

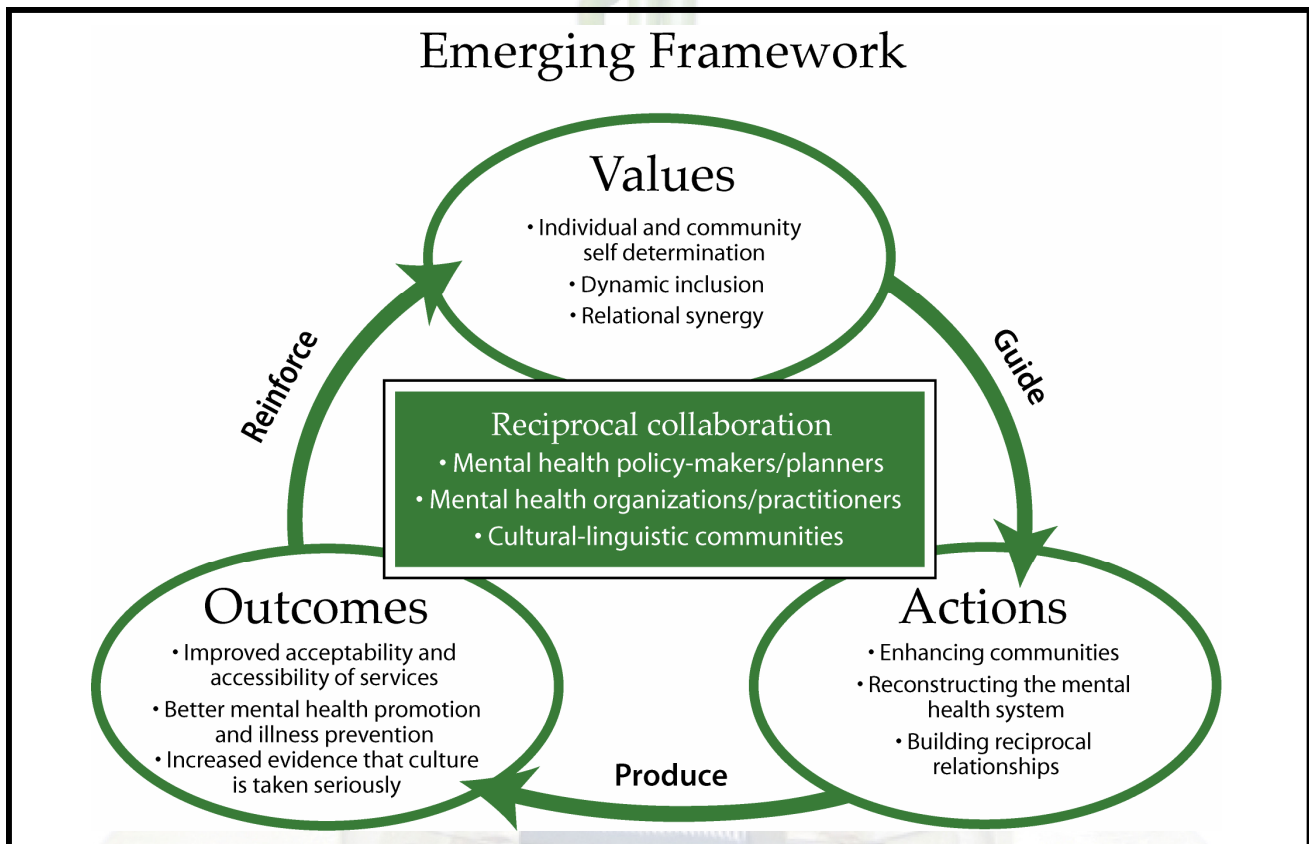
## Sharing What We're Learning

Over the past year, the Taking Culture Seriously partners have synthesized the data collected from our first two years of exploratory research. After speaking with over 300 diverse stakeholders, the CURA partners, including mental health practitioners, academics and cultural-linguistic communities, have collaborated to develop an emerging framework. The purpose of this document is to provide this emerging framework in detail. An academic article detailing all the elements of our emerging framework has been submitted for publication.<sup>1</sup>

### The Emerging Framework

This diagram demonstrates how we are currently envisioning the emerging framework. The emerging framework includes three main components: *values* that guide concrete *action* that in turn produces desired *outcomes* that serve to reinforce the stated values.

Central to the framework is the active collaboration and involvement of mental health policy-makers/system planners, mental health organizations/practitioners and cultural-linguistic communities. Through reciprocal collaboration, the values, actions and outcomes of the emerging framework are achieved.



