



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
UNDERSERVED CULTURAL COMMUNITIES (UsCC) UNIT**

**American Indian/Alaska Native UsCC Subcommittee
2021-2022 AI/AN Wellness Forums Project**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The American Indian/Alaska Native Wellness Forums Project was developed to reduce mental health access barriers for AI/AN community members by engaging in conversations about mental health and traditional forms of healing. Through dialogue and experiential engagement, all participants were given opportunities to learn more about the unique mental health needs of the AI/AN community and understand how these traditional forms of healing are practiced by the AI/AN community. Through this process, mental health services/resources were promoted which helped in reducing stigma and increasing the capacity of the public mental health system in the Los Angeles County area. Additionally, the ongoing series posed multiple opportunities to inform the AI/AN community regarding the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee. These helped to increase community member/consumer interest and participation in the MHSA stakeholder process. In addition, this helped engage more community members/consumers in the planning and development of future American Indian/Alaska Native Mental Health Conferences.

The “AI/AN Wellness Forums Project” name was renamed in our marketing and outreach efforts as “Indigenous Mental Wellness Gatherings” with a subtitle that highlighted the specific topics being addressed each month. Our team felt that having an inviting and catchy title that resonated with the community would increase interest, overall engagement and our registration outcomes. This report may use both names interchangeably. For the purposes of increasing relatability, our team marketed the AI/AN Wellness Forums Project as Indigenous Mental Wellness Gatherings. Each gathering commenced with a land acknowledgment and introductions of the staff and presenters, including their names, pronouns, and tribal affiliations. A land acknowledgment is not just a formal way to recognize the land we reside on, but is also a way to honor Indigenous protocol of respecting the land that we stand on which has allowed us to hold space together. Land acknowledgement is also a way to bring visibility to the Indigenous people of the land, and provide safe space for Native people attending these events. It is also important that our presenters share their identities and uplift who they are with a relational introduction that establishes connection and kinship. Each event included shared knowledge by



the presenters, engaging conversations from the attendees and a cultural art activity that supported mental wellness. Each event ended with post-surveys, a giveaway, and opportunities to network and build relationships with other participating members from the community.

Throughout the entirety of the Mental Wellness Gatherings, the UsCC committee liaisons and/or subcommittee co-chair provided feedback, suggestions for improvement, clarification needed on deliverables, and were given opportunities during each event to share information to the community about UsCC's planning and development.

There were a total of seven (7) forums throughout this series, five that were held virtually on the Zoom platform and two that were held in-person. The decision to hold the gatherings partially on Zoom was based on the current COVID restrictions, recommendations, and what we felt was safest for the community, staff, and presenters.

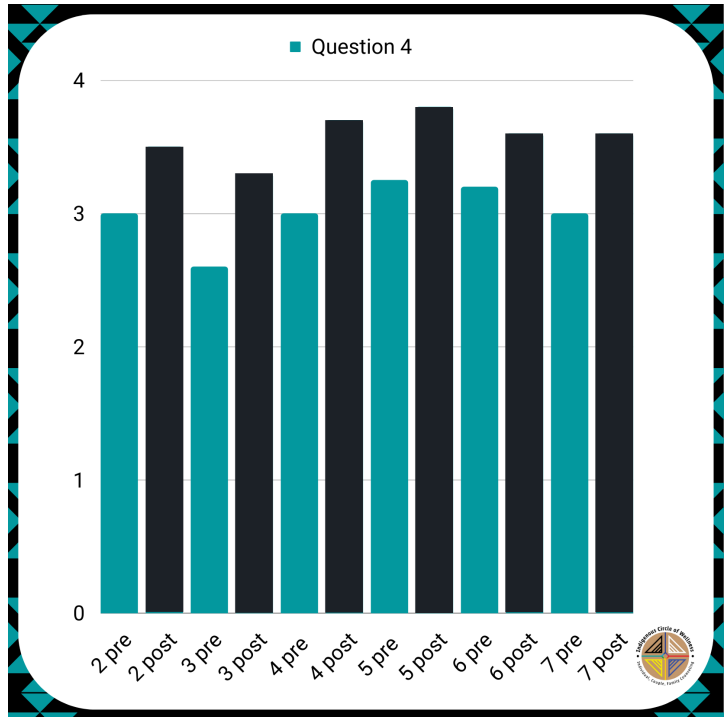
PROJECT RESULTS/OUTCOMES

There were a total of **526** participants who registered to the Indigenous Mental Wellness Gatherings over the course of 7 workshops. The total amount of workshop attendees were **396** and the attendee breakdown are as follows: **21** attended December's "Mental Health and Stigma", **52** attended January's "Emotional Wellbeing and the Brain: The Effects of COVID-19", **75** attended February's "Emotional Wellbeing and the Brain: The Effects of COVID-19", **72** attended March "Awareness, Treatment and Recovery from Depression", **47** attended April's "Awareness, Treatment and Recovery from Anxiety", **67** attended May's "Grief, Loss and Resilience", and **62** attended June's "Closing Panel".

