Who We Are

The **Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research** (CADER) is located at Boston University School of Social Work and is dedicated to strengthening the workforce that provides health and long-term supports and services to older adults and people with disabilities.

➢CADER offers a wide range of online training courses and certificate programs for learners at all levels of experience.

➢CADER programs and courses apply a competency-focused approach to comprehensive training, committed to enhancing the skills of practitioners in the field.

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CADER Program Benefits

➤ **Accessible -** Our courses are online and self-paced, allowing you to complete them anywhere and at any time

➤ **Quality Content** - Content developed by subject matter experts and reviewed by practitioners

➤ **Skill-based** - Tied to specific competencies needed for effective practice in the field

➤ **Professional Development** - Receive credentials from a nationally respected university that enhances your skill set and improves your qualifications

➤ **Make a Difference** - Training is designed so that you can put it into practice immediately, helping to improve the lives of older adults and people with disabilities

➤ **Learner Support** - Our staff will provide training support to help learners complete our programs

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NCOA & BU CADER Training Partnership

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) and the Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research (CADER) at Boston University have partnered to bring CADER's high quality online learning to our partners in community-based organizations – including our NISC Affiliate members. For more than 80 years, senior centers have been their community's "go to" place for opportunities to age well. As the demands and expectations of senior centers change to meet growing and diverse needs, we want to ensure that professionals working in senior centers have the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of older adults.

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https://thenetwork.bu.edu/ncoa-training-portal/

Enhancing Behavioral Health Competencies for Senior Center Staff:
Lessons Learned from Workforce Training Efforts

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Background

➤ In 2019, the U.S. population aged 65 and older numbered 54.1 million, or 16% of the total population

➤ As the population of older adults grows, so does the prevalence of mental health and substance use concerns among this population

➤ Expansion of interventions to support older adults' mental health and wellness is an important preventative measure

➤ Senior Centers are an ideal location for behavioral health education programs as they are the go-to place for many older adults

➤ Competency-based trainings are a pragmatic and effective way to enhance the skillsets of staff at community-based agencies to identify, support, and refer older adults to necessary care

Behavioral Health in Aging Certificate

➢ The Behavioral Health and Aging (BHA) Certificate was created by the Center for Aging & Disability Education & Research (CADER) at Boston University School of Social Work

➢ BHA Certificate is designed to improve the skills of staff at community-based organizations using an online self-paced curriculum

Five Courses:

1 **Mental Health and Aging Issues**

2 **Suicide Prevention among Older Adults**

3 **Mental Wellness and Resilience among Older Immigrants and Refugees**

4 **Substance Use among Older Adults**

5 **Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias**

BHA Course Participants

A total of 250 senior center staff in Illinois (38% of learners), Florida (38% of learners), and Wisconsin (24% of learners) completed the BHA online certificate program from 2018-2019 in collaboration with NCOA.

Demographics:
- 91% identified as women
- 70% identified as white
- Average age was 47 (range 21-75)
- 38% held a bachelor's degree

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Results: Competencies

At the beginning and end of each course, learners were asked to rate their skill level in various competencies using the scale: 0 - Not skilled at all; 1 - Beginning skill; 2 - Moderate skill; 3 - Advanced skill; 4 - Expert skill.

➤ All competencies were significantly improved after taking the associated course (p < .001)

➤ Many participants reported no experience or beginning experience skill level in key behavioral health competencies in the pre-course assessment

