

Narrative Equity Review Process Guide

"Stories are medicine. When we center community stories in evaluation, we transform monitoring from surveillance to healing, from extraction to sovereignty, from compliance to community power."

In this guide:

- [Understanding Narrative Equity](#)
- [Community Storytelling Protocols](#)
- [Healing Story Circle Framework](#)
- [Traditional Knowledge Integration](#)
- [Story Collection and Documentation](#)
- [Community-Led Analysis](#)
- [Advocacy and Action Planning](#)
- [Digital Storytelling and Technology](#)

Guide Purpose: Comprehensive framework for centering community stories in mental health evaluation, ensuring community control over narratives and transformation of monitoring from external surveillance to community healing.

Target Users: Community mental health task forces, traditional healers, peer support networks, family advocates, community organizers, progressive mental health professionals

This guide provides everything communities need to implement narrative equity reviews that honor community wisdom, protect story sovereignty, and transform evaluation from institutional compliance to community healing and empowerment.

Understanding Narrative Equity

The Foundation of Story-Centered Evaluation

Narrative equity means communities control their own stories about mental health, healing, and transformation.

Traditional evaluation extracts stories from communities for institutional use. Narrative equity ensures communities maintain ownership, interpretation, and action authority over their own stories and experiences.

Core Principles of Narrative Equity

Story Sovereignty: Communities control who tells stories, how stories are shared, and how stories are used for advocacy and change

Cultural Story Protocols: All storytelling honors cultural protocols and traditional ways of sharing wisdom and experience

Healing-Centered Storytelling: The storytelling process itself supports community healing and connection rather than extracting trauma for institutional use

Action-Oriented Stories: Stories are collected and shared to support community action and advocacy rather than academic research or institutional compliance

Community-Defined Impact: Communities define what stories matter and what changes stories should support

Transforming Evaluation Through Story

From Surveillance to Healing

Traditional evaluation monitors communities to ensure compliance with institutional standards. Narrative equity evaluation supports community healing through shared storytelling and collective meaning-making.

Surveillance Evaluation:

- External evaluators asking predetermined questions
- Focus on deficits and problems rather than strengths and wisdom
- Stories extracted for institutional reporting purposes
- Community members as subjects rather than partners
- Evaluation disconnected from community priorities and action

Healing-Centered Evaluation:

- Community members as storytellers and interpreters
- Focus on community strengths, wisdom, and transformation
- Stories shared for community healing and empowerment
- Community members as partners and leaders in evaluation
- Evaluation designed to support community action and advocacy

Community Authority in Story Interpretation

Traditional Approach: External experts interpret community experiences and determine what stories mean for policy and practice

Narrative Equity Approach: Communities interpret their own experiences and determine how stories should be understood and used for change

Community Storytelling Protocols

Cultural and Healing-Centered Storytelling

Every community has traditional ways of sharing stories that support healing and community connection.

Narrative equity reviews honor and build upon these traditional approaches while adapting to contemporary mental health evaluation needs.

Cultural Story Protocols

Traditional Storytelling Wisdom:

Community Storytelling Cultural Adaptation:

Traditional Elements to Honor:

- Opening ceremonies or prayers appropriate to your community
- Talking circles or other traditional sharing formats
- Elder involvement and wisdom-sharing protocols

- Sacred space creation and maintenance
- Community consent and decision-making processes

Contemporary Adaptations:

- Integration of mental health language with traditional healing concepts
- Inclusion of diverse family structures and chosen families
- Accessibility for people with disabilities and diverse communication needs
- Integration of contemporary healing approaches with traditional knowledge
- Technology integration that supports rather than replaces traditional practices

Sacred Story Protection:

- **Traditional Knowledge Boundaries:** Clear protocols for protecting sacred or traditional knowledge that should not be shared publicly
- **Family Story Privacy:** Respecting family and community privacy while sharing stories for advocacy
- **Healing Story Safety:** Ensuring storytelling supports healing rather than retraumatization
- **Cultural Authority:** Traditional healers and elders providing guidance on appropriate storytelling protocols
- **Community Consent:** Ongoing community consent for story sharing and use

Trauma-Informed Storytelling Protocols

Creating Safety for Story Sharing:

```
{
  "trauma_informed_storytelling": {
    "physical_safety": "comfortable, private, culturally appropriate space",
    "emotional_safety": "skilled facilitation and community support",
    "cultural_safety": "respect for cultural values and traditional practices",
    "spiritual_safety": "appropriate spiritual support and ceremony",
    "choice_and_control": "storytellers control what and how they share"
  }
}
```

Consent and Choice Protocols:

- **Voluntary Participation:** Completely optional storytelling with no pressure or consequences

- **Informed Consent:** Clear understanding of how stories will be used and protected
- **Ongoing Consent:** Ability to change mind about story sharing at any time
- **Story Control:** Storytellers control their own story including editing and withdrawal
- **Privacy Protection:** Strong privacy protection and confidentiality protocols

Community-Controlled Documentation

Story Sharing Options

Multiple Ways to Participate in Narrative Equity Reviews:

In-Person Story Circles:

- Traditional healing circles adapted for mental health storytelling
- Small group intimate sharing with community support
- Large community gatherings with multiple sharing circles
- Intergenerational story circles connecting elders and youth
- Cultural ceremony integration with story sharing

Individual Story Interviews:

- One-on-one story sharing with trained community listeners
- Family story interviews including multiple family members
- Traditional healer interviews about cultural healing approaches
- Peer-to-peer story sharing between people with similar experiences
- Professional ally interviews about community partnership experiences

Creative Storytelling:

- Art-based storytelling through drawing, painting, or crafting
- Music and song storytelling honoring musical traditions
- Poetry and spoken word storytelling
- Dance and movement storytelling
- Photography and visual storytelling

Written Story Sharing:

- Anonymous written story submission
- Guided writing circles with community support
- Letter writing to community or decision-makers
- Journal sharing with community consent
- Digital story submission through community-controlled platforms

Healing Story Circle Framework

Traditional Circle Adaptation for Mental Health

Healing story circles adapt traditional circle processes for mental health evaluation and community healing.

