LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION
UNDERSERVED CULTURAL COMMUNITIES (UsCC) UNIT

Indigenous Pride LA: Voices to Faces Project

FY 18-19 Capacity Building Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Describe the development of this project and how the subcommittee was involved by providing feedback and recommendations. Please include timeframe of project and whether the project was done in phases.

The Indigenous Pride Los Angeles: Voices to Faces project (IPLA) was developed by Special Service for Groups, Inc./APAIT (SSG/APAIT) to spread cultural awareness and education of healing practices that positively impact mental health among the Two-Spirit community which includes the Native Tribes, First Nations and other indigenous people. These healing practices include those that encourage wellness in mind, body, and spirit. This project aimed to destigmatize mental health issues among Two-Spirit individuals by highlighting the diversity of the population and the need for culturally affirming resources. The purpose of IPLA is to showcase the Two-Spirit community in Los Angeles County and decrease the invisibility of this community. This project also aimed to increase community member involvement in the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health stakeholder process.

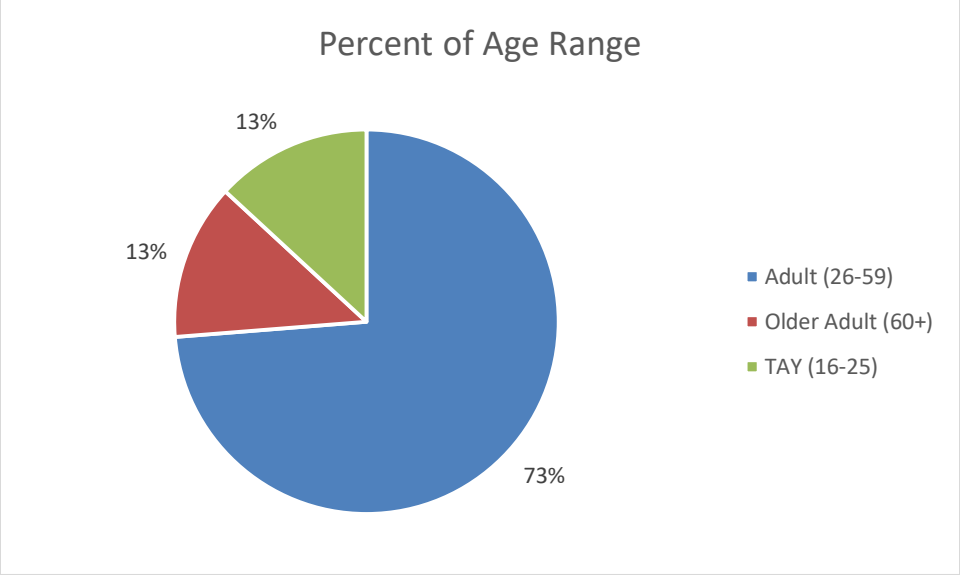
SSG/APAIT consulted with Yuè Begay, a community advocate and member of the Indigenous and Two-Spirit community and Sally Jue, Heather Enciso (LCSW) and Valerie Spencer (ASW), mental health providers who specialize in providing mental health services to the LGBTQIA2-S population to facilitate the workshops. Monique Castro, the CEO of the Indigenous Circle of Wellness, provided curriculum development for this project. This project has multiple phases. The first phase included outreach and engagement of Two-Spirit community members into a Community Collaborative. The second phase was the Community Collaborative, which aimed to create a safe space to discuss mental health and identify the specific mental health needs of Two-Spirit community, as well as learn how to best serve this community in a culturally affirming manner. Based on the information gathered during the Community Collaborative, the third phase consisted of consultants Yuè and Monique to develop a curriculum to be utilized during the wellness workshops targeting the Two-Spirit community as well as the non-Two-Spirit community with the purpose of increasing awareness of the benefits of traditional healing practices utilized by the Two-Spirit community and the positive mental health outcomes associated with cultural healing. The final phase was to host a wellness workshop for the Two-Spirit community.

PROJECT RESULTS

Include a narrative description

APAIT was able to recruit 32 participants internally and externally for the workshop. Fifteen participants completed the full two-day wellness workshop over the course of two weekends, and seventeen APAIT staff completed the five-week workshop over the course of January and February. Participants are case managers, mental health service providers, healthcare workers and community members. The two-day weekend workshops took place via Zoom on Saturday, February 13, 2021 and Saturday, February 20, 2021. Pre-test data found the majority (73%) of participants were adults ages 26 to 59 years old, followed by transition age youth (ages 16 to 25) and older adults (ages 60 and older) (Figure 1). When asked what their tribal affiliation(s) or community, participants responded with the following: ChichimecM/ichoacÃ¡n, Choctaw, Dena'ina and Sugpiaq, Navajo, Round Valley Indian Reservation, TAOS/Santa Ana Pueblo, as well as Native Hawaiian, Latino/Hispanic, and transgender community. When asked what their pronouns were, 27% of participants reported he/him/his and 73% as she/her/hers.

