

WWT Technical Assistance Center Survey Findings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 175 survey respondents reflect diversity in demographic characteristics and include consumers, family members, and employees.

The web-based survey was widely disseminated to county mental health leadership, consumer and family member organizations, wellness centers, and participants at the Consumer Employment Summit.

- ✓ The race/ethnicity of the respondents was 8% African American, 6% Asian, 62% Caucasian, 17% Latino, and 5% Native American.
- ✓ Seventy-three percent were female, and 89% were heterosexual.
- ✓ Respondents self identified as 30% consumers, 37% family members, and 63% as employees. One-third of the consumers also identified as employees as did 38% of the family members. Respondents were not asked where they lived so there is no information about the geographic location of the respondents.

The survey results confirm the existence of many significant perceived challenges to the employment of consumers, family, and parents/care givers (C-F-P/C) in the public mental health system.

Three areas with consistent perceived challenges are the lack of career opportunities; the existence of historical patterns within the mental health system which create resistance to C-F-P/C employment, particularly with regard to ethnic and cultural groups; and, workforce attitudes and stigma.

- ✓ *Career*: There are perceived challenges in hiring into full-time positions and a lack of advancement opportunities once hired. There was also concern about the existence of adequate orientation and training once hired.
- ✓ *Historical patterns*: There is a perceived difficulty in altering existing hiring patterns and a particular difficulty in hiring C-F-P/C of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds because of mistrust and historical disparities.
- ✓ *Workforce attitudes and stigma*: There are perceived challenges in having the existing workforce accept the presence of C-F-P/C co-workers because of concerns about privacy and licensure as well as doubting the value of C-F-P/C experience

While noting some challenges, the respondents were generally less concerned about issues related to supervision, support and accommodations once C-F-P/Cs are hired.

There were differences in perceived challenges based on the respondents' role and ethnicity/culture.

A few of the important differences by role are

- ✓ Family members generally the most challenges. This was the case for all types of issues except recruitment and hiring where employees perceived the most challenge.
- ✓ Both family members and consumers appeared more aware of current workforce attitudes and resistances to C-F-P/C employment than did employees.

While the numbers are small and therefore potentially not reliable, Asians and Native Americans perceived more challenges than other ethnic groups both in regard to general issues related to the employment of C-F-P/C and specifically to the employment of a diverse workforce. Ratings of challenges for Latinos did not differ appreciably from those for Caucasian respondents.

Obtaining additional clarification about the survey findings would be a worthwhile task for the WWT Project.

Some of the differences among role and racial/ethnic subgroups need further confirmation and interpretation, for example:

- ✓ Why do family members perceive greater challenges? Does this reflect their personal experiences?
- ✓ Why do employees perceive less challenge and more solutions with regard to worker attitudes than do consumers and family members? Is this an example of employees not understanding the depth of the problem and/or is it lingering mistrust on the part of consumers and family members?
- ✓ Why do Asians and Native Americans perceive greater challenges? What can be learned from the apparently more successful efforts with the Latino community?

Respondents indicated they had solutions for some of the perceived challenges. While the survey does not allow tracking back to individual respondents the project can initiate further information to obtain and verify existing solutions.

Both the WWT Project and counties can use the survey information to address the most important perceived challenges.

While substantial progress has been made in the hiring of C-F-P/C there must be greater attention paid to the “what next” aspect of employment. For some C-F-P/C, the mere achievement of employment may be sufficient, but the survey

results indicate that for many the issue of advancement is of great concern. The development of career ladders needs to be addressed.

The mental health system will need to continue its efforts to educate and prepare the current workforce for the employment of C-F-P/Cs. The role of historical patterns that have led to mistrust, stigma, and dis-empowering of C-F-P/C was highlighted in the survey results. Overcoming these obstacles is not easy, but an important role for the Project will be to find and publicize those efforts which have reportedly been successful.

The challenge of obtaining a culturally and ethnically diverse C-F-P/C workforce is especially daunting. Successful achievement of this goal is critical not only in achieving equity but also in its potential benefits for enhancing access in general for clients from such communities. A highlight of the survey findings is the apparent success in overcoming many of the perceived challenges with the Latino community. The Project will need to develop methods to assist counties to overcome the special barriers to employment for C-F-P/C from selected cultural and ethnic groups.

INTRODUCTION

The Working Well Together (WWT) Project is a collaborative effort to promote the employment of consumers, family members, and parents and-caregivers (C-F-P/C) in the public mental health system.

WWT is a joint initiative of the California Network of Mental Health Clients, NAMI California, United Advocates for Children and Families and the California Institute for Mental Health (CiMH). The collaborative responded to a Request for Proposals from the Department of Mental Health for a Statewide Client and Family Member Technical Assistance Center and was funded in 2008.

WWT is part of the Mental Health Services Act's commitment to a transformed public mental health system that is client and family driven, culturally competent, and recovery/resilience oriented. WWT contributes to this vision through activities which will assist the effective employment within the public mental health system of consumers, family members, and parents-caregivers (C-F-P/C) from diverse cultural and ethnic communities.

WWT achieves its goal by developing a wide ranging sustainable technical assistance capacity.

