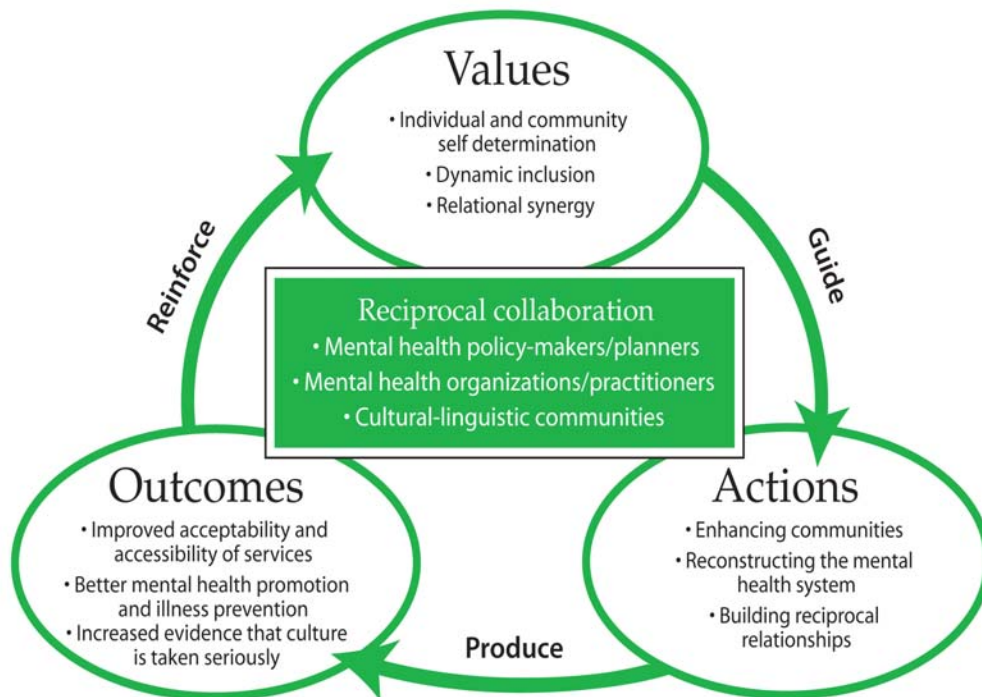


Taking Culture Seriously Framework

Through analysis of all CURA data compiled, CURA Partners proceeded to develop a framework to guide future mental health policy and practice. The intent was to develop a framework that was principle-driven, action-oriented and that could inspire future innovation (“scaffolding for demonstration projects” was how one partner put it). This theory-building process was highly collaborative and is described in detail in one of our CURA publications (Westhues, Ochocka, Jacobson, Simich, Maiter, Janzen & Fleras, 2008).

The *Taking Culture Seriously in Community Mental Health* framework includes three main components: values that guide concrete action that in turn produce desired outcomes that serve to reinforce the stated values. Each of these main components is described in detail and illustrated in the following pages.

Figure 1: Taking Culture Seriously in Community Mental Health framework



This framework adequately addresses combined ideals of both the culture-oriented and the power-oriented theories (Janzen, Ochocka, et al., 2007). Central to the framework is the active involvement of mental health policy-makers/system planners, mental health organizations/practitioners and cultural-linguistic communities. Their collaboration in innovating mental health policy and practice is characterized by reciprocity in which the benefits and responsibilities of collaboration are shared (Maiter, Simich, Jacobson & Wise, 2008). This type of reciprocal collaboration is the transformational process by which the present context of disconnections is rectified and through which the values, actions and outcomes of the Taking Culture Seriously framework are achieved (for details see Janzen, Ochocka et al., 2009, *in press*).

Guiding Values of the Taking Culture Seriously Framework

Values represent the underlying guiding assumptions or motivations for our actions. The framework identifies three main values. A detailed graphic of these can be found on the next page.

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.

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.

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 of the Taking Culture Seriously Framework

The CURA framework proposes three main groupings of actions. A detailed graphic for the framework actions is on the fourth page of this document.

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.

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.

Building Reciprocal Relationships

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 for shared responsibilities and mutual benefits.

