MASStrong GPS

GROUP PEER SUPPORT FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Learning Impact Report

FALL 2025 FACILITATOR TRAINING FOR THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY

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> **This training is a deeply enriching experience.** It not only offers practical tools for facilitating support groups but also helps develop awareness, empathy, and confidence when holding sensitive spaces. You learn to listen better, guide without imposing, and create environments where people feel seen, supported, and respected.
>
> **— Participant in the Fall 2025 Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community**

Executive Summary

GPS Group Peer Support has offered Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community delivered entirely in Spanish since 2023. The purpose of the training is to train Hispanic community leaders in 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.

The Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community was a transformative experience for participants, equipping them with the skills, confidence, and tools to lead trauma-informed support groups. GPS Group Peer Support facilitator trainings are designed to create welcoming spaces and uplift varied perspectives. Over three weeks, GPS delivered **20 hours** of interactive training designed to enhance facilitation abilities, improve group dynamics management, and strengthen trauma-informed approaches.

The GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community delivered in Fall 2025 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.**

The results were overwhelmingly positive. Participants reported **a 34% average increase in confidence** across all facilitation skills, with **a significant 64% increase** in confidence levels when it comes to leading relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

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An overwhelming **100% of participants would recommend the training to colleagues**, underscoring the program's relevance and effectiveness.

Despite **51% already leading support groups, 65% had never received formal group facilitation training;** the training filled that gap, providing participants with a structured, evidence-based approach, enhancing their ability to lead peer support groups effectively and immediately apply GPS principles in their professional settings. In addition, many of the participants expressed a desire to continue their education in the GPS model, including pursuing advanced certification.

The training also fostered a deeper understanding of group dynamics, leadership, and trauma-informed support. The training had a profound impact on those in community-based support settings, including those working with mental health support, individuals in recovery, those in healthcare, as parents in a variety of situations.

With a range of backgrounds and experiences represented in the Fall cohort, the training fostered an environment where participants felt heard, valued, and empowered. Significantly, **providing GPS training in Spanish allowed participants to engage more confidently.** It also fostered trust, encouraged authentic participation, and ensured cultural relevance by addressing community-specific attitudes and examples, enabling Spanish speakers to fully participate and serve their communities as peer supporters.

By investing in GPS training, organizations expand access to high-quality, peer-led mental health support. The Fall 2025 training for the Hispanic community reinforced the essential role of peer support in addressing emotional well-being, stress, and trauma. With **100% participant endorsement**, measurable skill growth, and a commitment to creating safe, effective support spaces, GPS continues to set the standard for facilitator training.

> I learned not only how to facilitate conversations, but how to hold them with empathy, intentional silence, and respect for each participant's emotional pace. This is fundamental in my work with diverse communities engaged in processes of support, healing, and personal and collective transformation.
>
> **— Participant in the Fall 2025 Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community**

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Introduction

The demand for high-quality, peer-led mental health support is rising. As communities face stress and trauma, the need for skilled facilitators to create safe, supportive spaces has never been greater. GPS Group Peer Support (GPS) meets this need by providing evidence-based training that equips individuals to lead structured, trauma-informed support groups.

1. **Training Purpose & Scope**: The Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community prepared 27 participants over three weeks with 20 hours of interactive learning in group facilitation, active listening, and trauma-sensitive care.

2. **A Range of Participant Backgrounds**: Attendees included mental health professionals, clinicians, community organizers, parenting program coordinators, program directors, and individuals with lived experience of trauma, all united by a shared goal of creating supportive peer spaces in Spanish.

3. **Practical, Immediate Application**: The training emphasized structure, consistency, and responsiveness, allowing participants to integrate GPS principles into their work immediately.

4. **Trauma-Informed Care & Group Dynamics**: Participants learned to recognize and respond to group members' emotional and psychological needs while practicing active listening, de-escalation, and conflict resolution.

5. **High Confidence Gains & Participant Endorsements:** Participants reported increased confidence across multiple measures, highlighting GPS's structured approach as a key factor in making group facilitation more manageable and impactful.

6. **Ongoing Impact & Expansion**: Many participants plan to pursue advanced GPS certifications or introduce the model into new settings such as healthcare organizations and community centers.

7. **Broader Mission**: GPS's structured, evidence-based training strengthens the peer support network, expanding access to trauma-informed mental health care and creating lasting community impact.

