CalSWEC Mental Health Program

Brief Summary of Curriculum Development and Implementation Activities

Curriculum Development and Implementation Team

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A variety of curriculum development and implementation activities have taken place since the inception of the Mental Health Program at CalSWEC in 2003. Initial funding support for curriculum development activities was provided by the Zellerbach Family Foundation and the California Endowment Fund in grants which supported the development of the CalSWEC Mental Health Initiative. With the implementation of the statewide MHSA funded Mental Health Stipend Program, specific funding resources were designated in a subcontract to Loma Linda University to support the curriculum development and implementation activities described herein. Additional funding support for a series of Curriculum Development Grants from 2007-2012 was received from the Zellerbach Family Foundation as outlined within this report.

The initial task for the Mental Health Initiative in 2003 was to develop a set of Mental Health Competencies to identify critical practice knowledge, skills and abilities that were necessary for successful social work practice in the public mental health system in California.

The result of this early curriculum development work was a set of mental health competencies at both the foundation and advanced or specialization levels of the graduate MSW education. The competencies address issues in recovery, resiliency, evidence-based practice, and psychosocial rehabilitation principles and are based on a series of principle statements adapted from the Mental Health Services Act, the California Mental Health Master Plan: A Vision for California (March 2003) and the President’s New Freedom Commission (November 2003).

The CalSWEC Board of Directors adopted the Mental Health Curriculum Competencies in May 2005. Schools, in collaboration with their county mental health and county contract mental health agency partners began to design strategies to implement the competencies in the curriculum in both classroom and agency based field work settings. In September 2011, the Advanced Mental Health Competencies were revised to reflect inclusion of practice indicators
related to the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities utilized in the Continuous Quality Improvement Study (CQI) and additional inclusion of issues around the principles of wellness and recovery, and the Mental Health Services Act. These newly revised competencies also reflect a set of integrated foundation competencies that address the three CalSWEC program areas of Aging, Child Welfare and Mental Health. The revised competency documents were unanimously approved by the CalSWEC Board of Directors at their September 23, 2011 meeting.

Additional collaboration efforts included the provision of technical support to schools across the state around the curriculum competencies and the identification of training and resource development needs. Additional emphasis was focused on continuing to build collaborative relationships with mental health partners and stakeholders at local, regional statewide and national levels.

**CalSWEC Mental Health Curriculum Resources Website**

The CalSWEC Mental Health Curriculum Resources Website was developed in 2006. It is housed at Loma Linda University, Department of Social Work and Social Ecology. The curriculum modules, specialized training documents, Curriculum Implementation Surveys, summary reports from the statewide events, documents from emerging areas (i.e. Primary and Behavioral Health Integration) curriculum syllabi from the schools, and relevant website links are all located on the website.


**Evaluation Studies**

**Curriculum Implementation Surveys**

Four Curriculum Implementation Surveys have been completed to date, reflecting activities and strategies identified by the university partners to assure implementation of the CalSWEC Mental Health Competencies in classroom and field education learning. The surveys were completed and reflected activities for the 2005/2006, 2006/2007, 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 academic year periods. The surveys have demonstrated the utilization of many strategies to integrate the competencies, provide relevant training for both students and field instructors, and increase collaboration between schools and county mental health/county contract mental health agencies in their region, as well as increase active participation of consumers and family members on school curriculum committees, Advisory Boards, classroom and field learning presentations and curriculum development activities. The surveys also identified needs for additional resources, and provided guidance for the curriculum implementation and development activities that have occurred over the past few years. Curriculum modules, specialized training activities for faculty, field instructors and stakeholder partners, the 2008 Statewide Mental Health Summit and the 2009 Supported Education Symposium are some of the activities developed to provide ongoing support to the Mental Health Stipend Program.
**Continuous Quality Improvement Study**

The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Study is a multi-phase study, funded by a grant from Zellerbach Family Foundation, to assess the perceived preparedness of MHP graduates for employment in the public mental health system. The assessment of preparedness has identified knowledge, skills and attitudes seen as critical for mental health practice, with a specific focus on the principles identified by the Mental Health Services Act, and expected in recovery-oriented programs.

A major question of the Continuous Quality Improvement Study is “How well are we preparing the future work force?” by addressing the underlying questions:

A. Have we identified the right competencies to be taught in the schools?
B. Are the competencies being taught?
C. Are they being learned?
D. What do we need to do to improve the education process in order to better prepare the future work force.

