

Listening Session and Strategic Discussion Series:

Emerging Issues Around COVID-19 and Social Determinants of Health for the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Workforces

Overview of ATTC/PTTC Listening Session and Strategic Discussion Series

Background

The [Addiction Technology Transfer Center \(ATTC\) Network](#), and the [Prevention Technology Transfer Center \(PTTC\) Network](#) facilitated a national online discussion and resource sharing opportunity for the substance use (SU) prevention, treatment, and recovery workforces focused on emerging issues around social determinants of health (SDH) and COVID-19. This was in response to the differential impact of the pandemic in underserved communities and/or communities of color. The goal of the series is to engage diverse community voices and create space and structure to hear from these communities about the following issues:

- How has COVID-19 further highlighted racial and ethnic disparities?
- What is the impact on the communities and those with substance use disorder?
- What is the impact on the SU prevention, treatment and recovery workforces?
- What strategies and resources are needed to mitigate these impacts?

Through an initial listening session to frame the ongoing and emerging issues and subsequent strategic discussions to engage key communities, the intent is to gather strategies and resources to identify emerging best practices that can support underserved and/or communities of color. *By no means is this to undermine the need for structural changes to address the intersecting and cumulative impacts of social determinants of health*, but rather to recognize this complex issue requires multi-level approaches and communities are developing culturally responsive strategies and resources to mitigate these impacts. After each session, we will disseminate notes, core themes, and outline any strategies and resources shared.

Timing of Series

- 1 Listening Session (Wednesday, April 22)
- 5 Strategic Discussions with specific populations:
 1. April 28: Health Disparities and the impact of COVID-19 on African American and black communities.
 2. April 30: Strategies to support the LatinX communities.
 3. May 5: American Indian/Alaska Native communities: Trauma-responsive approaches to support the communities.
 4. May 7: Asian-American Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and addressing stigma.
 5. May 12: *Wrap-up Session*: Racial equity and health disparities in the age of COVID-19: What new strategies are needed to support the SU prevention, treatment and recovery workforce serving communities of color and/or underserved communities?



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Strategic Discussion Session 2: Strategies to support the LatinX communities April 30, 2020: 2-3pm ET

Alex Barajas Muñoz, Ph.D., facilitated the strategic discussion session with four panelists: Haner Hernández, Ph.D., CPS, CADCI, LADC; Pierluigi Mancini, Ph.D., MAC; Troy Montserrat-Gonzales, MA, NCC, LPC; and Gabrielle Rodriguez. 280 people attended the online Zoom webinar and contributed through chat. The facilitator and panelists bios, session report, and link to the recording are posted on the [ATTC series page](#) and [PTTC series page](#). Four people analyzed the notes to outline themes and key issues, plus any strategies and resources that could be shared after the event. All notes shared in the report are de-identified except for when the community identity is relevant to framing issues.

Key Themes

The session engaged the four panelists in responding to three key questions.

- *How has COVID-19 further highlighted racial/ethnic disparities and what is the impact on LatinX communities, those with substance use disorder, and for the prevention, treatment and recovery workforces?*
- *What strategies and resources are needed to mitigate these impacts?*
- *What is working and/or what are people trying?*

Attendees were encouraged to participate and share comments and questions throughout using chat. The following section summarizes key issues and themes identified by panelists and attendees, outlines recommendations for mitigating these issues, as well as strategies and resources shared. At the end of the document, there are a list of remaining attendee questions that were answered by panelists post-event. A final report will further expand on these themes and share key quotes from panelists and attendees.

How COVID-19 further highlights racial/ethnic disparities and impacts LatinX communities

Panelists and attendees outlined key ways COVID-19 impacted and further highlighted disparities in LatinX communities. These include:

- **Healthcare access**
 - “Institutionalized racism is alive and well and impacts the LatinX communities in many ways” including treatment in the healthcare system.
 - Undocumented people lack access to healthcare and other resources.

