

Climate Crisis and Us: Creating a Better Future

Guide for a Self-Facilitated Discussion Group

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Created by



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Introduction

Citizens' Climate Lobby

The world's greatest problems were not solved by hopelessly looking the other way, but rather empowering ourselves to take action as a group. [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#) (CCL) supports individuals to come together as a team, to step up and make a difference. We strive to create the political will for a sustainable climate and to empower individuals to have breakthroughs in exercising their personal and political power.

Background

We ran an earlier version of this discussion group in the spring of 2015 in Nelson, BC, organized by Laura Sacks (CCL), Rev. David Boyd (Nelson United Church), and David Reid (West Kootenay EcoSociety). There was so much interest that we ran 2 groups at the same time.

Recently, our Nelson - West Kootenay chapter of CCL updated the resources to be more current. We are excited to share these with others, as addressing the climate crisis has become ever more urgent. At the same time, there are so many exciting opportunities to create a better world if we got serious about solving the crisis. We hope that participating in this discussion group helps spur conversations and action in your community. We welcome feedback: ccl.westkootenay@gmail.com.

Our Approach

This guide describes a self-facilitated discussion group, held in person or virtually. (Note, that you can always decide to have one facilitator if it works better for your circumstances.) The facilitated circle is meant to be collaborative. There is no expert, and everyone shares their ideas and insights while respecting one another's views.

It is also meant to be a safe, nonjudgmental place to express diverse opinions and perspectives. This is not the place for individual rants and specific agendas. We are not seeking to build consensus, but instead are exploring possibilities.

The inspiration for the format comes from [Northwest Earth Institute](#) (NWEI), with a focus on positive change. The three core elements are: “**collaborative discovery**, **personal reflection**, and **opportunity for action**.”

The circle process allows everyone to have a voice. No one should dominate the discussion.

The facilitator's role is to:

- ask discussion questions to get the conversation going
- ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak
- keep discussion focused on the session's topic
- prevent cross-talk, interruptions, or judgmental views
- keep track of the time

Please see [Tips on Facilitating Effective Group Discussions](#) (Brown University) for more ideas. This Guide transfers to online gatherings. If facilitating online, there are many resources online such as the e-book found at [Virtual Facilitation](#)

Content

For each session, we compiled select online resources on the given topic. Participants will need the internet to access. Be sure participants get materials at least a week in advance of the first session, so everyone comes prepared.

The materials are meant to give a flavour of the topic in order to allow for fruitful discussions. We do not mean to imply that they are the best materials available. We'd appreciate any suggestions as we continue to update the resources: ccl.westkootenay@gmail.com.

We start the 6-session series by looking at the current forecast. In the following sessions we envision a better future and explore how that might happen. We cover many topics, such as climate communication, renewable energy, urban design, restorative agriculture, indigenous land management, and economic policies. We end by exploring specific actions participants can take as they go forth.

We selected readings, videos, and podcasts that are accessible to people with a broad range of backgrounds. We assume that participants do not have a lot of prior information on the topics, but we include enough in-depth material that someone who is well-versed will not be bored.

We don't spend a lot of time on the science behind global warming. There are many excellent online resources available from esteemed institutions for more information. Scientists are in almost unanimous agreement that humans are altering the climate and warming the planet. Debating that scientific consensus is not part of this discussion series.

More Specifics

The NWEI's [Course Organizer's Guide](#) provides helpful information on how to organize a group, including some Frequently Asked Questions. We suggest a group of about 8 to 15 people, but that can be flexible according to your situation. We also suggest meeting for 1.5 hours on a weekly basis to keep up the momentum.

The organizer should facilitate the first session and bring a sign up sheet for the rotating roles: facilitator, opener (see below), notetaker (recommended, especially when actions are discussed), centre provider (optional). Decide on the best way for your group to communicate, and whether you will be sharing emails and/or phone numbers. The session's notetaker should share notes on the discussion with the group.

For the first session, your group should also decide on rules for engagement and write them out. Examples include no interrupting, respecting all views, no personal attacks, allowing all to speak, etc. It is helpful to have those posted (and reviewed if necessary) at each session. A talking stick might be helpful, depending on group dynamics.

At the start of each session, one of the participants brings an opener -- a short reading, poem, or story relevant to the topic. The opener serves as a transition from the day's activities to your group's focus. You can also consider having a low table in the centre of the circle with something meaningful as a focal point. That could be something shared each session by one of the participants.

After the opening, the facilitator begins with an introductory question around the circle so that everyone gets a chance to speak. Other discussion questions are listed, but these are just guidelines. It is best to let the discussion flow organically. You are not expected to get through every question – although you can if it works that way.

The last question reflects on related action. Do plan to get to that question, and have the notetaker write down specific ideas (which will be revisited in the last session).

