Welcome to the User’s Guide for the Cultures and Health video series.

Success in building a genuinely inclusive Culture of Health (COH) depends on recognizing and responding to what’s distinctive about particular cultures, and strengthening internal sources of resilience. To foster this type of actionable awareness, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation asked Purple States to create a learning experience for those whose mission it is to build and support a Culture of Health.

A cross-sector Advisory Group helped shape the project’s objectives and scope, and functioned as full critical and creative partners. Fourteen powerful and telling personal narratives of cultures and health were produced with cultural communities in various parts of the country.

Foundation staff, the members of the Advisory Group and our partner communities have used these stories to bring culture into conversations about how to improve health outcomes for all. Their aim has not been to transmit facts or advance solutions – nor to propose a particular understanding of “culture” or its role – but to promote reflection.

This guide provides step-by-step guidance on how to tailor presentations of one or more of these video stories to your own settings, to advance your own aims. We focus here on four of the stories, by way of illustration. The suggested strategies can be adapted for use with whichever stories best suit your purposes.

The Cultures and Health playlist – including the Introductory Video and fourteen 5-7 minute stories -- can be found here: [https://rwjf.ws/Cultures_and_Health](https://rwjf.ws/Cultures_and_Health). Additional versions of the videos (cross-cutting themes, one-minute trailers, and 3-minute versions) are also available -- at this DropBox links provided below, or by contacting Purple States (cynthia@purplestates.tv).

We hope that you find these stories as powerful and useful as we have.
USER’S GUIDE

Please note that what follows is intended simply as a guide to using these materials to spark a different kind of conversation about health with colleagues and partners – a conversation grounded in culture. The video stories and associated resources are yours to use in whatever ways you think will be most effective. No special expertise is required. Just draw on your own personal and professional experience, and draw others out about theirs.

Section One: Why use these stories? To explore how culture shapes health and wellbeing. And to motivate and equip Culture of Health sectors -- including RWJF itself – to leverage the role of culture to achieve better health outcomes for all Americans.

How can a discussion organized around personal video stories achieve these objectives?

1. Immersion in an individual’s story: drawing viewers into a distinctive and unfamiliar culture

2. Exploration: provoking awareness and appreciation of the role of culture

3. Reflection:
   - comparing and contrasting this culture with your own, and others.
   - acknowledging and reconsidering our preconceptions about different cultures
   - moving beyond our usual definitions of what counts as a path to health – and being open to developing new approaches, or reorienting our practices

4. Activation: learning to listen and act with culture in mind. Exploring ways in which this new frame of reference could move us beyond conventional methods and partners, and lead to more effective strategies.
Section Two: Getting Started!

1. Consider your audience and specific aims.
   a. What do you hope to achieve?
   b. What’s the value of exploring culture and health with this particular audience? Are there any potential downsides to consider?\(^1\)

2. How much time will you have? Consider whether you will want the group to do small group work or any other exercises and if that will require additional feedback time.

3. What’s the venue like? Is it conducive to discussion? If not, reconfigure chairs and/or tables to be closer together towards the front of the room in a layout that allows people to see and hear one another.

4. What would count as success?

5. Selecting the video(s)
   a. Read the summaries of the four videos (under ‘resources’, below)
   b. Select a video based on relationship to your work. Consider the relevance of the theme, not just or even primarily whether the featured culture resembles populations you work with.
   c. Watch the video
   d. Watch any additional video from the remaining three, regardless of its relevance to your work. Think about its resonance with the first one: differences, similarities, illuminating juxtaposition?
   e. Decide whether or not to show both videos -- or to pick a different one!

6. Send the one-minute trailer with your email invitation to the session.

7. Assemble your own discussion guide from the set of potential questions.
   a. Open the power point for the primary story (see link below under Resources), and read the Instructions slides as well as the notes section on each slide for additional guidance.
   b. Using the guidelines, select the mix of slides best suited to the occasion.
   c. Revise the notes for each slide as appropriate to your role, purpose, and audience.
   d. Insert a second video if desired. (See appendix for instructions)
   e. Review the sources and consider adding additional information.

