

Story Projects & Listening Projects



Including and engaging diverse stakeholders is central to building community resilience. We all have a stake in our climate future – how do we ensure that everyone’s concerns and solutions are heard? Enter: storytelling. Stories are how people connect; they are the inspiration that bring people to action. To build understanding of local climate impacts and promising community solutions, one strategy is to ask community members to simply share their perspective.

Why is Storytelling a Job for Public Health?

In addition to being an effective tool for including and engaging stakeholders, storytelling can be used to spread key messages about climate change. When conveying climate change to the public, communications scholars have found that stories, especially those about our health, are effective in motivating people to action.

Where to begin?

Tips for meaningful engagement

- Go to the community, don’t require them to come to you.
- Identify community partners who can help promote and build support for your project. Consider co-hosting the event and/or integrating the project into another community event.
- Consider appropriate strategies for reaching different populations within your community.
- If you’re hosting an event, plan to offer accommodations for people with disabilities and people with small children.
- Ensure that the time and location is best suited to fit the needs of the community (e.g. working hours, other community events, holidays, etc.)
- Identify major languages spoken in the community and if a translator will be needed
- Provide storytelling examples for community members to help them better understand the purpose and goal of the project.

Below is a list of different models of story and listening projects. Each represents a different kind of approach and takes on a different form. Your project can be tailored to best fit your program’s skillset, partnerships, community interest, and available resources. Click on the links to see examples.

Model	Steps	Example
Host a film screening to facilitate a community conversation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Select a short film that will catalyze conversation (2) Secure a facility and equipment needed for the showing – perhaps a partner can “sponsor” the event (3) Develop a set of questions to help facilitate dialogue after the screening (4) Advertise the event widely through existing community networks and channels that reach a diversity of community members (5) Plan to record the conversation and let participants know that their conversation will be recorded 	Wisdom of the Elders: The Wisdom Project Unnatural Causes Our Children’s Trust videos
Survey stakeholders with open-ended questions and use the responses to develop “Story Portraits”	<p>Choose a 2-4 questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your main concerns when it comes to climate change? • How do you think climate change might impact your community? • What makes a community resilient? • How would you like to see your community take action? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Create a list of diverse contacts and ask if they are willing to respond to the questions through e-mail, phone, or in-person. (2) Ask each participant to recommend additional contacts who can help to broaden the types of responses received (based on their expertise, background, experience, etc.) (3) Collect stories and work with partners to select quotes that tell a powerful story. Confirm that the participants are comfortable with sharing the selected quotes (4) Take photos of participants who contributed quotes. Use the photos and quotes to illustrate different community concerns and solutions. These can then be integrated into educational and communication materials, presentations, etc. 	Oregon Climate and Health Story Project

<p>Host a set of speakers to share their “climate story” – celebrate community success stories</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify speakers who can speak on behalf of their experience working on climate change such as students, activists, politicians, farm workers, educators, tribal leaders, etc. 2. Secure a time, location, and equipment needed to host the event such as a university conference hall or community building. 3. Advertise the event through existing community partners and reach out to community groups not previously worked with to reach a more diverse audience. 4. Record the event to be posted online to be shared with people unable to attend in person and have the project reach an even wider audience. 	<p>Fortified: True Stories of Climate Action</p>
<p>Conduct interviews with community members and document their stories through video</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify people in the community whose health or livelihood has been disproportionately burdened by effects of extreme weather events (e.g. migrant farm workers, outdoor recreation guides, elders, people living in flood plains, etc.). 2. Alternatively, identify people who have stories of strength and resilience. Ask people to talk about what resilience looks like in their life. 3. Have a set of questions that can help to prompt memories, stories of surviving and thriving. 4. Video record the stories and combine parts of the video into a communication tool that can be shared with the public and decision-makers. 	<p>Coalition for a Livable Future’s Equity Stories Project</p> <p>Climate Change in Atlantic Canada</p> <p>Colorado Health Story</p> <p>Minneapolis Story telling toolkit</p> <p>Minneapolis Story telling video</p>
<p>Host a community listening session</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite people from both communities considered ‘at risk’ and ‘not at risk’ to share concerns and explores solutions together. 2. Advertise the event through existing community groups as well as through flyers and social media to reach people not already involved. Consider offering an incentive for participation. 3. Hold the event in a meeting place that is conducive to equalizing talkers and listeners 4. Prepare open-ended questions and identify experienced facilitators who can encourage participation and ensure equal opportunities for sharing 	<p>Listening Project Resource</p> <p>Gentrification Listening Project</p> <p>Oregon Public Health Institute – Community Conversations Coming Soon</p>

Hold a climate change awareness bus tour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify areas within the community that have already or will likely face negative impacts from climate change to be included in the bus tour. 2. Select stops along the way where community members, activists, and politicians can speak to their concerns and efforts. 3. Partner with schools to help supply buses. 4. End bus tour with a chance for participants to reflect on what they learned and next steps. 	Beyond Toxics: Environmental Justice Bust Tour
Create an online Story Bank	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a space on your organization's website where people can anonymously contribute their story to share with the public. 2. Promote participation through organization listservs- ask other community organizations to forward the site to their colleagues and represented community base. 3. Ensure contributors understand that their confidentiality will be protected if they decide to share their story. 4. Stories can later be used to contribute to news reports, create health media messages, or community presentations. 	EPA's Climate Justice Blog & Story Map Utah Health Story Bank

For more storytelling resources, check out: [Climate Access](#)