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

New York Connects

Information and Assistance Program
Person-Centered Options Counseling Program

2024

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

February 2025

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

Table of Contents

I. Introduction 4
II. New York Connects Information and Assistance Program 4
A. Program Overview 4
B. Program Participation 4
C. Learner Demographics 4
D. Results 7
1. Core Issues in Aging and Disability 7
2. A Guide to the Aging and Disability Networks 10
3. Assessment with Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities 12
4. The Universe of New York State Programs: Identifying Sources of Support 15
5. New York No Wrong Door in Action 15
III. New York Connects Person-Centered Options Counseling Program 16
A. Program Overview 16
B. Program Participation 16
C. Learner Demographics 16
D. Results 18
1. Understanding Consumer Control, Person-Centered Planning, and Self-Direction 18
2. Care Transitions 21
3. Mental Health Training in Options Counseling 24
4. A Foundation in Ethics, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving 26
IV. Additional Assessments 29
A. Workforce Readiness Assessment 29
B. Job Role Assessment 34
V. Summary and Conclusion 36

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

Executive Summary

Through a partnership between NY Connects and the Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research (CADER) at Boston University, information and assistance (I&A) specialists and options counselors throughout the state of New York completed custom-developed online training programs. The goal of the trainings was to ensure that No Wrong Door (NWD) staff can effectively support clients entering New York's NWD system. I&A specialists completed the New York Connects Information and Assistance (I&A) Program. Options counselors completed the I&A program followed by the New York Connects Person-Centered Options Counseling (PCC) Program.

For both training programs, learners showed statistically significant increases in all course competencies, indicating an increase in skill level. This is noteworthy given that this training group was quite experienced with over half of learners reporting six or more years of experience working in the aging and/or disability fields. Competency increases did not differ based on whether a learner was an I&A specialist or an options counselor. Competency increases also did not differ based on whether a learner has previously completed CADER's Case Management certificate program.

Learner feedback was positive. Upon completing the courses, learners stated that they will be better listeners and communicators, more knowledgeable about resources for clients, more mindful of the signs of mental health concerns, more understanding of different cultures, and that they will support clients in making their own decisions.

Results from the workforce readiness assessment indicated that learners were more prepared to perform their jobs upon completing the training. Results from the job roles assessment indicated that learners mostly understood the difference between the I&A and options counselor job roles, although there was room for improvement.

Overall, through the NY Connects training program, learners gained skills and became more prepared for the workforce. CADER looks forward to a continued partnership with New York Connects to enhance the skills and training of NWD staff.

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

Evaluation Report

I. Introduction

The Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research (CADER) at Boston University is dedicated to bringing evidence-based research into practice through workforce innovation in the aging and disability fields. CADER programs and courses apply a competency-focused approach to comprehensive training, committed to enhancing the skills of practitioners in the field at all levels of experience.

In partnership with New York Connects and the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), CADER offered two online certificate programs to information and assistance specialists and options counselors throughout the state of New York: the NY Connects Information and Assistance (I&A) Program, and the NY Connects Person-Centered Options Counseling (PCC) Program. I&A specialists completed the I&A program only; options counselors completed both programs.

This evaluation report presents findings from the two training programs, including learner completion rates, demographics, outcomes from competency-based self-assessments, and learner feedback. Information was collected during the enrollment period of April 3, 2024 to December 31, 2024. CADER provided program support, including technical support, learner follow-ups, and course completion reminders. CADER tracked learner progress and provided monthly progress reports.

II. New York Connects Information and Assistance Program

A. Program Overview

The NY Connects I&A program is an online, self-paced certificate program that includes five courses:

1. Core Issues in Aging and Disability
2. A Guide to the Aging and Disability Networks
3. Assessment with Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities
4. The Universe of New York State Programs: Identifying Sources of Support *(custom course newly developed based on PowerPoint presentations provided by NY agencies)*
5. New York No Wrong Door in Action *(custom newly developed course)*

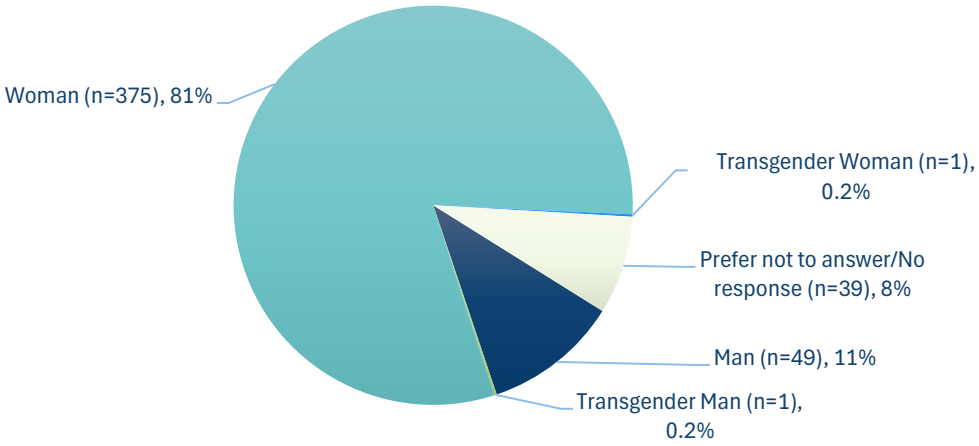
B. Program Participation

Out of the 503 learners who enrolled in the program, 465 completed it. The completion rate was 92%. Of the 465 learners who completed the program, 143 were I&A specialists and only completed the I&A program, and 322 were options counselors and completed the PCC program after the I&A program.

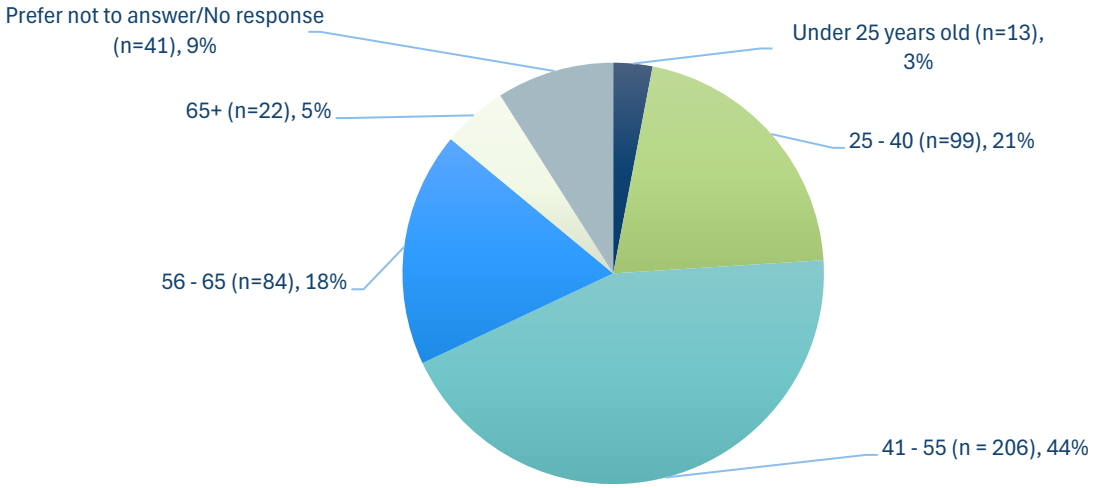
C. Learner Demographics

Learners self-reported demographic information during program registration. The following charts provide demographics (gender, age, race, educational attainment, and years of experience working in the aging and/or disability fields) for the 465 learners who completed the program.

