

Summary

Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Cultural Humility, Health Equity & Social Justice Committee

April 28, 2022
10:05 am – 11:00 am
Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Facility
Teleconference via Zoom

Present:

Sharon Jones, Sabrina Abong, Derric Brown, Jose Chavez-Diaz, Dee Espinoza, Fernando Granados, Heydi Herrera, Melyssa Hintz, Naila Hubbard, Ayesha Hunter, Adam Lane, Conor Maloney, Cindy Mattox, Jennifer McQueen, Marilyn Mochel, Maria Ocegueda, Maria Orozco, Nancy Reding, Brian Sterkeson, Ker Thao, Pangcha Vang

Presentation and Discussion:

All Members

I. Check-in/Conocimiento

II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for March 24, 2022 was motioned/seconded (Jose Chavez-Diaz, Jennifer McQueen) and carried.

III. May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Sharon Jones mentioned that May is a huge month to our wellness and everything. Here at BHRS they are going to have an event. Many of those present today will be participating on the 19th, which is going to be there on campus at 301 E. 13th Street. They are going to celebrate May is Mental Health Awareness month. Also, as Sharon looks out of her window she sees nothing but lime green on the poles. Banners were switched out to reflect Mental Health Awareness month. She shared that they are rocking the color lime green because that is what they do in Behavioral Health when it comes to getting the awareness out that each mind matters. Sharon asked if anyone else on there is having any events that they need to know about, or any events that they are having for Mental Health Awareness month.

Jose Chavez-Diaz, Golden Valley Health Centers, shared that they are not having an event, but they are pushing for their community's Golden Valley Health Centers flyer on presentations that they have there at the clinic. They are pushing a flyer to inform the community – the community workers will be informing them about behavioral health for that month. Sharon asked what type of presentations they do, so the group can know. He noted that right now Golden Valley Health Centers has approved a lot, but the ones that are linked to behavioral health are: Behavioral Health, Suicide Prevention, Chronic Disease and Behavioral Health, Risk Management, and Parenting Skills, which also talks a little bit about stress.

Sharon Jones asked that if anyone finds out about anything that is happening, to please send the flyer to Maria Orozco so that we can get the word out in our community.

Marylin Mochel, NAMI Merced County, shared that although they don't have a confirmed date, they are planning to provide a virtual presentation about mental health and college students. It will be presented by a clinician that works at UC Merced. The information will be sent as soon as they have it.

IV. Building a Culture of Humility

As mentioned in the Ongoing Planning Council, the importance of having this cultural humility and being able to listen to others when they're bringing forth things. Sharon asked how can we further build a cultural humility. They had a discussion on pronouns a few seconds ago before coming to this meeting. Just being able to respect the pronouns of that individual is so very important as a part of cultural humility and life-long learning – making sure that we have respect. She asked about other ways to build humility within our programs. Sharon knows we have training and that's a part of it, but asked what else can we really do to start bringing cultural humility to the forefront in the way that we speak and our actions.

Heydi Herrera, Golden Valley Health Centers, shared that she thinks in other places she worked in and there as well, they had like a newsletter that goes out every month. On that newsletter, they provide information on different topics and different things they are doing; it's education to the organization. They will also have different celebrations based on the month. She thinks April was the month of minority groups so they would talk about that. Just having different days or utilizing the month to celebrate maybe a specific culture,

a specific festivity that some cultures celebrate – she thinks that encompasses education, knowledge, even tolerance for individuals that may not agree with that. Sharon thinks that is a wonderful idea to raise and bring forth an awareness celebration.

Sharon suggested that even at our meetings, putting cultural humility at the forefront – before they act or speak, looking at what else they need to know about this.

