



Sponsored by LACDMH USCC AI/AN
American Indian/Alaskan Native Subcommittee

SEEDS OF RESILIENCE

Food Sustainability & Wellness - Capacity Building Project



USCC - AI/AN 2025



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing.



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LACDMH's Mental Health Help Line: **(800) 854-7771**

Help Line is available 24/7 to provide mental health support, resources & referrals



MICHAEL WHITEHORSE - AVILES
TONGVA ELDER

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land we gather on, known today as Los Angeles County, is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Tongva, Tataviam, Chumash and Acjachemen peoples. These Indigenous Nations have stewarded this land since time immemorial and continue to maintain deep connections to it.

We honor their legacy, as well as the broader community of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples who now live, work, and thrive throughout Los Angeles—many of whom come from Tribal Nations across Turtle Island, and whose cultures, languages, and histories are rooted in resilience, sovereignty, and care for all living beings.

As we engage in collective healing, food sovereignty, and wellness work, we do so with gratitude for the original caretakers of this land. We commit to uplifting Indigenous knowledge systems, supporting Native self-determination, and acknowledging our shared responsibility to care for the Earth and each other.



Chumash Indians



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ABOUT US

We are an AI/AN and BIPOC collective group committed to Indigenizing wellness, education, and advocacy rooted in community transformation.

We create spaces that center healing, equity, and growth—uplifting the mental, physical, and environmental well-being of our people. Through culture, care, and ‘injunity’—our unique blend of Indigenous ingenuity and justice—we work to restore balance, build resilience, and spark regeneration for generations before and after us.



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to create a supportive community space that empowers individuals to center themselves through healing, advocacy, and growth.

We are dedicated to fostering environmental wellness—addressing both mental and physical well-being—while providing educational resources to inspire lifelong health, resilience, regeneration and positive change for individuals and communities.

WE ARE CHANGEMAKERS

Seeds of Resilience

Food Sustainability & Wellness Workshops

METHODS OF OUTREACH

Outreach for Seeds of Resilience took place through a mix of social media, community events, and strong local partnerships, all rooted in the Native American experience of community connection and trust. The team shared updates, cultural stories, and wellness resources online, using social media as a modern tool to reach tribal members both locally and beyond.

In Los Angeles, outreach methods were adapted to meet the needs of the urban Native community by partnering with organizations like the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, Native American community centers, and local health clinics. The team also participated in cultural gatherings, such as powwows, community dinners, and Native wellness events, which served as trusted spaces for in-person engagement. Flyers and program information were shared through Native-serving schools, urban Indian organizations, and word-of-mouth networks led by elders and community leaders. These combined efforts helped ensure outreach was culturally grounded, community-led, and inclusive of the diverse Native population in Los Angeles

see Figure 1.0 & 1.1 flyer(s) is a single-page printed or digital advertisement

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Seeds of Resilience

Food Sustainability Workshops

Join us to celebrate Native foodways, build community, and protect the land that sustains life.

Learn practical tools & experiences to support physical and emotional wellbeing.

Learn how to build sustainable systems for mental health and food security.

Create a healthier, more resilient future for your family, & OUR Native (AI/AN) community.

Join our 5 week Garden Workshops

Starting: May 31 - June 28, 2025

- Healing thru Heritage
- From Ground to Table: learning about Soil
- Grow Anywhere
- Wellness Thru Food Sustainability
- Building Strong Communities

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REGISTER NOW



SCAN HERE

Workshop Benefits

- ✓ Practical Skills
- ✓ Stronger Communities
- ✓ Garden Incentives
- ✓ Cultural Connections

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Rising2POWER

www.Rising2Power.com



Figure 1.0

Seeds of Resilience

Food Sustainability Workshops

Join us to celebrate Native foodways, build community, and protect the land that sustains life

Rooted in Wellness: Healing Through Soil, Culture & Community

Join us for a transformative journey where soil becomes a source of healing—physically, emotionally, and culturally. This project is grounded in the belief that the earth holds wisdom. As we plant and grow together, we also nurture emotional wellness, strengthen cultural identity, and build lasting community connections.

