



**BAY AREA**  
Community Health  
Advisory Council

# Telling Our Story

## AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 | 3:30 PM | In Person

Behavioral Health Commission  
San Mateo County Health

SHAWNEECE STEVENSON, MSW AND CASSANDRA JACKSON, MA, PPSC  
BACHAC Co-Managers

Partner and Funder



**SAN MATEO  
COUNTY HEALTH**  
All together better.



# AGREEMENT OF USE

## The African American Community Assessment

In acknowledgment of the Black/African American Community's valuable contributions and their **courage in sharing their voices** with BACHAC, we kindly request that you seek our consent before utilizing the information in this presentation/report. Should you decide to use this information, we respectfully ask that you provide full attribution to BACHAC.

You can find all of our details at [www.bachac.org](http://www.bachac.org).



## A Community Lesson: *Bias in Assessment Process*

### LETTER TO THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM THE EVALUATION PARTNER

August, 2023

Dear Community Member,

A determination was made without consult by Committee members to include responses not representative of the community, impacting the final analysis and presentation to the community, for which we **acknowledge responsibility**.

The Centered for Applied Research Solutions (CARS)



# African American Planning & Design Committee (AAPD)

**Brenda Brown**, Peninsula Family Services

**Cassandra Jackson**, School Counselor, BACHAC \*

**Charles Woods**, Peninsula Family Services

**Chase Curo**, Peninsula Family Services \*

**Dana Johnson**, PRIDE Initiative

**Edith Cabuslay**, County of San Mateo

**Erika Green**, CARS Evaluator \*

**Dr. Frederick Gaines**, College of San Mateo

**Halley Crumb**, Retraining the Village +

**Isaiah Sneed**, Student, Serra High School

**Karla Brown**, MFT, Soul Centric Counseling

**Kathryn Haysbert**, RN, Volunteer/NAACP

**Ken Einhaus**, CARS Evaluator \*

**Lee Harrison**, County of San Mateo +

**Lisa Tealer**, BACHAC

**Lloyd Walter**, Student, Aragon High School

**Maurice Goodman**, Elected Official/NAACP

**Shawneece Stevenson**, MSW, BACHAC \*

**Sydney Jackson**, Student, SFSU

**Vicky Smothers**, Free at Last

**Yvette LaFleur**, County of San Mateo +

*(\*) Think Tank Members*

*(+) Attended early meetings*



Designed  
with the  
Community



★ **African American Planning and Design Committee (AAPD)** an intergenerational, diverse Black/African American Leaders & Residents to designed implement the assessment that is *by and for* the community!

★ AAPD approach was focused on **cultural strengths** and designed around social/environmental factors that prevalent and that contribute to substance use

★ AAPD designed the methodology, survey, outreach, and culturally relevant branding of the assessment.

★ Assessment was delivered by **trusted** Black members.  
★ Met the community with *diverse lived experiences* where they were and in places where they gather.

★ The Black Community at large and AAPD were **authentically engaged throughout the process** including data analysis, recommendations, and approving presentation on how they want to be portrayed in the public.

Implemented with the Community



Authentic Community Engagement



# Listen To Their Voices



**LIS•TEN** | To hear something  
with thoughtful attention.

**“There is a distrust with mental health services and not enough mental health providers that look like us.”**

Adult Focus Group Participant

**“Mental health services are hard. It’s hard to find a counselor. It’s hard to get into therapy, and it’s always expensive.”**

Adult Focus Group Participant

**“There are no Black counselors.”**  
High School Focus Group Participant

**“Unfortunately, we [our program] haven’t been part of the Black Community. We need support to be part of Black Community Gatherings.”**

Key Informant Interview

**“When you, a Black person or student, try to speak up for your race or people, you just continue to get looked over because of your race. And you just kind of become helpless and give up. They tend to look down on us, not fully listen, or hear the Black voices. No one truly wants to listen to your voice and hear you.”**

Young Adult Focus Group Participant

**“For me, at least at my school, it took awhile for the Black people to come together. I was proud that we finally were able to come together to talk about Black issues that we weren’t able to talk about because there wasn’t an established Black community.”**

