



## Strengthening Community Partnerships to Support Mental Health

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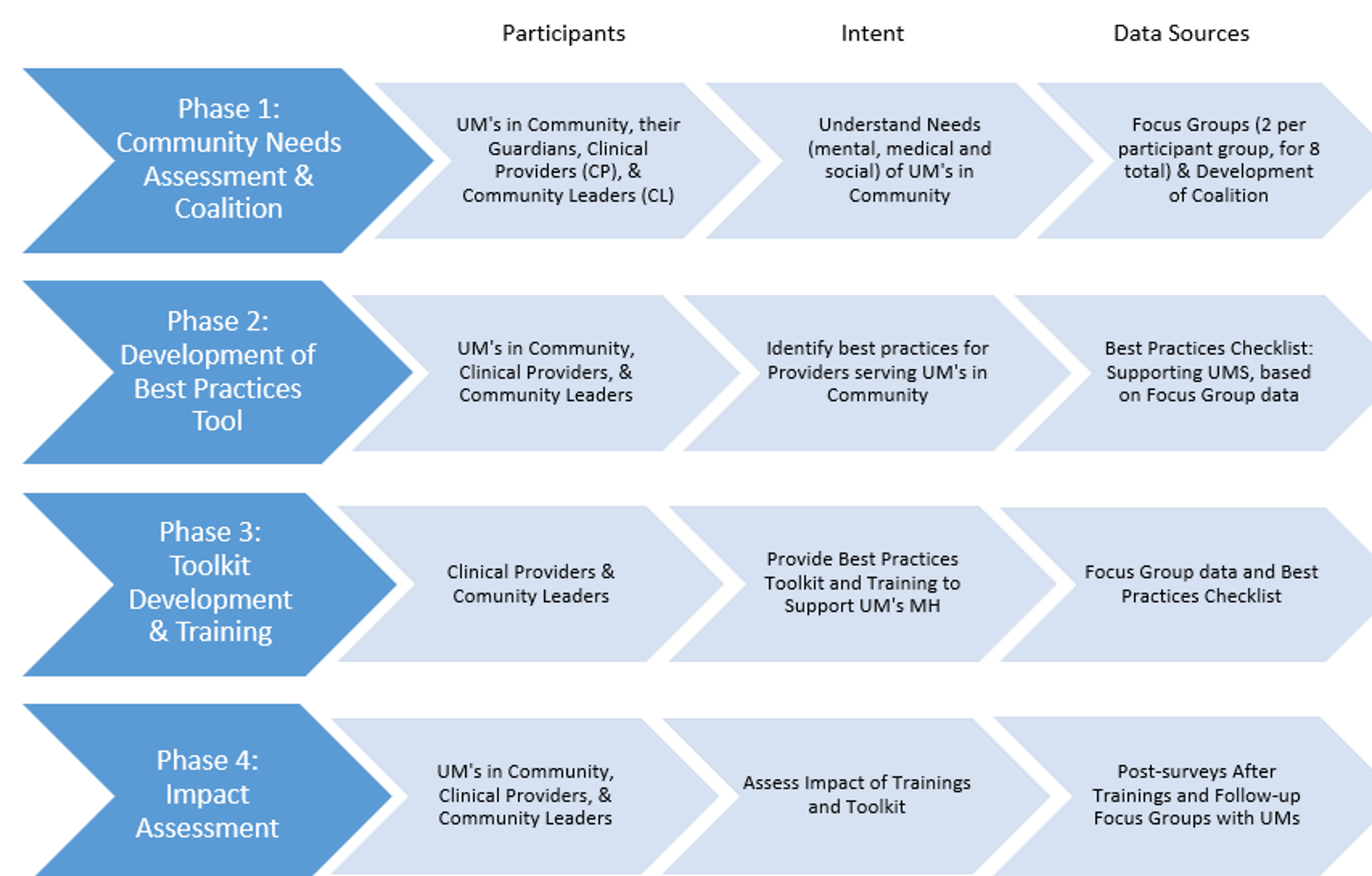
### Overview

The BridgeUM Team (a pediatrician, licensed clinical social worker, and two professional counselors) has embarked on a journey to improve the provision and use of trauma-informed mental health services by UMs in the greater Houston area by (1) conducting an in-depth needs assessment of the access to mental health services for UMs and (2) building a collaborative coalition of key healthcare partners to begin to tackle this wicked problem.