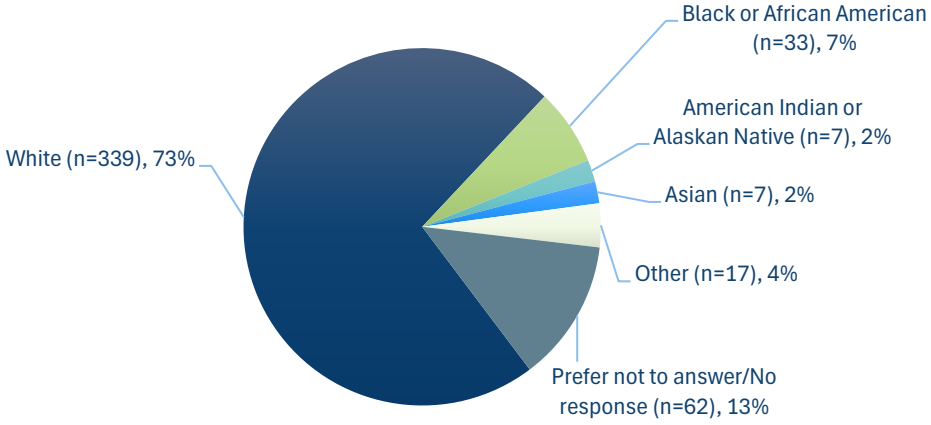
Learners by Gender



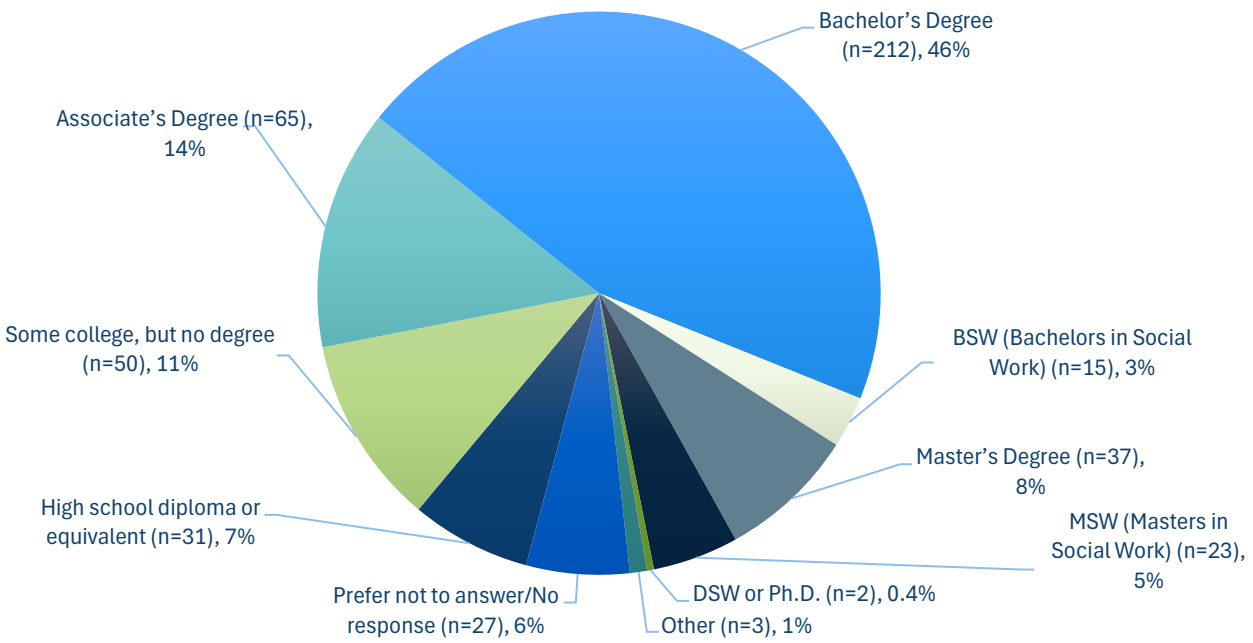
Learners by Age



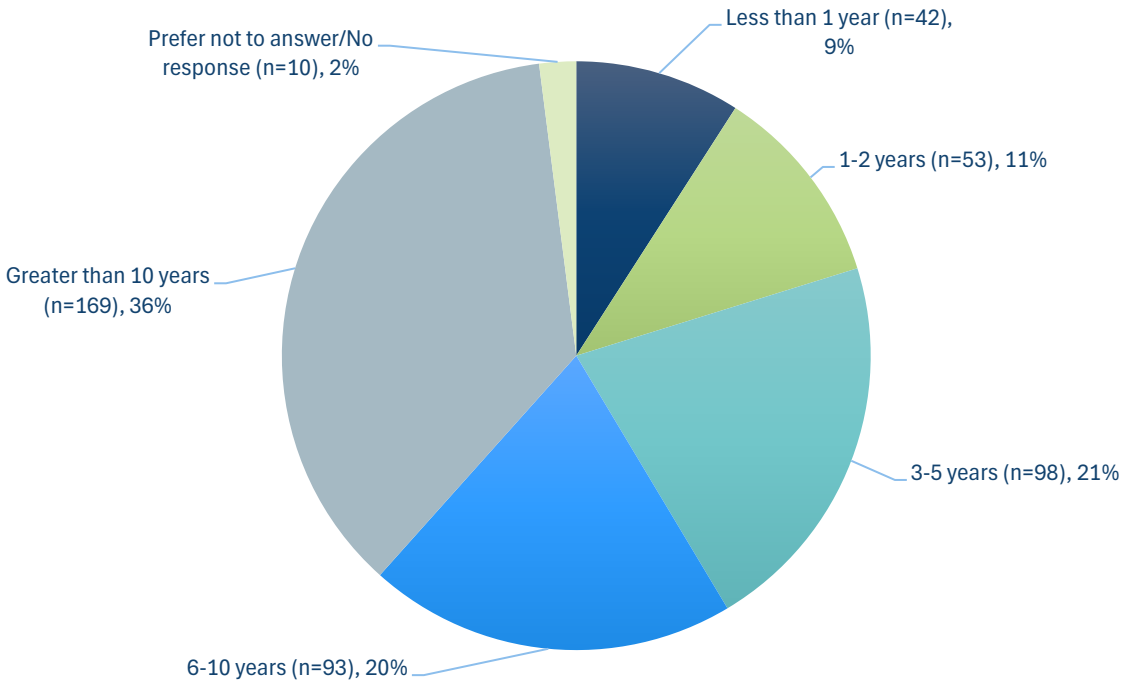
Learners by Race



Learners by Education



Learners by Years of Experience Working in the Aging and/or Disability Fields



D. Results

The following sections provide evaluation results by course. The evaluation results include:

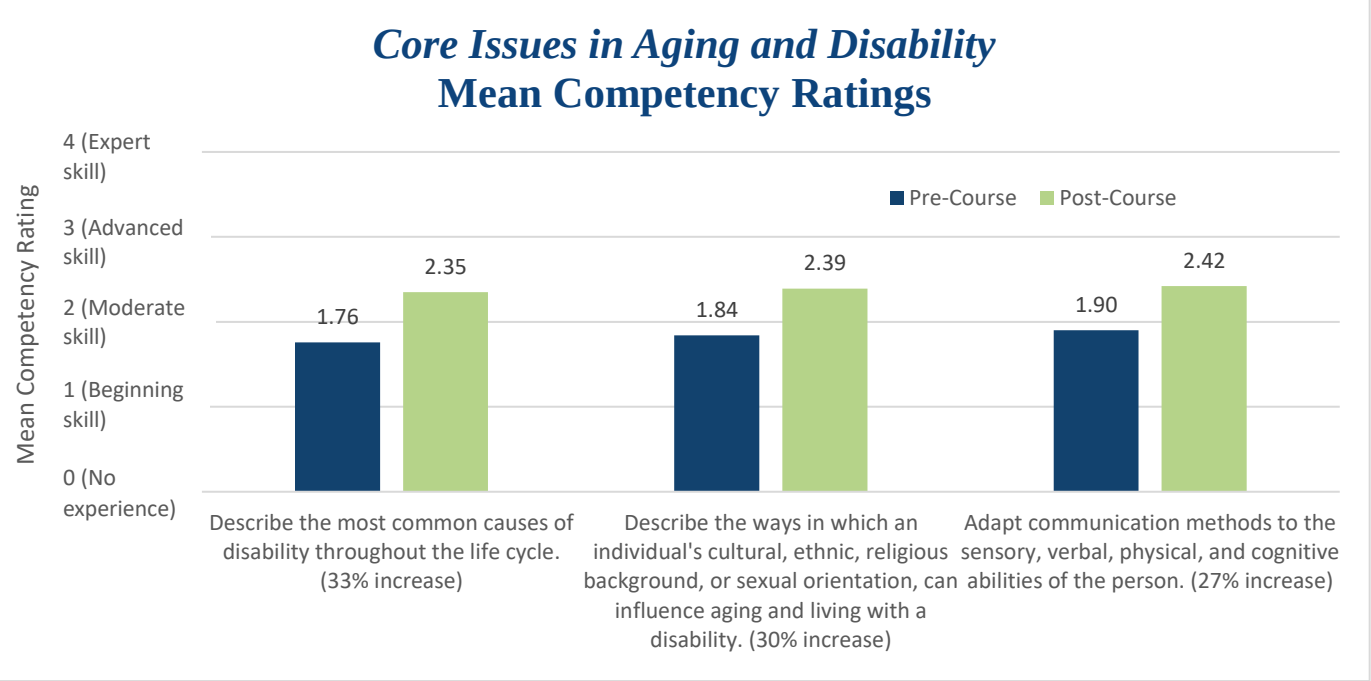
- **Competency Results:** At the beginning and end of each course, learners were asked to rate their skill level on competencies using the following scale: 0 - Not skilled at all; 1 - Beginning skill; 2 - Moderate skill; 3 - Advanced skill; 4 - Expert skill.
- **Competency Results by Learner Program:** Competency results were further assessed by dividing learners into four groups based on certificate program enrollment and looking for differences between the groups.
- **Course Evaluation Results:** At the end of each course, learners were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of course evaluation statements using the following scale: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neutral; Agree; Strongly agree; Not-applicable.
- **Learner Feedback:** Learners answered three open-ended questions upon completion of each course:
    - What changes do you anticipate making after taking this course?
    - What did you find most helpful about this course?
    - Your feedback is very important to us! Please share any comments about this course with us in the space provided.

1. Core Issues in Aging and Disability

This course covered key issues in aging and disability, including the influence of cultural, ethnic, and personal identities; the philosophy of consumer choice; functional capacity; and resources and programs for supporting older adults and persons with disabilities.

Competency Results

For all course competencies, mean competency ratings significantly increased ($p < .001$) from the pre-course competency self-assessment to the post-course competency self-assessment. Percent increases ranged from 15% to 33%. The following graph shows mean competency ratings for the three course competencies with the greatest percent increases.



Competency Results by Learner Program

Competencies were further assessed by looking for differences between four groups of learners: learners who completed only the I&A program; learners who completed the I&A and PCC programs; learners who completed the I&A program and had previously completed CADER's Case Management (CM) program; and learners who completed the I&A program, the PCC program, and had previously completed CADER's Case Management program.

The results in the table below show no differences in competency ratings between the four groups.

Competency		**Learner Group (based on programs completed)**			
		I&A only	**I&A and PCC**	**I&A and CM**	**I&A, PCC, and CM**
Understand the scope of physical, psychological, and social challenges that occur throughout the life cycle.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.03	2.04	2.04	2.04
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.47	2.47	2.48	2.47
	Percent Increase	22%	21%	22%	21%
Comprehend demographic shifts related to aging and disability in the United States.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.89	1.90	1.90	1.90
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.34	2.35	2.36	2.35
	Percent Increase	24%	23%	24%	23%
Describe the most common causes of disability throughout the life cycle.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.75	1.76	1.76	1.76
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.33	2.34	2.35	2.35

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)			
		I&A only	I&A and PCC	I&A and CM	I&A, PCC, and CM
	Percent Increase	33%	33%	34%	33%
Describe the ways in which an individual's cultural, ethnic, religious background, or sexual orientation, can influence aging and living with a disability.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.82	1.84	1.83	1.84
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.38	2.39	2.39	2.39
	Percent Increase	30%	30%	31%	30%
Adapt communication methods to the sensory, verbal, physical, and cognitive abilities of the person.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.89	1.90	1.90	1.90
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.41	2.42	2.42	2.42
	Percent Increase	28%	27%	27%	27%
Respect and promote self-determination, consumer choice, and participation during interactions with people and their extended networks.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.21	2.22	2.22	2.22
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.61	2.62	2.63	2.62
	Percent Increase	18%	18%	19%	18%
Understand the anxiety, stress, and fear that older adults and people with disabilities may face when communicating with workers.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.27	2.28	2.28	2.28
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.61	2.62	2.63	2.61
	Percent Increase	15%	15%	15%	14%

Course Evaluation Results

The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each course evaluation statement is provided in the table below.

Evaluation Statement	Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	87%
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	87%
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	75%

Learner Feedback

Learners described how the course will impact the care and services they provide. Many learners stated that they will be more empathetic, better listeners, and that they will pay more attention to culture and background.

"Take my time when talking to a consumer to really listen to their needs."

"Be even more considerate of an individual's cultural, ethnic, or religious background, or sexual orientation when meeting with them."

"I anticipate being mindful of what my clients may be going through and speak with them with more empathy realizing I may not know everything they're going through."

After taking the course, learners felt more prepared to assist clients with accessing services.

"I am now more informed about the clients we work with and how best to assist them with accessing services."

