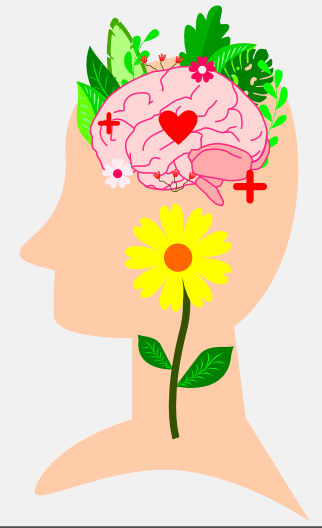


Experiences of Underrepresented Youth Behavioral Health Providers in King County



Project Background and Context



1 in 3 youth in King County experience symptoms of depression. BIPOC and LGB+ students were much more likely to experience symptoms of depression.



Over 4 in 5 Mental Health Counselors are White. The lack of diversity in the behavioral health workforce impacts access to culturally competent and affirming care for diverse youth.

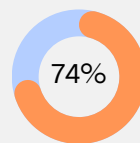
Project Goals and Purpose

To understand the facilitators and barriers that impact diverse recruitment and retention of the behavioral health workforce.

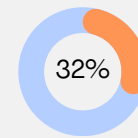
Methods

- Literature Review
- Focus Groups and Interviews with **19 clinical behavioral health providers and alternative healers**.
- Limitations: This qualitative sample may not be representative of all behavioral health providers and healers

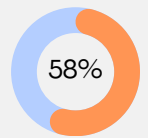
Participant Characteristics



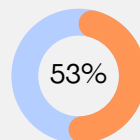
BIPOC



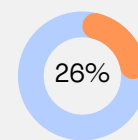
Gender Diverse



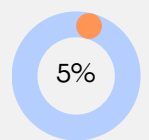
Queer



Licensed Providers



Associates (Working on licensure)



Other Credentials

Key Findings Overview

Getting Into Higher Education



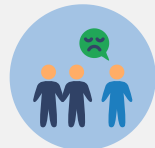
Cost of higher education is a barrier to entering the behavioral health field



Lack of access to information about the

- matriculation process
- career pathways available
- behavioral health programs offered

Higher Education Experiences



Lack of representation and experiences of racism & discrimination leads to feelings of isolation



Having student support services like programming, safe spaces/community and wrap around services is likely to increase retention

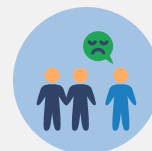
Fieldwork Experiences



Navigating the bureaucratic licensure process is a barrier



Lack of adequate pay and benefits leads to high turnover



Lack of representation and experiences of racism & discrimination leads to feelings of isolation

Professional Development



Difficulty accessing continuing education (CEUs)



Training providers in cultural humility and integration of other service modalities is likely to improve services for youth

Recommendations



Implement behavioral health education, outreach, and mentorship programming for young people



Provide financial support for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ in behavioral health graduate programs



Partner with relevant local entities to provide support and opportunities to paraprofessionals, alternative and cultural healers

Create a sustainable graduate mentorship and community program for students in behavioral health graduate programs

Provide funding for internships

Partner with CBOs and/or educational institutions to fund supports on licensure exam, application, internship and continuing education preparation and navigation

Create a professional community and mentorship programming for behavioral health providers

Provide funding for continuing education credits

Partner with CBOs to create a sustainable resource inventory of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ providers in King County

[*Check out our blog post here*](#)



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