



NAMI Support Technical Assistance and Resource Center (STAR)

*Report on Cultural Competency & Diversity Institute for Self-Help Centers
June 1, 2006
Freehold, New Jersey*

The STAR Center received a request from the New Jersey Collaborative Support Programs (CSP) to assist them with their conference on cultural competency and recovery. CSP is the largest consumer provider organization and they operate 21 of 27 drop-in centers in the state.

The conference theme was “Cultural Competency & Diversity Institute for Self-Help Centers Adopting an Attitude of Hope, Tolerance and Diversity.” The conference was held from May 31 thru June 1, 2006 in Freehold, New Jersey. Attendees were volunteers and paid leaders from CSP who were responsible for the operations of the drop-in centers.

Conference Attendance	Conference Attendance	Conference Attendance	Conference Attendance
Center Leaders	Self-Help Managers	Outreach Staff	Wellness and Institute Staff
65	26	4	4

General issues identified by conference attendees and the STAR Center as barriers for underserved populations participating and joining CSP drop in centers.

- Currently the people participating at the drop-in centers do not fully reflect geographic communities in which they are located. There was a clear need for the centers to reach out and connect with diverse communities.
- There is a problem in terms of language for non English or limited English speakers. These barriers are the translation and cultural adaptation of written material into other languages that are currently only in English. Multicultural and bilingual staff at the drop-in centers needs to be in leadership roles and on resource allocation decision making bodies within the organization. The lack of one or both of the previously mentioned items can be viewed as a major obstacle facing centers in reaching out and providing recovery services to diverse communities.
- Sometimes it has been the experience of CSP staff that there is a lack of motivation and intolerance of people who are perceived as different at centers.



- Boarding home life, housing issues and health care disparities can be worse for individuals who are considered in minority groups.
- There is sometimes a hierarchy within the consumer movement. The centers face problems and conflicts with “sub-cultures” within the consumer movement.
- There is a need to advertise recovery services by using appropriate media outlets, such as community newspapers, Spanish language radio stations etc.
- These leaders acknowledged the importance of diversity and seeking assistance in building interpersonal relationships, and the need for self-help centers to reflect the members of the community in which each center resides.

STAR Center Director Ramiro (Ray) Guevara gave a 40 minute presentation on recovery and cultural competency. He then answered a broad array of questions for about 25 minutes from an audience of 99 consumer leaders. A sample of the questions that the audience asked and excerpts of Mr. Guevara’s responses with resource links have been included in this report.

What is the most appropriate way to address people, as "Latino's" or "Hispanics"?

“It is largely a regional preference. Many people living in the southwestern region of the United States such as Texas and New Mexico prefer the word Hispanic. They feel that all Hispanic/Latinos can trace their ancestry to Spain (Iberian Peninsula). There is a common belief amongst this group that the word Latino excludes their Spanish heritage something all Hispanics share therefore making the term “Latino” unacceptable.

On the west coast, especially in the larger metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco the word "Hispanic" can bring about a negative reaction. It was a term the government used to label them not one that came from the community.” Critics of the term Hispanic believe that it does not refer to a specific people such as Mexicans or Puerto Ricans and is therefore void of a history, culture and heritage. These same critics feel the word Latino includes the indigenous roots that most groups who were subjugated by Spain share as a common thread in their cultural history and heritage. Latino is therefore more inclusive when attempting to describe people of these diverse backgrounds. To not include these indigenous roots is an insult to who they really are as a people.



The following three links are articles *by* Dr. LaFarelle, Darryl Fears, and Martha E. Gimenez. Dr. LaFarelle is a Chicano Studies Professor at the University of Texas, El Paso. Dr. LaFarelle gives an overview of the subject as well as historical context of some of the terms used to describe Hispanic/Latinos in his electronic newsletter *El Boricua Un Poquito De Todo*. Darryl Fears is a *Washington Post* staff writer. Mr. Fears' article describes the complexity and fierce debate going on within the Hispanic/Latino community over how they label themselves. Martha E. Gimenez describes most of the debate between Latino/Hispanic labels as identity politics. Both labels are inadequate because of their racist connotations when grouping people together and instead country of origin should be used. We at the NAMI STAR Center recommend that you always ask people how they wish to be addressed. Although this is a simplistic answer, it is often overlooked.

