African-American Mental Health Awareness

Baylor University’s
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Learning Objective

- Increase awareness of African–American wellness and mental health issues
- Understand barriers to help-seeking behavior
- Research
- Explore a practical approach to inter-departmental partnerships to address African–American mental health needs
- Discuss implications for improvement of mental health service to students
Format

- Significance of the MTWCB Forum
- Significance of MSMS
- Supporting Research
- Participants feedback
- Department Collaboration
- Expansion to other cultural groups
- Lesson learned and duplicating this event
- Personal Feedback
Motivation for the Program

Student Tragedy

Cultural Issues

Removing Barriers
Cultural Issues

- Mental
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Emotional
- ________?
- Recovery
Racial Identity Issues

DUAL

Racial Identity

Black Emotional Pain

Assimilation

SELF
Cultural Issues

- Assumption of counseling
- Mistrust of counselor
  - “healthy cultural suspicion” (Boyd–Franklin 2000)
- Issues usually handled within the “extended family”
  - “crisis spirituality” (Boyd–Franklin 2000)
Racial Identity Issues

Integrate

WHOLE   SELF
To foster a stimulating environment in which discussions about African–American mental health, partnerships and strategies for improved services can be explored in the spirit of advancing knowledge and education in order to improve quality of care

- Increase awareness of African–American mental health issues

- Understand barriers to help-seeking behavior

- Create inter-departmental partnerships to address African–American mental health needs
My Sister, My Self (MSMS) is a community developed to providing a safe and comfortable environment for women of color to address issues that affect their emotional, physical, spiritual, environmental, intellectual, and social wellness.

The primary goal of this group is discuss avenues in which this population can improve individually and collectively in the unique setting of a predominately white institution.
Supporting research
Common Sense Model

Identity \rightarrow \text{Cause} \rightarrow \text{Timeline}

Consequences \rightarrow \text{Cure/Control}

(Ward & Heidrich, 2009)
Barrier to Treatment

- Negative attitudes toward mental health components
- Negative view of psychological disorders and mental health treatment

- Negative attitude toward negative parts of self
- Withholding of embarrassing and distressing information

Stigma

Self-Concealment

(Masuda, Anderson & Edmonds, 2010)
External Barriers

- Lack of access
- Availability of services
- Social issues
- Poor quality of care
- Cultural matching/ethnic minority clinicians
- Cultural mistrust

(Masuda, Anderson & Edmonds, 2012)
Environmental Barriers

- Designed for the majority to excel
- Academic attrition vs. Environmental attrition
- PWI are less than welcoming
- Stereotypes
- Cultural educator

(Gusa, 2010) (Bourke, 2010)
Testimony

Student Speaks in Chapel
Bridging the Gap

Minority Student

MTWCB/MSMS

Minority Culture

PWI

(Ward & Heidrich, 2009) (Fiest–Price, 2001)
Participant Feedback
MSMS Survey

- Online
  - Qualtrics
- Demographics
- View of the importance of MSMS (8)
- Feedback (4)
## Demographics

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<td>Sophomore</td>
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<td>Junior</td>
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<td>Senior</td>
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<td>California</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
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Validity of MSMS

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<th>D</th>
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<td>Relevance</td>
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<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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Importance of MSMS

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<td>Need</td>
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<td>Support</td>
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Institutional Issues

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PWI Support</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Cultural Climate

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Felt comfortable to express opinions and beliefs
Topics were relevant to women of color
Surrounded by people I can relate to
Connecting with other Black women
Judgment free space
Felt empowered and encouraged
Criticisms of MSMS

- Only held once a month
- Attendance is low
- Day, Time & Location
- Lack of advertisement
- "Venting session"
- Lack of structure
- Needs to be more like therapy

Constructive Criticism

Criticism
“I appreciated how interdisciplinary the coordinator’s backgrounds are”
Collaboration with Others

- Networking
- Communication
- Transparency
Networking

- Divisional Luncheons
- Serving on Committees
- Attending Campus Speakers / Conferences / Banquets
- Advising
- Book Clubs
Communication & Passion

- Communication
- Expectations
- Purpose
- Roles
- Goals
- Passion
- Flexibility

“Our passions are the winds that propel our vessel”.
“Characterized by visibility or accessibility of information…”

Willingness to be present and share your story.

