



Empowering Nurses and Nursing Students to be Climate Leaders through Social Media Advocacy Skills

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Disclaimer

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This project was conducted under the mentorship of the **Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment, British Columbia (CANE BC)** staff. The opinions and recommendations in this report and any errors are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the **CANE BC** or the **University of British Columbia**.



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Executive Summary

The 2021 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) outlines the devastating impacts of climate change on the environment and human lives. Extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and climate-sensitive diseases have had severe and lasting impacts on world ecosystems, communities, and infrastructure. The physical and mental health of people have also been significantly affected, with mortality and morbidity rates expected to surge due to heat-waves, floods, air pollution, etc. Mental health issues are predicted to worsen for vulnerable populations. Climate change is also likely to contribute to the loss of a way of life and culture, adding to the negative impacts on human well-being. Adapting to these changes is crucial in mitigating their effects and ensuring that people can continue to live healthy and fulfilling lives. Urgent action is required from global leaders, policymakers, and individuals to address the challenges posed by climate change.

The primary cause of climate change is the buildup of greenhouse gases (GHG). The buildup is mainly due to human actions such as the extraction and burning of fossil fuels. Alarming, Canada is warming at a rate that is twice as fast as the rest of the world. Despite several plans to reduce GHG emissions, the overall GHG emission in Canada has increased by at least 20% over the past two decades. This has led to unparalleled extreme weather events, including heatwaves, floods, and wildfires, and caused extensive loss of life and economic damage. To reduce GHG emissions, Canada has committed to the Paris Agreement in 2015 and passed the Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act in 2021 aiming to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2021; Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2021; CBC News, 2021).

Advocacy is influencing people and policies to effectuate change and persuading those in authority to act more justly about addressing important issues (Tearfund, 2015). *Climate Change Advocacy* involves building political will and support for initiatives dedicated to preventing climate change (Hill, S., & Healy, L., 2021). It can take many forms, including lobbying for policy change, engaging in public education and awareness-raising, participating in public protests, and engaging in grassroots community organizing efforts (Klein & Wohlers, 2019). In Canada, there is a significant need to improve both Public Awareness and the Public Will of Canadians to make them aware of the costs of inactivity and improve their support for the government's climate mitigation strategies (Hanna, R., & DeMelle, B., 2018).

Social media is a powerful tool for advocating climate change action. It allows organizations, climate activists, and scientists to reach a larger audience around the world (Husna, A., 2020). Three social media platforms can be primarily utilized to engender large-scale climate change advocacy in Canada. They are Twitter, with an active user base of close to 6.5 million (Statista, 2021); Facebook, with an active user base of nearly 30 million (Statistics Canada, 2022); and Instagram, with an active user base of around 16 million (Statistics Canada, 2022). These three platforms provide a cost-effective way to spread awareness and mobilize climate action at a large scale, network with pro-climate individuals or organizations, reach out directly to Canada's top policy-makers and decision-makers and reach the remotest regions. Thus, ensuring everyone stays updated with the latest information (National Association of Secondary School Principals, n.d.).

A report by the National Academy of Medicine titled "Future of Nursing 2020-2030" highlights the importance of advocacy in nurses' identity, and how nursing organizations cover lobbying efforts. The International Council of Nurses (ICN) stresses the importance of advocacy in building strong healthcare systems and achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals. Nurses are taught the value of being public health advocates and research shows that they view it as one of their primary duties. Being the most trusted healthcare professionals in Canada for the past 21 years, nurses can demonstrate leadership in advocating and implementing necessary changes to pro-climate policies and practices. Additionally, nurses are effective communicators of how climate change affects public health and can use social media to promote health education. With 459,005 regulated nurses in Canada, they are well-suited to spearhead climate change advocacy efforts in the country. (Ipsos MORI, 2022; American Nurses Association, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2021; Ferguson et al., 2018; Moorhead et al., 2013; Canadian Nurses Association, 2021).

Nurses can play a crucial role in advocating for climate change action through social media. However, they need to develop certain social media skills, such as problem-solving, communication, influence, and collaboration, to be successful in their efforts (Tomajan, K, 2012). Nurses may also have hesitations in engaging with the public on social media, such as maintaining patient confidentiality, improving political and policy knowledge, overcoming technical difficulties, and dealing with online trolling (Moorhead et al., 2013; CBC News, 2021; Gregory, A, 2022).

Online trolling is when someone posts or comments online to deliberately provoke an argument or emotional reaction from the others (esafety commissioner, 2022)

Future studies should focus on how nurses, nurse educators, leaders, academics, and professional organizations can effectively use social media to promote planetary health.

Planetary health is defined as the attainment of the highest standards of health, wellbeing, and equity possible through thoughtful consideration of the natural systems of the earth and the political, economic, and social systems that shape humanity's future and determine the safe environmental boundaries within which humanity can thrive on a large scale (Kalogirou et al., 2020; Gregory, A, 2022)

To overcome their hesitations and become effective advocates, nurses require confidence-building and training in social media use. They must also take the time to craft convincing proposals and choose the right moment and person to request addressing decision-makers. Nurses must communicate their ideas succinctly and precisely while organizing their messages to be appropriate for both the context and the target audience. They must also establish positive, collaborative relationships with others and influence people to take action to resolve climate change issues (Tomajan, K, 2012).

To enhance the self-confidence of CANE BC's nurses, and to equip them with the awareness and skills required to effectively advocate for climate change action through social media, the following actions were taken by the Sustainability Scholar in consultation with the mentors from CANE BC:

a) Training

A 90-minute virtual training was conducted for nurses on November 24, 2022, to educate them on the importance of advocating for climate change action through social media, with a focus on three primary social media platforms- Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The training covered important features such as writing posts, commenting, sharing, tagging, and following, and was supported with infographics, handouts, and PowerPoint slide decks. Nurses were encouraged to follow up with the presenters regarding their increase in activity in undertaking climate change advocacy through social media, and further tips were offered. **Appendices A, D, and E** contain snapshots of the provided lists of people and organizations to follow, hashtags to use, and nurses advocating for climate change action on social media

b) Literature Review of Best Practices

The literature review aimed to identify best practices in nursing and healthcare for climate change advocacy through social media, including tagging responsive users, using direct messaging, capturing live moments, creating a set of social media guidelines, answering questions, providing real-time updates, reinforcing messages, avoiding technical jargon, framing climate change as a human health problem, emphasizing immediate benefits, creating personal blogs and using climate-related memes (Health Canada, 2011; Climate for Health, 2020; Southern Voices, 2010; Beveridge, C., 2022; Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, 2013). The snapshots are provided in **Appendix B**

c) Pre-Creation of Postable Content

The Sustainability Scholar and a representative of CANE BC collaborated to pre-create social media content for climate change advocacy. This offers consistency, saves time, allows for strategic planning, improves content quality, and provides flexibility in advocacy strategy (Constantinides, 2014; Jones, B., 2016). The snapshot of the table created is affixed under **Appendix C**

In sum, the report by the IPCC emphasizes the need for urgent action to address climate change and its impacts on human lives and the environment. Canada must take more significant steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent worsening extreme weather events and climate change advocacy is an effective tool for building public awareness and support for climate action through social media platforms.