Figure 1. Participant Percent of Age Range



At the conclusion of the training, participant feedback was positive among those who attended the training and reported satisfaction with the project.

Content

Participants appreciated the high value comprehensive content of the Two-Spirit community resulting in increased knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness among participants. They learned of indigenous participants' experiences, preservation of their culture and highlighting why they are protective of it. One participant stated the training had a "good flow, easy to follow and connect with material." As a result, participants revealed a strong desire to share content among their peers and pursue additional learning opportunities after the training.

Safe Space for Sharing

IPLA provided a safe space to allow opportunities to connect with other LGBTQIA2-S individuals and found that these spaces are critical as there are a lack of spaces where these conversations can be held. Participants reported everyone was warm and welcoming and that they liked the combination of small and large group discussions rather than "just lecturing." By providing an opportunity to share their personal stories, thoughts and feelings, the Two-Sprit and indigenous LGBTQIA2-S community felt heard and acknowledged. This transpired to cisgender and non-native participants to deeply appreciate hearing perspectives of indigenous folks and they felt they learned and became more aware of the unique challenges and cultural strengths of indigenous LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit communities. Moreover, those who acknowledged being uncomfortable felt safe enough to share and lean into their discomfort and remain open to learning. Participants noted that even among a diverse group of people, they were able to appreciate each other and identify shared values, experiences, and empathy for one another.

Benefits

Participants expressed the need for trainings like IPLA to increase cultural competency in the community and awareness of indigenous and Two-Spirit services. Other benefits were the opportunity to network with indigenous LGBTQIA2-S and cisgender participants who reside in rural areas to share information and tools with each other. IPLA also provided the ability for participants to hear from providers and mental health clinicians and obtain suggestions for effective cultural accommodations for clinical and non-clinical interactions with indigenous Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families. It is also important to have facilitators who are members of the Two-Spirit and Indigenous community to learn more about the diversity of this community.

LEASONS LEARNED

Briefly discuss things that were important to the project, things detrimental to accomplishing goals, problems encountered and what was done to overcome problems and suggestions for doing the project more efficiently and effectively.

The COVID-19 pandemic was the biggest challenge this project faced, resulting in delays of implementation and transition from in person to virtually. For instance, IPLA was initially designed for three-hour sessions over the course of five weeks but was changed to two eight-hour day workshops. As a result, participants unanimously agreed that two eight-hour days were too long and suggested hour trainings over three to four days. Moreover, due to COVID-19, the transition to telehealth increased barriers to participants interested in the project but had no access to online services.

The development of the materials was also challenging. For instance, when developing the PowerPoint presentation, access to stock images of Two-Spirit individuals accessing medical care or mental health services were not available. Moreover, the issue of copyright images and the costs to obtain use of images were also a barrier and unexpected expense. Providing more visuals such as videos of a cultural healer would make the presentation more visually appealing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Offer recommendations for future projects that can effectively provide outreach and mental health promotion to the target community (next step)

For future workshops, SSG/APAIT recommends scheduling shorter sessions a week apart to allow for participants to digest and apply the content and tools to be able to discuss them in the following sessions as well as provide participants with homework assignments. Moreover, to assess the impact of the project, conducting a three-to-six-month follow-up with participants to assess the impact of the project would be a great evaluation in addition to pre- and post-surveys. This would also provide an opportunity for participants to reconnect with one another.

To have more successful dialogue and conversations during breakout room discussions, more focused questions need to be provided for self-run groups. Participants expressed the need for facilitators during breakout sessions to ensure all participants remained focused, to manage time, and ensure everyone has a chance to share. Participants also expressed interested in facilitating breakout room discussion in the future.

Lastly, developing a participant manual to go along during the workshops would allow participants to follow along during the workshops as well to take the project content with them. Partnerships with Native organizations to reach a wider audience will also add to the experience of the workshop and knowledge of the Two-Spirit and indigenous LGBTQIA+ community. For instance, Valerie invited community members Elton Naswood, Former Capacity Building Specialist at National Native American AIDS Prevention Center and Mattee Jim, Native Trans Activist/HIV Educator.

OUTCOMES

Briefly provide a summary of outcomes collected for this project (as specified in the SOW) that demonstrate the project's impact on community capacity.

Table 1 presents the pre-survey responses on participant indicators on how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statements.