Circle processes honor the wisdom that healing happens in community and that every person has wisdom to share and receive.

Circle Setup and Preparation

Physical Space Creation:

Healing Story Circle Space Setup:

Circle Arrangement:

- Chairs or floor seating in circle without table barriers
- Talking piece or other traditional sharing object
- Sacred items or cultural objects as appropriate
- Tissues, water, and comfort items available
- Private space protected from interruption

Accessibility Considerations:

- Wheelchair accessible seating arrangements
- Sign language interpretation if needed
- Written materials in large print or braille
- Quiet space for sensory sensitivities
- Multiple communication options (verbal, written, artistic)

Cultural Elements:

- Appropriate opening ceremony or prayer
- Sacred objects or cultural items as decided by community
- Food and refreshments honoring cultural preferences
- Child care provided to enable family participation
- Transportation support for community members who need it

Community Preparation:

- **Community Invitation:** Open invitation explaining circle purpose and voluntary participation
- **Cultural Preparation:** Community education about cultural protocols and expectations
- **Facilitator Preparation:** Training for community members facilitating circles
- **Safety Planning:** Safety plans for people who might be triggered by story sharing
- **Follow-up Planning:** Plans for community support after emotional story sharing

Circle Process Structure

Opening and Grounding (15-20 minutes):

Circle Opening Process:

Cultural Opening:

- Traditional ceremony, prayer, or land acknowledgment as appropriate
- Moment of silence or meditation for grounding
- Sharing of circle intentions and community hopes
- Introduction of cultural protocols and safety agreements

Community Agreements:

- What is shared in circle stays in circle (confidentiality)
- Speak from your own experience using "I" statements
- Listen without giving advice or trying to fix
- Honor all experiences as valid and important
- Take care of yourself and ask for support when needed

Talking Piece Introduction:

- Explanation of talking piece tradition and protocols
- Invitation to hold talking piece only when speaking

- Permission to pass without speaking
- Explanation of circle speaking order and time awareness

Story Sharing Rounds (60-90 minutes):

Story Sharing Structure:

Round 1: Introduction and Connection (20-30 minutes)

- Each person shares name and brief connection to mental health topic
- Optional sharing of cultural background or community connection
- What brings you to this circle today?

Round 2: Experience and Journey Sharing (30-45 minutes)

- Personal mental health experiences and healing journeys
- Family or community mental health experiences
- Traditional healing experiences and cultural approaches
- Service experiences - what has been helpful or harmful

Round 3: Community Vision and Wisdom (20-30 minutes)

- What does mental health success look like in our community?
- What community strengths support mental health and healing?
- What changes would improve mental health in our community?
- What wisdom do you want to share with our community?

Reflection and Meaning-Making (20-30 minutes):

- **Pattern Identification:** What themes and patterns do we hear across stories?
- **Community Strengths:** What strengths and assets do our stories highlight?
- **Community Needs:** What needs and gaps do our stories identify?
- **Cultural Wisdom:** What traditional knowledge and cultural wisdom emerges from our stories?
- **Action Opportunities:** What opportunities for community action do our stories suggest?

Closing and Integration (10-15 minutes):

- **Appreciation Round:** Brief appreciation for stories shared and wisdom received
- **Commitment Sharing:** Optional sharing of commitments to community action
- **Resource Sharing:** Sharing of resources for ongoing support and connection
- **Cultural Closing:** Appropriate closing ceremony or prayer

- **Follow-up Planning:** Information about next steps and ongoing circle opportunities

Specialized Story Circle Formats

Intergenerational Healing Circles

Connecting Elder Wisdom with Contemporary Experience:

Elder-Youth Story Partnerships:

Intergenerational Story Circle Format:

Preparation Phase:

- Separate elder and youth preparation sessions
- Cultural protocol education for intergenerational sharing
- Consent and safety planning for all participants

Circle Structure:

- Opening with elder blessing or traditional ceremony
- Paired elder-youth story sharing with mutual listening
- Large circle sharing of insights from paired conversations
- Community visioning for intergenerational mental health healing
- Closing with commitment to ongoing intergenerational connection

Focus Areas:

- How mental health understanding has changed over time
- Traditional healing approaches and their contemporary relevance
- Historical trauma impacts and community healing
- Contemporary mental health challenges and traditional wisdom responses
- Community strengths spanning generations

Family and Chosen Family Circles:

- **Multi-Generational Family Stories:** Families sharing mental health experiences across generations
- **Chosen Family Circles:** LGBTQ+ and other chosen families sharing experiences
- **Caregiver and Support Person Stories:** People supporting others sharing their experiences

- **Family Healing Approaches:** Families sharing traditional and contemporary healing approaches

Cultural and Traditional Healing Circles

Traditional Healer Leadership:

Traditional Healing Story Circle:

Healer-Led Format:

- Traditional healers facilitating circles using cultural protocols
- Integration of traditional ceremony with story sharing
- Traditional healing assessment and community wisdom sharing
- Cultural competency evaluation of contemporary services
- Traditional knowledge preservation and transmission

Community Participation:

- Community stories about traditional healing experiences
- Assessment of traditional healing access and availability
- Cultural competency evaluation of mental health services
- Community feedback on traditional and contemporary healing integration
- Community support for traditional knowledge preservation

Cultural Restoration Stories:

- **Language and Cultural Practice Stories:** Stories about cultural healing and restoration
- **Land and Territory Connection:** Stories about connection to traditional lands and healing
- **Ceremony and Spiritual Practice:** Stories about spiritual healing and practice
- **Community Cultural Healing:** Stories about collective cultural restoration and healing

Traditional Knowledge Integration

Honoring Indigenous and Cultural Wisdom

Traditional healing knowledge holds essential wisdom for community mental health evaluation and transformation.

Narrative equity reviews must honor and protect traditional knowledge while learning from cultural approaches to healing and community wellbeing.

