

Review

Climate cafés as a space for navigating climate emotions: A scoping review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Climate change poses significant physical health risks, while its mental and emotional impacts are increasingly being recognized and researched. Although Climate Cafés have emerged as community-led interventions offering spaces to discuss climate-related thoughts and feelings, there is a paucity of literature describing their utility and impact. This scoping review maps the existing landscape of Climate Cafés and assesses their role in addressing climate-induced distress, and motivating action.

Methods: A literature review was conducted using academic literature published between 2015 and 2024 from the MEDLINE, PsychINFO, Public Health Database, and Web of Science databases. A grey literature search was also undertaken to capture information not published in the academic literature.

Results: No academic literature met inclusion criteria while the grey literature yielded 41 records. The grey literature depicted Climate Cafés as flexible, community-driven spaces for individuals to express and process emotions related to climate change. Programs varied: some were action-free spaces focused on emotional support while others promoted climate action. Participant feedback indicated reduced isolation, decreased anxiety, and increased hopefulness after attending sessions. Challenges identified include issues with inclusivity for marginalized communities, cultural barriers, logistical difficulties, and a lack of standardized evaluation methods.

Conclusions: Climate Cafés represent a promising yet under-researched approach to addressing the emotional impacts of climate change. Further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of Climate Cafés, which could inform their integration into strategies to support both individual well-being and community resilience.

1. Introduction

Climate change is a leading threat to human health, directly contributing to extreme weather events, changing weather patterns, and humanitarian emergencies [1]. Although its physical health impacts are well understood [2,3], the effects on mental and emotional health have only recently received attention. Climate change can significantly impact emotional wellbeing [4,5], and is associated with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicide [6]. The pathways linking climate change and mental wellbeing are varied and complex, encompassing both direct impacts such as increased stress and anxiety from extreme weather events, and indirect impacts including heat stress, disruptions to water and food supplies, and economic instability [7,8]. Climate change has been associated with increased substance use as coping mechanisms for stress brought on by environmental degradation [9,10]. Moreover, climate change can erode community well-being by damaging physical environments [11], leading to population displacement [12], inter-community conflict [13,14], and sexual- and gender-

based violence [15]. The health impacts of climate change are disproportionately experienced by those who are already vulnerable to climate events, including children and youth [5,16], racial minorities [17], Indigenous people [18], and those living in “developing” countries [19].

Specific terms have been developed to describe climate-related emotions to capture the varied psychological responses without pathologizing normal emotional reactions [20]. One term is eco-anxiety, which refers to feelings of worry, fear, and distress in response to current and projected impacts of climate change [21]. Not only are these emotions a natural reaction to witnessing environmental changes and uncertainties about the future [22], but they also reflect a growing concern for the planet’s well-being that can motivate individuals to take action [20,23].

Initiatives for eco-anxiety and climate-related distress often involve approaches that focus on building resilience, fostering hope, and empowering individuals through actionable steps [24]. A recent review from Baudon and Jachens [25] highlighted the importance of evaluating a variety of climate-related mental wellbeing interventions including: 1) fostering inner resilience, 2) helping clients find social connection and

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emotional support by joining groups, 3) encouraging clients to take action, 4) supporting practitioner's inner work and education, and 5) connecting clients with nature.

One strategy that has gained popularity is the Climate Café, an innovative approach to fostering open dialogue concerning emotions related to the climate crisis [26]. Recently, Climate Cafés have also been identified in academic literature as a promising tool for addressing mental and emotional wellbeing in the context of climate change [27]. The Climate Café approach was inspired by the work of Jess Pepper, who in 2015 ran a series that engaged community members in climate conversations [28]. Her work was influenced by the concept of Death Cafés [29], a structured, non-therapeutic gathering where people come together to discuss death and dying openly, aiming to increase awareness and comfort around these topics [30]. Inspired by this model, Climate Cafés were developed to provide a safe space for individuals to share their thoughts and feelings about the climate crisis.

