

Summary

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

September 28, 2023
10:05 am – 11:00 am
Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Facility
Conference Center Room C207

Present:

Sharon Jones, Cindy Mattox, Fernando Granados, Eve Clinton, Lizbeth Bravo, Kimberlee Bledsoe, Bacilia Mendez, Nicole Duarte, Layne Presley, Mai Vue, Laura Ruell, Shay Gassaway, Tanya Riley, Alma Avila, Marilyn Mochel, Jose Chavez-Diaz, Tony Lor, Norbela Luis, Mark Gutierrez, Katalina Zambrano, Natalie Leal,

Presentation and Discussion:

All Members

I. Check-in/Conocimiento

II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for August 24, 2023, was motioned/seconded (Kim Bledsoe / Jose Chavez-Diaz) and carried out.

III. Focus Groups Feedback

Voices within the community say they want more reachable services, information promptly, and more places with information and resources. All Focus Groups have been with individuals of diverse cultures and intersections giving feedback on their children and their lives, preventive care, and catching everything before it gets bad. Groups that we have had are the Latinx community along with general one. The next Innovation Plan MHSA will focus on the Latino/Latina/Latinx Community. Focus Groups that were done were on the Merced County West Side, we had three for Caring Kids last week, at the Playgroup at Los Banos Community Center, Parenting Class on Zoom, and Peer group support. The Innovation Focus Group will be at the Zoom in October and November. We are trying to do as much as possible for Innovation as well for the Annual update 2024-2025, Anyone interested in helping facilitate Focus Group is welcome, if in Spanish we will have someone helping to interpret. We would like to hear the voices of the community report back what we have in place and address what the requests are. The next in person will be at the Area of Aging Agency on October 20th for consumers.

Kim – How does it get advertised, how does the community get information about the dates and times of The Focus Groups?
Sharon responded that emails, and social media, go out to practitioners and it's expected of them to share information with clients, and consumers. Leadership is expected to inform their staff. At the meeting we let everyone know so they in turn can pass the word out. Community Development Partners out in the community informing families and individuals. We partner with individuals that have their list to share with. We share with BHRS, MHSA Stakeholders, and anyone who comes to the Culture Humility meeting. If we partner with any stakeholder, they are expected to share the information with their list.

Mai– What is the goal of the Focus Group.?

Sharon responded, for Innovation it's about a new program. In general, it's about systems improvements. The needs in the community change and attention needs go to a particular area. We want to have continued quality improvements and systems improvements to serve and help the community. It is all about having a healthy community as it relates to Behavioral Health, substance use, etc.

Mai – Love that you are doing a Latino/Latina, are you planning on doing the same with other communities?

Sharon responded, as resources and time allow for our 3-year plan we had a large Focus Group in the Sikh community. If there is a gap or barrier in a group of people who do not have a voice, I would like to do a Focus Group with their groups.

Mai – Does it have to be at our place, or do you have a specific place?

Sharon responded, "We could have them here, and if they have a space, we can do it there.

Mai – Do you reach out to different organizations like La Familia to do Focus Groups?

Sharon responded Somos Familia has me on speed dial and it's open for anyone to do one. I would like to do a Focus Group with consumers or clients. Key informant interviews also, last time we met for a key informant with Dr Sandoval. He talked about the power of informal networks in the communities, and the fact the BHRS is not open unless there is a crisis 24 hours for people to come and get services.

IV. Cultural Competence Goals

To formulate our Cultural Competence plan update which is due December 31, 2023, identifying the needs of families, and individuals that are served in the communities, what would be at the top of the list for setting up goals? What would be the number one goal in terms of needing Mental Health Services? Over the years we have heard a lot of barriers, social determinants of health, and transportation at the top of the list for many years. What is needed now to set a good culturally responsive, culturally safe, and respectable goal?

Jose – GVHC started a campaign on the My Chart app, where patients can access their medical health records at any time or place. We found out the system had many glitches, the Latin population was not able to understand because the words Behavior Health would not come out in Spanish, only in English so they were not able to understand. We have about two more months to work on this glitch so that the Spanish population can read and understand. The long-term goal is to have it in different languages so that the different languages can go into the system to make their appointments.

That's very important because is about accessing the patient portal. In terms of self-determination and empowerment, the system must support the patient's language.

Marilyn – On our website, you can go to the right-side corner and select Spanish, it's readable but does not necessarily match our programs. So, there is more awareness needed regarding trying to serve the community with their language. What we have learned through COVID is the importance of providing community education on the language of the people. While providing service in English, Spanish, and Hmong, interpretation, some is better than none, it does not provide equal access to information. That is the reason we are doing an all-Spanish program in Los Banos in October.

