



Q&A Follow Up: Climate Justice and Children's Health. Inspiring Youth to Advocate for Climate Action

Thank you for the great conversation during our live webinar on Friday, March 24. We recognize that we were unable to answer all the questions during the live event. Below are answers to some of the questions that we didn't have the opportunity to respond to.

Question 1: The content is very emotionally challenging. Given the mental health crisis that youth are facing in our communities, how are you dealing with the emotional/social processes as you present this curriculum?

Answer 1:

Tiffany Canate:

- Address the difficult nature of the topic upfront. Explain that Eco-anxiety is very real, and something a lot of people experience.
- Do check-ins with the group periodically, "On a scale from 1-5 how is everyone feeling?"
- Give them breaks and even allow them to go on their phones/listen to music (if school policy allows you to give them permission).
- Show them examples of what policy have been passed that make a difference or have large potential (i.e the Inflation Reduction Act had just passed when I was teaching, and I broke it down for them and explained the policy implications the bill could have towards our environment and health.)
- If you can, ask a mental health professional/ school counselor to come and do a group discussion/ exercise with the class after the lesson.

Question 2: This is for anyone. What do you think is the greatest barrier to addressing and amending climate-caused health problems among children in marginalized communities?

Answer 2

Tiffany Canate:

In my family, when there is a problem that cannot be seen or understood immediately, my family's response is typically "drink some water and go to sleep, you'll feel better after you rest." While water and rest are critical, they aren't a blanket solution, so part of the issue at least in my experience is getting communities to understand the importance of health concerns that are 'under the surface' so to speak.

Nsedu Witherspoon:

Acknowledgement of the real impacts that climate change continues to have upon the lives of marginalized children is a large barrier, as well as insisting that children overall and marginalized community members be included in state climate action plans.

Question 3: Do you have ideas as to how social workers can collaborate on these efforts?

Answer 3:

Nsedu Witherspoon:

Leveraging existing programs that already connect with the public.