Certificate Program in Implementation Practice

Overview

The Certificate Program in Implementation Practice provides professionals with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to implement evidence-informed interventions within their service settings. The program fosters learning and collaboration to solve real-world problems and reduce disparities in outcomes.

The certificate program consists of three courses delivered synchronously via Zoom. Each course spans two consecutive days. The courses are grounded in core competencies for implementation support practitioners.

Upon completion of the program, participants are eligible to receive a professional certificate from the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a digital badge at the validation level, and up to 24 continuing education credits.

> "Participating in the inaugural cohort of UNC School of Social Work's Implementation Practice certificate program was beyond impactful. I know that I have the tools to bring forth meaningful change in my team and our system. I celebrate the possibilities!"
>
> – Sabrina Clark, LAPSW, CSWM,
> Policy & Practice Model Supervisor,
> Mecklenburg County (NC)
> Dept. of Social Services

Course Descriptions

Course 1: Co-Creation and Engagement

The first course introduces a set of competencies essential to co-creating and engaging with a range of implementation partners. It includes a focus on relational skills, tools, and frameworks to guide ongoing interactions and activities. Participants have opportunities to practice co-learning, plan for feasible opportunities to address power differentials, explore how brokering and tailoring support contribute to positive outcomes, and consider what level of engagement—including co-design—may be needed among implementation partners.

All courses are undergirded by a set of **shared principles** for implementation support:

* Be empathetic
* Be curious
* Be committed
* Advance equity
* Use critical thinking
* Embrace cross-disciplinary approaches

Course 2: Ongoing Improvement

The second course introduces competencies needed to support ongoing improvement of an implementation effort, including the more technical, diagnostic, and analytic aspects of implementation support. Participants explore a process for assessing needs and understanding contextual fit of an intervention, use an implementation framework to match strategies to specific barriers, identify facilitation techniques aligned with the goals of an upcoming meeting, learn best practices for improving communication efforts through data visualization, and examine key activities used to carry out improvement cycles.

Course 3: Sustaining Change

The third course returns to relational aspects of implementation support with a set of competencies fundamental to supporting sustainability. Participants discuss approaches for developing psychologically safe implementation teams, identify characteristics of strong champions and courageous leaders needed to support implementation efforts, consider strategies for building capacity, and continue reflecting on the importance of growing and sustaining trusting relationships.
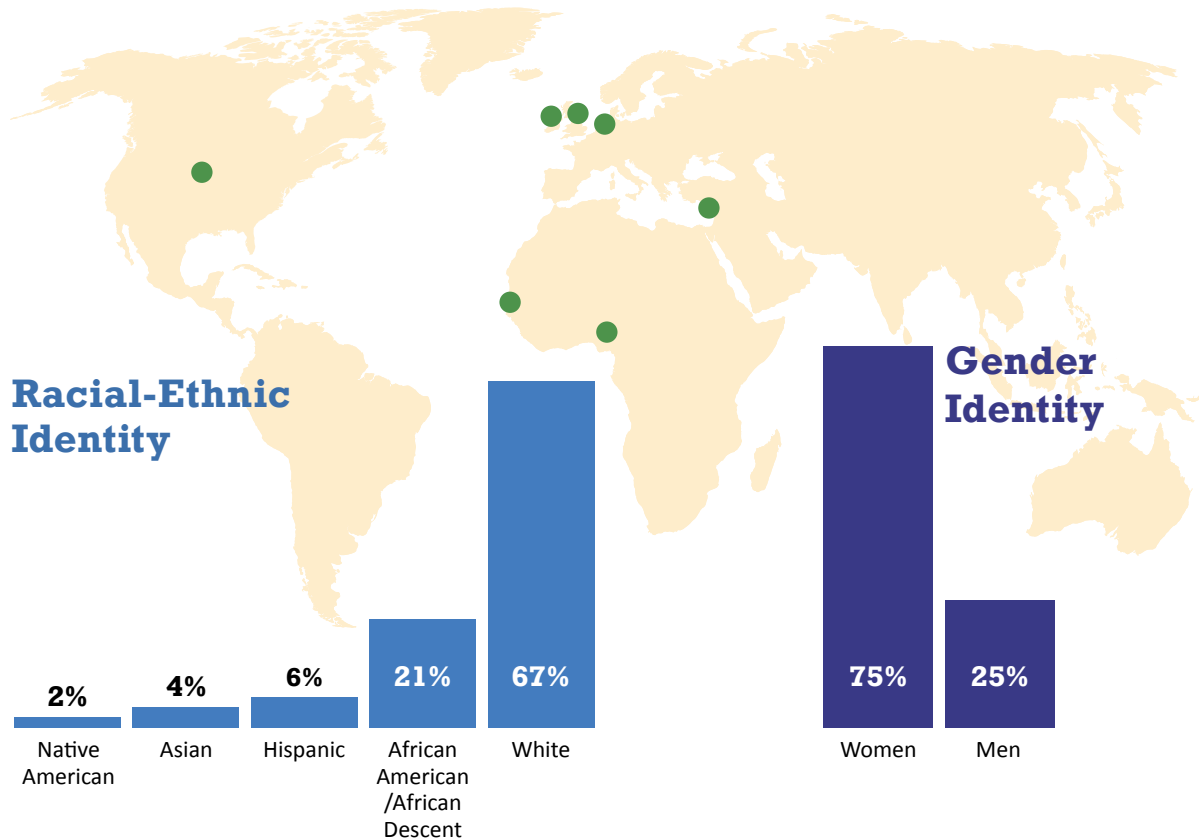
"The equity and implementation connection was well presented and very important to learn about, reflect on, and take action."

