

New York City Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee of the New York State Office of Mental Health's Bureau of Cultural Competency

Annual Report for 2014

Christian Huygen and Bert Coffman, ad hoc co-chairs

Annual report prepared by Christian Huygen, Ph.D., Executive Director, Rainbow Heights Club,
christianhuygen@rainbowheights.org

Statement of purpose: The purpose of the New York City Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee is to provide stakeholder input to the New York State Office of Mental Health and its Bureau of Cultural Competency on issues, challenges and opportunities within multicultural behavioral health care, including disparities and best practices, with an emphasis on proposing solutions rather than merely identifying problems. All stakeholders are welcome to attend.



*Christian Huygen, Frances Priester Moss, Bert Coffman
November 2014, Roof Garden, Prince George Hotel*

The New York City Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee met quarterly during 2014, and during this year became an effective venue to disseminate and discuss trainings and information on best practices in culturally competent behavioral health care.

In August, 24 stakeholders attended a presentation and discussion of the video “It starts at the front desk” from the [BCC webinar website](#). People said they wanted to learn about a broad range of cultural competency topics, and how to implement them in their work. Frances Priester Moss described the Bureau of Cultural Competency, the statewide Multicultural Advisory Committee and its history and recent achievements, and the Regional MACs.

We discussed cultural competency policies, practices, implementation challenges and opportunities. We also talked about where we want this RMAC to go. Some issues people talked about wanting to advocate for included

- How to address community issues like access to benefits and services
- How to educate people in the community and reduce stigma
- How to increase awareness of peer specialists’ work

We agreed to meet quarterly and present a training presentation and discussion at each meeting.



Members of the New York City Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee, November 2014

On November 13, 2014, the NYC RMAC met again, with 20 stakeholders attending. Frances Priester Moss gave an in person training on how to run multicultural spirituality groups; the training was very well received and a productive discussion took place afterwards. The manual and PowerPoint were disseminated to NYC RMAC members.

We discussed topics for future quarterly meetings. The leading webinars of interest that are available on the OMH BCC website were *Bridging cultural distance with interpreters*, a two hour webinar, and *Adapting treatment for culturally diverse youth*, an 80 minute webinar.

We will present *Bridging cultural distance with interpreters* at our February 2015 meeting, and *Adapting treatment for culturally diverse youth* in May. We discussed the possibility of NYC RMAC stakeholders presenting future trainings in person. We also reminded stakeholders that they can access on-demand webinars for their own or their staff's viewing by googling "OMH BCC webinar".

Next meeting dates: 2/5/15, 5/14/15, 8/13/15, 11/12/15.

On November 19, 2014, a very productive meeting took place with a number of staff at the NYC Field Office of OMH to discuss the New York City Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee and how it might collaborate with the OMH Field Office. The following people attended: Anita Appel, Marisa Derman, Digna Quinones, Celia Brown, AnneMarie Bove, and Neal Cohen, MD, of the NYS OMH Field Office, as well as Christian Huygen and Bert Coffman, who for two years now have been serving as ad hoc co-chairs of the NYC Regional MAC. We discussed the history of the statewide MAC and the NYC regional MAC, and explored whether and how the NYC regional MAC could offer input to or collaborate with the OMH Field Office.

We reviewed a number of existing venues that already provide input and feedback to the OMH Field Office:

- The OMH Field Office has a monthly Regional Advisory Committee that is open to stakeholders. The meeting has a particular focus on recipients, peers and family members.
- The Department of Health, Mental Health (DOHMH) Office for Consumer Affairs has in the past held monthly cultural competency discussion meetings.
- The OMH Field Office engages in planning processes on an as needed basis, e.g., to discuss the transition to Medicaid managed care.
- The NYC DOHMH produces the annual Local Government Plan for Mental Health Services, and holds community forums to seek input for that.

Christian described the work of the NYC Regional MAC as primarily focused on helping providers and other stakeholders learn about cultural competency best practices (mainly via the online webinars of the OMH Bureau of Cultural Competency) and discuss implementation challenges and opportunities. The NYC Regional MAC will continue with this work. Christian also stated that he would want to make sure any input from the NYC Regional MAC was useful and helpful to the NYC Field Office and would fit in with its other input venues in an organic and productive way. He asked about possible opportunities for collaboration.

We identified two main areas where the NYC Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee and the OMH Field Office might collaborate in the future.

- The OMH Field Office sometimes produces webinars, streams them to providers throughout the state, and archives them. If the NYC Regional MAC identifies a topic of interest for which there is no BCC webinar, we might collaborate to produce one.
- If the OMH Field Office engages in a planning process in the future, they are welcome to reach out to the NYC Regional MAC and its member stakeholders to invite participation in that process.

We also discussed having Christian Huygen come to the NYC Field Office to do a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) cultural competency presentation for field office staff. Christian did do that presentation, on October 14, 2014, and the presentation and discussion went very well. We appreciate this opportunity to share information and best practices with Field Office staff, and would be happy to do so with staff of agencies that would benefit from this information. This is yet another important way in which the New York City Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee, and its members, can provide value to the NYC Field Office of OMH and to NYC agencies.

Christian and Bert would like to thank the staff of the OMH Field Office for taking the time to meet with us.

Thank you for this opportunity to apprise you of the past and future activities of the New York City Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee. This annual report respectfully submitted by Christian Huygen, christianhuygen@rainbowheights.org

December 18, 2014