

Stony Brook University

Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and other related Disabilities (LEND)

Information Sheet on Stony Brook University LEND for Long-Term Trainees (LTTs)

Program Overview: The Stony Brook University LEND program is an undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate level interdisciplinary leadership and service training program federally funded through Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA's) Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB). This is accomplished by preparing trainees from a range of professional disciplines to be leaders in their fields, by ensuring the delivery of high-quality evidence-based care, by maximizing inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups, and by ensuring high levels of interdisciplinary clinical competence. LEND focuses training on the policy, advocacy, research, clinical skills and knowledge necessary to affect positive change on all levels, from the individual to systems.

Mission: The Stony Brook University LEND's mission is:

- 1) to improve the training of providers, individuals, and families in understanding all aspects of care for the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and neurodevelopmental disabilities (ND) community, and thereby lead their disciplines in supporting this community;
- 2) to support excellence in culturally-responsive, person-centered care;
- 3) to facilitate cutting-edge research aimed at improving the lives of individuals with ASD/ND;
- 4) to foster community, inclusion, belonging and acceptance of individuals with ASD/ND and their families through dissemination of current knowledge and offering a regional "hub" for the provider community.

Who can be a Stony Brook University LEND Long-Term Trainee? Stony Brook University LEND Core Faculty represent 12 disciplines. We accept Long-Term Trainees from the following designated MCHB disciplines:

- **Adult Medicine**
- **Disability Studies**
- **Family Member**
- **Nursing**
- **Occupational Therapy**
- **Pediatric Medicine**
- **Pediatric and Adult Dentistry**
- **Physical Therapy**
- **Psychology**
- **Public Health**
- **Self-Advocates/ Individuals with Disabilities**
- **Social Work**

Long-Term Trainees (LTTs): Individuals selected as Stony Brook University LEND LTTs will be part-time/full-time graduate students, have graduate level/post-graduate level education, be practicing professionals (family members of an individual with ASD/ND or a person with a disability). LTTs will have either an academic, professional and/or experiential background in disabilities. LTTs will participate in a 9-month program and complete a minimum of 300 didactic and experiential contact hours. This includes LEND coursework, seminars, research and presentation opportunities, mentorship, and hands-on experiences in clinical or community-based settings.

Training Opportunities for LTTs: The LEND training program will be delivered primarily by our Core Faculty at Stony Brook University, Supporting Faculty and community partners.



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Training will occur within (1) an academic curriculum, (2) clinical settings at Stony Brook Medicine and with our community partners, and (3) a capstone project focused on a research or quality improvement project.

- **Curriculum:** The academic curriculum consists of three different components; Didactic Seminars, CENDs, and Clinical Trainings. *Didactic Seminars:* Interdisciplinary graduate-level didactics will emphasize cutting-edge information about services and screening, diagnosis and treatment for individuals with ASD/ND and their families, advocacy and research. Trainees will participate in interactive seminars held via Zoom. The first 15-week course will be led weekly by a different Core Faculty Member, each provides a comprehensive overview of their discipline, how it addresses assessment, diagnosis and treatment for individuals with ASD/ND and their families and focuses on current trends and gaps in research. The second 15 weeks will focus on individuals with ASD/ND from the life course perspective and is taught by both Core and Supporting Faculty in addition to several guest presenters. Each LTT is assigned a family to provide trainees the opportunity to witness the “lived experience” of families with children with disabilities. Families answer questions about their lives, discuss the challenges and triumphs of being a family member of a person with a disability, and provide insight into how clinical recommendations are executed in the real-life home environment. Trainees meet with families via Zoom *for a one-hour interview* and present a verbal and written interview summary during class *at the end of the Spring Didactic*. On the first Friday of the month, LTTs will participate in the *Coffee with Experts from the Novel Disciplines (CEND) Series* to introduce trainees to faculty from outside the core LEND disciplines and discuss emerging issues, cutting-edge research and technology. Examples of novel disciplines in the first four years of the LEND program include music, dance, economics, paleontology, computational approaches, brain imaging, neurobiology, archaeology, fashion design, rhetoric, linguistics, art therapy, urban farming, among others. Each year, 5-6 novel disciplines will be highlighted and offered as a “flipped classroom,” with recorded lectures for LTTs to view on their own schedules and then have coffee virtually with the expert to ask questions. There will also be a *Clinical Trainings* online with 2.5 hour seminars for LTTs on the third Thursday of each month. Our Director of ASD Clinical Training, in concert with Core and Supporting Faculty, will provide clinical training which includes topics such as “Understanding Autism Symptoms and Tests for ASD” and “The Art and Science of Giving the ASD Diagnosis.”
- **Clinical Experiences:** An 80-hour *in-discipline rotation* will be required of LTTs. Primary in-discipline clinical rotations will be offered at Stony Brook Medicine Autism and Medical Evaluation and Treatment Clinics and at community partner programs and sites. LTTs will receive clinical training on screening, diagnosing, and employing interdisciplinary, evidence- and community-based interventions for individuals with ASD/ND and their families with mentorship/supervision from Core Faculty. Clinical settings provide opportunities to practice interdisciplinary skills, leadership skills and family-centered care, as well as cultural and linguistic responsiveness with a diverse population of individuals with ASD/ND and their families. Three *out-of-discipline*



