

MENTAL “WELLNESS” breakout session

VISION: *"Our community is healthy and well when residents and community based partners have the capacity, tools, and expertise to meet our own health needs related to mental and emotional well-being, strong relationships, healthy and affordable food, and healthcare free from structural barriers. Such capacity should be supported in times of emergency and during normal conditions."*

Priority Issues, Goals, Strategies

Priority Issue #1:

Stigma around mental health that deters residents/communities from seeking the help

Goal 1: Take proactive measures to destigmatize mental health in NYCHA communities

Strategies: Assess, develop, and use language for mental health that is more accessible TO ALL and builds on the resilience of communities of color to normalize seeking support *[high impact/high effort]*

What actions can we take to pursue this strategy?

Host forums that uncover the language that is stigmatizing and normalizing to inform a culturally informed communication campaign; forums must include space for different age groups and cultural and lived experiences

Host small-group community discussions to articulate the ways in which “mental illness” carries a strong stigma in our communities and what makes for “culturally competent” care.

Host small-group community discussions to discuss how “resilience” shows up in our Black/Brown communities - both as an asset (strength) and a liability (the shame of showing any sign of weakness)

Push out new terms that are more positive and mainstream - “Mental Fitness,” resilience, wellness to promote self-care around mental “illness” in the same way one would address any other type of health concern (eg. broken arm, diabetes, breast cancer)

Host intimate educational workshop(s) to share knowledge among residents on appropriate use of medical diagnoses/terms vs. stigmatizing “labels” and inform residents on where/how to access info/services

Promote and make more accessible DOE’s mental health campaign in schools

Launch an awareness campaign to promote mental health as part of the growing “fitness and wellness” movement in the mainstream

- Closer (trained) listening of those experiencing mental health issues -to provide appropriate assistance, support, direction on tapping resources (overlaps with Issue #2 goal to increase accessibility and culturally competent training)
- Personal storytelling among residents/within communities - perceptions and direct experiences - helps people see themselves/feel less "different"

Resources

- Dept of Health - existing workshops (tailored to address among residents; culturally relevant language/issues) and adapt to regular workshop "curriculum"
- ICS ER storybanking - ways to include these direct Mental health experience

Priority Issue #2:

Lack of awareness of and access to culturally relevant mental health information and services for NYCHA communities

Goal: Increase access to and training around culturally competent "mental wellness" information and services for residents across NYCHA communities

Strategy #1: Make existing information and resources around mental health and related services available and accessible TO ALL - incl. NYCHA residents
[high impact/high effort]

What actions can we take to pursue this strategy?

Take an inventory of existing information and resources provided by service providers and city agencies across the city and spotlight disparities in access to care

Take the above information and translate it into a language and messaging that is culturally sensitive

Make this information visually accessible and distribute widely across all NYCHA developments

Identify credible messengers - friends, family, community ambassadors and peers - to “deliver” this information to communities

Designate a contact at each service provider/ agency whose job it is to ensure this information is being distributed on a regular basis to NYCHA communities (produce a report card?)

Offer tele-health options to make resources more accessible while maintaining privacy

Promote new mental health first aid (Covid19 community conversations) to center racial equity, skills-building, coping skills in MAP & NYCHA communities

- Wellness Bulletin Board with various resources and flyers (privacy)
- Social media posting; banners; QR codes, zoominars
- Link mental health + wellness + chronic illnesses
- TRAINING - so many different forms! intent could unlock resources and information
- List of local services + how to access - making sure these list/resources are UPDATED (doc that's accessible in print + online) - How does a resource go beyond the PDF

Resources

- NYC Well
- Each neighborhood has its own services

Accountable Who is accountable / responsible for making sure progress is made?

Did not get to this

Strategy #2: Support/train first responders and direct service providers in providing culturally sensitive services to reach and provide services to communities of color [high impact/high effort]

What actions can we take to pursue this strategy?

