# Table of Contents

## Introduction
- Letter from the Writer 3
- About the Writer 4
- EduGuide Overview 5
- Launching the unit 8

## Episodes/Lessons
- Episode/Lesson #1: Rana 10
- Episode/Lesson #2: Lazarus 13
- Episode/Lesson #3: Sophie 16
- Episode/Lesson #4: Melissa 19

## Culminating Activity
- 22

## Student Handouts
- 24

## Conclusion
- 27
Letter from the Writer

Hello, and welcome to The It Gets Better Project’s EduGuide for The Assignment, a fun and irreverent web series where queer teens connect with queer professionals and complete activities within their mentor’s realm of expertise.

As educators of young queer people, it is important for us to remember that success can look different for everybody and to not subscribe to a one-size-fits-all approach in supporting our students as they plan for their futures. Increasing numbers of young people are exploring paths after high school that do not require a degree from a four-year institution. Queer people also have a long history of outside-of-the-box thinking, and have created careers and rich professional lives for themselves without very much guidance or support. With that in mind, it is our honor to support this next generation of queer youth as they embark on fulfilling, healthy futures.

Young queer and questioning people can turn to this web series to be inspired towards their personal and professional development. This EduGuide is designed for all high school-aged students, but contains specific insight for LGBTQ+ students who may not want to go to college. Rather than discouraging students who know what they want to do, we want to make sure we are empowering them with the tools to succeed, whatever that may look like for them.

The episodes in this EduGuide focus on professionals in the food and decor industry, from cooking to kitchen design. Folks will leave the series with a deeper understanding of the various career paths within these industries and will be inspired by the success of fellow LGBTQ+ folks.

That being said, this EduGuide is not meant exclusively for students who want to go into the food and decor industry. The lessons created for each video combine guided discussion and structured self-reflection activities purposefully designed for all students, regardless of their industries of interest. Our goal with this is to inspire students to continue with this work and use these lessons as a launching off point for more purposeful planning and holistic development.
About the Writer

My mission in life is always threefold: to educate, to inspire, and to spread joy. I spent the first decade of my career as a special education teacher and school leader, and have made it my mission to uplift those for whom society has not afforded a loud enough voice. From public schools in New York City, to private education in Hong Kong, to educational consulting in Los Angeles, I have learned that students across time and borders have much more in common than some may initially expect. When it comes down to it, students want to be heard, seen, and valued.

I firmly believe that everyone has something to offer, a story to tell, and I work hard to create environments in which students are educated holistically, are empowered to make their own decisions, and have fun doing it. For a learning environment to be holistic, it must be both inclusive and supportive, balancing high expectations with an understanding that a one-size-fits-all approach simply does not work. Fairness, after all, is not everyone getting the same thing; it is everyone getting what they need in order to be successful.
This EduGuide consists of 4 lessons, each of which corresponds to one of the episodes in The Assignment. These lessons can come together to form a unit of study in and of itself, or they can serve as supplements to larger units on career readiness, future planning, civil rights, the LGBTQ+ community, identity, etc. We recommend using this guide to inspire larger conversations about queerness and acceptance.

**Episode 1**
Rana (she/her) is the co-owner of a local, queer-owned, Black and Brown-owned, 100% organic juice bar.

**Episode 2**
Lazarus (he/him) is a chef, multi-hyphenate creative, and entrepreneur.

**Episode 3**
Sophie (she/her) is a self-taught designer based in New York.

**Episode 4**
Melissa (she/her) is a chef, entrepreneur, and activist in San Francisco.
Time Needed

Each video and accompanying lesson can be taught in a single class period (about 45 minutes), though you may want to factor in an additional 30 to 60 minutes for any extension activities or more in-depth discussions.

Audience

This EduGuide is intended for middle and high school students between the ages of 13-18, though we welcome you to adapt it for younger and older audiences if you believe it’s appropriate to do so. We hope this guide is inviting for both LGBTQ+ people and allies alike.