Pangcha Vang thinks that to support cultural humility we have to look at the history of racism or homophobia. Pangcha thinks that when we have police in our mental health programs, or at the physical location of our mental health programs with the County, or even at Livingston School, that we're creating an atmosphere that could be not feeling safe for some groups of people. Folks who are undocumented, black and brown, poor communities, or LGBTQ, they may not want to go to our programs if we have police officers integrated into our mental health programs or physically located in our county mental health program. If we want to be cultural humility, we have to understand the history of what police violence has done to these communities. Sharon thanked Pangcha for her feedback. When Sharon looks at the systems that are set up, even within the school system, she was facilitating Mental Health First Aid for the school resource officer at Cruickshank Middle School and a similar discussion came up in regards to the different experiences and how different cultural groups of population all over the world – it may bring fear and contribute to people not wanting to get care. Sharon added that the school also talked about the way their systems are set up. Some people were in agreement and for some that was not their world view so they couldn't understand. Sharon said that as we walk through with this life-long learning, we have to hear all the voices, and all the voices should lead to help healing and recovery, safety, and respect for people. The context of the conversation at the school was the 5150 process where law enforcement is called. Someone was speaking out in the group how the person is already in a crisis state. Depending on what community they come from, it means different things when they see law enforcement; it was a robust discussion. Pangcha added that police officers shouldn't be doing 5150 – it should be a mental health counselor who is trained in assisting with that. Sharon said she has provided some trainings to police officers and they really don't want to do the 5150 because they feel that it's outside of their scope and is best suited elsewhere. Sharon said that as we come together and are able to have effective conversations with each other we have to have cultural humility and know that we don't know it all. She shared that she facilitates trainings but she will be the first person to say that she doesn't even know everything in her family; something can come up and she won't have a clue. Sharon shared about the first time she heard the word "salty," coming from young people.

Marylin Mochel said that there is this connection between cultural humility and social justice so sometimes individuals can demonstrate humility but without action and advocacy nothing happens. Marylin thinks that some of the most difficult conversations have to do with systemic racism and discrimination. Some of that is overlaid with race, language, and legal status – other discrimination focused on groups of individuals such as LGBTQI or individuals with disabilities. We focus a lot on discrimination based on mental health as status. She thinks it's hard to talk about one of the inter-related topics without focusing on social justice. Sharon agreed and added that often times systems are not set up to hear the social justice part. Sharon knows that if she starts talking about these structures and systemic things, you have to be very courageous and really walk through with culture humility.

Pangcha Vang things that culture humility comes from management too. Pangcha knows that the system is totally flawed but feels that there's a lot of complaints from families that management of the county aren't actually culture humility. They actually don't respect people's pronouns or encourage their staff to respect people's pronouns or real names. She pointed out that if they are going to push culture humility, Pangcha said it starts with our management. Sharon agrees that it starts with the leadership.

V. What is the Current Community Voice

Sharon asked everyone, what is the currently community voice. She mentioned what Pangcha brought up regarding pronouns not being respected.

Jose Chavez-Diaz shared that what he has been hearing lately is our Oaxacan community, especially one that is in Stevenson and Newman, where they speak Trique Spanish. He is hearing that this community doesn't need Spanish speaking providers because they don't understand; they need the Trique language which is a native language from the Oaxaca state in Mexico. Jose shared that they tell them know that they will try to see how they could get them information in their language. Golden Valley is working on that. With the interpreter that speaks Spanish, they ask if they could relay the message, especially right now with the COVID-19 message. That is what they are hearing right now with Golden Valley Health Centers – they listen and will make a plan to reach those communities that don't speak Spanish and translate material into the Trique language. Sharon asked Jose to share his plan with the group and if there are any speakers. He said that they have a Community Health Worker whose parents are from Oaxaca and whose parents speak Trique. He no longer works with them but he works with United Ways – they are partners with Golden Valley with COVID-19 vaccines and testing kits to deliver to the community. The plan is to talk to him and see if they could get somebody who could help them translate the materials and then they could send them to their marketing team. They have someone who has been helping with the Hmong and Lao community – agencies help them to translate the materials. Little by little they will reach this plan and figure out how they will get those materials to them as soon as possible. Sharon asked Jose if they know the particular needs of that community. Jose explained that right now it's all medical, dental, COVID-19 information; basically, it's everything because they get

there are Spanish speaking organizations and they understand a little bit but not a lot. As an example, he shared about how he can understand a few words from the Hmong community but not a lot. It's not the same as when you're talking your language. When they go out the agriculture fields and do their heat illness prevention presentation, they will get 2-3 individuals who will move to the side and he could tell that they don't understand Spanish because they are from Oaxaca. Just like everything else when we find a need or concern, they work on the goal and then figure out how to get these Oaxacan community members the Trique materials they need in their language.

