

Background

Youth mental health remains a critical public health concern, with rising rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Despite increasing recognition of these challenges, significant barriers persist including stigma, and inadequate mental health literacy among youth and the adults that support them. Through CHA's Department of Community Health, building the community's capacity to address and respond to youth mental health is a critical component in ensuring positive outcomes for youth. Utilizing evidence-based curriculum, youth leadership development, and ongoing mental health awareness, we are continuing to increase the community's readiness to support youth.

Goals/Objectives

- ❖ Provide mental health awareness training to CHA staff, patients, community partners and others in the CHA service area
- ❖ Implement and expand Mental Health First Aid training to increase equity in mental health awareness and education, especially to Spanish speakers, teens, and other historically marginalized communities
- ❖ Develop and sustain partnerships that promote and build community resilience
- ❖ Strengthen community capacity for youth mental health support and resources
- ❖ Increase connections to care/referrals

Testimonials

"I feel like my knowledge of MHFA has really helped in my relationships with my students and the athletes I coach. I just feel as though I see them more and have created spaces where I feel they can come to me if they need it."

"I shared the reliable 988 resource for when my friend was feeling suicidal"



First Teen Mental Health First Aid Training, Summer 2023

Acknowledgements

Mental Health Awareness Training grant from SAMHSA, community partners, staff from Department of Community Health and throughout Cambridge Health Alliance, Institute for Community Health

Methodology

Mental Health First Aid Training

This evidenced-based national certification training program gives community members the skills and strategies to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, recognize the risk factors/warning signs of mental health challenges, understand the importance of early intervention, and get the skills and tools to connect with mental health professionals and offer support strategies.

Youth Mental Health Ambassadors

This stipend program provides youth (ages 16 - 20) with training, education, and opportunities to be community change agents who work to reduce stigma and create a positive perception toward mental health and raise awareness of common mental health issues in the community.

CHA News for Mental Health First Aiders

A bimonthly newsletter dedicated to keeping CHA's Mental Health First Aiders informed, engaged, and empowered. Each issue features updates on mental health initiatives, upcoming training opportunities, practical self care tips, and resources to support first aiders.

Curriculum

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Adult Mental Health First Aid

Teen Mental Health First Aid

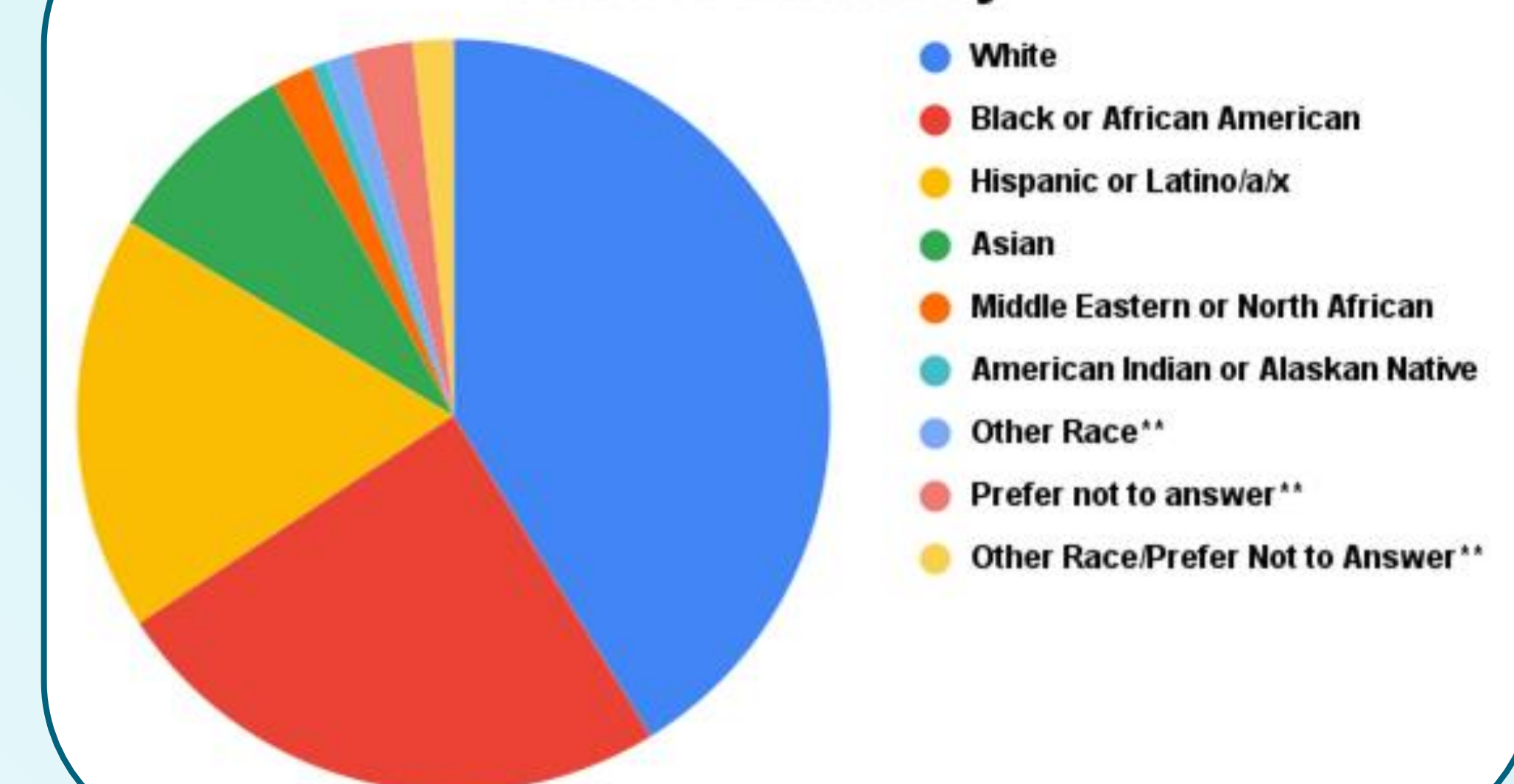


Spanish Youth Mental Health First Aid Training, December 2024

Results

- ❖ **2520** participants trained in MHFA to date
- ❖ **3826** reported referrals to mental health services
- ❖ **50+** youth between CHA's catchment area have participated in the YMHA program
- ❖ **1200+** Mental Health First Aiders reached in bi-monthly newsletter
- ❖ Over **30%** of participants speak another language other than English
- ❖ More organizations requiring training for all employees including schools, social services, hospitals, municipal depts, & more.

Race & Ethnicity



Reached a diverse group of participants, reflecting a broad range of racial and ethnic backgrounds and fostering inclusive community engagement.

Recommendations

- ❖ Expand program sustainability through new partnerships and generate new revenue
- ❖ Grow community education and training opportunities
- ❖ Create internal collaborations that reach external partners, especially public schools
- ❖ Expand Youth Mental Health Ambassador program for long-term leadership and workforce development opportunities

Learn more about our training on the CHA website:
<https://www.challiance.org/community-health/mental-health-first-aid-training>