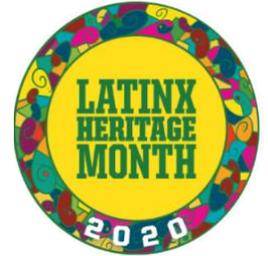




Behavioral Health Services – Monthly Communications Report

Our Latinx Clients and their Stories during the COVID-19 Crisis

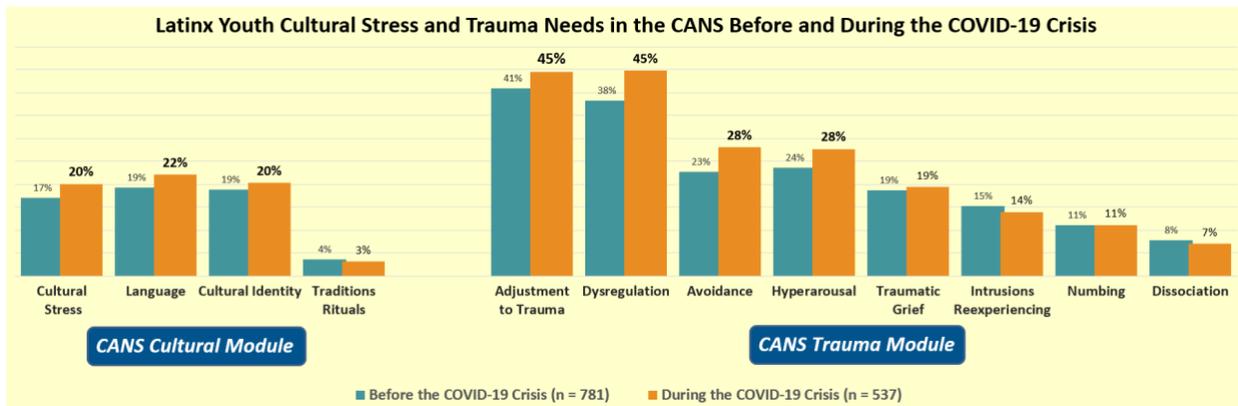
As we celebrate [National Latinx Heritage Month](#) (Sep 15 to Oct 15), we also need to reflect on the stories that highlight not only the [disproportionate impact](#) of this pandemic on the Latinx community, but also the [rising mental health needs](#) among our Latinx clients, which are most likely precipitated and perpetuated by this COVID-19 pandemic.



In clinical interviews with Latinx youth and their families, here are a few client stories that underscore difficulties and challenges at this time:

- *Client’s mood in the home and academic engagement has suffered since March 2020 because of distance learning challenges, witnessing the economic impact the pandemic has had on the client’s parents (i.e. unemployment of parents, father suspected to be homeless) and the change of service delivery through telehealth.*
- *Client acknowledges the difficulties of the trauma that they have experienced including witnessing domestic violence and the associated life changes such as moving to the United States, managing social interactions and school during COVID-19, and having to live in transitional housing.*
- *Client’s family previous to COVID had been attending church every Sunday and had gotten much support from this and this was also a family bonding ritual uniting the extended family (grandparents) and her nuclear family, however since COVID they have not been able to attend together.*

Our Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment show that Latinx youth who were admitted for behavioral health services during the COVID-19 crisis (i.e., March to September 2020) have a slightly higher likelihood of experiencing **cultural stress** as well as some **traumatic stress** reactions, when compared to Latinx youth who were admitted in the same time period last year (see data stories below).



Note: % = Proportion of Latinx youth who need intervention or intensive action. *n* = new clients for that period.

When working with Latinx clients and their families, it is essential to strike a good balance between cultural humility and cultural competence. The latter calls for adapting our practices using a trauma-informed and culturally-responsive lens. Here are a few resources where to start: [Working with Latinx Children/Youth and Families](#) - CYF TIPS (Tools to Improve Practice); [Culture and Trauma brief](#) (NCTSN, 2007); and [Healing Ethno-Racial Trauma in Latinx Immigrant Communities](#) (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2019). Feel free to reach out to Ritchie Rubio of CYF (ritchie.rubio@sfdph.org) for questions or consult.