Nurses, as the most trusted public health advocates and communicators, can lead climate change advocacy efforts in Canada. The actions taken through the Sustainability Scholar project were an attempt to enable nurses to assimilate greater social media skills, and become adept at maintaining patient confidentiality, improving political and policy knowledge, and dealing with online trolling. Future research and action should also focus on using social media effectively to promote planetary health and implement necessary changes to pro-climate policies and practices. Doing so will positively impact Canada's efforts to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act by 2030 and 2050 respectively, and thereby ensure that Canadians continue to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Introduction

About CANE BC-

The Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment, British Columbia (CANE BC) is a group of actively practicing as well as student and retired nurses. The association began as a part of the Canadian Network of Nursing Specialties of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) in 2008. As the most trusted position (Ipsos MORI, 2022) in the healthcare profession, CANE BC uses its voice to raise public awareness, implement concrete actions, and undertake advocacy efforts on planetary health.

However, CANE does not limit itself to working with nurses, nursing students, and retired nurses. They work collectively, in conjunction with other healthcare professionals such as physicians, and the existing environmental organizations that are equally concerned with the well-being of people and the planet. CANE BC believes that the synergy of these organizations coming together for a common purpose is the catalyst required to bring much-needed attention to the current climate challenges.

Planetary Health

Planetary health is defined as the attainment of the highest standards of health, well-being, and equity possible through thoughtful consideration of the natural systems of the Earth and the political, economic, and social systems that shape humanity's future and determine the safe environmental boundaries within which humanity can thrive (Kalogirou et al., 2020).

About the Sustainability Scholar-

Karthik Anand Chinta is a Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs student at the University of British Columbia, graduating in April, 2024. He has extensive experience in analyzing federal policies, and offering research-based consultation to provincial-level governments and organizations with regard to addressing the nation's burning socio-economic concerns (including climate change) and ensuring sustainable development.

About this Project-

One of the CANE BC's key objectives is to develop and support an evidence-informed approach that promotes planetary health, and enhances the engagement of nurses in the promotion of planetary health in all domains and contexts of nursing and care. One of the important tools nurses may use to promote planetary health is social media. Many nurses lack the confidence to effectively use social media to speak publicly about climate change issues and climate action.

The purpose of this project is to enhance the skills of nurses in CANE BC, with tools and strategies to use their trusted voices to mobilize climate action through social media confidently, thereby directly engendering progress toward the promotion of planetary health.

Background

IPCC about Climate Change-

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), through their report (IPCC, 2021), states that climate change has adversely impacted both the environment and human lives. As a result of the increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as heavy precipitation, drought, fire weather, and hot land and ocean temperatures, there have been lasting impacts on the world's ecosystems, communities, and infrastructure. People's physical and mental health have been significantly affected, along with their economic and social conditions.

Furthermore, it has been anticipated that there will be a surge in mortality and morbidity rates across the globe, due to human exposure to heatwaves, floods, air pollution, etc. Climate-sensitive diseases like food-borne, water-borne, and vector-borne diseases are also expected to rise with all degrees of warming. Mental health

issues, especially for vulnerable populations such as children, teenagers, the elderly, and those with underlying medical conditions like stress and anxiety, are predicted to worsen, along with the loss of a way of life and culture.

Overall, the report by the IPCC highlights that climate change and its associated extreme weather events are expected to have severe long-term impacts on the health and well-being of people worldwide. Adapting to these changes will be critical in mitigating these effects and ensuring that people can continue to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS HEALTH AND THE HEALTH SYSTEM

We are already seeing impacts to health and the health system across the country.

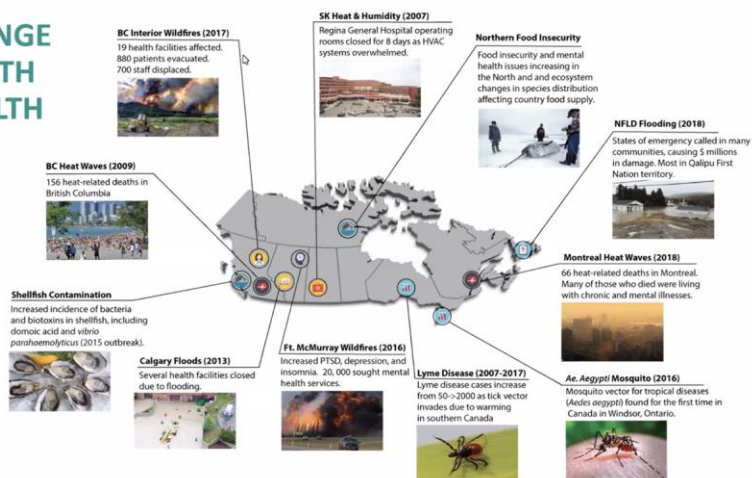


Fig: Health Impacts of Extreme Events in Canada

Climate Change in Canada-

The main source of climate change in Canada is the buildup of greenhouse gases (GHGs), which trap heat and have a warming effect on the atmosphere (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2021). The total amount of GHGs accumulating in the atmosphere, the length of time they stay there, and the ability of each GHG to trap heat all play a role in this warming impact. Human actions, such as extraction and burning of fossil fuels, can be directly

blamed for the rise of greenhouse gases in the environment.

Canada is therefore warming on average twice as quickly as the rest of the world (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2021).

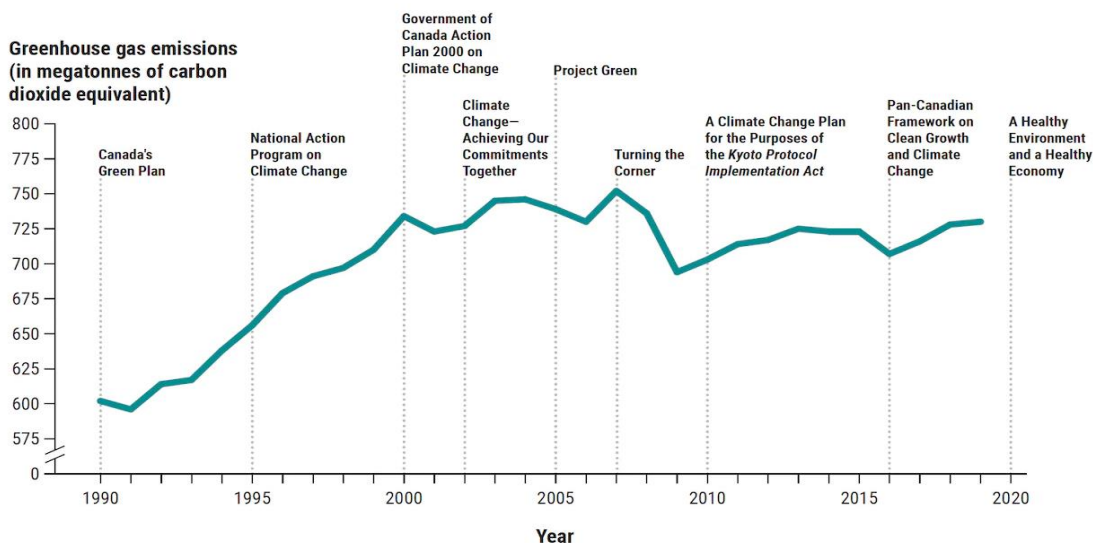


Fig: History of Climate Change Plans in Canada

Despite plans like the National Action

Program on Climate Change (1995), Project Green (2005), the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (2016), etc., the overall GHG emissions in Canada increased by at least 20% over the past two decades, According to the report by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2021).

