



Statement by Psychologists and Psychotherapists in response to the Protests for Increased Climate Protection

#Psychologists4Future #Psychotherapists4Future

„Climate Change is a psychological crisis, whatever else it is” (Poulsen, B., 2018)

The current protests by the climate protection movement are consistent, distinct and well justified. A continued rapid warming of the earth threatens our natural existence as well as our physical and psychological integrity. It is an existential threat to mankind.

For many years various international psychological and medical authorities have researched the connections between climate change and psychology/psychotherapy. As early as 2008 the American Psychological Association already formed a „task force“. As a group of professionals we see it as our responsibility to bring in our expertise.

Based on scientific sources it is known that:

- **Climate Change and the resulting environmental crisis are intuitively underestimated.** Impacts that are experienced as unpleasant, through psychological defense mechanisms (individually and collectively) can be held in the subconscious. Individual people and many politicians alike misjudge the extent of the threat to a high degree.

This collective denial hinders individual as well as political action. Psychological mechanisms that prevent behavioural change and political action must be identified, communicated and overcome.

The students of the Fridays-for-Future-Movement had the courage to face this fear and to point out their grievances. The opposition to these protests is understandable from a psychological point of view. Hence, those of us aware of the existential crisis, will support others in developing an individual and collective recognition of the problem.

- **Motivating people towards behavioural change and increasing environmental and climate awareness is a psychological task.**

Often it is plain habit; the feeling of not having any control or to be able to have an impact, that inhibits action. We can help people to develop greater self-efficacy, action control, to increase a feeling of responsibility and to reduce a sense of powerlessness.

- **The awareness of the urgency of climate and ecological crisis can bring about symptoms of psychological disorders.**

As professionals, we must be prepared. This can bring about intense, overwhelming feelings that can result in a sense of powerlessness and even psychological disorders.

Without political intervention for more climate protection, we will experience the repercussions outlined in **environmental psychological research.**

- The condition of the environment will have complex impacts on our behaviour, health and life experience. Various studies point to **increasing psychological and physical impacts following extreme weather events** such as loss of the familiar living environment. The global as well as national response capacities to confront such crises are currently not in place and must be created.

As psychologists and psychotherapists it is our duty to help people maintain their mental health, to cope with adversities and to support progress. The very existence and well-being of future generations is threatened and cannot be overcome without political action.

We all have a right to psychological well-being (Art. 25 Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 12 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

The concerns of the protestors are justified and reasonable.

These concerns are based on established scientific data (compare Scientists4Future). The current measures to protect the climate and to conserve species, forests, oceans and soil are insufficient and have to be expanded in a timely fashion.

As psychologists and psychotherapists we support and reinforce the demands of the Fridays-for-Future-Movement for more urgent and consistent action and for a fundamental political and social paradigm shift regarding climate. The goals set by the Paris Accord must be met.

We are recognizing our personal and professional responsibility and wish to increase pressure on the decision makers and motivate them toward more timely action.

Sources:

- Brick, C. & van der Linden, S. (2018) „Yawning at the apocalypse“. In: *The Psychologist*, 31, 30-35. British Psychological Society
- James, P., Iyer, A. & Webb, T.L. “The impact of post-migration stressors on refugees’ emotional distress and health: A longitudinal analysis“. In: *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 16.04.2019
- Lequertier, B., Simcock, G., Cobham, V.E., Kildea, S. & King, S. “Infant Behavior and Competence Following Prenatal Exposure to a Natural Disaster: The QF2011 Queensland Flood Study“. In: *Infancy*, Vol. 24, Issue 3, 06.03.2019
- Lertzman, R. (2014) “Breaking the Climate Fear Taboo. Why feelings matter for our climate change communications“, Sightline Institute (www.sightline.org)
- Lertzman, R. (2015) “Environmental Melancholia. Psychoanalytic dimensions of engagement“. Routledge, 1. Aufl.
- Lertzman, R. (2017) “How Can We Talk About Global Warming?“. In: *Sierra Magazin*, 19.07.2017
- Lowe, S.R., McGrath, J.A., Young, M.N., Kwok, R.K., Engel, L.S., Galea, S. & Sandler, D.P. “Cumulative Disaster Exposure and Mental and Physical Health Symptoms Among a Large Sample of Gulf Coast Residents“. In: *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Vol. 32, Issue 2, 26.03.2019
- Nomura, Y., Davey, K., Pehme, P.M., Finik, J., Glover, V., Zhang, W., Huang, Y., Buthmann, J., Dana, K., Yoshida, S., Tsuchiya, K.J., Bo Li, X. & Ham, J. “Influence of in utero exposure to maternal depression and natural disaster-related stress on infant temperament at 6 month: The children of Superstorm Sandy“. In: *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, 05.02.2019
- Poulsen, B. (2018) “On Mourning Climate Change. The psychological crisis that accompanies our changing climate“. In: *Psychology Today*, 16.12.2018
- Rhys Lim, J., Fisher Liu, B., Egnoto, M. & Roberts, H.A. “Individuals’ religiosity and emotional coping in response to disasters“. In: *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 17.04.2019
- Riederer, R. (2019) “The Other Kind Of Climate Denialism“. In: *The New Yorker*
- Van Valkengoed, A. & Steg, L. (2019): “Meta-analyses of factors motivating climate change adaptation behaviour“. In: *Nature Climate Change* 9, 158-163
- <http://fridaysforfuture.de>, 12.05.2019
- www.scientistsforfuture.org, 12.05.2019
- <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>, 12.05.2019
- <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>, 12.05.2019

Until 2019/05/20 signed by:

S. Amelung-Gramlich (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Laura Monika Arp (B.Sc. Psychologin, B.Sc. Betriebswirtin) | Dr. med. Ute Attermeyer (Fachärztin für Psychiatrie, Psychotherapeutin) | Nina Bahri (M.Sc. Psychologin, PiA) | Christian Bange (Student der Psychologie) | Clara Barthels (B.sc. Psychologin, im Masterstudium) | Kathrin Becker (Studentin der Psychologie) | Dr. med. Sönke Behnsen (Facharzt für Psychiatrie, Psychotherapie, Psychoanalytiker) | Karla Bethkenhagen (Psychologiestudentin) | Rajana Bildhauer (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Jutta Bilger-Umland (ärztliche Psychotherapeutin, Psychoanalytikerin) | Maria Alba Bosch Borràs (Dipl.-Psych.) | Katharina van Bronswijk (M.Sc. Psychologin, PiA) | Niels von Daacke (Dipl.-Psych., PiA) | Jan Dietz (Dipl.-Psych., PiA) | Lea Dohm (Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Aljoscha Dreisörner (Doktorand Sozialpsychologie, Goethe Universität Frankfurt) | Susanne Enke (M.Sc. Psychologin, wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin Universität Leipzig) | Jonathan Fahima (Psychologist, Psychotherapist) | Anne Förste (Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Dr. Sonja Geiger (Umwelt- und Kognitionspsychologin, TU Berlin) | Jochen Gertjejanßen (Arzt in der Weiterbildung zum Facharzt für Psychiatrie und Psychotherapie) | Dr. phil. Dipl. Psych. Günter Gödde (Psychologischer Psychotherapeut) | Elmar Große Ruse (Dipl.-Psych., Umweltpsychologe), CH | Delaram Habibi-Kohlen (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin, Psychoanalytikerin) | Hendrik Hackfeld, (M.Sc. Psychologe, PiA) | Lisa Kathrin Hackspiel (B.Sc. Psychologin) | David Hardecker (Systemischer Therapeut, Familientherapeut, Wiss. Mitarbeiter Universität Leipzig) | Christoph M. Hausmann (Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Helena Hecht (M.Sc. Psychologin, PiA) | Fiona Heib (M.Sc. Psychologin, PiA) | Charlotte Heidebrecht (Psychologiestudentin im B.Sc.) | Laura Hellerbach (M.Sc. Psychologin, PiA) | Magdalena Hirsch (Promotionsstudentin Psychologie, Universität Leipzig) | Daniel Huhn (Psychologischer Psychotherapeut) | Hildegard Huschka (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Mirjam Ibold (Psychologin) | Fredrik Ivarsson (Psychologist), SE | Lukas Jäger (M.Sc. Psychologe, PiA) | Malte Klar (Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Tamara Klaus-Karwisch (B.Sc. Psychologin, im Masterstudium) | Julia Klöfer (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Helen Koch (M.Sc. Psychologin) | Tobias Konermann (M.Sc. Psychologe, Psycholog. Psychotherapeut, Hochschuldozent) | Fabian Kotz (M.Sc. Psychologe, PiA) | Dr. med. Monika Krimmer (Ärztliche Psychotherapeutin, Psychoanalytikerin) | Gerrit Kubicki (Student der Schulpsychologie) | Sandra Ladegast (Psychologiestudentin) | Eva-Maria Lange (Dipl.-Psych.) | Johannes Lanzinger (M.Sc. Psychologe) | Dr. Parfen Laszig (Psychologischer Psychotherapeut) | Jens Linder (Psychologe, PiA) | Daniel Löschinger (M.Sc. Psychologe) | Prof. Dr. Claudia Luck-Sikorski (Psychologin, Psych. Psychotherapeutin in Ausbildung) | Maria Mammen (wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin Entwicklungspsychologie der LMU München) | Natalie Manok (Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Nathalie Marcinkowski (Psychologin) | Stephanie Mark (Dipl.-Psych.) | Franziska Markus (Rehabilitationspsychologin, PiA) | Detlef Marzke (Dipl.-Psych., Psychologischer Psychotherapeut) | Angela Mauss-Hanke (Dipl.-Psych., Psychoanalytikerin, Lehranalytikerin & Supervisorin) | Dominik Mederer (Dipl.-Psych., PiA, Promovierender an der Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel) | Dr. Antonia Misch (Psychologin, LMU München) | Hans-Jochen Müller (Psychologischer Psychotherapeut, Berlin) | Maike Müller (Dipl.-Psych., PiA) | Alexandra Nägeli (Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Prof. Dr. med. Christoph Nikendei (MME, Leitender Oberarzt, Leiter Sektion Psychotraumatologie, Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg) | Dominik Ohlmeier (Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Dr. Andreas Peglau (Psychologe, Psychotherapeut) | Anja Peters

