

# The Spirit of Organizational Cultural Competence Participatory Action Research

Dr. Heather M Boynton & Sarah McGreer PhD Student  
Faculty of Social Work



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

Co-Investigators: Dr. D. Nicholas, Dr. H. Ngo, Dr. L. Davis Collaborator: Carrie Avveduti

## Partnership & Objectives:

CASA Mental Health in Edmonton partnered with the University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work. Participatory Action Research aims:

- 1) establish baseline knowledge, advance an understanding of cultural competence
- 2) assess policies, procedures, and services
- 3) identify strengths, gaps, and barriers in meeting the cultural, spiritual, and traditional needs of service recipients

## Method: Participatory Action Research

Staff Survey	Focus Groups	Thematic Analysis
--------------	--------------	-------------------

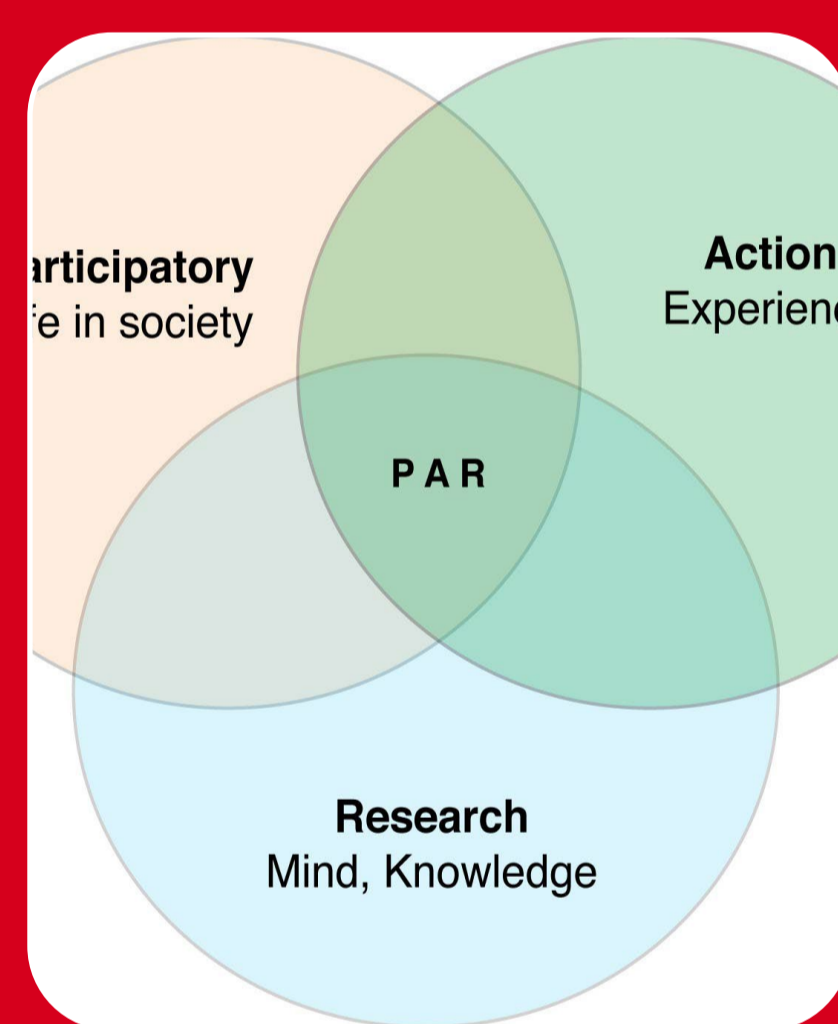


## Challenges with PAR:

COVID-19 impacts  
Staff turn over/engagement,  
New Leadership  
Restructuring

## Outcomes:

- 1) PAR supported staff in determining the research methods and identifying directions for enhancing cultural competence
- 2) Established a baseline level of knowledge for future evaluation
- 3) Recommendations for developing policy/procedures, encouraging involvement, feedback from service recipients, stakeholders, and community in culturally competent decision making and activities
- 4) Enhancing supports for staff working across cultures, staff training needs for culturally competent organizational practices and procedures
- 5) Need to develop a workplan and cultural competence committee



## Strength of PAR process

- Mobilized a team: CASA staff, researchers and collaborators
- Designed and disseminated a staff survey using benchmarks from the literature
- Achieved 53% staff participation in survey
- Management commitment and involvement with PAR process
- Conducted 7 focus groups with various program staff and managers and stakeholders



