

Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network Meeting Minutes March 5, 2002

Present: Chris Huffine (Men's Resource Center), Stacy Womack (ARMS), Christine Burke (Child Abuse Hotline), Paula Manley, Lee Parker (Change Point), David Houston (Men's Resource Center), Courtenay Silvergleid (Portland State University), Linda Jaramillo (Multnomah County Health Department) *Plus a few others that arrived late*

Minutes by: Courtenay Silvergleid

Topic: Working with men from non-dominant culture
in primarily dominant culture groups

Culturally and linguistically unique programs are the most desirable, but when it isn't an option, what can and should be done?

- One member expressed concern that it seems to take men of color longer to get through programs developed by and primarily attended by White men and that men from countries other than the US seem more likely to flat out deny any abuse.
- In response to the issues of denial, one member suggested that it may be more difficult for non-US born men to acculturate to the norms in the United States which have shifted in the last 20 years with respect to Domestic Violence and that this resistance may be for good reasons. "If I've left my country and then reject any part of what I perceive as my culture, then I often perceive that I'm rejecting a part of myself."
- The question becomes how do we respect the core heritage of these men while simultaneously letting them know that their abusive/violent behavior is not ok? One suggestion was to help them look at their resiliencies and strengths. Have them articulate and define who they are and what they have survived (war, terrorism, etc.).
- It may also be helpful to do value clarifying work with them initially. Looking at their cultural values. In every culture, violence and abuse are not acceptable. One practitioner goes back to the client's specific cultural values, their history, and uses that to create victim empathy.
- How can we integrate this kind of work in a group of men primarily from the dominant culture in the United States? One option would be to explore every group's member culture.
- One significant barrier however is that men of color are often very uncomfortable talking in a group of primarily White men. Men of color may fear that they are accommodating if they participate actively and engage the program. One of the things that oppressed groups learn is to comply, to go where they need to go, to do what we're needed to do, etc. One of the reasons that these men may not be moving through groups as quickly is because they aren't truly engaging the program.
- Another possibility is that there are different ways of processing (heart and head), different priorities, individualism versus collectivism. Confusion and difference with respect to terms and constructs such as power and control. Family roles for men are intertwined with what gets defined as power and control. Machismo is the most valuable thing that you can be as a man. It becomes difficult to accept changes that contradict Machismo.
- One group member recommended a movie Dating in the Hood – which is a dialogue among young African American men – produced by Lenita Duke at Grassroots News. Distributed out of St. Louis.
- A question that the group considered is what do we mean by culture? Most of the men in our group come from different cultures, based on age, religion, rural versus urban communities, etc.

communities, etc.

- Sometimes a man might get treated as a man of a “different” culture but his thinking may be totally Euro-Caucasian. Need to assess their level of cultural identification and affiliation. Need to explore their level of identification/affiliation before they get into the group
- Might need to take a look about how we do intakes. Perhaps there is a way to utilize volunteers from the community to assess levels of cultural identification/affiliation during intakes and then make recommendations about whether they will do well in a mixed group. Might also be able to use volunteers from the community to serve as mentors throughout the program.
- The challenge with any man is convincing him and helping to sell him that it is better to let go of power over. We need to find a way to speak to each man in his own language, in a way that connects with him. We need to train people of color about domestic violence so that they can work with their own community. Need to train clinicians/professionals of color.
- Is a mixed group the most appropriate? And if not, then what? And if it is, then how do you change it to make it work? There seems to be some agreement that culturally specific services may be the best. We think they need to be given the option. Regardless of the number of culturally specific services, there will still be men who either can’t attend those programs or can’t access them (if they are in rural communities).
- What are some of the signs that someone is culturally competent? We still allow the wrong people to define cultural competence. Those most impacted should be the ones to define it.
- One indication is the rigidity with which the facilitator follows the program. Not recognizing the fluidity. Culturally sensitive person is going to be fluid and flexible in the way they operate a group. Someone who does a good job of listening – not putting them in a box. Willing to admit some of the mistakes that we make rather than trying to cover up. We are not in someone else’s mind. The “I know how you feel stuff or you shouldn’t feel that way”. If you are referring to a specific group and looking at the one person in the group that is from that group. Use the terms that the person is using.
- Difference between sensitivity and competence. Sensitivity is like awareness. Competence is that I understand that everyone’s different.
- One provocative idea that emerged was to have cultural competence experts observe groups? Any program could open itself up to that. Point would be to improve service.
- DV needs assessment done for Governor's Council developed an assessment tool, might be worth considering with regard to the state standards being developed.