The successful employment of C-F-P/C in meaningful and gainful employment within the public mental health system requires a range of competencies for both the prospective C-F-P/C employees and for the workplace. The public mental health system must learn how to recruit, hire, train, supervise, and support new employees. It must prepare its own workforce and program structures to welcome and accommodate these new employees. Counties face significant barriers embedded in county rules, structures and bureaucracy and resting on historical patterns of attitudes, policies, and practices that stigmatize consumers and family members and lead to worker resistance to C-F-P/C employees.

Assisting counties to overcome these challenges requires a variety of strategies. Technical assistance is provided by WWT through a diversity of methods and modalities building off and working through existing workforce activities and groups where possible and developing new mechanisms and materials where necessary.

A first step in planning the Project was to deepen the understanding of the nature of the challenges and the presence of possible solutions.

To accomplish this, the Project designed a web-based survey which was widely distributed to stakeholders in the fall of 2008. This brief report contains the results of that survey. It includes a description of the survey format and the respondents, an analysis of the challenges, a summary of the extent of possible solutions, a summary of the findings, and some implications from the survey for the work plan of the Project.

Section 1: SURVEY FORMAT AND RESPONDENTS

The survey consisted of a set of statements grouped into categories.

The survey contained 46 statements. The statements included potential challenges or barriers and necessary components for effective employment of C-F-P/c. Here are few examples of the two types of statements:

- ✓ Challenges or barriers:
 - "Stigma within mental health agencies prevents useful identification and descriptions of job roles for clients, families, parents/caregivers."
 - "Having to interview everyone on an existing hiring list if a pre-existing job description is used for a new position."

- ✓ Necessary components of effective employment
 - "Adequate benefits counseling exists in multiple languages"
 - "Preparing co-workers to be welcoming and helpful."

The 46 statements were grouped into various categories representing the major areas of competence required for the effective employment of C-F-P/C.

- ✓ Recruitment and hiring (12 statements)
- ✓ Current workforce attitudes and resistance (7 statements)
- ✓ Jobs and careers (6 statements)
- ✓ Pay and benefits (6 statements)
- ✓ Pre and post employment training (7 statements)
- ✓ Supervision, support and accommodations (8 statements)

The respondents were to indicate which statements represented a challenge and which had been addressed through a solution.

There were four response categories for each statement. The respondent was to indicate the current status for each statement:

- ✓ If it was a challenge, or
- ✓ If a solution had been found, or
- ✓ If it was unknown, or
- ✓ If it was not applicable

The survey allowed only one response for each statement . So if the statement was (or had been) a challenge but a solution had been found then the "current status" qualifier meant that the respondent would answer "a solution had been found."

The on-line survey was widely disseminated to stakeholders.

Responses to the survey were sought from a wide variety of knowledgeable and interested stakeholders including the following:

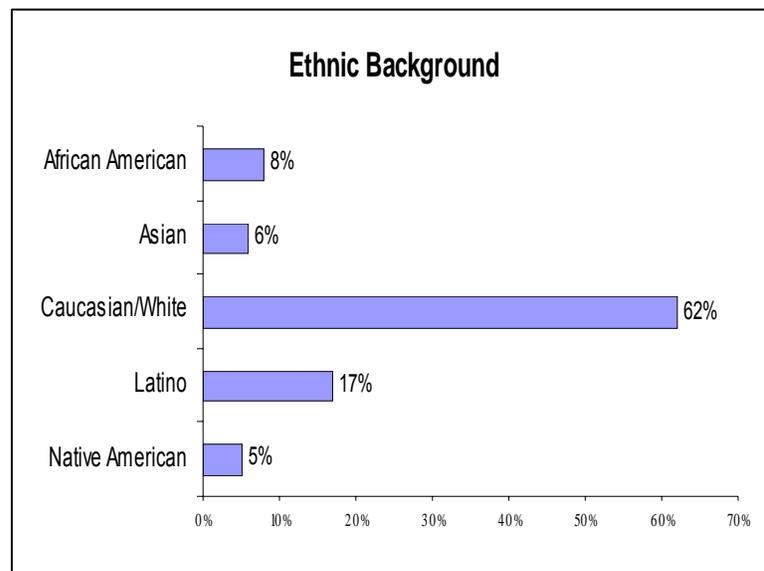
- ✓ County
 - Mental Health Directors
 - MHSAs Coordinators, and Workforce, Education, and Training (WET) Coordinators,
 - Full Service Partnership managers
 - Ethnic Services Managers
- ✓ Consumer and Family Member Organizations
 - NAMI
 - Network
 - United Advocates for Children and Families
- ✓ Wellness Centers
- ✓ Consumer Employment Summit participants

The analysis is based on 175 completed surveys.

The on-line survey was opened a total of 460 times. There were 175 completed surveys and 102 partially completed surveys. The length of the survey may have discouraged some respondents from completing the full survey. There were no significant differences between the demographic characteristics of the respondents who partially or fully completed the survey suggesting no particular bias from the relatively large number of partially completed surveys.