Traditional Healer Authority and Leadership

Elder and Healer Guidance:

Traditional Knowledge Integration Protocol:

Leadership Roles:

- Traditional healers providing guidance on appropriate evaluation approaches
- Elders offering wisdom about community healing and cultural protocols
- Cultural practitioners sharing knowledge about traditional mental health practices
- Spiritual leaders providing guidance on appropriate ceremony and spirituality

Knowledge Protection:

- Clear protocols for protecting sacred and private traditional knowledge
- Community consent for any sharing of traditional healing approaches
- Traditional healer authority over how their knowledge is represented
- Cultural community control over traditional knowledge documentation

Integration Approaches:

- Traditional healing concepts integrated with contemporary mental health practices
- Cultural understanding of mental health informing evaluation questions
- Traditional healing effectiveness assessed using culturally appropriate measures
- Community cultural competency evaluation of contemporary mental health practices

Cultural Protocol Integration:

- **Ceremony and Ritual:** Appropriate integration of traditional ceremony in evaluation processes
- **Sacred Space Creation:** Traditional approaches to creating sacred and healing space
- **Seasonal and Cultural Timing:** Aligning evaluation activities with cultural calendar and appropriate timing
- **Traditional Decision-Making:** Honoring traditional consensus and decision-making processes
- **Community Authority:** Traditional community authority and governance in evaluation processes

Traditional Healing Effectiveness Assessment

Community-Defined Traditional Healing Evaluation:

```
{
  "traditional_healing_assessment": {
    "effectiveness_measures": "community-defined success based on tra
    "access_evaluation": "community assessment of traditional healing
    "cultural_competency": "evaluation of contemporary service respect
    "knowledge_transmission": "assessment of traditional knowledge pro
    "integration_success": "community evaluation of traditional and co
  }
}
```

Traditional Knowledge Preservation:

- **Knowledge Documentation:** Community-controlled documentation of traditional healing knowledge and approaches
- **Intergenerational Transmission:** Assessment of traditional knowledge transmission to younger generations
- **Cultural Practice Preservation:** Evaluation of traditional healing practice preservation and adaptation
- **Language Preservation:** Traditional healing language and concepts preservation and use
- **Cultural Continuity:** Assessment of cultural continuity and traditional healing integration in contemporary life

Cultural Competency Evaluation

Community Assessment of Service Cultural Competency

Communities evaluating how well contemporary mental health services understand and respect cultural approaches to healing:

Cultural Competency Story Collection:

Cultural Competency Evaluation Questions:

Service Provider Cultural Understanding:

- Did service providers understand your cultural background and values?
- Were traditional healing approaches respected and integrated when appropriate?
- Were services provided in culturally appropriate ways?
- Did providers understand family and community relationships important to you?

Traditional Healing Integration:

- Were traditional healers included or consulted when you wanted them?
- Were traditional healing approaches available as part of your care?
- Did providers understand traditional healing and cultural approaches?
- Were cultural ceremonies or practices supported as part of healing?

Language and Communication:

- Were services available in your preferred language?
- Did providers understand cultural communication styles and preferences?
- Were family and community involvement supported when culturally appropriate?
- Did providers understand cultural concepts of mental health and healing?

Community and Family Integration:

- Were family and community included in healing in culturally appropriate ways?
- Did providers understand cultural family structures and relationships?
- Were community support systems recognized and integrated?
- Did services support cultural community connection and participation?

Traditional Healing Integration Success Stories:

- **Successful Integration:** Stories about successful integration of traditional and contemporary healing
- **Cultural Respect:** Stories about mental health services that honored cultural values and approaches
- **Traditional Healer Collaboration:** Stories about collaboration between traditional healers and mental health professionals
- **Cultural Healing Success:** Stories about cultural approaches to healing and their effectiveness

Story Collection and Documentation

Community-Controlled Story Documentation

Story collection must honor community control while creating documentation useful for advocacy and community action.

All story documentation respects storyteller choice and community cultural protocols while supporting community goals for mental health transformation.

Storyteller Consent and Choice

Comprehensive Consent Protocols:

Story Documentation Consent Framework:

Initial Consent:

- Clear explanation of narrative equity review purpose and community goals
- Explanation of how stories will be used for community advocacy and action
- Information about privacy protection and story confidentiality
- Options for different levels of story sharing and documentation

Ongoing Consent:

- Ability to change mind about story sharing at any time
- Regular check-ins about continued consent for story use
- Option to edit or withdraw stories from documentation
- Control over how stories are shared and with whom

Documentation Options:

- Anonymous story sharing without identifying information
- Confidential story documentation for community use only
- Public story sharing with full consent and preparation
- Partial story sharing with specific aspects kept private
- No documentation with story shared for healing purposes only

Story Control and Ownership:

- **Storyteller Authority:** Storytellers maintain authority over their own stories including editing and use
- **Community Ownership:** Community maintains collective ownership of community story themes and patterns

- **Cultural Protection:** Cultural protocols honored for traditional knowledge and sacred stories
- **Family Consent:** Family and chosen family consent for stories involving family members
- **Community Validation:** Community validation of story themes and patterns before advocacy use

Story Documentation Methods

Multiple Documentation Approaches:

```
{
  "story_documentation_methods": {
    "written_documentation": "note-taking during story sharing with s
    "audio_recording": "audio recording for transcription with full c
    "video_documentation": "video storytelling with complete control
    "artistic_documentation": "art, music, poetry, or other creative
    "photography": "photos supporting stories with participant contro
  }
}
```

Community Documentation Standards:

- **Privacy Protection:** Strong privacy protection for all story documentation
- **Cultural Respect:** Documentation approaches that respect cultural values and protocols
- **Accessibility:** Documentation accessible to people with diverse disabilities and communication styles
- **Community Access:** Community access to all story documentation and community control over use
- **Safe Storage:** Secure storage of story documentation with community-controlled access

Story Theme Analysis and Pattern Recognition

Community-Led Story Analysis

Community Story Analysis Process:

Monthly Community Story Analysis Session (3 hours):