➤ After taking the BHA certificate program, the proportion of participants reporting moderate to advanced skills increased
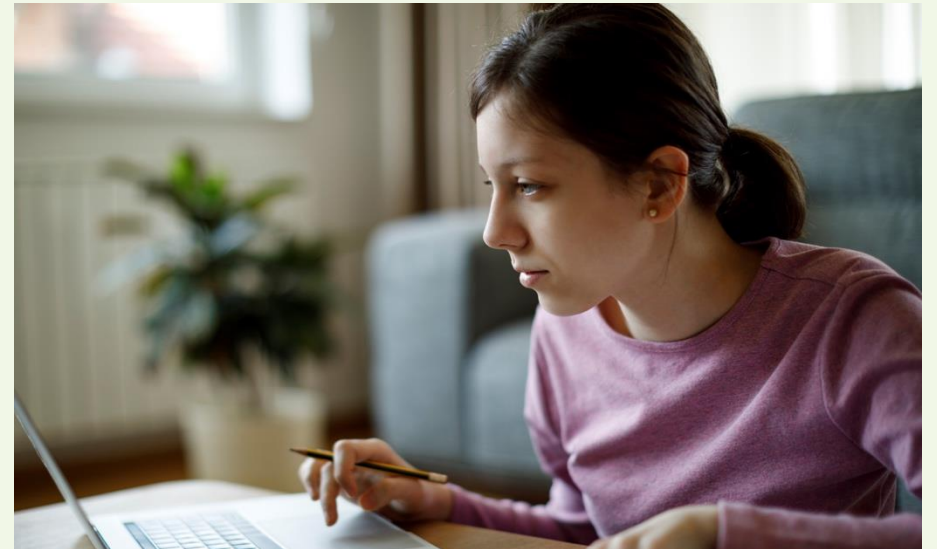
Behavioral Health in Aging Certificate: Mean Competency Ratings Pre-Course and Post-Course
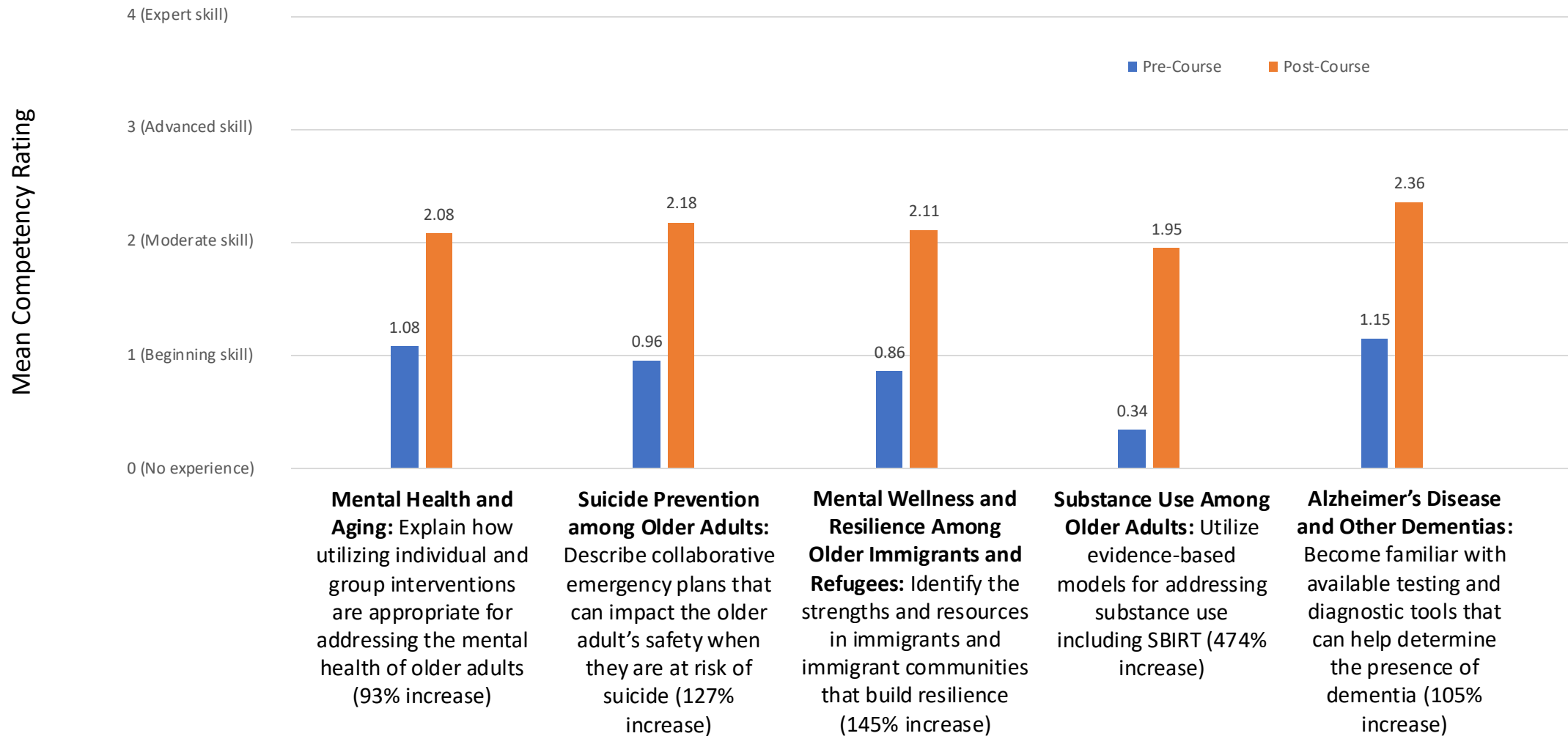
Training Participant Interviews

