

FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BODE MILLER



THE

PARADISE PARADOX



THE PARADISE PARADOX | DISCUSSION & ACTION GUIDE



PODIUM PICTURES PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALTERRA MOUNTAIN COMPANY "THE PARADISE PARADOX" PRODUCED BY BRETT RAPKIN, T.J. REGAN, SHARMILA SAHNI, JOHN MILLER. ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS ANNIE WEAVER, ERIC SLAYMAN, DEVI JAGS. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: THE RIESCHEL FOUNDATION, THE DOLLINGER FAMILY, JOHN AND JACOLYN DICKSBAUM FAMILY FOUNDATION, BRAD FELD AND AMY BATCHELOR, BODE MILLER, THE BORGES FAMILY FOUNDATION. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY T.J. REGAN. EDITED BY T.J. REGAN AND GENA FRIEDMAN. MUSIC BY MILO CANTOR. WRITTEN BY BRETT RAPKIN, SHARMILA SAHNI AND T.J. REGAN. DIRECTED BY T.J. REGAN.



PODIUM PICTURES & ALTERRA MOUNTAIN COMPANY PRESENT

THE PARADISE PARADOX

CO-DIRECTORS: Brett Rapkin & TJ Regan

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Bode Miller

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER & WRITER: Brett Rapkin

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PRODUCER: John Miller

FILM UNDERWRITING PARTNERS

The Rieschel Foundation

The Dollinger Family

The Bucksbaum Family

The Feld Family

The Borgen Family Foundation

The Lovell Foundation

RUN TIME

72 minutes

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#ParadiseParadoxFilm #EndTheStigma



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How to use this guide

Thank you for sharing **THE PARADISE PARADOX** with your community of viewers, educators, students, mental health advocates, and more. This guide has been crafted to assist you in facilitating conversations about the film, encouraging reflection on thoughts, emotions, and reactions it may have stirred. **Feel free to refer to the table of contents to choose and select sections that are most appropriate to your audiences.** It provides insights into the documentary, thought-provoking discussion questions, explores the stories of those featured in the film, and offers activities and resources to enhance engagement and impact. Please use the set of questions listed in the discussion guide according to your audience type and event needs.

Content Advisory: **THE PARADISE PARADOX** includes depictions of mental health challenges, substance abuse, and discussions of suicide. These themes may be distressing or upsetting for some viewers. We advise viewer discretion and recommend having a support system in place to discuss and process any emotions or reactions that may arise while watching the film. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issues, severe negative thoughts, thoughts of suicide, or is in crisis, please seek professional help or reach out to a trusted individual for support. Your health and well-being is important.



Film overview

Executive produced by Olympic ski racing legend and Montana resident Bode Miller and Emmy Award-winning impact sports filmmaker Brett Rapkin (HBO's "The Weight of Gold"), **THE PARADISE PARADOX** is a long overdue look at the mental health crisis that has been sweeping America's mountain towns and the innovative solutions being developed in response. The film is told through the experiences of not only the local heroes who are confronting these challenges but also renowned figures like Olympic gold medalist Mikaela Shiffrin.

From the ski patroller at Mammoth Mountain to the lift operator in Deer Valley, to the young snowboarder trying to improve their community, to affluent residents throughout the region, **THE PARADISE PARADOX** sheds light on the root causes of the mental health challenges in the snow sports industry and in America's mountain towns, including isolation, lack of resources, substance abuse, and stigma. Featuring stories from a diverse group of hard-working, inspiring families, individuals, and community members, there is also a focus on creative and scalable solutions local stakeholders, such as Alterra Mountain Company and Vail Valley Behavioral Health, are creating in response.

This film is designed to reduce stigma and give audiences the opportunity to connect and identify with each character's struggles and triumphs. Woven throughout will be a focus on hopeful, local solutions that communities can consider and replicate in order to improve mental health outcomes for all.

The film was primarily shot in Deer Valley, UT; Mammoth, CA; Eagle Valley, CO; Winter Park, CO; and Denver, CO.



Discussion questions

PERSONAL

Resonance/Reflection/Inspiration

1. What are the key insights or takeaways you gained from watching **THE PARADISE PARADOX**?
 - a. How would you describe this documentary to someone who hasn't seen it yet?
 - b. What are 3 words you would use to describe this documentary?
2. Reflect on the emotions and resonance that the film evoked in you. Was there a particular scene or moment that stirred these emotions or feelings the most?
3. Share what you found most surprising or unsettling about the film.
 - a. Did any specific aspect of the documentary challenge your preconceptions or open your eyes to new perspectives around mental health?

