

# Growing the Direct Care Workforce

April 24, 2025



## **Donna Benton**

*Associate Research Professor of Gerontology,*  
USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology



## **Corinne Eldridge**

*President & CEO,*  
Center for Caregiver Advancement



## **Jarmin Yeh**

*Associate Professor,*  
UC San Francisco, Institute for Health & Aging

## Learning Objectives

***Attendees will be able to:***

1. Describe key curriculum topics for quality training of diverse direct care workers to support an aging population.
2. Understand how to translate the curriculum to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of a diverse direct care workforce.
3. Recognize what challenges are faced when providing quality online training programs to a diverse direct care workforce.

# As California's population ages, the demand for direct care workers will rise.

- California faces a labor shortage of up to 3.2 million direct care workers.
- In response, a 10-year Master Plan for Aging was developed to help the state maintain California's leadership in health equity and justice.



# Four Direct Care Workforce Initiatives

	CalGrows	Career Pathways	IHSS+ AD RD Training Project	High Road Training Partnership
Funding	CA Department of Aging	CA Department of Social Services	CA Department of Public Health, Alzheimer's Disease Program	CA Workforce Development Board, Labor and Workforce Development Agency
DCW Type	Non-IHSS direct care workers (home care aides, personal care assistants, community health workers, family caregivers, etc.)	IHSS	IHSS	IHSS
Length	1 hour - 25 hours	1 hour - 6 hours	10 weeks, 35 hours	6 weeks, 15 hours
Class Size	1 person	1 - 35 persons	~30 learners	~30 learners
Delivery	Self-directed online to in-person	Self-directed online to zoom instructor lead to in-person	Live instructors via Zoom	Live instructors via Zoom
Languages	English, Spanish, Cantonese, Russian, Tagalog, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Burmese, etc.	Armenian, Cantonese, English, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese	English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin	English, Spanish
Stipend	\$35.9 million in paid incentives and stipends	\$3,500 max for time in training and/or pathway completion and/or retention with consumer with specific condition	\$300 Alameda per learner \$860 Los Angeles per learner	Payment of wages for hours in class + stipend upon completion + stipend for control group
Total # Trained	33,000 learners	35-75,000 learners*	723 learners	Goal: 2200 learners
Timeline	Ended August 2024	Ended September 2024	Ended June 2024	Through 2026

USC Leonard Davis

School of Gerontology

*Family Caregiver Support Center*

CalGrows



*Training for Caregivers*

# ABOUT ME



***Dr. Donna Benton***

**USC** Leonard Davis  
*Family Caregiver Support Center*

**LACRC**  
LOS ANGELES CAREGIVER RESOURCE CENTER  
A Program of the USC Family Caregiver Support Center



# USC CALGROWS TRAINING PROGRAM: ENHANCING SKILLS FOR LA COUNTY'S DCWS



*Goal: Increase knowledge, skills, and confidence of paid and unpaid direct care workers (DCWs) to improve care and promote career advancement*

## Objectives

- Develop culturally responsive training content
- Provide incentives for DCWs via CalGrows



## Delivery Timeline

Original: Mar–Dec 2023

Revised: Jun 2023–Aug 2024



## Course Offerings

- 21 asynchronous courses
- Fully accessible across multiple devices



# CALGROWS COURSES

## CALGROWS COURSE LIST

COURSE NAME	HOURS	INCENTIVE
1. Introduction to Aging	1	\$30
2. The Healthcare Delivery System: How Does It Work, and Where Does Home Care Fit In?	1	\$30
3. Common Diseases and Conditions of the Aging Body	2	\$60
4. Common Diseases and Conditions of the Aging Mind	2	\$60
5. Beyond Basic Care: Programs and Technologies to Engage Older Adults with Dementia	2.5	\$75
6. Promoting Patient Safety and Independence in Personal Care	2.5	\$75
7. Be Prepared: Home Safety and Injury Prevention	2.5	\$75
8. Housekeeping: Healthy Homes, Healthy Patients	2.5	\$75
9. Food Fundamentals: Understanding Nutrition, Health, and Aging	2.5	\$75
10. More than a Meal: Social and Cultural Food Preferences and Traditions	2.5	\$75
11. Elder Mistreatment: What Direct Care Workers Need to Know	2.5	\$75
12. Death, Dying, and End-of-Life Care: What Direct Care Workers Need to Know	2.5	\$75
13. Diversity in Aging: Honoring Culture While Providing Care	2.5	\$75
14. Say What? Skills for Communicating with Patients, Providers, and Family	2.5	\$75
15. Finding Strength When Stressed: Stress Management and Self-Care for DCWs	2.5	\$75
16. Jumpstart Your Career! Skills and Tips for Finding Direct Care Worker Jobs	2.5	\$75
17. Death, Dying, and End of Life Care: What Direct Care Workers Need to Know	3	\$90
18. Dementia Behavior Care: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behaviors	3	\$90
19. Be Prepared: Addressing Abuse, Home Safety, and Injury Prevention	3	\$90
20. Diversity in Aging: Honoring Culture While Providing Care	2	\$60
21. Therapies for Older Adults	3	\$90

