



REBECCA L. COLLINS, NICOLE K. EBERHART, ELIZABETH ROTH, INGRID ESTRADA-DARLEY

# Evaluation of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's 2020–2021 L.A. Dodgers Mental Health Campaign

**W**hyWeRise is a social marketing campaign conducted by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) that is focused on prevention of and early intervention for mental health challenges among county residents. It is intended to promote community engagement with mental health issues along a continuum from self-care to professional treatment services, reduce barriers to care, and increase awareness of how to seek mental health care. While retaining its commitment to this overarching goal, the campaign

has shifted its emphasis over the years since its inception in 2018, responding to changing community needs and refreshing content to maintain and expand community interest. In 2020 and 2021, LACDMH partnered with the Los Angeles Dodgers to expand the reach of the campaign to the Major League Baseball team's audience and spread the WhyWeRise messages to the Dodgers' extensive Hispanic fan base—a key county demographic with attitudes toward mental illness that sometimes differ from those of other ethnic groups.

To gain insight into the 2020 and 2021 Dodgers campaign reach

## KEY FINDINGS

- Those exposed to the WhyWeRise campaign were three to five times more likely to have used the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health website or Help Line than those who were not exposed.
- One in four of those attending Los Angeles Dodger games during Mental Health Month were aware of the WhyWeRise campaign.
- The campaign effectively reached Hispanic residents and young adults.
- The predominant reaction in 2020 was that the campaign messages made those individuals reached feel supported; in 2021, the messages predominantly made people feel that their mental health was important.
- One in two of those reached said the campaign gave them new information about how to obtain help with emotions or mental health.

and potential impact, LACDMH and the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) commissioned the RAND Corporation to conduct an evaluation. We previously evaluated the 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 WhyWeRise campaigns and a coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) campaign (Collins et al., 2018; Collins et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2021; Collins, Eberhart, and Roth, 2022). This report builds on our prior work and provides an evaluation of the reach of the 2020 and 2021 Dodgers campaign overall and a focus on the reach and potential impact of outreach to attendees of 2021 Dodger games. We conducted two online surveys of representative samples of Los Angeles County adults ages 18 and older—one evaluating each campaign year and the other of a sample of individuals who attended a 2021 Dodger game during Mental Health Month (May) when outreach was particularly intense.

**The results** indicated that the campaign with the Dodgers reached a substantial percentage of Los Angeles County residents: Between 11 and 14 percent of adults reported exposure to the campaign depending on the year. The campaign was effective in reaching Hispanic residents and, in 2021, young adults. County residents were primarily exposed to the campaign via social media, radio ads, and ads on the Dodgers' website. The majority of individuals reached by the campaign found it beneficial, in that it made them feel supported and that their mental health was important. Los Angeles County residents exposed to the campaign were more likely to be aware of county mental health resources in general, 50 percent more likely to be aware of the LACDMH

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Los Angeles County residents exposed to the campaign were more likely to be aware of county mental health resources in general.

website and LACDMH Help Line specifically, and three to five times more likely to have used the website and Help Line than those who were not exposed to the campaign. Those surveyed who attended Dodger games during Mental Health Month reported that the games made them feel connected to the community and helped them heal from stress, and one in four attendees showed awareness of the broader WhyWeRise campaign.

**In summary**, there is evidence that the campaign with the Dodgers successfully reached Los Angeles County residents—particularly Hispanic residents and young adults—and may have boosted awareness and use of key county mental health resources.

## Background

Mental health problems are common and debilitating, but many people do not receive the mental health treatment they need (see, e.g., Eberhart et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2015). Recognizing this factor, in 2018, LACDMH undertook the WhyWeRise campaign, which sought to

- increase community engagement around barriers to mental health care access (i.e., interest in and activism regarding this issue)
- promote awareness of county mental health resources and services (in particular, the LACDMH website and Help Line—resources designed to provide mental health support and connect residents with a wide variety of mental health resources and/or provide referrals that address needs across the continuum from serious mental illness to well-being)
- communicate messages of resilience, community, hope, and support. In fall 2020 and spring, summer, and fall 2021, WhyWeRise was expanded to include a partnership with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The campaign focused on awareness of resources and stigma-reduction among Hispanic county residents. Around the globe (Gaebel, Rössler, and Sartorius, 2016), in California (Collins et al., 2015), and in Los Angeles County (Collins et al., 2018), social marketing campaigns have been effective in shifting attitudes related to mental health,

increasing social acceptance of those experiencing mental health challenges, and raising awareness and use of mental health services and resources, including among Hispanic residents (Collins et al., 2018; Collins et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2021; Collins, Eberhart, and Roth, 2022; Wong et al., 2021).

The Los Angeles Dodgers report that 43 percent of people living in the Los Angeles designated market area (a region covering all of Los Angeles, Riverside, Ventura, Orange, and San Bernardino counties) are fans of the team.<sup>1</sup> These fans are diverse. Fifty-five percent are men, 58 percent have a college degree, 30 percent are younger than 35 years old, and 44 percent are 50 or older. About a third of them make less than \$50,000 per year, while a third make \$100,000 per year or more. Fifty percent of those who attend games at Dodger Stadium are Hispanic. LACDMH sought to take advantage of this extensive and diverse audience in its partnership with the Dodgers, pushing out themes and messages from WeRise and WhyWeRise, as well as some expansion of that content to widen its reach and, in particular, reach Hispanic residents who tend to have different, sometimes more stigmatizing, beliefs about mental illness and seeking treatment (Wong et al., 2021). In 2020, LACDMH/Dodgers outreach included ads during broadcasts of games on both English- and Spanish-language radio and posts by the baseball team on social media about taking care of one's mental health, the importance of talking with and reaching out to others during challenging times, and recognizing and confronting mental illness stigma. There was also a takeover of the Dodgers' website homepage with WhyWeRise images and messaging, a full-page WhyWeRise ad in the *Dodger Insider* online magazine, and a radio ad featuring Dodger pitcher Walker Buehler. There were no games with in-person audiences because of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns in 2020, but in-person games became an integral part of the LACDMH/Dodgers partnership in 2021 when, in addition to other campaign activities, four Mental Health Awareness Nights were held during May games. On these occasions, the pitcher's mound was painted with the WeRise logo; a digital ad, signs, and announcements addressed mental health; and resource sheets describing Los Angeles County

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LACDMH sought to take advantage of an extensive and diverse audience in its partnership with the Dodgers, pushing out themes and messages from WeRise and WhyWeRise.

mental health resources were distributed at the Viva Los Dodgers booth.<sup>2</sup>

LACDMH's WhyWeRise mental health campaign, including the Dodgers' component, used funds from the state's Proposition 63, which was signed into law as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The MHSA levied a 1-percent tax on all California personal incomes over \$1 million, resulting in a substantial investment in mental health prevention and treatment in the state. The MHSA made resources available to counties to support treatment for individuals with mental illness; it also provided prevention and early intervention services for mental health. A portion of those funds is specifically allocated for prevention and early intervention activities and cannot be used for other purposes (e.g., treatment, housing).

We had previously evaluated other aspects of WhyWeRise (Collins et al., 2018; Collins et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2021; Collins, Eberhart, and Roth, 2022). This report describes the methods and findings of our evaluation of the Dodgers' portion of the campaign. One component of the evaluation involved conducting two cross-sectional online surveys of representative samples of Los Angeles County adults ages 18 and older, one in spring 2021 evaluating efforts from the previous fall, and one in fall 2021 evaluating efforts

from spring, summer, and fall 2021. The first section of this report is a description of that effort. A second component of our evaluation was a survey of attendees to a Dodger game during Mental Health Month in May 2021. The goal of these brief online surveys (of individuals who were part of a Dodgers email list of recent-game attendees) was to gain insight into individuals' perceptions of and reactions to campaign outreach at Dodger games during the 2021 baseball season. The survey of game attendees is described in a second section of the report. A brief discussion of the overall findings and some general conclusions are provided in a third section at the end of this report. Evaluation activities were reviewed and approved by RAND's Human Subjects Protection Committee, RAND's Institutional Review Board.

