



WELCOME TO LISTENING IN *Action*

May 9th, 2024

Narrative Change Activity: Prompts

RED POST-ITS: What ideas or narratives are holding us back from advancing immigrant health in/through [topic area] in Massachusetts?

GREEN POST-ITS: What ideas or values do we want to center when working on [topic area] in Massachusetts?

Table #1 : MENTAL HEALTH

Facilitator: Asha Abdullahi

Culturally sensitive
and specific
serious providers

Fear to
seek help
related to
legal status

Generational
trauma

Everyone - including
immigrants - need care +
safe spaces to share

Strong
community &
relationships

Level of stigma
attached to
mental health in
immigrant
communities

“What
happens at
home stays
at home”

Need
more
connection,
familiarity

Fund
nonclinical
interventions

Immigration is
brave and
traumatic

Community-led
initiatives,
training to
identify, define
mental health
issues

Faith leaders unfamiliar with or
suspicious of mental health

Community
can get you
through this

Empower them
through
leadership
opportunities

Peer to peer
based
models of
care

Loss of community,
separation of families that
can contribute to isolation,
anxiety and depression

Obscures
mental
health
needs

Support isolated
communities with
resources

Extended family and
support structures are
something we can learn
from immigrants

Mental health treatment
differences in U.S. cultural
differences = expectations

Separation of
mind and body
health and
prioritizing
body over
mind

Many CBOs serving
as cultural brokers to
fill the gaps

You are not alone - it is
difficult for everyone and
we are here to help you

Table #2 : LEGAL STATUS

Facilitator: Cristina Freeman

Need for quicker and efficient process for work permit and green card status

Punitive tax policies

Robust legal services

Expand pathways to legal status

Community does not know enough - need legal education

Failure to reward it in workers

Expensive access to work permits - efficient renewal of work permit

Friendlier state laws for immigrants, especially kids

A long way to go to reach everyone

Complicated rules and lots of misinformation

Schools and health institutions are supporting immigrant education

Educate policy makers to change immigration laws to shorten process

Immigration process takes a year

Table #3 : ACCESS TO CARE

Facilitator: Abhirupa Dasgupta

Immigrants overuse and overwhelm emergency departments

Language and understanding patient/client

Immigrant communities are resourceful in getting help to those who need it

Use participatory design

Status - you do not qualify for this service

Immigrants only use the ERs

Immigrants help feed the healthcare system and should benefit from it as well

Shared culture opportunities

Complex rules impede access

Immigrants drain healthcare resources

Making care more accessible for some makes it more accessible for all

Immigrants have better health status as they come to host countries

Holding systems more accountable for lack of language access in care

The thinking that they will take away from others

Preventative healthcare for all costs less

Need to educate immigrants of care that is available

Increased collaboration between healthcare facilities and community-based organizations

Overuse of already limited resources

Are we allowing for flexibility and grace?

Build capacity in immigrant community-based organizations and expand access to care because they have incredible assets/strength

Table #4 : PUBLIC CHARGE

Facilitator: Nubia Goodwin

Unreliable
media narrator
- burden

Belief that immigrants
are lazy and do not
contribute

Immigrant drain public resources
such as education, healthcare
and public housing

Profound negative
effects on children

“They are
taking our jobs
and benefits”

Draining
resources

Just for a few
people

Small investment - big
return to the state

Immigrants pay taxes,
social security and fees
yet cannot get access

More economic input

They are eager to
work, learn and
advance

Quick boost to get going -
contribute - employee

Realization that
immigrants contribute to
our welfare and community

Changing the narrative
away from “only
deserving people
deserve public goods”

Immigrants
have always
been backbone
of economy

Table #5 : ADDICTION & RECOVERY

Facilitator: Dr. Ranjani Paradise

That negative will power is enough. If you are strong enough you would not be in this position

Immigrants bring drugs and alcoholism to profit off it. If they get service, they are draining the system

Assumptions that people in some immigrant communities do not want to talk about addiction or are not open to treatment

Narrative that people just aren't trying hard enough or do not want to recover

Living on the street - shelter - drug users

Narrative that people with addictions are not capable of contributing positively to society

Getting and using drugs

Immigrant groups have taken leadership on organizing for supportive housing at Shattuck

Hospitals available for all people

Language and culture access at all levels

Trauma informed

Everyone deserves the opportunity to receive the support they need and that can look different