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rotations of 6-8 hours each will also be selected by LTTs to experience a clinical or community-based opportunity with experts outside of their core discipline. Core Faculty develop each out-of-discipline rotation to ensure trainees experience sites and experts that focus on early childhood, school-aged children, adolescents or adults with ASD/ND and both challenge and support trainees to develop their clinical and leadership skills from an interdisciplinary lens.

- ***Research and Quality Improvement Projects:*** LTTs conduct research and quality improvement projects in coordination with the Director of Research and a Faculty Mentor. An asynchronous course is offered during the fall to help guide trainees to formulate and structure their projects for data collection and implementation in the spring. Research exposure and training is central to the Stony Brook University LEND program. Didactic sessions will feature current research within all core and novel disciplines, with a focus on how to interpret research findings and integrate these findings with experiential and clinical observations. LTTs will have the opportunity to present the results of their projects at a LEND Research Exposition that occurs in April/May.

Program Structure

Orientation

- During orientation, LTTs will review and reflect on the education and experiences that led to their decision to participate in the Stony Brook University LEND and learn extensively about the content and organization of the training program. Orientation will be held as a *two-day, in-person event in August.*

Curriculum

- LTTs will participate in *1 Didactic Seminar from August-December* and a second from *January-May on Mondays from 5:30-8:30p.m. via Zoom.*
- *Research and Quality Improvement Training* is provided as asynchronous trainings with corresponding readings and assignments, leading to the project. They occur throughout the LEND program.
- *Coffee with Experts from the Novel Disciplines (CEND)* flipped classroom to be watched prior to the question-and-answer session with the expert held on the *first Friday of each month, from 12:00-1:00p.m. via Zoom.*
- *Clinical Trainings* are clinical seminars offered the *third Thursday of the month, from 5:30-8:00p.m. via Zoom.*

Clinical Rotations

- LTTs will coordinate with their Faculty Mentor to select an 80-hour primary *in-discipline clinical rotation.*
- *Out-of-discipline clinical rotations* will be made available to LTTs who may participate in 3 rotations for 6-8 hours each throughout the program. Many are offered in person, others are virtual or hybrid.

Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness Training Seminar(s)

- These trainings will be led by a team of experts to investigate and disseminate best



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practices in the delivery of culturally competent services to the ASD/ND population impacted by cultural and linguistic barriers with a focus on intersectionality of identities. These 2-4 hour *virtual trainings* will be scheduled throughout the LEND program.

Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science Training

- This training will provide LTTs with strategies for effective interdisciplinary communication to increase the reach, sensitivity, and responsiveness of the services they provide, and of their broader engagement with the community. This 4-5 hour training is *in person during March*.

Leadership Institute

- LTTs will participate in a National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities Institute designed specifically for Stony Brook LEND trainees. The institute will include lectures from national experts in best practices in service delivery, policy, and advocacy for individuals with ASD/ND and their families. Trainees will engage in interactive activities, discussions, exercises, and assessments that inform personal leadership, organization, and change goals. This 10-hour *virtual* training occurs *in January*.

Mentor Meetings

- LTTs will meet 1 or 2 times per month with their Faculty Mentor to check on progress with their clinical and didactic work. Meeting times, dates and the mode are to be determined jointly with your Faculty Mentor.

Research and Quality Improvement Project Exposition

- LTTs will present their research or quality improvement project to other trainees and faculty *in person in April/May*.

Graduation

- An in-person ceremony honoring the LTTs for their accomplishments will be held *in May*.

