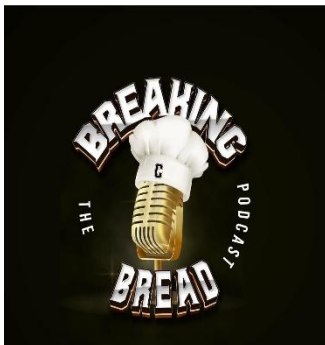


# Breaking Bread the Podcast & YouTube Series

## Project Summary Final Report

Operation Street Kidz

June 27, 2025



# **Breaking Bread the Podcast & YouTube Series**

## **Project Summary Final Report**

### **Program Description and Purpose**

This is a project of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health – Latino Underserved Cultural Communities (Latino UsCC), which was established under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), with the goal of reducing disparities and increasing mental health access for the Latino Community in Los Angeles County. This group works closely with community partners and consumers in order to increase the capacity of the public mental health system to develop culturally responsive, recovery-oriented services specific to the diverse Latino community and to develop capacity-building projects.

“Breaking Bread the Podcast” was designed to reach system-involved, either formerly or currently Latino Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY) ages 16-25 years of age. Latino system-involved youth, when compared to non-Latino system-involved youth, have reported some of the highest rates of behavioral health issues, including use of illicit drugs and substance use disorders, as well as mental health disorders. They have also been shown to have high rates of lifetime traumatic experiences.

Podcasts, along with nontraditional media, including social media have been increasing in interest and reach with TAY populations. Therefore, podcasts are a non-stigmatizing manner to reach system-involved youth or other Latino TAY who have experienced adverse life experiences. This podcast series will have a great deal of impact in giving Latino TAY hope and motivation to deal with and overcome mental health issues while providing a different avenue of expression to engage in mental health discussions.

### **Objective**

The objective of the Breaking Bread the Podcast and YouTube Series project is to outreach and engage members of the Latino TAY population who have experienced system-involvement or other potentially adverse life experiences including homelessness. By providing these platforms for discussions, it will hopefully allow space for discussions around mental health needs of these youth in a culturally appropriate and non-intrusive manner. This project aims to promote mental health services, reduce stigma, and increase the capacity of the public mental health system in Los Angeles County.

## The Team

This project is administered by the community based, non-profit organization Operation Street Kidz (OSK), which had successfully completed a project with the DMH Latino UsCC, “Empowering Latinx Youth Through the Lens as Mental Health Advocates,” in 2023. Team members of Breaking Bread include the following:

- **Jorge Urrea**, Creator and Host of Breaking Bread the Podcast. He is a chef, motivational speaker and social media influencer. His video “Shot 5 Times to Street Food Legend: How an Ex-Gang Member Became LA’s most Beloved Frutero (Fruit Cart Operator)” is on the First We Feast YouTube Channel, and has been viewed more than 125,000 times. Jorge is also a Mental Health Advocate, and speaks about his experience with the mental health system during childhood.
- **Chef JZ (Jose Zamora)** – Co-Host of Breaking Bread the Podcast. Chef JZ is a corporate Executive Chef with many years of experience. He grew up as a high risk youth running the streets of East Los Angeles. He speaks about how cooking saved his life, as he worked his way up in restaurant kitchens, starting with washing pots at the age of 17.
- **Josof Sanchez** – is the Founder and Executive Director of Operation Street Kidz, and serves as Executive Producer of Breaking Bread the Podcast.
- **Julie Matsumoto** – is Administrative Director of Operation Street Kidz, and serves as Executive Producer of Breaking Bread the Podcast. She administers the project and helps to coordinate all of the logistics, data collection, financial management and reporting.
- **Hugo Gomez** – Filmmaker who has worked with Operation Street Kidz for several years. He has directed the camera crew on Breaking Bread and is also responsible for editing each episode.

## Developed Screening Survey, Pre and Post-Surveys and Community Outreach

The Core Team of Jorge Urrea, Josef Sanchez and Julie Matsumoto met regularly to develop a Screening Tool and Pre and Post-Surveys for this project. These tools were approved by the Latino UsCC, and community outreach began.

We conducted community outreach by scheduling Jorge to speak and make presentations to schools and community based programs including: Five Keys Charter High School in Boyle Heights, Tri-C / Central High School (LAUSD) in Boyle Heights, the Boyle Heights Technology YouthSource Center, and the El Monte TORCH Program (a program of the City of El Monte and El Monte Police Department) – Jorge spoke to this group at least twice. Breaking Bread Flyers were distributed at all speaking engagements and outreach events, as well as through social media.

