

Mental Illness Stigma Reduction Situational Analysis



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2013

**PREPARED BY:
BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT INC.**



Foreword.....

Stigma is as disabling for people with mental illness as the illness itself. Advocates and researchers agree: erasing the stigma requires local and credible contact with people in recovery. This requires grounding public efforts in the perspectives of the area in which a stigma campaign is to be implemented. Paso del Norte Health Foundation and its partners are to be lauded for recognizing this priority and conducting an extensive situational analysis to inform the anti-stigma efforts in their area. This analysis was a labor intensive effort that included obtaining extensive information from all important stakeholder groups with consumers having an especially powerful voice. The analysis is not limited to a description of the problem. It yields concrete recommendations on how the community needs to organize to eradicate prejudice and discrimination against people with mental illness. The situational analysis is a beginning. Paso del Norte Health Foundation and partners need to now grab the wisdom of these findings to implement meaningful change.

Patrick W. Corrigan
Distinguished Professor of Psychology
Illinois Institute of Technology
and
Principal Investigator
National Consortium on Stigma and Empowerment

“We congratulate Paso del Norte Health Foundation and the people in the paso del Norte region for taking the initiative to address stigma associated with mental illness using multi-level approaches. Building synergy through effective education programs and ongoing collaboration of organizations, consumers and families will lead to positive change in attitudes about mental illness and recovery.”

Linda Rosenberg, MSW, President and CEO
The National Council For Behavioral Health

“The Brain Trust, an open network of community members committed to changing minds and attitudes about mental illness, is dedicated to growing a collaborative movement for lasting impact. We applaud Paso del Norte Health Foundation’s Think.Change initiative. This Situational Analysis will foster the region’s strategic next steps to improve mental and emotional well-being for the health of children, youth, and adults.”

Sharon Butterworth,
Mental Health Advocate and Brain Trust Chair



INTRODUCTION

This Executive Summary provides important information related to one aspect of overall health; mental health and emotional well-being. Behavioral Assessment, Inc. (BAI), contracted by Paso del Norte Health Foundation (Foundation), conducted a comprehensive Stigma Reduction Situational Analysis for the Paso del Norte region which includes; Doña Ana, Luna and Otero Counties in New Mexico; El Paso and Hudspeth Counties in Texas; and Ciudad Juarez in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico. Information and data were gathered from a variety of sources, including adults who reside in the region.

Data collected were used to help define the issues, challenges, community attitudes and opportunities for improving regional mental health through the reduction of stigma associated with mental illness and seeking out appropriate care. Participants in the project were passionate and vocal about the issues and provided a range of potential solutions to the problem of mental illness stigma. The full Mental Illness Stigma Situational Analysis is available at Paso del Norte Health Foundation's website www.pdnhf.org.

What is Mental Illness Stigma?

Mental illness is a treatable medical condition. Yet hundreds of thousands of people suffer needlessly because they do not have access to the latest scientific advancements that promote recovery (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). It is estimated that one in four will experience a serious mental, neurological, or substance abuse condition in their lifetime, with a higher burden affecting the poor due to the low access of care, social stigma and discrimination (O'Donnell, 2012). Research reveals that the stigma of being labeled as "mentally ill" is so great that people would rather suffer in silence than seek the help they need (Bell et al., 2011; Corrigan, 2004; Loya, Reddy, & Hinshaw, 2010). This decision affects not only the individual, their friends and family; it causes additional strain and burden on the social and economical well-being of the community as a whole (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).



Why Conduct A Situational Analysis?

The Situational Analysis provides varying perspectives and data driven answers about mental illness and stigma, its causes, consequences and potential solutions. It is a snapshot of the prevailing attitudes, beliefs and behaviors related to stigma in the Paso del Norte region. This United States Mexico border region is unique in many ways and has a diversity of cultures, lifestyles and connections on both sides of the international border. The complexity of mental illness and stigma calls for multi-level approaches and strategies that include mental health promotion efforts, education, policy change and cultural group engagement, all aimed toward reducing the stigma associated mental illness and with receiving mental health care.

What Are The Opportunities for Change?

A synthesis of results from the Mental Illness Stigma Situational Analysis can be summarized into 4 distinct action steps. Regardless of the source of data analyzed, these 4 recommendations consistently emerged from the Situational Analysis.

