

# Crossing the Religious Divide: Training Caregivers in Religious Diversity



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Final Report for May 2008-December 2009

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## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this project was to partner with Project Interfaith and the Respite Resource Center to promote awareness of religious diversity, its effect on health care and to provide access to resources needed by healthcare workers. We used a workshop format to conduct training on religious diversity and how it can affect the way caregivers provide care. Through two day-long training seminars, participants reflected on their own religious views and learned about the religious views and beliefs of others. They learned about accommodating the beliefs of others under the law and about communicating in a sensitive manner. Participants also learned about how to access reliable health information.

The workshops were held in Omaha, Nebraska on November 6, 2008 and May 6, 2009. A total of 74 health care workers, public health workers, librarians and members of the general public participated in the two workshops.

We were able to purchase two laptops that are housed at Project Interfaith. These were used to help promote the workshops, used in training and will continue to be used to promote the use of the website and the health information resources.

## **Geographic Region/Number of Counties**

The instructors and the participants were all from western Nebraska including the counties of Douglas, Lancaster, Washington and Sarpy.

## **Collaborations/Partnerships**

Creighton University Health Sciences Library partnered with Project Interfaith and the Respite Resource Center to promote and market this workshop. We also partnered with the Brookstone Meadows Assisted Living Facility and the Visiting Nurses Association of Omaha, the two sites for the workshops.

## **Training**

We held two day-long training sessions, one November 6, 2008 and another May 6, 2009. At the November workshop, 41 participants registered for the workshop. Thirty-three signed the Outreach Activity Participant Information Sheet. Participants include one member of the general public, two health sciences librarians and one public library staff member. The other 29 participants were health care service providers.

At the May workshop, there were 33 participants, 32 of which signed the OAPS. Three were from the general public, two were library staff members, three were public health workers and 24 were health care or service providers.

### **Training Sites**

Our two training sites were the Brookstone Meadows Assisted Living Facility and the Visiting Nurses Association. Both sites were in Omaha, Nebraska. Both had projection equipment, internet access, and areas for small break-out discussions. Brookstone Meadows is a beautiful facility, and they were very welcoming, but we may have pushed the limits of the training room capacity. There was some negative feedback on the crowded venue, the temperature of the room and the ability to hear all the speakers. The workshop at the Visiting Nurses Association facility had fewer participants and the flow was much better.

### **Exhibits**

Beth Katz promoted the workshops at a number of meetings and exhibits such as the Nebraska Medical Center's Diversity fair in August 2008, the National Respite Conference in Des Moines, IA, the Midlands Elder Care Network meeting, and the Greater Omaha Retirement Housing Group. Judi Bergjord had a poster at Creighton University's Health Science Diversity Day in April of 09.

### **Resource Materials**

Project Interfaith staff produced flyers and brochures for each of the workshops. Judi Bergjord created a list of health resources for diverse populations. Each participant was given a packet of information that included: workshop agenda and project goals, general information about Project Interfaith, a list of other Project Interfaith programs and trainings, a religious holiday calendar and glossary, Nebraska religious diversity statistics, local religious community and interfaith relations contact information, terminology for managing issues of religious diversity, a list of resources available at the Project Interfaith offices, and general information about Hinduism, Buddhism, and the Muslim, Baha'i, and Jewish faiths.

### **Website**

Project Interfaith is still in the process of developing their resources page

### **Approaches and Interventions**

Beth Katz led the training with establishing ground rules, identity exercises and developing a common language for diversity issues. Dr. Paul Williams (Nov. 6) and Betty Evans (May 6) presented a history of religious diversity in the United States and introduction to some legal issues. A volunteer panel of

members of the Jehovah's Witness, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish faiths presented a summary of their religious practices. After getting feedback from the November workshop, we added an informal question and answer session with the panelists. Beth led a discussion on best practices and strategies for inclusion and Judi Bergjord presented resources for dealing with religious diversity issues in healthcare.

