

Mental Health Ambassador Program

2024 Program Key Takeaways



METRO DENVER
PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH

About the Ambassador Program

The **Metro Denver Partnership for Health** (MDPH) has partnered with community-based organizations (called ambassadors) since 2021 to increase their capacity to improve mental health outcomes and promote anti-stigma messages within their communities. This initiative focuses on reducing stigma among communities experiencing disparities in mental health outcomes, such as **Latinx, Asian American, African American/Black, LGBTQIA+, and Medicaid recipients**. In response to ambassador feedback, MDPH converted the Mental Health Ambassador Program to a year-long model running from January to December 2024 to enhance program sustainability, deepen community impact, and provide greater continuity for ambassadors. MDPH partnered with **17 organizations serving the Denver metro area in 2024**. Throughout the program, liaisons representing public health and health care organizations supported ambassadors to implement activities. MDPH is continuing this work with a new cohort of ambassador organizations in 2025.

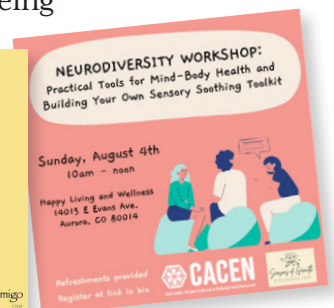
Program Goal

The program aims to achieve measurable outcomes, including a reduction in self-reported mental health stigma, within these priority populations by end of 2025, building on insights from previous cohorts. Drawing on findings from the Colorado Belonging Barometer – which measures how people in Colorado experience belonging and highlights its connection to social cohesion, mental health, and overall well-being – ambassadors also sought to engage in locations that facilitate a sense of belonging.

2024 Ambassador Program Activities

Ambassadors completed the following activities to promote anti-stigma messages:

- ▶ Networking and sharing information
- ▶ Hosting community events
- ▶ Creating and distributing anti-stigma messaging materials
- ▶ Participating in monthly community of practice meetings and other peer sharing opportunities
- ▶ Collaborating with MDPH and a marketing firm to update and improve the Let's Talk Colorado/Hablemos Colorado website, which encourages people to engage in conversations about mental well-being



Examples of anti-stigma messaging material created by ambassador organizations **Cuenta Conmigo** (left) and **Colorado Asian Culture Education Network**.

Ambassador Outcomes

Confidence:

To assess program impact, ambassadors completed pre- and post-program surveys along with quarterly reports. Reports gathered information on successes, challenges, and estimated reach. Surveys gauged ambassadors' confidence in addressing mental health stigma in their communities.

Results show that ambassadors report higher levels of confidence in both supporting their community to access mental health services and decreasing stigma around seeking mental health services after their participation in the program.

Average responses from pre- and post-program ambassador surveys ranking their confidence on a scale of 1 (low) to 3 (high).

Confidence Indicator	2024 Cohort	
	Pre	Post
Supporting community to access mental health services	2.3/3	2.5/3
Decreasing stigma around seeking mental health services	2.4/3	2.6/3

Engagement:

Ambassadors successfully expanded outreach efforts, launched new initiatives – including a mental wellness conference – and implemented community-driven stigma-reduction programming. Ambassadors estimated that they reached a total of 301,275 individuals in 2024 through 6,501 unique outreach efforts, including social media campaigns, door-to-door engagement, and community events. Many community members expressed appreciation for the information shared and demonstrated an increased willingness to discuss mental health. As part of their work, ambassadors will continue to play a key role in updating the Let's Talk Colorado/Hablemos Colorado website to enhance its cultural relevance.

Successes:

"It is very encouraging to see that people are speaking more openly about (mental health) and seeking help. This is reflected in the way our programs and events have become more seamless and how individuals are increasingly willing to discuss their situations and seek support."

"Our biggest success was the annual Mental Wellness Conference, which brings in about 400 community members to discuss stigma reduction and the importance of mental wellness."

"Once again, thank you to our liaison for his support in making connections and overall enthusiasm for the work we're doing at Envision:You."

Focus on Belonging

Recognizing the link between belonging and mental health, ambassadors refined their outreach to focus on locations that promote a sense of belonging.

This shift was driven by findings from the Belonging Barometer, which was originally developed by Over Zero and the American Immigration Council. It was adapted by the Colorado Health Institute in partnership with Over Zero to focus on Colorado-specific insights. The Colorado Belonging Barometer showed that people who feel a strong sense of belonging experience better mental and physical health, while those who experience exclusion or uncertainty about their belonging are at greater risk of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. The report also showed that people naturally feel connected in certain community spaces.

Driven by these insights, ambassadors prioritized hosting events in libraries, parks, and places of worship – settings shown to foster a sense of belonging. This shift has led to greater engagement, with higher attendance and more meaningful conversations with community members. By leveraging these welcoming spaces, ambassadors are reducing stigma, fostering social connection, and ensuring people feel supported and valued.

