



**STANISLAUS COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES**

**CULTURAL COMPETENCY SPECIAL EDITION**

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

**Cultural Competency, Equity and Social Justice Committee**

**CCESJC**

**Special Edition**

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**Inside this issue:**

<b>CCESJC Special Edition</b>	<b>1/2</b>
<b>Meeting Highlights</b>	<b>2</b>

In recognition of the upcoming Stanislaus County 2017 Diversity Week celebration, October 2nd - 6th, the following are a few highlights of amazing presentations and knowledge shared through the Cultural Competence Equity and Social Justice Committee (CCESJC) sponsored by Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS).

**"Homeless Persons Memorial Day" Presentation:**

Kimberlee Hamilton presented on the Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. 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. The goal of this Memorial Day is to call attention to the tragedy of homelessness and memorialize those who have passed. Last year Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto proclaimed December 21st as "Homeless Persons Memorial Day" in our area. To commemorate that day, over fifty volunteers and approximately 200 community members came together at the Salvation Army Berberian Shelter. During the CCESJC meeting, a candle was lit and the members read aloud the 33 names of the individuals that were mentioned on December 21st; those who have lost their lives due to homelessness.

*As a result of the presentation, CCESJC members obtained greater awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness. The experience of hearing all 33 names was truly moving. Several factors can contribute to homeless yet the challenges and difficulties encountered as a result, are indiscriminant. The presentation provided a rich discussion and was a good reminder to place particular attention and consideration to these challenges and issues when working with people who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.*

**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 Redwood Room, 800 Scenic Drive**

**CCESJC Cultural Competence Champion Award:**

BHRS/CCESJC is dedicated to promoting cultural competence, equity and social justice issues by being responsive to and addressing racial, ethnic and cultural disparities in the behavioral health care needs of diverse individuals and communities. The Cultural Competence Champion Award was awarded to Paul Hazelton for his outstanding leadership. Mr. Hazelton was nominated by Carmen Morad from Assyrian Wellness Collaborative. Mr. Hazelton a 4th grade teacher at Julien Elementary School in Turlock submitted an article to the Modesto Bee regarding a refugee student that he currently had in his classroom. Mr. Hazelton shared a letter to the Modesto Bee on December 20, 2016. As Mr. Hazelton shared in his letter to the Modesto Bee, "I have worked tirelessly to welcome my refugee students into my classroom and prepare them with the best resources for success. I look forward to their bright future ahead. It is my hope the larger community reciprocates the same level of love and acceptance". Mr. Hazelton thanked the committee and reminded us to use our words, there is power behind words.

*This award ceremony highlighted the efforts of Paul Hazelton in creating an environment of tolerance and respect. Through those efforts, Mr. Hazelton made a positive difference in the life of many students.*





**Latino Behavioral Health Conference:**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Latino Behavioral Health Conference that took place on September 10, 2017. This was the second year of this mental health conference in our community tailored specifically to the Latino population and provided entirely in Spanish. This conference was organized by the Vision and Compromiso Promotoras Network, in partnership with Stanislaus County BHRS Prevention and Early Intervention services, and other local community agencies. The conference focused on increasing awareness and conversations about mental health and stigma. The information was delivered in a culturally appropriate way by using the community’s primary language and emphasizing culture as a way to effectively deliver information regarding mental health and connect with the Latino community.

*This year, participants learned about various topics such as; stages of grief and loss, aging and depression, adolescents and suicide, and the impact of Marijuana on mental health among several others. Participants were able to select workshops according to their interest and received information on various local community resources. Many participants reported that they felt positively impacted by the presentations and their increased knowledge of Mental Health. This was another successful event with approximately 200 attendees.*

**Cultural Competence Summit:**

This year the California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS) and Sonoma County hosted a Cultural Competence Summit XX: Supporting Community Defined Practices with the goal to inform attendees about effective strategies for reaching out to diverse populations and to highlight successful activities that currently exist throughout the State. Various BHRS programs were in attendance as well as other partners. The first half of each day was dedicated to keynote speakers sharing their experiences and contributions to the mental healthcare system at various levels ranging from County, State and Federal sectors. The second half of the day was devoted to workshop presentations that promoted learning and growth through culturally appropriate and culturally relevant mental health care to communities and consumers.

*Those who attended shared information from the summit at the BHRS CCESJC. It was helpful for members to learn about the Cultural Competence efforts and practices that are being done throughout the State.*

**Life Path Program Presentation:**

Diane Rose presented on the LIFE Path program. This program serves Stanislaus County residents ages 14-25 and their families who meet the early psychosis intervention requirements. Studies show that 3 in 100 young people (between the ages of 12 and 25) will experience psychosis. LIFE Path is a transitional age youth program. Services are provided in the preferred language of the client, through interpreters if needed. Services are provided in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. LIFE Path is a community based program, able to provide many services throughout Stanislaus County. There is no fee to the clients or their families. Referrals to the LIFE Path program can be made at 209-312-9580. The LIFE Path program is collaboration between Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Sierra Vista Child & Family Services, and Center for Human Services.

*This presentation is another good example of the many presentations that occur at CCESJC. Members learned about the Life Path program and some were able to connect with program staff in order to coordinate a presentation at their program.*

**2016 Dionicio Cruz Award:**

Last year several BHRS programs participated in the Diversity Week Celebration. It was amazing to see people come together as they developed a greater understanding of each other’s cultural background and individual cultural experiences. Staff who participated shared that the event helped them better understand the cultural differences between each other and also identified various similarities across cultural practices. Because of these efforts, BHRS received the 2016 Dionicio Cruz Celebrating Diversity Award! *This year, BHRS seeks to continue that momentum for 2017 Diversity Week Celebration from October 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>. Please see the attached list of BHRS programs that will have a cultural/diversity display set up at their programs.*

**Parting thoughts:**

*Increasing diversity awareness gives us great opportunities to further know and appreciate cultures and ethnicities that are different from our own. As service providers we should strive not only to appreciate the strengths and characteristics of other cultures and ethnic groups but we are also responsible for identifying and responding to obstacles and challenges that may get in the way of providing a needed service. Diversity awareness is essential in developing and maintaining a solid foundation of cultural competence in any setting.*

