Integrating Cultural Competency into Suicide Prevention at the University of Puerto Rico-Cayey

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Campus Demographics and Setting

- 4-year college
- 99.5% of students are Puerto Ricans
- Located in the north-eastern mountainous part of the island
- Students from urban and rural areas (nearby towns)
Considering Diversity: Getting Ready to Engage the Campus

- Be aware of one’s own cultural worldview and others’ worldviews (provider vs. consumer)

- Puerto Rico is more homogenous (similar values, traditions, history); not many multicultural backgrounds as in U.S.

- Different from other Latino or Hispanic cultures
  - Sharing language isn’t enough
  - Need to understand belief systems of health and healing

Engagement

- Consider how groups on campus perceive mental health and mental illness

- People from different places in PR perceive counseling and psychology differently

- Different groups of students perceive counseling and psychological services differently (LGBT students, rural students, urban students, etc.)
Engagement

- Stakeholders:
  - Clinicians: How are we delivering services?
  - Students: stigma is an issue
    - Students do not want to be seen as mental health patients
  - Students and staff from counseling center: give feedback on principal message for promoting referrals and encouraging students to seek help
- Theater students: use language less associated with a psychologist; instead use "stress"
- Graphic design office

Addressing diversity in Services/Activities/Interventions

- Language
  - Diagnostic categories cause resistance: "I do not want anybody to think I'm crazy, I don't want to be identified as a person who visits a shrink".
  - Translation of What a difference a friend makes
- Addressing diverse student populations: students and groups differ from one another
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students,
- Explore different types of messages for faculty, parents, and non-teaching personnel
  - Ex. It could be one of your students. (faculty)
  - You can choose to let someone know that he/she needs help. (non-teaching personnel)
Addressing Diversity in Activities/Services/Interventions

- We prefer to use our slogan: *Your challenges are not only academic...when they become harder, please let us help you.*

- *Rochao* is a typical word that young people use for being sad or depressed.

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