

CONSIDER CALLING IN SICK APRIL 22 TO COMBAT ECO-ANXIETY

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Earth Day Canada is calling on Canadians feeling eco-anxiety to call in sick on April 22 (Earth Day) and take action to help themselves and the planet.

Representatives of the not-for-profit organization unveiled eco-anxiety as the theme of the 2022 media campaign during a news conference on Thursday, April 7.

They said eco-anxiety can manifest as insomnia, stress, depression, panic attacks, shortness of breath or anger and comes from a deep concern about the future of the planet.

Earth Day Canada Executive Director Valerie Mallamo said eco-anxiety among Canadians is growing and is not helped by recent media reports of a worsening environmental

situation.

However, she said there is hope.

"Eco-anxiety is a normal feeling, and it can be attenuated by connecting with our community and acting," said Mallamo.

"Around the 22nd of April, thousands of people from one ocean to the other will be participating in activities to take care of the planet. Walks, cleanup activities for the neighbourhoods, tree plantings and webinars on eco-anxiety will be just some of the things we will be able to do to take care of ourselves

and the planet."

Isabelle Beliveau, co-founder of the not-for-profit organization Eco-motion, which is dedicated to eradicating eco-anxiety, said children are particularly susceptible to eco-anxiety.

She noted that, as a child, she was so consumed with fear for the future of the planet that she became a climate change activist.

Looking back, she now realizes she was not alone in feeling this anxiety and says it is good to be talking about it.

Former federal NDP leader and chair of the Earth Day Canada board, Tom Mulcair, said it's the work of grassroots organizations that give him hope.

He said that while the Government of Canada is doing things, like approving a \$12-billion offshore oil project off the coast of Newfoundland, Earth Day Can-

ada and groups like it are working to help the environment by doing things like installing charging stations for electric vehicles.

"That has always been Earth Day's claim to fame," said Mulcair.

"We actually get things done."

Mallamo noted that since the point of the campaign is to relieve anxiety, she cautioned against people calling in sick on April 22 if doing so will cause them problems at work and therefore more anxiety.

"Find something that works for your work schedule," she said.

Residents interested in finding Earth Day activities in their area can visit <https://earthday.ca/april-22/campaign/remedy-together/>.

A 2019 article about eco-anxiety on the Canadian Mental Health Association



Earth Day Canada image
Canadians are urged to call in sick on April 22 to combat eco-anxiety.

(CMHA) website said being in control of your own environment footprint can counter the feeling of powerlessness climate change can bring.

Other recommendations included:

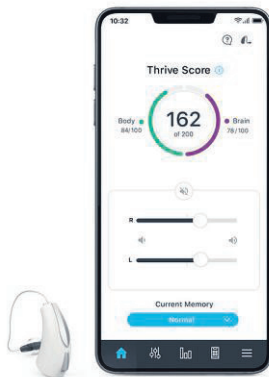
- talking about climate change to diminish fear of it
- becoming an activist to see you are not alone in your concerns
- demanding governments and businesses take action
- demanding health professionals and even teachers know how to recognize and respond to eco-anxiety in children.

The article went on to say that if your experience with eco-anxiety is extremely troubling or disabling, consult a health professional.

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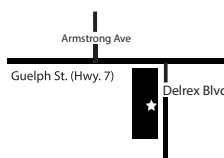
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