

Module 4:

Increasing Resilience and Family Support for Diverse Young People

Objectives

1. To be aware of the risks, resilience, and protective factors in African American and Black communities.
2. To understand the processes of racial identity development and racial socialization.
3. To appreciate the diversity of African American and Black young people and their families and mental health disparities.
4. To address oppression and trauma with African American and Black youth.
5. To gain skills for increasing youth resilience.
6. To build support for African American and Black young people and their families.

Scenario for Team Discussion

Working with Peer Support Providers to Bridge Cultural Difference ~ Tracey and Anna

Tracey is a 16-year-old African American young woman living with her grandparents in kinship foster care. Tracey is part of a large and very close extended family. There was conflict with her grandparents because Tracey was staying out late and wanting to bring friends to their home. The grandparents kicked her out several times because she wasn't following their rules. When this happened, she would stay with other family members or sneak back into the house later to sleep in her own room. At times she was homeless, moving from family member to family member.

Tracey was involved in a peer support project with a focus on preparing youth for the transition to adulthood, including attending college, and was working with a peer support provider, Anna. Coming from an Irish American background, Anna had grown up in a family where family members avoided each other when there was conflict and she found it hard to understand Tracey's choice to keep returning to her grandparents and arguing with them. There was cultural tension because Anna could not understand why Tracey kept going back to the grandparents' home after a conflict. Anna reported to the team her frustration with trying to help Tracey and disagreeing with her choices.

Questions for Team Discussion

After reading and thinking about the scenario above, engage in a staff discussion of the following questions:

1. Why is Anna frustrated?
 2. How do your own experiences and attitudes affect your responses?
 3. As a colleague, how would you respond to Anna's frustration?
 4. What approach might you suggest in her work with Tracey?
 5. What resources or supports might you suggest that Anna explore?
 6. How does the team support staff members who are experiencing challenges in their work related to cultural difference?
 7. What is your racial/ethnic/cultural background? How has this shaped your beliefs and how do your beliefs affect how you do your work? How have your beliefs interfered with your work with young people and how can you avoid that?
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Debriefing

After discussing the scenario, it may be useful to reflect on what staff members learned from each other, using the following questions to guide the conversation:

1. What approaches or strategies seem to be most useful to your team?
2. Where are the areas of agreement and disagreement?
3. In what ways have team members' responses contributed to changes in the ways you think about how to work with cultural differences?

Module 4 Discussion Questions

Here we offer questions to guide discussion of how module 4 content could be applied in your team's work in the local area and with the young people you serve:

1. What do you see as the benefits for African American youth and families having a service provider that understands their racial/cultural experience?
2. What have you done to prepare yourself for working effectively with African American youth and families? How have your perceptions of African American youth and families changed as a result of your work?
3. What are the risk and protective factors affecting the African American youth you have worked with? Give an example of how you have worked with a youth to reduce the impact of risk factors and increase protective factors.
4. What have you done to strengthen family and community support for an African American youth? Give examples.
5. How have you addressed oppression and/or trauma with an African American youth? Give an example of what you did that was most helpful.
6. What are the ways in which your cultural identity combines with your other characteristics (such as race, gender, age, educational level) to shape the ways you relate to other people?
7. How do you and your team define intersectionality? How does your organization address intersectionality in your work?