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- “Many undocumented people who may have virus symptoms are afraid to seek medication attention due to the fear of law enforcement and possibility of being deported.”
- Lack of Spanish speakers and culturally responsive treatment and care in hospitals/treatment centers.
- Lack of clinics in underserved neighborhoods.
- **Access to Education/Technology**
 - “Many of the folks I’m in contact with, people don’t have internet access and don’t know how to use technology. Many Latina and Latino parents are now expected to be teachers, and many don’t have a high school diploma let alone a college degree and they’re expected to do instructions at home.” This impacts school year and graduation rates for LatinX youth, with older adolescents expected to tutor younger siblings and complete their own work.
 - Many people in the community do not have access to the internet, smartphones, computers.
 - Much of the information in different languages is through social media and that presents a problem for the spread of misinformation and lack of trusted sources. This increases stress.
- **Workforce Concerns**
 - LatinX people over-represented in essential high-risk employment such as janitorial and cleaning staff at hospitals, clerks at grocery stores, line workers at manufacturing plants:
 - “People are unemployed or underemployed as essential workers and work in places of employment that are very high risk.”
 - “Undocumented people have been deemed essential workers but are dehumanized and treated badly in many different fronts.”
 - Lack of testing in underserved areas puts workers at higher risk
 - “In Georgia...in one of the largest poultry processing plants in the country – there was no testing. A lot of people that work in the poultry factory are Hispanics. Once testing was made available 56% of those tested, tested positive, so suddenly we have a huge number of Hispanics testing positive for the virus. They put themselves and their families at risk because they didn’t have access to testing.”
- **Access to Resources (including stimulus)**
 - Undocumented people have not had access to stimulus money, people in Puerto Rico have not received stimulus money.



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- Undocumented parents with children who are citizens are not able to receive stimulus checks.
- DACA students are also not allowed to receive support and services.
- Many families that crossed the border are now not able to cross back and if the family member that is stuck on the other side of the border is the main provider, the families on this side of the border are suffering. This causes guilt and fear in families.
- People in LatinX communities are over-represented in how frequently and prevalently the community is testing positive and under-represented in available and accessible resources.
 - Under-reported statistics because generally data do not include undocumented individuals who do not feel safe to seek services and treatment.
 - “The virus doesn’t discriminate but the government does.”
- **Social/Physical Distancing Concerns**
 - Physical distancing is a privilege. Many people live 2-3 families in 2-3-bedroom places and staying 6 feet apart/physical distancing is not possible.
 - Increase in depression, isolation, anxiety, trauma from being stuck at home, often with limited resources.
 - “Those who have experienced incarceration are being re-traumatized, feeling like they are back in jail. What does it look like for those that are returning home from jail right now?”
 - Domestic and intimate partner violence in communities is reported to be increasing because people are under more stress and have fewer resources and opportunities to get help.
- **Substance Use**
 - Need to address misconceptions in communities:
 - “We don’t get COVID because we use drugs and drugs protect us from that.”
 - Stigma around not gathering and getting together; important to reinforce impact of gatherings on increasing rates of COVID-19.
 - Lack of income has driven people to methadone clinics, but many clinics are not accepting new people.



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- Both alcohol and marijuana sales are going up – people are using substances as a coping strategy.
- **Language and Cultural Barriers**
 - No network of communication for Spanish-speaking individuals
 - Lack of culturally responsive materials and materials in languages other than English:
 - “There was no information in any other language that was made available to this community. How are you supposed to take care of yourself and avoid getting infected if you’re not getting the information in way that you can understand? Issues of access, language, culture of understanding health and illness continue to bubble up when we have a crisis or major health issue.”
 - Lack of resources that speak to intersectional and multiple identities
 - Examples: Queer/LGBTQ, LatinX, Hispanic, Recovery.
 - Lack of safe spaces that are not centered on alcohol or substance use.

