

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

### CULTURAL COMPETENCY COMMITTEE MEETING

**Date:** May 10, 2023

**Participants via Conference Call:**

Aaron Icedo, Guest; Anita Mihecoby, Conscious Culture Psychology; Ann Lee, DMH; Avril Cordova, Conscious Culture Psychology; Belinda Rabano, DMH; Bernice Mascher, CCC Co-Chair, Cultural Broker; Blanca E. Watson, SA 4; Brent Popham, LACCC, CCC; Camille Do, DMH; Christine De La Cruz, DMH; Cirilo Garcia, DMH; Clemencia Carroll, Mundo Maya Foundation; Elaine Waldman, DMH; Farrah Farris, AI/AN UsCC Co-chair; Gabriela Velasquez, SA 8; Gail Sulser, DMH; Guadalupe Aguilar, DMH Prevention Unit-CCU; Haydeh Fakhrbadi, DMH; Hector Ramirez, Access for All, UsCC Co-Chair; Helena Ditko, DMH; Hyun K. Lee, DMH, ARDI-CCU; Irma Velasquez, WOW Volunteer, SA 8, CCC member; Jacqueline A. Diaz-Fontana, Guest; James McEwen, DMH; Jannie, Guest; Jenn Win, Student Health Services, Antelope Valley; Kim Phan, Guest; La Londa Alex, DMH; Maria Zamora, CCC; Martha Ortiz, Senior Community Health Worker, DMH; Martin Almanza, DMH; Mercedes Moreno, CCC Co-Chair; Myan Le, DMH; Pamela Inaba, LACC, LA County ACCESS Ambassador, Cal Voices, CCC member; Rosemary Stevens, SCHARP; Ruth Tiscareño, DMH; Ruth Wen, Guest; Sirarotoga Solomona, SCHARP; Stephanie Cruz, Penny Lane Centers; Wendy Cabil, CCC Co-Chair, BAH UsCC; Yvonne Miranda, Project Return Peer Support Network; Yvonne Sandoval, Guest

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	Attendee introductions		CCC Co-Chairs
<b>Review of Minutes</b>	Review of April CCC minutes		CCC Co-Chairs
<b><u>Welcome Remarks</u></b>	The CCC Co-chairs welcomed the membership and participants to the monthly meeting. The co-chairs added that they hope the meeting atmosphere is safe for everyone to participate and share their points of view. They encouraged the membership who were not able to share their recommendations or comments		CCC Co-Chairs

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
<p><i>Land Acknowledgement</i></p>	<p>during the meeting, to send these to Ms. Guadalupe Aguilar at <a href="mailto:GaAguilar@dmh.lacounty.gov">GaAguilar@dmh.lacounty.gov</a></p> <p>A member from the American Indian/Alaska Native Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC), Ms. Farrah Ferris, represented Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood. She commented that a land acknowledgement(s) goes beyond acknowledging the land location, they also help us remember that those generations and caretakers are still with us today. “It is our privilege to carry on that mission of not only caring for each other but caring for the land and moving forward in a way that ensures we are carrying on in a good way, as we say in Hoopa, so that we make our ancestors proud, but also those seven generations there before us and we are all gifts to each other.” Ms. Ferris also shared a video of the late Ms. Julia Bogany sharing the land acknowledgement that was formed on behalf of Tongva people. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKfKg7SFrX8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKfKg7SFrX8</a></p> <p>Ms. Ferris acknowledged that May 5<sup>th</sup> was declared by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) as “National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.” (MMIW). The AI/AN UsCC presented this information to the membership at their stakeholder meeting. She noted that the First Nations in Canada were the first to roll this out and said that the AI/AN UsCC is working to bring awareness about MMIW.</p>		<p>Farrah Ferris, LCSW, AI/AN UsCC Co-Chair, DMH</p>

