Psychology & Climate Change

Dr Maxine Watkins

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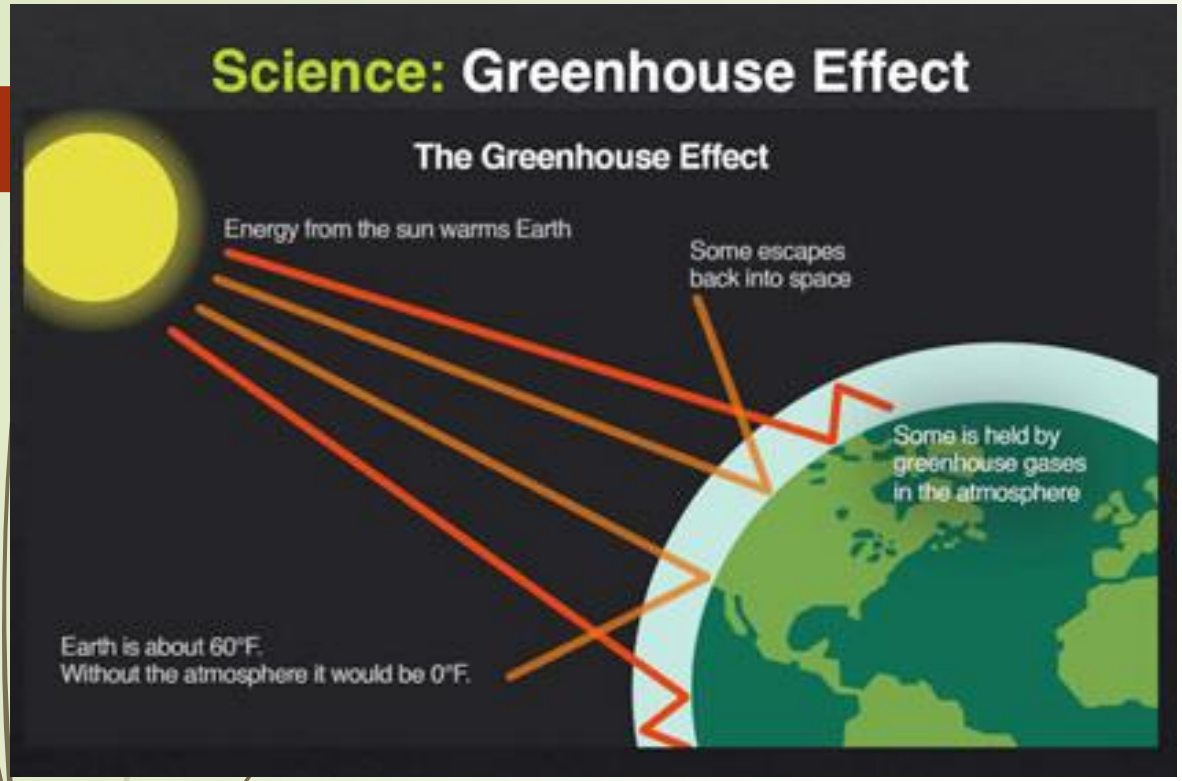