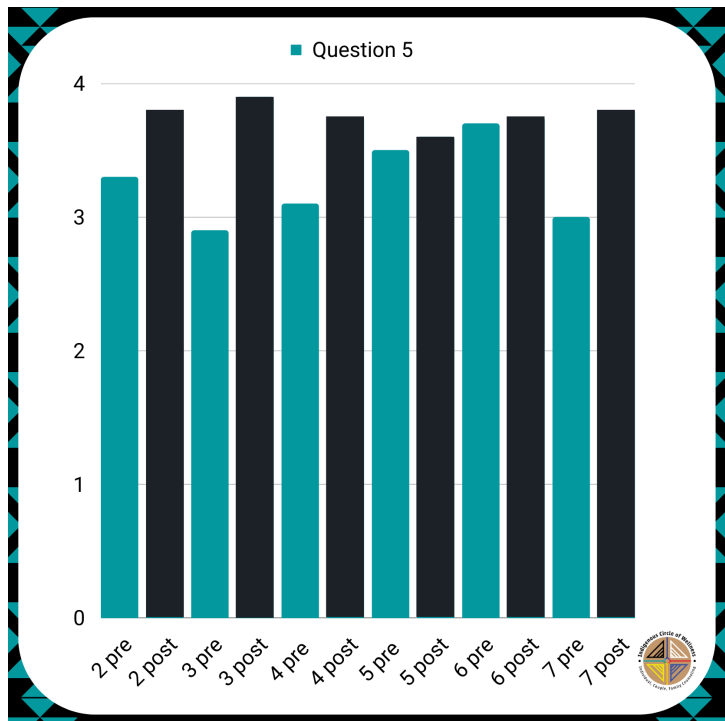
A total of 136 pre-surveys and 122 post-surveys were collected. Surveys included various formats of questions such as likert scales, short answer and multiple choice questions. An example of some of our likert scale questions are listed below demonstrating mostly an overall increase in every gathering for each of the questions asked. Additionally, these results were calculated by taking the overall average score of each gathering. We do want to note that surveys for our first gathering in December have been excluded due to a loss of results.



4.
How much knowledge do you have of the AI/AN and Indigenous community in Los Angeles?
(circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 being none at all and 5 being a great deal of knowledge)

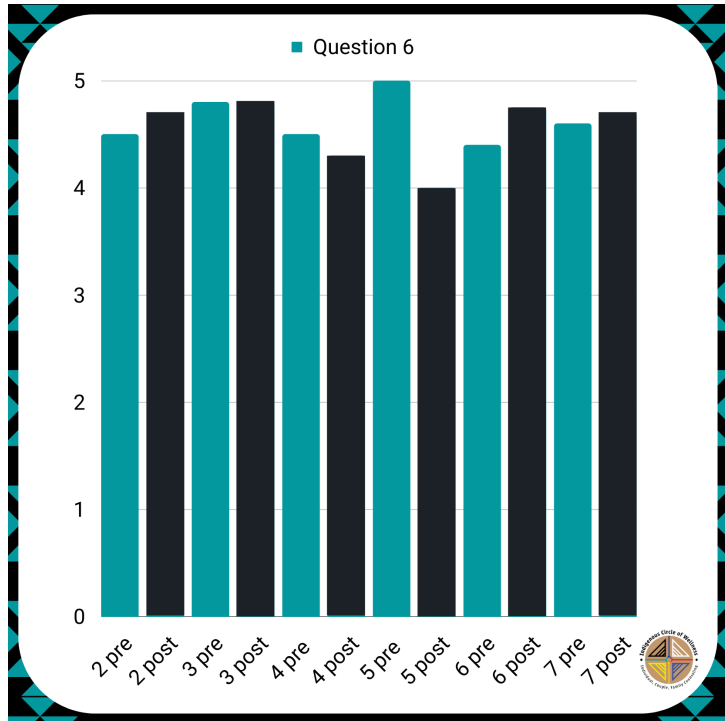


5.
How much knowledge do you have of the mental health challenges experienced amongst AI/AN and Indigenous community?
(circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 being none at all and 5 being a great deal of knowledge)

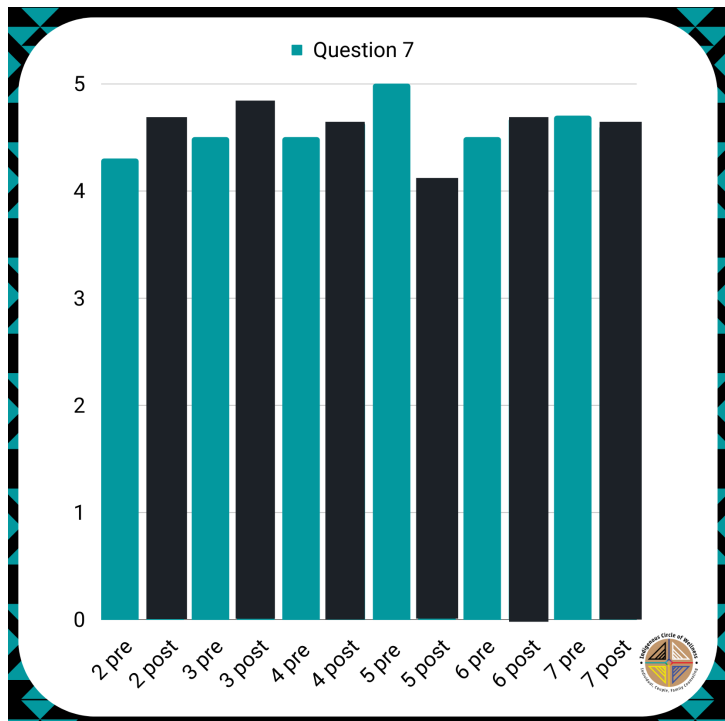




6.
To what extent do you think mental health challenges affect AI/ANs and/or Indigenous people? (circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 I don't know and 5 very likely)