## Countywide Surveys of Los Angeles Residents

We designed and analyzed two cross-sectional surveys of a representative sample of residents of Los Angeles County to understand (1) the reach of the Dodgers campaign and its components, and (2) the campaign's potential impact—how residents perceived campaign messages and how those who were reached by the campaign differ from others in terms of attitudes, beliefs, and behavior related to mental illness. We present the findings from each of the two surveys, one evaluating outreach in 2020 and the other evaluating outreach in 2021. Presenting the findings for each survey separately provides an understanding of each phase of the Dodgers effort.

## Method

### Data Collection

We conducted surveys of adults ages 18 or older. The surveys were fielded by Ipsos (a corporation that conducts survey research, polling, and other activities) from March 12, 2021, to April 21, 2021 (the survey evaluating the 2020 portion of the campaign), and from October 29, 2021, to November 29, 2021 (the survey evaluating the 2021 portion of the campaign). They were conducted using the web platform

KnowledgePanel, which was used to recruit a probability-based sample. Although the survey is administered online, KnowledgePanel uses address-based sampling to ensure a comprehensive sample that represents all households regardless of their access to phone or internet services. To further ensure representativeness, panel members are provided with a web-enabled device (e.g., tablet computer) and free internet service as needed. Sample weighting is used to compensate for differential response rates among different demographic groups. For this study, the samples were each weighted to be demographically representative of the Los Angeles County population ages 18 and older. The surveys were offered in both Spanish and English, were completed online, and were approximately 12 and 13 minutes long for the 2020 campaign survey and the 2021 campaign survey, respectively.

### Measures

The surveys measured demographics and other background characteristics, campaign exposure, and key targeted outcomes of the campaign. The specific items used varied slightly across the two surveys; differences are noted below. Some demographics were previously measured as part of KnowledgePanel participation.

### Campaign Exposure

We used several items to measure exposure to the campaign, focusing on different forms of campaign activities and resources. Items assessing exposure to the 2020 outreach used the reference period “since July 2020,” or, when referring specifically to Dodger games, “during the Dodgers season last year (fall 2020).” We asked, “When you were on social media, did you see any posts from the Dodgers about mental health issues and COVID-19?” Participants were also asked whether they had listened to Dodger games on the radio, visited the Dodgers website, and/or read the online *Dodger Insider*. Those who reported each of these activities were asked follow-up items to assess whether they were exposed to campaign materials from that source:

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The goal of these brief online surveys (of individuals who were part of a Dodgers email list of recent game attendees) was to gain insight into individuals' perceptions of and reactions to campaign outreach at Dodger games.

- “Did you hear any ads from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health during the Dodger games you listened to?”
- “When you visited the Dodgers website, did you see either of these images?”
- “When you read the *Dodger Insider*, did you read any articles or see any ads about mental health?”
- “When you read the *Dodger Insider*, did you see this image?”

Images of the LACDMH ads were shown alongside the relevant questions. Those who reported seeing or hearing an LACDMH article or ad in one or more of these venues, or seeing Dodgers social media posts about mental health issues and COVID-19, were categorized as exposed to the 2020 phase of the Dodgers campaign.

Exposure measures evaluating the 2021 outreach used the reference period “since April 2021,” or, when referring specifically to Dodger games, “during the Dodgers’ season this year.” All items except the one identifying exposure to radio ads were revised slightly to better reflect the 2021 outreach and messaging. In regard to social media, we asked, “When you were on social media, did you see any posts from the Dodgers about mental health?”, dropping the reference to COVID-19, which was no longer a focus of these ads. When in-person attendance to Dodger games returned, we asked adults whether they had attended a game and, if so, “Did you see any ads or signs for Mental Health Awareness, WeRise, or the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health during the Dodger game(s) you attended?” For those who reported visiting the Dodgers’ website, we asked,

“When you visited the Dodgers website, did you see any ads related to mental health?” Response options were

- “Yes, an ad for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-TALK”
- “Yes, an ad for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health”
- “Yes, an ad for the National Alliance on Mental Illness” (check any that apply)
- “No, I did not see an ad related to mental health.”

The option about an ad for the National Alliance on Mental Illness was designed to provide insight into any false reporting, as no such ad appeared.<sup>3</sup> Those who said they saw an ad for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or one for the LACDMH were categorized as exposed to the 2021 phase of the Dodgers campaign, as were those who reported seeing Dodgers social media posts about mental health issues or seeing or hearing an ad or sign while listening to a Dodger game on the radio or attending one in person.

Additional follow-up questions evaluating the 2021 outreach were used to help interpret the exposure data. These included items asking those who attended a Dodger game whether they attended on a Mental Health Awareness Night and/or visited the Viva Los Dodgers booth at a game, and an item asking those who followed the Dodgers through any of a variety of platforms (e.g., website, social media, reading the *Dodger Insider*, or listening to or attending a game) whether they had ever heard of Champions of the Community.

We note that, because items in these measures require individuals to recall exposure, they assess, in part, whether individuals exposed to the campaign attend to the ads and remember them sometime later. These individuals may be a select group who are particularly interested in mental health issues or who need the resources and support the ads describe. This should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

### Perceptions of Campaign Materials and Events

In addition to directing county residents to resources, key goals of the campaign were to increase awareness of mental health resources, perceptions of support, and hope. The campaign was also intended to normalize having mental health concerns. Those reporting exposure to campaign ads, images, or social media posts were asked to rate (on a scale from 1, *strongly agree*, to 5, *strongly disagree*) the extent to which each of those they were exposed to

- gave them new information about how to get help with emotions or mental health
- made them feel more connected to community
- made them feel supported
- made them feel hopeful
- made them feel it's normal to feel anxious or stressed
- made them feel that their mental health is important.

### Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors Targeted by the Campaign

Although perceptions are important indicators, people are often poor judges of what affects them and how (Collins et al., 1988; Nisbett and Wilson, 1977). An alternative methodological approach is to compare targeted outcomes between those who were exposed to the campaign and those who were not. To do so, we created campaign-specific items to ask all participants, regardless of exposure. Participants were asked, for example, how strongly they agreed or disagreed that they were “aware of the information and resources offered by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health” (see Table 1). The items assess endorsement of key mental health–related knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs targeted by the Dodgers cam-

campaign and/or referenced in the ads. For each item, we measured the extent of agreement on a five-point scale (*strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*). Responses were recoded to reflect any agreement (*agree* or *strongly agree*) versus none. Because the amount of content that focused on coping with the COVID-19 pandemic lessened in 2021, we dropped four of the six items on pandemic-related beliefs and added a more general one about the stress of the pandemic and racial injustice (as shown in Table 1).

### Stigma and Mobilization Against Barriers to Mental Health

The WhyWeRise campaign was originally designed to engage county residents in the issue of mental health by mobilizing them around issues of injustice, stigma, and barriers to care. Reduction of stigma was also an aspect of the Dodgers campaign. To assess whether exposure to the campaign might have been effective in addressing stigma, we employed a set of previously validated items on stigma-related mental health challenges and their treatment. Although not the main targets of the campaign, the constructs measured are implicit in many of the messages, such as those emphasizing the importance of talking about problems and reaching out to others. The stigma items in the surveys have been used in prior surveys (Evans-Lacko, Henderson, and Thornicroft, 2013; Jorm, Christensen, and Griffiths, 2006; See Change, 2012; Wyllie and Lauder, 2012), including in the evaluation of the Each Mind Matters campaign in California (Collins et al., 2015), thus allowing comparison with other mental health–related campaigns. These previously validated items consisted of three items measuring social distance (a key indicator of mental illness stigma) on a four-point scale (from *definitely willing* to *definitely unwilling* to have contact with someone who has a serious mental illness), three items measuring intent to conceal a hypothetical mental health problem out of concern over others' reactions on a four-point scale (from *definitely would* to *definitely would not*), and six items on negative beliefs about mental health challenges and individuals confronting them, measured on a five-point scale (from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*). A set of eight items addressed mobilization and related beliefs (e.g., “Everyone deserves to be well,” “I plan to take

