

## **Occupation and climate change: considerations for decision-making and engagement**

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**Introduction:** Human induced climate change is emerging as the most pressing global threat to our health and wellbeing - indeed our very survival. Occupation is at the heart of the cause and response to this 'wicked problem', presenting unique challenges and opportunities for occupational therapists.

**Objectives:** Drawing on research, this paper aims to stimulate critical thinking to guide engagement in climate change action.

**Approach:** Within the context of wicked problem theory, themes and strategic questions were derived from: (a) analysis of practical, cross-sector, multi-level engagement and evaluations in disasters, natural resource management, agriculture and community health; (b) a review of literature, including World Federation of Occupational Therapy policies on disaster, sustainable development and human rights.

**Practice Implications:** As a wicked problem, climate change requires us to act in a milieu of incomplete, contradictory and changing requirements and complex interdependencies. Decision-making is central to how occupational therapists engage with individuals, communities and organisations. Different decisions are needed at different policy and practice levels, a principle of multi-level governance. Strategic questions can assist in developing criteria to support complex decision-making and engagement. Climate change themes requiring attention include: social-ecological systems, resilience, development, sustainability, complex adaptive systems, justice and rights - for people and the environment. Implications for occupational models are also explored.

**Conclusion:** Climate change mitigation and adaptation presents occupational therapists with challenges and choices. Development and use of strategic questions can assist in navigating the complexity of decision-making and action that promotes equity, resilience and sustainability for people and the planet.