

ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY

FAITH-BASED OUTREACH COMMITTEE MINUTES OCTOBER 7, 2020

Committee Members Present: Gwendolyn A. Howard, LSW, MSSA, Committee Chair, Ashwani Bhardwaj, Gregory X. Boehm, M.D., Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., Patricia James-Stewart, M.Ed., LSW, Katie Kern-Pilch, ATR-BC, LPC-S, Rev. Max M. Rodas, MA, Mary R. Warr, M.Ed.

Absent: Rev. Brenda Ware-Abrams

Board Staff Present: Scott Osiecki, Chief Executive Officer, Joseph Arnett, Christina Bohuslawsky-Brown, Tami Fischer, Bill Hebble, Linda Lamp, Kelli Perk, Vicki Roemer, Allison Schaefer, Starlette Sizemore-Rice, Larry Smith, Jr., Thomas Williams, Beth Zietlow-DeJesus

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Gwendolyn Howard, Faith-based Outreach Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Ms. Patricia James-Stewart read into the record the Committee Mission Statement: *“To recognize and advocate spirituality in the recovery process; to connect the spiritual perspective with other interventions and best practices; and to promote the concept that treatment works and people recover.”*

2. COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL

Due to the current public health orders surrounding COVID-19, and the Board’s commitment to ensuring the health and safety of our Board members, staff, partners, and stakeholders, the Faith-based Outreach Committee was held via a Zoom meeting. To assure a quorum, Ms. Linda Lamp, Executive Assistant, completed the committee member attendance roll call.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Faith-based Outreach Committee minutes of June 3, 2020 were approved as submitted.

[Rev. Max M. Rodas, MA, entered the meeting.]

4. PROVIDER PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS: COVID-19 IMPACT ON SERVICES

Inner Healing Ministries/Student Training Outreach Prevention (STOP) Program

Ms. Nichole Cobb, Clinical Director at Inner Healing Ministries, reported that the Student Training Outreach Prevention (STOP) program is a community outreach prevention program designed to discourage youth, young adults and families from engaging in any activity or behavior that could place their lives at risk, impede their overall development, and jeopardize their future. She stated that COVID-19 has impacted services provided by the STOP program at Inner Healing Ministries. She reported that the STOP program has transitioned to an online service via Zoom; however, in-person group sessions are offered; but no one has requested this manner of service. Ms. Cobb indicated that the registration process is completed online; thus, participants must complete the registration material and view an introductory video whereby they obtain some information about the program, the funders, and the requirements. The STOP program is a selective prevention program serving youth and their families involved in the criminal justice system to decrease the risk factors and increase protective factors. All participants are court mandated to attend the program. Ms. Cobb stated that they are used as a first offender program that currently serves the municipalities of South Euclid and Cleveland Heights; however, they continue to facilitate outreach efforts to additional municipal courts.

Once the registration process is complete, the participant is provided with a link to attend the orientation session of the program. This program utilizes the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Overcomers program curriculum to deliver prevention education that provides practical and faith-based strategies that are combined with brain science to help participants overcome the effects of ACEs. These ongoing lessons are offered twice weekly, Tuesdays and Thursdays; while the orientation session is a two hour session that is offered one day a week. Participants are required to complete 10 weeks of the 12 week curriculum. Prevention strategies include education, alternatives and problem identification and

referral. One facilitator teaches the ongoing classes and a second facilitator is designated for participants that elect to attend in-person sessions via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) social distancing guidelines.

Throughout these ongoing sessions, anonymous polling is utilized to provide feedback on participants responses to the curriculum, responses to the facilitator and whether the program has been beneficial to the participant. Once the participant has completed all 12 lessons, they are provided with a link to complete the Devereux Adult Resilience (DARS) II survey; and once completed, they are issued a certificate of completion to share with the court to indicate that they have complied with all aspects of their requirements.

Ms. Cobb indicated that the courts are not meeting with the participants; as a result, challenges occur with individuals being compliant. If a participant misses a full week of sessions, their Probation Officer is notified, and additional sanctions are implemented. Ms. Cobb reported that the participants are usually required to complete 25 hours of community service; however, due to COVID-19, participants are not able to complete this service. As a result, they can collect canned goods. She stated that they are able to accept the canned goods; and through partnerships with other faith-based organizations, are able to pass these items on to local churches and food pantries.