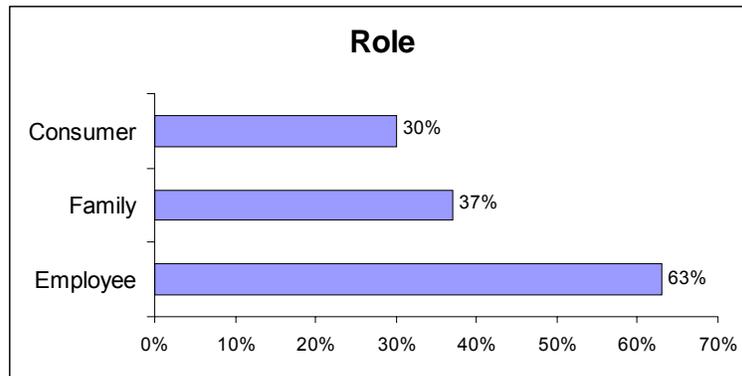
The respondents reflect some diversity in demographic characteristics and include consumers, family members, and employees.

The race/ethnicity of the respondents is shown below.



In terms of gender, 73% of the respondents were female, 26% male, and 1% transgender. Sexual orientation was 89% heterosexual, 8% lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender, and 3% other.

Respondents were asked to indicate their roles with the following result:



Since some respondents held multiple roles the percentages are greater than 100%.

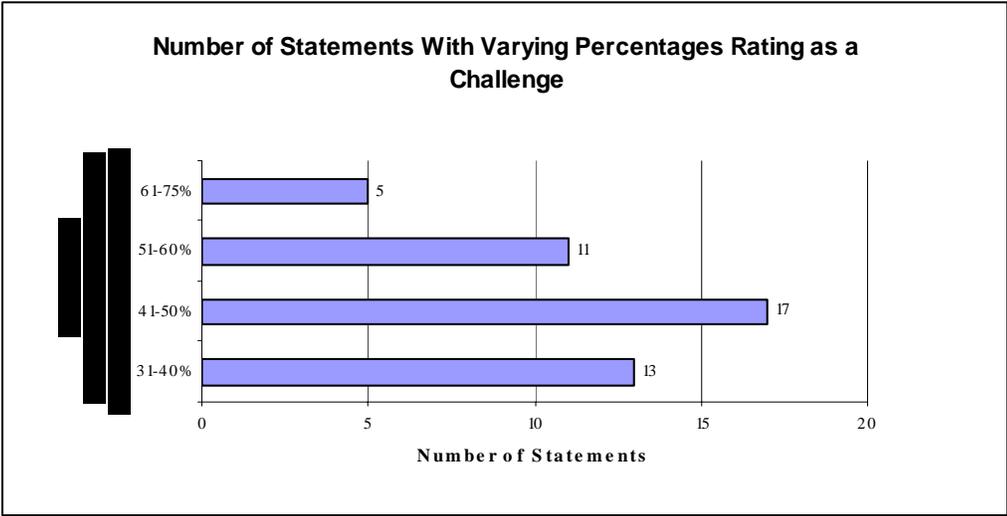
There were a sizable number of “don’t know” and “not applicable” answers.

On 10 of the statements, 30% or more responded either “don’t know” or “not applicable.” On another 17 statements, between 20% and 29% responded with “don’t know” or “not applicable.” As a result, the percentages that are cited in the report as “challenges” are understated since the percentages are calculated on the basis of all the respondents. If only those who answered either “a challenge” or a “solution” were used, the percentage of those indicating a statement represented a challenge would have been higher.

Section 2: CHALLENGES

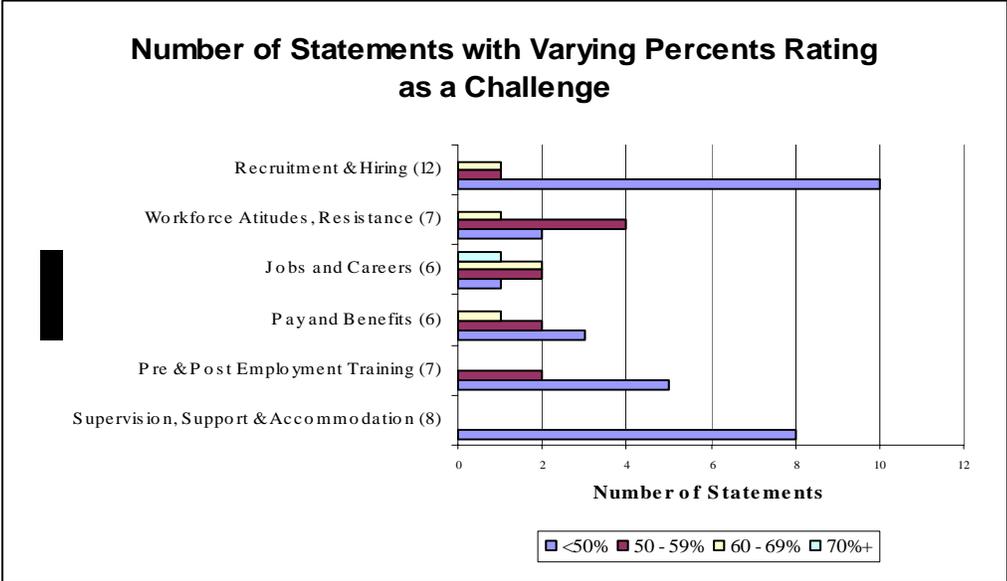
There are a large number of statements which are rated as challenges by a high percentage of respondents.