TABLE 1

Items Assessing Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs Targeted by the Dodgers Campaign

Assessment Item
I know how to find information or resources to help if I or someone I know experiences a mental health problem.
I am aware of the information and resources offered by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.
The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is here for me if I need help.
The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has resources for families.
I know how I could be supportive of people with a mental illness if I wanted to be.
Seeking help for mental health problems is a sign of strength.
Everyone needs support to get through these challenging times.
Talking about our feelings is important for mental health.
It's important to let people know if you need help.
I can get through things with the support of others.
Since the coronavirus outbreak and shutdowns, it is more important than usual to take care of your mental health and well-being.
Since the coronavirus outbreak and shutdowns, it is more important than usual to stay connected to family and friends.
Keeping a routine and normal activities is important to mental health and well-being.
It's normal to feel anxious, sad or overwhelmed about COVID-19, racial injustices, uncertain jobs, and fluctuating school and child care needs. <sup>a</sup>
Since the coronavirus outbreak and shutdowns, more people are experiencing mental health problems. <sup>a</sup>
It's natural to feel anxious and concerned during COVID-19. <sup>a</sup>
It's normal for kids to be sad or anxious during COVID-19 and shutdowns. <sup>a</sup>
I feel able to heal from the stress of the pandemic and racial injustice. <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Denotes an item included only in the survey about the 2020 outreach.

<sup>b</sup> Denotes an item included only in the survey about the 2021 outreach.

action to prevent discrimination against people with mental illness”), measured on the same five-point scale. Responses to all items were recoded to reflect any willingness, concealment, or agreement versus none.

**Awareness and Use of the LACDMH Website and Help Line**

As noted, a central goal of the campaign was to create awareness of two key LACDMH resources and drive residents to them: the LACDMH website (DMH.LACounty.gov) and the county’s Help Line (800-854-7771 for voice or 741741 for text). Awareness was measured with two separate items:

1. “Did you know that Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has a Help Line (800-854-7771 or 741741)?”
2. “Did you know that Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has a website (DMH.LACounty.gov)?”

**Well-Being**

We examined the Dodger campaign’s potential impact on aspects of well-being with three measures. Loneliness was measured with three items drawn from the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which uses a three-point scale from *hardly ever* to *often* (Hughes et al., 2004). Those whose summed scores were six or higher were classified as lonely. Hope was measured with a single item, “I feel hopeful about the future,”

rated on a five-point scale from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Social support was measured with the item “How often do you get the social and emotional support you need,” rated on a five-point scale from *always* to *never*.

### Background Characteristics: Demographics and Experience with Mental Health Challenges

Respondents provided their gender, age, household income, highest level of education achieved, and race/ethnicity (as part of previous KnowledgePanel participation). Respondents also told us whether they had ever experienced a mental health problem, whether they had experienced an issue they thought might require treatment in the past 12 months, and whether they had sought treatment for a mental health problem in the past 12 months. Psychological distress was measured using the Kessler-6 (Kessler et al., 2003), which consists of six items asking respondents to rate how often in the past 30 days they felt (for example) nervous, hopeless, restless, or fidgety (from 1 [*all of the time*] to 5 [*none of the time*]). Those whose summed score was 13 or higher were classified as currently experiencing serious psychological distress.

### Analyses

We conducted analyses to describe the characteristics of study participants, campaign reach (prevalence of exposure to the WhyWeRise campaign), and perceptions of that campaign. The main results compared mental health–related attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and well-being between those who reported exposure to the campaign and those who did not. Sample weights were applied to account for any differential nonresponse that might have occurred. Demographic distributions for Los Angeles County target populations were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey. Data were weighted to represent the Los Angeles County adult population on the following variables:

- age (18–29, 30–44, 45–59, 60+) by gender (male and female) (age and gender were addressed separately in weighting the 2020 outreach survey)

- race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black/African American, non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic other races, Hispanic)
- education (less than high school/high school, some college, bachelor’s degree or more)
- household income (under \$25,000, \$25,000–\$49,999, \$50,000–\$74,999, \$75,000–\$99,999, \$100,000–149,999, and \$150,000 or more) (some of these income groups were combined in weighting the 2020 outreach survey)
- ACS language (English proficient, bilingual/Spanish proficient, non-Hispanic).

We report weighted percentages and odds ratios. All reported differences are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Specific  $p$ -values are provided in tables and figures. The data analysis for this report was generated using SAS/STAT software (2016).

## Results

### Characteristics of the Samples

Sample characteristics (unweighted frequencies, unweighted and weighted percentages) are shown for each of the two surveys in Table 2. The survey evaluating the 2020 outreach was completed by 67 percent of those invited, resulting in a sample of 1,010 Los Angeles County adults. The 2021 outreach survey was completed by 68 percent of those invited, resulting in a sample of 1,002 Los Angeles County adults. Both surveys included somewhat fewer males, adults 18–44, individuals of Asian descent, those with lower education, and those with higher income than the population residing in Los Angeles County. As the table indicates, our weights corrected for these differences. Consistent with prior California statewide findings (Collins et al., 2015), after weighting, about one-quarter (25 percent) reported ever having had a mental health problem. In the 12 months prior to the survey, 21 to 24 percent reported having felt they might need treatment for a mental health concern, depending on the survey; 9 to 11 percent had symptoms of distress consistent with a serious mental illness, depending on the survey.

TABLE 2

## Characteristics of Two Samples of Los Angeles County Adults

Characteristic	Survey Evaluating Dodgers 2020 Outreach			Survey Evaluating Dodgers 2021 Outreach		
	Unweighted Frequency	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage	Unweighted Frequency	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	416	41	47	400	40	40
Female	594	59	53	602	60	60
<b>Age</b>						
18–25	33	3	8	21	2	5
26–34	126	12	19	127	13	22
35–44	180	18	21	178	18	0
45–54	203	20	16	188	19	16
55–64	194	19	18	203	20	19
65–74	189	19	13	189	19	12
75+	85	8	5	96	10	6
<b>Education</b>						
Less than high school	79	8	18	90	9	20
High school graduate	138	14	22	144	14	19
Some college	304	30	29	287	29	30
Bachelor's degree or higher	489	48	31	481	48	31
<b>Household income</b>						
Less than \$10,000	83	8	9	94	9	7
\$10,000 to \$24,999	131	13	10	136	14	9
\$25,000 to \$49,999	211	21	16	218	22	18
\$50,000 to \$74,999	158	16	13	174	17	17
\$75,000 to \$99,999	166	16	16	124	12	14
\$100,000 to \$149,999	139	14	16	127	13	18
\$150,000 or more	122	12	19	129	13	18
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
Black, non-Hispanic	69	7	8	76	8	9
White, non-Hispanic	365	36	29	370	37	29

Table 2—Continued

Characteristic	Survey Evaluating Dodgers 2020 Outreach			Survey Evaluating Dodgers 2021 Outreach		
	Unweighted Frequency	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage	Unweighted Frequency	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage
Asian, non-Hispanic	76	8	16	80	8	14
Other/2+ races, non-Hispanic	22	2	2	14	1	3
Hispanic, English-speaking	261	26	22	241	24	21
Hispanic, Spanish-speaking	217	21	23	221	22	25
<b>Ever had a mental health problem</b>						
Yes	254	25	25	272	27	25
No	752	75	75	726	73	75
<b>Serious psychological distress</b>						
Yes	66	7	9	93	9	11
No	943	93	91	907	91	89
<b>Perceived need for help in the past year</b>						
Yes	207	21	21	222	22	24
No	799	79	79	774	78	76

## Campaign Exposure

**In 2020, 14 percent of Los Angeles County adults were exposed to the Dodgers campaign through one or more forms of outreach (see “Any Exposure” in Figure 1a); in 2021, the number was 11.4 percent (see “Any Exposure” Figure 1b).** During the same period in 2020, 52 percent of county adults were exposed to other elements of the broader WhyWeRise campaign, and in 2021 this number was 37 percent. The broader campaign included radio and television ads. These mass media are typically able to reach broad swaths of the population and were the largest contributor to the high WhyWeRise numbers (reaching 40 and 30 percent of county adults in 2020 and 2021, respectively). The percentages of adults reached by Dodgers outreach are more comparable with the audiences for other individual WhyWeRise campaign elements in 2021 and 2020. These ranged from 3 percent of Los Angeles County adults for visits to the

campaign websites in 2021 to 35 percent for exposure to outdoor advertising for the campaign in 2020.

