

# **“Healthy Children in A Healthy Valley: The Final Chapter, Almost”**

Canadian Pollution Prevention Roundtable  
June 2007  
Jack Luskin  
Toxics Use Reduction Institute

# **Building for the Future- Part II: Incorporating Sustainability into University Curricula**

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Canadian P2 Roundtable  
June 2007

- **Problem:** Children are exposed to numerous toxic chemicals
- **Symptom:** Increasing incidence of adverse health effects
- **Solution?:** Reduce exposure through changes in household product purchase and use behavior (= *sustainable consumption*)



# Safer Products In Neighborhoods (SPIN)\*

UMass Memorial Hospital  
Regional Environmental Council  
Toxics Use Reduction Institute

2001-2002

# Healthy Kids, Healthy Homes\*\*

2003-2004

Family Service, Inc.  
Regional Environmental Council  
Toxics Use Reduction Institute

# Healthy Children in a Healthy Valley\*\*

2005-2006

Toxics Use Reduction Institute  
Family Service, Inc.  
Merrimack Valley Environmental Coalition

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*\*\*Funded in part by the U.S EPA*

For Background Information see:

**SPEAKER'S PRESENTATIONS**  
**Canadian Pollution Prevention Roundtable**  
**Victoria, British Columbia, Canada**  
**June 1 & 2, 2005**

Healthy Children in a Healthy Valley

Jack Luskin, Toxics Use Reduction Institute

[http://c2p2online.com/main.php3?session=&section=98&doc\\_id=597](http://c2p2online.com/main.php3?session=&section=98&doc_id=597)

# Key Change Agents

## Public Health Outreach Workers

- Change agents: specially trained outreach workers
- From the community, trusted by community
- Message delivered through home visits and group presentations
- Received training from TURI on toxics in household products

# Curriculum Overview

- Why/how toxics are a health problem
- Toxics commonly found in household products
- Learning about the ingredients in specific products
- Ways to use toxic products more safely
- Alternative products
- Information Resources

# Many Household Products Contain **Toxic Chemicals**

- Pesticides
- Cleaners
- Personal care products
- Beauty products
- “Home Improvement” products

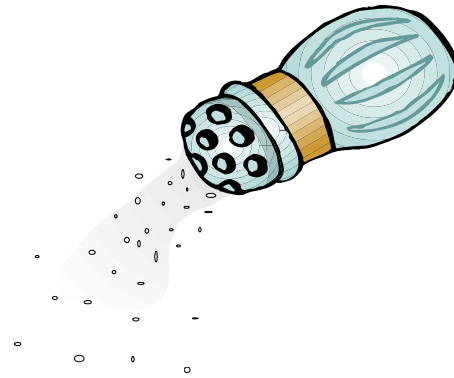
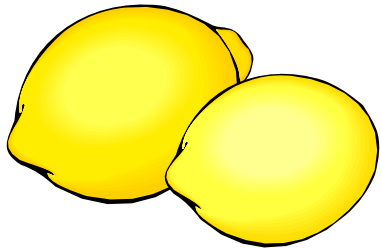
# Buying Safer Products

- Less toxic commercial products are sold in local stores
- There are no standards for “green” products
- Beware false or misleading advertising!



# Making Safer Products

- Ingredients include: baking soda, salt, vinegar, liquid soap, lemon
- Much cheaper to use



# Homemade Silver Polish

- ✓ In 1 quart warm water, mix 1 tablespoon baking soda with 1 tablespoon salt. Add a piece of aluminum foil and item to be polished. Let sit for at least 15 minutes.



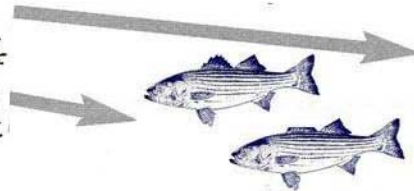
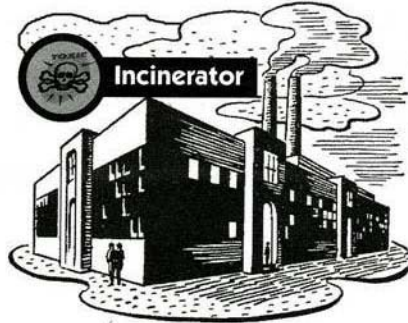
# Review of Homework Assignment (Using An Alternative Cleaner)

- Try one of the “recipes” for making a homemade cleaner and use it to clean something in your home.
- Bring in a list of all the cleaning products and laundry products in your home. Put a star next to each product that you think is safe to use.