Recommendation 1. Increase and Expand Education to Reduce Stigma

- Increasing educational strategies can help community stakeholders, families, health professionals and schools in obtaining basic and accurate knowledge about mental health and mental illness. Educational strategies are a core component of any successful stigma reduction effort and should be included in any regional effort. The use of media approaches to change the current negative “messaging” about treatment and recovery should be part of the educational strategy.

Recommendation 2. Increase Implementation, Adaption and Evaluation of Evidence Based Practices to Reduce Stigma

- A wide spectrum of stigma reduction programs have been found to be effective in other regions and other countries and offer a basis for long-range stigma reduction in the Paso del Norte region. A compendium of such programs and practices was developed as part of the Situational Analysis. The full Compendium includes a total of 84 anti-stigma reduction programs and 98 practices from across the United States and four other countries and should be used as the basis for implementing, adapting and evaluating outcomes from these programs. The



programs need to be adapted with consideration given to the local languages, cultures and age groups present in the region.

Recommendation 3. Incorporate Local and Regional Border Cultural Beliefs, Attitudes and Norms As Part of All Stigma Reduction Efforts

- Increasing cultural competence makes for better regional mental health and emotional well-being for all residents. When planning or implementing stigma reduction efforts, culturally appropriate interventions must take into account multiple and complex world views, cultural beliefs, languages and immigration policy challenges. Increase the use of culturally and linguistically appropriate (CLAS) cultural standards in all stigma reduction strategies. Military culture also has a strong influence along the border and must be considered in any stigma reduction effort.

Recommendation 4. Develop a Comprehensive Mental Health Workforce Plan for the Paso del Norte Region

Both professional and lay community mental health workforce need to be expanded. A broad and culturally competent workforce plan complete with recruitment, retention, and training initiatives to meet the increasing needs for mental health service delivery in rural, frontier and tribal areas of the region is needed. Increased training of “promotores” (lay health workers) will help to ensure that adults and children in remote *colonias* are afforded screening, referral and early interventions.



Approach to the Situational Analysis

The Situational Analysis was designed to assess issues relevant to all population groups residing in the region with no singular focus on any specific age, nationality, ethnicity or gender. Given the bi-national nature of the region and considerable presence of military facilities and personnel, recommendations include the incorporation of cultural information related to beliefs about mental illness, recovery, and stigma reduction messaging. The key activities of the Situational Analysis were:

- Coordination and collection of data from Key Informants
- Coordination and collection of data from Consumers and non-Consumers via Focus Groups
- Development of Mental Health Literature Review & Best Practices Compendium
- Creation of County-level Mental Health Profiles
- Development of Recommendations for the Community and the Foundation related to stigma reduction for the region.

Considerable background work was completed by Paso del Norte Health Foundation, along with partners from the local universities, public health and mental health authorities and local stakeholders. Based on this work, the Foundation frames mental health and mental well-being as “Fundamental to the quality of life and productivity of individuals, families, communities and nations, enabling people to experience life as meaningful and to be creative and active citizens.” This definition was central to the Situational Analysis and shaped many of the probative questions included in gathering key informant and focus group data. To complement the stigma reduction information from the 5-county United States Mexico border region in Ciudad Juarez, BAI partnered with the Alliance of Border Collaboratives (ABC) and Programa Compañeros (PC). A total of 3 consumer focus groups and 9 key informant interviews were coordinated and conducted by ABC and PC in Ciudad Juarez.

Paso Del Norte Health Foundation Framework for Stigma Reduction



The Foundation along with BAI developed a framework for stigma reduction. The framework relies on the original Corrigan model that includes Education, Protest and Contact strategies but also incorporates: a) Developmental Perspectives; and b) Cultural Factors. The following matrix is supported by findings from the Situational Analysis:

Paso del Norte Health Foundation Stigma Reduction Framework

Education	<i>Developmental Age</i>	<i>Cultural Factors</i>
Protest	<i>Developmental Age</i>	<i>Cultural Factors</i>
Contact	<i>Developmental Age</i>	<i>Cultural Factors</i>



DETAILED FINDINGS FROM THE SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The following sections of the Executive Summary provide more specific information for developing a region wide strategy to reduce stigma. Each section is based on results from the various data collection approaches:

Opportunities for Stigma Reduction Based on Key Informant Interviews

The following summary is based on a range of responses from key informant interviews. Specific recommendations, taken from 25 key informant interviews, help validate data gathered using various methods in conjunction with the Situational Analysis.