Since their initial conceptualization Climate Cafés have grown in popularity on a global scale. Yet, there is a paucity of literature supporting their utility and impact. This review aims to synthesize information on the scope, use, and impact of Climate Cafés. Such a review is crucial for identifying gaps in research, improving program design and delivery, as well as informing future practices for mitigating the mental health impacts of climate change. To our knowledge, this is the first scoping review that aims to identify and organize existing information concerning Climate Cafés.

2. Materials and methods

Given the recent emergence of Climate Cafés, we deemed a scoping review ideal for achieving our study's objectives due to its exploratory nature and ability to identify knowledge gaps. This scoping review drew on best practices outlined by Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for scoping review (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines and those described by Peter et al. [31]. The review was conducted in accordance with JBI methodology [32]. The protocol was prospectively registered on June 1, 2024: <https://osf.io/3f9qk/>.

2.1. Inclusion criteria

This review included records describing the range, use, and impact of Climate Cafés. A Climate Café is understood as an “empathetic space where fears and uncertainties about [the] climate and ecological crisis can be safely expressed”, as described by the Climate Psychology Alliance - North America (CPA-NA) [26]. Only records which explicitly described Climate Café programs as spaces where emotions/experiences could be openly expressed were included in this review. All study designs were considered to capture the full scope of available evidence. Grey literature included web pages, news articles, internal or external reports/documents, policy briefs, conference proceedings, and blogs.

2.2. Exclusion criteria

This scoping review excluded records describing a Climate Café program that did not meet the CPA-NA definition. Given that Climate Cafés began to develop in 2015, records published prior to January 1, 2015, were excluded. Video and audio records were excluded where transcripts were not readily available. Other ineligible grey literature records included social media posts and Climate Café event advertisements, as these sources typically lack detailed data.

2.3. Academic literature search strategy

The academic literature search strategy combined two core constructs, “Climate Café” and “intervention”. Search terms were initially developed for MEDLINE and then modified for other databases as required (Supplementary File 1). Searches in MEDLINE, PsychINFO,

Public Health Database, and Web of Science were carried out on June 5, 2024. Reference lists of included studies and relevant reviews were hand searched to identify further relevant records.

2.4. Study selection

Titles and abstracts were screened by two reviewers independently. Potentially relevant records were retrieved in full and screened by one reviewer and a subset (15 %) was screened by a second reviewer independently. Any disagreements in reviewer decisions were resolved by a third reviewer. All screening and selection were conducted using Covidence, a web-based platform designed to streamline the production of systematic and scoping reviews [33].

2.5. Grey literature search strategy

The grey literature search strategy followed methodologies and best-practice guidelines outlined by Godin et al. [34] and Pollock et al. [35]. It included four main steps: (1) targeted database search, (2) Google search, (3) targeted website search, and (4) consultations with key stakeholders. Stakeholders approached for consultations were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on individuals with direct experience in organizing, facilitating, or participating in Climate Cafés. Potential participants were identified through professional networks and relevant online communities, with outreach continuing until no new insights emerged. An email template was used to ensure consistency in communication (Supplementary File 2). All searches, including stakeholder consultations, were carried out between June and August 2024.

News article searches were conducted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic by incorporating real-world examples. Searches were completed in the news database Nexis Uni. Targeted searches were also completed on specific news outlet websites, including The Guardian, The New York Times, CBC, BBC, Al Jazeera, AllAfrica, and Asia Times to incorporate diverse perspectives. Database and targeted news website searches were carried out in June of 2024.

2.6. Data extraction and analysis

Data captured records (authors, publication year, and source) and characteristics of the Climate Café programming (country/location, program objectives, design, evaluation methods, facilitator details, participant characteristics, and feedback). Additionally, data on perceived barriers to implementation and potential solutions were collected. All relevant information was extracted and summarized into tables, and a narrative analysis was performed. An iterative thematic coding approach was employed, with the lead author extracting and coding all data, and a second reviewer independently analyzing 15 % of the records for verification. No headings were decided upon prior to coding; rather, overarching themes (e.g., ‘Purposes and goals of Climate Cafés’) emerged iteratively. Final themes for the Results section were then discussed among both reviewers and agreed upon by consensus.

