

CULTURAL COMPETENCE newsletter



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Behavioral Health Department

Health Agency



Cultural Competence Committee



Members:

Nestor Veloz-Passalacqua, Cultural Competence & Ethnic Services Manager

Maria Troy, Rn, BS, MPA

Marne Anna Trevisano, Ed.D., Ph. D., Psychologist

Lisa Huet, Wrap Program Supervisor

Amber Trigueros, M.H. Therapist IV

Dr. Jay Bettergarcia, Director of the Queer Community Action

Leah DeRose, M.H. Therapist IV

Laura Gabriella Zarate, Health Agency Secretary

Monica Reyes, Support Staff

Ellen Sturtz, GALA Volunteer

Kiana Shelton, ACSW Therapist IV

Kim Mott, Program Supervisor Drug and Alcohol

Jill Rietjens, LMFT Mental Health Program Supervisor

Anne Robin, LMFT Behavioral Health Administrator

Bonita Thomas, PAAT Member, Peer Advisory and Advocate Team

Joe Madsen, TMHA Division Director, Housing and Supportive Services Programs



FEATURE I

African American Mental Health

BY NAMI

African Americans are no different when it comes to prevalence of mental health conditions when compared to the rest of the population. However, your concerns or experiences and how you understand and cope with these conditions may be different.

This page focuses on how mental health affects the African American community so that you know how to find help.

Why Does Mental Health Matter?

Without mental health we cannot be healthy. Any part of the body—including the brain—can get sick. We all experience emotional ups and downs from time to time caused by events in our lives. Mental health conditions go beyond these emotional reactions to specific situations. They are medical conditions that cause changes in how we think and feel and in our mood. These changes can alter your life because they make it hard to relate to others and function the way you used to. Without proper treatment, mental health conditions can worsen and make day-to-day life hard.

If you feel you or a loved one might be experiencing a mental health condition, remember that these are biological brain disorders. Anyone can develop a mental health problem. It isn't your fault or your family's fault. Seeking treatment can help you live a fulfilled life and can strengthen you and your family for the future.

How Do Mental Health Conditions Affect The African American Community?

Although anyone can develop a mental health problem, African Americans sometimes experience more severe forms of mental health conditions due to unmet needs and other barriers. According to

the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, African Americans are 20% more likely to experience serious mental health problems than the general population. Common mental health disorders among African Americans include:

- Major depression
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Suicide, among young African American men
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), because African Americans are more likely to be victims of violent crime

African Americans are also more likely to experience certain factors that increase the risk for developing a mental health condition:

- Homelessness. People experiencing homelessness are at a greater risk of developing a mental health condition. African Americans make up 40% of the homeless population.
- Exposure to violence increases the risk of developing a mental health condition such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. African American children are more likely to be exposed to violence than other children.

Issues To Consider

Different reasons prevent African Americans from seeking treatment and receiving quality care.

Lack Of Information And Misunderstanding About Mental Health

In the African American community, many people misunderstand what a mental health condition is and don't talk about this topic.



This lack of knowledge leads many to believe that a mental health condition is a personal weakness or some sort of punishment from God. African Americans may be reluctant to discuss mental health issues and seek treatment because of the shame and stigma associated with such conditions.

Many African Americans also have trouble recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions, leading to underestimating the effects and impact of mental health conditions. Some may think of depression as “the blues” or something to snap out of.

Because of the lack of information about mental health issues, it’s not always clear where to find help when you may need it. Fortunately, you came to the right place to learn about what mental health conditions are and how to access treatments and supports.

Don’t let fear of what others may think prevent you or a loved one from getting better. One in 5 people is affected by mental illness. This means that, even if we don’t talk about it, most likely we have one of these illnesses or know someone who does.

Faith, Spirituality And Community

In the African American community, family, community and spiritual beliefs tend to be great sources of strength and support. However, research has found that many African Americans rely on faith, family and social communities for emotional support rather than turning to health care professionals, even though medical or therapeutic treatment may be necessary.

Faith and spirituality can help in the recovery process but should not be the only option you pursue. If spirituality is an important part of your life, your spiritual practices can be a strong part of your treatment plan. Your spiritual leaders and faith community can provide support and reduce isolation. Be aware that sometimes faith communities can be a source of distress and stigma if they are misinformed about mental health or do not know how to support

families dealing with these conditions.

Do rely on your family, community and faith for support, but you might also need to seek professional help.

Reluctance And Inability To Access Mental Health Services

Only about one-quarter of African Americans seek mental health care, compared to 40% of whites. Here are some reasons why:

- Distrust and misdiagnosis. Historically, African Americans have been and continue to be negatively affected by prejudice and discrimination in the health care system. Misdiagnoses, inadequate treatment and lack of cultural competence by health professionals cause distrust and prevent many African Americans from seeking or staying in treatment.
- Socio-economic factors play a part too and can make treatment options less available. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2012, 19% of African Americans had no form of health insurance. The Affordable Care Act is making it easier and more affordable to get insured.

