

Study Circles are a fun and engaging way to learn about easy ways to change habit and behavior—and move towards a more sustainable lifestyle. Each Study Circle is designed and facilitated by an individual or a neighborhood group, and takes on its own distinct tone and style. These are self-guided “events,” during which participants use workbooks and their own knowledge to learn about changes and behaviors that can help them become more sustainable in their lifestyles.

To help you get started, here are a few tips which hopefully you will find helpful for facilitating your own Study Circle.

FINDING participants . . .

- Create a flier that includes a few reasons why these Study Circles are fun and important. Hand fliers to your neighbors, work peers and friends. If you would like help laying these out, or producing them, please contact Phil Busse, Director of Communication, Sustain Dane, phil@sustaindane.org
- Create a post to your friends on Facebook.
- Send a succinct email to a dozen friends, and ask each to forward to two friends.
- Keep a record of who you contact, and follow up a week later with another email or, better yet, a phone call.

ORGANIZING participants . . .

- Start a Facebook group where potential participants can RSVP.
- Use Doodle.com. It is a great tool for asking potential participants times and dates that will work for meeting-up.
- Offer several potential dates for a meet-up for the first Study Circle. Make sure that you give potential participants a deadline by which they should respond.
- Using Facebook, Constant Contact or an email list, send a reminder about the first Study Circle meeting two-three days before it happens.

FACILITATING participants . . .

- A good facilitator doesn't make decisions for the group, but suggests ways to help the group move forward.
- Start the meeting on a positive note of confidence and energy, like sharing personal experiences.
- Invite questions and comments.
- Don't let a discussion continue between just two people, but seek comments from others.
- When you test for consensus, state in question form.
- If you find you are drawn into the discussion in support of one particular position, suggest that someone else take over the facilitation until that item is decided.
- It is often a good idea to evaluate the meeting to see how the process—not the content—was perceived by the participants.