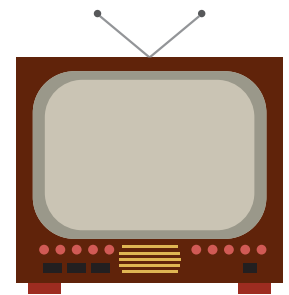
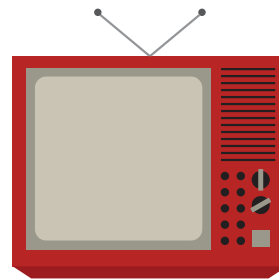
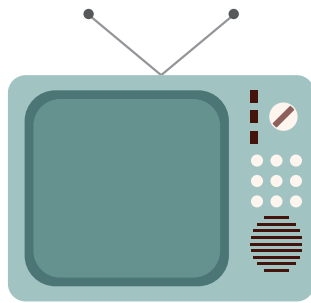
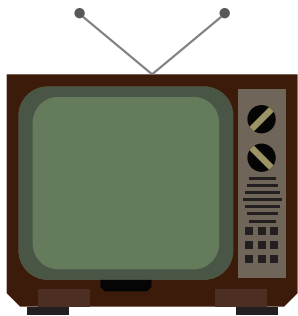


A Culture of Health

Going Beyond the Disease of the Week

Our health is influenced not just by individual choices, but also complex factors—often out of our control—such as where we live, how we work and the strength of our families and communities. Ensuring health for all, then, requires us to create a Culture of Health, a society that gives **all individuals an equal opportunity to live the healthiest lives possible**, regardless of ethnic, geographic, racial, socioeconomic, or physical circumstances.



How Is the Health of Americans Depicted Onscreen?

Research from the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center’s Media Impact Project identified four types of narratives in scripted entertainment, each with different impact on how people interpret blame and

solutions when it comes to health problems. “Hybrid” narratives, which tell a person’s individual health story in the context of the external factors that affect their health, are common. Research has shown that such narratives can elicit audience empathy and increase support for equitable systems.

Many hybrid narratives focus on individual solutions, such as a healthcare professional who goes above and beyond, coming up with a creative workaround or even violating ethical, legal or bureaucratic rules. However, hybrid narratives that demonstrate how individuals can change institutions are more powerful in helping people envision

societal-level changes. To successfully inspire a Culture of Health, content creators are encouraged to show how structural barriers to care and systemic injustice limit the options of a character, while also balancing this context with stories of individual agency and collective action. ■



Research from the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center’s Media Impact Project identified four types of narratives in scripted entertainment:

1. Personal responsibility
2. Hybrid
3. Hybrid narratives with individual solutions
4. Hybrid narratives with systemic solutions



TO LEARN MORE

- [Building a Culture of Health](#), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- [Narratives of Health Equity](#), Media Impact Project



Illustrating a Culture of Health



1 GENERATE empathy by creating stories that show health challenges or unhealthy behaviors driven by difficult circumstances. In *New Amsterdam* (NBC), a patient gets an infection while dumpster diving due to food insecurity, and then delays medical treatment because he is uninsured.



New Amsterdam

2 REVEAL how financial barriers can restrict access to care and exacerbate existing health problems. In *Roseanne* (ABC), Roseanne Conner develops an opioid addiction to cope with her knee pain because the necessary surgery is unaffordable.



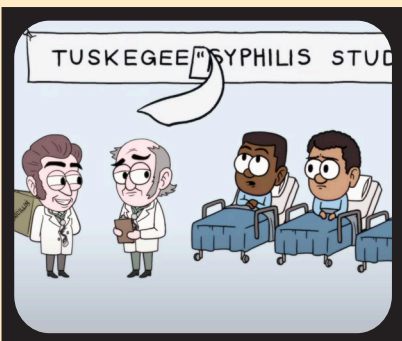
Roseanne

3 HIGHLIGHT the ways racism leads to poor health outcomes for people of color, generation after generation. *New Amsterdam* shows how racism can produce stress-related health conditions for Black people, while *The Chi* (Showtime) and *Queen & Slim* show how police violence disproportionately impacts Black communities.



The Chi

4 CONNECT historic and contemporary medical racism to Black people's reluctance to seek health care from Western doctors. *Mixed-ish* (ABC) demonstrates the internal struggles that Black characters face when confronted with health problems and a legacy of violent medical racism.



mixed-ish

5 EXPLAIN how bias towards transgender and gender nonconforming individuals leads to medical complications and public ignorance. *Pose* (FX) uncovers the U.S. government's historic ignorance of HIV, while dramas like *Chicago Med* (NBC) and *Royal Pains* (USA Network) show the social barriers to healthcare trans people face.



Pose

6 MODEL collective actions that modify systems and work towards a Culture of Health. TV series like *Superstore* (NBC) and *Bob's Burgers* (Fox) show workers who organize in order to secure important health-related victories.



Superstore