1. For more extensive details, please see:

Janzen, R., Ochocka, J., Jacobson, N., Maiter, S., Simich, L., Westhues, A., Fleras, A. and the Taking Culture Seriously Partners (submitted). Synthesizing Culture and Power in Community Mental Health: An Emerging Framework. *Social Science and Medicine*.

## Values

Values represent the underlying guiding assumptions or motivations for our actions. The framework identifies three main values:

### Value 1: Individual and Community Self Determination

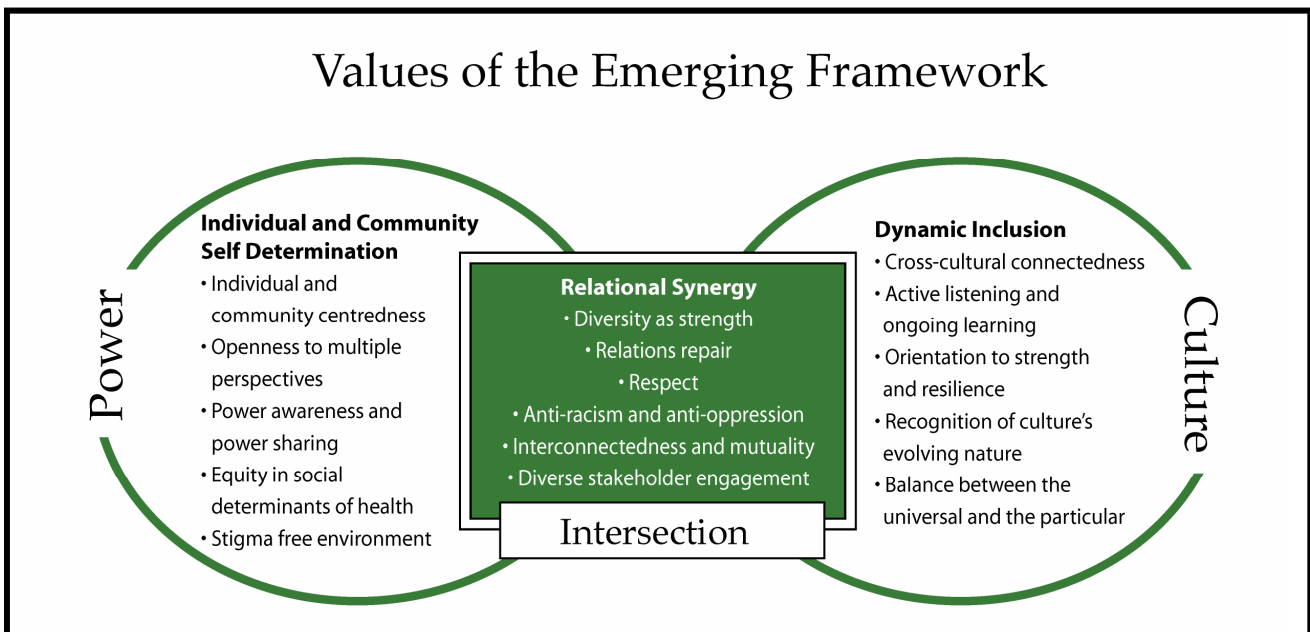
People from culturally diverse backgrounds, individually and collectively, should direct the formation and implementation of culturally responsive services and supports that promote their well-being. This value is oriented to issues of power. It attempts to address existing structural inequities between the mental health system and cultural-linguistic communities. It recognizes that access to existing mental health services is limited by structural barriers.

### Value 2: Dynamic Inclusion

The second value stresses the importance of culture and the need for people to improve culturally responsive attitudes, knowledge and skills. It is called dynamic inclusion because it emphasizes the need to ensure that people from all cultural-linguistic backgrounds have a sense of belonging to and participation in different contexts within mainstream society.

### Value 3: Relational Synergy

The final value is relational synergy. **Here power and culture intersect as new, mutually respectful and beneficial connections between cultural-linguistic communities and the mental health system are desired.** The diverse perspectives within such collaboration holds the potential to spur on innovation beyond what each stakeholder group could create in isolation.



