



Communication and relationship building to support mental health

John Eshun & Kathy Moore | Child & Family Health Division

Reimagine Black Youth Mental Health

Goals

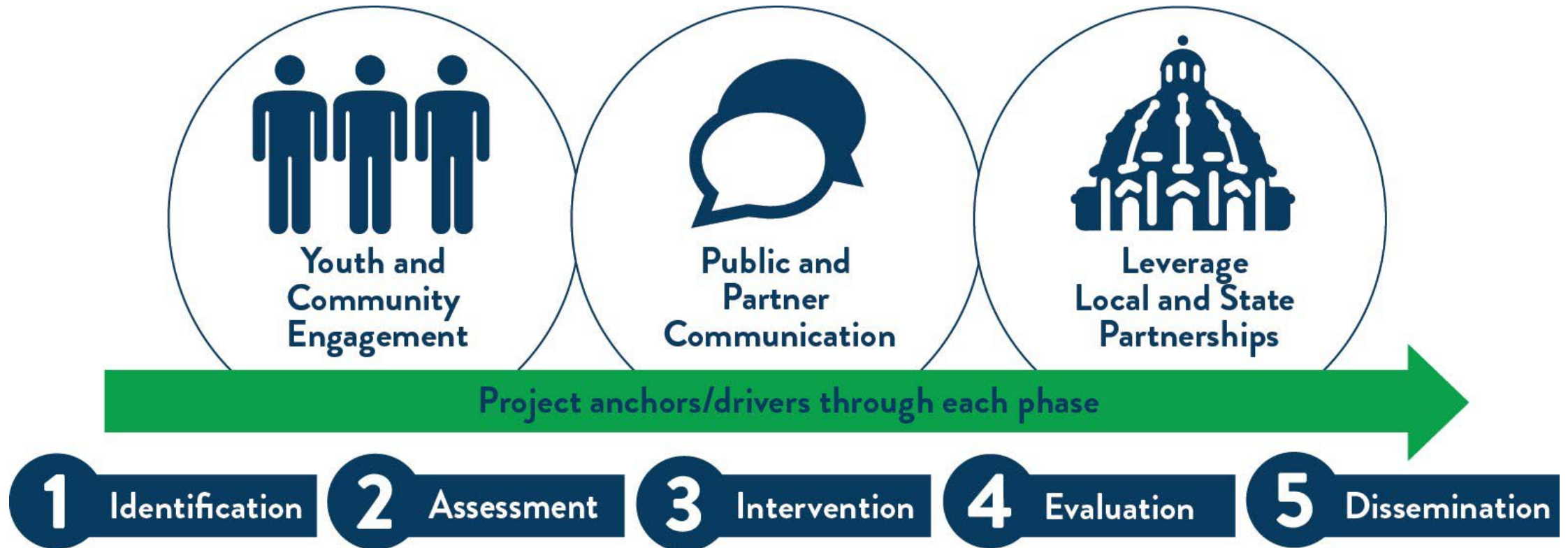
- Shift the narrative from deficit to well-being
- Change the conditions that harm Black youth
- Strengthen the ecosystem
- Model community-driven change