# Does Your Trash Really Go Away?

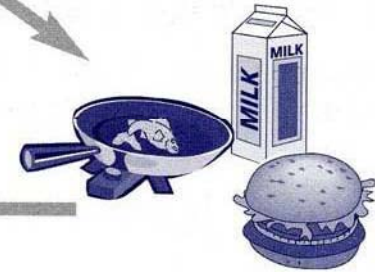
Dioxin, mercury & other particulates emitted from incinerators end up in food chain.



Mercury & dioxin contaminate fish.



Cows eat dioxin laced grass which builds up in milk and fatty tissue



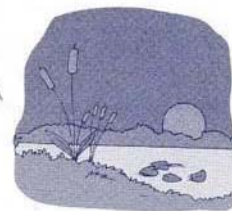
Humans unknowingly consume contaminated milk, fish and meat.



Humans drink water contaminated with lead and other toxins.



Contaminated ground water infiltrates our water supply.



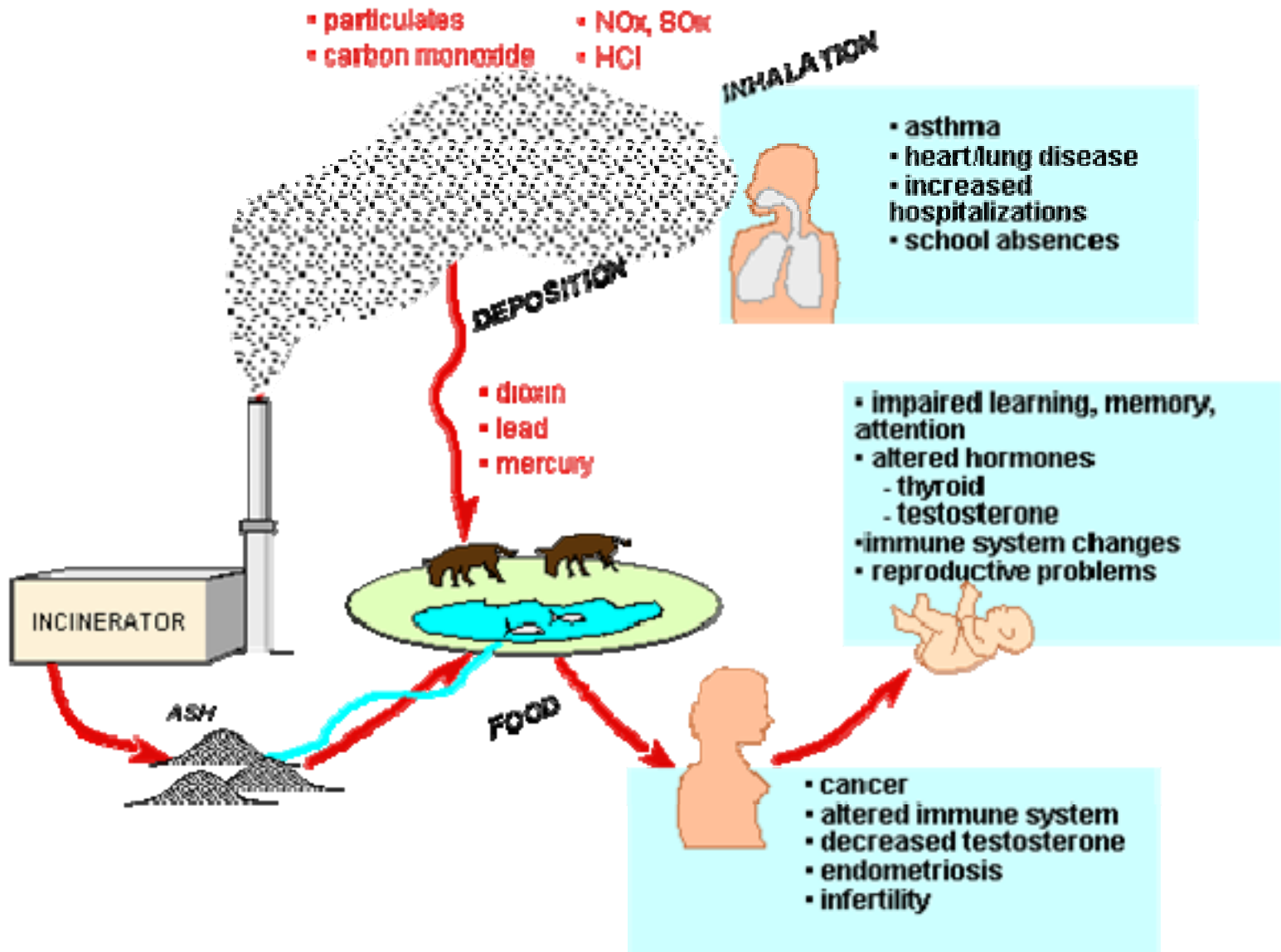
Toxins leak into water.