Why Soil?

The soil is more than just dirt—it's a living symbol of resilience, growth, and renewal. Families will connect to ancestral knowledge through hands-on gardening, learning how land-based practices can support mental health, grief transformation, and emotional strength.



FREE COMPOSTER START UP KIT -
composter & worms!



Workshops: June 21 & 28, 2025



What to Expect:

- 🌱 Culturally rooted gardening activities
- 🌱 Tools for emotional wellness and family healing
- 🌱 Community-building through land stewardship
- 🌻 Safe space for children & parents to grow—engage together
- 🌱 Soil testing

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Figure 1.1



PROJECT OVERVIEW

**USCC American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)
Project Funded by LACDMH USCC ARISE
Food Sustainability & Wellness Project: May–June 2025**

The American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to reduce disparities and increase mental health access for the AI/AN community in Los Angeles County. This project is part of a broader initiative to uplift Native families through culturally rooted practices that promote healing, food sovereignty, and sustainable wellness.

The AI/AN Wellness and Food Sustainability Project focused on strengthening mental health and wellness by reconnecting families to the AI/AN culture, land, food systems and mind/body exercise. The community came together to explore methods of self-discovery and healing both individually and collectively, using the garden as a central metaphor for growth, grief, resilience, and transformation. This space allowed for authentic conversations between Native community members and allies, honoring intergenerational knowledge and shared experiences.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW - CON'T

Throughout a six-week Hybrid series of experiential workshops, families engaged in hands-on learning that wove together parenting support, mental health awareness, traditional teachings, and food sovereignty. Parents learned how to help their children navigate emotions, grief, and the life cycle by emotional and physical grounding those lessons in natural and cultural metaphors—like the transformation of soil, the growth of seeds, and the cycles of planting and harvest.

Healing was further grounded in land-based knowledge, AI/AN dances such as the Jingle and Hoop Dance, and cultural practices that reflect interdependence, reciprocity, and reverence for all living beings. Participants practiced grounding, composting, and mindfulness in the garden space. Time was set aside for families to pause, observe, and listen—to the land, to their children, and to themselves.

Special attention was given to parenting children ages zero to five, focusing on developmental milestones, bonding through sensory gardening activities, and early co-regulation practices. Garden work became a space for soothing, attuning, and modeling emotional awareness for young children.

As the project evolved, families expressed deep interest in expanding their knowledge of land-based gardening, winter gardens, seed starting, fruit tree planting, composting, and food forests. There was an increased desire for continued access to resources, tools, and spaces that support long-term sustainability and intergenerational wellness.



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Learning to be good land caretakers and plant relatives



IMPACT & TAKEAWAYS

The project created a safe and interactive (hybrid - online via zoom platform and in person), nurturing space for Native families and allies to connect, heal, and grow. Practical skills in gardening, composting, and seed starting were paired with emotional wellness tools and cultural knowledge, creating a holistic experience rooted in Native values.

Stronger community connections were built through shared healing and traditional practices. Hybrid model allowed for increased engagement.

Families gained hands-on experience with gardening, soil health, composting, and planting—connecting these to ancestral practices and self-care. Cultural stories like the Potato Boy, the return of the Salmon, and the healing power of California blackberries helped reframe grief and resilience.

Parents learned how to co-regulate and care for their children through gardening, storytelling, and daily rituals.

The program reinforced the importance of food sovereignty and wellness through sustainable systems rooted in Native knowledge.

Healing was supported through land-based metaphors and collective storytelling.

The AI/AN Wellness and Food Sustainability Project served not just as a series of workshops, but as a return to core AI/AN values and ways of knowing—offering a model for how land, food, culture, and mental health are deeply interconnected.

