

CONNECTING THE DOTS

ON POVERTY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

A Collaboration Between Eastern Zone Community Health Boards, Mental Health and Addictions Health Promotion Team, and Public Health Healthy Communities Team



CLIMATE CHANGE & VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Climate change is arguably the greatest threat to the health of all Canadians. Factors such as poverty, education, race, age, and immigrant status cause increased risk of impacts from climate change. In fact, those who contribute the most to climate change are the least likely to experience its adverse impacts.



IMPACT ON INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Worldwide, Indigenous Peoples are particularly sensitive to the impacts of climate change as climate impacts traditional food sources, permafrost and sea ice changes. Indigenous people are also more likely to experience poverty.



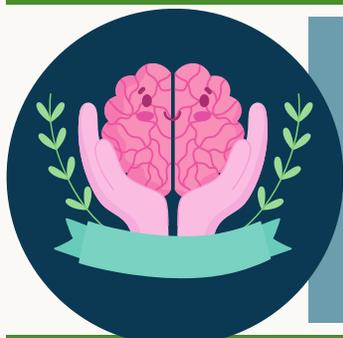
CLIMATE CHANGE & CHRONIC CONDITIONS

People who experience poverty are more likely to have poor health, and people living with chronic conditions, are at greater risk of illness or death by climate change when exposed to extreme weather events, water-related illnesses, and poor air quality. For example, older adults - who are both more likely to have chronic health problems, and/or experience poverty, also suffer greater climate impacts due to these compounding factors.



CLIMATE CHANGE AND MENTAL HEALTH

The relationship between climate change and mental health is bi-directional. Climate disasters such as droughts, wildfires and extreme storms bring on stressors, like high financial costs, job loss, displacement, and physical injury, which can cause post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression.



ENERGY POVERTY

Energy is essential for meeting our basic needs and is a prerequisite for good health. Energy Poverty is lacking ability to pay for adequate heat, electricity, and other utilities needed to feel comfortable in one's household and is an overlooked determinant of health. Depending on the measure, 6–19% of Canadian households face energy poverty.





CLIMATE CHANGE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

People without safe and consistent housing can experience challenges connecting to heat warning systems and exposure to mold-ridden conditions and unrepaired structures after major events. Those facing homelessness may find it difficult to access drinking water or to keep food from spoiling during extreme heat.

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES

Preparing for the health impacts of climate change requires us to address the root causes of health vulnerabilities such as poverty, race, homelessness, and food insecurity. Because we know that those living with these vulnerabilities are disproportionately affected by impacts of climate change, we need to keep these populations in mind.



ADAPTING FOR THE FUTURE

Investing in climate change adaptation today, including measures that address the social and economic factors that result in poor health, will save lives and improve quality of life for generations to come. Public Safety Canada estimates that every dollar invested in mitigation saves \$3 to \$5 in recovery costs. Indigenous knowledge-keepers and Elders must be part creating solutions for the future.



HELPING NOVA SCOTIANS

Book an assessment, review various rebate programs and see if you qualify for free energy efficient products like light bulbs, shower heads, faucet aerators, pipe wraps and more @ efficiencyns.ca



MORE HELP AT HOME

HomeWarming offers no-charge energy assessments and free home upgrades to eligible Nova Scotians.

Check out **this page** for energy efficiency tips for both homeowners and renters.



REFERENCES

- Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2022 - Mobilizing Public Health Action on Climate Change in Canada: <http://bit.ly/3OqGHOF>
- WHO Housing and Health Guidelines: <https://bit.ly/47npgXY>
- National Collaborating Center for Indigenous Health: https://www.nccih.ca/495/Climate_Change_and_Indigenous_People%E2%80%99s_health_in_Canada.nccih?id=10367
- Climate Anxiety and Eco-Grief: How Climate Change Hurts Global Mental Health: <https://bit.ly/3OvI0Sh>
- Canadian Climate Institute: <https://bit.ly/3OPlcY4>
- Understanding Climate Change Impacts in Relation to Wellbeing for Nova Scotia: <https://bit.ly/3OQTzPi>