At the outset, we also filmed a social media Promo Video, which was posted on several of our collective Instagram Pages: @breaking\_bread\_the\_podcast, @operationstreetkidz and @latinxyouthmentalhealth. In addition, Josof and Julie host a weekly community radio show on KQBH LA Community Radio 101.5 FM in Boyle Heights – called “The Mr OG Show” (Opportunity Giver). We dedicated one whole show to introducing Breaking Bread the Podcast, with Jorge Urrea and Chef JZ as guests, and hosted by Josof Sanchez and Julie Matsumoto. This hour long radio show was filmed in studio by Hugo Gomez, and is Episode 1 of Breaking Bread the Podcast. This introduction is very important, because both Jorge and Chef JZ go in-depth into their stories and background, and how they got into the culinary field. This show aired twice on KQBH Community Radio in early 2024.

## **Participant Data / Screening Form Summary**

As soon as community outreach began, interested participants completed the screening survey via a Google Form. Through this form, we were able to determine if each individual met the age, geographic and ethnicity criteria. A total of 20 people completed the Screening Survey. Some individuals, however, upon following up with them, were unable to be reached / did not respond to email and phone call follow-up.

A total of 8 participants filmed a Breaking Bread episode (the series consists of 10 episodes total, but the first episode is the Introduction from the radio show interview with Jorge and Chef JZ, and Episode 2 features our Host and Creator Jorge Urrea preparing Albondigas and speaking more about Breaking Bread the Podcast.

Here is a Participant Summary: Please note that all participants speak English, although many are bilingual (English/Spanish):

- 1) Omar – Male, Age 27, Canoga Park
- 2) Alex – Male, Age 25, East Los Angeles
- 3) Malia – Female, Age 16, Lancaster
- 4) Aariah – Female, Age 17, Highland Park
- 5) Luis – Male, Age 15, El Monte
- 6) Eve – Female, Age 24, Pomona
- 7) Jonathan - Male, Age 19, North Hills
- 8) Leonardo - Male, Age 25, Pomona

Participant Gender Breakdown:

Male – 62.5      Female – 37.5%

Age Range: 15 – 27 years of age. Target age range was 16 – 25, but an exception was made for Omar, age 27. He was actually younger than 25 when he agreed to participate, and has a special bond with Host Jorge Urrea.

Age 17 and younger: 37.5%

Over Age 17: 62.5%

Ethnicity: Latinx / Latino(a) – 100%

Noteworthy Data obtained from screening survey:

**Have you or anyone you know utilized mental health resources?**

YES – 62.5%                      NO – 37.5%

**Have you had personal experience with life changing trauma?**

YES – 87.5%                      NO RESPONSE – 12.5%                      NO – 0

The Screening Survey has highlighted and shed light on adverse life experiences of Transitional Aged Youth, through data collected here.

Three of our participants (all female) experienced the Foster Care System, and when asked to elaborate on life changing trauma that they experienced, comments included that they experienced physical, verbal and mental abuse, homelessness and domestic violence. One of these participants also experienced sexual molestation, but did not indicate this on screening form (we learned this through Adopted Mother).

Regarding the stigma of mental health in the Latino community, several male participants mentioned the difficulty for males not being able to express feelings and mental health challenges. Participant Jonathan stated, “Boys are taught that a man needs to be able to carry the weight of a family and not submit to emotions and to basically suppress any sort of emotional reactions---this leads to a build up of anger that sadly escalates into violence against our own people.”

Participant Leonardo commented on trauma he experienced growing up, and stated that he had been “racially profiled by the police since I was a kid.”

## **Location Scouting for Kitchens and Film Crew**

One of the challenges which we encountered was finding the right kitchen for filming the episodes. We started using the kitchen at CeFishe Restaurant in Pomona (197 E 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Pomona), where Jorge knows the owner, and allowed us to use it on Mondays when they were closed. However, the difficulty encountered was that our film crew has regular day jobs, so we were unable to begin filming in the kitchen until 5 pm, and everyone had to drive to Pomona. There was a steep learning curve for the entire team, and the film crew in setting up lighting and establishing the flow of shots, etc. The first episode filmed was Jorge Urrea, which took over 6 hours, including set up and clean up. This turned out to be untenable for our film crew, as they had to get up early the next day to go to work.

Other kitchens were researched, including the community based Eastmont Community Center in East LA and the Gloria Molina Kitchen at La Plaza de Cultura y Artes in Olvera

Street. Eastmont was unavailable, because they were renovating the kitchen and it was not available. The Gloria Molina kitchen is absolutely beautiful, but there is a very loud industrial fan, which our team figured out how to work around. We had to submit a proposal to them to use their kitchen, but it took weeks and weeks for them to respond. In the meantime, Chef JZ offered to let us use his home kitchen in Brea, which is where we filmed the remaining 7 episodes.

