COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEALTH TEAMS

Community Public Health Teams (CPHT) is a project that brings together community-based organizations, health care partners, and LA County Public Health staff. Each CPHT convenes community meetings to share data, jointly identify health issues, and develop a community action plan that incorporates community feedback on needs, metrics, and long-term outcomes. CPHTs also establish advisory committees of community members and partner agencies that provide guidance to CPHTs and contribute to the planning, development, tracking, and evaluation of community action plans.

CPHT NAME	South Central Heals
SERVICE AREA	SPA 6 - Florence-Firestone, Harvard Park, South Park, West Vernon

JOINTLY IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES

Through our community meetings, Community Advisory Board discussions, and analysis of more than 800 Household Assessments, the South Central community identified three key health issues:

1. **Mental Wellness** – Over 30% of participants reported their mental health as fair or poor in Household Health Assessments conducted throughout the year. In small group discussions community members shared that this number is likely underreported due to ongoing stigma and fear around discussing mental health and identified this as a priority issue.
2. **Food Access** – During community convenings, residents emphasized that limited access to affordable, high-quality food remains a serious concern. Requests for food program referrals have steadily increased over the past year, and recent budget cuts to the SNAP program are expected to further worsen food insecurity.
3. **Unemployment** – Community discussions also highlighted unemployment as a persistent challenge. This concern has been reflected in the growing number of residents requesting employment referrals during Household Health Assessment visits.

PRIORITY PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

The South Central community identified mental wellness as a top public health issue, with many residents experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression but often remaining silent due to stigma, fear, or lack of access to supportive services. This issue is rooted in historical trauma, cultural beliefs, and systemic barriers that have made it harder for community members to seek help and openly discuss mental health.

- Community members mentioned mental health issues as prevalent and as one of the community's highest needs at our first Community Convening.
- Additionally, at our July 2025 Community Advisory Board Meeting, mental health services were also mentioned as one of the services most needed within our community (of the needs mentioned by this board, 25% of comments were related to mental health).
- Analysis of a first quantitative data batch (02/16/25) given to us by DPH of our Household Health Assessments (HHAs), showed a prevalence of 31% of people telling us their mental health status was fair or poor, with an additional 5% of people who did not want to disclose their mental health status ("Don't know" and "Prefer not to state"). This percentage is probably an underestimation of the issue at hand: community members told us about our community's stigma on mental illness at our first Community Convening, which was confirmed by our Community Health Workers noticing this among participants when they conduct HHAs.

PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE
Mental Health & Wellness
ROOT CAUSES

- Mental health stigma is a complex issue deeply rooted in societal, cultural, and economic factors. In South Central Los Angeles, these factors intersect to create unique challenges.
- Lack of accurate and properly managed information from the community and those acting as intermediaries between the community and mental health services.
- Historical Trauma: The community has endured systemic racism, discrimination, and violence, leading to intergenerational trauma and distrust of institutions.
- Cultural Beliefs: Some cultural beliefs may view mental health issues as personal weaknesses or spiritual problems rather than medical conditions.
- Mental health stigma has been shown to be a barrier on self-identification and help-seeking initiation (e.g. McLaren et al. 2023, and Schomerus et al., 2019). This means that mental health issues might not be resolved or improved in our community as well as they would elsewhere. An intervention would be highly beneficial for the community.

PLAN OF ACTION

Through our community convenings and advisory board meetings, South Central Heals and community members jointly identified mental health stigma and lack of access to care as the main barriers preventing individuals from seeking help or speaking openly about their emotional well-being. To address these issues, our CPHT developed a two-pronged approach: (1) implementing community-based Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for trusted community members, including beauty practitioners and barbers, and (2) Mental Wellness Activations, expanding alternative wellness activities that make mental health conversations more natural and equip residents with everyday tools to care for themselves and others.

Beauty practitioners and barbers were specifically prioritized because they are trusted community figures who often provide emotional support and guidance in their daily interactions. By training them in MHFA, we build on existing relationships of trust and ensure that accurate information and compassionate support are available in familiar neighborhood spaces.

