



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.

March 2015

Volume 11, Issue 3

Veteran's Peer Group

By Tim White, Behavioral Health Advocate
Prevention & Early Intervention—Friends Are Good Medicine

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Last year, Friends Are Good Medicine—The first county-wide clearinghouse in the Central Valley that serves as a directory to publicize support groups which made mutual-aid available to everyone—(FGM) received a call from staff at the Veterans Medical Facility located on Coffee Road in Modesto asking if I could come and address some Veterans that were getting ready to graduate from a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) management session. The Veterans have grown to like each other over the time of the treatment and were curious to see if I would know of any way they could still meet and be of support to each other.

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

I educated them on peer support and, in my opinion, I thought a peer support group would be exactly what they might need. Four of the Veterans then signed up for the Group Facilitator Training, and they attended each class without fail. The Veterans Administration, in the meantime, informed the group they could no longer have the group at their facility due to space limitations. FGM was able to secure a meeting place in our facility at 800 Scenic Drive in Modesto, and the group started meeting every Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 in the Main Conference Room at that facility. The group has grown steadily. The leaders that took the training are now reaching out in the community to help those Veterans that are still in tremendous need.



One story that FGM was told was about a homeless Veteran who came to the meeting in an old, broken down, borrowed wheelchair and told the group that he was living in an abandoned shack in Salida. The group appointed some of the guys to help the Veteran to get to future meetings and appointed others to help the Veteran find suitable housing. Some of the leaders then contacted some connections they had at the Veterans Administration and found out that the Veteran was a Vietnam Era Veteran and had benefits available to him, such as medical, housing and a

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monthly income of about \$800.00. The guys found the Veteran a nice place in Modesto, and they also were instrumental in getting the Veterans Administration to hire an in-home care taker for the Veteran.

This is what peer support and groups are all about; peers helping themselves by helping others. With minimal support from BHRS (meeting space), the Veterans were able to organize and help a fellow Veteran. This in turn has raised the hopes of the Veterans and now the focus is switching from “what happened to us back then” to “what can we do to help those that are now walking the road in which we have all been down.”

If you would like to learn more about the Veterans Support Group, please contact the group leader, Jerry Wood at 209-402-6783. The group meets every Tuesday at Behavioral Health and Recovery Services —800 Scenic Drive, in the Main Conference Room from 1:00 pm.—2:30 p.m.

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



- * BHRS just finished the External Quality Review Organization (EQRO) audit. The CCESJC will have to focus on questions such as 1) What are some concrete things that we can do within the CCESJC? 2) What can the CCESJC do as a committee to address disparity issues? Next meeting's discussion will cover audit issues around addressing cultural competency within the organization.
- * Luis Molina will help convene a small workgroup that will look at recommendations and strategies to address the issues raised during the EQRO audit. This is a continuation of the conversation from earlier in the year.
- * A presentation by Jessica Van Tuinen and Joseph Mendonca called “Juvenile Justice Youth Leadership: Past, Present & Future”. The presentation focused on Youth in Mind, Youth Leadership at BHRS-Juvenile Justice, and future plans for Youth Leadership, Volunteer Track, JJ Drop in Center and the Youth Peer Navigators Innovation project.
- * Luis Molina, CCESJC Community Liaison, provided an update on the different activities going on in the county, such as SACR's 2nd Annual Youth leadership summit at Harvest Hall at the end of March.
- * LGBTQ Behavioral Health is planning a LGBTQ Health Summit to educate behavioral health and social service providers on issues facing the community and strategies to help the community. Meetings are held on the 4th Thursday in the evening.
- * Latino Behavioral Health Access met in January and identified nine strategies.
- * Assyrian American Collaborative – Health & Well-Being fair on Sunday, February 15, 2015.

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

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