



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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**County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department
Cultural Competence Plan
Annual Update – December 2020**

Summary

The County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department (SLOBHD), which includes divisions providing mental health and substance use disorder services, is committed to developing a system of care which serves an increasing, changing and diverse population in the county. The system must strive to ensure cultural competence at all levels of the organization. A Cultural Competence Plan is at the heart of the efforts to develop and maintain effective providers of health care for diverse communities.

The 2020 Cultural Competence Plan provides guidelines to help the Behavioral Health Department become a more culturally competent organization and to ensure that diverse populations in the county receive mental health and substance use services that are culturally appropriate throughout the behavioral health system. The Plan serves as a roadmap led by both the Cultural Competence Committee and the Department's Management Team.

The Cultural Competence Committee, formed in 1996, consisting of staff members from the various divisions and programs of the Behavioral Health Department as well as community partners, continues to assess, implement, and monitor policies and practices which ensure effective services are provided in cross-cultural situations. The committee members, representing diverse cultural backgrounds and other special interests, have provided input and insight in order to make the Plan an active document which will inform the County's mental health system for years to come.

La Frontera Inc., a mental health organization based in Arizona, developed a cultural competence self-assessment tool titled "Building Bridges", which the Department and its Cultural Competence Committee continues to use. In this assessment manual, culture is defined as follows: "The term culture is used in a broad inclusive sense. It includes race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, primary language, spiritual life, age, and physical condition. Culture is also a multifaceted concept. It incorporates cultural objects such as music, art and clothing; ways of living such as kinship patterns, communication styles and family roles; as well as beliefs or values such as religion, attitudes towards time and views of the natural world." With this definition as a starting point, the committee hosts a series of discussions to define and operationalize the concept of cultural competence for the mental health system.

As the Department continues to seek methods to engage staff and community providers with modern, effective cultural competence training and practices, a commitment to organizational growth is a Department value. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies, culturally competent organizations are ones which:

- ***Continually assesses organizational diversity:*** Organizations should conduct a regular assessment of its members' experiences working with diverse communities and focus populations. It also regularly assesses the range of values, beliefs, knowledge, and experiences within the organization that would allow for working with focus communities.
- ***Invests in building capacity for cultural competency and inclusion:*** Organizations should have policies, procedures, and resources in place that make ongoing development of cultural competence and inclusion possible. It must also be willing to commit the resources necessary to build or strengthen relationships with groups and communities. Including representatives of the focus population within the organization's ranks is especially useful.
- ***Practices strategic planning that incorporates community culture and diversity:*** Organizations are urged to collaborate with other community groups. Its members are also encouraged to develop supportive relationships with other community groups. When these steps are taken, the organization is seen as a partner by other groups and their members.
- ***Implements prevention strategies using culture and diversity as a resource:*** Community members and organizations must have an opportunity to create and/or review audiovisual materials, public service announcements, training guides, printed resources, and other materials to ensure they are accessible to and attuned to their community or focus population.
- ***Evaluates the incorporation of cultural competence:*** Community members must have a forum to provide both formal and informal feedback on the impact of all interventions.

The Cultural Competence Plan is part of the Department's efforts to remain a culturally competent, responsive, and supportive community organization.

Key Objectives and Annual Results

In response to the Department of Health Care Services CCP requirement, the SLOBHD has developed a comprehensive Plan and has chosen to include key objectives to monitor.

- The SLOBHD will complete the revision and adopt the Cultural Competence Training Policy which includes requirements for staff development in cultural competence and demonstrated improvements in service to diverse clients.
 - In 2019-2020, the Department continued the use of the Relias E-Learning system to provide core competency training and education for all staff, as well as community partners, consumers, and family members.
 - The Department provided access to 500 providers, consumers, and family members with a total of over 2,000 completed hours in fiscal year 2019-2020.