Overall, the STOP program is intended to increase the protective factors for teens and young adults by strategically highlighting key developmental assets that help them become healthy, caring, and responsible individuals. This includes the support of other adult relationships and caring neighbors, modeling proper boundaries, constructive use of time in youth activities, and pursuing spiritual growth.

Mr. Errick Cox, Lead Group Facilitator, reported that he is very impressed with the program participants and indicated that they are receiving a large amount of impactful information; whereby they are being transformed in their thoughts. He cited an example of a participant that abused alcohol, participated and completed the program and was able to walk away with a different mindset that impacted her and everyone around her.

Committee Member Input:

- Ms. Howard stated that sometimes the spiritual component is the one aspect that is missing when individuals receive treatment.
- Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., suggested that Mr. Cox and Ms. Cobb connect with Ms. Julie Johnson, from the Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland, which is also a faith-based organization, to discuss their program.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Greater Cleveland/Mental Health Awareness, Support and Education

Ms. Chris Mignogna, Executive Director of NAMI Greater Cleveland, reported that COVID-19 has impacted services provided by NAMI Greater Cleveland. She reported that the agency's focus is to provide education and support within faith based communities for individuals with mental illness and their families. She noted that at the onset of COVID-19, NAMI Greater Cleveland did a really hard pivot with providing services; and most of the faith-based organizations that they were providing support did a really hard pivot as well; with a focus on sheltering, medication and food for their congregations. As a result, NAMI Greater Cleveland was no longer able to go into the churches to provide support groups. However, NAMI Greater Cleveland was able to transition their program offerings; including their helpline, support groups, volunteers and educational activities to virtual platforms. Through this transition, NAMI Greater Cleveland was able to continue to outreach to the faith-based organizations to provide information and offer virtual programming; including the psychoeducation courses, access to helpline, live chat and the virtual support groups.

Ms. Mignogna reported that Ms. Monica Olivera, Hispanic Multicultural Outreach Specialist of NAMI Greater Cleveland, contacts approximately 4 to 6 faith-based organizations monthly to build relationships and develop opportunities to enable NAMI Greater Cleveland the ability to provide educational programming. During these contacts, Ms. Olivera provides information regarding NAMI Greater Cleveland's programs and how they are able to support the congregation.

Ms. Mignogna indicated that NAMI Greater Cleveland has not been able to provide Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) courses during the pandemic because the MHFA organization suspended their programs until new guidelines and a new curriculum

for delivering the material virtually was created. She stated that MHFA recently announced the guidance on the new curriculum and NAMI Greater Cleveland's Support and Education Coordinator, Ms. Kari Kepic, has been recertified to deliver the course via Zoom. NAMI Greater Cleveland's intention is to continue outreaching faith-based organizations to offer this course as an opportunity to their congregations.

Ms. Mignogna reported that NAMI Greater Cleveland was also impacted with their faith-based program in late July when a staff separation transpired. She indicated that this coordinator was responsible for outreach to faith-based organizations other than Spanish speaking congregations. However, five weeks ago NAMI Greater Cleveland hired a new staff person to fill this vacancy and will be responsible for developing relationships with faith-based organizations, in addition to delivering MHFA training.

On Friday, July 31, 2020, NAMI Greater Cleveland staff met with Dr. C. Dexter Wise, III, Pastor of Faith Ministries Church, in Franklin County to discuss his efforts to bring mental health education to the Baptist Churches in Franklin County that are interested in ministering to their congregation's mental health needs during the pandemic. As a result of this meeting, Dr. Wise offered to assist NAMI Greater Cleveland with introductions to Cuyahoga County based Baptist Pastors regarding their interest in mental health education. Ms. Mignogna indicated that NAMI Greater Cleveland will be following up with Dr. Wise with the intention of facilitating a large webinar during the fourth quarter of 2020 to introduce NAMI Greater Cleveland to the Cuyahoga County Baptist community for a presentation of the services they provide.

Representatives of NAMI Greater Cleveland have also met with Ms. Marilyn Scott, Director, and Mr. Bob Duda, Program Administrator, of Catholic Charities Disability Ministries. Ms. Mignogna reported that Mr. Duda oversees a program titled Links Cleveland, which is located at St. Augustine Church. The mission of Links Cleveland is to provide individuals the opportunity for social, recreational, educational and personal growth experiences with the vision of assisting individuals with opportunities and resources to live life to their potential and to participate fully in church and society. She highlighted that NAMI Greater Cleveland is exploring a partnership with them to assist with providing educational opportunities on a variety of topics.

