



School of Social Work:  
Center for Aging & Disability Education & Research

# Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) Certificate Training Initiative FY2024

**Evaluation Report from the Center for Aging & Disability  
Education & Research (CADER)  
Boston University School of Social Work**

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## Evaluation Report

### I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The EOEA/CADER training initiative targeted aging and disability network staff across Massachusetts, employed at Aging Service Access Points (ASAPs) and Councils on Aging (COAs). The enrollment period was October 23, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Learners had two different certificate options:

1. **Behavioral Health in Aging:** This 19-hour certificate program included 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
2. **Person-Centered Case Management:** This 24-hour certificate program included six courses:
  1. Core Issues in Aging and Disability
  2. Understanding Consumer Control, Person-Centered Planning, and Self-Direction
  3. Assessment with Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities
  4. A Guide to the Aging and Disability Networks
  5. Care Management Practice
  6. Care Transitions

### Completion Rates

#### **ASAP Learners**

The overall completion rate for ASAP learners was 91%. 119 ASAP learners completed the Behavioral Health in Aging certificate, and 166 ASAP learners completed the Person-Centered Case Management certificate.

#### **COA Learners**

The overall completion rate for COA learners was 72%. 17 COA learners completed the Behavioral Health in Aging certificate, and 24 COA learners completed the Person-Centered Case Management certificate.

### Learner Demographics

#### **ASAP Learners**

The majority of ASAP learners were White (n=146, 61%), women (n=218, 87%), and had at least a Bachelor’s degree (n=190, 74%). Most learners were 25-40 years old (n=135, 54%) or 41-55 years old (n=69, 28%). Many learners were employed as case managers (n=100, 39%) or service coordinators (n=61, 24%).

#### **COA Learners**

The majority of COA learners were White (n=35, 92%), women (n=36, 95%), and had at least a Bachelor’s degree (n=28, 74%). 45% of learners (n=17) were in the 41-55 age group. Many learners

were employed as outreach coordinators (n=12, 32%), directors or assistant directors (n=8, 21%), or social workers (n=6, 16%).

## II. EVALUATION

### Competency Results

At the beginning and end of each course, learners were asked to rate their skill level in various competencies (0 - Not skilled at all; 1 - Beginning skill; 2 - Moderate skill; 3 - Advanced skill; 4 - Expert skill). For the Behavioral Health in Aging certificate, the mean competency rating increased significantly ( $p < .001$ ) from 1.64 on the pre-course self-assessment to 2.39 on the post-course self-assessment. For the Person-Centered Case Management certificate, the mean competency rating increased significantly ( $p < .001$ ) from 1.68 on the pre-course self-assessment to 2.46 on the post-course self-assessment. Increases in competency ratings demonstrate an increase in skill level.

### Learner Feedback

#### ***Behavioral Health in Aging Certificate Program***

After completing the program, learners felt more knowledgeable about the stages and types of dementia, evidence-based treatment models, identifying resources for clients, and navigating ethical dilemmas. Multiple learners said that the knowledge they gained will be helpful in their job. Learners intended to make their organizations more welcoming to immigrants and to bring more awareness to suicide prevention.

***“I am more knowledgeable about mental health issues for older adults and [I am] able to better access resources and or point clients in a helpful direction.”*** -COA Learner  
Mental Health and Aging Issues course,  
Behavioral Health in Aging Certificate

#### ***Person-Centered Case Management Certificate Program***

Learners who completed the program described feeling better prepared to conduct assessments, engage in care management, and to utilize appropriate language. They appreciated the information that the program provided on advance care directives, available resources, and policies. Many learners stated that they will advocate more for consumers and strive to better understand their clients’ backgrounds and experiences when providing services.

***“I will incorporate what I have gained in the course to my daily practice as a case manager, ensuring that I am aware of my client’s backgrounds and to provide the utmost care while incorporating them as much as they can.”*** -ASAP Learner  
Care Transitions course, Person-Centered Case  
Management Certificate

## III. CONCLUSION

Learners in the EOEA/CADER training initiative gained key skills that they will apply in their job roles to provide better informed and culturally competent care. Learners provided positive feedback on the training and reported feeling more confident in their ability to help their clients.

The outcomes of this training initiative highlight the importance of professional training for those working with older adults and people with disabilities. We look forward to continued partnerships with EOEA to enhance the skillset of this workforce and to improve the care and services provided to older adults and people with disabilities throughout Massachusetts.