
*Cultural
Competency
Toolkit*

CHAPTER **9**



**The Campaign
to Increase Cultural
Competence**

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Executive Summary

Utah's population is growing and becoming increasingly diverse; out of a total 1,916,000 inhabitants, some 203,000 individuals are minority persons. The Mental Health Association in Utah (MHAU) proposed to organize a training for one hundred mental health practitioners to meet and to learn about competently serving the state's various minority communities.

Project Goals

- To train 100 mental health professionals in cultural competency.
- To promote the training through an extensive media campaign.
- To develop recruitment and evaluation materials.
- To provide information on the training on MHAU's website.

Introduction

Utah's population is growing and becoming more diverse. As of May 1996, according to the Utah Department of Employment Security, there were a total of 203,266 minority persons out of a population of 1,916,000. Of these, 14,254 were African Americans, 27,058 were Native Americans, 45,371 were Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, and 116,583 were Hispanic/Latino. And at least 29,000 people from various minority groups in Utah have serious mental illness.

As Utah's population becomes more diverse, the need for appropriate mental health services grows as well. Currently, there are not nearly enough culturally trained therapists, and without direct intervention this gap will only widen. At the time of this grant proposal, no public or private entity in Utah was providing in-depth, specific, multi-cultural training for mental health professionals.

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Program Plan

It is critical for public and private agencies to be staffed with culturally competent and appropriately qualified personnel, and it is consequently necessary for direct care staff to receive multi-cultural training. To see that Utah's growing minority populations were better served, MHAU proposed to organized a conference where 100 mental health professionals could meet to learn about working with minority populations. Conference presenters would be representatives of all of Utah's racial and ethnic groups.



Organizational Overview

MHAU was well-suited to carry out the proposed training. In Utah, there are five offices of Racial and Ethnic Affairs at the state level, and MHAU has worked with all of the executive directors of these offices to provide educational programs on mental illness. Additionally, MHAU has representation on the State Board of Mental Health, the Children’s Mental Health Advisory Board, and the Chamber of Commerce.

MHAU staff and board members are also experienced in multi-cultural initiatives. Dr. Mack Gift, the project director and CEO of MHAU, wrote the curriculum for a community college for Native Americans and designed, implemented and directed “Project Respect,” a self-help training program for inner city youth. Additionally, one of MHAU’s board members serves as the Director of the Division of Indian Affairs for the State of Utah.

Dr. Mack Gift, the project director and CEO of MHAU, wrote the curriculum for a community college for Native Americans.

MHAU operates with a twelve member board composed of people strategically placed within the Salt Lake City community. Business professionals, mental health professionals, consumers, and widely known public personalities make up this board.

Implementation

As a first step to organizing the Conference on Cultural Competency, Gift established a planning committee with representatives from the different mental health provider organizations in Utah. The main purpose of this committee, according to Gift, was “to get commitment from these big providers that they would be supportive of the conference.”

The committee met throughout June and July and assisted both in recruiting speakers for the conference and in publicizing the conference to mental health professionals. In September, flyers and brochures announcing the conference were sent out to all of the major mental health providers in the state and to twelve different treatment centers. Gift personally spoke with the directors of these centers to make sure that they encouraged their staff to attend.

MHAU aimed to find representatives from all of Utah’s ethnic minorities to speak at the Cultural Competency Training Conference.

The conference was also published on MHAU’s website with great success. Gift reports that the site received some 10,000 hits once details of the conference were posted.

MHAU aimed to find representatives from all of Utah’s ethnic minorities to speak at the Cultural Competency Training Conference, and this goal was achieved. Keynote speakers included Native Americans, a Hispanic American, an African American, a Pacific Islander and an Asian American — all individuals with previous experience in offering cultural competency trainings. Additionally, Gift was able to recruit experts in Deaf culture and in interpreting.



Interest in the conference was much higher than expected, with 200 professionals from across the state registering to attend. Consequently, Gift offered the program on two consecutive weekends so that all interested individuals could take part.

Discussion and Conclusion

Clearly, MHAU's Cultural Competency Training was a remarkable success, with double the amount of mental health professionals attending as anticipated. Even though NCSTAC funding will not continue beyond this grant cycle, Gift is already making plans to offer a similar program next Fall. A local HMO, InterMountain Health Care, provided a generous grant for the 2000 conference and has already expressed an interest in providing further assistance for the 2001 conference.

“Make contact with persons of different racial and ethnic groups; become friends with the key players.”

— Dr. Mack Gift,
project director

Gift's advice for those interested in organizing similar programs is “to make contact with persons of different racial and ethnic groups; become friends with the key players.” It was primarily through his personal contacts that Gift was able to recruit so many talented speakers to present at the conference.

Furthermore, MHAU made the conference particularly desirable to attend by providing continuing education credits to attendants. This option was arranged with the Continuing Education Committee of the National Association of Social Workers' Utah Chapter.

Additional Resources

(African Americans)

Byrd, W. Michael and Clayton, Linda A. *An American Health Dilemma, Volume One: A Medical History of African Americans and the Problem of Race: Beginnings to 1900*. New York: Routledge. 2000.

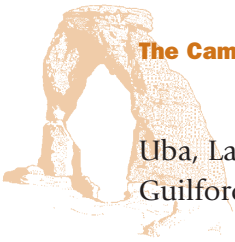
Cultural Competence Standards in Managed Care Mental Health Services: Four Underserved/Underrepresented Racial/Ethnic Groups. Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (Available on the internet at www.samhsa.gov/centers/cmhs/cmhs.html)

Pouissant, Alvin and Alexander, Amy. *Lay My Burden Down: Unraveling Suicide and the Mental Health Crisis among African-Americans*. Boston: Beacon Press. 2000.

(Asian Americans)

Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. Boston: Little, Brown. 1998.

Tuan, Mia. *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?: The Asian Ethnic Experience Today*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. 1998.



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Uba, Laura. *Asian Americans: Personality Patterns, Identity, and Mental Health*. New York: Guilford Press. 1994.

Zia, Helen. *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2000.

(Deaf Culture)

Lane, Harlan. *When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf*. New York: Vintage Books. 1989.

Padden, Carol and Humphries, Tom. *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 1988.

(Hispanic/Latino Americans)

Augenbraum, Harold et al. *Growing Up Latino: Memoirs and Stories*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1993.

Garcia, Jorge and Zea, Maria (editors). *Psychological Interventions and Research With Latino Populations*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 1997.

Olmos, Edward (editor). *Americanos: Latino Life in the United States*. Boston: Little, Brown. 1999.

Padilla, Felix. *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. 1985.

(Native Americans)

French, Laurence Armand. *Counseling American Indians*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. 1997.

Kelso, Dianne. *Bibliography of North American Indian Mental Health*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press. 1981.

Narduzzi, James. *Mental Health Among Elderly Native Americans (Garland Studies on the Elderly in America)*. New York: Garland Publishers. 1994.

O'Neil, Theresa. *Disciplined Hearts: History, Identity, and Depression in an American Indian Community*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press. 1996.