

Melissa Pennise, MPH, Sr. Health Project Coordinator; Jeiri Flores, BS, Self-Advocate and UR LEND Faculty
Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Communication is central to effective health care. Clear and thorough language interpretation facilitates care of individuals from traditionally under-served minorities, but the special communication elements required to serve people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) are not part of interpreter training, nor are cultural differences in perception of developmental disabilities. The purpose of this project was to train Spanish language medical interpreters in these missing elements.

Survey results

- 90% of interpreters rated the training Excellent or Above Average
- The interpreters demonstrated an increase in understanding the following concepts between Time 1 and Time 2 surveys:
 - Understanding the importance of the medical visit to people with IDD.
 - Experience with alternate modes of communication (e.g., Dynavox).
 - Addressing patients directly, rather than family members or supports.
 - Familiarity and comfort with referring families to IDD agencies.

Interpreter training feedback:

- "I found the training very informative. Gained more knowledge."
- "Really useful, mindful and enlightening. Should be expanded to other areas in our medical settings, basically to direct providers, MDs, PAs, NPs and all."
- "Truly powerful and excellent training. Opened up a bridge to new knowledge and understanding that there is a lot to learn about IDD, not only about disability but about how to be a better advocate."
- "It was excellent. I would like to be more involved and know more about how to help and advocate for people with disabilities."

Objectives and Project Timeline:

March – May 2017

Built a partnership between SCDD, Ibero American Action League, Self-Advocates, and URMIC Interpreter Services with the aim of increasing cultural understanding of issues faced by Latinx people with IDD for all partners.

March – August 2017

Developed training for Spanish-language medical interpreters around disability culture and services, and unique healthcare disparities and issues faced by people with IDD.

November 2017

Delivered 4-hour training to 28 hospital and community-based interpreters over 2 sessions.

September 2017 – January 2018

Conducted pre- and post-training surveys and a 2 month follow up survey to evaluate satisfaction and effectiveness of the training.

January 2018 – March 2018

Used evaluation data to create a readily available training for interpreters about healthcare for people with IDD.

Training Structure:

Module 1:
IDD Health Disparities

Module 2:
Disability Culture & Latinx Cultural Values

Module 3:
Communication