Ms. Mignogna is also developing a faith-based campaign aimed at inclusivity for African-American faith-based communities; and with the assistance of Rev. Gohlstin, they were able to identify neighborhoods near prominent African-American churches that they intend to target with a mental health awareness marketing campaign to promote NAMI Greater Cleveland's programs and services and develop and begin new partnerships. This campaign will include four billboards near these churches and will occur during the timeframe of December 2020 through April 2021 to enable individuals to join NAMI Greater Cleveland's virtual programs specifically targeted for their congregations. NAMI Greater Cleveland will also be doing a billboard for the timeframe of one month; with location yet to be determined. Ms. Mignogna also indicated that they will be printing 350 posters to be distributed to salons, barber shops, grocery stores and other locations with the goal to connect with black owned businesses; and facilitate a social media pop up campaign whereby advertisements will pop up, in addition to a radio advertisement campaign for a two month timeframe with the goal of letting individuals know they are there to support them.

Mr. Osiecki indicated that he has met with Ms. Mignogna to discuss the faith-based funding NAMI Greater Cleveland currently receives from the ADAMHS Board. He reported that due to COVID-19, the Board has determined that they will allow NAMI Greater Cleveland to utilize ADAMHS Board funding to assist with their upcoming faith-based campaign as well as the provision of the Understanding Mental Illness program to faith-based communities via Zoom.

Committee Member Input:

- Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., suggested that NAMI Greater Cleveland's upcoming campaign should not be focused solely on Baptist Churches; and sited that the United Pastors in Mission is an interdenominational group. He further stated that NAMI Greater Cleveland's campaign should be targeted for all churches in Cuyahoga County, which include over 2,000 churches. Ms. Warr concurred.
- Mr. Ashwani Bhardwaj requested additional information regarding NAMI Greater Cleveland's programs and services. Ms. Starlette Sizemore-Rice, Director of Special Projects, reported that she will forward this information, along with a faith-based brochure to his attention.

Mr. Khalid Samad, Chief Executive Officer/Co-Founder of 99Treasures Arts & Culture, offered his services to assist with connecting NAMI Greater Cleveland with broadening the scope of efforts to reach additional faith-based organizations.

5. FAITH-BASED OUTREACH PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Tom Williams, Evaluation & Research Officer, highlighted accomplishments of each of the Faith-based Outreach Providers illustrated in the written Faith-based Initiative 2020 Update Report. (The report is attached to the original minutes stored in the Executive Unit.)

Mr. Williams stated that the faith-based programming for children K-12th grade is measured through the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) instrument. The DESSA web-based system is designed to help school and after-school program staff promote the healthy social-emotional development of all children. The DESSA is a thorough assessment of the following social-emotional competencies: self-awareness; social-awareness; self-management; relationship skills; goal directed behavior; personal responsibility; decision making skills; and optimistic thinking, which translates to a score and categorized through a numerical value. 60 and above indicate social and emotional “Strengths” showing children doing well; 40-59 indicate “Typical” positive behaviors for children; and 40 and below indicate “Need for Instruction” to further develop social and emotional skills. The report identified the DESSA grades K-8th and 9-12th completed pre/post assessments in programs for three out of the four agencies to date and noted that results from pre to post assessments indicated the need declined and strengths went up.

The faith-based program for adults demonstrates resiliency measured as Always (A), Sometimes (S), or Not Yet (N) through the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS) instrument that promotes self-awareness regarding personal strengths to enhance creativity and the ability to set limits to cope with adversity and stress measured through the following areas: Will gain knowledge to develop healthy relationships; Will learn skills to increase self-worth to enhance internal beliefs and values; Will learn strategies to develop/enhance self-motivation to increase independence; and Will learn to self-regulate and control without the use of substance and negative influences. The report identified the four agencies that have submitted their DARS data to date; Trinity Outreach Ministries, Inner Healing Ministries, OhioGuidestone and 99Treasures Arts & Culture.

Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach individuals how to spot the signs and symptoms of mental illness and provide help on a first aid basis. Individuals who are participating in a Mental Health First Aid training provided by a faith-based program provider is expected to successfully complete the course evaluation/quiz and score at least 60% based on the following topics: Helpful Things to Say; Myths and Facts-Suicide and Self-Injury; Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors; Panic Attacks; Traumatic Events; Auditory Hallucinations; Psychosis; and Substance Use Disorders. However, none of the Mental Health First Aid programs were started before the COVID-19 shutdown of face-to-face meetings at the end of the first quarter.

