



# ACTION COUNCIL COMMUNICATOR

February 29, 2004  
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## The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Cross-Cultural Mental Health and Human Services Conference

### "Diagnosis, Treatment and Recovery: Cross-Cultural Research, Policy and Practice"

Welcome to the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Cross Cultural Conference. Among us are mental health researchers, policy makers and practitioners who will discuss contemporary issues in the delivery of mental health and related educational and social services to culturally diverse populations.

We are honored to have expert panelists who will deliberate on the recommendations and concerns delineated in the final reports of the President's New Freedom Commission entitled, "Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America." Other consultants will deliver workshops on topics ranging from "Lifestyle Choices: Policies, Programs and Practices that Build or Inhibit Healthy Relationships, Families and Communities" to "Recovery: Policies and Strategies that transform Internal and External Conditions."

Which issues discussed will be of particular concern to South Carolina, in general terms; the conference will engender a national focus.

Participants will engage in learning activities via five (5) learning tracks; namely: 1. Education; 2. Clinical; 3. Spirituality; 4. Justice and 5. Policy and Governance.

Roundtable discussions will be instituted in alignment with each of the learning tracks. This will allow participants the opportunity to further explore ideas generated in the learning tracks by receiving expert opinion and/or clarification.

Please participate fully in the conference. Our goal is to help professionals to become more culturally competent. Surely, you are at the right pace for this to be realized.

Enjoy a wonderful learning experience.



By: Dr. Carl E. Jones  
Vice-Pres. for Student Services  
SC State University  
2004 Cross-Cultural Conference  
Co-Chair

**Sharon Rice-Brown,**  
**Editor**

**Professional  
Productions,  
Desktop Publishers**



Action Council for  
Mental Health and  
Human Services  
P.O. Box 1695  
Columbia, SC 29202  
(803) 252-6610  
Email: ActCouncil@aol.com



### President's Message

John A Morris, MSW

Dear Conference Participants and Members of the Action Council:

When you read this, we will be embarking on the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Cross Cultural Conference on Mental Health and Human Services. This year's meeting has special significance, as it is in many ways a national meeting. With outstanding support from the Center for Mental Health Services, we are concentrating on the implications of the President's New Freedom Mental Health Commission. This landmark document reflects the work of the first Presidential Commission on mental health since the Carter administration twenty-five years ago. Dan Fisher, MD, PhD, Founder of the National Empowerment Center, a member of the Commission, will offer the

keynote address on the consumer perspective of the report.

Kathryn Power, Director of the federal Center for Mental Health Services will share her unique perspective of the report; she has been charged with leading the government's implementation of the recommendations. Her support for this meeting is deeply appreciated.

We are delighted to note that the report paid special attention to issues of cultural competence, and the Action Council is delighted to welcome four representatives of the major national organizations focusing on issues of culture. Their input into the report helped ensure that the New Freedom Commission report stayed true to the values of cultural competence



John A. Morris, MSW  
President

country. It is an exciting meeting, and all of us owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the members of the planning committee; their tireless work has borne wonderful fruit.

And finally, on behalf of the Board of the Action Council, I want to extend a special welcome to consumer attendees from George, North Carolina and South Carolina, and a special thanks to CMHS for providing scholarships that enabled them to attend.

2004 promises to be full of challenges for us as we attempt to make change happen.



and diversity.

In addition to these keynotes, there are numerous other wonderful workshops addressing a wide range of issues of importance to South Carolina, the Southeast, and the



## ***Education: Making the Connection for Student Success and Achievement***

The Action Council and employees of the South Carolina Department of Education collaborated to produce the education tract of the Twenty-sixth Annual Cross Cultural Conference. Workshops will focus on outcome based strategies for enhancing the education system. Included will be research related to the impact of health on student achievement; creating safe and drug-free schools, character education, and parent/community involvement. Conferees will return to their schools and communities with evidence-based strategies that promote success.

A major impediment to a successful educational system is legislative intrusion. State and federal legislators too often issue educational mandates which harm or do

nothing to improve schools. Too often decisions are made without research. The mood of the electorate has generated educational policy while evidence-based research has been ignored by state and federal legislators.

This tract of the conference is an excellent opportunity for educators and others to learn what is proven to work. I am convinced that the majority of decisions about schools should be made at the local level. These workshops contain valuable information which can be used without state or federal approval.

*By: James C. Starnes,  
Action Council Board  
Education Track Chairperson*

## ***The Justice System***

The United States currently imprisons a higher percentage of its population than any other country in the world. The number of prisoners in state and federal prisons has increased over five-fold in the last 30 years, from under 200,000 in 1970 to currently over 2 million. The explosion in the rate of incarceration is having dire consequences for several segment of our population including the mentally ill, mothers and their children, and blacks.

We are warehousing the mentally ill in jails and prisons. A recent *New York Times* report suggests that, by default, jails have become the only available mental health institutions for a large segment of the mentally ill population in the United States. High rates of mental disorder, including substance abuse disorders and multiple co-occurring diagnoses are found among children incarcerated in juvenile facilities.

