

Behavioral Health Training for the Aging Network at BU CADER: How we do it and why it's important

**Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research
(CADER)**

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Agenda for Today

1. Overview of BU CADER program
 - Course Development
 - Best Practices
 - Courses/Evaluation/Program Benefits
2. Identifying the needs of our workforce
3. Three program examples
4. Implications and next steps

Center for Aging & Disability Education & Research at Boston University

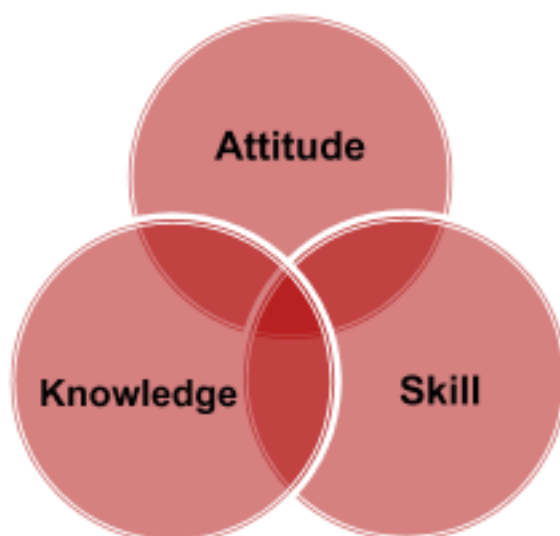
- The Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research (CADER) is dedicated to strengthening the workforce that provides health and long-term supports and services to older adults and people with disabilities through education, training, and research
- Originally funded in 2002 by The Atlantic Philanthropies
- Now funded through grants and state and local contracts

BU CADER Overview

- National leader in training since 2002
- Robust catalog of online courses that focus on the knowledge, skills, and values needed for effective practice with older adults and people with disabilities
- Trained over 20,000 workers in the last 15 years
- Worked with more than 450 agencies and organizations around the country

Course Development

- Began with focus groups of practitioners, subject matter experts, and academics to determine core competencies
- Identified 10 key content areas for our first courses/certificates
- Created a prototype for a 3-4 hours online course
- Pilot tested in the field
- Courses are regularly updated with content expert review
- All courses are approved to provide social work CE credit hours



Best Practices in Online Training

- ❑ CADER's approach to training utilizes the best practices in workforce development
- ❑ Annapolis Coalition on Workforce and SAMHSA suggested best practices should include the following:
 - ❑ Identify core competencies
 - ❑ Develop and implement competency-based curricula
 - ❑ Adopt evidence-based training methods that have been demonstrated as effective through research
 - ❑ Use technology to increase access to training and education
 - ❑ Evaluate the effectiveness of the training

Challenges Encountered by Service Providers

- Capacity
- Services
- Competencies
- Training

CADER Online Certificates

CADER developed the following Certificates in addition to offering 30 individual courses:

1. Foundations in Aging and Disability Certificate
2. ADRC Options Counseling Certificate
3. Case Management Certificate
4. Behavioral Health in Aging Certificate
5. Ethics, Legal Principles, and Key Practice Areas Certificate
6. Supervision and Leadership Certificate
7. Interdisciplinary Teams and Healthcare Certificate
8. Residential Housing and Community Living Certificate

Evaluation Methods

- Participants complete self-rated Pre and Post Competency Assessments
- At the end of each course, participants complete a knowledge quiz and a course evaluation
- Disseminate a 3-6 month follow-up to assess the sustainability and impact of training on their practice and organization

Program Benefits

- Competency Based
- Consistent
- Flexible
- Program is managed

Behavioral Health Training Need

- One of the greatest barriers to the provision of mental health services is the **lack of a trained workforce**
- This leads to unrecognized, undiagnosed, and untreated mental health issues that are costly and even lethal
- An IOM 2012 Report² suggests that the “breadth and magnitude of inadequate workforce training and personnel shortages have grown to such proportions, says the committee, that no single approach can adequately address the issue”

² Eden, J., Maslow, K., Le, M., & Blazer, D. (Eds.). (2012). The Mental Health and Substance Use Workforce for Older Adults: In Whose Hands? National Academies Press

CADER Behavioral Health Programs

Training for AAA Providers and Senior Center Staff

Senior Centers are the community focal point for social and support services to elders, families, and caregivers. There is limited information available on best practices in training Senior Center staff in behavioral health issues. CADER has trained thousands of providers in these organizations across the country.

