SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Taking on the "Perfect Storm": Faith-based Organizations and Partnerships Address COVID-19 and Critical Behavioral Health Needs in Communities of Color

NNED Virtual Roundtable
July 16, 2020

This virtual roundtable, hosted by the NNED National Facilitation Center and SAMHSA's Office of Behavioral Health Equity, in partnership with SAMHSA's Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network Coordinating Office, discussed how faith-based organizations and leaders are supporting the mental health concerns of racial/ethnic minorities.

Dr. Farha Abbasi

"When trauma happens to one community, it pervades the whole society. Faith leaders become first responders to the community."

COVID hit during Ramadan. Muslims are struggling with COVID and mental illness, while being targeted politically.

- Lead Mental Health First Aid training for Imans
- Bring mental health services and virtual activities to Islamic centers
- Have interfaith dialogue and partnership to augment mental health and substance use resources

Pastor Clarence Yarholar

"Civil unrest becomes spiritual unrest. Spirituality is the hope in worst situations."

- Provide prayer rooms, meditation rooms, and spirituality rooms in health care
- Train Native counselors for Native patients
- Learn Native theological concepts and narratives in order to serve the Native community
- Understand culture, lifestyle, language, and practices such as ceremonial dances and feasts, and the connection to mental health

Rev. Pausa Kaio Thompson

"As a diaspora community, churches are the core, trusted messengers where we get our information."

Pacific Islanders in the U.S. have been most impacted by COVID-19 among all Asian American Pacific Islanders.

- Communicate through storytelling to the Pacific Islander community
- Work with medical practitioners to give important information to the congregation
- Host joint dialogues with faith and mental health leaders

Maria del Carmen Uceda-Gras

"Since COVID-19 began, there has been a lot of fear. It has been very frightening times for the Latino community."

- Expand the workforce to people trusted by Latino community
- Work with faith-based organizations to provide Latinos access to telehealth
- Provide access to behavioral health in the Latino community's language
- Develop relationships with medical specialists to access care independently
- Give hope to people, especially during the pandemic times when people are more fearful and anxious

Rev. Dr. Charles Butler

"10% of my congregation has died from COVID. There is a need to address trauma and loss."

- Invite people from other professions to the church to share information
- Bring faith leaders together with health and mental health practitioners
- Offer food ministry and health ministry
- Provide virtual prayer sessions to deal with grief and provide bible study for connection while socially isolated
- Set up COVID testing sites in churches

Dr. Sidney Hankerson

"Faith has been a bedrock and an opportunity to provide healing."

- Create Community Health Worker Institute by recruiting from Harlem congregations, train to do depression screenings and patient navigation to access mental health care
- Enroll people in health insurance through the church
- Organize Community Coalition for Mental Health across faith leaders, mental health professionals, and community residents

Community Coalition For Mental Health encourages African Americans in Harlem, NY to receive mental health support in faith-based settings.
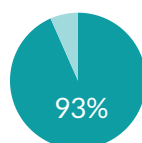
Participants

711 participants by computer or phone
1589 registrants
46% attendance rate

1,100 views
36 shares
3,589 reach
85 engagements

Resources and more information at:
https://bit.ly/39nMpMd
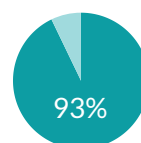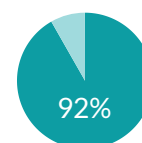
Survey Results

Following the roundtable, participants were asked to fill out a survey on their experience. 182 attendees responded to the feedback survey (26%).
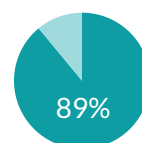
- **93%** This virtual roundtable was informative
- **93%** The dialogue increased my knowledge of the subject
- **92%** Information provided could be useful to my work
- **89%** The structure was effective and allowed opportunities to raise questions and get information

▲ Strongly Agree and Agree   ▲ Strongly Disagree and Disagree