## Project Outcomes: Pre and Post-Survey Results

After participants were selected to participate in Breaking Bread and record an episode, they were asked to complete a Pre-Survey via a Google Form. The survey consisted of five questions. Two of the questions required a short narrative answer, and the rest were selecting an answer on a scale of 1 to 5 or 1 to 7. Two spreadsheet files are attached to email with Final Report, with actual responses of each participant.

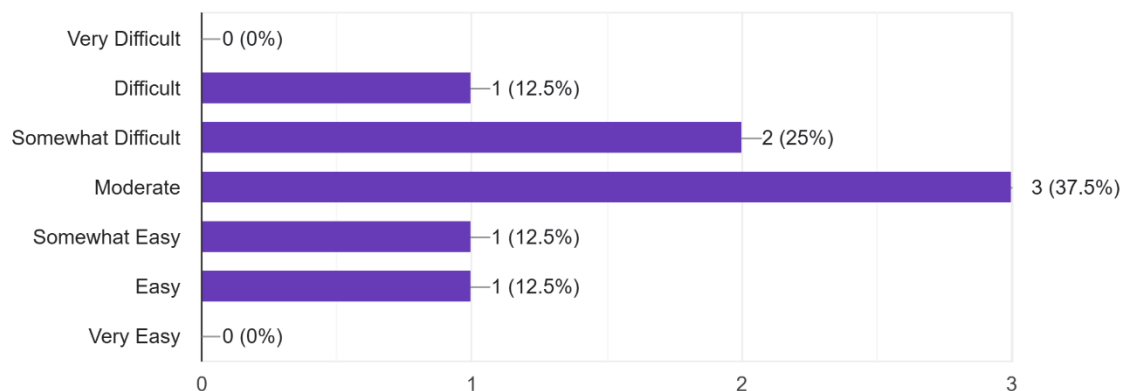
Upon completing the filming of their Breaking Bread episode, they again were asked to complete the same survey (Post-Survey)

### Q1: How accessible is it for you to find mental health resources on social media?

On the Pre-Test, responses ranged from 2 (Easy) to 6 (Difficult), with average being 4.125 (4 being moderate).

How accessible is it for you to find mental health resources on social media? Select One

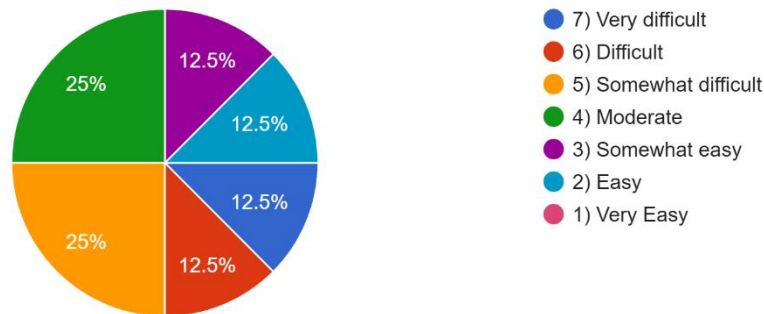
8 responses



On the Post-Test, responses ranged from 2 (Easy) to 7 (Very Difficult), with average being 4.5, which is slightly less accessible than the pre-survey.

How accessible is it for you to find mental health resources on social media?

8 responses



All participants except two reported the same level or improved level of accessibility.

### **Q2: What are some effective methods that can minimize stigmas around Latinx mental health?**

Responses have been grouped with the numbers following the response being the number of participants who provided that response.

- Promote open conversations in general, and in other facilities and on school campuses (4);
- Community events (2)
- Make culinary arts more popular/accessible to Latino youth (1)
- Start at home with parents encouraging children to express themselves and seeking help (1)

One additional response different from above was provided during the Post-Survey:

- Expose Latin communities to other fun healthy activities/ therapies, such as geocaching(1)

### **Q3: What are some things that you would like to learn in the culinary field that would help you towards your future goals?**

- Improve plating and shortcuts to cooking faster (1)
- Learn more about global cuisines (1)
- Learn more dishes to make and utilizing different spices (1)
- Learn how to become a chef (1)
- Learn how to make healthy food taste good (1)

Two additional responses different from above were provided during the Post-Survey:

- Learn how to monetize and inspire (1)