\(^1\) Safety is one concern. All of the storytellers are aware that the videos are being broadly distributed. Where appropriate, we have used only first names.
Resources

A. Story summaries and community context for: Charlie, Kitchu, Mackenzie, Zindy (see Appendix)

B. Power point presentations, incorporating video & discussion guide, are available for download here: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jxvu8c9q5agupb5/AABsuRCOfj-Aw4JQFtfVOCEHa?dl=0 or by contacting cynthia@purplestates.tv
   a. Charlie
   b. Kitchu (Kit)
   c. Mackenzie
   d. Zindy

C. Videos for viewing and download
   a. Full-length videos of these four stories:
      • Charlie’s Path: https://youtu.be/54gG3UpMr0M
      • Kitchu’s Path: https://youtu.be/ESStQCRCyel
      • Mackenzie’s Path: https://youtu.be/MLhzNDVc_2s
      • Zindy’s Path: https://youtu.be/Q1b_k2yObCw
   b. Four one-minute trailers:
      https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3t5v51pm4qpzb5u/AADU9ZZNoktrf_wUCNWzgC
      HRa?dl=0
   c. The full series: Introductory video and fourteen community stories,
      https://rwjf.ws/Cultures_and_Health
   d. 3-minute versions of all fourteen stories:
      https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q4of9nynfg0h6xt/AAA6rZLxx4S83nVZ8NydgVPEa?
      dl=0
   e. Two videos on cross-cutting themes – the role of elders, and how culture affects mental health
      https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mh4s3q03a5kgva1/AA AQxfe_yCaZqW_2ACUr2f
      wa?dl=0

D. Additional tools
   a. Complete set of story summaries (below)
   b. Story index -- organized by content elements and populations, to facilitate selection of videos for different purposes, audiences, contexts
      https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/77sk5yujusle471yjb1mx/Story-Index-
      selecting-by-theme-and-population.xlsx
Appendix

Story summaries and community context for: Charlie, Kitchu, Mackenzie, Zindy

1. CHARLIE’S PATH

The Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes Reservation in Montana is home to tribes whose culture was defined by their relationship to their land and their horses. Generations of systemic oppression drained their culture of its traditional meaning, and they struggle with grief, shame, and loss. Their trauma has led to fractured families, substance abuse and a high teen suicide rate. Charlie Four Bear gives troubled Fort Peck youth a chance to build relationships with horses, and through them, with tribal elders like himself, and to reclaim their tribal family’s cultural pride.

Context
Montana’s American Indian peoples belong to federally-recognized tribes on seven reservations and one state-recognized tribe. Some reside in urban areas. Poverty, distance from services, and cultural disenfranchisement are significant issues in tribal lands. In 2014, the state’s Department of Public Health documented severe health disparities: the median age of death for American Indian people in Montana is 50 (more than 20 years earlier than non-Indian Montanans). The state also reported significantly higher mortality rates from heart disease, cancer, respiratory illnesses, injuries, and suicide.

In 2015, the Department held an official government-to-government consultation with tribal government leaders and tribal health directors. Specific health issues emphasized by participants include methamphetamine and prescription drug abuse, diabetes, and youth suicide. According to the report on the convening, “historical trauma, racism and discrimination (both past and present), childhood trauma and abuse, poverty, loss of traditional culture, lack of opportunity, and hopelessness were discussed by many participants as fundamental problems that must be overcome in order to improve health...Many people emphasized that trauma lies at the root of health disparities, and underlies problems including drug and alcohol use, suicide, and even illnesses like diabetes.”

Fort Peck: The Fort Peck Reservation is home to 6,390 American Indians of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes. Fort Peck has made progress on health indicators, but signs of continued challenges include: adult obesity (29%), physical inactivity (30%), access to exercise opportunities (40%) and excessive drinking (22%), as well as social and economic factors like child poverty (19%) and income inequality. The physician-to-person ratio on the reservation is 1 to 4010.

