

Research Inspired Mental Health Innovation

December 4th, 2009 - Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario

PANEL DISCUSSION SUMMARY Insights about Reciprocal Collaboration

At the conference, panel presenters and participants discussed insights about working together in more reciprocal, collaborative ways. Some of these insights have been captured in the table below, and grouped according to the three core values identified in the Taking Culture Seriously Framework (see figure below). Panelists' and participants' comments focus on how these three values can be used in practice, and focus especially on moving toward system change in mental health.

Value #1: Power - Individual and Community Self-Determination

- Broad systemic change is needed to achieve equity.
- Resources should be directed towards initiatives that demonstrate progressive ideas and show initiative.
- Resources should be directed towards health promotion and prevention (so that we are not waiting for crises to occur)
- Moving away from the practice of labeling people dealing with mental health issues will help in the recovery process
- There is a need for more advocacy on health equity and on the need for systemic change
- There is a need for more exploration and action on the root causes of mental health issues
- Traditional individualistic approaches sometimes don't fit with collective/family-focused cultural norms
- Traditional policies and practices regarding confidentiality can become obstacles to innovation, especially when working with cultures that have more collectivist traditions. There is a need for creative new approaches to managing confidentiality.

Value # 2: Culture - Dynamic Inclusion

- Cultural stigma needs to be recognized
- There is a need to enhance cultural competencies within organizations
- Cultural competency takes time, but we need to get decision-makers at the table
- Training and consultation needs to take place
- There is a need for linguistic competencies (e.g., interpreters, cultural interpreters, cultural brokers)

Value # 3: Intersection - Relational Synergy

- There is a need to include representatives from cultural communities in the groups that provide governance and strategic direction to major mental health institutions
- There is an opportunity at present to harness existing movement and energy for new collaborations
- Collaboration and partnerships are good first step but need to be linked to structural change
- Collaborate don't duplicate
- Outreach to cultural communities is needed so that conversations about mental health can take place. These conversations need to happen across generations as well
- There is a need to create a public health commitment and identify champions for mental health
- Communities need to bring the answers forward and organizations need to move answers forward
- Research and practice need to proceed in partnership
- Navigators may do for culturally responsive services what peer educators did for consumer-oriented services

Values of the Taking Culture Seriously Framework