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> GPS Training is a transformative experience that teaches you to guide groups with empathy, mindfulness, and deep respect for human experiences. It's not just technical training, but human learning: it teaches you to truly listen, create safe and trauma-sensitive spaces, and accompany emotional processes without invading them.
>
> **— Participant in the Fall 2025 Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community**

Increasing Capacity To Serve A Range Of Individuals

The Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community brought together a committed group of 27 individuals across various communities, united by a shared goal of expanding access to peer support.

Participants signed up via GPS's MASStrong program – a statewide initiative supporting the mental health and well-being of healthcare workers in Massachusetts. Supported by the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Trust Fund, MASStrong equips professionals with tools to build resilience and foster workplace wellness, while also helping to stem the rising mental health costs that directly impact organizations. In this particular training, **78% work with those who identify as Hispanic/Latino/Latinx, 31% work in mental healthcare, 25% work with perinatal populations, 14% work in the recovery field, and 8% work with individuals with disabilities.**

The range of participants represents the reach and adaptability of GPS's Facilitator Training program, which empowers individuals to lead peer support groups in a range of communities, reinforcing a collective investment in mental health and healing. The Fall 2025 Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community not only equipped facilitators to create safe, confidential spaces where anyone, from parents and healthcare workers, can connect with both empathy and understanding, but enabled them to do so in Spanish.

This training drew participants from a variety of organizations, including Crece Conmigo, Iglesia evangélica Rebaños de paz, Platiquemos entre Padres, Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE), and Washington United Migrant.

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Evaluation Results

Participant Feedback and Training Impact

High Recommendation Rate

The Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community received universal endorsement from participants. Among those who completed the post-training survey, **100% indicated they would recommend the program to their colleagues**, underscoring the training's perceived value and effectiveness.

Positive Training Experience

Participants provided overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding various aspects of the training, including the expertise of the trainers, the GPS Group Peer Support model, and the overall training structure.

90%

of participants rated the training experience as excellent/good

93% **rated the GPS model itself as "excellent/good," reflecting its applicability and relevance to their professional roles.**

97%

praised the quality of online support provided during the training, emphasizing the program's adaptability to a virtual format.

Participants reported increased confidence in facilitating non-clinical, group-based peer support.