3. Results

3.1. Academic literature

We identified 144 articles while screening, and 5 were included for full-text review. We used “Climate Cafés” as the primary search term along with additional terms (e.g., “climate conversation”) to capture a broad range of potentially relevant literature. None of the 5 records met inclusion criteria because they did not mention Climate Cafés or related terms, or these were not the focus of the study.

3.2. Grey literature

Given the lack of academic literature observed during preliminary searches, we anticipated that grey literature would provide a major foundation of records for this scoping review. The combination of the search strategies with the news article search yielded 282 records (Fig. 1). After the screening process, 41 grey literature records met all eligibility criteria. Characteristics of included records are given in Supplementary File 3. When key information was not stated in the record, data were collected from other sources (i.e. organization website).

3.3. Purposes and goals of climate cafés

Of the 41 records in this review, 39 outlined specific objectives/goals for Climate Café programming. Primary objectives were to provide spaces for open conversations about climate change, fostering inclusive places for the exchange of ideas, and promoting a sense of community among participants [36–38]. Many Cafés focused on providing climate education, community-building, and resilience-building [37], aiming to enhance participants' engagement with climate issues through informal, inclusive dialogue [39,40]. These discussions were reported to generate meaningful insights [41–43], and promote collaboration [44,45] to address challenges associated with climate change [46].

Other Cafés were more focused on providing empathetic environments where participants could express their fears, uncertainties, and other emotions associated with the climate crisis. According to the records, these supportive spaces aimed to facilitate sharing of climate-related emotions [41], mutual understanding [47,48], and emotional

processing [49,50]. Many Cafés aimed to transform eco-anxiety into taking action [51,52]. Hospitable spaces were central to these Cafés [53–55] and collective emotional expression was seen as vital for building resilience and coping with the climate crisis [36,56,57]. Several records noted adhering to guiding principles, or 'ways of being' [56], to create supportive, empathetic, and inclusive environments [58,59]. These principles were intended to ensure that participants can engage in meaningful dialogue and express their emotions safely. Common principles are presented in Table 1.

3.3.1. Climate Cafés as action-free or action-promoting spaces

While program objectives/goals were similar across records, they varied in how Climate Cafés address the concept of action. In fact, the designation of Cafés as action-free versus action-promoting spaces is inconsistent [53,60,61]. Twelve records specified that Cafés were **action-free spaces**. These records emphasize the role of Cafés as environments dedicated to reflection, emotional processing, and communal support (rather than direct activism or problem-solving) where participants can openly voice their experiences and emotions [62,63]. Organizations highlight the non-prescriptive nature of these spaces, focusing on open dialogue and emotional support rather than action planning [45,64–67].

In comparison, 16 records specified that Climate Cafés should be **action-promoting spaces**. They describe Cafés as collaborative hubs where participants can strategize and plan community projects [37,68], emphasizing the transition from discussion to tangible actions [69]. These forums are designed to convert climate distress into proactive measures, thereby potentially fostering community resilience [70]. By

