



IMANI
ROMPIENDO
Barreras

The IMANI Breakthrough Project:

A cultural and faith-based recovery initiative for Black and Latinx communities in response to our current Opioid crisis

August 11, 2021
Rhode Island Governor's
Taskforce

Presenters:

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yale
program
for
recovery
and
community
health



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Imani Breakthrough

Imani Rompiendo Barreras

A Faith-Based Recovery Opioid Program

What is the meaning of Imani?

Imani means “faith” in Swahili.

The Imani Breakthrough is an intervention developed to target people addicted to and actively using heroin and/or other opiates and other drugs. This is a state of CT’s Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services initiative funded by SAMHSA and is part of the Connecticut State Targeted Response (CT STR) to the Opioid Crisis and the State Opioid Response (SOR) funding.



Starting with the Why?



**Why are we working with churches to do this? and
Can we collectively figure out a way to do something about it?**

- Racial\Ethnic minorities in US are less likely than Whites to **seek** mental health treatment (including for drug and alcohol)
 - Latinos and Black people compared with racial groups are less likely to **start** drug and alcohol treatment
 - If they do start, they don't really like the care they receive...**Lower Treatment engagement**
- This is where the **Latinx and Black CHURCH** can be helpful
- Religion and spirituality enable Latinos and Black people to cope with psychological distress (mind stress)
 - In urban Black communities (cities) 65-80% of adults attend church regularly **and in the Latino community 70% of the population attends church**
 - Many studies highlight the importance of church in addressing drug and alcohol use, where members seek help from clergy (pastors, deacons, deaconess)
 - **In addition, Latinos and Black People are often do not get help at traditional (regular) clinics**



Introducing...

Imani Breakthrough



**WE aim to Promote
Health and Healing
for**

Ourselves and Our Communities!

How we do this...

BY:

Creating a sense of unity – WE are in this together!

Creating a sense of collective responsibility

Through a Participatory process

Our approach

Church Liaison: Rev Robyn Anderson, M.A., LPC

- Our process:
 1. Learning through Conversations with communities and faith-based leaders and members.
 2. Through conversations with organizing team, using suggestions from communities, to modify and develop the faith-based recovery program.
Selected a model to combine the 5 Rs (Rowe, et al) and 8 Dimensions of Wellness (Swarbrick), with wrap-around coaches.
 3. Decided to add a component focused on Education sessions for churches and communities



Collaborating with Churches and Selection of Facilitators



Unique from other recovery programming, Imani deliberately has a strong focus on:



The importance of spirituality, known to have high cultural significance among Black and Latinx communities, through intervention groups based in churches.

- Culturally-informed opioid education and naloxone distribution (OEND)
- Addresses social determinants of health through the 8 dimensions of wellness and the 5Rs of citizenship: Roles, Rights, Resources, Responsibility, Relationships
- Harm Reduction
- Emphasizes Mutual support
- Intensive wraparound support
- Coaching in a safe and familiar environment
- Training and Curriculum based on IMANI philosophies
- Facilitators are people from the community/churches and those with lived experience of substance use.
- Imani directly addresses the barriers that impede access to the most effective pharmacologic and behavioral therapies available



Varick Memorial AME
Zion, New Haven, CT

Blackwell Memorial AME
Zion Church, Hartford, CT

Mount Aery Baptist,
Bridgeport CT

Burning Bush Family Life
Center, Waterbury, CT

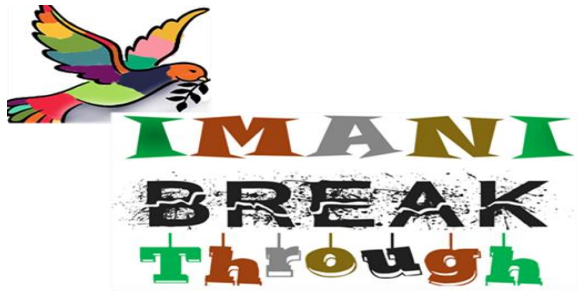
Collaborating with Churches and Selection of Facilitators