## Actions

The framework proposes three main groupings of actions:

### Action 1: Enhancing Cultural-linguistic Communities

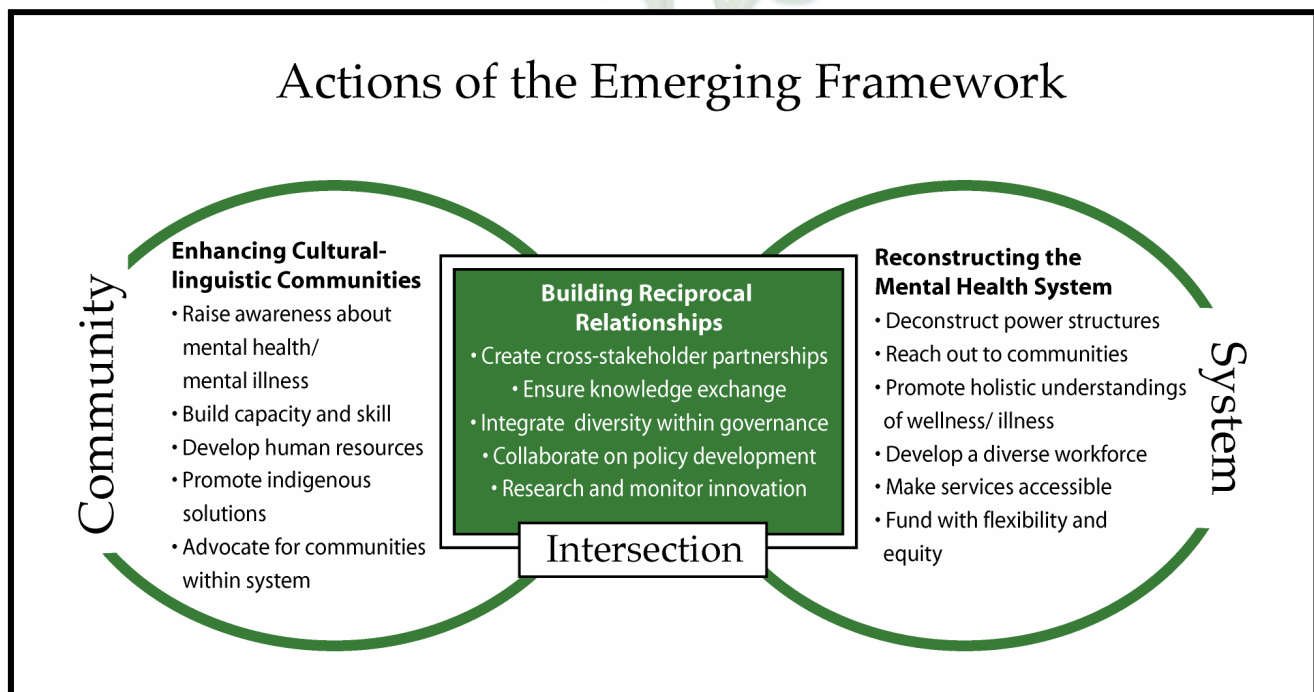
Community enhancement refers to activities that strengthen cultural-linguistic communities. It implies an acknowledgement that activities should build on and augment existing strengths inherent within cultural-linguistic communities. Equally important is recognizing the need to equip cultural-linguistic communities with resources to more fully realize well-being.

## Action 2: Reconstructing the Mental Health System

The second group of activities target the mental health system. These activities work to make mental health policy, system planning, organizations, and individual practitioners more responsive to the cultural diversity around them. This requires a reconstruction or rebuilding of a mental health system that in many ways is currently dysfunctional.

## Action 3: Building Reciprocal Relationships

In the spirit of reciprocal collaboration, the third group of actions is the most important in that it brings together cultural-linguistic communities and the various parts of the mental health system. Here the value of “relational synergy” is acted out, as communities and the system build relationships that allows each to influence and shape the other. It is reciprocal because the responsibilities and benefits of the relationship should be mutual.



## **Outcomes**

Outcomes are the tangible changes that the framework is intended to produce.

### Outcomes #1: Gateway Outcomes

The starting point of observable change is the new and stronger reciprocal relationships that are developed among cultural linguistic community members and the various components of the mental health system. This is a foundational level from which all other outcomes flow, being the gateway to subsequent levels of change.