Story Review and Sharing (60 minutes):

- Review of stories collected in past month
- Community discussion of story themes and patterns
- Traditional healer and elder perspective on stories
- Cultural context and traditional knowledge integration

Pattern and Theme Identification (60 minutes):

- Community identification of common themes across stories
- Strengths and assets highlighted in community stories
- Challenges and barriers identified through stories
- Cultural wisdom and traditional knowledge emerging from stories

Action Planning and Community Response (60 minutes):

- Community implications of story themes and patterns
- Advocacy opportunities identified through story analysis
- Community action plans based on story findings
- Resource and support needs identified through stories

Traditional Knowledge Pattern Analysis:

- **Cultural Theme Recognition:** Traditional healers and elders identifying cultural themes in stories
- **Traditional Healing Effectiveness:** Pattern analysis of traditional healing approaches and success
- **Cultural Competency Patterns:** Patterns in cultural competency of contemporary mental health services
- **Community Strength Recognition:** Cultural and traditional strength identification through story analysis
- **Healing Approach Patterns:** Patterns in effective healing approaches from community stories

AI-Assisted Pattern Recognition with Community Control

Community-Controlled AI Story Analysis:


```
{
  "community_controlled_ai_analysis": {
    "community_consent": "AI analysis only with explicit community co
    "cultural_training": "AI tools trained to recognize cultural conce
    "privacy_protection": "Strong privacy protection with community co
    "pattern_validation": "AI-identified patterns validated by commun
    "community_ownership": "Community maintains ownership and control
  }
}
```

AI Analysis Protocols:

- **Community Training:** Community training on AI analysis benefits and risks
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** AI tools designed to recognize and respect cultural approaches and language
- **Traditional Knowledge Protection:** AI analysis protocols that protect traditional knowledge and sacred information
- **Community Validation:** All AI analysis validated by community interpretation and cultural authority
- **Community Control:** Community control over AI analysis use and story data management

Community-Led Analysis

Community Interpretation of Story Patterns

Communities are the ultimate experts on interpreting their own experiences and determining what stories mean for community action.

Community-led analysis ensures that story interpretation honors community wisdom and cultural knowledge while supporting community goals for mental health transformation.

Community Story Interpretation Process

Quarterly Community Story Interpretation Workshops:

Community Story Interpretation Workshop (6 hours over 2 days):

Day 1: Story Pattern Recognition (3 hours)

Morning Session:

- Review of quarterly story collection and documentation
- Community discussion of story themes and patterns
- Traditional healer and elder interpretation of cultural themes
- Identification of community strengths and assets through stories

Afternoon Session:

- Recognition of challenges and barriers through story analysis
- Cultural competency assessment based on community stories
- Traditional healing effectiveness assessment through stories
- Community needs and priorities identification

Day 2: Community Action Planning (3 hours)

Morning Session:

- Community visioning based on story findings
- Advocacy priority setting based on story themes
- Community action planning using story evidence
- Resource and support planning based on story needs

Afternoon Session:

- Community report development and story sharing planning
- Advocacy strategy development using community stories
- Community mobilization planning based on story findings
- Next quarter planning for ongoing story collection and action

Traditional Knowledge Integration in Analysis:

- **Cultural Context:** Traditional healers and elders providing cultural context for story interpretation
- **Traditional Healing Assessment:** Traditional healer assessment of healing approaches and effectiveness described in stories
- **Cultural Competency Evaluation:** Traditional knowledge perspective on contemporary service cultural competency
- **Community Strength Recognition:** Traditional knowledge identification of community assets and healing resources

- **Cultural Restoration Assessment:** Traditional healer assessment of cultural healing and restoration through stories

Community-Defined Success Indicators

Story-Based Success Measurement:

```
{
  "community_story_success_indicators": {
    "healing_journey_progress": "stories of individual and family healing",
    "community_connection_improvement": "stories of increased community connection",
    "cultural_restoration_success": "stories of cultural healing and restoration",
    "service_cultural_competency": "stories of respectful and culturally responsive service",
    "community_empowerment": "stories of community advocacy and self-determination"
  }
}
```

Traditional Healing Success Stories:

- **Traditional Healing Effectiveness:** Stories documenting traditional healing success and community satisfaction
- **Cultural Integration Success:** Stories about successful integration of traditional and contemporary healing approaches
- **Traditional Knowledge Transmission:** Stories about successful traditional knowledge preservation and sharing
- **Community Cultural Healing:** Stories about collective cultural restoration and healing
- **Traditional Healer Recognition:** Stories about appropriate recognition and integration of traditional healer authority

Community Report Development

Community-Authored Story Reports

Community Report Framework:

Community Narrative Equity Review Report Template:

Executive Summary: Community Voice and Vision

- Community-authored summary of story findings and priorities
- Community vision for mental health transformation
- Key community recommendations based on story analysis

Community Story Themes: Our Experiences and Wisdom

- Major themes identified through community story analysis
- Community strengths and assets highlighted through stories
- Challenges and barriers identified by community through stories
- Traditional healing wisdom and cultural knowledge from stories

Community Assessment: What We've Learned

- Community evaluation of mental health service effectiveness
- Cultural competency assessment based on community experiences
- Traditional healing integration success and challenges
- Community needs and priorities based on story findings

Community Recommendations: Our Vision for Change

- Community-driven recommendations for mental health transformation
- Traditional healing integration recommendations
- Service improvement recommendations based on community stories
- Policy and advocacy recommendations from community analysis

Community Action Plan: How We Will Create Change

- Community action plans based on story findings
- Advocacy strategies using community story evidence
- Community organizing and mobilization plans
- Traditional healing integration and cultural restoration plans

Community Report Ownership and Control:

- **Community Authorship:** Community members as primary authors of reports based on their own story analysis
- **Traditional Knowledge Inclusion:** Traditional healers and elders contributing cultural knowledge and perspective
- **Cultural Protocol Adherence:** Reports written in ways that honor cultural protocols and traditional knowledge protection
- **Community Approval:** Community approval of all reports before sharing with external audiences

- **Story Sovereignty:** Community control over how stories are represented and used in reports

Advocacy and Action Planning

Story-Based Community Advocacy

Community stories become powerful evidence for advocating for mental health transformation that honors community values and priorities.