Require cultural competency as an integral part of professional mental health service provider training

Offer more small group “safe place” meetings to promote trust, sharing, and “group therapy” without calling it “therapy”

Offer training opportunities to “boots-on-the-ground” community members (“credible messengers”) to help identify what is and is not a crisis, where to go for help, and how to get them there

Offer more “train the trainer” programs - mental health first aid training

Provide sustainable funding for local therapeutic services that reflect the culture and diverse healing practices beyond clinical approach

- How can city agencies and providers have opportunities to listen and HEAR the issues from residents directly and more frequently

Resources Did not get to this
Accountable Did not get to this

Priority Issue #3: _____

COVID-19 & EMERGENCIES

Goal 1: **Increase equitable access to supportive services, preparedness, testing, and vaccination**

What solutions have been tried? What has worked before?

- Word of mouth shares of positive experiences
- Work with trusted credible messengers in BIPOC communities to share information and help overcome Vax scheduling/digital divide
- Visibility of DOH Pop up sites (restoration plaza) in major thoroughfares - more pop ups!
- Outreach + Education around the vaccine
- Neighborhood GUIDES to food assistance - printed booklets updated annually organized by neighborhoods - available via email guides@hungerfreenyc.org - <https://hungerfreeamerica.org/en-us/neighborhood-guides-to-food--assistance>
- Can request them for free- info on SNAP/WIC, food pantries, soup kitchens, farmers markets, senior meals
- Master list of emergency resources
- Having Vaccine available in your community
- Designated local orgs to be schedulers
- DOHMH - Train the Trainers. Education around Vaccines. and how to access the appointments.
- DOHMH Community conversations

What hasn't worked? What have been the obstacles?

- Miscommunication around vaccine. Fears around the Vaccine. Mistrust of govt
- Community "outsiders" accessing local vaccine sites
- conflicting information in the media
- Scheduling issue = supply issue
- Fear of being a guinea pig
- Lack of concrete CLEAR information about the vaccine (science)
- Lack of (clear) info on safety of vaccine on those with preconditions
- AstraZeneca vaccine recall in the news

What do you want to see happen? What are new ideas?

Community Local Action:

- Credible messengers as Champions: overcoming doubts + sharing positive resident experiences (wasn't so bad!) :)
 - Sharing personal tips: 2 tylenols + lots of water! And home remedies - rubbing alcohol on the arm
 - Debunk myths, demystify, educating, assist other w/ technology and knowledge

Agency Action:

- MORE mobile Vaccination Vans dispatched by the city (Mayor) to our Black/Brown communities - esp sr. citizens, ppl w/ disabilities- throughout city (MAP dev) - 200ppl
- How can the CITY AGENCIES be a catalyst for: Debunk myths, demystify, educating, assist other w/ technology and knowledge
- PRI (Pandemic Response Institute) working to be better prepared next time: opportunities to COORDINATE, INFORM, DISSEMINATE INFO, etc.
- FUNDING CBO's to be the engagement leaders in the community around vaccinations

What could have been done better?

- ALL OF IT! - medical people on the ground distributing info and dispelling fears. All we heard was how many people were dying (escalating fears)
- We didn't have access to TESTS! Mixed messages about steps to take, for whom and how, etc.
- MAP NSTAT provided info throughout NYCHA communities, how to tap their expertise going forward (dedication! across developments)
- Move to digital queueing - and move AWAY from inefficient physical queueing!
- DOHMH - Unfortunately we have separated neighborhood emergencies from city wide emergencies— we gotta connect it all

Let's take ONE strategy, and do a policy event analysis of that strategy:

Strategy #1: Credible messengers as Champions: overcoming doubts + sharing positive resident experiences (wasn't so bad!) :)

What POLICY EVENTS or actions can we take to pursue this strategy?

