



PAINTED BRAIN

FY 21-22 MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Access for All Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), with the goals of reducing disparities and increasing mental health access for the disabled community in Los Angeles County. They work closely with community partners and consumers in order to increase the capacity of the public mental health system to develop culturally relevant recovery-oriented services specific to the disabled community and also to develop capacity building projects.

Painted Brain was contracted to develop and implement the UsCC Capacity Building Project: Physically Disabled Community Mental Health Needs Assessment Project virtually. The project period dated July 2021 to June 2022. The objective of this project was to outreach and engage people within this population from the eight (8) service areas across Los Angeles County into a virtual discussion regarding the mental health needs of this community, as well as to reduce the stigma associated with mental health services. This project aimed to increase connections with mental health resources and provide opportunities to address concerns about mental health services. Painted Brain outreached to people within this community and engaged them in one of nine (9) scheduled virtual Focus Groups to assess their mental health needs. Additionally, Painted Brain identified gaps in accessibility to mental health services and determined how to effectively engage community members into mental health services provided by Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH).

Simultaneously, Painted Brain was contracted to develop and implement the UsCC Capacity Building Project for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Blind Partially Sighted, and Visually Impaired. The deliverable and implementation processes were replicated for all three projects to ensure continuity of data collection. The deliverable process is as follows:

- Deliverable 1 - July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021 - Development of Focus Group questions, resource guides, flyers and other promotional materials.
- Deliverable 2 - October 1, 2021 to November 30, 2021 - Coordination of virtual Focus Groups for community members for eight (8) service areas and recruitment of Focus Group participants.
- Deliverable 3 - December 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022 - Facilitation of eight (8) virtual Focus Groups to the physically disabled community.



- Deliverable 4 - June 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022 - Final summary report highlighting all data collected.

PROJECT RESULTS

The following summary charts and information have been generated to reflect project results.

Total Number of Focus Groups Facilitated

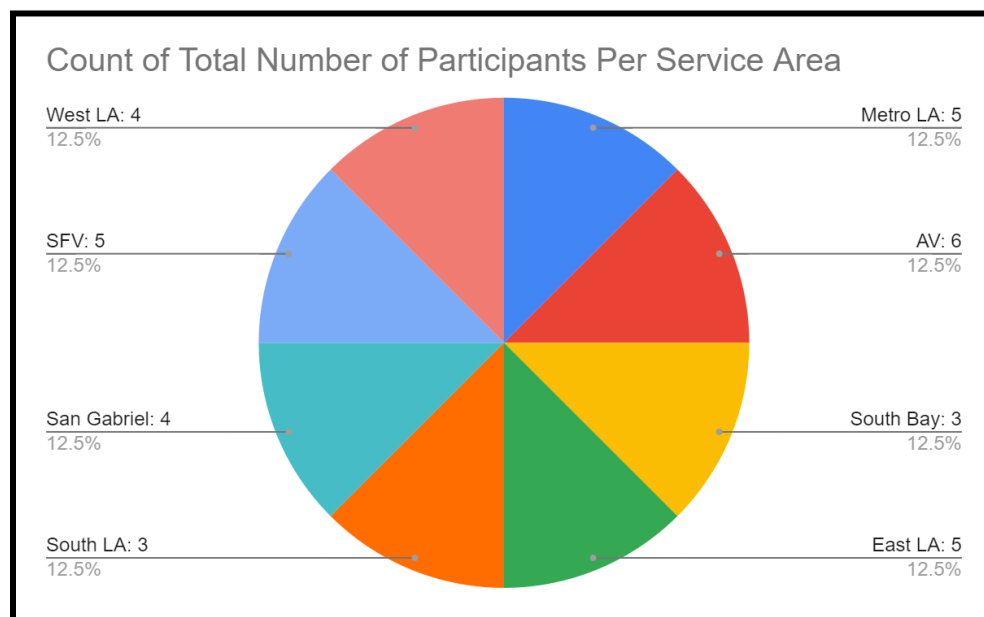
- Painted Brain facilitated a total number of nine (9) Focus Groups during the contract period. Eight (8) Focus Groups were facilitated for all eight (8) service areas, one (1) Focus Group per service area and one (1) additional Focus Group encompassing all service areas. While conducting the Focus Groups, an issue arose of participants confirming their attendance via email, but would not attend the scheduled Focus Group. This “no show” situation necessitated an additional Focus Group be conducted encompassing every service area. Thus the total number of Focus Groups per disability sector is the required eight (8) plus one (1) additional.