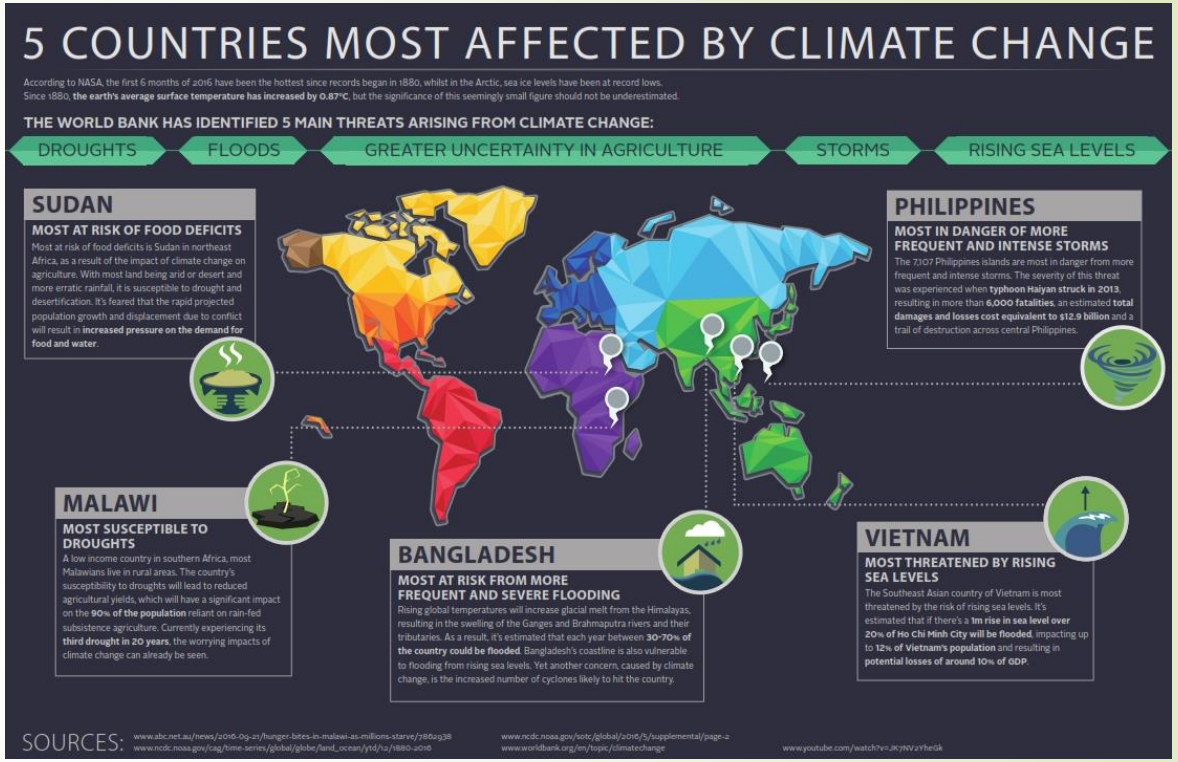

The science of climate change

https://www.climatecentral.org/go/warming-world-science-of-climate-change-outreach

https://www.rayburntours.com/education/blog/geography

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HARRODS
TAXI

Superdry

‘The biggest obstacle to dealing with climate disruption lies between your ears’

Per Espen Stoknes (TED talk, 2017)

How can Psychology help?

- Psychology behind the **perceptions** of climate change
- **Communication** of climate change
- Psychological **impacts** of climate change
- Human **responses** to climate change

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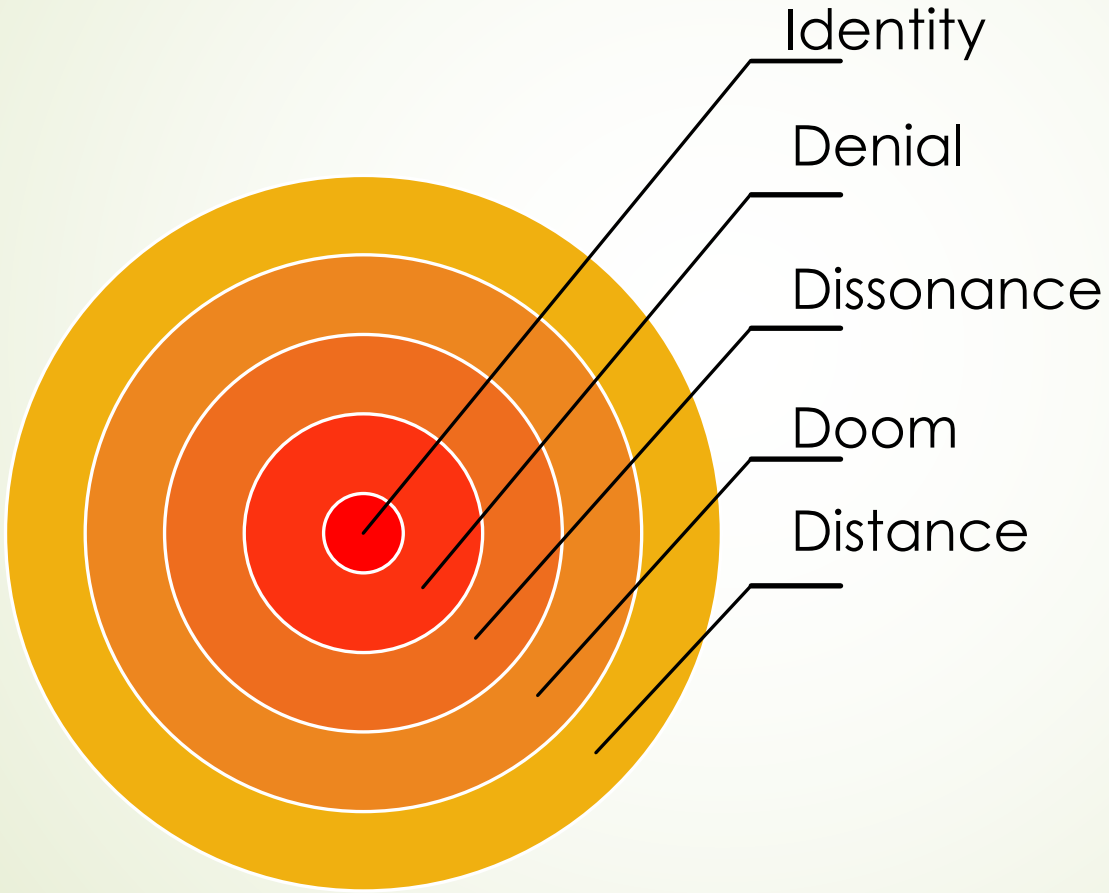
Climate Change Communication