The chart below shows the number of statements which were rated as a challenge by varying percentages of the respondents. There are three statements which were rated by more than 60% as challenges and 11 statements which were rated by between 31% and 40% as a challenge. Overall, 31 of the 46 statements were rated by more than 30% of the respondents as a challenge.



The categories with the largest number of statements with high ratings as challenges are workforce attitudes/resistance, jobs/careers, and payroll/benefits.

The chart below shows the number of statements within each category having varying percentages rated as a challenge. For example, of the 12 statements in the recruitment/hiring category, one statement had between 60-69% of the respondents rating it as a challenge, one statement had between 50-59% rating it as a challenge, and 10 statements were rated as a challenge by less than 50% of the respondents.



The jobs/careers category has the most statements with high percentages of respondents rating them as challenges with 5 of 6 statements with more than 50% rating it as a challenge including one statement with more than 70% rating it

as a challenge. The category of workforce attitudes/resistance had 5 of the 7 statements with more than 50% rating them as challenges; and, payroll and benefits had 3 of 6 statements with more than 50% rating as a challenge.

Two areas that stand out with high ratings (rated by 60% or more of the respondents as challenges) relate to careers and historical patterns.

The statement with the highest number of ratings as a challenge (75%) was “limited career opportunities.” Two other statements reflect concern about career implications:

“Ease of hiring into full-time positions.” (61%)

“Stigma within mental health agencies prevents development of career ladders that acknowledge and value C-F-P/C experience and expertise” (61%)

The other area with statements rated by more than 60% as a challenge referred to historical patterns which were hard to overcome, particularly as related to cultural and ethnic inclusion.

“Historical mistrust between the mental health system and racial, ethnic, and cultural communities, including LGBTQ, impacts the organizational environment.” (64%)

“Historical policies, practices, and/or funding patterns are a barrier to creating C-F-P/C opportunities.” (64%)

“Historical disparities within the mental health system prevent the development of community partnerships and relationships necessary for effective recruitment of culturally diverse C-F-P/C employees.” (60%)

Workforce attitudes and agency stigma represent significant challenges.

As noted above, five statements within the workforce attitude and resistance category were rated as challenges by more than half the respondents.

“Some co-workers would be uncomfortable (fear of job loss, confidentiality issues, etc.)” (58%)

“Some co-workers and managers do not acknowledge the benefit of employees with C-F-P/C experience” (58%)

“Some clinicians fear having clients as fellow employees could jeopardize their licensure (e.g. boundary issues, inappropriate contact, etc.)” (53%)

“Some people think it is inappropriate to employ individuals with C-F-P/C experience.” (51%)

Three of the other categories had some statements rated by 50% or more as challenges.

In the pay and benefits category the biggest challenges were “getting benefits counseling in multiple languages” (54%) and the “ease of providing health benefits” (50%).

Two of the seven statements in the pre and post employment training category were rated by more than 50% as challenges.

“Orientation and initial training needs are unclear” (57%)

“Peer, family, and parent/caregiver training programs are non-existent or not well developed.” (58%)

The three of 12 statements in the recruitment and hiring category rated as a challenge by 50% or more of the respondents relate to hiring a culturally and ethnically diverse group of C-F-P/C employees. Already cited above was the challenge reflected in the historical disparities (60%). The other statement was

“Engagement and outreach to C-F-P/C from racial/ethnic/cultural specific communities.” (51%)

The only category with no statement rated as a challenge by more than 50% of the respondents was supervision, support and accommodation.

The citing of challenges was analyzed by role and racial/ethnic subgroups in order to gain additional understanding.

The question for analysis was whether there were differences among subgroups in how frequently respondents cited statements as challenges. The subgroups analyzed were role (consumer, family member, employee) and race/ethnicity (African American, Asian, Caucasian/White, Latino, Native American).

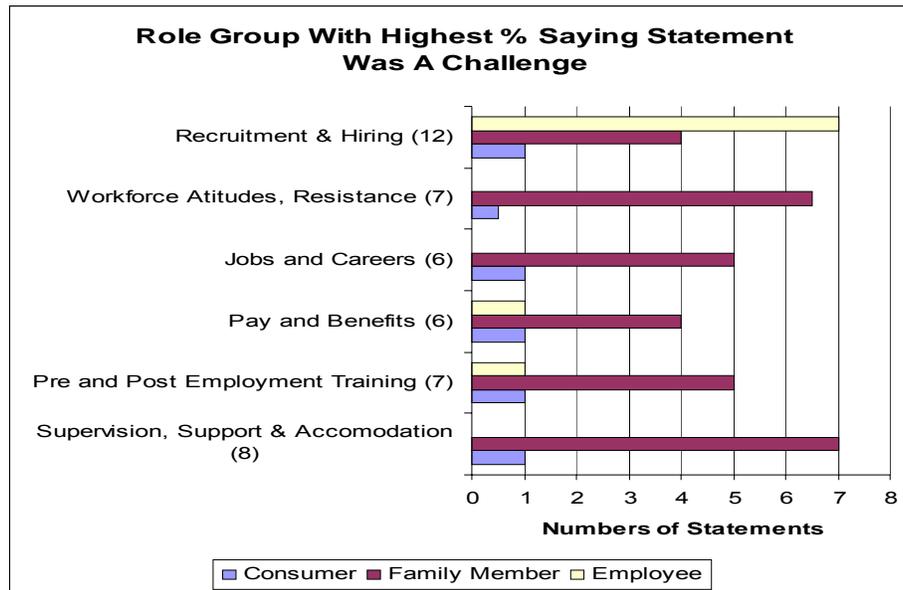
Because of the small numbers of persons in some of the subgroups we have to be cautious about the reliability of some of the differences. This is particularly the case with the Asian and Native American subgroups where there were differences but where the numbers were small (11 Asians and 6 Native American respondents).

