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Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) partners with Community- based Organizations (CBOs)

David Helm

University of Massachusetts Boston, David.Helm@umb.edu

Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston

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Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) partners with Community-based Organizations (CBOs)

Summary/Abstract

Interdisciplinary Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) a Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) funded-program providing long-term, graduate level interdisciplinary training to health professionals and family members. The purpose is to develop leadership potential to improve the health status of infants, children, and adolescents with or at risk for neurodevelopmental and related disabilities and to enhance the systems of care for these children and their families

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Fellows explore relationships between culture and disability and varying perceptions of the meaning of disability within diverse communities.

Objectives: The objective for students includes acquiring a better understanding of the impact of culture on people's understanding of disability and how this might impact access to services. The objective for the CBO and the population they service is to gather a better perspective on services and supports that are available for families whose children have developmental disabilities.



Approaches and Methods

The LEND program partners with CBOs to provide an opportunity for LEND fellows to pursue a cross-cultural experience and learn about issues of culture and disability. LEND fellows have the chance to practice and enhance skills of cultural awareness, openness, listening, assessment, networking, and leadership. Trainees participate in a 6-hour culture brokering – culture competence mini-course and then affiliate with a community agency.



Fellows offer their time and skills in helping organization meet their goals by being involved in activities such as finding and responding to grant opportunities, running focus groups, assessing community needs, teaching about disability in English as a second language classes, co-leading support groups for families, teaching families about clinical topics (such as autism, attention deficit disorder, developmental milestones, post traumatic stress disorder), participating in health fairs, and linking individuals/families to services.

Each fellow devotes approximately ½ day each week for 15 weeks working with their CBO.

Results/Impact

Our program has worked with 32 CBOs in the past 8 years including organizations serving Haitian, Somali, Ethiopian, Chinese, Vietnamese, African-American, Latino, Eritrean, Cambodian, Congolese, Russian, and Native American. Fellows work with CBO executives and staff to develop projects. Past projects have included organizing and running a day-long conference on assistive technology for an African-American special education population, creating a resource guide for recent immigrants and refugees from Somali, or helping to create and run an after school program for Haitian youth with intellectual disabilities, creating a radio program devoted to Ethiopian community about developmental disabilities, working on a nutrition and urban gardening project with Eritrean families, or devising an exercise/dance class for Haitian youth with disabilities and their non-disabled friends/family.



Conclusion/Next Steps

LEND fellows have developed a variety of competencies via these partnerships including: 1) appreciating diversity in customs, values, beliefs and communication patterns, 2) understanding and effectively responding to cultural differences, 3) engaging in cultural self-assessments at the individual and organizational level, 4) adapting services and enabling supports through policy development, 5) ability to institutionalize cultural knowledge and practice, and 6) communicating effectively with persons across cultures including those with limited English proficiencies, reading and comprehension skills.

References and Resources

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Additional Partnerships, Information and/or Contacts

David T. Helm, PhD, LEND Director, ICI, Children's Hospital Boston, 300 Longwood Avenue, Boston MA 02115
David.helm@childrens.harvard.edu & ICI, UMass Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston MA 02125. David.helm@umb.edu