

# Summary

## Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Cultural Competency Committee

August 27, 2020  
10:05 am – 11:00 am  
Behavioral Health & Recovery Services  
via Teleconference

### Present:

Fernando Granados, Caitlin Haygood, Sharon Jones, Alejandro Jurado, Marilyn Mochel, Maria Orozco, Nancy Reding, Steve Roussos, Sandra Sandoval, Anna Santos, Ralph Silva Rodriguez, Belle Vallador, Janet Zamudio

### Presentation and Discussion:

*All Members*

#### I. Check-in/Conocimiento

Sharon asked that those in attendance email Maria Orozco to confirm their attendance.

#### II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for July 16, 2020, was motioned/seconded (Fernando Granados/Belle Vallador) and carried.

#### III. Cultural Competence Committee Change of Name

Sharon Jones stated it has been proposed to change the name of the Cultural Competence Committee be changed to "Cultural Humility, Health Equity, and Social Justice Committee". She asked for feedback from the group on the proposed name change.

Multiple attendees approved of the name change. An attendee stated that with the name change, she also sees the focus and dynamics of this group changing.

When asked if there is a reason we would like to move away from the term "competency", Sharon stated that we now know that "competency" is an antiquated term. We can never become fully competent, this name change signifies and lifelong learning process towards cultural humility that is ongoing. This name is a move towards a more progressive movement.

Sharon stated that, if everyone agrees, moving forward the committee's name will be the "Cultural Humility, Healthy Equity, and Social Justice" committee. There were no objections to the name change.

#### IV. Cultural Humility Initiative Timeline

Sharon Jones shared that the Director has given the directive for a cultural humility initiative. She will be putting together a timeline to put together for a cultural humility initiative. She asked the committee what they think should be included in the initiative. Nancy Reding said that it needs to consciously state that there is room for change. Sharon Jones agreed.

Steve Roussos shared as an example, the Sacramento City Unified School District's learning continuity plan and how it incorporates cultural humility, a focus on trauma and mental health for families, and includes a description of their values and how they are going to be culturally humble given the context. The school district listed the follow as their core value: "We recognize that our system is inequitable by design and we vigilantly work to confront and interrupt inequities that exist to level the playing field and provide opportunities for everyone to learn, grow, and reach their greatness." This school district is proactively acknowledging the inequities of the system.

Belle Vallador from Healthy House shared that, to her, cultural humility means to promote the respect of different beliefs and cultural practices of different ethnic groups in the community.

Marilyn Mochel said that it is important to develop the language and understanding around social determinates of health and what health equity means. Institutional accountability is important. Engaging residents or community members requires some adoption of how it should be done from an institutional or organizational perspective. That is the only way a community can hold an institution accountable for imbalances. She said this is an opportunity to build a stronger foundation that goes beyond just learning about different cultural groups.

#### **V. Integration of Health Equity and Social Justice**

No discussion took place regarding this agenda item.

#### **VI. Discussion on Improving Timely Access to Mental Health Services for Individuals and/or Families from Underserved Populations**

Sharon Jones asked the committee for thoughts on how we can better serve the unserved and underserved populations in Merced County. She shared that feedback from the faith communities have recommended programs that are inclusive of the faith community, law enforcement, and a mental health practitioner.

Marilyn Mochel shared that in her experience working with different cultural groups in the community, across different languages, one of the missing pieces is that when a person has a mental health problem it becomes a family problem. With a more collective emphasis we could serve individuals better. As long as we are very individual oriented, it means that certain groups, whose beliefs are not individually focused, we are not going to be able to serve appropriately.

Belle Vallador from Healthy House shared that when it comes to cultural humility, it is connected to our ability to listen to the needs of the underserved and connect them to the services they need, especially at this time of crisis. We need to be sensitive, welcoming, and embrace those in need. We need learn more about what we can do to help those that are the most underserved in our county.

Sharon asked the committee which populations they would identify as the most underserved in Merced County. Responses included low income working mothers; those who are unhoused; those who are undocumented; foster youth who have aged out of group homes and have a mental health diagnosis; elders and seniors; LGBTQ elders, children, and young children who are starting to transition privately; young people from the queer community lack safe spaces. Belle Vallador emphasized that elders and seniors are underserved, especially those in long-term nursing facilities who have no family to advocate for them. Belle had a suggestion to the Department of Public Health to introduce the oral health program to local nursing homes. Another attendee recommended that Belle contact a Long-Term Care Ombudsman with any issues or concerns concerning residents of care facilities. Belle said she is concerned for those without advocates who will contact ombudsman on their behalf.

#### **VII. Building and Infrastructure of Trauma Informed Care Healing Organization**

Sharon Jones asked for suggestions on how we can build a trauma informed organization. Steve Roussos said that when trying to tackle trauma as an organization, part of it is asking how we as an organization create a more meaningful and equitable relationship in terms of power with the people we serve. We try to take a strength base approach and try to engage clients and consumers as equals, but there is still a lot of patronizing and disengagement occurring. We have to ask how we can move toward a more equitable place in our community where power is shared. Marilyn Mochel emphasized the importance of building a strong foundation and having conversations to help people understand the social factors that affect behavioral health. Belle Vallador shared that Healthy House has provided interpreters with training on trauma informed practices.

#### **VIII. Suicide Prevention Month**

Sharon Jones shared that September is Suicide Prevention Month. She encouraged the committee to encourage everyone to keep writing their story.

**IX. Cultural Competence Plan Update**

Sharon Jones also shared that the department is working to update the annual cultural competence plan.

**X. Program Reports and Updates**

No program reports or updates were provided.

**XI. Possibilities and Success Stories**

Nancy Reding shared about an upcoming webinar with the Reverend James Lawson and his brother retired Reverend Phil Lawson will be holding a webinar on September. The focus is on racial justice yesterday, today, and tomorrow and what we need individually and culturally to move forward.

Alejandro from Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) shared that last week YLI started a new cohort for young people of Merced to participate in. They do culturally base healing circles. This is a place where young people are taught what it means to be respected. They are always looking for young people to be a part of our groups. They do a lot of leadership development and political education. These groups are specific to boys and men of color and girls and women of color. Alejandro will send the information to Sharon.

**XII. Next Steps**

Sharon will update the committee on the description of the committee name change and a timeline of the work to come. The next meeting will be September 17, 2020.

**XIII. Adjourned**

Meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.