Building Partnerships: Conversations with Native Americans about Mental Health Needs and Community Strengths

Adoption Competent Mental Health · https://bridges4mentalhealth.org/hub/adoption-competence/building-partnerships-conversations-with-native-americans-about-mental-health-needs-and-community-strengths/

Summary: To build a foundation for ongoing outreach and engagement with historically underserved communities, the UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities reached out to develop relationships with Native American youths and adults, community leaders, and community-based organizations. The participants shared their concerns about loss of cultural roots, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, and suicide. For many participants, the disconnection with cultural values and tradition was seen as a key factor contributing to the fragmentation of their communities.

Western mental health focuses on the individual as the locus of illness, while for Native Americans an individual's mental illness is just a symptom of a whole community that is suffering. What is needed is a holistic approach which includes the healing of the community as a whole. The remainder of the study looks at strategies for making that happen including defining the community's strengths and assets, prevention, health services, education and cultural events.

Application: The UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities takes a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to address inequities in health access and quality of care. Their focus is on reaching out to unserved and underserved populations in California and beyond.

This study can help inform parents, medical researchers, clinicians, social workers, community providers, community-based organizations, and community members who are interested in working together to design and implement community engaged research and outreach and engagement activities.

Read More