

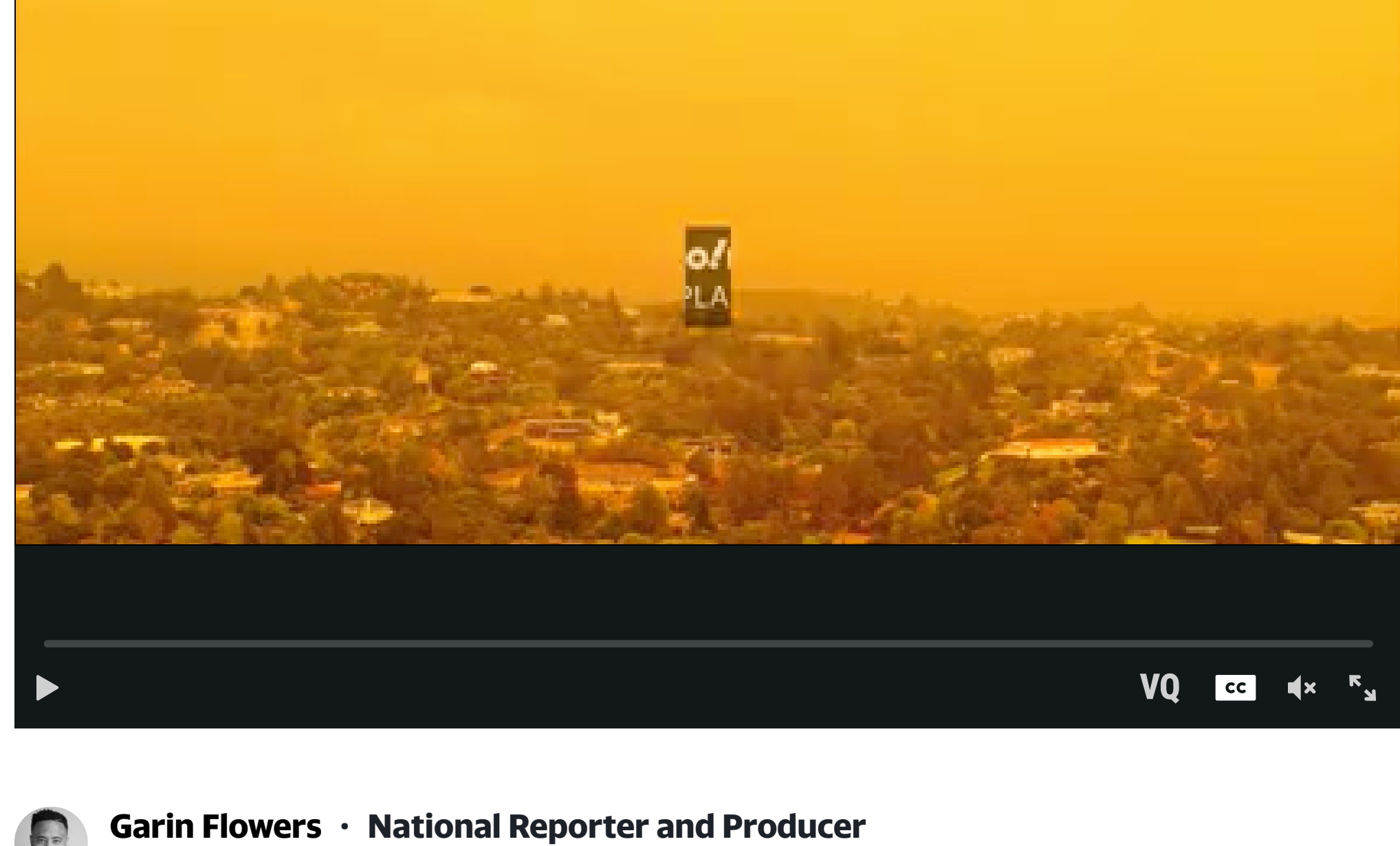
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Study: Climate Change causing high 'psychological distress' among teens and young adults



Garin Flowers · National Reporter and Producer
21 September 2021 · 2-min read

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A recent international study concluded that young people are experiencing “high levels of psychological distress” from climate change and governmental inaction on the growing crisis.

Almost half of the young people surveyed, 45 percent, said that anxiety and stress surrounding the issue is affecting their daily lives and functioning.