### **Evaluation and Feedback**

We asked participants to fill out an evaluation form at the end of the workshops. The compilation of their comments is attached. Some of the feedback we received: "Had difficulty hearing speakers in the chapel", "Allow more time for panelist – this was the most interesting and helpful part of workshop. It was very difficult to hear the panelist in the small groups with everyone talking at once", "I like the discussion groups and learning about the different religions from the panel. Great resource list", and "More case studies/illustrations of actual situations that involved religious diversity issues and how they were resolved (or not)".

### **Problems or Barriers**

Other than some problems with the physical layout of the venues, we had little or no technical difficulties. At one of the workshops there was a time when participants needed to be reminded of the ground rules of having respect and tolerance for other viewpoints, but the group was quickly brought back on task.

### **Continuation Plans**

Beth Katz has held one brainstorming luncheon asking community stakeholders for feedback and insight on how to move forward in the most helpful and strategic manner. She is planning at least one more luncheon in the next few months.

### **Impact**

From the evaluations, 92% of participants felt their expectations of greater knowledge of religious diversity, and how to incorporate this knowledge into their workplace experiences were met or exceeded.

### **Recommendation for Improvement**

The participants especially enjoyed the discussions with members of the different religious groups that presented their view. More time with these presenters would be helpful. Possibly asking participants to submit questions ahead of time that the presenters could address or have them submit questions afterwards that the presenter could address at a later time and have the answers sent out to the participants. At one point in the workshop it was pointed out that as

healthcare providers, you should not use the patient as the teacher to learn about their religion.

### **Follow-Up**

We are still in the process of gathering data in regards to how the workshops have affected how participants deal with religious diversity in the workplace. E-mail surveys have been sent out asking for comments, examples and anecdotes on workplace experiences with diversity. In June 2009 an article about the project was submitted to the Plains to Peaks Post Newsletter. An effective practice entry was made on the Library Success wiki at: [http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Religious\\_divide](http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Religious_divide)



Beth Katz



Sharing during Circle exercises



Small group discussions



Learning about Hinduism





Appendix I

Religious Diversity Issues in Professional Care Giving Training

Evaluations

November 6, 2008

Total: 38

Religious Affiliation:

Christian- 29	Catholic- 10	Hindu - 0
Jewish- 0	Methodist- 2	Buddhist - 0
N/A- 3	Muslim – 0	Baptist - 1
Eastern Orthodox - 1	Lutheran- 5	Interdenominational - 1
Other- 2	Unity- 0	ELCA - 1
Christian and Missionary Alliance- 0	Unitarian Universalist - 1	

Positions:

Coordinator – 1	Division Director of Care Management – 1
Social Worker - 1	Case Manager – 7
Administrator -1	C.O.O. -1
RN – 5	RN Lead – 1
Client Services – 1	RN Case Manager – 5
Program Director – 2	Librarian -1
Pastoral Care Director – 1	Training Manager- 1
Senior Service Director – 1	I & A, SWCM – 1

Question	Poor	Fair	Average	Very Good	Excellent	N/A
Organization of the training	0	0	4	18	16	0
Meeting stated goals	0	0	3	16	18	1
Ms. Katz's presentation skills	0	1	3	15	20	0
Dr. William's presentation skills	0	0	1	17	20	0
Ms. Bergjord's presentation skills	1	3	5	9	15	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0
Handouts/Resources	0	0	3	19	14	0
Organization and use of space and room(s)	4	2	10	14	6	0
The overall program	0	0	5	15	16	0

Question	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful	N/A
Agenda and goals of program	0	1	5	20	10	0
Identity activities	2	5	3	18	10	0
Developing a common language	0	3	6	22	6	0

activity						
Presentation of First Amendment issues	0	2	6	17	13	0
Panel on religious diversity in Omaha	0	0	0	8	30	0
Best practices and strategies for inclusion discussion	1	2	7	16	10	0
Presentation on religious diversity resources	0	1	4	18	10	0

Expectations:

Failed- 3

Met- 19

Exceeded- 9

No- 1

## Open Ended Questions:

### 1. What did you expect to gain by attending this training?

- N/A- 17
- Religious Diversity - 14
- Objectives on brochure – 1
- Greater Awareness, sensitivity and know resources – 2
- A great experience – 1
- New resources and ideas for training – 1
- Renewed perspective – 1
- I was expecting more information on individual faiths. Overall, I found interesting information and all speakers interesting. A lot of information