Pastor Jose church – Oasis of
Blessings Christian Center - , New
Britain, CT

Prince of Peace Church,
Bridgeport CT

Casa de Oracion y Adoracion,
New Haven, CT

IAR Nuevo Comoenzo (New
Beginnings) Church, Hartford, CT



Overview of Imani Breakthrough Intervention

The Imani Breakthrough intervention involves two components and takes place over 6 months:

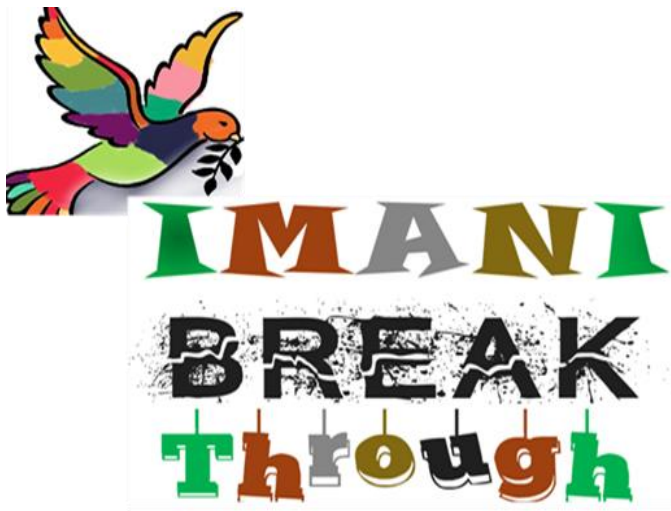
Part 1:

A group education component:

- **12 weeks** of classes and activities focused on wellness enhancement:
 - 8 Dimensions of Wellness** (Spiritual, Emotional, Physical, Financial, Environmental, Social, Intellectual, Occupational)
 - 5Rs of Citizenship enhancement** (Roles, Responsibilities, Relationships, Resources, Rights)
- **Wrap around Support and Coaching** – provided during the 12 weeks. Coaches provide weekly check-ins and are there to assist participants towards obtaining their recovery, hopes and dreams within the scope of the 8 Dimensions of Wellness and the 5Rs.

Part 2:

- **Next Step group component** – 10 weeks mutual support (post 12 week group).



