Cultural Competency in Peer-Led Programs: A Web Survey & Program Assessment Tool

Cultural Competency Tool Developers

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NIDRR

STAR Center
support, technical assistance, and resources

Phases of our Project

- Review of existing CC tools
- Listening sessions & interviews with peers at Alternatives, NAMI, and other meetings
- Web survey
- Tool development
- Expert review
- Pilot-test
- Refinement & Dissemination

Web Survey Specifics

- **Target Audience:** adults (age 18 or older) who have had mental health or emotional problems
- **Purpose:** to learn more about the cultural competence of peer-run programs and groups. Cultural competence defined as the knowledge, skills, & attitudes to help people from many cultural backgrounds.
- **Human Subjects:** voluntary and anonymous; approved by UIC IRB
- **Privacy:** survey was encrypted before being sent from the respondent's computer to ours
- **Subject Burden:** 10 to 20 minutes to complete the survey
- **Instructions:** completion in one session was required
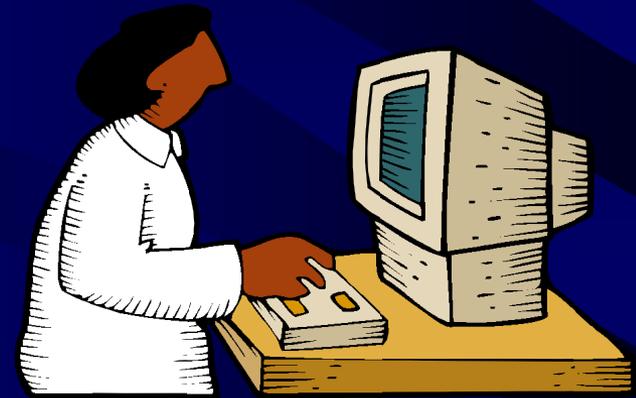
Web Survey Development and Implementation

- UIC and STAR Center staff worked collaboratively to design the survey and write the questions

- Contracted with an outside vendor for survey development software, and secure Web survey hosting and data collection

- Programmed, pilot-tested, and re-tested

- Launched survey in October 2007 and began publicizing

5 Major Survey Research Questions

➢ What kinds of people responded to the survey?

➢ What were common reasons for not attending peer-run programs?

➢ Did reasons for non-attendance vary by ethnicity?

➢ What were the most common cultural competency hurdles facing peer-run programs?

➢ Did the perception of hurdles vary by ethnicity?

Demographics of 4 Groups of Respondents (N=609)

	Racial/Ethnic Minority		Non-Minority	
	Attender	Non	Attender	Non
Female	69%	81%	73%	80%
Avg age***	46	40	49	41
HS+ Ed*	93%	96%	97%	97%
Working	50%	60%	58%	54%
Urban**	51%	37%	35%	27%
Suburban*	33%	42%	43%	52%
Rural	16%	21%	22%	21%
<$10 K/year	24%	12%	17%	15%
Caucasian***	3%	4%	95%	88%
African Am***	44%	30%	<1%	0%
Hispanic***	24%	37%	1%	4%
Asian/PI***	3%	9%	0%	0%
Mixed**	6%	10%	1%	3%
Other***	20%	10%	3%	5%

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Reasons for Not Attending Peer-Run Programs Among *Never Attenders*

Reason	Racial/Ethnic Minority	Non-Minority
Not open convenient hrs	16%	11%
Not comfortable w idea	10%[+]	20%[+]
Don't feel like I belong or I'm at home	28%[*]	16%[*]
I prefer professionals	19%[*]	34%[*]
Don't know of programs	51%	46%
Don't respect my race, culture, ethnicity	10%[*]	<1%[*]
Preferred language not spoken there	5%[*]	0%[*]
I have all the support I need	9%[+]	18%[+]

$*p<.05$, [+] $p<.10$

Why not sensitive to your needs?

- "I am a professional & there would be some boundary issues for me."
- "Can't find any gay/lesbian groups."
- "I have always gotten the impression everyone is placed in the same boat."
- "I cannot relate to most people outside of my ethnic group…I can't see how this would be any different."
- "They may not have a true understanding of my culture to provide the help I need."
- "The groups I'm aware of do not have qualified persons running them."

I would attend if…

- "If they created them for me and my needs or the needs of my community, not some "canned" stuff from people way across the country."

- "If there was more of my race there."

- "If they were run by [members if my own community]."