2 Interactive data sources on counties and neighborhoods include the County Health Rankings, and the City Data website.
According to the Reservation’s website:

- The **median age of death in Fort Peck is 50 for American Indian males and 60 for females**, compared to 75 and 82 for Montanans as a whole.
- The primary causes of death in Fort Peck (cardiovascular, kidney and lung disease as well as alcohol abuse) are strongly correlated with modifiable risk factors like diet, exercise, and avoiding alcohol and drug use.

Fort Peck’s **Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HP/DP) Wellness Program** is a “tribally operated, locally controlled initiative whose mission is to restore the traditional values of the tribes and help our communities return to a healthier lifestyle. The program helps increase access to mental, physical, and spiritual health resources.” Fort Peck also recently re-launched a needle exchange program to reduce transmission of blood-borne illnesses such as hepatitis C and HIV, using a unique protocol which was one of the first operated in a rural reservation in the US.

2. **KITCHU’S PATH**

Line dance leader Kit Cheung teaches her class of Chinese-American women in an unlikely place —the parking lot of a local library. No other public location offers both the outdoor space and sun cover the group requires for their twist on the traditional Chinese exercise of tai chi. The relationship that forms between the initially-reluctant library and Kit’s dance group has created some unexpected opportunities.

**Context**

Alhambra is one of the most ethnically diverse communities in L.A. County. It is a primarily working class area northeast of downtown in the San Gabriel Valley. Its population of 83,089 is 53% Asian: 37% Chinese, 5% Vietnamese, 1.5% Japanese, 2.5% Filipino, 1% Korean, and 5% other (SE Asian, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, and Pacific Islanders). Of the remainder, 28% are White, many of whom are retired blue-collar workers. 34% are Latino (26% Mexican), 1.5% African American, and 0.6% Native American. Over 50% of residents are foreign-born. 14% of residents live below the federal poverty line.

The life expectancy for the community as a whole is 82. The leading causes of premature death in Alhambra are (in this order) heart disease, vehicle accidents, stroke, lung cancer, and colorectal cancer. An L.A. County statistic that (misleadingly) bundles together all Asian-Americans in the County as a whole may nonetheless offer a starting point for discussions with the different Asian-American communities in Alhambra. For Asian-Americans in L.A. the second
most common cause of premature death is not accidents but suicide, and lung cancer is in third place. The residents of Alhambra all have access to the same Culture of Health infrastructure. But each sub-group’s cultural identity may well be informing their choices and usage of available resources.

3 & 4. MACKENZIE AND ZINDY’S PATHS

Atlanta context

Racial and ethnic minorities make up roughly one-third of Georgia’s population, yet their disease burden is significantly higher. Georgia has well documented disparities in availability of culturally competent caregivers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease, cancer, stroke and HIV/AIDS.

These disparities are evident in Greater Atlanta, where one zip code’s life expectancy can differ by as much as 12 years from the next one over. And Atlanta is experiencing demographic change. The Hispanic and Asian populations have been growing rapidly. The more affluent residents of Greater Atlanta are returning to the downtown areas, while the economically disadvantaged are moving to the suburbs surrounding the central city. This is creating problems in terms of access to health centers, medicines, and healthy food. 88% of the homeless population of Greater Atlanta lives in the suburbs. What effects are these changes – an influx of newcomers, the acculturation process, transience, and the changing make-up of neighborhoods – having on cultural sources of resilience?

Initiatives like the Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement (ARCHI) are reaching across traditional boundaries to improve health equity. For example, Grady Health System identifies frequent users of ER’s, and the United Way sends trained community health workers into Atlanta’s neighborhoods to provide these residents with home-based care and case management services. Families First, a 125-year-old nonprofit whose mission is to connect, strengthen, and sustain families, is adapting its strategies for helping Atlanta’s vulnerable populations to serve new residents and address new challenges, with residents and other partners.