Overview of Imani Breakthrough Preliminary Data



Demographic Information



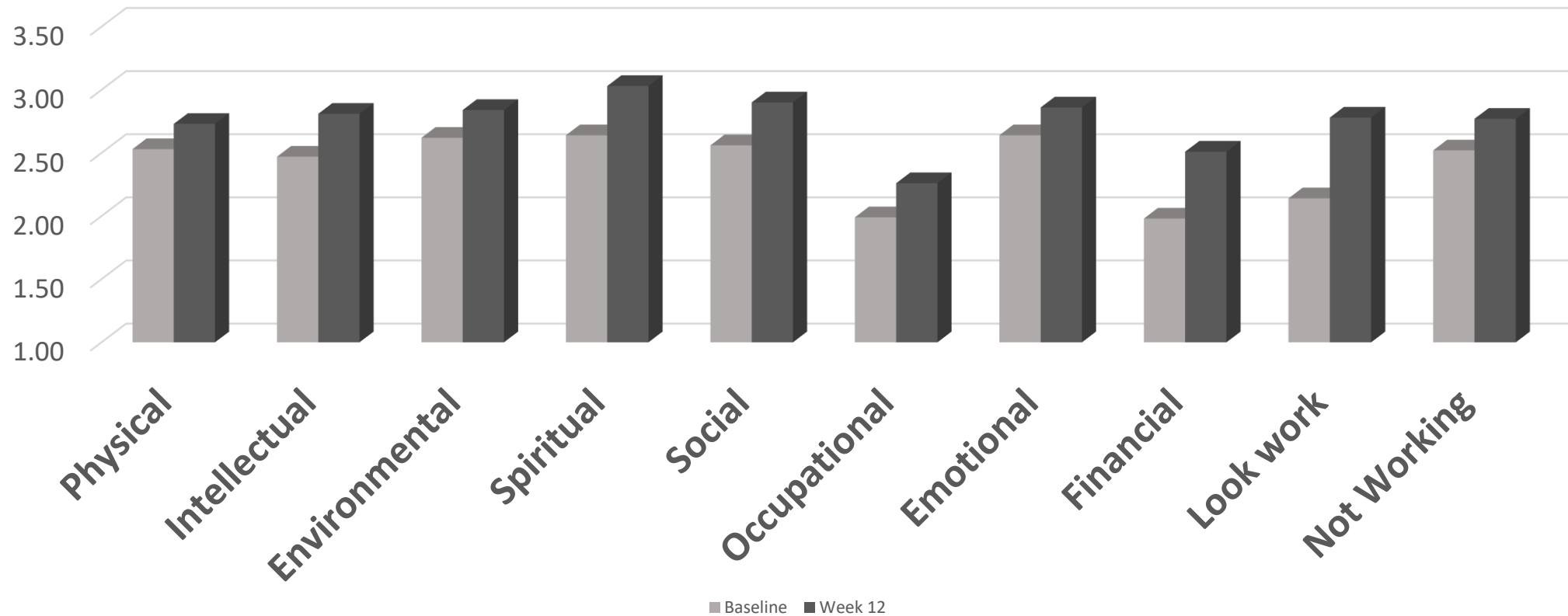
Demographic Characteristics

43% Female, 57% Male	74% Have experienced homelessness
Mean age – 47 y/o (SD 12)	43% Have experienced childhood physical, verbal, or sexual abuse
22% Latinx/Hispanic	50% Have witnessed physical, verbal, or sexual abuse as a child
61% African American	65% Have experienced violence as an adult
13% White/Caucasian	69% Have witnessed violence as an adult
78% high school diploma or less	47% Attend Religious/Spiritual meetings
81% currently not working	49% Engage in religious/spiritual practice
75% Have been hospitalized at least once	11% Are members of a club or social group
44% - 3 or more times	67% Currently were not receiving substance use services
31% - 5 or more times	25% report use of opioid
65% Have been incarcerated	53% report use of alcohol
14% are currently on probation/parole	43% report use of cocaine and/or crack cocaine