Community Needs, Feedback, Desires

4. How has watching **THE PARADISE PARADOX** impacted your awareness and understanding of mental health issues in US mountain towns and their relevance beyond these communities?
5. Compare the support—or lack thereof—for mental health care within the mountain communities that were depicted in the film to your own experiences or observations in your community. What similarities or differences do you see, and what lessons can be drawn from these comparisons?

Further Action

6. Think about any of the stories or experiences that were shared in the film. Did they bring to mind any personal memories or encounters you have had?
7. Reflect on one actionable idea or change that you believe could have a positive impact on your mental health, inspired by the film.

MENTAL HEALTH

Resonance/Reflection/Inspiration

1. The film delves into the topic of trauma and its long-term effects. How can we better recognize when we've experienced trauma, and what self-care and healing strategies do you find most effective for addressing trauma in your own life or with your loved ones?

Community Needs, Feedback, Desires

2. The film emphasizes the importance of discussing mental health within one's community and family.
 1. How can we encourage open conversations about mental health and create safe spaces for individuals to share their experiences and challenges?
 2. Mental health care is a fundamental right for everyone, yet it remains a taboo subject in many BIPOC & Latinx communities.
 - a. How can healthcare providers engage with marginalized communities to facilitate important conversations and ensure equitable access to proper mental health care?
 - b. What barriers persist in these communities, and how can they be dismantled?
 - c. What role do language and culture play in dismantling these barriers?
 - d. In these communities, men & boys, in particular, are encouraged to be tough, and either downplay or not talk about their feelings and emotions. How can we make sure that all people have access to mental health tools and safe spaces?
3. The film highlights trauma training for ski patrollers, raising the question of whether similar training could benefit those who care for others in various roles.
 - a. Do you believe trauma training for caregivers is effective and necessary? If so, how can we empower individuals in caregiving professions to process the trauma they may encounter daily?
4. In addition to trauma training, what other forms of support and resources could be beneficial for individuals who regularly encounter trauma as part of their profession?
 - a. How can organizations better prioritize the mental well-being of their employees and provide resources for trauma processing and emotional resilience?

Further Action

5. The film portrays various strategies and initiatives to address mental health issues.
 - a. Which approach or program from the film resonated with you the most, and why?
6. How can similar strategies be implemented or adapted in your own community?
7. Reflect on one actionable idea or change that you believe could have a positive impact on your mental health, inspired by the film.

COMMUNITIES/MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES

Resonance/Reflection/Inspiration

1. The film highlights how individuals in mountain towns can struggle without receiving the necessary support or treatment. How can we raise awareness in these communities about where to access the support they need for mental health challenges?

Community Needs, Feedback, Desires

2. Given that mountain communities often have high suicide rates ([source](#)), what strategies can these areas implement to ensure they have the resources and infrastructure to support individuals dealing with mental illnesses or suicidal thoughts?
 - a. Beyond infrastructure, how can we foster a culture of support among community members?
3. The film emphasizes the importance of a strong sense of community for well-being. We see organizations like [My Future Pathways](#) creating spaces for youth to express themselves and learn about mental health care.
 - a. How can we continue to rely on our communities to create environments where individuals feel seen and heard, making it easier to seek help when needed?
4. With infrastructure improvements in place, how do we ensure that people are consistently receiving the help they need? How can we work to make these improvements sustainable for the long term, ensuring ongoing access to mental health support in mountain towns and beyond?
 - a. Discuss how the [Precourt Healing Center](#) came into being, and how the community came together, found a source of income, and is building a center to help everyone. How can you replicate that model in your community?

Further Action

5. Reflect on one actionable idea or change that you believe could have a positive impact on mental health in your local mountain community, inspired by the film.

SPORTS/ATHLETES

Resonance/Reflection/Inspiration

1. The film prominently features athletes like **Mikaela Shiffrin**, who are advocates for mental health.
 - a. How do athletes' willingness to discuss mental health impact the broader sports community and society as a whole?
2. In recent years, we saw Simone Biles, Kevin Love, and Naomi Osaka openly discussing their mental health challenges and taking breaks from competition. This film is executive produced by **Bode Miller**, the most successful male American alpine ski racer of all time. This film also features the snowboarder **Ben Lynch** who died by suicide in 2021.
 - a. What role have you seen athletes play in your life or community to be better advocates for mental health and self-care?
 - b. Who are some athletes you admire and look up to for their contributions to mental health awareness and advocacy?
 - c. How have these athletes influenced your perspective on the importance of mental well-being in sports and life?
3. After watching the film, do you believe there is a difference in how male athletes are expected to address mental health compared to female athletes? How can we empower male athletes to openly discuss their struggles and contribute to normalizing these conversations?
4. Reflect on athletes you've seen in your own life or community who have become advocates for mental health and self-care. How have their stories and actions impacted the people around them?