NOTE: The Assignment and the activities provided are explicitly targeted for young audiences exploring potential career paths that do not require a college degree.

Setting

These lessons can be used in small or large groups. Some connector activities and some group activities may be best suited for a small group, so if the lesson is facilitated with a larger group – divide the large group into small groups (6-8 students) to complete the activity.

While we encourage in-person discussions, all activities included below can be conducted in a virtual environment. Facilitators will want to make use of break-out rooms for smaller group activities, with shared documents or online boards to facilitate collaboration.

NOTE: The Assignment is largely focused around self-guided personal development tasks for students as they work toward planning their futures.

Participant Support

We encourage you to make these workshops absolutely voluntary. We think a basic agreement for the space of these workshops should be that everyone is here because they have decided to be here and anyone can choose not to participate in a part of the lesson.

Additionally, depending on the experiences shared by students during the lesson, individual follow up may be needed. As students share challenges they currently face or anticipate facing, they may need to have individual discussions for support and intervention. If a school counselor is facilitating the lesson, plan an individual session.
to follow-up with the student to determine the level of support needed for the student. If a teacher or other educator is facilitating the lesson, report the concern to a school counselor who can follow-up with the student individually. If the student has an IEP or receives any additional support, be sure to include special education teachers or support systems in the conversation. Let the student know you are sharing the concern so trust is not broken.

**Common Core Standards**

- Production and Distribution of Writing - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.4-6
- Range of Writing - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.10
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.7-8
- Comprehension and Collaboration - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-12.1-3
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-12.5-6

**Additional Resources**

- It Gets Better Project - [Videos](#)
- It Gets Better Project - [LGBTQ+ Glossary](#)
- Journal of College Access - [Over the Rainbow: A Career Development Group for LGBTQ+ Teens](#)
- Youth.gov - [How to Improve School Experiences for LGBTQ+ Youth](#)
- American Psychology Association - [Toolbox to Promote Healthy LGBT Youth](#)

**Student Handouts**

At the end of this EduGuide, you will find a 5-Year Care Plan as well as a Culminating Activity document. Students will be asked to add to their care plans at the end of each lesson. The culminating activity should be saved for the end.
Launching the Unit

Materials Needed
- Projector for images and videos
- Sticky notes (preferably in 4 colors)

Overview & Activation

Please follow these steps as you launch the unit.

Begin by posting a question. What is important to you in your future?

**Say:** What is important to you in your future? It’s okay if you don’t know what you want to do in your career. This just asks you to consider what is important to you. You may express your answers however you choose (i.e. word cloud, drawing, etc.).

Some ideas might be: health, safety, or financial security. If it fits in your classroom culture, please welcome students to share some of their ideas.

**Say:** This unit will share several stories of queer people meeting with professional mentors in the food industry. The activities that follow will ask you to consider the following four elements as you plan for your futures: health, belonging, creativity, and identity.

Distribute four sticky notes per student (preferably in four different colors to support visual learners in a differentiated learning environment).

**Say:** Let’s begin by creating a shared definition of what these words mean to you as individuals and to us as a community. Define each word on its own sticky note.

Gather sticky notes and create a shared class definition for each word, finding commonalities between sticky note responses. If your group is large, consider dividing the students into four groups and assigning each group a word to define for the class.

Review class definitions.

Watch the [trailer](#) for The Assignment.
Community Agreements

Conversations in this and all It Gets Better EduGuides will require maturity and sensitivity. Staying curious, while keeping all comments respectful, will be the key to a successful learning experience. If you have not already established these or similar guidelines in your learning environment, consider soliciting student ideas for community guidelines and agreeing to the shared expectations. Once established, please be mindful and remind students of these agreements before each lesson.

NOTE: For The Assignment, in particular, it is important to note that it’s completely okay for students to not yet know what they want to do in their careers. We are here to explore as a community, and should not shame people for not having all the answers.

