

HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY PLANET

A SIX-SESSION COMMUNITY READING AND DISCUSSION PROGRAM

PURPOSE

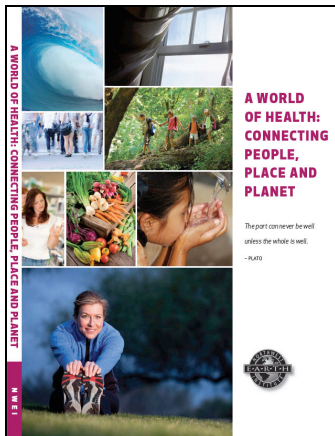
To explore the connection between human health and the environment.

To examine the roots of Western medicine and how it has evolved in a industrial society.

To learn about the places where our personal health intersects with the environment –our food, our living spaces, our communities and ultimately, our planet.

To identify actions that promote good health and in turn promote a healthier environment.

Text for the discussion:



SESSION THEMES

Redefining Health: Good health is something most of us strive for, but what do we really mean when we talk about it, and how might we go about creating the conditions that foster it? This session explores how we define health and how that understanding informs our individual and collective well-being.

Eating Well: Most people agree that eating well is a foundation of good health. Yet many of our decisions are now focused on avoiding foods that might be harmful to us and our planet. How did we arrive at this point where food, which sustains us, has often become something to fear and worry about?

Cleaning House: Americans now spend nearly 90 percent of their time indoors, much of that at home. We look to it as a safe haven, a place to escape from the stresses and trials of the outside world. But recent studies suggest they may not be the safe refuges we think. This session uncovers dangers of household toxins and empowers participants to minimize exposure to health risks

Building Healthy Communities: Many of Americans' health problems may be traced not only to what we eat, but also to where we live. 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.

Curing Consumption: Having considered some of the more direct links to health in previous sessions, the authors in this session look at health within the broader context of a consumer culture. While it is easy to see the connection between health and what we eat, drink and breathe, making connections between the products we buy and our health can require some additional effort.

Healthy Planet-Healthy People: The focus of this session widens to consider health within the 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.

Readings on these topics were compiled by the Northwest Earth Institute for self-facilitated, small group study circles. The discussion guide has discussion questions and facilitation guidelines.

For more information, contact the Catamount Earth Institute at catamount@valley.net or see www.catamountearthinstitute.org

The course books are available for \$15.

Healthy People, Healthy Planet

WHAT

- *Healthy People, Healthy Planet* is a 6-session reading and discussion program for community groups of 8-12 participants. It is one of eight discussion courses compiled and published by the Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) of Portland, Oregon.
- The discussion guides are anthologies with articles by prominent authors. Visit the discussion course [website \(http://tinyurl.com/44b7814\)](http://tinyurl.com/44b7814) for a full description of the course.

WHY

- This past winter and spring the Catamount Earth Institute and six co-sponsors helped organize NWEI discussion groups about food and agriculture called *Menu for the Future*. Now, *Healthy People, Healthy Planet* offers an opportunity to continue to expand these “Community Conversations” to engage Upper Valley citizens and inspire better personal and community health.
- To learn about the places where our personal health intersects with the environment – our food, our living spaces, our communities and ultimately, our planet.
- To identify actions which promote good health and in turn promote a healthier environment.

WHO

For any group of 8-12 people who commit to attending all or almost all sessions. Groups have formed in libraries, environmental education centers, faith communities, homes, and work places.

HOW

- Self-facilitated, easy to implement, with start-up assistance from a Catamount Earth Institute representative.
- Discussion guide has facilitator guidelines — everything you need to run a discussion group.
- Discussion sessions are 1 to 1½ hours, usually weekly, time and venue determined by individual groups.
- The first session is facilitated by the convener. Successive sessions are facilitated by group members on a rotating basis.
- Each session includes readings, video clips, short assignments and accompanying group discussion questions.

COST

Individual course readers are \$15. This is a reduced rate, thanks to a grant from the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

“What I eat, what I buy for my house, how I live from this point on, has been changed by the readings in this course.”

Thomas Mohr, Columbia, Maryland

The NWEI courses offer us an opportunity to create rich dialog among staff members on topics that are vital and pertinent to our mission as well as to our personal lifestyles. The discussions help us build community and promote understanding of the interconnections between environmental quality, public health, and our daily practices as businesses and individuals. Reading what today's leading thinkers have written about these connections is inspiring. Every business should consider organizing a discussion course and allowing their staff the time to participate.

John Leigh, Manager, Waste & Recycling Programs, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

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