- ***Increase and expand local and regional mental health training for health professionals and community leaders.***

Key informants emphasized that training programs would increase knowledge about basic mental health and help dispel myths and misinformation in the region. Community leaders were identified as elected officials, school superintendents, chiefs of police, and other governmental leaders and administrators.

- ***Increase and expand local and regional basic mental health education through training and workshops.***

Key informants indicated that local and regional educational training and workshops conducted in schools, churches, libraries, town halls and other public venues would help provide programs like Mental Health First Aid for the general public.

- ***Establish community dialogue through activities that encourage and promote the dissemination of accurate information about mental health and emotional well-being.***

Key informant responses indicated that trained mental health providers should be involved in these dialogues to ensure that medically accurate information about



mental illness and mental health care is disseminated. It is also suggested that reach and participation level in these activities be evaluated.

- ***Increase and expand education programs for parents and children to raise awareness of available local and regional mental health services and promote mental health and emotional well-being.***

Results of the key informant interviews reflected a need to empower parents through education to better screen, identify and address early signs and symptoms of mental illness in their children and families. Evaluation of programs aimed at increasing parent education on children's mental health is needed.

- ***Increase public education about mental health through media.***

According to key informants, media that includes printed newspapers, magazines and brochures as well as electronic media such as the internet, social networking sites, television and radio can be useful in increasing positive messaging through public service announcements and special reports that emphasize the importance of early and available treatments for mental health problems.

- ***Develop, implement and test media messaging models that address a paradigm shift away from the negative connotations associated with terms such as “mental,” “mental health care,” and “mental illness.”***

Key Informants stated that messaging should focus on terms that emphasize brain health, social emotional health, emotional well-being, wellness, and similar concepts rather than words with negative connotations.

- ***Increase and expand training of Promotoras and other community lay health workers to assist with basic mental health screening and referral systems for children and families. .***

Results from the key informant interviews suggest training and engaging health “navigators” such as Promotoras. This could be accomplished under the Affordable Care Act, using Mental Health First Aid or similar basic informational



programs on mental illness, care and effectiveness of treatment. Implementation, testing and evaluation of these innovative educational models were also suggested to determine how these approaches increase use of mental health services.

- ***Increase and expand campus-based mental health education to reduce stigma associated with mental illness.***

Educational programs should raise awareness about student depression, suicide and potential violence prevention through campus-based venues such as middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities. Reach and impact of increased education on mental and emotional health should be evaluated.

- ***Explore innovative approaches to screening and treating military personnel with the goal of improving mental health outcomes.***

Recent behavioral health research (Becker, et. al., 2013) has shown that approaches such as internet-based interventions may improve mental health outcomes. Key informants suggested that these innovative, web-based or tele-health programs ought to be evaluated using media metrics to show how far the programs reach and to determine specific treatment outcomes.



Opportunities for Stigma Reduction Based on Focus Groups with Consumers and Non-Consumers

The following summary is based on a range of responses from consumer and non-consumer focus group interviews. These summaries represent specific recommendations taken from 10 focus groups conducted in the U.S. and 3 focus groups conducted in Mexico. These focus groups help validate information and data gathered from other methods in the Situational Analysis.

- ***Advocate for school system changes.***

Respondents indicated that school system and curricula changes are needed to better promote emotional well-being and discourage bullying. This includes development of stronger school policies and enforcement as well as increased teacher and parent education on children's mental health.

- ***Increase and expand programs that emphasize early detection and treatment of emotional and behavioral problems, as well as addressing issues associated with overmedicating children or medicating them prematurely or unnecessarily.***

Based on the focus group responses, advocacy programs and educational campaigns can be useful in informing parents about the benefits of early screening and detection of behavioral and emotional problems in youth and can provide information with regard to care.

- ***Increase implementation of new and innovative teaching techniques aimed at helping children cope with their mental health issues.***

Based on the focus group responses, Mental Health First AID, stress management and cultural supports can be integrated into traditional health-focused curricula. This includes increased teacher training programs designed to improve sensitivity to children's emotional and behavioral health.

- ***Expand and increase advocacy and education for families of consumers toward improving integration into mainstream society.***



Focus group responses indicated that NAMI-based organizations and NM Behavioral Health Collaboratives are good models for increasing community advocacy and education for families and consumers.

- ***Increase and expand general education among those who provide information related to mental and emotional health: doctors, community health education and teachers.***

Focus group data also indicated that Mental Health First AID and similar orientation training programs need to be implemented in general health care settings to include training for health professionals on mental and emotional health services, early screening and detection.

