

Well-being Among New Americans in Clay County

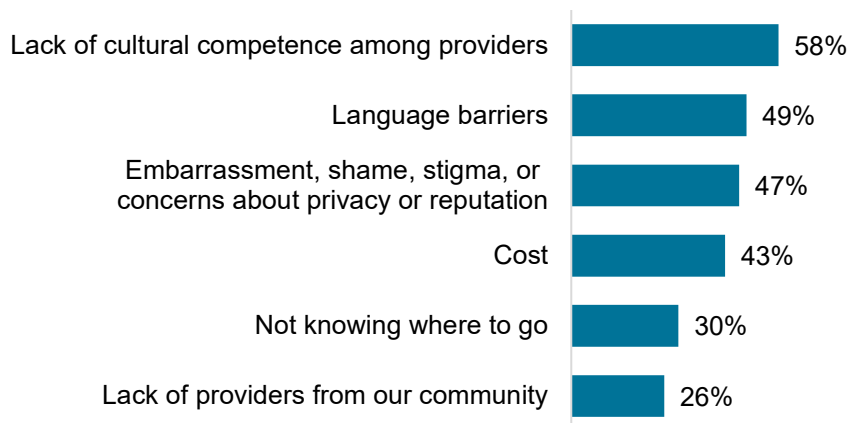
Key Findings from a Survey of New Americans

Clay County, Dei Consulting, and Wilder Research recently conducted a survey of adults who live in Clay County and identify as New Americans (i.e., immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers). The survey was conducted as part of a Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Grant Clay County received from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to help the county better understand the well-being of the New American community and identify ways the county could help improve well-being. This summary presents key findings from the survey results; complete findings, methodology, and description of respondents can be found in the full report.

There are many barriers to accessing mental health services, particularly related to cultural competency and relevancy.

- Respondents identified several barriers that prevent people in their community from accessing mental health services, including several barriers related to cultural competency and relevancy of services (Figure 1).
- Culture-related barriers included a lack of cultural competence among providers, language barriers, and a lack of providers from the respondent's community.
- Other commonly reported barriers included embarrassment, stigma, or privacy concerns and cost.

1. MOST COMMONLY REPORTED BARRIERS TO ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



Respondents were mostly unfamiliar with existing services and resources in Clay County, with some exceptions.

- Across the 18 services or resources provided by organizations the survey asked about, the majority of respondents reported that they had either never heard of the organization, or that they had heard of the organization but didn't know what services or resources the organization provides (55-93%).
- Results indicate greater levels of familiarity for some services, including Clay County, Essentia Health, FirstLink (211), and Sanford Fargo Behavioral Health.

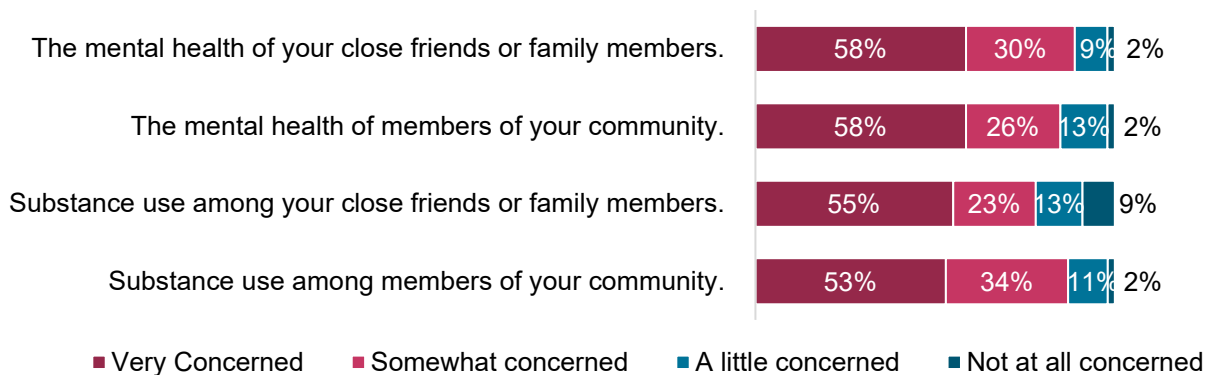
Health care providers, faith or religious supports, FirstLink (211), and community elders appear to be primary sources of mental health support for the New American community.

- Respondents were asked to identify the resources they would suggest if someone they knew had a mental health concern, and they most commonly selected health care providers (55%), faith or religious supports (40%), FirstLink/211 (38%), and community elders (36%).

Respondents expressed concern about the well-being of their family, friends, and community members, and some respondents reported experiencing mental health symptoms themselves.