Community Needs, Feedback, Desires

5. Mikaela Shiffrin is very vocal about mental health, but is often asked to talk about it because she's discussed it previously. While this normalizes conversations at a certain level, how can we continue to normalize these conversations in not only sports, but also in our communities?

Further Action

6. Reflect on one actionable idea or change taken by an athlete that you believe could have a positive impact on mental health in your local community, inspired by the film.

GROUP QUESTIONS

These questions are designed for smaller, group discussions. We advise splitting the audience or classroom into groups of 4 or 5 and having them nominate someone who can report back.

Resonance/Reflection/Inspiration

1. Did the film inspire you to have more conversations about mental and behavioral healthcare or make you feel better prepared to approach conversations surrounding this topic?
2. How does society's view on mental and behavioral healthcare (specifically the stigma) relate to the larger barrier of being afraid to ask for help?
 1. How can we continue to reduce this barrier for young people now, and for future generations?
 2. Discuss the role of stigma in preventing individuals from seeking help for mental and behavioral healthcare. How can we challenge and change these stigmas in our own communities?
3. What were your initial perceptions and expectations before watching the film? Did the film align with or challenge these expectations?
4. Can you relate any personal experiences or encounters you have had to the stories shared in the film? How did this connection affect your viewing experience?
5. In what ways did the film humanize the individuals facing mental health challenges in mountain towns? Did it change your perspective or increase your empathy?
6. Share a specific scene or moment from the film that you believe can be a powerful conversation starter when discussing mental health with others.

Community Needs, Feedback, Desires

7. The film highlighted various local and national initiatives. Which one resonated with you the most, and why? How can you contribute to or support similar efforts in your community?

Further Action

8. Considering the film's focus on young people, what steps can we take to ensure that future generations have better access to mental and behavioral healthcare and are more willing to seek help when needed?
9. How can we encourage communities, like those in mountain towns, to actively address mental health challenges and create supportive environments for residents?
10. Reflect on one actionable idea or change that you believe could have a positive impact on mental health in your local community, inspired by the film.

Resources

YOUR PATHWAY FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

We want this film and impact campaign to be actionable and focused on results so you can create similar programs in your community.

Below are some key points on the work Eagle Valley Behavioral Health is doing in Colorado, providing a model for other communities seeking to address similar behavioral health challenges.



01 School Based Services



Increase funding to support the placement of additional school-based clinicians in public and private schools so every school has at least one clinician and develop a comprehensive wellness curriculum that would highlight what social, emotional, and prevention and education framework would be covered at each grade level.

02 Cross-Functional Behavioral Health Facility



Vail Health is working with Eagle Valley Behavioral Health and Eagle County to design a comprehensive behavioral health facility with plans include a crisis stabilization unit, a social detox unit, and a psych urgent care with 24/7 walk-in service – all accessible by public transport. This was paid for by a local family.

03 Provider Access & Capacity



Attracting more healthcare providers to expand access and capacity, exploring innovative ways of lowering barriers to accessing behavioral health care, and working to fully integrate behavioral health care into all primary care settings across the community.

04 System Coordination & Transformation



Investing in prevention and education by both supporting proven programming and filling gaps through new initiatives to bolster civic engagement and improving social connections.

05 Prevention & Education



Transforming the behavioral health system by creating a multiplier effect through partnerships, fundraising, and community-based programs and providers with effective delivery systems.

06 Crisis Response & Transition Services



In response to behavioral health crises, the community has established a mobile crisis response system, resulting in a 74% reduction in hospital and jail transports.

Are you an educator or coach hoping to help your students discuss mental health in the classroom or field or someone interested in expanding their knowledge and sharing with others?

Check out the resources below to help launch your efforts!

