

An Open Letter from Mental Health Professionals to the Health Industry: Healing Requires Integrity

As mental health professionals and advocates, our work is rooted in helping people heal — restoring trust, nurturing resilience, and empowering individuals and communities to face life's most profound challenges. Today, we are compelled to speak not just as experts but as caretakers of collective wellbeing.

The fossil fuel industry is not just an environmental threat — it is a direct and escalating danger to human health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution — much of it from fossil fuels — [kills 7 million people](#) every year, including over [700,000 children under five](#) i.e. one child every minute. Air pollution has also been linked to [anxiety, depression, and psychosis](#), especially for children and children of mothers exposed to particulate matter during pregnancy. Fossil fuels are also the main driver of the climate crisis, which [according to the WHO](#) is the “greatest global health threat of the 21st century.”

We see it every day: the quiet despair of displaced families, the anxiety of children growing up in a world on fire, the disorientation and grief communities face after floods, drought, and wildfires. Climate anxiety is no longer a fear of what might happen — it is the emotional response to what is already happening.

Nearly [60% of 10,000 young people globally](#) say they feel “very” or “extremely” worried about climate change, and 45% say it negatively affects their daily lives. These are not abstract emotions. They point to a deep undermining of young people's hopes for a world where they can thrive; worsened by feelings of betrayal due to inaction by powerful actors who distort reality to protect profit.

And while people search for stability and reassurance, they look to the institutions they trust—health systems, care providers, and the companies that uphold them. This is why we are speaking to you: the leaders of the health industry. You are the stewards of wellbeing. But right now, a quiet contradiction is undermining that purpose.

Advertising and public relations firms that serve both the health sector and the fossil fuel industry are working at cross purposes. On one hand, they help promote products, services, and messages that are meant to support healing. On the other hand, they help greenwash an industry that is accelerating a global health emergency. This is not just a PR issue — it's a profound conflict of interest. The United Nations [makes it clear](#) in no uncertain terms that corporate greenwashing — especially through PR and advertising — delays public support for climate action and undermines democratic accountability. These campaigns don't just shape perception. They shape policy. They shape what happens to communities on the frontlines.

Every campaign that delays action, every message that misleads the public about fossil fuel harms, chips away at the trust people place in science, in care, in truth itself. And this erosion of trust—this feeling that no one is truly looking out for them—is in itself a source of psychological harm.

June 2025

We know that in moments of crisis, human beings are capable of immense courage and solidarity. But what breaks people's spirits is when institutions they rely on choose complicity over care.

The health industry may not be able to confront fossil fuel companies directly. But we have tremendous leverage with the marketing agencies we hire. We can set the standard. We can draw a line. We can say: "Our mission is health — and that cannot be compromised by those who profit from its destruction."

We, as mental health professionals and advocates, urge you to review your relationships with PR and ad firms. Ask them where they stand. And be prepared to walk away from those who continue to work with fossil fuel clients.

Healing requires integrity. And integrity means choosing people over polluters, care over contracts, truth over spin.

This is our moment to lead—with courage, clarity, and compassion.

Signed by,

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