



STANISLAUS COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES

CULTURAL COMPETENCY UPDATE

...a newsletter to address cultural issues that enable us to effectively work in cross cultural situations.

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The Culture of the Recovering Community

By Charles Yarnell M-RAS, FAC

SRC SUD DAY TX Coordinator/ SUD Liaison

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Culture; Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “culture” as (1) the beliefs, customs, arts etc. of a particular society, group, place, or time (2) a particular society that has its own beliefs, way of life, art , etc. (3) a way of thinking, behaving or working that exists in a place or organization. This led me to the idea for the December newsletter of discussing the “Culture” of recovery. Having spent the last 19 years of my life working with individuals suffering from Substance Use Disorders (SUD) and having my own journey down the path of recovery, there are things that I hear, say, read on a daily basis that I do not even give a second thought to nowadays.

At Stanislaus Recovery Center the staff works diligently towards the goal of helping others heal. One component of this healing process is what is referred to in the treatment field as the “changing of people, places, and things”. This is referring to the fact that most often those suffering from a substance use disorder stand the best chance of long term recovery if they quit associating with people they used to associate with, if they quit frequenting places associated with their using, and lastly if they attempt to eliminate those “triggers” that inevitably lead to the thought, craving, use cycle.

Most often individuals are encouraged by staff to seek peer support through one of a variety of peer led recovery fellowships, be it Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA), Celebrate Recovery, etc. Most often, individuals will get exposed to a fellowship through H&I (Hospitals and Institutions). This is a sub-committee of the AA. NA fellowships are tasked with taking meetings into places where individuals may not be able to get out to meetings. At other times, staff is able to take clients out to meetings in the community. It is at these meeting that the “newcomer” (person in their first 30 days of recovery) may first begin to hear the “recoveryese” (made that one up) that can be so confusing.

So exactly what does “one day at a time” “let go let god” “just for today” mean, and what is the difference between a “Basic text” and a “Big Book”? What is a “flat book”? Where does one get these “chips” others are talking about? What exactly is a “sponsor” and how much will they cost? What is, a Higher Power of your choosing?

If you ever had to change schools, you know what the first days, weeks can be like. For that matter, think back to your first days with BHRS or your current employer or, perhaps, the first days in a new place after a transfer. I mean, let’s face

BHRS Cultural Competence Oversight Committee meets on the 2nd Monday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the Martin Conference Room, 830 Scenic Drive

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it our acronyms have acronyms BHRS, QMT, QIC, SLT, CCESJC, ERGO, CANS, PIP, ASI...you get my point. The confusion you may have experienced in navigating this acronymic maze (5 pts for word use J) is often the exact thing the individual new to the recovering community or a new SUD staff without a personal background in recovery may experience.

One of the foundational concepts of providing culturally competent services is the ability to provide services in a language the seeker of services can understand. This is not any different when working with those seeking relief from a Substance Use Disorder. At Stanislaus Recovery Center and in my own experience as a treatment provider, I have seen firsthand the benefit of doing groups on 'the culture/language of recovery'.

It is fairly common in the treatment industry to utilize the terms addict/alcoholic or alcoholic/addict. Unfortunately this sets our clients up for chastisement as this "identifier" is in direct opposition to the traditions of both Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous and is written directly into the "readings" of both of these programs. Simple groups on the "culture" of the recovering communities can go a long way to easing the anxiety of our clients seeking to integrate themselves into a recovering community.

In my 22 years of experience with SUD services and the various 12 step communities, one thing I have noticed is the "equal opportunity" aspect of substance dependence and subsequent recovery from a SUD. Addiction pays no mind to your income, race, occupation, gender, sexuality or religious preference. Its impact crosses all lines. Similarly recovery from a SUD is open to all. This brings me to page 17 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous chapter, "There Is a Solution". "We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade." And it is this, the freedom from active addiction, that the staff at Stanislaus Recovery Center make possible on a daily basis for those seeking our services.

If you would like to learn more about the services provided at Stanislaus Recovery Ctr. Please contact them at: Stanislaus Recovery Center, 1904 Richland Ave., Ceres, CA 95307. The phone number is 541-2121. Services are provided on a first come, first serve basis "unless connected to a "team". Medi-Cal and private insurance accepted for co-occurring services. There are no fees for outpatient services for those with Medi-Cal or low income populations. There is a \$200.00 dollar admit fee for detox/stabilization.

Highlights of December Cultural Competency, Equity and Social Justice Committee (CCESJC) Meeting



- * Informational presentation on the Latino Access Team Program with Telecare staff.
- * Discussion & input Q&A after the networking opportunity: Cultural Competency, Equity and Social Justice - 1) What did you hear? 2) What did you like? 3) What questions do you have? 4) What do you think is possible with the CCESJC?
- * Informational presentation of the CCESJC and the Cultural Competency Plan requirements.
- * Presentation of the Los Angeles County Faith & Spirituality policy with the intent of having a Faith & Spirituality policy for Stanislaus County.

If you have questions or suggestions regarding Cultural Competency, please forward them by e-mail to:

Ruben Imperial, rimperial@stanbhrs.org

Jorge Fernandez, jfernandez@gvhc.org