Mr. Williams also provided a narrative progress report of Faith Community Supportive Services, which is a new Board faith-based program. In closing, he also reported that the Board had anticipated that DESSA data would be received from Inner Healing Ministries and that the Board had anticipated that DARS data would be received from Life Recovery Ministries. He further noted that although Life Recovery Ministries is not using DARS, Board staff have been meeting with Life Recovery Ministries to identify one or more measurement instrument(s).

Ms. Sizemore-Rice highlighted accomplishments of each of the Faith-based Outreach Providers illustrated in the written Faith-Based Program Progress Report and responded to questions from committee members. Overall, Mr. Williams and Ms. Sizemore-Rice noted that the faith-based outreach initiatives are making a difference in the lives of those individuals being served and show movement and growth. (The report is attached to the original minutes stored in the Executive Unit.)

Ms. Ruth Standiford, a representative from 99Treasures Arts & Culture, briefly cited an example of an individual’s testimony that was had during a presentation at 99Treasures Arts & Culture. As a result, Ms. Sizemore-Rice was requested to contact 99Treasures Arts & Culture to inquire as to whether this individual would be interested in providing a personal testimony at the Board’s October General Meeting.

Committee Member Input:

- Ms. Howard commended 99Treasures Arts and Culture for serving more individuals than anticipated.

6. RACISM IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS DISCUSSION

Ms. Howard reported that a meeting titled “Eliminating Structural Racism in Behavioral Healthcare Work Group” transpired on Monday, October 5, 2020, via a Zoom meeting and indicated that Ms. Beth Zietlow-DeJesus, Director of External Affairs, would provide an update of this meeting. Ms. Zietlow-DeJesus stated that 61 individuals were registered for this work group meeting; 51 individuals attended and several others that indicated their inability to attend the first meeting but wanted to be added to the contact list going forward.

Ms. Zietlow-DeJesus reported that Mr. Osiecki provided opening remarks, welcomed everyone in attendance and shared information regarding keeping the focus on behavioral healthcare relative to fixing the systematic inequalities and to consider short term and long term goals. Ms. Zietlow-DeJesus also shared some examples of words that were identified from meeting participants regarding thoughts on the topic of racism. The examples shared included, but were not limited to: inequity, inequality, silent, stereotypes, limiting, hurtful, fear, unjust, suffering, hurtful, disrespect, harmful, discrimination, anger, current, trauma, burden, frustrating, disempowering and generational. Additionally, during this discussion, two videos titled “Think” and “Health Equity Animated” were viewed. Rev. Gohlstin also shared information regarding the economic impact of racism and explained why the ADAMHS Board was acting on work to address Racism as a Public Health Crisis.

During a brainstorming session of four breakout groups, participants were asked to answer the following:

1. Define existing barriers for behavioral healthcare and consider the who, where, when, how these are impacted by racism.
2. Identify Disparities in Behavioral Healthcare keeping in mind immediate, short-term and long-term goals.

Once time was up, each group shared their responses, Lastly, participants discussed meeting structure, dates and times and next steps.

Mr. Osiecki reported that a consultant will be retained to assist the Board with efforts to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in behavioral health services in Cuyahoga County. Ms Zietlow-DeJesus stated that she will forward an email to committee members to share links to the two videos shown during the work group session.

Committee Member Input:

- Ms. Howard commended the ADAMHS Board for their efforts with continuing to be a voice for vulnerable populations; and for recognizing the importance of addressing systemic racism to support equity and holistic wellness.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Sizemore-Rice to inquire with Mr. Samad to obtain contact information to finalize plans for a personal testimony during the General Meeting of October 28, 2020.

Rev. Gohlstin requested that Mr. Osiecki contact Ms. Brenda Ware-Abrams to ensure her well-being.

8. UPCOMING OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER BOARD MEETINGS:

- Committee of the whole: October 21, 2020
- General Meeting: October 28, 2020
- Committee of the Whole Meeting: November 4, 2020
- General Meeting: November 18, 2020

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Submitted by: Linda Lamp, Executive Assistant

Approved by: Gwendolyn A. Howard, LSW, MSSA, Faith-Based Outreach Committee Chair