ADVANCED

### • 21 Asynchronous Courses

- 16 Foundational
- 5 Advanced



### • Languages Offered

- English
- Spanish
- Mandarin Chinese



### • Incentives

- \$30/hr; up to \$90/course



### • Topics Include:

- The Healthcare Delivery System
- Home Safety & Injury Prevention
- Food Fundamentals
- Death, Dying, & End-of-Life Care
- Career Skills & Tips
- Dementia Behavior Care

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# ENGAGING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

## *Culturally Responsive Design*

- Used clear, easy-to-understand language to make content accessible to all learners, regardless of educational background
- Offered in 3 languages (English, Spanish, Mandarin)



## *Outreach Highlights*

- Shared via USC FCSC website, newsletters, social media
- Direct outreach to 69 organizations
  - Example: 32 learners from Home Instead, 8 from FCSC



## *Accessibility Efforts*

- Instructional videos used a mix of actors and an avatar (Maria)
- No in-person courses or support stipends due to funding, but extensive tech support provided



# LEARNER FEEDBACK



*"I liked the video with Maria. It is not typical to have videos like this for us who speak Spanish."*  
- Spanish Learner



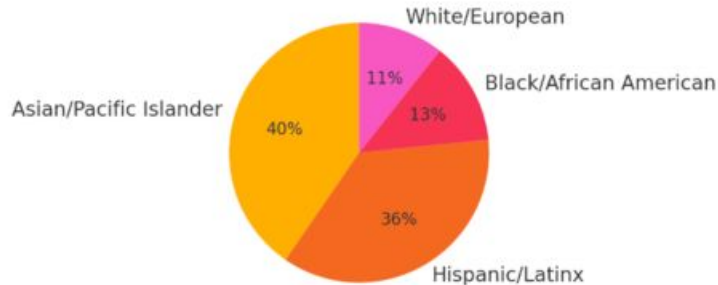
# WHO WE REACHED

## Languages Spoken (Self-Reported):

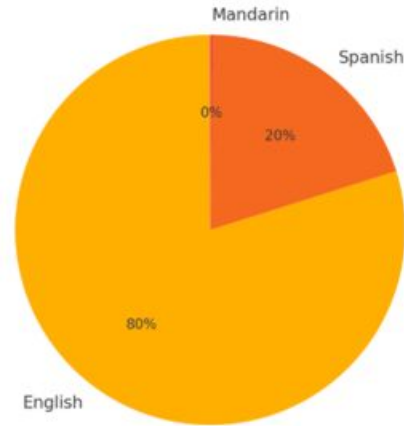
- English Only: 11%
- Spanish: 30%
- Tagalog: 28%
- Others: Mandarin, Farsi, etc.



## Race/Ethnicity:



## Total Unique Learners: 457



## Age Range: 18–82

- Majority: 31–40



**Gender Identity: Majority female**

# BUILDING TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

## Key Lessons Learned

- Prioritize user-friendly platforms (i.e., mobile/smart phone)
- Budget more realistically for video production
- Extend development timeline (recommend 12 months)
- Encourage collaboration among grantees



## Future Directions

- Offer training for free via USC FCSC catalog
- Seek funding to expand tech support and language access (e.g., Tagalog)
- Partner with care facilities for program sponsorship