### BACKGROUND

- The highly diverse and rapidly growing greater Houston metropolitan area is home to 1.6 million immigrants from all over the world.
- Asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors (UMs), children who crossed the Southern United States (U.S.) border without their parents or guardians, are likely the most vulnerable immigrants in the U.S.
- UMs experienced high rates of trauma and grief in their home countries and during their journeys to the US.
- After immigrant children and UMs leave shelters and enter the community, many of their physical and mental healthcare needs are unmet.
- The provision of trauma-informed and culturally-responsive mental health care services for vulnerable immigrant children is a social justice and human rights issue that must be tackled.

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES



### HEALTH CARE PROVIDER BEST PRACTICES TO SUPPORT UM'S

#### Understanding Unaccompanied Minors (UMs):

- Each UMs situation is unique
- UMs perception is that "everything is a challenge"
- UMs feel uncertainty about the future and are living moment to moment
- UMs are worried about deportation
- UMs need support in general (food, housing, legal, language, medical, and mental health)
- UMs experience racism and xenophobia

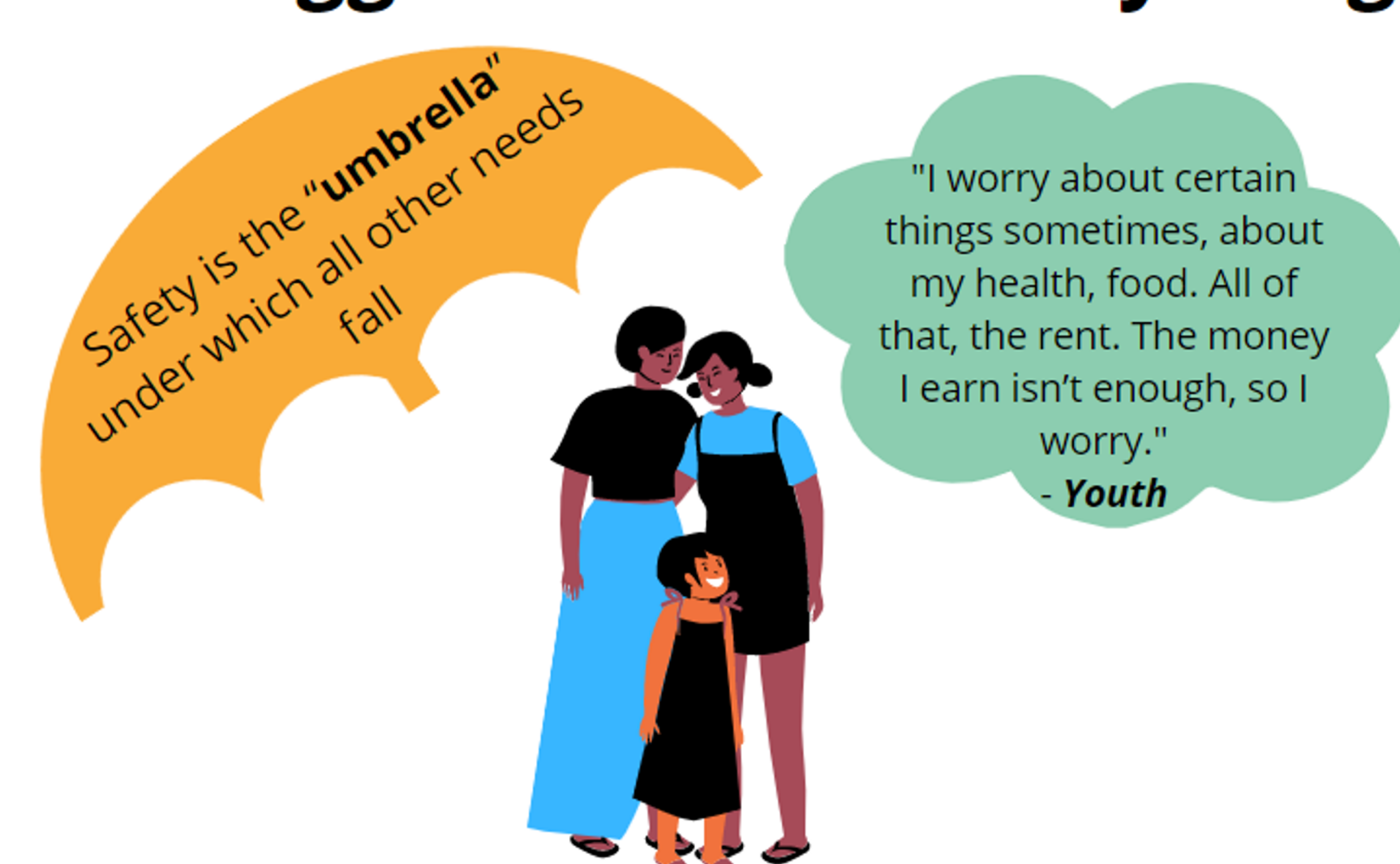
#### Provider Action Steps to Take:

- Compassionately ask about immigration history
- Build trust with UMs and their families
- Empower UMs and their families by addressing:
  - Social and legal needs
  - Physical and mental health needs
  - Systemic issues that affect UMs
- Support mental and emotional wellness of community providers who work with UMs and their families

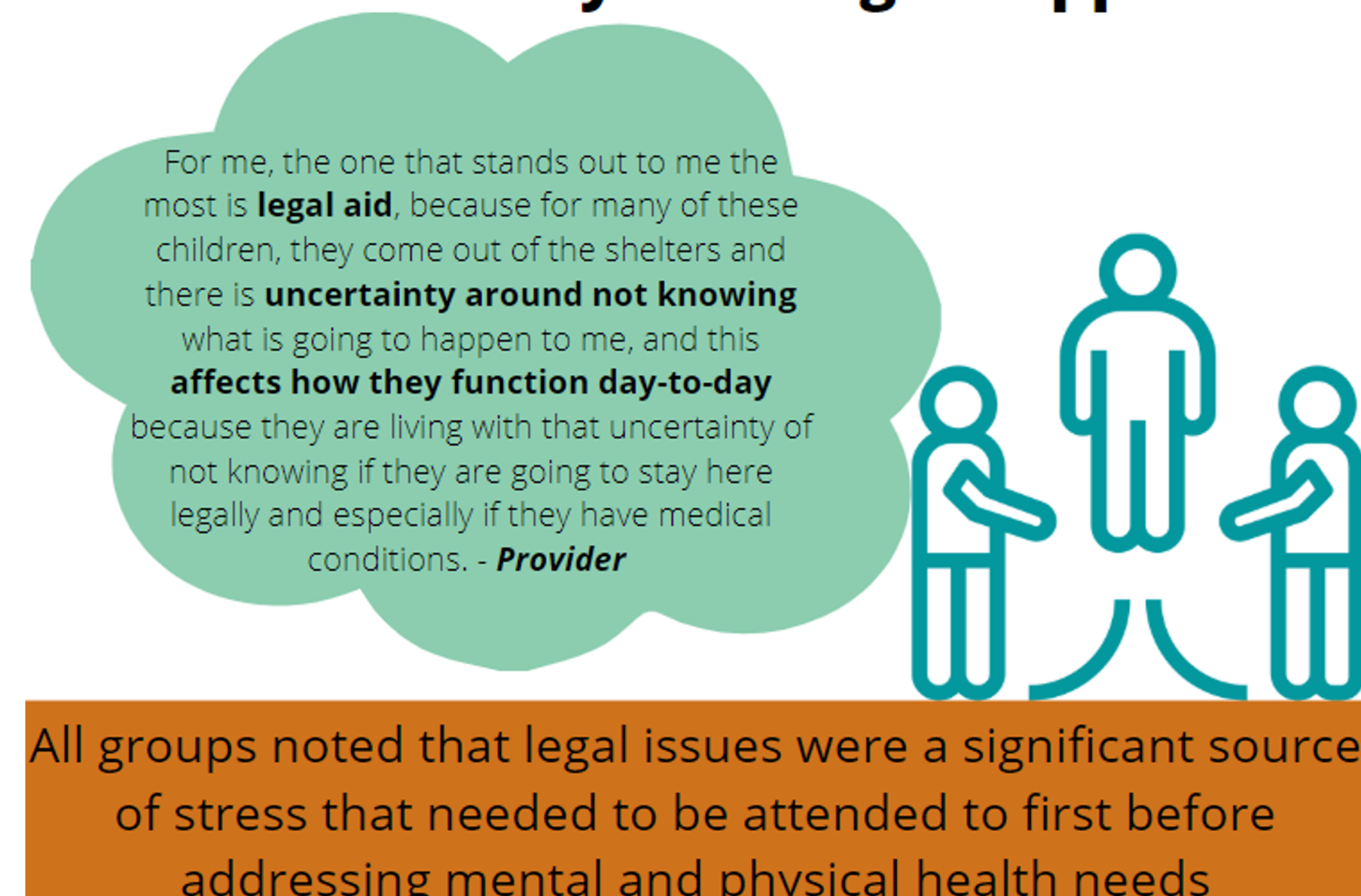
**Downloadable** as a one-pager here: [www.bbhoustan.org/](http://www.bbhoustan.org/)

### PRIMARY THEMES

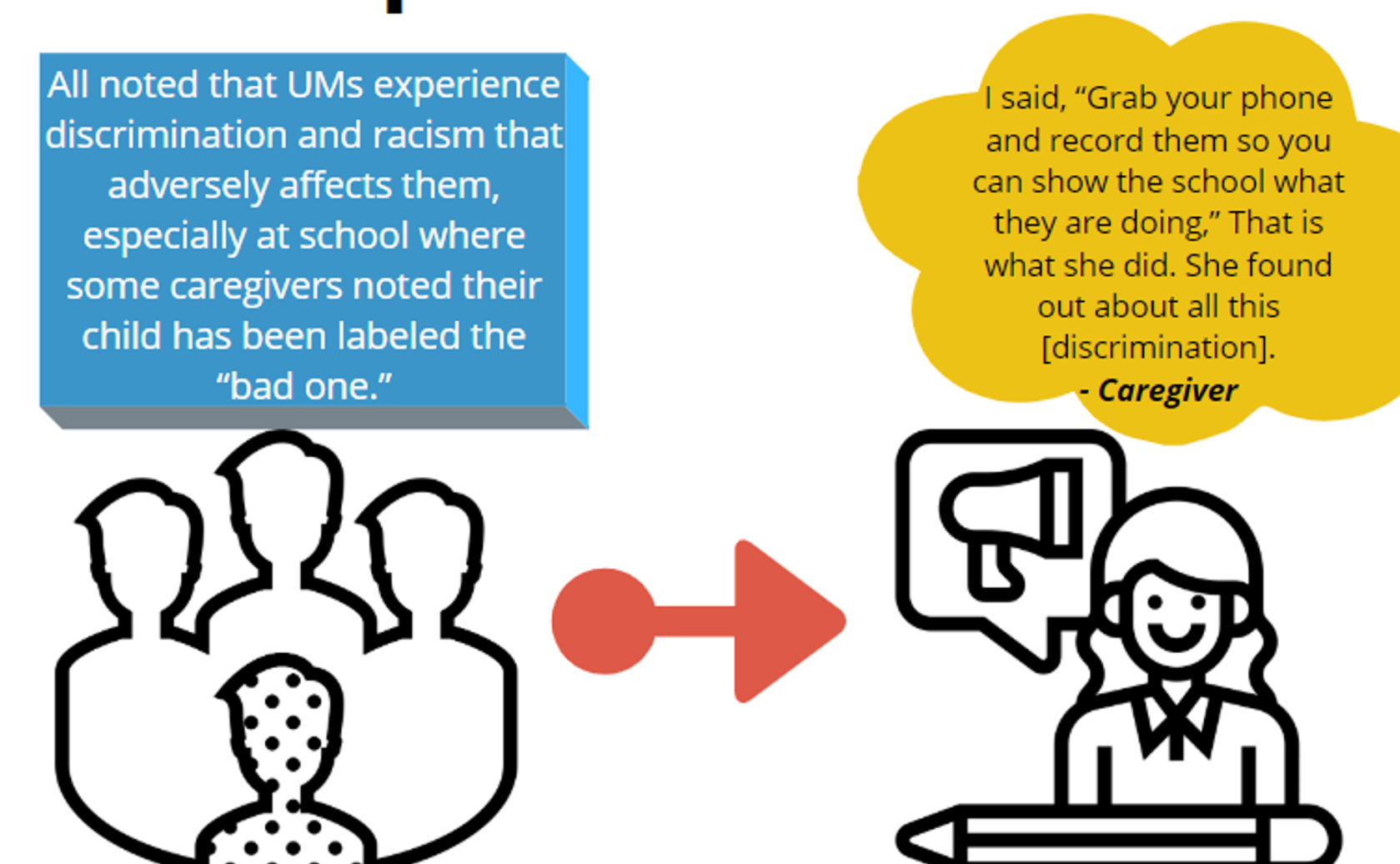
#### The biggest need is "Everything"



#### The importance of working collaboratively with legal supports



#### UMs Experience Discrimination



### NEXT STEPS

- **Create a Toolkit for Providers working with UMs** as a supplement to our research-based Best Practices.
- **Deliver resources and trainings to health care providers** to share a unified standard of trauma-informed, culturally responsive health care services for UMs.
- **Support efforts in creating community-based supports for UMs and provide trainings on best practices** across the United States.

- **Please visit our website** with community resources for UMs and their families, as well as a link to our Best Practices checklist: <https://www.bbhoustan.org/>
- **Follow us on Twitter at @bridge\_um**