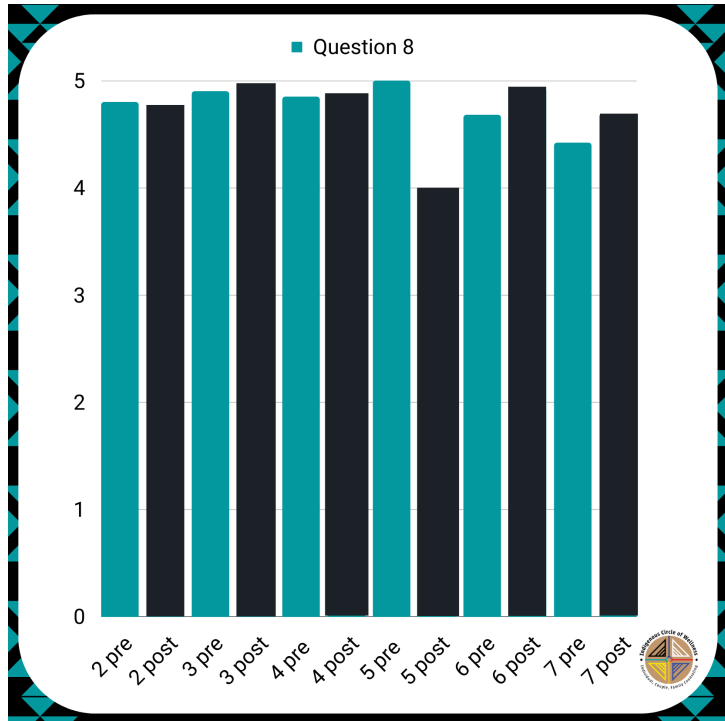


7.
To what extent do you think it is likely that AI/ANs and/or Indigenous people are more likely to have mental health challenges compared to any other racial/ethnic group? (circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 I don't know and 5 very likely)

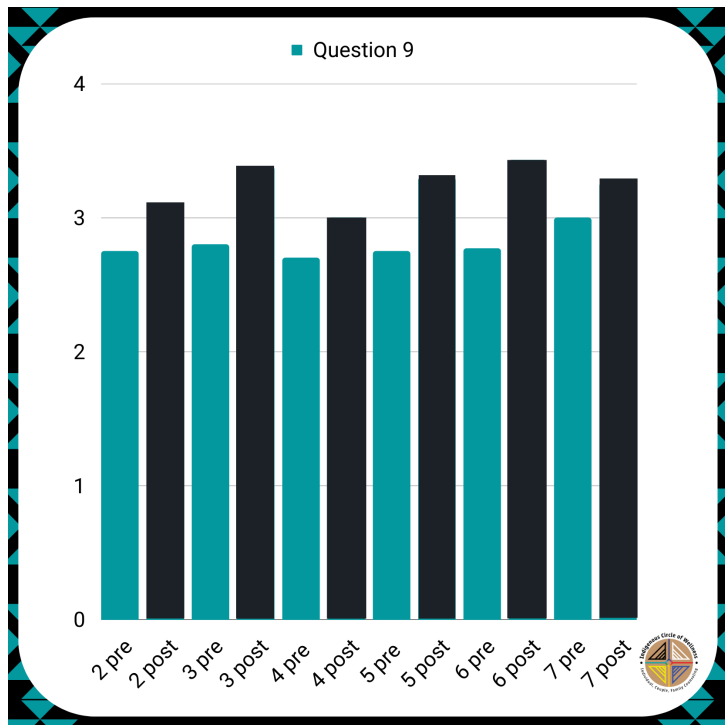




8. To what extent do you think it would be helpful for AI/ANS and/or Indigenous people to engage in cultural practices to help with mental health challenges (i.e. traditional medicines, traditional ceremony, drumming, etc.)? (circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 I don't know and 5 very likely)



9. How much knowledge do you have of traditional forms of healing? (circle one on a scale of 1-5, 1 being none at all and 5 being a great deal of knowledge)





FORUM EVENT NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Indigenous Mental Wellness Gathering (Forum 1 of 7) “Mental Health and Stigma”

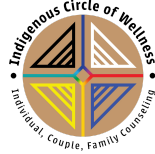
69 registered and **21** attended the “**Mental Health and Stigma**” gathering which took place on Saturday, December 4, 2021 from 9:30am-1:00pm via Zoom. This event was facilitated by Dria Yellowhair and she began our event with a land acknowledgement, community agreements, and context setting through sharing the purpose and intention of this event. The gathering’s presentation was facilitated by the Department of Mental Health Promoters, Harrelson Notah (Diné) and Iva Maes (Assiniboine/Gros Ventre and San Felipe Pueblo). It was important for us to center the voices of trusted Native community leaders to increase connection and reduce stigma associated with difficult conversations about mental health. Harrelson and Iva engaged participants in conversation for the first half of the event through a presentation about mental health in relation to a current and post-pandemic future.

