

Summary

Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Cultural Competency Committee

April 16, 2020
10:05 am – 11:00 am
Behavioral Health & Recovery Services
301 East 13th Street, Merced

Present:

Alyssa Castro, Vong Chang, Fernando Granados, Caitlin Haygood, Heydi Herrera, Sharon Jones, Adam Lane, Megan Lawson, Marilyn Mochel, Ryan Munoz, Jesse Ornelas, Maria Orozco, Nancy Reding, Anna Santos, Ker Thao, Steve Roussos, Ralph Silva, Zer Yang, Janet Zamudio, Shauna, Griselda Vazquez

Presentation and Discussion:

All Members

I. Check-in/Conocimiento

The group completed self-introductions, stating names and agencies. Sharon asked that those whose name was not called during role to email Maria Orozco to confirm their attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for February 20, 2020, was motioned/seconded (Nancy Reding/Fernando Granados) and carried.

III. Cultural Competence Training Requirements

Sharon Jones provided updates on the Cultural Competence Training Requirements. Sharon reported that initially 32-hours of cultural competence training in the form of California Brief Multicultural Competency Scale (CBCMS) Training was required, but many said that 32-hours was too long. The latest requirement is a minimum of 16-hours over the first year of employment followed by an 8-hour refresher each year that follows. This new requirement will be reflected in contracts. Trainings attended outside of BHRS would need to be approved. The goal is to have ongoing cultural competence and responsive humility to keep it at the forefront of the work we do. We are looking at ways to expand Cultural Competence training opportunities for BHRS staff and Contractors during the COVID-19 situation.

IV. Development of Cultural Competence Goals

Sharon Jones stated that the Cultural Competency Committee is responsible for setting the overarching cultural competence goals of the department. She referred to a handout that was emailed to the group that listed a variety of definitions of cultural competence and different perspectives on how cultural competence has been defined over the years. Sharon stated that, as a group, want to think about what our overarching goals are and what type of work we want to see go forward. The work should be a catalyst for programs to adopt a culturally specific focused lens when working with individuals.

Two individuals asked that they be included in future emails when materials pertaining to the Cultural Competency Committee meetings are emailed to members.

V. Program Cultural Competence Objectives

Sharon Jones: In previous meetings, we talked about coming up with a definition of cultural competence and then coming up with overarching goals that guide the work. Sharon asks that for the next meeting people come with ideas for a definition of cultural competence. Once the committee formulates a definition that guides the work, overarching goals will be developed out of that definition. All programs will come up with objectives that meet the needs of the overarching goals, as well as objectives on how they will accomplish those goals and meet the needs of cultural communities and groups.

VI. Program Reports and Updates

Marilyn Mochel stated that she wants to make sure that youth culture is identified as a priority in terms of cultural groups and training needs. Reaching out to youth in our community, especially around COVID-19, requires a certain level of understanding that not all contractors may have. She recommends that we add youth to the list if it is not already identified as a specific cultural group.

Sharon Jones stated that she agrees and that we will work to identify cultural groups that may need more support during this time.

Nancy Reding agreed that it is necessary to focus on youth. Nancy added that there is also a need to focus on LGBTQ+ youth, many of whom are experiencing isolation, abandonment, abuse and harassment, and may be living in homes where they cannot be who they are. We need to reach out to the LGBTQ youth in Merced County.

Steve Roussos – asked if there is any type of way that we are assessing whether or not training is actually producing more culturally competent organizations and practices. Individuals can complete training, but if the result in terms of how organizations are practicing, or the clients served are not experiencing things differently, then he does not understand how we understand if the training is influencing anyone.

Sharon Jones stated that information and data is collected on this topic in the form of pre- and post-tests before and after training, consumer satisfaction surveys, and consumer reports to leadership during meetings.

Nancy Reding suggested that Steve was referring to grantees in terms of whether or not they are doing pre- and post-tests, or looking at any changes within the people being trained.

Sharon Jones reiterated the methods currently utilized to measure training effectiveness and stated that change is hard in general, we are looking at how individuals are performing their work and listening to the voices of consumers. She said it is always a work in progress and right now that is what we have in place.

Nancy Reding stated that change is not hard, but it only happens with information and education. She said that when we are giving trainings, if all grantees do a pre- and post-test, which she does not believe is happening, that it would benefit and expedite change.

