

# Health Equity Initiatives (HEI)

The Health Equity Initiatives (HEIs) provide one path for ODE to link community needs to County & community-based resources. Funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) since 2007, the HEIs have built on the work done by Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS) Cultural Competence Committee (currently the Diversity & Equity Council). The HEIs work to decrease stigma, educate & empower community members, support wellness & recovery, & build culturally responsive services. Over the years, the HEIs have hosted events & trainings, implemented culturally-responsible policy interventions, & created safe ways for our marginalized communities to engage with BHRS.

Participation is **welcome** to **all** who are passionate about embracing diversity & advancing equity. HEI meetings are held monthly. Detailed information can be found at [www.smchealth.org/HEI](http://www.smchealth.org/HEI)

## Health Equity Initiatives:

- ***African American Community Initiative (AACI)***
- ***Chinese Health Initiative (CHI)***
- ***Filipino Mental Health Initiative (FMHI)***
- ***Latino Collaborative (LC)***
- ***Native & Indigenous People's Initiative (NIPI)***
- ***Pacific Islander Initiative***
- ***PRIDE Initiative***
- ***Spirituality Initiative***

**The Diversity & Equity Council (DEC)** is a guiding body with a passionate vision of embracing diversity, eliminating health disparities & embracing equity. They aim to coordinate, inform, support, advocate & consult with BHRS & our communities.

## ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY

**Culture** can be defined in many ways. At BHRS, we believe culture goes beyond racial, ethnic, linguistic & gender characteristics, & includes a system of values, attitudes & beliefs that shape & influence perceptions & behaviors, individually or collectively.

**Cultural Humility** is a philosophy that goes beyond striving for cultural competence. It is engaging in a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation & self-inventory, establishing a respectful relationship with others through an attitude of openness & curiosity.

**Multicultural Organizational Development (MCOB)** is our BHRS framework to advance equity, diversity, belonging & principles of cultural humility & inclusion in the workplace.

**Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)** aim to improve healthcare quality & advance health equity by establishing a framework for organizations to serve the nation's increasingly diverse communities.

**ODE's Theory of Change 1: *Workforce Development & Transformation*** – Expand on Workforce Development & Transformation that prioritizes cultural humility, inclusion & equitable quality care. 2: ***Community Empowerment*** – Create opportunities for individuals with lived experience, families & community members to engage in decisions that impact their lives. 3: ***Strategic Partnerships*** – Strengthen & create new meaningful partnerships in the community to maximize reach & impact on equitable behavioral health outcomes. 4: ***Policy & Systems Change*** – Influence organizational level policies & institutional changes across San Mateo County agencies to positively impact behavioral health outcomes.



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES (BHRS) OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (ODE)



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
& RECOVERY SERVICES**

## WHO WE ARE

As part of the San Mateo County Health System's Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS), the Office of Diversity & Equity (ODE) values & amplifies the voices of underserved, unserved, & inappropriately served community members in conversations about wellness, recovery, & resilience. We strive to make behavioral health services culturally appropriate & mental wellness accessible for all San Mateo County residents. Additionally, ODE demonstrates a commitment to understanding & addressing how health disparities, health inequities, & stigma impact an individual's ability to access & receive behavioral health & recovery services. ODE works to promote cultural competence & cultural humility within the County's behavioral health service system.

Our office is proud to provide oversight & guidance to our Health Equity Initiatives, Diversity & Equity Council, Health Ambassador Program, Prevention & Early Intervention Courses (Parent Project®, Mental Health First Aid, Story Telling Series, Suicide Prevention efforts (Suicide Prevention Committee, Trainings, SMC Road Map development), BHRS Workforce Education & Training Department, Mental Health Services Act (planning, delivery & management), Multicultural Organizational Development Plan, Cultural & Linguistically Appropriate Services, Stigma Reduction work, BHRS Psychology Training Program, & Cultural Stipend Program.



## WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

**Culturally-Relevant Provider Trainings** - provides in-depth information, skills training & resources to enhance multicultural knowledge & proficiency when working with diverse clients.

**Parent Project®** - an interactive 12-week course that teaches parenting skills to improve a parent's/caregiver's relationship with their child(ren). The class focuses on effective identification, prevention & intervention strategies.

**Health Ambassador Program (HAP)** - provides additional learning opportunities for individuals to enhance their knowledge & skills related to supporting others who need emotional support. Participants learn about WRAP, ASIST, MHFA & other effective interventions in assisting others.

**Mental Health First Aid -Adult** - an interactive, 8-12 hour public education program designed to help non-mental health professionals & community members identify, understand & respond to someone who is experiencing an emotional crisis & learn how to connect them to appropriate supports.

**Youth Mental Health First Aid** - an 8-hour public education program that introduces participants to risk factors & warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, the importance of early intervention, & how to help in a crisis or during a mental health challenge.

**Teen Mental Health First Aid** - teaches teens in grades 10-12, or ages 15-18, how to identify, understand & respond to signs of mental health & substance use challenges among their friends & peers. High schools, organizations partnering with a high school & youth-serving organizations are eligible to teach Teen Mental Health First Aid.



## ELEVATE YOUR VOICE

**Storytelling Series** - historically used as a way of communicating, stories can transmit wisdom, open hearts, break down barriers, & be healing for both the listener & the storyteller. Our "Storytelling Series" launched in 2011, using personal stories of individuals who have lived experience, to draw attention to behavioral health & community issues including, racism, discrimination & stigma. The goal is to evoke social change by eliminating stigma & reduce health disparities around mental illness & substance use.

**Digital Stories** - a short digital film is created to provide individuals with an opportunity to share their own personal stories. Digital stories can include any combination of video, sound, music, animation, photographs, & other images in order to capture the individual's lived experience.

**Photovoice** - a community-based research methodology that allows individuals to highlight & express important social issues that impact their everyday lives using self-selected photographs & narratives.

**Graphic Novel** - created & developed by the BHRS Office of Diversity & Equity, the first-ever mental health graphic novel program assists participants in engaging in workshops that help them create & share their stories in different forms.

Learn more:



<https://www.smchealth.org/office-diversity-equity>

Contact us: [ODE@smcgov.org](mailto:ODE@smcgov.org).