The reports point to the combustion of fossil fuels as the main reason for the sharp increase in GHG emission rates. The North Arctic region is warming at a rate that is particularly high—about 3x the global norm. As a result of rising temperatures, the nation has recently seen some unparalleled extreme weather events, including the recent *Record Heat under the Dome*- a deadly heat wave that hit British Columbia in 2021 and claimed at least 570 lives (British Columbia Coroners Service, 2021), *the Flood of Floods*- a devastating flood storm that also hit British Columbia in 2021 and displaced thousands (Reuters, 2021), *the Dry Coast to Coast*- the longest summer period on record that lead to severe drought conditions and wildfires in many regions (Government of Canada, 2022), *Ontario's worst wildfire season*- with around 1, 200 wildfires reported and nearly 800,000 hectares of forests burned (Government of Ontario, 2021), to name a few. According to scientists at the World Meteorological Organization and United Nations, unless appropriate large-scale measures are taken right away, these events, which have already caused extensive loss of plant, marine, animal, and human lives, and billions of dollars-worth of economic damage (CBC News, 2021), will become more intense and frequent in the years to come. The two major commitments made by Canada to reduce GHG emissions within the nation are the Paris Agreement, a binding international agreement on climate change adopted in 2015, and the Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, a law passed in 2021 reaffirming commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Climate Change Advocacy-

Advocacy is influencing people and policies to effectuate change and persuading those in authority to act more justly to address important issues. It also entails working cooperatively with the authorities to affect change (Tearfund, 2015). Similarly, *Climate Change Advocacy* refers to building political will and support for initiatives dedicated to preventing climate change. (Hill, S., & Healy, L., 2021). It also entails pushing for more ambitious solutions to the climate crisis and humanitarian emergencies at global, regional, and national levels, and empowering coalitions to take part in meaningful, coordinated, and persistent actions (CARE International, 2022).

Climate change advocacy can take many forms, including lobbying for policy change, engaging in public education and awareness-raising, participating in public protests, and engaging in grassroots community organizing efforts (Klein & Woehlers, 2019).

Need for Climate Change Advocacy in Canada

The adjacent statistics imply that there is still a lack of understanding among the majority of Canadians about climate change and its mitigation strategies (Ipsos, 2019). They also indicate that many people are still undecided about whether to support or oppose climate policy initiatives of the federal government (Ipsos, 2022).

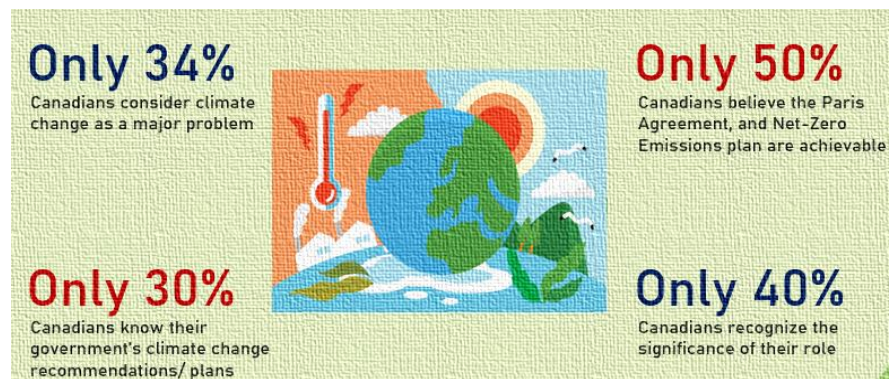


Fig: Statistics of Canadians with regard to Climate Change Awareness

Therefore, there is a significant need to improve both *Public Awareness* and the *Public Will* of Canadians (Hanna, R., & DeMelle, B., 2018). This is to make them aware of the costs of inactivity, and the causes and effects of climate change, and improve their support for the government's climate mitigation strategies and their adoption of pro-climate behaviors.

Climate Change Advocacy through Social Media

Social media is a powerful tool for influencing others. Many people rely on social media platforms to learn, gather information, entertain, and socialize. Social media also makes it possible for organizations, climate activists, and scientists to reach a larger audience around the world. The public can use social media platforms not only to share valuable climate knowledge but also to interact, and collaborate with policy professionals, activists, politicians, researchers, etc. to demonstrate how the world is currently in a state of climate emergency (Husna, A., 2020).

In sum, social media is a great platform to engender climate change advocacy due to the following reasons (National Association of Secondary School Principals, n.d.):

- It provides massive scope for networking with pro-climate individuals or organizations

- It is a cost-effective way to spread awareness and mobilize climate action at a large scale
- It allows for the general public to reach out directly to the country's top policy-makers, decision-makers, and the other public representatives at the local, provincial and federal levels
- Its provisions reach the remotest parts of the country thereby ensuring everyone stays updated with the latest information (especially political) on climate change

Three primary social media platforms can be utilized to engender large-scale climate change advocacy in Canada. They are:

a. Twitter

With an active user base of close to 6.5 million (Statista, 2021), Twitter is a terrific platform for reaching the correct audience because it connects all the major stakeholders associated with climate change efforts, such as journalists, opinion leaders, politicians, and activists. Those working in the mainstream media also frequently monitor Twitter to see which topics or issues are trending or about to blow up. When a major story breaks, news organizations frequently run tweet-shared footage and photographs from eyewitnesses (ACT for Birds, n.d.). The platform allows users to tweet (*also called a post*) at any of the stakeholders, retweet their tweets, directly message them, and publically reply to their tweets

b. Facebook

With an active user base of nearly 30 million (Statistics Canada, 2022), Facebook is one of the most well-known social media platforms. It lets registered users create profile pages for the cause or issue they are advocating for. With the help of this feature, climate change advocates can make a profile for their organization or advocacy campaign, which interested stakeholders and members of the public can follow (Muster, 2021). A few other distinctive features apart from the *post, share, like, and comment* are also available on Facebook for use by advocacy organizations to advance their efforts, such as *promoted posts, live streaming, spin-off pages, etc.*

c. Instagram

With an active user base of around 16 million (Statistics Canada, 2022), Instagram is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms. It allows users to post photos and videos relevant to their climate change advocacy campaign or of other individuals or organizations that are relevant. This tool can assist an advocate to present a personal image of their climate change efforts (Muster, 2021). In the captions of their photos or videos, users can also utilize hashtags. Their media will be indexed and searchable under a hashtag once it has been added to a description. Other similar features such as *like, share, comment, promoted posts, etc.* will allow for the advocacy campaign to garner significant traction

Nurses and Climate Change Advocacy

Why Nurses?

As per the report *the Future of Nursing 2020-2030* by the National Academy of Medicine, advocacy has always occupied a prominent place in nurses' professional identity. The standards of conduct and ethics of nursing regulatory and professional organizations clearly and implicitly cover lobbying efforts. According to the International Council of Nurses (ICN), advocacy is essential to nurses' role in building robust and resilient healthcare systems and advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As part of their education, nurses are taught the value of being public health advocates, and research shows that the majority of nurses view this as one of their primary duties (American Nurses Association, 2020). Moreover, given their *direct proximity to the most at-risk and vulnerable populations*, and their *high level of public trust*, nurses are well suited to undertake climate change advocacy in the various communities and institutions they serve. Research studies also indicate that they are effective communicators about how climate change affects public health, and about the most effective solutions that safeguard, and advance public well-being.

