

## Exercise Two: What is my culture? (Done during module 3 or 4)

Everyone has a culture, even if sometimes it is invisible because everyone around us appears to share our values, beliefs and daily practices. Our culture, though, shapes our everyday interactions with the world around us.

Understanding our culture is very important to understanding our resilience. The risk factors that most threaten us, the outcomes we most cherish, and the protective factors we find most helpful, are all shaped by culture.

For this exercise do the following:

### Part 1:

- Think of a book, movie, television series or song which reflects your cultural identity.
- Which qualities of your culture (taken from these artistic expressions) are useful when facing difficulties, or having to make life-changing decisions?
- Group these qualities on a piece of paper (or on a screen) under the two categories of Rugged and Resourced. If you identified mostly factors that fit under one or the other categories, see if you can identify an equal number of factors from both categories that are culturally relevant. For example, if you said, “My faith gets me through difficult times” (a rugged quality) consider, “How does my faith community also make it easier to cope with life’s challenges?” (a resource). Likewise, if you said, “I really like celebrating the holidays because it brings together family and friends” (a resource) then consider “And how does the rituals and the routines of these holidays make you feel?” (a rugged quality).

### Part 2:

- Think of a recent problem which caused you to become stressed.
- What solutions did you use (or try to use) to solve the problem.
- Did these solutions reflect your culture (the way you see the world, your beliefs, or the expectations of others for how you should behave)?
- How did others view your proposed solution? Was it socially acceptable? Did it fit with the way others handle problems (reflect the culture of those around you) or was it different than the way people expect you to cope?

Culture can be a powerful tool to help guide people to solutions, or it can constrain choices.