Workshop Methods of Healing & Connections



PROJECT KEY BENEFITS

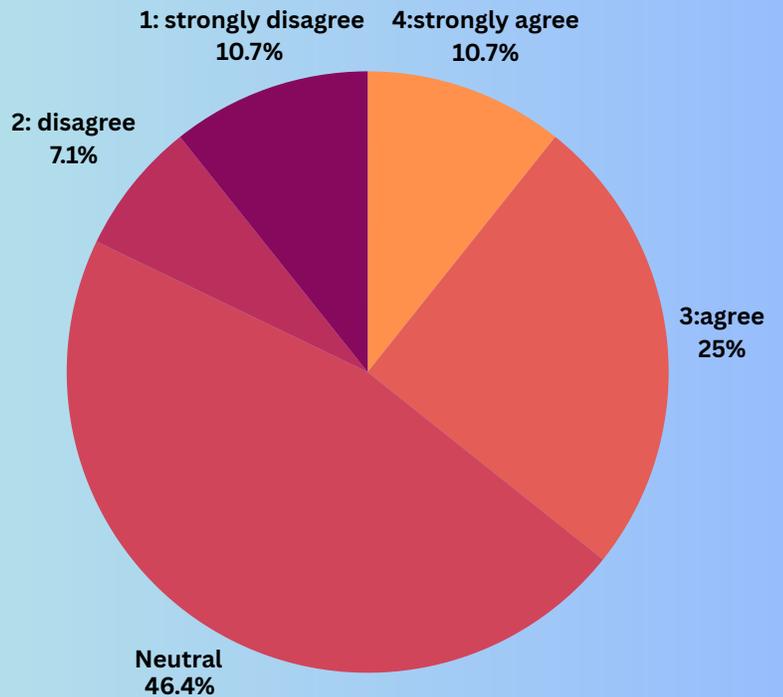
- **Stronger Communities** through shared learning and healing
- **Practical Skills** for gardening, developmental stages and phases - emphasis on grief/loss, sensory, emotional health, and family wellness
- **Cultural Connections** that promote resilience and identity
- **Garden Incentives** to support at-home food sustainability
- **Healing Through Heritage** using ancestral knowledge and storytelling
- **From Ground to Table** Learn about soil, growing food, and honoring life cycles
- **Grow Anywhere:** Learn to garden with limited space or resources
- **Wellness Through Food Sustainability** that supports long-term mental and physical health
- **Building Strong Communities** that reflect Native values of care and connection
- **Learn Practical Tools & Experiences** to support physical and emotional well-being
- **Build Sustainable Systems** for mental health and food security
- **Create a Healthier, More Resilient Future** for your family and our Native (AI/AN) community



RETROPECTIVE – PRE SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question

I am aware of how my food choices affect the environment and my community's future.



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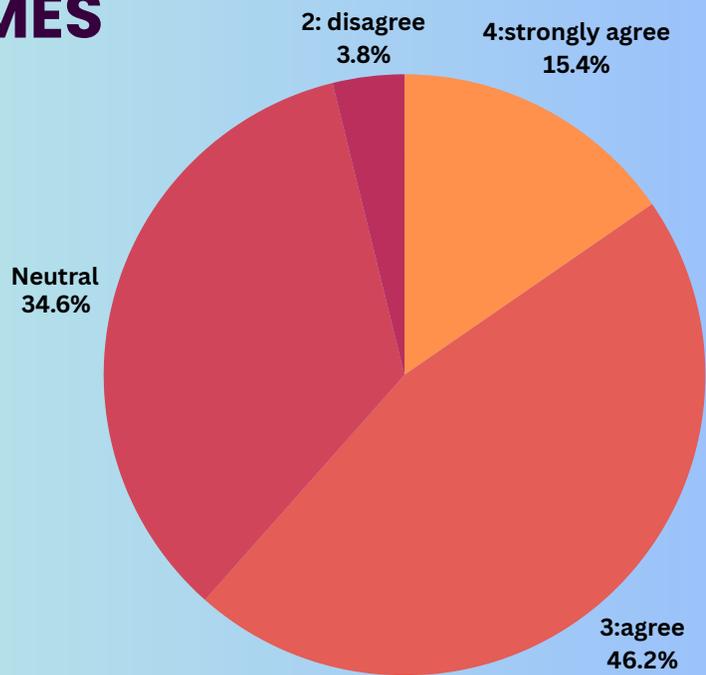
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RETROPECTIVE PRE SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question

I believe that connecting to gardening can support my (and my family's) mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness.