Total Number of Registrants

- 138 individuals registered to participate in the scheduled Focus Groups.

Total Number of Participants Served Per Service Area

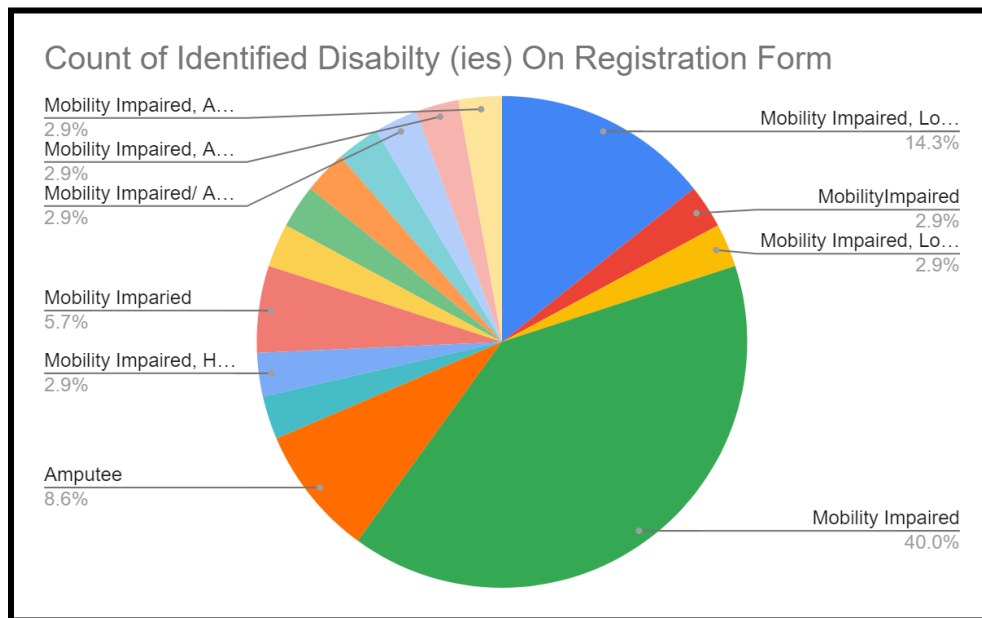
- A total of 35 participants were served during the project period.





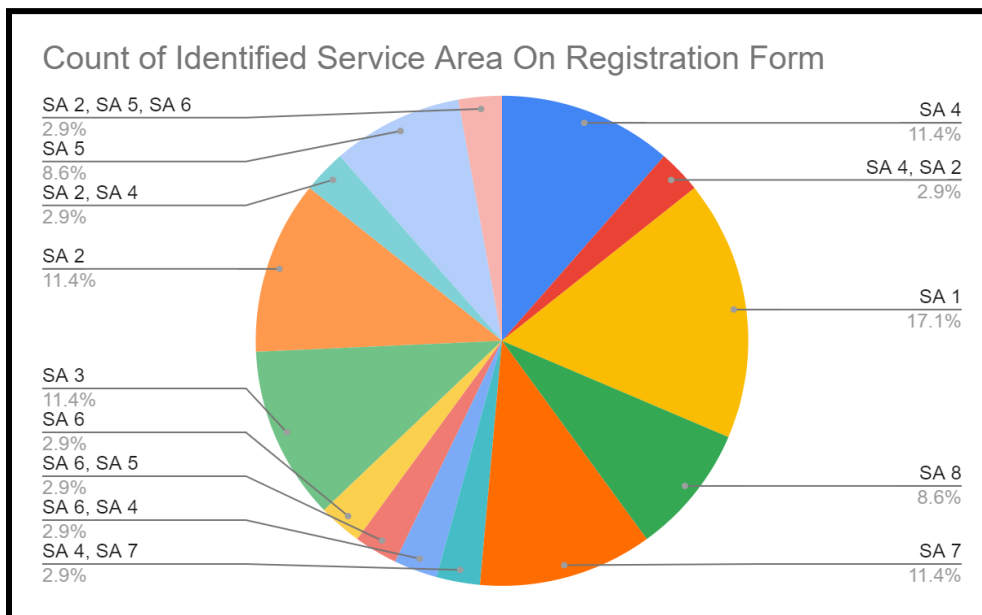
Identified Disability(ies) on Registration Form