Figure 2: Guiding Values of the Taking Culture Seriously Framework

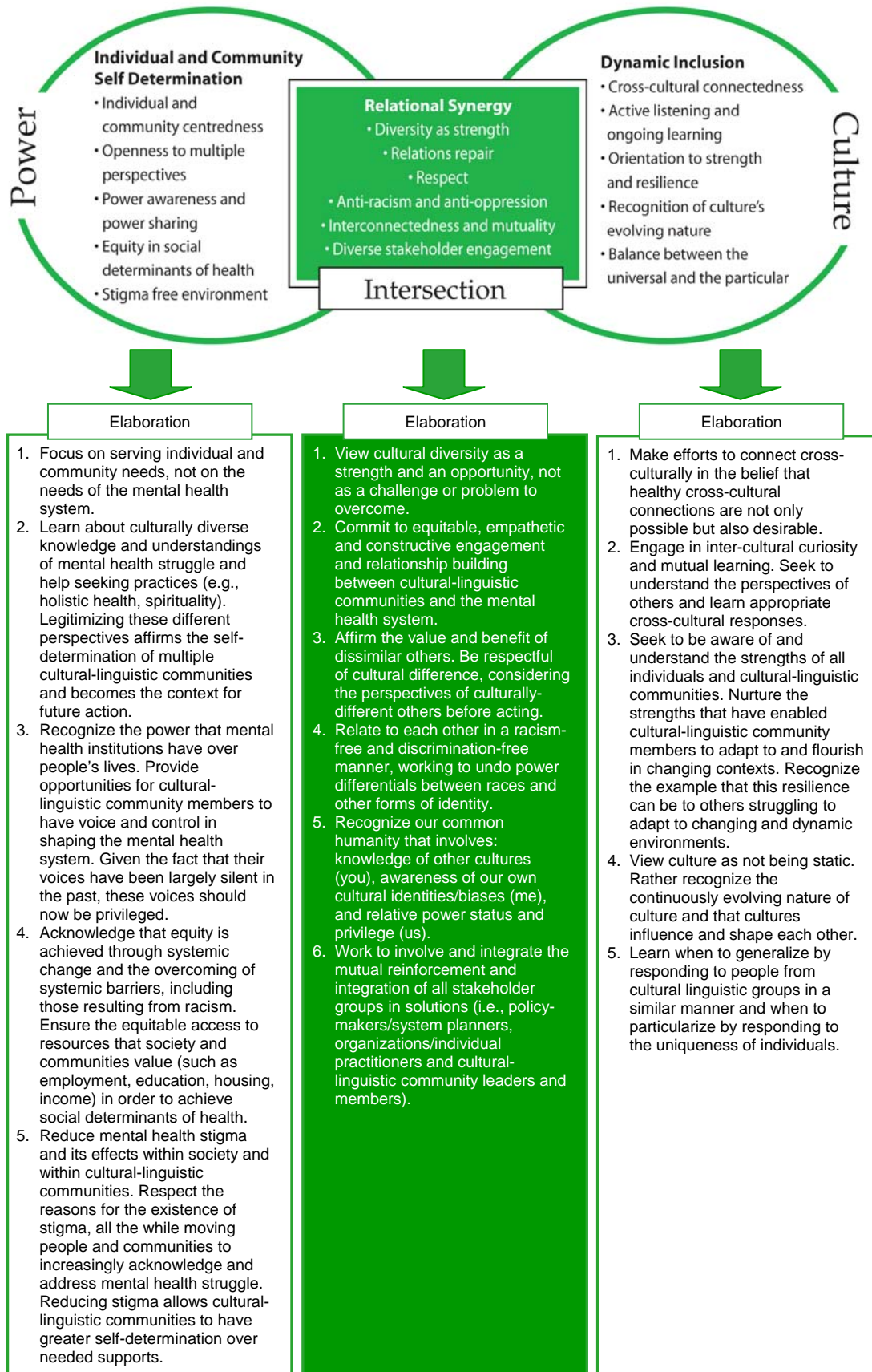
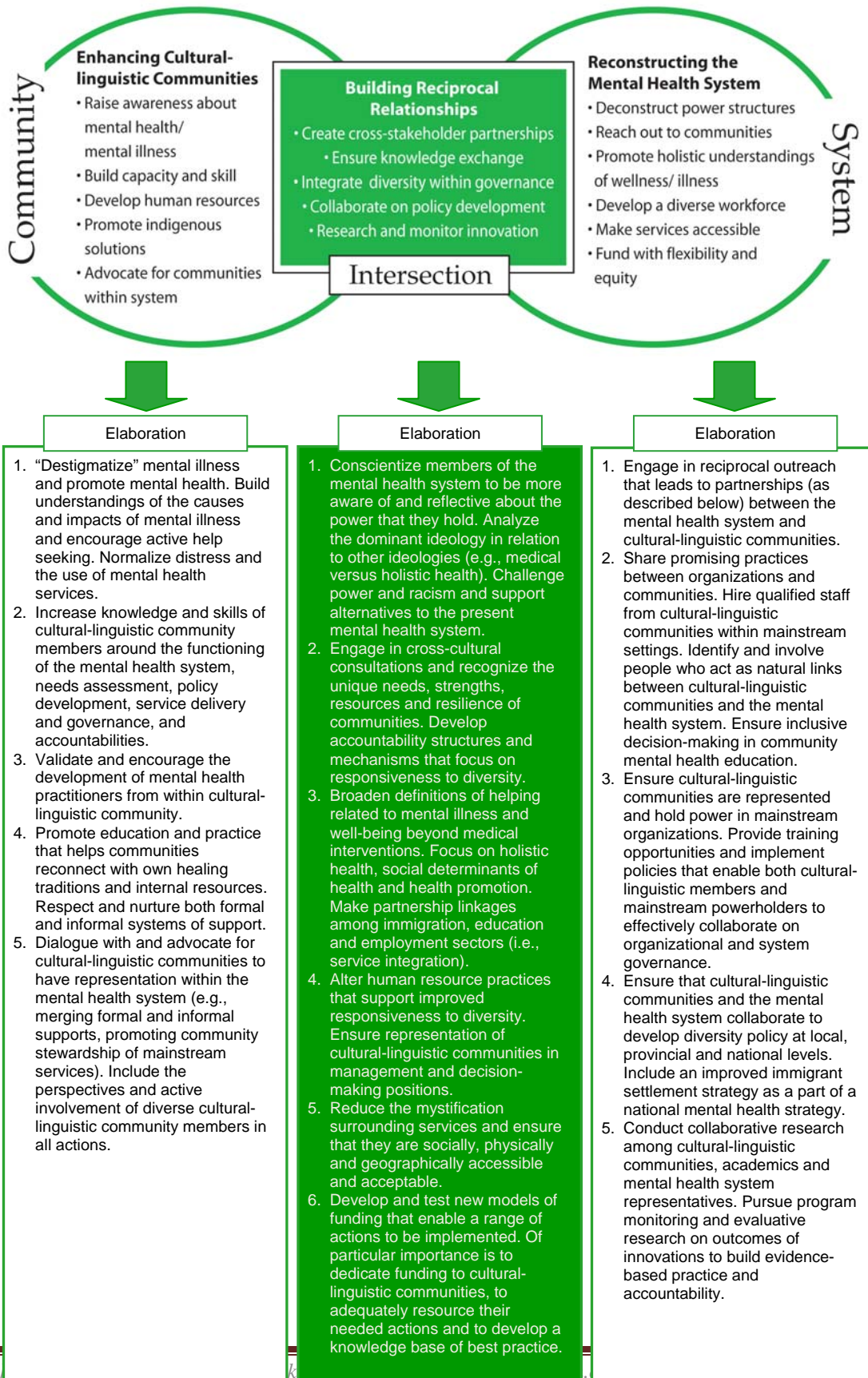


Figure 3: Actions of the Taking Culture Seriously Framework



Outcomes of the Taking Culture Seriously Framework

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

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.

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.

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.

Figure 4: Outcomes of the Taking Culture Seriously Framework