Table 1. Percent of Participants Who Indicated If They Strongly Agree Or Disagree To The Following Statements Pre-Survey.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel knowledgeable about the Two-Spirit community in Los Angeles County.	0%	20%	33%	33%	13%
2. I feel knowledgeable of the unique mental health challenges Two-Spirit individuals face.	7%	40%	13%	27%	13%
3. I feel knowledgeable about the traditional healing practices used by the Two-Spirit community.	0%	20%	27%	33%	20%
4. I understand the importance of culturally competent mental health services for Two-Spirit individuals.	33%	13%	27%	20%	7%

5. I am knowledgeable about the services and resources offered in Los Angeles County for Two-Spirit individuals.	0%	20%	27%	33%	20%
6. I am comfortable with sharing my opinions/thoughts on mental health issues as an advocate among my community.	27%	47%	27%	0%	0%

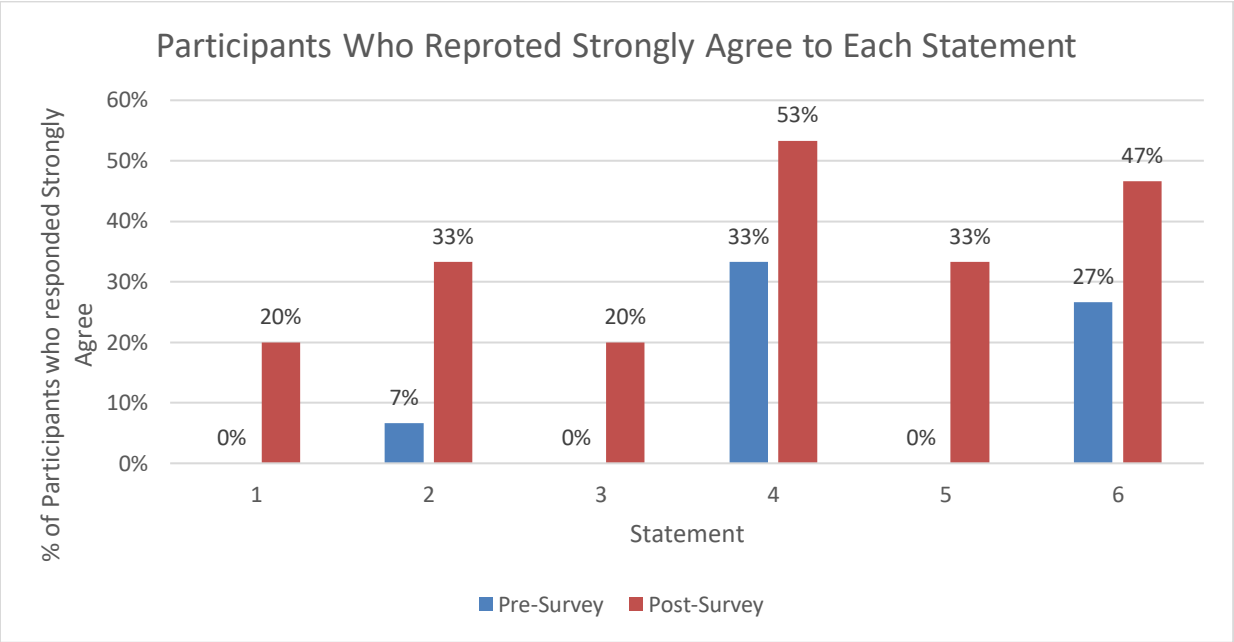
Table 1 shows a wide range of responses of knowledge and understanding of Two-Spirit and Indigenous individuals with the first five statements resulting in more than 25% of respondents selecting disagree or strongly disagree with each statement. At the end of the workshop, a post-survey was administered, and participants were asked to strongly agree or disagree with the same statements. Table 2 shows the results of the post-survey.

Table 2. Percent of Participants Who Indicated If They Strongly Agree or Disagree To The Following Statements Post-Survey.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree
I feel knowledgeable about the Two-Spirit community in Los Angeles County.	20%	67%	13%
I feel knowledgeable of the unique mental health challenges Two-Spirit individuals face.	33%	67%	0%
I feel knowledgeable about the traditional healing practices used by the Two-Spirit community.	20%	67%	13%
I understand the importance of culturally competent mental health services for Two-Spirit individuals.	53%	47%	0%
I am knowledgeable about the services and resources offered in Los Angeles County for Two-Spirit individuals.	33%	60%	7%
I am comfortable with sharing my opinions/thoughts on mental health issues as an advocate among my community.	47%	53%	0%

At the end of the workshop, no participants reported disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to all of the statements and nearly all clients reported either strongly agree or agree to each statement. Figure 2 displays the percentage of respondents who selected strongly agree at pre-survey compared to post-survey.

Figure 2. Percent of Participants Who Selected Strongly Agree at Pre- and Post-Survey.



SSG/APAIT and IPLA successfully increased knowledge and awareness among workshop participants. The workshop will expand the need for mental health resources and providers for to address the unique needs of this population.