Marketing efforts tend to be more effective when a message is received through more than one medium or approach (Hornik, 2002). Importantly, about half of all individuals exposed to the Dodgers campaign were exposed to multiple elements of the campaign: 7 percent in 2020 and 5 percent in 2021. Another way in which exposure to a Dodgers campaign message might be reinforced by a similar message is via exposure to the broader WhyWeRise campaign. In 2020, 87 percent of those exposed to the Dodgers campaign were also exposed to the broader (non-Dodgers) WhyWeRise campaign, and, in 2021, this number was 78 percent. There was less exposure to WhyWeRise among those *not* exposed to the Dodgers campaign. Forty-seven percent of these Dodgers-unexposed individuals were exposed to WhyWeRise in 2020, and 32 percent in 2021.<sup>4</sup> In addition to indicating the opportunity for the two pieces of WhyWeRise to reinforce their mutual mes-

Figure 1a  
 Percentage of Los Angeles County Adults Exposed to the 2020 Dodgers Campaign (n = 1,010)

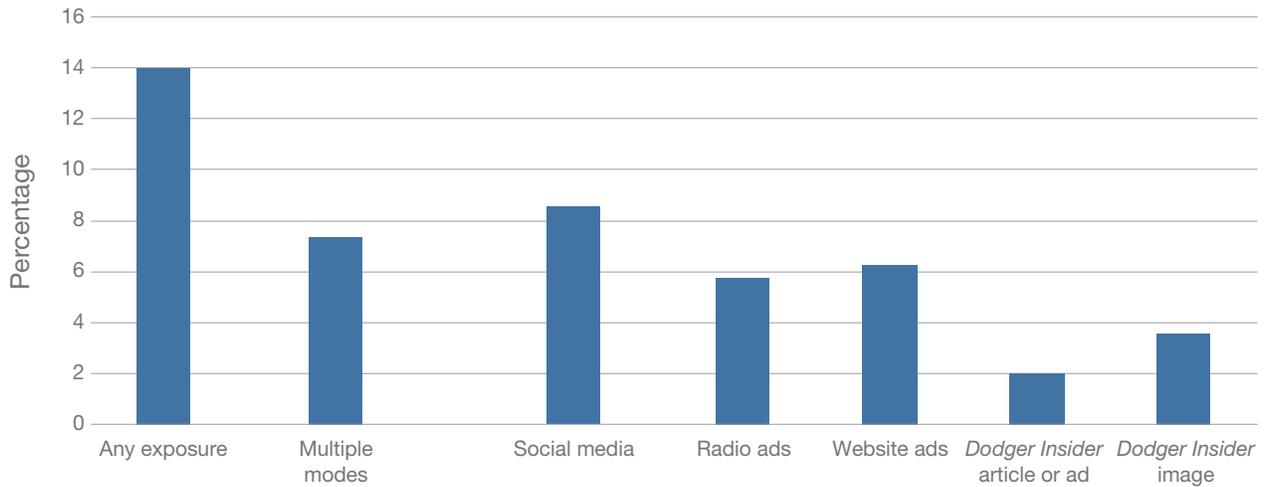
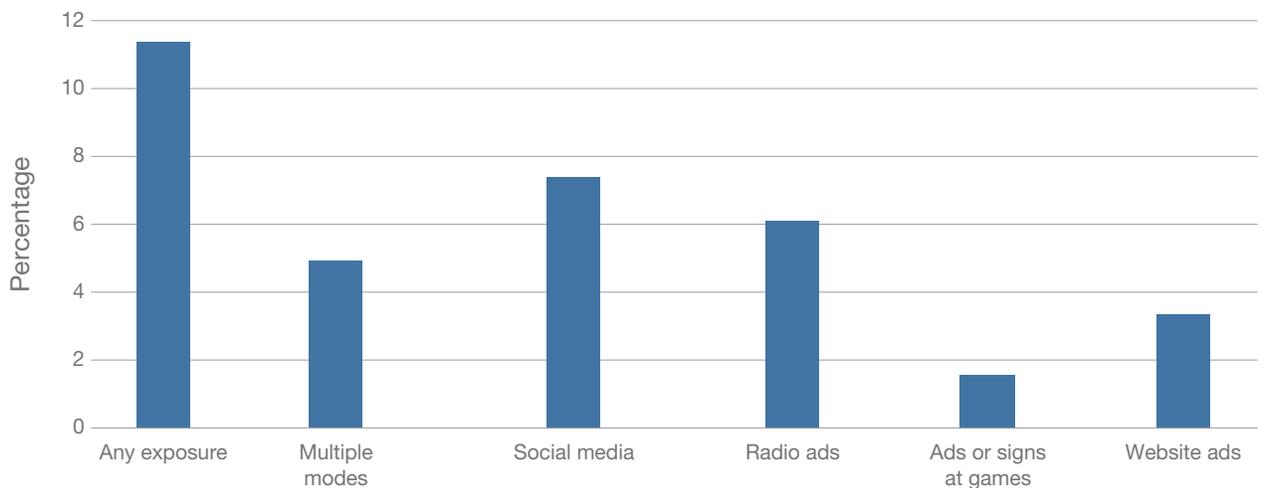


Figure 1b  
 Percentage of Los Angeles County Adults Exposed to the 2021 Dodgers Campaign (n = 1,002)



NOTE: Types of exposure were self-reported.

sages, these results suggest that they reached strongly overlapping, but not identical, audiences.

As Figures 1a and 1b indicate, exposure to some of the individual components of the Dodgers campaign was quite low; in particular, less than 2 percent of county adults reported seeing ads or signs about mental health at a Dodger game in 2021 (Figure 1b). Although our survey indicates that 11 percent of adults in the county attended a game during the season, only 18 percent of these (or 2 percent of county adults overall) visited the Viva Los Dodgers booth at the game,

where some of the campaign promotional materials were distributed, and only 8.6 percent (or 1 percent of county adults overall) attended on one of the four Mental Health Awareness Nights featuring the campaign. Although it is possible that these were high-impact exposures capable of delivering a strong dose of the campaign, it is clear that potential campaign reach through game attendance was limited by these small percentages. In contrast, about 34 percent of county adults followed the Dodgers in some fashion in 2021 (e.g., visiting the website, reading the *Dodger Insider*,

following the team on social media, or listening on the radio). Outreach through these other venues was critical to achieving the overall 11-percent exposure to the campaign in 2021.

## Predictors of Campaign Exposure

To understand who was most likely to be exposed to the campaign, we tested associations between campaign exposure and each of the demographic characteristics and prior experiences with mental health challenges that we measured.

**2020 campaign.** Spanish-preferring Hispanic residents (as indicated by language of survey) were more likely than adults from other racial, ethnic, or language backgrounds to have been exposed to the Dodgers campaign. These individuals made up 39 percent of those exposed but only 23 percent of the weighted sample responding to the survey.

**2021 campaign.** Hispanic adults, both Spanish-preferring and English-preferring, were particularly likely to be reached by the Dodgers campaign in 2021. Spanish-preferring and English-preferring Hispanic residents made up 38 and 30 percent of those exposed, respectively, compared with 25 percent and 21 percent of those surveyed. We also found that young adults 18 to 25 years of age were more likely to be exposed to the 2021 campaign than those older than 25. Young adults made up 15 percent of those exposed to the Dodgers campaign but constituted only 5 percent (weighted) of those surveyed.

The campaigns were equally likely to reach males and females. There were also no differences in exposure on the basis of prior mental health experiences (ever having experienced a mental health problem, perceiving a need for mental health treatment in the past 12 months, or experiencing serious psychological distress in the past 12 months).

