Mental Health and Food Insecurity Survey

Food insecurity, poor diets, and inadequate nutrition, directly and indirectly, contribute to undermining physical and mental health. NEDHSA will lead the creation of an analytic tool and methodology to help ascertain the severity of food insecurity in Northeast Louisiana. The survey tool has been developed in partnership with the Food Bank of NELA and will be distributed throughout both networks and the 12-parish region. In particular, the survey instrument will ask an array of questions about mental health, addiction, primary health, food insecurity, negative social determinants, and trauma.

1. **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to help meet the mental health, physical health, and food insecurity needs of vulnerable communities in Northeast Louisiana. This study further advances Northeast Delta's integrated healthcare delivery model and efforts to reduce negative social determinants of health like inadequate housing, unemployment, food insecurity, loneliness, and limited education. NEDHSA will use the information collected to better inform our programs and services, benefiting the citizens we serve. Once the data is gathered, Northeast Delta will analyze the data, publish and share the findings, and immediately begin to fill gaps and needs identified by survey participants.

2. **Methods:**

a. Data collection

A web-based survey will be distributed among the residents of Northeast Louisiana including the clients of NEDHSA and Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana. The survey will be conducted from November 8, 2021 to January 7, 2022 (tentatively). A survey invitation link will be shared with NEDHSA outpatient clinics, inpatient facilities, contractors, and partner organizations. The online survey is completely voluntary. No protected or private health information will be collected, and participants cannot be identified by the data being collected. All responses will be captured through the online survey using the Google Form interface, and responses are automatically entered and housed on the backend in an attached Excel spreadsheet for data analysis purposes. Survey data is also compiled and analyzed automatically by Google Forms, and analytics are provided on the backend. All online survey data is maintained on Google Drive in a specified private, password-protected file accessible to Dr. Dependra Bhatta.

b. Informed consent for survey participation

An introductory screening page will be provided to the potential survey respondents. They will be informed about the purpose of the study. Only adults (≥18 years old) who can read and write in English can participate in the survey. They will be informed that their participation is voluntary and they can terminate participation at any time. The survey questions will be presented to those who provide their consent.

c. Confidentiality

This is an anonymous survey. Respondents will not be asked for any personal information that can identify them. The demographic information asked in this survey is limited to respondents' age, gender, race, and parish of residence (if they live in Louisiana).
NEDHSA will maintain the confidentiality of the data collected through this survey.

d. About the survey

Please find attached the survey questionnaire for the covariates.

3. **Expected results:**

NEDHSA Department of Behavioral and Primary Health Analytics will analyze the collected data with different statistical tools. We expect to find a significant interaction between mental health and food insecurity status consistent with the recent literature. There is a bidirectional association between food insecurity and mental health. Individuals with a mental health disorder, such as major depressive disorder, may have experienced food insecurity because they are less likely to engage in the job market or other supportive resources. Conversely, food insecurity undermines the physical health of an individual and increases the psychological stress for not being able to secure food. We will also measure the severity of mental disorders and food insecurity. We expect that the individuals living in more food insecure conditions are more likely to develop severe mental illness.

Please follow the following link to fill out the survey
https://forms.gle/oHiMc7pTcuPhJUvr9