

Practicing Humility and Building Stronger Connections Across Backgrounds: Applying the Family-as-Host Model for Responsive and Respectful Engagement



Dr. Mirian Ofonedu, PhD, LCSW-C, is the director of training at the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger Institute. She is an associate professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) Graduate School and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Department of Mental Health. She is also a faculty affiliate of the Johns Hopkins Wendy Klag Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities and an adjunct professor at the UMB School of Social Work. Dr. Ofonedu is a psychologist, a licensed clinical social worker and a fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA). Her work spans over two decades.

To register, [click here](#)
or call 443-923-4114.

Date: Thursday, October 15, 2026

Time: 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. EDT

Where: Live Interactive Webinar

Registered participants will receive an email with instructions on how to join the session.

Objectives: Participants will be able to:

1. Describe two to three factors that supports and two to three factors that hinder effective engagement with individuals and families from various backgrounds in treatment and service programs.
2. List three to four strategies that enhance the quality and fairness of treatment experiences and outcomes for individuals and families from a range of lived experiences.
3. Discuss key approaches for fostering trust and engagement early and consistently throughout the care or service provision process, using humility and reflection to support positive outcomes.
4. Apply the "[Family-as-Host](#)" model to strengthen engagement practices and build deeper connections and partnership with families and communities across

For individuals, families, and communities to fully engage in services, education, and research efforts, they must first feel understood, respected, and acknowledged. Professionals who take deliberate steps to understand different life experiences and communication styles—while offering thoughtful information, resources, and support—can create stronger pathways for engagement and better outcomes. This interactive workshop introduces the "Family-as-Host" model, a framework that helps providers center humility and mutual respect when working with individuals and families whose backgrounds may differ from their own. Participants will gain practical skills to improve engagement, build meaningful relationships, and strengthen the impact of their work across a variety of service settings. **This seminar is intended to meet most professional licensing board requirements of enhancing competency in working effectively with individuals, families, and communities from various backgrounds and life experiences. It also meets other Social Work Practice content as required by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners. Instructional level:** Intermediate.

Who should attend? Professionals and anyone interested in the topic. 3.0 Continuing Education Credits (Category 1) will be granted to licensed social workers and psychologists for attending the session in full and completing all requirements. A Certificate of Attendance will be made available for all other disciplines.

Kennedy Krieger Institute, Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities is authorized by the Board of Social Work Examiners in Maryland to sponsor social work continuing education programs, and it maintains full responsibility for this program. Kennedy Krieger Institute is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. Kennedy Krieger Institute maintains responsibility for this program and its content. No conflicts have been identified (this includes commercial support and research grants/funding). The registration fees are: \$90 for professionals seeking CE credit, \$70 for professionals and community members not seeking CE credit, and \$35 for students not seeking CE credit who register with a school email address.

For more information on our Annual Learning Series or to request accommodation or assistance for individuals with disabilities, please contact us by phone at **443-923-4114**, email **Training.MCDD@KennedyKrieger.org** or visit **KennedyKrieger.org/MCDDTraining**. Requests should be made as soon as possible but at least seven days prior to the scheduled meeting.

