Script 1

When we talk about climate change, we usually talk about the effects on the planet, or the economic consequences. But all the damage being done by climate change is also having an effect on our minds, our mental health.

Rob

Fires, heat waves, floods, hurricanes, droughts… the list of climate emergencies goes on and on, and sometimes it all feels like doom and gloom – an idiom describing a situation that is very bad and without hope. This worry is leading to mental health problems, not just for the unfortunate people who experience climate events first-hand, but for us all.

Sam

In this programme, we'll meet one expert who's investigating the link between climate change and mental health problems and hoping to find some solutions. And, as usual, we'll be learning some new vocabulary along the way.

Rob

But before that I have a question for you, Sam. The 2021 UK census reported that three quarters of adults in Britain are worried about the impact of climate change, and it's a worry that's shared by the young. According to a survey by Greenpeace, what percentage of young people worldwide say they feel worried about climate change? Is it:

a) 74 percent?
b) 84 percent? or
c) 94 percent?

Sam

I think the figure will be high among young people, so I'll say b) 84 percent.

Rob

OK, Sam, we'll find out if that's the correct answer later in the programme. The expert I mentioned earlier who's investigating this problem is Dr Gesche Huebner, senior researcher at University College London. Here Dr Huebner explains to BBC World Service programme, The Climate Question, what she's been finding out.

Dr Gesche Huebner

I think we have very clear evidence that, for example, hot temperatures – heat waves - are leading to an increased risk of suicide and also other adverse mental health effects. We also have pretty good evidence that, for example, experiencing a natural disaster - storms, flooding - are linked to negative mental health outcomes such as post-traumatic stress disorder or other anxiety issues.

Sam

Many people who experience a climate change event like flooding suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, often shortened to PTSD – a serious mental health disorder that can develop after a very bad experience like war, or natural disasters like a flood or fire.

Rob

But according to Dr Huebner, even people without direct experience can suffer

anxiety issues about what the future holds for our planet. This is known as climate anxiety, sometimes called climate doom – a low-level feeling of nervousness or worry about the consequences of climate change.

Sam

These mental disorders are different in terms of how intense they feel, but Dr.Huebner describes them both as adverse – having a harmful or negative effect.

Rob

In all this doom and gloom, it's easy to forget that many of the things which are good for fighting climate change are also good for mental health. Here's Dr. Huebner again, talking with BBC World Service's, The Climate Question, this time focussing on positive things which can be done to help.

Dr Gesche Huebner

For example, if we get fossil fuel vehicles off the road we can improve the air quality, and we know that per se can be good for mental health. If we change our road infrastructure to enable more walking and cycling, again we have fewer… fossil fuel being burned but also, we know that walking and cycling are very good for mental health. If we can change our road layout and create more urban greenspaces, we already know that green and blue spaces are good for mental health.

Rob

Dr Huebner also recommends more urban greenspaces – open areas for parks, plants and wildlife which are built into the design of towns and cities. With creative thinking like this, it may still be possible for today's young people to have a planet worth living for. Speaking of which, Sam, it's time to reveal the answer to my question.

Sam

Yes, you asked what percentage of young people worldwide report feeling anxious about climate change. I guessed it was 84 percent.

Rob

Which was the correct answer! Well done! It's a high percentage which is not surprising considering that it's future generations who will live with the consequences of what we do, or fail to do, today.

Answer Key to Listening 1 (2 points for the correct answers which are printed in bold type)

1. Fires, heat waves, floods, hurricanes, droughts _____the list of climate emergencies.

   a) complete b) restrict c) deny **d) exemplify**

2. The 2021 UK census reported that _____ of adults in Britain are worried about the impact of climate change.

   a) three quarters a) two quarters c) thirteen quarters d) twenty quarters

3. According to a survey by Greenpeace ____ percent of young people worldwide say they feel worried about climate change.

a) 74 **b) 84** c) 94 d) 64

4. The Climate Question is ____ .

a) Dr. Gesche Huebner's research **b) BBC World Service programme** c) A term for adverse mental health effects d) A term for urban green spaces areas

5. Post-traumatic stress disorder **(**PTSD) stands for a serious mental health disorder that can develop after _____ .

a) a very bad experience like war b) climate doom **c) a very bad experience like war, or natural disasters** d) fighting climate change

6. The things which are good for fighting climate change are also good for ____.

a) doom and gloom b) The Climate Question c) Post-traumatic stress disorder **d) mental health**

7. According to Dr. Huebner, even people without ____ experience can suffer anxiety issues about what the future holds for our planet.

a) Post-traumatic stress disorder **b) direct** c) indirect d) natural disasters

8. According to the speakers, if we change our road infrastructure, we'll have fewer _____ .

a) doom and gloom b) walking and cycling **c) mental health problems** d) green places

9. We know that _____ spaces are good for mental health.

a) green and blue b) grey and light blue c) yellow and blue d) green and light blue

10. Dr. Huebner also recommends more ____ greenspaces.

a) urban b) rural c) wildlife d) cycling

Script 2

The Myth of Mars and Venus

In a section of his book which explains how to ask men to do things, Gray says that women should avoid using **indirect requests**. For instance, they should not signal

that they would like a man to bring in the shopping by saying, “The groceries are in the car”: they should ask him directly, by saying, “Would you bring in the groceries?” Another mistake women make is to formulate requests using the word '**could**' rather than '**would**'. “Could you empty the trash?”, says Gray, “is merely a question gathering information. “Would you empty the trash?” is **a request.**

Gray seems to be suggesting that men hear utterances such as 'Could you empty the trash?' as purely hypothetical questions about their ability to perform the action mentioned. But that is a patently ridiculous claim. No competent user of English would take 'Could you empty the trash?' as 'merely a question **gathering information**, any more than they would take 'Could you run a mile in four minutes?' as a polite request to start running.
A friend once told me a story about the family dinners of her childhood. Each night as the family sat down to eat, her father would examine the food on his plate and then say to his wife something like, “Is there any ketchup, Vera?” His wife would then get up and fetch whatever condiment he had mentioned. According to Gray's theory, he should have reacted with surprise: ‘Oh, **I didn't mean** I wanted ketchup, I was just asking whether we had any.' Needless to say, that was not his reaction. Both he and his wife understood 'Is there any ketchup?' as an indirect request to get the ketchup, rather than 'merely a question gathering information'.
The more similar men and women become, the more they are in direct competition for the same **kinds of rewards** (jobs, status, money, leisure time). My parents never **argued about** who should take out the trash, pick up groceries, wash dishes, drive the car, or make important financial decisions. Nor were they ever in conflict about whose job came first or whose life had to be fitted around domestic commitments. These things were settled in advance by the basic fact of **gender difference**. [But] For many couples today, pretty much everything is up for negotiation. That has the potential to lead to **arguments and conflicts**.

Key to listening 2 (2 points for every correct answer)

1	indirect requests	6	in direct competition
2	could, would	7	kinds of rewards
3	a request	8	argued about
4	question gathering information	9	gender difference
5	I didn't mean	10	arguments and conflicts