Recommended Strategies for LatinX Communities and SUD Workforce

Panelists and attendees identified strategies to address the disparities in LatinX communities. These include:

- **Build trust**
 - Provide stimulus directly to people who don’t have documentation.
 - *Example:* Los Angeles, CA created an "Angelino Card" for getting funds to households regardless of documentation
 - Identify what resources communities need and create safe culturally responsive spaces virtually as well as physically.
 - *Example:* [Respuesta Comunitaria Latinx al Covid-19 en WA](#)
 - Recovery is very white so creating culturally responsive alternatives to mainstream approaches and providing Spanish/bi-lingual/multi-lingual virtual recovery groups will support making recovery culturally responsive and relevant to the needs of diverse communities.
 - *Example:* Spanish language Virtual All Recovery Meeting every Tuesday at 12 noon EST. Zoom meeting number 695 949 293 or join by phone at 646-876-9923
 - Develop trusted partnerships by providing needed services in community: food, housing, clothes, water.



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- “Families, Not-For-Profit, and faith-based organizations are doing phenomenal work in feeding people, housing people, and our community trusts them more than the trust those of us who work in huge organizations with government funding.”
- “Syringe service programs and low threshold harm reduction programs are often good resources...These programs often provide care coordination, clothing, food, hygiene supplies, safer use information, OD prevention education, and deeper connections to care”
 - *Example:* [Peer Network of New York; North American Syringe Exchange Network \(NASEN\)](#)
- Learn from and collaborate with other communities of color (LatinX, Black and African American, American Indian, etc) and engage to better understand strategies/approaches to public health issues. Jointly advocate for change.
 - “I think a lot of opportunities exist to join the Latino/a/x and African American communities. As minority communities of color...I think just building trust within each community and finding someone who has that credibility to help you with projects.”
- **Advocate**
 - For Spanish and Portuguese language resources.
 - For resources for those who are undocumented.
 - *Example:* [Recursos y Información Para la Comunidad Indocumentada en el Condado de Yakima y Ellensburg Durante COVID-19](#)
 - For inclusive public health policies.
 - For those who are incarcerated
 - For workers deemed essential who lack PPE and other safety equipment; meat packing industry, farms, healthcare organizations, transport
 - For harm reduction
 - For culturally responsive strategies; alternatives to mainstream approaches
 - For planning beyond this pandemic to have a structure and resources in place
 - “When another crisis comes have solutions ready and a workforce path so people don’t have to wait 6 weeks or longer to get help and don’t have to die because there was no one there to speak their language and they didn’t receive the information they needed.”
 - For data that highlights racial and ethnic disparities
 - *Example:* [The COVID Racial Data Tracker](#)
 - For data around detention centers that outlines ICE detainees (asylum seekers, family separation) and COVID-19 data.
 - For data from prisons, especially high population prisons.

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- For structural changes to address issues of institutionalized racism and health disparities.
- **Language and Cultural Barriers**
 - Provide information in Spanish through multiple mediums.
 - Create common language and terminology for emerging words (National Hispanic and Latino ATTC/PTTC are identifying Spanish terms for sanitizing, face coverings, and social isolation).
 - Expand Spanish-speaking/bi-lingual workforce to increase available clinicians and prevention staff. Telephonic translation is not a replacement for in-person translation/communication with provider.
 - Expand peer recovery workforce to include peers from the community and peers who speak Spanish.
 - “Peers are some of the most valuable individuals that can help reach people in need. They are underutilized because we don’t have the tools to train them.”
 - Mirror language of clients/patients rather than using medical or “field” terminology; meet people where they are, not where we are.
 - Increase awareness of LGBTQ language in LatinX communities.
 - Advocate for bilingual materials from vendors.
 - Example: [RICARES Communities for Addiction Recovery Efforts](#)
- **Create safe spaces for healing and practice self-care**
 - Be aware of “compassion fatigue” and “thrivers guilt” and practice self-care; how can we support our workforce and sustain ourselves during this pandemic?
 - Offer sober, inclusive, and healing spaces in the community.
 - Create safe spaces for LGBTQ people in recovery (example of grassroots nonprofit in Denver, [La Conexión](#))
 - Heal intergenerational trauma.
 - Practice mindfulness.
 - “...those of us that have significant trauma history have underdeveloped brains in certain regions that cause us to act in certain ways when were under stress. Impulsivity, increased risk in use, anxiety, feeling overwhelmed...mindfulness and mindful awareness systems have been shown to rebuild those areas of the brain that were underdeveloped when we’re under chronic stress and pressure.”
 - Engage in traditional/healing practices.