## Perceptions of Campaign Messages

Fifty percent or more of county adults who were exposed to the campaign messages and materials found them to be helpful (see Table 3). **About 50 percent in each year said the messages gave them new information about how to get help with emotions or mental health, consistent with resource aware-**

**ness goals. The predominant reaction in 2020 was that the campaign messages made those reached feel supported (68 percent, or two in three adults, agreed with this); in 2021, the messages predominantly made people feel that their mental health is important (74 percent, or three in four adults, agreed).** Notably, the brief message in one of three primary campaign images in 2020 was “Here for you 24/7.” In 2021, the brief message accompanying the primary images was “Mental Health Matters.”

## Association of Campaign Exposure with Endorsement of Campaign-Targeted Outcomes

### Targeted Attitudes, Knowledge, and Beliefs

As previously noted, a central goal of the campaign was to increase awareness of LACDMH resources and perceptions that the county is available to support those in need. The Dodgers campaign appears to have achieved some impact in this area, although associations are not consistently statistically significant. **In regard to both the 2020 and 2021 Dodgers outreach, those who were exposed to the campaign were about 20 to 25 percent more likely than those who were not exposed to agree that they know how to find information and resources if they or someone they know experiences a mental health problem (see Figures 2a and 2b).** Individuals exposed in 2020 were also more aware that LACDMH has resources for families and more likely to agree with the statement that LACDMH “is here for me if I need help.” Although responses to the latter two items did not differ statistically by exposure in 2021, the pattern was quite similar and suggestive of greater endorsement among those exposed to the campaign. Similarly, those who were exposed in 2021 were more likely than those unexposed that year to say that they knew how they could be supportive of someone with a mental illness and more likely to be aware of LACDMH information and resources; patterns were similar in 2020 but not statistically different depending on exposure.

Those exposed in 2021 were also more likely to endorse the importance of talking about feelings and letting others know if they need help. And

TABLE 3

## Perceptions of Campaign Messages Among Los Angeles County Adults Exposed to the Campaign

The Dodgers website, sign, radio ad, social media post, ad, or image about mental health . . .	Los Angeles County Adults (% agreeing)	
	2020 Dodgers Outreach	2021 Dodgers Outreach
gave me new information about how to get help with emotions or mental health	53	49
made me feel more connected to community	60	49
made me feel supported	68	60
made me feel hopeful	60	63
made me feel that it's normal to feel anxious or stressed	60	67
made me feel that my mental health is important	61	74

those exposed in 2020 were more likely to agree that “everyone needs support to get through these challenging times.” Although this statement might reflect success with the secondary focus on the mental health challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in that campaign year, several items more directly measuring this dimension were not associated with exposure (e.g., “Since the coronavirus outbreak and shutdowns, more people are experiencing mental health problems”), undermining this interpretation (see Table 4).

### Awareness and Use of the LACDMH Website and Help Line

A key campaign objective in both years was to drive county residents to the LACDMH website and Help Line. Awareness of both resources was at least 50 percent higher among those exposed to the campaign in either year. Use of the website was three times as likely among respondents exposed to the 2020 Dodgers outreach and five times as likely among those exposed to the 2021 outreach, compared with unexposed individuals. Use of the LACDMH Help Line among campaign-exposed individuals was also three to five times greater depending on the year (see Figure 3). Our methods do not allow us to determine cause and effect, but these findings suggest that the campaign may have been effective in increasing awareness of these resources (which provide a connection to a slate of mental health information and services) and use of

them. Alternatively, those with mental health needs may have been more likely to attend to the campaign or to recall its messages.

### Stigma Related to Mental Health

None of the items on stigma were differentially endorsed by those exposed to Dodgers outreach in 2020. However, important differences emerged based on the 2021 outreach. **Those exposed to the 2021 outreach were 30 to 36 percent more likely to be willing to socialize with, live next door to, or work closely with someone experiencing mental illness (see the top three rows of Table 5). They were also more likely to say that people with mental illness experience high levels of prejudice and discrimination. Those exposed were also more likely to say that they could recognize the signs that someone might be experiencing a mental health problem.** Social distance (assessed by the willingness items) is considered one of the most-central indicators of mental health stigma, so this finding is particularly important. However, as with other attitudes and beliefs that differed by campaign exposure, we cannot determine whether a reduction in stigma was caused by the campaign or whether the campaign was simply better remembered by those with less-stigmatizing beliefs.

Figure 2a  
 Los Angeles County Adults Exposed to the Campaign in 2020 Were Significantly More Likely to Know that LACDMH Provides Resources and Support

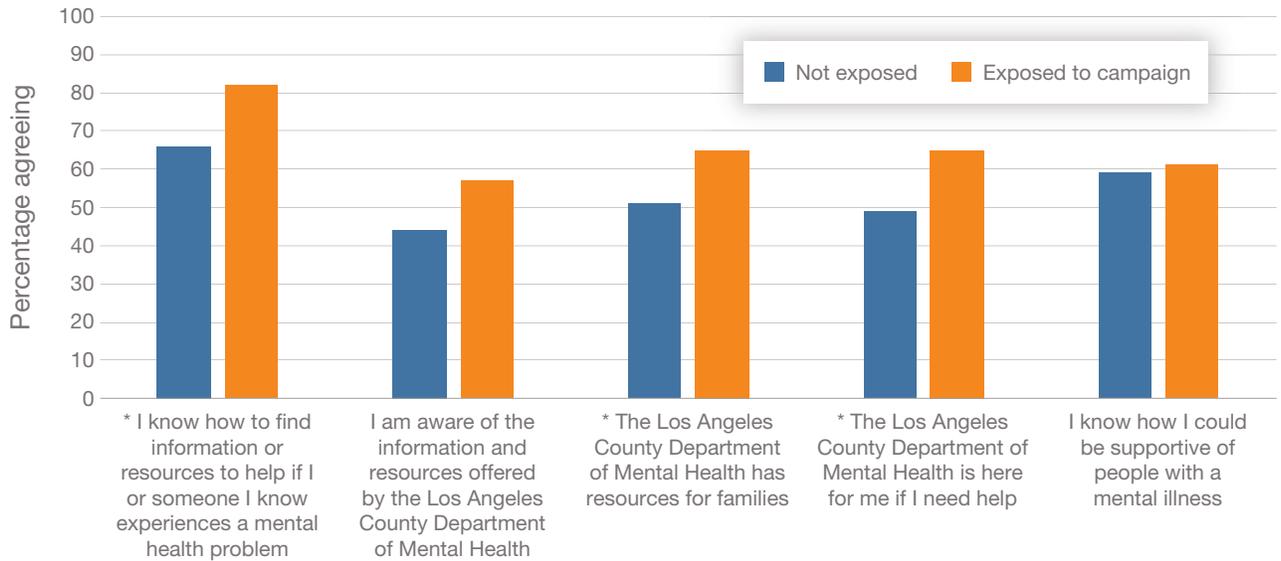
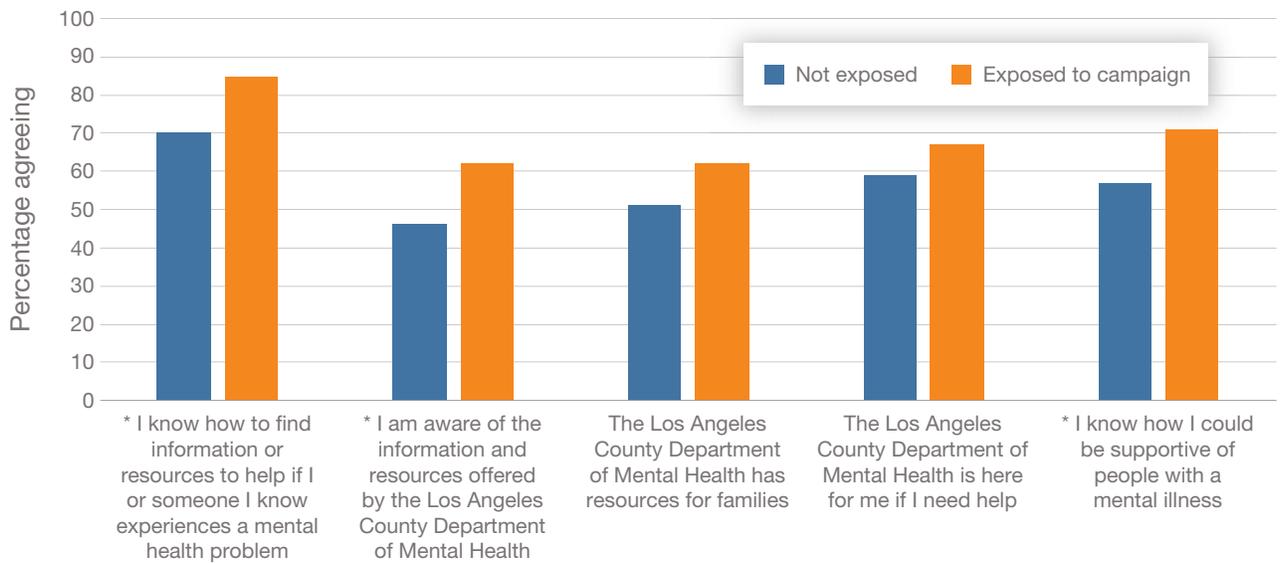