Study subjects included MSW graduates who received MHP stipends and who have worked in the public mental health system for a minimum of 1 year, a sample of line supervisors of newly hired MHP graduates in county operated mental health and contract CBO organizations, and a sample of project coordinators from MHP schools. Through focus groups with multiple mental health stakeholder partners, including MSW students and graduates, a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA’s) was developed which reflected the key areas identified as critical for effective social work practice in the public mental health system. The CQI survey asked respondents to rank the importance of the various KSA’s, and identify to what degree they had learned content relevant to those KSA’s during their MSW program.

The sources of data were: online surveys for graduates, county and county contract supervisors of MSW’s, and project coordinators of the Mental Health Stipend Program at participating schools; and a syllabus content analysis conducted by California State University, East Bay.

The CQI Study is a groundbreaking and innovative project which has significance in California as well as across the country as behavioral health services are transformed. It may also serve as a blueprint for other disciplines to utilize this set of KSA’s for graduate and/or in-service training, and identify how curricula can deliver these concepts to students to prepare a multidisciplinary workforce for behavioral health services.

**Curriculum Development Activities**

Beginning in 2007, the MH Program received supplemental funding in the form of Curriculum Implementation grants from the Zellerbach Family Foundation to support the development of curriculum modules and resources, and provide training seminars and statewide events to the mental health community.
**Curriculum Modules**

Five curriculum modules have been developed covering critical content areas focusing on mental health practice to support and further teaching capacity in these areas in the California schools of social work. Each of the modules contains nine hours of lecture content, with accompanying exercises and reference materials, and can be used as a total course or as “drop-in” lectures in a variety of courses.

*Recovery, Stigma and Discrimination*
  by Betty Dahlquist, MSW, Executive Director, CASRA

*Co-Occurring Disorders*, by Dr. Sally Mathiesen, Professor,
  San Diego State University, School of Social Work

*Specialized Interventions for Children and Transitional Aged Youth with SED*,
  by Sigrid James, PhD, Professor, Loma Linda University, Department of Social Work and Social Ecology

*Specialized Interventions for Older Adults with Mental Illness*,
  by Dr. Michael Johnson, Professor, California State University Stanislaus, Department of Social Work

*Collaboration Between Mental Health and Child Welfare Services*
  by Sigrid James, PhD, LCSW, Loma Linda University,
  Department of Social Work and Social Ecology and
  Lynne Marsenich, LCSW, Mental Health Consultant, California Institute of Mental Health (CIMH)

**Specialized Training Seminars**

The Mental Health Program has sponsored a variety of training seminars over the past 4 years for faculty, agency based field instructors, agency staff, consumers and family members and interested mental health stakeholders. Seminars have focused on content relevant to public mental health practice, and have included active participation from consumers, family members and MSW students with lived mental health experiences as well as the professional mental health stakeholder community.

Focus on Recovery
Chad Costello, LCSW, MHALA The Village
Heather Martin

What Do Treatment Professionals Need to Know: Understanding and Helping Clients with Co-Occurring Mental Health and Addiction Disorders
UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs
Specialized Interventions with Children and Transitional Aged Youth
Sigrid James, PhD, LCSW, Loma Linda University
Department of Social Work and Social Ecology

Specialized Interventions with Older Adults with Mental Illness
Michael Johnson, PhD, LCSW, CSU Stanislaus Department of Social Work

Collaboration in Mental Health and Child Welfare Services
Sigrid James, PhD, LCSW, Loma Linda University School of Social Work and Social Ecology and Lynne Marsinich, Mental Health Consultant, California Institute of Mental Health (CIMH)

WRAP – Wellness Recovery Action Plans
Matthew Federicci, Executive Director, The Copeland Center

Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act
Mr. James Preis, JD, Executive Director
Los Angeles Advocacy Services, Inc.

Developmental plans for Training in Recovery for presentation to faculty at participating educational partners in 2012. This project has involved collaborative work with Working Well Together, NAMI, United Advocates for Children and Families, California Network of Mental Health Clients, MHALA Village, and Project Return Peer Support Network,

Statewide Summits and Symposiums

Statewide Mental Health Summit – July 2004
A Dialogue with Leaders in Mental Health: Focus on MSW Curriculum Development

Statewide Mental Health Summit – September 2008
National to Local Perspectives: Converging to Sustain Change

Statewide Supported Education Symposium – June 2009
Supporting Individuals with Lived Experience with Mental Health Issues to Succeed in Post-Secondary Education

The following document was developed as a follow-up to the Statewide Supported Education Symposium. The full document is available on the CalSWEC Mental Health Curriculum Resources Website.

A Tool Kit of Possibilities: Developing Supported Education Programs at California Universities, by Tim Stringari, MFT, Rick DeGette, MFT and Daniel Chandler, PhD