Story-based advocacy ensures that community voices and experiences drive advocacy rather than external expert opinions or institutional priorities.

Community Story Advocacy Framework

Story-Based Advocacy Development:

Community Story Advocacy Process:

Story Selection and Preparation:

- Community selection of stories that illustrate advocacy priorities
- Storyteller consent and preparation for advocacy use
- Cultural protocol adherence for public story sharing
- Traditional healer guidance on appropriate story sharing

Advocacy Narrative Development:

- Community development of advocacy messages based on stories
- Traditional healing and cultural perspective integration
- Community solution and recommendation highlighting
- Cultural competency and traditional healing integration advocacy

Decision-Maker Engagement:

- Community presentation of stories and recommendations to decision-makers
- Traditional healer and elder participation in advocacy meetings
- Community demand and recommendation presentation
- Follow-up advocacy based on decision-maker response

Public Education and Mobilization:

- Community-controlled public sharing of advocacy stories
- Community education about mental health transformation based on stories
- Community mobilization around advocacy priorities
- Media engagement with community control of narrative and story use

Traditional Knowledge in Advocacy:

- **Cultural Authority:** Traditional healers and elders providing cultural authority for advocacy messages
- **Traditional Healing Integration:** Advocacy for traditional healing recognition and integration based on community stories
- **Cultural Competency Requirements:** Advocacy for service cultural competency based on community experiences
- **Traditional Knowledge Protection:** Advocacy that protects traditional knowledge while supporting traditional healing integration

Community-Led Policy Advocacy

Policy Change Based on Community Stories:

```
{
  "community_story_policy_advocacy": {
    "mental_health_legislation": "advocacy for rights-based mental health legislation",
    "traditional_healing_integration": "policy advocacy for traditional healing integration",
    "cultural_competency_requirements": "advocacy for service cultural competency",
    "community_authority": "advocacy for community authority in mental health",
    "funding_priorities": "advocacy for community-controlled mental health services"
  }
}
```

Community Advocacy Campaign Development:

- **Story-Based Campaign Messages:** Campaign messages developed from community story themes and priorities
- **Community Spokesperson Development:** Community members prepared as spokespeople using their own stories and analysis

- **Traditional Healer Advocacy:** Traditional healers advocating for traditional healing integration and cultural competency
- **Coalition Building:** Coalition building with other communities and organizations based on shared story themes
- **Media Strategy:** Community-controlled media strategy that centers community voices and story authority

Community Action Implementation

Community-Led Improvement Projects

Using Story Findings for Direct Community Action:

Community Healing Projects:

- **Story-Based Healing Circles:** Ongoing healing circles based on story themes and community needs
- **Traditional Healing Programs:** Community programs integrating traditional healing based on story recommendations
- **Peer Support Networks:** Peer support programs developed based on community story analysis and needs
- **Cultural Restoration Projects:** Cultural healing projects based on traditional knowledge shared through stories
- **Community Crisis Response:** Community crisis response programs based on story analysis of current service gaps

Service Improvement Advocacy:

- **Provider Cultural Competency Training:** Advocacy for cultural competency training based on community story experiences
- **Traditional Healing Integration:** Direct advocacy with service providers for traditional healing integration
- **Community Representation:** Advocacy for community representation in mental health service governance based on story authority
- **Service Accessibility:** Advocacy for improved service accessibility based on community barrier assessment through stories

Community Capacity Building:

- **Story Collection Training:** Training more community members in narrative equity review methods
- **Traditional Knowledge Preservation:** Community projects preserving and transmitting traditional healing knowledge
- **Youth Leadership Development:** Youth leadership development in community mental health advocacy based on intergenerational stories
- **Family Support Programs:** Family support programs based on family story themes and needs

Digital Storytelling and Technology

Community-Controlled Digital Platforms

Technology can support narrative equity reviews while maintaining community control over stories and data.

Digital storytelling platforms must center community sovereignty and cultural protocols while expanding access to story sharing and community connection.

Community-Owned Digital Story Platforms

Platform Design Principles:

```
{
  "community_digital_platform_principles": {
    "community_ownership": "platforms owned and controlled by community",
    "cultural_protocols": "technology designed to respect and support",
    "privacy_sovereignty": "community control over story data and privacy",
    "accessibility": "platform accessibility for people with diverse needs",
    "story_sovereignty": "storyteller control over story sharing, editing, and ownership"
  }
}
```

Digital Platform Features:

- **Story Collection Tools:** Digital tools for collecting stories through multiple formats (text, audio, video, artistic)
- **Community Analysis Tools:** Digital tools supporting community analysis of story patterns and themes
- **Privacy Protection:** Strong privacy protection with community control over story access and sharing
- **Cultural Protocol Integration:** Digital tools that support cultural protocols and traditional storytelling approaches
- **Community Validation:** Digital tools supporting community validation and interpretation of story analysis

Digital Story Documentation and Sharing

Community-Controlled Story Documentation:

Digital Story Documentation Protocol:

Story Collection:

- Multiple digital formats for story collection (text, audio, video, artistic)
- Community consent integration for all digital story documentation
- Cultural protocol integration in digital story collection tools
- Accessibility features for diverse communication and technology access

Story Storage and Management:

- Community-controlled secure storage of digital stories
- Strong encryption and privacy protection for story data
- Community access control for story sharing and use
- Story backup and preservation for community ownership

Story Analysis and Sharing:

- Digital tools supporting community analysis of story patterns
- Community-controlled story sharing for advocacy and action
- Digital advocacy tools using community stories with consent
- Community report generation using digital story documentation

Traditional Knowledge Protection in Digital Spaces:

- **Sacred Knowledge Protection:** Digital protocols protecting sacred and traditional knowledge from inappropriate sharing