(Stoknes, 2014)

Social Identity and Climate Change Communication

- Social Identity
- Group categorization

- Perceptions polarized based on Political Identity

- Environmental Identity

(e.g. Activists v/s Deniers)

Social Media and Climate Change Communication

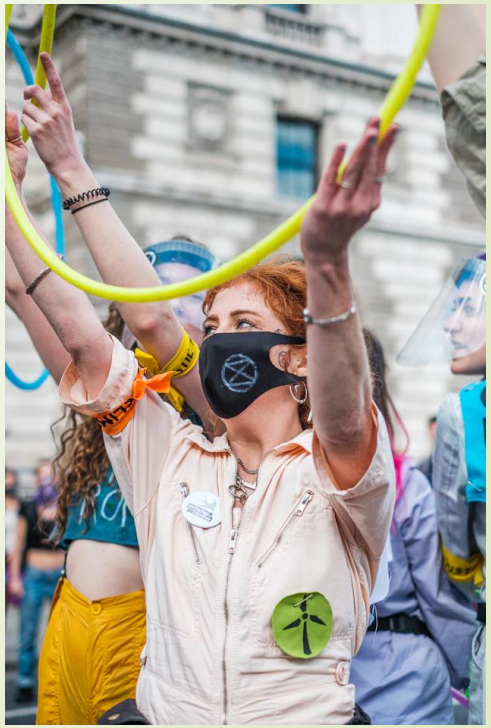
‘Eco Anxiety’

- Increased awareness
- Psychological response to climate change
- Adaptive function
- Sense of powerlessness

Interventions for Climate Related Anxiety

- Complex challenges to mental health
- Clinical interventions
- Social support (Clayton et al., 2017)

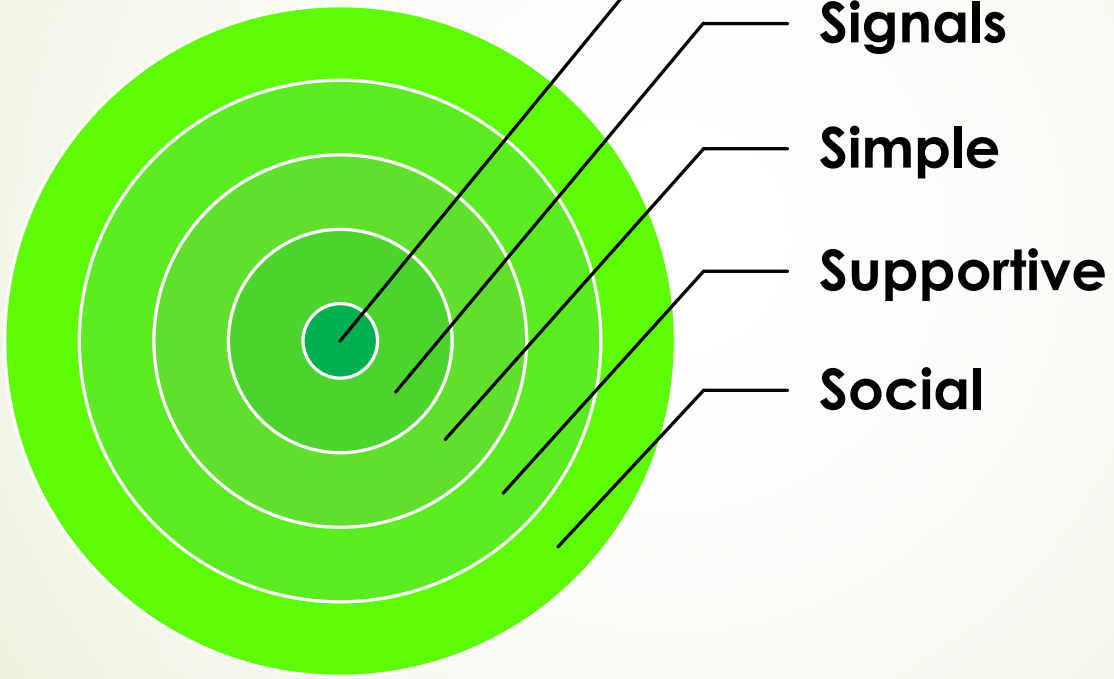
Study:
Are activist groups a form of intervention?