During the second portion of the event, Warren Pemberton (Diné) hosted a painting circle for our participants. As Warren guided participants in painting a medicine wheel, Dria Yellowhair was able to engage participants in continuing our conversation about mental health. All supplies for this activity were sent to participants before the event.

Indigenous Mental Wellness Gathering (Forum 2 of 7) “Emotional Wellbeing and the Brain: The Effects of COVID-19”

76 registered and **52** attended the “**Emotional Wellbeing and the Brain: The Effects of COVID-19**” gathering, **29** people completed the pre-survey and **27** completed the post-survey which took place on Saturday, January, 22, 2022 from 10:00am-1:30pm via Zoom. This event was facilitated by Dria Yellowhair and she began our event with a land acknowledgement, community agreements, intention and purpose of this event. The gathering’s presentation was facilitated by the Department of Mental Health Promoters, Harrelson Notah (Diné) and Iva Maes (Assiniboine/Gros Ventre and San Felipe Pueblo). Both Harrelson and Iva were able to engage our participants in conversation about their emotions in connection with their experiences with COVID. Additionally, the facilitators shared about the health complications brought upon by COVID in connection with the brain including brain fog, difficulty concentrating, brief memory loss, etc.

During the second portion of the event, Dr. Kimberly Robertson (Mvskoke), was able to facilitate a beading activity with our participants. She taught participants how to bead a lanyard for their masks to maintain a clean face covering in the instance where they do not have a place to store it and also ensure they have one readily available while in public. Kimberly also engaged



participants in conversation about their emotions and coping mechanisms while living through the pandemic.

Indigenous Mental Wellness Gathering (Forum 3 of 7)
“Emotional Wellbeing and the Brain: The Effects of COVID-19”

137 registered and **75** attended the **“Emotional Wellbeing and the Brain: The Effects of COVID-19”** gathering, **31** people completed the pre-survey and 26 completed the post-survey which took place on Saturday, February 12, 2022 from 10:00am-1:30pm via Zoom. This event was facilitated by Dria Yellowhair and she began our event with a land acknowledgement, community agreements, intention and purpose of this event. The gathering’s presentation was facilitated by the Department of Mental Health Promoters, Harrelson Notah (Diné) and Iva Maes (Assiniboine/Gros Ventre and San Felipe Pueblo). Both Harrelson and Iva were able to engage our participants in conversation about their emotions in connection with their experiences with COVID. Additionally, the facilitators were able to connect the health complications brought upon by COVID in connection with the brain.

During the second portion of the event, Dr. Kimberly Robertson (Mvskoke), was able to facilitate a beading activity with our participants. She taught participants how to bead a lanyard for their masks to maintain a clean face covering in the instance where they do not have a place to store it and also ensure they have one readily available while in public. Kimberly also engaged participants in conversation about their emotions and coping mechanisms while living through the pandemic.

Indigenous Mental Wellness Gathering (Forum 4 of 7)
“Awareness, Treatment and Recovery from Depression”

75 registered and **72** attended the **“Awareness, Treatment and Recovery from Depression”** gathering, **20** people completed the pre-survey and 17 completed the post-survey which took place on Saturday, March 19, 2022 from 10:00am-2:00pm via zoom. This event was facilitated by Kylee Jones and Bridget Garcia Vera and they began our event with a land acknowledgement, community agreements, intention and purpose of this event. The gathering’s presentation was facilitated by the Department of Mental Health Promoters, Harrelson Notah (Diné) and Iva Maes (Assiniboine/Gros Ventre and San Felipe Pueblo). Both Harrelson and Iva provided an engaging conversation about depression and the symptoms associated with it.

Our first was a zine making activity with Sierra Edd (Diné). This workshop explored art and zine-making as a therapeutic practice for mental health and wellness. Participants learned bookbinding skills and focused on telling their own stories through the creation of personalized zines. It was beginner-friendly workshop and contextualized visual storytelling and zines within discussions of Indigenous resistance narratives and identity.



Our second activity consisted of beading aromatherapeutic bracelets activity led by community member Kimberly Robertson, PhD (Mvskoke) In this hands-on workshop, participants beaded an aromatherapeutic bracelet and had the opportunity to consider the ways in which cultural activities and natural medicines can combat depression and contribute to overall health and wellness.

Our last activity, dye making, was led by Joel Garcia (Huichol). During this activity, participants reconnected with plant relatives to uplift their spirits and energy. They used plants and flowers to create a custom hand-dyed bandana that can be used as a wearable Land Acknowledgement or a new addition to their altars.

Indigenous Mental Wellness Gathering (Forum 5 of 7) “Awareness, Treatment and Recovery from Anxiety”

46 registered and **47** attended the “**Awareness, Treatment and Recovery from Anxiety**” gathering, **8** people completed the pre-survey and 10 completed the post-survey which took place on Saturday, April 9, 2022 from 10:00am-2:00pm as an in-person event at the Welcome Pavilion at the Los Angeles State Historic Park. This event was facilitated by Dria Yellowhair and she began our event with a land acknowledgement (from community member Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood (Ohlone/Chicana), community agreements, intention and purpose of this event. The gathering’s presentation was facilitated by the Department of Mental Health Promoters, Harrelson Notah (Diné) and Iva Maes (Assiniboine/Gros Ventre and San Felipe Pueblo). Both Harrelson and Iva provided an engaging conversation about anxiety and its associated symptoms including how these vary per individual, how these show up in our daily lives and how we can best manage symptoms.