Total Time

• 30 minutes
## Episode/Lesson #1: Rana

### Objectives

Students will:
- Identify several of their professional and social justice interests.
- Recommend ways to bring their above interests together.
- Construct a plan to prioritize their health over the next five years of their educational and vocational journeys.

### Relevant Concepts/Vocabulary

- **Health** - refer back to the shared definition from the Unit Launch activity.
- **Organic produce** - fruits and vegetables grown naturally without using any pesticides, chemicals, insecticides
- **Social justice** - the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities

### Teacher Preparation

- Watch the episode in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students.
- Gather materials (below) if possible.

### Materials/Supplies Needed

- **Episode #1: Rana**
- Paper plates
- Colored pens & markers
- Printer paper
- **5-Year Care Plan** (located in the Student Handout section of the EduGuide)

### Total Time

- 45 minutes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Group Configuration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Welcome and Agreements</td>
<td>Welcome students to the space and ask a student to review group agreements that have been established. The facilitator then shares the lesson plan’s objectives and key concepts/vocabulary from above.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>What’s on your plate?</td>
<td>Distribute <a href="#">paper plates and colored markers</a> to students. <strong>Say &amp; post the question</strong>: What’s on your plate? Give students a few minutes to express themselves however they wish using the materials. Some things on their plates might be school work, a job, family stress, friendships, extracurriculars, etc. Students are welcome to share with partners or table mates if they so choose. <strong>Say</strong>: We all come to this space with different things on our plates. Now that we have acknowledged what we are bringing to the table, let’s learn together, with kindness and compassion.</td>
<td>Individual activity with partner or whole-group share-out, as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Let’s Learn</td>
<td>Have the group watch the <a href="#">Rana video episode</a> together.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Quick Discussion</td>
<td>Lead a whole-group discussion to check in after viewing the video. <strong>Say</strong>: In the video, we met Rana Halpern, co-owner of Super Juice in Oakland, CA. The founders believe that food justice is social justice and love to make delicious nutritionally dense drinks and food that heal their communities. What do you think “food justice is social justice” means?</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Self-Guided Activity</td>
<td>1. Create a <a href="#">T-chart</a> on the top few lines of a fresh piece of paper or virtual document. - On one side, list some <a href="#">professions or career paths</a> that appeal to you. Try a few, even if you are not sure. - On the other side, list some of your <a href="#">social justice interests or causes</a> that are meaningful to you. Think: How do you want to make this world a better place?</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Group Configuration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
|       |                  | 2. Brainstorm ways that you might bring two of these together, one from each column. How could they complement each other?  
3. Choose a pairing. If you were to launch your own business, which career and social justice interests might you merge? How would you market your business? What successes or impact would you hope to have?  

**Optional Extension:** A Day in the Life – Write a journal entry from your own perspective 15 years from now, as the owner of the business you founded. | Whole group |
| 10 min| 5-Year Care Plan | **Say:** In the video, Rana talks about creating a health-centered community that nourishes people. How do you see health playing a role in your future? Maintaining your health throughout your career is not only vital but also makes you better at what you do.  

Distribute the 5-Year Care Plan. Students should individually fill in the first box, answering the question: *In the next five years, how are you going to tend to your health?*  

**NOTE:** Students will add to their 5-Year Care Plans at the end of each lesson. | Individual |
|       |                  | - Further Resources  
If you’re interested in learning more about Rana’s path, check out the following:  
**Super Juiced Oakland** is a queer-owned, Black and Brown-owned, 100%-organic juice bar in Oakland – co-owned by Rana Halpern. The founders believe that food justice is social justice and love to make delicious nutritionally dense drinks and food that heal their communities.  
If you are considering trade school opportunities for careers in the food industry (and others!) you might want to look into Trade-Schools.net.  
Check out this list of **The Best LGBTQ-Owned Restaurants Across the US**. Is there one in your area?  
Read about Eric See, a **queer chef** who’s supporting his community. | Whole group |
Episode/Lesson #2: Lazarus

Objectives
Students will:
• Reflect on their own experiences with belonging.
• Create a web chart of the support they will need to reach their professional goals.
• Construct a plan to prioritize a feeling of belonging over the next five years of their educational and vocational journeys.

