FACILITATOR'S TOOLKIT FOR A
PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

United for Prevention in Passaic County

Sponsored by: NJDMHAS

Facilitator's Toolkit for a Photovoice Project

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BACKGROUND

What is photovoice?

Photovoice is a participatory action research methodology created by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris in the early 1990's where "people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369). According to Wang and Burris (1997), photovoice provides the opportunity for community members to creatively document their concerns and simultaneously act as "catalysts for change" (p. 369). Additionally, it ignites interest about important topics that are relevant within a community and allows a community to express themselves through photography. Photovoice breaks past language and traditional communication barriers that often prevent members of a group from expressing their concerns. (See Appendix A)

Three Main Goals of Photovoice:

1 To enable people to record and reflect their community strengths and concerns.

2 To promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussions of photographs.

3 To reach policy makers and encourage the adoption of health promoting policies.

Why does it work?

Over the last twenty years, several peer-reviewed articles have been published on photovoice projects that have taken place in various community settings, each with different cultural issues/concerns, e.g., substance abuse (Brazg, Bekemeier, Spigner, & Huebner, 2011), violence (Wang, Morrel-Samuels, Hutchison, Bell, & Pestronk, 2004), college campus issues (Goodhart et al., 2006), occupational safety (Flum, Siqueira, DeCaro, & Redway, 2010). Photovoice is unique in that it brings community members together to discuss and act on critical issues presented through photographs and narratives. Participants are active contributors throughout all phases of the photovoice project.

Photovoice is a highly customizable community-based intervention. After creation of the photos and narratives, it is important to present them in multiple venues around the community; the more exposure the project receives, the more likely it will affect change in the community. If working with a large group of people, it may be easier to have multiple trainings and processing sessions to accommodate the different schedules of participants.

When is it appropriate to use?

Photovoice is an excellent tool to use when there is a need to create awareness around a certain issue or concern, and can be particularly helpful when the issue of concern is one that is traditionally difficult to address or discuss.

ELEMENTS OF A PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

1. **Photographs** – Participants capture images that mean something to them, regarding specific project topics.
2. **Narratives** – After discussing the photos, the photographer writes up a short narrative to along with each picture, using the SHOWeD method (explained later in this toolkit). This narrative helps the image deliver a clear message.

INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN A PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

1. **Project Manager** – This person is responsible for overseeing the project process, including time management, funding, and the specific project topic.
2. **Facilitators** – Facilitators help participants accurately reflect the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the community they are serving underline without introducing bias.
   a. Lead Facilitator – This person is responsible for overseeing the elements of the photovoice project, including participant registration, consent and release forms, review of photographs for appropriateness, and corresponding narratives.
   b. Assistant Facilitator – This person is responsible for assisting the lead facilitator in distribution and collection of materials in group meeting, maintaining participants focused in meetings, and promoting participant engagement throughout the project.
3. **Participants** – Participants are members of the community who want to help raise awareness and promote local change. Photovoice participants take the photos and write the narratives that will be displayed to the community.

Recommended Materials

Materials	
• Cameras • Pens/pencils • Computer • Printer • Consent forms	• Voice recorders (to review information afterwards) • Photo display board (used for exhibitions)

Ethical Considerations

The concept of a photovoice project is simple and may seem harmless, but there are several ethical considerations that need to be addressed prior to and during a photovoice project.

1. **Obtain Informed Consent** – Consent must be given for participation (from adults and minors), to utilize photographs for exhibits and promotional purposes, to take pictures of people and/or private homes or businesses, and for consent of people identified in photographs. (Appendix B)

   ASK YOURSELF? Is it invading someone's privacy?

Consent Needed	Consent NOT Needed
•Taking a picture of someone who is recognizable (faces, tattoos, or markings) •Taking a picture minors (under 18 years) •Taking a picture of personal belongings and/or personal property	•Taking a picture of public figures •Taking a picture of the environment or public settings •Taking a picture of people who cannot be specifically identified

2. **Protect Participants** – Participants must refrain from entering dangerous spaces/situations to complete the project. Think not only about danger in terms of physical harm, but also in emotional harm, harm to an individual's reputation, or potential financial harm, among others.