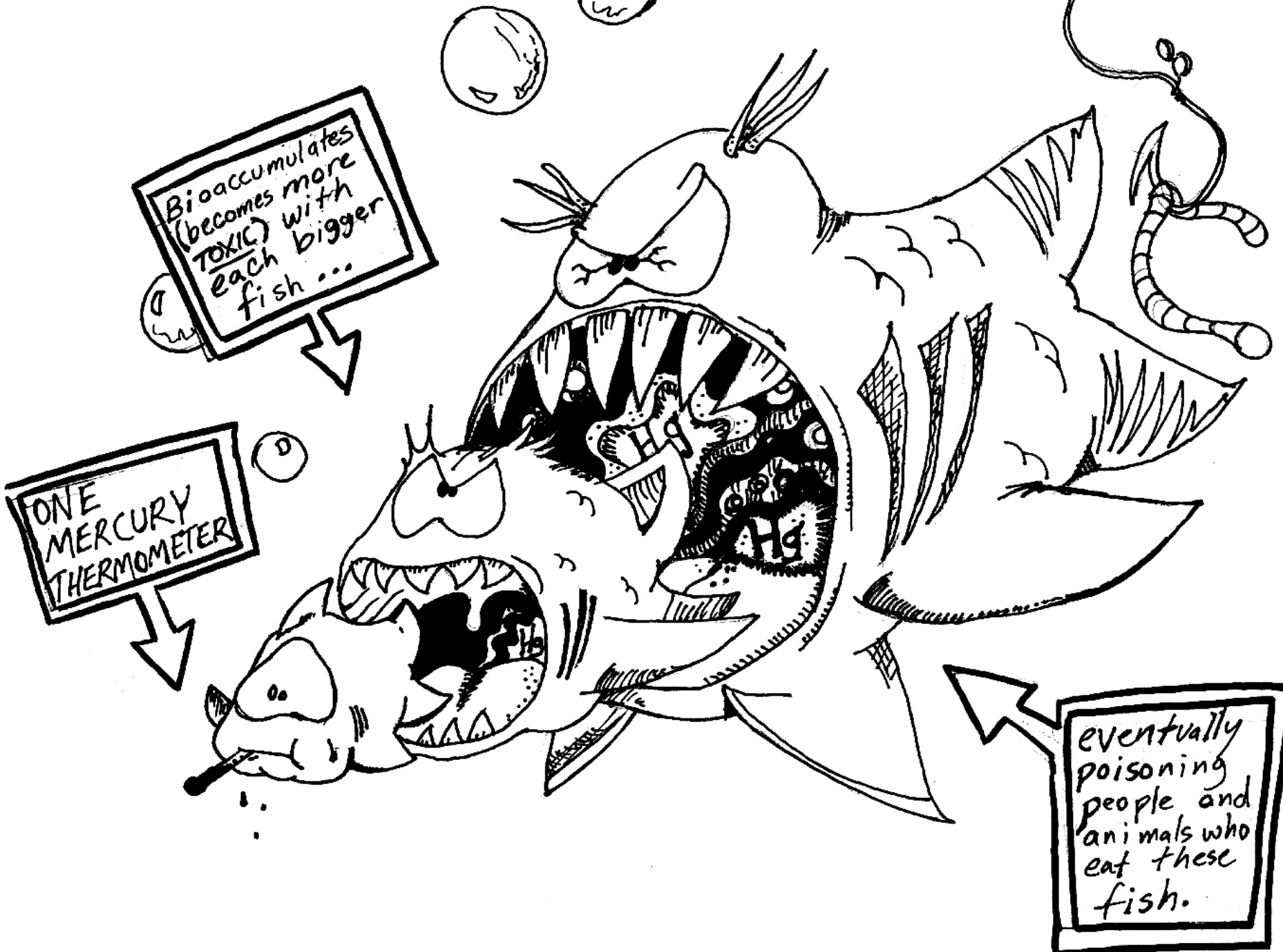
Hazardous gases emitted from landfills may be inhaled by nearby residents.



