

Part 3: Creating and Enhancing Pathways to a Racially/Ethnically Diverse Behavioral Health Workforce

Resources and more information at: share.nned.net/2021/08/nned-vr2021-workforce

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, this roundtable examined how organizations can create career development experiences and professional pathways to support racially/ethnically diverse people in entering behavioral health careers. See panelist biographies at nned.net/9192/#panelists.

Barriers for racially/ethnically diverse professionals to enter the behavioral health workforce

- **Lack of diversity in behavioral health:** majority of prescribing clinicians are white, and majority of the behavioral health workforce are female
- **Confusion about the field:** lack of knowledge of career choices, lack of mentorship, and lack of clarity on expectations and requirements for programs and licensure
- **Financial burden:** tuition, exams, and materials are too costly; unpaid internships are financially challenging; and salaries are not competitive
- **Stigma of behavioral health:** cultural beliefs and faith can make behavioral health taboo and not talked about at home
- **Economic mobility:** families rely on youth to succeed and uplift the family; they do not consider behavioral health careers ideal

Strategies and resources for organizations to diversify the behavioral health workforce



Thomas Clarke, PhD, MPH

- SAMHSA offers a practitioner training portal and technical assistance for behavioral health providers.
- Minority fellowship programs provide masters and doctoral students training and support to effectively treat racial and ethnic minority communities.
- HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) Center for Excellence in Behavioral Health expands campus service capacity including provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate health resources.



Fred Sandoval, MPA

- Survey and/or consult recent graduates and program participants to identify gaps and to inform programs.
- Provide scholarships and stipends, including to DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) students, who are not eligible for financial aid.
- Support policy change that would increase pay for behavioral health workers and address the wage gap for racially/ethnically diverse professionals.
- Involve trusted local community partners (e.g. Mexican consulates) as donors/contributors to Latino-focused programs.



Leonissa Johnson, PhD

- Create a group of racially/ethnically diverse professionals able to connect students to information and opportunities.
- Provide peer-to-peer sharing and mentoring opportunities between new and experienced students.
- Leverage the unique perspective of your organization to create mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Communicate the work you are doing through your website, social media, YouTube channel, and newsletters.



Michael Awad, PhD

- Provide hands-on/experiential opportunities to connect students of all ages with behavioral health clinics and centers.
- Host a Zoom event on a behavioral health topic that interests your students.
- Find behavioral health graduate programs and ask to guest lecture or sponsor an award monetarily.
- Invite student volunteers to work at a behavioral health event you are hosting in the community.

Participants

The roundtable was hosted on Zoom and streamed on Facebook Live.



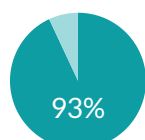
651 participants
1510 registrants
43% attendance rate



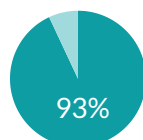
298 people reached
129 views
43 engagements

Survey Results

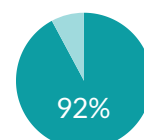
Following the roundtable, participants were asked to fill out a survey on their experience. 115 attendees responded to the feedback survey (18%).



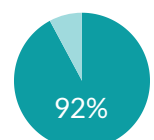
This virtual roundtable was informative



The dialogue increased my knowledge of the subject



Information provided could be useful to my work



The structure was effective for raising questions and getting information



Strongly Agree / Agree



Strongly Disagree / Disagree