

## Moving beyond Learner Outcomes: Culturally Responsive Recruitment, Training and Workforce Development

**Authors :** Tanya Greathosue, Adrianna Taylor, Lori Darnel, Eileen Starr, Susie Ryder, Julie Clockston, Dawn Matera Bassett, Jess Retrum

**Abstract :** The United States has an identified need to improve the social work mental and behavioral health workforce shortage with a focus on culturally diverse and responsive mental and behavioral health practitioners to adequately serve its rapidly growing multicultural communities. The U.S. is experiencing rapid demographic changes. Ensuring that mental and behavioral health services are effective and accessible for diverse communities is essential for improving overall health outcomes. In response to this need, we developed a training program focused on interdisciplinary collaboration, evidence-based practices, and culturally responsive services. The success of the training program, funded by the Health Resource Service Administration (HRSA) Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET), has provided the foundation for stage two of our programming. In addition to HRSA/BHWET, we are receiving funding from Colorado Access, a state workforce development initiative, and Kaiser Permanente, a healthcare provider network in the United States. We have moved beyond improved learner outcomes to increasing recruitment of historically excluded, disproportionately mistreated learners, mentorship of students to improve retention, and successful, culturally responsive, diverse workforce development. These authors will utilize a one-group, pre-/posttest survey design and demographic trend analysis to evaluate the success of this extension programming. This article describes our culturally responsive training program. Our goals are to increase the recruitment and retention of historically excluded, disproportionately mistreated learners. We achieve this by integrating cultural humility and sensitivity training into educational curricula for our scholars who participate in cohort classroom and seminar learning. Additionally, we provide our community partners who serve as internship sites with on-going continuing education on how to promote and develop inclusive and supportive work environments for our learners. This work will be of value to mental and behavioral health care practitioners who serve historically excluded and mistreated populations. Participants will learn about culturally informed best practices to increase recruitment and retention of culturally diverse learners. Additionally, participants will hear how to create a culturally responsive training program that encourages an inclusive community for their learners through cohort learning, mentoring, community networking, and critical accountability.

**Keywords :** culturally diverse mental health practitioners, recruitment, mentorship, workforce development, underserved clinics, professional development

**Conference Title :** ICSH 2025 : International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

**Conference Location :** Lisbon, Portugal

**Conference Dates :** October 28-29, 2025