All participants who completed the BHA program were invited to participate in an interview

➢16 semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted between 2019-2020

➢The purpose of the key informant interviews was to gather information on:

➢facilitators and barriers to completion of the online certificate program

➢the perceived importance of the program content

➢the impact of the program on their daily interactions and work

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Results: Qualitative Learner Feedback

Memorable aspects of the program

"Defining of needs of diverse populations was most powerful since I am a suburban kid who doesn't know that. Even though you think you know what [immigrants and refugees] need, you don't know. Cultural sensitivity or humility - even though we talk about it, because the module was so in-depth, it was more powerful."

Changes in thoughts, skills, and behaviors

"When going through [the program], I was thinking of some people and wishing I could see them again, to watch their behaviors now that I had this other information."

Individual impact

"I have an increased confidence in addressing or evaluating what I'm seeing."

Organizational impact

"I live in a small rural community, and we do have connections to our mental health providers, but we have very few mental health providers. So, I think I would encourage employees to really start reaching out to them to see what we could start offering jointly."

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Summary of Findings

➢ Senior center staff who are appropriately trained are well-positioned to support older adults during periods of crisis.

➢ Training staff in community-based agencies can be a powerful intervention to increase knowledge and skills in behavioral health, which can result in better outcomes for older adults.

➢ High completion rates, significant changes in competencies, and a desire for more training, all speak to the success of this program.

➢ People who completed the BHA program were satisfied with the course materials and described numerous opportunities for professional growth at the individual and organizational levels.

Conclusions

➢ National organizations such as the Institute of Medicine, SAMHSA, NCOA, and the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging have been calling attention to the need for training in the area of behavioral health and aging and for "critical strategies to address the current and future shortfall" (NCOA, 2022). Training staff at senior centers is one strategy to address this need.

➢ Additional state and federal funding is needed to support workforce training in order to sustain these important training initiatives and improve the care of older adults.

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Volunteer Engagement in the Aging Network