MACKENZIE’S PATH

English Avenue, a historic African American neighborhood with an illustrious past, sits at the bottom of Atlanta’s water runoff. Blighted by regular flooding, mass vacancies, unemployment and impoverishment, English Avenue finds hope in a home-grown response from its youth. Longtime resident MacKenzie Bass—along with fellow members of Street Smart—helps construct a park that curbs the excess water, creates a gathering place, and seeks to reclaim English Avenue’s identity.
Context: Fulton County and English Avenue

The county population is about equally divided between African-American and white residents, each representing approximately 40% of residents. The English Avenue neighborhood is 2/3 African-American, and the life expectancy rate in Mackenzie’s zipcode is 71, as compared to 84 for the most affluent area of Atlanta. The county coefficient for black/white residential segregation is 73 out of a possible 100, significantly higher than in the state as whole, and income inequality is almost double the national average.

County rates of high school graduation lag behind the state average, while child poverty, single-parent households, rates of violent crime and serious housing problems are significantly higher than for the state as a whole. Research on economic mobility shows that Fulton is among the worst U.S. Counties in helping poor children advance. Spending 20 childhood years in a poor family in Fulton reduces annual income as a young adult by an average of $3000. Reported drinking water violations are one indicator of persistent environmental challenges.

ZINDY’S PATH

Zindy is a Mexican immigrant and domestic abuse survivor who lives with her five children at an isolated Atlanta-area trailer park. She notices that other park residents—immigrants from Mexico and Central America—struggle with the same issues she does, such as English fluency, reticence to trust others, and limited access to education and other services. But Zindy views their shared isolation as an opportunity and unites mothers in the community around similar cultural norms and practices – not to address shared problems, like domestic abuse, but to realize their common dreams for their children. This is the story of how they forged cultural ties and mutual trust, and the confidence to seek outside help to create an escuelita (“little school”).

Context: Gwinnett County

Located just east of central Atlanta, Gwinnett ranks second in the state on overall health outcomes. The population has grown rapidly over the past 20 years, to 877,000. Gwinnett has been credited with more than a quarter of the region’s total growth. It has also become much more diverse: 58% of Gwinnett’s residents are White, 27% Black, and 20% Hispanic/Latino. Half of the Hispanic/Latino residents are of Mexican origin, 8% Puerto Rican, and 3% Cuban. Gwinnett is also home to the largest Asian population in Georgia: 11.5% of county residents are Asian (23% Indian, 15% Chinese, 24% Korean, and 18% Vietnamese).

The average life expectancy in Gwinnett County is 78. The leading causes of premature death when ranked by years of potential life lost are: external causes, followed by cancer, cardiovascular conditions, and fetal and infant conditions. External causes includes unintentional injuries or accidents (e.g., motor vehicle crashes, poisonings and falls) and intentional injuries (e.g. suicide, homicide).
Measures of health and wellbeing suggest that in Gwinnett, Latinos and Asians rather than African Americans are experiencing the greatest challenges. Unemployment at the time of the financial crisis was twice as high for Hispanics as for African Americans. The 2008 Georgia Health Disparities report showed that the % Speaking non-English Language at Home was 21.2% in Gwinnett. And 26.6 % of Hispanics had less than a ninth grade education. There are indications of un-addressed mental health issues among these populations, and among whites. A 2010 report (based on earlier data) showed suicide as the sixth leading cause of death for Hispanics.
Story summaries for complete Cultures and Health video series

The full Cultures and Health playlist can be found here: https://rwjf.ws/Cultures_and_Health

INTRODUCTION
Video: https://youtu.be/wp2SSH65KI4
Summary: This video introduces a fourteen-part series that provides insider access to cultures of health. We meet Ava, a young ballerina who draws on African-American traditions and defies stereotypes. And Israel, a transgender teen. Both learn from their elders to respect their bodies and themselves. Other videos in the series feature Kitchu line-dancing with seniors in a library garage; Zindy organizing mothers in a trailer park to start an on-site preschool; Caroll, an unemployed garment worker, making quilts for young mothers, and Charlie, a Lakota elder, building relationships between children and horses. This series of personal narratives is designed to equip organizations from across sectors to explore the significance of culture and leverage cultural resilience and innovation. The stories are proving valuable for staff development, teaching, program outreach and community-driven planning.