Figure 2b  
 Los Angeles County Adults Exposed to the Campaign in 2021 Were Significantly More Likely to Know that LACDMH Provides Resources and Support



NOTE: \* Differences between those exposed and not exposed are statistically significant.

TABLE 4

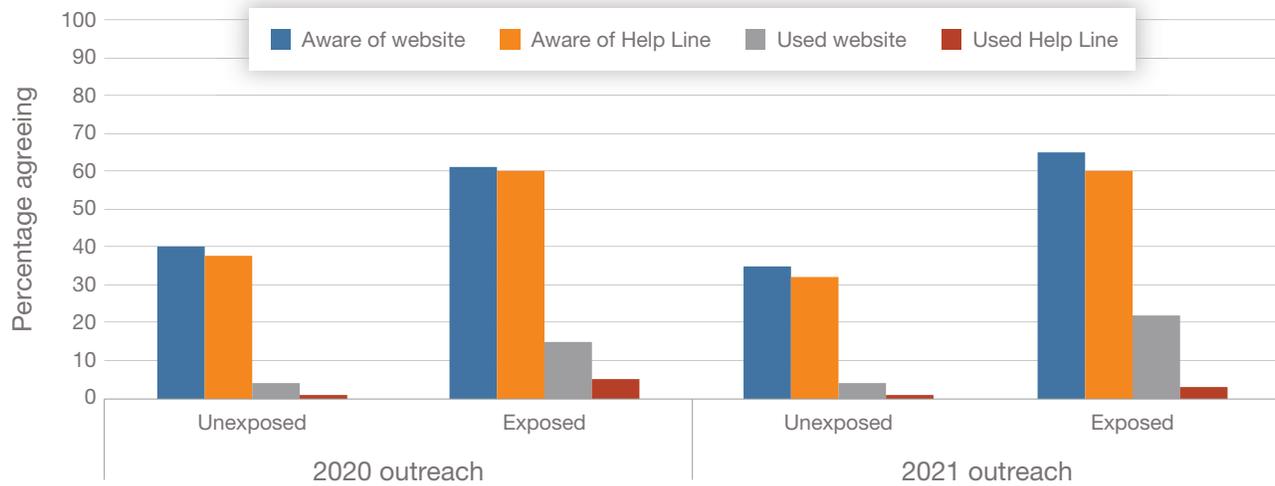
## Associations Between Campaign Exposure and Campaign-Targeted Attitudes, Knowledge, and Beliefs in Two Years of the Campaign

Campaign-Targeted Attitudes and Beliefs	Los Angeles County Adults (% agreeing)			
	2020 Dodgers Outreach		2021 Dodgers Outreach	
	Unexposed	Exposed	Unexposed	Exposed
I know how to find information or resources to help if I or someone I know experiences a mental health problem.	<b>66</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>85</b>
I am aware of the information and resources offered by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.	44	57	<b>46</b>	<b>62</b>
The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is here for me if I need help.	<b>49</b>	<b>65</b>	51	62
The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has resources for families.	<b>51</b>	<b>65</b>	59	67
I know how I could be supportive of people with a mental illness if I wanted to be.	59	61	<b>57</b>	<b>71</b>
Seeking help for mental health problems is a sign of strength.	82	85	85	89
Everyone needs support to get through these challenging times.	<b>85</b>	<b>95</b>	85	93
Talking about our feelings is important for mental health.	88	94	<b>90</b>	<b>96</b>
It's important to let people know if you need help.	91	89	<b>91</b>	<b>98</b>
I can get through things with the support of others.	85	90	81	75
Since the coronavirus outbreak and shutdowns, it is more important than usual to take care of your mental health and well-being.	89	92	91	76
Since the coronavirus outbreak and shutdowns, it is more important than usual to stay connected to family and friends.	89	89	90	82
Keeping a routine and normal activities is important to mental health and well-being.	92	82	92	86
It's normal to feel anxious, sad or overwhelmed about COVID-19, racial injustices, uncertain jobs, and fluctuating school and child care needs.	82	76	na	na
Since the coronavirus outbreak and shutdowns, more people are experiencing mental health problems.	83	89	na	na
It's natural to feel anxious and concerned during COVID-19.	86	86	na	na
It's normal for kids to be sad or anxious during COVID-19 and shutdowns.	81	79	na	na
I feel able to heal from the stress of the pandemic and racial injustice.	na	na	65	71

NOTES: Bold type for numeric estimates denotes that, within a campaign year, the percentages of exposed and unexposed individuals agreeing with the statement differ from one another,  $p > 0.05$ . na = An item was not asked regarding the specified campaign year.

FIGURE 3

Exposure to the Campaign Was Strongly and Positively Associated with Awareness and Use of the LACDMH Website and Help Line



NOTE: All differences between those exposed and unexposed were statistically significant,  $p < 0.05$ .

## Well-Being

**We did not observe any association between exposure to the Dodgers campaign in either year and the three well-being indicators of loneliness, hopefulness, and social support (see Table 6).** About 35 percent of residents were lonely, at least 70 percent were hopeful, and 84 percent got the social and emotional support they needed, regardless of campaign exposure and year, suggesting that the messages did not bolster perceptions of support and hope substantially. We obtained the same findings for the broader WhyWeRise evaluations in both years. We noted then that it may be too much to expect that the social marketing might affect well-being in the context of such factors as unemployment, school closings, and widespread illness from the pandemic.

## Countywide Survey Results: Summary and Conclusions

The Dodgers campaign reached 14 percent of Los Angeles County adults in 2020 and 11.4 percent of county adults in 2021. This translates into approximately 1 million residents reached by the campaign in each year. Although substantially less than the percentages reached by the broader (non-Dodgers)

WhyWeRise campaign (WhyWeRise reach was 37 percent in 2021), this percentage is much larger than the reach of most other individual WhyWeRise campaign elements. The Dodgers campaign was also highly effective in reaching Hispanic residents and, in 2021, young adults ages 18 to 25. Reach to these groups provides the potential to close gaps in mental health resource use and delivery of services to some of those most in need and is also an important element in Los Angeles County's efforts toward mental health prevention and early intervention, because mental health problems typically emerge at these younger ages.

