

The Vermont Youth in Transition (YIT) project addresses Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC) statewide under the very able leadership of Mercedes Avila. Mercedes has created a CLC Workgroup to assist child, youth and family serving agencies within the System of Care to implement culturally and linguistically competent practices. So far, YIT staff and young adults from four regions are participating in this group: Chittenden (Burlington), Franklin-Grand Isle (Saint Albans), South Windham (Brattleboro) and Orange North Windsor (Hartford). The group has already met once to learn about Native American issues. Its next meeting is scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup> in Saint Albans. The CLC Workgroup will meet monthly at different locations throughout Vermont to stimulate discussions about CLC among YIT staff and key stakeholders (including young adult and family leaders) in all regions.

Because professional development can increase cultural and linguistic competence, Mercedes created a 3-hour training session for mental health clinicians: *Towards Cultural Competency in Mental Health*. This training is being offered at the HowardCenter in Chittenden County on September 30, and due to the large number of people interested in participating, a second training has been scheduled there for October 14<sup>th</sup>. In the future, Mercedes and the CLC Workgroup plan to offer this training to the other mental health agencies and to family and youth serving organizations around the state.

Participants who attend this training will be able to:

- Increase self-awareness of racial, ethnic and class biases.
- Define cultural and linguistic competency and become familiar with the stages of cultural competency (or continuum).
- Explain how cultural beliefs shape clinical encounters.
- Understand the impact culturally competent services can have in the clinical outcomes of refugee and/or immigrant consumers.
- Discuss the implications of demographic trends for health disparities.

Three CEUs have been approved for Social Workers, Mental Health clinicians and Psychologists who complete the training. Participants will receive a training binder, book, booklets and a CD with 200+ CLC resources and toolkits. The training's cost is covered by the YIT grant so it is being offered free of charge to local and/or state agencies or organizations interested in hosting the event. Please contact Mercedes Avila at [MAvila@howardcenter.org](mailto:MAvila@howardcenter.org), or 802-999-4985 if you want to host or attend a CLC training.