Planetary Health

What is Planetary Health?

Welcome to the exciting journey of understanding planetary health – a concept that focuses on how environmental changes affect human health. Planetary health involves caring for our planet and all its inhabitants. It's about ensuring healthy air, water, and land for generations to come, as our own well-being is intertwined with that of the Earth. By nurturing a sustainable environment, we not only protect the health of present and future generations but also preserve the rich diversity of life on our planet.

Connecting Everything Together

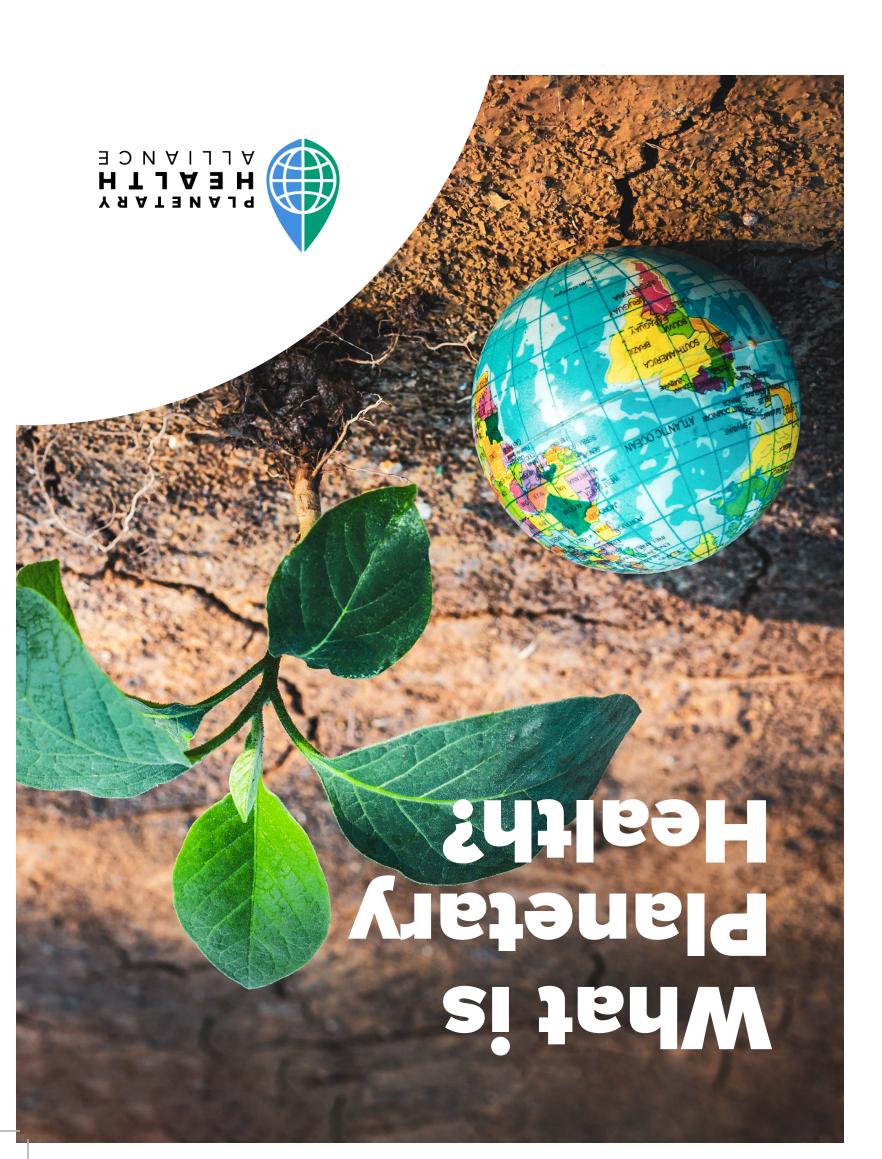
Planetary health teaches us that everything is connected – the air, oceans, forests, animals, and humans. It investigates and seeks solutions for various interconnected issues such as climate change, natural disasters, water scarcity, changing food systems, urbanization, shifts in biodiversity, deforestation, pollution, diseases, and mental health. Understanding and addressing these topics are crucial for a sustainable and healthier world.

Why Does Planetary Health Matter?

We only have one Earth. It's our home, and we want it to flourish now and for future generations. When we take care of the planet, we are also caring for ourselves. Clean air, fresh water, and a thriving environment contribute to our well-being. By looking out for the Earth, we're safeguarding the well-being of all life forms.

The Path Forward: **Preserving Our Planet**

Planetary health emphasizes our interconnectedness and the significance of our choices. When we make decisions that benefit the Earth, we're creating a healthier and happier home for everyone. It's crucial to maintain a balance between all aspects of the environment to ensure a sustainable future. Let's embark on this journey together, exploring and learning how to be the best guardians of our incredible planet, navigating the path forward hand in hand.



