

MAC Brainstorming Sessions

Meeting 4: May 15th, 2024

Welcome and Introductions

Heather welcomed the group and reviewed meeting guidelines. Based on feedback, a new guideline was added, which asks that the group use a raise of hands to make sure everyone is on the same page about new concepts. Participants also highlighted other potential guidelines, such as utilizing two facilitators, so that one can solely monitor the chat. It was clarified that this would be most helpful for the actual MAC.

Heather also reviewed feedback and learnings provided by the group about the Brainstorming Sessions, including:

- Add more slide subtitles
- Consider interactive activity
- Peel back the "onion" of outreach and engagement

As an icebreaker, participants answered the question: what does “cultural relevance” mean to you?

Overview of What We Have Learned So Far

To make sure everyone is on the same page, Heather provided an overview of what we have learned from conversations so far, including feedback about:

- Desired MAC Participation
- Outreach Obstacles
- Outreach Lessons Learned
- Outreach Partnerships for Success
- Messaging Strategies and Content

Heather also reviewed visual representations of feedback from the group, including the various programs, home and community-based settings, and geographical areas that the group has highlighted in conversations to date. Another visual representation demonstrated partnerships for successful outreach provided by the group so far.

Participants suggested additions for the visual representation, including

- Adding congregate settings such as prisons and homeless shelters

- Adding colleges, community homes, and schools as settings to reach youth and young adults

Who Are Your Community Allies?

The group discussed what allies they look to in their own communities as well as how to find and reach these allies in their lives. Participants observed that they may have multiple identities, and are a part of many communities and shared their allies across identities. Participants provided the following suggestions about reaching community allies:

- Consider using a peer-to-peer model of outreach
 - A participant noted that people often rely on their neighbors. Neighbors may be initially reached via flyers, local informational booths, or local television stations
- Consider reaching out to services and professionals within those services used often by the community
 - A participant offered examples around what these allies look like for them, including a friend who repairs wheelchairs, a technology center, and disability services
 - A participant also highlighted working with healthcare providers across the state
- Prioritize outreaching where people are already congregating, such as local markets, farmers markets, festivals, supermarkets, shelters, and pride parades
- A participant also recommended reaching out to medical trauma support groups, with the option for anonymous feedback and opportunities to ensure the MAC is a safe space.

Outreach At the Edges of the State

The group reviewed a map of Massachusetts and Heather emphasized areas that MAC outreach has struggled to reach thus far, including the Western, Northeast, Southern tip, and Cape and Islands of the state. Heather also noted that there are underserved communities within areas technically accounted for that may not yet be reached, such as some communities in Boston. The group discussed strategies for reaching these areas, including:

- Connecting with the following partners to reach people in the Western and Southern areas
 - The Wildflower Alliance, a group that works with low-income communities in Western Massachusetts

- Mental Health vendors in this area
- Peer respite organizations
- Connecting with the following partners to reach people in the Northeastern areas
 - Northeast Independent Living Program (NILP)
 - Local recovery learning center
 - Local hospitals
- Utilize the following strategies to reach people in communities that outreach has not yet successfully connected with in more urban areas
 - Host a booth at the Caribbean festival in Boston
 - Research local events and celebrations at the town and city level and find ways to be involved
 - Work with the community members that throw block parties or throw a block party for the purpose of outreaching about the MAC

MAC Outreach Messaging

To facilitate a discussion about effective messaging, the group broke into small groups and used a platform called JamBoard to record their ideas. After returning from small groups, participants shared their ideas:

Outreach Formatting

- Participants suggested using multiple formats including both digital and non-digital
- Participants highlighted flyers, videos, tabling at events, and social media posts in specific community groups and events pages as examples
- Participants emphasized that all formats must be accessible. For instance, all digital materials should use image descriptions.

Describing the MAC

- Participants recommended sharing all logistical information such as hybrid options, time, location, and commitment level
- Participants suggested that outreach highlight the function of the MAC, how a member may contribute and why their input is important
- Participants noted that messaging must clarify any expectations for members and highlight that no special skills or computer skills are required
 - Messaging should highlight that only their own personal experiences are required
- Participants recommended validating peoples experiences and concerns in the outreach process

Potential Imagery and Slogans

- Participants provided examples of engaging imagery for outreach, such as
 - Hands of various skin tones coming together
 - Puns around Big Macs such as using McDonalds symbolism or using an Uncle Sam “we want you” poster but replacing his face with a Big Mac
- Participants suggested potential slogans such as
 - Making MassHealth Yours
 - Making MassHealth Ours
 - Change, Adapt, & Evolve
- Participants discussed the pros and cons of using silly/punny/or otherwise light imagery and messaging. Participants recommended tailoring messaging to audience needs and preferences.

Language Use and Accessibility

- Participants suggested using plain language
 - Participants stressed the need to avoid assuming people understand acronyms or healthcare jargon
- Participants recommended translating outreach into many different languages, including the dialect that different communities use
- A participant suggested using language and symbolism that helps marginalized communities feel safe such as
 - Including pronouns in email signatures
 - Requesting information about accessibility needs in initial outreach
 - Including pictures in outreach email signatures to demonstrate that non-white people are in leadership positions
 - Ensuring all materials are accessible to blind and low vision members, including color contrast and font size

Implementing the MAC

The group also discussed ideas for implementing an effective MAC, which requires creating a safe space for members to share. Participants discussed elements that may help members to feel comfortable sharing in MAC meetings, such as:

- Recognize that topics may be sensitive and be proactive about this
- Reiterate that the MAC is a safe space to share
- Recognize that people have real fears around retaliation from MassHealth or government agencies, such as immigration

- Recognize that some members may prefer or need anonymity
 - This may include not publishing names or not recording meetings
- Consider creating spaces for members to communicate outside of MAC meetings or without MassHealth representatives present

Wrap Up and Closing

To close the meeting, Heather checked in with the group about the small group JamBoard activity and found that participants enjoyed this discussion strategy. Haylee also reminded the group of upcoming meeting information.

The meeting resulted in the following next steps:

- Participants will fill out the Post-Meeting Reflection
- Haylee will update the visuals to reflect suggestions made by participants
- Haylee will share meeting notes