

Interdisciplinary Team Education is Essential

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I had an opportunity to work at the USC-Rancho/Los Amigos CADC as a collaborative partner through the Alzheimer's Association California Southland Chapter. My role was to assist monolingual Spanish speaking families, diagnosed with a dementia or MCI, connect with community resources and/or give them caregiver /patient education information. This experience proved to be extremely valuable on many levels.

The expertise of the multidisciplinary team provides comprehensive service to families which connect them with agencies, resources and services which would enhance the caregiver's ability to understand MCI, dementia, its impact on cognition, behavior; the individual and family as a whole. The teams cultural sensitivity required their solicitation of funds which brought my role into their midst, as a Spanish speaking social worker.

My work with the California Southland Chapter involved extensive community outreach and networking. When appropriate, I shared learning experiences from the USC-Rancho/Los Amigos CADC which highlighted the multidisciplinary team's treatment expertise, state of the art research and community resource collaboration.

As I provided community education workshops at churches, senior centers; and many other social service agencies through out LA County; I was able to refer many middle age individuals and seniors (English and Spanish speaking) to the Memory Clinic for diagnosis, treatment and 2nd opinions. In addition, it was good to see the communities' interest at these events as I provided information on how they and their families could participate in research opportunities to enhance knowledge of the disease process, treatment and possible cure.

The highlight, on a personal level, was the opportunity to learn from each team member, and to see from each team member a willingness to share their knowledge and expertise with other professionals and students.

The true treasure for the community was the dedication and sincere respect with which they provide service to each and every client, regardless of educational level or social economic status.

- Maria Z. Anaya, MPH, December 30, 2009

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