Our first activity was Indigenous yoga with community member Analisa Rockbridge (Diné). During our workshop, participants practiced three of the eight limbs of yoga. Meditation is a practice of awareness, Pranayama is the practice of breath and Asana is the practice of movement. These teachings are shared as a way of revisiting wellness that is used throughout our day and integrated into our lives as coping skills for self care.

Our second activity was beading aromatherapeutic bracelets with community member Kimberly Robertson, PhD (Mvskoke). In this hands-on workshop, participants beaded an aromatherapeutic bracelet and had the opportunity to consider the ways in which cultural activities and natural medicines combat depression and contribute to overall health and wellness.



Our last activity, dye making, was led by Joel Garcia (Huichol). The 7-Generation Eco Print offered participants a tool to reflect on their individual and family wellness, but also imagine a thriving future. Using an accordion-style booklet, workshop attendees produced a Codice-style wellness guide infused with the colors and textures of plants and flowers.

Indigenous Mental Wellness Gathering (Forum 6 of 7) “Grief, Loss and Resilience”

55 registered and **67** attended the “**Grief, Loss and Resilience**” gathering, **22** people completed the pre-survey and **16** completed the post-survey on Saturday, May 14, 2022 from 10:00am-2:00pm via Zoom. This event was facilitated by Dria Yellowhair and she began our event with a land acknowledgement, community agreements, intention and purpose of this event. The gathering’s presentation was facilitated by the Department of Mental Health Promoters, Harrelson Notah (Diné) and Iva Maes (Assiniboine/Gros Ventre and San Felipe Pueblo). Both facilitators were able to present this topic with plenty of compassion and with assistance of Dria Yellowhair and Elena Nourrie, they were both able to sympathize, validate and process participants’ feelings and emotions.

Our first activity was gourd painting facilitated by Mark Villaseñor (Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians), who engaged participants in the decoration of gourds. Gourds have been an integral part of cultural activities for various Indigenous people since time immemorial. While working with the gourds, participants had an opportunity to express themselves in a format that supports processing grief and loss to bring them toward a path to resiliency in order to support their current mental wellness.

Our second activity was a clapper stick painting facilitated by Lazaro Arvizu (Gabrielino). This workshop was an introduction to the method and art of decorating a clapper-stick, the percussion instrument of California's Indigenous coastal people. Each participant received a bag with a clapper and a few materials to decorate it before, during, or after the workshop.

Our last activity was chia energy bars facilitated by Craig Torres (Tongva). This workshop introduces participants to the work of the Chia Cafe Collective and Indigenous Cooking. Participants will be able to learn about and make Chia Power Bars using fresh ingredients that are culturally significant to Southern California Indigenous Communities such as chia, pine nuts, etc.



Indigenous Mental Wellness Gathering (Forum 7 of 7) “Closing Panel”

68 registered and **62** attended the “Closing Panel” gathering, **26** people completed both the pre- and post-survey on Saturday, June 25, 2022 from 10:00am-1:30pm as an in-person event at the ASU California Center. This event was facilitated by Dria Yellowhair and she began our event with a land acknowledgement (from community member Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood (Ohlone/Chicana), community agreements, intention and purpose of this event. This event consisted of a closing panel with guest speakers: Kylee Jones (LCSW), Robyn Gomez (LCSW), Iva Maes (DMH Mental Health Promoter) and Harrelson Notah (DMH Mental Health Promoter). As Dria Yellowhair facilitated the panel, she actively engaged our panelists in answering questions about all topics covered throughout the course of these gatherings.

Our first activity, paint your story, was facilitated by Lorene Sisquoc (Fort Sill Apache/Cahuilla) who engaged participants in painting out their story, legend, tribal tradition, or memory using only symbols. They used yucca brushes and learned how to grind natural pigments into paint as they used cloth squares as a canvas. There were samples of symbols on ledger art, pictorials, and some rock art. They listened to stories before and while they worked on projects to inspire participants. Once projects were done, they were encouraged to share the meaning and symbolism behind their stories.

Our second activity was a medicine box facilitated by Dr. Kimberly Robertson (Mvskoke). In this hands-on workshop, participants used collage materials/techniques to adorn a small wooden box intended for the safekeeping of their cultural medicines. They also had the opportunity to consider the ways in which cultural activities and medicines can contribute to individual and community health and wellness.

Our last activity, clay medicine prints, was facilitated by Joel Garcia (Huichol) who offered participants an opportunity to explore their wellness and well-being through plant relatives. Using quick-dry clay, participants created a clay wall hanging imprinted using medicinal plants, a visual reminder to connect with our plant relatives when times get rough.

FORUM FACILITATORS, PANELIST, AND ARTIST BIOS

Throughout the series of events, we contracted various facilitators, panelists, and artists to bring each gathering together and provide a unique cultural and wellness experience. Below is a list of all the facilitators, panelists, and artists who participated in one or more of the Indigenous Wellness Gatherings.