According to the latest survey conducted by Ipsos (Ipsos MORI, 2022), nurses were voted as the most trusted healthcare professionals in Canada for the 21st consecutive year, with 89% of Canadians expressing trust in nurses, as compared to other professions like engineers, scientists, teachers, etc. This puts nurses in great stead to demonstrate leadership in advocating and implementing the necessary changes to pro-climate policies and practices as well as provide reliable, evidence-based answers to the climate change vs public health questions. Furthermore, some studies have shown that healthcare professionals, including nurses, are increasingly using social media for professional purposes such as sharing and seeking information, connecting with colleagues, and promoting health education (Ferguson et al., 2018; Moorhead et al., 2013). Another significant reason is that nurses are one of the largest occupations in Canada in terms of the workforce (Statistics Canada, 2021). There are 459,005 regulated nurses in Canada, which includes registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) (Canadian Nurses Association, 2021).

From the foregoing, it is evident that nurses are greatly suited to spearhead climate change advocacy efforts in Canada.

Need for Nurses' Social Media Training-

Given that nurses are entrusted with caring for the most at-risk and vulnerable populations, it makes sense that, with the right preparation, they would be able to use social media to effectively and professionally promote the health and well-being of the public. Future studies need to also look at how nurses, nurse educators, leaders, academics, and professional organizations can effectively use social media to promote important causes like climate change (Gregory, A, 2022) on a large scale. It would be useful for the nurses to hone their social media skills (given below) to ensure they are effective at advocating for climate change action through social media (Tomajan, K, 2012):

- Problem-Solving

The majority of climate change advocacy efforts involve requesting action to address the issue. It is crucial to take the time to craft a convincing proposal and choose the right moment and person to request before addressing decision-makers. It is important to note that the expected results are usually not accomplished on the very first attempt and may require a series of actions over time to be achieved

- Communication

Nurses need to convey their ideas succinctly and precisely on social media platforms. They must organize their messages to be appropriate for both the context and the target audience. They need to feel at ease communicating in oral, written, and electronic modes. Communication about the issue should be accurate and consistent. While being prepared to discuss the specific facts and data associated with climate change is important, it is essential for nurses to also discuss the impact of the situation on those involved, especially those who are at the highest risk

- Influence

Nurses must have the ability to influence people to take action to effectively resolve issues. Influencing is the capacity to change or influence the opinions, beliefs, or behaviors of others. Competence, credibility, and trustworthiness are the foundations of influence. Keeping the best interests of all parties involved in the situation in mind fosters trust and credibility. Nurses must also ably influence decision-makers by constructing a case of action on climate change and supporting it with facts and data

- Collaboration

To garner the necessary support to address the issue, nurses must also establish positive, collaborative relationships with others. Collaboration entails working with other people or organizations to achieve a common goal. It differs from cooperation, which involves organizations or individuals working together to actualize their individual goals. Trust, mutual respect, and credibility are the foundations of collaboration. The result of individuals or organizations working together to accomplish a common goal can be greater than what each group could achieve alone. Collaboration requires careful communication by the nurses with the individuals or organizations involved in the process, soliciting input when necessary, and providing ongoing reports on progress toward the goal

Additionally, nurses would benefit from receiving tips (listed under **Appendix E**) to help alleviate their hesitations about actively engaging with the public on social media:

- Lack of Political and Policy Knowledge

Nurses often believe that they do not possess the ability to effectively address leaders and policy-makers on national issues such as climate change. They feel they lack the power to impact political and policy outcomes through social media (Gregory, A, 2022)

- Maintaining Privacy, Confidentiality, and Professionalism

For nurses who breach issues of privacy, confidentiality, and professionalism, the consequences can be life-altering and severe, such as resulting in loss of licensure, monetary fines, or termination (Gregory, A, 2022).

Therefore, they are to be guided to use social media with the utmost care, especially when trying to handle the advocacy for a sensitive issue like climate change

- Technical Difficulties

Finally, some nurses may feel overwhelmed by the technical and legal complexities of social media use, including issues related to privacy, security, and copyright (Moorhead et al., 2013). Without proper training and support, nurses may be hesitant to engage with the public on social media and miss out on potential benefits

- Online Trolling

Online trolling is when someone posts or comments online to deliberately provoke an argument or emotional reaction from others (eSafety Commissioner, 2022). Online trolling can be a difficult and potentially distressing experience for anyone, including nurses. Social media training will assist nurses in determining how to effectively deal with them (CBC News, 2021)

In sum, despite their active presence on social media, there is a need for nurses to assimilate greater awareness of *how and when* to effectively (and virtually) engage with the various stakeholders on aspects relating to climate change. Some of them also require confidence-building to effectively use social media, to educate the public, and to raise the profile of the nurses in protecting our planetary health (Gregory, A, 2022).

Actions under the Project

To enhance the self-confidence of CANE BC's nurses, and to equip them with the awareness and skills required to effectively undertake climate change advocacy through social media, the following actions were taken by the Sustainability Scholar in consultation with the mentors from CANE BC:

Training-

A 90-minute virtual training was conducted for nurses on November 24, 2022. The focus of the training was to align them with the importance and benefits of engaging in climate change advocacy through social media and to give them hands-on experience on the important features of three widely used social media platforms, viz., Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Features such as '*Writing Posts*', '*Commenting on Posts*', '*Sharing Posts*', '*Tagging people or organizations in Posts*', and '*Following People or Organizations*', etc. were discussed and demonstrated during the training.

Nurses were further supported with information collaterals such as handouts, videos, and PowerPoint slide decks to enable them to retain their learnings from the training and to reinforce the same when needed later on. *A list of people and organizations to follow on Twitter, a list of hashtags to use on the three platforms, etc.* were collated in the form of infographics. Some of these are enclosed under **Appendix A**.

Upon completion of the training, nurses were encouraged to follow up with the presenters regarding their increase in activity in undertaking climate change advocacy through social media. Additional tips were offered too, and that is given under **Appendix E**, along with the snapshots of a few nurses and nursing organizations advocating for climate change on social media given under **Appendix D**.

Literature Review of Best Practices-

Purpose

In healthcare, the term "best practice" is used to describe clinical practices, treatments, and interventions that are associated with the most favorable outcomes for patients and the healthcare organizations that offer those services (O'Connor, M., 2018). The literature review aimed to identify the best practices in nursing and healthcare that have been shown to advance progress on climate change advocacy through social media

Method Used

A comprehensive search of several sources such as databases, websites, government reports, etc. was conducted to identify the relevant literature, with a focus on the ones published within the last decade and within two regions (USA and Canada). The search terms used included *best practices, nursing, healthcare, public health, advocacy, and climate change*. Literature that met the inclusion criteria was analyzed and synthesized to identify the best practices related to climate change advocacy through social media

Results

The literature review identified several best practices in nursing and healthcare that have been shown to further progress on climate change advocacy through social media (Health Canada, 2011; Climate for Health, 2020; Southern Voices, 2010; Beveridge, C., 2022; Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, 2013). They include the following:

- Tagging people who have been responsive to your posts, to keep them involved and through them reach out to other people
- Using the direct messaging feature for reaching out to users privately
- Capturing live moments and sharing via Instagram or Facebook stories in real-time to increase engagement
- Developing a set of common social media guidelines for the nurses, such that everyone posts appropriately
- Creating a video series on climate change and health. Including the videos or links to the videos in the Twitter or Facebook posts
- Regularly answering questions from the public, directing people to credible sources, and helping to counter misinformation through posts will increase followers and public engagement
- Using the pinned post features and regularly updating banners and cover images to increase public engagement
- Providing real-time updates directly to the public, on information pertinent to climate change actions through posts
- Reinforcing messages or instructions through stakeholder communication activities, i.e., presenting a united voice along with stakeholders where the right amount of info (*using simple terms) is given to the public on what actions to carry out