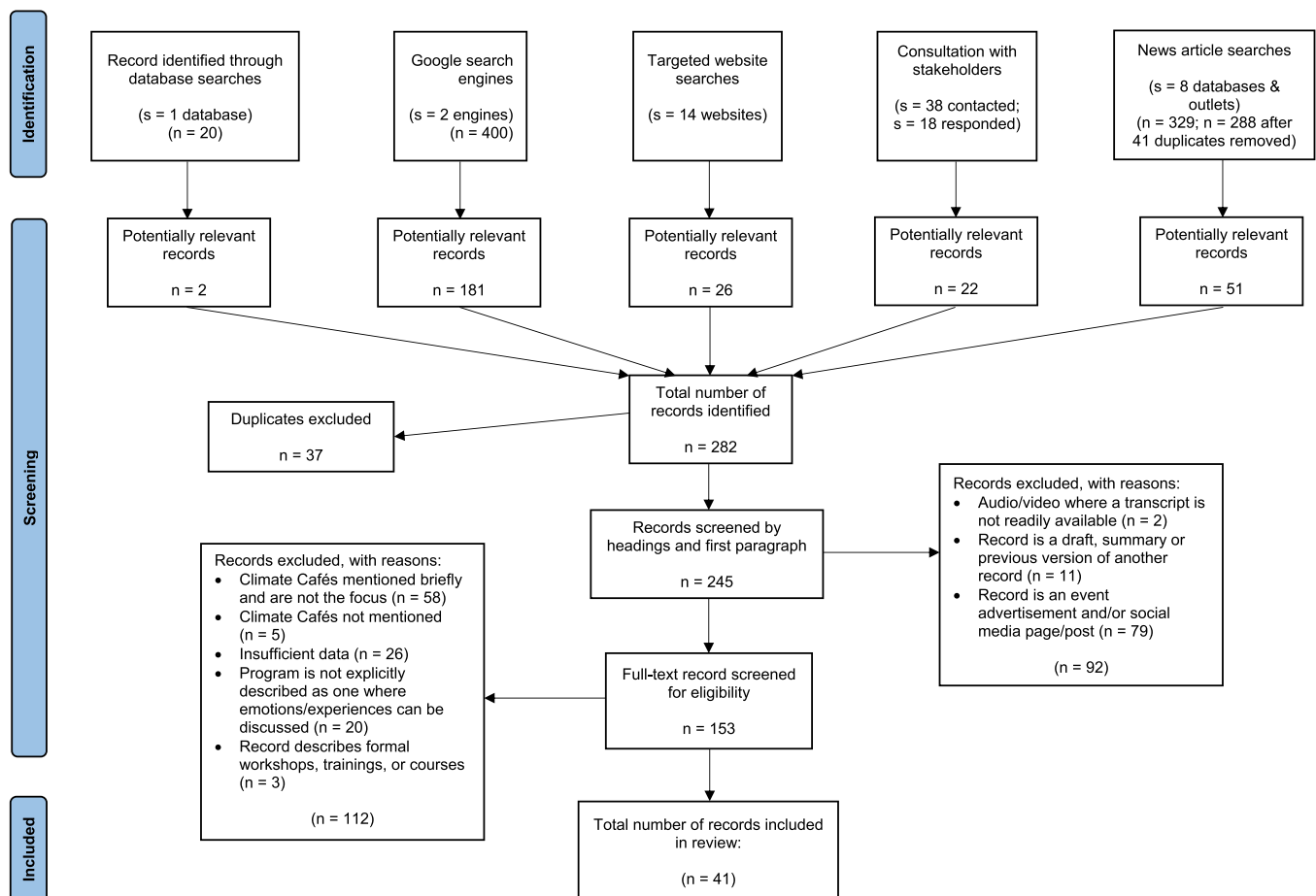


Fig. 1. Grey literature study flow diagram. This figure depicts the three phases of the review, including the number of records screened and included in the final synthesis.

Table 1
Guiding Principles for participating in a Climate Café.

Guiding Principle	Description
Confidentiality	Ensures participants feel safe to share thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment or repercussions [58,59].
Taking turns to speak	Encourages everyone to share their experiences and perspectives [41,44].
Welcoming all emotions	Recognizes and validates the full range of emotions that participants may experience, from fear and anxiety to hope and resilience, creating a non-judgmental and inclusive space [36,56,57].
Avoid problem-solving	Focuses on empathetic listening and understanding rather than offering solutions, ensuring that participants feel heard and supported in their personal reflections and experiences [54,56].
Sitting in silence	Encourages moments of silence for participants to reflect and process their thoughts and emotions [55,58].
The “ouch” principle	Provides a way for participants to express when something said impacts them negatively, fostering mutual sensitivity, respect, and accountability for the words shared [41,54].

encouraging engagement in local environmental initiatives [71], organizations seek to channel participants’ creativity and energy into meaningful climate actions [36,40,49]. Consequently, Climate Cafés may foster a proactive mindset empowering individuals to actively address climate change [52,72].