Harrelson Notah is a Mental Health Promoter with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, where he delivers mental health workshops based on empowerment and a strength-based approach. Harrelson also serves the community in his role as an academic counselor with the Educational Opportunity Program at California State University of Long Beach.

Iva Maes has served as a Wellness Outreach Worker (WOW) Volunteer for LACDMH at American Indian Counseling Center (AICC), where she was awarded L.A. County's WOW Newbie/Rookie Volunteer of The Year, and WOW's Most Innovative Volunteer of The Year the following year.

Robyn Gomez (Licensed Clinical Social Worker 96526) is a Huichol-Xicana born and raised on Tongva and Tataviam lands, known today as the Northeast San Fernando Valley. Attended Los Angeles Mission College, Cal-State Northridge, and received her master's degree in Social Work (MSW) from the University of Southern California. She utilizes strengths-based approaches, clinical interventions, and ZERO TO FIVE core knowledge skills to engage families and the community through holistic approaches, ancestral healing, and social justice advocacy.

Kylee Jones is an Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW #93587) who was born and raised in Riverside, California. She has earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from California Baptist University and her Master's of Social Work from Our Lady of the Lake University. She has worked in the urban Native community within the Los Angeles and Riverside Counties for over six years. In addition to working with the Native community, she also works with low income individuals in San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties offering court-mandated psychoeducation courses, treatment and services within the residential rehabilitation setting, services during acute hospitalization, and short-term counseling. Kylee is a multiracial woman who has a passion for advocacy, outreach, and representation.

Dr. Kimberly Robertson is currently an associate professor of American Indian Studies at California State University of Long Beach. She is also an artist who uses Native practices to create. Most recently, Dr. Robertson's art was featured on the cover and inside "Otherwise Worlds," a Duke University Press publication.

Joel Garcia is an artist, arts administrator and cultural organizer with 20+ years of experience working transnationally focusing on community-centered strategies. His approach is rooted in Indigenous-based forms of dialoguing and decision-making (non-hierarchical) that uplifts non-institutional expertise. Joel uses art and organizing to raise awareness of issues facing underserved communities, inner-city youth, and other targeted populations.



Sierra Edd (Diné), a PhD student in Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She is T'łógi, born to the Kinlichii'nii people and grew up in Durango, Colorado/Four corners. Her current interests are in Indigenous gender and sexuality, culture, storytelling, futures/futurity, and digital media. She received her B.A. from Brown University in the department of Ethnic studies with her previous scholarship exploring colonial violence and resistance border towns along the Navajo reservation.

Analisa Rockbridge (Diné) walked the Camino de Santiago because of yoga. In 2016, her son Sage was diagnosed with cancer when he was 4 months old. Analisa stopped breathing and started surviving. She already practiced yoga, so she knew the movements, but Analisa needed to be stronger for her son. She started exploring meditation and pranayama. In 2019, Analisa was ready to take her practice to the next level, so she started her 200 hours of teacher training. In 2020, Analisa graduated with 500 hours of teacher training. Now, she is excited to share her teachings with you.

Craig Torres (Tongva) a descendant of the Indigenous communities of the Yaavetam (Los Angeles) and Komiikravetam (Santa Monica Canyon) that existed in the Los Angeles Basin. The descendants are more commonly known today, collectively as the Tongva or Gabrielino Indians of San Gabriel Mission. He is also descended from three of the founding families of Los Angeles pueblo in 1781. He is a member of the Traditional Council of Pimu and involved with Ti'at Society, an organization focused on the revival of the traditional maritime culture of the Southern California coastal region and the Southern Channel Islands. He is an artist, as well as a cultural educator, presenter, and consultant to schools, culture and nature centers, museums, and city, state, and government agencies acting as a consultant on the Tongva.

Lazaro Arvizu who was born a descendent of the Indigenous people of the American Southwest on the land of his ancestors, the Gabrielino people. During his formative years, he gained an understanding of art as an integral part of culture. Through his community he was exposed to drawing, painting, sewing, feather-work, and wood carving. Lazaro's early experiences taught him that art is an important way of life with serious cultural, social, and economic implications.

Mark Villaseñor has been an engaged leader and citizen of the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, a sovereign tribe of Los Angeles County. He is the descendant of lineages/villages of Ta'apu, Tapo Canyon, Siutcanga, the village at Encino, and Chaguayanga, a village in Santa Clarita Valley. And as the current Tribal Vice President for his tribe, Mark collaborates with Federal, State and Local municipalities, as well as other sovereign nations, in efforts to better his tribe. Engaging in civic activities and volunteerism, Villaseñor has been active in City sponsored initiatives.