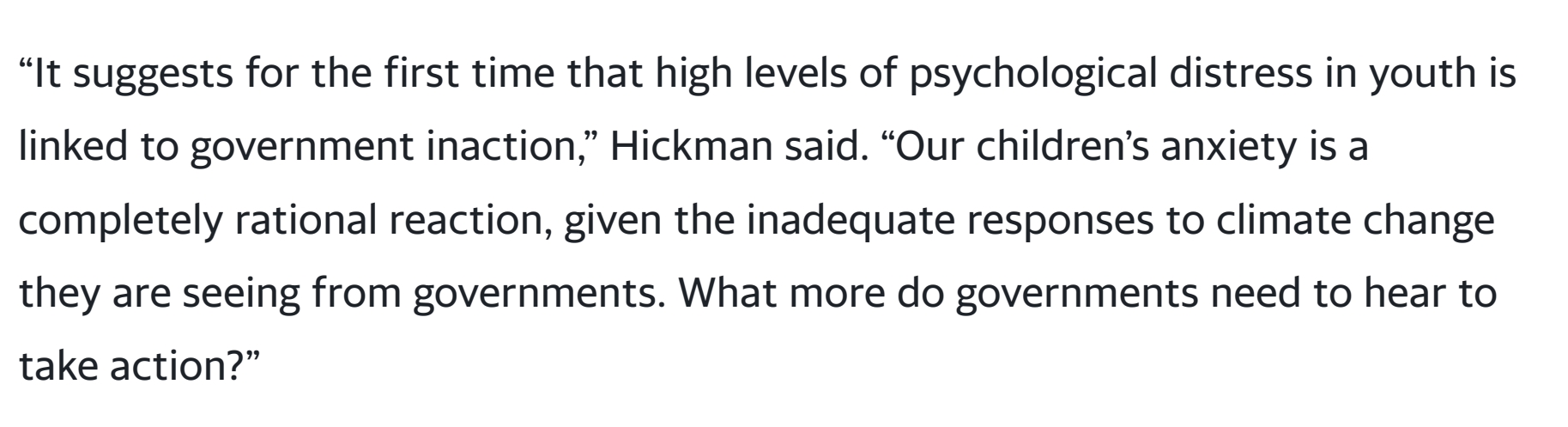
The authors of the study, surveyed 10,000 young adults and teenagers of ages 16-25 in 10 different countries, including the United States, Australia, India, Nigeria and the Philippines.

They found that three-fourths of young folks believe that “The future is frightening,” and that 65% of them believe their governments aren’t doing enough to combat catastrophes that will be exacerbated by climate change.

“This study paints a horrific picture of widespread climate anxiety in our children and young people,” said Caroline Hickman, co-lead author of the study, a professor and researcher at the University of Bath in the United Kingdom.

Described as the first large-scale study of climate anxiety, it was assisted by human rights activists, academics and mental health experts, including Dr. Eric Lewandowski, a New York University clinical associate professor. It was funded by AVAAZ, a U.S. nonprofit organization that promotes global activism, and it is expected to be published in the Lancet Planetary Health.

“It suggests for the first time that high levels of psychological distress in youth is linked to government inaction,” Hickman said. “Our children’s anxiety is a completely rational reaction, given the inadequate responses to climate change they are seeing from governments. What more do governments need to hear to take action?”



Buildings near Lafourche Parish in Louisiana are submerged by Hurricane Ida on Sept. 3. (Jonathan Ernst/Pool/Reuters)

As climate change contributes to deadly weather events, more organizations are getting active to combat it. Quill Robinson, vice-president for government affairs of the American Conservation Coalition, a conservative advocacy organization, tries to mobilize young people around market-based environmental action.

“Unfortunately,” he said, “I’m not surprised that young people are so concerned and so scared of climate change.

“Young and old alike, we need to tell a factual story about climate change, you know,” he added. “The world is not going to end in 12 years, it’s not going to end in 20 years, it’s not going to end in 100 years, but we do need to act on this. I think that empowerment is really the key word here, and something we need to focus on rather than fear.”

The survey comes at a time where young people have been vocal about climate change. A global youth-led “climate strike,” with rallies planned in thousands of cities, is [planned](#) for Friday.

Greta Thunberg, the world-famous teenage climate activist, was quoted in the study, saying, “Young people all over the world are well aware that the people in power are failing us.”



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