



Graphic by Al Davila

Understanding the personal effects of Climate Change

By Al Davila

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In the back of the study room the light laughter of my friends and I bounces off the walls. We sit and joke in the library, circling the coffee table placed strategically beneath the AC. Temperatures this past week have been in the three digits at a consistent rate. Everyone is feeling the effects. The library however, provides us a sweet hideaway. We joke about our futures and where we'll be in 10 years. In our minds, we are all millionaire rockstars, well-respected doctors or even teachers. I myself dream about four children, a dog and beachside house. In a lot of ways we still have a child-like sense of reality. There is however a dread looming over us, and the outside heat is only a reminder.

We understand the severity of our planet's health. Realistically what could our world look like in 10-20 years? NASA Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says the global temperature is expected to exceed three degrees in the next few decades. This change will have a dire effect on our planet. But what about the more personal effects of climate change? How does the knowledge of a global threat change the way we live our day-to-day lives? We hear it every day when we go online. It's hard not to be bombarded with stories of another wildfire or see the desolate ruins of a once-thriving rainforest.

"Did you hear the Northern White Rhino is set for extinction?" "Yeah, actually I did hear that."

I would come to know this state of defeatism as "climate anxiety."

What is climate anxiety?

Clinical Psychologist and Associate Professor at the Yale School of Public Health, Sarah Lowe, describes climate anxiety as "fundamental distress about Climate Change and its impacts on the landscape and human existence." This is a trend that is gaining more attention as people worldwide are faced with the overwhelming threat of a warming planet. Climate anxiety is largely considered a rational response to the reality around you.

But why are young people in particular so affected by it?

While anyone can be affected by the dread of Climate Change, it is easy to understand why young people (categorized as 16-25) are at the center of the conversation. In a survey done by The Lancet Planetary Health on climate anxiety in children and young adults, 55.7% of participants claimed they feel that humanity is doomed. Many youths of America feel abandoned.

While past generations will be able to live out their lives in contentment, Gen Z and forward will likely not get to old age without seeing major natural catastrophes completely transform the state of their planet. Specifically as college students, we are at a time where we plan for our futures. The awareness young people have on Climate Change can be crippling.

Climate Change isn't going away. However, the way we deal with our anxieties can improve. Lowe advises you should not stay away from climate media altogether. It is important to maintain a healthy "media diet." This is what Lowe says we can do. "Stay aware but put limits on your consumption, and just be aware if you are doom scrolling."

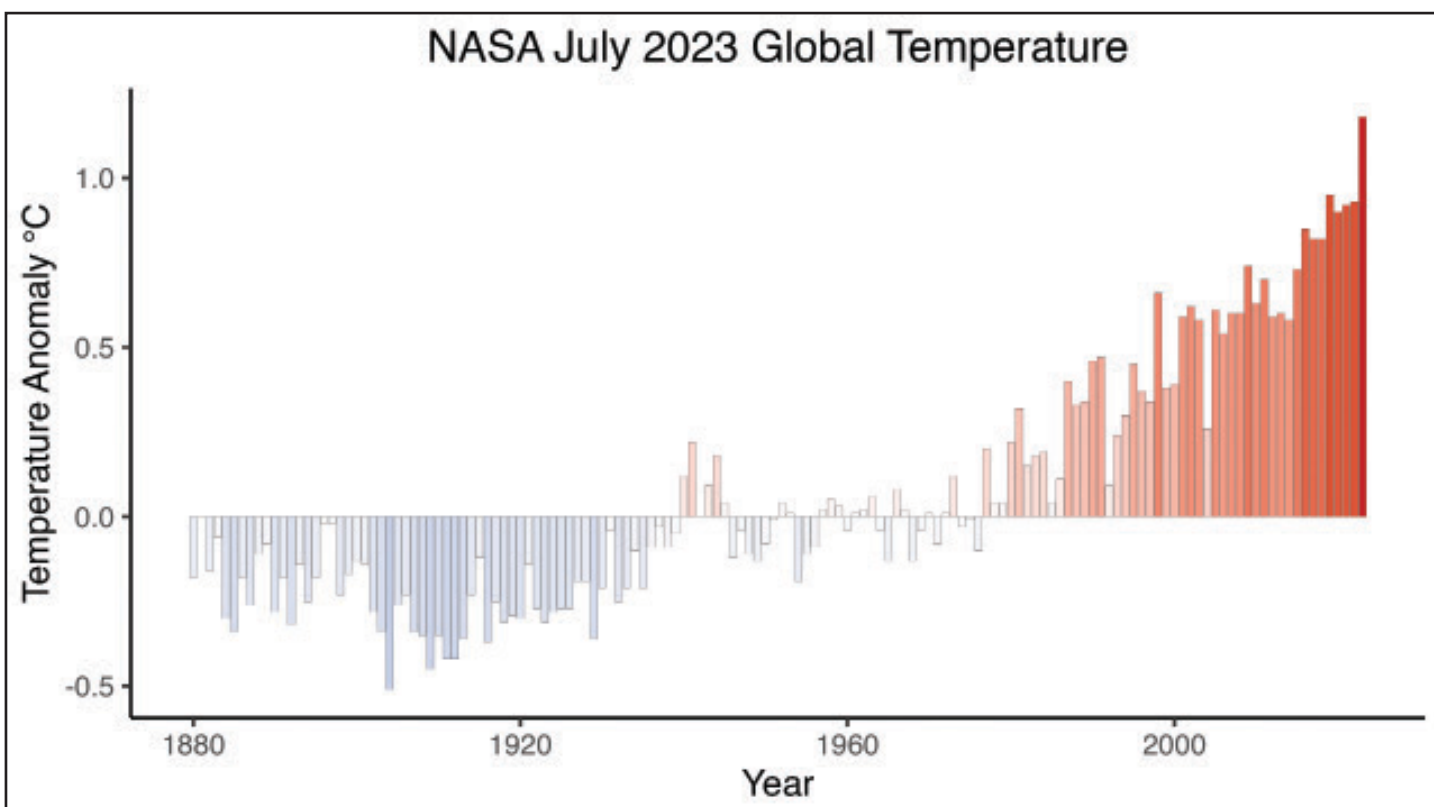


Chart provided by the NASA Earth Observatory

The chart showcases temperature anomalies starting in 1880. According to NASA's Goddard Institution of Space Studies, Earth's global temperature has increased by 1.9 degrees Fahrenheit since 1880.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

Asking for help can be scary. Lifelines are an anonymous and readily available resource for anyone facing mental health struggles.

'988'

If you or a loved one is experiencing anxiety, or in need of any other mental health service, call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at "988"

Or text "LA" to 741741

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"Be aware if you are doom scrolling,"
-Sarah Lowe