Planetary Health Topics

Climate Change

Climate change is the long-term alteration of Earth's weather patterns. Our planet is getting warmer, primarily due to human activities like burning fossil fuels, which release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and cause temperatures to rise. Since the start of the Industrial Revolution in the late 1700s, the average temperature has increased by about 1.2 degrees Celsius. This rise in temperature is leading to major impacts, including unusually hot summers, heavy rainfalls, and droughts, as our climate becomes increasingly unstable.

rupts ecosystems, and degrades natural habitats.

and cancers in humans but also harms wildlife, dis-

to respiratory diseases, cardiovascular problems,

tion-related causes. Pollution not only contributes

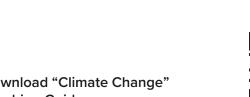
people die prematurely each year due to pollu-

the environment. Alarmingly, more than 9 million

devastating impacts on both human health and

and soil with harmful substances, which can have

Pollution involves contaminating the air, water,



Natural Disasters

Natural disasters are powerful forces unleashed by nature, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods. Every year, about 100 million people worldwide are impacted by these sudden and intense events, which can wreak havoc on communities. Climate change is exacerbating these natural disasters, making them more frequent and severe. When natural disasters occur, individuals are forced to evacuate, facing greater risks of sustaining injuries or becoming ill, and must deal with the aftermath of having their homes destroyed.



Planetary Health Topics

Water Scarcity

Water scarcity occurs when there's an insufficient supply of clean water to meet people's needs. Currently, 2.2 billion people—almost 1 out of every 3 individuals on Earth—lack access to safe drinking water. This shortage of water makes it challenging for people to maintain their health, cultivate food, and carry out everyday tasks such as cooking and cleaning. Additionally, water scarcity affects vulnerable communities to a greater extent, worsening inequalities in many regions of the world.







and well-being of adults.

Changing Food Systems

Changing food systems means that the way we

grow food and the nutritional quality of our food are

shifting. Unfortunately, not everyone has enough

food, and for those who do, it might not provide

the proper nutrients to keep them healthy. Approx-

imately 820 million people experience hunger due

to a lack of access to food or because their diet

lacks essential nutrients. Insufficient nutritious food

can cause malnutrition, which impacts children's

growth and learning abilities, as well as the health

and Nutrition





Biodiversity Shifts

Biodiversity, the variety of living things on Earth, is

crucial for keeping our planet's ecosystems healthy

and balanced. Unfortunately, in the last 40 years,

Earth has lost around 60% of its wildlife population.

This decline not only endangers many species but

also disrupts the important relationships between

different plants and animals that are necessary for

keeping ecosystems strong and healthy. Addition-

ally, this loss of biodiversity affects people's health.

Studies show that as biodiversity decreases, the risk

of diseases like malaria and Lyme disease spreading

increases, posing significant public health risks.

Created by: Jennifer Rasmussen, PHA Education Fellow

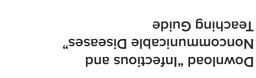
support and collaboration, the PHA aims to equip individunound the world to share resources and collaborate on initia-ives that bridge knowledge with action. Through unwavering

Education plays an integral role in advancing planetary health awareness and action. Across the globe, planetary health education is expanding, marked by the emergence of new courses, lecture series, degree programs, faculty positions, and cross-university initiatives.

.pniəd-lləw bna dtlaah namud committed to understanding and addressing the impacts of global environmental change on organizations, research institutes, and government entities from 60+ countries worldwide



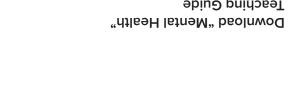




problems on public health worldwide. showing the major impact of lifestyle-related health eases account for over 70% of all global deaths, predispositions. Shockingly, noncommunicable disdietary choices, sedentary lifestyles, and genetic tes, are not contagious but arise due to factors like cable diseases, such as heart problems and diabeinated surfaces. On the other hand, noncommuniphysical contact, airborne transmission, or contamperson to another through various means, such as scopic, harmful germs that can spread from one

Infectious diseases are illnesses caused by micro-

Noncommunicable Diseases Infectious and



and water quality.

Deforestation

contributing to climate change, biodiversity loss,

a result, deforestation disrupts this vital process,

absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. As

Trees, the "lungs of the earth," regulate climate by

affects climate, wildlife, and the balance of nature.

lion hectares vanish each year! This destruction

forests, occurs at an alarming rate – about 10 mil-

Deforestation, the cutting down of large areas of

Planetary Health Topics

lessness, and suicide. including increased risk of substance abuse, homehealth issues can lead to serious consequences, all well-being. Additionally, if left untreated, mental tionships, work or school performance, and overimpact individuals' quality of life, affecting their relatheir lives. Mental health problems can significantly experience mental health issues at some point in lenges. It is estimated that I in 5 people worldwide and coping strategies in response to life's chal-Mental health encompasses our thoughts, emotions,

Mental Health

Planetary Health Topics



Planetary Health Topics

Urbanization

Urbanization refers to the process of cities expand-

ing as more and more people move from rural

areas to urban centers. In fact, more than half of the

world's population now resides in cities! This signif-

icant shift influences different aspects of our lives,

including transportation services, infrastructure,

and access to resources. Additionally, urbanization

leads to changes in housing, job opportunities, and

cultural dynamics within urban areas.