As implementation has progressed, emerging community needs have highlighted increased levels of stress, fear, social isolation, and uncertainty among residents. Community members have increasingly sought support related to emotional well-being, social connection, food insecurity, housing instability, and the impacts of immigration enforcement activity. In response to these evolving conditions, South Central Heals is prioritizing a Community Wellness Circle model facilitated by trained Community Health Workers (CHWs)/Promotores.

Community Wellness Circles will create safe, culturally responsive spaces where residents can build connections, discuss challenges, strengthen community support networks, learn stress management and wellness practices, and access information about available mental health and community resources. This approach leverages the trusted relationships CHWs already have with residents while expanding opportunities for community members to support one another and reduce stigma around conversations about mental health.

Beauty practitioners and barbers remain an important long-term component of this strategy. South Central Heals recognizes the importance of implementing models that are sustainable and feasible for community partners and will continue to explore opportunities and resources to support future engagement of beauty practitioners and barbers in Mental Health First Aid activities. Community Wellness Circles will also create opportunities for participation by trusted community leaders, including beauty practitioners and barbers, helping build the foundation for future MHFA implementation.

This community-driven approach directly addresses the root causes of stigma and lack of access by increasing awareness, building local capacity, strengthening social connections, and creating safe spaces where conversations about mental health can happen openly.

Goals	Wellness Circles	Mental Wellness Activations
Short-Term	• Establish mental health and wellness partnerships and identify content experts to help inform project development. • Develop a Community Wellness Circle framework and facilitator guide. • Build a steering committee made up of community members, CHWs/Promotores, and wellness partners.	• Build steering committee made up of local wellness practitioners and community members • Develop project evaluation tools
Intermediate	• Train CHWs/Promotores to facilitate Community Wellness Circles using trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches. • Develop a vetted mental health and community resource guide for participants. • Pilot Community Wellness Circles and gather participant feedback to inform ongoing refinement. • Identify trusted community locations and partners to support implementation.	• Identify community centered and accessible locations • Curate a mix of alternative wellness activities (e.g., yoga, art therapy, drumming circles, guided meditation, dance)
Long-Term	• Facilitate ongoing Community Wellness Circles throughout the service area. • Strengthen participant connections to mental health, social service, and community resources through warm handoffs and referrals. • Build community leadership by encouraging participants and trusted community members to support wellness activities. • Ensure that a tracking and evaluation system is in place to monitor participation, outcomes, and impact. • Explore future opportunities to engage beauty practitioners, barbers, and other trusted community leaders in Mental Health First Aid and related mental wellness initiatives.	• Adapt programming based on community and partner feedback
	Identify sustainability opportunities (funding, CHW/Promotor training, embedding activities into partner programs)	

SOLUTION

South Central Heals will reduce stigma around mental health in South Central Los Angeles by hosting community activations that promote open conversation and alternative wellness activities, while implementing Community Wellness Circles facilitated by trained Community Health Workers (CHWs)/Promotores. Through these circles, community members will have opportunities to discuss emotional well-being, strengthen social connections, learn practical wellness strategies, and access information about available mental health and community resources in a safe and supportive environment. When appropriate, CHWs/Promotores will provide warm referrals to South Central Heals partners and community resources, helping individuals access the mental health, social service, and wellness supports they need.

PARTNERS

- Esperanza Community Housing
    - Project management – South Central Heals Program Manager & Admin Program Manager
    - Project evaluation – South Central Heals Manager of Data and Evaluation
    - South Central Heals Community Health Workers - Community engagement and outreach efforts
    - Development team – funding and sustainability
- St. John's Community Health
    - Inform Community Wellness Circle content and implementation
    - Provide mental health expertise and consultation
    - Receive mental health referrals
    - Development team – funding and sustainability
- Community Advisory Board
    - Inform direction of overall Community Action Plan
    - Give feedback on emerging community needs
- Local Residents
    - Participate in ongoing community convenings to provide feedback on emerging community needs
    - Participate in Mental Wellness activities
    - Help inform future mental wellness programming
- LACDMH
    - Provide mental health subject matter expertise
    - Inform Community Wellness Circle content and resource development
    - Receive mental health referrals
- South Central Run Club – Alternative Mental Wellness Activities
- Tree Yoga Collaborative – Alternative Mental Wellness Activities