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
<p><b><i>Update: Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Cultural Transformation Model (ICCTM) Learning Collaborative6</i></b></p>	<p><b><u>Highlights of workgroup meeting</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Aguilar read a summary of the last meeting on behalf of Ms. Irma Velasquez. A presentation was made on the Solano County ICCTM five-year model, which is based on MHSA's multi-phase innovation project focused on underserved populations in Solano County. The question that was asked was whether it was possible to promote mental health equity in historically underserved populations through community engagement approaches. The project focused on three underserved populations in Solano County: Hispanic/Latino, Filipino American, and LGBTQ+ found to be less likely to enter the care system through the crisis access point. The overall goal of the project was to improve access to mental health services via community participation, mental health services awareness alliances, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services. These strategies created greater trust towards the behavioral health provider in Solano County and resulted in substantial cost savings. The workgroup hopes to utilize this model withing DMH to generate positive advances for the benefit of underserved communities</li> </ul>		<p>Guadalupe Aguilar, Prevention Division, CCU-DMH, on behalf of CCC's ICCTM representative Irma Velasquez</p>
<p><b><u>Reflections: ARDI-CCC Women's Empowerment event</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Highlights of the Women's Empowerment Event:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CCC Co-chair, Ms. Bernice Mascher, opened the discussion and invited the membership who attended the ARDI-CCC event to share their thoughts about the event. The event centered around recognizing women and their contributions in daily life, family systems, community wellbeing and society as a whole. The keynote speaker for the event was Senior Deputy Director Mary Barraza, LCSW, who shared about her life, her background, and her journey in pursuit of her goals. Featured in the Women's Empowerment event was an impressive panel discussion with outstanding participants representing the Underserved Cultural Communities Subcommittees (UsCC), and the CCC as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood, AI/AN UsCC</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p>CCC Co-Chairs</p>

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pamela Inaba, API UsCC and CCC</li> <li>○ Access for All UsCC</li> <li>○ Gia Olaes, LGBTQIA2-S UsCC</li> <li>○ Sara Mijares, CCC</li> <li>○ Payal Sawhney, API UsCC</li> <li>○ Peggie Reyna, Access for All UsCC.</li> </ul> <p><b>CCC feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Comments from CCC participants converged on describing the entire event as amazing, powerful, and meaningful.</li> <li>● CCC Co-chair, Ms. Wendy Cabil, stated that she had enjoyed the event very much and was glad for the opportunity to come together in a creative way, to share, celebrate one another, everyone’s diversity as well as commonalities. She also mentioned that the food provided for the event, was exceptional.</li> <li>● CCC Co-chair Ms. Bernice Mascher, added that the event was held at DMH headquarters, 510 S. Vermont Ave., Terrace level. She was impressed with the lighting and view of Los Angeles. She really enjoyed the space, and it was the first time since COVID-19, connecting in person with other participants. The CCC members emphasized that this event should become an annual event given the importance to continue to recognize the challenges women face, even today, to reach their goals</li> </ul>	<p>The CCC Co-Chairs and CCU staff will draft an article featuring key points and photos taken during the event to be</p>	

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
		submitted to the CT&C newsletter column	
<p><b><u>Feature Presentation: Conscious Culture Psychology Clinic &amp; Take Action for Mental Health LA</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Highlights of the presentation:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In honor of Mental Health Awareness month, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) has launched the <i>Take Action for Mental Health LA County</i> campaign, which focuses on helping L.A. County employees and residents support their own mental health and the mental health of people they care about. The campaign’s call to action encourages people to take action for themselves and others through the DMH 24/7 Help Line at 800-854-7771 and resources available from DMH to support each person’s wellbeing journey. A complete list of upcoming activities is included in the link provided.  <a href="https://www.takeactionlac.com/community-events">https://www.takeactionlac.com/community-events</a></li> <li><u>Speaker 1:</u> Dr. Anita Mihecoby introduced herself as a licensed psychologist and Comanche Tribal member. During her college years, mentorship was a foundation of her research with a focus on learning and providing support for Latino college freshman at risk for poor academic outcomes and how a mentorship program can help improve retention and a sense of belonging during the college years. In her doctoral program in 2010, she was able to publish “Indigenous Ways of Knowing as a Philosophical Base for the Promotion of Peace and Justice in Counseling Education and Psychology.” This article defined indigenous practices that naturally promote peace, justice, respect for life on the planet defined by collective epistemology and ontologies of people to promote harmony and balance</li> <li>In 2015, Dr. Mihecoby along with her research team published “Understanding and Healing Historical Trauma: The Perspectives of Native American Elders.” They interviewed elders about the effects of</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Anita Mihecoby, Conscious Culture Psychology</li> <li>Avril Cordova, Conscious Culture Psychology</li> </ul>