Marilyn Mochel shared with Jose that one the challenges she thinks, is that in some of the Oaxacan languages, people actually aren't literate. Sometimes we make assumptions so exploring the literacy of individuals that you're interacting with, they also found that the interpreting that was most effective was what they call Relay Interpreting. They have a Spanish interpreter and you work with an individual who speaks Spanish and Trique for example, or Spanish and Misteco; there aren't a lot of people who actually qualify but there is an organization in Fresno that we worked with in the past because this would impact behavioral health too in serving the Oaxacan populations who speak other languages, especially the women in these communities. Often, they do not speak Spanish or they speak a very limited amount of Spanish. Those are 2 of the challenges from her perspective working with the Spanish speaking community in Planada and Le Grand they continue to hear some of the challenges around their legal status and concerns about accessing services. Marilyn thinks that those who work with patient navigators, they call them many different things, make sure that they have as much information as possible to get them connected before they're in crisis.

Jose added that Golden Valley Health Centers has partnered with El Concilio. With the COVID-19 need, he went to a conference in Portland, Oregon. They have similar organizations over there and they all suggested that they talk to organizations at least in Merced County – they might have a promotora that speaks Spanish and Trique. They will be taking all of those steps and figuring out how they will take information verbally or written to the Trique population.

This is why Sharon was asking about the voice of the community because the need is also linked to the voice of the community.

Heydi Herrera added that in regards to those who the patients who are undocumented, they may not have access to medi-cal. She knows that it's an expansion that is coming up beginning May 1st. Jose added that it's Health for All. It already passed for Golden Valley Health Centers and their team is aware of it. Jose has a couple of numbers and could let everyone know. This is for 21 and over. Heydi said that beginning May 1st, 2022 a new law in California will give full scope medi-cal to adults 50 years of age or older, regardless of their immigration status. This will be something very important to communicate.

VI. Opportunities to Involve Community

Sharon mentioned that in the last meeting, Pangcha talked about peer-support. It seems as though more jobs are opening up for peer-support. Sharon sees peer-support as a way to involve the community. She supervises individuals who are Community Development Partners and they are the wisdom of the community. Sharon asked the group about ways to involve the community.

Pangcha Vang thinks that peer and family advocates are really great. On top of that, Pangcha thinks our meetings should be after 6:00 PM so that we could have community members come to our meeting to provide input. Sharon said kind of like the First 5 meeting – she thinks they have theirs in the evening after 6:00 PM. Sharon asked Pangcha if she said family advocates or family client advocates. Pangcha said family advocates.

Marilyn Mochel said she would build on what Pangcha said. She thinks that having meetings that are held in the languages of the individuals, such as the Spanish language in multiple places after 5:00 o'clock. It's important to ask individuals in different communities what time works best for them. That depends on the time of year and the length of work hours for some of these populations. Sharon has also noticed in terms of their daily routine and their traditions, such as having to prepare dinner in the evening; Sharon has learned about that as well. Sometimes in the evening they need a little bit more time to prepare meals and things like that for the family. Sharon has encountered that in some communities. Marilyn shared that what's worked with women in the Spanish speaking community is after they drop their children at school, but the language must be delivered in the language they feel most comfortable in – whether it's Hmong, Spanish, etc. Time is important, language is important, and really thinking about trans adapting the messages because we have a tendency as English speakers working in organizations to deliver our messages the way we deliver it in English. That isn't the way people receive the information best. There are many factors that have to be considered before we try to hear the voice of the community. Sharon said that she Marilyn and Pangcha brought up some really important things because basically, the way that we may communicate to a person in English, may not be the way that another person may be able to receive the message. Depending on the tone, the messages may mean something differently.