- Participants identified with one or more disability(ies), below is the summary of participants identified disability(ies) per their registration form.



Identified Service Area(s) on Registration Form

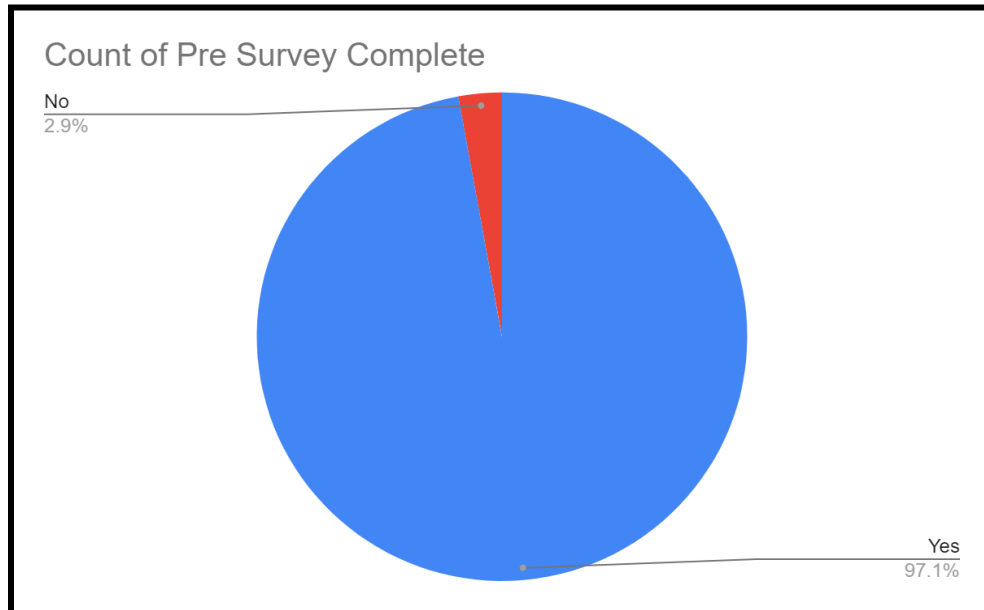
- Participants identified with one or more service area(s), below is the summary of participants identified service area(s) per their registration form.