Kim – Access but more inclusive, client-centered, and meeting people where they are. Many clients struggle with access to services for various reasons.

The goal is intentionally about being inclusive. What is inclusive to you might not be inclusive to clients. Now it's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and belonging, I can include you but still make it comfortable as you belong, so it goes back to the language. Being intentional and mindful of diversity, language, and gender, and not having a mindset of one size fits all.

Katalina – While creating Somos Familia, the communication team wanted to go all digital with a QR Code, but the community that we serve does not know what that QR code is. People still want to see paper especially when we do events in their language. An issue with The QR code is if your phone is not working properly, it will not work while scanning. We need to know what is best for the people we are engaging with. We must do research and one way to do that is through the voices of the people.

Marilyn – NAMI started a telephone number in Spanish and when people would call, I would answer in my broken Spanish and have someone else call them back. It's being aware and addressing it.

Katalina – A lot of our community members specifically are Trans, Queer, and Latinx nonspeaking English, by the time they get the confidence to make that phone call, on the other end they speak English, which could be very discouraging, and they give up. That phone call can make a huge difference in someone's life. We had a person reach out to us from Instagram because they were being held captive in their home. They were trans women, 18 years old, some friends came to the outreach event took back some brochures to her and got the courage to message us because her parents did not allow her to get any kind of help. We were able to get her housing to help her leave her abused home. Making sure there is something in Spanish is very important for the community.

What I also heard is that we need to be alert cause we are geared toward the West and the West has a way of doing things, but we might not align with other cultures, intersectionality.

Kim – being intentional, not having biases How to guide the clients. While shadowing intake for visually impaired people, we are handing them forms to sign but they are not able to see. We do not have braille, so we are not meeting all challenges.

If an individual is visually impaired maybe they can't read the brail but how can we help them get the best customer care service experience possible? One thing that I have been thinking about is maybe having a Culture Responsive box for ideas, if you see, or hear, something that needs to be addressed, you can enter it in the box. We can collect the ideas and inform leadership. This is a way of revealing what is seen or heard.

Kim – We need to take a stand when we see problems.

Katalina – Let's start having those conversations making people feel more comfortable by sharing pronouns to make a safe space.

BHRS is a large organization and has many contract providers, but identity is everything.

Pronouns allow for good conversation. Relationships are everything but you can't build one if you are not talking about things of interest to them. We have quite a few goals evolving, we have linguistic, gender pronouns,

Jesse – One of the biggest subgroups of society that feel alienated, and disposable, is gang-involved people. They are hard to reach because they have their own rules and regulations in their culture. Getting help is frowned upon, like being soft, they have their social norms. The amount of trauma that they have is projected. Having some intentional outreach for that subgroup society is needed. The prevention and intervention that is in the community fall very short. Media is always criminalizing them, they are constantly being criminalized, and at the end of the day, they feel like no one cares.

Going back to the sense of belonging, when rejected the belonging gets stronger with the gangs. That is a community and a culture here in Merced County, a culture of trauma, adverse child experiences, and untreated Mental Health concerns. The key is having a sense of belonging that is taught in El Joven Noble, rights of passage, positive role modeling, mentoring, and new information for a new reality.

Kim – Training in implicit biases for providers.

You can set the expectations if you work for BHRS and make them very clear and hold the person accountable if they are falling short of their expectations.

Jose – It is internal to the organization, GVHC has mid-trainers, and they include Culture and Empathy training for an hour. Everyone gets this training from facilities to our doctors.

There should be some follow-up action on how it is demonstrated in the line of work and what you are doing.

Katalina – It's very difficult to put all that information in an hour of training. It's continuous training that can make a difference. At the training have questions about what they have learned.

For most people, if it's ongoing they will start to feel uncomfortable because they are not ready to release the hate.

Katalina - Did a training for Juvenal Justice last Friday and it was brutal training. An individual not willing to change his mindset, I mentioned to him maybe he was not at the right job and that he needed to change careers. It was scary to see that this individual was working in a place where clients already have a lot going on in their lives.

Marilyn – Behavioral Health has had a hard time developing accountability systems. They must be put in place like the secret shopper to help the organization become more aware of behaviors that certain people have. The systems must address it, sometimes, they know about the problem people. We must develop systems that have behavior modification plans and make them accountable.

Katalina – the term, I am neutral doesn't fly.

V. Development of Cultural Competence Plan

We are working on the new Cultural Plan

VI. Review Data

I will send out an external quality review.

VII. Public Health Assessment

I will send out the Public Assessment.

VIII. Next Steps

IX. Adjourn

11:08 am

The next meeting is October 26, 2023.