Holistic Cultural Education Wellness Center (HCEWC): Program Evaluation Interim Report

August, 2015
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Summary

This Interim Report was prepared by Alliant University, serving as a consultant to the Holistic Cultural Education Wellness Center (HCEWC) for program evaluation services. Additional information related to the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), in particular, MSHA Innovations, was prepared by Department of Behavioral Health staff.

It should be noted the Interim Report is not intended to be a final, comprehensive finding of program effectiveness of the HCEWC, but rather a “snapshot” of current HCEWC programming from the perspective of the Alliant University and the HCEWC’s impact upon participants involved in programming. Report findings from the period of late 2012 to July 2015 indicate the HCEWC has positively impacted participants through learning activities, education classes and workshops and is fulfilling Fresno County’s MHSA Innovations Work Plan for Holistic Services in relation to:

- Increasing mental health awareness
- Reducing mental health stigma
- Increasing understanding of holistic treatment methods

The Learning Goals of the HCEWC are directly aligned to the original MHSA Innovation Work Plan for the Holistic Services. The Learning Goals serve as the framework for the HCEWC design as an MHSA Innovation pilot project that was stakeholder driven through the community program planning process, a MHSA Innovations regulatory requirement.

The following information reflects programming provided at two locations of the HCEWC; the main site located at 4879 E. Kings Canyon Road in Fresno, and the Parlier Satellite Site is located at 745 Tulare Street in Parlier. It should be noted an additional satellite site was recently opened in Fresno’s Lowell District at 108 N. Poplar, designed to increase exposure of HCEWC programming to additional cultural groups. Participant data from the Lowell District site is not included in this report.

Qualitative data analysis including client testimonials and focus-groups showcase and demonstrate the many benefits of the HCEWC. The data demonstrates the majority of clients report high levels of satisfaction with programming offered through the HCEWC. Quantitative data analysis was utilized to measure clients’ satisfaction through satisfaction
surveys. Further, clients’ pre/post survey data reveal “statistically significant” results in increased knowledge and awareness levels of mental health gained through HCEWC programming (workshops, education classes, trainings and activities).

Activities are organized and facilitated by “Cultural Brokers” who are culturally competent in providing HCEWC services and resources to participants from their respective communities. The Cultural Brokers provide a variety of activities and services which are specifically designed for various cultural groups, which are usually provided in the specific language of a cultural group (Hmong, Spanish, Khmer, Punjabi, Cambodian). The Cultural Brokers provide alternative methods for mental health healing and awareness. Activities are categorized into any combination of holistic, cultural, education, and wellness, which are uniquely defined by the HCEWC. Holistic may be defined as either: (a) consisting of alternative medicine or healing practices; (b) integrating unique forms of mental health training and support; or (c) focusing on aspects of physical and mental health with an emphasis on the “whole” person; in the areas of social, society, family, occupation and education.

Workshops are facilitated by mental health professionals within each respected community to lay people and professionals alike by providing educational seminars on mental health awareness, stigma reduction, alternative healing, cultural awareness/sensitivity, etc. Each workshop has holistic, cultural, educational, and wellness as central themes. The workshops are formally presented to fluent English speakers, whereas many of the HCEWC activities are provided to mainly non-English speakers at a basic level of communication with social interaction and sharing. A client’s mental health awareness is improved by their involvement in activities and workshops facilitated by Cultural Brokers that have received Mental Health First Aid training. These culturally sensitive activities enable clients to share their issues and concerns in a safe environment. Stigma reduction is achieved by talking about mental health topics particularly in the context of immigration. Alternative healing awareness is provided to clients who seek help for their stress, anxiety, depression, and other mal-adaptive behaviors—whereby CBs provide an Alternative Healers list with the contact information of various types of practitioners for possible referral services.

Populations Served 2012-2015

During the reporting period, over 52,000 individuals participated in HCEWC programming. It should be noted 52,000 does not represent “unique clients” served, but rather
the total number of participants directly involved in programming. Unique client counts will be included within the HCEWC Final Report. All of these individuals completed pre/post tests and participant satisfaction surveys that assisted in data analysis and program evaluation purposes. The majority of the participants served at the HCEWC were Hispanic/Latino, followed by Hmong, Caucasian, Laotian, Asian, African American and Cambodian. The remaining participants consisted of Other Ethnicity, Multi-Racial and Native American.