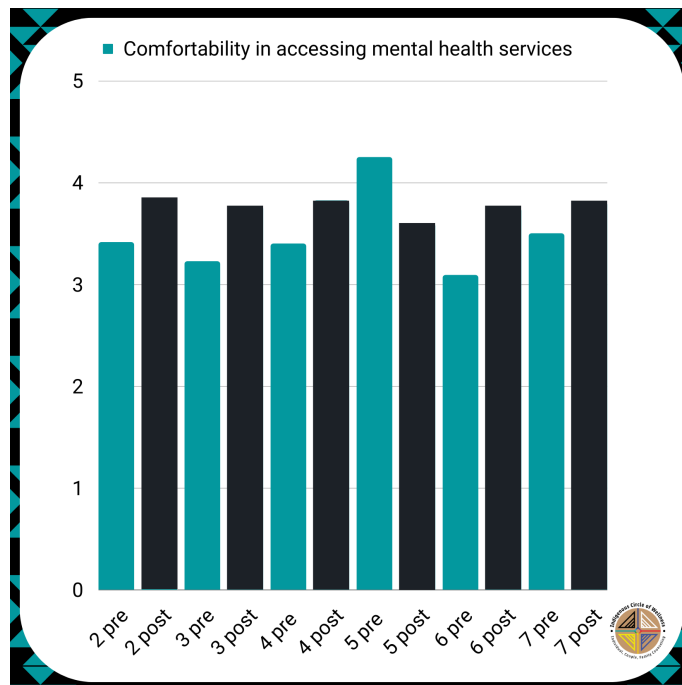


Lorene Sisquoc (Fort Sill Apache/Cahuilla) serves as Curator / Culture Traditions Leader at Sherman Indian High School Museum; Instructor, University of California, Riverside; Elder in Residence, California Polytechnic State University; Mother Earth Clan Programs; Sisquoc is co-founder and curator of the Sherman Indian Museum. Sisquoc co-founded the Mother Earth Clan Cultural Programs in 1986. She became volunteer curator/manager of the Sherman Indian Museum in 1991 and has taught classes in Native American traditions and basketry at Sherman Indian High School since 1995. Sisquoc is the first elder/scholar-in-residence at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, California.

HIGHLIGHTS

During all of our gatherings we were able to provide all participants a variety of topics surrounding mental health. We greatly benefitted from partnering with Department of Mental Health Promoters, Harrelson Notah and Iva Maes to facilitate these topics as they are known members within the community. Having this connection with community members, they were able to engage participants in conversations about how to manage their mental health especially during the ongoing pandemic.

Our pre- and post-surveys also indicated that our workshops were influential to our participants in their comfort in accessing mental health services within Los Angeles County. We see an overall increase within most of our workshops demonstrating the importance of having workshops that inform our community about mental health topics.





In particular, gathering number four, “Awareness, Treatment and Recovery from Depression” greatly benefitted from having a mental health therapist present to assist in managing the personal stories shared by participants. Community members felt comfortable in sharing their experiences without holding back their emotions and it truly created an intimate space during this gathering. By having the therapist present, she was able to give the participants sharing their experiences a sense of validation and share coping mechanisms to manage their emotions. Before transitioning into our break, participants expressed their gratitude in being heard and noted how important the presentation was for their understanding of depression.

Our first in-person gathering in April was a great “come back” event after two years of not hosting any public events for our community members. Community members expressed their excitement in being able to gather and see one another in person, as they had not seen many people for two years. By providing masks, sanitizers, and other safety equipment, participants were able to engage with one another through a healthy and safe environment. As they joined their individual activities, participants expressed the need for more in person events to come together to learn about mental health topics and love the incorporation of an activity to support their mental health.

Lastly, we would like to highlight our outreach efforts and the participants who were able to join our gatherings. In particular, we were able to reach Changing Spirits, an organization that serves American Indian community members entering their recovery program. This specific connection is new to our outreach efforts and truly highlights the importance of connecting with people who are at their most vulnerable and in need of resources to continue their journey. We were honored that they joined us online and were able to participate in our conversations by sharing their intimate stories and experiences.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Following each gathering, we were able to analyze event surveys and debrief as a team to help inform our approach and adapt for each event to best serve community. The list outlined details what we learned throughout this process:

1. Navigating these events during a pandemic taught us that even though we planned for in-person events, many were canceled due to the rise in COVID-19 cases throughout Los Angeles County, having patience to adapt and move events online was a must.
2. Hosting online events after 2+ years of a pandemic affected our participation numbers as people have become exhausted of online events and are now looking forward to in-person events.
3. Do not host Gatherings during or close to holiday breaks. This caused low attendance to events that were in close proximity to these dates as participants forgot to attend or simply had other commitments. This occurred regardless of the reminder emails that



were sent for the events. Many participants mentioned “unplugging from technology” during these times.

4. Try to not host multiple events around the same time as other events in the community as it also produced low attendance. Events such as Pow Wows, other DMH online events, and other resources fairs took many participants who would have otherwise participated in these Gatherings.
5. Having art, beading, and other artistic forms of activities after the presentation portion really increased the likelihood of having participants show up to the events and they often engage with their children through these activities designed for an intergenerational group.
6. During in person events, it is ideal to have plenty of volunteers to assist with setting up with the event, keeping the agenda running on time, and for event breakdown.
7. Moving forward on any in-person events, the gatherings should include other Native/Indigenous community-based organizations to table at the events to increase connections and provide additional resources to community members attending.
8. For any in-person event that occurs in a public place, such as a park, we suggest verifying if any other public event will be hosted during the same day and time. There was a conflict with a bigger event for our April gathering and the parking became difficult for our participants to obtain which made it difficult for them to locate our event.
9. We noted that our art facilitators would run out of time when trying to finish their projects with the participants. For future events, we would like to shorten the time of the actual presentation and extend the time for lunch and the planned activities.
10. Partnerships with the Department of Mental Health Promoters had a positive impact upon our participants as they were able to obtain knowledge from the promoters around mental health topics and additionally, they learned about the Department of Mental Health’s cultural subcommittee for American Indians and Alaskan Natives.
11. Lastly, ensure that results are placed in safekeeping after every gathering. We unfortunately had a loss of pre- and post-surveys due to the deletion of them with our online form.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