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
	<p>historical trauma on self, family, and community and what they would recommend addressing these issues. In 2017, she was given the opportunity to develop the first formal Native to Native virtual Mentorship program with the goal of increasing intergenerational communication and relationships among the members of the Society of Indian Psychologists. Dr. Mihecoby demonstrated the front covers of the two handbooks she put together for the two-year term she chaired the program. The handbook was a 15-page document which included a Native Centered Mentorship Philosophy, Goals, Expectations, the Agenda, and various resources. A native-centered approach was used in the handbook, comparing the difference between a native-centered approach versus the western approach. One of the philosophies behind this native mentorship program was mentorship was a sacred duty. In order to heal from our own historical and current traumas is necessary to break the unspoken generational spiritual contracts in order to exit from cycles of suffering. She began utilizing this trauma informed approach by implementing the four (4) R's realizing trauma was widespread. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Realizing – trauma has a widespread on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and has an understanding of paths to recovery.</li> <li>○ Recognize – the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, staff, and others in the system</li> <li>○ Respond – by fully integrating trauma knowledge into policies, programs and practices</li> <li>○ Resist – re-traumatization</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dr. Mihecoby briefly talked about the “Whisper Campaign of Academic Trauma” which refers to the ways in which students of color are taught to internalize their own pain, not as a sign of dehumanizing systems, but as a sign of personal deficiency. Students of color are gaslighted into believing that institutions are acting correctly and that it is the students of color who too combative, too hard to please, to resistant, and ultimately not cut out for academia. She developed a handbook on lighting the path for</li> </ul>		

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
	<p>psychology licensure specifically for the Native American community. The handbook is a guide to inspire and mentor the Native American community to get licensed. Her private practice specializes in evaluations, therapy, group workshops, consultations, and research consultations. During her education and training, she had several safe spaces, and this is what she wants to create with her practice; a safe space for ethnic minority psychologists who come out of higher education and then still need to go through all the evaluations to get licensure. Her goal is to provide a safe space for psychologists to really integrate their ethnic identity with their professional identity. Dr. Mihecoby introduced Avril Cordova to share with the membership about their collaboration with DMH's Take Action for Mental Health LA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Speaker 2:</u> Ms. Cordova shared she is the owner and operator of AC Associates, she is an entrepreneur, and does contract work with several entities. She worked with Dr. Mihecoby the United American Indian Involvement Child and family services. She was there for thirteen (13) years. She was a Care Coordinator, helping individuals and families work through their mental health goals. Ms. Cordova added that she is not a therapist but has participated in non-traditional practices of healing like Pow Wows. Her parents were part of the relocation program and forced boarding school, her grandfather died at Wounded Knee. When she is out in the community, she does "heart" work because it is truly a passion of hers to be out in the community. In closing, Ms. Cordova is thankful that DMH is partnering with the community to put together these events</li> </ul> <p><b><u>CCC Feedback</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member congratulated Dr. Mihecoby on the excellence of her work. She is happy to see that there is cultural healing and a cultural approach to therapy. It is one of the areas her organization Mundo Maya Foundation focuses on. She asked if there were still booths available for the Saturday events. Her organization provides healing circles to the community.</li> </ul>		

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dr. Mihecoby said there is still space for tabling at their May 20<sup>th</sup> and May 27<sup>th</sup> events</li> <li>● Another member praised the presenters stating that it is really good to see more community-based services for communities that reflect the needs of communities in Los Angeles. He enjoyed the presentation Dr. Mihecoby provided and added he sees opportunities to utilize her skillset both as to build cohorts for clinical services but also in the training division where more culturally relevant approaches are needed, particularly as new projects are developed. He invited Dr. Mihecoby to connect with the AI/AN UsCC as well as the Latino UsCC, where many of the participants are of Mayan descent. He commented that the UsCCs work on capacity building projects with funding from MHSA funds and encouraged Dr. Mihecoby to reach out to these stakeholder groups in terms of working together on monies dedicated to underserved communities</li> <li>○ Dr. Mihecoby thanked the member for his kind words and added she looks to him as an amazing individual who is doing great things. She shared that they are still looking for volunteers to help in the morning sessions of their Take Action LA event at El Rancho High School</li> <li>● A member shared that the UsCCs receive funding every year to do capacity building projects which translates to opportunities to contract with DMH</li> <li>● A member thanked the presenters and said it was a beautiful presentation and added there needs to be more professional mental health services for the Latino community.</li> </ul>		
<b>Break:</b>	<p><b><u>Song: “A Mother’s Love” – Gena Hill</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In commemoration of May is Mental Health month and in honor of Mother’s Day celebrations in the month of May for many countries around the world, this song was played during the meeting break. Comments from the membership included: This was a beautiful song honoring the</li> </ul>		Guadalupe Aguilar, Prevention Division, CCU-DMH



Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
	important role mothers play in all our lives. Some members said they teared up remembering all their mothers have endured for their children.		
<b>Special discussion for May is Mental Health Awareness month: <u>Culturally specific motherhood traditions and wellbeing practices in daily life</u></b>	<p><b><u>Presentation highlights:</u></b></p> <p>In commemoration of May mental health awareness month, the CCC engaged in a fluid discussion about the ways in which healthy parenting, the role of motherhood, can be a protective factor in the development and child and wellbeing of adult children. Members highlighted and shared traditional cultural practices mothers utilize in shaping the lives of their children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCC Co-chair Ms. Mercedes Moreno began by sharing she is the mother of two boys and one girl. In her country of El Salvador, Mother’s Day is celebrated on May 10<sup>th</sup>. During this time, vendors make artificial flowers to earn money. They make red roses for the mothers still present and white roses for the mothers that have passed away. She shared she never gave up looking for her son who had been missing for 31 years. By the magic of social media platforms, she was finally reunited with her son. Resilience and never giving up are the tools that gave her hope that one day she would find her son. Hope is what she held on to for all those years, hope that one day she would find her son. Although her son is still in another country, she is happy to have been reconnected with her son to help him navigate his mental health issues</li> <li>• A member shared that when she was a little girl, her family did not have much money, and so her three siblings and herself purchased mangoes and wrapped them in colorful napkins and presented these “mangoes” to their mother. This is one of her fondest memories from her childhood. For her, the best gift to a mother is a hug, a flower, and time together. When one becomes a mother, she is like a bird and when the child is born, the</li> </ul>		Mercedes Moreno, CCC Co-chair and CCC membership

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
	<p>mother nurtures the child until the child has formed its wings and is ready to “fly” and leave the nest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilience, determination, and strength are the things a member remembers about her mother. Her mother immigrated to Los Angeles from Mexico when she was only 18, and then at the age 36, she was left to care for her six children after her husband passed away. She remembers her mother’s fearlessness, even with her “broken English”, her mother never backed down when people tried to put her down</li> <li>• A member shared it is an honor to now take care of her mother who is 91 years old. Her mother has endured so much, particularly when she lived in the internment camps, experiencing discrimination and hate towards Asians along the way. Through all these experiences, her mother persevered. She is proud of her mother for going back to school for her master’s degree, and she appreciates her mother’s silent strength and although the member is more vocal, these are the lessons she carries with her</li> <li>• A member said she is sharing her respect and love for all of the women, but especially for the ones that are mothers. The testimonies given today by the members were touching and powerful.</li> <li>• Another member stated the previous testimonials were beautiful, she sends love to all who shared and strong prayers to the women whose mothers have journeyed on. She added that some people may have “mother figures” in their life, Aunties, Godmothers, a friend, a neighbor, etc. She wanted to acknowledge and hold space for these women.</li> </ul>		
<b>Labor Acknowledgement</b>	<b>We must acknowledge</b> that much of what we know of this country today, including its culture, economic growth and development throughout history and across time has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and		CCC Co-Chair Wendy Cabil

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions	Action Item	Person(s) Responsible
	<p>their descendants who suffered the horror of transatlantic trafficking of their people, chattel slavery and Jim Crow.  <b>We are indebted</b> to their labor and their sacrifice, and we must acknowledge the tremors of violence throughout the generations and the resulting impact that can be felt and witnessed today.</p> <p>Source: Diverse Issues in Higher Education  <a href="http://www.diverseeducation.com">www.diverseeducation.com</a></p>		
<b>Announcements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Public Health – MLK Core Wellness Center virtual events, May 12<sup>th</sup>, Understanding the Risks of Cannabis</li> <li>• SALT 8 Mental Health Resource Fair, “Healing Through community”, Friday, May 12, 2023, MacArthur Park, 1321 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, CA 90813</li> </ul>		Membership

Respectfully Submitted,

*Sandra T. Chang, Ph.D.*

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health  
Prevention Division  
Cultural Competency Unit Program Manager  
LACDMH Ethnic Services Manager