



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.

Not Forgotten

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Since 1990 the National Coalition for the Homeless has sponsored the National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day on December 21st, the first day of winter and the longest night of the year to call attention to the tragedy of homelessness and memorialize those who have passed.

This year Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto joined these efforts by officially proclaiming December 21st "Homeless Persons Memorial Day" in our area. Mayor Ted Brandvold presented and read the proclamation during the City Council meeting on December 6th. It was an honor to stand with other planning committee members as our mayor delivered the proclamation. I felt very proud to be part of a community that has leaders who recognize and honor things important to their citizens.

Over fifty volunteers came together on December 21st at the Salvation Army Berberian Shelter. Many started at 2:30 to help set up and most importantly to serve hot beverages to people as they began to arrive at 3:00 to secure their place in line for the 5:30 check-in process. Volunteers were supported to prepare and serve hot beverages with a curious heart and intention of learning about the individuals they served. They were prepped with sample questions and "role-Play" prior to serving as a tool for communication. Many believe it is through the sharing of stories that we really can know a person and also creates space for healing. Volunteers will join again in January and be prepared to share what they learned and how the experience impacted them personally and their ideas about homelessness.

This year's Memorial was coordinated by Community ~ Hope ~ Recovery's Volunteer Team of HRHSAT and was sponsored by BHRS, Golden Valley Corner of Hope, Salvation Army Berberian Shelter and the Modesto Peace-Life Center. We had an awesome planning committee this year that really worked hard to create an event that would truly honor those who passed away. Members of the community along with Turning Point, Empowerment Center, Josie's Place, Golden Valley Corner of Hope and Salvation Army met weekly for several month's of planning and preparation.



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



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Wednesday December 21st marked the 11th year of holding the memorial in Modesto. Nearly 200 people stood and received messages from a Panel of Faith Leaders from our community that included a message from the Captain of Salvation Army Berberian Shelter, a sacred song of morning from the Native American Community, Poetry reading from Community~Hope~Recovery, a meditation lead by Buddhist Master, a prayer offered in Spanish by a Deacon of the St. Stanislaus Church, prayer offered by the Director of Modesto Gospel Mission and concluded with prayer in English and Hebrew by Rabbi from Beth Shalom congregation. The panel was followed by a candle lighting ceremony where a candle was lit for each of the 33 individuals being honored. Followed by a song of love and remembrance and moment of silence. (Due to a request for anonymity, the names of panel participants are not included.)

The event was recorded by members of the Peace Life Center who will be doing a documentary on the event.

While the vigil honors those individuals who have passed away during the year it is also a tribute to those who are surviving against great odds and those volunteering their time and talent to understand and serve this population.



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



Did you Know 2016 Video Presentation

Did you Know 2016 Video presentation was shown and discussed the effects that it has on our consumers. Many shifts and changes throughout the years. It was mentioned by the committee the disadvantages with technology; individuals connecting on line instead of face to face. Younger generations have a lot of support on line but some have not developed social support. Balance of history, understanding and introducing how we grew up communicating face to face not technology based. Teaching social ques. For those staff members that see families together as a unit be mindful on what is the impact that technology is having on that family, how can it potentially be impacting the serves that are provided. Where that person maybe in terms of who we are serving and know if they have technology limitations or they have different abilities related to technology. If a consumer is user friendly of the internet it is more likely to refer to resources on line versus someone who is limited or no knowledge of technology will probably need a printout or different options.

Stigma Reduction / Welcoming Environment

Reviewed what different agencies or programs are doing to reduce any potential stigma that might be occurring in general or what are they doing to be more welcoming to the population that they serve. Members mentioned the different pictures displayed in the lobby that represents different ethnicities, light music playing in the background, break room set up for consumers and inspirational quotes that inspire. Members who work in an office that serves the public were asked to make a note of one thing in their office that helps make a welcoming environment and share at next months meeting.

Cultural Competency Discussion

It was discussed at the last month's meeting the impact and importance that the recent elections have had on our consumers. We need to be mindful and continue to service the public in a way that is not bias by any of our own personal views. "Post-Election trauma" is a phrase that is being heard and used in describing some of the fears and confusions experienced by various community members/refugees as a result of the different stories and/or fake news. Are we prepared to have that discussion with them about their experiences? St. Francis Church in Riverbank held a workshop mostly in Spanish and offered support to the community to speak about the facts. What more can be done to raise the level of understanding in different languages to prepare ourselves to serve the community? Recently PEI received brochures in 6 different Eastern Asian dialects on "Knowing the Signs". It is important to connect families to resources and be respectful to everyone's opinion. How is the population that we are serving being affected? How can we best serve our consumers?

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