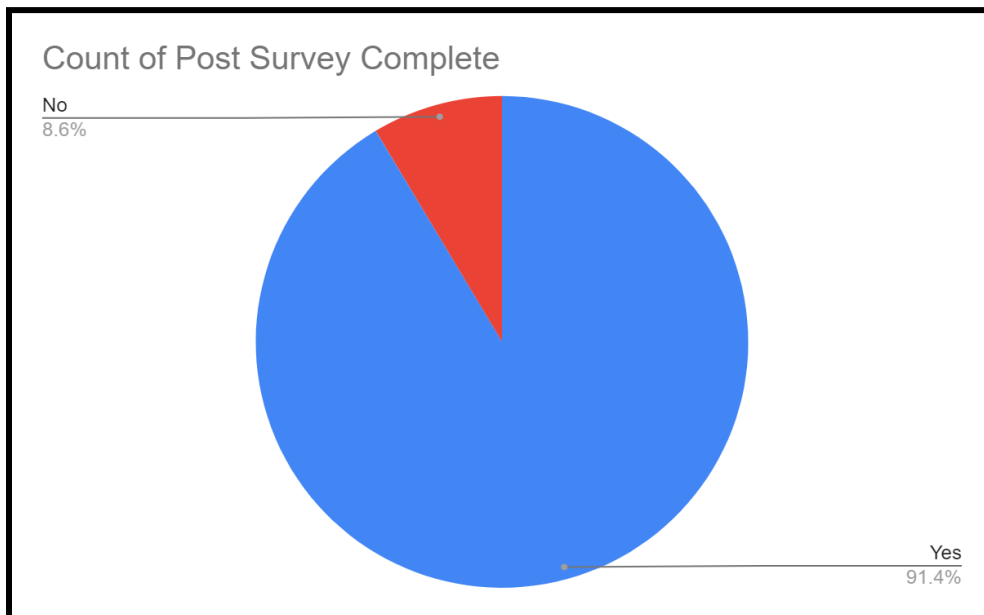
Completed Pre-Surveys

- 97.1% of participants completed a pre-survey. Despite follow-up, there were participants who did not complete the Focus Group pre-survey.



Completed Post-Surveys

- 91.4% of participants completed a post-survey. Despite follow-up, there were participants who did not complete the Focus Group post-survey.





Development of Focus Group Subjects Areas and Questions

The development of the Disability Mental Health Needs Assessment Subject Areas and Questions were co-developed through meetings with the LACDMH and UsCC. Key areas of inquiry for the Disability sectors were identified to gauge mental health service use and mental health needs of the physically disabled community. These key subject areas were then further developed into Focus Group questions that would best illustrate the current state of affairs within the disabilities community in Los Angeles County. The subject areas and questions were uniformly applied across all three (3) Needs Assessment projects to create a continuity of the data collection.

The process of developing the subject areas and the Focus Group questions took place over a series of Access For All meetings until approval of final questions was achieved. The subject area feedback and comments were received from the UsCC members, community stakeholders, and LACDMH staff.

Focus Group subject areas:

- Available Services
- Challenges/Gaps in Services
- Stigma
- Improvements
- Outreach Suggestions

Focus Group questions:

1. What mental health services are you currently using or know of?
2. What are some challenges to accessing mental health services you or the physically disabled community experience?
3. What stigma related to mental health do you experience?
4. If you could change one thing about mental health service delivery for the physically disabled community what would it be?
5. What are some suggestions you have for outreaching about mental health services for the physically disabled community?

The following are results to the Focus Group questions:

What mental health services are you currently using or know of?

Focus group participants identified accessing mental health services such as in-home therapy and found it helpful and supportive due the convenience of not having to commute anywhere



to receive services. Additionally, many participants also indicated that they are accessing physical therapy along with mental health treatment.

What are some challenges to accessing mental health services you or the physically disabled community experience?

Participants of the physically and mobility impaired Focus Groups identified four major challenges in accessing mental health services:

1. Availability of services
2. Transportation accessibility
3. Negative stigma
4. Financial support

Availability of services: Availability of services was a barrier to accessing mental health services for many. Often, mental health agencies lack the capacity to meet the demand of the community, requiring the target population to seek services outside of their service area. Thus making accessing mental health services far more challenging and often unattainable. Additionally, mental health service providers have a large workload that interferes with their ability to meet the needs of clients. Language barriers also contribute to inadequate access to services. Lastly, there is insufficient representation of mental health service providers that offer services in different languages to meet the unique demographics of each service area.

- **Participant quote:** “You know, we want to be able to access these mental health services but oftentimes they're not really in the areas that we live in.”

Transportation accessibility: Due to the lack of local mental health service providers, individuals are in need of reliable transportation services. Current transportation services do not meet round trip accessibility needs effectively. Additionally, transportation services are limited and overcrowded, therefore individuals are unable to arrive at scheduled appointments on time. Furthermore, the physical demand that long commutes require results in those who are physically and mobility impaired to experience pain when getting to scheduled appointments. Lastly, limitations of free and low cost transportations services increase the financial costs associated in accessing mental health services.

- **Participant quote:** “So the cost of transport may be a bit expensive for me to achieve, and so, which means that [I] may not be able to attend my counseling sessions and also for work.”



Negative Stigma: Lack of cultural sensitivity interferes with the quality of service delivery from mental health service providers. Participants reported a lack of “professionalism” in forms of discrimination and racism. Participants stated that mental health service providers make generalizations and assumptions about perceived racial identities and abilities. Additionally, participants reported not being heard and having concerns dismissed, which they attributed to a lack of relatability from the mental health service providers.