3.4. Stakeholders and participants

Thirty-four records discussed specific Climate Café programs while the other 7 discussed Climate Cafés more generally. The 34 records described Climate Cafés offered by 24 distinct organizations. Types of organizations and countries of operation are described in Table 2.

Thirty-three records provided specific information on participant demographics. Thirteen records stated that “everyone” or “all” were welcome to participate in Climate Cafés. Specific youth-focused programming (ages 16–35) was highlighted in 11 records. No records mentioned targeting specific gender groups, although 1 study did indicate that all

participants recruited were women [73]. Programming targeting post-secondary students was described in 3 records [37,46,70] and 1 program was developed for parents [44]. Seven records described participants from professional backgrounds, such as educators, healthcare workers, and environmental activists [42,53,56,61,62,74]. Only 2 records described Climate Cafés that were offered specifically for ethnic and racial minorities [37,63]. Gribkoff [53] noted that Climate Cafés can be dominated by white individuals, limiting inclusivity. Several records emphasized the importance of making these spaces culturally accessible [45,53,74].

Twenty-six records discussed information pertaining to facilitator characteristics. While some records indicated that facilitators could come from any professional background [53,58,60,68], most had prior knowledge of climate change and action [38–40,44,46,49,57,59,62] and/or were mental health professionals [45,49,58,59]. Facilitators were also noted to have backgrounds as creative communicators [50,63] and students [67]. The facilitators for several programs were members of the community in which the Climate Café session was being offered. Four records recommended that Climate Café facilitators have prior experience in attending Cafés [38] and/or group facilitation to ensure the best experience for participants [45,49,73].

3.5. Implementation and operation

Climate Cafés exhibited diverse delivery modes, session duration, frequency, and designs, with each tailored to their specific contexts and participant needs. Delivery methods included online, in-person, and multiple modes (Table 2).

Six records reported Climate Cafés being offered exclusively online. Nestor [66] noted that the CPA originally began offering Cafés online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate Cafe® [68] and Wruch [45] indicated that online spaces may be preferred because they are more accessible to participants, while Carbon Conversations Toronto (CCTO) [64] suggested that online spaces may allow people to feel more comfortable participating from home. In comparison, 14 records reported Cafés offered exclusively in-person. Records indicated that in-person Climate Cafés may be preferred as they can foster increased trust building and emotional connections among participants [56,73]. The other 13 records described Climate Cafés that were offered online and in-person,

Table 2
Climate Café program characteristics.

Organization	Organization type	Country	Target population	Delivery mode
Break the Divide [37]	NGO	Canada	Students; immigrants	In-person
Mass Audubon [38]	Community organization	USA	Not specified	In-person / online
Environment Lethbridge [39]	Community organization	Canada	Not specified	In-person / online
Climate Café NYC [40]	Community organization	USA	Everyone	In-person
For Their Future [41,69]	Community organization	Canada	Everyone	In-person / online
Kim Michl-Green [42]	Independent	USA	Youth	In-person
Shamim [43]	Independent	Tanzania	Youth	In-person
New Hampshire Healthcare Workers for Climate Action [44]	Community Organization	USA	Parents	In-person
Climate Psychology Alliance [45,58,66,73]	NGO	Globally (UK- and NA-based chapters)	Everyone	In-person / online
Temple University [46]	Post-Secondary institution	USA	Youth; students	In-person
Force of Nature [36,47,74,76]	NGO	Global	Youth	Not specified
Climate Café® [48,68]	NGO	Global	Everyone	In-person / online
Magnetic Ideals [49]	Community organization	UK	Everyone	In-person
Embodied Climate Justice Fitness [50]	Community organization	Canada	Everyone	Online
CCC-CATAPULT [51]	Research Collaboratory	UK	Youth	Not specified
Carbon Conversations Toronto [54,64,75]	Community organization	Canada	Everyone	Online
Peggy Land and Kate McLaren [55]	Independent	Canada	Everyone	In-person
Climate Café LA [57]	Community Organization	USA	Everyone; youth	Online
Orygen [59]	NGO	Australia	Youth	In-person
SustyVibes [62]	NGO	Nigeria	Not specified	In-person
Maya Adams Art [63]	Independent	USA	BIPOC people	In-person / online
Psychology for a Safe Climate [65]	NGO	Australia	Not specified	Not specified
University of Victoria [66]	Post-Secondary Institution	Canada	Everyone	In-person
International Student Environmental Coalition [70]	NGO	Cameroon	Youth; students	In-person

