

A World of Health: Connecting People, Place and Planet

"The most fundamental message is for people to remember that the environment is not just something that they visit on weekends or during their summer vacation—that the environment is all around us, that it is in us and we are in it, and that it profoundly influences our health."

— Dr. Philip Landrigan
Director, Children's Environmental Health Center,
Mt. Sinai Medical Center

A WORLD OF HEALTH: CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACE AND PLANET IS A SIX-SESSION DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR THE WORKPLACE, COMMUNITY CENTER, HOME OR UNIVERSITY.

PARTICIPANTS IN THIS DISCUSSION COURSE WILL:

- Explore the connection between human health and the environment
- Examine the roots of Western medicine and how it has evolved in an industrial society
- Learn about the places where our personal health intersects with the environment—our food, our living spaces, our communities and ultimately, our planet
- Identify actions that promote good health and in turn promote a healthier environment



INSPIRING PEOPLE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EARTH

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DISCUSSION COURSE DESCRIPTION

SESSION THEME	DESCRIPTION	READINGS
Redefining Health	Good health is something we all strive for, so how might we go about creating the conditions that create it? This session explores how we define health and how that understanding informs our individual and collective well-being.	<p>"The Diagnosis of the Unknown Physician" by Carolyn Raffensperger</p> <p>"Beyond the Patient" by Lee Thirer</p> <p>"The Coming Age of Ecological Medicine" by Kenny Ausubel</p> <p>"The Rabies Principle" by Sandra Steingraber</p>
Eating Well	Most people agree that eating well is a foundation of good health. This session explores the impacts of the industrial food system on personal, collective and ecological health as well as addresses the health impacts of food packaging and toxins in our foods.	<p>"Buying Organic? Some Points to Consider" by Julie Deardrorff</p> <p>"Pesticide Drift" by Rebecca Clarren</p> <p>"Myth of the BPA-Free Diet" by Kat Kerlin</p> <p>"Cheap Eats" by Ellen Ruppell Shell</p> <p>"The Only Way to Have a Cow" by Bill McKibben</p> <p>Video: "Teach Every Child About Food" with Jamie Oliver</p> <p>Action item: Weekly EcoChallenge: Eating BPA-free meals</p>
Cleaning House	Those living in industrialized societies now spend nearly 90 percent of their time indoors, much of that at home. We look to it as a safe haven, but recent studies suggest they may not be the safe refuges we think. This session brings to light the toxins in and around our living spaces and everyday household items, considering ways industry and government can eliminate toxins in consumer products. Ways to reduce exposure to household toxins will be explored.	<p>"How to Keep Your Family Safe from Toxic Chemicals" by Virginia Sole-Smith</p> <p>"Nine Ways to Avoid Household Toxins" by Nena Baker</p> <p>"Bridging the Divide: It's not only about Taste" by Carolyn Butler</p> <p>"The Dark Side of Lawns" by Beth Huxta</p> <p>Excerpt from Chasing Molecules by Elizabeth Grossman</p> <p>Activity: Healthy Home Assessment</p> <p>Action item: Weekly EcoChallenge: Detoxing Your Home</p>
Building Healthy Communities	Many health problems may be traced not only to what we eat, but also to where we live and how our urban design impacts health. What health impacts do big box shopping centers have on local communities? The readings in this session examine how issues of proximity to major roads and industry, urban and suburban sprawl, and access to amenities and green space impact our overall well-being.	<p>"Environmental Amnesia" by Sandra Steingraber</p> <p>"Our Chemical Legacy" by Stacy Malkan</p> <p>Excerpts from Big Box Swindle by Stacy Mitchell</p> <p>"At Risk: High-Traffic Areas..." by Eric Nagourney</p> <p>"Why Bikes are a Sustainable Wonder" by John C. Ryan</p> <p>"Leave No Child Inside" by Richard Louv</p> <p>Activity: Mapping Accessibility</p> <p>Action Item: Weekly EcoChallenge: Driving Less</p>
Curing Consumption	The authors in this session look at health within the broader context of a consumer culture. Readings explore the life cycle of "stuff" and its impact on human and ecological health and consider more sustainable and healthy alternatives.	<p>Video: "The Story of Stuff" with Annie Leonard</p> <p>"The Rise and Fall of Consumer Cultures" by Eric Assadourian</p> <p>"Simplicity and Consumption" by Duane Elgin</p> <p>"The Plastic Killing Fields" by Amanda Woods</p> <p>"e-Waste: Where does it go?" by NWEI staff</p> <p>"A Cure for Consumption" by Juliet Schor</p> <p>"One Approach to Sustainability: Work Less" by John de Graaf</p> <p>Action Item: Weekly EcoChallenge: Buying Less</p>
Healthy Planet, Healthy Self	This session considers health within the broader context of Earth's dynamic and life-sustaining ecosystems. The readings explore the importance of biodiversity, the health of the oceans, climate change and the interplay between the forces of nature and our individual and collective health.	<p>"Embedded in Nature: Human Health & Biodiversity" by Eric Chivian and Aaron S. Bernstein</p> <p>"Climate Change and Health Vulnerabilities" by Juan Almendars and Paul R. Epstein</p> <p>"Restoring Nature, Restoring Yourself" by Francesca Lyman</p> <p>"3 Bets" by Sandra Steingraber</p> <p>Excerpt from Hunting for Hope by Scott Russell Sanders</p> <p>Action Item: Weekly EcoChallenge: Saving Energy</p>