Youth Focus Group Participant

**“What I like about the Black Community is the people. The rich culture and support systems.”**

Community Leader Focus Group Participant





## THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

### 441 Total Community Participants

371 Surveys (120 Youth, 251 Adults) | 59 in 11 Focus Groups  
11 Key Informant Interviews

32%

Respondents were youth

68%

Respondents were adults

69%

Identify Black/African American  
5% Black African (naturalized  
immigrant), 4% Black Hispanic  
(identify as Hispanic/Latino),  
13% Multiracial (identify as  
Black, one or more combined  
races), 9% declined to state

The largest response rate was from the city of **San Mateo**  
(24%) followed by **East Palo Alto** (22%).

80%

Respondents reside in **16 of 20** of the cities in the County

46.4% Males | 36.1% Females | 6.2% LGBTQIA+  
11.3% Declined to State

# LEARNING FROM THE COMMUNITY: *Survey Key Findings*

## Substance Use

- **48% of youth** and **26% of adults** responded that they- have **NEVER** used substances in their life.
- **Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana [all which are legal substances]** are the substances of **greatest current use** by both adults and youth. **With prescription drugs on the rise for youth.**
- **Average of First Use amongst youth** is **13 years** old for marijuana use, **15 years old** for tobacco use, and **9 years old** for alcohol use.

## Reasons for Use

- **Isolation, loneliness,** and **grief** were identified by both youth and adults as to why they use substances.  
**32% of adults** identified they felt **felt often or sometimes isolated, lonely, or abandoned.**  
**64% of youth** that identified a **lack on companionship** often use substances.  
**64% of youth** that **feel left out often or sometimes.**
- Experiences of **stress related to racism** and **community unrest.** **69%** of adults and **73%** of youth that **often or sometimes** reported using substances also reported **often or sometimes** experiencing racism personally
  - **Inconsistency in Black male youth** reported of substance use **and** frequency of use.
  - **26%** youth often or sometimes **did not feel valued at school.**



**re·sil·ience** | means to bounce back from adversities and thrive.



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## Reasons for **not** using - Protections from

A **sense of belonging, personal support systems, and community connections** protect against substance use.

- Youth reported that they did not use substances **because of support from their family.**
- **Individual support and connections** were also important in stopping substance use.
- **72%** Adults and **51%** of youth **that stopped substance use** were able to do so **by their own decision**, with the **support of their family** and with the support from their **faith community.**

*I believe my faith in God  
and a support system  
fueled by the love of my  
parents and other loved  
ones explains my  
resiliency*  
Youth Survey Respondent



**with·stand** | to be unaffected by, offer strong resistance to something.

# **Highlights of LEARNING FROM THE COMMUNITY: *Key Themes***

## **Individual and Group Listening Sessions**

- Need More Programs/Resources by and for Black Community
- Need for more education about Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) with outreach to Black Youth & families
- Lack of Marketing, Outreach & Engagement
- Need for Mentoring & Youth Leadership
- Sense of pride in Black culture and community
- Stigma and cost associated with mental health
- Desire for more community building
- Experience of racial microaggression, bias, and white coat syndrome
- Lack of access to African American Providers ✨ *Based on BACHAC's Black clinical provider survey in 2022, Black Clinicians aren't on panels for private, public, or contracts (i.e. SMCOE master contract)*



# 7 African American Community Assessment RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the African American Community Assessment Findings to understand the social and environmental factors that prevent or contribute to substance use amongst Black youth, the African American Planning and Design (AAPD) Committee has identified **Three Core Priorities** with **Seven strategies and programs.**

**1. Promote ethnic identity and celebrate Black heritage** through programs designed for and by Black/African Americans;

**1. Strengthen relationships, social connections, and belonging** within the Black community and beyond;

**1. Expand navigation, outreach, engagement, and inclusion** of Black/African American Youth in existing or new programs.



## Black Youth Mentorship

Create mentor program and create and encourage college awareness with Black led civic organizations.



## Public Policy and Advocacy

Develop policy advocacy and promote legislation to address social media and advertisement in highly populated Black Communities.



