

Health Equity Initiatives

In 2007, the Mental Health Services Act provided funding to continue to support the burgeoning efforts of staff to address racial, ethnic, and cultural disparities within BHRS.

Participation is welcome to all who are passionate about embracing diversity and advancing equity. We are looking for more consumers, family members and community stakeholders! Learn more about the Health Equity Initiatives at www.smchealth.org/HEI.

Health Equity Initiatives

- African American Community Initiative
- Chinese Health Initiative
- Filipino Mental Health Initiative
- Latino Collaborative
- Native American Initiative
- Pacific Islander Initiative
- PRIDE Initiative
- Spirituality Initiative

Diversity and Equity Council (DEC)

The DEC is a guiding body with the passionate vision of embracing diversity, eliminating health disparities and advancing equity. Their goal is to coordinate, inform, support, advocate and consult with BHRS and its communities.

The DEC meets every first Friday of the month from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm. Visit the Office of Diversity and Equity website for information at www.smchealth.org/ODE.

Cultural Humility

Culture can be defined in many ways. At BHRS, we believe culture goes beyond racial, ethnic, linguistic and gender characteristics, and includes a system of values, attitudes and beliefs that shape and influence perceptions and behaviors, individually or collectively.

Cultural Competence facilitates improved client outcomes through more efficient treatment and care, decreased errors (misdiagnosis), better client-provider communications, an increased level of comfort between clients and providers, and a greater likelihood that clients will follow their treatment plan. Cultural competence also enhances the overall working environment for staff which results in better customer service.

Cultural Humility is a philosophy that goes beyond striving for cultural competence. It is engaging in a lifelong commitment of self-evaluation and self-inventory, establishing a respectful relationship with others through an attitude of openness and curiosity

Office of Diversity and Equity



The choices we make are shaped by the choices we have.

Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?

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SAN MATEO COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH &
RECOVERY SERVICES

Office of Diversity and Equity



The Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) is dedicated to promoting cultural competence and addressing health inequities. ODE was established within Behavioral Health and Recovery Services in 2009 primarily as an information and resource hub for data, training, dialogue and collaboration regarding diversity and social justice. ODE addresses health inequity using the “fish framework” (visit www.smchealth.org/ODE for more information).

In addition, ODE provides oversight to the Diversity and Equity Council and the Health Equity Initiatives.

Our Values

- Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility
- Shared and multicultural leadership
- Building bridges and sustainability of partnerships
- Forward and out of the box thinking
- Advocacy and building community capacity
- Use of data to determine outcomes

How We Can Support You

- Consultation and technical assistance
- Training and facilitation
- Strategic planning and program development
- Coordination of resources

Current Projects

Culturally-Relevant Provider Trainings - provides in-depth information, skills training and resources to enhance one's multicultural knowledge and proficiency when working with diverse clients.

Parent Project - an interactive 12-week course which teaches parenting skills to improve a parent's/caregiver's relationship with their child(ren). The class focuses on effective identification, prevention and intervention strategies.

Health Ambassador Program - provides additional learning opportunities for interested individuals to enhance their knowledge and skills related to supporting others who are in need of emotional support. Participants learn about WRAP, ASIST, MHFA and other effective intervention practices in helping others.

Stigma Free San Mateo County - an effort to eliminate the stigma and discrimination against people with mental illness and substance use issues. Education and sharing of personal stories from individuals with lived experience are used to promote hope, recovery and wellness for all.

Mental Health First Aid - an interactive, 8-12 hour public education program designed to help non-mental health professionals and community members identify, understand and respond to someone who is experiencing an emotional crisis and learn how to connect them to appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help care.

Youth Mental Health First Aid - an 8-hour public education program that introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, the importance

Current Projects

of early intervention, and how to help an adolescent who is in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. Role-playing and simulations are used to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect young people to professional, peer, social, and self-help care.

Storytelling Series - historically used as a way of communicating, stories can transmit wisdom, open hearts, break down barriers, and be healing for both the listener and the storyteller. Our "Storytelling Series" launched in 2011, using personal stories specifically from individuals who have lived experience, to draw attention to behavioral health and community issues including, racism, discrimination and poverty. The goal is to evoke social change by eliminating stigma and reducing health disparities around mental illness and substance use.

Digital Stories - a short digital film is created to provide individuals with an opportunity to share their own personal stories. Digital stories can include any combination of video, sound, music, animation, photographs, and other images in order to capture the individual's lived experience.

Photovoice - a community-based research methodology that allows individuals to highlight and express important social issues that impact their everyday lives using self-selected photographs and narratives.

Contact the Office of Diversity and Equity to find out how you can participate in these projects.