   ASK YOURSELF? Will it harm me or others? Is it dangerous?

3. **Protect the Community** – It is important to protect others by abstaining from taking pictures that may harm the reputation, safety, or individual liberty-of another.

   ASK YOURSELF? Will it put a person's employment, status in the community, etc… in jeopardy?

4. **False Light** – It is necessary to make sure that situations in the community are reflected accurately. Necessary steps must be taken to accurately portray the community and to avoid taking photographs of images that could be taken out of context.

   ASK YOURSELF? Is it truthful? Does it accurately represent the situation?

Photograph and Narrative Examples

Example 1

By Katie Ruhl

This is Skyline Park. It has a baseball field, a basketball court, and a playground with a gazebo. As per most parks, there is a sign with rules and regulations along with consequences for breaking those rules. What you don't see is the place where most addicts drank their first beer, smoked their first joint or shot up for the first time. In high school, this was where we came to "hang out", which meant drink or do drugs. When you said you were going to Skyline Park your friends knew what you were going to do there, regardless of the sign.

After it became known to most parents what actually went on at this park, I was no longer allowed to hang out there after school and most importantly after dark. From experience, cops have driven by, telling us to get lost. But we never did. It was dark. We just quieted down. Enforcement of these rules and regulations may have deterred some people from using for their first time. When I was a teenager, I would have said it was "lame" when a cop would tell us to leave, but now I wish they had done more than that, especially for some of my friends.

Example 2

By Kyle Ormston

What used to be a creative way of publicly celebrating birthdays and igniting team spirit has become a billboard for the latest overdose victim.

This once fun local tradition has evolved into a depressing reminder of the loved ones we have lost.

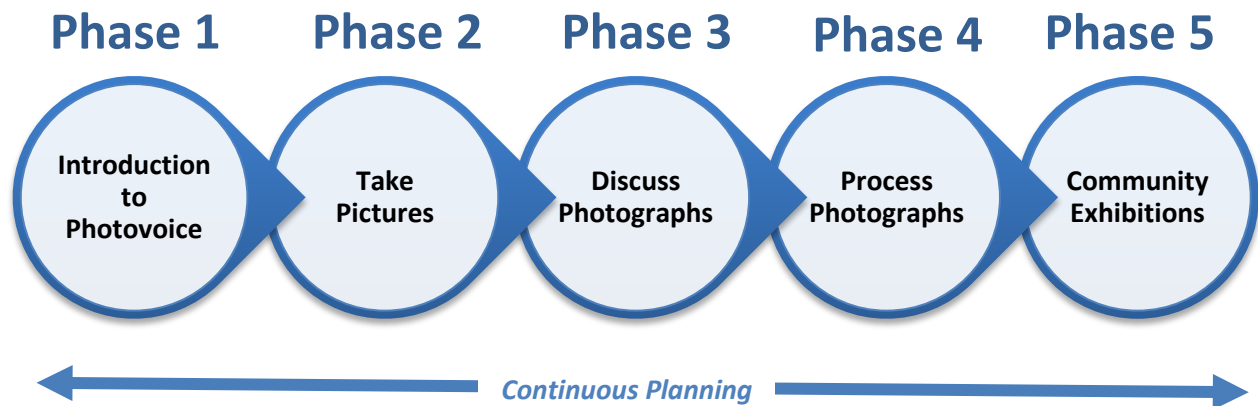The blank wall represents not knowing "who will be next".

HOW TO UTILIZE PHOTOVOICE

Process Overview

Photovoice is much more than simply taking a photo and telling a story about the photo. Photovoice is a community engagement process in which participants are introduced to photovoice and trained in its use before photos are taken. After photographs have been taken, participants reassemble for a group processing session or sessions. Finally the group collectively decides how to leverage the photovoice project to encourage and enact change within the community through the exhibition of the completed photovoice stories. This process is displayed in the following figure.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Introduction to Photovoice	Take Pictures	Discuss Photographs	Process Photographs	Community Exhibitions

Continuous Planning

CONTINUOUS PLANNING: (14 weeks)

Before Implementation – Identify staff roles, participants, dates and times for project implementation, convenient meeting locations, identify stakeholders and community exhibition locations. Make sure to think about what each phase is going to look like before actually getting right into it. For example, for phase four, think about the financial resources available to print the photographs taken in this photovoice project. Also, consider using incentives to encourage participation and show appreciation for the time participants dedicate on the photovoice project.