The approach

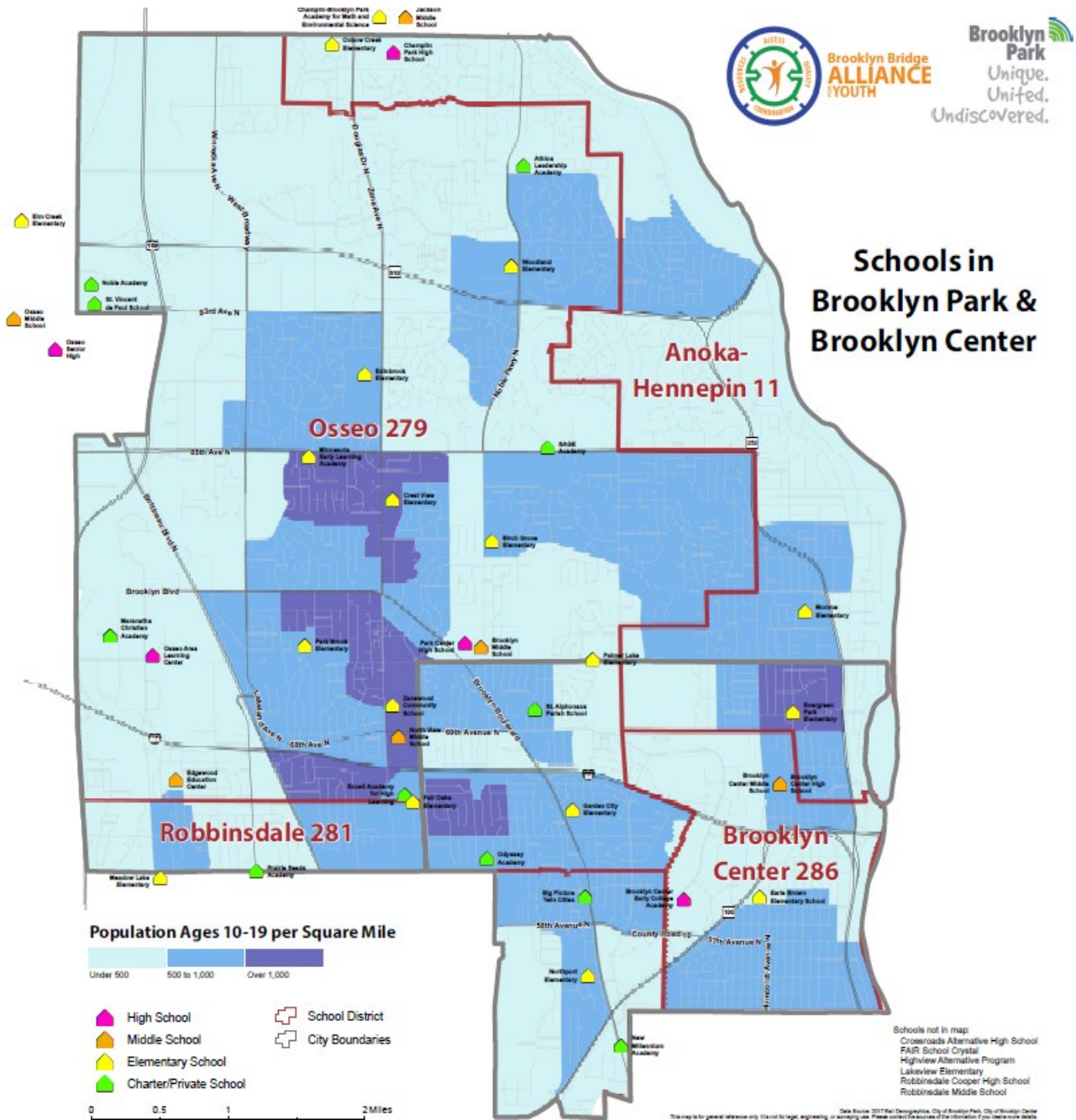
- Black centered
- Youth led
- Community driven
- State/local partnership



Project stages



Target population



Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, or the Brooklyns, are two of the most diverse cities in Minnesota.

- 10,414 Black youth ages 10-17
- Young people go to school, live, work, and play in these communities.

