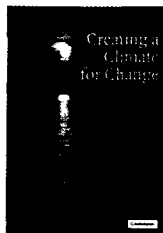


Psychology and the planet

It is now clear that climate change and overexploitation of natural resources pose a very serious threat, and with each passing month further data reinforces the view that it is happening at a much faster pace than was thought. It is in this context that I have been puzzled by the silence of the British Psychological Society and its members. The one exception as far as I know, was when Ray Miller, then Society President, chaired a successful day with the British Ecological Society and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (see *The Psychologist*, September 2006, p.522).

As a clinical psychologist myself, I decided to test out if this was just lack of being asked about these issues. I e-mailed round the Managers Faculty in the Division of Clinical Psychology about an Ethics Committee meeting we were having on this topic and had very little feedback. It is quite clear to me that my fellow clinical psychologists are



Creating a Climate for Change: Communicating Climate Change and Facilitating Social Change

SUSANNE C. MOSER & LISA DILLING

CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2007;
Hb £75.00 (ISBN 978 0 521 86923 2)

REVIEWED BY **Tony Wainwright**

worried about anthropogenic climate change and are probably greener than most, yet as a profession we have said very little. Perhaps it is because we are preoccupied with regulation, or pay structures, or access to psychological therapies.

This book summarises the American work concerning communicating about climate change. The National Center for Atmospheric Research led a series of events which brought together an interdisciplinary group of experts. All the chapters are detailed on a website for the book (www.isse.ucar.edu/communication/book/toc.jsp) and other reviews and background material can be found there.

The book provides clear evidence that there are many significant overlaps between communicating about climate change and the challenges faced by health professionals in communicating about health issues. Professor David Uzzell, who attended the Ethics Committee meeting on sustainability, quotes compelling parallels with the way we have tackled obesity and our collective lack of success. As psychologists, we have access to the evidence-base about behaviour and attitude change, and we could do much more in sharing this with others who are able to influence organisations.

The chapter by psychologist Professor Keith James *et al.*,

'Changing organizational ethics and practices toward climate and environment', provides a useful blueprint for the work that needs to be done. How many NHS trusts include the environment in their mission statement or equivalent? Yet we know that the more an individual or organisation identifies itself as 'green', the more likely it is to behave in a sustainable manner.

Is this an issue for psychologists? Clearly we are all citizens of planet Earth, so in that sense certainly. There are also specific ways in which we as a profession are well placed to offer insights and guidance on policy and practice that will make a difference. This book is packed with useful information. While it is only the American literature, this is well covered, but there is much in our own, which we could and should be actively disseminating.

■ *Dr Tony Wainwright is an honorary fellow at the University of Exeter.*