Medications

Some studies indicate that African Americans metabolize many medications more slowly than the general population yet are more likely to receive higher dosages. This may result in a greater chance of negative side-effects and a decreased likelihood of sticking with treatment.

Provider Bias And Inequality Of Care

Conscious or unconscious bias from providers and lack of cultural competence result in misdiagnoses and poorer quality of care for African Americans.

African Americans, especially women, are more likely to experience and mention physical symptoms related to mental health problems. For example, you may describe bodily aches and pains

when talking about depression. A health care provider who is not culturally competent might not recognize these as symptoms of a mental health condition. Additionally, men are more likely to receive a misdiagnosis of schizophrenia when expressing symptoms related to mood disorders or PTSD.

Given this bias and the negative impact they have on our care, it is easy to understand why so many African Americans mistrust health professionals in general and avoid accessing care. While you have a reason to doubt whether professionals will mistreat you or not, don't let this fear prevent you from seeking care. The section below gives ideas on how to find the right provider for you.

Finding The Right Provider For You

Cultural Competence In Service Delivery

Culture—a person's beliefs, norms, values and language—plays a key role in every aspect of our lives, including our mental health. Cultural competence is a doctor's ability to recognize and understand the role culture (yours and the doctor's) plays in treatment and to adapt to this reality to meet your needs. Unfortunately, research has shown lack of cultural competence in mental health care. This results in misdiagnoses and inadequate treatment. African Americans and other multicultural communities tend to receive poorer quality of care.

However, you can improve your odds of getting culturally sensitive care.

While we recommend you go directly to a mental health professional because this is their area of expertise, if you do not feel comfortable right away, a primary care doctor is a great place to start. The primary care doctor might be able to start the assessment to determine if you have a mental health condition or help refer you to a mental health professional.

Unfortunately, while you may prefer finding an African American mental health professional, this is not often possible because there are a small percentage of African American providers. The good news is that professionals are increasingly required to learn how to effectively treat people from diverse backgrounds. However, as mentioned before, many providers still lack cultural competence and do not know how to effectively treat African Americans.

When meeting with your provider, ask questions to get a sense of their level of cultural sensitivity. Do not feel bad about asking questions. Providers expect and welcome questions from their patients since this helps them better understand you and what is important to you. Your questions give your doctor and health care team important information about you, such as your main health care concerns. Here are some questions you could ask:

- Have you treated other African Americans?
- Have you received training in cultural competence or on African American mental health?
- How do you see our cultural backgrounds influencing our communication and my treatment?

- How do you plan to integrate my beliefs and practices in my treatment?

Your mental health provider will play an important role in your treatment, so make sure you can work with this person and that you communicate well together. Mention your beliefs, values and cultural characteristics. Make sure that she understands them so that they can be considered in the course of your treatment. For example, mention whether you would like your family to be part of your treatment.

If finances are preventing you from finding help, contact a local health or mental health clinic or your local government to see what services you qualify for. You can find contact information online at findtreatment.samhsa.gov or by calling the National Treatment Referral Helpline at 800-662-HELP (4357).

10 Tips for Mental Wellness

BY NAMI

It's the start of a new year and a great time to focus on our overall health. Good nutrition and daily exercise are important to start the year off right, but don't forget about your mental health. As with our physical health, sometimes we are doing well and other times we could use some help. Working on your mental wellness now may help you face challenges down the road.

There are many ways to improve or maintain mental wellness, and what works for one person may not work for another. Therefore, it's important to seek what is right for you. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of California has a database of classes, events and support groups that can provide additional support if you need to talk about mental health. Another great resource is Mental Health America's website with information on how to achieve wellness by living mentally healthier lives. Practicing mindfulness can also help strengthen your brain. Read more about it here.

Here are 10 tips from Mental Health America for mental wellness.

Connect with others

- Research has demonstrated the benefits of social connection, including increased happiness, better health and a longer life.

Stay positive

- Thinking negatively can drag down our moods, our actions and even our health. Instead foster optimism, practice gratitude and think positively.

Be physically active

- Daily physical activity can help your mood by decreasing stress, anger and tension as well as reduce anxiety and depression.

Help others

- Research indicates that those who consistently help other people experience less depression, greater calm, fewer pains and better health. They may even live longer.

Get plenty of sleep

- There are many tasks that fill our to-do list, but research shows that you, are more likely to succeed at your tasks, and enjoy greater well-being, if you get some serious shut-eye.