## African American Outreach

Create an African American centered outreach program to support access to mental health and substance use services.



## Youth Leadership and Advisory

Gather with youth to design programs to meet their needs and interest.



## Understanding Our History and Ourselves

Implement county-wide AP: African American History course or create a Heritage Bootcamp with college credit.



## Cultural Competency Training

Train educators, schools, and substance use prevention program on working with Black youth.



## Full Family Engagement

Develop full family engagement programs that provide resources, tools, and strategies to develop mentors, family support, and faith spiritual development.

For more information,

# Successes so far . . .



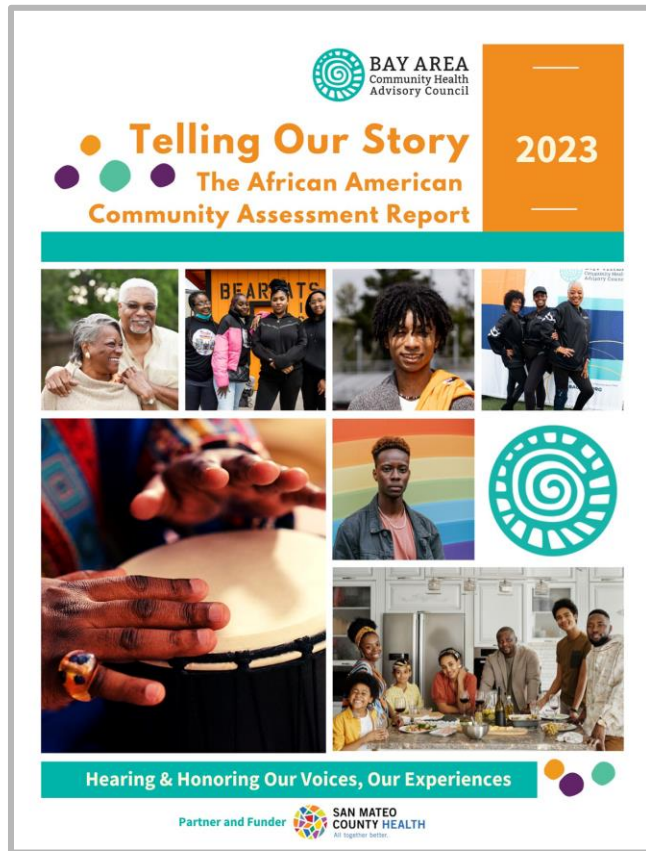
- We are establishing **County-Wide Black Youth Advisory Board (Black YAB)**.
- We inspired efforts and organizations in our county to deeply think about supporting Black Youth. For example, **Culturally Restorative Learning Supports, LLC (CRLS)** is hosting in partnership with local leaders a **Black&EMPOWERED Series** to design viable solutions with community and BACHAC will be sharing our recommendations as a tool for the series.
- We are sharing resources in the community through our strong network to ensure success of programs geared toward such as SMCOE Afrofuturism Conference and showing up **in community at culturally relevant gatherings to share resources (Black History Month Events)**.
- We are broaching conversations with those who want to **invest in transformative change** in partnership with the community - We have held 3 conversations so far!
- We are have presented lesson learned how to engage of the Black Community.



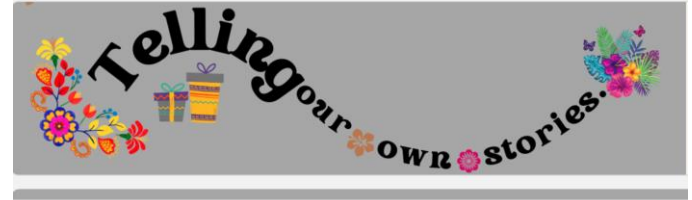


# Download the Executive Summary or *Telling Our Story: The African American Community Assessment Report 2023*

[www.bachac.org/african-american-community-assessment-2023](http://www.bachac.org/african-american-community-assessment-2023)



**Feedback on today - please complete the survey:**



Telling Our Story - The Latina/o/x,  
Tongan, & African American  
Community Assessments  
Presentation Feedback

**Email BACHAC for any questions:**

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*Thank you for the opportunity to share our story!*