Relevant Concepts/Vocabulary
Belonging - refer back to the shared definition from the Unit Launch activity
Entrepreneur - one who creates, organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise

Teacher Preparation
• Watch the episode in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students.

Materials/Supplies Needed
• Episode #2: Lazarus
• Printer paper
• Colored pens & markers
• 5-Year Care Plan for each student

Total Time
• 45 minutes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Group Configuration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Welcome and</td>
<td>Welcome students to the space and ask a student to review group agreements that have been established. The facilitator then shares the lesson plan’s objectives and key concepts/vocabulary from above.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Sense Memory</td>
<td>Distribute printer paper and markers to students.</td>
<td>Individual activity with partner or whole-group share-out, as appropriate</td>
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<td>Think about the flavors that remind you of your childhood.</td>
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<td><strong>Say &amp; post the question:</strong> Think about the kitchen, fridge, or pantry of where you live. What do its contents tell us about you?</td>
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<td>Give students a few minutes to create a visual representation of their ideas. Students are welcome to share with partners or table mates if they so choose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Let's Learn</td>
<td>Have the group watch the <a href="#">lazarus video episode</a> together.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Quick Reflection</td>
<td>Lead students in a quick self check-in after viewing the video.</td>
<td>Individual activity with partner or whole-group share-out, as appropriate</td>
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<td><strong>Say:</strong> In the video, Lazarus asks: “Was there a place when you were growing up that you felt like you truly belonged?” Think about what that place was for you.</td>
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<td>Give students a few minutes to draw or sketch out their places of belonging. Encourage them to try to remember with all of their senses, and express that somehow in their drawings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Self-Guided</td>
<td>All of us exist as part of larger communities. In order to feel a sense of belonging, we need support from those around us. Take out your work from our last lesson. Consider the communities you may be a part of in your future professional life.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>1. Create a <a href="#">web chart</a> with yourself in the middle and the types of support you will need surrounding you. Think about areas of support, which can be broad (i.e. financial planning, mental health) or more specific to your particular areas of need.</td>
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<td>2. Who will be on your team? Create a <a href="#">team roster</a>. These can be people you already know or people with a specific role in your support network.</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<td>Group Configuration</td>
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<td><strong>Optional Extension:</strong> What role do you think you might play on someone else’s team? Think about someone whose team you might be on. Send them something (it can be as simple as a text message) to make them smile and let them know you’re here.</td>
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<td><strong>Say:</strong> In the video, Lazarus talks about using his food to create a sense of belonging with his ancestors. How do you see belonging playing a role in your future? Maintaining a sense of belonging in your communities, queer or otherwise, is critical for mental health and professional success.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>5-Year Care Plan</td>
<td>Direct students back to their 5-Year Care Plans that they started last lesson. Students should individually fill in the second box, answering the question: In the next five years, how are you going to tend to your sense of belonging?</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> students will add to their 5-Year Care Plans at the end of each lesson.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Further Resources</td>
<td>If you’re interested in learning more about Lazarus’s path, check out the following:</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- <a href="https://example.com/lazarus-lynch">Lazarus Lynch</a> is a celebrated African-American queer chef, entrepreneur, filmmaker, musical artist, and mental health advocate. He is also a two-time Chopped champion and <a href="https://example.com/became-only-black-queer-chef">became the only Black, queer chef ever to cook at the Met Gala</a>.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>- If you are considering trade school opportunities for careers in the food industry (and others!) you might want to look into <a href="https://example.com/trade-schools">Trade-Schools.net</a>.</td>
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<td>- Interested in becoming a chef? U.S. News offers some tips.</td>
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<td>- Get inspired by <a href="https://example.com/20-lgbtq-chefs">20 LGBTQ Chefs</a>, including Lazarus!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Episode/Lesson #3: Sophie

#### Objectives
Students will:
- Create a mind map of their own creative influences.
- Build a visual representation of their professional goals, identifying areas of opportunity to infuse creative influences regardless of their possible career paths.
- Construct a plan to prioritize a feeling of belonging over the next five years of their educational and vocational journeys.

