

DIVERSITY SURVEY SUMMARY

Thanks to the 42 people who took the time to give the Alaska Psychological Association valuable feedback and input by taking the Alaska Psychological Association Diversity Survey.

Highlights from the survey are summarized below.

BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

- About one-third (35%) of survey respondents were not currently members of AK-PA.
- Of those who were members, more than half (51%) had been members more than 5 years.
- Respondents belonged to many other professional organizations. American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the Alaska Counseling Association were the most frequently mentioned.
- Most (73%) said their primary professional focus was clinical. About 20% had an administrative focus and the remaining 7% were academicians or researchers.
- In terms of how long respondents had been a behavioral health professional, 60% indicated 16 or more years.
- Most respondents (70%) offered the majority of their services in Anchorage.

ASSESSMENT OF AK-PA

- Participants were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements about AK-PA. Statements indicating disagreement (I disagree with the statement somewhat, for the most part, or completely) were grouped together. Statements indicating agreement were also grouped.

Statement	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Don't Know (%)
AK-PA celebrates and affirms the diversity of all persons.	10	12.5	70	7.5
AK-PA works diligently to ensure that its membership is diverse.	20.5	12.8	46.2	20.5
AK-PA offers useful training opportunities for behavioral health providers to increase their competence in working with diverse clients.	17.5	5	72.5	5
AK-PA communicates regularly about the importance of diversity issues.	25	15	50	10
AK-PA is committed to working to achieve social justice for all.	12.5	20	57.5	10
AK-PA is committed to partnering with other organizations to further the principles of diversity.	12.5	22.5	45	20
AK-PA is effectively meeting my needs to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.	20	20	57.5	2.5
AK-PA effectively meets the needs of providers who work in rural parts of Alaska.	30.8	20.5	25.6	23.1

- When asked to provide comments about their ratings to the item above, the lack of a presence in rural Alaska was mentioned several times. In addition, several mentioned AK-PA doesn't seem inclusive of masters-level professionals.
- Almost 30% of respondents reported they were from a diverse background themselves. Of these, a little more than one-third (38.5%) agreed to some degree with the statement "AK-PA effectively meets my professional needs as a person from a diverse background."

PROFESSIONAL NEEDS

- Respondents were asked what percent of people they served came from diverse backgrounds.
 - About half (51%) said up to 30% of those they served came from diverse backgrounds.
 - About a quarter (26%) said between 50 to 70% of those they served were diverse.
 - A little less than a quarter (23%) said more than 70% of those they served were diverse.
- When asked about the diverse backgrounds of clients, significant ethnic diversity was mentioned (Alaska Native, African American, Pacific Islanders, Latina/Latino) as well as diversity across sexual orientation, religious affiliation, socio-economic status, and veteran status.
- Seventy-two percent said that less than 10% of those they served spoke limited English. The remaining 28% said up to 50% of their clients spoke limited English.
- Most (68%) have worked with an interpreter.

TRAINING NEEDS

- About fifteen percent of respondents felt their training offered insufficient preparation for working with people from diverse backgrounds. The remainder felt their training was adequate (36%) or prepared them very well (33%) or extremely well (15%).
- Most (67%) rated their competence in working with people from diverse backgrounds as "a good deal competent" or "very competent".
- However, ninety-five percent stated they'd like more training in working with people from diverse backgrounds.
- When asked whether they'd prefer one or two day conferences or workshops, most (63%) preferred one day conferences followed by two day conferences (18%) and two hour workshops (14%).
- Respondents were then asked to indicate what topics AK-PA could address to meet the needs of behavioral health professionals working with people from diverse background. At least 50% of those who responded indicated they'd be likely to attend a training addressing the following topics.
 - Working with older adults.
 - Addressing generational cohort influences and generational roles.
 - Working with transgender individuals.
 - Working with Alaska Native people.
 - Working with biracial people.
 - Assessing cultural identification.
 - Working with immigrants.
 - Working with refugees.
 - Working with devoutly religious individuals.
 - Incorporating spirituality or religion into treatment.
 - Working with people of a gay sexual orientation.

- Working with people of a lesbian sexual orientation.
- Working with people of a bisexual sexual orientation.
- Working with people who have physical disabilities due to injury, stroke, MS, etc.
- How to assess functional impairment.
- Working with interpreters.
- Working with individuals living in poverty.
- Working with individuals who live in rural locations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

- About a quarter of respondents (26%) said they were an expert in an area of diversity.
- We asked for ideas about how to improve AK-PA's efforts in increasing the visibility and importance of diversity. Communicating about AK-PA's current and planned diversity efforts with membership was suggested. More outreach to and collaboration with diverse communities was mentioned as well as more trainings offered in rural Alaska or about practicing in rural Alaska. Requiring all presenters to address diversity was another idea.
- We also solicited ideas about how to increase participation in AK-PA by rural providers. Telecommunication and videoconferencing were mentioned by several respondents. Other ideas included the following; offer funds to help rural providers with transportation costs to conferences in Anchorage, hold conferences outside Anchorage, advertise workshops in Anchorage well in advance so rural providers have time to plan, actively recruit rural board members, hold a workshop on rural practice, hold a rural providers meeting at the annual meeting, advocate for different ways for rural providers to obtain licensure and education (e.g., support degrees obtained through distance education).

If you would like to request more detailed information about the survey results, please contact Denise Dillard at ddillard@scf.cc or 907-729-8518.