



A Right to Heal: Mental Health in Diverse Communities



California Pan-Ethnic
HEALTH NETWORK



California Consortium
for Urban Indian Health



Listening and Learning

WHY?

To improve California's failing public behavioral health system, voters passed the Mental Health Services Act, 2004 (MHSA) to fund multiple initiatives including:

1. Community Services and Supports
2. Prevention and Early Intervention
3. Testing of Innovative Programs

In 2020, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) contracted CPEHN (California Pan-Ethnic Health Network) for 3 years to engage and uplift diverse voices to influence what local programs and services are funded in their communities. Year 1 and Year 2 accomplishments can be found [here](#).

HOW?

Listening sessions with diverse racial and ethnic communities enables CPEHN to amplify the voices of historically marginalized communities whose needs and wishes have been overlooked or assumed.

At the local level, the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley (IHC) collaborated with CPEHN and its statewide partner the California Consortium for Urban Indian Health (CCUIH) to facilitate listening sessions with community members (23 participants) including American Indian and Alaskan Native service members and youth.

"These kinds of events are important for our future and way of life."

– U.S. Army Veteran

"It brought a lot of spirit and healing. Today was very special for me."

– U.S. Army Veteran

23

individuals attended the
listening session

#CultureIsPrevention

#WeSupportOur
Veterans



WHAT?

3 Themes Heard From the American Indian and Alaska Native Community of Santa Clara Valley

- 1 Build awareness to promote mental health
- 2 Offer culturally relevant *and* competent mental health services
- 3 Make access easier

BUILD AWARENESS TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH

Lack of knowledge of available mental health resources along with stigma create a reluctance to seek help or participate in a loved one's treatment.

Only a handful of community members are knowledgeable about mental health resources.

OFFER CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND COMPETENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

There is a lack of culturally competent providers and services, along with an absence of culturally relevant events to engage community members in a supportive environment to promote mental health and educate participants.

There's a gap in culturally competent services and client-provider matching.

MAKE ACCESS EASIER

Challenges to accessing mental health services include theme #1 and #2. But technology, language, and transportation logistics to system-level barriers like complicated county processes, eligibility requirements and long wait times due to a lack of providers make accessing existing services worse.

There are a myriad of obstacles preventing access to services.



THE LISTENING SESSIONS NOT ONLY IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS, BUT ALSO IDENTIFIED SOLUTIONS

Build Awareness

- **Mental health promotion campaigns** "*you are not the only one*" through cultural events, schools, county-wide alerts, Instagram and more
- **Creative workshops** including art, crafts, or animals to facilitate connection

Embrace Culture

- **Acknowledge historical trauma in the screening or triage process** to address mistrust
- **Traditional healing** approaches for Indigenous people should be offered

Ease Access

- **Home visits** allow for meetings in an informal comfortable space, also conducive to family healing
- **Cultural navigators** to assist in the complicated process of receiving services

WHAT'S NEXT?

This is a historic opportunity to translate what we've learned into action. While A Right to Heal as a project is ending, it has paved the way for MHSA community program planning to *reflect the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of mental health consumers* moving forward by continuing to listen to and support local communities in their advocacy for their mental health.

For more about CPEHN's work mobilizing communities of color to advocate for public policies that advance health equity and improve health outcomes, visit www.cpehn.org.