

USING FOCUS GROUPS TO INFORM A HEALTH SYSTEM ON STRENGTHS AND GAPS IN ACHIEVING THEIR GOALS OF REDUCING DISPARITIES AND IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF COMMUNITIES

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Definition and Goals

- Definition
 - Diverse characteristics including but not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation and identification, religious affiliation, socio-economic status, marital status, physical attributes, disability and political beliefs
- Explore employee perceptions related to
 - Working within the healthcare system
 - Strategies for improving diversity
 - The relationship between safety and diversity
- Developed probing questions around each parameter

Process

- Recruited participants on Intranet
 - 53 employees expressed interest
 - 23 employees participated
- Scheduled six focus groups
- Set ground rules
 - Participate and contribute openly and honestly
 - No bad ideas
 - Productive, constructive conversation and feedback
 - One person talks at a time
 - No sidebar conversations
 - Respectful disagreement okay
 - What is said during the focus group stays in the focus group
- Ground rule agreement signed by participant

Experience of Working at this Healthcare System

- Inclusive and supportive
 - Chapel, supportive coworkers, more open about talking about diversity
- Alienation
 - Feeling isolated and separate from others
- Tolerance of stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination
 - Multiple examples related to African American, Muslim, LGBTQ community, and people of color
- Patient insensitivities
 - Disrespectful behaviors based on staff member's race or ethnicity

Strategies for Enhancing Diversity and Inclusiveness within this Healthcare System

- Education
 - In person, opportunity to interact
- Celebration
 - Tying food to learning about cultural beliefs and practices
- Diversification of marketing materials
 - Internal and external materials; cautioned that clinicians would need to be prepared to care for these populations
- Diversification of staff and leadership
- Personal responsibilities
- Policy and procedure changes

Relationship Between Safety and Diversity

- Acceptance of diversity enhances safety
 - People cannot feel safe without feeling accepted
 - People cannot embrace safety if marginalized
 - Lack of understanding leads to unsafe environment

Actions Taken Based on Focus Group Results

- Tracking diversity of board governance, leadership, and staff
- Recruited two diverse board members
- Increased recruitment of diverse leaders and staff
- Recruited diverse participants for Patient Family Advisory Committee
- Provided education for managers
- Incorporated content into high reliability (safety) training

Outcome: Care Compliment

- Internet posting
 - "I would like to thank all the sweet employees who helped me and my partner feel welcome. Everyone was sweet to us and respectful of our relationship. A special thank you to Nurse Jane for making me and my partner feel comfortable and knowledgeable regarding all the types of medicine they used on my partner. I wish there were more good hearted people like you in the world. Take care and God bless."

And the work continues.....

- Developing a tool kit for managers to use with staff
- Developing simulation scenarios for staff
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