#### Relevant Concepts/Vocabulary
- **Creativity** – refer back to the shared definition from the Unit Launch activity
- **Industrial designer** – one who develops the concepts for manufactured products, such as cars, home appliances, and toys

#### Teacher Preparation
- Watch the episode in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students.

#### Materials/Supplies Needed
- **Episode #3: Sophie**
- Plastic cups (1 per student)
- Printer paper
- Colored pens & markers
- 1:1 technology for virtual collages and slideshows
- **5-Year Care Plan** for each student

#### Total Time
- 45 minutes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Group Configuration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Welcome and Agreements</td>
<td>Welcome students to the space and ask a student to review group agreements that have been established. The facilitator then shares the lesson plan’s objectives and key concepts/vocabulary from above.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Sense Memory</td>
<td>Distribute <em>cups, paper, and colored markers</em> to students.</td>
<td>Individual activity</td>
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<td><strong>Say &amp; post the question: What’s in your creative cup?</strong></td>
<td>with partner or</td>
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<td>Give students a few minutes to brainstorm some of their creative influences. The idea is for them to write each influence on a slip of paper to fill their creative cups. Students are welcome to share with partners or table mates if they so choose.</td>
<td>whole-group</td>
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<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> If you do not have cups available, you can readily conduct this activity with post-it notes or even a simple mind map. The more we can embed multimodal ways for students to express themselves, though, the better.</td>
<td>share-out, as</td>
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<td>appropriate</td>
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<td>8 min</td>
<td>Let’s Learn</td>
<td>Have the group watch the <em>Sophie video episode</em> together.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
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<td>5 min</td>
<td>Quick Reflection</td>
<td>Lead students in a quick self check-in after viewing the video.</td>
<td>Pairs</td>
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<td><strong>Say:</strong> <em>In the video, Sophie teaches us how to liven up our kitchens. Consider your own kitchen or work space. How can you use elements from your cup and apply that to your work space or future career path?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Self-Guided Activity</td>
<td>Creativity can and should play a part in any career path you take. As you continue to think about how your professional journey may unfold, gather images that represent some of your goals. Referencing the work completed in the last two lessons, create a collage or slideshow that answers the question: How can you bring creativity into your professional life? Remember: creativity does not just have to do with artistic expression.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td><strong>Optional Extension:</strong> If you were to present your collage or slideshow to someone but could not speak when presenting, what soundtrack would you play and why? What does this choice tell us about you and how you choose to present yourself to the world?</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5-Year Care Plan</td>
<td><strong>Say:</strong> In the video, Sophie talks about finding fun and creative ways to</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td>liven up one’s kitchen or workspace. How do you see creativity playing a</td>
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<td>role in your future? Sometimes, we need to find creative ways to reach our</td>
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<td>goals. This will look different for everyone.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Direct students back to their 5-Year Care Plans. Students should individually</td>
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<td>fill in the third box, answering the question: In the next five years, how are</td>
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<td>you going to tap into your creativity?</td>
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<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> Students will add to their 5-Year Care Plans at the end of each</td>
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<td>lesson.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Further Resources</td>
<td>If you’re interested in learning more about Sophie’s path, check out the</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>following:</td>
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<td>Sophie Collé is a self-taught, New York-based designer began selling her</td>
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<td>colorful pieces on Instagram just a couple of years ago, a process that</td>
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<td>has gained her nearly 20,000 followers all for individual wooden pieces</td>
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<td>she’s created with her own two hands. With her unique and colorful pieces,</td>
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<td>Collé has become a key voice in the burgeoning world of whimsical and</td>
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<td>wiggly interiors.</td>
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<td><a href="#">Interior Designer vs. Interior Decorator: What's the Difference?</a></td>
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<td><a href="#">High-Paying Creative Jobs that Don’t Require a Degree</a></td>
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<td><a href="#">12 Cool Jobs that Don’t Require a College Degree</a></td>
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Episode/Lesson #4: Melissa

Objectives

Students will:
• Create a menu that tells their life story through food.
• Write a 60-second elevator pitch for themselves.
• Construct a plan to be true to themselves over the next five years of their educational and vocational journeys.