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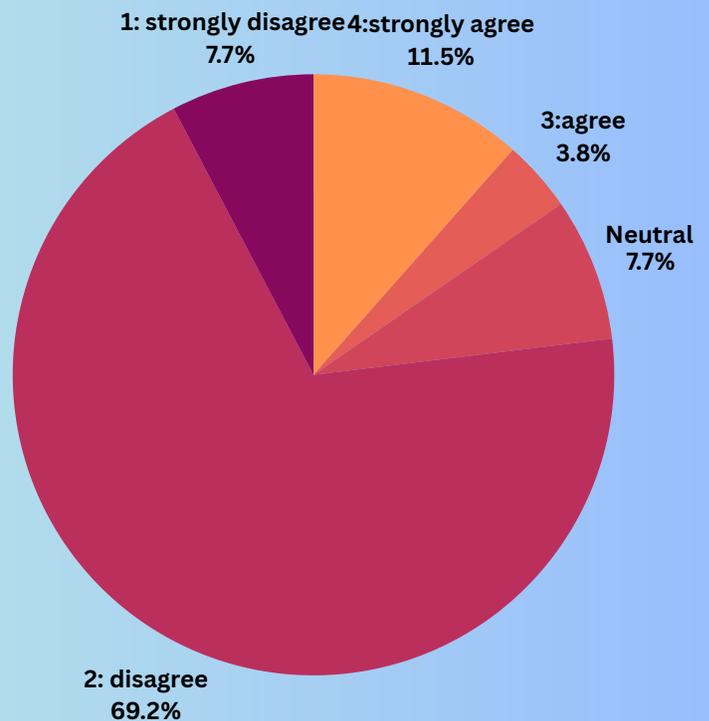
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RETROPECTIVE PRE SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question

I can create my own or identify community gardens, or food programs that support my overall wellness goals.



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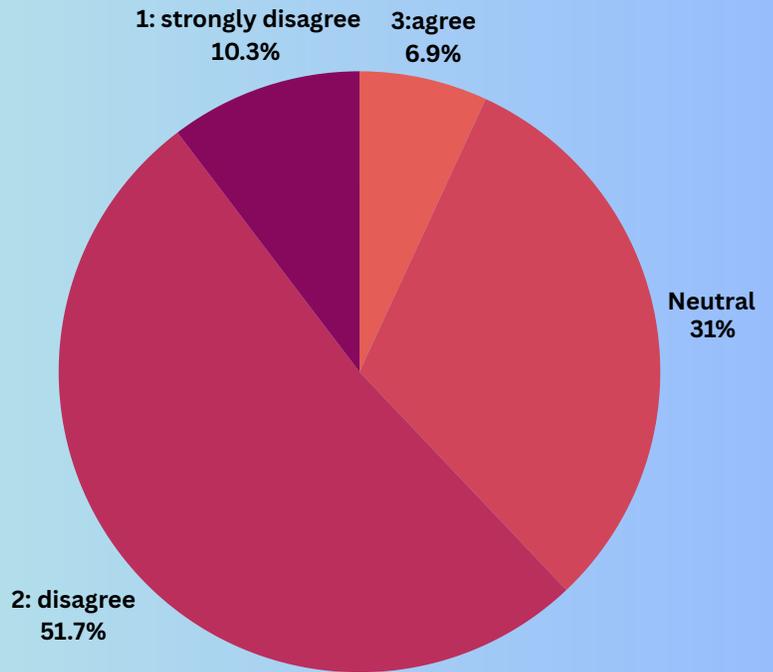
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RETROPECTIVE PRE SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question

I have had increased positive mood re: self and family because gardening (in last 6 weeks).