Trash goes to a landfill or incinerator.

# Incineration Health Impacts





Bioaccumulates  
(becomes more  
**TOXIC**) with  
each bigger  
fish ...

ONE  
MERCURY  
THERMOMETER

eventually  
poisoning  
people and  
animals who  
eat these  
fish.

Never doubt that a small group of  
thoughtful, committed citizens can  
change the world; indeed,  
it's the only thing that ever has.  
-Margaret Mead



# **Healthy Children in a Healthy Valley**

**Evaluation Report  
June 2006**

**Healthy Children in a Healthy Valley**  
**Pre Survey – 2005**  
**DAY I**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>1. Strongly Agree</b>	<b>2. Agree</b>	<b>3. Disagree</b>	<b>4. Strongly Disagree</b>
1. I understand that certain ingredients in cleaning products can be harmful to one's health.				
2. I understand how chemicals can get into the body.				
3. I understand what health effects can result from exposure to toxic chemicals in cleaning products.				

# **Pre Survey – 2005 (cont'd)**

- 4. I understand that some people are more sensitive to chemicals than other people.**
- 5. I understand what a toxic chemical is.**
- 6. I understand where the packaging and other trash I throw away goes.**
- 7. I understand how incinerated and land filled trash can affect human health.**
- 8. I understand how to read product labels to get a sense of the potential health risks.**
- 9. I understand how to use household products more safely.**
- 10. I understand how to find (or make) safer cleaning products.**
- 11. I understand how our environment affects public health.**
- 12. I feel comfortable discussing the safety of cleaning products with friends, family, and clients.**

# Worker Key findings

**At least 80% of workers at post-test reported that they agree or strongly agree that they understand:**

- How chemicals can get into the body.
- What a toxic chemical is.
- That certain ingredients in cleaning products can be harmful to one's health.
- What health effects can result from exposure to toxic chemicals in cleaning products.
- That some people are more sensitive to chemicals than other people.

# Key findings (cont'd)

- Where the packaging and other trash they throw away goes.
- How incinerated and land filled trash can affect human health.
- How to read product labels to get a sense of the potential health risks.
- How to use household products more safely.
- How to find (or make) safer cleaning products.
- How our environment affects public health.

# Parent-Participant Key Findings

- **At post-survey, at least 80% of the participants had increased knowledge about:**
  - What a toxic chemical is.
  - That certain ingredients in cleaning products can be harmful to family's health.
  - How chemicals from cleaning products get into the body.
  - What health effects can result from exposure.
  - Where packaging and other trash thrown away goes.
  - How incinerated and land filled trash can affect human health.

At post-survey, the majority (62%) of participants reported always or sometimes taking some type of precautions when cleaning, an increase from pre-survey results for precautions listed in survey tool.