In 2000 nearly 3.6 million parents were under some form of correctional supervision affecting 7.1 million minor children. The war on drugs accounts for the incarceration of large number of mothers. About 80 percent of the incarcerated women are single mothers. More than 1700 women were incarcerated in South Carolina's prisons on June 30,

2003. Mothers and pregnant women are "the forgotten offender" and the real casualties of our war on Drugs. Many have little social and economic support outside of prison.

There are now more black American males in prison and jail than in college. During the 1980s and 1990s, spending on corrections grew at six times the rate of spending on higher education. Can the black community and society as a whole prosper when the role models in many communities are more likely to have spent time in prison than to have attended college? In 2003, a coalition of African-American civil rights, religious and social service organizations acknowledged the necessity for the African-American community to take responsibility and clean up its own backyard as it announced the start of a campaign to reduce urban violence in Cincinnati. High levels of community church involvement and the routines of a solid marriage are some measures responsible for lowering rates of serious crime.

*By: Ernest Shaw  
Justice Track Chairperson*



## ***Student Participation Day at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Cross Cultural Conference***

The Action council for Mental health and Human Services is pleased to announce **"Student Participation Day"** Tuesday, March 2, 2004 from 9:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M.

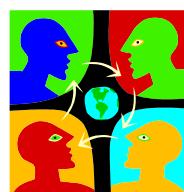
As the nation celebrates the most important court decision of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, millions of students are discussing *"Still Separate, Still Unequal 50 Years Later."* As the 21st Century opens, it is a good time to explore how cultural diversity---which is viewed by this writer as being the collection of various cultures within a country---affects higher education in South Carolina. Also, by looking at the current trends in the way higher education deals with cultural diversity.

This Conference will explore what new innovations higher education may see in the years ahead in response to the nation's cultural diversity. This country, more than any other, is blessed with cultural diversity. Traditional minority groups will be numerically elevated to ever increasing proportions of the population. For this reason it is beneficial to consider how higher education institutions view their diverse student populations.

Educators are at a crucial time in this nation's history---a time when national policies concerning cultural diversity can truly affect the stability of the country---and colleges and universities should plan accordingly.

There is a lot riding on how well the citizens of the United States handle the characteristic cultural diversity of the country. Finally, "The Conference will address physical and behavioral healthcare issues as they relate to education, social services and juvenile/adult justice systems. These themes will be placed within the frameworks of spirituality, cultural diversity and consumer empowerment."

*By: Mark Bellamy, Chair  
Local Planning Committee*





## Policy and Governance

This year's conference will include learning tracks that will give special attention to issues of Policy and Governance and Spirituality. Participants will engage in learning activities that will examine policy and practices that build partnerships and collaborations between systems of education, justice, health and human services and faith based communities. A multi-agency leadership panel will identify and further develop collaborative efforts used to provide services and resources to consumers with multiple needs. Proven innovative action plans to ensure that diversity is valued and demonstrated will be discussed. This will also afford an opportunity for brainstorming to ensure that services are becoming more family, community and consumer focused.

We are fortunate to have identified experts in the fields of sociology, psychiatry, spirituality, health and human services who will participate in a panel and a roundtable discussion to consider whether agencies and faith based policies and practices on lifestyle choices build or inhibit healthy individuals, families and communities. Workshop #15 will examine agency philosophies and church administrations to explore whether there is an environment of inclusion for persons who practice an alternative lifestyle. A goal of this session will be to further sensitize and provide training to practitioners and members of faith based institutions to enhance skills and competencies to address lifestyle choices.

Policy and Practices that improve diversity in higher education will be the focus of

workshop#20. Issues that support diversity, including access and equity programs, employment of diverse faculty and enrollment of diverse student populations will be explored. An examination of issues pertaining to diversity in training programs is an objective.

Our spirituality track will embrace a theme of using spirituality to promote empowerment, sustain hope and facilitate healthy individuals, families and communities. Workshops will focus on associations and the relationship of mental health and religion. Attention will be given to the function of religion, which relate to mental health and its impact on psychological adjustment, social conflict and mental disorders. There will be an examination of how spiritual assessments can be used in one's care, treatment and recovery. Finally, what constitutes a spiritual support system and recovery ministry will be addressed.

Submitted by,  
*Sharon Rice- Brown, MSW*  
Editor Action Council Communicator  
Action Council Board Member



## From The Editor:

The theme of Recovery and Hope is what gathers us here at the 26th Annual Cross Cultural and Human Services Conference.

We are direct service workers, policy makers, administrators, family members, service users and mental health professionals. Just ten years ago it was difficult for us to speak to each other and very rare to catch all of us in the same room together. But here we are, gathered together—social workers sitting next to family members who are sitting next to policy makers, who are sitting next to case managers, who are sitting next to academicians who are sitting next to service users. We are here to develop strategies to promote and educate our service deliverers, consumers, families and communities that recovery is possible. We refuse to adopt the images of extreme despair and hopelessness so often associated with mental illness and the experience of severe trauma.

