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Broome County Mental Health Cultural Competency Project Report

October 2004/May 2005

Prepared by:
Lynne Esquivel, MPA
Performance Management Analyst for Broome County Mental Health
And
Daniel Wright, MA
Information Analyst for Broome County Mental Health

Introduction

This report details the results of the Cultural Competency Seminars that occurred in October 2004 and in May 2005. The purpose of the seminars was to begin the process of developing cultural competency plans to be implemented within each county-funded program. A total of 12 agencies took part in each seminar. Differences among the agencies were evident in their plans. The quality of the cultural competency plans illustrated a commitment to cultural competency for all those participating. It was also recognized that there are areas in need of further development with respect to training and translating services at the county level and recruitment, hiring, and retention practices at the agency level.

Assisted by the CCSI Performance Management Staff (Lynne Esquivel, Michael Kennerknecht, and Daniel Wright), the Cultural Diversity professionals, Lenora Reid-Rose, CCSI Cultural Diversity Director and Neville Morris, Cultural Diversity Consultant, facilitated the seminars.

According to the 2000 US Census (see Table 1), less than nine percent of Broome County residents identified themselves as non-white. When compared to New York state (32 percent non-white) and the US (25 percent non-white), one might simply dismiss the cultural diversity in Broome County. However, Broome County, along with Coordinated Care Services, Inc. (CCSI) and the Nathan Kline Institute (NKI) began a proactive approach to address cultural diversity with the assessment and other initiatives.

Table 1: *US Census Data*

Race	Broome County	New York State	USA
White	91.3	67.9	75.1
Black or African American	3.3	15.9	12.3
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.2	0.4	0.9
Asian	2.8	5.5	3.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.03	0.05	0.1
Other	0.8	7.1	5.5
Two or more races	1.6	3.1	2.4
Hispanic or Latino	2.0	15.1	12.5

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census

October 2004 Cultural Competency Planning Seminar

The October 2004 Cultural Competency Planning Seminar consisted of six half-day sessions with the Cultural Diversity Professionals from CCSI, Lenora Reid-Rose, Cultural Diversity Director and Neville Morris, Cultural Diversity Consultant, and assistance from the CCSI Performance Management Staff (Lynne Esquivel and Daniel Wright).

This seminar was the first step in preparing for a culturally competent plan for each agency. At the seminar, the facilitators reviewed with each agency where improvements were needed with respect to cultural competency within the agencies according to an assessment that was conducted at an earlier date. Furthermore, break-out sessions were conducted where each organization was assigned a facilitator who would lead the group through the planning process. Several procedures followed the October seminar that were key in reaching the ultimate objective of having a sound cultural competency plan for every agency. First, Individual technical assistance was given to eight agencies. This assistance allowed the CCSI staff to clarify any questions that the agencies had regarding their cultural competency plans. Following these sessions, the agencies were given a submission deadline for their cultural competency drafts. These drafts would then be presented to all of the agencies involved in this project at the May 2005 Cultural Competency Knowledge-Sharing Seminar.

Table 2: *October 2004 Cultural Competency Planning Seminar*

Date	Agency	Program(s) Requesting	CC Contact Person
October 18	Recipient Affairs Office	All programs	Elizabeth Hayes
October 19	Youth Advocate Program	All programs	Nancy Avery
October 19	UHS	New Horizons	Alan Wilmarth
October 18	Lourdes	MHJJ & Student Assistant Program	Terri Atwood
October 18	Catholic Charities	Core Services/Central Referral – Case Mgmt.	Julie Smith
October 18	SOS Shelter	Non-Residential Domestic Violence	Patricia Ericksen
October 19	Greater Binghamton Health Center	Social Work	Rita Shawn
October 20	Family & Children’s Society	All programs	Bill Knecht
October 20	Children’s Home of the Wyoming Conference	All programs	Amy Vredenburgh-Simon
October 20	Fairview Recovery Services	All programs	Pat Haley
October 20	Addiction Center of Broome County	All programs	Ann Shafer
October 20	Mental Health Association	All programs	Rahman Rahmani

May 2005 Knowledge-Sharing Seminars

The May 2005 Cultural Competency Knowledge-Sharing Seminars consisted of three half-day group meetings with the Cultural Diversity Professionals from CCSI, Lenora Reid-Rose, Cultural Diversity Director and Neville Morris, Cultural Diversity Consultant, and assistance from the CCSI Performance Management Staff (Lynne Esquivel and Daniel Wright).