Importance of Volunteers

- **Volunteers are a key human resource**
- They participate in **programmatic, fundraising, and administrative services**
- They provide **a connection to the greater community**
- They may also be **future leaders in your organization**
- Sizeable overlap between people who volunteer and **provide financial support** to organizations (2022):
  - Fidelity Charitable found that 62% of charitable donors are recent volunteers
  - 39% of volunteers support a nonprofit by volunteering before they make financial donations
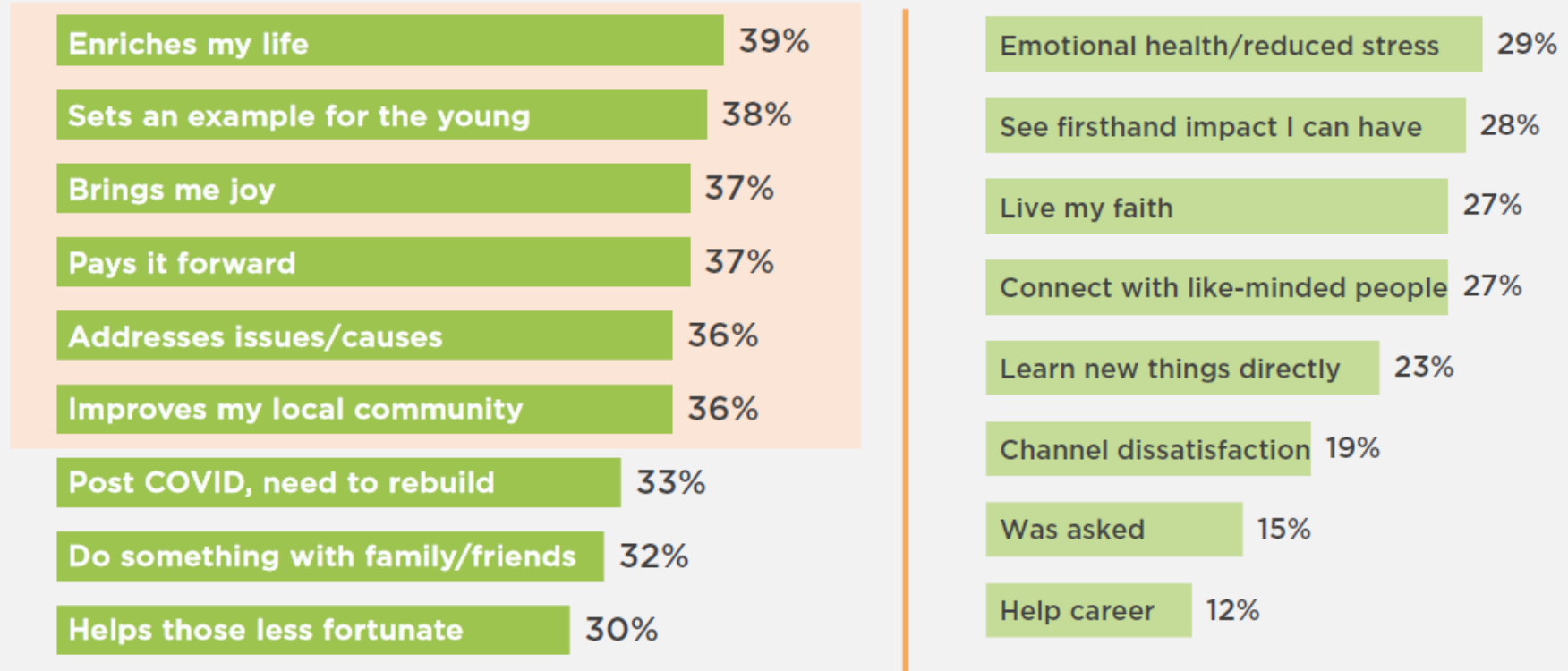
According to the Administration for Community Living, the economic value of Area Agencies on Aging unpaid volunteers in 2019 was approximately $1.7 billion.

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Why People Volunteer

Personal Motivations for Getting Involved and Taking Action to Make a Difference
% Selected Response

Motivation	%
Enriches my life	39%
Sets an example for the young	38%
Brings me joy	37%
Pays it forward	37%
Addresses issues/causes	36%
Improves my local community	36%
Post COVID, need to rebuild	33%
Do something with family/friends	32%
Helps those less fortunate	30%
Emotional health/reduced stress	29%
See firsthand impact I can have	28%
Live my faith	27%
Connect with like-minded people	27%
Learn new things directly	23%
Channel dissatisfaction	19%
Was asked	15%
Help career	12%

Points of Light: Engaging Americans in Civic Life (May 2020)

Course Overview

**Course Features: 2.5 hour** online course

Goal: To provide an overview of the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for you to assess and strengthen your volunteer program. Sample forms and worksheets will be provided for each section making the course **practical** for COAs.

What you will learn:

➢ **Planning** - Describe the components of your volunteer program

➢ Develop a targeted volunteer **recruitment** campaign

➢ **Train** and **manage** program for effective **retention**

➢ Learn how to identify process and outcome measures to **evaluate** your volunteer program
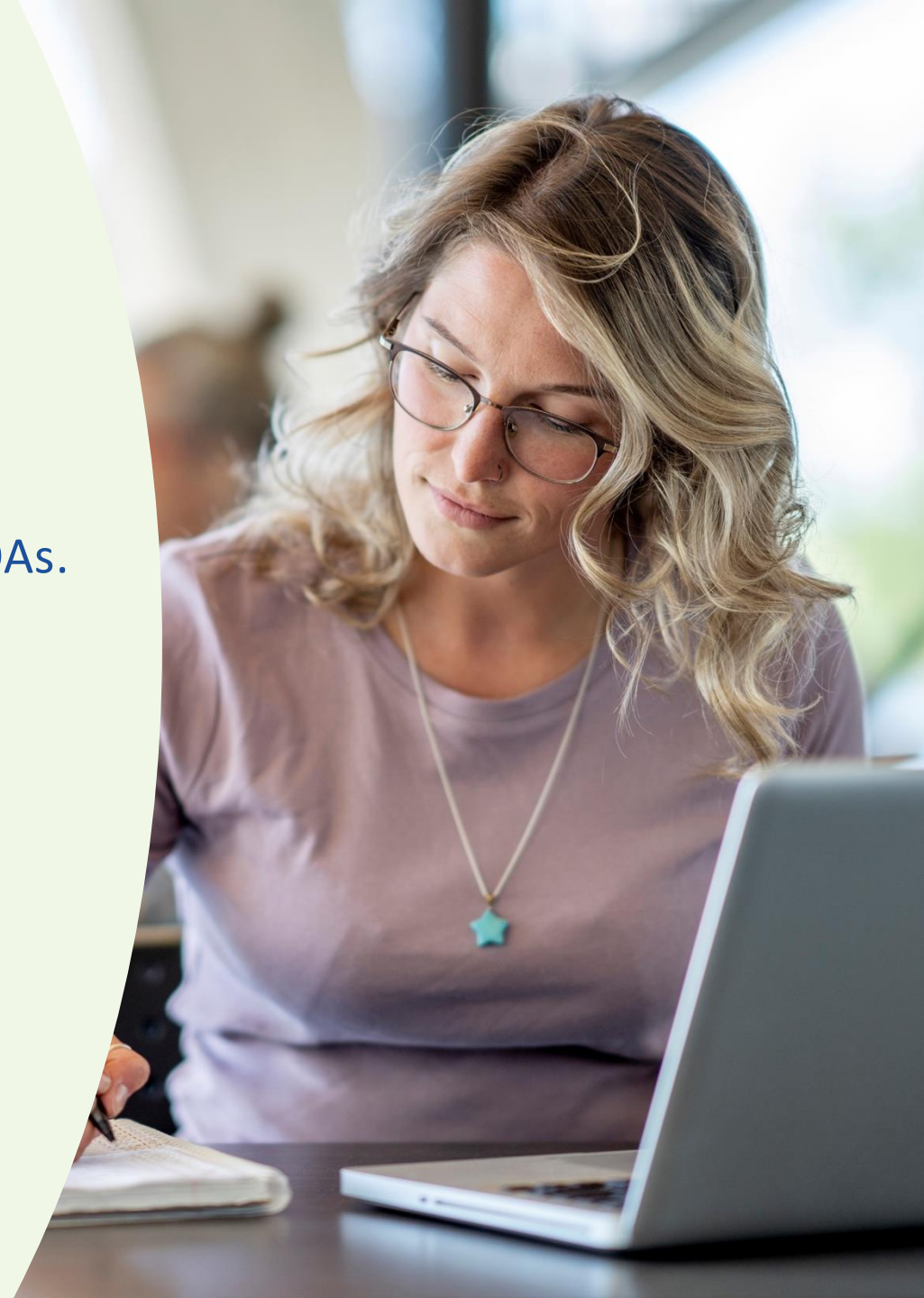
Course Content Areas

Planning
- Define your mission
- Assess your organization
- Develop you volunteer program
- Describe volunteer positions

Recruiting
- Assess your image
- Decide how to recruit
- Develop your message
- Find volunteers
- Select volunteers
- Screen volunteers

Training
- Develop your orientation program
- Assign orientation leaders
- Schedule orientation
- Develop materials
- Conduct the orientation
- Train your volunteers

Managing
- Assign a supervisor
- Communicate with volunteers regularly
- Evaluate your volunteers
- Avoid volunteer burnout
- Recognize your volunteers' efforts

Evaluating
- Describe your program
- Design the evaluation
- Collect data
- Analyze the data
- Report results

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Course : Worksheets and examples

Job Description Worksheet

Scenario:

You are the volunteer coordinator at a COA. You need to hire 5 volunteer front desk receptionists.

The template can help to create a job description.