- Avoiding using technical jargon, contradictory words, condescending and judgmental phrases, promises, or guarantees in posts. This can be misinterpreted by the public
- Putting uncertainty about the severity or span or possibility of a climate change impact into context (in posts or videos) to investigate public action. Add links to additional resources where they can assimilate deeper clarity on the same
- Emphasizing the immediate or near-term health and other (ex. cost savings) benefits — i.e., the “win-wins” — associated with taking action, in the posts
- Using simple terms to communicate (in posts or videos) the risks of climate change on human health will help the public discern better
- Nurses (*especially the younger generation) creating a personal blog (*or a blog with joint access with multiple nurses) on climate change action and giving free access to the public whilst also including the feature to comment on blog posts to encourage dialogue. Drawing attention to the blog through tweets or Facebook and Instagram posts
- Using climate-related memes to increase online public engagement

A snapshot of the table created is affixed under **Appendix B**.

Pre-Creation of Postable Content-

Content for social media posts pertinent to climate change advocacy was pre-created by the Sustainability Scholar in collaboration with a representative of CANE BC, to offer the nurses the following benefits (Constantinides, 2014; Jones, B., 2016):

- Consistency
By pre-creating content for social media posts, we can ensure that nurses are consistently sharing high-quality content regularly. This can help to build trust and engagement with the public and various stakeholders over time
- Time-Saving
Pre-creating content for social media posts can save nurses a lot of time in the long run. Rather than scrambling to come up with new ideas or content every day, they can plan and schedule posts in advance, thereby freeing up time for other tasks
- Strategic Planning
Pre-creating content for social media posts would allow the nurses to take a more strategic approach to social media-driven climate change advocacy. They can plan content around specific campaigns or events, or align posts with the overall goals of their social advocacy strategy
- Improved Quality
When nurses have more time to plan and create content, they can often produce higher-quality posts. This might mean incorporating more visuals or multimedia elements or taking more time to craft engaging and compelling copy

- Flexibility

Pre-creating content for social media posts can also provide more flexibility in the nursing practice's advocacy strategy. They can easily adjust the timing or frequency of posts, or swap out content if necessary

Overall, pre-creating content for social media posts can help to streamline the nursing practice's climate change advocacy efforts and improve the overall quality and consistency of their online presence. The snapshot of the table created is affixed under **Appendix C**.

Conclusion

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, alongside other studies, highlights the devastating impacts of climate change on the environment and human lives, calling for urgent action from global leaders, policymakers, and individuals to address the challenges posed by climate change. Canada, in particular, needs to do more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent the worsening of extreme weather events, including heatwaves, floods, and wildfires, causing extensive loss of life and economic damage. Climate change advocacy can be a useful tool for building public awareness and support for initiatives dedicated to preventing climate change, with social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram presenting cost-effective ways to spread awareness and mobilize climate action at a large scale.

Nurses, given their role as public health advocates and effective communicators on how climate change affects public health, are well-suited to spearhead climate change advocacy efforts in the country. They are also the most trusted healthcare professionals in Canada. The actions taken through the Sustainability Scholar project (training, literature review of best practice, and pre-creation of postable content) were an attempt to enable nurses to assimilate greater social media skills, and become adept at maintaining patient confidentiality, improving political and policy knowledge, and dealing with online trolls. Future studies and action should also focus on how nurses and other stakeholders can effectively use social media to promote planetary health and implement necessary changes to pro-climate policies and practices. Doing so will positively impact Canada's efforts to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act by 2030 and 2050 respectively, and thereby ensure that Canadians continue to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Training Collaterals


**HASHTAGS FOR CNA NURSES
ON ALL SOCIAL MEDIA
PLATFORMS**




Starter Top 10

1. #Nurses4PlanetaryHealth
2. #NursingClimateLeadership
3. #ClimateHealthEmergency
4. #ClimateChangesHealth
5. #NurseClimateChampion
6. #Nurse Twitter
7. #NursesClimateChallenge
8. #ActOneClimate
9. #NursingKnows
10. #NursingMatters

**Nursing and
Climate Change
Related**




- #Nurse4ClimateJustice
- #Nurses
- #Nurses4Climate
- #Nurses4EnvironmentalJustice
- #NursesDrawdown
- #Nursing
- #NursingAdvocacy
- #NursingClimateSolutions
- #NursingLeadership
- #NursingOurPlanet
- #NursingPlanetaryHealth



**Climate
Action
Related**

- #ClimateAction
- #ClimateActionNow
- #ClimateAdaptation
- #ClimateAwareness
- #ClimateChange
- #ClimateChangeAction
- #ClimateChangeAwareness
- #ClimateCrisis
- #ClimateEmergency
- #ClimateEmergency
- #ClimateJustice
- #ClimateSolutions

**General Climate
Change Related**



#BcPoli	#HealthEquity
#BeTheChange	#HumanRights
#CanPoli	#Nature
#CleanEnergy	#OurPlanetaryHealth
#CommunityAdvocacy	#PlanetaryHealth
#EcoFriendly	#PlanetaryHealthNursing
#Environment	#PlanetEarth
#EnvironmentalAdvocacy	#Policy
#EnvironmentalJustice	#PolicyNurse
#FossilFuels	#SaveOurPlanet
#FossilFuelTreaty	#SaveThePlanet
#GoGreen	#Sustainability
#Greenwashing	#SustainableLiving

Fig a: Climate Change Twitter Hashtags



Fig b: Video on Ban of Fossil Fuel Ads

Recommendations of Hashtags to use on Twitter

Hashtags in a Poster Format (PDF)- [Hashtags we can use](#)

Top 10

1. #Nurses4PlanetaryHealth
2. #NursingClimateLeadership
3. #ClimateHealthEmergency
4. #ClimateChangesHealth
5. #NurseClimateChampion
6. #NurseTwitter
7. #NursesClimateChallenge
8. #ActOneClimate
9. #NursingKnows
10. #NursingMatters

Climate Change Related

1. #Nurse4ClimateJustice
2. #Nurses
3. #Nurses4Climate
4. #Nurses4EnvironmentalJustice
5. #NursesDrawdown
6. #Nursing (very popular)
7. #NursingAdvocacy
8. #NursingClimateSolutions
9. #NursingLeadership
10. #NursingOurPlanet
11. #NursingPlanetaryHealth
12. #ClimateAction
13. #ClimateActionNow
14. #ClimateAdaptation
15. #ClimateAwareness
16. #ClimateChange
17. #ClimateChangeAction
18. #ClimateChangeAwareness
19. #ClimateCrisis
20. #ClimateEmergency

21. #ClimateEmergency
22. #ClimateJustice
23. #ClimateSolutions

Environmental Related (General)

