



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

Massachusetts Executive Office of Aging & Independence Certificate Training Initiative FY2025

**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 AGE/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 November 12, 2024 to June 30, 2025. 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 92%. 81 ASAP learners completed the Behavioral Health in Aging certificate, and 121 ASAP learners completed the Person-Centered Case Management certificate.

COA Learners

The overall completion rate for COA learners was 67%. 31 COA learners completed the Behavioral Health in Aging certificate, and 23 COA learners completed the Person-Centered Case Management certificate.

Learner Demographics

ASAP Learners

The majority of ASAP learners were White (68%), non-Hispanic (82%), women (91%), and had at least a Bachelor's degree (74%). Most learners were 25-40 years old (49%) or 41-55 years old (29%). Many learners were employed as case managers (40%), service coordinators (26%), or protective services workers (12%).

COA Learners

The majority of COA learners were White (95%), non-Hispanic (93%), women (95%), and had at least a Bachelor's degree (80%). Most learners were 25-40 years old (41%) or 41-55 years old (43%). Many

learners were employed as outreach coordinators (30%), directors or assistant directors (22%), or social workers (15%).

II. EVALUATION

Competency Results

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. For the Behavioral Health in Aging certificate, the mean competency rating increased significantly ($p < .001$) from 1.50 on the pre-course self-assessment to 2.27 on the post-course self-assessment. For the Person-Centered Case Management certificate, the mean competency rating increased significantly ($p < .001$) from 1.80 on the pre-course self-assessment to 2.49 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 reported that they will add more culturally inclusive programming at their organizations. They also indicated that they will have more substance use resources available and will be more aware of the signs of mental health concerns and suicide. Regarding their work with individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, learners said that they are better equipped to respond to common behaviors, express compassion, communicate effectively, and provide resources to caregivers.

Person-Centered Case Management Certificate Program

Learners intend to make numerous practice changes after completing the certificate, including being more aware of biases and cultural differences, listening better, taking time to establish rapport, and promoting consumer choice. Learners are more knowledgeable about federal and state resources, Medicaid and Medicare, ethical considerations involved in assessments and care planning, and advanced care directives.

"My interviews with older adults will be more tailored to the potential for mental health issues or cultural differences and the impact these have on being able to communicate needs."

-COA Learner

Mental Health and Aging Issues course,
Behavioral Health in Aging Certificate

"I found most helpful about this course was learning how to support consumer autonomy while still providing guidance. The sections on person-centered approaches, dignity of risk, and effective communication really helped me understand how to better empower individuals in making their own informed choices."

-ASAP Learner
Understanding Consumer Control, Person-Centered Planning, and Self-Direction course,
Person-Centered Case Management Certificate

III. CONCLUSION

Learners in the AGE/CADER training initiative gained skills in key competency areas relevant to their practice. Learners indicated that they will provide more compassionate and person-centered care. They completed the training with a better understanding of the challenges that older adults and people living with disabilities face.

The outcomes of this training initiative highlight the importance of professional training to strengthen the skills of those working with older adults and people living with disabilities. CADER looks forward to continuing our partnership with AGE to improve the care provided to older adults and people living with disabilities throughout Massachusetts.