The facilitator for session 6 (along with others as needed) reviews in advance actions that were discussed during sessions 1-5. Those actions can be re-written on sticky notes or written on a flip chart or board during session 6 to review.

After you are done with your 6 sessions, it is nice to celebrate with a potluck or another social gathering. The group may decide to continue meeting, as either a closed or open group.

Session 1: Climate Crisis and Its Forecast

This first session focuses on how the climate crisis is already impacting us, and how it is expected to get considerably worse over the next few decades. Please read, watch, or listen to **at least 4** of the following resources to prepare for our first meeting discussion:

1. Read the article summarizing the 2021 UN Production Gap Report: ' [Fossil Production Dangerously Out of Sync with Paris 1.5 Limit](#)' Oct. 2021
2. Watch one of the video shorts [How Global Warming Works](#) (5 min or less)
Watch [What's the Big Deal With a Few Degrees?](#) with Katharine Hayhoe, Global Weirding, March 2019 (9 min) or ,
watch [Climate Change Explained](#) with Katharine Hayhoe, April 2021(7 min)
3. Watch [Climate Change – The Facts in 4 minutes](#), featuring David Attenborough, BBC, May 2019 (4 min)
4. Watch [Are We Too Late to Solve the Climate Crisis?](#) By Inside Climate News, December 2018 (4 min)
5. Check out any of the resources listed in [The Crisis is a Scary Time. You are Not Alone](#). From The Energy Mix, 2021
6. Watch Just have a Think: [BLAH, BLAH, BLAH? Is that all our leaders provided at COP26?](#) November 2021 (18 min)
7. Watch [Petrocultures: Climate change, culture, and society](#), by Prairie Climate Centre, March 2018 (3 min)

Optional: [Climate Change: The Basics](#), including embedded video [1 °C and its impacts: what does climate change mean for Canada?](#) (3 min). For more in-depth on climate science, continue to click “Next Article” at bottom to read all 4 short articles with graphics, by Prairie Climate Centre.

Optional: Explore [Climate Atlas of Canada Map](#) about how climate change will impact your area and other parts of the country, by Prairie Climate Centre.

Session 1 Discussion Questions: Climate Crisis and its Forecast

1. What prompted you to join this discussion group? Do you have a personal story to share?
2. Were there any surprises after reading or viewing the above information?
3. From the resources, along with personal experience and recent news stories, what did you discover about your local, regional and the global impacts?
4. How does gathering and talking about this make you feel?
5. What kind of action does this drive? (Notetaker please record.)



Session 2: Envisioning a better future

Many of us have a hard time thinking about the climate crisis because it has been framed either as a distant challenge, we feel helpless and despair at the extent of the problem, and/or that it is discussed in terms of a dystopian future that shuts us down. In this session we explore better ways to engage with the issue so that we can envision a better future and move toward action. Please read or watch **at least 4** of the following resources to prepare for the first meeting.

1. Watch one (or all) of these videos by climate scientist and communicator Katharine Hayhoe (longer ones get deeper into the topic):
 - a. [If I just explain the facts, they'll get it, right?](#), Global Weirding, January 2017 (7 min)
 - b. [The most important thing you can do to fight climate change: talk about it](#), TEDWomen, November 2018 (17 min)
2. Watch video [Building Back Better - Canada in 2030](#) (4:35 min)
3. Listen to interview with George Marshall on [Bridging the climate change divide](#), CBC Frontburner, November 2018 (14 min)
4. Optional: Explore more about the [Alberta Narratives Project](#)<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/on-being-with-krista-tippett/id150892556?i=1000539316479>
5. Read article [The psychology of climate change: Why people deny the evidence](#), by Nicole Mortillaro for CBC News, December 2018
6. Read article [Solving the climate crisis isn't on consumers. It's on the people in power](#), by John Geddes, Macleans, January 2020
7. Watch [Joanna Macy - Befriending your Despair](#), June 2020. (4.30 min) Read excerpt from [Active Hope](#) by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnston, posted March 2017
8. Read article ['6 Habits of Hope'](#), by Kate Davies, May 2021. Excerpted from Intrinsic Hope: Living Courageously in Troubled Times.

Optional: Explore other video short episodes of [Global Weirding](#)

Session 2 Discussion Questions: Envisioning a better future

1. What surprised you and/or added to your knowledge in the session's material?
2. Did anything inspire you from this session's material?
3. What does your story of a better future look like?
4. What challenges can be flipped into opportunities?
5. What kind of action does this drive? (Notetaker please record.)



Session 3: Clean Energy Revolution

To address the climate crisis, it is clear we need to rapidly phase out fossil fuels and transition to renewable energy. We are close to hitting tipping points as prices of renewables continue to drop. It is not happening fast enough and we need policies to accelerate this transition. But it is clear that we have the tools that we need. In this session, we explore this rapidly changing area.

