



To: Artie Padilla, Executive Director, Every Neighborhood Partnership, Fresno
Stress Health Team, Center for Youth Wellness, San Francisco
From: Public Profit
Re: Findings from Fresno community stakeholder interviews
Date: July 3, 2019

This memo shares findings from our interviews with Fresno community stakeholders about the upcoming Stress Health community campaign in southwest Fresno.

About the Stress Health campaign

The broad Stress Health campaign brings awareness and education about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress to parents and caregivers in the public at large, including what they can do to be a buffer for their children and how they can help their children develop a healthy stress response through sleep, nutrition, exercise, mental health, mindfulness, and healthy relationships.

The Stress Health community campaign in southwest Fresno will make this awareness and education about ACEs and toxic stress more tangible and directly relevant to parents and caregivers in the community, by drawing on community norms and values, and empowering locally rooted and respected organizations and trusted messengers.

About the community stakeholder interviews

The Stress Health community campaign draws on strategies that are identified through a community design process. For the Fresno campaign, these community stakeholder interviews represented the start of that process. This memo summarizes findings from our stakeholder interviews about (i) how ACEs and toxic stress affects residents of southwest Fresno, (ii) interviewees' ideas, recommendations, and advice for the community campaign, and (iii) potential partners for the community campaign.

Interview findings

How ACEs and toxic stress affects residents of southwest Fresno

Interviewees pointed to the issues in southwest Fresno that they saw as strong indicators of high levels of ACEs and toxic stress in the community – concentrated poverty, high levels of crime and violence (especially domestic violence and gun violence), food insecurity and lack of access to grocery stores, homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, high levels of illiteracy among adults, high rate of dropout from high school, lack of well-maintained public spaces and green spaces, high levels of air pollution, and the prevalence of health conditions (e.g. asthma, childhood obesity) and significant health disparities. Interviewees highlighted the role of systemic racism and oppression and said that many of the issues identified were a legacy of segregation and under-investment in southwest Fresno.

Ideas, recommendations, and advice for the Stress Health community campaign in southwest Fresno

Community involvement in design and implementation

Interviewees emphasized the need for the Stress Health community campaign to have local roots in Fresno, as southwest Fresno residents are the experts about their community. They said that the design and delivery of the message must come from people who know the community, live in the community, and have built trusted relationships with the community. Residents of Fresno have had many experiences with campaigns that come and go, which have rightfully led them to be wary of new partnerships or new initiatives that drop in and then leave before progress is made. Interviewees said that undocumented residents were particularly skeptical of outsiders and that they needed to be approached by those they know and trust. Interviewees advised the campaign team that trust and relationships need to be in the foreground of the Stress Health community campaign.

“[The] framing of the [Stress Health] message must come from people who the community trust - established voices in the community to do this.”¹

“Any materials and communication need to be attributed back to a trusted, local community-based organization (CBO) like Every Neighborhood Partnership, [or the] West Fresno Family Resource Center for people to be more apt to listen to [the] message.”

“If you are not part of the community, but are doing well-intentioned work, do not take it personally of the community's initial lack of trust.”

¹ Stakeholder quotes are taken from our interview notes and are not precise transcriptions.

“The campaign needs to be mindful of the community - both the community's expectations and constraints. [The] campaign needs to ask how do we do it well in a way that honors the residents and lived experiences? How do we ensure that the campaign is really about the residents? Can they access the campaign?”

To build trust and relationships within the community, interviewees spoke about the need for the campaign to engage faith-based organizations in southwest Fresno. Faith-based leaders are trusted individuals in the community. Interviewees spoke about gaining the buy-in of key faith-based organizations to be able to communicate the Stress Health message to congregants. Additionally, some faith leaders and congregants may already be very familiar with or even specialize in mental health and trauma-informed care.

“Involving the faith-based community is important. At the Westside Church of God, the pastor is a practitioner and a few parishioners are mental health practitioners.”

“Start with the churches and gain their buy-in/participation in the beginning. Much better to have them at the table up front rather than involving churches after implementation (For example, saying ‘We have this message we would like you to present to your congregation’).”