Center for  
Caregiver  
Advancement

# Career Pathways



# ➤ Career Pathways Program (CPP)



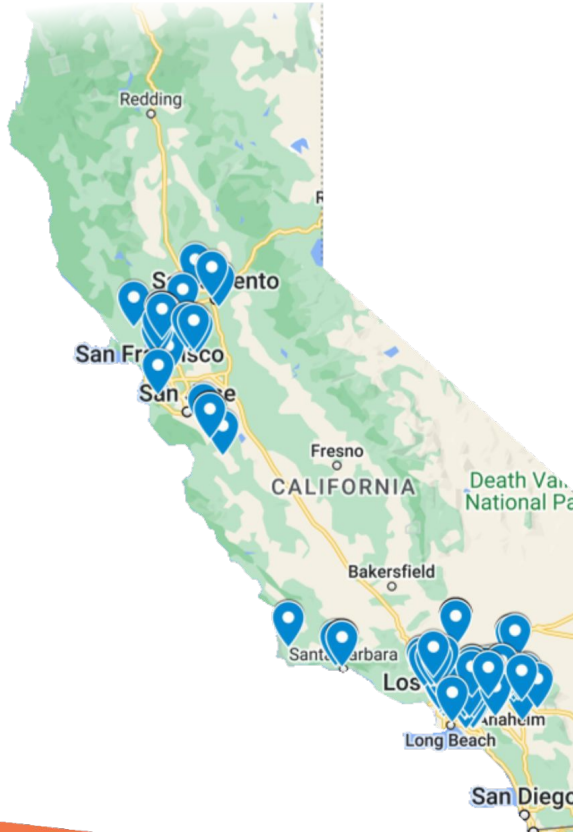
## Courses

- Basic Health & Safety (101 & 102)
- Alzheimer's & Related Dementias
- Emergency & Disaster Readiness
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Diabetic Care & Nutrition
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Heart Disease & Care

