



February 12, 2010

Greetings from the California Mental Health & Spirituality Initiative --

In this email, we are providing data and analysis from two surveys conducted by the Initiative in 2009:

1. Survey of County Behavioral Health Directors (phone interviews)
2. Survey of Individuals and Families Receiving Mental Health Services (web-based and paper surveys)

Because we received over 25 surveys from consumers/family members identifying your County as their place of residence, we have prepared a special version for you with your County-specific data, alongside the statewide figures.

Relevance of Spirituality to Mental Health Wellness, Recovery & Multicultural Competence

The statewide response to the surveys has far exceeded our expectations: we interviewed 52 of the 59 County Behavioral Health Directors, and received over 2,600 surveys from consumers and family members statewide. We have been encouraged in our work by this high response rate, the actual survey findings themselves, and the enthusiastic participation of the 1,111 consumers, family members, service providers, and representatives from faith/practice-based organizations who attended the June 2009 Conferences on Mental Health & Spirituality in Oakland or Los Angeles. This groundswell of support indicates a strong need for the inclusion of spirituality among the resources available to service recipients, service providers, and communities in the pursuit of mental health wellness, recovery, and multicultural competence.

There is a significant movement underway in public mental health both statewide and nationally to address spirituality as a resource for reducing disparities in access to care, to support wellness and recovery, and to promote trauma healing. This is an area in which programs must tread carefully so as not to infringe upon the rights of consumers, family members, or staff, including those who are actively engaged in faith- or

practice-based communities, those who have been harmed by such communities, and individuals who are secular.

Next Steps

The California Mental Health & Spirituality Initiative was established to provide technical assistance to individuals, programs, and systems to work effectively in this area. In response to requests for more advanced tools to assist California Counties and CBOs in their endeavors to address spirituality effectively, the Initiative has framed six new deliverables:

- 1) **“Spirituality 101” staff training** on including spirituality as a life domain in wellness and recovery-oriented mental health services
- 2) **Customized** administration and analysis of the **Survey of Individuals and Families** Receiving Mental Health Services regarding Spirituality
- 3) Handbook, Facilitators Guide, and consultation on **fostering spirituality support activities in wellness and recovery centers, peer-operated, and self-help programs**
- 4) **“Spiritual assessment and inquiry” skill training** for mental health care providers
- 5) **“Mental Health 101” training** for spiritual leaders and faith-based/practice-based communities -- a recovery-oriented mental health education curriculum
- 6) Train-the-trainer approach to prepare facilitators, or provision of expert facilitation of, **community dialogues with spiritual communities/faith-based organizations** which could lead to ongoing dialogues and round table discussions.

These are the services that we are preparing to offer to Counties in the timeframe January 2010 thru June 2011. If these are services that you would like to get more information about, or engage for your county specifically, please contact a member of the Statewide Steering Committee. (See attached description and contact information).

We hope that the attached material will prove useful to you. Ongoing updates and a wide array of related resources can be accessed anytime at our website, www.mhspirit.org. Thank you for your support of the Initiative.

Sincerely,

Rev. Laura Mancuso & Dr. David Lukoff
Survey Research Consultants
California Mental Health & Spirituality Initiative
www.mhspirit.org
mentalhealthandspirituality@gmail.com