

Conference Program

N A P A *f* A S A 2004 Conference

“Substance Abuse Practice – Making Research Work for AAPI Communities”

Crowne Plaza Hotel
14th and K Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. 20045
June 28-29, 2004

Tuesday, June 29, 2004

Review of Previous Day

Ms. Emilie Dearing welcomed all attendees back for the second day of the NAPAFASA 2004 Conference.

Ms. Kalei Ka’ilihiwa opened the second day of the conference with a Hawaiian blessing.

Overview of NAPAFASA AAPI Substance Abuse Institute Concept Paper

Mr. Alan Shinn, MSW, Executive Director, Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii; Honolulu, HI.

Dr. Ford Kuramoto, National Director, NAPAFASA; Los Angeles, CA.

Mr. Alan Shinn welcomed everyone back and expressed his pleasure with yesterday’s conference. Summarizing yesterday’s key points, Mr. Shinn stated that AAPI communities are currently in the infant stage of fostering relationships between researchers and agencies. Agency survival issues make it difficult to focus on research,

and professional field language make research difficult to build.

As panelists have remarked, trust is key, but also very difficult to develop. Other points include the need to investigate projects that claim to serve the AAPI community and expanding narrow data sets to be more beneficial to communities.

Nevertheless, there are promising models such as culturally-appropriate programs like Waianae Men in Recovery.



Service providers and researchers should also keep in mind that drug use is illegal and may result in deportation. For many, the risk of deportation is very serious, particularly in these times. Research should include these issues in mind to protect subjects. Prevention programs should also keep this in mind, particularly when working with youth.

Dr. Kuramoto briefly reviewed the National Asian American and Pacific Islander Substance Abuse Institute Proposal. It was Jeff Mori's original vision that for underrepresented, underserved organizations that don't have the infrastructure, there needs to be a way to allow them to catch up and gain ground. His idea was a comprehensive, coordinated effort that will look at a range of elements in the form of an institute with different activities including research services and training.

The AAPI Substance Abuse Institute Centers of Activity include:



1. AAPI Program Development and Service Utilization Center
2. AAPI Technical Assistance and Training Center
3. The AAPI Research and Data Collection Center
4. The AAPI Clearinghouse and Resource Center

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Nora Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse; Rockville, MD.

Prevention

The way to think about decreasing substance abuse is prevention research and targeting people before they start. Drugs should be thought of as a vector, similar to infectious diseases. The reason why NIDA has decreased mortality in the past is the use effective prevention strategies for infectious diseases. Public health intervention has been carried out by taking action like washing hands or other materials, making sure they are not infective. NIDA needs to interfere with the drug use vector in a similar way.

By targeting children a major amount of drug use can be decreased through prevention alone. It is in that stage that drug use starts to develop. For marijuana, it has been

shown that the earlier you start, the more problems you will have with substance abuse in the future. There needs to be research to optimize prevention strategies, and go from understanding genetics, to development, to the environment, to co-morbidity. This is priority number one. Priority number two is treatment, and the third area of priority is HIV/AIDS.

Drug abuse is a developmental disease that starts in adolescence and childhood. If you start during peak vulnerability years, you have a much higher chance of developing a substance abuse disorder. With other drugs, like inhalants, it starts earlier. Could this mean that the brain of an adolescent is sensitive to the reinforcing effects of drug abuse? We know that children and adolescents are very curious and want to experience new things. What characteristics of the brain make them want to do this? The brain of the adolescent is very different from that of young adults. The frontal cortex of the brain is the area most affected by chronic addiction and this area allows you to exercise judgment and inhibitory control. If this area is damaged or not fully developed, as in the case of youth, your ability to restrain yourself is markedly curtailed.

There are certain environments where the risk of substance abuse is much greater. Low socioeconomic status makes one more vulnerable to drug addiction. It's the stressors associated with being in a low social class that adds to vulnerability. To illustrate this, consider a study which showed that dominant monkeys have a higher number of receptors, and submissive, less. The question is to look at if the receptors pre-determine dominance or submissiveness. In individually-housed monkeys, there was little difference between the number of receptors in the dominant and subordinate monkeys. However, in group-housed monkeys, it was very different, showing that an environmental factor, social factors, significantly affects the number of receptors in the brain. So they were not predetermined to be dominant, but the environmental interaction allowed for the development of receptors and dominant personality. Scientists took the monkeys with low levels of receptors and the monkeys with high levels of receptors and put them in a cage with a self-administering cocaine device. The animals with high levels of receptors are very reluctant to administer cocaine, clearly indicating that a neurobiological change has occurred as a result of the environment. In this case, it is linked to changes that protect you from drug abuse.

How do researchers apply this information to prevention? Although researchers and providers cannot change the socioeconomic makeup of a whole society, they can provide interventions that compensate for stressors in the environment. When you talk about disadvantaged groups, you want to create an infrastructure that will give them a sense of value and purpose.

**Youth Roundtable: AAPI Youth Coalition on Substance Abuse Programs;
Washington, DC**

Facilitated by Frank Irigon

With representatives from: Asian American LEAD, Boat People SOS, Chinatown Service Center, Union of Pan Asian Communities, Asian Services in Action Inc.

Q: How can you help do research?