- In 2019-2020, the Cultural Competence Committee selected training courses on Relias Learning for Behavioral Health staff focused on multicultural care and issues of abuse. The assigned curriculum included the completion of two courses:
 - Working with People Experiencing Homelessness (assigned to all staff)
 - Suicide and Depression in Older Adults (assigned to adult-based staff)
 - Developmental Concerns, Childhood to Adolescence (assigned to youth-based staff)
- Staff course completion was 85%, with 365 (out of 384) direct service employees (including temporary and volunteer staff) completing the curriculum.
- The Cultural Competence Committee (CCC) will increase cultural competence training for mental health and drug and alcohol system providers by two activities per year.
 - Strategies to accomplish this objective include networking with community partners who can provide quality training for mental health and drug and alcohol system provider professionals.
 - The CCC brought an important perspective to local providers in April, 2020 – “Bridges Out of Poverty” provided key lessons in dealing with individuals from poverty. Topics included increasing awareness of the differences in economic cultures and how those differences affect opportunities for success. This workshop was based on the book Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities, and was presented by Jodi Pfarr, an author focused on community training.
 - All attendees surveyed (n = 14) reported the ability to develop a mental model of generational poverty and explore the impact of poverty on those served by the organization and understand the six poverty registers of language, discourse patterns, and cognitive issues.
 - In partnership with the regional WET collaborative – Southern California Regional Partnership – the CCC (also in August, 2019) presented “Enhancing Cultural Humility in Working With Diverse Families in Community Based Mental Health Settings.” The training was presented by Jonathan Martinez, PhD., of California State University, and was attended by 96 local providers.
 - All participants reported the ability to understand culture, cultural humility, race/ethnicity, and diversity. And, 87% (36/41 surveyed) reported gaining the knowledge to implement culturally-responsive, evidence-based strategies to enhance cultural humility values in daily practice.
 - The County and its CCC will also broaden the approach to cultural competence training to include activities which improve the mental health and the drug and alcohol system’s capacity to serve cultural populations (e.g. LGBTQ, Veterans, consumers and family members).
 - In August 2019 and February 2020, the CCC hosted a powerful training focused on implicit bias, systemic racism, and racial inequities in behavioral health. "Cultural Competence: Toward a Culturally-Informed Behavioral Health Practice " was

presented by Dr. Leola Dublin Macmillan and associates to the entire Behavioral Health Department over three weeks, with a follow-up session to enroll all staff. Nearly four hundred staff were engaged by Dr. Macmillan on issues of structural inequality, implicit bias, cultural relevance, and dismantling oppression within the behavioral health continuum of care.

- Participants reported (83%, 110/131 surveyed) a greater understanding of the intersection of social justice and behavioral health, and how those terms relate to behavioral health. Participants also gained (85%, 111/131) knowledge of health care disparities in marginalized and underserved communities and how those disparities are salient issues for behavioral health practitioners.
- The last training held prior to shelter at home orders, due to COVID-19, was a ‘Trans Training 101’ presented by Dr. Jay Bettergarcia (Cal Poly) and Stacy Hutton, on March 12, 2020. The purpose of the workshop (which had 75 attendees) was to enhance the ability to work in an effective and affirming manner with transgender clients across the lifespan. A broad overview of trans-related terms and topics was presented in an informative and accessible manner. Attendees engaged in experiential activities, watched video clips, and observed mock therapy sessions. All attendees surveyed (21) reported better understanding of subtleties in language and perspective that make interactions with trans people truly affirming.
- The CCC will increase membership of staff from the Drug and Alcohol Division by two or more members annually over the next two years.
 - This objective is critical to enhance the diversity of the Committee which serves to improve cultural competence principles across the SLOBHD’s programs and services. This specific goal was accomplished as a total of five (5) qualified staff members from across the Department’s divisions joined the committee.
- The Committee will identify other underserved populations reflecting cultural needs in order to provide services and support within the County system. This will be measured by an increase in CCC membership to include representatives of currently unrepresented communities.
 - The strategies to meet this objective include working with the County’s Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs which have built relationships and partnerships with organizations serving cultural populations often underserved in the mental health and drug and alcohol system, along with expanded services with the Latino and Latinx population. These include Asian/Pacific Islanders, LGBTQ, veterans, older adults, TAY, and consumers.
 - During FY 2019-2020, the CCC participated in the release of the findings of the LGBTQ+ Mental Health Needs Assessment which attempted to best identify the needs of the community. The research will help the County identify gaps and needs for training to develop a culturally competent system and workforce. The results became available in June 2019 with local presentations to the Behavioral Health Board and the MHSa Advisory Committee and PEI Stakeholder groups in