ANTHONY’S PATH – Birdsong guides a tribe home
Video: https://youtu.be/d_Z9wSMNkA0
Summary: The desert-dwelling Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians were uprooted from their ancestral lands. For decades they were cheated of the property rights deeded to them by the U.S. government, and then subject to restrictive deed provisions. Not until the 1980’s were they able to develop their own land in Palm Springs, and only recently have they begun to restore the springs revered by their ancestors. Tribal council member Anthony J. Andreas III battles the severe mental health problems that afflict the traumatized tribe by reviving ancestral practices. Traditional bird songs and pottery help today’s youth draw strength from the tribe’s sources of spiritual resilience.

AVA’S PATH – Every little girl should be able to wear a tutu
Video: https://youtu.be/wA5n5ZtDPIA
Summary: Ava is an ambitious teenager who owes much of her inner strength to a dance studio in South L.A. Founder Lula Washington and her daughter Tamica are professional dancers -- and they are role models as well as teachers. At their dance school, African American children learn to respect themselves, their bodies and their cultural traditions. The young dancers also defy stereotypes by mastering ballet. The dance program cultivates self-discipline and mutual support that enables girls like Ava to flourish even when their families are facing hard times.
BRITTANY'S PATH – Woman warrior
Video: https://youtu.be/nW1zh1Oxoek
Summary: Brittany Iron competes in the Crow Nation's Ultimate Warrior Challenge. The Challenge spurs her to master canoeing, running, and riding. The race teaches the Native values of commitment and perseverance. To participate, she has to commit to abstain from drugs and alcohol. The Crow are reimagining what it means to be a warrior. They are now drawing on traditional rituals to combat the effects of centuries of stigma and trauma, and to rebuild the tribe’s sense of pride and purpose.

CARROL AND KAYLA’S PATH – Stitching together the social fabric for young mothers in Appalachia
Video: https://youtu.be/-97Yf_fEhP8
Summary: Carrol Layfield manages a quilting group of older women from Ritchie County Virginia, who used to work in the area's garment industry. Using techniques handed down over generations, the women piece together quilts from remnants of fabric from the shuttered factories. Kayla Turk is a young mother of two children who returned home to Ritchie County to live with her parents when her husband was laid off. At a communal baby shower, Kayla receives a quilt from the older women, and discovers a network of support.

CHARLIE’S PATH – Rediscovering the healing power of horses
Video: https://youtu.be/54gG3UpMr0M
Summary: The Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes Reservation in Montana is home to tribes whose culture was defined by their relationship to their land and their horses. Generations of systemic oppression drained their culture of its traditional meaning, and they struggle with grief, shame, and loss. Their trauma has led to fractured families, substance abuse and a high teen suicide rate. Charlie Four Bear gives troubled Fort Peck youth a chance to build relationships with horses, and through them, with tribal elders like himself, and to reclaim their tribal family’s cultural pride.

ESPERANZA’S PATH – Dealing with depression through faith and acupuncture
Video: https://youtu.be/Y0CqDW2V3ww
Summary: Esperanza is an undocumented Mexican immigrant in Compton, California. She suffers from fears and anxieties caused by her four previous deportations and her high-stress role as her family's caregiver. Esperanza doesn't see depression as a health problem. When she shares her struggles with a local priest, she discovers a network of support that ranges from her comadres to a free clinic.
ISRAEL’S PATH – Shifting gender, securing acceptance
Video: https://youtu.be/oV-40tKNReo
Summary: Nineteen year old Israel Moncado spent his childhood being shuffled from one foster care setting to the next. After years of untreated gender dysphoria—and the bouts of self-harm and social isolation that often result from stigma — Israel visits his first LGBT center and discovers he's not alone. When he finds a safe space in a transgender community, Israel begins to embrace his identity.