Investigate root causes that push individuals / immigrants to experience certain health disparities (ex: predatory casino advertising in Chinatown), shifting lens to structures/systems

Cultural humility, culturally responsive and accessible treatment

Table #6 : AGENCY & STRUCTURE

Facilitator: Dr. Carmel Salhi

Holding us back -
individual responsibility
and bad choice

No English - no thinking -
no critiques - no interest

Shallow DEI in
policy but not in
practice

Drain to the
system

We Americans
did not flee bad
countries, came
here illegally,
pay taxes and
follow the rules

More people
relying on us

Immigrants do not fulfill their obligations
as residents of Massachusetts

Services and
goods are just
given to
immigrants

They came and want
to take what we have
with taxes we pay

Create
accessible
resources
on state
website

Language,
equity,
opportunity

Fresh eyes,
new voices

Immigrants
pay taxes

Educate on
science of
scarcity and
make policy
change

Immigrants have
goals and
dreams; they
want to control
their story and
contribute their
voice and ideas

Immigrants bring skills and
perspective, desire to work and
contribute to the economy & childcare

Narrative to
advance
social/political
economic
content

Inclusivity in
practice, not
with words

Bring unique
skills, talent

Immigrants come
with education
and skills and
often contribute
more than they
receive

Table #7 : ASYLUM MEDICINE

Facilitator: Dr. Barbara Ogur

Not understanding trauma - substance abuse

"She just came so the baby would be a citizen"

They do not want to be a part of America

They are bringing disease

Suspicious of drugs in people of color

Bias - lack of understanding of special need of traumatized people

Why don't they learn English?

They are making up their trauma

They have to learn the language

The numbers will overwhelm us

Not looking for a handout

Strong family networks

Strong personal resilience

Welcoming them, making them feel like they belong

Actually not using services

Expand everybody if we integrate people of other cultures

Strong desire to navigate complex systems

Holistic spaces - co-locations

People are here for a better life-seeking acceptance

We need people in the workforce

Table #8 : ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Facilitator: Guerlince Semerzier

Immigrants do not contribute to the tax base and should not get a safety net benefit

MA and federal government must encourage immigrant students and workers to work in fields without any limitations such as educational background and qualifications

They can do the jobs no one else wants - what about living wage?

They cannot communicate in a work setting, if they do not speak English

Immigrants do not speak English and are hard to work with

Immigrants come with loads of education and career experiences

Immigrants come with no skills and no education

Immigrants take away public resources and jobs from Americans

Massachusetts lost 20,000 residents who moved out during the pandemic, 20,000 immigrants just arrived, let's include and engage them

Skilled immigrants can fill critical core gaps

Children of immigrant parents become strong contributors

Be that mentor that opens doors to all immigrants and help them unlock their economic potential

Immigrants are hardworking contributors

Immigrants contribute to economy in ways many other do not want to

Immigrants want to work to provide for their families, to contribute to their community, just ask them

Tell stories of immigrants going back two generations or more

They start businesses and contribute to the economy

Bring businesses to communities - diversify options, food, human services (e.g., eldercare)

There are legacies of collective and cooperative economic development models

Immigrants help businesses to grow

Table #9: MA WELCOMES CAMPAIGN

Facilitator: Liz Sweet

They use
resources
Americans
need

Immigrants somehow take
away resources from those
who already live here

Immigrants
bring
disease

Why do newcomers
deserve more than
residents who are
uninsured?

They do not
speak
English

All people
need safety to
care for their
families

Immigration
is brave

ESOL in
Schools

Immigrants
are criminals

Massachusetts does not
have the resources for
people who are already
here

Immigrants
do not
belong here

Bring diversity
in culture that
increases
property
values

Culturally
congruent
messaging

They are a
window into
things we do
not know

Immigrants just need to
work harder, or that
somehow they do not
work as hard and
therefore do not
deserve

Immigrants bring
violence

This state/country has
enough abundance to
share

Massachusetts supports
immigrant-run businesses and
immigrants support
Massachusetts businesses

Immigrants
are hard
workers

Faith and faith
leader education

Our communities
are better when
we are
empathetic

They will do
many jobs
we do not
want to

All lack
education
and skills

Immigrants steal
jobs, services,
and resources

All humans deserve
safety and dignified life

Immigrants are not only followers, they
are quite often leaders and can teach us
a lot if we let them