- **Cultural Authority:** Traditional healer and elder authority over digital representation of traditional knowledge
- **Community Consent:** Community consent protocols for any digital sharing of cultural or traditional knowledge
- **Cultural Competency:** Digital platform cultural competency supporting diverse cultural approaches to storytelling
- **Traditional Protocol Integration:** Digital tools supporting traditional storytelling protocols and cultural approaches

AI and Community Story Analysis

Community-Controlled AI Story Analysis

AI Tools Supporting Community Analysis with Community Authority:

Community-Controlled AI Analysis Framework:

Community Training and Consent:

- Community education about AI analysis benefits and risks
- Community consent for any AI analysis of community stories
- Cultural authority guidance on appropriate AI use for traditional knowledge
- Community control over AI analysis results and interpretation

AI Tool Design:

- AI tools trained to recognize cultural concepts and traditional knowledge
- Cultural sensitivity in AI pattern recognition and analysis
- Privacy protection and community data sovereignty in AI analysis
- Community validation required for all AI analysis results

Community Use of AI Analysis:

- AI analysis supporting community interpretation rather than replacing it
- Community authority over AI analysis interpretation and use
- Traditional healer and elder guidance on AI analysis of cultural traditions
- Community action planning based on AI-supported community analysis

Ethical AI Use Protocols:

- **Community Benefit:** AI analysis designed to benefit community goals rather than external research interests
- **Cultural Respect:** AI tools designed with respect for cultural values and traditional knowledge
- **Story Sovereignty:** AI analysis supporting storyteller and community authority over stories
- **Privacy Protection:** Strong privacy protection and community control over AI analysis data
- **Traditional Knowledge Protection:** AI protocols protecting traditional and sacred knowledge from inappropriate analysis or sharing

Implementation Resources

Getting Started with Narrative Equity Reviews

Community Readiness Assessment

Narrative Equity Review Readiness Checklist:

Community Foundation:

- ☐ Community interest in story-centered evaluation and community health
- ☐ Trusted community members willing to participate in storytelling
- ☐ Basic understanding of cultural protocols for mental health stories
- ☐ Community commitment to honoring diverse healing traditions and practices

Community Capacity:

- ☐ Community members with facilitation skills or willingness to learn
- ☐ Access to appropriate spaces for community storytelling and gathering
- ☐ Basic communication methods for community engagement and story sharing
- ☐ Connection to traditional healers, elders, or cultural knowledge holders

Cultural Readiness:

- ☐ Community understanding of appropriate cultural protocols for stories
- ☐ Respect for traditional healing approaches and cultural knowledge
- ☐ Commitment to protecting traditional knowledge and sacred information
- ☐ Recognition of community authority and wisdom in story interpretation

Safety and Support:

- [] Understanding of trauma-informed approaches to storytelling
- [] Plans for supporting community members during emotional story sl
- [] Connection to mental health crisis support and professional res
- [] Community agreements about confidentiality and story privacy pro

Community Consultation Process

Before Beginning Narrative Equity Reviews:

Community Visioning Sessions:

Community Mental Health Story Visioning (4 hours):

Hour 1: Community Mental Health Storytelling Vision

- What role do stories play in our community healing?
- How can storytelling support our community mental health goals?
- What cultural protocols should guide our storytelling approaches?

Hour 2: Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Integration

- How do traditional healing approaches understand storytelling and ho
- What cultural protocols protect our traditional knowledge and sacre
- How can we honor traditional healing wisdom in contemporary evaluat

Hour 3: Story Safety and Community Protection

- How do we create safety for community members sharing mental health
- What support do people need when sharing difficult experiences?
- How do we protect community privacy while using stories for advocacy

Hour 4: Community Action and Advocacy Vision

- How can our stories support community advocacy and transformation?
- What changes do we want to create through our storytelling and evalu
- How do we maintain community control over our stories and their use'

Traditional Healer and Elder Consultation:

- **Cultural Protocol Guidance:** Traditional healers and elders providing guidance on appropriate storytelling and evaluation approaches

- **Traditional Knowledge Protection:** Elder consultation on protecting traditional knowledge while sharing cultural wisdom
- **Sacred Story Boundaries:** Traditional authority guidance on boundaries for sacred or private traditional knowledge
- **Healing Integration:** Traditional healer guidance on integrating traditional healing wisdom with contemporary evaluation
- **Community Authority:** Elder and traditional healer support for community authority in storytelling and evaluation

Training Materials and Facilitation Guides

Community Facilitator Training Program

Narrative Equity Review Facilitator Training (24 hours over 6 weeks):

Week 1: Foundations of Narrative Equity and Community Healing (4 hours)

- Understanding narrative equity principles and community story sovereignty
- Trauma-informed approaches to community storytelling and healing
- Cultural competency and traditional knowledge integration in evaluation
- Community authority and wisdom in story interpretation and action planning

Week 2: Community Storytelling Facilitation Skills (4 hours)

- Healing story circle facilitation techniques and cultural protocol integration
- Creating safety and cultural appropriateness in storytelling spaces
- Active listening and supportive response skills for community story sharing
- Crisis response and community support during difficult story sharing

Week 3: Cultural Protocol and Traditional Knowledge Integration (4 hours)

- Working with traditional healers and elders in narrative equity reviews
- Protecting traditional knowledge and sacred information in storytelling
- Integrating cultural healing approaches with contemporary evaluation methods
- Honoring diverse cultural approaches to storytelling and community healing

Week 4: Story Documentation and Analysis Skills (4 hours)

- Community-controlled documentation approaches respecting story sovereignty
- Community story analysis and pattern recognition techniques
- Traditional knowledge integration in story interpretation and meaning-making
- Privacy protection and confidentiality in story documentation and sharing

Week 5: Community Action and Advocacy Using Stories (4 hours)

- Developing advocacy campaigns based on community story analysis
- Community spokesperson development and story-based advocacy training
- Policy advocacy using community stories while maintaining story sovereignty
- Coalition building and community organizing using story-based evidence