1. #BcPoli
2. #BeTheChange
3. #CanPoli
4. #CleanEnergy
5. #CommunityAdvocacy
6. #EcoFriendly
7. #Environment
8. #EnvironmentalAdvocacy
9. #EnvironmentalJustice
10. #FossilFuels
11. #FossilFuelTreaty
12. #GoGreen
13. #Greenwashing
14. #HealthEquity
15. #HumanRights
16. #Nature
17. #OurPlanetaryHealth
18. #PlanetaryHealth
19. #PlanetaryHealthNursing
20. #PlanetEarth
21. #Policy
22. #PolicyNurse
23. #SaveOurPlanet
24. #SaveThePlanet
25. #Sustainability
26. #SustainableLiving

Appendix B- Literature Review of Best Practices

Source	Country of Publication	Year of Publication	Best Communication Practices/Tips
The Climate Change Advocacy Toolkits. (n.d.). Southern Voices on Climate Change. https://www.southernvoices.net/en/documents/key-documents/43-advocacy-toolkits/file.html	Denmark	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use 'Likelihood' terms to communicate (in posts or videos) risks of climate change on human health to help the public discern better. Ex. using 'very likely' if there is at least a 80-90 percent likelihood of the threat/risk to come and 'likely or more likely than not' to convey greater than 50 percent likelihood Nurses (*especially the younger generation) create a personal blog (*or a blog with joint access with multiple nurses) on climate change/action, and giving free access to the public whilst also including the feature to comment on blog posts so as to encourage dialogue. Promoting/Drawing attention to the blog through tweets or facebook or Instagram Use climate related memes to increase online public engagement/attention
MOVING FORWARD- A Guide for Health Professionals to Build Momentum on Climate Action. (n.d.). Climate for Health. http://climateforhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CFHMFG-web.pdf	USA	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilize larger climate action through making a visible/public commitment to climate change campaign or solution in the/your social media posts, and sharing stories of the follow up (at personal level) to the commitment made. Ex. Supporting and advocating for the fulfillment of net-zero emissions act Tag policymakers and public representatives directly in the relevant posts with facts, predictions and statistics. They actively use social media (*Twitter especially) to engage with public and gauge their opinion for when making policy decisions
Maibach E, Nisbet M, & Weathers M. (2011) Conveying the Human Implications of Climate Change: A Climate Change Communication Primer for Public Health Professionals. Fairfax, VA: George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication	USA	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the posts, frame the concern as a human health problem — rather than as an "environmental problem" — to help the public and other decision-makers consider and engage more on the issue of climate change. Ex. Excess illnesses and deaths are projected to occur due to climate change — including those from extreme weather events, exacerbation of respiratory and other chronic conditions, and food-, water-, and vector-borne diseases such as lyme. (Note- Re-framing climate change as a public health issue can help reveal local angles of a global problem, thereby making the problem more concrete)

Fig c: Snapshot of Literature Review

Appendix C- Pre-Creation of Postable Content

Themes Covered:

- Reduction of GHG
- Fossil fuel and negative health impacts
- Plastic pollution and planetary health
- Toxics in products: Glyphosate, beauty products
- Transportation: cycling, EV
- Buildings: Retrofitting
- Habitat Restoration
- Old Growth Tree Canopy
- Renewable energies: solar, wind power
- Food: plant-based diet and food waste reduction
- Environmental Justice; Truth & Reconciliation for September
- Climate change anxiety
- Climate change impact on health care delivery
- Greening our health care facilities
- Positive health effects from spending time in nature

Tags Covered:

Healthcare Associations

- *@_CANE_BC* for the Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment BC Chapter
- *@ONEIGrnao* for the ONEIG Ontario Nurses for Environment Interest Group
- *@CAPE_ACME* for CAPE Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
- *@cape_ab* for CAPE Alberta
- *@ccghc* for the CCGHC Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care
- *@enviRN* for the ANHE Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environment
- *@nnp_bc* for the NNPBC Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of BC
- *@BCNursesUnion* for the BCNU British Columbia Nurses Union
- *@CFNU* for the CFNU Canadian Federation of Nurses Union
- *@UBCNursing* for UBC Nursing
- *@RNClimateChal* for the Nurses Climate Challenge
- *@cascades_en* for CASCADES

- @CANE_ACIIE for the Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment
- @CAPE_BC_Tweets for CAPE BC
- @Climate4Health for Climate for Health USA
- @GCHAlliance for GCHA Global Climate Health Alliance
- @ccghc for Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care
- @ph_alliance for Planetary Health Alliance
- @canadanurses for Canadian Nurses Association
- @ICNurses for International Council of Nurses
- @GCCHE_ for Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education

Environmental Organizations

- @GCHAlliance for the GCHA Global Climate Health Alliance
- @TheEnergyMix for The Energy Mix
- @climate_unit for the Climate Emergency Unit
- @WCELaw for the West Coast Environmental Law
- @DavidSuzukiFDN for the David Suzuki Foundation
- @bcparksfdn for BC Parks Foundation
- @forourkids_vyr For our kids Vancouver
- @ShakeUpTheEstab for Shake up the Establishment
- @makewaytogether for Make Way
- @envirodefence for Environmental Defence
- @equiterre for Equiterre (Quebec)
- @Ecojustice for Eco Justice Warrior
- @ehfccca for Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors
- @ncceh for National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health
- @sustainUBC for Sustainability UBC
- @Health_Enviro for Canadian Health Association for Sustainability and Equity
- @PreventCancerNw for Prevent Cancer Now
- @inwhosebackyard for The Enrich Project



<u>Date to post</u> <u>Person</u> <u>posting</u>	<u>Topic</u> <u>Title</u>	<u>Content in En/Fr</u> <u>(Inclusive of hashtags</u> <u>and tags)</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Source/</u> <u>Reference (of</u> <u>Content)</u>
Theme- Reduction of GHG				
Week # 1 January Mon/Wed/Fri @12 PM	Lower GHG emissions one inhaler at a time	'The carbon footprint of 100 doses of aerosol puffer (inhaler) is equivalent to traveling 290 km by car'. Here's how you can help reduce the impact- #BeTheChange #ClimateAction #Nurses4PlanetaryHealth		https://cascadecanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Patient-Facing-Inhaler-Infographic-September-2022-2.pdf
	Lower GHG emissions by changing your diet	Fact Alert: If half the world's population adopted a plant-rich diet by 2050, ~65 gigatons of carbon dioxide would be removed from the atmosphere over about 30 years #ActNow #ClimateSolution #ClimateAction #Nurses4PlanetaryHealth		https://scied.ucar.edu/learning-zone/climate-solutions/reduce-greenhouse-gases