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

- Find the Messengers!!
- Get Messengers up to speed on the info
- Language translation of the info
- Address gaps/resources needed for digital divide; who has privilege/time to schedule!
- Identify platforms for sharing the messaging
- Transparency - communicate accurate info
- Empower NYCHA residents - building healthy communities - remove barrier - to be more active credible messengers

AGENCY-DRIVEN

DOH:

- We have a resource guide that is distributed by T 2 community navigators and is on our website. We can talk about how we can get them to you
- Train more credible messengers - RESIDENTS! On: What side effects to expect, what you're feeling (antibodies); educating in the 1-hr training (decreased attendance - maybe we saturated our neighborhoods - but opportunity to train more
- ICS unit designed to engage community partners. With COVID - (politics) new initiatives came into play - ID networks before emergencies, how are we connecting to those networks (eg. measles) - hard to engage people BEFORE the Emergency. Cure violence teams - how to plug into a larger interconnected network. Comm Service providers are the ones who should be at the table - so funding and programs can be rolled out. PROACTIVE vs. REACTIVE. How to mobilize NOW. Connect the dots between emergency + crisis mgt network - can be activated. Time is NOW!
- Train the Trainers - by DOH - ingredients, clinical trials, how many people have been vaccinated, updated info on eligibility/proof of, how to access the vaccines (still need to schedule) Vaccinefinder, VAXNYC - medical doc present to answer questions. dispelling myths.
- Faith-based institutions to host these train the trainer workshops - how to reach more people (MAP has relationships but not systemic)\HST partnering with UWNYP working w/ black churches [Choose Healthy Life/5-Cities Project] to disseminate info
- How to tailor COMMUNICATIONS - so that info gets out there to the right people and places (which means we need to have a better grasp of communications channels/user behaviors) - cell phone # names; social media -won't pop up if you don't know about it. Word of mouth + using tech field's strategies to apply (target marketing has been used DOH)

Resources

- [Vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov), [Vax4nyc.nyc.gov](https://vax4nyc.nyc.gov)
- IOBY - tries to remove barriers for accessing \$ to allow access to raise \$ for initiatives
- Partnership for Parks - City Parks foundation (fiscal sponsor for Friends of parks groups). Need a Fund for public health needs with private \$\$
- CBO's to serve as fiscal conduits for funding to reach communities

Accountable **Did not get to this**

FOOD SECURITY breakout session

Priority Issue #1:

Inequitable access to fresh and nutritious food that disproportionately affects the health and wellbeing of low-income residents in NYCHA developments

Goal 1: **Increase access to fresh, nutritious, and affordable food for residents throughout NYCHA communities**

Strategy 1: **Proactive outreach to inform residents about available food resources and programs**

What POLICY EVENTS (actions) can we take to pursue this strategy?

a	Create a list of quality, affordable food in all the stores and programs
b	Post available food resources on multiple formats (signage, flyering, digital, social media) to keep residents informed
c	Scale up mutual aid efforts - Call elected officials to fund mutual aid
d	Coordinate and push out information on Emergency food deliveries
e	Require language translations on all outgoing info resources from City Agencies
f	Offer cooking demos and virtual cooking classes - or get residents who cook to host/share their recipes
g	Launch a community advocacy campaign to improve quality of produce & meat

Strategy 2: **Provide incentives (and monitoring) to food providers and to residents**

What POLICY EVENTS (actions) can we take to pursue this strategy?

a	Create a report card or "reviews" to incentivize supermarkets and bodegas to offer more produce
b	Create a google map with resident feedback on local stores as an advocacy campaign
c	Get suppliers and restaurants to donate food
d	Provide workshops on nutrition, cooking at home, and meal prep/planning (cooking once in bulk/lasting for days)

e	Share the needs assessment data with City to try to improve how programs are designed and delivered
f	Call EDC to enforce and monitor the supermarkets that are receiving the grants, monitor
g	Work with supermarkets to remove junk food at the registers

Any strategies we've missed?

Strategy 3: Increase access / improve distribution of fresh, nutritious food for people with mobility issues

Strategy 4: Create community ownership over food distribution systems/network e.g. worker own cooperatives

Strategy 5: Scale-up mutual aid efforts - Call elected officials to fund mutual aid