November. The results are meant to influence and develop strategic practices to ensure services and programs needed for the LGBTQ+ community are addressed.

- The CCC, as part of its mission to “ensure that cultural diversity is incorporated into all levels of the Behavioral Health Department,” will begin the development of practices to best process review and recommendation related to culturally competent factors and services in the mental health system.
 - This objective will need to include an expansion of the CCC’s review process for documents and translation services aimed at the Spanish-speaking community; staffing recruitment and recommendations, and presentations made to various Department programs currently not represented in the CCC. Strategies to meet this objective include establishing CCC practices to provide feedback and advice to all SLOBHD programs and services that serve diverse clients to assure cultural competence policies and procedures are in place. These elements have begun implementation as the CCC is in the process of reviewing a specific policy for the Latino Outreach Program regarding clients’ cultural gift appreciation.
 - The most critical advance in this objective was the need for the Cultural Competence Committee to monitor and assist the Department in meeting the cultural and linguistic challenges of the COVID-19 shelter orders. The CCC worked with the Department and its providers to ensure telehealth options were made available, staff had access to outreach vulnerable cultural populations, and all public communication by the Department reflected appropriate cultural competence.
 - Members of the CCC provided over 300 hours of public health translation services for the County during the first six months of COVID-19 operations.

The Cultural Competence Committee

The Cultural Competence Committee is dedicated to assure that the County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department becomes a culturally competent health system which integrates the concept of cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity into the fabric of its operation and organization. The committee creates agency-wide awareness of the issues relevant to cultural diversity and provides recommendations to the County Behavioral Health Administrator on issues pertinent to the achievement of these goals.

The Committee members are the decision-making body and represent a diverse range of cultural, ethnic, racial and geographic regions of the county. The Committee advises and serves as a resource group to the Behavioral Health Director, County Health Agency Staff, Quality Support Team (QST), and affiliated agencies. Meetings are held quarterly. Visitors are welcome to attend committee meetings and provide input.

The goals of the Committee are:

- To ensure that County Behavioral Health embraces and implements the behaviors, attitudes, values and policies of cultural diversity.

- To provide recommendations that will increase service delivery to culturally diverse clients.
- To provide recommendations which address the need of continued training on cultural diversity topics.
- To identify and facilitate the removal of barriers that affect sensitive and competent delivery of service to culturally diverse clients.
- To provide recommendations which address the recruitment and retention of bilingual providers.
- To provide recommendations that increase utilization patterns of the unserved and underserved populations such as the Latinos, Native Americans, and transition age youth, and older adults.
- To provide County Behavioral Health employees with the topics and information discussed at the Cultural Competence Committee.
- To provide and sponsor trainings focused on expanding and enhancing cultural and linguistic knowledge;
- To forge alliances with other community agencies and committees who support the mission and goals of the Cultural Competence Committee.
- To foster a strong network among community agencies that will facilitate an integrated delivery of services.

Cultural Competence Newsletters

The Committee produces quarterly newsletters focused on cultural topics in relation to mental health issues. In 2019-2020, the CCC released a total of four newsletters, along with information on local resources and articles highlighting various topics related to the mental health field.