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- “Practices that may be considered traditional or indigenous to us are usually medicinal and healing and health promoting. Anything you might do or may have access to that is specific to your culture or community like craft or music or art or singing, if it’s something you’re drawn to it has health promotion properties.”

Resources Shared

The following tables include resources shared by attendees and panelists:

SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline

Toll Free: 1-800-985-5990 (español e inglés)

Text in Spanish: Envíe “Háblanos” al 66746

Text in English: “TalkWithUs” al 66746

(TTY): 1-800-846-8517

English: <http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

Spanish: <http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disasterdistress-helpline/espanol>



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Spanish Materials Available Related to COVID-19: CDC

<i>Focus</i>	<i>Title and Link</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Kit de herramientas para los medios sociales	CDC Social Media Toolkit: Includes messages and graphics for responding to COVID-19. (In English)
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Lo que necesita saber sobre la enfermedad del coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)	CDC Factsheet: What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others. (In English)
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Ponga De Su Parte Para Desacelerar La Propagación Del Coronavirus	CDC 30 Days to Slow the Spread Postcard: Coronavirus Guidelines. (In English)
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Detenga La Propagación De Los Microbios	CDC Poster: Stop the Spread of Germs. (In English)

Spanish Materials Available Related to COVID-19: SAMHSA - National Hispanic and Latino TTC's

<i>Focus</i>	<i>Title and Link</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	National Hispanic and Latino ATTC	National Hispanic and Latino Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network. Provides webinars, podcasts, fact sheets, and other resources relevant to the LatinX community in English, Spanish, Portuguese.

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<i>LatinX Communities</i>	National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC	National Hispanic and Latino Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network. Provides webinars, podcasts, fact sheets, and other resources relevant to the LatinX community in English, Spanish, Portuguese.
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	National Hispanic and Latino Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network	National Hispanic and Latino Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network. Provides webinars, podcasts, fact sheets, and other resources relevant to the LatinX community in English, Spanish, Portuguese.
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	ATTC Network List of Products in Spanish Productos del ATTC en Español	Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network list of products in Spanish.
<i>LatinX</i>	PTTC Factsheets: Prevention Tools for Latino Families: English , Spanish , Portuguese	PTTC fact sheets on Prevention Tools for Latino Families During COVID-19.
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Fact Sheet: Alcohol Use and Abuse During COVID-19	Tri-lingual products (English Spanish and Portuguese) from the SAMHSA-funded National Hispanic and Latino ATTC focused on alcohol use and alternative coping tools for stress and anxiety
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	COVID 19 and the Impact on Intimate Partner Violence for Latinos	Webinar provided by the SAMHSA-funded National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC focused on COVID 19 and the impact on intimate partner violence for Latinos

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Spanish Materials Available Related to COVID-19: Psychoeducation Resources

<i>Focus</i>	<i>Title and Link</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Psicoeducación para las organizaciones, agencias o clínicas	Coronavirus Support Network: Includes factsheets, FAQs, Debunking Myths, Resources for Clinics and Community Service Providers
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Preguntas Frecuentes Sobre el Coronavirus (COVID-19) para Clínicas Comunitarias y su Personal	Coronavirus Support Network: FAQ's for Community Clinics and Their Staff (In English)
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Preguntas frecuentes sobre el coronavirus (COVID-19)	Coronavirus Support Network: Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 (In English)
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Maneja la ansiedad y el estrés	CDC: Managing Stress and Anxiety related to COVID-19 (In English)