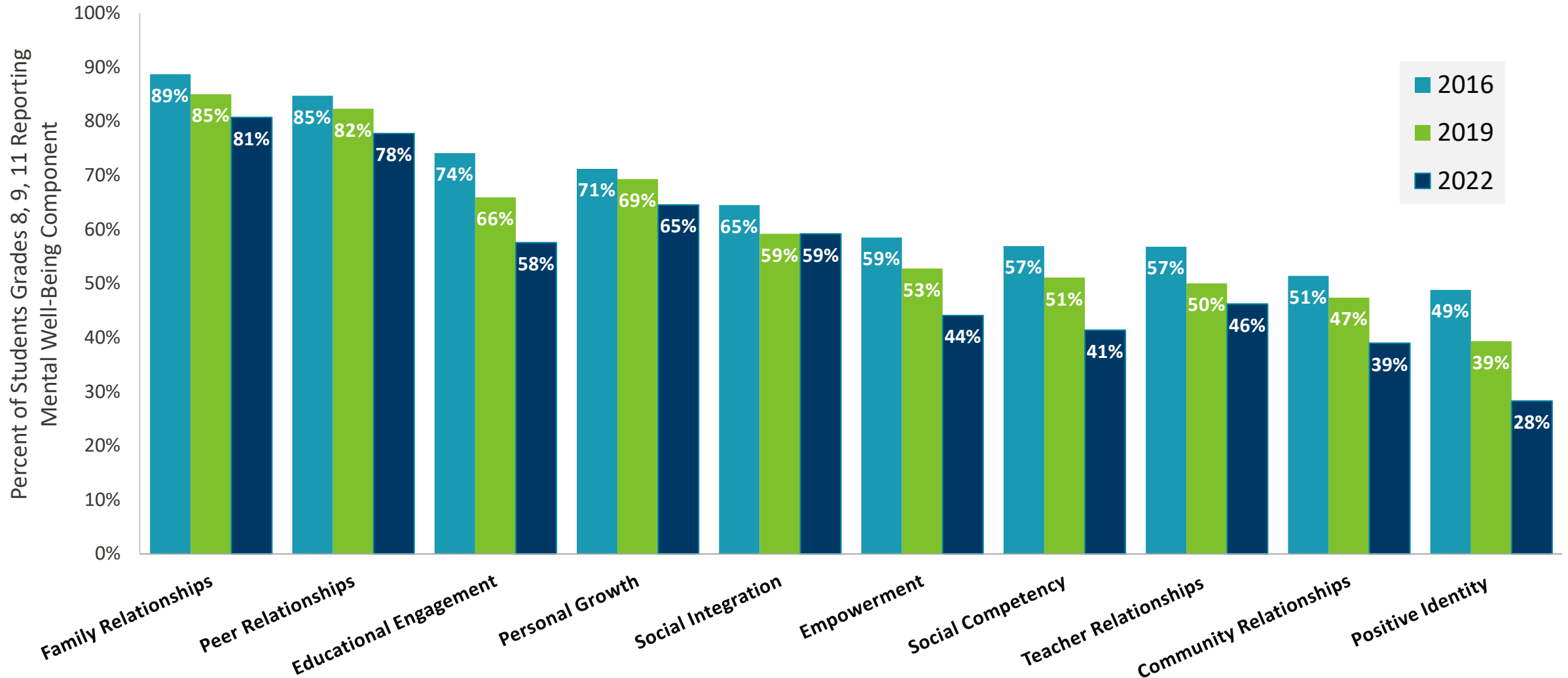
Key mental health indicators

- 1. Sense of Belonging** (social integration): connection to structures and relationships that support sense of belonging.
- 2. Social Competency** (emotional stability): ability to build relationships, navigate peer pressure, appreciate other people's feelings.
- 3. Parent and Peer Relationships:** supportive and loving connections.

Key mental health indicators, cont.

- 4. Personal Growth:** feeling like you have something to contribute, supports planning for a future.
- 5. Empowerment:** opportunities for autonomy and decision-making, feeling valued and appreciated.
- 6. Positive Identity:** feeling good about yourself and overall, understanding your role and purpose.

Student reporting of mental well-being components



**What we ask determines what we find.
What we find determines how we talk.
How we talk determines what we can imagine.
What we imagine determines what we achieve.**

- Local Advisory Council's approach

Shifting the narrative

- Focus on Black Joy.
- Honoring diversity of Black experience.
- Understanding cultural norms and perspectives.
- De-stigmatizing mental health and promoting mental well-being.
- Expanding understanding of what contributes to mental well-being.

- How does your community define mental well-being?
- What are negative stigma in your community?
- Share examples that exemplify mental well-being.



What does it mean
to strengthen the
ecosystem?

Core values and expectations

- Shared power with local organization.
- Centering Black Youth and community capacity/leadership.
- Focus on policy changes, not directly about services.
- Prioritizing mental health and well-being promotion vs. treating mental illness.

Model community driven change

- Taking action in your community is an effective strategy to improve mental well-being.
- Community level health improvement requires community level action.
- Create a process for including community and reversing some historical policies that have limited community influence.
- Participation in your community, in your mental well-being is the goal.

Continue the dialogue



- How do people see themselves in the language you use to promote health?
- How does community see ownership in their role of making those changes?
How are they included?
- What agency exists in your community for individuals to advocate for themselves?

How will you strengthen
your ecosystem?

MDH mental health initiatives

- Reimagine Black Youth Mental Health
 - [Reimagine Black Youth Mental Health](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/blackyouth.html)
(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/blackyouth.html)
- [Minnesota Thrives](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/mnthrives.html) (www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/mnthrives.html)
 - Online database of community mental health and well-being initiatives.
- Supporting children of incarcerated parents
 - [Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/jail.html)
(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/jail.html)
 - Model Jail practices & community-based programming
- Well-being and resilience living webinars
 - Last Tuesday of most months, from 10 a.m. - Noon

Questions?

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