The important question to ask is what might account for differences and what implications the differences have for the agenda of the WWT.

Family members perceive more challenges than consumers or employees.

As noted in the chart below, for all the categories except for the recruitment and hiring, family members had the most number of statements in which the their

percentage rating a statement a challenge was greater than the percentage of the other two groups. For example, in the training category there were 5 statements in which family member respondents had a higher percentage rating it a challenge than the other two groups, one statement in which a higher percentage of the consumer respondents rated it a challenge than the other two groups, and one in which the employees had the highest percentage.



There is no way of telling from the survey whether family members face a harder time in obtaining and maintaining effective employment or whether their expectations may be higher than those of consumers or employees. This is an issue which needs to be explored in further depth.

On some items the family ratings of challenges, while higher than consumers, were close to those of the consumers. In other instances the family ratings were significantly higher than the consumers as well as the employees. These two patterns are discussed briefly in the next two sections.

A higher percentage of both family members and consumers perceived a challenge than did employees on some items related to worker attitudes and beliefs.

Here are some examples of statements in which a higher percentage of consumers and family member respondents indicated it was a challenge. These statements generally refer to the attitudes and beliefs of the current employees about the employment of C-F-P/C, rather than to any of the more bureaucratic or job task related items. The consumers and family members appear to perceive more resistance to their employment than do the employees.

Percentage of Role Subgroups Rating Statements a Challenge

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Consumer</i>	<i>Family Member</i>	<i>Employee</i>
"Some people think it is inappropriate to employ individuals with C-F-P/C experience."	55%	62%	44%
"Some co-workers would be uncomfortable."	69%	69%	53%
"Some managers and co-workers do not acknowledge the benefits of C-F-P/C experience."	63%	70%	53%
"Some managers seem to want a few C-F-P/C employed only to please reviewers, auditors."	57%	64%	42%
"Stigma within mental health agencies prevents useful descriptions of job roles for C-F-P/C staff."	62%	58%	45%
"Some managers and co-workers do not acknowledge the potential for reducing disparities as a result of hiring culturally diverse C-F-P/C (improvement in access, etc.)"	57%	64%	42%

Note: All statements in which the percentage citing as a challenge among employee subgroup at least 10% lower than the lower of the consumer or family member subgroup.

Of particular note are the statements which had a significantly higher percentage of family members rating them as a challenge than did consumers.

These statements are noted in the table below. Some of them may indicate that the efforts involved in consumer employment are more well developed than those for family members. But as noted above, the interpretation of the family member results needs further clarification.

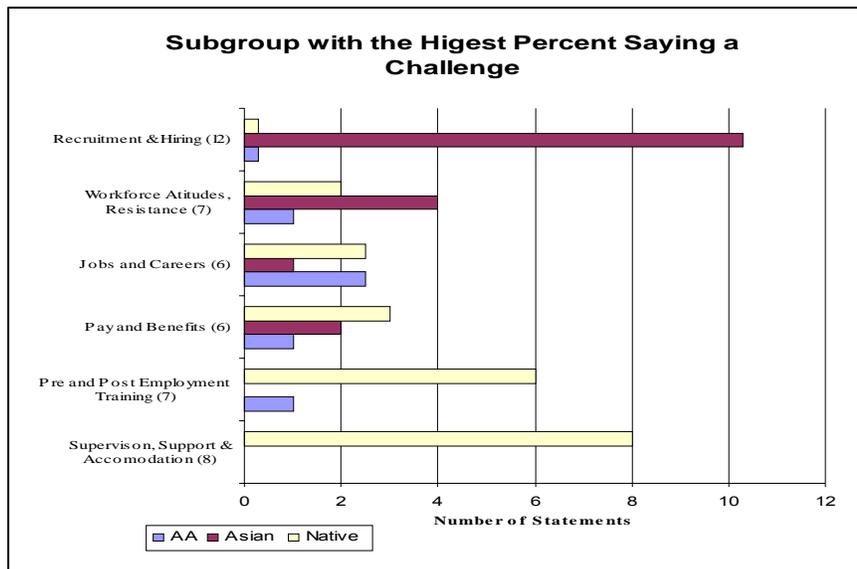
Percentage of Consumer and Family Member Subgroups Rating Statements a Challenge

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Consumer</i>	<i>Family Member</i>
"Soliciting input from C-F-P/C in creating specially designated positions."	24%	48%
"Peer, family, and P/C training programs are non-existent or not well developed."	56%	72%
"Preparing co-workers by offering education about organizational culture and its impact on stigma and discrimination."	29%	51%
"Providing transitional support and information regarding re-entry to services is needed upon C-F-P/C resignation or termination."	39%	54%
"Traditional degree requirements for non-traditional positions geared towards C-F-P/C positions."	36%	57%
"Hiring as independent contractors."	36%	52%

Note: All statements in which the percentage rating as a challenge was at least 15% higher for family members than consumers.