Participant Characteristics (2023 Inaugural Cohort)

The inaugural cohort was composed of 44 professionals from the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Cyprus, Nigeria, and Senegal.

Racial-Ethnic Identity

Native American	Asian	Hispanic	African American /African Descent	White
2%	4%	6%	21%	67%

Gender Identity

Women	Men
75%	25%

Service Systems

Participants represented a range of professional experience, including many with 15 or more years, in the following service systems (fields):

* Child welfare
* Criminal justice
* Early childhood
* Health
* Implementation science
* K–12 education
* Mental and behavioral health
* Public health

Agency Settings

Participants also worked in a variety of agency settings:

* Faith-based organizations
* For-profits
* Government (federal, state and local)
* Higher education/academia
* Hospitals
* Non-profits
* Philanthropy
* School systems

Course Feedback (2023 Inaugural Cohort)

Key Themes

* The **high-quality program faculty and guest speakers** have expansive content knowledge and can effectively model facilitation skills and empathy.
* **Small group engagements** foster connection and learning, allowing participants to build relationships while practicing skills.
* The **format for content delivery** is exceptionally effective, allowing for high levels of participation and learning.
* The **explicit focus on equity** is valuable and pushes participants to think deeply about systems change.
* The **content is directly applicable** to participants' current work and is likely to improve their effectiveness.

> "So much of this material is applicable to my work. I will be a better change agent because of this."

Across all three courses, over 91% of participants "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with these statements:

Overall I am satisfied with this course.

I feel capable of using what I've learned in my work supporting implementation.

I am confident I will have opportunities to use what I've learned in my day-to-day work.

The knowledge and skills I gained are applicable to my professional practice.

I am motivated to use what I've learned in my work supporting implementation.

I believe what I've learned will benefit my work supporting implementation.

Program Faculty and Speakers (2023 Inaugural Cohort)

* **Allison Metz** *(Director and Developer of the Certificate Program),* Collaborative for Implementation Practice, UNC School of Social Work

* **Jen Agosti,** JRA Consulting, Ltd.
* **Bianca Albers,** Institute for Implementation Science in Health Care, University of Zurich
* **Marita Brack,** NHS Education for Scotland
* **Gina Chowa,** School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
* **Lacy Dicharry,** LacyDee Consulting, LLC
* **Amanda Farley,** Collaborative for Implementation Practice, UNC School of Social Work
* **Sophia Farmer,** National Implementation Research Network, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
* **Iheoma Iruka,** Department of Public Policy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
* **Todd Jensen,** Collaborative for Implementation Practice, UNC School of Social Work
* **Audrey Loper,** Collaborative for Implementation Practice, UNC School of Social Work
* **Kimberly Mann,** Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (retired)
* **Yolanda Perkins,** National Implementation Research Network, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
* **Caryn Ward,** National Implementation Research Network, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Planning for the Future

The Collaborative for Implementation Practice at the UNC School of Social Work is committed to growing a workforce with the skills and abilities to support implementation, evidence use, and change efforts that lead to equitable outcomes for children, youth, and families in their local communities.

> "This is the best online course I've been a part of. I'm excited to apply the learning directly to my work."

As we look to the future, we are excited to offer the certificate program to additional cohorts and to disseminate findings and lessons learned from our efforts to build the capacity of professionals supporting implementation. In the next year and beyond, we will:

* Engage additional cohorts of professionals, drawing from a significant waitlist of interested individuals.
* Deliver the certificate program with closed cohorts of staff from several organizations providing implementation support nationally and internationally.
* Present content and findings from the certificate program at national and international conferences.

To learn more about the work of the Collaborative for Implementation Practice, visit implementationpractice.org. For more information about the certificate program, contact Amanda Farley at amanda.farley@unc.edu.

Collaborative for Implementation Practice
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