

Evaluating Organizational Cultural Competence through Participatory Action



CASA
Child, Adolescent and Family
Mental Health



This presentation offers insights from Participatory Action Research (PAR) with CASA Child Adolescence and Family Mental Health Service in Edmonton, Alberta. This study is examining organizational strengths and needs for culturally competent service delivery. We present some of the complexities of PAR, quantitative results highlighting strengths and needs from a survey developed from best practices in the literature. The survey was completed by approximately 53% of staff from all levels of the organization and results inform next steps for organizational change and questions for focus groups.

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Organizational Participatory Action Research

PAR is a collaborative approach to promoting change involving members at all levels of the organization in taking a role in producing and using knowledge in every aspect of the research project.

The first step was the creation of a staff survey based on the literature. This provided an organizational baseline to present to staff. In collaboration with CASA staff pertinent questions for focus groups are being developed that will elicit further information on strengths, needs and recommendations from staff, managers, clients, and stakeholders.

We will engage CASA staff in the research process through specific PAR steps including planning, action, reflection and evaluation of changes to policies, procedures and service delivery that are congruent with cultural competence practices.

Strengths of CASA PAR process:

- Mobilized a team consisting of CASA staff, researchers and collaborators
- Designed and disseminated a staff survey using benchmarks from the literature
- Achieved staff participation in survey
- Management commitment and involvement with PAR process
- Management input for focus group planning and discussion

Creating the CASA Staff Survey: Standard Indicators of Organizational Cultural Competence

Example Domain: Organizational Norms, Principles, and Policies

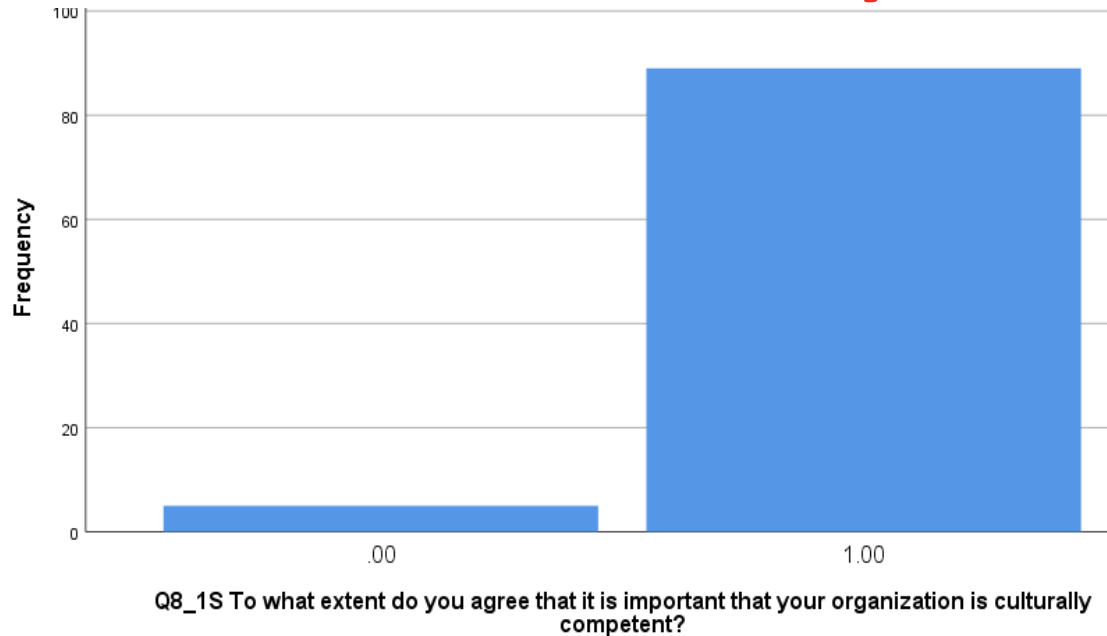
Example of Standard Indicator: There is a Cultural Competence Plan for the Organization

- The organization has an organizational plan for CC. The components of the strategic plan should include; objectives, strategies, implementation plan naming lines of responsibility and timetable, dissemination of plan, oversight method, and management accountability.

In looking at benchmarks prior to developing the survey we gained knowledge that CASA had not met Standard Indicators in the Domain of Organizational Norms, Principles and Policies and wondered about the levels in the other domains for benchmarking.

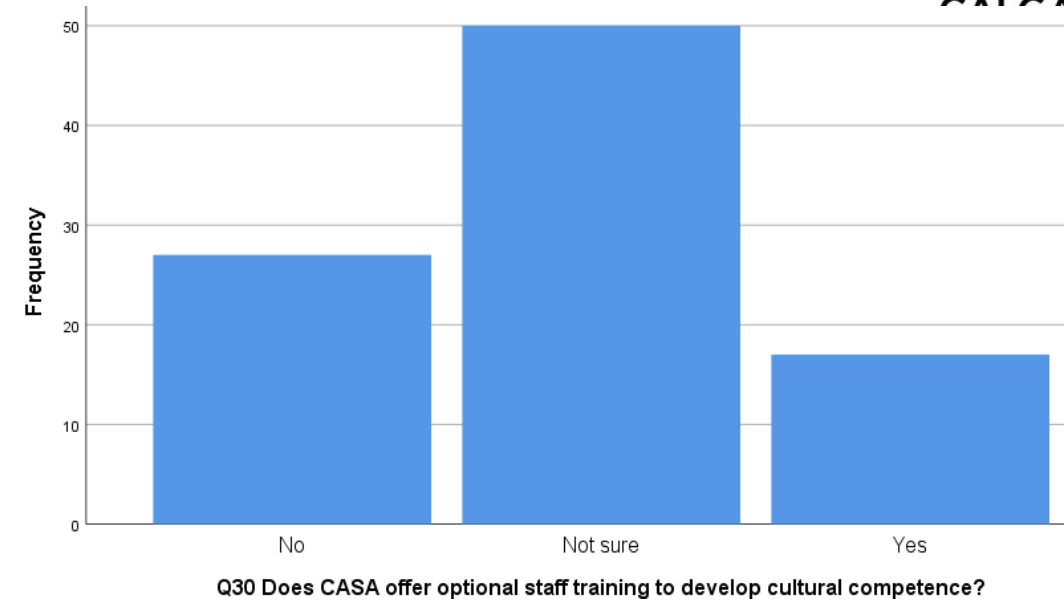
We incorporated other domains in the survey such as service delivery, needs identification, management, etc.