100% of participants would recommend it to others

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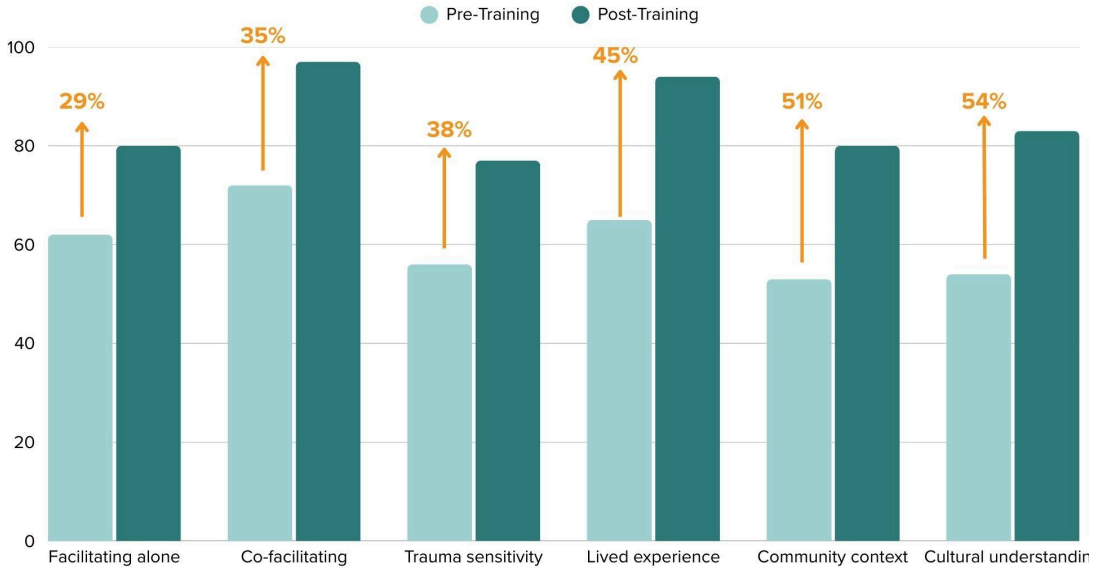
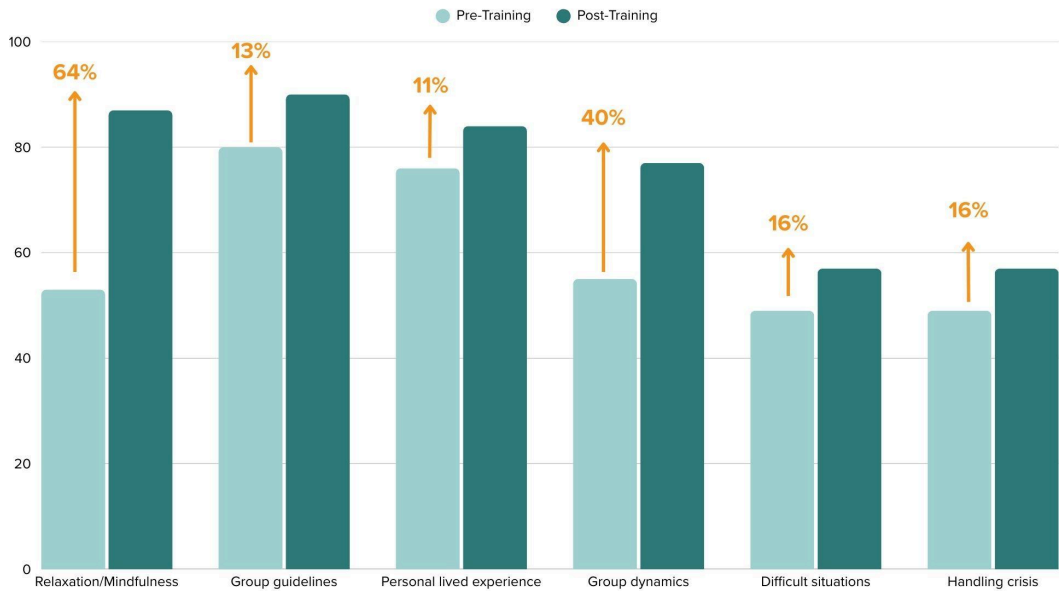
Increased Confidence in Group Facilitation

The training significantly boosted participants' confidence across all measured competencies. Pre- and post-training comparisons revealed:

- Confidence increased by a minimum of **11%** across all skill areas, with an **average increase of 34%.**
- A significant **64% increase** in confidence levels when it comes to leading relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

CONFIDENCE LEVELS





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These findings demonstrate that GPS Facilitator Training not only equips participants with practical skills but also fosters a high level of confidence in applying these skills within their professional contexts. This data reinforces the training's efficacy in preparing facilitators to lead trauma-informed, culturally responsive group sessions effectively.

For a detailed explanation of specific areas measured, please refer to the addendum at the end of this report.

Participant Insights and Feedback

The GPS Facilitator Training For the Hispanic Community has proven to be a transformative experience for participants, offering practical tools and strategies to enhance their professional effectiveness and confidence. Feedback highlights how the program's trauma-informed approach aligns seamlessly with participants' existing practices while introducing new methods for group facilitation, cultural competence, and creating safe, supportive spaces for healing.

Participant Reflections: Building Confidence Through Structured, Experiential Learning

Feedback from the post–training survey highlights the value of GPS's balance of clear instruction and hands-on practice. Participants emphasized how the training's structured format, facilitator modeling, and direct experience with the GPS protocol strengthened their confidence and ability to respond effectively in challenging moments. These reflections underscore the impact of a training approach that is both practical and deeply experiential, supporting facilitators to feel grounded, prepared, and equipped to lead with clarity.

> "I appreciated the excellent balance between direct instruction and explanation of the model, followed by the opportunity to experience it firsthand."

> "The GPS format or protocol helps guide me as a facilitator, use tools better, and manage pauses and rest. Above all, it gave me more confidence about what to do in difficult situations."

> "I liked that there was an excellent balance between instruction and direct experience. Especially in the first session where facilitators modeled and guided us."

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Strengthened Facilitation Skills and Increased Confidence

Post-training reflections show clear growth in both facilitation skills and confidence. Participants described meaningful shifts in how they listen, hold space, and support others—moving from a more reactive style to one grounded in understanding, empathy, and respect. These quotes reflect increased clarity around the facilitator role and greater comfort using core GPS practices such as silence, validation, and non-assumptive support.

> Before I tended to listen with the intention of responding, but now I listen to understand, without interrupting or imposing my interpretation.

> I feel I improved in understanding my role as a facilitator and how to support participants from their own experience, not from my assumptions.

> I learned to leave space for silence, validate others' experiences, and emotionally hold the group from empathy and respect.

Culturally Responsive and Welcoming Learning Spaces

Participants emphasized the importance of experiencing the training in a space that intentionally addressed inclusion, racial equity, and social justice. Reflections highlight how the Spanish-language cohort created a sense of belonging, safety, and cultural affirmation—allowing participants to engage fully in their own language without fear of judgment. These responses underscore the impact of culturally responsive facilitation that honors lived experience, identity, and community context while strengthening leadership capacity.

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> This training addressed inclusion, racial equity, and social justice in a very respectful and conscious way. It made me reflect on my own privileges, my experiences as a Latina immigrant woman, and how those experiences influence how I support others.

> I felt included, comfortable, and very excited to participate in a group in my language as a participant. Happy to have found a group open to the Latino community with GPS's level of experience.

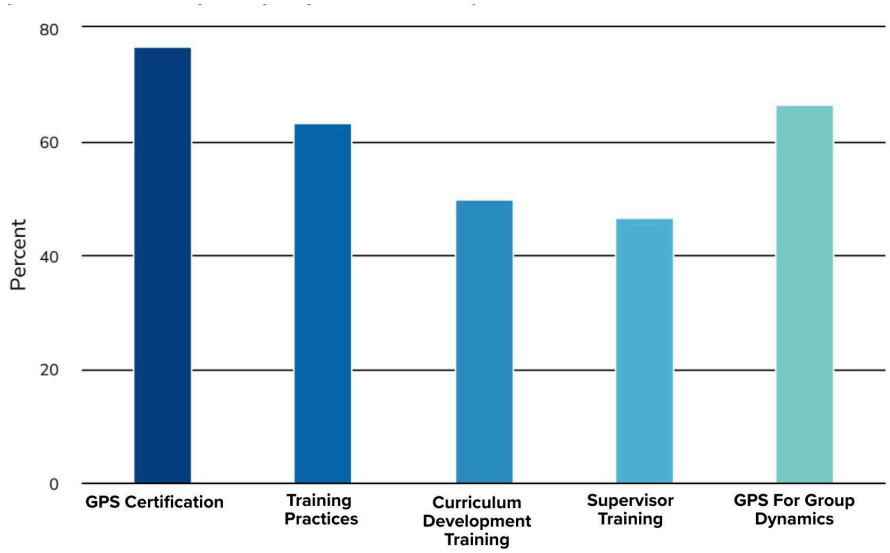
> I was very happy to know there are spaces in my language. I could speak and listen to participants and fully understand; I felt integrated without feeling judged.

The insights shared by participants underscore the profound impact of the GPS Facilitator Training on their professional development and practice.

By equipping facilitators with trauma-informed frameworks, culturally responsive tools, and practical strategies for group dynamics, the program empowers professionals to create environments that foster healing, resilience, and meaningful connection. The overwhelmingly positive feedback reinforces the training's essential role in enhancing the quality of care provided to a range of different communities.

Interest in Future Learning Opportunities with GPS

Participants indicated a strong interest in attending future GPS training programs. Most notably, **77% of respondents are interested in strengthening their skills** by taking the GPS Certification Program.



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Training Participants

Participant Profile

The range of backgrounds, experiences, and expertise of the Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community participants demonstrates the broad applicability and relevance of the program. By including individuals from various professional sectors, educational backgrounds, and facilitation experience levels, GPS ensures that its training is both accessible and impactful, fostering a more inclusive and skilled network of facilitators.

The Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community attracted a group of 27 participants, each bringing unique experiences and backgrounds to the program. The participants included professionals from mental health services, substance use/recovery programs, parent support networks, and peer-led advocacy groups. **For a more detailed demographic description of participants, please refer to the addendum at the end of this report.**

The Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community demonstrated the accessibility of peer support facilitation by bringing together participants from various educational and professional backgrounds. Some entered with minimal formal education and no prior facilitation experience, while others held advanced degrees and extensive leadership roles in group settings. This inclusivity reflects the participant experience emphasizing that despite different educational and experience levels, all attendees could build essential skills, refine best practices, and gain confidence in leading trauma-informed groups.

Participants consistently highlighted the value of GPS's structured approach, which provided a clear framework for both beginners and seasoned facilitators. By fostering a welcoming and supportive learning environment, GPS continues to expand access to high-quality, trauma-informed peer support across a range of different communities, strengthening the reach and impact of group facilitation.

This training embraced a wide range of perspectives and experiences, emphasizing and addressing the range of needs of both facilitators and the communities they serve.

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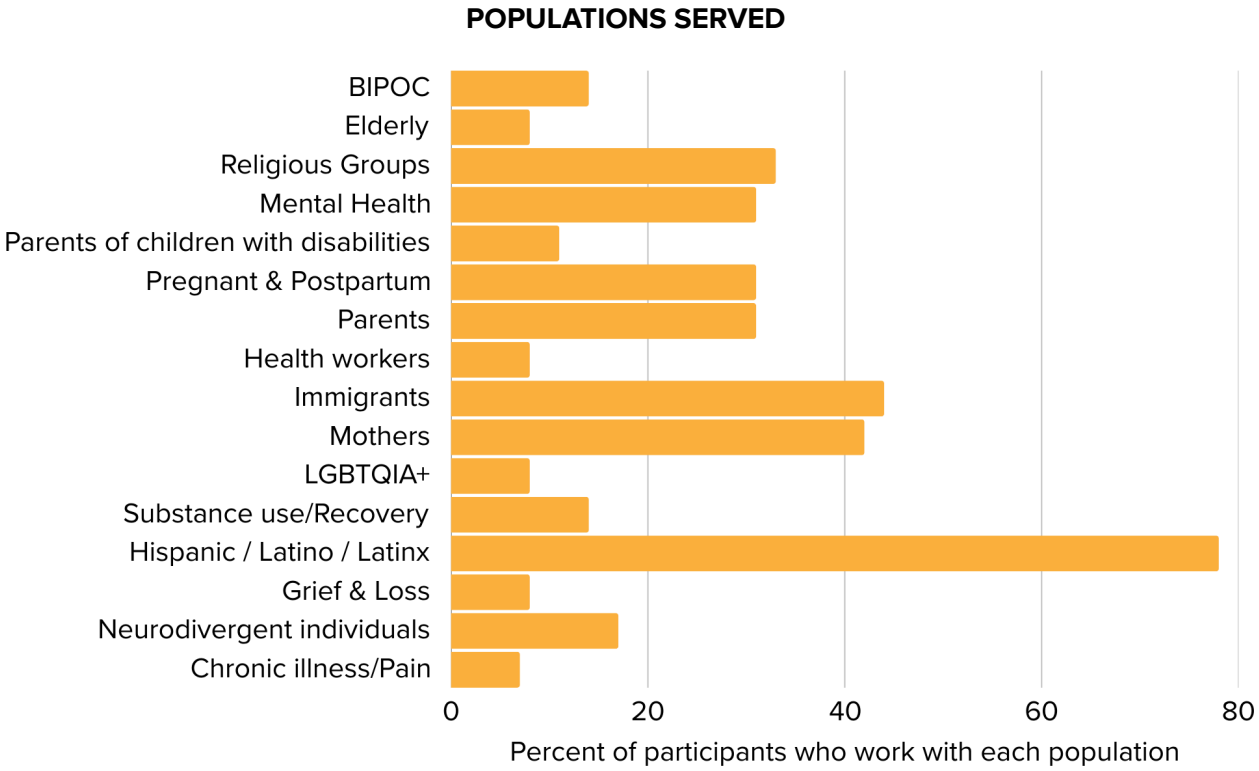

Impact and Next Steps

The Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community has demonstrated a significant positive impact on participants, enhancing their confidence in all aspects of group facilitation. Participants reported increased commitment to leading trauma-informed support groups in their communities and expressed strong interest in pursuing further professional development in the GPS model. Many were already facilitating groups prior to the training, yet they embraced the opportunity to incorporate the GPS framework into their practice with enthusiasm and readiness.

The success experienced in the Fall 2025 GPS 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.