1. Watch **1 or more** of the following videos:
 - a. [Tony Seba: Rethinking the Future - Clean Disruption of Energy and Transportation](#), April 9, 2018, keynote at the 70th annual Conference on World Affairs in Boulder, Colorado (~1 hr)
 - b. [Climate Matters: in conversation with Tom Rand](#), May 2018 (13 min)
 - c. [Mark Jacobson: Getting to 100% clean, renewable energy](#), October 2018, co-hosted by the CCPA and UBC's Vancouver School of Economics (~1 hr)
2. Read [A Future Without Fossil Fuels?](#) by Bill McKibben, Common Dreams, March 2019
3. Read [Missing the Picture: Tracking the Energy Revolution 2019](#), Clean Energy Canada
4. Read Clean Energy Canada article: [Moving past oil and gas](#). Oct 2021, **or** read the Executive Summary of Clean Energy Canada's Report '[Turning Talk into Action: Building Canada's Battery Supply Chain](#)', May 2021
5. Read / watch **1 or more** of the following, about local initiatives transitioning to renewable energy:
 - a. Read [First Nations Community Four Steps ahead of Climate Change](#), National Observer, January 2019
 - b. Read [How Orkney leads the way for Sustainable Energy](#), The Guardian, January 2019.
6. Read, or listen to the article about [Tzeporah Berman's vision](#), presented at the TED Countdown Summit.

Optional: Explore [The Solutions Project map](#) about how Canada and other countries can get to 100% Renewable Energy.

Session 3 Discussion Questions: Clean Energy Revolution

1. Can you think of a positive story about the green energy revolution that you have seen or experienced recently?
2. What surprised you and/or added to your knowledge in this session's material?
3. Did anything inspire you from this session's material?
4. How does this session tie to your local area?
5. What kind of action does this drive? (Notetaker please record.)



Session 4: Interconnections – Food, Water, Land

Most of the dire impacts of the climate crisis on humans are related to water (too much or too little) and food security. By considering interconnections and embracing complexity, we can help address climate change and build our resilience. Please read or watch **at least 1 of the resources in each subheading:**

Overview

1. Watch [TED: 100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming](#), by Chad Frischmann with Project Drawdown, September 2018 (17 min)
2. Watch [Sir David Attenborough Presents: Breaking Boundaries: The Science of Our Planet](#) trailer, April 2021 (10 min) The Full 74 min. movie available on NetFlix.

Optional: Look through solutions at [Drawdown: 100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming](#)

Food and Soil

3. Read [How to Sustainably Feed 10 Billion People by 2050, in 21 Charts](#), World Resources Institute, December 2018
4. Watch [Soil Solutions to Climate Problems - Narrated by Michael Pollan](#), November 2015 (4 min)

Optional: Watch [Live in Syntropy](#), 2015 (15 min)

Water

5. Read [A City within a Garden](#) (excerpt from “Life After Carbon: The Next Global Transformation of Cities”), by Peter Plastrik and John Cleveland, January 2019
6. Read [Mitigating flood risks in your own backyard](#), by Bob McDonald, CBC, November 2018
7. Read [Blue Ecology](#): interweaving Indigenous Cultural Knowledge and Western Science, Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC, January 2019

Caring for Land

8. Watch [The Harrop-Procter Community Forest](#), by David Springbett, 2008 (11 min)
9. Read Native Knowledge: [What Ecologists Are Learning from Indigenous People](#), by Jim Robbins, Yale Environment 360, April 2018
10. Listen to podcast with [Robin Wall Kimmerer on Indigenous Knowledge for Earth Healing](#), For the Wild, August 2018 (1 hr)

Session 4 Discussion Questions: Interconnections – Food, Water, Land

1. Share an example of an interconnectedness that you are aware of in your life.
2. What surprised you and/or added to your knowledge in this session's material?
3. Did anything inspire you in this session's material?
4. How does this tie to your local area?
5. What kind of action does this drive?



Session 5: Policy and Economics

We hear a lot these days about having to balance the economy and the environment. In this section we explore how to balance the economy and environment to move toward a green future. We also look at some of the economic policy tools that we can use to tackle the climate crisis. Please read or watch **at least 5 of the following resources (1 or 2 from each of the subheadings)**.

Economic Growth and Society's Goals

1. Read the opinion article: [How can a coronavirus response reduce inequity and protect the climate?](#) Elizabeth Sawin, Co-director of Climate Interactive July 2020
2. Watch [How the Dutch are reshaping their post-pandemic utopia](#). BBC, June 2020 (6 min)
3. Read [Building the Infrastructure of Care](#), The Tyee's interview with Naomi Klein, October 2021
4. Read [Climate Action, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Justice](#), by Sean Meyer, Municipal World, 2021.