- ***Increase and expand school-based and community-based parent education programming to better screen, identify and address early signs and symptoms of mental illness in their children and families.***

Results from the focus groups reinforced the idea that early screening, identification and treatment of emotional and behavioral problems in young children can help avoid more pronounced problems in later childhood and adolescence. Parent training can also help dispel culturally-based myths about mental illness.

- ***Increase and expand school-based educational programs that provide age-appropriate information to children about emotional and behavioral health.***

Focus group participants recommended that programs to increase youth knowledge about mental health can help youth develop sensitivity for those with emotional problems and can reduce bullying based on mental health/mental illness.

- ***Increase the production and dissemination of educational media through campaigns and programs aimed at raising the general public's awareness about mental and emotional health.***

Focus group respondents indicated that positive media messaging can play a significant role in changing negative perceptions and overcoming perceived norms in the larger community.



Opportunities for Stigma Reduction Based on the Compendium of Programs and Practices

The following summary is based on a compilation of stigma reduction programs, practices and strategies that were found in the published literature. Included are programs developed in the U.S. as well as programs that have been tested and implemented in other countries.

- ***Increase and expand the implementation of stigma reduction programs and practices identified in the Compendium.***

Based on findings in compiling the Compendium, the implementation and testing of a wide spectrum of programs have been found to be effective in other regions and other countries and offer a basis for long-range stigma reduction in the Paso del Norte region.

- ***Develop and test adaptations of existing evidence-based practices to include programming that addresses children's mental health, family and culturally-based programming toward stigma reduction***

Based on Compendium findings, while a variety of education, protest and contact programs are available, these will need to be adapted in consideration of the local languages, cultures and age groups present in the Paso del Norte region.

- ***Establish and expand evaluation requirements for organizations in determining the outcomes of implementing and replicating existing or adapted strategies included in the Compendium.***

Findings from Compendium suggest that organizations that have stigma reduction programming would benefit through participation in training that involves evaluation technical assistance. Developing evaluation skills that lead to rigorous outcome evaluations of stigma reduction needed in the region. Provide training on fidelity monitoring and adaptation processes.



- ***Establish and increase training and technical assistance in capacity building efforts for local organizations in the region.***

Findings from the Compendium also suggest that assistance for organizations is needed on matching and assessing their capacity to adopt, adapt and implement anti-stigma reduction programs and practices included in the Compendium. This technical assistance may include mentoring, coaching or assistance that is culturally appropriate to the nature, size and unique profile of organizations. Optimize the training and technical assistance support available from anti-stigma program developers, especially if local adaptations are necessary.

- ***Increase the level of organizational knowledge of the cultural considerations of language, beliefs, values, customs, practices and social norms found in the region.***

Findings from the Compendium point to the need for cultural competence that goes beyond providing a demographic description of the region but that teaches stakeholders and organization about cultural brokers, cultural leaders and community representatives. Also suggested is an increase in the use of programs that implement new CLAS standards as part of anti-stigma strategies. Findings from the Compendium also suggest the need to consider culturally relevant messaging or taglines that cross cultural lines applicable to the region.

- ***Increase overall implementation of anti-stigma programs, practices and strategies among smaller community-based, grassroots, neighborhood, consumer-operated, family-operated, school-based and coalition-based entities.***

Consumers and family members must have active, meaningful engagement by leaders, facilitators, partners and cohorts in implementation of anti-stigma programs.



Opportunities for Stigma Reduction Based on the Literature Review of Mental Health and Stigma

As part of the Situational Analysis, a comprehensive literature review on issues related to mental health and stigma was conducted by the BAI technical team, including Dr. Cervantes, Mr. Fred Sandoval and Ms. Rose Nava. The literature review provided a glimpse into some of the most recent key national and international research findings to date on the topic of mental health and stigma. It is important to note that the literature review had to be expanded to include national and international data sources given that the published research on mental health and stigma in the Paso del Norte region are very limited. At the same time, studies are relevant for developing a community action plan to reduce stigma in this region.

- ***Increase and expand evaluation studies, research studies and other publishable anti-stigma data that highlight local and regional stigma reduction efforts.***

The literature review indicates that there are few local and regional studies on approaches to stigma reduction. Efforts between local programming and research-based organizations should be fostered to help determine what approaches to stigma reduction are effective. New stigma reduction studies specific to the Paso del Norte region are sorely needed.