*More than  
**100,000**  
duplicated  
students*

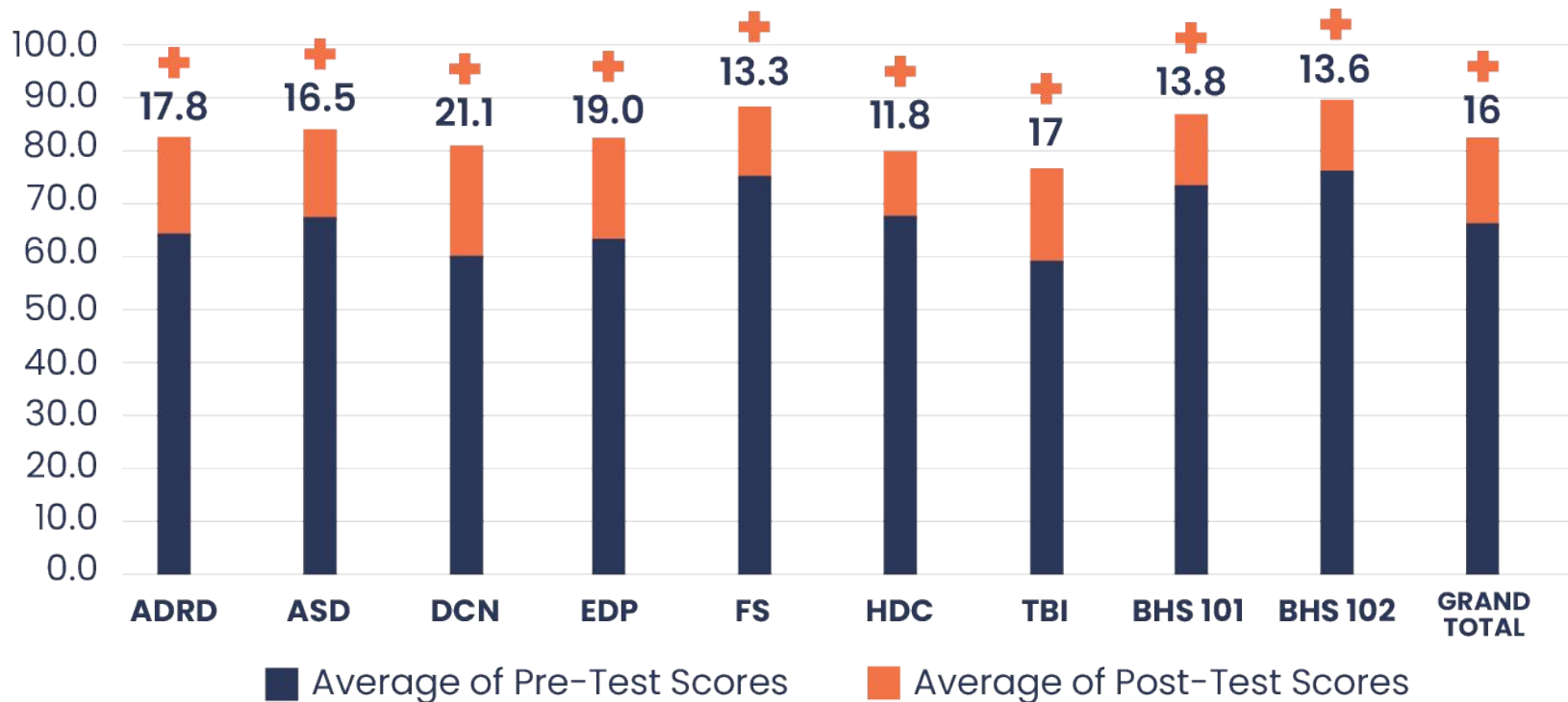
## 8 Languages

Armenian, Cantonese, English, Korean,  
Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese



# ➤ Knowledge Gains Across ALL Courses

**Career Pathways Program (CPP) – Change in Test Scores by Class**



# ➤ Graduates!



***Building a Workforce of Highly Trained Caregivers that Many Californians Can't Live Without***

Course	Graduates
Alzheimer's & Related Dementias	4,237
Autism Spectrum Disorder	4,496
Basic Health & Safety 101	4,290
Basic Health & Safety 102	4,308
Diabetic Care & Nutrition	4,374
Emergency & Disaster Readiness	3,479
Heart Disease & Care	4,271
Traumatic Brain Injury	4,186