Dr. LaFarelle, *El Boricua Un Poquito De Todo*

http://www.elboricua.com/latino_hispanic.html

Darryl Fears, *Washington Post*

<http://webhost.bridgew.edu/lasociedadlatina/Articles/Latinos%20or%20Hispanics.pdf>

Martha E. Gimenez

<http://clogic.eserver.org/1-2/gimenez.html>

How can I do outreach to the Latino/Hispanic community so that they will come to my center?

“You need a strategic outreach plan to the community you are targeting to be successful in your endeavor. Finding partners or “gatekeepers” in the community that you are targeting can provide you with access and credibility. You can meet gatekeepers at local churches, ethnic community celebrations and civic centers. Having and maintaining a presence at community events will allow your organization to begin to build a rapport with the community you are targeting. It will enable your organization to begin to understand values, beliefs, and help seeking behaviors of people in their preferred community settings.



Your organization needs staff/volunteers who are multicultural and bi-lingual. Hiring multicultural staff conveys a message that you understand that all cultures are equal in value. Implementing cultural competency policies and procedures will help you apply the multicultural principle at an organizational level. The demographic make up of your staff needs to reflect your community. You need to ensure that you have staff who are bilingual and that the written information you provide has been translated and adapted in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

The following are links to the STAR Center Teleconference on outreach to communities of color. Next is a cultural competency self-assessment by Andrulis, Delbanco, Avakian and Shaw-Taylor.

STAR Center National Teleconference Call: Outreach to Consumers of Color

URL: <http://www.consumerstar.org/resources/general.html>

Cultural Competency Self-Assessment by Andrulis, Delbanco, Avakian and Shaw-Taylor

URL: <http://www.consumerstar.org/pubs/Culturalcompselfassess.pdf>

STAR Center staff provided technical assistance to consumer leaders in a workgroup meeting titled "Leadership Training and Development." STAR Center staff was able to guide consumer leadership on what type of training they should ask the state of New Jersey to provide, including culturally specific group dynamics, outreach and staff development.

Work Group Feedback: June 1, 2006 **Leadership Development and Training**

1. Some participants stated that bonds are formed between participants when ethnic meals are served.
2. Participants stated that center leaders, at some centers, form cliques that fight among themselves. They felt this may prevent people from attending or coming back after they observe leaders bickering amongst themselves.
3. Participants also acknowledged that they are more alike (homogenous) in terms of cultural and ethnic experiences. From the discussion it seemed as though leaders need training in the following areas:
 - Group dynamics and dynamics in relation to diversity conflict resolution



- Shared Leadership: Help the leadership to work collaboratively and in harmony rather than bickering and vying for leadership.
- Issues of working with individuals who may encounter visual, auditory and other cognitive challenges, as well as other cross disability special needs.
- Meeting the needs of people leaving the criminal justice system.

The luncheon address and workgroup trainings were well received. STAR Center staff had attendees approaching them throughout the day asking for more information on the STAR Center and a chance to express their gratitude.

There is clear and convincing evidence that mental illnesses touch people of all ages, racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and that significant disparities continue to exist preventing underserved communities of color from sharing equal access to timely and appropriate recovery services.

The role of culture, race and ethnicity on understanding, accessing and the delivery of effective recovery services is complex. The STAR Center has been charged with providing technical assistance to the consumer movement. The technical assistance the STAR Center provides to these peer groups primarily focuses on diversity and cultural competency issues. The STAR Center believes that regardless of differences in race and ethnicity, all consumers should have equal access to recovery services.