VII. How to Think Inclusion

One thing Sharon has been thinking about is the rich experience we have here on this committee. She knows Marilyn has done a presentation and Derric Brown was supposed to do a presentation. Building on our expertise can help us travel from this committee as time permits. Maybe having some real culturally responsive and trainings focused on culture humility. Sharon proposed to start up

a list to find out what the expertise is on this committee because she knows we have some great expertise on here such as Adam Lane, Marylin Mochel, and Jose Chavez-Diaz. With the permission of this committee, Maria Orozco will be sending out a form to let Sharon know what is their expertise and what they could bring to the table in terms of helping to develop them better from a cultural humility lens. Sharon does training on but just to build it up a little bit more.

Jennifer McQueen shared that the Merced Pride Center has partnered with the Mainzer in downtown Merced. They do community talks that they offer at their really nice theater there free to the community. On June 7th she will be putting together an evening there and it's going to be a little bit different. In the past they have done sort of one speaker from the community present for an hour but now they will be putting together a panel of lived experience individuals and LGBTQI+ community. It will be folks that are here locally but really to share their raw honest experiences. Jennifer really thinks that this is an amazing opportunity – it ties exactly with what we're talking about regarding sensibility and humility. She thinks it's an amazing opportunity for folks to really understand the experience of the queer community. She mentioned that they also have another LGBTQI+ non-profit here in Merced, Workshop 44 – they will be there filming it and broadcasting it live on YouTube so that it can be very accessible to everybody. Sharon asked Jennifer about the name of the non-profit once again. Jennifer also shared that if anyone has heard about the first queer film festival coming up in May, Workshop 44 and Merced Pride Center have partnered to bring that festival to Merced County. The whole idea is really visibility – to have 4 days here in Merced County and the Central Valley where we have a huge event and film festival based on uplifting queer voices for 4 days and for folks to see themselves and others walking downtown. Adam Lane is contributing to the Film Festival with the LGBTQ+ Collaborative. The Merced County Arts Council has jumped on board and they have so many sponsors including United Way. Jennifer expressed that it was amazing that they had a vaccine clinic yesterday at the Merced Pride Center and she had 3 community members approach her just as individuals that wanted to sponsor as well. It has been really amazing bringing this sort of visibility to the area.

VIII. Cultural Humility Committee Training

Sharon will send out the form regarding the committee's expertise, and thinks that it would be good to have presentations in each meeting as well to expand our life-long learning.

IX. Substance Use Division Reports

No Report.

X. Client /Consumer Reports

Sharon realized that they will have to reach out so that we can restore our representation of clients and consumers on the committee because after COVID it seems as though there's a slow process of getting people to come and join but Sharon will be working on that for sure.

Jennifer McQueen shared that she thinks it's important to be aware of some of the things that she has seen and experienced just recently in the last 4 months. Jennifer also shared that she has had the humbling opportunity of being a peer advocate and physically attending doctor appointments alongside folks of the LGBTQI+ community literally sitting side by side with them in their MPC and making those phone calls, as well as helping them fill out paperwork. The big that Jennifer has really noticed is that it overwhelmed her the amount of people that she is finding are reaching out to them for questions like they need a primary care physician but do they know somebody who is already friendly to the community. They explain that they've had enough trauma and negative experiences with seeking medical help, resources, or interactions with medical professionals that now they have so much anxiety and apprehension. Jennifer noted that it's at the point where a lot of folks literally know that they need to seek medical help and they don't because of all the past experiences and the PTSD that's attached to attending things like that. Jennifer herself has seen transgender folks attend their appointments and be mis-gendered – when they corrupt the medical professionals they refuse to call them by their preferred name such as calling them by their legal name. Jennifer has had to step in and say that she understands that but the way that they are interacting with the conversation with this patient, they should be able to respect their preferred name and how they are asking to be addressed. Jennifer has watched individuals have to experience these sorts of things; she thinks it's important for everyone to be aware because if you're not seeing it, experiencing it, or knowing that it's happening, it is really easy to ignore how negatively impactful this is for people's well-being, mental health, and what it does to a person.

