**Cultural Competence Committee 4/13/17**

For the purpose of this evaluation, “culture” refers to anything which pertains to an individual’s unique personal or professional situation which requires consideration in order for them to form effective relationships with others. Culture can include race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, geographic location, dietary needs, job role, world view, etc. These facets of culture influence our value systems, which in turn drive our behavior.

**Results of Culturally Effective Communication Survey**

Per the results of the February 2017 survey on enhancing culturally effective communication, the majority of respondents voted for interventions related to Organizational Development (“Making deliberate choices to help us become more aware of cultures around us”). Of this main theme, the three most voted sub-themes were:

* Resources to help us be aware and better treat less visible cultures (“Understand Charlotte better…the history of the neighborhoods and community development. We overlook or underappreciate the obvious cultural groups that we serve.”)
* More visuals which communicate inclusion and appreciation
* Greater use of data gathering for cultural competence feedback (i.e. finding out about the specific issues of our clients).

**Synthesis of Findings**

Cultural Competence team members synthesized these findings with their own knowledge and experience to interpret how these results could be applied into actionable ideas and interventions.

**Systems View**

Based on the survey results, the team determined that it would be most effective to work on internal culture for the purpose of enhancing cultural inclusion and presenting a unified front in the community.

1. **Enhancing Employee Relationships to Increase Awareness in the Community**. The team recommended greater networking between Thompson employees for the deliberate purpose of:
   1. Understanding the roles and experiences of others in the Community; This would allow co-workers to understand more about the clients we serve even when we do not have direct exposure to them. It would help us understand what our co-workers experience in dealing with these populations. It would also help us learn more about what the different programs do.
   2. Sharing Event Info; Co-workers could share knowledge about community events and encourage group participation in those events.
   3. Sharing Successes and Efforts; Co-workers could share success stories regarding helping clients as well as communicating what they are doing in the community.
   4. Sharing Community Needs; Co-workers could communicate the specific needs and cultural values that they are learning or have learned about those whom they serve.
2. **Presenting a Unified Front in the Community: “Intentional Cultural Outreach”**
   1. Meeting external community members “in their space” to show company as an ally and not a threat.
   2. Understanding more about underserved communities (beyond what could be learned in training) can drive program knowledge and effectiveness.
   3. Empowering multiple employees to engage in the community together, and then communicating and celebrating that community engagement, rather than making it a formality. (As opposed to a select few going to community meetings with no established outlet for communication about it).

**Actionable Ideas and Interventions**

To meet the systematic view presented above, the team discussed concrete and feasible interventions. These are hereby presented as recommendations for leadership to consider.

1. Community Cafés

In a community café, individuals are encouraged to meet and talk about themselves and their work. This has become an established practice in organizational team-building (also called World Cafes). It would allow Thompson employees the ability to meet, enhance professional relationships, and network. This could include enhancing gathering spaces which encourage collaborative relationships (e.g. inviting, place to rest, good place to do group work, etc.).

It could also be used to allow individuals in the local communities to discuss their issues and lives, allowing for Thompson employees to understand more about their needs. This evaluative information could be gathered and returned to leadership to help inform service delivery. However, these individuals would need to be approached in the manner which best suits them.

1. Attending community events

Employees from multiple programs would be encouraged to attend community events together. Their experience would not only be shared with others, but the goal would be to communicate these cultural experiences as an important part of organizational culture. Examples of events include provider fairs, cultural gatherings, and (down the road) possible even sponsored events.

1. Enhanced communication tools

Whereas the newsletter has been a valuable tool, team members suggested emulating other organizations which use television screens on each campus as a method of communicating. A simple weekly powerpoint could highlight cultural events, program news, open invitations to visit departments, pictures of events, and other pertinent information.

It was suggested that internal screens could be displayed in employee areas (such as being a screensaver for computers) whereas screens in waiting rooms/ public areas could display information relative to marketing efforts.

It would be important to maintain consistency with visuals across campuses (company branding).

Physical newsletters may also be an effective tool for reaching employees with limited computer access, unless they have screens in employee areas.

1. Culturally relevant events at company

Team building events could occur around cultural holidays. Alternative/obscure holidays could be used as events which do not disrupt productivity, but help improve morale while providing cultural education.

1. Department “Open Houses”

Where relevant and appropriate, departments would have a day and time where co-workers would be invited to visit them and learn about what they do, the populations they serve, and what their job experience is like.

**Summary**

Based on the results of the Q3 2017 survey, the Cultural Competence Committee offered recommendations in the systemic context that cultural collaboration in the internal organizational structure would facilitate a unified front in deliberate cultural outreach to the community. This would allow us to gather information from the community about specific needs and digest the findings in a way that allows for programs and employees to adapt and develop in a dynamic relationship (back-and-forth relationship) with that community. This community action would be a resource unto itself. Enhanced visuals and communication efforts would help the organization to stay aware of incorporating these systematic interventions into organizational norms.