



# Climate Is Health

*Educational Resources on Climate,  
Health, and COVID-19*

## Session 4


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# Climate Change, Inequitable Impacts, and Community Resilience

### Getting Started (10-15 min)

Welcome to Session 4 of the “Climate Is Health” series. This week we are focused on climate resilience and systems. Our Guest Speaker is Kristin Baja, who works as the Programs Director for Climate Resilience and Equity with the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, where she helps cities identify strategic ways to advance climate resilience planning and implementation and build their capacity to take proactive action.

Key concepts this week include [environmental and climate justice](#), [systems thinking](#), and [resiliency planning](#).

 **If you have time, take a moment to reflect before starting with the session and answer the following questions in a notebook:**

1. Reflecting back on your climate story, think about ways that other stories within your community or around the world might be different from yours.
2. Ponder ways that other people’s stories, and our own, are similarly impacted by larger systems affecting climate, even though our stories are different.
3. What does *resilience* mean to you?

## Guest Speaker (10 min)



**Kristin Baja,**  
Urban Sustainability Directors Network

[Watch Interview](#)



### Key definitions for this session:

- **Climate Resilience:** The ability of a community to anticipate, accommodate, and positively adapt to or thrive amidst changing climate conditions or hazard events and enhance quality of life, reliable systems, economic vitality, and conservation of resources for present and future generations. (USDN)
- **Racial Equity:** When race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved. (GARE)
- **Racial Justice:** Proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all. (Race Forward)
- **Corrective Action:** Shifting power to residents and community-based organizations to determine their own needs, identify how to meet those needs, and build relationships that will increase their influence on future decision-making processes. (USDN)

## Explore in Depth (10-30 min)

### [Why Is Climate Change So Unfair?](#)

Everyone is going to be affected in some way by big, global issues like climate change (or coronavirus for that matter). But some folks are going to feel the hurt more than others.

### [Why We Can't Ignore the Link Between COVID-19, Climate Change, and Inequity](#)



If we aren't careful, the battle against coronavirus could have a negative impact on equity and climate change.

### [The Interwoven Threads of Inequality and Health](#)

The coronavirus crisis is revealing the inequities inherent in public health due to societal factors, Nancy Krieger, a professor of social epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, says.

### [Build Empathy in Your Students](#)

Choose a social cause to learn about and then select the Design for Change activity path that works for you. These podcasts are under 10 minutes and have an accompanying presentation to introduce the topic to students and get their brainstorming juices flowing!

### [What Is a System?](#)

The Climate Leader shares a video introducing systems thinking and offering tools for you to develop your strategies to address climate change and other complex challenges you face.

### [The Magic of 'Multisolving'](#)

Six principles and practices to unlock cross-sectoral collaboration.

### [How Resilience Hubs in Cities Would Help Coronavirus Response](#)

Resilience Hubs can help vulnerable communities without overloading local governments during crises such as the COVID-19 outbreak.

### [Learn More About Resilience Hubs](#)

Resilience Hubs are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life.

## Reflect and Discuss (10-30 min)

1. What are ten different larger systems impacting your climate and health story, the climate and health story of your community, and the global COVID-19 story? How are these systems connected?
2. What do **you** think it means for your community to have climate resiliency? In what ways is your community showing resilience now?
3. Whose stories are you not currently listening to? How can you find resources (podcasts, books, etc.) to learn more about other people's stories and lived experiences?

## Case Study (1-2 hours)

### Following a Devastating Tornado, Town and Hospital Rebuild to Harness Wind Energy


Explore what makes the above case study a successful example of long-term planning and building climate resilience in a community.

- What inspires you about this story?
- In what ways were they successful? What allowed this success to happen?
- What challenges were faced and overcome in this case study?
- What connections does this case study have to your own community?
- What questions do you have?
- Argument: LEED certification is expensive and the benefits aren't distributed to everybody; the town could have done more immediate good for more people by not paying those costs.
  - Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Whether you personally agree or disagree, how would you refute this argument?

## Take Action (30-60 min)

- ★ **Reflect on your climate story.** How can you weave your own connection with climate and your own passions to create change with the stories and passions of others to make a larger collective impact? *Map out all of the different people, resources, and organizations in your life that can support your goals to help ensure that your community and our climate are healthy and resilient in the future.*
- ★ **Explore the relationship between climate resilience, equity, and environmental justice.** Who is part of the decision-making process focused on providing a healthy environment within your community? How can your community ensure that all people are protected from environmental and health hazards? In what ways is your community in a good position to develop a strong climate resilience strategy and in what ways does it lag behind? *With these thoughts in mind, write down three questions that you would like to explore further in order to deepen your knowledge of environmental justice, climate resilience, and equity within your own community. Then, choose at least one of them to explore in depth and share what you've learned with a classmate or peer.*
- ★ **Imagine what it would look like for your community to have stronger climate resilience and structural support to help all individuals have a better climate reality.** What's different about this community? What barriers stand in the way of this resilience? What ideas do you have about how to overcome them? *Write down three tangible things that you could help change within your community to build more climate resilience.*

## Connect

 Don't forget to post your ideas and learning journeys on social media with the tag #climateishealth and @HarvardCCHANGE, and email [harvardclimatesummit@goputney.com](mailto:harvardclimatesummit@goputney.com) with any questions you have.