DRAFT for Discussion – January 15, 2025

Mary Nakamura, Health Program Manager

Behavioral Health Services (BHS), Cultural Competence and Ethnic Services

Hello Mary,

Dear Mary,

I hope this message finds you well.

Some time ago, the Disability Advisory Commission’s (DAC) Programs and Services Access Subcommittee provided input on the "2019 Sacramento County Mental Health Human Resource Survey," specifically regarding Question 7:

**7. I live with a disability:**
Yes
No
Choose not to answer

At that time, we recommended adding more specific categories of disabilities to better capture the diverse experiences of Behavioral Health Services (BHS) staff. While we understand the decision to prioritize privacy and confidentiality, we believe this recommendation merits reconsideration.

Identifying the demographics of staff with disabilities in an anonymous survey is both valuable and appropriate. Other questions, such as those related to race, sexual orientation, and gender identity, demonstrate that sensitive topics can be addressed respectfully while maintaining anonymity. The same considerations should extend to disabilities.

In discussions with Stephanie Kelly, we learned about the positive steps BHS has taken to raise awareness about disabilities. Collecting similar demographic information would further support the County’s goal of reflecting the diversity of the community it serves and inform strategies for representation, resource allocation, and workforce planning.

To address this, we propose revising Question 7 to align with other demographic questions by including major disability categories:

**7. I live with a disability:**
Yes (mark one or more):

* Vision
* Mobility
* Auditory
* Neurological
* Cognitive
* Medical
* Psychological

No, I do not have a disability

Choose not to answer

This approach would provide several benefits:

1. **Improved Representation:** Ensures the workforce reflects the diversity of the community.
2. **Resource Allocation:** Informs planning for accommodations and support.
3. **Recruitment Goals:** Helps identify and address gaps in recruitment and retention.

Given that the survey is anonymous and targets current employees, concerns about hiring discrimination do not apply. Including detailed disability demographics would align with BHS’s broader commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this proposal further. Please let us know a convenient time to follow up or if there are additional steps we can take to support this discussion.

Thank you for considering this request, and we look forward to collaborating to enhance inclusivity within BHS.

Best regards,

Angela Talent, Chair
Programs & Services Access Subcommittee
Disability Advisory Commission