The Parlier Satellite Center hosted a number of activities which had a high participant turnout on a weekly basis with the majority of the clients being of Hispanic descent. This may give the appearance the HCEWC focused on serving this particular community, but these numbers represent the dominant group at the Parlier Center and those at the HCEWC. It should be noted the total of Southeast Asian ethnic groups (Hmong, Cambodian, and Laotian) are not completely accurate given some clients indicated they were Asian/Pacific Islander as opposed to their specific Asian Ethnicity.

Further breakdown of the participants of HCEWC programming show there were 677 single parents, 105 veterans, 18 new mothers, and 68 LGBT participants recorded from the HCEWC demographic surveys. Note these numbers represent the total number of clients who participated in HCEWC activities and workshops during the reporting period. This Report does not include evaluation of individuals that learned of the HCEWC through outreach efforts or social media campaigns hosted by the HCEWC.

The following section of the Report will present information on selected activities of the HCEWC. Please consider this information as merely an example of activity that occurred at the HCEWC. The selected workshops, activities and education classes are representative of the types of culturally competent learning that supports positive mental health through a holistic approach. The participant data has been collected and analyzed in the following activities which include:

- Hmong Family Empowerment
- Hmong Cultural Support Group
- Healing Dance
- Platicas
- Music Therapy
- Healing Garden
- Healthy Cooking
- Mental Health First Aid

Additional results of the data analysis for these activities are available upon request.
# HCEWC Participant Count

## September 2012 - June 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mind &amp; Spirit</td>
<td>21,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral and Physical Health</td>
<td>21,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Cultural Workshops</td>
<td>1,216</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outreach (recruited clients)</td>
<td>7,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health First Aid</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>*52,211</td>
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**Category Examples**

**Mind & Spirit:** Healing Arts & Crafts, Let’s Talk, Healing Garden, Veteran’s Support Group, Yoga & Meditation, Music Therapy, Family Night, etc.

**Behavioral and Physical Health:** Healthy Cooking, Healthy Living, Zumba, Karate, Gatka, Senior Wellness, Veterans Wellness, Lets Move, etc.

**Cross Cultural Workshops:** African American, Native American, Mexican, Hmong, Khmer, LGBT, Ayurveda Medicine, Cross Cultural Diagnosis, etc.

**Outreach Events:** Sikh Temple, Lao Temple, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Mexican Independence Day, Khmer New Year, Dia de Los Muertos, etc.

**Mental Health First Aid Training:** Learn to identify signs/symptoms of mental illness and how to help those in need.

* 52,211 exceeds the HCEWC’s targeted participant count goal.
Cultural Education

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hmong Family Empowerment Program</td>
<td>The Hmong Family Empowerment Program engages clients (family members) in family bonding activities such as cooking, storytelling, camping, learning Hmong language, culture, values, beliefs, norms, and etiquette. This activity convenes every Sunday for several hours and is facilitated by a large group of volunteers in the community. Occasionally, a smaller group will meet at a Hmong community funeral home to further study and practice Hmong Funeral rites and rituals, including traditional songs and cultural practices. This group consists of young Hmong professionals who are highly respected in their professions, but feel isolated from the Hmong community due to their lack of Hmong cultural knowledge and skills. These individuals hope that by gaining more cultural knowledge and skills, they can be better integrated socially and culturally accepted in the community.</td>
<td>The purpose is to assist and acculturate the Hmong individuals and families in the area who have lost their cultural values, beliefs, and native language skills, which are crucial attributes for a healthy family and a healthy community. This loss has contributed to social, cultural, and linguistic isolation, widening the generational and experiential gaps between children and adults which can lead to family and community discord and ultimately depression.</td>
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**Hmong Family Empowerment Program (FOCUS GROUP)**

Due to the large number of clients in this activity, estimated to be 90, a smaller group of children and adults were chosen for this particular focus group.

**What are some of the most enjoyable aspects of this activity? How would you improve this activity? What would you change or include?**

Most of the clients considered learning Hmong language and more about the culture as the most enjoyable aspect of the activity. They felt very comfortable with each other and valued spending time with friends and family.

