Portland, Maine

Multilingual and Multicultural Center
Portland Public Schools
Portland Demographics

- City Population ~ 64,000
- Total Student Body ~ 7,000
- 60 different languages
- 6 SBHCS serving ~ 1700 students, 4-64% minorities
To design, develop, and implement a mental health service delivery system --from prevention, intervention, and treatment-- for immigrant and refugee children and families that recognizes the cultural norms and values of their communities.

The Goal:
Empowerment Across Communities
Portland, Maine
Community Providers of MH Services

Institute of Higher Education

Children and families

Schools and School-based MH Providers

Other Social Service Providers

Public Health

Empowerment Across Communities
Portland, Maine
Culturally Responsive
Trauma-Informed
Program and Activities

Meaningful Community
Partnerships

Reflective
Consultative
Intercultural

CAC
Collaborative
Steering
Committee

Approach to
Empowerment

Programs

Partnerships

Process
**Challenges**

- Penetrate and extend influence in established ‘turfdoms’.

- Political climate regarding immigration policies and perception of immigrants.

- Using program models or approaches appropriate for various cultural groups as well as the school culture.

- Foreign healing beliefs and practices.

- Language accessibility.

- Need for funders to collaborate and pull their resources together.

- Project sustainability.
**Successes**

Caseload of refugee and immigrant students among school-based social workers have more than doubled.

Increase in knowledge and understanding of the target linguistic groups among school staff and community-based providers.

Some funding received to expand and extend the goals of the project.

Strong and meaningful collaboration among school and community providers of mental health.

Diminished ‘turfdoms’.
Sustainability

- Shared Vision
- Commitment Among Partner Organizations
- Trust and Credibility
- Funding and Advocacy

Empowerment Across Communities Portland, Maine
Vision

We are a dynamic group of human service providers representing both the public and private sectors who, together, share a common interest and passion for learning in pursuit of operationalizing the concepts of healing, empowerment and transculturalism.

We value the dignity, resiliency and creativity of the human spirit. We bear witness and surrender ourselves to the power of the stories of peaceful reconciliation that abound among the multicultural families that we serve.

We seek to shift the paradigm of currently established Western health practices to be more reflective of the rich diversity that exists in our community and models innovative and evidence-based care to ultimately increase access to services.
Critical Elements to Successful Partnership

• Shared vision and goals.
• Clearly defined roles and process for decision making.
• Structure for communication, planning, and evaluation.
• Introspection, reflection, and learning.
• Support for each other’s work and invested in each other’s success.
Strategies To Build Trust and Credibility in the Community

Hire bicultural/bilingual staff as consultants and cultural brokers.

Understand and appreciate the internal dynamics of communities.

Honor and build on community interests, priorities, and assets.

Support and visibility in community planned events including festivals.

Leverage existing institutional relationships

Empowerment Across Communities Portland, Maine
Funding and Advocacy

- State Philanthropy Organizations
- Collaborate on grants with partner organizations
- Policy change initiatives
- Use of interpreter as Medicare reimbursable
- Redefinition of billable services
Contact

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