

# A Report from the National State-of-the-Science Institute on Community Inclusion

July 24 – 25, 2017 / on the Campus of Temple University / Philadelphia PA



## 2017 Summer Institute on Community Inclusion

THE STATE OF THE SCIENCE: WHAT DO WE KNOW? WHERE DO WE GO?

Sponsored by the Temple University Research and Training Center on Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

Funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)

The contents of this report were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number #90RT5021-02-00). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this report do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

# Introduction

The Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities (Temple), as part of its work as a federally-funded research and training center of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), periodically hosts a national research Institute to review the progress and outcomes of its ongoing research and training initiatives. Accordingly, at the end of July 2017 Temple hosted over 200 researchers, community mental health program managers and practitioners, service recipients and their families, and advocates for a two-day ‘state-of-the-science on community inclusion’ review of emerging research outcomes in the broadening effort to assist individuals with mental health conditions in regaining their connections to everyday community life.

This ‘working session’ provided participants several opportunities to bring themselves up-to-date on Temple’s research activities and findings, the initiatives of other researchers in the field from around the country, and ongoing efforts to translate these findings in to practical policy, program, and practitioner initiatives. The two-day program, held on campus at Temple University, included:

- 16 research presentations from Temple staff, based on the past and current research initiatives undertaken as part of their work within the Temple Collaborative’s research and training grants from NIDILRR, in both 90-minute workshop and 120-minute seminar sessions;
- 12 workshops, with presentations from two-dozen researchers, practitioners and service recipients from around the country, reporting on program outcomes from employment, education, housing, and self-directed care initiatives; and
- lunchtime activities that enlivened the proceedings, in two ways: lunchtime the first day included an informal opportunity for service recipients to share their stories; and lunchtime the second day offered a chance for participants to share – in light of current research activities and findings – their recommendations for the next generation of community inclusion research.

Participants were asked to evaluate the two-day event, and their evaluations were very positive, emphasizing the clarity of the presentations and the participants’ assessment that the information they received would prove very useful in developing more effective community inclusion policies, programs, and practices when they returned to their home agencies. The participants were particularly complimentary about the lunchtime ‘storyslam’ provided by service recipients and afternoon workshop that emphasized ‘storytelling’ and the ‘voice’ of service recipients. Participants also felt that the two-day

program provided them with a wealth of ideas and practical first steps for re-emphasizing community inclusion outcomes in their programming.

## Quality, Knowledge, and Impact

The Temple University Collaborative prides itself on doing great science in areas that are relevant to inclusion-oriented policies, programs, and practices, and disseminating this knowledge in exceptional ways. Post-Institute survey results indicate that we hit our target.

- 90% highly agreed that the quality of the presentations was very high
- 93% highly agreed that the sessions were relevant to them or their work
- 84% highly agreed that the sessions increased their overall understanding of community inclusion for people with psychiatric disabilities
- 88% highly agreed that the sessions increased their knowledge of strategies for promoting community inclusion

## The Agenda

The [full version of the agenda](#) includes brief descriptions of all 28 presentations by 54 presenters. The presentations addressed three major themes:

- **The existing and emerging research basis for community inclusion:** eight presentations focused on research topics in the field, sharing information about: the research base for community inclusion; strategies for assessing, at individual and aggregate levels, service recipient community inclusion activities and interests; the relevance of emerging research into ‘distal support’ and ‘environmental enrichment’ to community inclusion theory; and new data on environmental barriers to community inclusion;
- **community inclusion programming within specific domains of everyday community life:** one-third of the presentations explored outcomes from research activities of initiatives targeted to address specific life domains – attaining independent employment; continuing/completing one’s education; expanding participation in community-based leisure and recreational programming; responding to consumer interests in family life and social activities; preparing counselors for more open and comfortable discussions with consumers about sexual intimacy; exploring ways to support individual service recipients in reconnecting to the religious congregations of their choice;

responding to service recipient needs for transportation; and addressing service recipient wellness needs; and

- **targeted community inclusion programs:** other presentations focused on community inclusion activities targeted to specific populations, such as parents with mental illnesses, individuals with mental illnesses returning to community life following incarceration, and young adults. In addition, research results from specific service delivery models - a from self-directed care, person-centered care, and activity fair projects – was the focus of several workshops.

## Future Research Recommendations

Throughout the two-day Institute participants were offered a variety of opportunities to share their evolving views – given the variety of research activities to which they were exposed – with regard to ‘the next generation’ of community inclusion research needed to move the field further forward. These included:

- **Post-It notes & Social Media:** Opportunities at the end of each seminar and workshop presentation to share ideas with others their formative ideas about the most important research to be undertaken in the years ahead through public Post-It boards and social media.
- **What do we know? Where do we go?:** A second day luncheon provided a format for both a large group discussion and social media posts aimed at identifying attendee preferences for the types of research now needed to keep community inclusion program momentum building; and
- **End-of-conference evaluation forms:** Attendees had the opportunity not only to mention those ideas and presentations they had found most compelling but also those areas of inquiry that could take our understanding of effective policy, program, and practice initiatives in the field in new directions.

Several key research issues were of primary concern to the conference participants, as reflected in each of the data collection methodologies used:

### Domains of Community Living:

- **Leisure and Recreation:** participants believed that far more work should be done to explore ways in which service recipients could be helped to engage in mainstream leisure/recreational activities
- **Religion:** further research exploring strategies for promoting congregational connections and creating welcoming communities in religious settings were considered research priorities as well

- Education: there was a persistent interest in using research and demonstration projects to further our understanding of the supports needed to facilitate better academic advancement
- Criminal Justice: addressing the community inclusion needs of those leaving the criminal justice systems and the systems' ability to meet those needs

### Strategies to Promote Community Participation:

- Peer Support: participants believed that far more research should explore the impacts of peer specialists as significant supporters of community inclusion
- Storytelling: there was considerable interest in exploring strategies to promote community inclusion that relied upon a variety of 'storytelling techniques' from service recipients themselves
- Welcoming Communities: Institute attendees were concerned that there was not yet adequate research on how to create more welcoming community environments for service recipients
- Peer Run Programs: many participants recommended a greater research focus on the development and accomplishments of peer run programs vis-à-vis community inclusion

### Opportunities for Research & Training:

- Evaluation: participants clearly were interested in further development of evaluation and assessment strategies to capture cost-effective community inclusion programming
- Outcome Data: participants asked for a greater focus on the development of outcome data to provide a research basis to undergird programmatic development in community inclusion
- Barriers to Community Inclusion: participants asked for a greater research emphasis on defining systemic barriers to community inclusion (e.g. poverty, transportation), and expanding GPS research
- Social Media: the expanding use of social media by service recipients was an area of research interest as well as a recommended arena for the expansion of knowledge dissemination initiatives

Finally, participants indicated that a greater emphasis on research had to be accompanied by a more dramatic increase in knowledge translation activities to provide much needed information to service recipients and their families, program executives and practitioner, and public mental health system leaders, at state and local levels.

For more information on the National State-of-the-Science in Community Inclusion Institute:

[Full copy of the two-day agenda and workshop presenters](#)

[Video from the first day lunchtime storyslam presentations](#)

Other social media products from the Institute:

[Social media from the first day of the Institute](#)

[Social media from the second day of the Institute](#)