Cultural Competence Training

- Journey of Hope is a community forum presented in partnership with Transitions Mental Health Association. In February, 2019 the featured keynote speaker was comedian Adam Grabowski. An acclaimed performer and leader of the #sayitanyway campaign, Adam spoke about his depression and anxiety, empowering others to talk about their own mental health experiences, at two separate events. This was the first time hosting multiple Journey of Hope events (one in the south and one in north county) to engage diverse audiences.
- Relias “E-Learning”: The Department provided access to 500 providers, consumers, and family members with a total of over 2,000 completed hours in fiscal year 2019-2020.
 - In 2019-2020, the Cultural Competence Committee selected training courses on Relias Learning for Behavioral Health staff focused on multicultural care and issues of abuse. The assigned curriculum included the completion of two courses:
 - Working with People Experiencing Homelessness (assigned to all staff)
 - Suicide and Depression in Older Adults (assigned to adult-based staff)

- Developmental Concerns, Childhood to Adolescence (assigned to youth-based staff)
 - Staff course completion was 85%, with 365 (out of 384) direct service employees (including temporary and volunteer staff) completing the curriculum.
- Using a Trauma-Informed Lens: This training is designed to support a shift in thinking, perception, and behavior. Looking through a Trauma Informed Lens means being sensitive to the impact of trauma on others and yourself, understanding and utilizing tools to support self and others in regulating during times of stress; as well as identifying and supporting the system change needed to reduce re-traumatization. Continuing our efforts toward a Trauma Informed SLO County will enhance resilience, increase connection and support stability within our community.
- Trans-Training 101: 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.
- Promotores Collaborative: The Cultural Competence work plan includes cultural competence-based workforce development and training. The funds are used with stakeholder approval to offer translation and interpretation services for the Latino Outreach Program (LOP) clients across the county. The Promotores Collaborative goal is to develop a sustainable, diverse, and comprehensive culture that promotes equal access to community resources and services among all members of the Latino community in the County of San Luis Obispo.

2019-2020 Cultural Competence Committee - Roster		
Name	Title	Agency
Nestor Veloz-Passalacqua, M.P.P.	Ethnic Services Manager	Behavioral Health Department
Anne Robin, L.M.F.T.	Behavioral Health Administrator	Behavioral Health Department
Joe Madsen	Division Director	Transitions-Mental Health Association
Desiree Troxell,	Quality Support Team	Behavioral Health Department
Jill Rietjens	Division Manager, Youth Services	Behavioral Health Department
Bonita Thomas	PAAT Member	Peer Advisory & Advocacy Team
Marne Travisano, Ph.D.	Licensed Psychologist Private Practice	Private Practice – Community Member
Amber Trigueros, M.A., L.M.F.T.	Mental Health Therapist III	Behavioral Health Department
Jay Bettergarcia, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Kiana Shelton	Mental Health Therapist IV	Behavioral Health Department
Laura Zarate	Secretary I	Behavioral Health Department

John Aparicio	Outreach Coordinator	Veteran Services Office
Lilia Rangel-Reyes	Multicultural Specialist	Tri-Counties Regional Center
Leola Dublin MacMillan, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Katherine E. Soule	Director	UC Coop. Extension & Youth, Families.
Barry Johnson	Division Director	Transitions-Mental Health Association
Maria Mickens, L.M.F.T.	Social Worker	Family Care Network
Gabriel Granados	Behavioral Health Specialist II	Behavioral Health Department
Maria Troy, R.N., B.S.,M.P.A.	Promotores Interpreter	Promotores
Marcy Paric, Ph.D.	Behavioral Health Board Member	Behavioral Health Board
Maegan Cain	HR Personnel Technician	Behavioral Health Department
Michelle Call	Executive Director	Gay and Lesbian Alliance
Nasseem Rouhani	Health Education Specialist	Public Health Department
Leticia Palafox	Behavioral Health Specialist I	Drug & Alcohol Division
Tania Resendiz	Behavioral Health Clinician II	Drug & Alcohol Division
Annika Michetti	Program Supervisor	Drug & Alcohol Division
Claudia Lopez	Patient’s Rights Advocate	Behavioral Health Department
Adare Toral	Behavioral Health Clinician II	Drug & Alcohol Division

Finally, in late 2019, the CCC helped the Department produce the following “We Welcome” signage for each of its public offices:

