



# GPS

GROUP  
PEER  
SUPPORT

# GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community 2024



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# REPORT



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## Learning Impact Report: GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community 2024

Curso de Capacitación de Líder de Grupo para la Comunidad Hispana

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*“This course changed my life. Learning from leaders who understand the realities of our culture was healing and liberating.”*

— Participant in the GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2023, GPS Group Peer Support has offered GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community delivered entirely in Spanish. The purpose of the training is to train Hispanic community leaders how to lead GPS groups for Spanish-speaking communities

in their native language. Having the training presented in Spanish and specifically adapted to the Hispanic community is immensely beneficial and valued by participants. This report summarizes the experiences, learning, and growth of participants from the GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic community cohort.

GPS is a mental wellness intervention that mitigates the long-term effects of stress, strain, and trauma. Incorporating elements of mindfulness-based stress reduction, cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, peer-to-peer support, psychosocial education, and other evidence-based modalities, GPS is designed for the rapid implementation of essential mental health support during times of stress, crisis, and change. The GPS model has been successfully implemented among diverse populations including parents dealing with postpartum depression, residents of rural areas living with chronic conditions, people dealing with substance use disorder, refugees, survivors of war, and people facing oppression based on their racial, sexual, gender, religious, or other identities. It can be delivered by mental health clinicians or trained, non-clinical workers with relevant lived experience. Since its founding, GPS has focused on the needs of communities that face high barriers to behavioral health care, including individuals in recovery.

The GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community delivered in Spring 2024 taught a variety of information and skills, with the focus being on a culturally adaptable, trauma-sensitive group support model that is easy to learn and adapt in diverse settings, with various populations and in multiple languages. Participants learned how to address taboo topics such as trauma, racism, poverty, discrimination, cultural and gender equality, as well as challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, with compassion, transparency, and skill. They also learned essential trauma-sensitive skills to create environments of mutual respect, non-judgment, compassion, and emotional safety, and how to incorporate evidence-based approaches from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction in groups. Participants came away with a better understanding of a strengths-based group approach that ensures an accessible, welcoming, and transformative group experience for all.

**The training was successful, with nearly all participants reporting that they would recommend the training to a colleague (97%).** Pre- and post-training surveys found statistically significant increases in confidence levels across all measured areas of learning. Participants also reported that the GPS training was useful, effective, educational, and inspirational.

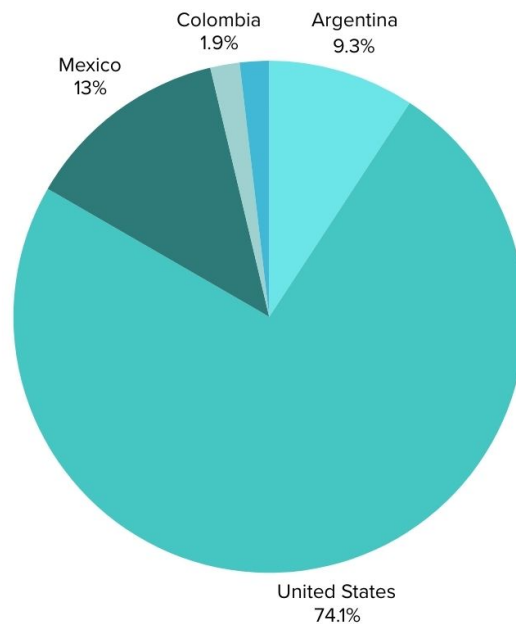
## TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

### Demographic Information for Training Participants

Among participants ages 18 to over 60, the vast majority of training participants (94%) were Hispanic/Latino(a), with 6% also describing themselves as White, 4% Black or African American, 4% Indigenous, and 2% Caribbean. Only 33% of participants were born in the United States. Of participants 93% identified as women, 7% identified as men, and 3% as non-binary. Further, 19% of participants identified as a person with a disability or other chronic condition.

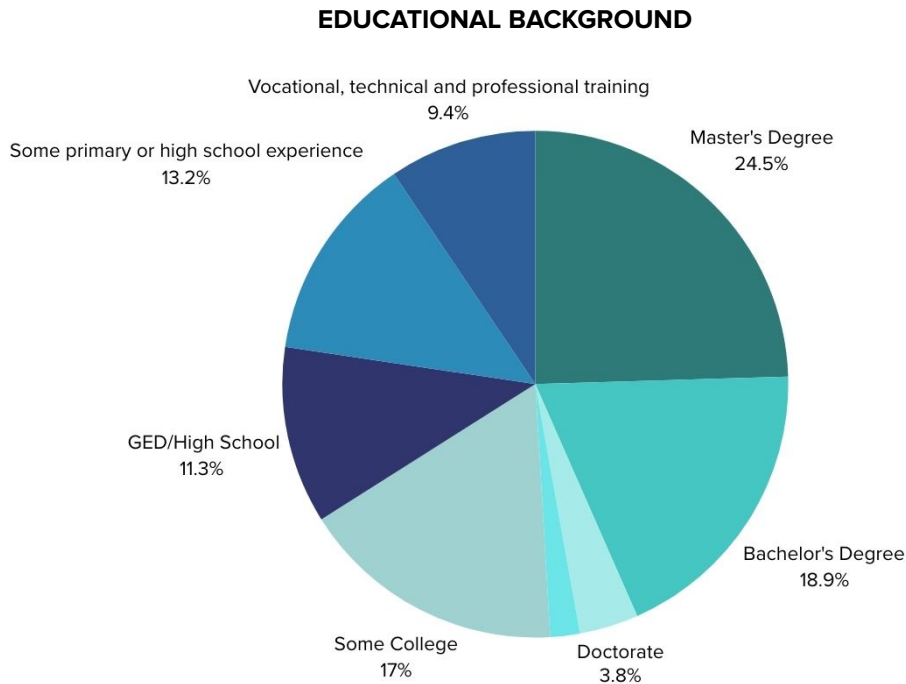
While 74% of participants live in the US, the rest attended the training from outside the country.

**CURRENT COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE**



The majority of participants (55%) had received group facilitation training in the past even though 66% of participants currently run support groups. While 48% of participants led groups in English, 84% led them in Spanish.

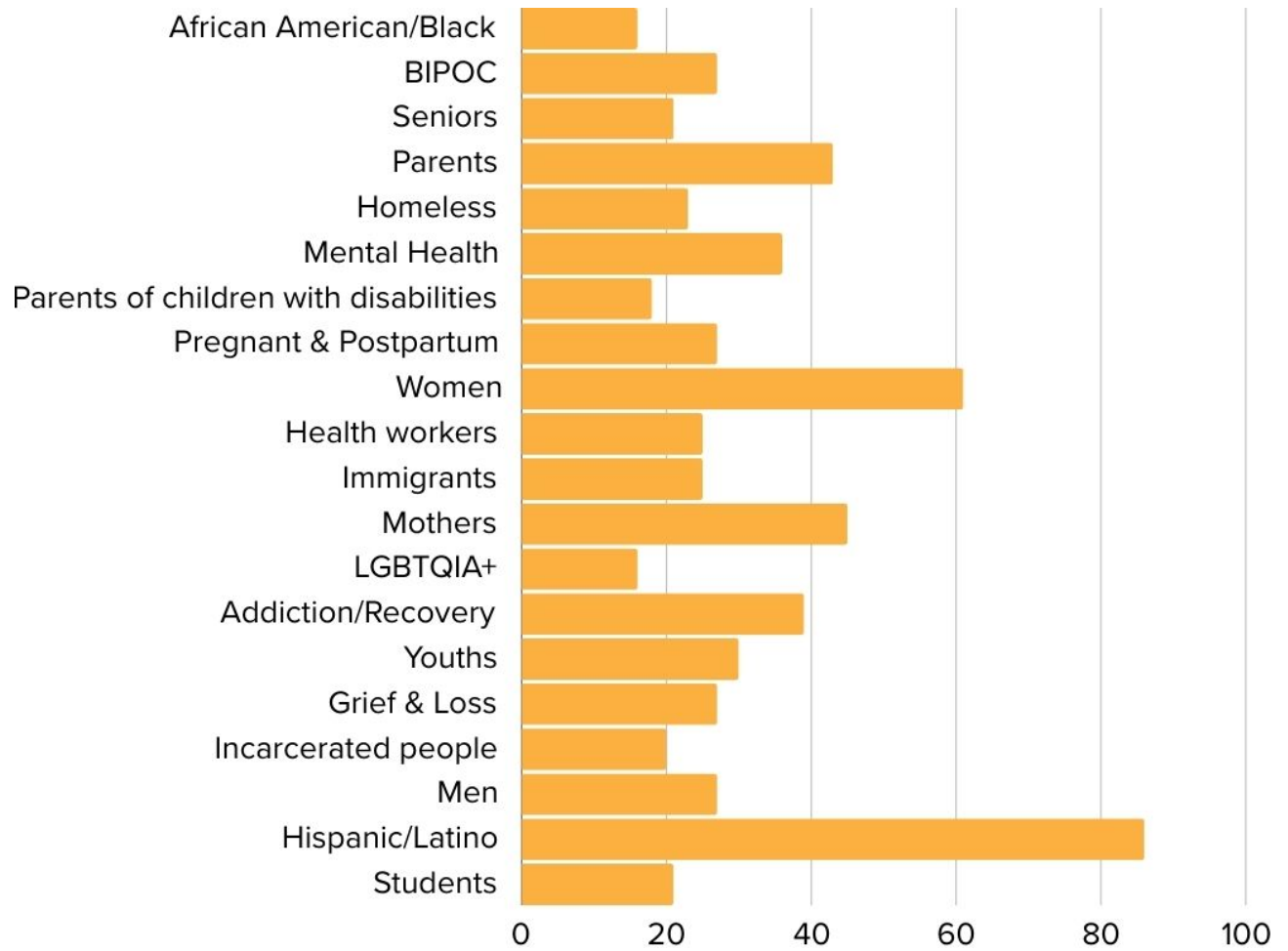
This training was accessible to a wide range of educational backgrounds.



**BSAS had 24 individuals attend this training.** Participants came from a variety of work backgrounds, including counselors, community health workers, case managers, social workers, recovery coaches, program directors, and others. They also represented many different organizations, including Casa Esperanza, Gandara Addiction Recovery Program, Health Care Resource Centers, The Happier Life Project, Amherst Public Schools, and more.

Participants serve a wide range of populations, with the largest being the Hispanic/Latino community.

**POPULATIONS SERVED**



## EVALUATION METHODS

Training participants were asked to complete pre- and post-training electronic surveys. The surveys were anonymous. The pre-survey included demographic information, as well as questions about their work, their experience running support groups, and their confidence levels in the various aspects of running support groups which would be covered in the training. The post-training survey included some of the measures from the pre-survey to measure change (specifically confidence measures), as well as several debriefing questions regarding the participant's experience in the training: what was helpful, what wasn't helpful, and their experience around equity and inclusion within the training.

## EVALUATION RESULTS

### **Participants recommend this training to their colleagues**

Participants surveyed in the 2024 Spanish training overwhelmingly responded that they would recommend the training to their colleagues (97%).

### **Training Experience**

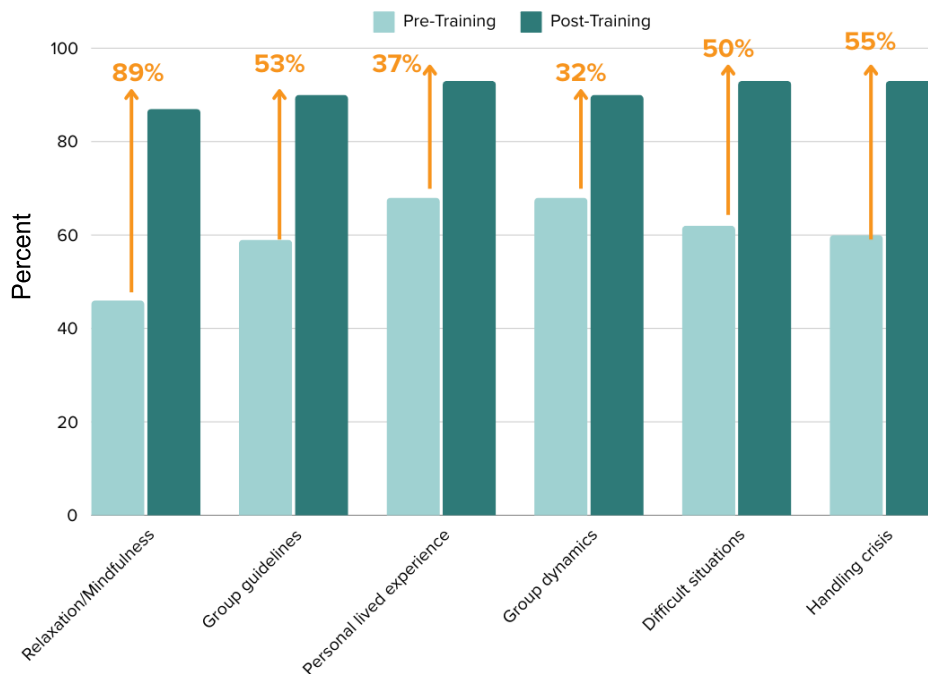
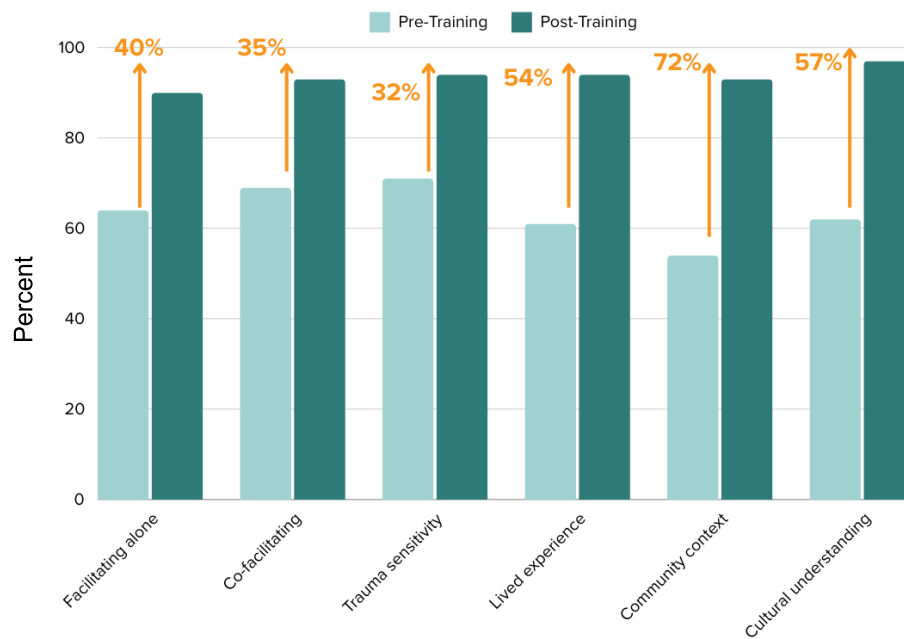
When asked questions about their experience in the training, the expertise of trainers, the GPS Group Peer Support model, and GPS support groups, participants overwhelmingly responded positively. When it came to their overall learning experience, the majority of participants (64%) rated the training "excellent." Seventy-seven percent of participants rated the overall expertise of GPS trainers as "excellent," while 67% found the GPS model itself to be "excellent."

### **Confidence Within Leading a Support Group**

The graph below shows the significant change in the confidence levels of participants before and after the training. Confidence levels increased in all areas, with an average increase of 50% across every category, including **an 89% increase in confidence levels when it comes to leading relaxation/mindfulness exercises for groups.**

The following areas were measured (abbreviated below):

- Facilitating groups alone
- Co-facilitating groups with another leader
- Creating a trauma-sensitive setting and using trauma-informed skills in leading groups
- Including content related to the lived experience of group members
- Discussing the community context of individuals in the group
- Cultural understanding and implementation in leading groups
- Leading relaxation/mindfulness exercises for groups
- Explaining group guidelines
- Sharing personal lived experience appropriately as a facilitator
- Managing group dynamics
- Managing difficult situations
- Appropriately attending to individuals in crisis

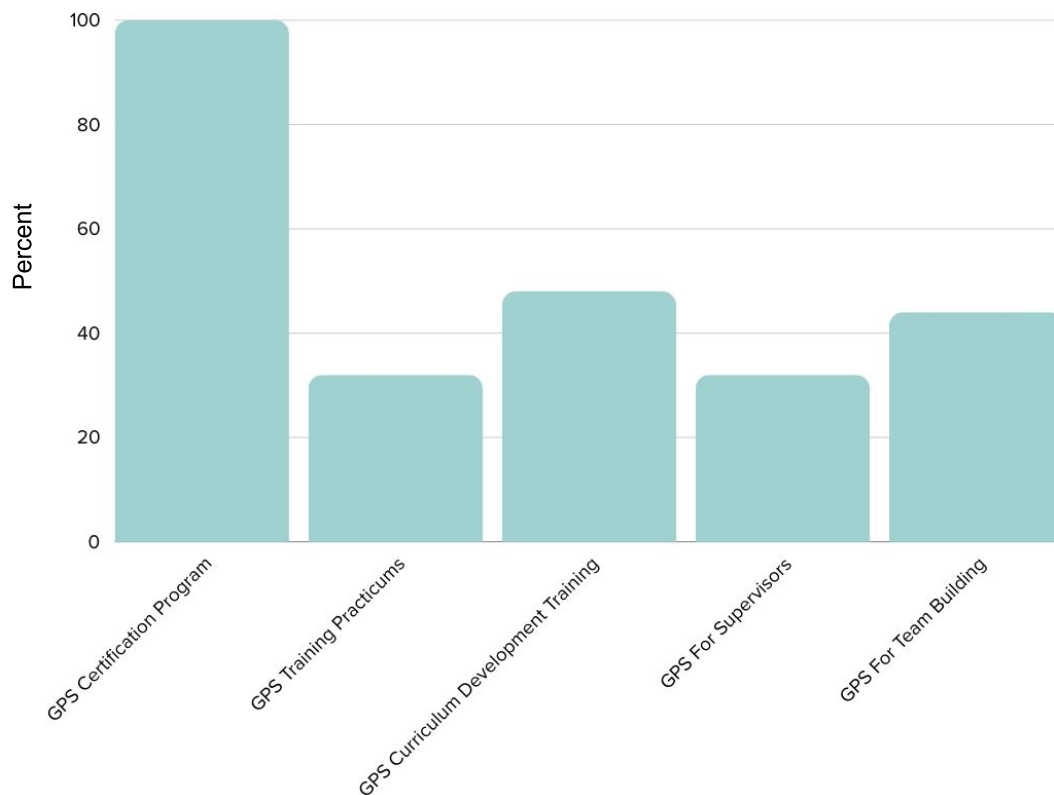


## Measuring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

GPS Group Peer Support has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Across all of its programming, it is crucially important that everyone feels seen, heard, and validated. To ensure that our training is meeting the needs of the diverse population we serve, participants were asked several questions on this topic. When asked if the training created a safe space for people of all identities, 70% of participants agreed that it had done so. A total of 71% agreed that diverse perspectives were actively sought and valued during the training sessions. When asked if GPS takes appropriate action to address issues related to discrimination or bias, 71% of participants agreed. Finally, 63% of respondents felt that the training had helped them to better understand the intersection between trauma and race, culture, ethnicity, and identity.

## Interest in Future Learning Opportunities with GPS

The graph below shows that participants indicated a strong interest in attending future GPS training programs. Most notably, every single respondent hoped to take the next steps to become certified in the GPS model.



## Qualitative Responses

### Skill Improvement

Participants shared the many areas where the training helped to improve their skills.

- *Learning how to structure sessions and be more empathetic*
- *Helping people to be present*
- *Relaxation and good communication*
- *Problem management and self-care*
- *Time management and session segmentation*
- *Improvement of techniques and control of groups*
- *Mindfulness exercises*
- *Active listening and reflection*
- *Providing support and weaving in experiences*

### Comfort & Confidence

Participants noted that their confidence and ability to lead a group grew from the training.

*“I love that it's in my language. Also, it helped to improve my vocabulary and gave me better ways to create questions and confidence when speaking.”*

— Participant in the GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community

- *“It's a good training, especially if you have trouble running groups or would like to learn more about groups and feel more comfortable running groups.”*
- *“I feel more confident, with clearer and more motivated guidance to start my group.”*

## Feeling Seen and Validated

Participants shared that having the training adapted to Hispanic culture and taught entirely in Spanish was extremely important to them. Being able to participate in their native language made the discussions and practicums clearer and more useful.

*“Thank you for representing the Latino community! Your creativity, your respect, and your motivation to support the community are inspiring.”*

— Participant in the GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community

- *“I love that it's made in Spanish, in my language, by people who look like me and speak like me.”*
- *“My job is to teach the Hispanic community, and they always talk to me or come to me to share their life experiences. The tools you gave me helped me interact more professionally with them.”*
- *“This course changed my life. Learning from leaders who started from the bottom and who understand the realities of our culture was healing and liberating.”*

## Overall Thoughts on the Training

Participants enjoyed the way the training was delivered, the skills and expertise of the facilitators, and the information they learned.

- *“I liked the experience. Technology allows you to share with people who are in different countries. The facilitators were excellent and very patient with the questions and doubts of the participants. In general, it has been a very enriching experience, with a lot of learning.”*
- *“The facilitators are very friendly and very well prepared. I have been working with the community for a long time and I have my training, but this is different: speak to heal, do not give advice without permission, and be able to say no.”*

- *“As a bilingual clinician and small group facilitator, the group format helps everyone be heard.”*

## IMPACT AND NEXT STEPS

The positive impact on individuals who are trained in the GPS model is clear. Their confidence levels in all areas of group facilitation increased. Their commitment to running trauma-informed support groups in their community grew. Their desire for additional professional development and training in the GPS model was indicated. The majority of participants were already running support groups, and yet, they were eager and ready to implement the GPS model in their groups. The GPS model and facilitation training fill a previously unfulfilled need for a group facilitation structure that is trauma-informed, accessible, and culturally adaptable. The more we build the capacity for peer support in the recovery communities, the higher quality of care we will be able to provide.

The success experienced in the 2024 online Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community is also a testament to the adaptability of the GPS model. The majority of participants intend to take the model back to their communities and run support groups in Spanish. Learning the model in their native language added an element to this training that participants had not found elsewhere. As a result, training participants are now prepared with the tools they need to successfully implement support groups in their communities, with increased confidence. The remarks of one participant are a summation of the power of GPS: *“I leave inspired to provide a safe, peaceful, and comforting space for people who need it — the space that I would have liked to have on many occasions.”*

# ADDENDUM

## TRAINING CONTENT AND OVERVIEW

- The GPS Spring Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community took place over 4 weeks. Each training session was 2.5 hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- The training was conducted virtually on Zoom
- Participants were required to attend their opening and closing practicums live. The remainder of the training was available as live sessions or recordings.
- Training dates: March 28th-April 18th, 2024
- Total training hours: 35

### Training Schedule

#### Week 1: Opening Practicums

- The Opening Practicum invites individuals to experience a GPS support group firsthand as a participant. Practicum Sessions are experiential opportunities to apply learning, practice skills, and build confidence in facilitating the model.

#### Week 2:

- The Power of GPS Groups and Unique Challenges, Barriers to Care and Stigma Faced by the Hispanic Community
- GPS Mindfulness Rest Stop: Trauma-Sensitive Group Opening and Welcome
- Specialized Trauma- Informed GPS Guidelines

#### Week 3:

- GPS Realities and Strengths for Hispanic Culture
- Check In: Facilitating Empowering and Transformative Conversations
- Group Motivational Closure

#### Week 4: Closing Practicum in small groups

- The Closing Practicum allows participants an opportunity to practice what they learned throughout the training, by co-facilitating a live GPS support group of fellow facilitators.

# About GPS

GPS Group Peer Support (GPS) is a mental wellness intervention that mitigates the long-term effects of stress, strain, and trauma. Incorporating elements of mindfulness-based stress reduction, cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, peer-to-peer support, psychosocial education, and other evidence-based modalities, GPS is designed for the rapid implementation of essential mental health support during times of stress, crisis, and change. The GPS model has been successfully implemented among diverse populations. It can be delivered by mental health clinicians or trained, non-clinical workers with relevant lived experience.

**A note about the language used throughout:** GPS values inclusion and diversity, and strives to use respectful terms and language for individual and community identities. Throughout this material, whenever possible, we have used terms that are most widely accepted by the communities they represent to refer to people through the language they use for themselves. We recognize that language is frequently changing around topics such as gender, race, sexuality, and other identity or community labels and terms. As we learn and grow as an organization, and as terms change or evolve to be more inclusive and respectful or preferred within communities, we will update our manuals, curriculums, and reports.

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