JEREMY’S PATH – Veterans discover solace in service
Video: https://youtu.be/dEYmuTXIVV8?si=xnxO8VHTrT8GemF6
Summary: Marine Corporal Jeremy Dobbins returned to Dayton Ohio from duty in Afghanistan with an 80% disability rating and issues with anger. Trained in service to others, veterans often resist the idea that they themselves need help. And they have difficulty sharing their war experiences with family and friends. An oral history project at Wright State University is giving Jeremy and other young veterans a chance to help older veterans recover their stories of war, and to come to terms with their own.

KIT’S PATH – Fun and fitness in a library parking lot
Video: https://youtu.be/ESStQCRCyeI
Summary: Line dance leader Kit Cheung teaches her class of Chinese-American women in an unlikely place — the parking lot of a local library. No other public location offers both the outdoor space and sun cover the group requires for their twist on the traditional Chinese exercise of tai chi. The relationship that forms between the initially-reluctant library and Kit’s dance group has created some unexpected opportunities.

MACKENZIE’S PATH – Curbing floods and restoring a sense of community
Video: https://youtu.be/MLhzNDVc_2s
Summary: English Avenue, an historic African American neighborhood with an illustrious past, sits at the bottom of Atlanta's water runoff. Blighted by regular flooding, mass vacancies, unemployment and impoverishment, English Avenue finds hope in a home-grown response from its youth. Longtime resident MacKenzie Bass—along with fellow members of Street Smart—helps construct a park that curbs the excess water, creates a gathering place, and seeks to reclaim English Avenue's identity.
PADAM & PURNA’S PATH – Familiar food turns a refuge into a home
Video: https://youtu.be/Laeseo-qys4
Summary: Padam and Purna were forced from their homeland in Bhutan, and trapped in camps in Nepal for decades, before being resettled in an alien land: Clarkston, Georgia. The refugees have found some stability, but still feel frustrated and uprooted, which leads to domestic violence and suicide. Padam and Purna realized that familiar food is the first step to feeling at home. They have opened a food store and other refugee-run businesses, which offer safe spaces and sources of mutual support for all the Asian refugees in Clarkston, who are united by their experience of trauma.

SHERRIDAN’S PATH – Growing vegetables and expanding horizons
Video: https://youtu.be/9wNj1_h1JEQ
Summary: Many residents of Compton, California live in a food desert. They lack access to healthy foods. Young people have never acquired the habit of eating fresh fruits and vegetables. Retired neurosurgeon Sherridan Ross may have a solution: teach them to grow their own food. Drawing on the legacy of farming in Compton by African-Americans, Sherridan develops community gardens that transforms the attitude of neighborhood youth to food, and benefits them in other ways, too.

TOMÁS' PATH – Immigrant fathers and sons communicate – on the soccer field
Video: https://youtu.be/jvwE-pqV1VA
Summary: Traditional sports build cultural solidarity. In rural North Carolina, Tomás, a retired semi-professional soccer player from Mexico, co-founds an organized soccer league with family and fellow Central and Latin American undocumented immigrants. The common language of the sport forges bonds among the players and across generations, helping to foster more open communication between fathers and sons, and creates mentoring relationships with other adults. Moreover, the league’s frequent games promote physical and psychological resilience in a community burdened by the risk of deportation.

ZINDY’S PATH – In a trailer park, isolated mothers pursue a shared dream
Video: https://youtu.be/Q1b_k2yObCw
Summary: Zindy is a Mexican immigrant and domestic abuse survivor who lives with her five children at an isolated Atlanta-area trailer park. She notices that other park residents—immigrants from Mexico and Central America—struggle with the same issues she does, such as English fluency, reluctance to trust others, and limited access to education and other services. But Zindy views their shared isolation as an opportunity and unites mothers in the community around similar cultural norms and practices -- not to address shared problems, like domestic abuse, but to realize their common dreams for their children. This is the story of how they forged cultural ties and mutual trust, and the confidence to seek outside help in creating an escuelita ("little school").