Individual behaviours can make a difference

(Williamson et al., 2018)

Climate Change Communication



COMMUNICATION

(Stoknes, 2014)

Presenting Climate Change and Climate Breakdown as a Choice

THE YEAR IS 2050.

THE WORLD IS BREATHING.

THE AIR IS FRESH. NATURE IS THRIVING.

ENTIRE POPULATIONS HAVE A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE.

(Figueres & Rivett-Carnac, 2020)

Climate Change & Psychology

- How do we **perceive** climate change?
- How do we **communicate** what we know about climate change?
- How do we experience the psychological **impact** of climate change?
- How are we going to **respond**?

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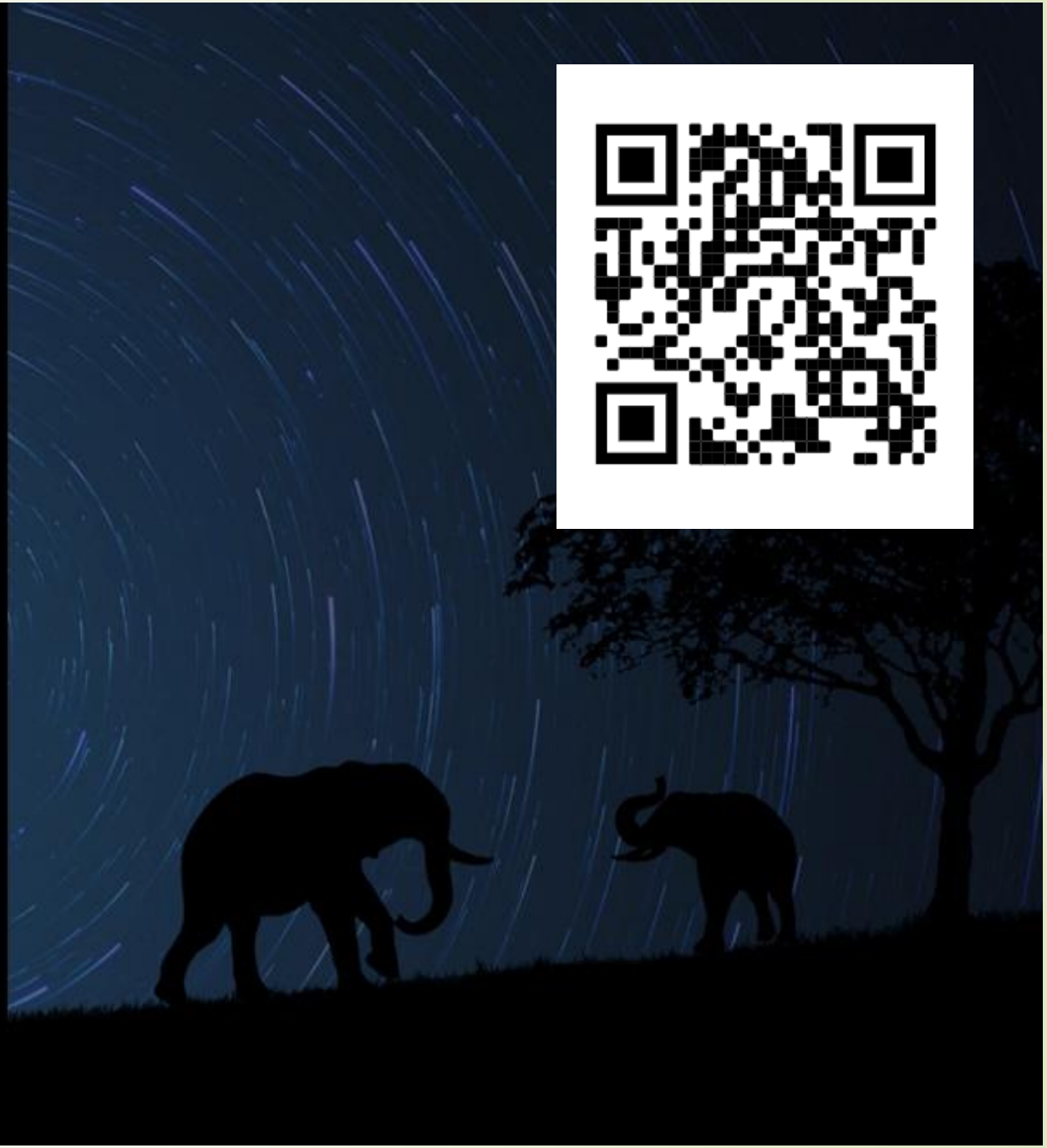
WWF | FOR YOUR WORLD

HOW BIG IS YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT?

Find out with our environmental footprint calculator



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