Create joy and satisfaction

- Did you know laughing decreases pain and promotes muscle relaxation? Creating avenues of good feelings can boost your ability to bounce back from stress, solve problems, think flexibly and even fight disease.

Eat well

- Food can boost your energy and fuel your brain, and good nutrition can help at times of stress. According to a recent survey, nearly half of Americans overeat or eat unhealthy food to cope with stress. If you are feeling stressed, find healthier ways to feel better like taking a walk.

Take care of your spirit

- Spirituality can mean something different for everyone. Connect to what you find meaningful. Whether it is in a higher power, other people, in nature or kindness, spirituality offers many possible benefits including better mood and less anxiety.

Deal better with hard times

- At some point in our lives, most of us will face times that are extra stressful. At those times, having strong coping strategies can make a huge difference. Research shows those who spent time writing about a difficult event had better health and less depression.

Get professional help if you need it

- If the problems in your life are stopping you from functioning well or feeling good, professional help can make a big difference. Remember that you don't have to be in a crisis to seek help. A mental health professional can help with coping strategies and problem solving.

FEATURED

Community Spotlight

DOUG
HEUMANN

The Cultural Competence Committee is delighted to introduce Doug Heumann as part of our Community Spotlight. Doug is a local attorney, whose law practice includes estate planning, conservatorships, probate and LGBTQ matters. As a volunteer, he is the Chair of Tranz Central Coast, which is an organization that serves as the trusted point of contact for transgender people, their family, and the community at large. Doug is also the Chair of the Growing Together Initiative (GTI), a fund of the Community Foundation of San Luis Obispo County, which focuses on providing education to the community and addresses issues of stigma and discrimination for the LGBTQ+ community. And lastly, Doug is a member of the Common Ground Task Force, which focuses on creating a safe environment for all youth within the San Luis Coastal Unified School District.

Doug believes that Cultural Competence lies in understanding and being open to others, and to communicate with community members from various backgrounds. One must be willing to learn and to contribute to a cycle of learning by teaching others. And most importantly, one must be sensitive to the experience of others, while creating and embracing commonality. His current work with the Central Coast Coalition for Inclusive Schools, an organization resulting from the collaboration between the Growing Together Initiative and the Cal Poly School of Education, highlights this experience. Central Coast Coalition for Inclusive Schools is an organization that actively supports the development of safe and affirming school communities that celebrate diversity and advocate for social justice, while transforming educational cultures that support youth, families, professionals, and community organizations' empowerment.

Doug believes that one of the most pressing challenges in our community is related to the lack of cohesiveness and sense of belonging for the trans-community. The pressing challenge rises due to 1) the lack of community outreach, and 2) the lack of venues for the trans-community to reach out or connect with the community at large. Being this a dual problem at both ends, the idea to bring both voices together is to begin a larger conversation of inclusion that

involves the spectrum of trans-community needs. Doug stated that in such manner, cultural competency is important as individuals and the community overall need to approach challenges with sensitivity, empathy, knowledge-sharing, and ensuring the involved community continues to learn, improve, and reach out to others. In other words, a continuous learning cycle allows individuals and the community to communicate and ensure the community is engaged based on their experience. Doug reflected that much of this work is being done by Tranz Central Coast's Education Committee, whose members represent various professions, such as attorneys, psychologists, and physicians. The Education Committee has recently outreached to collaborate with other organizations and individuals interested in receiving or providing training and education regarding the trans community.

Doug concluded our interview by highlighting two key aspects for an organization to become culturally competent. One aspect lies in listening to the needs of the community and developing training programs for all staff, this includes training department directors who need to support and promote a level of expectation to learn and be sensitive when engaging with communities from various backgrounds. The second aspect lies in ensuring policies and forms reflect the current national and state conversation of diversity and inclusion.

The Cultural Competence Committee would like to extend our gratitude to Doug Heumann for taking the time to be part of our community spotlight session, and for his continued work of inclusion and diversity.

Doug can be reached at:

Doug Heumann, Esq
Steering Committee, Chair
TRANZ CENTRAL COAST
www.tranzcentralcoast.org
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Tlegal5@gmail.com

Dates to Remember

April

- World Health Day April 7
- World Autism Awareness Day Apr. 10
- National Alcohol Screening Day Apr.10
- National Stress Awareness Day Apr. 18
- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Stress Awareness Month
- National Autism Awareness Day
- National Counseling Awareness Month
- National Minority Health Month

May

- National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day May 10
- National Prevention Week May 13-19
- Mental Health Month
- National Maternal Depression Awareness Month
- Self-Discovery Month
- Women's Health Month
- National Anxiety and Depression Awareness Week TBD
- National Women's Health Week

June

- National Men's Health Week June 11-17
- International Day of Yoga June 21
- National HIV Testing Day June 27
- National PTSD Awareness Day June 27
- National PTSD Awareness Month
- Men's Health Month