Asians and Native Americans perceive the biggest challenges to C-F-P/C employment.

The chart below shows the number of statements within each category in which a particular ethnic group had the highest percentage rating it as a challenge. For example, in the pay and benefits category (6 statements), Native Americans had the highest percentage rating the statement as a challenge for three of the statements; for two of the statements the Asian respondents had the highest percentage rating the statements as a challenge; and, African Americans had the highest percentage rating for one statement.



As noted earlier, the number of respondents in these categories is small so the results should be interpreted cautiously. But, if reliable, they indicate that Asian respondents perceive particular challenges in the recruitment and hiring area while Native Americans perceive particular challenges in the area of training, support, and supervision. And both groups – along with African Americans - perceive challenges in the areas of attitudes, jobs and careers, and pay and benefits. For no statements did the Latino or the white respondents have the highest percentage rating the statement as a challenge.

The differences in perception of challenges among ethnic groups exist for both statements related to specific ethnic/cultural issues and statements not related to ethnic issues.

The table below shows some examples of the differences in ratings of challenges by ethnic subgroup for statements which have no reference to ethnic or cultural issues.

Percentage of Ethnic Subgroups Rating Particular Statements a Challenge

<i>Statement</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Caucasian</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Native American</i>
"Ease of hiring into flexible positions."	50%	54%	41%	54%	100%
"HR communication with applicants during application process regarding job requirements and/or benefits."	31%	60%	30%	29%	33%
"Preparing co-workers by offering education about organizational culture and its impact on stigma and discrimination."	50%	46%	36%	54%	83%
"Providing supports required by a person's work assignments."	38%	46%	35%	36%	67%
"Ongoing training to improve job performance."	71%	45%	46%	37%	67%
"Stigma within mental health agencies prevents useful descriptions of job roles for C-F-P/C."	71%	82%	52%	56%	33%

The table below contains the statements which are especially relevant to challenges in obtaining a culturally diverse group of C-F-P/C employees.

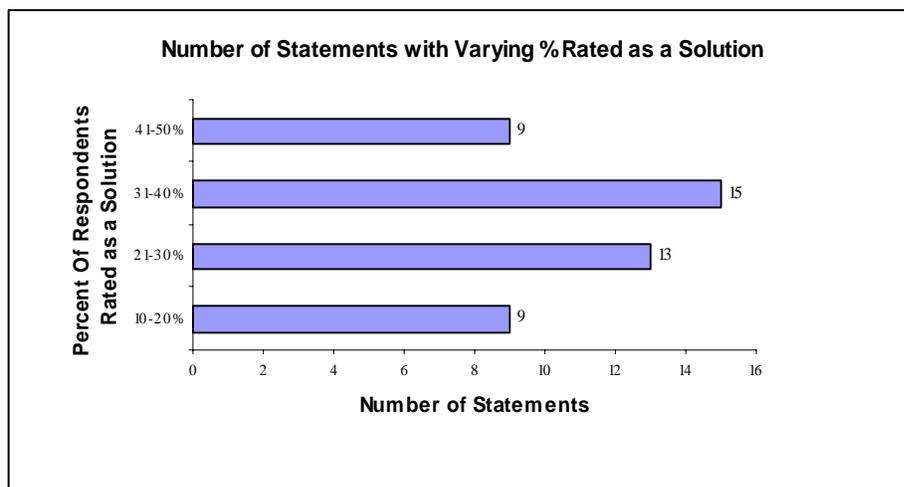
Percentage of Ethnic Subgroups Rating Particular Statements a Challenge

<i>Statement</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Caucasian</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Native American</i>
"Engagement and outreach to C-F-P/C from racial/ethnic/cultural specific communities."	46%	80%	54%	36%	67%
"Historical disparities within the mental health system prevent the development of community partnerships and relationships necessary for effective recruitment of cultural diverse C-F-P/C employees."	64%	73%	57%	61%	67%
"Some managers & co-workers do not acknowledge the potential for reducing disparities as a result of hiring culturally diverse C-F-P/C (improvements in access, etc.)"	50%	70%	44%	48%	33%
"Historical mistrust between the mental health system & racial, ethnic, and cultural communities, including LGBT, impacts the organizational environment."	79%	73%	62%	67%	50%
"Linking with educational or vocational program(s) designed to prepare C-F-P/C for employment."	46%	73%	42%	46%	83%
"Adequate benefits counseling exists in multiple languages."	57%	54%	55%	48%	67%

Section 3: SOLUTIONS

At least some respondents indicated they had a solution for all 46 statements, although the percentages knowing of a solution were generally small.

