

Assess the Accessibility to Culturally Competent Mental Health Services for Haitian Communities in New York State

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Abstract : Mental illness encompasses more than two hundred types of mental troubles, and more than half of the American population is at risk of being affected. If not effectively treated, mental illness can have dire consequences on health, the economy, and society. New York State, the second state after Florida with the most prominent Haitian/American, counted 180,710 inhabitants distributed in 60321 households in 2021, with almost half 46.4% being less than 35 years old. Studies show that while minorities are seen as resilient communities when they experience mental illness, they are more likely to be severe, chronic, and permanently disabled. Cultural competence can narrow health disparities. Cultural competencies can help narrow inequality in mental health access. Achieving cultural competency in the health system involves good coordination from a robust system in providing health service where everyone is ready to contribute to its practical implementation. However, there is not enough secondary data representing the accessibility to culturally competent mental health services for the Haitian American communities in New York. This Community Needs Assessment will be conducted in the ten regions of New York State. Providers, clients, members of the community, and minority organizations will be recruited. The data analysis will have a descriptive and analytic part. The descriptive part will be done in two surveys, one collecting primary data from the general population receiving the services and the other from health providers that provide health services. The questions and answers will be saved in Excel and analyzed on SPSS. For qualitative data, focus groups and in-depth guide interviews will be conducted and analyzed through Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis of how the population and critical informants understand and identify cultural competency components in the mental health system. This research will be presented at the HAFALI research forum and specific minority organizations in New York. It will be submitted to mental health conferences and specific journals for publication. It will be shared with the heads of the community health service and the heads of the New York State Office of Mental Health, hoping it can improve their health policy. Cultural competency in mental health services remains a determinant factor for health equity, better health outcomes, and increased quality and effectiveness of care. This needs assessment will be used as a tool to improve access to culturally competent mental health services nationally and worldwide.

Keywords : mental health, minorities, New York, needs assessment

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