Week 6: Implementation Planning and Community Sustainability (4 hours)

- Planning ongoing narrative equity review systems in community
- Community leadership development and facilitator mentorship
- Resource development and sustainability planning for community storytelling
- Integration with other community mental health initiatives and advocacy

Community Workshop Templates

Monthly Community Story Circle Facilitation Guide:

Monthly Community Story Circle (2.5 hours)

Pre-Circle Preparation (30 minutes before participants arrive):

- Set up circle space with appropriate cultural elements
- Prepare talking piece and any cultural objects
- Arrange refreshments and accessibility accommodations
- Review participant list and any special considerations

Opening Circle (20 minutes):

- 0:00 - Welcome and cultural opening ceremony as appropriate
- 0:05 - Circle introductions and check-ins
- 0:15 - Review of circle agreements and cultural protocols
- 0:20 - Introduction of circle focus and storytelling invitation

Story Sharing Round 1: Current Experiences (45 minutes):

0:20 - "What is your current mental health journey?"

0:35 - "How has your community supported or challenged your mental health journey?"

0:50 - "What healing approaches have been most helpful to you?"

1:05 - Break (10 minutes)

Story Sharing Round 2: Community Vision and Wisdom (45 minutes):

1:15 - "What does mental health success look like in our community?"

1:30 - "What community strengths support mental health and healing?"

1:45 - "What changes would improve mental health support in our community?"

2:00 - "What wisdom do you want to share with our community?"

Reflection and Action Planning (20 minutes):

2:15 - Community reflection on story themes and patterns

2:25 - Action opportunities and next steps identification

2:35 - Closing circle and appreciation

Post-Circle Documentation (15 minutes after participants leave):

- Document story themes and patterns with community consent
- Plan follow-up support for participants who shared difficult experiences
- Prepare community summary respecting privacy and cultural protocols

Quarterly Community Story Analysis Workshop:

Community Story Analysis Workshop (6 hours over 2 days)

Day 1: Story Review and Pattern Recognition (3 hours)

Morning Session (90 minutes):

- Review of quarterly story collection from circles and individual sharing
- Community discussion of immediate story themes and observations
- Traditional healer and elder perspective on cultural themes in stories
- Break (15 minutes)

Afternoon Session (90 minutes):

- Small group analysis of story patterns by theme areas
- Large group sharing of pattern recognition from small groups
- Community validation of story themes and pattern interpretation
- Initial identification of community strengths and challenges from stories

Day 2: Community Interpretation and Action Planning (3 hours)

Morning Session (90 minutes):

- Community interpretation of story patterns and their meaning
- Traditional knowledge integration in story analysis and interpretation
- Community assessment of mental health service effectiveness based on story analysis
- Cultural competency evaluation based on community story experiences

Afternoon Session (90 minutes):

- Community action planning based on story analysis findings
- Advocacy priority development using community story evidence
- Community capacity building planning based on story analysis
- Next quarter planning for ongoing story collection and community action

Story Collection Templates and Guides

Individual Story Interview Guide

Community Mental Health Story Interview (60-90 minutes):

Community Mental Health Story Interview Guide

Introduction and Consent (10 minutes):

"We're collecting community stories to understand how well mental health services are working for our community."

Consent Process:

- Explanation of how story will be used for community advocacy
- Options for different levels of story sharing and privacy
- Ongoing consent and ability to change mind about story sharing
- Community ownership of story themes while respecting individual privacy

Opening Questions (15-20 minutes):

- Can you tell me about your mental health journey and experiences?
- What has been most helpful in your healing and mental health?
- How has your family and community supported your mental health?
- What role has traditional healing or cultural practices played in your healing?

Service Experience Questions (20-30 minutes):

- What experiences have you had with mental health services?

- How culturally appropriate and respectful were the services you received?
- Were traditional healing approaches respected or integrated in your care?
- What barriers did you face in accessing mental health support?
- How effective were the services you received for your healing?

Community and Cultural Questions (15-20 minutes):

- How does your community understand and support mental health?
- What traditional healing approaches are important for your community?
- How could mental health services be more culturally appropriate?
- What community strengths support mental health and healing?

Recommendations and Vision (10-15 minutes):

- What changes would improve mental health services for your community?
- What does mental health success look like for you and your community?
- How can your community be more involved in mental health services?
- What wisdom do you want to share with other community members?

Closing (5-10 minutes):

- Is there anything else about your mental health experiences you think is important?
- How would you like your story to be used for community advocacy?
- What support or follow-up would be helpful for you?

Family and Community Story Interview Guide:

Family Mental Health Story Interview (90-120 minutes)

Family Introduction and Consent (15 minutes):

- Introduction of all family members participating
- Explanation of family story purpose for community mental health advocacy
- Family consent for story sharing and community use
- Cultural protocol acknowledgment for family story sharing

Family Mental Health Journey (30-40 minutes):

- How has mental health affected your family over time?
- What healing approaches have been most helpful for your family?
- How has your extended family and community supported your family's journey?
- What role have traditional healing and cultural practices played in your healing?

Service Experience as Family (25-35 minutes):

- What experiences has your family had with mental health services?

- How well did services understand and support your family structure?
- Were traditional healing approaches respected and integrated when you needed them?
- How culturally appropriate were services for your family's background?

Community Support and Cultural Healing (20-25 minutes):

- How has your community supported your family's mental health challenges?
- What traditional or cultural approaches to family healing have been helpful?
- How could community support for families dealing with mental health challenges be improved?
- What community strengths have supported your family's healing?

Family Recommendations and Vision (15-20 minutes):

- What changes would improve mental health services for families like yours?
- How can mental health services better understand and support family mental health?
- What does family mental health success look like for your family?
- What wisdom does your family want to share with other families and the community?