with delivery mode varying depending on the specific program and context.

Less than half of the records ($n = 19$) included information regarding session duration, which ranged anywhere from 90 minutes to 3 hours. Ninety-minute sessions were the most common ($n = 10$). Only 9 records reported session frequency. Some sessions were offered continuously on a weekly or monthly basis [40,64,68,75], while others were offered for 2–4 months [37,46]. Three records suggested that session frequency depended greatly on the goals and context of a specific program [36,48,60]. In general, Cafés were referred to as informal, flexible programs. Several records suggested that participants can attend individual sessions without the obligation to commit to a series of meetings [36,45] allowing attendees to participate as their schedule permits [36].

3.5.1. Design and organization

Twenty-five records contained information on how Climate Café sessions were organized. Cafés were typically divided into four distinct sections, each with a specific purpose and function (Table 3). Several non-traditional Café models were described that incorporated creative elements. Some Cafés feature guest speakers who provide insights on various aspects of climate change, such as scientific findings, policy developments, or personal experiences with climate activism [24,53,59]. Magnetic Ideals [49] and Embodied Climate Justice Fitness [50] highlighted use of art and movement to engage participants. Break the Divide integrated Cafés within a fellowship program designed to enhance community skills [37]. Several records emphasized flexible and adaptable Café models to meet the diverse needs of different communities and contexts [39,53,68,71].

3.5.2. Facilitation

Twenty-eight records provided information regarding the number of facilitators, which ranged from 1 to 4. Most often, there were 2 or more ($n = 25$) facilitators, which is recommended to ensure that all participants receive adequate attention, and allow facilitators to support each other, enhancing overall facilitation quality [51,66].

Few records ($n = 14$) provided information concerning facilitator training requirements. No records explicitly stated that training was required to be a Climate Café facilitator; however, training was recommended for facilitators to feel comfortable generating discussion [51]. Climate Café @ [48,68], the CPA [45,58], and Force of Nature [36,47] specified that all offering Cafés through their organization are required to take their facilitator training. Five additional records indicated that facilitators had taken CPA-NA facilitator training courses [42,46,54,63,73].

Few records provided a detailed account of the facilitator's role during the Climate Café session. Even so, records indicated that facilitators

were tasked with guiding rather than leading discussions, with the intention of ensuring participants took ownership of the conversation [56,73], as well as providing emotional support [44,64]. Moreover, facilitators were often provided with support to help them navigate the complexities of their role via a facilitation guide and/or co-facilitator [66].

3.6. Reception and impact

None of the records referenced a formal evaluation plan or tool. Eighteen records did provide specific information regarding participant feedback and program reception. The reception was generally positive, with participants reporting that Cafés provided a sense of relief [43,53,55,56] and connection to others [42,53,56,62,75], and alleviated feelings of isolation [40,46,65,75]. Several participants reported that attending Climate Cafés made them feel "hopeful" [43,44,70,73]. For example, of the 250 people who participated in the Force of Nature Climate Cafés during 2022, 75 % reported feeling more hopeful after participating [76].