We are here to evaluate whether the seeds that we plant are producing the quality we expect. If not, is there something wrong with the seed? The real challenge is to look at the environment around the seed and ask, "What must change in this environment such that the seed can grow? How can we create a hope filled environment and relationships in which students achieve and succeed, our spirituality leads to empowerment, our recovery embrace, both internal and external conditions and where there is effective treatment practices for the mentally ill in jails and prisons. Do our policies and



*Sharon Rice- Brown, MSW*  
Editor

philosophies foster healthy individuals, relationships and communities?

Dan Fisher, MD, PhD, a member of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health and Founder of the National Empowerment Center will provide the Keynote Address for the Conference's Opening Session. He has written of the need to "build a coherent social faith and order" as a way to promote recovery. He describes this new order as a "positive culture of healing... a culture of inclusion, caring, dignity, respect, hope and love. In a human service organization this healing begins with an environment characterized by tolerance, listening, empathy, compassion, respect, safety, trust, diversity and cultural competence". Professionals and consumers

are empowered and engaged. There is a collaborative relationship that builds partnerships between families, consumers, communities, education, health and human services.

In closing, let me thank each of you who contributed to this fifth edition of our newsletter, the Action Council Communicator. I am extremely excited about this year's conference and have spent my entire career embracing the multi-faceted concepts of our theme. As a member of the Action Council Board of Directors, I can assure you that both our Statewide and Local Conference Planning Committees have diligently planned a conference of learning experiences, networking opportunities and cultural activities of which you will be well pleased. Your membership and input is important to us. Please feel free to share with us any ideas, news, and articles of interest or accomplishments you may have.

Enjoy the Conference and the benefits of The Beach!

Blessings,

*By: Sharon Rice- Brown, MSW*  
Editor Action Council Communicator  
Chairperson, Membership Committee

## CLINICAL TRACK

The clinical track for this year's conference will focus on the physical as well as the emotional aspects of health. Experts in the field of physical and mental health will discuss strategies that will allow individuals, groups and communities to develop a recovery, and wellness based lifestyle. The workshops will provide practical suggestions for how individuals, groups and communities can work together to improve the health of it's people.

The workshops will address issues related to: Recovery, Trauma, Building Healthy Communities and Co-occurring Disorders. The Recovery workshop will address models of recovery that embrace both internal and external conditions to facilitate recovery. The Trauma workshop will provide a forum for dialogue, information sharing, knowledge and skill building to better address policy making in the treatment, diagnosis, and interventions that facilitate recovery from traumatic events. Building Healthy Communities: Developing a Recovery and Wellness Lifestyle will provide practical suggestions that individual, groups and the community can

employ to prevent the development of chronic disabling problems that may result from childhood health problems, HIV and Obesity. The Co-occurring Disorder workshop will examine the challenges of working with clients that have been diagnosed as having a substance use disorder co-occurring with an Axis I or II psychiatric disorder (s). Clinicians will be challenged to shift their thinking from the traditional mental health model that views substance use as separate from the underlying psychiatric disorder.

Attendants will value the insights that health care professionals, public/private administrators, mental health professionals and health planners have gained from their field-based experiences. Roundtable discussions will allow participants the opportunity to further explore ideas and strategies for implementation.

By: Josephine Mitchell, MSN  
Chair, Clinical Track  
Action Council Board Member



## Who We Are

The Action Council for Cross-Cultural Mental Health and Human Services, Inc. (ACCMHS) is a voluntary organization dedicated to enhancing the involvement of minority citizens in the management, delivery and utilization of mental and human services. The Council represents public and private business/industry and organization representatives, professionals, and volunteers who have an interest in cross-cultural issues.

The Council exists for the purpose of understanding diverse cultures, enhancing cultural relations and providing a forum for multi-cultural issues and management/personnel concerns. This includes educational training, resource management and networking toward providing service delivery and cultural awareness.

## Why You Should Belong

Statewide and regional support is needed to make the Council's goals a reality. By your membership and interest, you join in enhancing the participation of professionals from diverse cultures in mental health and human services.

## Join the Action Council

### Membership Benefits Include:

*Reduced cost for AC events  
Networking Opportunities  
Membership Retreats  
CEU Training Opportunities  
Current Cultural Competence  
Trends and Information  
Quarterly Newsletter  
Management Resource  
Training  
Educational Cruises*

**Membership dues:**  
**Students and Seniors**  
(Age 60+) \$10  
**Adults \$20, each additional family member \$15**

*Memberships valid until June 30, 2005*

*Sign Up Now @ Membership Table*



## A Readiness Assessment of and by Executives

- Would you recommend this as a good place for women, minorities, and people with disabilities to work?
- Do you perceive any advantages to any groups of people?
- Are there perceptions/stereotypes of any groups that might create barriers to success?
- Do people from diverse groups participate in policy decisions?
- Has the organization adopted a mission statement and action plan to implement diversity?
- Does the organization experience problems resulting from having a diverse group of employees?
- Are there any departments or position levels where there is little diversity?
- Does the organization employ people with disabilities?
- Are there jobs where people of one gender predominate?
- Are there jobs where people of one racial/ethnic group predominate?
- Are there perceptions of salary inequities related to gender, race, or disability?
- Are promotion rates higher for certain groups (e.g., men as compared to women)?