- Most respondents shared they were somewhat or very concerned about mental health and substance use among their close friends, family members, and members of their community (78-88%; Figure 2).
- While most respondents reported they are not bothered at all or only bothered "a little" by mental health symptoms, others indicated that some of the symptoms bother them "quite a bit" or "extremely" (11-34%). The most commonly reported symptoms included feeling everything is an effort and feeling sad.

2. MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE-RELATED CONCERNS



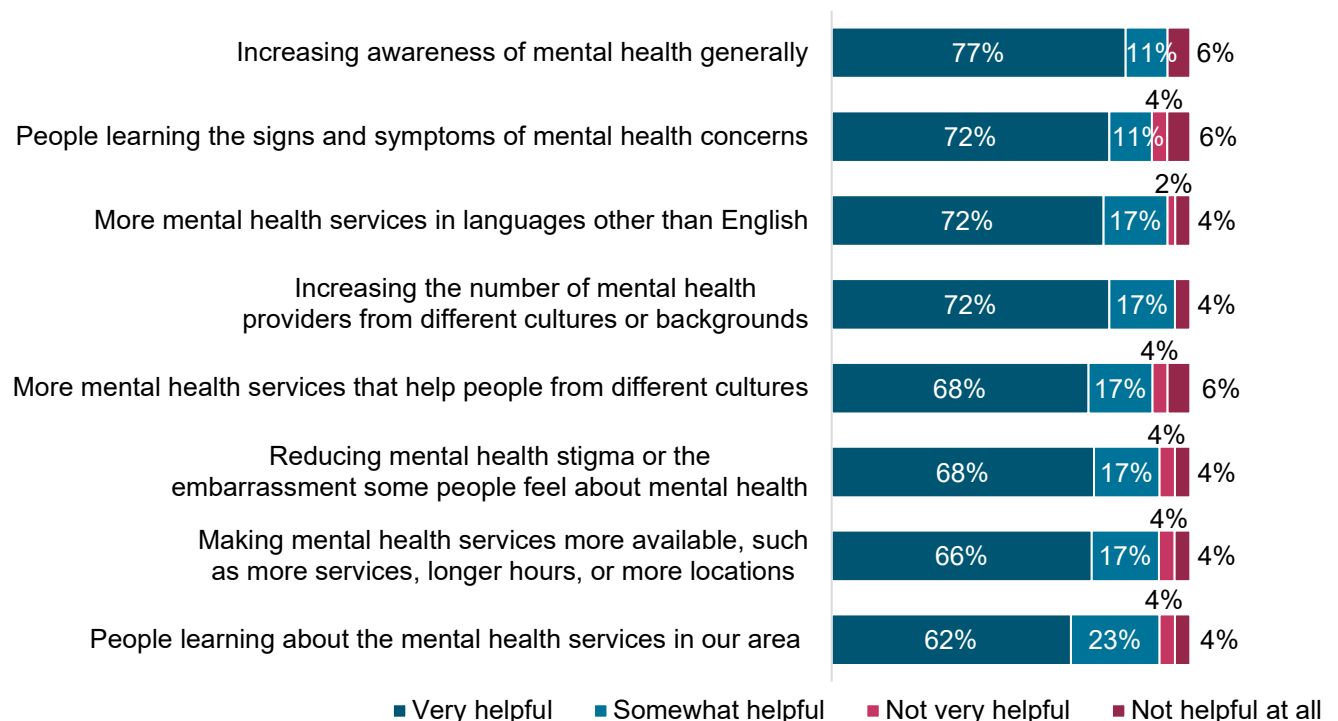
Respondents generally agreed that people can have positive mental health, but they also generally agreed that mental health is only about “illnesses or problems.”

- The majority of respondents agreed with the statement, “People can have positive mental health” (83%).
- However, the majority of respondents also agreed with the statement, “Mental health is only about illnesses or problems” (59%).

There are many opportunities to improve the well-being of the New American community in Clay County.

- When asked how helpful specific changes would be to improve the well-being of their community, the majority of respondents agreed that all the changes would be somewhat or very helpful (83-89%; Figure 3).
- These changes include making services more available, increasing awareness of available services, increasing awareness of mental health and mental health symptoms, improving the cultural competency and relevancy of services (e.g., providing services in languages other than English, increasing the number of providers from different cultures), and reducing stigma.

3. HELPFULNESS OF POTENTIAL CHANGES TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY WELL-BEING



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For more information

This summary presents highlights of the *Well-being among New Americans in Clay County: Key Findings and Data Tables of Survey Results* report. For more information about this report, contact Melissa Serafin at Wilder Research, melissa.serafin@wilder.org.

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APRIL 2022