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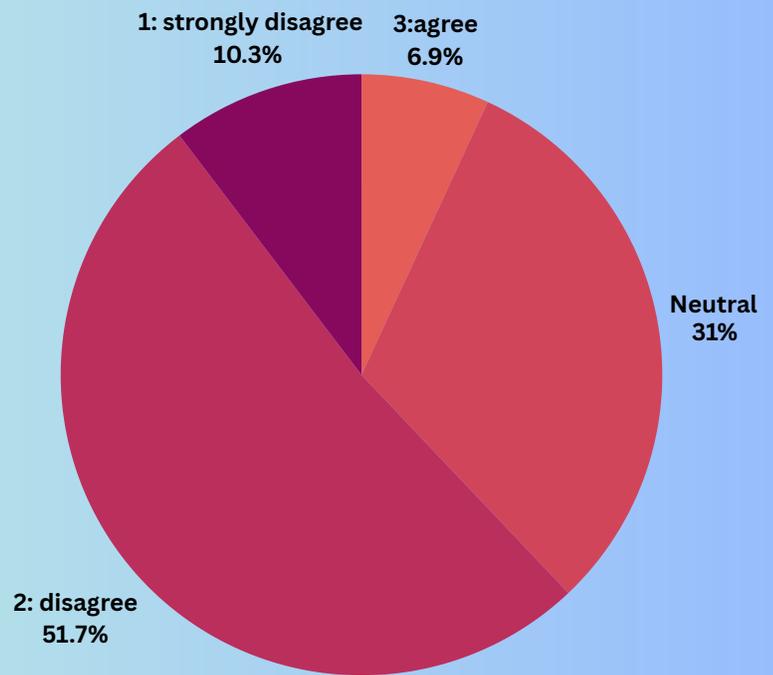
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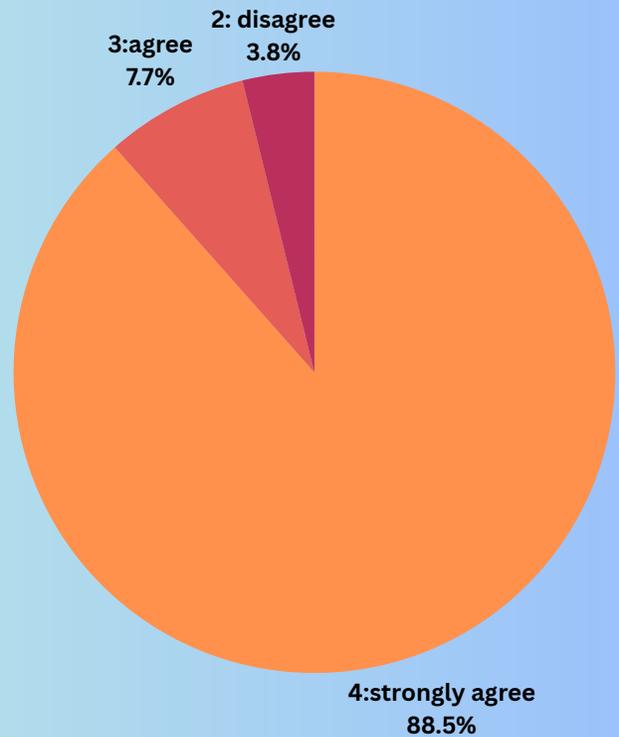
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RETROPECTIVE – POST SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question #1