## Strengths Identified

- Staff have diverse cultural backgrounds that reflect the culture of service users
- Staff respect the worldview of others and value cultural competence
- Staff are informed of the systemic problems experienced by different cultural groups in the area
- Staff recognize it is their job to understand the culture of clients
- Staff evaluation of their own level of cultural competence could be leveraged along with training and orientation practices



## Gaps Identified in Survey

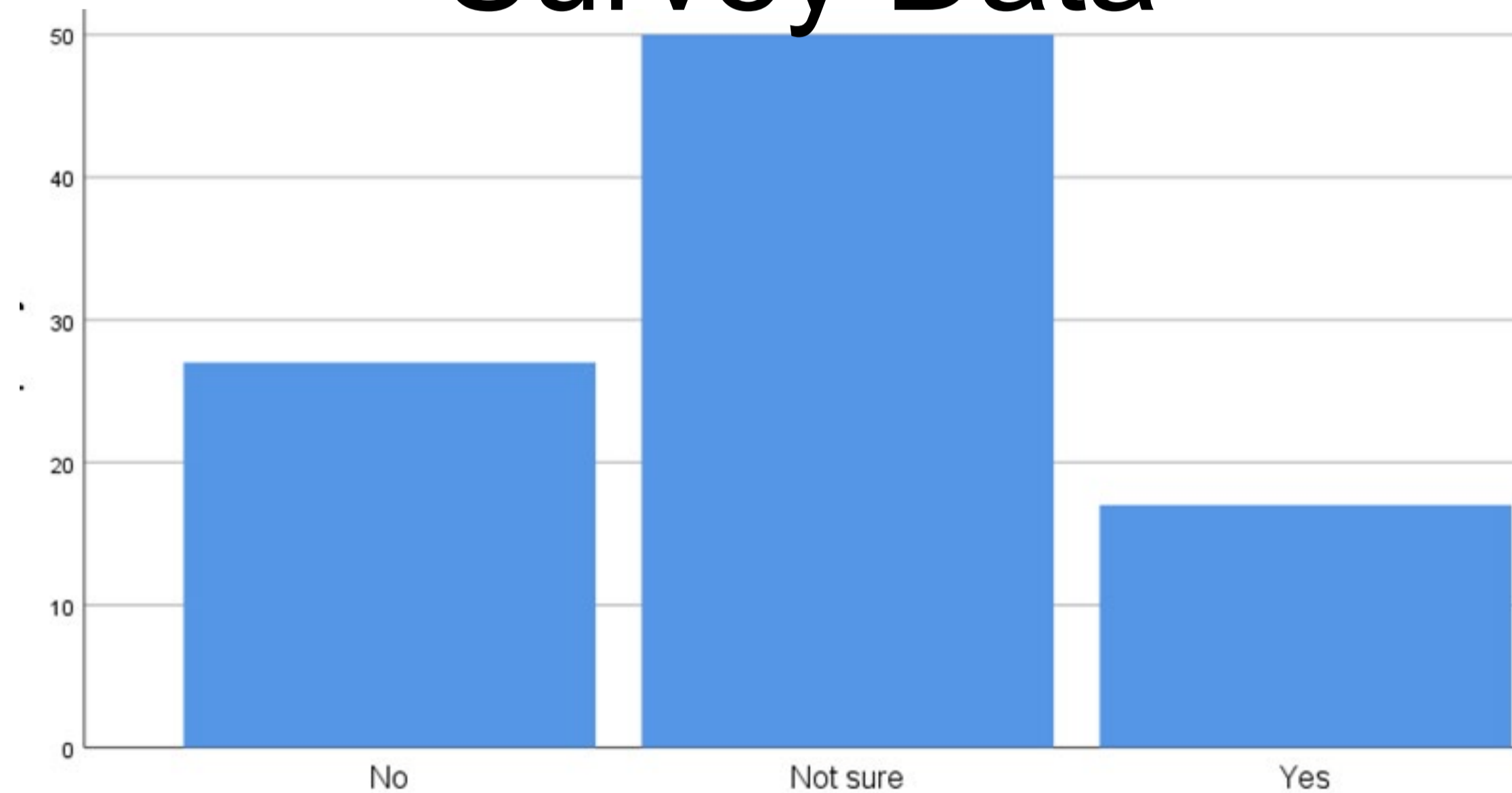
- Low staff knowledge of organizational policies, and resources for cultural competence
- Staff are unaware of culturally diverse services available
- Staff are unaware of processes to incorporate client feedback regarding cultural aspects in assessment, treatment, and evaluation of service delivery
- Staff at all levels feel there is much more to address