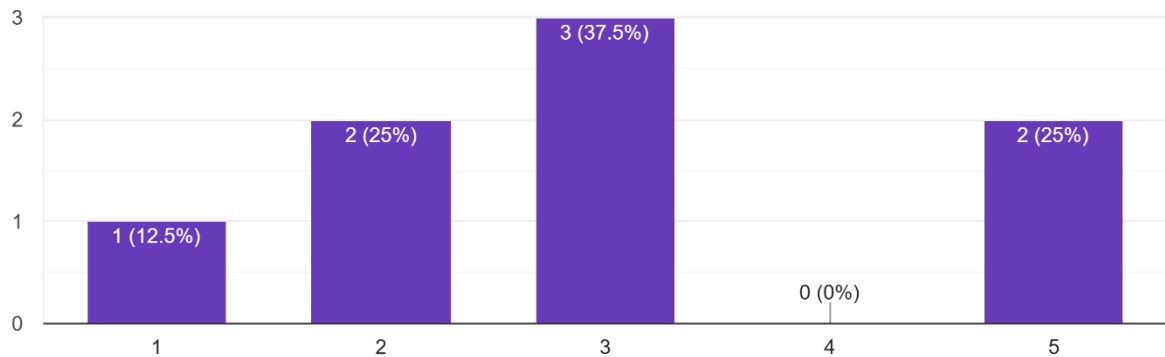
- How to cook like Chef JZ (1)

**Q4: On a scale of 1 to 5, how effective do you think social media is on promoting mental health?**

In the Pre-Survey, responses range from 1 (Not effective) to 5 (Effective), with average being 3.0

On a scale of 1 to 5, how effective do you think social media is on promoting mental health?

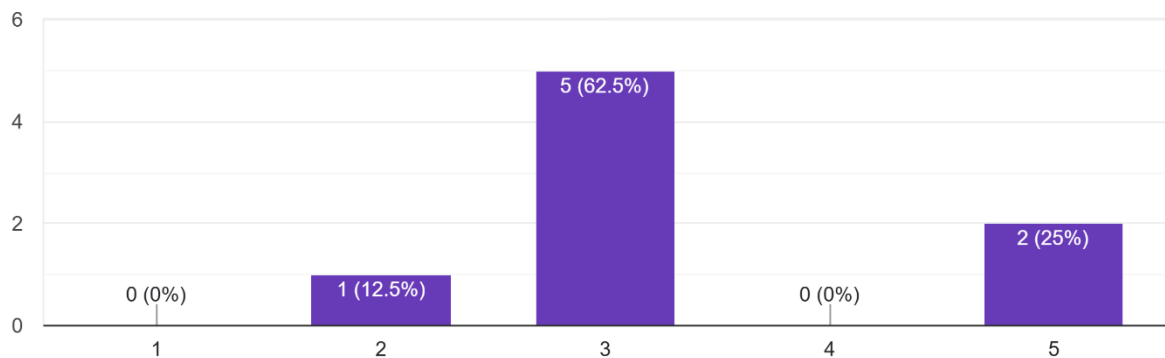
8 responses



In the Post-Survey, responses range from 2 to 5 (Effective), with the average being 3.375 – thus participants reported social media being more effective in promoting mental health in the Post-Survey.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how effective do you think social media is on promoting mental health?

8 responses



Participant Omar lowered his response from 5 → 3 after the Post-Survey; All other participants either had the same response or it increased from Pre to Post.

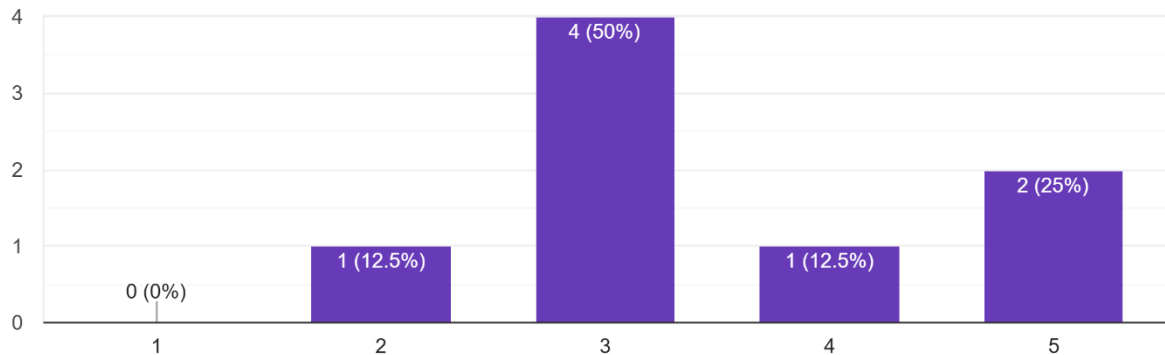


**Q5: On a scale of 1 to 5, how helpful is social media on raising mental health awareness?**

In the Pre-Survey, responses range from 2 to 5 (Extremely helpful), with the average being 3.5.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how helpful is social media on raising mental health awareness?