The majority of individuals reached by the campaign said that they found it beneficial. They agreed that it made them feel supported and that their mental health is important, and about half said it gave them new information about how to seek mental health care. Indeed, our results suggest that the Dodgers campaign may have been successful in meeting its goal to increase awareness of the mental health information and resources offered by LACDMH. Among those exposed to the campaign, approximately 60 percent said they were aware of the LACDMH website and Help Line, compared with 30 to 40 percent of those unexposed, and 15 to

TABLE 5

## Associations Between Campaign Exposure and Mental Health Stigma Across Two Years of the Dodgers Campaign

Stigma-Related Belief	Los Angeles County Adults (% agreeing or willing)			
	2020 Dodgers Outreach		2021 Dodgers Outreach	
	Unexposed	Exposed	Unexposed	Exposed
Definitely/probably willing to move next door	47	55	<b>50</b>	<b>65</b>
Definitely/probably willing to socialize	61	73	<b>61</b>	<b>83</b>
Definitely/probably willing to work closely	54	56	<b>57</b>	<b>77</b>
Would definitely/probably delay treatment fearing others might know	21	22	21	19
Would try to hide mental health problem from family/friends	31	27	29	37
Would try to hide mental health problem from co-workers/classmates	53	44	51	52
A person with mental illness is a danger to others	23	24	26	33
People who have had a mental illness are never going to be able to contribute much to society	10	18	9	21
A person with mental illness can eventually recover	64	73	69	87
Treatment can help people with mental illness lead normal lives	87	84	86	90
People with mental illness experience high levels of prejudice and discrimination	71	77	<b>70</b>	<b>82</b>
People with mental illness are able to do things as well as most other people	62	69	63	70
I can recognize the signs that someone may be dealing with a mental health problem or crisis	46	48	<b>47</b>	<b>68</b>

NOTE: Bold type for numeric estimates denotes that, within a campaign year, the percentages of exposed and unexposed individuals agreeing with the statement differ from one another,  $p > 0.05$ .

TABLE 6

## There Were No Associations Between Dodgers Campaign Exposure and Well-Being Indicators in Either Year of the Campaign

Well-Being Indicator	Los Angeles County Adults (% agreeing)			
	2020 Dodgers Outreach		2021 Dodgers Outreach	
	Unexposed	Exposed	Unexposed	Exposed
Lonely	36	34	35	38
Hopeful about the future	77	76	70	76
Get the social and emotional support I need	83	89	84	86

20 percent had used the website, compared with only 4 percent of those unexposed. Use of the Help Line was also three to five times greater among those who were campaign-exposed compared with those who were unexposed. In our evaluation of the broader WhyWeRise campaign, we found that four in five visitors to the website and two in three who used the Help Line said that the resources were somewhat or very helpful (Collins, Eberhart, and Roth, 2022).

Although the Dodgers campaign seemed to have little influence on residents' attitudes and beliefs about mental health challenges and residents who experienced these challenges in 2020, there may have been some positive effects on these beliefs in 2021. In that year, those exposed to Dodgers outreach were somewhat more willing to live next door to someone experiencing a mental illness and substantially more willing to work closely or socialize with such an individual. Eighty-three percent of those exposed to the campaign in 2021 said that they would be willing to socialize with someone experiencing a mental illness. These shifts in so-called social distance are difficult to achieve, and the stigma they tap into is a major barrier to mental health service use, particularly among Hispanic residents (Wong et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2021). The current results might provide a hint that the messages specific to the 2021 Dodgers outreach (e.g., the importance of mental health) might help reduce this barrier. It could also be that the in-person messaging at games, which was specific to 2021, helped normalize conversations about mental illness and thereby reduce stigma. A final possibility is that cumulative exposure to the campaign across two years of outreach to Dodgers fans resulted in a shift that just one year of exposure was insufficient to achieve. Ultimately, whether any reductions in stigma resulted from the 2021 Dodgers outreach cannot be determined from our findings. In the absence of an immediate answer to this question, it may be wise for future campaigns to incorporate aspects of the 2021 campaign.

Limitations in our evaluation design mean that we cannot confirm causal effects of the Dodgers campaign. Although the awareness and use of county resources among those exposed to the campaign are more consistent with campaign goals than the awareness and use of these resources among

county residents who were unexposed, this might be because individuals interested in or experiencing mental health issues are more likely to take note of and remember campaign materials. Our measure of exposure requires this attention and recall, not just exposure per se. Nonetheless, the pattern observed is consistent with what we would expect from effective messages, and residents also reported perceptions of the messages that are consistent with this interpretation. Moreover, we found no differential exposure to the campaign among those who had symptoms of serious distress in the year prior to the survey; among those who thought they might need mental health treatment in that year; or among those who reported greater loneliness, less hope, or less social support. Finally, WhyWeRise exposure among those unexposed to the Dodgers campaign means that the differences we observed between the exposed and unexposed might underestimate the effectiveness of the Dodgers campaign—some of the unexposed group has been exposed to similar messages through the main WhyWeRise campaign. In summary, what evidence we have from our survey of Los Angeles County residents suggests that the LACDMH/Dodgers campaign partnership effectively reached substantial percentages of county residents, particularly Hispanic residents and, in 2021, young adults, and it might have made those reached more aware of key mental health resources.

## **Survey of 2021 Dodger Game Attendees**

In 2021, the Los Angeles Dodgers allowed in-person audience attendance at games, which had been paused the previous season because of pandemic-related concerns. This expanded the scope of the LACDMH Dodgers campaign to these games. As noted above, the games included the pitcher's mound painted with the WeRise logo; a digital ad, signs, and announcements addressing mental health; and resource sheets describing Los Angeles County mental health resources at the Viva Los Dodgers booth. RAND surveyed 2021 game attendees to evaluate their demographic characteristics; their perceptions of the outreach at the games; and their atti-

tudes, beliefs, and intentions to act related to mental health challenges.

## Method

To target the survey to individuals who had attended a Dodger game during Mental Health Month, the Dodgers sent out an email blast on May 25, 2021, to individuals on the organization's mailing list. The email invited those who had recently attended a game to complete a RAND Corporation survey and provided a link to it. Eligibility for the survey was limited to those who were 18 or older and spoke Spanish or English (the invitation and the survey were in both languages). The survey was closed to responses on May 26, 2021. During this period, we received 1,125 surveys. After we removed surveys that were less than 50 percent complete, that took less than 50 seconds to complete, that were completed outside California, and where more than five individuals from the same geolocation completed the survey, 635 surveys remained for analysis. Twenty-one surveys were completed in Spanish; the rest were in English. Surveys took approximately two minutes to complete. Participants received a \$5 online gift card as an incentive.

## Measures

### WeRise Awareness

One item showed the WeRise logo and asked respondents whether they saw it at the event (yes or no). A second asked respondents to identify the goal of WeRise from a set of four possibilities (combat hunger in low-income groups, encourage well-being and healing, promote COVID-19 vaccination, or promote women's rights).

### Demographics

The survey measured gender (male, female, nonbinary, other), age (18–24, 25–34, 35–49, 50+), and race/ethnicity (White/Caucasian, Latino/Hispanic, Black/African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native).

## Perceptions of the Dodger Games

We used five campaign-specific items to assess perceptions of the event and their alignment with WhyWeRise goals. For example, “The event connected you with information and resources to support your own and others' well-being” and “The event made you feel more connected to community.” Participants indicated extent of agreement on a five-point scale (*strongly agree to strongly disagree*) for all five items; items were recoded to reflect any agreement versus none.

## Mental Health–Related Attitudes and Beliefs

Seven items were used to identify endorsement of key goals and beliefs targeted by WeRise. The 2021 WeRise theme “None of us are well until all of us are well” was included among these, as was the item “The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is here for me if I need help.” The remaining five items measured constructs about LACDMH resources, stigma, barriers to mental health treatment, advocacy, and hope. These items were used in a statewide survey of a representative sample of California adults for an evaluation of the Each Mind Matters campaign (Collins et al., 2015). For each item, we measured extent of agreement on a five-point scale (*strongly agree to strongly disagree*) and recoded responses to reflect any agreement versus none. We also employed one previously validated item that identifies stigma related to mental health challenges and their treatment (Collins et al., 2015): “Imagine you had a problem that needed to be treated by a mental health professional. Would you put off seeking treatment for fear of letting others know about your mental health problem?” Responses were made on a four-point scale (*yes, probably would; yes, definitely would; no, probably would not; no, definitely would not*) and recoded to indicate those who definitely or probably would delay treatment.

## Analysis

We report univariate and bivariate analyses and significance tests.