- "Families are invited to include their knowledge of my history…"

- "I had transportation," "Close to home," "Better time of day"

Cultural Competency Barriers Faced by Peer-Led Programs as Perceived by *Attenders*

Problem	Racial/Ethnic Minority	Non-Minority
Lack of staff education about diverse cultures' needs & beliefs	47%	41%
Staff not willing to learn about about different cultures	29%*	16%*
Failure to recognize the need for cultural competency training	41%*	28%*
Lack of knowledge of alternative/ non-traditional healing resources	43%	39%
Lack of information about current members' cultures	44%*	31%*
Lack of $ to reach out to diverse communities	51%	49%
Lack bilingual staff	42%+	51%+

*p<.05, + p<.10

CC Challenges Perceived by Attenders

- "Overtly racist & arrogant toward non-whites."
- "Clear substandard treatment for peer-run clubhouse that was a majority of people of color…left us feeling like second class people."
- "More like one size fits all
- "They didn't know what they didn't know."
- "[They] cut out the bus passes." "Lacked transportation."
- "Found it hard to speak freely in group."
- "Not committed to children's/family issues."
- "…reaching out to diverse communities in a state with a large military veteran population…"
- "Lack of [encouragement] from health care providers."

CC not a problem

- "As a person of color & queer identified, there have been no problems…"
- "Group was homogenous across multiple metrics so there were no obvious issues or lack of resources."
- "I didn't feel there was any [CC] issue."
- "I didn't recognize anything lacking."
- "…learned from the represented minority cultures during their participation in the program."
- "No deficits."
- "We do not have this problem in the group."
- "We were all white."

Based on these findings…

- UIC & NAMI STAR Center worked collaboratively to create a Tool that could be used in peer-led programs to assess & enhance competency

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Tool's Five Programmatic Focus Areas of Cultural Competency

➢ **Administration, Policies, & Guidelines**

➢ **Peer Providers & Group Leaders**

➢ **Services & Supports**

➢ **Program or Group Environment**

➢ **Communication Abilities & Language Capacity**

Cultural Competency in Mental Health Peer-Run Programs and Self-Help Groups:

A Tool to Assess & Enhance Your Services

Introduction

This tool was created to help mental health consumer-operated programs and self-help groups assess their cultural competency. By using it, you'll identify ways your activities are already responsive to culturally diverse peers, and where you could use some improvement. You'll also create specific action plans to enhance your cultural competency in five important areas.

Why Assess Your Program's Cultural Competency?

You may feel that your peer-run group or program already does a pretty good job of serving people from all walks of life. There's a widespread belief that sharing the experience of mental health problems puts peers on an equal footing despite any cultural differences. Also, many argue that coping with serious emotional distress makes peers more empathic toward each other. This common ground is why mutual support is such a critical component of recovery. Nonetheless, <u>we all</u> have more to learn about cultures and lifestyles that differ from our own.

There's a myth that being culturally sensitive means treating everyone "the same" or "as equals." In fact, this is only half the battle. Certainly, shared experiences, respect, and equal opportunity are essential when providing peer support. However, cultural competency involves **embracing and acting on** different cultural viewpoints -- not setting them aside or simply accepting them. Acknowledging their heritage is quite important to people from diverse backgrounds.

In a national survey, we identified people in recovery who do and don't use peer support and are members of racial and ethnic minority groups. When asked why they weren't in peer programs, many expressed concerns about not feeling understood or accepted. Even those who do use peer support felt that peer programs are sometimes disrespectful toward their cultural beliefs and values, even though the membership is caring. Some people feared "rocking the boat" by openly expressing their cultural views and lifestyles in peer programs.

Here's the moral of the story -- even if your program's environment is welcoming, there are ways to be more responsive to people from different walks of life. When this happens, the equality fostered by "treating all people the same" becomes enhanced by the ability to embrace all

How do we rate?

1	2	3	4
• Our peer providers or group leaders are not yet proficient in this area. • Our group does not currently offer or support diversity training and events, and we have not yet discussed doing so. • Our current peer supporters are not evaluated in regard to their cultural competence. • We haven't hired or set goals to recruit and retain staff/volunteers from or with experience working with diverse groups.	• My program or group is taking steps towards competence in this area by offering training on cultural competence. • We have made plans to recruit and retain diverse staff, volunteers, and leaders.	• My program or group offers and requires attendance at cultural competence trainings and events. • Our program has recruited and retained one staff person or volunteer from the most prevalent cultural group (other than Caucasian) in our community.	• Besides a coordinated training program, we've recruited multiple people from the prevalent cultural groups in our community. • Peer staff and leadership are formally or informally evaluated regarding their cultural competence in yearly evaluations. • We regularly discuss ways to increase and support cultural competence among our peer providers, group leaders, and volunteers.

How well-prepared and well-supported are your peer providers, volunteers, or group leaders to meet the needs of diverse individuals?

Our rating: _____

What are Some Next Steps for Our Action Plan?