(Umweltpsychologin) | Ulrike Pinder (Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | León Plugge (Psychologiestudent, Universität Marburg) | Dr. Roland Quabis (Wissenschaftler und Dozent am Lehrstuhl für Sozialpsychologie der LMU München) | Dimitris Repantis (Ärztlicher Psychotherapeut) | Andreas Ritzenhoff (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Miriam Rohe (Psychologin, systemische Therapeutin) | David Roth (Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Dan Rubin (PsyD, Clinical Psychologist in Private Practice, Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Maitripa College, Portland, OR, USA) | Elisabeth Schmid (Psychologische Psychotherapeutin) | Christoph Schmitz (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Charlotte Schönfeldt (Kinder- und Jugendlichenpsychotherapeutin) | Prof. Dr. Malte Schophaus (Dipl.-Psych., Hochschullehrer, Mitglied der Initiative Psychologie im Umweltschutz e.V., Mitherausgeber der Zeitschrift „Umweltpsychologie“) | Mareike Schulze (Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Sylvia Schulze (Dipl.-Psych., Psychoanalytikerin) | Kristina Siever (Dipl.-Psych., Psychologische Psychotherapeutin) | Franck Siljestränd (Psychologist), SE | Katharina Simons (Dipl.-Psych., MPH, PiA) | Bettina Sonnenschein (Psychologische Psychotherapeutin) | Ursula Späte-Schumacher (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Ulrike Stalitz (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Günter Steigerwald (Kinder- und Jugendlichenpsychotherapeut) | Roman Stengelin (M.Sc. Psychologie, Wissenschaftler im Bereich der kulturvergleichenden Entwicklungspsychologie) | Simone Stöckert (Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Lisa Strand (Authorized Psychologists), Stockholm, SE | Florian Theis (Dipl.-Psych., Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Susanne Theobald (Psycholog. Psychotherapeutin) | Celina Tossi (PiA) | Dr. Jürgen Tripp (Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Josephine Träger (Umweltpsychologin, wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin der Universität Koblenz-Landau) | Annabel Weinrich (stud. Psychologie, Universität Marburg) | Achim Werwie (Psycholog. Psychotherapeut) | Anja Wieser (Dipl.-Psych., Systemische Therapeutin) | Susanne Zander (Psychologin, PiA) | Philipp Sebastian Zimmermann (Psycholog. Psychotherapeut)