Bridging the IDD-MH Training Gap: National Center for START Services’™ Innovative Virtual Professional Development Courses

Mission: Increase the competence and confidence of professionals to provide effective services, support, and treatment to people with IDDMH and their families through evidence-informed instruction and best practices.

Poster Objectives
1. Describe key information, characteristics and methodology associated with PD courses
2. Describe the prior experience related to IDDMH of course participants
3. Quantify changes in perceived abilities after completion of the course
4. Identify additional training needs identified by PD course participants

Course Characteristics
- Six weekly live, virtual sessions
- 105 minutes
- Blend of direct instruction & interactive elements
- Sessions recorded
- Course materials + supplemental materials provided, updated regularly
- UNH CEUs
- Certificate of Completion

Methods
Enrollment
- Shared with START Network via NCSS newsletters; open to all
- Group enrollment process for organizations

Session Facilitation
- Leveraging technology to promote engagement and collaborative learning
- Diverse facilitator pairings including people with lived experience of IDDMH
- Weekly inter session meetings to review session surveys with facilitators; build the “You Spoke We Listened” slide based on session survey feedback

Evaluation Measures
- Pre survey: Demographics, prior experience/background, knowledge-based questions
- Post survey: Self-assessment, overall evaluation, knowledge-based questions (same as pre)
- Session survey: Overall satisfaction & room for comments/questions

I cannot tell you how much I am enjoying this series. Having served this population for years it feels like a breath of fresh air to discuss these services with such compassion and hope!

-PD Course Participant

Pre-Survey

1. Identify how common mental health conditions present in persons with IDDMH.
2. Identify the most common mental health conditions within the IDDMH population.
3. Clarify differences between presentation and diagnosis.
4. Identify skills and approaches to crisis assessments.
5. Integrate information into disposition recommendations.

Post-Survey

1. Demonstrate an understanding of IDDMH and the presentation of mental health conditions.
2. Demonstrate a biopsychosocial understanding of strengths and vulnerabilities.
3. Apply strengths-based therapeutic practices, interventions, and skills.
4. Effectively facilitate therapeutic activities.
5. Engage in positive and wellness-focused interactions.

Participant Identified Training Needs
1. Addition of Applied Positive Psychology course (October 2023)
2. Developing a course for counselors/therapists
3. Designing “Level II” options for those who wish to continue their learning
4. Adjusted outreach schedule to raise post-survey completion