



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

Massachusetts Executive Office of Aging & Independence Certificate Training Initiative FY2026

**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 was offered to aging and disability network staff across Massachusetts, employed at Aging Service Access Points (ASAPs) and Councils on Aging (COAs). The enrollment period was October 7, 2025 to June 30, 2026. The initiative consisted of three certificate programs:

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
3. **Fundamentals of Supervision:** This 10-hour certificate program included three courses:
 1. Supervisor Essentials I – Building Organizational Capacity: Supervisory Practice and Planning
 2. Supervisor Essentials II – Core Management Skills: Leading People and Teams
 3. Supervisor Essentials III – Critical Thinking and Problem Solving in Supervisory Practice

Learner Demographics

ASAP Learners

The majority of ASAP learners were White (65%), non-Hispanic (81%), women (89%), and had at least a Bachelor's degree (76%). Most learners were 25-40 years old (47%) or 41-55 years old (35%). Many learners were employed as case managers (39%), program and service coordinators (26%), or social workers (8%).

COA Learners

The majority of COA learners were White (83%), non-Hispanic (94%), women (83%), and had at least a Bachelor's degree (84%). Most learners were 25-40 years old (37%) or 41-55 years old (47%). Many learners were employed as outreach workers (37%), social workers (21%), or information and referral/assistance workers (16%).

II. Program Evaluation

This section provides the following for each certificate program:

- **Completion Rate** for ASAP and COA learners.

- **Competency Results:** At the beginning and end of each course, learners rated 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.
- **Learner Feedback:** At the end of each course, learners provided written feedback.

Behavioral Health in Aging Certificate Program

Completion Rate: Out of the 76 ASAP learners who enrolled in the program, 70 completed it, for a completion rate of 92%. Out of the 11 COA learners who enrolled in the program, six completed it, for a completion rate of 55%.

Competency Results: The composite mean competency rating significantly increased ($p < .001$) from 1.33 on the pre-course self-assessment to 2.12 on the post-course self-assessment, demonstrating an increase in perceived skill level.

Learner Feedback: After completing the program, learners said that they will be more empathetic, compassionate, and understanding towards older adults with mental health and substance use concerns. Learners said that the training will enhance their communication with people living with dementia and that they will provide better education to family members of people living with dementia. Learners felt more confident assessing suicide risk and recognizing warning signs.

“After completing this course, I will ask more questions about the mental health of my seniors, listening more closely.” -COA Learner
Suicide Prevention among Older Adults course, Behavioral Health in Aging Certificate

Person-Centered Case Management Certificate Program

Completion Rate: Out of the 107 ASAP learners who enrolled in the program, 97 completed it, for a completion rate of 91%. Out of the 20 COA learners who enrolled in the program, 14 completed it, for a completion rate of 70%.

Competency Results: The composite mean competency rating significantly increased ($p < .001$) from 1.95 on the pre-course self-assessment to 2.38 on the post-course self-assessment, demonstrating an increase in perceived skill level.

Learner Feedback: When conducting assessments and managing care, learners said that they will now be more thorough, pay attention to how their biases may influence the care they provide, be more sensitive and respectful of cultural preferences, and use a more person-centered, strengths-based approach. Learners feel better equipped to connect consumers with appropriate resources based on their unique needs and to support independence. Learners found the information on Medicaid, Medicare, and eligibility requirements helpful.

“What I found most helpful about this course was learning how to recognize personal biases and values, and how they can impact the way we provide services. It also gave me practical tools to communicate effectively, respect consumer preferences, and provide person-centered care.” -ASAP Learner
Assessment with Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities course, Person-Centered Case Management Certificate

Fundamentals of Supervision Certificate Program

Completion Rate: Out of the 148 ASAP learners who enrolled in the program, 138 completed it, for a completion rate of 93%.

Competency Results: The composite mean competency rating significantly increased ($p < .001$) from 1.96 on the pre-course self-assessment to 2.50 on the post-course self-assessment, demonstrating an increase in perceived skill level.

Learner Feedback: As a result of completing this training, learners said that they will engage in additional program planning activities, including needs assessments, evaluations, and developing goals and objectives. Learners intend to incorporate their organization's mission into their practice. Regarding how they supervise staff, learners will add more structure and clearer communication. Learners felt that they will be better at managing conflicts. They will engage in more self-reflection and ask their supervisees for feedback.

“I plan to improve my reflective practice, communication style, and supervision skills by being more intentional with feedback, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving with staff and team members.”

-ASAP Learner

Supervisor Essentials II course, Fundamentals of Supervision Certificate

Additional Results:

- 93% of learners agreed or strongly agreed that this training would be valuable and useful for new supervisors.
- 92% of learners agreed or strongly agreed that this training will be helpful in their role as a supervisor.
- 89% of learners agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of this training, they will be a more effective supervisor.
- 88% of learners agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of this training, they will have better supervisory relationships with their staff.
- 86% of learners agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of this training, they are better prepared to support, develop, and retain staff.

III. Conclusion

Learners in the AGE/CADER training initiative reported gains in knowledge and skills pertaining to behavioral health, case management, and supervision. The feedback revealed that participation in training through the CADER certificate programs will influence their practice and service delivery, as they will provide more person-centered care and improve their communication with consumers and other team members/supervisees.

The outcomes of this training initiative demonstrate how competency-based training can impact the care and services that practitioners provide. CADER looks forward to continuing our partnership with AGE to empower aging services providers across Massachusetts to deliver high-quality care to older adults and individuals living with disabilities.