Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada

Making It Happen: Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Nursing Education - Summary of Activities, Reports and Resources funded by the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative

The Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada (A.N.A.C.) has developed a number of resources and has taken part in a number of activities relative to the goal of cultural competence and culturally safe nursing care to improve the health status of Aboriginal clients. These resources and activities were completed with the support and funding from the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada – Aboriginal Health and Human Resources Initiative. This is an overview of these projects.

In 2008, A.N.A.C. collaborated with the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) for the project, “Making It Happen: Strengthening Aboriginal Health Human Resources.” In 2009, a review of the literature “Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nursing Education: An Integrated Review of Literature” and a Canadian Cultural Safe Framework, “Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Nursing Education: A Framework for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nursing” designed for nursing schools to be able to examine and address needed curriculum changes and equity and other barriers faced by many Aboriginal students were completed. As result, this will improve the healthcare experience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis clients. Additionally, this framework can also be adapted to the provision of a culturally safe workplace setting.

In 2009/2010, A.N.A.C. completed Phase 2 of the project entitled, “Strengthening First Nation, Inuit and Métis Health Human Resources: Curriculum Development and Getting the Word Out, Making it Happen” that was funded by the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative (AHHRI). In partnership with CASN, this phase involved the development of adaptive nursing school curricula by six representative schools of nursing located at: Langara College, University of Alberta, Trent University, Laurentian University, and Nova Scotia Community College and Saint Francis Xavier University. As a result of the dissemination of information about this topic, a number of nursing education programs in Canada continue to transition from theory to implementation in their respective curriculum and in policies and in the structure of their practices. In addition, there continues to be great interest and demand for pertinent information on how to implement the principles of culturally safe practices into their respective schools of nursing.

In a related project, A.N.A.C. chose to partner with the Canadian Healthcare Association (CHA), a trusted partner with an extensive and credible history of supporting the educational needs of people working in healthcare. A.N.A.C.’s joint venture with CHA utilizes the literature from the aforementioned project, but switched gears to encompass designing curriculum for all Healthcare workers. Released in the fall of 2010, the new curriculum was piloted and revamped and is available as a distance learning course for health care managers and professionals in the workplace. The course is called, Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Health Services. Material from the development of this course on cultural competence and cultural safety has also been successfully integrated in the CHA course on Modern Management, thereby furthering the dissemination of the work.

Phase 3, of the “Making It Happen” projects involved research and dissemination. The research project (2010-2012), titled “Cultural Readiness in Schools of Nursing” included a survey of English
speaking schools of nursing affiliated with the CASN and in-depth interviews with selected schools of nursing. The purpose of the survey was to assess the readiness of Schools of Nursing across Canada to integrate cultural competence and/or cultural safety into their curricula and to identify performance indicators that could be used as standard measures of cultural competence and/or cultural safety within these schools. This is also known as the Evaluation Project on Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Schools of Nursing Curricula.

Included in this project during phase 3, A.N.A.C. completed an annotated bibliography on cultural safety that could be used as part of a research project or stand alone as a source of current research on cultural safety. The dissemination aspect of this project included the presentation of the research project at the National Forum, “Sustaining a Healthy Future: from Indigenous Knowledge to Cultural Safety.” In addition, it was determined that a peer reviewed document be prepared to add credibility to the data collected, and to serve as a dissemination document.

In 2012-2013, the project, “Improving Aboriginal Health by Supporting Nursing Educators: Making It Happen Phase IV Knowledge Translation” included the development and dissemination of an e-teaching aid/tool. The document, “Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Nursing Education: A Framework for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nursing” was the foundation in which a competence was selected for the development of a teaching aid.

Collectively the projects in all four phases are also known as “Making It Happen” projects.