## Student Value & Satisfaction

**Fei Tian**, a Career Pathways Program (CPP) student, is a part-time Chinese language teacher and part-time IHSS provider for her parents. Her weeks are spent divided between time with her father and mother who live in different towns and each have their own needs. Fei took the courses in Mandarin, her first language.

“ Having the training in my first language is very important. It is so beneficial because [in Mandarin] I understand everything and I’m more ready and able to learn.”

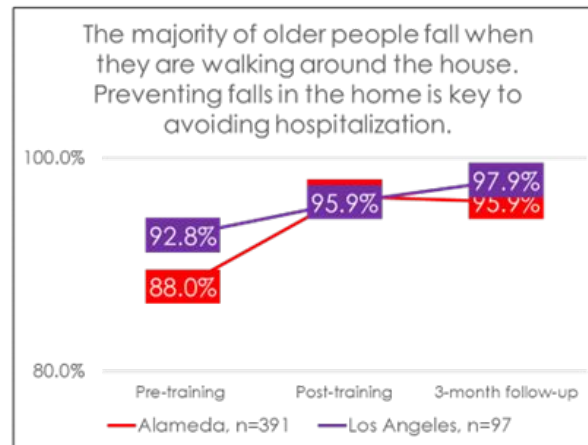
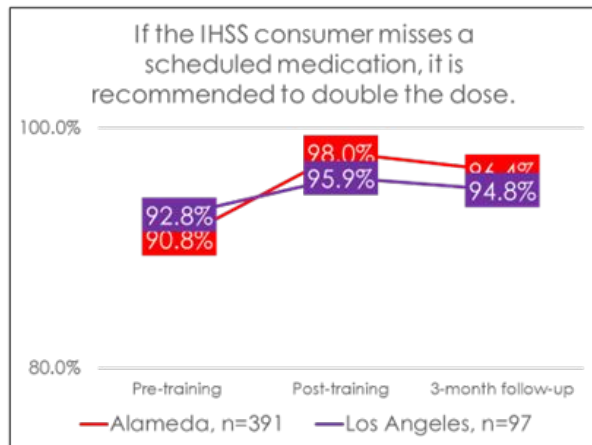
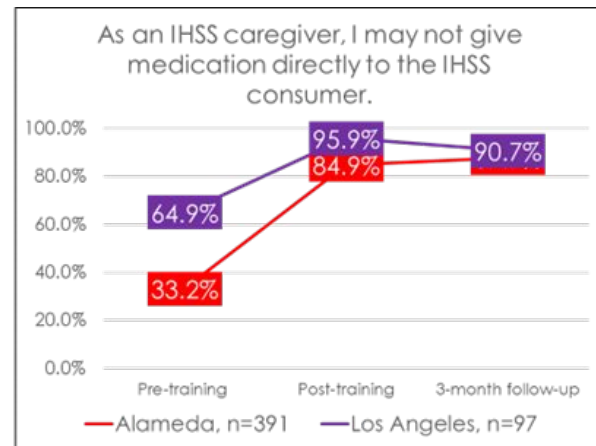
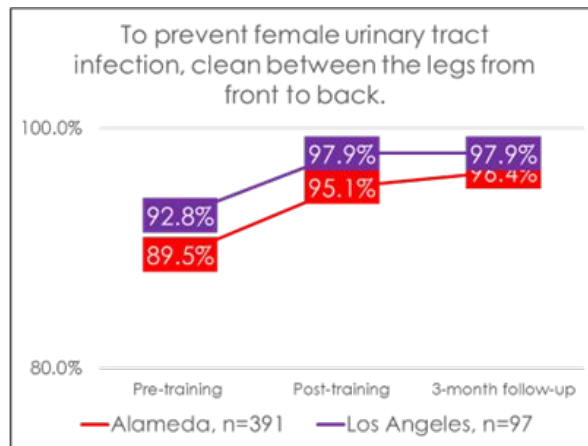
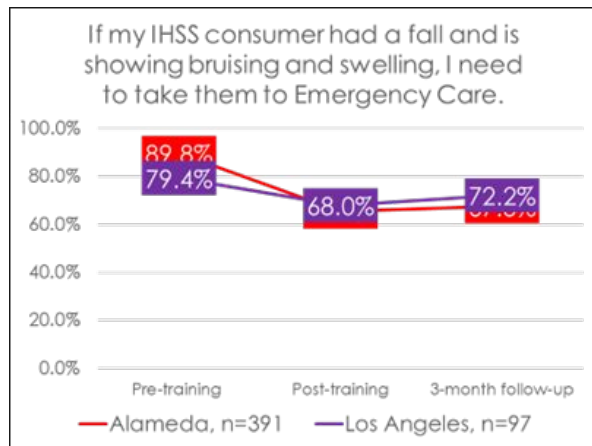