ACTION STEPS – Community Mental Wellness Activations

Step	Lead	Deadline
Build a steering group of community members to co-design activities so they feel authentic and relevant.	Program Manager Admin Program Manager	Term 4 Mos. 1-2

Identify and collaborate with trusted local partners on provision of alternative wellness activities for community members	Program Manager Admin Program Manager	Term 3 – Mos. 8-12
Curate a mix of alternative wellness activities (e.g., yoga, art therapy, drumming circles, guided meditation, dance).	Program Manager Admin Program Manager	Term 4 - Mos. 2-ongoing
Recruit experienced facilitators to lead community conversations about mental health to normalize dialogue and reduce stigma.	Program Manager Admin Program Manager	Term 4 - Mos. 2-ongoing
Identity community locations well equipped for larger events	Program Manager Admin Program Manager	Term 4 - Mos. 2-ongoing
Develop participant and partner feedback survey; implement participant pre/post surveys on attitudes toward mental health.	Manager of Data and Evaluation	Term 4 – Mos. 3-5
Develop bilingual outreach & communications plan (flyers, social media, church and school bulletins).	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager	Term 4 – Mos. 2 and ongoing
Develop data management workflow (survey administration, storage, analysis, reporting).	Manager of Data and Evaluation	Term 4 – Mos. 3-5
Identify sustainability opportunities (funding, CHW/Promotor training, embedding activities into partner programs).	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager Esperanza Community Housing and St. John's Community Health development teams	Term 4 – Mos. 6-12
ACTION STEPS – Mental Health First Aid training for Beauty Practitioners and Barbers		
Step	**Lead**	**Deadline**
Establish MH partnerships and identify content experts that help inform project development.	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager Manager of Data and Evaluation	Term 4 Mos. 1-3 Dec-Feb
Develop the Community Wellness Circle framework and gather community input through listening sessions and focus groups.	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager Director of Promotores Program MH Partner	Term 4 Mos. 2-6
Develop a vetted MH and alternative mental wellbeing activities resource list	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager Manager of Data and Evaluation	Term 4 Mos. 2-6

Training to South Central Heals CHWs on Community Wellness Circle facilitation, trauma-informed approaches, and participant support.	Director of Promotores Program Program Manager	Term 4 -Mos. 7-8
Training to South Central Heals CHWs on the various types of mental health services and practitioners (counseling, therapy, psychiatry, psychologist.)	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager DPH SJCH LADMH Future identified MH Partners	Term 4 – Mos. 7-8 Team is already familiar but will get a refresher
Recruitment of BP/Bs.	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager CHWs	Term 4 – Mos. 4-6
Recruit community members and trusted community leaders to participate in Community Wellness Circles.	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager Manager of Data and Evaluation DPH SJCH LADMH Future identified MH Partners	Term 4 – Mos. 8 and ongoing
Ensure that a tracking system is in place to monitor implementation and impact	Administrative Program Manager Program Manager Manager of Data and Evaluation	Term 4 – Mos. 8 and ongoing

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The implementation timeline spans two years**,** beginning with Stage 1 measures tracked immediately to capture outputs such as the number of activations, participants, and outreach efforts. By six months, Stage 2 measures are introduced to assess quality and participant satisfaction, allowing for mid-course adjustments. From 12 months onward, Stage 3 outcome measures are incorporated to evaluate whether participants and partners are "better off," including reduced stigma, improved knowledge, and stronger collaborations.

