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Crisis & Counseling Holds Important Training on Transgender Issues for Agency Staff

Hope, Healing, and Gender

Monday, March 7, 2022, AUGUSTA, ME – Today, Quinn Gormley, (she/her/hers) executive director of MaineTransNet (<https://www.mainetrans.net/>), came together with Crisis and Counseling Centers' Justice, Equity, Diversion, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee to provide a "Transgender Introductory Primer" for Crisis and Counseling Centers' staff interested in learning more about supporting members of the transgender community.

MaineTransNet, located in Portland, is an organization of transgender people that provides community events, support groups, and advocacy training to various organizations about transgender issues. During this training, staff learned basic terminology and theory, tips on asking for pronouns, information on the health disparities facing the transgender community, resiliency factors, gender transition paths, support needs, and targeted best practices.

When helping frame pronouns for staff, Quinn says, “Even if you don’t get it. Even if it is difficult, even if you don’t like any of my evidence about grammar, this is someone’s pronouns. If these are their pronouns, using another set of pronouns is misgendering them, and you’re not going to be able to form a positive client relationship with them if you do that.”

As a non-profit that supports people through crises, Crisis and Counseling Centers plays a pivotal role in helping transgender people who may be actively suicidal. This training offered critical insight into the transgender community, which has one of the highest suicide attempt rates in the United States. Quinn explained for transgender people, “the median age for suicide is 15.”

The 2015 United States Transgender Survey (USTS), the most extensive survey conducted in the United States about transgender people, reported that 40.4% of transgender people attempted suicide at some point in their lifetimes. In addition, the same organization provided a state-by-state report, which said that 44% of those surveyed experienced psychological distress in Maine.

A recording of the training will be made available to Crisis and Counseling Centers’ staff who could not attend today’s training.

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About Crisis & Counseling Centers: Founded in 1970, Crisis & Counseling Centers is a 52-year-old multi-service mental health and substance use agency headquartered in Augusta, Maine, that provides a comprehensive treatment continuum that includes: Crisis Mobile Resolution and Crisis Stabilization Unit services; mental health, substance use disorder and co-occurring disorders treatment; statewide parent/caregiver support through its G.E.A.R. Parent Network program; Children’s Targeted Case Management; PATH Case Management services; Parents Case Management for pregnant women or parents struggling with substance use disorder; correctional behavioral health care services; medication management; and OPTIONS, a substance use harm reduction program. More information is available online at CrisisAndCounseling.org.

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Maine Crisis Line is available 24/7 by calling (888) 568-1112.

About the JEDI Committee

The mission of Crisis and Counseling Centers' Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee is an internal reckoning among staff, programs, the organization, and the community to foster justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion intentionally. We recognize the impacts of structural oppression and the need to learn from people's lived experiences. We strive to create spaces where clients and staff are comfortable sharing their cultures and identities and bringing their whole selves to our agency. The committee's role is to: Assess the current organizational culture; Inform on best practices; Institute policies that nurture physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and social safety; and Create opportunities for active Allyship for underserved and underrepresented individuals and communities. Through fulfilling these roles, C&C will advocate for the well-being of individuals and communities in Maine.

Sources:

- James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality. <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>
- 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey: Maine State Report. (2017). Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality. <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-MEStateReport.pdf>