SF Latinx Community Organization and Resiliency

BHS Mission Family Center (MFC) has remained staffed with minimal coverage during Shelter in Place and sees clients in the Transition Age Youth (TAY) Clinic as needed when a client family is in crises or has a difficult time engaging in telehealth. We collaborated with Habit for Humanity to receive donations of two large playhouses for children once Shelter in Place is lifted. We were also the recipients of 100 handmade children's masks - 50 from a donor through Dr. David Smith of BHS Pharmacy and 50 from a donor at the Chinatown Children's Development Center.



Additionally, MFC staff participated in the BHS booth at the Carnaval "[Salud es Poder](#)" Wellness Pavilion on September 5, 2020, in celebration of Latinx Heritage Month, dedicated to public health education for the Latino community which represents over half of all COVID + individuals in SF. We are forever inspired by the organization and resiliency of our Latino community in these challenging times.

And last but not least, a great big shout out to MFC staff who are deployed either full or part-time: Maureen Gammon, Health Worker at the COVID Command Wellness Center; Augusto Guerra, Sr. Clerk, and Roxana Razo, Behavioral Health Clinician, at the Isolation and Quarantine (I&Q) Hotels; Marta Bernal and Leslie Nieves, Behavioral Health Clinician COVID Contact Tracers; and Claudia Diaz, Sr. Behavioral Health Clinician at SFUSD COVID Resource Hotline. You are all amazing!

For more information, please contact MFC Director Robán San Miguel at: roban.sanmiguel@sfdph.org

Photographed: Leslie Nieves, Robán San Miguel and Jaime Arcila (top right) and Maria Isabel Sanchez, HSA COVID Command Equity Liaison, Robán San Miguel, MFC Director, and Anthony Sarabia, BHS Vocational Programs Specialist (bottom left).



Salud es Poder: Health is Our Wealth

San Francisco's 42nd Annual Carnival Latino Covid-19 Healing and Recovery Street Fair



Over the Labor Day weekend, [DJ Julicio](#) played his Latinx dance hits and members of several dance troupes performed their choreographed moves, while members of the health community, including Behavioral Health Services, handed out health information, adding to the festive ambiance that is always Carnival in the Mission.

This year's slogan, "Salud es Poder: Health is our Wealth," reminded us of our purpose to assist families in the Mission District who have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The health fair section of the street fair provided free COVID-19 testing, groceries, employment information, acupressure, and a myriad of other services from a variety of providers. Our BHS booth handed out tips for dealing with COVID-19 stress and leaflets on how to help our children deal with these unprecedented times.

Tabling at this year's event were BHS employees Roban San Miguel, Maria "Chavela" Sanchez, Julio Siliezar, Michaelo Rosso and Anthony Sarabia. Despite the record-breaking heat wave and poor air quality, the public came out to enjoy the festive atmosphere. Face Masks and social distancing reminded us of San Francisco's commitment to responsible social interactions with their neighbors, making this year's event a great success!

For more information on BHS Vocational Services please contact Travis Hill at 415-255-3607 or william.hill@sfdph.org.



Transition Age Youth (TAY) System of Care (SOC) Program Spotlight: Horizons Unlimited SF

For 35+ years, Horizons has offered a variety of culturally-rooted and linguistically specific services, events, and campaigns including employment, gender specific, prevention and treatment programs in English and Spanish for youth and families, serving over 5,000 unduplicated clients each year.

An important TAY SOC partner, Horizon's **EMIC** Behavioral Health Services program brings lo-threshold, culturally and developmentally responsive services to youth and TAY ages 12-25. Services include outreach, screening and assessment, wellness promotion, therapeutic services, case management and service linkage.



During the COVID-19 crisis, staff shifted case management virtually, maintaining clients' active engagement. Clients shared the virtual space allowed them to be more open and honest on an array of topics while easing their anxiety when speaking with staff. In addition, Horizon staff member, Gabi Espinoza, created a Newcomer Wellness Group catered to Brazilians in response to a rise in youth from Brazil. The group was successful in meeting virtually and was facilitated in Portuguese! TAY also reported increase in hopefulness due to Horizons' support mitigating any distress in lack of resources, including access to food banks, economic relief, internet access, and filling out forms for undocumented youth.