A: Outreach to youth should be done by youth not adults. If an adult does the outreach, it feels more like a lecture.

Q: Did the researchers present in a language the youth can understand?

A: It was quite clear, I was able to understand the presentation.

Q: What makes research effective from your point of view?

A: Researchers need to provide more information and feedback with results to the students, that way they would be aware of the effects and it would be better for the community.

A: When researchers do surveys in high school, students do not take it seriously. Researchers should make surveys shorter and share the results with the students. The surveys should be short, not an hour, maybe 30 minutes would be reasonable. 10 minutes would make the survey more accurate. Surveys are probably the most practical and cheapest for researchers, but they need to make students trust the researchers. It's not unusual to lie on the first survey.

Q: Do you think it would be better to talk with youth in an individual or group setting?

A: If the researcher expressed the importance then the students would take it more seriously, rather than just handing the survey to the students and tell them to complete it.

Q: Among your peers what types of drugs do you know they are using?

A: Marijuana. Lots of students use dip, it's more common to get.

A: Marijuana, alcohol and tobacco are the most common in school.

A: The school I go to, probably have 50 percent of the students use weed because they feel that they are not being loved.

Q: Are they involved in the program that you are involved in? If not how do you outreach?

A: The reason they don't join is because they don't want to unless they start seeing consequences.



Break Out Sessions for East Coast, West Coast, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and Youth

Researchers, service providers and community representatives discuss collaboration and make recommendations regarding AAPI community research and services.

Youth

1. Family relationships: Better family relationships between families and children can be very beneficial.
2. Education: Educate the parents, many of whom may not know about what youth do and learn from their programs. Better education can mean greater support and enrollment for programs.
3. Positive activities: Tailor activities to youth for better attendance, make activities relevant to their experience. These activities can also prevent youth from more risky behaviors.
4. Media representation: The need for better role models in the media.

East Coast:

1. Increase access to the target population: Many agencies felt that the community's needs were often not being met. For example, barriers include lack of overall comprehensive treatment capacity or limited linguistic capabilities.
2. Documentation: Many agencies knew they were providing good services, but were not able to document what they were doing, or how to conduct appropriate program evaluation.
3. Capacity-building to work with researchers: Discussions centered on ways to increase the interest of CBOs to want to work with researchers. Researchers and CBOs should look at each other's goals, recognize that this is a bilateral

commitment and contribution, develop a realistic investment and time commitment to research.

4. Role model speakers and in-service speakers: Training for ex-users to speak with the community and provide suggestions to providers.
5. Local advocacy: Be aware of funding agencies and task forces out there, and open dialogue with those working on the same issues.
6. Data: There is a significant amount of data being collected at various sites and agencies from various populations.
7. Collaboration: The group was able to get a commitment from agencies in the east and northeast to collaborate with each other and share information.

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders

1. Collaboration: The need for collaboration between researchers and CBOs, and CBO to CBO. Also, the need to sustain collaborations after the grant ends.
2. Cultural competence: Capacity building for the Pacific Islanders, having researchers interact with Pacific Islanders before doing research.
3. Funding opportunities: Need to advocate for the needs of Pacific Islanders.
4. Meeting: Having a conference in the Pacific Islands.
5. Partner across fields: There are too many silos, but there needs to be a sharing of data across fields.
6. Research and CBOs: Both parties should work together to inform policy. Need to create relationships with policy makers and advocate issues that are important to Pacific Islanders.

West Coast

The group started by asking questions:

1. How are we studying dual-diagnosis? Is it successful? What are some successful prevention efforts from the AAPI community?
2. 12-step programs: Are they appropriate for AAPIs? It has been successful in some communities, but less so in others.
3. Use of non-Western methods: How are non-Western methods being used, are there evaluations conducted on these?
4. Evaluation: How do we evaluate programs and make sure that there are scientifically valid evaluations that can be generalized to other communities.

NAPAFASA Roundtable: Holding regional roundtables or forums that meet regularly and discusses local issues.

NAPAFASA AAPI National Institute: Supporting the Institute and ensuring that there is a connection between research and practice, ensure parity with other ethnic groups.

Membership: Be sure to sign up for NAPAFASA membership.

Directory of AAPI researchers: Develop a directory of researchers, which can include a training or mentoring program for junior researchers.

Publishing and disseminating CBO data: Many CBOs have a great deal of relevant information/data, but don't have the capacity to disseminate it.

Data: Need to disaggregate data, access county and state data.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Alicia de Leon Torres, Division Manager, Union of Pan Asian Communities; San Diego, CA

Ms. Alicia de Leon Torres thanked everyone for attending the 2004 NAPAFASA Conference as well as the planning committee, speakers, participants, board, staffs, youth, NIDA, SAMHSA, and ONDCP.

Although the conference allows the opportunity for everyone to share ideas, it's important that the dialogue continues once everyone returns home. Be sure to network, and share information. Also, don't forget seeing through the eyes of others. As adults, don't forget what it is to be a youth, and as a researcher, take the perspective of a CBO, and vice versa. Take care to mentor one another, and simply because some of us are older, does not mean we don't have anything to learn from the younger generations. Finally remember we want a better future not just for our community, but our children, and their children.