- ***Increase collaborations between local organizations, universities and other private research and evaluation groups to study and report data on stigma-related projects.***

Based on the literature review, new research on stigma reduction needs to be stimulated for the border region, rural and hard to reach communities, including those that are non-English speaking.

- ***Expand the original Corrigan model of Stigma Reduction.***



The literature review suggests that new models for stigma reduction are needed for the region. These models should include key cultural variables such as acculturation as well as lifespan concepts and developmental theories focused on children and adolescents.



Opportunities for Stigma Reduction Based on 5 County Profiles of Existing Data

The following summary is based on a review of existing data relevant to Paso del Norte regional demographics, as well as mental health and related risk factors. The data have been used to help determine prevailing attitudes about stigma in the region as well as develop conclusions about next steps for community action. County-level data on a variety of community mental health issues, risk factors, cultural factors and other related information was included in 5 county profiles.

- ***Increase efforts to collect and analyze data that is specific to the Paso del Norte region.***

Findings from the County Profiles show that gaps in data exist in the areas of children's mental health, military mental health, and school-based mental health issues.

- ***Increase parent, teacher and other child caretaker education on mental health such as Mental Health First Aid programs.***

Findings from the County Profiles suggest increasing specific education for parents, school officials, and community leaders on the value of early intervention and prevention programs with regard to suicide. Consider mental health check-ups or screenings among youth in schools and at community health events

- ***Increase the number of stigma reduction projects that have established logic models and clear education, contact and protest evaluation outcomes.***

Findings from the County profiles emphasize the need for clearly articulated program goals and objectives that can measure improvements in prevailing community attitudes about stigma.

- ***Increase and expand the use of data in communities to raise awareness about stigma associated with mental illness and suicide among youth.***



The findings from the County Profiles also suggest that media campaigns and public awareness should be based on valid and reliable data on teen depression, other mental illnesses, and treatment success.

- ***Increase and expand services for co-occurring mental health and substance use in rural areas and other hidden populations throughout the region.***

Based on findings from the County Profiles, co-occurring drug use and mental health problems appear to be prevalent in the region. Tailored dual diagnosis treatments are needed.

- ***Increase and expand public employee education for personnel in county and city jails, law enforcement, EMTs and emergency rooms on issues surrounding mental illness to lessen stigma and increase early identification and treatment of mental illness.***

Based on the findings from the County Profiles, mental health needs are also present in non-traditional settings. Expansion of innovative mental and emotional health training in these non-traditional work settings is needed.

- ***Develop comprehensive local and regional mental health workforce plans complete with recruitment, retention, and training initiatives.***

Given recent demographic trends and increases in military populations, diversity workforce development in the area of behavioral health would help meet needs for mental health service delivery in rural, frontier and tribal areas of the region.

- ***Given the large military population in the Paso del Norte region, increase military mental health services.***

Based on findings from the County Profiles discrete services, including web-based treatments, are needed for the region that address PTSD, traumatic brain injury, co-occurring problems and suicide prevention..



- ***Increase cultural and linguistically appropriate mental health services in small community settings that are distinguished by large Hispanic populations, close proximity to Mexico, and rural communities (colonias).***

Based on findings from the County Profiles, colonias are a unique feature of the border region. These colonias may have high mental health needs as a result of stress associated with poverty, migration and cultural differences. There is a call for increased and culturally appropriate services in these small, rural community settings.



CONCLUSIONS

First and foremost the Situational Analysis tells us that stigma associated with mental illness is present in the Paso del Norte region. Participants of the many focus groups and key informant interviews were passionate in their descriptions of stigma and how it affects their lives and the wellbeing of their communities. As in other parts of the country, stigma in this region often prevents those in need from seeking out professional services, prolongs or delays treatment, and diminishes the quality of life for many who suffer from emotional problems.

At the same time there are many opportunities for developing a regional effort to reduce stigma and assure that residents, including children, receive the prevention, screening, referral and treatment services that may be needed. As mentioned throughout the Executive Summary, mental health and stigma reduction is complex issues with no one simple answer. However, by developing a range of educational programs and media messages, implementing and evaluating adapted evidence based programming, increasing workforce development efforts, and attending the cultural and linguistic needs present, stigma can be reduced.

The Paso del Norte Health Foundation, along with Behavioral Assessment, Inc. wish to thank all of the stakeholders, provider groups, interviewees and staff that contributed to the development and completion of the Situational Analysis.