I understand what food
sustainability means in
an urban setting



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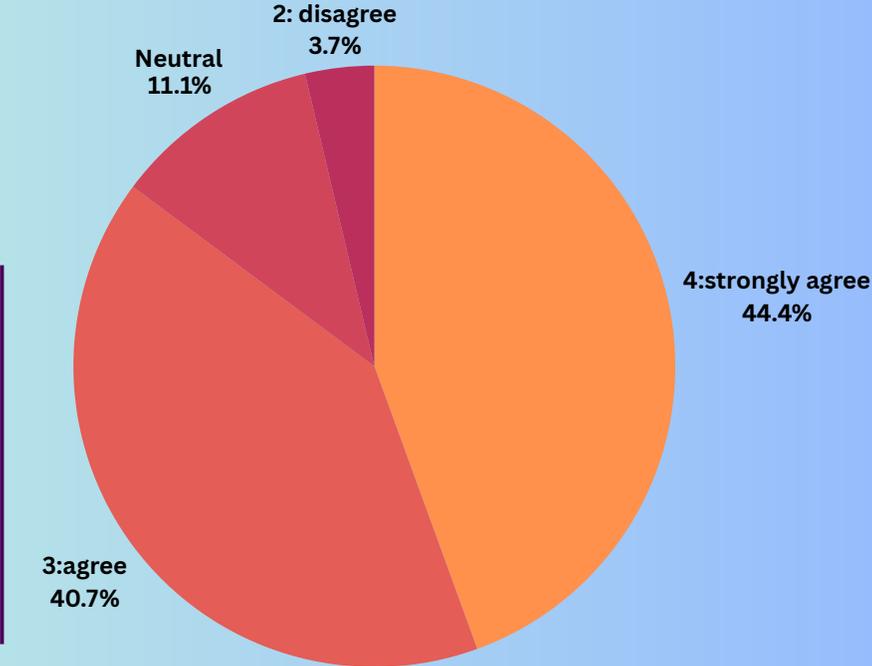
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RETROPECTIVE – POST SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question #2

I am aware of how my food choices affect the environment and my community’s future.



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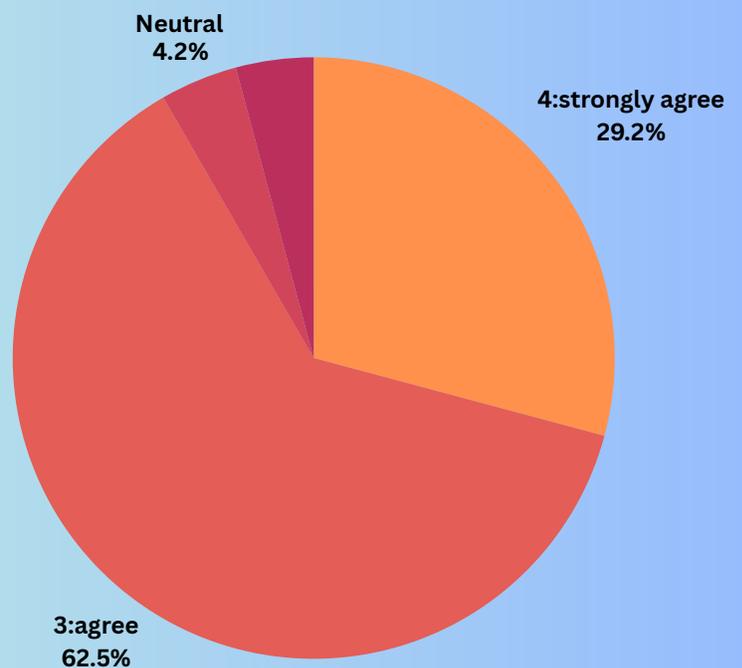


WELLNESS EMPOWERMENT & RESILIENCE

RETROPECTIVE – POST SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question #10

I can create my own or identify community gardens, or food programs that support my overall wellness goals.