> ★ *It is important to obtain parental consent from any minors who will be participating in the photovoice project. The "Minor Consent Form" can be found in Appendix B.*

During Implementation – Identify and resolve any issues or concerns before moving forward with the project. Once the community exhibition details have been finalized, start promoting the events and invite key community leaders.

After Implementation – Identify successful and unsuccessful aspects of the project and modify accordingly for future projects. Explore other forms of community displays (e.g., newspapers, galleries, libraries) to keep the discussion of the critical issue active.

PHASE 1: *Introduction to Photovoice* (2 hours)

Icebreaker Activity – Have participants introduce themselves to each other, because they will be working together in discussing their photos and the community issue later in the project. Examples can be found in Appendix C.

Introduce Photovoice – Introduce the concept and benefits of photovoice and explain how this project can have a positive effect on a community. Use Appendix A for participants to follow along with the introduction.

Introduce the Project – Introduce the topic and timeline for the project. Use Appendix A to discuss what is expected from the participants, ethical considerations, and how to obtain informed consent.

Introduce Photography Concepts – Provide a short tutorial on how to use the chosen camera for the photovoice project. Next, provide handouts of "Photography Tips" found in Appendix D.

PHASE 2: *Taking the Photos* (2 weeks)

Encourage participants to take this time between group meetings to explore their community and to capture about three to six photographs that accurately represent the project topic previously discussed.

★ *All participants must release the rights to the photos they take in order for them to be used for the photovoice project. Photography subjects must give their consent to be photographed if they or their property can be identified. Both the "Acknowledgement of Release" form and the "Photography Consent Form" can be found in Appendix B.*

PHASE 3: *Discuss Photographs* (2-3 hours)

Introduce the SHOWeD Method – Facilitators distribute handouts for participants to begin expressing the meaning behind their photos using the SHOWeD method displayed in Appendix E.

Group Discussion – Each participant will select and share two favorite photos they want to display at the exhibitions. Make sure that the participants are answering the questions from the SHOWeD method, as it is a guide to help them express what they really want to say with their photographs.

Narrative Writing – Participants will write a short narrative describing their final selected image(s), taking into account the group discussions.

PHASE 4: *Process Photographs* (1-3 weeks)

Formatting – Many of these photos may have few pixels, meaning they were taken with a low resolution camera, which can affect its appearance when being blown up to be 5 times its original size. Keep this in mind if you are planning to display clear and crisp photographs.

Printing – Photos should be printed with the narratives accompanying them. Printing from a computer may be more cost effective but may require extra work when attaching the photos and narratives to display boards. Professional formatting and printing can be done but may be costly and take a few weeks for development. Displaying the photos on a custom pull up banner is another option to print and display photovoice. The cost of printing and formatting photos can run from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars; therefore, it is very important to carefully prepare this portion of photovoice to accommodate the budget.

PHASE 5: *Community Exhibitions* (3-5 hours)

Set up, display, and discuss the project with community members. Remember, the goal is to bring awareness about the critical issue to the community, so be sure to invite the appropriate community members, such as policymakers and other stakeholders who can bring about environmental and policy change.

It is important to present photovoice in multiple venues around the community. The higher the exposure, the more likely the project will affect change in the community.

Example Stakeholders
Board of Education Members
Business Community
Law Enforcement Officials
Local Government Officials
Local Media Persons
Parents/Guardians
Religious Leaders
Youth Serving Organizations

Example Locations
Businesses
Libraries
Municipal Building
Local Art Galleries
Schools

Example Timeline

A successful photovoice project spans several months and must begin with a clear implementation plan. Many communities find that it is helpful to construct a timeline during the pre-planning process of a photovoice project.

The timeline displayed below is an example to assist facilitators in the development of their timeline. Each photovoice project timeline will vary due to the group participation size, budget, volunteers and staffed employees. For example, a larger participation group can require additional meetings to prepare images and set up narratives.

