



Call for Papers

“Climate Crisis and the Human Factor”

A Special Issue of *European Psychologist*

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Anthropogenic global climate change and its disruptive impact on ecosystems and communities around the world are subjects of widespread scientific consensus. The role of psychological factors in mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis has been receiving increasing attention both from researchers and practitioners, within and outside the fields of social and behavioral studies. While core tasks related to mitigating climate change (reducing CO₂ emissions, protecting biodiversity, and introducing sustainable solutions in agriculture and industry) are based on natural science and technology, their widespread and prompt implementation depends on the human factor. Therefore, in addition to the systematic change of infrastructure, rules and laws, effective climate action relies on sustainable social norms and attitudes, pro-environmental behavior change, education and support at a community level, and political engagement based on knowledge, values and emotions. Psychology as the study of mind and behavior has a role to play in the research field of climate change, where individual behavior in its socio-ecological context can make a substantial contribution. Psychological expertise can also contribute to mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis, at different levels of influence.

Psychology and Climate Change

In May 2024, European Federation of Psychologists Associations' (EFPA) Expert Reference Group for Psychology and Climate Change issued an opinion paper offering a selection of the most important topics in the emerging field of psychology of climate change: “Climate Crisis and the Human Factor: 10 Psychological Keys to Unlocking Climate Action” (a preprint available online at: <https://www.psycharchives.org/en/item/e3b3000d-6e28-46e6-a17e-02564eaeflee>). It was developed in collaboration between European academics, independent practitioners, under the auspices of European psychology organizations, and represents at a time empirical evidence and professional

experiences. Complex relations between individual, social, and systemic factors responsible for, first, effective and just climate action and, second, resilience and vulnerability of people's mental health and well-being in the climate crisis are a focus of the paper. It also discusses psychology of climate change as a field marked by a variety of sometimes conflicting approaches. Therefore, a question arises how to present an evidence-based approach in this unavoidably political arena in a way to provide in-depth understanding of the human factor related to the climate crisis, and to enhance cooperation between psychologists from different fields of research, practice and education.

Special Issue Framework

In regard of these issues, we are interested in theoretical and systematically based review papers, and meta-analyses that offer a broad view on the interplay between psychology and climate change and have the potential to inform and enlighten theory, research and practice. Related to policies of the *European Psychologist*, only exceptional empirical studies may be considered for publication (very large, impactful, multicultural and/or multinational studies). In the current crisis, we are experiencing “science in real-time”, which is why the transfer into practice is particularly important. For this reason, we invite papers addressing science into practice across multiple areas of the psychology of climate change, as well as we encourage every author to include practical perspectives into their arguments.

The special issue is inspired and organized around the opinion paper (subject to peer review and final editorial approval) to enable a deeper and more detailed presentation of the issues that have been addressed. Therefore, authors can consider one or simultaneously various of the following topics, as they are not mutually exclusive, and

address them in a systematic or in-depth way, or engage critically with presented arguments. This may involve:

I. Sustainability as a New Base

The pursuit of sustainability challenges traditional materialistic views of success and happiness, suggesting that greater well-being can be achieved through environmentally-friendly and less consumer-driven lifestyles. This shift requires a significant psychological and cultural adaptation, moving away from consumption-focused values towards a more sustainable approach for living.

II. Sustainable Transformation

Tackling the climate crisis involves balancing individual stress and participation in societal change. Psychology aids in navigating this by considering climate justice and individual differences. Personalized, appropriately paced behavior change within a broader societal context is a key. However, focusing only on individual actions may neglect necessary systemic changes. Effective climate strategies should be sustainable, science-driven, and community-based.

III. Collective Efficacy

In confronting global crises, collective action is crucial. Working together in families, teams, and communities are more effective for coping with stress and adapting to change. Collective efficacy is a key in environmental actions, influencing individual action and enhancing faith in community-driven change. This group-based approach, stronger than self-efficacy, motivates pro-environmental behavior and policy acceptance, showing that shared experiences and group norms are more impactful than mere information or persuasion in driving behavioral change.

IV. Emotions as Drivers for Action

In climate change psychology, the focus is shifting from being solely on cognitive attitudes to also include emotional responses in influencing pro-environmental behaviors. Emotions like eco-anxiety play a complex role in motivating action; they can be both adaptive and counter-productive. The “emotional turn” in environmental communication acknowledges emotions as a key drivers but caution is necessary, taking into account their potential negative impacts on mental well-being and the risk of over-relying on emotional appeals for inducing pro-environmental actions.

V. Mental Health and Resilience

The impact of climate change on mental health includes both direct effects, like heat-related stress, and indirect effects from natural disasters and socio-political pressures.

