



Rutgers Center for
State Health Policy

Evaluation of NJ EASE for Caregivers

A National Family Caregivers Support
Program Initiative

Amy M. Tiedemann, Ph.D.

- In 2001, State of NJ was awarded an Administration on Aging, National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) grant
- Goal of NFCSP is to improve service networks to support caregivers
- NJ's project, NJ EASE for Caregivers, integrated a focus on caregivers into existing NJ EASE system

Grant Activities

- Five primary grant activities
 - Formation of Advisory Committee and Subcommittees to develop all grant elements
 - Development and piloting of caregiver interview risk screening, assessment, and care planning tools
 - Development and piloting of staff caregiver training curriculum
 - Development and launching of a website for caregivers
 - Assessment and reorganization of state policies regarding caregiver services

- Five county Area Agencies on Aging involved in piloting different grant elements: Bergen, Gloucester, Middlesex, Monmouth, Warren
- CSHP evaluated each grant activity through surveys, interviews, a website testing, and review of grant products and documents
- Highlight findings that may benefit others working to improve state/local delivery of services to caregivers

Organizational Structure

- Division of Aging and Community Services, Department of Health and Senior Services project team led grant work
- Advisory Committee included membership from local Area Agency on Aging administrators and staff, physicians, and advocacy group representatives
- Caregivers from diverse NJ communities held membership on the Advisory Committee and its Subcommittees
- Subcommittees conducted the bulk of grant development tasks: Training, Tool, Website, Diversity, and Resource Guide

Subcommittee Survey Results

- 24 responses for a response rate of 66%
- Members very positive about workgroup experiences
- Majority felt groups were productive and successful
- 83% felt membership was diverse in terms of racial/ethnic origin

Subcommittee Survey Results

- All respondents felt adequate attention was given to the needs of caregivers and perspectives of county offices on aging
- All felt committees integrated cultural competency issues into their work
- Overall, members said groups were inclusive and attentive to stakeholders, productive and successful in meeting goals

“Understanding Caregivers Across Cultures” Training

- Training subcommittee developed a 3-day curriculum for AAA Information and Assistance and Care Management staff
- Goal: increase staff awareness of caregiving issues and improve service skills for helping caregivers
- Topics: caregiver demographics, defining caregiving, realities, cultural impacts, resources and strategies for interacting with caregivers
- Staff from Bergen and Middlesex county AAAs participated

Caregiver Training Evaluation Results

- CSHP staff survey – 40 responses (63%)

Scales: 1=poor, 5=excellent; 1=not at all useful, 5=extremely useful

Survey Questions	Mean on 5 point scale
Overall evaluation (NJ GEC)	4.0
Overall quality (CSHP)	3.5
Usefulness for serving culturally diverse caregivers	3.1

- Participants enjoyed course but did not find information and materials highly useful back on the job
- Staff had concerns about length of training
- In response to these findings, DHSS has integrated elements into existing NJ EASE Care Management and Information and Assistance training

Caregiver Risk Screen, Assessment and Care Planning Tools

- Three tools were piloted: Risk Screen, C.A.R.E. assessment, and Care Planning Tool
- Bergen, Gloucester, and Warren County AAAs used one or more of the tools

Tool Survey Results

	Risk Screen		C.A.R.E. Tool		Care Planning Tool	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Ease of Use	3.38	1.28	2.55	0.51	3.13	1.19
Cultural Sensitivity	3.11	0.81	3.40	0.68	NA	NA

- 47.7% of staff who had used risk screen felt it provided additional information while 52.6% felt that it did not
- 52.6% of staff who had used C.A.R.E. tool felt it provided additional information while 36.8% felt that it did not and 10.8% did not know
- Half of respondents thought caregivers were served somewhat better with risk screen and half that they were served the same as before
- Nearly 75% of respondents thought caregivers were served the same as before with use of the C.A.R.E. assessment tool

Question: Would you recommend that your organization continue to use the tool?

	Risk Screen			C.A.R.E. Tool			Care Planning Tool		
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No	Not Sure
Number	8	8	4	2	11	8	2	5	7
Percent	40.0	40.0	20.0	9.5	52.4	38.1	14.3	35.7	50.0

- Mixed reaction to tools
- Reasons for recommending C.A.R.E. tool
 - Additional information gained
 - Time spent with caregivers is valuable
- Reasons for not recommending C.A.R.E. tool
 - Serve caregivers well without tool
 - Difficult to use
 - Raises expectations
 - Too long
 - Replicates information gathered with other tools

Impact on Caregivers

- CSHP survey – 86 caregivers from Bergen and Gloucester who called during tool pilot
- Findings (5 point scales)
 - Mean score on helpfulness – 4.23
 - Mean score on how understanding staff were of caregiver's situation – 4.43
 - Those who had assessment
 - Mean score on Care Managers level of understanding – 4.9
 - Mean score on how well needs were identified – 4.67
 - 93% said having assessment done was worthwhile for them
 - Care Managers were understanding and helped connect them to needed services

Lessons Learned

- Diverse Advisory Committee membership creates an inclusive and productive environment
- Communication with staff who have direct contact with caregivers is important
- Involvement of caregivers as advisors is a model for program and policy development
- Incorporating a caregiver focus into existing staff trainings, tools, and policies holds potential for success