Goals: The Stony Brook University LEND training program will increase the number and expertise of clinicians and leaders who are well-prepared to deliver high-quality, interdisciplinary, family-centered, and culturally responsive care, and to appropriately identify and refer children, adolescents and adults with ASD/ND and their families to comprehensive systems of care. Through the Clinics affiliated with Stony Brook Medicine and our community partners, the LEND program will provide interdisciplinary clinical services that directly benefit children, adolescents, and adults with ASD/ND throughout the region.

The Stony Brook University LEND will provide interdisciplinary training on evidence-based screening, diagnosis, and treatment of the complex needs of those with ASD/ND, so as to increase the number of clinicians and families with (1) knowledge and skills in providing empirically supported diagnosis, health, and treatment practices and (2) training in leadership skills so that they can lead others in their communities to adopt these practices. Through LEND's focus on research and research training, we will advance scientific knowledge about the challenges, needs, strengths, and opportunities of individuals with ASD/ND and their families. This program will develop visionary leaders in communities who are: experts in their disciplines and in interdisciplinary knowledge of ASD/ND, designers of new models of care provision,



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committed to high quality, evidence-based services from core and novel disciplines, able to communicate effectively with families and providers from a wide range of cultural and economic backgrounds, and committed to advocacy, leadership, technical assistance and consultation in their communities.

In summary, the Stony Brook University LEND training program is designed to increase the number of clinicians, community leaders, self-advocates and family members who provide empirically supported clinical care and/or lead others in their communities to adopt these practices and become leaders in the ASD/ND field.

General Expectations: LTTs participating in the Stony Brook University LEND program will be expected to:

- Obtain a foundation in values and knowledge, and participate in individually-tailored out-of-discipline clinical experiences
- Demonstrate "best practices" as defined by their own discipline and the interdisciplinary team of Core Faculty
- Demonstrate ethical principles of their home discipline, including confidentiality, to guide their clinical practice
- Display professional behavior and be treated professionally
- Engage in experiences with families and individuals with ASD/ND as partners, forming part of a team that assists and supports the individual and family, with the individual and/or family as team members whose voices are heard, respected and responded to
- Experience interactions with individuals with disabilities across the life span and across a variety of disabilities
- Participate in a variety of service delivery settings
- Interact with individuals with disabilities and/or their family members to better understand the impact of disabilities on their lives
- Develop the skills to access community-based services

General Competencies: Below are examples of competencies that LTTs will acquire through demonstrated participation in didactics, clinical training, research and other program activities.

Maternal Child Health Knowledge Base/Context

- Demonstrate knowledge of the role of federal, state, and local government in ensuring equitable healthcare for individuals with disabilities.
- Describe health disparities impacting the ASD/ND population and offer strategies to address them.

Ethics

- Identify and address ethical issues for individuals with ASD/ND in patient care, community-based settings, human subjects research, and public health theory and practice.
- Demonstrate an understanding of ethical dilemmas and issues that impact individuals with ASD/ND, with particular attention to healthcare and research.

Communication



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- Demonstrate cultural and linguistic responsiveness through sharing of thoughts, ideas, and feelings effectively in discussions, meetings, and presentations with individuals and diverse groups.
- Summarize complex information about disability appropriately for a variety of audiences and contexts.

Cultural Responsiveness

- Demonstrate knowledge of the impact of culturally responsive health care practices on individuals with disabilities access to health services, participation in health promotion and prevention programs, adherence to treatment plans, and overall health outcomes.
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of health care professionals in improving communication with and enhancing service delivery for individuals with ASD/ND and their families from diverse backgrounds.

Family-Professional Partnerships

- Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of family-centered care in programs and clinical practice.
- Recognize the impact that an individual with ASD/ND has on the family unit throughout the life cycle.

Appointment and Stipend: Financial stipends of \$7,500 are available to support up to 10 LTTs each year. Additional LTTs may be considered who meet all criteria and will be awarded a \$1000 stipend.

Applicants: Trainees will be accepted only from the core disciplines outlined on the first page of this Information Sheet.

Application Process: Please submit the online LEND application. Applications are due by May 31, 2025.

Applications will be reviewed by members of the LEND Core Faculty and the Program Director. Select applicants meeting full requirements will be contacted for a brief semi-structured interview with the LEND Program Director and at least one Core Faculty member. Final decisions will be communicated to the applicant via email within the month of June.



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