### 2. What should be changed to make things training more effective in the future?

- N/A- 14
- We had such a very good group this morning. Wish we would have had one more opportunity to get together for some closing activity. Handout with all e library sites
- Small group – could not really hear. Too noisy from other group.
- Hard to hear in chapel room during discussion. Thank you!
- Break out rooms for group discussion questions of presenters by group rather than break out – learning more from larger group rather than smaller break out groups.
- Beautiful facility but too small a room – having to turn one's head to view powerpoint not comfortable and lights – made people sleepy!
- Had difficulty hearing speakers in the chapel
- Allow more time for panelist – this was the most interesting and helpful part of workshop. It was very difficult to hear the panelist in the small groups w everyone talking at once.
- A little more space – the room was very cold at times. The presentation was great!
- As mentioned, room was too small. Offer other vegetarian food – cheese pizza, pasta w tomato sauce, fruits, vegetables. More handouts /summaries of different religions; pagan, Wiccan etc. w info on 1) diet, 2)medical, 3)afterlife, 4) clearing up stereotypes. Ran out of cookies. I attend a workshop hat had all the panelists at a table (included a Christian, Catholic Priest, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu speaker). Audience could ask them questions. Each speaker took a few minutes to review info and then opened it up to questions. For 2 hrs the audience was engaged in questions comparing and contrasting religions, discussing stereotypes. I learned so much more with this format than w separate groups. Would also be great to include a pagan, Wiccan, and Unitarian Universalist! An atheist would be interesting too. Maybe have audience submit questions in writing. Things may be too sensitive to ask. Didn't need to see all the web pages. Info and verbal overview would have been adequate. Couldn't read the screen anyway.
- Needed more time w panel speakers

- More time w presenters on their religion. Maybe general bullets handout from each.
- Powerpoints never clear. Temperature varied – uncomfortable.
- I'd have the whole thing in the chapel; too cozy.
- Maybe longer time for presenters.
- Very good. More time w panel presentations – very interesting and very helpful in better understanding of different religious practices. Would love to see one on cultural diversity.
- Given the morning questions for Dr Williams it would be helpful to get a quick snapshot of Christian beliefs (Catholic/Protestant)
- Add a break – The large room activities were difficult because we could not hear conversations.
- Choose a facility conducive to learning – space and acoustics. Unable to hear in chapel activities. Too crowded. Print too small on handouts and powerpoint.
- Talk to speakers longer
- Let the speakers take questions from group. The small groups were difficult for individuals to hear questions & responses.
- Best practices/resources can be given in writing and do not have to be reviewed.
- Need interaction in bigger rooms, room temp. ok, but ability to hear terrible!
- Bigger room. Less time on other areas and more on religious panel. Killing us w the resource presentation!

**Appendix II**

**Religious Diversity Issues in Professional Care Giving Training**

**May 6, 2009**

**Total Received: 26**

**1. Religious Affiliation:**

Christian -16

Lutheran –ELCA (but Catholic by birth) -1

Lutheran-ELCA -3

Catholic -5

Southern Baptist -1

Evangelical -1

Nondenominational -2

Presbyterian -1

Methodist -2

Hindu -1

Jewish -3

N/A-6

**2. Organization:**

ASERA CARE HOSPICE -4

Mercy Villa -1

Joy Medical Group – 1

International Society of Krishna Consciousness -1

Concord Center -3

The Nebraska Medical Center -4

VNA -2

Immanuel Medical Center -1

Visiting Nurse Association – 1

Eastern NE Office on Aging -3

Davita Healthcare -1

St Elizabeth Regional Med Center -1

**Position:**

Volunteer Coordinator -4

Owner -1

Community Religious Director -1

Manager, Clinical Pastoral Education -1

RN -1

Chaplain – 8

Hospice Manager -1  
 Family Group Conference Coordinator -1  
 Social Work -3  
 Service Coordination for Medicaid Waiver -1

3. Please rate the training on the following criteria by circling the number that corresponds with your answer: (If you cannot rate an item, select N/A – Not Applicable)