Policy Options for Decarbonization

5. Read Executive Summary, [Zeroing in on Emissions: Canada's Clean Power Pathways – A Review](#), David Suzuki Foundation, May 2019
6. Read [A Climate Policy Plan For Deep Decarbonization In Canada](#) and accompanying report by youth winner, Pembina Institute, June 2019
7. Watch [Climate change is costing us. Carbon pricing works](#), Canada's EcoFiscal Commission, April 2018 (3 min)
8. Read [Breaking it down: how carbon pricing addresses climate change](#), Pembina Institute, August 2018

Other economic policies: Subsidies, Divestment/Finance, Regulations

9. Watch [\\$11 trillion divested from fossil fuels!](#) 350.org, September 2019 (1.5 min)
10. Listen to [Mark Carney says the smart money is on transition from fossil fuels](#), CBC Sunday Edition, February 2020 (31 min)

Session 5 Discussion Questions: Policy and Economics

1. Did anything surprise, really interest you, and/or add to your knowledge from this session's material?
2. Can we have both economic growth and environmental sustainability?
3. Is there an economic role for diversified and integrated energy systems - how could this work?
4. How does this tie to what you see happening in your province and nationally?
5. What kind of action does this drive? (Notetaker please record.)



Session 6: Working Toward Change

This last session focuses on action. Let's first imagine again the future that we want, and then look at the most effective ways to influence change to get there. We have already looked at a lot of resources and discussed many approaches to positive change.

Let's remember that there are many ways to influence change and that we all have different strengths. We are not seeking to find consensus as a group on the best solution. We hope to inspire you to consider how you can personally be involved in creating a better future. To get you thinking, please read or watch **at least 4** of the resources below, in addition to #1.

1. Complete [So, what can I do?](#), a ven diagram to help you figure out where to focus your climate action. October 2021
2. Take a short quiz, [What kind of changemaker are you?](#) from Project Inside Out, 2021
3. Read the opinion article, [How to Stop Freaking Out and Tackle Climate Change. Here's a five-step plan to deal with the stress and become part of the solution.](#) The New York Times, Jan 2020
4. Read [Loving a Vanishing World](#), by Emily Johnston, May 2019 ([or listen here](#))
5. Read [What We Can Do Now](#), by Megan Ogilvie, Toronto Star, July 2019
6. Listen to [Citizens Climate Radio interview with Katharine Hayhoe](#), December 2018 (first 15 min)
7. Read [16 Sustainability Leaders Weigh In: How YOU Can Help To Reverse Global Warming](#), Crowdsourcing Sustainability, January 2019
8. [Hope on climate change doesn't come easily — but action isn't futile](#), by Grace Nosek for CBC News, December 2018

Optional: Explore 6 options presented as [Frameworks for Action](#), on Paul Hawkin's Regeneration website, October 2021 or explore Regeneration, Paul Hawkins, website <https://regeneration.org/nexus>

Section 6 Discussion Questions: Working Toward Change

1. Did anything surprise, really interest you, and/or add to your knowledge from this session's material?
2. Renee Lertzman described different types of changemakers: Righter, Educator, Cheerleader, Guide. What type of changemaker best describes you? (from [quiz](#) in #2 above)?

Section 6: Pathways to Action

During sessions 1-5, specific actions were noted. This session, we'll review those notes and arrange them into clusters with similar themes or actions (facilitator, please see pg. 4),

1. Can clusters of actions be described as one general action? That action may have several different parts or steps.
2. Considering your experience, interest and available time, which actions interest you?
3. How might you organize specific actions with others or as an individual? Be specific.
4. Commit to taking steps toward action in the next week. What will they be?



Appendix: Additional Resources

If you want more information, the following resources are available at no cost:

Two references to set up Google Alerts, even if you don't have a Google account. You can set it up for your areas of interest

<http://www.basiccomputerinformation.ca/create-google-alert/>

<https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/4815696?hl=en>

Climate Tech and Sustainability newsletters – free subscription.

<https://startupbasecamp.org/top-climate-tech-and-sustainability-newsletters-to-subscribe-to/>

Just Have a Think, video channel dealing with climate & sustainability. Regular episodes are free.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/JustHaveaThink/videos>

Global Weirding video channel with Katharine Hayhoe – free.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi6RkdaEqgRVKi3AzidF4ow>

Top 10 institutions for Earth and environmental sciences.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01928-7>

Non-profit Advocacy organizations

<https://climatestore.com/take-action/get-involved/non-profit-organizations-working-on-climate-change>

Sources for recent positive news stories about the clean energy revolution: [Clean Energy Canada newsletters](#), [The Energy Mix](#), [Green Energy Futures](#)

If you do a search on a specific topic, be sure to check more than one reference and also check the person or group providing that reference so that you can determine the credibility.