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JOB TITLE

Organization name

Organization mission

Contact name & email

Component	Details
Direct Supervisor	*The title of the person to whom the volunteer will report*
Location	*The title of the person to whom the volunteer will report*
Hours/Requirements	*The approximate number of days/hours required per week and flexibility in scheduling. Also, the time period in which the volunteer will serve*
Qualifications	*Education, experience, knowledge and skills (e.g. web development or communication) required as well as requirements for background checks*
Responsibilities	*Major duties as it relates to accomplishing the purpose of the role*
Training & Support	*Resources available to volunteers including on the job instruction*
Benefits	*Insurance, parking, events to recognize volunteers, and other benefits*

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VOLUNTEER FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST

Organization XYZ

Our Mission: To support the aging experience for the older adults in our community and make real differences in their lives.

Contact:
Stephanie Pine, Center Director
Spine@organizationxyz.com

Component	Details
Direct Supervisor	Stephanie Pine, Center Director
Location	Senior Center
Hours/Requirements	At least 3 days/week between 1:00 pm - 4:00pm At least 1-year commitment
Qualifications	Vaccination requirement (flu and COVID-19), mandatory background check; Office/Administrative experience is welcome but not required
Responsibilities	Answer phones, greet members and visitors, assist with program information, resource sharing, and activity registration
Training & Support	Senior center staff will provide training and guidance
Benefits	Volunteer gala, mileage reimbursement, CPR certification training

Sample Worksheet : Evaluate Your Volunteer Program

Sample evaluation questions:

Adequate Support	Were you satisfied with the supervisor support you received? ☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied
Meaningful Work	I feel that my volunteer work has an impact. ☐ Almost Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Seldom ☐ Never
Physical or mental well-being as a result of volunteering	I have experienced increased physical or mental well-being since becoming a volunteer. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

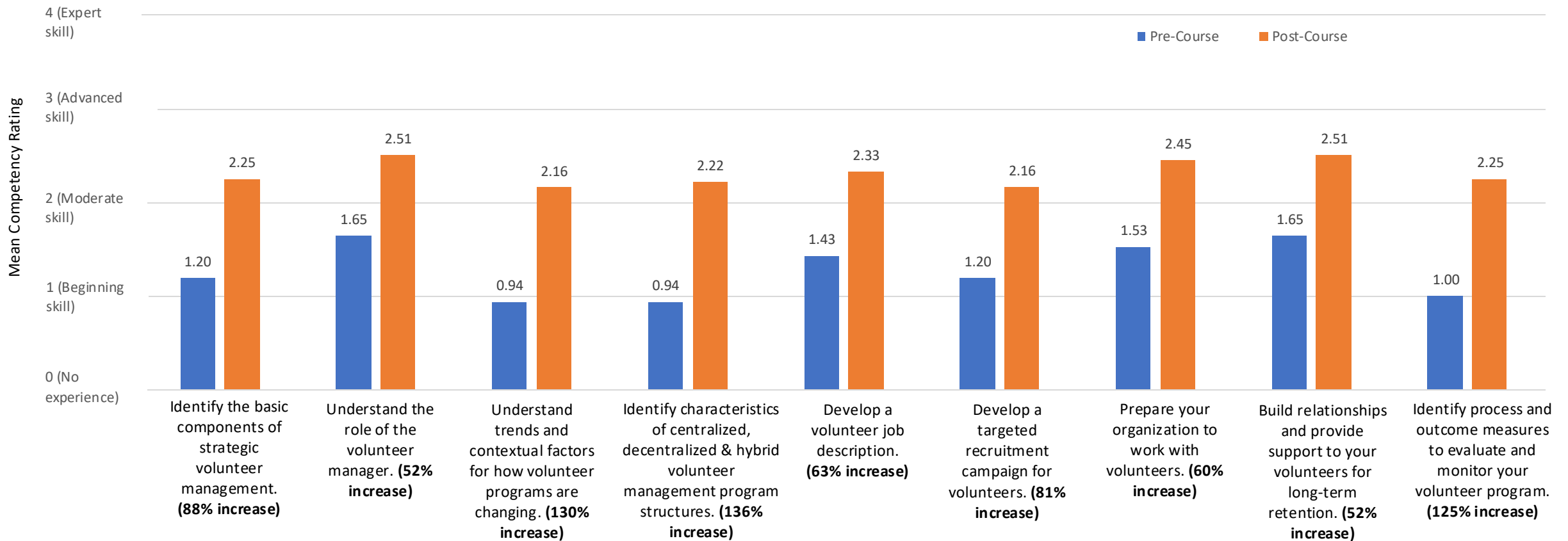# Volunteer Engagement in the Aging Network:

Course Evaluation Results

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Results: Competencies

At the beginning and end of the course, learners were asked to rate their skill level in nine competencies using the scale: 0 - Not skilled at all; 1 - Beginning skill; 2 - Moderate skill; 3 - Advanced skill; 4 - Expert skill.