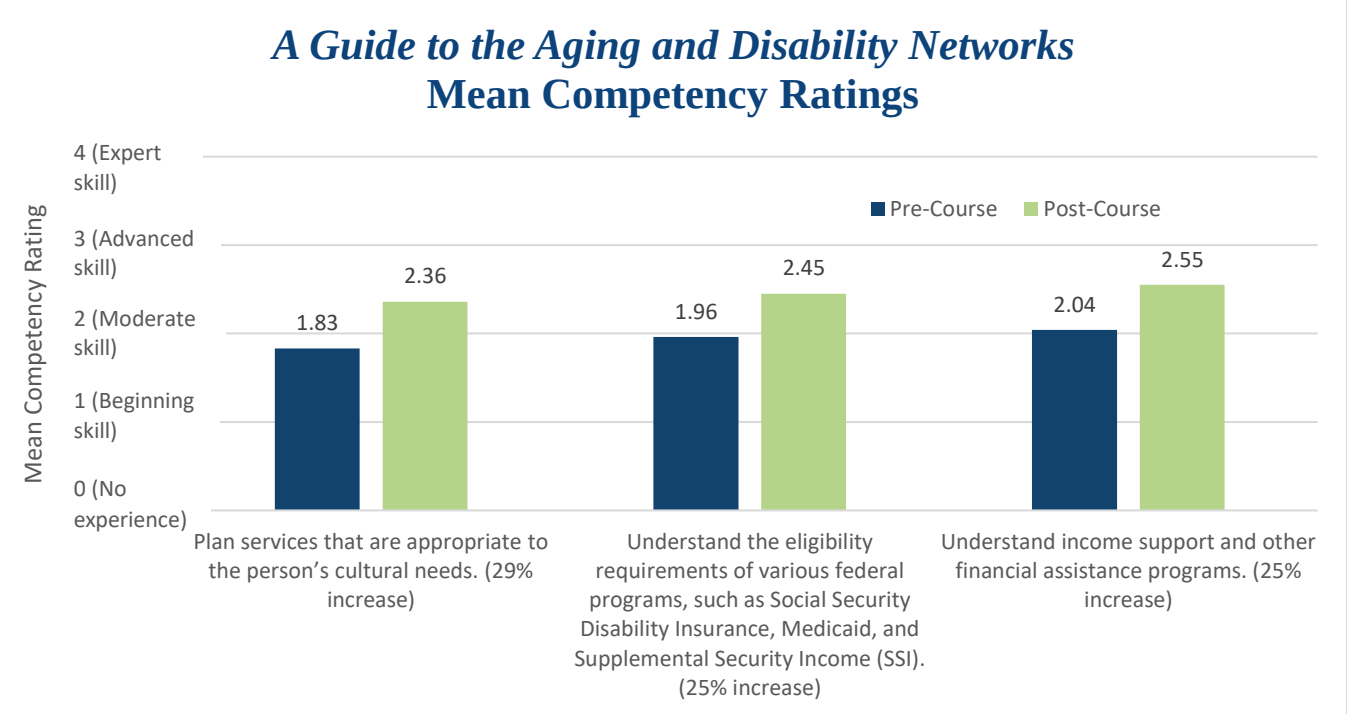
"After completing this course, I have gained a deeper understanding of the various ways to support and provide services to older adults and individuals with disabilities."

2. A Guide to the Aging and Disability Networks

This course identified key resources for older adults, persons with disabilities, and their families at federal, state, and local levels. It also discussed eligibility, methods for identifying and accessing resources, and key terminology for navigating aging and disability networks.

Competency Results

For all course competencies, mean competency ratings significantly increased ($p < .05$) from the pre-course competency self-assessment to the post-course competency self-assessment. Percent increases ranged from 18% to 29%. The following graph shows mean competency ratings for the three course competencies with the greatest percent increases.



Competency Results by Learner Program

The results in the table below show no differences in competency ratings between the four groups.

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)			
		I&A only	I&A and PCC	I&A and CM	I&A, PCC, and CM
Know what federal, state, and local resources are available to older adults, people with disabilities, and their families.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.08	2.10	2.09	2.09
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.53	2.54	2.53	2.54
	Percent Increase	21%	21%	21%	21%
Understand the eligibility requirements of various federal programs, such as Social Security Disability Insurance, Medicaid, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.94	1.96	1.94	1.95
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.44	2.45	2.44	2.45
	Percent Increase	26%	25%	26%	25%
Understand income support and other financial assistance programs.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.02	2.03	2.02	2.04
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.54	2.55	2.54	2.55
	Percent Increase	26%	25%	26%	25%
Connect all resources (e.g. housing, long-term care, community-based services) that are available to a consumer.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.10	2.12	2.10	2.12
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.55	2.56	2.55	2.56
	Percent Increase	21%	21%	22%	21%
Ensure that all information is available to and understood by the person and family.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.66	2.67	2.67	2.67
	Percent Increase	18%	18%	18%	18%
Plan services that are appropriate to the person's cultural needs.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.81	1.82	1.83	1.82
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.34	2.35	2.35	2.35
	Percent Increase	29%	29%	28%	29%

Course Evaluation Results

The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each course evaluation statement is provided in the table below.

Evaluation Statement	Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	88%
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	85%

Evaluation Statement	Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	78%

Learner Feedback
Upon completing the course, learners felt more knowledgeable about where to look for resources for their clients. They felt more confident and better equipped to assist older adults.

"I have learned a lot about the aging resources and services that I would share for my clients."

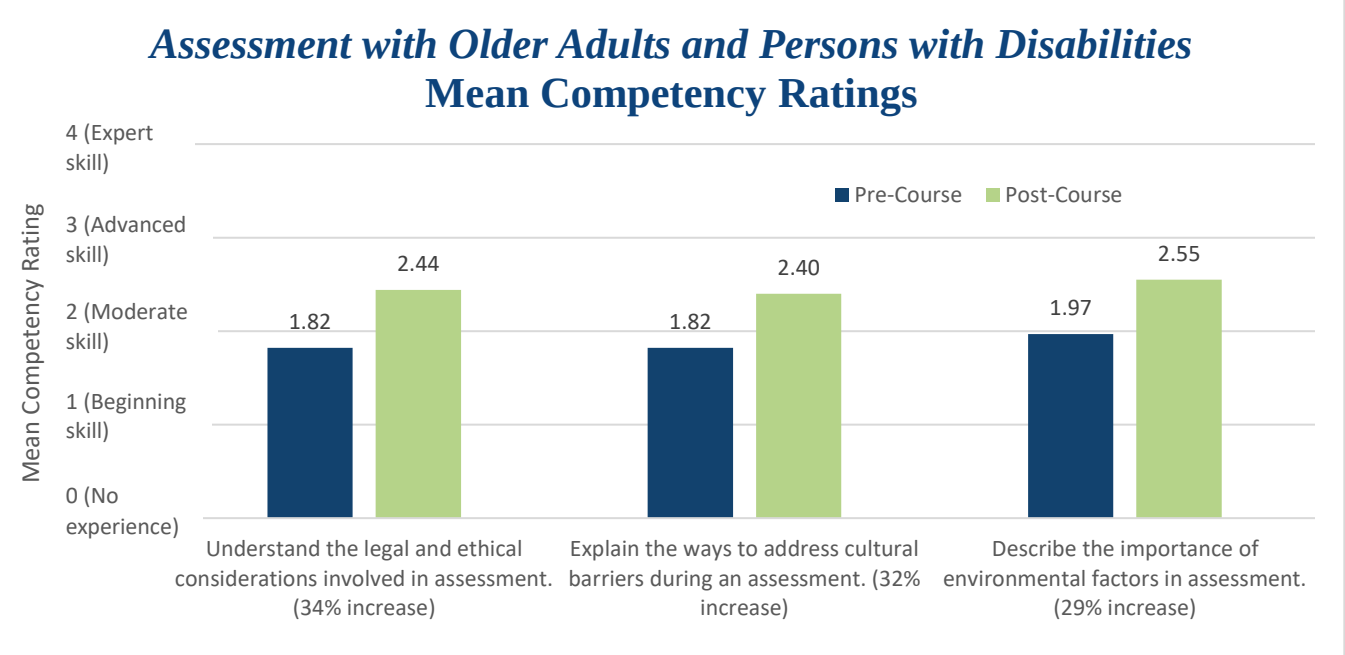
"Better knowledge of programs available and qualifications of programs."

"I will be more aware and try to notice signs of older people in my community needing help. I feel better equipped to offer them help."

"I feel more confident in discussing programs available to people in our community."

3. Assessment with Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities
This course explored the importance of facilitating choice, self-determination, and participation in the assessment process. It also considered legal and ethical aspects of performing assessments and explained the need for cultural humility.

Competency Results
For all course competencies, mean competency ratings significantly increased ($p < .05$) from the pre-course competency self-assessment to the post-course competency self-assessment. Percent increases ranged from 12% to 34%. The following graph shows mean competency ratings for the three course competencies with the greatest percent increases.



Competency Results by Learner Program

The results in the table below show no differences in competency ratings between the four groups.

Competency		**Learner Group (based on programs completed)**			
		I&A only	**I&A and PCC**	**I&A and CM**	**I&A, PCC, and CM**
Describe the core elements of assessment including social supports and functional abilities.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.94	1.95	1.95	1.94
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.47	2.48	2.48	2.48
	Percent Increase	27%	27%	27%	27%
Understand the legal and ethical considerations involved in assessment.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.82	1.82	1.83	1.82
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.44	2.44	2.45	2.44
	Percent Increase	34%	34%	33%	34%
Describe the importance of environmental factors in assessment.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.96	1.97	1.98	1.97
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.54	2.54	2.56	2.55
	Percent Increase	29%	29%	29%	29%
Demonstrate communication skills, such as active listening, paraphrasing, and decision support, during assessment.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.38	2.39	2.39	2.39
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.70	2.70	2.71	2.70
	Percent Increase	13%	13%	13%	13%

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)			
		I&A only	I&A and PCC	I&A and CM	I&A, PCC, and CM
Explain the ways to address cultural barriers during an assessment.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.81	1.82	1.83	1.82
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
	Percent Increase	32%	32%	31%	32%
Recognize one's own attitudes and the impact of your attitudes on assessment.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.24	2.26	2.26	2.26
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.67	2.67	2.68	2.67
	Percent Increase	19%	18%	19%	18%
Respect the consumer's right to choice and self-determination throughout the assessment process.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.43	2.44	2.45	2.44
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.72	2.73	2.73	2.73
	Percent Increase	12%	12%	11%	12%

Course Evaluation Results

The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each course evaluation statement is provided in the table below.

Evaluation Statement	Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	86%
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	87%
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	79%

Learner Feedback

Overall, learners found the course helpful and applicable to their work.

"Since starting a new career, this course has been very helpful with giving me a basic start to the job. I really appreciate it."

"This entire lesson was extremely helpful."

"I really appreciated all the topics covered in this course and the continued emphasis on consumer choice and right to autonomy."

Learners indicated that they will be more aware of environmental and cultural factors when conducting assessments.

"Taking more environmental factors into consideration during client assessments."

"Having a heightened awareness of environment and cultural factors while interacting with a client. I will be aware of any biases I may have."