	Week 1-4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14
Phase 1: Introduction to Photovoice		X									
Phase 2: Take Pictures			X	X							
Phase 3: Discuss Photographs & Develop Narratives					X						
Phase 4: Process Photographs						X	X	X			
Phase 5: Community Exhibitions										X	X
Continuous Planning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Social Media

Social media is a very powerful tool that can be used to enhance a photovoice project. For example, instagram can be used to exhibit the photovoice project and the target issue can raise awareness by using hashtags; such as, #LGBT community or #climatechange. Another option could be posting the photovoice project on the organization's Facebook page and encourage community members to like the post. Encouraging Facebook friends to share it on their Facebook page as well can also open up the opportunity for many people in the community to view the photovoice project.

Facebook Examples:

https://www.facebook.com/PCIMediaImpact/posts/10151770446729276

https://www.facebook.com/groups/slowfoodns/permalink/10153696255086043/

https://www.facebook.com/practicalfarmers/posts/10151802292377761

Budget

The photovoice project is flexible with your budget. With a small budget, the biggest expense will be the print production for the exhibition of the project. The cost for print production can range drastically depending on the available resources, such as, discounts, print board material, and shipping. In this modern era, many youth may have a camera at their disposal. However, lower income communities may not experience the same opportunity. In this case, it may be helpful to consider purchasing disposable cameras when looking at the budget. Group meeting and exhibition locations are possible expenses that do not have be costly. If fact, facilities are usually welcoming of projects that benefit their community and they are usually willing to donate space to support a project.

Personal Information

Personal information, such as one's name and address, should not be disclosed to third parties unless given permission by the participant themselves. It is best to keep a secure file of all participant's personal information to offset legality issues that may be brought up otherwise.

Appendix A

Photovoice Factsheet

What is it?

Photovoice is a participatory action research methodology created by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris in the early 1990's where "people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369). According to Wang and Burris (1997), photovoice provides the opportunity for community members to creatively document their concerns and simultaneously act as "catalysts for change" (p. 369). Additionally, it ignites interest about important topics that are relevant within a community and allows a community to express themselves through photography. Photovoice breaks past language and traditional communication barriers that often prevent members of a group from expressing their concerns.

Three Main Goals of Photovoice:

1 To enable people to record and reflect their community strengths and concerns.

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3 To reach policy makers and encourage the adoption of health promoting policies.

What is expected of me?

While participating in photovoice, you should always be respectful, honest, sincere, and focused on addressing the important issues in your community. There are *four* expectations:

| Time Commitment | Photography | Group Discussions | Photo Presentation |

What can I take a picture of?

When participating in photovoice, you as the photographer, have the ability to photograph whatever you desire to address a community issue or theme. However, you are responsible for following the *ethical considerations* below to ensure that you are following measures that protect yourself and the participants involved.

Is it ethical?

1. **Obtain Informed Consent** – Consent must be given for participation (from adults and minors), to utilize photographs for exhibits and promotional purposes, to take pictures of people and/or private homes or businesses, and for consent of people identified in photographs. (Appendix B)

    ASK YOURSELF? Is it invading someone's privacy?

Consent Needed	Consent NOT Needed
•Taking a picture of someone who is recognizable (faces, tattoos, or markings) •Taking a picture minors (under 18 years) •Taking a picture of personal belongings and/or personal property	•Taking a picture of public figures •Taking a picture of the environment or public settings •Taking a picture of people who cannot be specifically identified

2. **Protect Participants** – Participants must refrain from entering dangerous spaces/situations to complete the project. Think not only about danger in terms of physical harm, but also in emotional harm, harm to individual reputation, or potential financial harm, among others.

    ASK YOURSELF? Will it harm me or others? Is it dangerous?

3. **Protect the Community** – It is important to protect others by abstaining from taking pictures that may harm the reputation, safety, or individual liberty-of another.

    ASK YOURSELF? Will it put a person's employment, status in the community, ect. in jeopardy?

4. **False Light** – It is necessary to make sure that situations in the community are reflected accurately. Necessary steps must be taken to accurately portray the community and to avoid taking photographs of images that could be taken out of context.