# IHSS+ ADRD Training Project

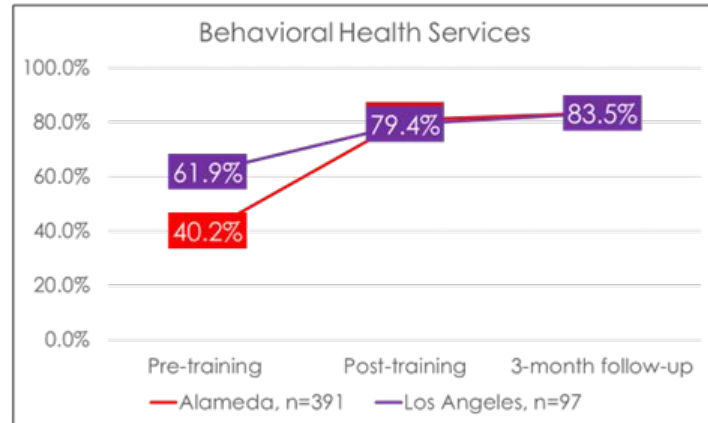
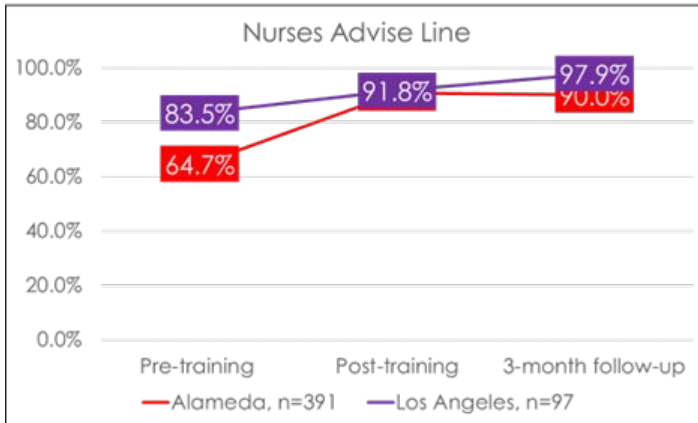
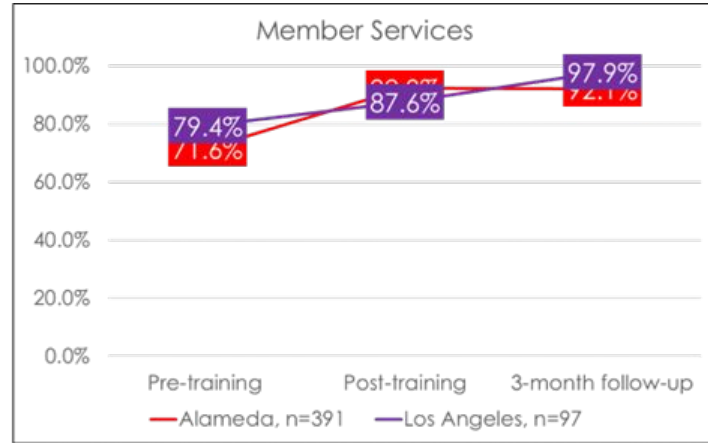
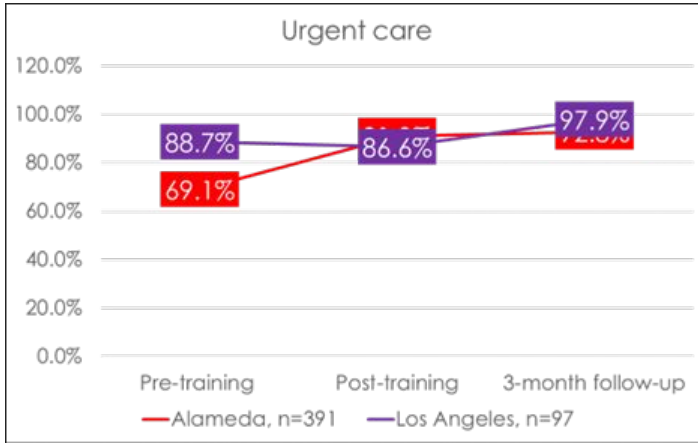
# IHSS+ ADRD Training Project