4. The Universe of New York State Programs: Identifying Sources of Support

This course provided information about the resources available in New York State from three offices: the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Office of Mental Health (OMH), and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports. After completing the course, learners submitted a quiz. There were no competencies or course evaluation questions.

5. New York No Wrong Door in Action

This course guided learners through multiple video-based scenarios utilizing actors to portray situations that learners may encounter in their work, teaching learners to navigate different circumstances and to provide resources to individuals based on their unique needs. Learners submitted reflections and responded to discussion prompts. There were no competency questions.

Course Evaluation Results

The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each course evaluation statement is provided in the table below.

Evaluation Statement	**Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed**
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	90%
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	92%
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	81%

Learner Feedback

Many learners described ways in which they will improve their communication with clients, including through active listening, asking probing questions, and paraphrasing.

"More active listening/ repeating back and making sure the client understands the convo/plan."

"I will paraphrase client's replies to reiterate what next steps are. I will actively listen with more acuity."

"Taking more time to listen more closely to the client's needs and strengths."

Learners also said that they intend to be better at asking for consent.

"I will ask permission before probing questions. I often do but not always, as it seems interrupt the flow of the conversation but I will do so more than I do now."

"I will be more cognizant of getting permission to enter someone into the database and ensure I receive consent."

Overall, learners liked the course.

"I have to say WOW. After this course I feel so much confident! I have a better understanding of our role and new ideas to apply to my daily calls. I will definitely apply all I have learn with this course."

III. New York Connects Person-Centered Options Counseling Program

A. Program Overview

The New York Connects Person-Centered Options Counseling Program is an online, self-paced certificate program that includes four courses:

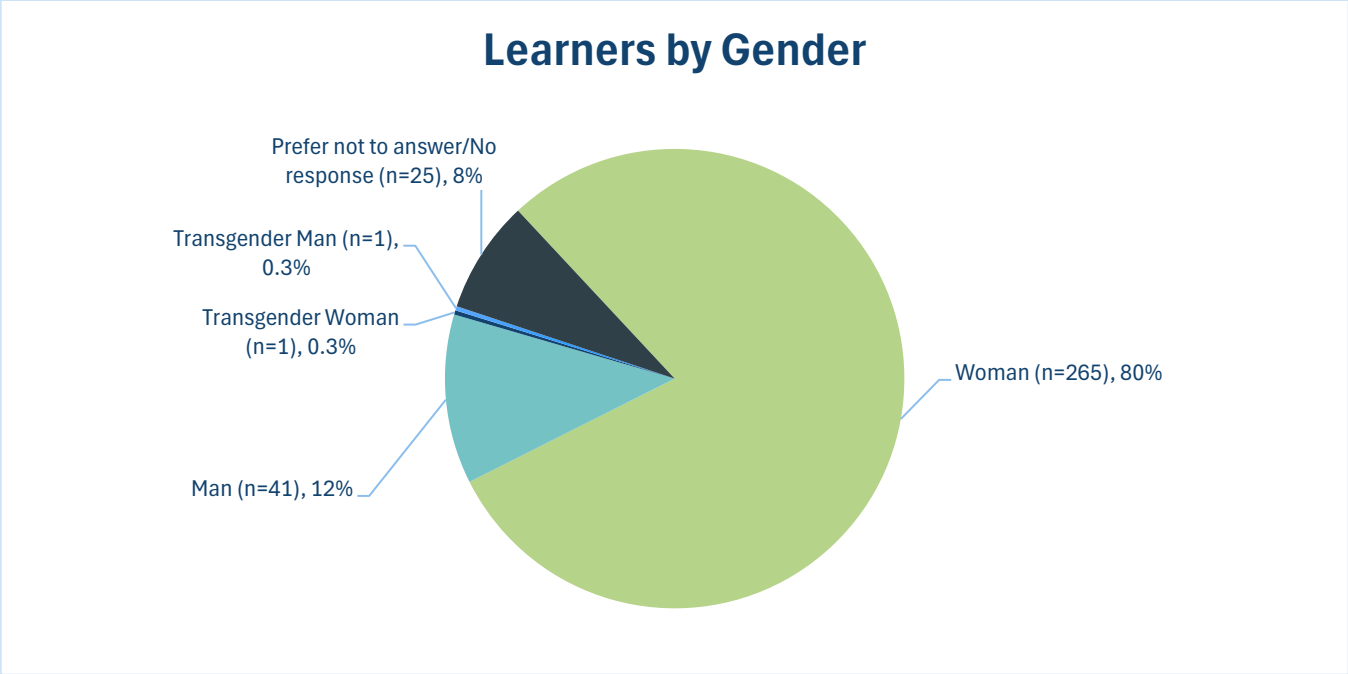
1. Understanding Consumer Control, Person-Centered Planning, and Self-Direction
2. Care Transitions
3. Mental Health Training in Options Counseling
4. A Foundation in Ethics, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving

B. Program Participation

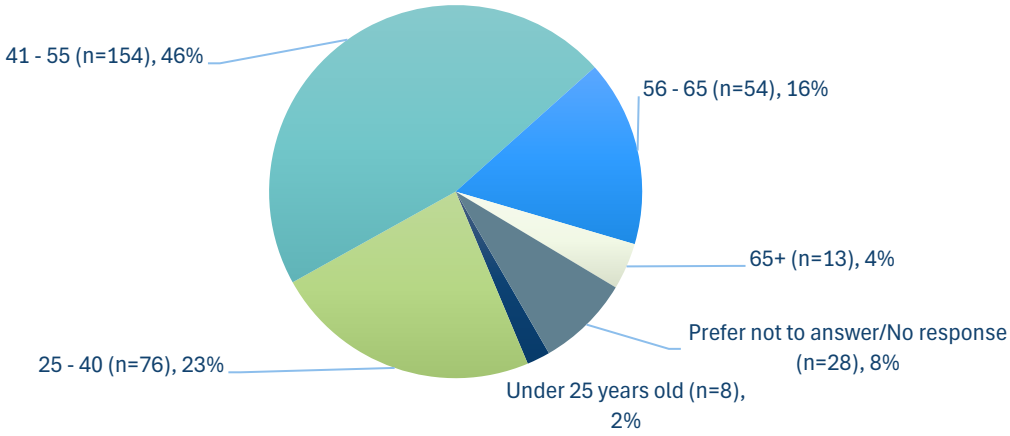
Out of the 360 learners who enrolled in the program, 333 completed it. The completion rate was 93%. These learners were options counselors who already completed the I&A program.

C. Learner Demographics

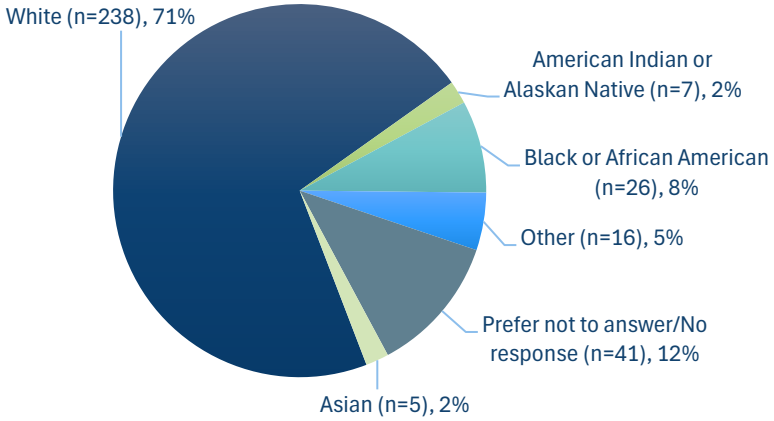
Learners self-reported demographic information during program registration. The following charts provide demographics (gender, age, race, and educational attainment) for the 333 learners who completed the program.



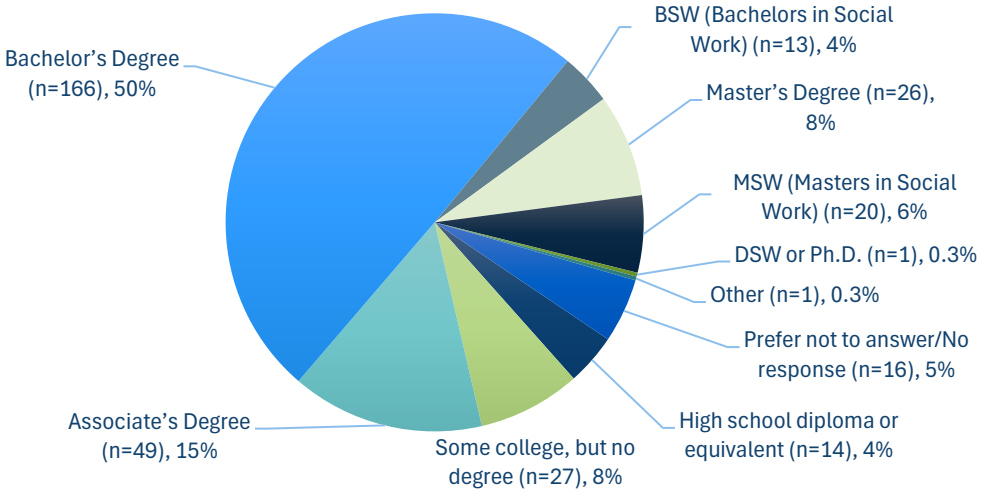
Learners by Age



Learners by Race



Learners by Education



D. Results

The following sections provide evaluation results by course. The evaluation results include:

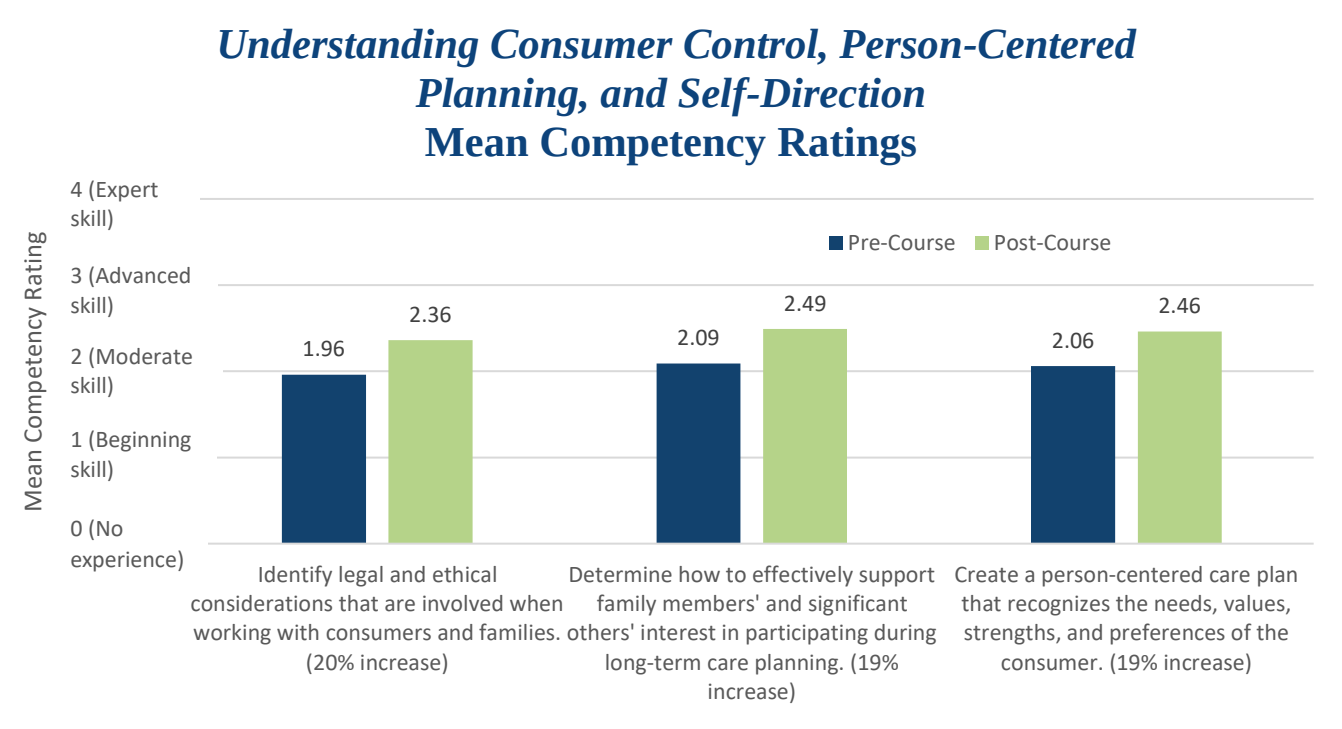
- **Competency Results:** At the beginning and end of each course, learners were asked to rate their skill level on competencies using the following scale: 0 - Not skilled at all; 1 - Beginning skill; 2 - Moderate skill; 3 - Advanced skill; 4 - Expert skill.
- **Competency Results by Learner Program:** Competency results were further assessed by dividing learners into two groups based on certificate program enrollment and looking for differences between the groups.
- **Course Evaluation Results:** At the end of each course, learners were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of course evaluation statements using the following scale: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neutral; Agree; Strongly agree; Not-applicable.
- **Learner Feedback:** Learners answered three open-ended questions upon completion of each course:
    - What changes do you anticipate making after taking this course?
    - What did you find most helpful about this course?
    - Your feedback is very important to us! Please share any comments about this course with us in the space provided.

1. Understanding Consumer Control, Person-Centered Planning, and Self-Direction

This course described the importance of consumer control to empower individuals to make informed decisions. The course provided learners with decision-making tools that they can utilize to support consumers in navigating their choices effectively.

Competency Results

For all course competencies, mean competency ratings significantly increased ($p < .001$) from the pre-course competency self-assessment to the post-course competency self-assessment. Percent increases ranged from 12% to 20%. The following graph shows mean competency ratings for the three course competencies with the greatest percent increases.



Competency Results by Learner Program

Competencies were further assessed by looking for differences between two groups of learners: learners who completed the PCC program, and learners who completed the PCC program and had previously completed CADER's Case Management (CM) program.

The results in the table below show no differences in competency ratings between the two groups.

Competency		**Learner Group (based on programs completed)**	
		PCC	**PCC and CM**
Describe person-centered planning, consumer control, and consumer direction in providing community-based supports and services.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.13	2.13
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.48	2.48
	Percent Increase	17%	17%
Identify legal and ethical considerations that are involved when working with consumers and families.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.96	1.96
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.36	2.36
	Percent Increase	20%	20%
Create a person-centered care plan that recognizes the needs, values, strengths, and preferences of the consumer.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.06	2.06
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.45	2.46
	Percent Increase	19%	19%
Develop strong interpersonal communication skills to support the	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.29	2.29

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)	
		PCC	PCC and CM
consumer in the decision-making process, including active listening, paraphrasing, and effective ways to ask questions.	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.60	2.60
	Percent Increase	13%	13%
Demonstrate creative ways to research services and supports.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.19	2.19
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.54	2.54
	Percent Increase	16%	16%
Determine how to effectively support family members' and significant others' interest in participating during long-term care planning.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.09	2.09
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.49	2.49
	Percent Increase	19%	19%
Recognize the impact of one's own values and biases on one's ability to provide quality services related to aging and disabilities.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.29	2.29
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.57	2.58
	Percent Increase	13%	13%
Understand the importance of cultural inclusion and cultural humility when working with consumers.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.22	2.22
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.50	2.50
	Percent Increase	12%	12%

Course Evaluation Results

The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each course evaluation statement is provided in the table below.

Evaluation Statement	Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	86%
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	86%
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	74%

Learner Feedback

Learners indicated that after completing the course, they felt more confident and more prepared to perform their jobs, as they felt better equipped with tools and resources to assist clients.

"Now, I feel I have resources to walk the client through the process and get the help they need."

"I plan to strengthen my approach in regards to consumer control. I plan to use motivational interviewing, as well as other skills to determine and identify options for consumers."

"Will feel more confident."

Learners were inspired to keep an open mind when working with clients and to encourage clients to make their own decisions.

"I expect to be more patient and understanding of one's personal beliefs and priorities."

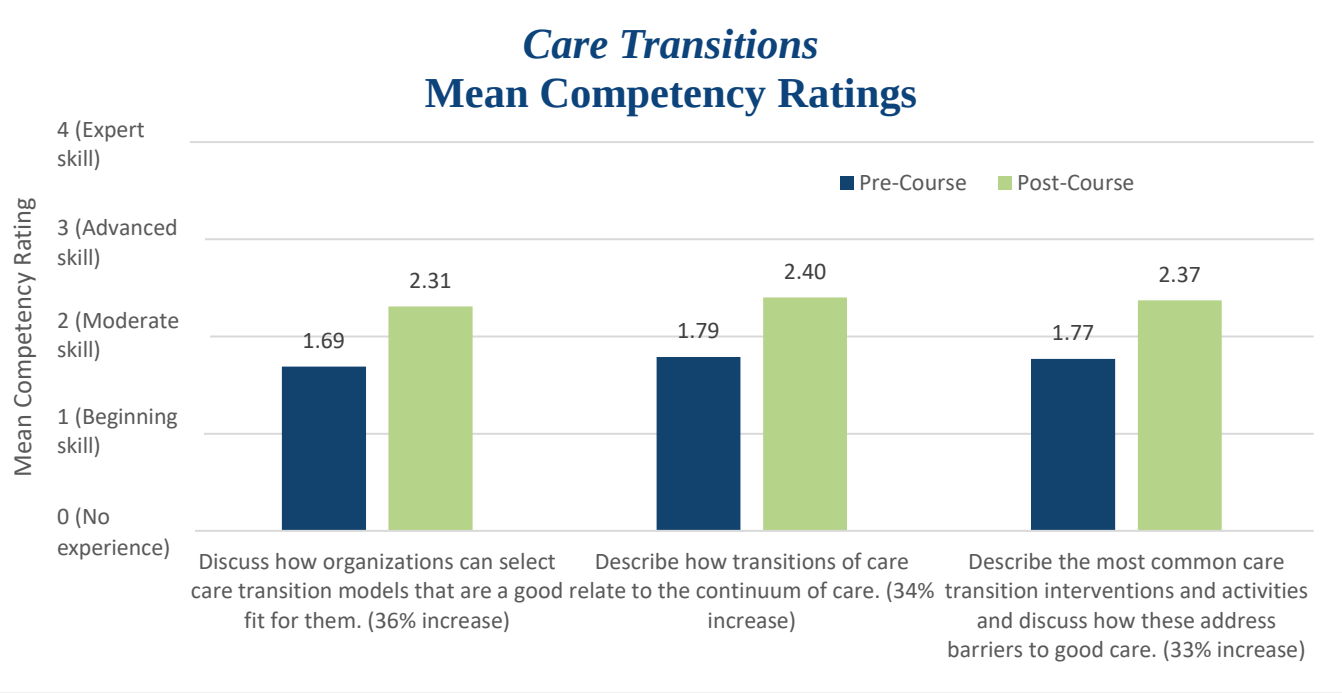
"Keeping an open mind acknowledging that the decisions of others may not be the same as my own."

2. Care Transitions

This course prepared learners to provide comprehensive support during care transitions through selecting appropriate care transition models, addressing healthcare disparities, enhancing communication, and understanding cultural factors.

Competency Results

For all course competencies, mean competency ratings significantly increased ($p < .001$) from the pre-course competency self-assessment to the post-course competency self-assessment. Percent increases ranged from 17% to 36%. The following graph shows mean competency ratings for the three course competencies with the greatest percent increases.



Competency Results by Learner Program

The results in the table below show no differences in competency ratings between the two groups.

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)	
		PCC	PCC and CM
Define the term care transitions.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.88	1.88
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.48	2.48
	Percent Increase	32%	32%
Describe the most common care transition interventions and activities and discuss how these address barriers to good care.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.77	1.77
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.36	2.36
	Percent Increase	34%	34%
Discuss how organizations can select care transition models that are a good fit for them.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.69	1.69
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.31	2.31
	Percent Increase	37%	37%
Discuss the role of health and human service workers in care transitions.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.91	1.91
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.48	2.47
	Percent Increase	30%	30%
Demonstrate the ability to form relationships with consumers and families, perform assessments, coordinate care, and assist in planning discharges and post-discharge follow up.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.98	1.98
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.46	2.46
	Percent Increase	24%	24%
Demonstrate the ability to communicate with other health and human service team members during transitions of care.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.14	2.14
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.49	2.49
	Percent Increase	17%	17%
Discuss how health care disparities need to be addressed when planning care transitions.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.82	1.82
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.37	2.37
	Percent Increase	30%	30%
Describe how transitions of care relate to the continuum of care.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.79	1.79
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.39	2.39
	Percent Increase	34%	34%
Describe the role of community-based and health care organizations in transitions of care.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.90	1.90
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.43	2.43
	Percent Increase	28%	28%

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)	
		PCC	PCC and CM
Identify the barriers to successful transitions of care.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.88	1.88
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.43	2.43
	Percent Increase	29%	29%
Understand the importance of end-of-life conversations and planning (when appropriate) as consumers transition through multiple settings.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.85	1.85
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.45	2.44
	Percent Increase	32%	32%
Recognize how culture and ethnicity can influence care planning and transitions of care.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.98	1.98
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.43	2.43
	Percent Increase	23%	23%

Course Evaluation Results

The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each course evaluation statement is provided in the table below.

