

Overview

What is access to culturally responsive care?

Access to culturally responsive care means “access to care, services, and programs that are culturally specific, honoring, and appropriate.”¹

What is an issue profile?

Issue profiles briefly explore an issue by summarizing key background information and introducing potential solutions. Several recent community assessments identified access to culturally responsive care as a priority issue for Spokane County. In November 2023, a group of 29 community partners convened to collectively build knowledge about this issue in Spokane County. This document shares the results and can be used to develop improvement strategies.

Why is access to culturally responsive care a priority issue in Spokane County?

Since 2021, at least three community assessments identified access to culturally responsive care as an issue in Spokane County and Washington state, specifically for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities.

Assessment and Sponsor	Assessment Findings
2021-2022 Spokane County Community Health Needs Assessment² <i>MultiCare, Providence, Spokane Regional Health District</i>	<p>“Many groups identified racism and discrimination as a threat to health and said that some were refused care, dismissed by their provider when bringing up health concerns, or kept from getting the care they needed because of the color of their skin, the language that they spoke, or because they had a disability. Very real health impacts were cited by stakeholders including misdiagnosis, late diagnosis, and withholding treatment because of racism and perceptions about a certain group of people.”</p> <p>“Many respondents felt that they have specific needs around gender identity, sexual orientation, and LGBTQIA2S+ relationships that many providers in Spokane County do not have the knowledge to address.”</p>
2022 Community Health Needs Assessment³ <i>Kaiser Permanente Washington</i>	<p>“Access to quality, culturally responsive health care remains a critical health need in the Washington region ... Communities of color often do not seek care because of mistrust of the health system, in part because of past discrimination.”</p> <p>“... behavioral health intake systems can be difficult to navigate and not designed for different cultures and different ways of thinking about mental health. Young people of color in particular could benefit from supportive adults who reflect their cultures; as one informant pointed out, ‘Who needs services the most? Black and brown boys. Who provides it? White women.’”</p>
2023 Spokane County Needs Assessment⁴ <i>Priority Spokane</i>	<p>More than 75% of the BIPOC focus group’s participants voted for health as a key priority and emphasized “culturally competent services.” Less than 50% of the LGBTQIA+ focus group’s participants voted for health as a key priority, but they noted “affordable, inclusive, and culturally competent health care” as a concern.</p>

Current Situation

Community partners explored current work, players, resources and potential barriers during a series of rotating discussions. This section summarizes the information they found the most promising or impactful.

Question	Promising or Impactful Information
Current work	<p><i>Inside county:</i> staff from communities served by the organization, culturally informed definitions of mental health, connecting people with resources, maintaining lists of culturally informed providers, partnerships, wraparound services, translation, section 1332 waivers, insurance navigators, mobile services, community health workers helping bridge gaps, motivated community partners, advocacy for language access, funders accelerating collaboration, culturally inclusive curriculum for medical students, promoting cultural learning and gathering</p> <p><i>Outside county:</i> health equity research, development of culturally responsive clinical practices, career pipelines, health coalitions, immigrant and refugee advocacy</p>
Community support	The NATIVE Project, MiA - Mujeres in Action, Refugee and Immigrant Connections, World Relief, Latinos en Spokane, Nuestras Raíces
Available resources	Funding, expertise, thought partnership, local ACH duties, community work, Spokane Collaborative, culturally competent organizations, interpretation services, healthcare navigators, individual providers, medical curriculum, libraries
Potential barriers	Power and privilege, white supremacy, systems that are rooted in white supremacy or racism and still practiced, lack of political and social will to change systems and power structure, lack of investment in education and upward mobility of marginalized communities, providers and policymakers not understanding the issues (like language access), systems built on white supremacy (like licensure and education), historical harm, lack of trust, changes are often grant-based and financially unsustainable, issues with retention and valuing culturally diverse providers, lack of interpreters, lack of access to affordable health insurance for undocumented people, fear based on status, broadband availability, no resources in rural areas, lack of cultural responsiveness curriculum in provider training

Strategic Collaboration

Community partners identified opportunities for strategic collaboration and alignment across sectors by completing a survey about their organization. This section shares the survey results.

What values do community partners share?

Eight values appeared in more than two community partner profiles. Strategies to increase access to culturally responsive care may be more successful with these values built into collaborations and projects.

- Equity
- Respect
- Collaboration
- Liberation and empowerment
- Diversity and inclusion
- Integrity
- Anti-racism
- Stewardship



What resources might partners be able to contribute?

Community partners selected a wide range of resources they might be able to contribute, and they most frequently selected staff time to implement strategies and staff time to support community engagement. Resources with the fewest potential sources include child care, staff time to transcribe meeting notes or recordings, and lending interpretation equipment for meetings. The table below shows how many community partners may be able to provide each resource.

Resource	#	Resource	#
Funding to support community engagement	5	Staff time to support interpretation and translation	2
Food for community meetings	3	Staff time to support community engagement	7
Child care for community meetings	0	Lending interpretation equipment for meetings	1
Policy/advocacy skills	6	Staff time to support relationship building between CHI staff and other organizations	6
Media connections	6	Staff time to participate in CHI meetings/activities	5
Social media capacities	6	Staff time to help plan CHI meetings/activities	3
Physical space to hold meetings	5	Staff time to help facilitate CHI meetings/activities	4
Technology to support virtual meetings	4	Staff time to help implement strategies	8
Coordination with Tribal government	2	Staff time to transcribe meeting notes/recordings	1

What initial thoughts do community partners have about goals or strategies?

Community partners' initial thoughts about goals and strategies for increasing access to culturally responsive care fell into two areas: process design and potential strategies.

Themes	Initial Thoughts
Process design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be outcomes driven • Establish data-driven goals • Seek community support
Potential strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve care by better understanding different communities • Establish a baseline training • Continue education and funding for impacted communities • Diversify the workforce • Improve language access

Next Steps

A task force will convene in 2024 to increase access to culturally responsive care in Spokane County through long-term, upstream changes. The group will develop community health improvement strategies, address root causes of inequity and social determinants of health, and use strategic partnerships for sustainable impact. Their plans will be published in a community health improvement plan (CHIP) in late 2024.

To request the full data set, contact the Spokane Regional Health District Data Center at datacenter@srhd.org.



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