	Alameda, n=391	Los Angeles, n=97
Mean age	•50.6 (20-78)	•51.6 (29-69)
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•61% Not Hispanic/Latinx</li> <li>•24% Hispanic/Latinx</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•21% Not Hispanic/Latinx</li> <li>•77% Hispanic/Latinx</li> </ul>
Race (can select more than one category)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•36% Asian/Asian American</li> <li>•28% Black/African American</li> <li>•8% White/Caucasian</li> <li>•3% American Indian/Alaska Native</li> <li>•2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•4% Asian/Asian American</li> <li>•9% Black/African American</li> <li>•32% White/Caucasian</li> <li>•2% American Indian/Alaska Native</li> <li>•1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</li> </ul>
Married	•56%	•52%
Female gender	•88%	•95%
Highest education	•25% High School/GED	•30% High School/GED
Relationship to consumer	•39% Daughter or Son	•37% Daughter or Son
Live-in	•47%	•55%

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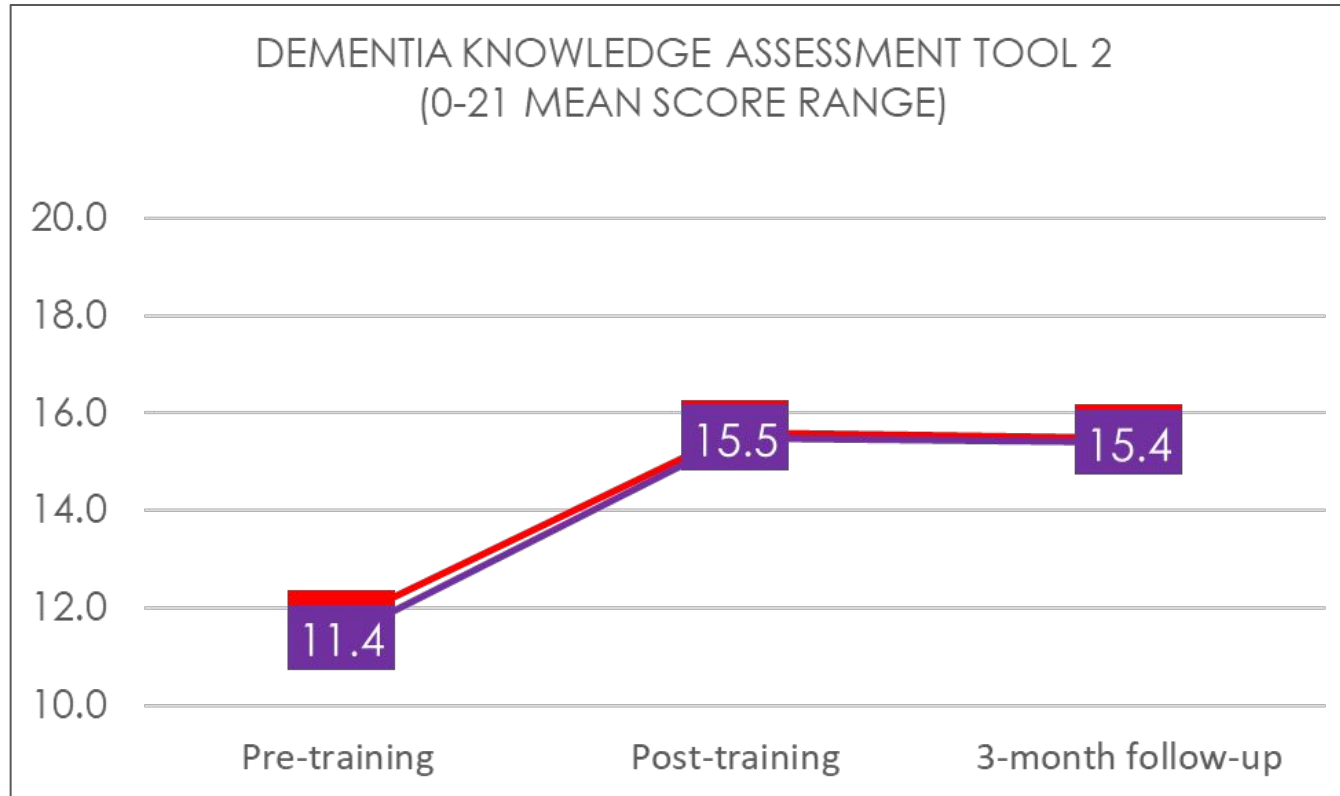


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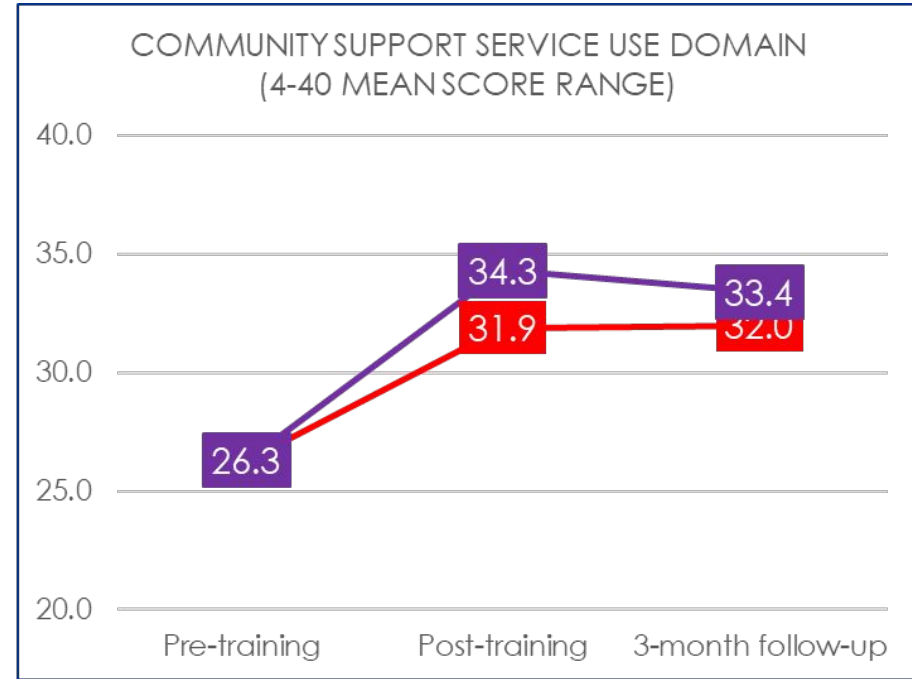
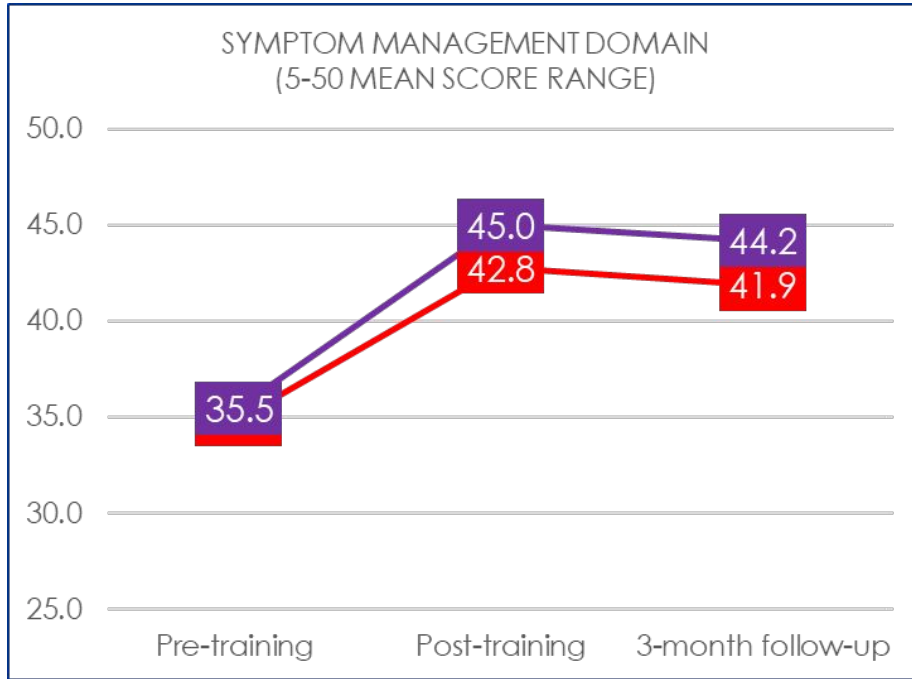