Psychoeducation for Children

<i>Focus</i>	<i>Title and Link</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	“The Story of the Oyster and the Butterfly: Coronavirus and Me” Available in English and Spanish Reading (in English) of Book on YouTube	A free children's book by Ana M Gomez (a psychotherapist). Includes handout and worksheet with activities.
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	“Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus” Available in English, Spanish , and Chinese	A comic based on a radio story by NPR educator Cory Turner

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<i>LatinX Communities</i>	How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus Available in English and Spanish	PBS article outlining various ways to address coronavirus with children
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	No te veo y sé que estás ahí, coronavirus, y también sé que te vas a ir Available in Spanish	A free PDF story describing coronavirus in Spanish created by Cristina Cortés and illustrated by children.
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Anxiety and Depression Red Flags while Social Distancing Available in English	An article by Children's Mercy describing anxiety and depression red flags you may want to look out for during social distancing requirements

Related Spanish Materials (not COVID-19 Specific): SAMHSA

<i>Focus</i>	<i>Title and Link</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit (Spanish): Prevención de la Sobredosis de Opioides Manual de Instrucción	Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	The Facts About Buprenorphine for Treatment of Opioid Addiction (Spanish version) Información sobre la Buprenorfina	The Facts About Buprenorphine for Treatment of Opioid Addiction
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Tips for Disaster Responders: Identifying Substance Misuse In The Responder Community (Spanish Version): Consejos para socorristas: Cómo identificar el abuso de sustancias en la comunidad de socorristas	Tips for Disaster Responders: Identifying Substance Misuse In The Responder Community
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	The Next Step Toward a Better Life - Based on TIP 45 (Spanish Version): El próximo paso hacia una vida mejor	The Next Step Toward a Better Life - Based on TIP 45

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<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Helping Yourself Heal: A Woman's Guide to Coping With the Effects of Childhood Abuse Issues (Spanish Version): Ayudando a Sanarse a Si Misma: Una Guia para Mujeres en Recuperacion para Ayudarles a Enfrentar los Problemas Asociados con el Abuso Infantil	Helping Yourself Heal: A Woman's Guide to Coping With the Effects of Childhood Abuse Issues
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Follow Directions: How to Use Methadone Safely (Spanish Version): Siga direcciones: Cómo utilizar la metadona de una manera segura	Follow Directions: How to Use Methadone Safely
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Waiver management in Spanish	Find information about the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA 2000) that allows physicians to use buprenorphine in the treatment of opiate dependence.
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Recovery month PSAs and promotional/printable materials in Spanish	Recovery month PSAs and promotional/printable materials in Spanish
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	Disaster Behavioral Health resources in Spanish	Disaster Behavioral Health resources in Spanish

Other Resources

<i>Focus</i>	<i>Title and Link</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>LatinX Communities</i>	UnidosUS	Nonpartisan web page for LatinX communities.

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<p><i>LatinX Communities</i></p>	<p>Journeyworks.com</p>	<p>Health Promotion and Health Education publishing company with brochures and promotional materials related to health. The company has brochures in English and Spanish.</p>
<p><i>LatinX Communities</i></p>	<p>Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Spanish Resources</p>	<p>Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has some resources and information in Spanish.</p>

Questions Raised by Attendees and Any Follow-up Responses from Panelists Post-Event

1. Who are some agencies/organizations that are leading in Peer services focused for people of color? (Including Latinx populations?)