N=808 Results – 8 Dimensions of Wellness
Imani

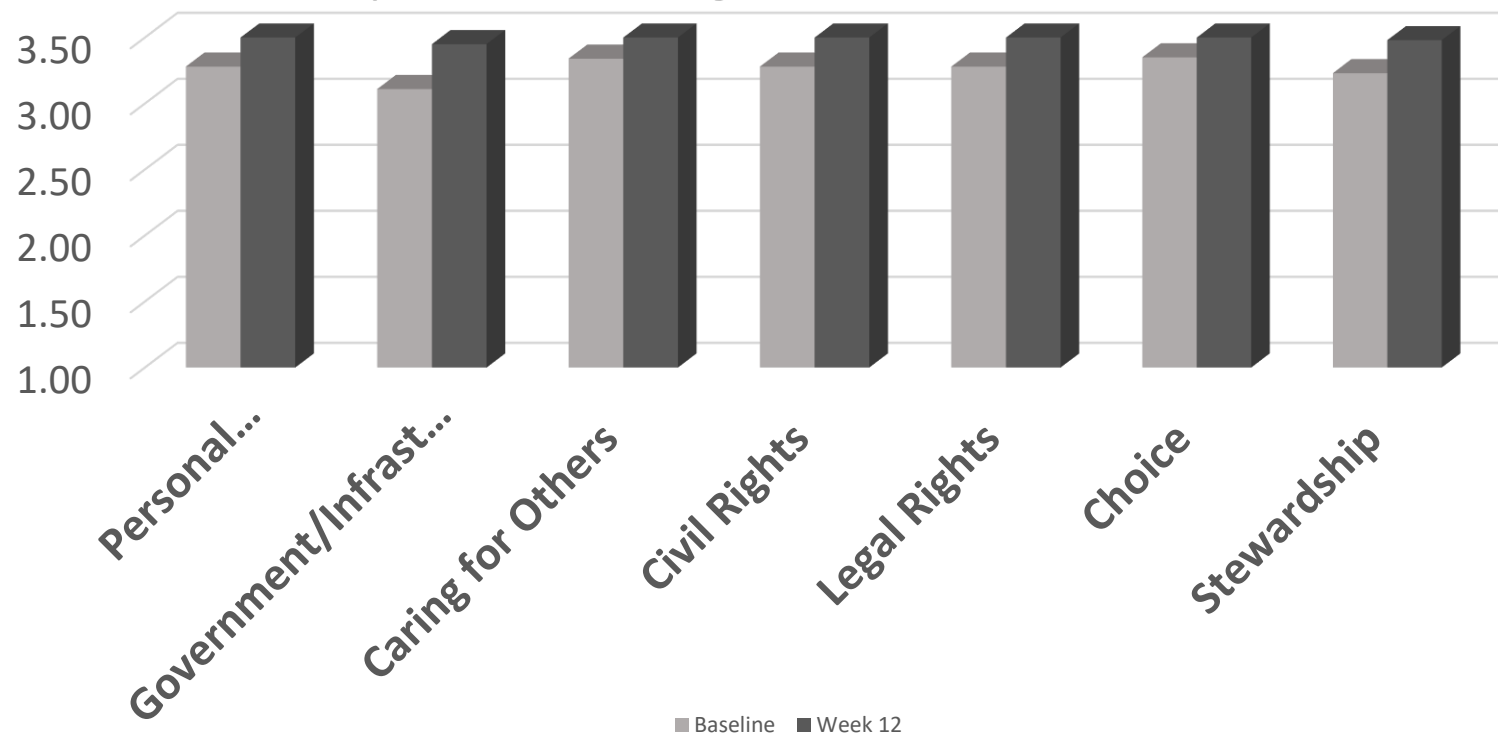


Dimensions of Wellness Change in Score from Baseline to Week 12





Citizenship Score Change from Baseline to Week 12



N=808 Results – Citizenship subscales
Imani



Overview: Community Conversations with Participants

Table 1. Quotes from Imani Conversations

Self-Actualization: *"In the beginning, I was not able to recognize that things could get better. I learned from everyone here that I could be better every single day."*

I improved myself. I'm better for myself. I came to believe that I don't need it [drugs]. I really like to talk. I like the feeling. I'm not afraid to talk no more."

"...The last 15 years of my life is ... I did a lot of programs and never finished. I was super negative about life. I never had self-worth. There are other people just like me that have a lot of problems. Graduating from this program opened doors. I got my GED, and I'm going to see what my purpose is..."

Autonomy: *"I got to take back my control. I'm the one that makes my reality..."*

"This is not an obligation...You don't have to follow the curriculum as you do in other programs"

"I went to a mandatory program. It is hard when you don't want to go to this place. You are not there. How will you talk if you don't want to? Sometimes you want to keep barriers, and here it is okay."

Culture and Faith: *"I don't know if it is God, I don't know if it is something else. I know that when you have a power in your heart, we are connected with something that changes your life..."*

"I have faith and I don't believe in God. It is important to respect what you believe. I believe in each other."

"Spiritually is a motivation. Sometimes it is the only thing that you have. Helps me validate my feelings because I have so many thoughts and I believe that it is important. My power comes from my thoughts, my values too."

Thank you for your time!