NATIONAL RESOURCES

- ❖ **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** is a 3-digit code that individuals can call or text (or chat), which is free with 24/7 support. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat **988lifeline.org**
- ❖ **The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** is a voluntary health organization that advocates for research and education around suicide, based in New York City, with a public policy office based in Washington, D.C. The organization's mission is to "save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide." Learn about their **Talk Away the Dark** campaign.
- ❖ **NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness**, is the US' largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for those affected by mental illness. Across the country, thousands of trained NAMI volunteers bring peer-led programs to a wide variety of community settings, from churches to schools to NAMI Affiliates. With the unique understanding of people with lived experience, these programs and support groups provide outstanding free education, skills training, and support.
- ❖ The Jed Foundation (JED) is a nonprofit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for our nation's teens and young adults, giving them the skills and support they need to thrive today, and tomorrow. **The Jed Foundation's Mental Health Resource Center** provides essential information about common emotional health issues and shows teens and young adults how they can support one another, overcome challenges, and make a successful transition to adulthood.
- ❖ **The Spirit Level** by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett is the book mentioned in the film. It features groundbreaking analysis showing that greater economic equality —not greater wealth — is the mark of the most successful societies and offers new ways to achieve it.

COLORADO RESOURCES

- ❖ Since its inception in July 2019, Vail Health's Eagle Valley Behavioral Health (EVBH) has led community collaboration to ensure access to superior behavioral health services. EVBH is responsible for assessing community needs, identifying service gaps, convening community leaders, allocating funding, and enhancing and developing the services necessary to prevent the onset of behavioral health conditions and to provide services for those most in need of care. EVBH has strengthened and expanded the existing system of care in the community by aligning partners and filling gaps rather than replacing existing community capacity. EVBH serves to coordinate, develop, enhance, fund, and oversee all behavioral health services in their community spanning the following areas of service: Education/Consultation, Prevention/Early Identification, Outpatient Services, Intensive Outpatient Services, Crisis and Emergency Services, and Inpatient Services through collaborative partnerships. Follow this model in your community. You can learn more about them [here](#) or listen to [this podcast](#) detailing their work.
- ❖ As shown in the documentary, SpeakUp ReachOut works to reduce instances of suicide in Eagle County, CO, and helps those affected by addressing their pain. Through educational programs, events, peer groups, and partnerships, they bring community members together to learn and share their unique experiences.
- ❖ The Grand Foundation, also seen in the film, is a philanthropic organization serving all of Grand County, CO. The Foundation seeks to improve the quality of life in Grand County by proactively addressing current and future needs in the areas of Health & Human Services, Arts & Culture, Education, Amateur Sports, and the Environment.
- ❖ The I Matter program can connect you with a therapist for up to 6 free virtual counseling sessions (some in-person appointments available, too) that are completely confidential. To start, [click here](#).
- ❖ Mental Health Colorado is an advocacy organization that works to promote mental wellness, end discrimination, and ensure equitable access to mental health and substance use care.

UTAH RESOURCES

- ❖ **This fact sheet** provides an overview of mental health and substance use disorders in Utah, including mental illness during the COVID-19 pandemic, trends in drug overdose death rates and suicide death rates, and coverage and access issues. National-level data is also included for comparison.
- ❖ In 2019, the Huntsman family made a generous donation of \$150 million to create the **Huntsman Mental Health Institute (HMHI)**. As part of a world-renowned academic health system, HMHI provides comprehensive mental health services and psychiatric care throughout the Salt Lake Valley.
- ❖ For over 30 years, **Valley Behavioral Health** has successfully helped thousands of adults, children, and families by providing individualized therapy, mental health services, and personalized treatment methods to each individual's needs. If you or a loved one are in need of support in UT, check out their programs and services to find the treatment that is right for you.
- ❖ **NAMI Utah** offers classes and support groups throughout Utah for families, caregivers, and individuals living with mental illness.

About Podium Pictures & Podium Society

For the past twenty years, **Podium Pictures** has helped studios like HBO and legends like Michael Phelps and Steve Nash tell stories that matter.

The **Podium Society** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping mindful philanthropists, brands, and studios fund social impact sports media in order to educate, inspire, and create change.

Since 2007, national suicide rates for people aged 10-24 have increased by 60 percent. Emergency room visits rose sharply for anxiety, mood disorders, and self-harm. Thirteen percent of adolescents reported having a major depressive episode ([source](#)).

Podium Pictures' acclaimed 2020 HBO film "**The Weight of Gold**" sparked a conversation and has helped thousands of individuals reach out for the help they need, inspired by their heroes who declared that it's "ok to not be ok," But now, it's time to end the stigma for good.

The Podium Project encompasses 6 new documentaries featuring legendary athletes across major sports leagues, sharing their stories and encouraging people to raise their hands and ask for help. Mental health touches all of us, and nobody should suffer in silence.

