

OMHRC Capacity Building Summary African American Gay/Bi/MSM Health Summit

General Observations

- Average Age of Participants = 37.5
- Average length of time in Minneapolis, MN = 20.3 years
- Gay = 80% Bi = 20%
- Number of Participants = 20
- HIV positive = 13
- HIV negative = 4
- AIDS Diagnosis = 3

Provider/Client Interactions

- Several clients and providers have commented on the need for supportive, community institutions to support them better. Connections to faith-institutions were notably challenged.
- Clients request more *Engagement* opportunities with providers so they might better understand each other.
- Providers would like to see better Communication between themselves and their clients.
- Providers are extremely protective and dedicated to their clients.
- Participants clearly hold their providers in high esteem. In their opinion, they are receiving excellent care and services.
- Two participants reported instances of provider/client interactions as being inappropriate.
- Providers report “wishing” to see clients more invested in their own health and success.
- Clients report turf wars between providers. They also call for more staff development and leadership development opportunities throughout provider agencies.

Client Experiences

- Clients experience a pervasive sense of Feeling like Outsiders.

- Isolation definitely and consistently impacts African American clients. For instance, most participants do not rely on their family to take them into appointments. Instead, they most often choose to take public transportation instead.
- Insurance greatly impacts the ability of participants to seek and remain in care.
- There is a need to be better “Acknowledged” by providers. Many report feeling uncomfortable when they visit their providers.
- Formerly incarcerated clients express needing better transition plans when returning to the community.
- Participants expressed a need for more cross-cultural events.
- Stigma was rarely mentioned as a factor limiting client access to care. Transportation was more often mentioned as being a limiting factor in breaking their isolation and gaining access to care.

Suggested Activities

- Participants reiterated a need for “Sober Events”.
- Both providers and clients stressed the need for continued mental health services. Mental health services were highly appreciated and regularly attended by the participants.
- Providers may want to institute in-service trainings on how to greet/support all of their clients. This may include scheduling diversity trainings for key positions in their organizations.
- There is a definite need to create more relationship building activities opportunities among clients, providers and African American communities in Minnesota. An example would be instituting *Listening Sessions* on a regular basis with their clients.
- Providers may want to review the impact of Transference in professional situations with their staff to avoid any semblance of misconduct and thereby placing the agency in jeopardy.
- The need for a sustained faith-based initiative should be considered.
- Create more events that are multi-cultural in nature.