General Prompts for Any Episode

BEFORE & AFTER DISCUSSION STARTERS:

These pre- and post-viewing suggestions help people become more aware of their assumptions and beliefs. They should be used in combination with comprehension and discussion questions.

Health Equity Quiz

Before: Administer the Health Equity Quiz (www.unnaturalcauses.org/interactivities.php)

After: Give people time to adjust their responses, and then discuss answers that were surprising or unexpected.

Quick Write

Before: Engage participants in a 5-minute "quick write" using some of the questions below.

After: Allow people a few minutes to reflect silently on what they wrote, and then discuss how answers changed or not given the content of the film.

Sample questions:
➤ What are health disparities? What are health inequities? What's the difference, if any?

➤ Which U.S. populations live longer, healthier lives? List three reasons why.

➤ If you could wave your magic wand, what three things would you change to close socio-economic and racial health gaps?

The Baseline / Ten Things to Know

Before: Establish a "baseline" for your group's understanding: What do you know about [insert episode topic]? What are your sources of information? What makes those sources reliable (or not reliable)?

After: In what ways did the film challenge or affirm your ideas or sources?

Follow up activity: Distribute and review the handout "Ten Things to Know about Health." Select a few points and ask: What did you see that supported this? Are you convinced that this is true? Why or why not? What questions do you still have and how might you find answers to those questions?

REFLECTION & COMPREHENSION:

Personal reactions:

➤ How is this film similar to or different from other media you have seen, read, or heard on this issue or community? In what ways did it confirm or challenge ideas you held?

➤ What stood out as surprising or disturbing for you in the film? Describe a moment or scene that affected you and why.

➤ What questions / issues surfaced that you would like to know more about?

Key concepts:

➤ What is the significance of the series title UNNATURAL CAUSES?

➤ What are social determinants of health?

➤ What is the difference between individual health and population health?

➤ How do inequality and social injustice produce health consequences, as illustrated in the film? Why is health more than health care, individual behaviors or genes?

➤ Why do we typically think of health only in terms of health care and personal behaviors? Where are these messages coming from? Who benefits from them?

➤ What social and economic conditions described in the film support and encourage healthy choices? What social and economic conditions and structures affect health that have nothing to do with individual choices? How are resources allocated in your community or in society?

➤ Many Americans, when confronted with evidence of health inequities, respond that the outcomes are unfortunate but not necessarily unjust. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Whose responsibility is it to address inequities in health and in society?

➤ What social and economic conditions described in the film support and encourage healthy choices? How are resources allocated in your community or in society?

➤ What policies at the local, state or federal level (e.g., education, transportation, employment, etc.) might reduce social and economic inequities? What would a more equitable society look like? Who can make it happen?

FOCUSING ON YOUR COMMUNITY:

1. **What elements depicted in this film reflect your community?** Which issues most affect health in your community, for better and worse: housing, jobs, income, transportation, racism, schools, social exclusion or civic engagement, land use and development…? How?

2. **Who makes the decisions that affect your community?** Who's missing? How can community members gain access to power? How would you change the process? What decisions would you make differently?

3. **What compelling stories do you want to tell about your community?** How would you reshape the media coverage that exists? Which voices are missing? What messages and ideas? Who are your audiences? What images and symbols would you use in communicating with media?

4. **How can you make things better in your community?** What are the greatest challenges? What additional resources are needed? Who are your natural allies and how will you begin creating alliances and partnerships? What are your priorities for action?

5. **What initiatives are already underway that can improve health outcomes** on the local, state or federal level (e.g. living wage campaign; a drive for universal pre-school; mandated paid sick leave)?

TIP: The UNNATURAL CAUSES Toolkit contains useful questions and suggestions for this area.

Readings

The following articles and reports provide a good introduction and overview of social determinants of health. The UNNNATURAL CAUSES Web site (www.unnaturalcauses.org) also includes a health equity database searchable by topic and keyword.

Adler, Nancy et al. *Reaching for a Healthier Life: Facts on Socio-Economic Status in the U.S.* San Francisco: MacArthur Research Network on SES and Health, 2007. www.macses.ucsf.edu/News/Reaching%20for%20a%20Healthier%20Life.pdf

Bell, Judith and Victor Rubin. *Why Place Matters: Building a Movement for Healthy Communities.* Oakland, CA: PolicyLink, 2007. www.policylink.org/documents/WhyPlaceMattersreport_web.pdf

Braveman, Paula and Susan Egerter. *Overcoming Obstacles to Health: Report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to the Commission to Build a Healthy America.* Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008. www.commissiononhealth.org/Report.aspx?Publication=26244

Drexler, Madeline. "How Racism Hurts – Literally," *Boston Globe,* July 15, 2007. www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/07/15/how_racism_hurts____literally/

Epstein, Helen. "Enough to Make You Sick?" *New York Times,* Oct. 12, 2003. www.mindfully.org/Health/2003/Urban-Poor-Sick12oct03.htm

Hofrichter, Richard, ed. *Tackling Health Inequities through Public Health Practice: A Handbook for Action.* Washington, DC: National Association of County and City Health Officials, 2006. www.naccho.org/pubs/product1.cfm?Product_ID=11

Marmot, Michael. *The Status Syndrome: How Social Standing Affects Our Health and Longevity.* New York: Henry Holt, 2004.

Resources

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Health Policy Institute: www.jointcenter.org/index.php/current_research_and_policy_activities/health_policy_institute

National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Health Equity and Social Justice Program: http://www.naccho.org/topics/justice/index.cfm

PolicyLink: www.policylink.org

The Praxis Project: www.thepraxisproject.org

Prevention Institute and the Strategic Alliance for Health: www.preventioninstitute.org