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Please consider
The following resources

Mental Health Services

SAN LUIS OBISPO YOUTH 0-5

MARTHA'S PLACE CHILDREN'S
ASSESSMENT CENTER
2925 MCMILLAN AVE,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805)781-4948

SAN LUIS OBISPO YOUTH

1989 VICENTE,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805)781-4179

SAN LUIS OBISPO ADULTS

2178 JOHNSON AVE,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805)781-4700

SAN LUIS OBISPO PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY

2178 JOHNSON AVE,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805)781-4711

ARROYO GRANDE YOUTH

345 S. HALCYON,
ARROYO GRANDE, CA 93420
(805)473-7060

ARROYO GRANDE ADULTS

1650 GRAND AVE,
ARROYO GRANDE, CA 93420
(805)474-2154

ATASCADERO YOUTH & ADULTS

5575 HOSPITAL DRIVE,
ATASCADERO, CA 93422
(805)461-6060

SERVICES AFFIRMING FAMILY EMPOWERMENT (SAFE)

1086 GRAND AVE. ARROYO
GRANDE, CA 93420
(805)4742105

More Resources in The Community

RISE | RESPECT. INSPIRE. SUPPORT. EMPOWER.

LGBTQ HEALTHY RELATION-
SHIPS SUPPORT GROUP
(805)226-6791

ACCESS SUPPORT CENTER

1320 NIPOMO ST.
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805)781-3660

GAY AND LESBIAN ALLIANCE (GALA) OF THE CENTRAL COAST

(805)541-4252

TRANZ OF THE CENTRAL COAST

(805)242-3821
SAN LUIS OBISPO AND
NORTH COUNTY SUPPORT
GROUPS
WWW.TRANZCENTRALCOAST.ORG/

SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE:

1-800-662-HELP

Drug & Alcohol Services

SAN LUIS OBISPO ADULTS

2180 JOHNSON AVE,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805)781-4275

SAN LUIS OBISPO YOUTH

277 SOUTH ST. SUITE T,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805)781-4754

PASO ROBLES ADULTS & YOUTH

1763 RAMADA DRIVE,
PASO ROBLES, CA 93446
(805)226-3200

ATASCADERO YOUTH & ADULTS

5575 HOSPITAL DRIVE
ATASCADERO, CA 93422
(805)461-6080

PREVENTION & OUTREACH

277 SOUTH ST. SUITE T,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805)781-4754



Trans Training 101

Registration link:

<https://sloco.wufoo.com/forms/zgzkkl1bxgst3/>



Description:

The purpose of this workshop is to enhance the attendee's ability to work in an effective and affirming manner with transgender clients across the lifespan. A broad overview of trans-related terms and topics will be presented in an informative and accessible manner. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage in experiential activities, watch video clips, and observe mock therapy sessions. Attendees will be taught about the subtleties in language and perspective that make interactions with trans people truly affirming.

Objectives:

- Attendees will effectively identify three (3) differences between each of the following: biological sex, gender identity, gender presentation, and gender attribution.
- Attendees will list two (2) ways in which they can alter their work environment to be more trans-affirming
- Attendees will identify and categorize a list of 10 statements into trans-affirming and non-affirming columns
- Attendees will identify (2) two personal skills that increases their confidence in working with trans clients across the lifespan

Trainers:

Dr. Jay Bettergarcia and Dr. Stacy Hutton.

Who should attend:

Direct Care Staff, Counselors, Support Staff, Agency Supervisors, Managers, Resource (Foster) Parents, Social Workers, Teachers, and Law Enforcement

Location:

French Hospital Copeland
Health Education Pavilion Third Floor
1823 Johnson Ave.,
San Luis Obispo, CA

Training Day:

- March 13th, 2018
- 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Check-In:

- 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM

Training:

- 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
- 4 Training Hours
- Training is FREE
- Morning snacks, coffee, tea, and water will be provided

Registration Accommodations, and CEU Questions?

Contact Rebecca Redman
San Luis Obispo County
Behavioral Health Department
rredman@co.slo.ca.us

Grievance, Refunds, or Cancellations?

Please contact nvelozpassalacqua@co.slo.ca.us to provide you with our Grievance Policy and Procedure Refunds and Cancellations

County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department is approved by the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists to sponsor continuing education for behavioral health professionals. County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department maintains responsibility for this program/course and its content. Please allow two weeks for completion of training and evaluation to receive certificate. County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department—course meets the qualifications for four hours of continuing education credits for MFTs, LPCCs and/or LCWs as required by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. Approval #00000. Supported by the Cultural Competence Committee.

Cultural Competence Committee



Behavioral Health
Department

Health Agency