

Lower Hudson MAC

Re: Lower Hudson MAC Activities for 2015

Date of Report: January 11, 2016

From: Jean Williams, MAC Co-Chair Person; Family Services of Westchester/Mount Vernon Clinic Director; jwilliams@fsw.org , Damon Bacote Co-Chair Person, dbacote@fsw.org Family Services of Westchester

Activities that have characterized Lower Hudson MAC during the calendar year 2015 have focused around strengthening participant's ability to identify disparities in the community. Ongoing communication has increased the group's awareness of disparities that their colleagues are experiencing in the diverse communities of Westchester County.

February: In our February meeting, Adam Black , Jean Williams and Christina Eisenberg reported on Lower Hudson MAC's leadership meeting with our Field Office headed by May Lum. MAC officers met with the field Office in the Poughkeepsie office site in December 2014. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce our MAC region to the field office, and to give them an overview of our existence and what types of activities we had been involved. The MAC officers shared with the field office staff a draft of the consumer survey that Lower Hudson MAC had created.

March: In the March meeting, Christina Eisenberg, MAC Co Chair and Minority Coordinator at Westchester Independent Living Center, WILC, was our presenter. Christina's presentation was around the work she does in education around sensitivity and cultural competence in working with individuals who live with physical disabilities. The information Christina provided was a great segue for participants to discuss accessibility of physically disabled individuals to buildings where services are provided.

April: The importance of collaborating with other community groups that are concerned with disparities was a theme of this meeting. MAC had been invited to participate in Mount Vernon's Wellness week. The group decided on offering the Spirituality Workshop done by Frances Priester-Moss, if she were available to present on the given dates. Upon contacting Ms Priester-Moss she accepted the invitation to do the Spirituality Workshop on behalf of Lower Hudson MAC for Mount Vernon's Wellness Week schedule for May 2015.

May: In May MAC collaborated with Mount Vernon's Wellness Week. Frances Priester-Moss facilitated the Spirituality Workshop at the Mount Vernon Public Library, Mount Vernon, New York. The workshop was well received by attendees. In the monthly MAC meeting Hextor Pabon's webinar, "It Starts at the Front Desk" was viewed by MAC and discussed by attendees. MAC members expressed interest in having Mr. Pabon come to one of our meetings to continue dialogue on this webinar.

June: In June the participants discussed the article "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo. The article was sent to MAC members prior to the scheduled meeting. The discussion that ensued increased participant's awareness of each other's awareness of their different experiences on disparity and "white privilege." Group members requested more articles like this to provide ongoing dialogue on subject.

September: Family Services of Westchester/SNUG Program presented at this meeting. MAC co-chair Damon Bacote is the Coordinator of this FSW program. SNUG is a Cure Violence evidenced based model that was implemented in Mount Vernon over a year ago. SNUG recently completed a film that was done and produced by Rockland Psychiatric (Health First). The video was shown at this meeting, and was well received by MAC. The video will be available on You Tube in the near future.

November: In November participants at the meeting discussed the article in the magazine The Atlantic, "The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration" by Ta-Nehisi Coates. The link to the article was sent to MAC members prior to the meeting. The purpose of this discussion was to be able to look at some barriers that some of our families that MAC committee members might serve that have been affected by this. This was requested by our committee members to have articles like this to keep dialogue open as we look to address the disparities for the families that we serve.

Plans: Lower Hudson MAC continues dialogue with Yonkers YMCA for a Town Hall Meeting with mental health providers and Westchester County faith based organizations. The exact date in 2016 has not been established. Plan for Frances Priester to meet with new MAC participants in 2016. This will be coordinated with Hextor Pabon's office.