

Promoting Diversity and Equity through Interdisciplinary Leadership Training

Authors : Sharon Milberger, Jane Turner, Denise White-Perkins

Abstract : Michigan shares the overall U.S. national need for more highly qualified professionals who have knowledge and experience in the use of evidence-based practices to meet the special health care needs of children, adolescents, and adults with neurodevelopmental disabilities including autism spectrum disorder (DD/ASD). The Michigan Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (MI-LEND) program is a consortium of six universities that spans the state of Michigan and serves more than 181,800 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The purpose of the MI LEND program is to improve the health of infants, children and adolescents with disabilities in Michigan by training individuals from different disciplines to assume leadership roles in their respective fields and work across disciplines. The MI-LEND program integrates "L.I.F.E." perspectives into all training components. L.I.F.E. is an acronym for Leadership, Interdisciplinary, Family-Centered and Equity perspectives. This paper will describe how L.I.F.E. perspectives are embedded into all aspects of the MI-LEND training program including the application process, didactic training, community and clinical experiences, discussions, journaling and projects. Specific curriculum components will be described including content from a training module dedicated to Equity. Upon completion of the Equity module, trainees are expected to be able to: 1) Use a population health framework to identify key social determinants impacting families and children; 2) Explain how addressing bias and providing culturally appropriate linguistic care/services can influence patient/client health and wellbeing; and 3) Describe the impact of policy and structural/institutional factors influencing care and services for children with DD/ASD and their families. Each trainee completes two self-assessments: the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Health Practitioner Assessment and the other assessing social attitudes/implicit bias. Trainees also conduct interviews with a family with a child with DD/ASD. In addition, interdisciplinary Equity-related group activities are incorporated into face-to-face training sessions. Each MI-LEND trainee has multiple ongoing opportunities for self-reflection through discussion and journaling and completion of a L.I.F.E. project as a culminating component of the program. The poster will also discuss the challenges related to teaching and measuring successful outcomes related to diversity/equity perspectives.

Keywords : disability, diversity, equity, training

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