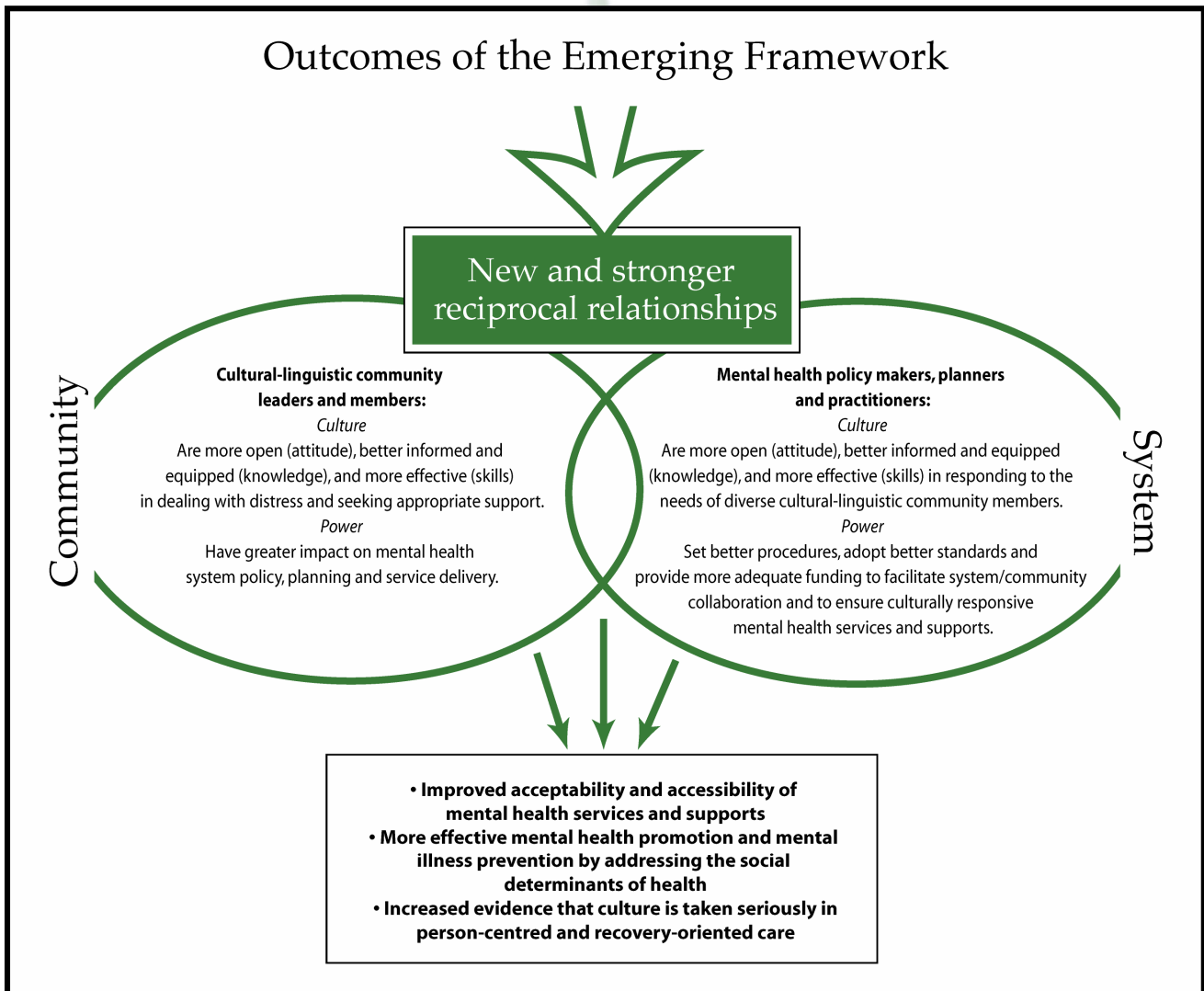
### Outcomes #2: Individual Stakeholder Outcomes

A second level of outcomes identifies changes that occur within specific stakeholder groups. They are: 1) changes within cultural-linguistic communities, and 2) changes within the mental health system.

*Cultural-linguistic communities and the mental health system* are expected to change in ways related to both culture and power. Leaders and members of cultural-linguistic communities and mental health policy-makers, planners and practitioners will be more competent, better informed and equipped, and more effective at promoting and providing culturally responsive mental health policy, planning and service delivery.

Outcomes #3: Longer-term Outcomes

The third level of outcomes are longer-term in nature. Three groups of outcomes include: (a) improved acceptability and accessibility of mental health services and supports, (b) better mental health promotion by addressing the social determinants of health and better mental illness prevention, and (c) increased evidence that culture is taken seriously in person-centred and recovery-oriented care.



**Conclusion**

The emerging framework is a work in progress and will be additionally shaped in the process of evaluating demonstration projects. Presently study partners (and interested others) are clustering into sub-groups to develop a series of demonstration projects. Each project is a collaborative effort that seeks to examine both power and culture in practice, while committing to actions that advance reciprocal relationship building between the mental health system and cultural linguistic communities. While no one project will illustrate the complete framework, collectively they aspire to promote innovation at multiple levels of intervention.