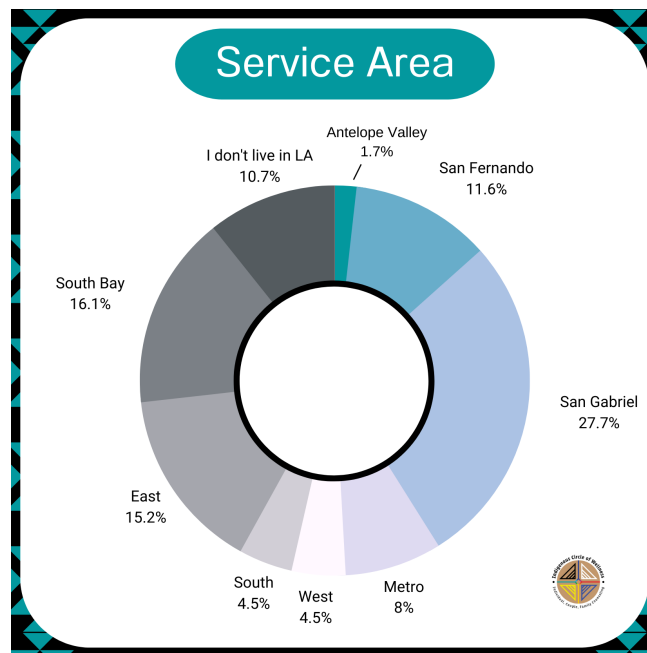
We recommend not hosting gatherings during any time that it is conflictive with other AI/AN centered events, location events, or around holidays. We fully support having our AI/AN communities having options to attend different events, but, in having too much choice it becomes a difficult choice to come to the gatherings. We suggest that the main facilitator of the gatherings ensures they completely research with surrounding Native organizations to avoid these conflicts in the future.

When our participants were presented with only one choice in the art portion, we had very little participation. Once we gave them additional options per gathering that explored different



aspects of physical, art, beading, etc. activities, we realized that our registration numbers increased. The increase in activities in relation to the topic of the gathering greatly increased our registration numbers and we definitely recommend having interactive activities when hosting these gatherings.

Based on our completed surveys, we gathered that SPA Antelope Valley, Metro, West and South had the least amount of participants for all of our gatherings. We recognize the lack of specific outreach in these areas and would recommend that in the future these areas are prioritized and targeted for participation. One way we imagine that these areas could potentially have an increase in participation is to directly partner with organizations that exist within these areas that directly serve the AI/AN community. In creating these partnerships, the community members they service will more likely partake in the gatherings.

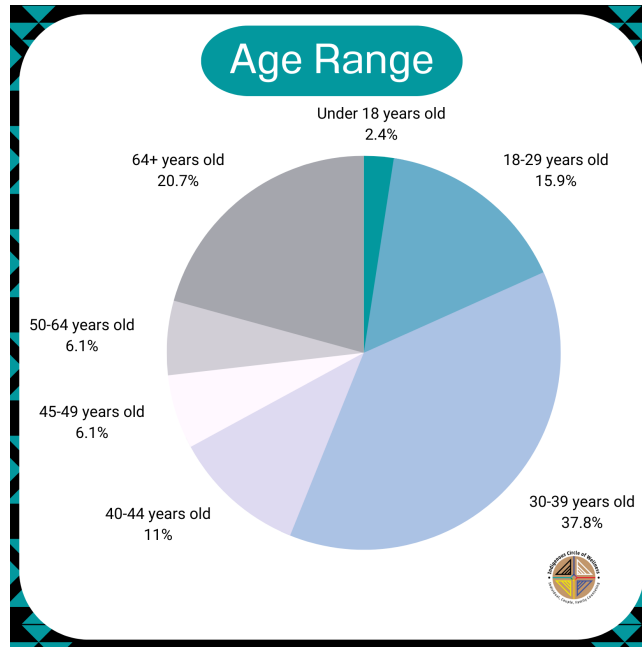


There was little participation in collecting completed surveys from community members who attended our events through Zoom. We recognize that the Zoom gatherings were 4 hours on a Saturday morning and our participants were likely too exhausted to complete these surveys even as we created time within the agenda for them to complete the survey. We suggest that the pre-survey always be included in the preliminary email sent out to participants before the event and the post-survey be included in the post-email sent after the event.

Lastly, we also learned that targeting youth under the age of 18 years old should also be a primary audience to engage throughout other Mental Wellness Gatherings. The low attendance



of participants under the age of 18 years old could possibly be due to no topics that were directed toward this audience. Our recommendation for the future of these gatherings would be to include at minimum one topic geared toward this age range.





For additional information or questions about this summary, please contact:
Indigenous Circle of Wellness via email at info@icowellness.com or phone at 626.782.5570