## Results

### Characteristics of Respondents

Data on the characteristics of those who completed the survey can be seen in Table 7.<sup>5</sup>

**Although we cannot know to what extent the characteristics of survey respondents reflect the characteristics of all those who attended a WhyWeRise–sponsored game, the data suggest that the audience for recent Dodger games included strong representation of Hispanic residents and non-White residents, who together made up 97 percent of respondents.** Hispanic residents were represented at a rate equivalent to their representation in the Los Angeles County population, Black/African American and American Indian/Alaska Native residents were overrepresented, and White residents were underrepresented. Those responding to the survey also spanned a wide age range roughly representative

TABLE 7  
Characteristics of 635 Adult Participants in the Dodger Game Survey

Characteristics	Percentage
<b>Age</b>	
18–24	7
25–34	25
35–49	40
50+	29
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	43
Female	56
Nonbinary or other	1
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic	51
Non-Hispanic White	3
Non-Hispanic Black	35
Non-Hispanic Asian	2
Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native	7
Multiple races/ethnicities	1

NOTE: Numbers are rounded and might not always sum to 100.

of the county as a whole. The individuals surveyed included slightly more females than males.

### Perceptions of the Outreach at Dodger Games

**Perceptions of the outreach at games were positive, particularly the sense among attendees that the games helped them heal and made them feel connected to community; each was endorsed by 84 and 83 percent of respondents, respectively.** Fewer, but still the majority, of respondents said that the games showed the healing power of creative expression or empowered them to take care of their well-being. **A substantial minority—41 percent of those responding—said they were connected to resources to support well-being** (Table 8). This suggests that the events fulfilled their WhyWeRise goals, although it is unclear to what extent this is a function of the mental health messaging at the games versus a more generalized reaction to attending a Dodger game. The percentage affected specifically by LACDMH messaging might lie between the lower bound of 41 percent who said they were connected to resources to support well-being and the 83 percent to 84 percent who said that game attendance helped them heal from pandemic stress and made them feel more connected to community.

### Awareness of WeRise

**More than one in four (27 percent) of those who responded to the survey remembered seeing the WeRise logo.** This is evidence of good branding at the games, which could help tie participants to other WeRise events and WhyWeRise messaging before and after the Dodger events. **Importantly, about half of all respondents (52 percent) also correctly identified WeRise as a campaign to encourage well-being and healing.**

### Mental Health–Related Attitudes and Beliefs

The attitudes of respondents toward mental health were overwhelmingly positive (Table 9). **Ninety-**

TABLE 8  
Perceptions of the Outreach at Dodger Games

Percentage of Adults Agreeing				
Connected me with resources to support my own and others' well-being	Made me feel more connected to community	Made me feel empowered to take care of my own well-being	Helped me heal from the stress of the past year (e.g., pandemic, racial injustice)	Showed the healing power of creative expression
41	83	52	84	62

TABLE 9  
Event Attendees' Mental Health–Related Attitudes and Beliefs

Event-Targeted Attitudes and Beliefs	Percentage Agreeing
None of us are well until all of us are well	78
I know how to find information or resources to help if I or someone I know experiences a mental health problem	84
The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is here for me if I need help	63
Seeking help for mental health problems is a sign of strength	93
I feel hopeful about my future	91
I plan to help break down barriers that keep people with mental health challenges from getting treatment	80
I have the power to change how our communities deal with mental health issues	70
I would put off seeking treatment for fear of letting others know about my mental health problem	23

**three percent of those attending a game agreed that seeking help for mental health problems is a sign of strength. A similar percentage (91 percent) said they felt hopeful about their future.** About eight in ten agreed with the WeRise event slogan for 2021, “None of us are well until all of us are well,” said they knew how to find mental health resources, or said they planned to break down barriers to treatment. Fewer, but still strong majorities, said they had the power to change practices around mental health issues (70 percent agreed). These were all themes of WhyWeRise more broadly. **Sixty-three percent agreed that LACDMH is there for them if they need help.** However, it might be that those attending Dodger games and/or those agreeing to participate in our survey already held these positive views rather than the outreach at the games leading to changes in their attitudes and beliefs.

One item in the survey assessed stigma and its association with treatment-seeking. When asked whether, if those surveyed were to experience a mental health problem, they would delay seeking treatment out of concern over others’ learning of the issue, 23 percent of respondents said they would do so. This is consistent with the percentages who endorsed this item in Los Angeles County as a whole, regardless of exposure to the Dodgers campaign, suggesting no impact of game attendance on this aspect of stigma.

## Survey of Game Attendees: Summary and Conclusions

Our data are consistent with the intention of the LACDMH campaign. Attendees of Dodger games held during Mental Health Month who responded to

our survey reported awareness of the mental health outreach activities that took place at those games and were specifically aware of WhyWeRise. About half of attendees were aware of the mental health theme and about one-quarter recalled the campaign logo. There appears to have been strong diversity in attendees' ages and racial and ethnic backgrounds, although very few White residents responded to our survey relative to their percentages in the Los Angeles County population. Perceptions of the games were mostly positive. Fewer than half of respondents agreed that the games connected them to resources to support well-being, but the 41 percent who agreed with this aspect is a substantial group considering that most attendees were probably at the game for reasons other than an interest in mental health topics. In addition, the 63 percent who felt that LACDMH is available to them if they need help is substantial in a broad audience and consistent with the campaign-exposed percentages endorsing this idea in the countywide survey. It should be kept in mind that those responding to our survey may not be representative of all those attending such events, and we cannot test the causal impact of attending beyond individuals' perceptions. Thus, any conclusions must be drawn with caution.

## General Conclusion

Overall, the evaluation found evidence that the 2020–2021 LACDMH Dodgers campaign successfully reached approximately 1 million Los Angeles County adults each year and was particularly effective in reaching Hispanic residents and young adults. It appears to have made those reached feel supported and aware of Los Angeles County's mental health resources. In 2021, it also may have reduced an aspect of mental health stigma involving avoidance of those with mental health problems. Perhaps most importantly, Los Angeles County residents exposed to the campaign were much more likely than others to be aware of and to have used the county's main mental health information and resource hubs, the website at [dmh.lacounty.gov](http://dmh.lacounty.gov), and the LACDMH Help Line.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Data were provided by the Los Angeles Dodgers in a CalMHSA 2020 recap. The information is available from the authors upon request.
- <sup>2</sup> Viva Los Dodgers is a monthly family friendly event held two hours in advance of Dodger games.
- <sup>3</sup> Among the 3.4 percent of Los Angeles County adults claiming to have seen an ad on the Dodgers website, 0.6 percent endorsed the false option. Half of these (0.3 percent) also endorsed a correct option and were classified as exposed, and half did not and were classified as unexposed.
- <sup>4</sup> We were able to determine this percentage because the same surveys that evaluated Dodgers campaign reach and impact were used to evaluate the reach and impact of WhyWeRise. Results of the latter evaluations are available in Collins et al., 2022, and Collins, Eberhart, and Roth, 2022.
- <sup>5</sup> Data are not weighted in this section of the report because we do not have information about the characteristics of all who recently attended a Dodger game to adjust the characteristics of our sample (or to determine whether the sample is representative of recent-game attendees).

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## About This Report

WhyWeRise is a social marketing campaign conducted by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) that is focused on prevention of and early intervention for mental health challenges among county residents. In 2020 and 2021, LACDMH partnered with the Los Angeles Dodgers to expand the reach of the campaign to the Major League Baseball team's audience and spread the WhyWeRise messages to the team's extensive Hispanic fan base. To gain insight into the 2020 and 2021 Dodgers campaign reach and potential impact, LACDMH and the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) commissioned the RAND Corporation to conduct an evaluation. The current report provides an evaluation of the reach of the 2020 and 2021 Dodgers campaign overall and a focus on the reach and potential impact of outreach to attendees of 2021 Dodger games.

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## CalMHSA

CalMHSA is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. Prevention and early intervention programs implemented by CalMHSA are funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63). Prop. 63 provides the funding and framework needed to expand mental health services to previously underserved populations and all of California's diverse communities.