Commitment to the greater good.

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transparent
Duplicating this group on your campus
Duplicating this group on your campus

- Location
- Connected Student Leaders
- Seize Promotional Opportunities
- Dual Socialization/Commitment to Student Retention
- Advertisements
- Assessment
Location, Location, Location

- You must create a relaxed, safe, and open environment.
- Intentional about where to meet (counseling center vs. other campus space).
- Brainstorm with each other to locate a space on your campus that has a “living room” feel that is private.
Utilize each departments connection and access to student leaders.

Remember that word of mouth from a student leader to their peers is excellent marketing and promotional tool.

Make sure that you have student groups promoting it at their events.
Take advantage of welcome back to campus events, organizational fairs, orientation, and other well-attended events by the target student population.
According to Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2004) “institutions share responsibility in the successful cultural and social integration of students into college...The assumption that minority students are solely responsible in assimilating and incorporating themselves to the culture of the college excuses institutions from dealing with their own barriers to retention”.

www.ksbe.edu/spi/PDFS/Retention_Brief.pdf
“Kuh and Love (2004) found that students who made cultural connections through social groups that reflect their culture of origin were more likely to persist in higher education.”

www.ksbe.edu/spi/PDFS/Retention_Brief.pdf
Create a Twitter & Facebook Group
Utilize Departmental Twitter & Facebook Groups
Advertise on the campus calendar, & campus wide newsletter
Send out creative, fun, emails to your regular attendees
Personal invites
Make sure that everyone’s department is promoting the group is a resource
Assessments

- Assessment is something that you will need to do frequently in order to effectively meet the needs of the students.

- Soliciting feedback from the students empowers and establishes ownership of the group.

- Explain to the students the importance of actually having them do the assessments.
Additional Resources for Implementation
How are other college campuses addressing this issue?

- Models
  - Sam Houston State University
  - Banard College
  - Triton College
  - Amherst College
  - Stanford University (AA men)
  - University of Kentucky
  - University of Chicago
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Black Men's Forum (BMF) – The Black Men's Forum is an organization started in recognition of a need for an inclusive, meaningful, and structured network of Black male students on Stanford's campus. The goal is to establish and foster a sense of unity, strength, and love among Black males and to direct it towards uplifting the community at large. It also aims to foster positive relationships for black men with others, to develop and highlight the leadership of black men in their communities, and to engage and affect the lives of others beyond the boundaries of Stanford's campus. Through the implementation of community service efforts, the BMF seeks to insure that the strengths, talents and experiences of Stanford black men are reinvested back into the community. Lastly, it seeks to both provide for the professional, academic and personal success of black men at Stanford and to intellectually engage the broad range of issues facing black men and boys.
Committee Meetings

- Regular meetings to brainstorm possible topics of interest
  - Relationships
  - Portrayal of AA women in the media/music
  - Healthy hair
  - Sisterhood
  - Colorism
  - Body image
  - Cultural misperceptions
  - Classroom interactions
  - Role of the church in African–American wellness
  - Racism
  - Interracial dating
  - Physical/Mental health
  - Relationships
Publications/Other Resources

- Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America (Cherise Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden, PhD)
- Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We’re Not Hurting (Terrie Williams, MSW)
  - Stay Strong Foundation
  - http://www.halfofus.com/video/?videoID=3&chapterID=1
- Webinars
- Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) (regional, national)
- Speaker’s Bureaus
Begin with the End in Mind

- Prior to meeting: Surveys, focus groups may be helpful to assess needs of students, topics of interest, etc.
- What do you want to accomplish
  - Develop learning outcomes
  - Assessment throughout
- Faculty/Staff support
- Funding (Guest speakers, snacks, etc.)
Who is your Target Population?

- African–American women/men?
- Women of Color?
- Men/Women of Color?
- International Students?
Expanding MSMS

- Buenas Amigas – spring 2013
Group Activity/Reflection

- What potential strategic partnerships can you think of at your institution?
- What are the target populations?
- What are the potential barriers?
- Structure of the group?
  - Number of participants
The End

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