Recently, one of Horizon's youth tested positive for COVID-19 and contracted it to their own family. Everyone stayed home to get better and currently all are physically healthy luckily. With no extended family nearby, Horizons' helped obtain economic assistance since for them and provided Safeway gift cards so the family had groceries delivered to their doorstep. The family was so thankful and appreciative! This situation has helped promote the importance of telehealth and the need for social distancing.

Horizons truly builds trust and rapport in providing valuable services and in creating meaningful therapeutic relationships with TAY and their families. Recently, they welcomed new Clinical Director Karla Solis to their team! To learn more or get involved, visit their [website](#) or contact clucero@horizons-sf.org



New BHS Bed Availability & Optimization Team Gets Started

Yoonjung Kim, LCSW, and David Pating, M.D. are co-leading, the BHS Bed Availability & Optimization (BAO) Project, with data analysis assistance from Emeterio Garcia, under SF Mental Health Reform. This project is specifically focused on improving client access, patient flow, service quality, and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the BHS system of mental health (MH) and substance-use disorder (SUD) residential treatment beds. The team is working closely with BHS behavioral health residential treatment providers and stakeholders on new policies and procedures to optimize utilization of the beds.



The BAO Project was initiated in 2019, under prior project manager, Lauren Brunner, and included the launch of our public website, www.FindTreatmentSF.org, which now displays real-time availability and occupancy of BHS SUD residential treatment beds. The purpose of the website is to monitor bed utilization, improve bed management and access, and promote transparency and accountability via sharing of information with the public. The new team, Yoonjung, David, and Eme, updated data collection methods for the SUD bed availability website, incorporated the impact of COVID-19, and are now working to launch an equivalent MH residential treatment bed availability website.

BHS MH and SUD residential treatment beds constitute a significant and critical investment for clients experiencing the highest acuity and most severe impairments from serious mental illness and substance-use disorders, who are in need of prolonged periods of stay in 24/7 recovery and rehabilitative settings. BHS currently has almost 200 MH residential treatment beds and over 500 SUD residential treatment beds available for clients in SF including medical and social detoxification, MH crisis, 90-day transitional, MH one-year long-term, SUD residential step-down, and behavioral health perinatal beds.

In addition to refining the data collection and monitoring of the daily bed census, capacity, and utilization across BHS MH and SUD residential treatment facilities, the BAO Project team is determined to pursue other system reform implementation initiatives to further improve BHS residential treatment services.

Kudos to Yoonjung, David and Eme, for quickly tackling this important challenge, and working collaboratively with BHS providers towards improving our BHS residential treatment services! For more information on the BAO Project, please contact yoonyung.kim@sfdph.org or david.pating@sfdph.org.



Pilot for CBOs to get FREE Access to Interpretation Services Continues through FY 20-21

The BHS Office of Equity, Social Justice, and Multicultural Education (OESM) is writing to announce that Language Resources for CBO Programs Pilot is continuing through the duration of FY 20-21. Last year, after receiving feedback via our Cultural Competence Questionnaire and CBO representatives on the BHS Cultural Competence Task Force, OESM learned that the ability to fund language resources for clients was a big obstacle for contracted providers to better reach and retain clients. With this in mind, OESM made it a goal to support our CBOs by providing them with **free** access to our interpretation vendors for in-person interpretation. For this pilot program, all that was needed was the completion of a simple request form, to be submitted to OESM, who would work with our vendors to ensure that an interpreter was assigned to the appointment or event.



Through FY 19-20, the pilot was quite successful, with approximately 30 requests being processed. The vast majority of requests came from just a handful of agencies, and Chinese was the most commonly requested language.

For this current fiscal year, we hope to get increased usage of the pilot, with more contracted agencies participating and an even more diverse array of languages requested. Since most appointments or meetings are being held over WebEx, Zoom, and traditional conference calls, assigned interpreters are joining those until in-person sessions are resumed.

Please spread the word so that the value of this opportunity can be maximized!