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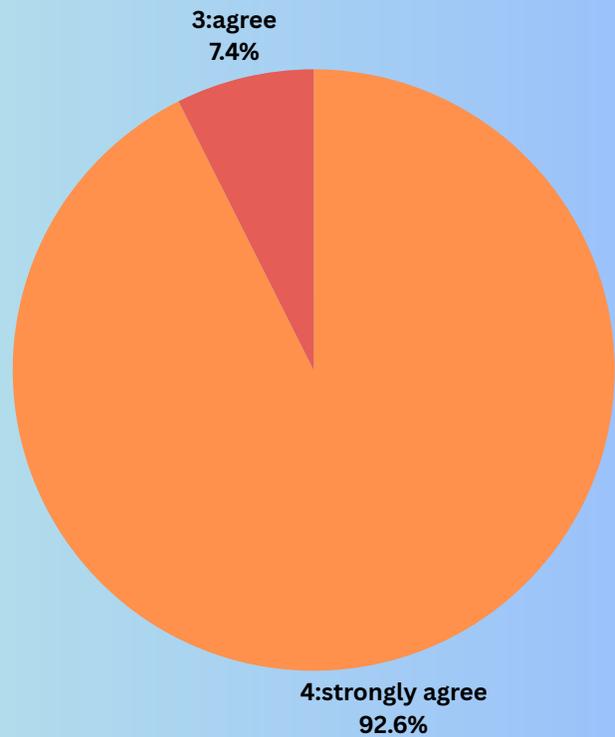
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RETROPECTIVE – POST SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question #

I believe that connecting to gardening can support my (and my family's) mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness.



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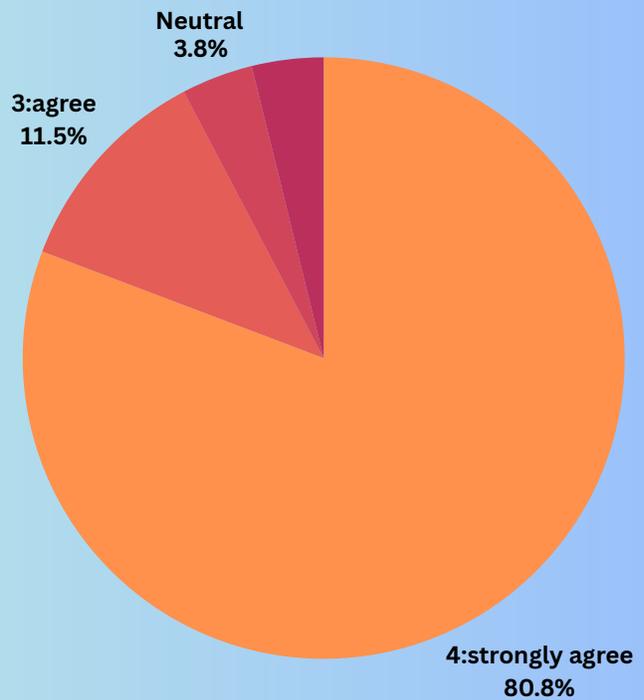
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RETROPECTIVE – POST SURVEY OUTCOMES

Survey Question #

I have had increased
positive mood re: self and
family because
gardening (in last 6
weeks).



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COMMUNITY FEEDBACK/RESPONSES

- “The fact that we are hands on gardening. Getting our hands dirty in the soil is so satisfying. And more importantly it's a Career Choice my daughter...”.
- “Overall handling of this project was great. Interactions with community, and the care to explain everything well”.
- “In person workshops were we get together with common interests”
- “The parts of the workshop that helped me feel more connected were the stories that were shared both by the speakers and the other community members. I also felt connected by seeing other community members!”





COMMUNITY HOPES/TS'EHDIIYAH: (thank you)

- **“Hope it continues”**
- **“This was so awesome. And the beautiful relaxing setting in Torrance, Thank You for opening Up Your Space”**
- **“This has been a wonderful experience.”**
- **“Thank you so much for this workshop series. My family is so grateful for the opportunity to reconnect with our culture and community in this way! This workshop helped me to understand the connection between food and my mental/ emotional state. Not only do I have a better understanding of the connection but I have been encouraged to make some changes in our household. Lastly, we are so excited to keep our garden going and hope to be able to supplement our grocery bill and eventually give to others in our community/ around us. Thanks again!”**



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK/RESPONSES

Future workshop topics

- Cooking, Winter Gardening, Propagating food/ plants
- More Composting
- Best climate for different plants.
- Youth activities
- Traditional recipes, maybe common gardening myth busters

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