

# Community Conversations

Diversifying Our Workforce: Addressing Culturally Competent Recruitment and Retention for Human Service Organizations





# Local Organizations Panel

- Walt Boulden, Resource Development Institute
- Joy Foster, Jewish Vocational Services
- Tina Malinowski, Rose Brooks Center
- John Fierro, Mattie Rhodes Center
- Anne Miller, Don Bosco Senior Center
- Theresa Reyes-Cummings, Jackson County Mental Health Fund



# Sharing Our Experiences

- What needs or issues required agency to work on cultural skills of staff, diversify work force, or reward cultural competence.
- Process or steps we took to develop our work force.
- Problems / Barriers / Lessons Learned
- Success! What is working now.



*Resource Development Institute*

*Since 1950*

A discussion on LGBT Population

◦ **WALT BOULDEN,  
RESOURCE  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE**



# Health and Mental Health Risk for LGBT Population

- More likely to suffer from:
  - Depression
  - Drug and Alcohol abuse
  - Suicide Attempts
  - Sexually transmitted diseases
  - Stigma and discrimination
- Less Likely to have access to:
  - Health Care
  - Insurance Coverage
  - Outreach
  - Prevention Programs
  - Health-related information specific to the gay community



# Why does RDI need to be Culturally Competent?

- Need to be able to partner with diverse groups of people
- Need to understand how groups of people:
  - Perceive an intervention
  - Communicate their views
  - Act on the knowledge gained from evaluation
- Need to understand how to competently:
  - Gather quality data
  - Make accurate conclusions
  - Ensure findings are used appropriately



# Process to diversify work force

- Addressed issues of diversity and inclusion in all forms at Board Level
- Established and implemented a comprehensive and proactive Cultural Competence Plan
- Set diversity and inclusion as priorities in Board and Staff development and expansion
- Created an open and inclusive work environment which values diverse perspectives
- Conduct/provide ongoing educational opportunities



## Specific to LGBT

- Sexual orientation is not evident when recruiting and hiring
- Open environment is critical
- Public stances and work around cultural competency (especially around LGBT issues)
- Barriers include inability to provide domestic partner benefits
- Overall challenges include understanding and linking overlapping issues of race/ethnicity/gender/sexual orientation/disability/faith etc..



Diversifying our Work force



**JOY FOSTER,  
JEWISH VOCATIONAL  
SERVICES**



## Where we are

- In 1997 Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) had about 30 employees 80% Caucasian, 20% African American
- JVS developed programs to meet the needs in our diverse community and increased diversity of staff
- By 2010, JVS was 50% Caucasian, 50% African American, African, Latino, Asian and other ethnicities.



# Services

- 1999 Began Immigration Counseling Program
- 2000 Expanded Refugee Employment Program
- 2000 Began Interpreter Training and Cultural Competency Training
- 2004 Began Refugee Resettlement Program
- 2007 Began Interpreter Services



# How JVS Worked to Change

- JVS needed to effectively communicate with our diverse consumers
- JVS began to recruit bilingual and bicultural staff
- JVS began to look to our consumers as potential staff members
- JVS invested heavily in staff development and training for bilingual and bicultural staff



## JVS Lessons Learned

- Hire based on qualifications – not just language or culture
- Keep investing in staff development and training
- Be Flexible – one size doesn't fit all – appreciate diverse work styles
- Appreciate differences in approaches
- Appreciate differences in attitude
- Appreciate and utilize **DIFFERENCES !!**



## JVS What is working now

- Embrace cultural differences – Staff speak about 15 different languages including American Sign Language
- The “American” way isn’t necessarily the best way – Individualistic vs. communal
- Ask
- Listen
- Respect
- Celebrate

Domestic Violence among Immigrant Women



**TINA MALINOWSKI,  
ROSE BROOKS CENTER**

ROSE  BROOKS

*Breaking the cycle of domestic violence*



## Needs and Issues

- If I call 911, I will be put in Jail
- The power of I (one)
- Rose Brooks levy funded pilot project with Mattie Rhodes in 2003 built capacity to serve battered immigrant women
- Relationships and commitment are everything
- Baby Steps – start with foreign language access



# How we worked to change

- Blinded by the White
- Who is at the Table?
- Learning from your firsts



# Lessons and Success

- No chest pounding
- Keep your eye on the prize
- Sit on your hands
- Move through the guilt, anger, frustration and shame – there's light and learning on the other side
- Change = Chaos
- Take your M.E.D.S. and breathe
- **BECOME FULLY HUMAN**



# JOHN FIERRO, MATTIE RHODES CENTER



**MATTIE RHODES CENTER**  
Brightening Lives. Building Futures.



## Experience and Background in Social Services

- Language barriers - an increase in Spanish-speaking clients.
- Immigrant populations
- Serving Individuals with disabilities
- Changing cultural make-up of Kansas City



# Working to Change

- Cultural Competency became a regular topic of discussion at all levels of management
- We identified staff to coordinate our plan
- We used framework(s)



## Lessons Learned

- Our approach created resistance to this change – it wasn't presented as “person-centered.” But instead as if we wanted to improve how to work with “special populations.”
- Perception is that cultural competency is an end goal vs. journey.
- Cultural competency was interpreted by some as to how non-minority and English only speaking staff can work with minority and dual language clients.



## Success !

- A better understanding and open dialogue about what cultural competency is and what is not.
- More than one advocate in the agency.
- A commitment from the top to regularly assess and improve our cultural competency.



**ANNE MILLER,  
DON BOSCO  
SENIOR CENTER**



# Needs and Issues

- **Historic Northeast Community is culturally diverse and growing in immigrant populations.**
- **Language Barriers**
- **General Workforce vs. Professional and Administrative Staff**



# Working to Change

- Staffing reflective of community
- Leadership Staff
- Board of Directors
- Human Resources



# Lessons Learned

- Remain open-minded
- Receptive of learning from individuals served by agency
- Provide training



# Success!

- Latino Outreach Coordinator
- Interpretation Services
- Translation
- Bi-Lingual Staff
- Summer Youth Camp



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**THERESA REYES-  
CUMMINGS,  
JACKSON COUNTY  
MENTAL HEALTH FUND**



# Needs and Issues

- 1990's increasing diverse populations
- Requesting diversity information from providers
- 2009 Reports
  - Non-English mental health services
  - Spanish Speaking Consumer Experience
  - Cultural Competency Plan Assessment based on CLAS Standards.



# Working to Change

- Board adopted formal values – Diversity is number one value
- Staff developed cultural competence plan for organization
- Applied for outside technical assistance
- Internal and External Evaluation
- Board Retreat
- Training



# Lessons Learned

- Understanding our Role
- Understanding disparities in mental health care
- Clarity/Communication
- Partnerships



# Success!

- Establishing baseline data
- Commitment to research
- Commitment to training
- Understanding our providers community and needs
- Outside Consultation
- Inclusion practices among the philanthropic community



**Thank You !!**