At post-survey, reported use of certain cleaning products containing toxic chemicals decreased...

At post-survey, reported use of less toxic cleaning products increased...

At post-survey, 77% of participants reported that they had shared the information they learned about cleaning products with others, including family and friends.

# **Selected Comments by Outreach Workers**

This was a great workshop, because it makes you aware of everyday home products that we use that could be harmful to our house (family members). I wish that this information was passed out to all school systems and all day care system.

I think that this workshop was great because I learned how to protect my family from toxic. This workshop provided very helpful information that we could speak with our clients and family members. Thank you!

The information was great. I learned a lot about toxic in my house. I will be making some changes when I get home this afternoon. Thank you!

I really enjoyed this workshop a lot. I understand more about cleaner's in my household and I can clean safer around my daughter now. Thanks. I will share this information with others.

The information was very helpful and thought-provoking. Rather than feeling overwhelmed, I feel more informed and empowered to learn more. It was a great motivator to take control of more of my life and my family life.

# **Healthy Children in a Healthy Valley**

## **Impact Evaluation Report September 2006**

# The purpose of the impact assessment

## To determine:

- to what extent outreach workers retained the information they learned in the trainings;
- with whom (family, friends, colleagues, clients, etc.) outreach workers have shared the information they learned in the trainings;
- in what settings (office visits, home visits, small group settings (parent support groups or playgroups) have outreach workers shared the information they learned in the trainings;

# The purpose of the impact assessment

(cont'd)

- to what extent has the information outreach workers learned in the trainings been diffused throughout the organization they work and activities they partake (faith-related, volunteer organizations, informal parent networks, etc.);
- if sharing this information is part of the regular work that outreach workers do with clients; and
- other opinions about the project offered by the outreach workers.

# Results

## *Shared information learned in HCHVP trainings with others*

All eighteen outreach workers (100%) reported that they continued to share information about the risks associated with common household products, the availability of safer alternatives, and the connection between product use and outdoor air toxics with family and friends and to a lesser extent with clients (72%), colleagues (56%), acquaintances (61%) strangers (56%), health care providers (47%).

## *Settings information shared*

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of outreach workers reported that they shared HCHVP information in 1:1 meetings with parents, guardians, and grandparents and 61% reported they shared information during home visits with clients/parents. Fifty percent (50%) of outreach workers reported that they shared HCHVP information in small group settings, parents support groups and playgroups and 44% reported they shared information during office visits with clients/parents.

# Results

## *Organization impact of information learned in HCHVP*

Fifty-six percent (56%) of outreach workers reported that their organizations integrated information learned through HCHVP into their work, such as through policies and/or practices. Several reported that their organization purchases non-toxic cleaners only or makes their own products to clean the office. This has led some employees to change cleaning practices at home as well (using less toxic cleaners/making safer cleaners). Also, several outreach workers reported that their agencies have developed lists with recipes of safer products and provide these to clients and day care providers and another makes and provides products to clients on a regular basis.

## *Difficulties sharing information learned in HCHVP*

Only 28% of outreach workers reported that they had difficulties sharing information learned in HCHVP trainings. The most common reasons cited for difficulties sharing the information are:

“People resist changes.”

•“Some people don’t want to hear what’s good for them.”

•Some people are “skeptical about using [non-toxic products, such as] baking soda.”

•People may find it “easier to purchase cheaper cleaners because they don’t feel economically motivated to make their own products; instead they purchase the dollar product that works quicker.”

None of the outreach workers cited lack of time, that sharing the information is not part of their job description, or the need for more training as barriers to sharing the information learned in HCHVP trainings with others (even when probed by the interviewer).

Ninety-four percent (94%) of outreach workers reported that they *strongly agree* and 6% *agree* that they feel comfortable discussing the safety of cleaning products with friends, family, and clients.

All of the outreach workers (100%) reported that they *strongly agree* that they understand all the basic concepts taught during the training.

# Public Service Announcement



# Is there anything else?

Training in SF-late summer 07

Other location?

Presentation at conference

On-going development of PSAs