- Anna Gray, Executive Director, Prosumer www.theprosumers.org
AHGray59@gmail.com
- Ruth P. Gonzales, ALWF Peer support leader from California. Crestwood Behavioral Health ruthgonzales@cbhi.net;
www.crestwoodbehavioralhealth.com

2. Are there concerns over detained families?

- Yes, there is much concern over detained families. Recent reports highlight that children are being returned home; detention facilities are overcrowded and it's difficult to find out the conditions or safety measures being taken.
- Lengthy detention of migrant children may create lasting trauma, and many have already experienced layers of trauma by the time they arrive here.
- A recently published study in Social Science & Medicine found that 32% of children at a detention center showed signs of emotional problems.
- 17% of the children showed significant symptoms of PTSD.

3. Are 12 step/recovery meetings now virtual everywhere? How do people without smart phones access?



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- There are 12 step/recovery meetings being held virtually everywhere almost at every hour of the day. There are national and international Zoom recovery meetings in different languages.
 - Most of the meetings have a telephone option, some are connecting people to free or reduced-price service options for those that don't have a cell phone.
- 4. Increase in MH challenges and substance use; are we also discussing immigrant populations?**
- Immigrant populations are also experiencing MH and substance use disorder challenges during this period.
- 5. How do you get current drug and alcohol consumption information?**
- 'Current' is a difficult word. Published data from SAMHSA and other federal agencies is usually from one or two years ago since they come from very large national surveys.
 - There are local surveys done by coalitions and other community organizations that may be timelier.
 - Current alcohol sales are available from your state Department of Revenue office.
- 6. As many harm reduction programs do not require participants to be documented or have any ID, how can those programs continue to provide connections, care, and treatment to people who are undocumented and use drugs?**
- The challenge seems to be with the treatment end of the equation. Many states implemented guidelines that require individuals to show proof of legal status in order to access public services.
 - The recent discussion around 'public charge' also scared off many individuals who are documented from seeking treatment since they fear they may be denied further benefits or opportunities to attain citizenship if they utilized public benefits.
 - Partnering with community organizations has helped keep individuals informed but the challenge seems to be in the securing treatment and recovery services.
- 7. How do we build trust? What are some culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies for those in the behavioral health workforce to help**



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LatinX communities struggling with substance use and mental health issues?

- Focus on Family
 - Particularly parent-child relationship
 - Communication and monitoring
- Prevention Model
- Ecological Model
 - Individual, family, peer, school and neighborhood networks all contribute to the health and well-being of Latino youth
 - 2 of 3 partner directly with schools
- Explicit Focus on Culture
- Go out of your agency and get involved with and become familiar with their community, attend their social events (when able), do outreach to let people in the community know about your services. Identify influential/respected people with leadership roles in their community and introduce yourself and your agency to them (religious leaders, educators, etc.) and collaborate with them. Become more familiar with the community, their challenges and strengths, and be authentic in your interactions with them. Be reflective and open to identify and own any biases, stereotypes, stigma, etc. you may hold, apologize if you act on any of those biases and move on, by continuing to be genuine it will show that you care and people will be more likely to trust you. Work with your agencies to address issues related to making LatinX people feel welcome and that they belong in your agency and you are there to serve them (this includes representation of their population in your agency's staff, marketing materials, magazines and reading materials the waiting room, decorations, etc.). Everyone from front desk staff to clinical, administrative and managerial staff can make an impact on ability to develop trust in the community, so do what you can to speak up and open discussions on issues related to developing trust within your agency if you want to increase the impact of your ability to improve trust.

8. How or what opportunities do they believe exist in partnering, or bridging the relationship between African American and LatinX communities to jointly advocate for change as they share many of the same impacts of implicit bias and structural racism? Particularly regarding accessing systems of help.

- Partnering can yield great opportunities if all parties involved are working toward a common goal. I personally have had success with African American and Asian communities in advocating for cultural and linguistically appropriate services. I

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believe what makes a partnership work is having a well thought out action plan with specific outcomes, responsible parties and target dates.

- Become familiar with African American communities within your region and organizations dedicated to serve those African American populations and reach out to those organizations to offer your support and desire to collaborate, identify opportunities to advocate and collaborate in mutual issues and common goals.

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