“Everyone is busy throughout the week, so this is a good time for kids to come by and socialize.” “As Hmong we realize that our children are not able to speak or write their language. The priority is to learn to speak Hmong then to write it; thirdly hopefully they are able to learn about their cultural heritage.”

Clients said their lives have improved because they are now able to speak and write Hmong more fluently. Parents mentioned that they have seen a big improvement in their children’s ability to communicate in Hmong. They have made new friends and are proud to be Hmong. “I grew up not knowing how to speak Hmong and had grandparents who did not speak Hmong, and now I am able to speak to them without speaking English or asking my parents to translate.”

Many of the clients indicated they would like to have more space and some outdoor activity because there are many people who want to attend, but are unable to due to the limitations of this facility and a waiting list exists for clients who would like to be included.
Cultural Wellness

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Healing Dance</td>
<td>Cultural dances are incorporated with an educational lesson. The group practices Khmer Traditional dancing that promotes healthy body and healthy mind. Some of the dances are similar to Yoga movements which help relieve stress and relaxation. Healing dance is ideal for family bonding and connecting the gaps existing between parents and their children. The main component of this activity for the Khmer community is a way to bring them back together, sharing cultural traditions, helping the family group to be more meaningful and valuable. The healing dances have 2 sessions: Saturday and Sunday from 1-4pm. It is open to all clients ages pre-K and up.</td>
<td>Parents and children learn traditional dance moves as part of a healthy body, &amp; techniques of how to work with their children, incorporating team skills. The children learn how to be patient and calmer through meditation, and expressing positive emotional behaviors. Everyone learns how to manage stress through the use of dance, focusing on becoming more self-confident.</td>
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CAMBODIAN HEALING DANCE (FOCUS GROUP)

37 participants including adults and children. It was a mixed group with males and females, adults, small children and teenagers. Most of the clients had attended regularly for several years.

1. What are some of the most enjoyable aspects of Cambodian Healing Dance?
   “Getting to know more traditional dance and about culture; Something good to do out of school and put onto a resume.”

2. In what ways have you benefited from participating in this activity?
   “We connect with a special bond, with each other even when there are problems we get over it and learn new things.”

3. What sort of changes have you seen in your life after participating in Cambodian Healing Dance?
   “We’re really grateful that the county has put funds into this program to give us the chance to explore our culture; being a small group, we do not want to be forgotten.”

4. Observations: School age children were very well behaved and several teenagers were open to sharing their views of the program. Many of the teenagers displayed promising attitudes for their futures (for example, one girl showed high potential for future leadership in her community as she was very articulate for her age, sharing feelings and encouraging others to do the same).
Holistic Cultural Education Wellness

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tr>
<td>Platicas (Let’s Talk)</td>
<td><em>Platicas</em> is a Hispanic Women support group conducted in Spanish, and is structured for all women in the community with no age limits. The core of this session is to create a comfortable environment to stimulate dialogue around the personal lives of clients in fostering their coping mechanisms for mental health. Facilitators and monthly guest speakers present on special topics such as: physical and emotional health, motherhood, parenting, communication skills, healthy versus unhealthy relationships, alcohol and drug abuse, culture, music, ethnic cuisine, and dance.</td>
<td>The main purpose is to offer an alternative for women in need and to build relationships in transforming isolation into connection. To offer a positive environment for Hispanic women to meet each other, share their problems and concerns to improve their mental health.</td>
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**Platicas: Let’s Talk (Focus Group)**

Participants: 19 Hispanic males and females (This session was translated into English.)

1. **What are some of the most enjoyable aspects of the activity?**

Most clients felt that the most enjoyable aspect of Platicas was that they can share their ideas/feelings and learn different things from each other. They also mentioned an appreciation for the help they received in order to deal with their personal issues and improve their relationship with their families.

2. **What are the benefits of this activity?**

Participating in the activity has helped the clients develop friendships and have a sense of belonging to a support group. It has also helped them deal with strong emotions, become more patient, and feel stronger as individuals.