Evaluation Statement	Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	86%
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	84%
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	78%

Learner Feedback

Learners felt better prepared to support clients through care transitions and discharge after taking the course.

"Providing all the necessary tools upon discharge to avoid readmission."

'I anticipate having more conversations with clients about their available informal supports as we discuss discharge planning."

"I anticipate providing my clients with more comprehensive health and healthcare resources after taking this course."

Many learners appreciated the information on health disparities and stated that they will now be more mindful of health disparities when assisting clients through care transitions.

"I will be more aware of health disparities and I will be able to better help with care transitions."

"Understanding health disparities relating to care transitions."

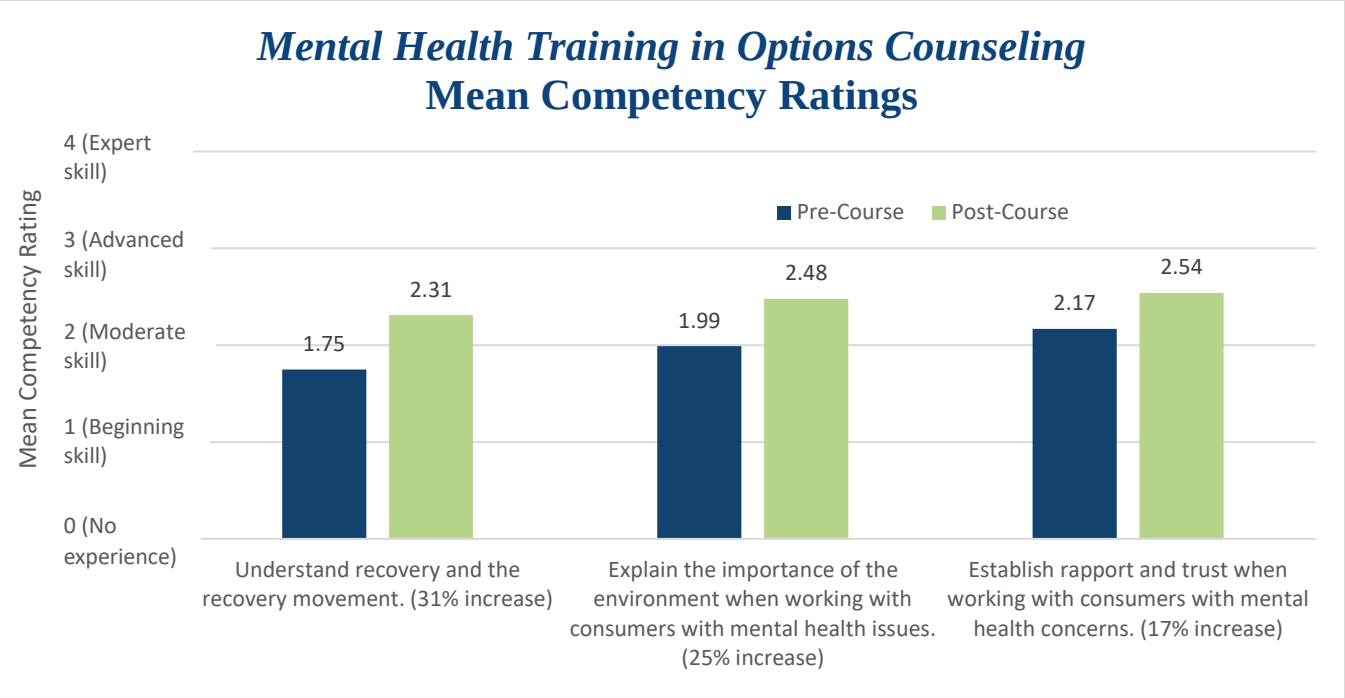
"Being mindful of health disparities."

3. Mental Health Training in Options Counseling

This course provided learners with an understanding of diverse mental health terminologies and explored utilizing options counseling to enhance consumer choice and participation. The course acknowledged various perspectives on mental health and emphasized the importance of communication when working with clients with mental health concerns.

Competency Results

For all course competencies, mean competency ratings significantly increased ($p < .001$) from the pre-course competency self-assessment to the post-course competency self-assessment. Percent increases ranged from 11% to 31%. The following graph shows mean competency ratings for the three course competencies with the greatest percent increases.



Competency Results by Learner Program

The results in the table below show no differences in competency ratings between the two groups.

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)	
		PCC	PCC and CM
Recognize common mental health conditions that can affect older adults and people living with disabilities.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.15	2.15
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.41	2.41
	Percent Increase	12%	12%
Know the range of referral resources and organizations available for consumers and families who are in need of mental health services.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.13	2.13
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.40	2.40
	Percent Increase	13%	13%
Understand recovery and the recovery movement.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.75	1.75
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.30	2.30
	Percent Increase	32%	32%
Develop skills to engage consumers with mental health concerns including establishing rapport and developing trust when doing options counseling.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.17	2.17
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.54	2.54
	Percent Increase	17%	17%
Explain the importance of the environment when working with consumers with mental health issues.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.98	1.98
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.48	2.48
	Percent Increase	25%	25%
Exhibit cultural humility and inclusion when working with consumers with a mental health issue.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.14	2.14
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.48	2.48
	Percent Increase	16%	16%
Understand the value of choice and self-determination in options counseling.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.34	2.34
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.61	2.61
	Percent Increase	11%	11%

Course Evaluation Results

The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each course evaluation statement is provided in the table below.

Evaluation Statement	Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	83%
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	82%
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	76%

Learner Feedback

Many learners noted that they will now pay more attention to non-verbal cues and look for signs of mental health concerns.

"Pay closer attention to non-verbal cues from consumers."

"More attention to individuals' nonverbal communication."

"Being more mindful of issues to watch out for when meeting clients."

Learners also described how they intend to be more patient with and supportive of clients with mental health concerns.

"Being more mindful and patient with consumers with mental health issues."

"I will continue to prioritize my client's autonomy and right to self-determination and help them communicate their wishes to their family members and caregivers."

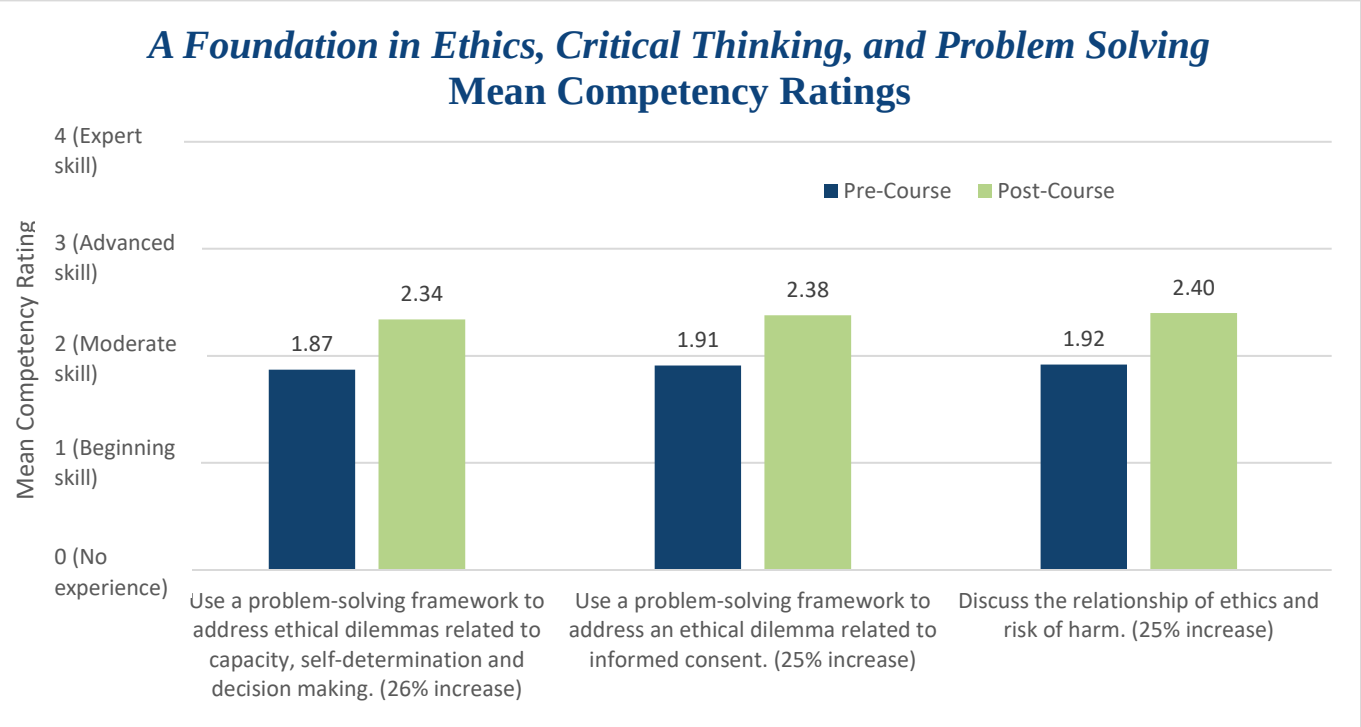
"This training is absolutely necessary to help remind us all of the challenges that our clients experience, specifically mental health and substance use."

4. A Foundation in Ethics, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving

This course discussed ethical principles including autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, as well as the importance of informed consent and confidentiality. Case studies were utilized to illustrate problem-solving for difficult ethical situations.

Competency Results

For all course competencies, mean competency ratings significantly increased ($p < .001$) from the pre-course competency self-assessment to the post-course competency self-assessment. Percent increases ranged from 10% to 26%. The following graph shows mean competency ratings for the three course competencies with the greatest percent increases.



Competency Results by Learner Program

The results in the table below show no differences in competency ratings between the two groups.

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)	
		PCC	PCC and CM
Describe an ethical dilemma.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.98	1.98
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.44	2.44
	Percent Increase	24%	24%
Discuss the relationship of ethics and informed consent.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.08	2.08
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.47	2.47
	Percent Increase	19%	19%
Discuss the relationship of ethics to discussions of capacity, self-determination, and decision making.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.00	2.00
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.38	2.39
	Percent Increase	19%	19%
Discuss the relationship of ethics and risk of harm.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.92	1.92
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.40	2.40
	Percent Increase	25%	25%
	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.30	2.30

Competency		Learner Group (based on programs completed)	
		PCC	PCC and CM
Explain the importance of confidentiality as it relates to ethical practice.	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.52	2.53
	Percent Increase	10%	10%
Apply ethical decision making and problem-solving processes to practice situations.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.09	2.09
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.40	2.40
	Percent Increase	15%	15%
Use a problem-solving framework to address an ethical dilemma related to informed consent.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.91	1.91
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.38	2.38
	Percent Increase	25%	25%
Use a problem-solving framework to address ethical dilemmas related to capacity, self-determination and decision making.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.86	1.86
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.34	2.34
	Percent Increase	26%	26%
Identify and assess one's own values relating to ethical practice.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.11	2.11
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.41	2.41
	Percent Increase	14%	14%
Describe how to deal with ethical issues related to conflicts of interest and boundaries.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	1.97	1.97
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.38	2.39
	Percent Increase	21%	21%
Understand how culture can influence ethical approaches to problems.	Pre-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.02	2.02
	Post-Course Mean Competency Rating	2.41	2.42
	Percent Increase	19%	19%

Course Evaluation Results

The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each course evaluation statement is provided in the table below.