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ADDENDUM

Training Overview

The Fall 2025 GPS Facilitator Training for the Hispanic Community was structured to ensure that participants received a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. This section provides a detailed breakdown of the training curriculum, key learning components, and the interactive methods used to reinforce facilitator skills.

Structure of the Training Program

Training is delivered virtually over three weeks and includes a blend of live sessions, recorded modules, and interactive learning opportunities. A hybrid format is also available, allowing participants to combine live engagement with self-paced study for added flexibility. Components include:

- **Live interactive sessions:** Engaging workshops run by experienced GPS trainers. Each session combines presentations, live practicum, and open Q&A to engage participants with real-world examples of the GPS Model and active dialogue to help learn it in depth. Breakout rooms and collaborative activities are incorporated to keep participants actively involved.
- **Role-playing and practice exercises:** Participants actively apply new skills in a supportive environment. Facilitators offer feedback and reflections, bringing the model to life.
- **Small group discussions:** Participants are divided into smaller cohorts during live sessions to foster more intimate discussions and peer-to-peer learning. These facilitated conversations allow a deeper understanding of skills and allow for refinement of facilitation techniques.
- **Facilitator demonstrations:** Trainers model best practices for leading GPS groups and offer practical examples for facilitating GPS Check In, managing group dynamics and conflict, encouraging participation, closing groups effectively, and more.
- **Recorded Modules:** While attendance at live sessions is encouraged, in order to meet the varied needs of participants, recorded versions of all core modules are made available, allowing for flexibility and accessibility. This feature ensures that participants who miss a live session or wish to review content can catch up at their own pace, so no one is left behind.

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Key Learning Components

Each session is carefully structured to build upon the previous content, reinforcing a strong foundation for group facilitation:

1. **Introduction to GPS & Group Facilitation:** This foundational module introduces the fundamentals and structure of the GPS model, which blends peer support, trauma-informed care, and mindfulness-based approaches.

2. **Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Environment:** Examining aspects of the GPS model that provide concrete techniques for ensuring that groups are safe, welcoming, and empowering for everyone.

3. **Effective Communication and Active Listening:** Strong facilitation depends on clear, compassionate communication. Participants develop the interpersonal skills needed to lead meaningful, engaging, and trauma-informed conversations.

4. **Managing Group Dynamics:** Groups are inherently dynamic and participants are taught strategies that equip facilitators to navigate challenges gracefully.

5. **Mindfulness and Grounding Techniques:** To support both facilitators and participants in staying present and regulated, Facilitator Training explores mindfulness practices tailored to group settings.

6. **Facilitating Welcoming and Supportive Conversations:** Participants learn to create an atmosphere of meaningful connection and openness that encourages supportive dialogue.

7. **Navigating Difficult Situations:** Facilitators may encounter moments of tension, strong emotions, or crises. GPS training prepares facilitators to respond effectively.

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Evaluation Methods

To assess the impact and effectiveness of the Spring 2025 GPS Facilitator Training, a structured evaluation process was implemented. Participants were asked to complete **anonymous pre- and post-training electronic surveys**, providing valuable insights into their experiences, confidence levels, and the training's overall impact.

1. **Pre-Training Survey**:
    - **Purpose**: Collected baseline data to understand participant demographics and gauge their initial confidence levels in group facilitation.
    - **Key Components**:
        - Demographic information (e.g., age, gender, language proficiency, and educational background).
        - Professional context, including prior experience running support groups and current roles.
        - Confidence levels across various group facilitation skills that would be addressed during the training.
2. **Post-Training Survey**:
    - **Purpose**: Measured changes in confidence levels and gathered feedback about participants' experiences in the training.
    - **Key Components**:
        - Reassessment of confidence levels using the same metrics from the pre-survey to quantify growth.
        - Debriefing questions to evaluate participants' perceptions of the training's relevance, usefulness, and effectiveness.
        - Open-ended feedback on specific aspects of the training, including the GPS model, trainer expertise, and applicability of skills learned.

This dual-survey approach provided a comprehensive evaluation of the training, highlighting its strengths, areas of improvement, and the measurable growth in participants' skills and confidence. The findings serve to refine future training sessions and validate the efficacy of the GPS Facilitator Training program.

