

4-2019

NMPHI and CCIDS Parent Advocacy Training Collaborative

Crystal Cron

April Fournier

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NMPHI and CCIDS Parent Advocacy Training Collaborative

Crystal Cron, B.A. Psychology and April Fournier, M. Ed.
Leadership Partners: Hibo Omer, MPH, NMPHI, and Marnie Morneault, M. Ed., CCIDS

Lewiston Public Schools has almost 25% of the student population identified as English Language Learners. Approximately 10% of Lewiston's population is Somali.

New Mainers Public Health Initiative (NMPHI) aims to empower, inform, and educate new Mainers about preventive health measures through health promotion by developing the capacity to mobilize community partnerships in identifying and solving health problems in order to bridge the gap in health care service delivery and decrease health disparities. NMPHI works with the underserved, including those with intellectual impairments, by providing targeted case management services and rehabilitative community support services.



- Our Project Scope
- Assist in the development of parent advocacy training module for parents of children on the autism spectrum
 - Assist in the planning of parent advocacy trainings for Somali parents of children on the autism spectrum.
 - Participate in delivering parent advocacy trainings for Somali parents of children on the autism spectrum in Lewiston, Maine.
 - Assist in the development of resource and information materials on Somali populations in NH and Maine.

Being inclusive and equitable means that all parents should have access to and understanding of their child's health and education information. Immigrants who come from countries where parent engagement in the school setting is not encouraged may not fully understand their right to have a say in their children's education.

We are providing Group Listening and Structured Learning Sessions on Special Education Topics Relevant to Community Members' Interests and Needs

Culturally and linguistically appropriate services are lacking in the school systems. We hope to support and provide resources for community members to lead their own trainings, using their expertise about their community and their unique needs.

We have experienced an increase in participation weekly as more parents within the community learn about our initiative. Our first session had 7 parents, the second session had 12 parents, and the third session had 9 parents.

Our Listening Sessions allowed us to hear First-hand Accounts of Challenges Accessing Education and Special Education

We have partnered with Community Members to Develop Leadership Opportunities for Future Trainings, Increasing Community Capacity for Peer Leaders and Mentors.

Trainings were developed through the feedback from the listening sessions. Parents' concerns and challenges with the education system, and the areas that they were seeking guidance became the topics of the structured learning sessions.

Feedback followed each learning session and this shaped the structure of the subsequent training. This family led approach allowed us to provide information that was especially relevant.