- **Participant quote:** *“People who understand us fully and not just simply just kind of discard us, and kind of put us to the side because we do have a disability, or you know they don't identify with you.”*

Financial support: The high cost for mental health services was a recurring barrier to accessing mental health services/treatment. For many, the cost of weekly out-of-pocket services added up. Participants also expressed challenges in being able to identify and access affordable mental health services.

- **Participant quote:** *“I was trying to get a therapist? they're [Service Provider] like ‘hey, what's your insurance?’, after I throw out this thing [insurance card] and then they had some very long answer about how they take my insurance, but they're not going to cover really anything but they wanted to charge me a \$150, or something like that per session, and I just didn't respond to them because I was like I don't have money to pay \$150 per session like that.”*

What stigma related to mental health do you experience?

Focus Group participants expressed that stigma perpetuates limiting views of an individual's capacity as being “impaired” which then influences discriminating behaviors that contribute to internalized challenges with motivation. Stigma is sustained by the lack of comprehension of impairment. The general public needs to be educated in understanding what disabilities look like, and that generalizations can not be made.

- **Participant Quote:** *“Repeated experience of people avoiding you, not talking to you, moving away from you, etc., that creates like this very deep level of isolation within.”*

If you could change one thing about mental health service delivery for the physically disabled community what would it be?

Listed below are Focus Group participants suggestions that may improve the quality of mental health services provided, they are as follows:



- Increase the number of mental health service provider site locations and number of available mental health service professionals/providers
- Increase the representation of mental health service providers to include: race/ethnicity, language, cultural background, abilities, lived experience.
- Raise awareness of community engagement projects and include public health education that recognizes mental illness and using social media to promote these resources
- Expand telehealth services and make it more accessible
- Create a unified local service network for individuals to navigate and utilize
- **Participant Quote:** *“Having the diversity in the therapists, and those in particular, with disabilities, I encourage them to become therapists, so that they can help others with disabilities.”*

What are some suggestions you have for outreaching about mental health services for the physically disabled community?

The following are Focus Group suggestions to increase awareness of mental health services:

- Educate communities by organizing seminars and hosting peer led groups to discuss mental health
- Create mental health awareness by having a presence in public spaces (e.g. gyms, churches, etc) by providing resource material, free workshops and peer groups
- Create local awareness groups that normalize accessing mental health services

PROJECT COSTS

\$43,500

LESSONS LEARNED/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Fraud

The presence of a \$50.00 gift card incentive may have skewed the demographics of the participants towards a lower financial segment of the disabled population. Further, issues of fraudulent registrations, and participants were a concern.

- **Recommendation:** Marketing the gift cards as a raffle, may reduce fraud. Though marketed as a raffle, all participants would receive a gift card at the conclusion of all Focus Groups.



Vetting Process for Participants

Applying a vetting process for disabled participants is strongly recommended for future LACDMH Focus Groups.

- *Recommendation:* Collaborating with disability service providers and University disabled student service departments, to recruit Focus Group participants may aid in the verification of participant disability and vetting processes. Additionally, we suggest receiving referrals from a trusted source/agency who can vet participants.

Service Area Selection

Having multiple Service Areas able to be selected on the Registration Form, caused logistic issues in regards to where a participant would be scheduled for a particular Focus Group. Further, a pattern of registrants selecting multiple service areas & multiple disabilities, raised fraud concerns.

- *Recommendation:* It is strongly suggested that only one (1) Service Area option be selected on the Focus Group Registration form.

Security

The majority of Focus Group participants did not enable their video camera or share their facial image. This raised security concerns, as it was not possible for the Focus Group facilitators to visually vet the participants.

- *Recommendation:* A discussion of how to best ensure the safety of Focus Group participants is strongly recommended for LACDMH to further develop the balance between privacy and security issues.

Disability Resources

The Disability Resource Guide produced by Painted Brain, that is posted on the LACDMH website is in PDF form with no method of being updated & searched. The resource guide appears as three (3) separate PDF files.