Stage 1How much did we do?
Mental Wellness Community Activations

- # of community activations hosted (fairs, workshops, wellness events).
- # of participants attending activations.
- # of alternative mental wellness activities offered (art, movement, mindfulness, etc.).
- # of resource fairs supported by South Central Heals.
- # of outreach materials distributed in multiple languages (flyers, calls, social media campaigns).
- # of successful recruitments/attendees reached through outreach.
- # of community partners engaged in planning or delivering activities.
- #of referrals from SCH CHWs resulting in service connection

Community Wellness Circle Participants

- # of Community Wellness Circles hosted.
- # of participants attending Community Wellness Circles.
- # of repeat participants attending multiple Community Wellness Circles.
- # of recruitment attempts for Community Wellness Circles.
- # of successful recruitments for Community Wellness Circles.
- # of community partners supporting Community Wellness Circles.

Community Wellness Circle Referrals

- # of referrals made by SCH CHWs to mental health practitioners and community resources.
- % of referred community members who enrolled in mental health services.
- % of connections of community members to mental health practitioners or community resources through follow-up.

Stage 2: How well did we do this?
Mental Wellness Community Activations

- Average attendance rate at activations compared to registrations/RSVPs.
- Satisfaction rate of participants (measured through post-event surveys). (Months 1-24)
- Diversity of activities offered (ensuring culturally relevant and inclusive options).
- Partner satisfaction with collaboration and event implementation.
- Rate of activities co-designed by community members

Community Wellness Circles

- Attendance rate of participants at Community Wellness Circles.
- Satisfaction rate of Community Wellness Circle participants.
- Satisfaction rate of community members connected to mental health practitioners or community resources.
- Ratio of dissatisfied community members with referred services.
- Ratio of community members needing additional connections to mental health providers or community resources.

Stage 3: Was anyone better off?
Mental Wellness Community Activations

Community Members

- #/% of participants reporting reduced stigma toward discussing mental health (Attitude).
- #/% of participants who report improved knowledge of available mental health resources (Knowledge).
- #/% of participants who felt more comfortable seeking mental health support after attending (Attitude/Behavior).
- #/% of participants who report adopting at least one new mental wellness practice introduced at the event (Behavior).
- #/% of participants who successfully connected to South Central Heals or partner mental health services through a soft handoff (Behavior).

Community Partners

- #/% of partners reporting increase in community participation in their activities or programs
- #/% of partners who continue to collaborate in future wellness events.

Community Wellness Circles
Participants

- #/% of participants who report increased knowledge of mental health resources and wellness practices (Knowledge).
- #/% of participants who report feeling more connected to their community and support networks (Attitude).
- #/% of participants who report feeling more comfortable discussing mental health concerns (Attitude).
- #/% of participants who report adopting at least one new mental wellness or stress-management practice (Behavior).
- #/% of participants who successfully connected to mental health, wellness, or community resources through SCH referrals (Behavior).

Community Members Receiving Referrals

- #/% of participants who report they were better off as a result of participating in Community Wellness Circles.
- #/% of participants who report reduced stigma toward mental health and help-seeking (Attitude).
- #/% of participants who report satisfaction with services and supports received (Satisfaction).

DATE PLAN TAKES EFFECT
Our team received resounding approval to move forward with these activities at our most recent Community Convening held in September 2025 and we have already started to contact community partners.

ACCOUNTABILITY

South Central Heals is committed to keeping our community informed and engaged as we carry out this Community Action Plan. We will share updates, progress, and new opportunities for involvement during our **community convenings**, on **Instagram (@southcentral.heals)**, and through our website at **www.esperanzacommunityhousing.org/southcentralheals**.
Community members are encouraged to stay connected and participate in our ongoing convenings, where we will report back on results and gather input on emerging needs and priorities.
For more information, contact South Central Heals at sch@esperanzacommunityhousing.org or **(213) 791-2089**

Our team received strong community support to move forward with the original Community Action Plan during our Community Convening held in September 2025. Since then, South Central Heals has conducted one-on-one conversations with community members and engaged in ongoing internal planning to assess emerging needs and implementation opportunities. As a result, adaptations were made to the implementation strategy while maintaining the original goals of reducing mental health stigma and improving access to support. This updated approach will be presented to the Community Advisory Board for review and feedback during the current reporting period.