Mean Competency Ratings Pre-Course and Post-Course

Mean Competency Rating

- Pre-Course
- Post-Course

Competency	Pre-Course	Post-Course
Identify the basic components of strategic volunteer management. **(88% increase)**	1.20	2.25
Understand the role of the volunteer manager. **(52% increase)**	1.65	2.51
Understand trends and contextual factors for how volunteer programs are changing. **(130% increase)**	0.94	2.16
Identify characteristics of centralized, decentralized & hybrid volunteer management program structures. **(136% increase)**	0.94	2.22
Develop a volunteer job description. **(63% increase)**	1.43	2.33
Develop a targeted recruitment campaign for volunteers. **(81% increase)**	1.20	2.16
Prepare your organization to work with volunteers. **(60% increase)**	1.53	2.45
Build relationships and provide support to your volunteers for long-term retention. **(52% increase)**	1.65	2.51
Identify process and outcome measures to evaluate and monitor your volunteer program. **(125% increase)**	1.00	2.25

Results: Course Objectives

At the end of the course, learners were asked whether they felt that the course met the learning objectives using the scale: 1- Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - Neutral; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree.

Learning Objective	Percent of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
Describe and understand the components of volunteer management.	96%
Understand different methods to develop or strengthen your volunteer program.	98%
Identify ways to make your volunteer program more inclusive.	95%
Engage your volunteers for effective retention.	93%
Identify process and outcome measures to evaluate your volunteer program.	95%

Results: Course Evaluation

At the end of the course, learners were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of course evaluation statements using the scale: 1- Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - Neutral; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree; 6 - Non-applicable.

Evaluation Statement	Percent of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	**98%**
The course materials were suitable and useful.	**96%**
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	**94%**
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	**92%**

Learner Feedback

What did you find most helpful about this course?

Sample documents	• "The samples of forms and resources are always helpful with examples." • "Downloadable content to use and templates." • "The resource documents for future reference." • "The Resources and Examples because I'm a visual person."
Concrete steps	• "Step-by-step instructions on volunteer recognition, recruitment, and engagement." • "Helpful examples of documents and concrete steps to take in order to improve our volunteer program." • "Strategies for creating inclusive volunteer programs."
Information on volunteer retention	• "How to create a plan to retain volunteers." • "It had helpful ideas about volunteer retention and surveys that I hadn't considered."
Information on volunteer management and training	• "The volunteer management checklist will be very helpful to me moving forward." • "Onboarding and Training." • "Management and training to volunteers."

Learner Feedback

What changes do you anticipate making after taking this course?

Volunteer job descriptions	• "Write specific job descriptions." • "More clearly defined job descriptions for volunteers."
Volunteer management	• "Creating a formalized volunteer management process." • "Implement a strategic plan."
Volunteer recognition and support	• "We will be adding more ways to recognize volunteers, getting volunteer feedback and adding more training." • "More check ins with volunteers to see how things are going, providing feedback, and thanking them." • "Ask current volunteers for feedback to give me insight as to how to make their experiences better. Increase diversity of volunteer pool. Increase recognition of volunteers."
Evaluations	• "I am going to create a survey for volunteers to provide feedback about what would make their jobs better/easier/more fulfilling." • "Incorporating surveys and evaluations." • "Better assessment of our volunteer management processes."

Learner Feedback – General Comments

"Great course, so helpful suggestions that we will incorporate in our volunteer program."

"This was an extremely helpful course, especially in providing ways in how to examine certain processes currently in place."

"I would recommend this course to anybody managing volunteers."

"Thank you for opening this up to the public. Volunteers make a lot of necessary change that would otherwise be unattainable. It's important to me as a Volunteer Coordinator that I am able to communicate the huge difference they make, and provide a solid, healthy volunteer experience for them too."

"I feel that this improved my knowledge on how to manage volunteers at my center."

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