Fig d: Snapshot of Pre-Created Posts

Appendix D- Nurses in Action

On Twitter

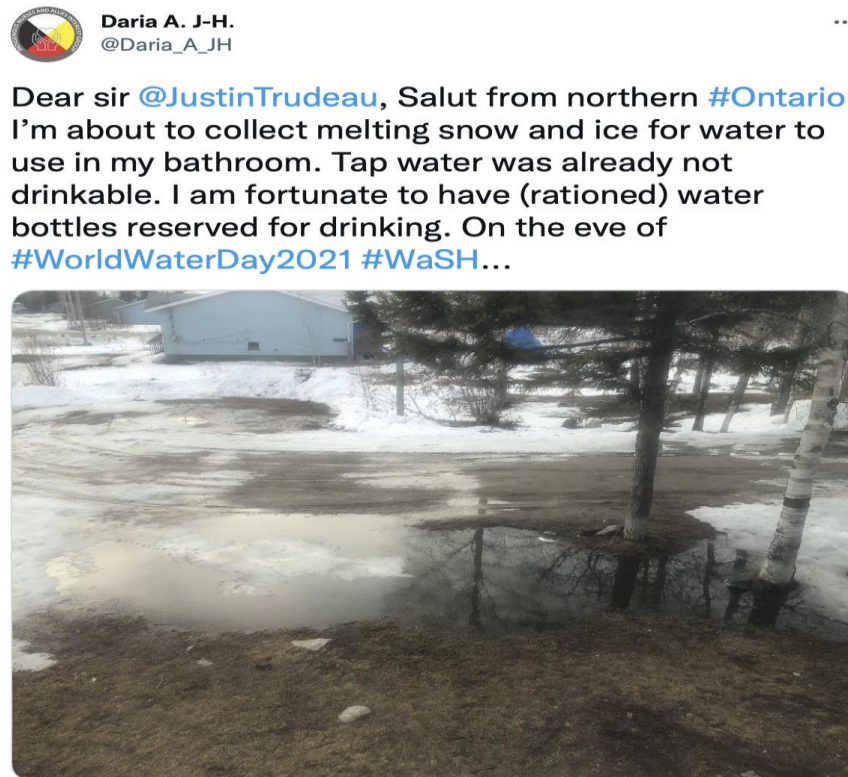
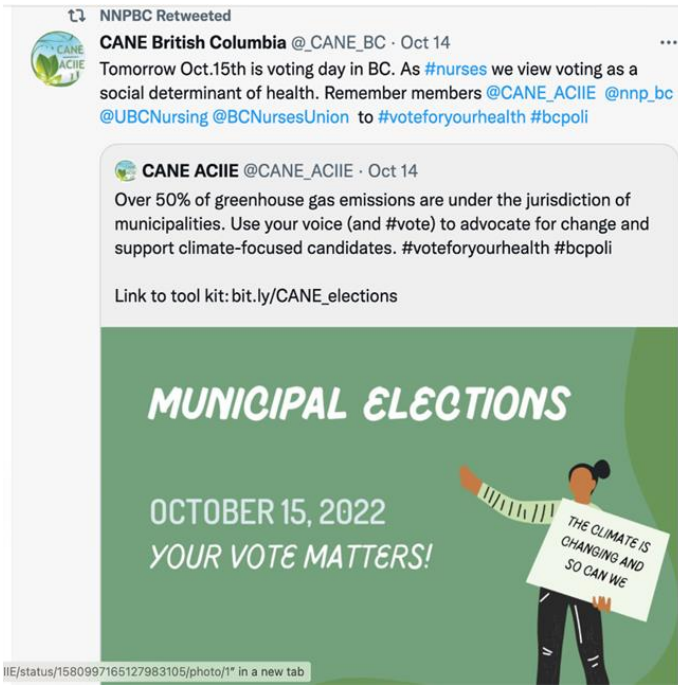
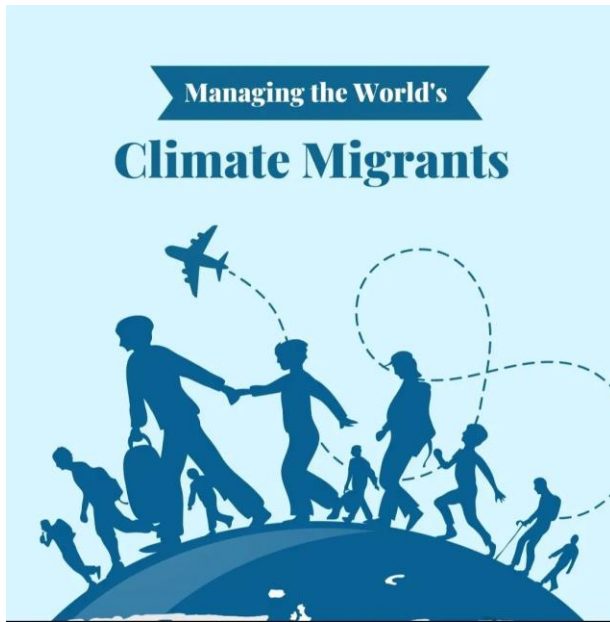


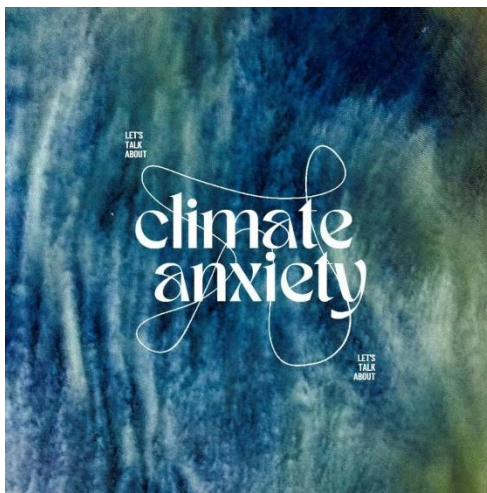
Fig e: Images of Climate Change Related Tweets by CANE Nurses



Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment ...

Climate migration will affect all Nations of the world. This is an issue of #EnvironmentalJustice as those who contribute the least are disproportionately affected and in need of relocation. Is Canada ready?

#EnvironmentalJustice
#Nurses4PlanetaryHealth

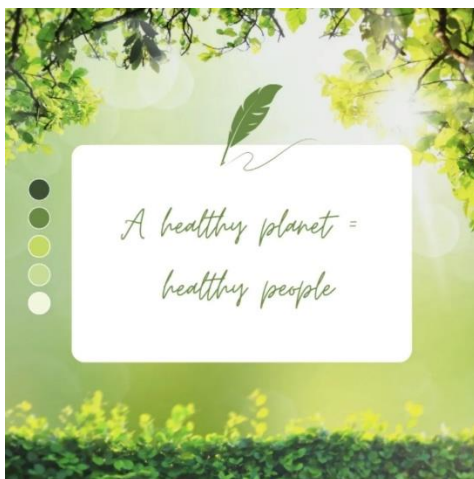


Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment ...

"The climate crisis looms as the most critical public health crisis in the 21st century; thus, it is essential that NPs have a comprehensive understanding of climate change and its associated health consequences."

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nurpra.2021.07.013>

#Nurses4PlanetaryHealth
#NursingClimateChange
#ClimateChangesHealth



Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment ...

If you want to know more about how nurses are taking climate action, or want to get involved visit <https://cane-aiie.ca> or click link in bio! 🌱