The chart below indicates the number of statements which were rated by the various percentages of respondents as a solution. For example, for 9 statements between 41 and 50% of the respondents thought they had a solution, for 15 of the statements, between 31 and 40% had a solution, for 13 between 21-30% had a solution, and for 9 between 11 and 20% had a solution. Overall, for 24 of the 46 statements the percentage indicating they had a solution was 30% or less.



Solutions were noted by many for some types of challenges.

As noted in the table below, the concrete elements of recruitment and hiring (job descriptions, job qualifications, HR communication); some elements of pre and post employment training; and providing supervision, supports and accommodations were the statements with the highest percentage ratings as having solutions.

Percentage of Respondents Saying They have a Solution for the Statement

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Have Solution</i>
"Preparing co-workers to be welcoming and helpful."	50%
"Preparing co-workers by offering education about organizational culture and its impact on stigma and discrimination."	46%
"Soliciting input from C-F-P/C in creating specifically designated positions."	46%
"Linking with an educational or vocational program(s) designed to prepare C-F-P/C for employment."	46%
"Providing supports required by a person's work assignments."	46%
"Making reasonable accommodations attributable to a person's disability (e.g. initial interviews; on the job)"	46%
"Pre-employment training regarding job duties."	42%
"On-going training to improve job performance."	42%
"Supervisors have the ability to supervise a C-F-P/C employee and recognize the skill sets they offer the organization."	42%

Solutions were more rarely noted for statements related to some historical patterns and career advancement.

It is not surprising that some of the statements which were most frequently noted as challenges are rated as having a solution by few respondents – the lack of career opportunities being the prime example. In addition to some of the historical pattern and attitude items, there are lower percentages saying they have solutions for a few of the more bureaucratic elements – having to interview full lists and lacking benefits counseling in multiple languages.

Percentage of Respondents Saying They Have a Solution for the Statement

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Have Solution</i>
"Limited career advancement opportunities."	10%
"Historical mistrust between the mental health system and racial, ethnic, and cultural communities, including LGBT, impacts organizational environment."	14%
"Historical policies, practices, and/or funding patterns are a barrier to creating C-F-P/C job opportunities."	15%
"Having to interview everyone on an existing hiring (or eligibility) list, if a pre-existing job description is used for a new position."	16%
"Traditional degree requirements for non-traditional positions geared towards C-F-P/C positions."	18%
"Some clinicians fear having clients as fellow employees could jeopardize their licensure (e.g. boundary issues, inappropriate contact, etc.)."	18%
"Historical disparities within the mental health system prevent the development of community partnerships & relationships necessary for effective recruitment of culturally diverse C-F-P/C employees."	19%
"Adequate benefits counseling exists in multiple languages."	19%

There were different patterns of ratings on solutions depending on the role of the respondent.

A higher percentage of consumers than family members or employees said they knew of solutions to certain items related to pay and benefits; training; and supervision, support, and accommodation.

Employees perceived more solutions than consumers and family members on items related to worker attitudes and stigma. These differences appear to reflect differences in perception about the effectiveness of efforts to overcome some of these challenges.

Percentage of Respondents Saying They Have a Solution for Statement by Role

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Consumer</i>	<i>Family Member</i>	<i>Employee</i>
"Soliciting input from C-F-P/C in creating specifically designated positions."	62%	44%	49%
"Structuring jobs (e.g. outreach, peer support, orientation/training of new employees) for individuals with consumer or family experience."	45%	33%	36%
"Hiring as 'independent contractors.'"	31%	19%	19%
"Pre-employment training regarding job duties."	54%	39%	37%
"Pre-employment training on Federal Equal Employment Opportunity laws, state employment laws, and ADA."	44%	30%	30%
"Preparing co-workers by offering education about organizational culture and its impact on stigma and discrimination."	61%	40%	46%
"Some co-workers and managers do not acknowledge the benefit of employees with C-F-P/C experience."	17%	16%	30%
"Some clinicians fear having clients as fellow employees could jeopardize their licensure (e.g. boundary issues, inappropriate contact, etc.)."	12%	10%	24%
"Some managers and co-workers do not acknowledge the potential for reducing disparities as a result of hiring culturally diverse C-F-P/C (improving access, etc.)."	17%	18%	33%
"Stigma within mental health agencies prevents development of career ladders that acknowledge and value C-F-P/C experience and expertise."	19%	25%	36%

There were differences in percentages having solutions by ethnicity, but the patterns are not consistent.

The table below presents some examples of statements in which there were differences in the percentages of respondents by ethnicity saying they have solutions. For most items there is no clear interpretation for why these differences might exist.

Percentage of Respondents Saying They Have a Solution for Statement by Ethnicity

<i>Statement</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Caucasian</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Native American</i>
"HR ability to speak with C-F-P/C employees whose first language is NOT English."	29%	10%	21%	41%	0
"Some people think it is inappropriate to employ individuals with C-F-P/C experience."	50%	9%	30%	33%	33%
"Ease of providing health benefits."	7%	9%	29%	32%	0
"Orientation and initial training needs are unclear."	38%	0	22%	31%	0
"Ongoing training to improve job performance."	21%	36%	42%	58%	17%
"Making reasonable accommodations attributable to a person's disability (e.g. initial interviews; on-the-job)."	75%	36%	45%	42%	0

Section 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The survey confirms the existence of significant challenges to the effective employment in the public mental health system of C-F-P/Cs from diverse cultural and ethnic communities.