    ASK YOURSELF? Is it truthful? Does it accurately represent the situation?

How do I approach subjects?

When taking a picture of a human subject or their personal property **you must ask their permission first**. Make sure that the images you take will accurately represent the situation.

Assess
Assess the situation. Can you approach them safely or are they engaged in a dangerous activity (ex. Driving)?

Explain
Explain the project and your involvement.

Ask for Consent
Ask if it would be acceptable to use images from them to discuss the themes of your project in a group setting.

Minor Participation Consent Form

I, _____, give permission for my child, _____,
to participate in the [insert project name] photovoice project.

I understand that this project may discuss topics of a sensitive nature. I understand that my child
will be taking photographs that will be used by [insert organization] for public display and
discussion.

I allow my child to participate, and be photographed or recorded in group discussions that may
be used for research and/or data collection methods.

I am aware that these photographs and/or recordings may be used for promotional and
furtherance of the [insert project name] photovoice project.

Signature of parent or guardian: _____

Printed name of parent or guardian: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgement of Release

I, _____, grant [insert organization], its representatives and employees the right use photographs that I have taken for exhibition purposes. I authorize [insert organization], its assigns and transferees to use and publish the same in print and/or electronically or display and/or promotional purposes.

I have read and agree to the above:

Signature: _____

Parent or guardian's signature (if under 18):

_____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Photography Consent Form

Photovoice is a community art project which uses photography to describe the strengths, weaknesses, and overall health of a community. [Insert project name] photovoice project focuses on the topic of [insert selected topic] to raise awareness and promote discussions surrounding the topic.

I, _____, understand that photos of me and/or my likeness may be used in a public setting and displayed indefinitely. I give permission to the photographer and [insert organization] to use my likeness for research, display, and promotional purposes surrounding the [insert project name] photovoice project.

Signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Icebreakers

Icebreakers are a great way to introduce one another in a group setting. They help to get conversation flowing and get individuals to open up and engage comfortably with their peers. There are numerous icebreaker activities that will achieve this effect, below are just a few examples.
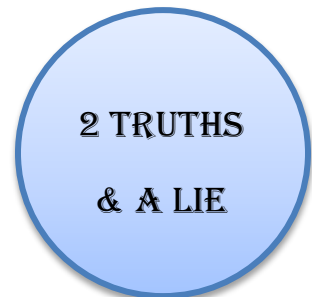
Example 1

While going around the room and introducing themselves, have individuals answer a question such as:

- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go?
- If you could be an animal, which one would you be and why?
- Who is your favorite cartoon character and why?
- If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit and why?

Example 2

Ask participants to come up with two statements about themselves that are true, and one statement that is a lie. As they go around the room introducing themselves, have them say two truths and one lie and let the class decide which statement is a lie.

2 TRUTHS & A LIE

Example 3

Ask the group to describe, without looking, what is on the front and back of a penny. Draw the image they describe while asking questions such as:

- Which way is he facing?
- Where is that?
- Is that on the top or the bottom?
- Is that on the left or the right?

Once the group thinks they are done, make any corrections that are necessary. You'll be surprised by how few details our minds can remember about such a familiar object!

Appendix D

Photography Tips

What are you taking a picture of?

Do you have a clear idea of what you want your image to say? Before cell phones and digital cameras one would have been limited to 24 images on a single roll of film. That means you would only have 24 opportunities to showcase what you are trying to say. How many times do you retake a picture before finding the right photo?

Does it stand out?

PHOTO BY VANESA APAZA

There is a lot to look at in this photo, but it is clear that the main object of focus is the sticker on the pole. Some cameras allow for the background to remain out of focus while the main image, or foreground, is focused. This can also be achieved by zooming in.

When taking a picture of a small object or a singular object among many it is important to focus on the main message. Is your photograph telling the same story that you are seeing?

Color makes a difference.

Color is a key player in taking a powerful photograph as colors often relate to one's emotions. Red can be interpreted as passion either in a loving or negative way, whereas the lack of color may also help express your message. Does a black and white photograph help promote your message?