Alyssa Castro stated that these things are happening with YLI and challenged the group to assume good intentions. Alyssa confirmed that YLI is aligned with all requirements that come with funding. She stated that she is open to any dialogue that needs to happen and that YLI will be in contact with the LGBTQ+ Alliance.

Sharon Jones moved on to the topic of faith communities, this is a change for them, they look forward to gathering, some faith community leaders have received fines for meeting. Cultural implication, also a safety and public health concern. Families commune together, now that we are physically distancing ourselves, At this time as practitioners we have to be

Steve Roussos– stated that one thing he hearing and seeing is a lot of anxiety about food and the lack of food, especially for families with young children. There is a stigma surrounding going to get free food and what it means to get free food. Sometimes the food is not culturally appropriate for some families. Steve asked how this is coming up among the grantees in terms of anxiety surrounding food insecurity. Sharon Jones stated that no one has reached out to her in terms of grantees, but that she has noticed that for communities that are already having difficulty making it day to day, the stress is compounded.

Alyssa Castro from YLI reported that organizations are having to shift their focus to meet basic needs. Many organizations do not have the element of direct service. This is something YLI has had to shift our focus on to meet the basic needs of participants. It creates an added layer of effort if you do not come with that kind of framework. YLI is working to connect people to existing resources and provide support within the capacity that the organization has.

VII. Possibilities and Success Stories

Adam Lane from Merced LGBTQ+ Alliance shared a possibility. Adam shared that the Alliance is looking into not only doing some virtual meet-ups for community members for individuals who normally participate in groups or events, but also providing drag story time for our youth and children. Sharon would like to hear more about it and how it goes. Adam said he will keep the group updated.

Anna Santos from Aspiranet TIP shared that they have been providing virtual groups for youth. Anna said that they are finding is that, for youth, their whole schedule has shifted. They are trying to adapt to their changing sleep patterns. What they have noticed is that motivation has decreased to do school work, which has been a challenge. Anna reported that there have been conversations about incentives for group attendance and opening groups to other programs within Aspiranet. Anna also noticed that a new dynamic in the homes for their youth has occurred because many homes have both parents present at all times, which sometimes comes with new challenges sometimes. Due to this change, their lens has definitely moved from just youth to how they can serve the whole family during these times. Janet from Aspiranet echoed this last statement and stated that she has noticed that caregivers now have to be more involved in the treatment of our clients and often are responsible for implementing the interventions they have provided, which has been a struggle. Though they are loving that their family is getting more involved.

Marilyn Mochel shared that NAMI and Health Equity have partnered with some of the **BHC** grantees to do weekly calls and provide COVID-19 updates and combine it with mental health support. All calls are in Spanish. Marilyn said she is happy to hear that the state of California will provide support for farm worker families, but there is a need we need to concentrate on some of the limited English speaking groups to ensure they have accurate information. There is so much misinformation that is causing fear in different groups.

Heydi Herrera stated that one of the challenges is that they are facing is providing telephone sessions with those who communicate using sign language, as they are not using video telehealth. Recently they have encountered the situation where a telehealth situation may not have been appropriate because the patient was presenting with auditory and visual hallucinations and suicidality, but they were able to manage though linking this patient has been very difficult. Sharon suggested reaching out to the BHRS Clinical Director, Jacqueline Coulter.

Zer Yang from Merced Lao Family Community, Inc. added that spirituality plays such a huge role in the mental wellness of a lot of their clients. Something that they have done is create a video of spiritual protections for the community, which brings about healing and decreases the fears for a lot of people. They have also provided protection strings, which has had a positive impact on the community. Zer stated that there has been a lot of misinformation, but that they have been trying to share culturally and linguistically appropriate, factual resources, to ensure that the community is able to find reliable information. Zer said they are working to ensure people reaching out to their PCP's if they are feeling unwell and are checking in with the leaders to make sure this information is shared with the rest of the community, as well. Zer said they are working on putting the video out on social media platforms.

VIII. Next Steps

Sharon Jones provided next steps: A sheet will be sent out to ask the group how they would define cultural competence; the group will work on crafting a list of individuals in our community who need enhanced support; the group should think about what goals are important for this committee to really have impact and help our community and, from there, we will make sure our programs have objectives to meet these goals.

The next Cultural Competency Committee meeting will take place on May 21, 2020 via teleconference.

IX. Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.