CADER Behavioral Health Programs

Training for Faith-Based Organizations

CADER offers behavioral health training to faith-based leaders across Massachusetts. During episodes of stress, grief, and depression, older adults are more likely to turn to clergy when they have behavioral health concerns. Currently, we are bringing together faith-based leaders and health and social services providers who have completed the training to increase collaboration in order to support older adults.

CADER Behavioral Health Programs

Training and Age Friendly Initiatives

CADER, in collaboration with the Age-Friendly New Bedford Coalition, received funding from Tufts Health Plan Foundation to build an anti-stigma campaign focused on training community providers, reducing the stigma of mental illness and increasing awareness of the effects of social isolation in the community.

Greatest Gains in Pre-Post Competency: AAA Providers and Senior Center Staff

- Preliminary analysis for completers show that 100% of competencies are statistically significant from pre to post competency score
- 94% of participants “agree” or “strongly agree” that they have a greater understanding of how and where to make referrals for behavioral health services such as mental health and recovery support
- 90% of the participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the information in the training program was effectively presented

AAA Providers and Senior Center Staff

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- 90% of the participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the information in the training program was effectively presented,
- 94% reported that because of this training program, they believe they will be a more effective worker in serving older adults with behavioral health concerns

Key-informant Interviews

AAA Providers and Senior Center Staff

- Participants mentioned that they felt **more knowledgeable** about the various mental health issues impacting older adults after completing this certificate.

One participant shared:

*“I feel that before this program, I have missed many cues during my conversations with my clients. Having taken the modules, **it has expanded my personal knowledge to identify the cues and ask additional information which then turned into a conversation which then turned into a referral which then turned into the help that the person might need.**”*

Greatest Gains in Pre-Post Competency: Faith-Based Organizations

Greatest Competency Increase By Course



Greatest Gains in Pre-Post Competency: Age Friendly Initiative

- The greatest changes in competencies reflect some of the most pressing needs for training the workforce in behavioral health.
 - Ability to identify mental health problems
 - Knowing how to intervene
 - Where to refer for treatment
 - Addressing suicide.

“LOVED this course. I think the case examples presented were wonderful & thought provoking. By far the best class I have taken in a long time.”

Learner Feedback

- ***Mental Health and Aging Issues.*** *“This course was extremely useful in identifying mental health issues for referral. I thought I could recognize several conditions before but did not have the confidence and now I do.”*
- ***Mental Wellness and Resilience among Older Immigrants and Refugees.*** *“I enjoyed the course and believe it helped me to understand more fully the process of immigration and the difficulties people face when coming to a new country. I believe the things I learned will help me to be better able to help anyone who is struggling and be more aware of what they are facing.”*

Learner Feedback

- ❑ ***Suicide Prevention among Older Adults.*** *“This course was presented in a clear manner with many links to enhance knowledge and competency in the subject of suicide prevention.”*
- ❑ ***Substance Abuse among Older Adults.*** *“I was especially struck by the stats about elder substance use and the risks for suicide. I have become more aware of the importance of not taking for granted that other assumed sources, such as an elders doctor or family, will notice or intervene when an elder is at risk. I have made an effort to raise awareness about these shocking statistics.”*

Implications and Next Steps

- Competency-based training is critical and can lead to earlier identification of mental health and substance use issues, which can mean less cost to communities and less distress to older adults and their families
- This is a cost effective and easily replicable program using online training to enhance the skills of the health and social service workforce
- The online curriculum is standardized and can be provided to agencies and providers across the country
- This is an efficient way to provide this much needed training, and can be a great step forward in addressing this workforce and population need

Contact Information

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