Relevant Concepts/Vocabulary

Identity - refer back to the shared definition from the Unit Launch activity
Activist - a person who campaigns to bring about political or social change
Elevator pitch - a brief way of introducing yourself, getting across a key point or two, and making a connection with someone

Teacher Preparation

• Watch the episode in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students.

Materials/Supplies Needed

• Episode #4: Melissa
• Printer paper
• Colored pens & markers
• 5-Year Care Plan for each student

Total Time

• 45 minutes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Group Configuration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Welcome and</td>
<td>Welcome students to the space and ask a student to review group agreements that have been established. The facilitator then shares the lesson plan’s objectives and key concepts/vocabulary from above.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
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<td>Agreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Sense Memory</td>
<td>Distribute <strong>paper and colored markers</strong> to students, as needed. <strong>Say &amp; post the question:</strong> What’s on the menu? <strong>Say:</strong> Take a few minutes to create a menu that tells your life story through food. Feel free to use any dishes, any ingredients, and any number of courses you need. Give students a few minutes to create their menus. If you have more time for the lesson, students can be invited to share in partners or table groups.</td>
<td>Individual activity with partner or whole-group share-out, as appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Let’s Learn</td>
<td>Have the group watch the <a href="#">Melissa video episode</a> together.</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Quick Reflection</td>
<td>Lead students in a quick reflection &amp; discussion after viewing the video. <strong>Say:</strong> In the video, Melissa talks about bringing together French and Italian cooking styles with Chinese dishes and flavors. How do you celebrate your culture through food? How do you celebrate it in other ways? Remember: your culture does not just have to be that of the family you were born into. This can be conducted as a small-group or whole-class discussion.</td>
<td>Whole group or small groups depending on number of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Self-Guided Activity</td>
<td>You have done a lot of thinking about your goals, passions, and communities so far. Today, you’re going to bring that all together and create a <strong>60-second elevator pitch</strong> for yourself. An elevator pitch can be very useful as you build your network and find the support you need to reach your goals. As you work on your elevator pitch, consider these tips: Reference the work you have done in all four lessons in this unit. Consider the most important elements of who you are, from your personal history to your career goals to your social justice interests.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Group Configuration</td>
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<td><strong>Answer the questions: Who are you? What do you care about? What are you hoping to achieve?</strong></td>
<td>Pairs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Workshop your elevator pitch with a partner, or practice recording yourself delivering it so you can hear how it sounds.</td>
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<td>5 min</td>
<td>5-Year Care Plan</td>
<td><strong>Say:</strong> In the video, Melissa talks about finding ways to bring together elements from her own identity in her cooking. How do you see identity playing a role in your future? How will you stay true to yourself as you embark on the next phase of your journey? This will look different for everyone.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Direct students back to their 5-Year Care Plans. Students should individually fill in the fourth box, answering the question: In the next five years, how are you going to honor your identity and stay true to yourself?</td>
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<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> Students will add to their 5-Year Care Plans at the end of each lesson. At the end of this lesson, their document should be completed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Further Resources</td>
<td>If you’re interested in learning more about Melissa’s journey, check out:</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
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<td>- Melissa King is one of the most exciting talents in America’s culinary scene — with a unique cooking style that combines the Bay Area’s best ingredients with modern techniques and Asian flavors.</td>
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<td>- King placed as a finalist on Bravo’s <em>Top Chef: Boston Season 12</em> and is competing again on this season’s <em>Top Chef All-Stars: Los Angeles Season 17</em>. King has been recognized as “one of the best female chefs in San Francisco” and “40 under 40: Rising Star”.</td>
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<td>- <a href="#">How Queer Chefs are Rewriting the Recipe for Success</a></td>
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Culminating Activity

Materials Needed

Culminating Activity handout

Community Agreements

Welcome students to the space and ask a student to review group agreements that have been established.

