

# Coping With The Reality Of Climate Change

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AUDIE CORNISH, HOST:

The U.N. has said that it is unequivocal that humans have warmed the Earth and that the scale of the changes is unprecedented. And the predictions are dire – more drought, more fires, heat waves – if we don't change our ways. And it's not the first time we've heard it, though the evidence linking human behavior to climate change is now stronger. So that got us wondering, how does such overwhelming news affect us and our desire to do something about it? We're joined now by Dr. Elke Weber, professor of psychology at Princeton University, and she also contributed to the U.N.'s latest climate report. Welcome to the program.

ELKE WEBER: Thank you so much, Audie, for having me.

CORNISH: Increasingly, people are dealing directly with the results of climate change – right? – record heat across the country. How do people respond when they're confronted with the sort of bigness of the issue of climate change? What kinds of emotions can that draw out?

WEBER: It can be incredibly overwhelming, especially among younger people. And so there's no question that climate anxiety has gone drastically up by contemplation about sort of what kind of world we live in and what kind of a world we might leave to our children and grandchildren. So it's very debilitating symptoms that oftentimes have to be treated with medication or with psychotherapy.

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