   “Now I am more patient with my family, especially my husband—I’ve been coming here for two years & I can deal with my issues in better ways than before.”

3. **What sort of changes have you seen in your life after participating?**

Clients improved their communication skills with their families, which has also improved their relationships.

   “Not having a great day, but I made the effort to come to the activity today because it helps me when I’m here...we are becoming better people.”

   “I think we all feel more secure being in this group and much stronger as a person.”
## Holistic Cultural Educational Wellness

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<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Music Therapy</td>
<td>Music Therapy is a very popular activity that is held twice per month, every first and third Tuesday from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. It is conducted in Spanish and is structured for everyone in the community with no age limits. Clients can pick up a song to sing, or listen to, and after the interpretation, they can share why they like it, why they feel connected to it, and why it is meaningful to them. The closing part of the session always is with vibrant music to finish with positive energy with optimism to live life. There was singing, dancing, laughing, and releasing emotions.</td>
<td>The goal is to provide the opportunity to use popular music as a therapy to express feelings, alleviate pain, manage stress, identify emotions, and make connections with challenging experiences in the past. Additionally, the activity helps to find avenues for communication that can be useful to those who have hard time expressing themselves as they will be able to release everyday stress, grief and loss issues, anxiety, depression, and psychological traumas.</td>
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**Music Therapy (Focus Group)**

Participants: 31 Adults and 24 Children. This session was translated Spanish into English.

**Recurring Themes Identified from the music:**

Death/ Loss of a loved one; Missing someone; Leaving someone behind/Regret/Loyalty
Personal/Emotional Needs; Betrayal/Extramarital Affairs/Revenge; Advice for Living Life

**Reasons for a particular song:**

“It reminds me of my late husband. I think he was trying to send me a message with that song.” “It reminds me of being back home in a safe place.”
“That song reminds me to take life one day at a time; to tell my kids I love them everyday.” “It brings me nice memories to remember.”

**Stated benefits of music therapy:**

“It gives me something to do with my husband.”; “It helped me see that you don’t have to be stupid (drunk/high) to have a good time.” “I have more friends now and I feel less sad; I feel better.” “When I come to class I feel less stressed and I am nicer to everyone.” “It helps me get things off my chest and express myself.” “I feel like coming here helps to take away some of my problems”

**Observations:** Clients shared painful stories related to song selections; some cried both while sharing and listening to other’s stories.
### Holistic Wellness

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Essential Elements</th>
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<td><strong>Healing Garden</strong></td>
<td>The Healing Garden was created to educate clients about the benefits of taking care of plants and trees as a reflection of how they will take care of themselves to promote a healthier mental status. When the clients water the plants they are providing nourishment to the plant just as how they will nourish themselves. Removing dead leaves and flowers on the plant is a reflection of removing past pain and guilt in their lives. It is the hope that healing garden will be a place where many different types of herbal plants from the Hmong, Laotian, Khmer and Hispanic cultures are grown and their medicinal properties and usage is shared among all of the cultures. The herbal plants are provided by the clients who willingly bring plants of their choice from their gardens to place in the Healing Garden and share the healing properties. A pamphlet was created with descriptions of all plants in the garden and their medicinal use as herbal remedies.</td>
<td>The essential elements of this project/activity include a small plot of land which is large enough to grow and maintain the various herbal plants that were donated by clients and maintained by volunteer gardeners with accessible water to sustain the plants. The Healing Garden will have a variety of traditional herbal plants from all cultures where their medicinal properties and usages will be shared and passed down to the younger generations. It will be accessible to the whole community and acts as a bridge among the different ethnicities.</td>
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<td><strong>Healthy Cooking</strong></td>
<td>Healthy cooking was created to help clients feel better about themselves and their families, promoting a healthier mind and body. Learning how to cook healthy meals can reduce stress and promote a better self-image. It is a form of relaxation and promotes family time, allowing one to engage their loved ones to become active participants in the meal preparation which in turn makes it fun for the entire family. The goal is to introduce healthy cooking habits and to help individuals eat a well-balanced meal. It helps to promote better self-image physically and mentally. It is about making positive changes in one’s life and creating good habits. The goal is to help clients make wise choices when selecting and planning a meal promoting healthy body and mind.</td>
<td>An essential part of healthy cooking is being able to share with clients how to plan, shop for and cook meals. A healthy meal can be cost effective and learning how to plan meals in advance can make preparation fun and less stressful. When cooking and planning for meals includes family members, it can be a bonding moment for the entire family. Cooking time can be used for clients to share their daily experiences as a coping mechanism for relieving stress.</td>
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**Healing Garden & Healthy Cooking Focus Group**

Participants: 29

This group was a combination of Healing Garden and Healthy Cooking and there was a group of Hmong women who did not speak English so there was an interpreter.
What are the enjoyable aspects of this activity?