Overview & Activation

Say: During the lessons in this EduGuide, you have reflected on some of your own goals and interests, through the lens of four major areas: health, belonging, creativity, and identity. To bring everything together in this culminating activity, we would like to introduce you to the Japanese concept of ikigai.

Ikigai has no synonym in English but can best be understood by the sum of its parts:
iki = life
gai = worth

Say: Ikigai is all about finding purpose, a reason for being and living regardless of life’s inevitable challenges. It’s about identifying your strengths and seeing where they can have the most positive impact, not just for yourself, but also for your community and for the world at large.

Show the students an image of an ikigai diagram, or watch this video from the Prime Minister’s Office of Japan.

Image: PositivePsychology.com
If you’d like to learn more about ikigai, you may enjoy this article from PositivePsychology.com.

Say: As we finish our work with The Assignment, you will have the opportunity to try and identify your ikigai. This is a lifelong process, and we do not expect you to have all the answers right away. That being said, this can be a helpful tool.

Distribute a copy of the Culminating Activity page to each student. Review the four major areas that ikigai is centered around:

1. What you love
2. What the world needs
3. What you can be paid for
4. What you are good at

Say: Begin by filling in the outer circles, then work your way inward, identifying areas of overlap.

Note: Students may work in pairs if that helps them. Finding commonalities may also help inspire a strong sense of community as students work toward identifying their next steps.

Exit Ticket - Ask students to identify one thing that surprised or intrigued them as they filled in their ikigai chart, and one major takeaway they have from the unit as a whole. This can be done orally, with post-it notes, or posted to a shared virtual document.

Total Time

30–45 minutes
Student Handouts
5-Year Care Plan

As you plan the next steps in your educational and professional journey, it will be important to take care of yourself. During each lesson of The Assignment, you will be filling in one of the boxes below. When you have completed the unit, keep this as a reference for yourself as you plan your future.

In the next five years, how are you going to...

...tend to your health?

...tend to your sense of belonging?

...tap into your creativity?

...honor your identity and stay true to yourself?
The Japanese concept of ikigai, 生きる、生きる、生きる, has no synonym in English but can best be understood by the sum of its parts. *iki* means life, and *gai* means worth. *ikigai* is all about finding purpose, a reason for being.

**IKIGAI**

YOUR REASON FOR BEING

- What you love
- Your mission
- What the world needs
- Your profession
- Your vocation
- What you can be paid for
- Your passion
- What you are good at

Image: PositivePsychology.com
Conclusion

Final Thoughts
We hope you enjoyed this EduGuide and the video series it accompanied. This resource is part of a growing portfolio of materials that help ensure that the uplifting stories crafted and collected by the It Gets Better Project reach LGBTQ+ youth wherever learning takes place. Learn more at www.itgetsbetter.org/education, and for inquiries, email us at education@itgetsbetter.org.

About the It Gets Better Project
It Gets Better Project is a nonprofit organization on a mission to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe.

Contributors to this EduGuide
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Reviewer – Zachary Koung, Independent Consultant

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Tumblr: www.itgetsbetterproject.tumblr.com
Twitch: www.twitch.tv/itgetsbetter
Twitter: www.twitter.com/ItGetsBetter
YouTube: www.youtube.com/itgetsbetter

Survey
By completing the 2-minute survey at itgetsbetter.org/EduFeedback, you’re helping our organization improve the educational materials we provide that aim to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth. Plus, you’ll receive a free gift from our store!
The Assignment is made possible through the generous support of the Taco Bell Foundation.