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Developing Effective Assessment Procedures and Instruments for the *DiversiWe* Program

Assessment Mini-Grant Report

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Introduction

DiversiWe is an ongoing training series in multicultural competence for mental health professionals hosted by students and faculty of APCE, a department within the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at UNC. Through activities such as panel discussions, case conceptualizations, and role-plays, students develop skills that allow them to more effectively work with diverse individuals. Overall, the objectives of the program were to: facilitate empathy for diverse individuals, generate understanding of how diversity impacts mental health, identify culturally sensitive interventions, cultivate cultural humility and sensitivity in mental health professionals, and promote the role of mental health professionals as social justice advocates.

The Assessment Mini-Grant were utilized to further refine and develop an assessment tool to measure the participant's skills and knowledge resulting from attending our program. Additionally, funds were used to hire personnel to both facilitate the program and to identify various outcome measures that could enhance the effectiveness of our survey.

Methods

To evaluate the effectiveness of *DiversiWe* for meeting the objectives and the needs of students, a mixed-methods study was developed with tools to assess measuring change in cultural competence for and perceptions of the program from student attendees. Cultural competence was assessed through pre- and post-test surveys on Qualtrics using items from the Multicultural Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills Survey - Counselor Edition - Revised (MAKSS-CE-R; Kim et al., 2003). The researchers developed an evaluation form and conducted in-depth interviews to assess student perceptions of their experience.

Participants were required to attend at least eight of ten training sessions for *DiversiWe*, hosted bi-weekly, in the academic semester. Training was divided into three blocks of three sessions each focused on different marginalized populations (low SES, previously incarcerated individuals, and first-generation students) with one review session at the end of the semester. Participants completed the evaluation form at the end of each session they attended. Participants completed the pre-test survey online prior to the first session and the post-test survey online after the last session before they were scheduled for an interview.

Eight participants were recruited through convenience sampling from Master's and PhD programs in the Applied Psychology and Counselor Education department at the same university where the program was hosted. Two participants did not complete the study and another two participants did not complete the post-test survey despite partaking in the interview. Data was collected and analyzed through thematic coding and analysis from a final sample of $n = 6$ for the interview and through a paired sample t-test from a final sample of $n = 4$ for the survey.

Results

Qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized to determine effectiveness of the survey items. Five participants completed the pre- and post-test with three participants not completing the post-test. Participants who did not complete both the pre- and post-tests were not included in the analysis. Three paired samples t-tests were conducted. No significant difference was found for the variable of awareness between time 1 and time 2; $t(8) = .000$, $p < 1.0$. A significant difference was found for knowledge between time 1 and time 2; $t(10) = -3.218$, $p < .008$. A significant difference was found for skills between time 1 and time 2; $t(9) = -5.369$, $p < .000$. Thus, there were significant increases in participants' self-reported multicultural counseling competencies of knowledge and skills from time 1 to time 2.

Themes from the interviews indicated that the evaluation form was effective in

encompassing most considerations for reflecting on current sessions and looking forward to future sessions and that participants felt they could share their thoughts on DiversiWe openly due to the structure of the form. Additional themes included: increased awareness in working with diverse populations, increased preparedness to work with diverse clients, and that the evaluation form was perceived by some as repetitive across questions. Participants reported that they gained empathy through hearing the panelist stories, felt safe to share and engage in meaningful ways, and that they learned more about intersectionality through this process.

Discussion and Implications

Quantitative results demonstrated significant increases in multicultural knowledge and skills, but no significant increase in the dimension of multicultural awareness. These results were echoed in the interview as participants resonated significantly with panel narratives and role plays but desired more consideration of self-reflection. DiversiWe has been successful in meeting some of its objectives but might require a broadening of scope to encompass all necessary training in cultural competence. Furthermore, broadening of evaluation to consider more specificity in experiences of the group and the training activities will be important to fully meet needs of students. DiversiWe is still being refined in content and assessment but the promising results of this study indicate DiversiWe might serve as a model for development of similar multicultural training programs and their evaluation. Ongoing multicultural training is necessary to ensure students are prepared for best serving the needs of diverse individuals.

Future directions for the project include further refining the evaluation form to reflect specific objectives for each DiversiWe session regarding knowledge, skills, and attitudes for panel discussions, demonstrations and role-plays. Additionally, we hope to reach more students in the future.