

Summary

Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Cultural Humility, Health Equity & Social Justice Committee

February 23, 2023
10:05 am – 11:00 am
Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Facility
Teleconference via Zoom

Present:

Sharon Jones, Bacilia Mendez, Cindy Mattox, Ruth Portillo, Jose Chavez, Emily Diaz, Katalina Zambrano, Leslie Benítez, Rocio Ortega, Cara Rupp, Zeus Baldevia, Maria Colomer, Jesse Ornelas, Fraulein Lacy, Christina Vang, Tony Lor, Griselda Vasquez, Hope Stokes, Belle Vallador, Fernando Granados

Presentation and Discussion:

All Members

I. Check-in/Conocimiento

II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for January 26, 2023 was motioned/seconded (Jose Chavez-Diaz / Ruth Portillo) and carried.

III. Discussion on promoting and monitoring quality and equitable care

We live in a community where we are below the poverty level, families are in great need, even more need since the critical incidents of COVID and the recent flooding, in the community. How do we still provide quality and equitable care? How can we promote and monitor quality care?

Belle – When serving the underserved, we should have follow-up case management. Many populations are non-English At Healthy House, we follow up by providing interpreters in their language. We make sure their mental health, and medical health is being address. We assist them to understand the provider.

Sharon asked, What is your approach to case management? Belle gave an example, when providing help to the homeless, for housing. We follow-up with Section 8 for housing vouchers. After helping them we do not leave them, we try to reach out to them twice a month to see how they are doing, are they seeing their medical providers, are they taking their medication. These are some of the thing we address at Healthy House.

Jose – GVHC, I agree with Belle, case management follow up is very important. Especially when providing support to Planada and the flood. I attended the town hall meeting and there was a lot of crying and angry people, complaining about not following up from different agencies, I want to make a correction, I mentioned on previous meeting HSA being recognized but I meant BHRS for being at Planada after the flood and currently right now. Human Services Agency (HAS), Golden Valley Health Center (GVHC), Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) and many different organizations from this meeting were given positive feedback. The biggest thing at the meeting was that FEMA. And the County Building Commission, they received all the complaints and “heat” because people were saying that they had a slow process, applications were not being process fast enough.

Sharon added not only is case management important but follow-up, being there. Letting individuals know that you care and showing up for them is very important.

Katalina – Working together as a Network, making sure all resources in Merced are available to us, so when there is an emergency we can direct them to the right resource and following up with them and/or the resources. Getting to know all Network’s strong points.

IV. Discussion on cultural populations served by county operated and contracted behavioral health programs

Who are some of the cultural populations that we have identified in Merced County that need support and equitable care?

Example – According to the state the Latina-X, Latina, Latino community is underserved as well as the Hmong Community.

Jose – The cultural communities that are underserved, are the homeless population, small rural communities, like Beachwood, Le Grand, and Cressy.

Sharon added, our LGBTQ Communities are also underserved.

Katalina – Yes, Our LGBTQ, we did our LGBTQ 101 training with your staff. Even though we are close to the Bay Area, here in the Central Valley we have the least amount of resources.

Sharon asked what other Cultural communities we have here. We have our farmworkers, speaking about that we have many cultural communities here. Think about the cultural communities you work for, who are they? I have heard Individuals unsheltered, unhoused, are underserved.

Jose – Our elderly community is also underserved, In Livingston the Punjabi community is underserved due to not having enough Punjabi translation/interpretation. In GVHC's case. We have one community health worker in Stanislaus and we have to bring her to Livingston area for outreach.

Sharon added, How about our youth and children? How can we make it more equitable for them? Or individuals that have disabilities or males, females. When we look at our cultural populations, what is missing for them to get the care that they need?

Belle – Healthy House is helping the underserved Hmong elder's community and 100% of them go to BHRS. The Breast Cancer Research Program in collaboration with UC Merced are serving the Latino community and 90% of them are from Planada Community. We are working on having a support program for them. We have African American mothers with age 0-5 children attending weekly focus Group. We have a program for youth in collaboration with the Public Health Department and putting a school base dental sealant event in Merced.

Jesse – My organization Youth Leadership Institute we have found a gap, young youth that are looking for therapeutic help, and parents are not in acceptance with it. If we can get some type of resource that is confidential for them, this impacts the youth of the LGBTQ + community. The communities of color have stigma around Mental Health. Younger generations are more accepting of getting help but the generational gap prevents them from seeking the help. Sometimes it is more acceptable for a child to drink alcohol or smoke weed than it is getting mental health care. The gang life style whether we like it or not they need help to navigate through life because when they choose to leave that life style there are consequences and there is a lack of support for them to be productive and self-sustaining. There is a gap for them not having navigation services for them. The homeless population the community agencies need to be more consistent with outreach, in the street, in the encampments.

