The Spirit of Organizational Cultural Competence
Participatory Action Research

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Partnership & Objectives:
CASA Mental Health in Edmonton partnered with the University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work. Participatory Action Research aims:
1) establish baseline knowledge, advance an understanding of cultural competence
2) assess policies, procedures, and services
3) identify strengths, gaps, and barriers in meeting the cultural, spiritual, and traditional needs of service recipients

Method: Participatory Action Research

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<th>Staff Survey</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
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Challenges with PAR:
COVID-19 impacts
Staff turn over/engagement, New Leadership Restructuring

Strength of PAR process
• Mobilized a team: CASA staff, researchers and collaborators
• Designed and disseminated a staff survey using benchmarks from the literature
• Achieved 53% staff participation in survey
• Management commitment and involvement with PAR process
• Conducted 7 focus groups with various program staff and managers and stakeholders

Strengths Identified
• 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 recognize it is their job to understand the culture of clients
• Staff evaluation of their own level of cultural competence could be leveraged along with training and orientation practices

Gaps Identified in Survey
• Low staff knowledge of organizational policies, and resources for cultural competence
• Staff are unaware of culturally diverse services available
• Staff are unaware of processes to incorporate client feedback regarding cultural aspects in assessment, treatment, and evaluation of service delivery
• Staff at all levels feel there is much more to address

Outcomes:
1) PAR supported staff in determining the research methods and identifying directions for enhancing cultural competence
2) Established a baseline level of knowledge for future evaluation
3) Recommendations for developing policy/procedures, encouraging involvement, feedback from service recipients, stakeholders, and community in culturally competent decision making and activities
4) Enhancing supports for staff working across cultures, staff training needs for culturally competent organizational practices and procedures
5) Need to develop a workplan and cultural competence committee

Survey Data

- Does CASA offer optional staff training to develop cultural competence?
- Are translated services and materials available for people in their language?

Next Steps:
• Thematic analysis of focus groups in progress
• Research Report: Recommendations for a comprehensive workplan to enhance cultural competence at all levels of the organization and services

References