Climate Cafés were seen as unique and accessible spaces for expressing climate emotions [53,60,67,75]. Feedback from a Climate Café series offered by University of Victoria students indicated that sessions improved participant mental wellbeing [67]. Similarly, 56 % of students who attended Cafés at Temple University indicated their climate-related anxiety was reduced after participating [46]. An attendee of Climate Café LA noted that mental health services are often inaccessible, and Climate Cafés offer a no-cost option for receiving support [57]. Many reported that the biggest impact was a journey of self-understanding and prioritizing their emotional responses to climate change, which opened new avenues for self-care [73].

Despite overall positive feedback, some concerns were raised. Facilitation issues left some participants feeling disconnected due to improper session management [73]. Additionally, some participants felt the discussions occasionally lacked depth and actionable solutions [73]. Several participants expressed that direct focus on the climate crisis could be overwhelming, limiting participation [39,48,51,56,67]. Among 53 people who attended CCTO Climate Cafés, 16 % reported feeling overwhelmed by their experience, as well as emotions shared by others [75]. In the same group, 11 % felt that Cafés were targeted toward those already engaged in climate activism so they would not recommend the program. Despite this, 87 % of participants said they would refer others to the program, with 25 % expressing a need for similar programming in their own communities [75].

3.7. Challenges and barriers

Barriers and challenges in Climate Café operation were reported in 19 records. Cultural barriers were frequently noted, with some reporting that cultural norms impeded open discussion of climate change and emotions [42,62]. Specifically, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour often felt these spaces were not inclusive or welcoming [60,63]. Group dynamics also posed challenges, as some participants perceived others as privileged, which hindered genuine connection [53,60]. Additional challenges with group dynamics included participants disregarding session guidelines, engaging in advice-giving [52], and feeling uncomfortable sharing their feelings [51,75].

Logistical challenges were also mentioned, with online Cafés posing significant challenges. For instance, the option to turn off cameras in conferencing software led to a lack of engagement and compromised interpersonal connection [38,39,45,57,75]. CCTO reported that among 53 participants, 16 % said they did not feel sufficiently connected to others due to the online setting [75]. Other logistical issues, including the need to share in-person spaces, and cost of resources were reported [51]. Ensuring sessions are accessible, welcoming, and inclusive was a challenge [72].

Table 3
Structural segments of a Climate Café session.

Segment	Description
Welcoming	Introduce the purpose of the gathering and the overall session structure [56]. Open communication is established [38] and facilitators outline the guiding principles to ensure respectful dialogue [41,69].
Opening round	Participants are invited to share their initial thoughts, feelings, or experiences related to climate change [56]. Facilitators may use guiding questions or prompts to help participants articulate their feelings and experiences [39].
Main discussion	Facilitated discussions concerning pre-selected themes/questions related to climate change [40,64]. This section may also include small group discussions to foster deeper connections [40,51].
Closing round	Participants reflect on the discussion and share their takeaways. This segment provides an opportunity for individuals to process the conversation, express gratitude, and offer final thoughts [45,64].

4. Discussion

This review uncovered a significant gap in academic literature on Climate Cafés, with organizational reports, websites, and news articles being the main information sources. This gap may be attributed to the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, and the relatively recent emergence of eco-anxiety as a mental health concern [20]. As climate-related events become more frequent and severe, the health and wellness toll on individuals and communities is expected to rise [4]. Grey literature emerged as the primary source of information, providing insights into the design, implementation, and perceived impacts of Climate Cafés. Currently, these initiatives are predominantly driven by grassroots movements, non-governmental organizations, and community organizations. The prominence of grey literature suggests a disconnect between academic research and community practices that needs to be addressed.