Framing of the Stress Health message

Interviewees said that the framing of the Stress Health message needed to be tailored to fit the community, and they offered advice about things to consider when crafting the Stress Health message. To make the Stress Health community campaign most effective in southwest Fresno, interviewees suggested the message framing include the following aspects:

Accessible and relatable

To accommodate the diverse community of southwest Fresno, interviewees suggested not taking a one-size-fits-all approach, but instead creating a multi-faceted and multi-generational message to reach different groups of people and tailoring the message to fit their needs. Interviewees also said that the community needs to see themselves represented in the campaign materials (e.g. people in campaign collateral should look like them).

“Because southwest Fresno is so diverse, the message should be communicated in different ways that resonate with different cultures, faiths, languages.”

“[The] message should be geared in a way that people see themselves (for example, represented in visuals).”

Asset-based

Interviewees said the Stress Health message should be asset-based and should build on the existing strengths of the community. The message should acknowledge and appreciate the resiliency already present in the community and offer ways for residents of southwest Fresno to enhance the practices, programs, and initiatives that are already in place.

“Framing should also be from a strengths-based model, and move away from a deficit model.”

“[The] framing of [the] message must appreciate everyone where they are at and what they’re comfortable with.”

Linked to science

Interviewees said that the Stress Health message should be linked to the science of ACEs and toxic stress and that it should discuss the broader health impacts of ACEs and toxic stress beyond mental health. Interviewees recognized that there was a stigma associated with mental health issues and that residents might engage with the campaign more deeply if other health issues such as diabetes and high blood pressure were also discussed. Interviewees said that linking the campaign message to science could potentially help to reduce any feelings of self-blame that residents may be facing, by cultivating a deeper understanding of how the brain and body are affected by ACEs and toxic stress. Interviewees cautioned that the message should not be so technical or scientific that it becomes hard for people to understand.

“The label ‘mental health’ has negative connotations in some communities. The term ‘toxic stress’ is softer.”

“ACEs/toxic stress is a human issue. Saturate the community with the message.”

Builds on existing trauma and mental health work in the community

Interviewees said that there are already many initiatives and programs that focus on trauma and mental health in the community. They recommended that Stress Health find a way to align with these initiatives and programs while standing out and providing value.

Delivery of the Stress Health message

Interviewees suggested that the Stress Health message be delivered in different ways to people of different age groups, cultures, and languages. The message should be put out in as many ways as possible to reach the community and should come from a variety of sectors. Interviewees had the following suggestions for delivery of the Stress Health message:

General considerations for delivery

- Inundate the community with the message – people should be receiving the message everywhere they go as part of their everyday routine, and from all sectors (e.g. faith community, schools, local businesses).

“We need to find ways to make it into [parents’] routines - like the radio or churches.”

“Delivery of [the Stress Health] message should be... from all sectors: health, education, faith-based, but also the business sector (e.g., [it could be an] opportunity for employee wellness and discussing the financial impact of ACEs and employee absenteeism). This is often seen as a public health or childhood issue, and ACEs gets siloed into different sectors. But this impacts everyone.”

- Adopt a multi-faceted approach to message delivery – use different strategies to reach different groups of people (e.g. social media to reach the younger generation vs newspapers to reach the older generation).

“[We] need strategies to reach [the] younger demographic and [the] older demographic, and everyone in between.”

- Provide multi-lingual and multi-cultural resources – provide campaign resources in many different languages (English, Spanish and Hmong at minimum) and tailored to many different cultures.

Run an air game

- Include a media/social media campaign component – use billboards, radio, public service announcements (PSAs), television commercials, newspapers, social media.

Run a complementary ground game

- Recruit messengers from the local community. Trainers and facilitators should have insight that comes from lived experience, not just ACEs knowledge.

“Lasting change would take into consideration facilitators/presenters having both information and insight. Knowing about ACEs is one thing (information) but having lived experience (insight) will move the message forward in a way that just having the knowledge can't.”