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Participants were surveyed about their confidence levels both before and after the training. The following areas were measured:

- **Facilitating groups alone**: Participants self-evaluated their ability to independently lead group sessions, reporting significant increases in confidence and competence after the training.
- **Co-facilitating groups with another leader**: Participants assessed their collaborative leadership skills, noting marked improvement in their ability to co-lead group sessions effectively.
- **Creating a trauma-sensitive setting and using trauma-informed skills in leading groups**: Participants evaluated their capacity to establish safe, supportive environments, demonstrating enhanced proficiency in applying trauma-informed practices post-training.
- **Including content related to the lived experience of group members**: Participants reflected on their ability to incorporate members' lived experiences into discussions, with notable growth in ensuring relevance and authenticity.
- **Discussing the community context of individuals in group**: Participants assessed their understanding of how social, cultural, and environmental factors influence group members, showing significant gains in integrating these contexts into discussions.
- **Cultural understanding and implementation in leading groups**: Participants evaluated their cultural competency, reporting substantial improvements in recognizing and addressing the diversity of group members effectively.
- **Leading relaxation/mindfulness exercises for groups**: Participants self-rated their ability to facilitate relaxation and mindfulness techniques.
- **Explaining group guidelines**: Participants assessed their competence in establishing and communicating group guidelines, noting enhanced clarity and effectiveness after the training.
- **Sharing personal lived experience appropriately as a facilitator**: Participants reflected on their skill in sharing personal experiences appropriately, reporting increased confidence in using this technique to build trust and connection.
- **Managing group dynamics**: Participants evaluated their ability to navigate group interactions and address conflicts, showing significant growth in maintaining a positive and productive atmosphere.
- **Managing difficult situations**: Participants assessed their readiness to handle challenging scenarios, with improved strategies for managing resistance, disruption, or emotional distress.
- **Appropriately attending to individuals in crisis**: Participants self-rated their ability to respond to crisis situations within a group setting, demonstrating increased confidence and preparedness after the training.

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Participant Demographic Overview

The range of differences of the participants emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive facilitation, ensuring that GPS-trained facilitators can support a wide range of communities.

The demographic diversity of participants enriches the learning experience, ensuring a variety of perspectives that enhance the depth and relevance of peer support facilitation.

- **Age Range:** Participants ranged from 18 to over 70 years old.
- **Gender:** 97% identified as women, and 3% as men. The high percentage of female participants reflects the strong representation of women in caregiving and peer support roles.
- **Racial and Ethnic Background:**
    - 89% of participants identified as Hispanic/Latino/Latinx
    - 5% identified as white
    - 5% identified as African American
    - 5% identified as Caribbean
    - 3% identified as Indigenous

Educational Background

Participants came from a variety of educational backgrounds, highlighting the accessibility of GPS training to individuals with different levels of academic preparation while fostering a shared commitment to peer support.

- **16% hold master's degrees and 3% hold doctorates,** demonstrating a strong foundation in professional expertise.
- **43% hold bachelor's degrees,** indicating a high level of academic preparation among participants.
- **27 % have completed post-secondary training,** reflecting a range of educational backgrounds suited for peer support work.
- **8% have a GED or High School diploma,** showing that formal education levels varied, making the training accessible to individuals with different learning experiences

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About GPS

GPS Group Peer Support is a strength-based, trauma-informed, and welcoming approach to group care, offering consistent mental health support during times of stress, crisis, and change. This evidence- and trauma-informed model has been successfully implemented across a range of populations and settings, delivering impactful results. By incorporating mindfulness-based stress reduction, cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, peer-to-peer support, and other evidence-based modalities, GPS effectively mitigates the long-term effects of stress and trauma. The model allows for rapid replication in an easy-to-learn format for both peer specialists, people with lived experience, volunteers, and lay leaders, as well as professionals. GPS trainings are interactive, ensuring participants gain a comprehensive understanding to begin using this proven, impactful approach in their communities. GPS's innovative, scalable, and replicable approach aims to foster a supportive environment where individuals can find the resources and strength to move through difficult times with confidence and resilience.

A Note About Language Usage:

GPS is committed to using respectful and widely accepted terminology when referring to individuals and groups. Throughout this material, we have aimed to use terms that reflect how people describe themselves. We recognize that language evolves over time, and we remain committed to updating our manuals, curriculums, and reports as terminology shifts to better reflect the preferences of the communities we serve.

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