	Poor	Fair	Average	Very Good	Excellent	N/A
Organization of the training	0	0	0	13	13	0
Meeting stated goals	0	0	1	13	12	0
Ms. Katz's presentation skills	0	0	3	7	14	0
Ms. Bergjords's presentation skills	0	0	5	9	8	0
Handouts/Resources	0	0	11	10	12	0
Organization and use of space and room(s)	0	0	1	7	18	0
The overall program	0	0	1	11	13	0

4. Please rate how helpful the following components of this training have been for you. (If you cannot rate a component, select N/A – Not Applicable)

	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful	N/A
Agenda and goals of program	0	0	3	12	10	0
Identity activities	0	0	2	10	14	0
Developing a common language activity	0	0	8	8	9	0
Presentation on First Amendment issues and religious demographics	0	2	4	10	9	0
Panel on religious diversity in Omaha metro area	0	0	3	7	16	0

<b>Best practices and strategies for inclusion discussion</b>	0	0	8	7	10	0
<b>Presentation on religious diversity resources</b>	0	0	6	6	11	0

**What did you expect to gain by attending this training?**

- A better practical understanding of religious diversity in our area and strategies for being respectful of all -9
- How to incorporate information about other religions when volunteering/providing healthcare -3
- Opportunity to learn and interact
- This encouraged me to take a closer look at several areas I had not previously considered.
- New perception and details on a subject I really care about.
- Greater understanding of various religions and faith traditions. Perspectives on health care and end of life issues.
- I thought more about care specific less about religious education
- To be tripped

**Did this training meet your expectations? (Circle one)**

**Failed to meet my expectations -1**

**Met my expectations -10**

**Exceeded my expectations - 15**

**No expectations-0**

**What should be changed to make this training more effective in the future?**

- Would have appreciated more time for the panelists to present. -5
- Having copies of their (panelists) main points would have been nice. -3
- A table outlining prohibitions in certain religions
- More detail for patient care issues (helpful healthcare stuff)
- What an excellent experience! Thank you to all!
- Beth, this was a great session. The day was well organized and done with a tremendous amount of purpose and intent. You are a leader in your field and a credit to the Omaha community – Ralph.
- Looking at resources was a bit too long. Maybe an additional break -4



- Maybe try to incorporate a little more specifically how to address religions diversity issues with individual clients. Dr. Betti Evans was great!
- More case studies/illustrations of actual situations that involved religious diversity issues and how they were resolved (or not)
- Why were Evangelical, Roman Catholic, mainline and progressive Christians not in the panel
- Case Studies
- Take another look at the section on “developing a common language” It seemed a bit disjointed.
- You were very good about pre-training communication. It may be helpful for the first activity if the participants were given some questions to think about prior to coming to training about their own religion or beliefs and other religion’s beliefs (not the same questions but some broad thought questions).
- I like the discussion groups and learning about the different religions from the panel. Great resource list
- When printing powerpoint presentation be sure to print in B&W rather than to color & Xerox – many colored fonts reproduced poorly – especially when small
- I found Beth Katz’ presentation very dry and too long. Maybe in the future she can use different teaching tools: like video, or solicit more participation from attendees.
- Already had “best practices and strategies for inclusion discussion” & “presentation on religious diversity resources” although can’t read websites on info-too small
- Did not address issue on trend to “universalize God”
- What are the demographics of the group that is attending today? Why aren’t more reps from faith groups on the panel represented in the general population of this seminar? What needs to be done to change this?
- FYI – one person who did not have a “religion” yet still believed in “God” left this seminar because it was “over her head”.
- Have all panel members have a power point.
- More organized or pointed discussion on First Amendment – seemed to go all over the place.
- Different room arrangement of table/chairs. Too crowded. Hard to pay attention to folks when we were all on one side of the table – in conversing w panelists.
- Maybe this could be a 2-day training and break-up speakers/topics to get the most info possible. The handout would have been sufficient on resources so that more time could have been spent on various religions
- The content of Ms. Katz presentations was good. But she tends to “yell” when she is speaking and she says “umm” a lot. This is very grating to listen to for a long time.
- Going through all the websites at the end of the day was harsh: divide this section into little pieces in between other presentations.
- Add Native American Spirituality. Maybe use lunch time for the panel to give them more time for their overview