- Host big events – convene a block party, community BBQ, or concert as a way of spreading the message in a fun, engaging way while incentivizing attendance.
- Distribute campaign materials in many different settings – including in school registration packets, mailers, door hangers, waiting rooms of doctors' offices, and at clinics (e.g. during children's physical exams, dentist appointments or immunization appointments).

Potential partner organizations for the campaign

Interviewees identified many groups and institutions from different sectors that already have strong relationships with the community and may be good partners for the campaign. They urged the campaign team to collaborate with partners across different sectors.

Education

Because education plays a significant role in children's and families' lives, many interviewees suggested that schools and other educational programs play a role in the Stress Health community campaign. The following list consists of school districts, schools, education services organizations, and programs that interviewees saw as potential partners for the Stress Health community campaign:

- *Fresno Unified School District*
 - *Parent University*
 - *Black Student Union*
- *10 schools in southwest Fresno*
- *Gaston Middle School*
- *Clovis Unified School District*
- *Out-of-school time programs in southwest Fresno*
- *Fresno County Office of Education*
- *Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)*
- *Lighthouse for Children*
- *Childcare centers in southwest Fresno*

Health

Many health agencies and programs already serve and support residents across southwest Fresno, and are also working to align their existing services or even expanding them to support individuals with ACEs and toxic stress. The following list consists of health programs, agencies, and initiatives that many interviewees said could potentially partner with the Stress Health community campaign:

- *Fresno County Department of Public Health (DPH)*
 - *Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program*
 - *Black Infant Health Program*
 - *Fresno County Health Improvement Partnership*
- *Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)*
- *Clinica Sierra Vista*
- *Valley Children's Hospital*
- *Fresno County Preterm Birth Initiative*
 - *African American Youth Leaders Academy (AAYAL)*
 - *Keeping It Real*
- *Fresno County Trauma and Resilience Network*

- *Family Foundation Counseling Services*
- *California School-Based Health Alliance*
- *Doctors in southwest Fresno*

Local community organizations and community spaces

Some interviewees suggested reaching out to local community organizations and well-known community spaces to partner or support the Stress Health community campaign in southwest Fresno. The following list consists of community organizations and community spaces that could be potential partners for the campaign, given their commitment to serving families and children in southwest Fresno:

- *Every Neighborhood Partnership*
- *Marjaree Mason Center*
- *Fresno Family Resource Centers*
- *Hinton Community Center*
- *Centro La Familia*
- *Central Valley Big Brothers & Sisters*
- *Police Activities League (PAL) Program*
- *Public libraries*
- *Neighborhood/community watch groups*
 - *Action and Change / Accion y Cambio*
 - *Fresno Street Saints*

Faith-based organizations

Churches and faith-based organizations have a strong presence and involvement in the southwest Fresno community. Most interviewees recommended that pastors, churches, and the faith-based community be campaign partners, and identified the following list of potential partners:

- *Saint Rest Church*
 - *Saint Rest Economic Development Corporation*
- *Westside Church of God*
- *Rising Star Baptist Church*
- *Opening Doors Ministries*
- *Youth for Christ*
- *Fellowship for Christian Athletes*

Government

Many governmental departments, entities, and services such as local elected officials, police departments, and fire departments serve and protect the residents of southwest Fresno. The following list consists of governmental departments, entities, and services beyond the health realm that interviewees suggested the campaign consider as potential partners:

- *Local elected officials*
 - *Board of Supervisors*
 - *City Council members representing southwest Fresno*
- *Fresno Police Department*
- *Fresno Fire Department*
- *First Five Fresno County*
- *Fresno County of Department of Social Services*
 - *Child Protective Services*

Other stakeholders in southwest Fresno

Some interviewees suggested that the campaign consider partnering with local everyday businesses and media platforms that residents know or come into contact with on a day-to-day basis. The following list consists of local businesses and media platforms that interviewees suggested partnering with:

- *Local businesses*
 - *Laundromats*
 - *Oliver Pete - Mr Fro's Barber Shop*
- *Media*
 - *Radio stations*