For questions on the pilot or if you need a copy of the request form, please email Michael Rojas at michael.rojas@sfdph.org.



Expanded Language Services and Voting Access for BHS Clients



The SF [Community Justice Center](#) (CJC) has seen a large influx of monolingual Spanish speakers which as necessitated out of the box thinking on how to best engage and serve this underserved population during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Case Managers have been working with Spanish speaking staff as well as the Language Line in order to best serve and address the unique needs of this population.

CJC staff have identified various community resources which are available during the pandemic, including the [Mission Hiring Hall](#) which has been running the “Latino Task Force” weekly on Wednesdays and Thursdays to include free job counselling for Spanish speaking community members, free food boxes and free COVID-19 testing. We have also been working with [City College of SF English Language as a Second Language Department](#) to help clients connect to courses for the Fall 2020 semester, which are now all online using Zoom.

A huge shout out to Sara Biel and the [RAMS Peer Division of Peer Based Services](#) for their fantastic work getting voter registration, information, and ballot boxes in the COVID Shelter In Place hotels. Many of our clients have been excluded from having their voices heard in local and national elections and we are thrilled for the opportunity to help empower them to participate in our democratic process. We appreciate all the work to support our clients and are excited to include them this November.



See: [Voting Rights for Persons with a Criminal History](#)

For more information on CJC please contact Forensic and Justice Involved Behavioral Health Services Director, Angelica Almeida at angelica.almeida@sfdph.org.



New COVID and Racism Pandemic Practice Improvement Tools



San Francisco Health Network
Community Behavioral Health Services
Children, Youth, and Families System of Care

What is the CYF TIPS website?

The CYF Tools to Improve Practice (TIPs) website was designed to serve as an online hub of resources that providers can use to strengthen and supplement their clinical intervention work with children, youth, and families.



Why the need for this website?

Our story started in the Winter of 2018, at a CYF Providers' Meeting. While collectively reflecting on our data stories from outcomes of our children and youth clients, we acknowledged the impact of ongoing trauma, racism, and other cultural and systemic factors on the well-being of our child and youth clients. Aside from ongoing trainings and groups, we highlighted the potential usefulness of an online resources hub, that any provider can access, for tools that can support and reinforce their practice. We started with internal wiki pages and shared folders of resources, disseminated through time, but later realized how cumbersome it can be to navigate these folders.

The need for a user-friendly website became more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, especially as most of our providers shifted their practice to telebehavioral health. In response, I put together this temporary website. The BHS website is currently undergoing a major redesign. Once this is completed, these CYF TIPS will be migrated to a dedicated CYF page in the BHS website.

CYF-SOC TIPS website flyer. Created on 9.15.2020. For consult/questions: Ritchie Rubio (ritchie.rubio@sfdph.org)

How do I access this website?

The link to the website is as follows:

<https://sites.google.com/view/cyftips/>

This website will continue to be in development in the next months. As a start, I have prioritized including currently relevant resources:

COVID-19 Pandemic Tools

Telebehavioral Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual adaptations of some evidence-based practices Suicide prevention and intervention via telehealth Useful websites for telehealth training and resources 	Practice Tips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice recommendations Resource guides Tip sheets 	Workbooks and Guides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBT-informed workbooks and worksheets to help with anxiety Play therapy techniques Emotion regulation worksheets Online/in-place activities for families Journaling prompts 	Therapeutic Stories

and

Racism Pandemic Tools

Race Conversations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tip sheets and toolkits on how to start race conversations with children and youth Bibliotherapy recommendations (e.g. Black Lives Matter reading room) 	Racial Trauma Healing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice recommendations on helping clients heal or cope with racial trauma Resources for healing 	Anti-Racism Toolkits

Next steps will be to add resources on: (1) trauma-informed tools; (2) evidence-based tools informed by the F.I.R.S.T. model (Weisz & Bearman, 2020); and (3) tools to strengthen cultural humility and competence.