In this context, emotions extend beyond motivating climate action to significantly impacting mental health and well-being. Negative emotions like eco-anxiety, although common in environmental concern, can contribute to mental health challenges, particularly for vulnerable groups. Addressing direct and indirect mental health effects requires recognizing the variety of affected groups and fostering resilience, both individually and within communities, to adapt to climate-related stressors effectively.

VI. Pro-Environmental Behavior in a Community Context

To mitigate climate change effectively, emphasis should be placed on high-impact pro-environmental behaviors within communities, targeting those most active in areas like transport, diet, consumption of goods and energy use. Overcoming barriers such as lack of awareness and structural challenges is crucial, and community level interventions can harness social norms and values to propagate pro-environmental behaviors. This collective approach not only fosters individual and group resilience but also addresses ethical concerns related to global inequalities and the responsibilities of wealthier nations.

VII. Pro-Environmental Behavior in an Organizational Context

Organizations, including public, commercial, and NGOs, significantly shape pro-environmental behavior through both internal policies and public engagement. By embedding environmental values into their operations and communications, such as performance indicators and annual reports, they promote sustainable practices among employees and the wider public. Their role extends beyond influencing behaviors to actual CO₂ emissions reduction, requiring transparency and accountability to build trust and avoid green washing. These organizational efforts support broader systemic changes necessary for effective climate action.

VIII. Climate Policy

Psychology’s role in shaping pro-environmental public policies is vital as policy moves beyond individual behavior changes to address systemic and political actions necessary for carbon neutrality. Psychologists bring insights from political psychology to influence policy design and implementation at various levels. Their involvement includes political advocacy, enhancing trust and hope in political processes, and ensuring policies are informed by an understanding of social dynamics and human behavior. This broader application of psychological principles helps empower communities, foster public engagement in environmental actions, and supports sustainable policy development.

IX. Climate Change Communication

Climate change communication aims to shift behaviors and foster societal engagement in sustainability through psychologically informed strategies. Effective communication requires more than just information delivery; it involves engaging in dialogues, strategic messaging, and visible examples of sustainable behaviors to establish new social norms. This approach leverages psychological insights to create messages that resonate with diverse values and motivations, using framing techniques to highlight the personal and collective benefits of environmental actions. The goal is to empower communities, enhance participation, and promote a broader commitment to environmental stewardship as well as improving efficacy of pro-environmental action.

X. Collective Responsibility

Broadening the scope of psychology in climate action is critical, emphasizing the need to move beyond influencing individual behavior to impacting collective efforts and systemic changes. Psychology must engage with community actions and target decision-makers and economic leaders who possess the capability to implement transformative, large-scale environmental reforms efficiently. This shift is essential for achieving substantial and effective solutions to climate as well as other socio-ecological challenges.

Timeline

In order to make the process of working on the special issue more feasible, we would like to invite authors to submit short proposals first (up to 500 words).

Authors are invited to send short proposals

March 1, 2025

to the Special Issue editor's email address:
weronika.kalwak@uj.edu.pl

After reviewing the proposals, we would reach out to some authors to ask for submitting the whole manuscript.

Authors will be invited to submit whole manuscripts until

June 1, 2025

through the *European Psychologist's* online submission system.

Submissions

Because *European Psychologist* privileges review, integrative articles, and which are of relevance for the European

context and particularly for the 350,000 psychologists represented by the 37 associations members of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA), manuscripts should take a broad, synthesizing view within the interface between psychology and climate change, including directions for further research and developments in the field. All manuscripts will be peer-reviewed, and should be prepared in accordance with the journal guidelines.

Submissions should be submitted exclusively via the online submission system

<https://www.editorialmanager.com/ep>

Manuscript Preparation

Original articles should not exceed 7,500 words including abstract, references, figures, and tables, but may be allowed more space on a case-by-case basis. Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the journal's author guidelines available on the journal's website at

<https://www.hogrefe.com/j/ep>

Contact Details

If you have any questions concerning editorial matters, please contact the Special Issue Editors via

weronika.kalwak@uj.edu.pl

Should you have any technical queries regarding the online submission system, please contact

production@hogrefe.com

Only papers that have not previously appeared in or currently under consideration for another publication can be considered for publication. Manuscripts are subject to peer review and may be returned to authors for revision.

Reference

Katwak, W., Ekelund, B., Gale, N., Peter, F., & Wortelboer, S. (Eds.). (2024). *Climate crisis and the human factor: 10 psychological keys to unlocking climate action. Opinion paper of the EFPA's Expert Reference Group for Psychology and Climate Change.* European Federation of Psychologists' Associations EFPA AISBL. <https://doi.org/10.23668/psycharchives.15026>

Published online January 15, 2025