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Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MECDHH): Needs Assessment

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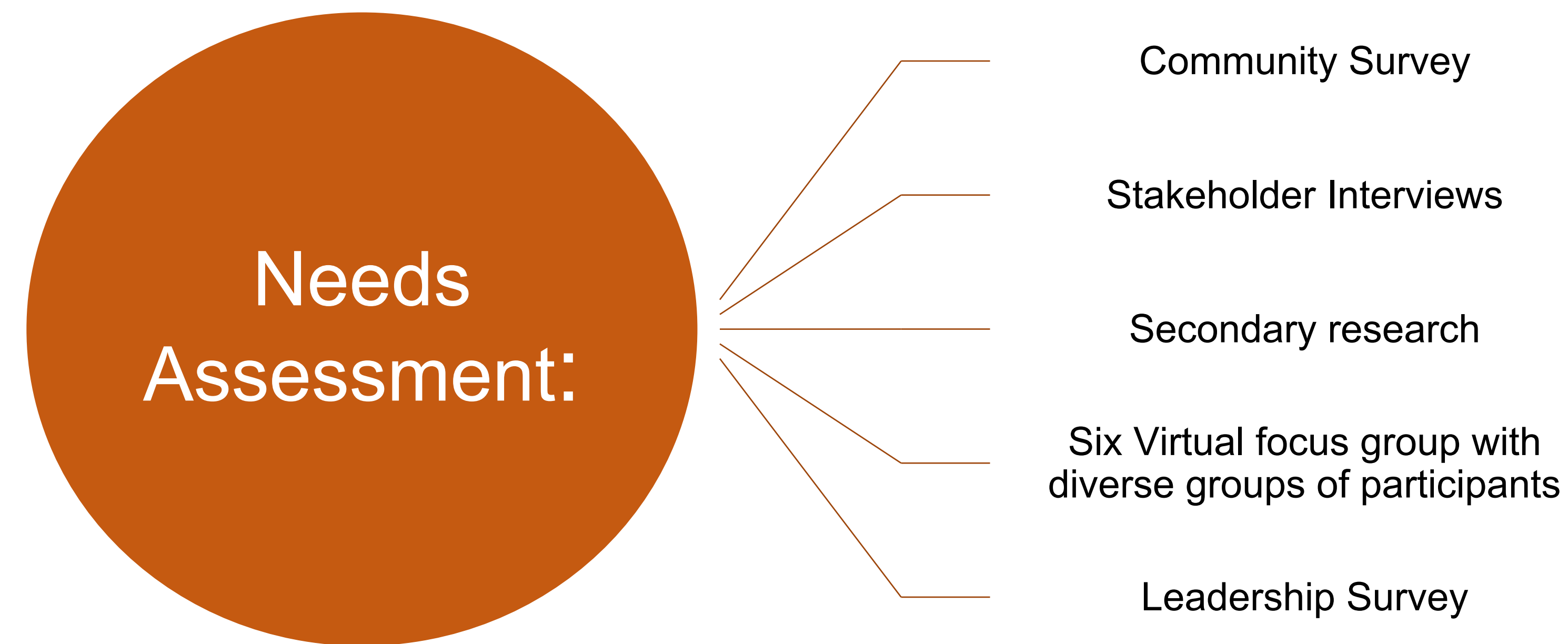
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MECDHH/GBSD has formed a collaborative partnership with several statewide agencies in Maine that serves children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. Early screening for children is necessary to provide them the right services. Based on research done in 2018, approximately one in three children did not receive any follow up testing and received no diagnosis. In addition, the social determinants of health plays a big role when it comes to service delivery knowing that Maine is mostly a rural area. In this presentation, we will focus on the activities and the needed priorities identified in the community.

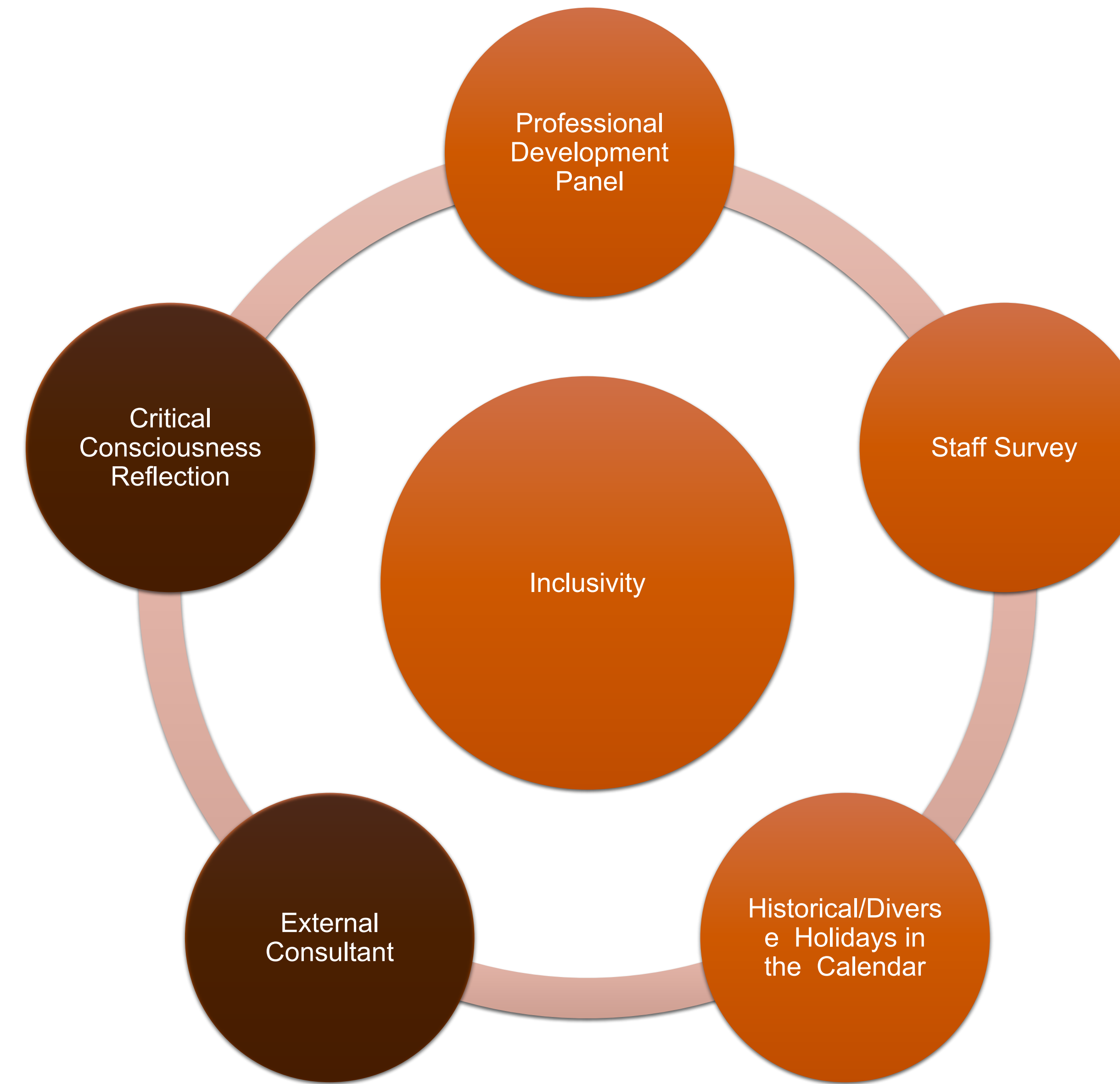


15 Community Needs Identified

- Increased access to specialized services and providers in rural areas –
- Improved system for obtaining all records from audiologists and other providers for early intervention enrollment
- Increased access to newborn hearing screening equipment for midwives
- Standardized training for primary care providers and OB/GYNs on the newborn hearing screening process across the state
- Improved and updated information on all services and providers available for deaf and hard of hearing children for PROVIDERS
- Increased access to technology and high-speed internet for families
- Standardized training for newborn hearing screening providers on the newborn hearing screening across the state
- Improved socialization opportunities for families and deaf and hard of hearing children during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Improved cultural sensitivity training for state agencies and community organizations that work with families with a deaf or hard of hearing child(ren)
- Increased access to continuing education on risk factors for hearing loss
- Improved follow-up system to ensure PCPs receive updates from CDS about early intervention enrollment status
- Improved and updated information on all services and providers available for deaf and hard of hearing children for FAMILIES
- Creation of a single point of contact for families during the newborn hearing screening through early intervention enrollment process (i.e., case management)
- Increased access to newborn hearing screening equipment and/or secondary machine for small community hospitals
- Increased access to specialized services and providers in urban areas



Cultural Shift Collaborative



The main goal for my leadership placement was to understand how the system works in one of the biggest institutions for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. MECDHH has many divisions and different services, however, it is difficult for families to navigate within the system and find the right resources. For this reason, the needs assessment will offer some solutions to the barriers families face and will orient them to the right paths. Having in mind that Maine is home for many immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers a cultural shift collaboration has been created to minimize the health disparities by integrating the cultural sensitivity into our tasks from the needs assessment. A project of five different goals has been established and a weekly meeting is now hosted to implement the tasks needed. A panel will be hosted in September for all staff to understand the cultural and background experience of New Mainers and invite culturally competent professionals and community members with lived experience. There is also a survey for staff created to identify a feeling of oppression from the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural level perspective. The team will also raise awareness within the institution by adding into the calendar historical events such as the black history month. Finally, the purpose of hiring a consultant will be to provide new skills working with a diverse community and having a clear understanding of the cultural challenges and disparities.



Maine Educational Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. (2022). Retrieved from About MECDHH/GBSD: <https://www.mecdhh.org/>

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