Sharon asked Adam Lane if he had anything to add. He commented that Jennifer has said everything so far and that he doesn't have much to add. As far as community building goes, one of the best pieces of advice he ever got was to keep things fun in order to get people there and in order to get them to come back again whatever the situation is. Whether it's a support group or an event.

XI. Updates

Item tabled.

XII. Possibilities and Success Stories

Jennifer McQueen shared that they ran a vaccine clinic yesterday at the Merced Pride Center and County Department of Health helped them out – Jose really helped her out connecting her with translators and taco trucks. The Alliance for Health came out and gave \$50 gift card incentives. She said that they're whole thing with doing these vaccine clinics is that they know that a lot of folks in the LGBTQ+ community will not go get a vaccine. They won't do those kinds of things. If they are not going to get medical help for symptoms they feel in the moment, they have so much apprehension that they won't be seen, so they won't go get the vaccine. Their thought was that if they had it at the Merced Pride Center, a place that is friendly, welcoming, they know the staff and where they feel comfortable, maybe that will encourage them to come. The clinic yesterday, all that staff that came, the nurses, the individual from Alliance for Health, let them know that this is by far the most successful vaccine clinic all month in Merced. She shared that specifically, 2 folks that came that she had an opportunity to talk to, were of over 65 range and one of them came all the way from Snelling. The individual expressed how comfortable they felt and that they loved going there. Someone else also expressed something similar – they had not gone out to get a vaccine because they just don't feel comfortable going anywhere but they called Alliance for health and they were able to get them medical and transportation, got them to the center, spent some time there, and then went back. Jennifer wanted to share that because she thinks as community-based organizations, they should really show their faces, show visibility, and show that they are strong organizations here that really serve the community. She noted that folks gravitate towards that and they have really been seeing that.

Sharon let everyone know that moving forward she is trying to pass the feedback on to leadership here so that she can come back and respond to their feedback. Sharon has been hearing about law enforcement being connected to mental health programs and about family advocates and support – that is the next step she is moving forward with. Sharon mentioned that there has been some beautiful learning today from Jose sharing about people who are from Oaxaca, what Jennifer Mockus shared about the new CalAIM initiative, and about indigenous people.

Marylin added that this is a resource they have worked with before with Fresno just for anybody who wants to connect with organizations that focus on indigenous people from Oaxaca.

Marylin shared via chat: *Organization in Fresno CENTRO BINACIONAL PARA EL DESARROLLO INDIGENA OAXAQUENO works with indigenous migrant communities from the state of Oaxaca, Mexico- (559) 499-1178.*

Nailah Hubbard said that she wanted to share that as a national organization in California, their church is doing a Be Made Whole project which has to do with mental and physical health. They are hoping to partner with various organizations within the community throughout the state. Of course, they want to include Merced County and city of Merced in that partnership. More information will be provided as it further develops. This was started already and are hoping to partner with groups, particularly like NAMI because they are an international organization in California and in Merced so they want to make sure they have that partnership. They have some fiscal sponsors to support that. Particularly since COVID, they've had a lot of people coming to the churches with some serious mental health issues and pastors not necessarily being prepared to handle or refer those folks out. She noted that they definitely need this project. Nailah will keep everyone updated. Sharon asked about the name of the organization. Nailah stated it is the African Methodist Liaison church. Sharon asked if she could look that up online. Naila said that she just finished the logos so the website should be up shortly. She will be forwarding information to Sharon as they further develop it. It is a 3-year project.

Marylin Mochel announced that there will be a partnership between NAMI Merced County and an organization that's forming called LEAD – Leaders for Equity and Dignity. That is to offer emotional emancipation circles designed only for African American community members. They have 2 individuals who did the national certification training so they are hoping that will begin in their community in September; they will keep everyone informed. Sharon said that she is familiar with that and knows about someone from CIBHS who was trained in that, and she has attended one of those circles.

XIII. Next Steps

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 26, 2022

XIV. Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 10:57am