## References

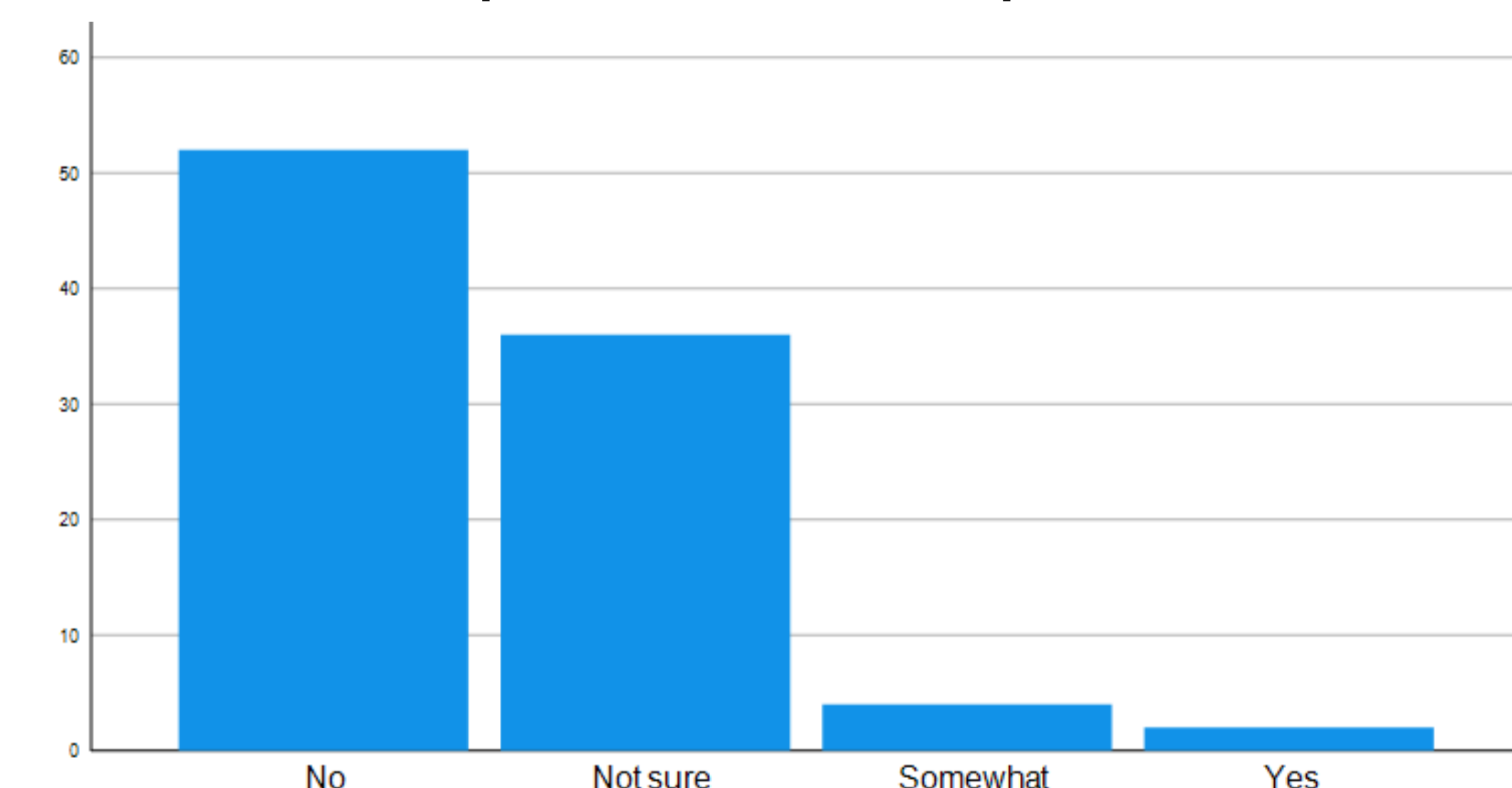
Ngo, H.V. (2008). *Cultural competence: A guide for organizational change*. Calgary, AB: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Olavarria, M., Beaulac, J., Bélanger, A., Young, M., & Aubry, T. (2009). Organizational cultural competence in community health and social service organizations: How to conduct a self-assessment. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 16(4), 140–150.

## Survey Data



Does CASA offer optional staff training to develop cultural competence?



Are translated services and materials available for people in their language?

## Next Steps:

- Thematic analysis of focus groups in progress
- Research Report: Recommendations for a comprehensive workplan to enhance cultural competence at all levels of the organization and services