Achieving Whole Health: Balancing Body, Mind and Spirit
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The Achieving Whole Health: Balancing Body, Mind, and Spirit curriculum was adapted from the Peer Support Whole Health Resiliency (PSWHR) Training Curriculum, created by the Appalachian Consulting Group, Inc. NAAPIMHA is grateful for the generosity of Larry Fricks who allowed NAAPIMHA to modify the PSWHR Training Curriculum to make it culturally relevant for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities.
Introduction

The journey of a thousand miles must being with a single step. ~ Chinese Saying

Developing the Wellness Coach program for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders has been part of the long journey to improve the quality of care for AANHPI communities. This truly has been a collaborative effort between NAAPIMHA and its partners at the local, national and federal levels. NAAPIMHA would like to acknowledge the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health National Umbrella Cooperative Agreement, NUCA II initiative for funding the development of the Wellness Coach curricula and to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, Administration, SAMHSA and its National Network to Eliminate Disparities (NNED) for providing the resources to develop a learning network that strengthened the training materials to make it culturally relevant for AANHPIs.

NAAPIMHA is also grateful to the generosity of the Appalachian Consulting Group for sharing their Peer Support Whole Health Resiliency program that served as the basis for this training. A special thank you goes to Larry Fricks for sharing his wisdom, and his commitment that allowed NAAPIMHA to modify the materials to make them culturally relevant for AANHPI communities.

NAAPIMHA would also like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Ed Wang, Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs at the State Department of Mental Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Office of Multicultural affairs helped NAAPIMHA pilot the training in Boston that provided valuable input from community members on the training materials. NAAPIMHA would also like to acknowledge those on the Steering Committee who provided guidance to the project. These include Larry Fricks, Appalachian Consulting Group; Janet SooHoo, Training Director; Can Truong, Director of National Asian American Pacific Islander Empowerment Network; Rachele Espiritu, Change Matrix; Yoon Joo Han, Asian Counseling and Referral Services; Lily Stearns, Asian Community Mental Health Services; and John Aldam, National Asian American Pacific Islander Empowerment Network.

Training community members to become Wellness Coaches does more than increase the number of individuals entering the service delivery system. It gives voice to the community to insure that traditional customs, beliefs and practices are incorporated into our current understanding of what it takes to provide quality care. It helps individuals on their own journey of recovery by giving them the skills and competencies to not only make positive changes in their lives but also the lives of others. It follows NAAPIMHA's firm belief that the community can heal itself if given the proper support, resources and encouragement.

The Affordable Care Act of 2010 has many important provisions designed to improve health outcomes for those living in this country. Among these is increased access to care. Unfortunately the increased access will only place an additional burden on the current service delivery system. While there are clinicians who have provided quality care for many years, they are already overburdened and therefore unable to meet the increased demand for services. Failure to strengthen the workforce will result in many of our most vulnerable populations not receiving the care they need which including poorer assessment, diagnosis and development of appropriate treatment plans, increased severity of symptoms, increased medical costs, loss of wages, increased emotional stress for the
individual and his/her family members.

The current workforce also separates the mind, body and spirit, which is counter to the traditional healing practices and perspective of AANHPIs who use a whole health approach to care. Western research is now “proving” what traditional cultures have always known—that there is a direct relationship between the mind, body and spirit. Research also shows that there is a direct correlation between depression, trauma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, eating disorders, smoking and other health related conditions. The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors found that individuals with serious mental health problems die on average twenty five years earlier than the general population. Only 30% are due to suicide. The other 70% are due to medical conditions that could have been treated more effectively had they received both mental health as well as physical care.

The lack of a properly trained workforce has been a concern of NAAPIMHA for many years. NAAPIMHA developed Growing Our Own, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate care for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander. This was the first national multi-disciplinary training program for providers working with AANHPI adults. NAAPIMHA then developed Growing Our Own: Working with AANHPI children, youth and families. NAAPIMHA also recognizes that a properly trained interpreter can greatly improve communication between the provider and person in need of services. In collaboration with the National Latino Behavioral Health Association, NAAPIMHA, developed the Mental Health Interpreter Project that has been implemented throughout the state of California as well as in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Georgia, New Orleans and Guam. The current training program for Wellness Coaches follows in this tradition of improving the current workforce. It cannot wait 5-10 years for individuals to receive their MD, PHD or MSWs, which does not guarantee cultural competence anyway. Research also shows that using properly trained paraprofessionals can be very effective in increasing outreach and engaging the community. NAAPIMHA firmly believes that training Wellness Coaches is a key component to improving health outcomes for AANHPIs.

DJ Ida, Ph.D
Executive Director
NAAPIMHA