Analysis of Survey Results



Strengths identified in the survey:

- Staff have diverse cultural backgrounds that reflect the culture of service users
- Staff respect the worldview of others and value cultural competence
- Staff are informed of the systemic problems experienced by different cultural groups in the area
- Staff evaluation of their own level of cultural competence could be leveraged in policy



Gaps identified in the survey:

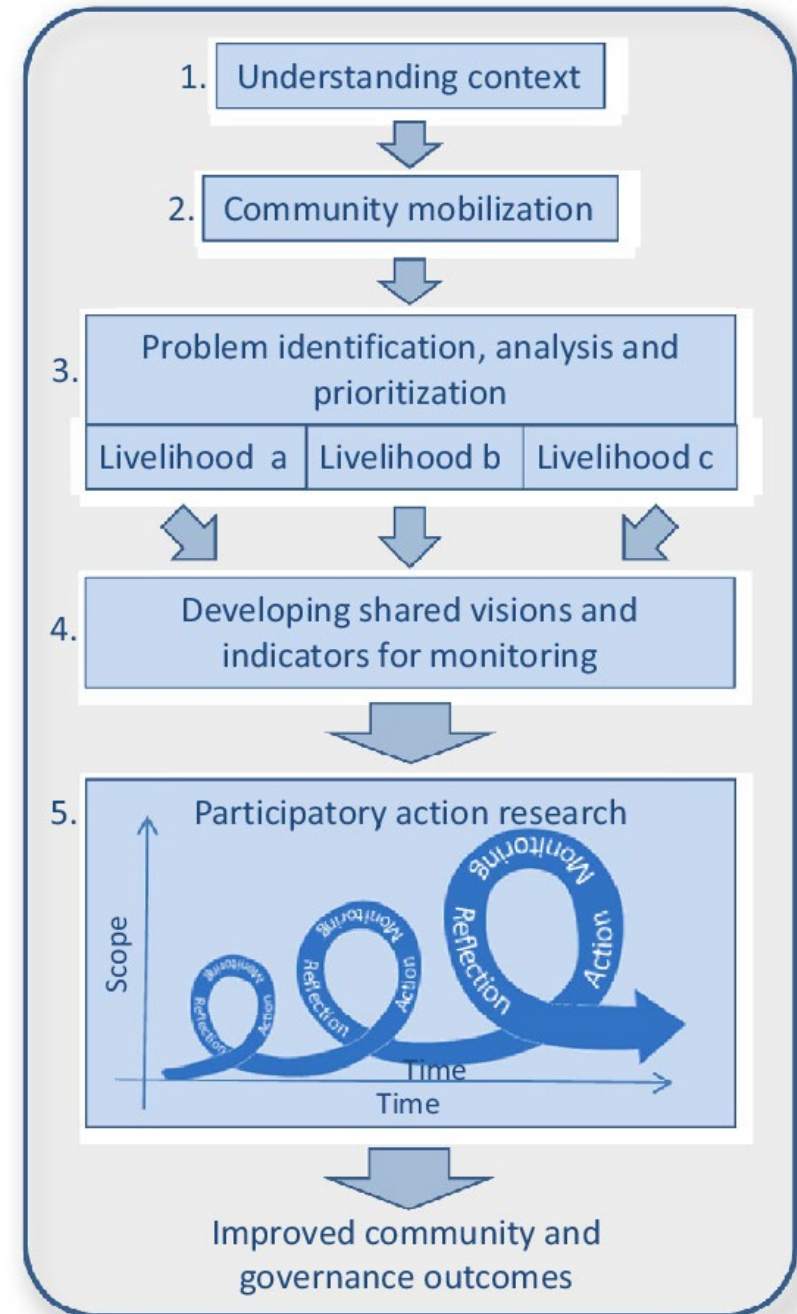
- Low staff knowledge of organizational policies toward cultural competence
- Staff are unaware of culturally diverse available services
- Staff are unaware of processes to incorporate client feedback regarding cultural aspects in assessment, treatment, and evaluation of service delivery
- There is an opportunity for staff training regarding organizational policies and practices

Challenges and Next Steps in PAR Process

- Staff turnover makes it difficult to continue momentum in PAR processes
- Agency restructuring (agency stretched thin) and strategic planning, competing needs
- Low staff knowledge/understanding of Cultural Competence
- Lack of knowledge of PAR

Next Steps

- Planning and conducting focus groups at various organizational levels and with service recipients
- Increase opportunities for staff engagement and involvement in PAR process
- Development of a comprehensive CC plan



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