V. Discussion on budget resources for diversity, equity and inclusion

How can we insure that we are taking into consideration inclusion when we set up programs?

Cara – When patients come into the office and they feel accepted and feel safe, using the funds we do have to make the rooms more home like for the client of different cultures by decorating, adding plants, signs, poster, pictures, LGBTQ flags, also a lot of front desk education, they are the first face our clients see in the office. Keeping the dialogue open. When our staff go out to the community making sure they are responsive to the different cultures, homelessness, making sure they are respectful.

Fernando – What we have talked about in our Culture Competency Committee is making sure that environments are welcoming, even when doing the zoom call during COVID, making sure that the background was not offensive. Just being sensitive aware of how my space looks and making sure it's inclusive for everyone. What we practice while working with the youth is utilizing our pro-nouns because if we utilize our pro-nouns they can also let us know what pro-nouns they utilize.

From Chat Z Baldevia – We welcome everyone in our agency and the youth program. We usually start by inclusive meeting and sharing a meal together. Food is fellowship

VI. Retention of a multicultural workforce

What is something that we can do to insure a Multicultural workforce?

Griselda – Here at Behavioral Health in Livingston, we try to diversify our team to represent the community that we serve across gender, it is important for clients that come in to feel that they can identify themselves with the workers. It's not an easy job, lots of agencies are struggling to find a diverse workforce. It takes a very dedicated individual when it comes to serving the underserved, hard to serve, unserved populations. As an organization we have what it is called A Culture Club Committee with different members from different cultural backgrounds and we bring each month activities that highlight the different cultures to engage the workers.

Sharon asked, why do people leave jobs or why they do not stay at jobs?

Hope – Unable to understand (audio) breaking up

Fernando – One thing implemented at Sierra Vista was, we do stay interviews, there is the annual performance and during that time, we ask the supervisor and manager to do stay interviews with employees, asking them what keeps them at Sierra Vista? What could make their job better at Sierra Vista? What type of feedback they want from their supervisor? So, there is a series of question we ask the employee as a way to get to know the employee more and build the relationship between the employee and supervisor. As a strategy to retain the staff, if workers know what they are looking for or want and if we can provide that, it makes that staff stay with us longer.

Rocio – from Public Health, talked about trying to balance child care, a discussion of budget resources, just working with parents so they could hold a full-time job. Being flexible with parents that need to pick up their children. Some of the employers do not want to work with the departments. Departments need to listen more to their employees.

VII. Our unserved and underserved populations in Merced County

Individuals with disabilities, hard of hearing, justice involved individuals, veterans,

VIII. Discuss what are some of the informal networks that are helping people in Merced County

Jesse – as a result of the floods, a group of young organizers, started a farm worker fund. Many of them spend lots of days out in Planada volunteering but they were also able to do a fundraiser for a few thousand dollars to give out to farmworkers that were impacted by the flood. The ones that were slipping through the cracks FEMA requirements due to documentation. We also started a Man of the Village, Healing Circle Group, we operate on donations, and we use a boxing gym as a location. By-weekly circles, for men that want to build a community.

Belle – Conservative groups which involve church faith organizations, family counsels in schools, Immigrations reforms organizations, Saint Patrick's church out at Yosemite Avenue has a very active Filipino Community, they help other organizations and underserved populations that come to the church.

Sharon added, in receiving email in regards to the African American community, the question being brought up is, why is there not an African American Day in Merced County? Who would like to join in a Committee to do some planning for an African American Day in Merced County? The powerful voice of the people is how things happen. In going back to what Jose said, you have to be there if not the community thinks you do not care, and be there consistently. What Katalina mention earlier, it can't be just a one shot, putting up something and then taking it down.

Griselda – Being at the two trainings at BHRS, thank you Katalina for yesterday's training, what I have notice is not enough engagement at the training. It is an opportunity for us to demonstrate that we are looking to diversify, to support and speak out about the inequities and to include more individuals. There needs to be more engagement and buy in to better serve the community.

IX. Next Steps

Identifying priorities and Goals for Governance and Leadership

X. Adjourn

11:04 am

Next meeting March 23, 2023.