- *Recommendation:* Have the Disability Resource Guide in Web Page template that can be updated and additional resources can be added. Add a search engine feature to the template.

Tutorial Video

Focus Group expectations sent via email communications were not clearly understood by selected registrants.

- *Recommendation:* The creation of a tutorial video on how to register and participate in a Focus Group, is strongly recommended as an outreach tool, to better inform potential



Focus Group participants of these processes/expectations. For the disability sector in particular, American Sign Language Interpretation within the tutorial video is also recommended.

Threshold Languages

We did not reach many communities that are native speakers of the 13 Threshold Languages.

- *Recommendation:* Outreach materials translated into the fourteen (13+ASL) currently identified Threshold Languages within Los Angeles County is strongly recommended. Requirements to conduct translation of outreach materials is suggested as a line item of the contract Scope Of Work.

OUTCOMES

Project Pre-production

- Project planning meetings with LACDMH and USCC to discuss project and project deliverables.
- Draft of project roadmap highlighting all activities to be performed during the project period.

Project Coordination

- Painted Brain internal staff meetings to discuss project deliverables, timeline and activities. 1-2 times per week.
- Meetings with contract liaison to discuss project updates and supports needed. Once (1) per month.

Development of Marketing/ Outreach Materials

- Development of marketing e-flyers and promotional videos (TikTok) for the recruitment of physically disabled participants in each of the eight (8) Service Areas. Marketing flyers were in PDF and Alt Text format. Promotional flyers/videos included voice over accessibility.
- Development of Resource Guide with Countywide resources for the physically disabled community to provide to Focus Group participants.
- Development of a compilation Resource Guide with Countywide resources for all disabilities to provide to Focus Group participants. PDF version posted on LACDMH website, Get Help Now Page - Resources Disabled.

Marketing, Outreach & Recruitment for Virtual Focus Groups



- Utilized social media platforms to recruit physically disabled community members in each of the eight (8) Service Areas.
 - Twitter
 - FaceBook
 - Instagram
 - Club House
 - Twitter Space
- Conducted motivation outreach in each of the eight (8) service areas to recruit physically disabled community members.
 - Hosted outreach presentations to the following:
 - Service Area Leadership Team – SPA 3, San Gabriel Valley
 - Abilities Expo
 - Requested consultation on best practices to outreach to the physically disabled community from the following agencies:
 - California State University Northridge– Department on Disabilities
 - Conducted outreach efforts via email to Community Based Organizations, Colleges/Universities, Independent Living Centers in each eight (8) service areas.

Focus Group Logistics Coordination

- Conducted nine (9) Focus Groups virtually to the physically disabled community, one Focus Group in each of the eight (8) service areas in Los Angeles County and one (1) Focus Group to all eight (8) service areas
- Developed Focus Group registration form and pre/post surveys on Google Forms. Conducted accessibility testing on phone and computer platforms for the registration and pre/post surveys.
- Developed Focus Group questions
- Developed slides for the Focus Group presentation
- Developed Focus Group timeline
 - December 2021 – May 2022
- Managed registration list of participants
- Vet participants list
 - Ensured participants selected to join one of the scheduled Focus Groups met criteria.
- Email communications to selected participants
 - Confirmation email to participate in one of the scheduled Focus Groups
 - Introduction to Focus Group
 - Expectations to join



- Follow-up email confirming attendance
 - Created and provided participants with the Zoom Link and phone numbers to join
- Post Focus Group follow-up email
 - Distribution of Resource Guide PDF
 - Instructions to receive gift card
- When requested, arrange for the availability of ASL interpretation services at the Focus Group
 - Provide ASL interpreters with Focus Group presentation for review
- Enabled live transcription and closed captioning for all virtual Focus Groups
 - Review keyboard shortcuts for main feature buttons -mute, video etc. at each scheduled Focus Group
- Coordinate gift card distribution to Focus Group participants
- Provide monthly status reports to project liaison
 - Provide reports at Access For All monthly meetings
- Submit report/ invoice per project delivery phase
- Sort and access Focus Group data to determine results, lessons learned, recommendation, and outcomes.