



# CULTURAL COMPETENCY UPDATE

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

**October 2015**

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## 2015 National Alliance on Mental Illness National Conference

By Denise Dillon with input from Melissa Farris and Tim White  
Family Advocates

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The Family Advocate Team attended the four day conference that included various Key Note Speakers, presentations, resources and workshops. The conference focus had several key components, “Embrace the Future, Drive Advocacy, Focus on Youth, Build a Movement, Leverage Technology, and Strengthen the Organization.” One of the most important and rewarding parts at the conference was the networking we did while sitting with others. It is truly amazing to meet such passionate and dedicated people from all over the United States.

One of the highlights of the conference was a presentation using technology to help support anyone suffering from mental illness. It works by using an app on smart phones that asks questions and makes recommendations based on responses, for a course of action, such as take a walk or make an appointment with your provider. This is innovative as most individuals have smart phones and are hopefully more likely to use a handy app for support during a challenging moment or ongoing treatment with a provider. For more information go to [moodmatters.org](http://moodmatters.org)

Another highlight at the conference was a workshop on DBT-Dialectical Behavior Therapy. This method emphasizes helping the individual learn how to gain control of emotions and behavior. DBT builds and strengthens emotional connections with others through behavioral skills such as mindfulness, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness and emotional regulation. DBT has been effective working with individuals diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, substance use disorder, depression, post traumatic disorder (PTSD) and eating disorders.

The last highlight was a film “That Which I Love Destroys Me”, (TWILD M). This film gives a rare look into the lives of two American Special Operations soldiers. The film shows their journey from active combat to suffering and recovering from mental trauma and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). TWILD M conveyed the importance of family member’s participation in the wellness and recovery process of the soldiers. After the film one of the soldiers and his brother spoke to the audience about the stigma that surrounds returning soldiers and the importance of

**BHRS Cultural Competence, Equity and Social Justice 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**



getting the message out that help and support is available.

The Family Advocate Team enjoyed the conference, learned about new ideas, resources and new ways to help support family members with loved ones suffering mental illness. We look forward to the next conference.

*The Family Advocate assists families with accessing, understanding and utilizing mental health including Early Psychosis and Substance Use Disorder. In addition, support and information is provided to family members to help cope with the illness of loved*

*ones. The Family Advocate works independently and assists families in their interactions with service providers in order to help improve and facilitate these important relationships.*

*Pictured (left to right) Melissa Farris, Joyce Plis-Hickman (NAMI-Stanislaus), Denise Dillon, Judy Kropp, Nicki Allen, Tim White, Rhonda Allen, Lynn Padlo)*

For more information about the Family advocates of Stanislaus County—BHRS is located at 800 Scenic Drive, Suite E. The office number to contact the advocates is 209-525-4982. Their respective email addresses are: Denise Dillon, [ddillon@stanbhhs.org](mailto:ddillon@stanbhhs.org); Melissa Farris, [mfarris@stanbhhs.org](mailto:mfarris@stanbhhs.org); Tim White, [twhite@stanbhhs.org](mailto:twhite@stanbhhs.org)

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



- \* Pam Esparza, BHRS Manager of Consumer and Family Affairs, and Kevin Panyanouvong, Chief of Adult and Older Adult System of Care, presented on housing and supportive services in Stanislaus County.
- \* Luis Molina, CCESJC Community Liaison, briefly discussed the different state and local suicide prevention programs (Each Mind Matters and *Sanamente*) and Mental Health First Aid. Luis had a table set up at the meeting to provide different information for suicide prevention. The committee members were asked to take back to their programs some information from the table. He informed the committee that September 7-13 was National Suicide Prevention Week, with September 10th is National Suicide Prevention Day.
- \* Going forward, Madelyn Schlaepfer will spontaneously ask various people in the group to find out what members are doing to reduce stigma. She asked the group to come prepared to talk about stigma reduction at future CCESJC meetings.
- \* Monica Silva announced that the next peer committee meeting will be held at either DRAIL or Josie's place.

**If you have questions or suggestions regarding Cultural Competency, please e-mail:**

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