A dilemma emerged about whether Climate Cafés should function as action-free spaces focused on emotional support or as platforms that also promote climate action. Twelve records emphasized the importance of providing a non-prescriptive environment where participants can process their emotions without the pressure to act. This approach aligns with practices that prioritize creating safe spaces for emotional expression [77,78]. Conversely, sixteen records advocated for integrating action-oriented elements, viewing Climate Cafés as opportunities to channel eco-emotions into constructive activities. This aligns with literature suggesting that taking action can alleviate feelings of helplessness and improve mental health [79,80]. The choice between action-free and action-promoting models can significantly influence participant experiences and outcomes. Flexibility in programming allows Climate Cafés to serve a broader spectrum of individuals by adapting sessions to provide either or both emotional support and avenues for action.

The diversity of stakeholders involved in organizing Climate Cafés reflects their adaptability and widespread appeal. However, the geographic distribution of records found was mostly in Western countries, particularly Canada, the United States, and Europe. This raises concerns about accessibility and relevance of Climate Cafés in non-Western settings, especially the Global South, where the impacts of climate change are often more severe and resources for mental and physical health support are limited [2].

Moreover, several records described Climate Cafés as 'white spaces,' highlighting barriers to inclusivity for racial minorities and marginalized communities in Western countries. Community-based participatory research emphasizes co-ownership, co-design, and shared leadership with local participants [81]. Such strategies include collaborating with established grassroots organizations and allowing participants to co-create discussion topics—both of which have been shown to build trust and shared ownership [82]. A study on a community-driven climate resiliency program further demonstrated that higher involvement of minority communities was achieved by leveraging local cultural leaders, providing equitable support (e.g., childcare, transportation, and translation services), offering flexible meeting times and locations, and fostering shared decision-making [83]. Translating these insights to the Climate Café context involves partnering with local cultural leaders, offering accessible meeting formats, and co-creating culturally relevant topics.

Flexibility and adaptability are crucial components to the implementation of Climate Cafés. Offering multiple settings—both in-person and online—enhances accessibility and accommodates individual preferences [84]. Flexibility in session design, including variations in frequency, duration and focus, allows facilitators to tailor experiences to specific community needs. This adaptability is essential because personalized approaches can improve accessibility. Addressing challenges in participant recruitment and retention is critical for improving inclusivity. Without deliberate efforts to engage diverse populations, these spaces may not reach those most affected by climate change.

Despite providing valuable insights into the landscape of Climate Cafés, this review has several limitations. First, the reliance on grey

literature may affect the credibility and comparability of findings. While grey literature highlights innovative facilitation techniques and participant experiences that academic studies might overlook [85], this literature lacks methodological rigor, making it difficult to generalize findings or replicate successful models [86]. Second, the absence of empirical academic studies limits the ability to rigorously assess the effectiveness of Climate Cafés and draw definitive conclusions. Lastly, the geographic concentration of data from Western countries restricts generalizability of the results to non-Western contexts, potentially overlooking cultural differences and the experiences of communities most affected by climate change.

5. Conclusion

Climate related effects on mental and emotional health have only recently received widespread attention. As a response, Climate Cafés began to evolve to provide people with a safe space to share their thoughts and feelings about climate change. The aim of this scoping review was to provide a synthesis of information on their scope, use and impact.

Our findings reveal that Climate Cafés are primarily community-driven initiatives with diverse formats and goals, but lack formal evaluation. The grey literature underscores their growing popularity and positive reception. However, there is debate about focusing only on helping people talk about climate distress or also emphasize motivating action. The significant lack of research to date in the academic literature limits our understanding of Climate Cafés reach and effectiveness. Attention is needed to standardize formats and implementation that would enable evaluation of outcomes like eco-anxiety and wellbeing, as well as engagement in climate change actions. In addition, quantitative and qualitative studies of participant and stakeholder experiences are needed to understand impact mechanisms, and adaptations for cultural inclusivity to reach diverse populations. Such research is vital for building an evidence base that informs best practices, guides policy, and integrates mental and emotional wellbeing into climate resilience planning and programming.

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Anna De Jong: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Data curation. **Susan Harris:** Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization. **Christy Costanian:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology. **Harvey Skinner:** Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization.

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Supplementary materials

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