Evaluation Statement	Percentage of Learners Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This training expanded my knowledge and understanding of the topic area.	84%
This training will help me apply practice skills in the topic area.	85%
I would recommend this course to my colleagues.	76%

Learner Feedback
Learners reported that the course gave them a stronger understanding of the importance of informed consent and confidentiality.

> *"Ensuring clients have an understanding of confidentially limitations and informed consent."*

Learners found the course applicable to their work and described how they would apply what they learned.

> *"After completing this course, I plan to reflect more on my values and beliefs, especially in how they influence my interactions with others who may have different perspectives. I aim to approach these differences with empathy and respect, recognizing the impact of individual experiences and cultural backgrounds."*

> *"I intend to use the content from this course when dealing with very complicated client cases."*

IV. Additional Assessments

Two additional assessments were included in the training programs as described below.

A. Workforce Readiness Assessment

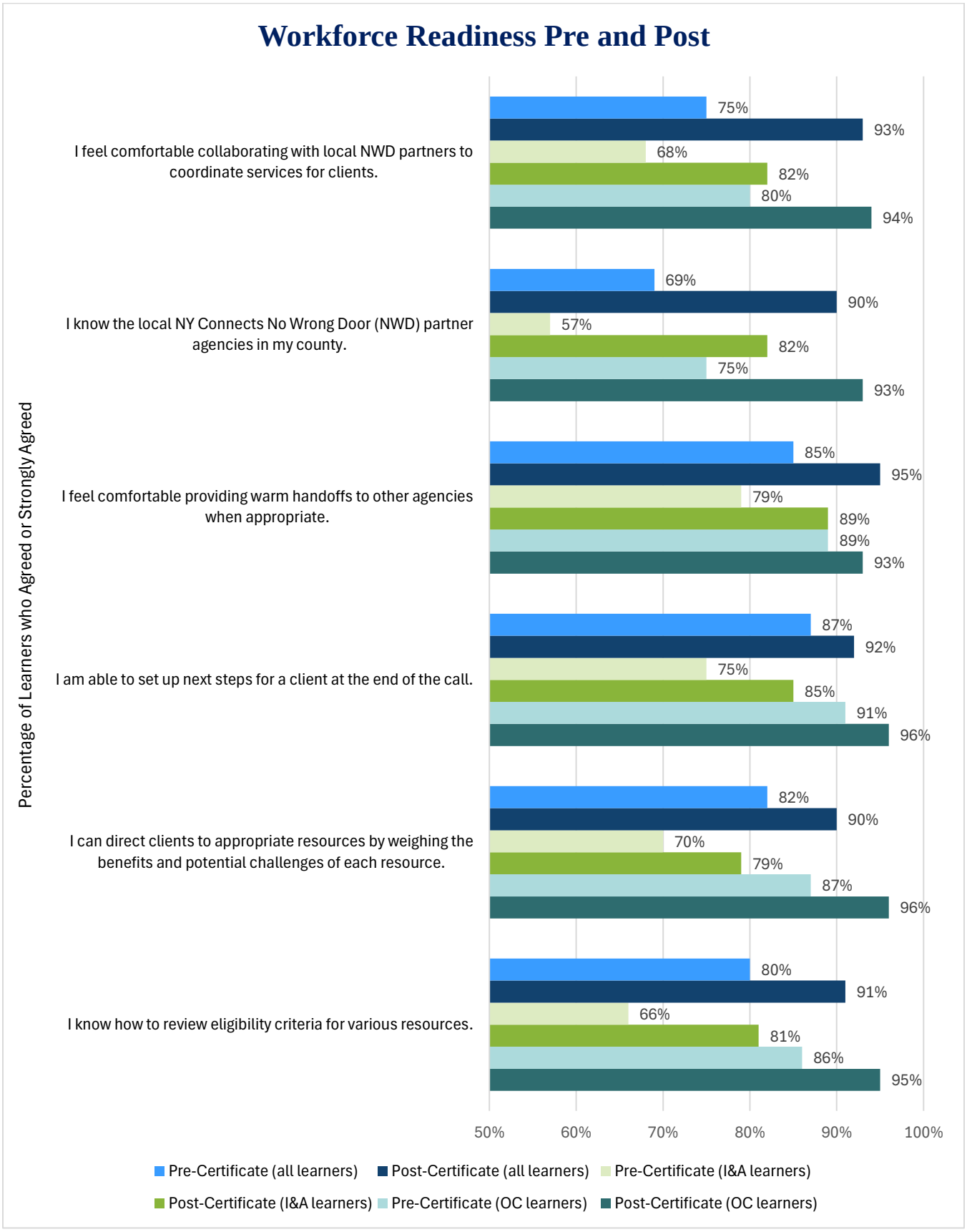
To assess workforce readiness, learners indicated how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements using the following scale: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neutral; Agree; Strongly agree. Learners responded to the statements twice: before starting the I&A program and after completing the I&A program.

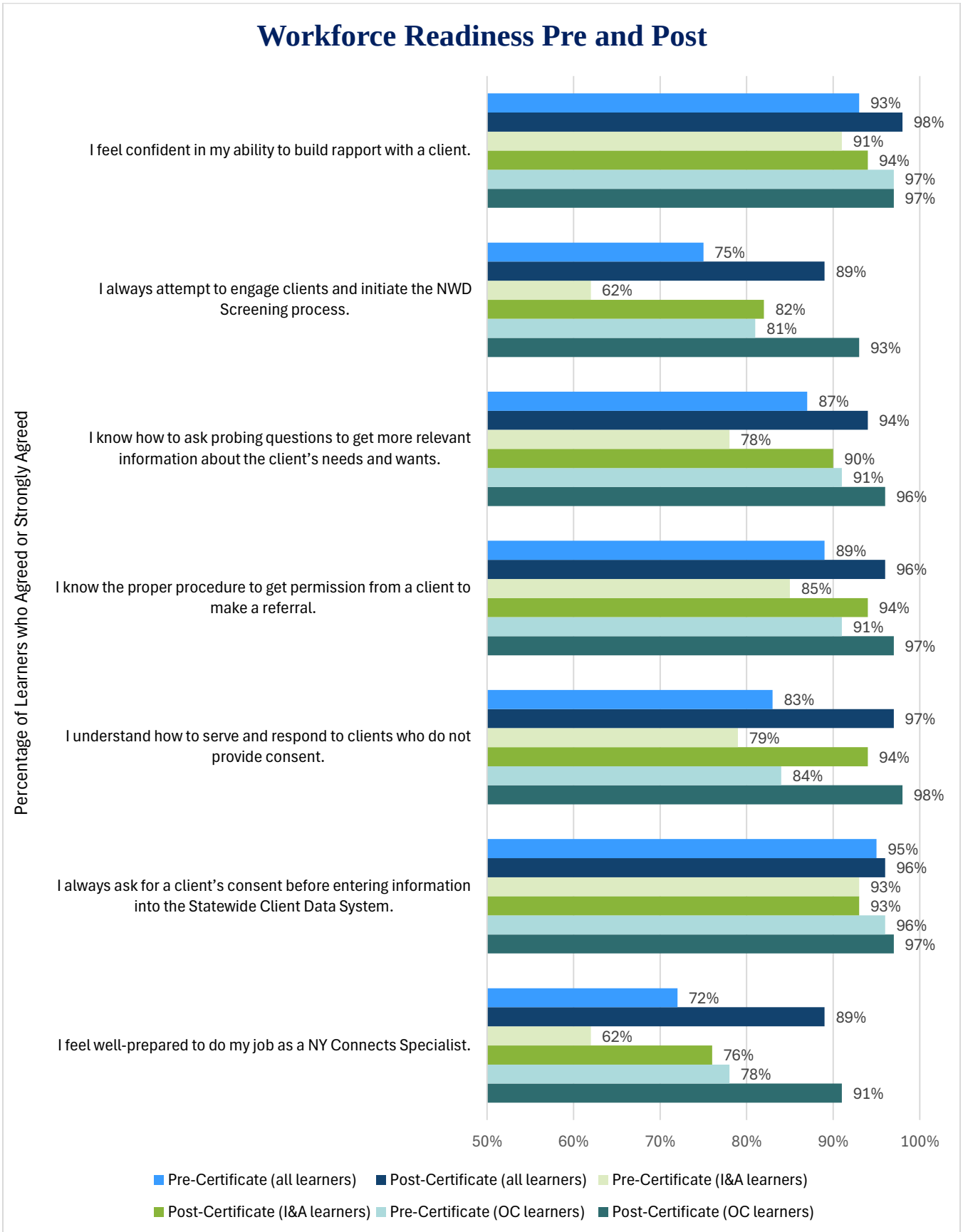
The percentage of learners who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement is shown in the charts below. Results are displayed for three groups: all learners combined; learners who completed only the I&A program (I&A specialists); and learners who completed the I&A and PCC programs (options counselors).