#Nurses4PlanetaryHealth
#NursingClimateLeadership
#ClimateChangesHealth

Fig f: Images of Climate Change Related Posts by CANE

On Instagram

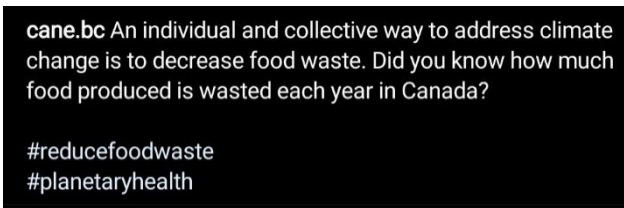
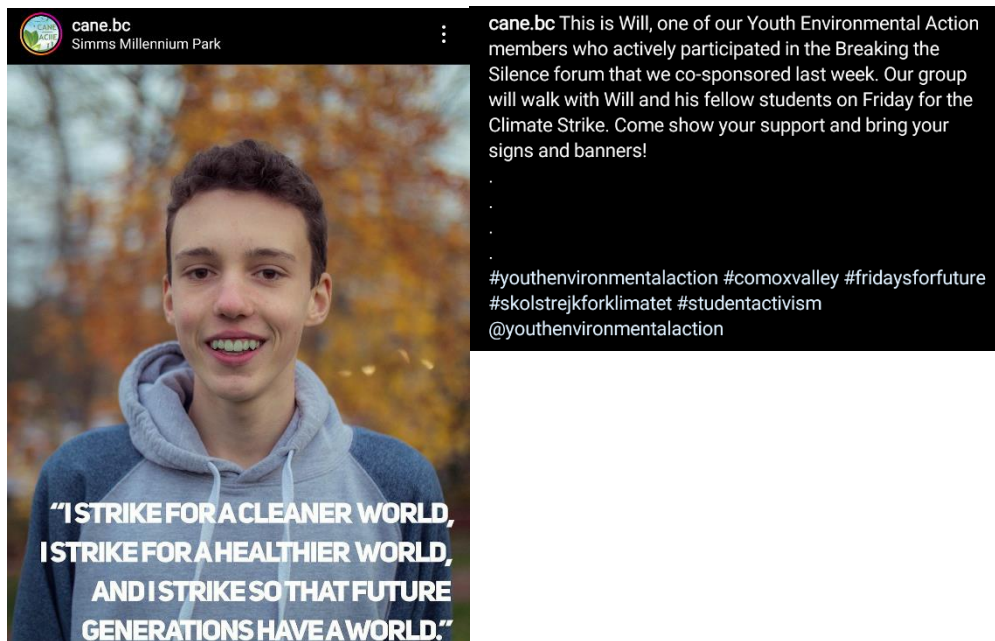
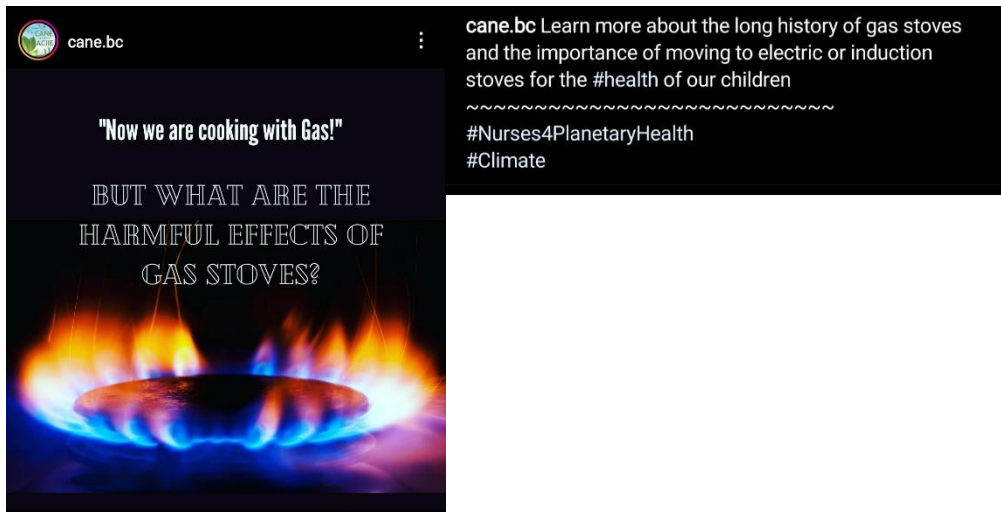


Fig g: Images of Climate Change Related Posts by CANE BC

Appendix E- Further Tips to Nurses for Climate Change Advocacy

As mentioned in the above sections of this report, nurses have an important responsibility as respected healthcare professionals to assist communities in adapting to climate change and advocating for patients and the environment towards a sustainable future. Below are some of the other essential details they could be aware of, with regard to climate change advocacy (Nursing's Role in Climate Change, n.d.; Getting Started: A Guide for Nurses – ANHE, n.d.; Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of British Columbia, n.d.; Willingham, A., 2017; A., 2019)-

The 'What' and 'How'-

- **What:** Educate yourself on the impact of climate on health and what solutions are available
 - **How:** *Attend training programs, conferences, and webinars on climate change*
- **What:** Teach your patients about climate change and the effects it can have on their health
 - **How:** *Focus on susceptible populations such as the elderly and children; Encourage patients to have disaster preparedness plans in place at home; Hold periodic climate change and health learning sessions and invite patients attend; Share educational materials in a greener format – only print when necessary on recycled paper, or on 'seed paper' that can be planted in the ground; Add notes and memos to the calendar as a reminder to speak with patients about upcoming extreme weather events such as wildfires, heat waves, heavy rainfall leading to flooding, etc.; Speak with patients about the importance of mental health in a climate-changing world*
- **What:** Associate climate change to health.
 - **How:** *Discuss climate change and its effects on human health regularly to normalize the language; Convey which symptoms are aggravated by changes in the environment*
- **What:** Use your voice within your professional community
 - **How:** *Ask other nurses or colleagues to join your efforts in advocacy; Promote best practices that benefit the environment and share success stories; Take on a leadership role in your organization by encouraging decreased energy use and avoiding the use of fossil fuels; Discuss with your leadership team ways in which your organization can decrease their GHG emissions*
- **What:** Be proactive within your home community
 - **How:** *Collaborate with local leaders, businesses, and elected officials to make climate change a priority initiative; Incorporate climate and health in neighborhood, town, and state programs*
- **What:** Advocate for equity and sustainability at the national, provincial and local Levels
 - **How:** *Share information about climate change inequities on social media; Join climate events; Convene colleagues, other health care professionals, and the public to discuss climate change and the social and environmental determinants of health – brainstorm potential actions and solutions; Speak or write to local politicians, policymakers and other relevant elected representatives about climate change inequities and sustainability challenges in the respective levels, and inform them about the social determinants of health and advocate for greater investment into rural and remote health, and*

accessible and appropriate public health services to underserved communities; Advocate the need to accurately recognize and respect the local territories, lands, peoples, and all life in the natural environment; Promote the transition away from fossil fuels toward renewal resources that do not take the same harsh toll on the environment and the peoples within it;

- **What:** Advocate for the recognition of emerging needs in a climate changing world
 - **How:** *Speak with patients about their individual health care needs and discuss potential action plan options and self-preparedness in the case of an extreme climate event; Work with government, allied healthcare professionals, and other emergency responders to identify vulnerable populations and determine emergency response plans for various scenarios; Evaluate workplace readiness in the case of an emergency event – consider supplies, human resources, space allocation, knowledge acquisition, and more; Discuss climate change and mental health with patients, acknowledge anxieties and post-traumatic stress, and provide resources and options moving forward; Keep up to date with evolving science and information through personal research of reliable and peer-reviewed materials, educational courses, online databases, and more; Speak with patients, family members, neighbors, friends, and colleagues about action plans and build an emergency response network*
- **What:** Improve Political and Policy Knowledge
 - **How:** *Start by knowing about local, national legislators and politicians through the BC Legislative Assembly and House of Commons portals respectively; Read about the minutes of city council and town hall meetings through the respective City's (Municipality) portals; Follow the parties, politicians, journalists and news outlets on Twitter to know about political or policy updates*
- **What:** Deal with Online Trolls
 - **How:** *Block them and move on if comments are clearly abusive or personal attacks; Respond with facts objectively; Ignore them or Do not respond; Hide or delete comments;*