- Think about your current peer staff, volunteers, and leaders. Are they from diverse backgrounds? Do they have training or experience regarding multicultural diversity and how to incorporate diverse beliefs into programs? If not, what training or events in your community can they attend to start gaining knowledge and skills?

- What types of training can you offer in-house, especially free on-line programs (see the resources at the end of this assessment for suggestions)? Can you invite cultural leaders into your program or group to conduct training?

- Review your program's or group's process for recruiting and retaining employees and volunteers. Are you reaching out to all of the cultures represented in your community with information about staff/volunteer positions? If not, what are some ways you can reach diverse communities with this information? For example, you can post job advertisements on bulletin boards in places of worship or in neighborhood flyers/newspapers. Consider whether these ads can be translated into the prevalent languages of your community.

- Take a look at your recruitment process. Do you discuss cultural competence when interviewing people? If not, consider adding a discussion of your program's commitment to diversity during the interviewing process. This will help people know your organization's expectations before they pursue a job or volunteer position.

Learn About Your Community Using U.S. Census Bureau Information

http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

The website above provides information about the kinds of people that live in communities across the U.S. It presents data regarding race, gender, age, disability, immigration status, and marital status. Data also are available on social, economic, and housing characteristics for your community.

To find this information, go to the website and find the bar at the top of the page that reads "Fast Access to Information." In the text box below, enter the name of your city, town, county, or zip code. Next, select your state from the drop down box below. Then, click on the box that says "Go." This will take you to a page that provides detailed information about your community. Demographic characteristics regarding race, ethnicity, gender, and age are located at the bottom of the page. If you select the link that says "show more," the website will provide more specific information regarding age and ethnic features of people in your community.

The information available on this website is based on the American Community Survey. It reflects data collected over a 3-year time period for geographic areas with populations of 20,000 or more. If your community is smaller than 20,000 people, try searching for the town nearest to yours or for the county that you live in.

Peer-Run Programs Serving as Pilot-test Sites

- **Amarillo Area Mental Health Consumers - TX**
- **CHEEERS Inc. - Phoenix, AZ**
- **Empowerment Initiatives, Inc. – Portland, OR**
- **The Gathering Place, Inc. – Green Bay, WI**
- **Project Return Peer Support Network – Commerce, CA**
- **Prosumers International – San Antonio, TX**
- **Recovery Empowerment Network – Phoenix, AZ**
- **United Self Help – Honolulu, HI**
- **The Wellness Shack, Inc. – Eau Claire, WI**

Conclusions

- ***What kinds of people responded to the survey?***

  Respondents were primarily women, average age from early to mid-forties, highly educated, employed, & living in urban or suburban areas.
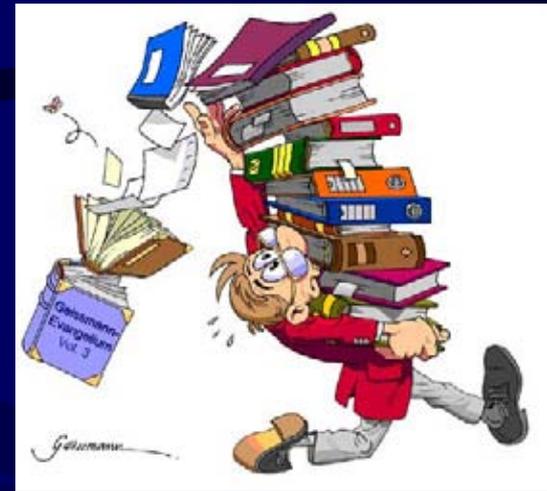
Conclusions

- *Among those who had <u>never attended</u>, what were peoples' reasons for not participating in peer-run programs & did these vary by ethnicity?*
    - Most common reasons were not knowing of any programs in their area, not being comfortable with peer-run programs, not feeling like they would have a sense of belonging, not liking to share problems with strangers
    - Members of racial/ethnic minority groups more likely to fear their culture wouldn't be respected, that they wouldn't have a sense of belonging, & they didn't like to seek help outside their families
    - Caucasians more likely to say they preferred professional support & weren't comfortable with peer-run programs

Conclusions

- *Among those who <u>had attended</u> peer-run programs or groups, what cultural competency barriers were reported by current or ex-members & did these vary by ethnicity?*
    - Most common barriers were lack of funding, not recognizing the need for staff to receive CC training, lack of resources for CC, & staff lacking information about the cultures & needs of current & potential members
    - Members of racial/ethnic minority groups more likely to feel programs didn't recognize the need for CC training of their staff, lacked information about the cultures of their members, & that staff were unwilling to learn about members' cultures
    - Caucasians more likely to perceive need for bilingual staff

Take Home Messages

Thank You!

- ❖ Questions?
- ❖ Comments