Community Report Templates

Community Narrative Equity Review Report Template

Quarterly Community Story Report:

Community Mental Health Story Review Report

Quarter: _____

Community: _____

Reporting Period: _____

Executive Summary: Community Voice

- Overview of community story collection and participation
- Key story themes and community priorities identified
- Major community recommendations based on story analysis
- Community vision for mental health transformation

Community Story Collection Summary

- Number and types of stories collected
- Community participation demographics and representation
- Cultural and traditional knowledge integration
- Story collection methods and community engagement approaches

Community Story Themes: What We Learned

Major Theme 1: [Community-identified theme]

- Story examples and community experiences
- Community interpretation of theme significance
- Traditional knowledge perspective on theme
- Community strengths and challenges related to theme

Major Theme 2: [Community-identified theme]

- Story examples and community experiences
- Community interpretation of theme significance
- Traditional knowledge perspective on theme
- Community strengths and challenges related to theme

[Continue for all major themes identified by community]

Community Assessment of Services and Support

- Community evaluation of mental health service effectiveness
- Cultural competency assessment based on community stories
- Traditional healing integration assessment
- Community support system effectiveness evaluation

Community Recommendations for Change

Service Improvement Recommendations:

- [Community recommendations based on story analysis]
- [Traditional healing integration recommendations]
- [Cultural competency improvement recommendations]

Policy and Advocacy Recommendations:

- [Community policy priorities based on stories]
- [Traditional healing recognition recommendations]
- [Community authority and governance recommendations]

Community Action Plan

- Community-led initiatives based on story findings
- Advocacy campaigns using community story evidence
- Traditional healing integration projects
- Community capacity building priorities

Next Steps and Community Commitment

- Community commitments for ongoing story collection and action
- Plans for next quarter narrative equity review activities
- Community leadership development and sustainability planning
- Integration with broader community mental health advocacy

Annual Community Story Impact Report

Annual Community Narrative Equity Impact Assessment:

Annual Community Mental Health Story Impact Report

Year: _____

Community: _____

Community Story Journey: Year in Review

- Summary of year-long story collection and community engagement
- Evolution of community story themes and priorities over time
- Community growth in storytelling and evaluation capacity
- Traditional knowledge integration and cultural healing progress

Story Impact on Community Healing

- Community healing and connection outcomes from storytelling
- Family and individual healing supported through story sharing
- Community relationship building through shared storytelling
- Cultural restoration and traditional knowledge revival through story

Story Impact on Services and Systems

- Service improvements achieved through community story advocacy
- Cultural competency improvements in mental health services
- Traditional healing integration successes based on community advocacy
- Policy changes influenced by community story evidence

Community Capacity and Leadership Development

- Community facilitator and leadership development through narrative
- Traditional healer and elder engagement in evaluation and advocacy
- Youth leadership development in storytelling and community advocacy
- Community organizing and advocacy capacity building through story w

Community Recommendations for Continued Transformation

- Community priorities for continued mental health transformation

- Traditional healing integration goals and advocacy priorities
- Community story collection and evaluation sustainability planning
- Regional and broader advocacy goals based on community story analysis

Community Celebration and Appreciation

- Community celebration of storytelling courage and wisdom
- Appreciation for traditional healers and elders sharing cultural knowledge
- Recognition of community growth and healing through narrative equity
- Commitment to continued community storytelling and advocacy for traditional healing

Technology and Digital Tools

Community Digital Storytelling Platform Guidelines

Community-Controlled Digital Platform Development:

```
{
  "community_digital_storytelling_platform": {
    "community_ownership": {
      "governance": "community-controlled platform governance with traditional healing integration",
      "data_sovereignty": "community ownership and control of all stories",
      "cultural_protocols": "digital platform designed to support cultural protocols",
      "privacy_protection": "strong privacy protection with community input"
    },
    "accessibility_features": {
      "multiple_formats": "text, audio, video, and artistic story submission",
      "language_support": "platform available in community languages and dialects",
      "disability_accessibility": "platform accessible to people with disabilities",
      "technology_accessibility": "platform accessible to people with limited technology access"
    },
    "story_features": {
      "consent_management": "comprehensive consent management for story collection",
      "story_control": "storyteller control over story editing, sharing, and removal",
      "cultural_protection": "protection features for traditional knowledge and protocols",
      "community_validation": "community validation features for story accuracy and cultural appropriateness"
    }
  }
}
```

```
}  
}
```

Digital Privacy and Security Protocols:

- **End-to-End Encryption:** Strong encryption protecting story data during transmission and storage
- **Community Access Control:** Community-controlled access management for story data and analysis
- **Regular Security Audits:** Regular security audits with community oversight and transparency
- **Data Backup and Recovery:** Secure data backup and recovery systems with community control
- **Privacy by Design:** Platform designed with privacy protection as foundational principle

Conclusion: Stories as Medicine for Community Transformation

Narrative equity reviews transform evaluation from institutional surveillance to community healing, from story extraction to story sovereignty, from compliance measurement to liberation tracking. When communities control their own stories about mental health and healing, evaluation becomes a tool for community empowerment and transformation.

This guide provides frameworks and tools for communities to implement narrative equity reviews that honor community wisdom, protect story sovereignty, and support community goals for mental health transformation. The most important resources are the stories, wisdom, and healing knowledge that exist within every community.

Remember: Stories are medicine. When shared with cultural protocols and community consent, stories heal individuals, families, and communities while providing powerful evidence for advocacy and transformation.

Your community's stories hold the wisdom needed for mental health transformation. Trust your community's knowledge, honor your cultural protocols, and remember that healing happens through shared storytelling and collective action.

Framework Development Notes

This Narrative Equity Review Process Guide represents a synthesis of community-based participatory evaluation approaches, traditional healing wisdom, and trauma-informed storytelling practices. The framework prioritizes community sovereignty and cultural protocols while providing practical tools for story-centered evaluation and advocacy.

Development included consultation with community mental health advocates, traditional healers, evaluation specialists focused on community-led approaches, and communities implementing story-based evaluation and advocacy. The guide is designed for adaptation to diverse cultural contexts while maintaining core principles of narrative equity and community control.

For additional resources, training support, and connection with communities implementing narrative equity reviews, access the complete Living Mandala for Planetary Mental Health toolkit library.