



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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Wellness Recovery Center and Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Peer Network

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Over 30 years ago my ambitions, hopes and dreams faded. At that time I slowly found myself imprisoned inside my mind as the onset of my first psychotic break introduced me to a world riddled with mental illness that destroyed my life. The episodes were horrific as family members, friends and business associates watched the disease take its course. For years I felt like I had failed my family friends and that my life was over. Even so I began to access care at a Stanislaus County Regional outpatient facility.



Picture: Wellness Recovery Center Office

Recovery Happens: Peer Support

My world changed as I listened and learned from others who seemed to have risen above their destructive and humiliating past. I began my first step into service work as I helped to provide coffee and warm space at a local drop-in center. The volunteer tasks were minimal yet I began to feel a sense of belonging and really felt the unity amongst my peers. My service benefits were twofold. Not only was I helping others in their quest for sobriety but also for the first time I too remained sober. Now educated on the facts about sobriety my life took on new meaning.

This service work, backed by a strong conviction to follow my psychiatrist's direction, proved very beneficial in opening the gates to freedom. Armed with a vision of hope and a reluctance to remain on Social Security, I chose to volunteer. My first mental health volunteer job was during the development of a new conceptual Stanislaus County mental health program, Wellness Recovery Center. We answered calls for peers and facilitated recovery support groups at a variety of locations, including inpatient psychiatric hospital settings. I soon achieved purpose as a peer mentor. The position raised my self-esteem and fired my imagination.

Peer Support, Mutual Aide Network!

In the later part of 2012 a Wellness Recovery Center (WRC) restructuring concept was proposed by senior leadership for I was asked to come on board as coordinator, due in part to the aforementioned lived experience. Those early discussions lead to what is now a WRC with no clinical component based on peer supports with peers providing that support in a variety of locations within Stanislaus County.

We would like to share some thoughts and core concepts. Our program design and model is based on peer relationships. We are a community, a group of people who know each other well enough that they can act together and support each other. Peers are simply defined as persons or people who know each other well enough to support, share their "Gifts" with one another in ways that give hope, direction and social connection. By supporting each other in a positive process of recovering, through a variety of social interactions, we connect to other peers who can act as part of a larger network of peers.



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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Peers encourage and engage other peers and provide each other with a vital sense of belonging, supportive relationships, valued roles, and community. Through helping others and giving back to the community, one helps one's self— (SAMHSA-Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

Our program's TEAM WELLNESS will:

- Serve as an “Ambassador of Hope” for our client/patient and family members in ways that recognize and embrace the philosophy of emotional health, wellness, leading to independence and full reintegration into the community;
- Serve as a role model for patient/client in personal hygiene, appearance, and social interaction; provide guidance to individual clients in recreational or other community based socializing activities;
- Provide supports to client/patient and their families and serve as resource guide to ensure our customers are knowledgeable on mental health services or other community based options that may best meet their needs;
- Facilitate or co-facilitate a variety of support or educationally focused group sessions both at site and in other locations in Stanislaus County;
- Satisfactorily provide guidance, peer support and inspiration to those we serve in a professional and personal standard as defined in Stanislaus County Code of Ethics.

For more information about Wellness Recovery Center and/or the Peer Network, please visit their offices at the following locations:

500 N. 9th street, Suite A - Turlock Recovery Services - Alano Club Ceres

Coming soon : Peer Network Stakeholders Forum

For more details please contact John Black at (209) 543-2425



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



* Introduction to Social Justice:

Veronica briefly discussed the Social Justice component of CCESJC. She referred to the articles from Luis Molina and shared that he will speak on this topic at the March 14, 2016 CCESJC meeting.

* CLAS Standards:

- * Madelyn began the conversation with a reminder that the CCESJC is tasked to ensure that the work of BHRS and its contractors are in alignment with the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS).
- * Madelyn covered the Principal Standard (Standard 1), Governance, Leadership, and Workforce standards (Standards 2-4), Communication and Language Assistance standards 5-7.
- * The remaining standards (Communication & Language Assistance Standard 8, Engagement, Continuous Improvement and Accountability – Standards 9-15) will be discussed at the March 14th CCESJC meeting. More will be added to the text of Standards 10, 13 and 15.

* Directing Change:

The deadline for Directing Change video clips is Tuesday, March 1, 2016. Please see www.directingchange.org for more details about contest guidelines.

* Stigma Reduction:

- * Assyrian Wellness Collaborative – The members are changing their approach by not assuming mental illness, listening, and developing trust with the refugee population.
- * Juvenile Justice – They are doing the following stigma reduction efforts: Presentations on stigma to youth & TAY at local colleges and universities; the youth are working on the new anti-stigma campaign called “Re-think mental illness” and; they are considering doing a Directing Change video submission in the future.



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

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