Highlights from National Suicide Prevention Week in September

National Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month & Week, World Suicide Prevention Day, as well as National Recovery Month all took place in the month of September. In honor of World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th, the Mental Health Services (MHSA) Team and Behavioral Health Services partnered with San Francisco City Hall to have the civic landmark illuminated in purple and teal, the colors which symbolize suicide awareness and prevention.



During Suicide Prevention Week, MHSA also shared with providers and partners daily resources from Each Mind Matters (EMM) which included webinars, virtual events, and activities that reflected this year's theme of "Hope, Resilience and Recovery." EMM also encouraged a special focus on the intersection between suicide prevention, alcohol and drug use in their events and activities given that research has shown there's a strong co-morbidity and overlap among risk and protective factors for substance use and suicide.

We encourage everyone to remember that we're in this together. Let's continue to help ourselves, clients, and loved ones by staying connected, reaching out, knowing the suicide warning signs, asking for help, and offering help when we can.

EMM is California's Mental Health Movement which consists of many organizations and individuals that work to advance mental health and to reduce stigma and discrimination around mental health. EMM is implemented by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) and is funded through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

For resources and more information, please visit [Each Mind Matters](#) and [Suicide is Preventable](#). For additional questions, please contact MHSA@sfdph.org.



New BHS Webinar Recording Available Online

Aspire to Re-Imagine Safety and Equity (ARISE): Interpersonal and Structural Violence Prevention and Intervention in COVID-19

Presented by Leigh Kimberg, MD | Recorded 9/23/20 | [Vimeo Link](#)



Dr. Leigh Kimberg will discuss how interpersonal violence (IPV) is rooted in oppression and structural violence and how violence is prevented through safe, nurturing and equity-promoting relationships and policies. She will review the ways people using violence wield power and control in relationships, the impacts of interpersonal violence on health, and ways to provide prevention and intervention resources to the patients we care for. Dr. Kimberg will invite IPV service providers to share their best practices in prevention and intervention for people experiencing IPV and structural violence, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the communities they serve, and the ways they have adapted their programs and practices to meet current challenges. Throughout the training we will practice caring for ourselves while caring for others through guided meditations and healing practices.

Other BHS Training Webinars are available on the [Training Unit Vimeo Page](#)

If you have feedback including future training suggestions, please contact Michelle Meier, LCSW, BHS Training and Internship Manager (Michelle.Meier@sfdph.org).

BHS Staffing Update

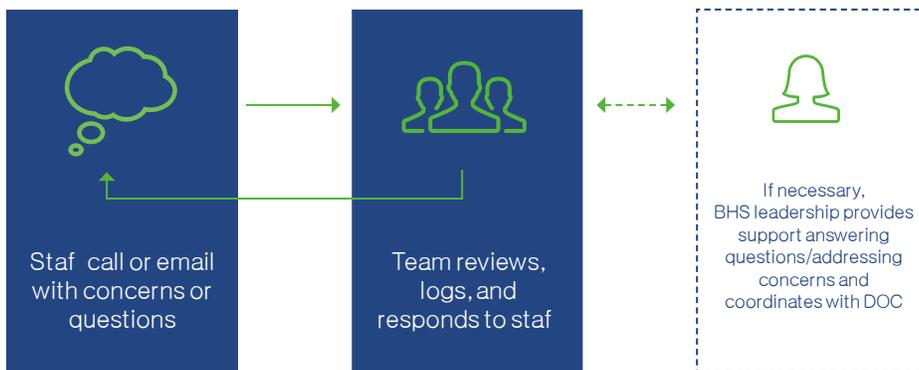


As of September 15, 2020, Lucy Arrellano, the Quality Management Grievance & Appeal Officer, will be taking a temporary 9-month leave of absence to serve at the COVID Response Command Center. During this period, Dr. Melissa Bloom, BHS Risk Manager, will be handling grievance issues until a temporary replacement is found to cover the role. Grievances can continue to be submitted as they normally would.



Do you have general questions about being a Disaster Service Worker (DSW) or are you currently deployed and have concerns you need help getting answers for?

The BHS Clearinghouse team is available to support you regarding your deployment needs.



415-255-3427



bhsclearinghouse@sfdph.org



San Francisco Health Network
Behavioral Health Services

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