Each agency presented their plans to the group, discussing any challenges, successes, issues, and concerns. Feedback was then generated from the facilitators and the other group participants. There was constructive criticism by the group toward all of the plans, which was deemed important and helpful. Furthermore, group members were able to gather ideas about how to improve their plans by reviewing the plans of the other agencies present.

In addition to reviewing the cultural competency plans, there were particular topics discussed by those present regarding cultural competency. Interpreter services was an important topic, because there are barriers to obtaining those services for some agencies because of the cost and being unaware of where to find such services.

Group members mentioned that there is a need for consistent cultural competency training, and being able to obtain the training inexpensively. This suggests that there is need for future seminars sponsored by the county to address cultural changes in the community and how those changes affect the cultural competency plans of the agencies.

The Local Multicultural Advisory Committee (LMAC) was mentioned by the group as needed to be more of a presence within the community to help alleviate cultural and linguistic barriers. This seminar helped to promote the committee, yet the objectives of the committee need to be more definitive.

Table 3: *May 2005 Cultural Competency Assessment Meetings*

Date	Agency	Program(s) Representing	CC Contact Person
May 13	Fairview Recovery Services	All programs	Michele Napolitano
May 13	Lourdes Hospital	MHJJ & Student Assistant Program	Bette Gifford
May 12	Children’s Home of the Wyoming Conference	All programs	Amy Vredenburg-Simon
May 12	Recipient Affairs Office	Peer Advocacy, Bridger, Education, Beacon	Matt Stanton
May 12	Addiction Center of Broome County	All programs	Petra Stone
May 12	Family & Children’s Society	All programs	Bill Knecht
May 12	Greater Binghamton Health Center	Social Work	Rita Shawn
May 12	Catholic Charities	Core Services/Central Referral – Case Mgmt.	Julie Smith

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May 12	Mental Health Association	All programs	Rahman Rahmani
May 12	Youth Advocate Program	All programs	CJ Scharfenstein
May 13	UHS	New Horizons	Barry Schecter
May 13	SOS Shelter	Non-Residential Domestic Violence	Patricia Ericksen

Conclusions

The October 2004 Cultural Competency Planning Seminar was successful in introducing to every agency the importance of Cultural Competence and being able to integrate Cultural Competence into the inter-workings of every agency. By utilizing the assessment conducted in 2003, it was feasible to determine what the strengths and weaknesses were for each agency. This assessment provided the Cultural Diversity professionals with a starting point that helped them focus on where the greatest Cultural Competency needs were for each agency.

The individual technical assistance that was provided gave participating agencies personalized attention that enabled them to get specific questions answered by the Cultural Diversity professionals. It also enabled the agencies to finalize their Cultural Competency Drafts that were to be submitted to the BCMHD and then presented at the May 2005 seminar.

The May 2005 Cultural Competency Knowledge-Sharing Seminar was a useful collaboration for every agency present. Organizations were able to share ideas and offer different points of view on how they currently handle Cultural Competency matters. For example, one agency utilized a Language Identification Card at intake. This card would be presented to a client, and the client could point to the language that he or she spoke. Also, key Cultural Competency issues were discussed specifically regarding interpreter services, trainings, and the objectives of LMAC.

Following the May 2005 seminar, it was the wish of the agencies to hold another information session before the end of 2005 so that everyone's Cultural Competency plan was in order for 2006.