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## Collaborating for Change: NH-ME LEND/New Mainers Public Health Initiative (NMPHI) – An Interagency Parent Advocacy and Information Project

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# Collaborating for Change: NH-ME LEND/New Mainers Public Health Initiative (NMPHI) – An Interagency Parent Advocacy and Information Project

Institute on Disability/UCED University of New Hampshire

Outcomes

develop all aspects of the project in

a culturally responsive way, leading

knowledge, partnered and

stories of parents served

Oral culture-centered individual

multiple purposes including

relationship building, connection

within the training content, and

methods for conducting training

with culturally and linguistically

advocated in meetings.

Project partners collaborated to

to the following outcomes:

Parents implemented

data collection.

Maine UCEDD.

Strategies for effective

collaboration, as well as

Marnie Morneault M.Ed., and Hibo Omer, MPH

Collaboration between NH-ME LEND Program and New Mainers Public Health Initiative lead to the development, delivery and evaluation of parent advocacy training (emphasizing Individualized Education Programs and advocacy within the K-12 system) for parents with children on the autism spectrum.

### **Project Areas of Need Addressed**

- 1) Diminished the challenges that culturally diverse parents of children with disabilities experience in education settings;
- 2) Increased culturally diverse parents' meaningful collaboration with education systems, particularly regarding Individualized Education Programs and advocacy within the K-12 education system; and
- 3) Built the NH-ME LEND Program's capacity to offer culturally and linguistically competent training experiences for longterm trainees.
- 4) Common challenges for parents navigating the special education system:
  - Structure of the special education system
  - ♦ Individual child needs
  - ♦ Teacher interpretation of system
  - Parent understanding, participation

#### Additional challenges for parents of different cultural background:

- ♦ Language barrier
- Conceptual barriers

#### Led to:

- More restrictive placements for children
- Disagreement about service quantity
- ♦ Lack of growth on IEP
- Parents sought less inclusive settings



"I advocated at my last meeting, I said LRE is my child's right."

~ Parent of a high school child with autism.

## Challenges



Consideration for cultural linguistic needs.

Responsive listening facilitated trust and relationship between facilitator and parents

#### Session Challenges

- Confusion of interpretation
- Training interruption due to late arrivals
- Language of materials
- Lack of group norms
- Confusion of interpreter role versus cultural broker role

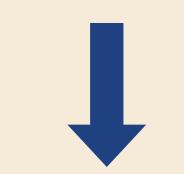
Co-Collaborators Hibo Omer and Marnie Morneault created session outline for Parent Advocacy training series.



Parent Advocacy Training Sessions One – Five

Ongoing Parent Group Supports

#### Solutions



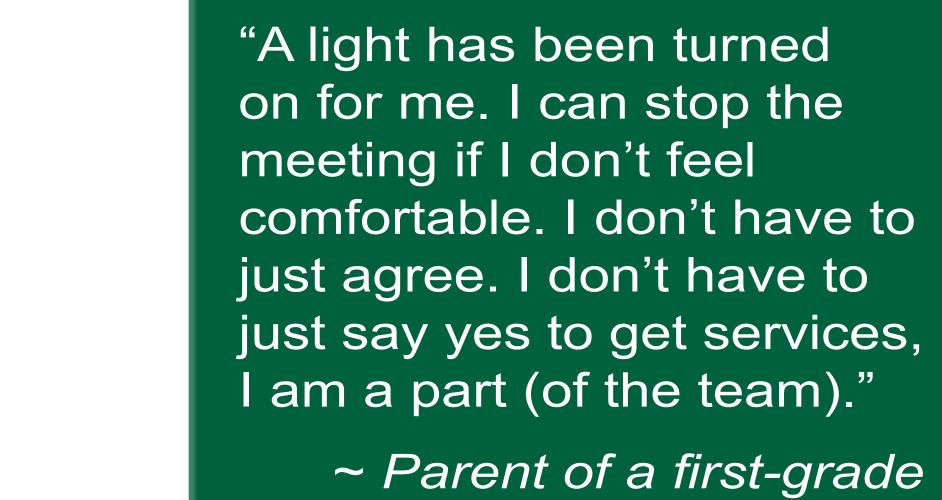
- Personal stories training content
- Separated cultural broker role
- Consistent clarification of roles
- Established group norms
- Started training without repeating content when participants arrived late
- First part of training refresher of material

diverse parents of children with New possibilities for future partnerships among NMPHI, the

 The use of both a translator and cultural broker, which deepened understanding among project participants, and secured trust with the outside facilitator.

NH-ME LEND Program and the

 Interpreters who work in the community better informed about special education processes, parent perspective of special education meetings.



~ Parent of a first-grade child with autism.



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