

VI. Mental Health

Title:	Data Source:	Publish Date:	Contact:
East Palo Alto Mental Health Advisory Group: Findings from community meetings	East Palo Alto Mental Health Advisory Group (EPAMHAG)	February 2007	One East Palo Alto

Major Findings

EPA residents and stakeholders identified and proposed to MHSD staff a number of priority improvements to be made in the quality and availability of local mental health services. The proposed improvements addressed, among other things, access, culturally inappropriate treatments, and/or un- and under-service for the community's major ethnic subpopulations – Latinos, African Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Community Needs: East Palo Alto residents have identified several needs currently not being addressed by the county's current mental health services.

- 1) Diverse Latino and Pacific Islander population is underserved
 - a. Cultural belief stigmatizes use of mental health services
 - b. Misdiagnosis of symptoms presented by different cultural groups
 - c. Bureaucracy prevents access to existing services
 - d. Engagement of consumers thwarted by professionals lack of cultural competency, limited resources, and restrictive service offerings
- 2) Children have high risk factors that can lead to mental health issues
- 3) Dementia, Depression, Alzheimer's is a prevalent issue for seniors in our community impacting our traditional and disproportionately large non-traditional family structures.
- 4) Limited access to school-based mental health services for the Ravenswood City School District and East Palo Alto Charter Schools.
 - a. School-based mental health services are not culturally competent
- 5) Co-occurring substance abuse and mental health clients do not have access to appropriate services due to conflict in diagnosis. Referrals and assessments necessary

Mental Health Goals and Objectives: EPA residents and stakeholders identified the following mental health goals for East Palo Alto:

- 1) Increase equity and access for un-served and under-served East Palo Alto residents
 - a. Provide crisis stabilization, short-term case planning and problem resolution, family resource development, community linkage and advocacy, educational linkages and long-term case management.
- 2) Create culturally competent, ethnically diverse community response teams
 - a. Expand local capacity to utilize peers, family members, CBO's, and consumers as providers of services.
 - b. Timely access to needed help, including times of crisis.
 - c. Offer outreach services to engage persons who are currently un-served or under-served.

Recommendations: The following recommendations were outlined.

- 1) The East Palo Alto Drop-in Center and/or Clubhouse program should provide access and engagement information, peer support, socialization and activities, and recovery and wellness services.
 - a. Use a holistic approach to service delivery
 - b. Expand weekend access to drop-in center
 - c. Increase utilization of Cultural Navigators
 - i. Promotor Navigator

1. Navigator services that provide welcoming outreach and care advocacy to individuals and their families that seek services.
 - ii. Increase peer counselor support
 - d. Collaborate and coordinate linkages to CBO's and other community service providers.
- 2) East Palo Alto mental health school-based services are provided to children (8-18) in schools through programs and/or clinics.
 - a. Must include a culturally appropriate diagnosis
 - b. Include gender specific assessments
 - c. Must make provision for mental health services to non-medi-cal eligible students
 - d. Need culturally appropriate engagement with parents
 - e. Increase involvement of Promotor Navigator

Community members established the East Palo Alto Mental Health Advisory Group (EPAMHAG) to formally engage with MHSD staff on strategies for improving access and design of mental health services in the EPA region of San Mateo County. The advisory group is comprised of heads of leading EPA nonprofits, faith organizations, and community residents, with representative of all three of the community's major ethnic subpopulations.

Why is this Topic Important?

Health disparities are overwhelming especially in the East Palo Alto region of San Mateo County and need to be addressed! Community collaboration is necessary to reach the community as a whole. The fact is community members are approaching us with complex issues and what we know to be true is treating issues simultaneously creates a more effective approach to establishing holistic service deliveries and ultimately creating positive outcomes.

Resources

Collaboration, cross trainings, education and effective communication.

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California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) Key Findings- 5 th Grade Spring 2006, Ravenswood City Elementary	California Healthy Kids Survey	Spring 2006	Call your CHKS Service Center for further information.

Major Findings

EXTERNAL ASSETS (RESILIENCE)

Internal Assets, also known as developmental outcomes or resilience traits, were assessed: Empathy, Problem Solving, and Goals and Aspirations. These internal assets are those found to protect a young person from involvement in health-risk behaviors. They are the natural developmental outcomes for youth that experience homes, schools, communities, and peer groups rich in the external assets or developmental supports and opportunities.

Percentage of Students Scoring High in External Assets in their Home, School, and Peer Environments

Home Environment 47%
 School Environment 77%
 Peer Environment 40%

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators selected by CDE to monitor progress in reducing drug use and promoting protective factors, as required by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Performance indicator	Spring 2004	Spring 2006
Protective Factors		
The percentage of students that report high levels of caring relationships with a teacher or other adult at their school	42%	49%
The percentage of students that report high levels of high expectations from a teacher or other adult at their school	48%	65%
The percentage of students that report high levels of opportunities for meaningful participation at their school	14%	16%
The percentage of students that report high levels of school connectedness at their school (Total School Assets)	40%	47%

Why is this Topic Important?

Internal and External Assets

Three principles External Assets research has shown to be essential for promoting resilience and positive youth development. These three resilience principles or protective factors are: (a) Caring Relationships, (b) High Expectations, and (c) Opportunities for Meaningful Participation. These are the supports and opportunities that meet the basic development needs of youth and are associated with both healthy development -lack of involvement in health-risk behaviors- and academic success. In addition, three Internal Assets, also known as developmental outcomes or resilience traits, are assessed: Empathy, Problem Solving, and Goals and Aspirations. These internal assets are those found to protect a young person from involvement in health-risk behaviors. They are the natural developmental outcomes for youth that experience homes, schools, communities, and peer groups rich in the external assets or developmental supports and opportunities.