- ✓ More than 30% of the respondents cited each statement as a challenge.
- ✓ For 16 of the 46 statements more than half the respondents cited the statement as a challenge.

Areas reflecting the highest ratings as challenges were careers and historical patterns.

- ✓ The lack of career paths was the most frequently cited challenge.
- ✓ Historical patterns in policies, practices and mistrust were rated frequently as challenges.
- ✓ Current worker attitudes were also often ranked as challenges.

The role of the respondents made a difference in the ratings of challenges.

- ✓ Family members had the highest percentage ratings of statements as challenges.
- ✓ Family members noted greater challenges than consumers in some items related to hiring and training and support.
- ✓ On statements about worker attitudes both consumers and family member respondents saw greater challenges than employees.

Ratings of challenges varied by ethnicity with the greatest challenges noted by Asians and Native Americans.

- ✓ The differences were noted for both statements related to and not related to specific cultural ethnic factors.
- ✓ African Americans also had higher ratings of challenges than Latinos and Caucasians.
- ✓ There were no statements in which the highest percentage ratings as a challenge came from Latinos or Caucasians.

At least some percentage of respondents said they had a solution for each of the statements, although the percentages were generally low.

- ✓ For nine statements between 41 and 50% of the respondents said they had a solution.
- ✓ 30% or less of the respondents said they had solutions for 24 of the 46 statements.
- ✓ The concrete elements of recruitment and hiring (job descriptions, job qualifications, HR communication); some elements of pre and post employment training; and providing supervision, supports and accommodations were the statements with the highest percentage ratings as having solutions.
- ✓ Solutions were more rarely noted for statements related to careers and to historical patterns.

There were differences by roles in the perception of solutions.

- ✓ A higher percentage of consumers than family members or employees said they knew of solutions to certain items related to pay and benefits; training; and supervision, support, and accommodation.
- ✓ Employees perceived more solutions than consumers and family members on items related to worker attitudes and stigma.

Section 5: SOME IMPLICATIONS

Obtaining additional clarification about the survey findings would be a worthwhile task.

While the survey results provide some clear direction about issues which need to be addressed by the Project, there were also findings which would benefit from further study. In particular, two areas for further study are suggested: some of the differences among role and racial/ethnic subgroups need further confirmation and interpretation, and the nature and effectiveness of proposed solutions should be explored further.

As noted in the report, some of the subgroup findings would appear to have implications for the work plan of the Project, but first need to be verified and better understood. Some of the questions that might be asked about the subgroup findings include the following:

- ✓ Why do family members perceive greater challenges? Does this reflect their personal experiences? Are solutions to some of the challenges more developed for consumer than for family member employees and/or do family members have higher expectations?
- ✓ Why do employees perceive less challenge and more solutions with regard to worker attitudes than do consumers and family members? Is this an example of employees not understanding the depth of the problem and/or is it lingering mistrust on the part of consumers and family members?
- ✓ Why do Asians and Native Americans perceive greater challenges? Is this the result of something unique to their participation in the mental health system and/or the result of less experience with the mental health system? What can be learned from the apparently more successful efforts with the Latino community?

The survey provides information about the kinds of challenges for which respondents felt they had solutions. Unfortunately it is impossible to track back from the survey to the specific respondents to find out more information about the solutions and their effectiveness. But the results can be used to find out more information from selective groups who indicated on the survey that they did have solutions. So, for example, the Project could query consumers about solutions on those items on which high percentages reported having a solution and it could ask Latino C-F-P/C about things which made their employment process apparently more successful than other ethnic groups.

Three areas stand out as clearly requiring special attention: career development, preparation of the existing workforce, and achieving a culturally and ethnically diverse C-F-P/C workforce.

While substantial progress has been made in the hiring of C-F-P/C there must be greater attention paid to the “what next” aspect of employment. For some C-F-P/C, the mere achievement of employment may be sufficient, but the survey results indicate that for many the issue of advancement is of great concern. The development of career ladders needs to be addressed. This is a complicated issue which will no doubt have multiple solutions depending on how a county has established its original C-F-P/C positions, i.e. as regular positions highlighting C-F-P/C experience or as special positions requiring such experience. And solutions will require the active participation of county human resources personnel as well as careful analysis by mental health managers.

The mental health system will need to continue its efforts to educate and prepare the current workforce for the employment of C-F-P/Cs. The role of historical patterns that have led to mistrust, stigma, and dis-empowering of C-F-P/C was highlighted in the survey results. Overcoming these obstacles is not easy, but an important role for the Project will be to find and publicize those efforts which have reportedly been successful.

The challenge of obtaining a culturally and ethnically diverse C-F-P/C workforce is especially daunting. Successful achievement of this goal is critical not only in achieving equity but also in its potential benefits for enhancing access in general for clients from such communities. A highlight of the survey findings is the apparent success in overcoming many of the perceived challenges with the Latino community. The Project will need to develop methods to assist counties to overcome the special barriers to employment for C-F-P/C from selected cultural and ethnic groups.

For more information about Working Well Together, please contact us:

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