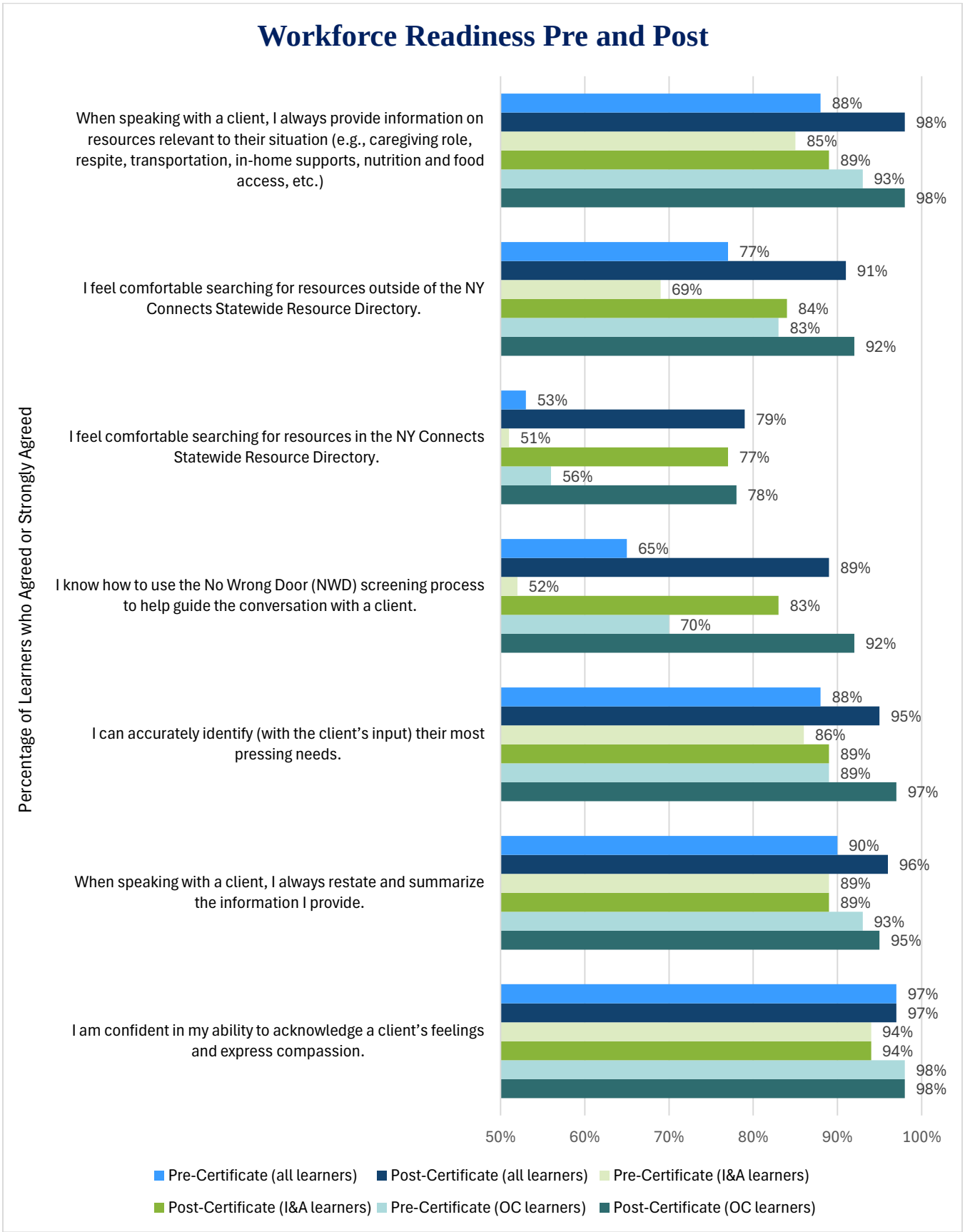
For 18 out of the 20 workforce readiness statements, there was a statistically significant change in learners' agreement with the statements. Learners reported higher agreement with the statements after completing the I&A program, indicating that the program had a positive impact on their readiness. The statements for which the change was statistically significant were:

- I feel comfortable collaborating with local NWD partners to coordinate services for clients.
- I know the local NY Connects No Wrong Door (NWD) partner agencies in my county.
- I feel comfortable providing warm handoffs to other agencies when appropriate.
- I am able to set up next steps for a client at the end of the call.
- I can direct clients to appropriate resources by weighing the benefits and potential challenges of each resource.
- I know how to review eligibility criteria for various resources.
- I feel confident in my ability to build rapport with a client.

- I always attempt to engage clients and initiate the NWD Screening process.
- I know how to ask probing questions to get more relevant information about the client's needs and wants.
- I know the proper procedure to get permission from a client to make a referral.
- I understand how to serve and respond to clients who do not provide consent.
- I feel well-prepared to do my job as a NY Connects Specialist.
- When speaking with a client, I always provide information on resources relevant to their situation (e.g., caregiving role, respite, transportation, in-home supports, nutrition and food access, etc.)
- I feel comfortable searching for resources outside of the NY Connects Statewide Resource Directory.
- I feel comfortable searching for resources in the NY Connects Statewide Resource Directory.
- I know how to use the No Wrong Door (NWD) screening process to help guide the conversation with a client.
- I can accurately identify (with the client's input) their most pressing needs.
- When speaking with a client, I always restate and summarize the information I provide.


Workforce Readiness Pre and Post
Percentage of Learners who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
I feel comfortable collaborating with local NWD partners to coordinate services for clients.
75%
93%
68%
82%
80%
94%
I know the local NY Connects No Wrong Door (NWD) partner agencies in my county.
69%
90%
57%
82%
75%
93%
I feel comfortable providing warm handoffs to other agencies when appropriate.
85%
95%
79%
89%
89%
93%
I am able to set up next steps for a client at the end of the call.
87%
92%
75%
85%
91%
96%
I can direct clients to appropriate resources by weighing the benefits and potential challenges of each resource.
82%
90%
70%
79%
87%
96%
I know how to review eligibility criteria for various resources.
80%
91%
66%
81%
86%
95%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Pre-Certificate (all learners)
Post-Certificate (all learners)
Pre-Certificate (I&A learners)
Post-Certificate (I&A learners)
Pre-Certificate (OC learners)
Post-Certificate (OC learners)


Workforce Readiness Pre and Post
Percentage of Learners who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
I feel confident in my ability to build rapport with a client.
93%
98%
91%
94%
97%
97%
I always attempt to engage clients and initiate the NWD Screening process.
75%
89%
62%
82%
81%
93%
I know how to ask probing questions to get more relevant information about the client's needs and wants.
87%
94%
78%
90%
91%
96%
I know the proper procedure to get permission from a client to make a referral.
89%
96%
85%
94%
91%
97%
I understand how to serve and respond to clients who do not provide consent.
83%
97%
79%
94%
84%
98%
I always ask for a client's consent before entering information into the Statewide Client Data System.
95%
96%
93%
93%
96%
97%
I feel well-prepared to do my job as a NY Connects Specialist.
72%
89%
62%
76%
78%
91%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Pre-Certificate (all learners)
Post-Certificate (all learners)
Pre-Certificate (I&A learners)
Post-Certificate (I&A learners)
Pre-Certificate (OC learners)
Post-Certificate (OC learners)


Workforce Readiness Pre and Post
Percentage of Learners who Agreed or Strongly Agreed
When speaking with a client, I always provide information on resources relevant to their situation (e.g., caregiving role, respite, transportation, in-home supports, nutrition and food access, etc.)
88%
98%
85%
89%
93%
98%
I feel comfortable searching for resources outside of the NY Connects Statewide Resource Directory.
77%
91%
69%
84%
83%
92%
I feel comfortable searching for resources in the NY Connects Statewide Resource Directory.
53%
79%
51%
77%
56%
78%
I know how to use the No Wrong Door (NWD) screening process to help guide the conversation with a client.
65%
89%
52%
83%
70%
92%
I can accurately identify (with the client's input) their most pressing needs.
88%
95%
86%
89%
89%
97%
When speaking with a client, I always restate and summarize the information I provide.
90%
96%
89%
89%
93%
95%
I am confident in my ability to acknowledge a client's feelings and express compassion.
97%
97%
94%
94%
98%
98%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Pre-Certificate (all learners)
Post-Certificate (all learners)
Pre-Certificate (I&A learners)
Post-Certificate (I&A learners)
Pre-Certificate (OC learners)
Post-Certificate (OC learners)

B. Job Role Assessment

To examine whether learners understood the difference between I&A and options counseling job roles, learners responded to a series of job role questions after completing the I&A program and (for options counselors) after completing the PCC program. The table below shows each job role question, the answer choices (the correct answer choice is bold and highlighted), and the percentage of learners who responded correctly.

Question	Answer Choices	Percentage of Learners Who Responded Correctly		
		Post I&A Program		Post PCC Program
		I&A Specialists	Options Counselors	Options Counselors
True or False: When a client needs information on available resources, an options counseling session is needed.	True **False**	70%	74%	64%
True or False: When a client requires supported decision-making to decide what services and resources are the best fit, an options counseling session may be needed.	**True** False	95%	98%	98%
True or False: When a client wishes to discuss their goals, preferences, and values, an options counseling session may be needed.	**True** False	83%	89%	95%
Which of the following scenarios presents an opportunity or cue to provide options counseling?	A. An individual who is transitioning from a hospital back to their home. B. An individual experiencing multiple complex challenges who requires an in-depth conversation about the services available to meet their needs. C. A caregiver who needs help caring for their loved one.	90%	88%	93%

Question	Answer Choices	Percentage of Learners Who Responded Correctly		
		Post I&A Program		Post PCC Program
		I&A Specialists	Options Counselors	Options Counselors
	D. An individual who experienced a sudden decline in health and needs immediate assistance to create a long-term care plan. **E. All of the responses are correct.**			
Please select the job role that best corresponds to the following task: Assisting the client with developing a person-centered plan detailing their decisions, immediate next steps, and long-term objectives.	A. Information & Assistance **B. Options Counseling**	94%	96%	96%
Please select the job role that best corresponds to the following task: Conducting the No Wrong Door screening process and linking the client to supports as indicated.	**A. Information & Assistance** B. Options Counseling	83%	89%	82%
Please select the job role that best corresponds to the following task: Providing the client with information on publicly and privately funded long-term services and supports, along with eligibility and financial requirements.	**A. Information & Assistance** B. Options Counseling	78%	82%	81%
Please select the job role that best corresponds to the following task: Following up with a client over time to ensure they are meeting their objectives and accessing desired services.	A. Information & Assistance **B. Options Counseling**	73%	83%	87%

Question	Answer Choices	Percentage of Learners Who Responded Correctly		
		Post I&A Program		Post PCC Program
		I&A Specialists	Options Counselors	Options Counselors
Please select the job role that best corresponds to the following task: Conducting a person-centered interview to discover what is important to and important for the client.	A. Information & Assistance **B. Options Counseling**	73%	78%	88%
Please select the job role that the following task is most appropriate for: Engaging clients to obtain information to support connections to the most appropriate services reflective of their needs and expressed preferences.	**A. Information & Assistance** B. Options Counseling	69%	66%	47%

V. Summary and Conclusion

To create a No Wrong Door workforce that is prepared to support clients navigating the aging and disability networks, NYSOFA partnered with CADER to develop two custom training courses and implement pre-existing CADER programs to create the New York Connects Information and Assistance Program and the New York Connects Person-Centered Options Counseling Program.

Based on the results from the workforce readiness assessment, the NY Connects training program did have an impact on learners' readiness for the workforce, with learners reporting feeling more prepared and able to perform their job responsibilities after the program. Despite most learners having multiple years of experience working in the aging and/or disability fields, percent increases in competencies were statistically significant, indicating increases in skill level. Learners were especially enthusiastic about the *New York No Wrong Door in Action* course, as they appreciated the real-world scenarios and how the course was specifically designed for their job roles.

CADER looks forward to a continued partnership with NYSOFA to enhance the skills and training of NWD staff, ensuring that individuals who access the aging and disability networks receive high-quality care and support.