- People who come regularly are very engaging as well as the staff so it “feels very welcoming to come and participate”.
- “I always feel better when I leave—I’ve learned something new, engaged with friends and will be able to try new things.”
- “I like the teaching of the “whole” approach—cooking and eating with the actual herbs from the garden that I have watched grow”.
- “This is the best education and feels natural for my recovery because it is so healthy.
- “I have learned new skills and been able to take them home. I now know more about sugar, salt, and ways to use herbs”.
- “I have learned so much about other people’s culture and how they use the herbs for many kinds of remedies—we actually used rose petals to make a Middle Eastern tea which I now drink every day.”
- “I know so much about different kinds of foods I would never have tried and it’s really so informative—I love the herb sharing and the book is great—I use it all the time.”

In what ways have you benefitted from participating in this activity?

- “I am much healthier—my blood pressure has been lower and I’ve lost weight so I can exercise. I learned so many things about the food I was eating that wasn’t good for me so this was very good”.
- “I’ve learned about cooking and eating kinds of food that I would never have bought and been able to introduce it to my family. I think differently now when I’m planning my meals”.
- “I’ve been able to be less stressed because I see the food being cooked and then can eat it here so I feel I will be more likely to try it at home”.
- “I use this activity as a reward for myself—I want to eat more healthy foods and I know I will when I come to the class. People are friendly here and I feel it’s the best thing about getting out of my house—especially on dark and cloudy days.”

What sort of changes have you seen in your life after participating in this group?

- “I now drink tea instead of sodas—many different kinds of tea and have used it in my family for helping with colds, gassy digestion, and my diabetes.”
- “I am now off my insulin and pills that I was taking for my diabetes and I feel so much better after making the changes in the ways I was eating.”
- “I incorporate what I have learned about healthy options as I am the primary cook in the family and it has really helped my children make better food choices. The family is eating regular meals (instead of snacking) and are willing to try more things—have stepped out of the box”.
- “There were things here like cilantro and green onions that I had never tried and I’ve learned where I can put them in my cooking to be healthier.”
- “I took some mint home and I use it all the time in the tea I learned about here. I now grow it at home, but would have never tried it or how I could use it.”
- “I have given up coffee since I learned so much about the teas and tried them. I have been able to tell my Mother about it too and she’s drinking tea with me.”
How would you improve this activity—change or include?

- “I wish it was offered in the evening as I work during the day sometimes and I really miss it when I don’t come—it feels like a family here.”
- Several people take the bus to get here and would like to have it in other parts of the city.
- “I wish there would be one for the kids so they could understand why some of the things that they want to eat are not good for them.”

This was a very lively group and a lot of personal sharing of their week was evident. At least 8-9 of them are “regulars” and have been since the beginning of the activity.

Although most of the Hmong women who were in the Healing Garden group did not speak English, they joined in the conversation with others and seemed to feel very included.

A very healthy salad was made with many different kinds of greens and herbs along with some vegetables which was enjoyed by all who attended.

**Mental Health First Aid**

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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| Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The evidence behind the program demonstrates that it does build mental health literacy, helping the public identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness. | • Grow the knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions.  
• Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental illness or addiction.  
• Increase their confidence in and likelihood to help an individual in distress.  
• Show increased mental wellness themselves. |

(The *Description* and *Outcome* are from the Mental Health First Aid web-site at: [http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org))

136 /138 participants completed the training through the HCEWC “would recommend” this course to others. 2121/2919 responses indicated that participants “strongly agree” to the **overall benefits of the course** and their **Confidence in using the practical applications**.