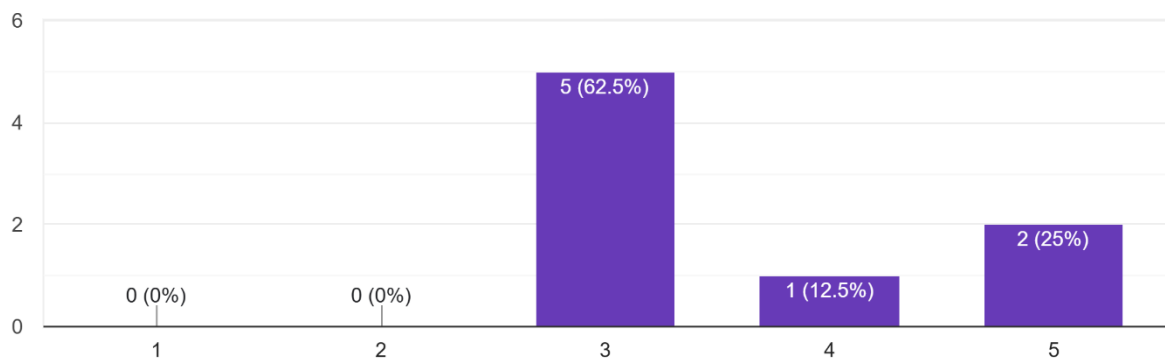
8 responses



In the Post-Survey, responses range from 3 to 5 (Extremely helpful), with the average response being 3.625.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how helpful is social media on raising mental health awareness?

8 responses



Participant Omar decreased his response from 5 to 3 in the Post-Survey. All other participants either had the same or higher response over Pre-Survey.

Also, an interesting note regarding 15 year-old Participant Luis, instead of answering the pre and post questions asked, he stated that he has experienced depression and is asking for help in coping with depression. In his screening survey, he also did not answer the question “Have you

had personal experience with life changing trauma?” He left this question blank. But he did indicate that he does NOT have a support system.

## **Publishing and Promoting the Episodes**

Each of the ten episodes have been uploaded to our YouTube Channel: ***Breaking Bread the Podcast.***

## **Accomplishments / Lessons Learned / Outcomes**

As mentioned earlier, there was a very steep learning curve, for both the Host and Co-Host, in perfecting the timing of the dialogue with the cooking and also for the film crew who worked hard to set up lighting and camera angles. Midway through the filming of the episodes, the film crew placed a dedicated camera on the ceiling to just capture shots of the food.

Scheduling was also a challenge. Once we settled on using Chef JZ’s home kitchen, we had to work around his schedule---it had to be on a weekend, but he also has a very busy schedule and travels a lot for work. Then we had to coordinate schedules of the 3 person film crew and also the participants.

Breaking Bread Host Jorge Urrea commented that the “therapeutic side of cooking is very apparent, and was highlighted and reinforced through this project.” 16 year old participant Malia stated that “Cooking helps me forget about what’s going on in my head.” Jorge also added that there are a lot of juveniles who use cooking as therapy, as early as 12 years of age into their 20’s.

Participants all enjoyed being part of Breaking Bread, preparing a dish and sharing their story. We are also grateful to have had the perfect Host and Co-Host for cooking with high risk and transitional aged youths, who have all experienced early childhood trauma. Both Jorge and Chef JZ made each participant feel comfortable to share their story and prepare a dish in the kitchen with them, and offered to mentor them not only in the culinary field, but with the challenges of life. Participant Omar experienced severe trauma as a child when his Father was killed while he was with his best friend Jorge Urrea. This episode was very special, because Jorge and Omar have such a special bond, and Omar shared with us that the process of filming the episode was very healing for him.

Omar and the other participants all have a heart to touch someone’s life by sharing their story, and through this process they are moving forward with their own healing process.

All of the dishes prepared were selected by the participants themselves, as a dish that has special meaning for them. We were able to show a broad spectrum of dishes that can be prepared, and

many participants talked about growing up with little resources and having to prepare meals that were affordable yet healthy.

This is a project that can make a positive impact and inspire a segment of the population that do not often have a voice. The Breaking Bread team is dedicated to continuing this project in the future.

We would like to thank the County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health – Latino UsCC for their tremendous support and assistance in allowing us to bring this project to completion.

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