PHOTO BY VANESA APAZA

In this office setting where many items are black, white, or gray, this red objects really stands out. If this photo was taken in black and white, then it would not have the same effect on the viewer. Immediately, the viewer's eyes are drawn to the red cup.

All about perspective.

Naturally we take a picture from the angle we are looking, but consider looking at the world from a different perspective. Children see the world from the ground up, and birds from the sky down, try holding your camera at different levels and angles to see the world a little differently.

In the first picture it is unclear what the photographer is intending, is the focus on the student, the walkway, or the construction? However, in the second picture the main emphasis is on the dump truck. The low angle at which this photograph was taken makes the construction vehicle appear larger than life, highlighting its power and importance.

Rule of thirds.

The subject in this photo was intentionally placed off-centered in the frame. By placing the subject in one of the frame's "thirds", it becomes more aesthetically pleasing to the viewer.

To get someone's attention through photography you must make sure that the photos are interesting out of context, meaning that it is visually pleasing even without knowing the story behind it. Try using the rule of thirds to make an image more appealing. Instead of lining up your main subject directly in the middle of the photograph, imagine that there are these lines over the top of your picture. Try placing your subject where the lines intersect.

Appendix E

SHOWeD Method

After you have selected two photographs, use the questions below to identify and explore the community concerns related to the project topic that is illustrated in the photos.

What do we **S**ee here?

_____

_____

_____

What is really **H**appening here?

_____

_____

_____

How does this relate to **O**ur lives?

_____

_____

_____

Why does this situation, concern, or strength **e**xist?

_____

_____

_____

What can we **D**o about it?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F

PHOTOVOICE NARRATIVE 1

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_____

_____

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PHOTOVOICE NARRATIVE 2

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_____

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_____

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Scholarly References

Brazg, T., Bekemeier, B., Spigner, C., & Huebner, C. E. (2011). Our community in focus: The use of photovoice for youth-driven substance abuse assessment and health promotion. *Health Promotion Practice, 12*(4), 502-511.

Flum, M. R., Siqueira, C. E., DeCaro, A., & Redway, S. (2010). Photovoice in the workplace: A participatory method to give voice to workers to identify health and safety hazards and promote workplace change—a study of university custodians. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine, 53*(11), 1150-1158.

Goodhart, F. W., Hsu, J., Baek, J. H., Coleman, A. L., Maresca, F. M., & Miller, M. B. (2006). A view through a different lens: Photovoice as a tool for student advocacy. *Journal of American College Health, 55*(1), 53-56.

Gross, L., Katz, J. K., & Ruby, J. (Eds.). (1988). *Image ethics: The moral rights of subjects in photographs, film, and television.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior, 24*(3), 369-387. doi: 10.1177/109019819702400309

Wang, C. C., Morrel-Samuels, S., Hutchison, P. M., Bell, L., & Pestronk, R. M. (2004). Flint Photovoice: Community building among youths, adults, and policymakers. *American Journal of Public Health, 94*(6), 911-913.

Links to Community Examples:

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5VDu8MWegg&feature=youtu.be

2. http://cchealth.org/topics/community/photovoice/1998_east_county.php
3. http://www.brainline.org/content/2011/07/photovoice-ii.html
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8lSw5Cdi8k
5. https://photovoice.org/projects/
6. http://www.pwhce.ca/program_poverty_photovoice.htm
7. http://www.atlantichealth.org/overlook/our+services/community+health/photovoice+exhibition/
8. http://vp.telvue.com/preview?id=T01001&video=171660

Links to Other Resources:

1. http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/photovoice/main

2. http://www.nicwa.org/research/documents/PhotovoiceGuideNov2013_000.pdf

3. https://photovoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PV_Manual.pdf

4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkDbUM3nbhI&feature=youtu.be

5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyXnnOlvqOM

6. http://archived.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/mapp/framework/clearinghouse/upload/Photovoice-Manual.pdf

7. http://norcalheal.cnr.berkeley.edu/docs/Photovoice_Training.pdf
8. http://www.nonformalii.ro/uploads/resurse/fisiere/From_Snapshot_to_Civic_Action_Photovoice_Manual_july2012.pdf
9. http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Photovoice%20Facilitators%20Guide%20with%20Resources.pdf