# IHSS+ ADRD Training Project



The average number of correct statements significantly increased between pre-post training ( $p < 0.001$ ) and between pre-3-month follow-up ( $p < 0.001$ ).

# IHSS+ ADRD Training Project



Symptom Management Domain (5-50 scale range) and Community Support Services Use Domain (4-40 scale range) scores significantly increased between pre-post training ( $p < 0.001$ ) and between pre-3-month follow-up ( $p < 0.001$ ).



# High Road Training Partnership

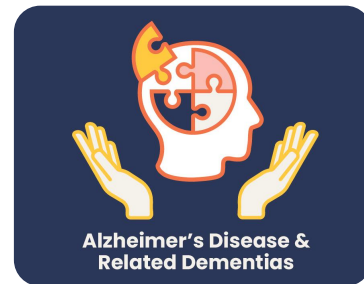
# In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) – San Bernardino

## Need

- Higher prevalence of Alzheimer's disease;
- Among individuals of Hispanic origin;
- Over 70% of the census tracts there are classified within the top 25% of high pollution and disadvantaged communities
- Access to training focused on **Alzheimer's care and climate-related emergency preparedness** critical to the safety and wellbeing of older adults and people with disabilities

## Training

- Basic
- Alzheimer's & Related Dementias
- Emergency & Disaster Readiness



## Randomized Control Trial

The RCT assessed **worker** outcomes and **consumer quality care outcomes** based on health plan encounter data; advances research and lays **groundwork for policy** change by showing that **multi-week skill-building training is necessary for improving job quality, retention and care.**



## ➤ Outcomes



“ I appreciated the hands-on tips from others in the course, such as redirecting an Alzheimer's person who can't remember things and keeps repeating themselves. Instead of trying to explain things to them, just redirect them. That is a very helpful tip! I can't think of another place where I'd get hands-on examples like that.”

*– Martha N., CCA-trained caregiver  
(ADRD Course)*

# Outcomes

“

The essentials program gave me all the tools needed to make my job a lot more manageable... Without these classes that I've been blessed with, I probably would not have lasted over 6 months in this field. I'm very happy for all that was learned (a lot) as it gives me a window into [the care recipient's] life...THANK YOU!!!

”

– *Current (2025) ADRD Course Student*

# THANK YOU

  
**On Aging 2025**  
Orlando, FL | April 21-24, 2025

## Contact

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