

**Grant Number:** 8 T15 HL69789-03 (Formerly: 1T15AI07595-01)

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**Project Title:** ETHICAL ISSUES IN SERVICES RESEARCH

**Description:**

This project will develop, implement, and evaluate a four-day training course focusing on ethical and legal issues that arise when vulnerable populations, particularly people with severe mental disabilities, are used as research subjects. Issues to be addressed include decisional capacity and competency; confidentiality; coercion, both direct and indirect; the special problems that arise when children with severe emotional disorders are used as research subjects; and the potential impact on the emotional health of subjects of commonly used techniques like mail and phone surveys. The curriculum will also expressly integrate issues of diversity and multicultural perspectives as they relate to and impact on ethical and legal issues in behavioral health services research.

The course will target three primary audiences: (1) advanced doctoral or newly graduated minority students who wish to conduct human services research; (2) practitioners and advocates (including primary consumers and family members) conducting human service research and evaluation; and (3) persons serving on Institutional Review Boards that review proposals in which vulnerable populations are used as subjects.

Upon completion of the course, participants will: (1) understand the historical, legal, and cultural contexts of ethical decision-making as applied to research conducted using persons with serious mental illness as subjects; (2) be able to identify and understand important ethical and legal concepts in conducting research, as well as apply these concepts in practice; (3) have a framework for developing strategies to address and minimize ethical conflicts in conducting behavioral health services research; and (4) gain a better understanding of the IRB process and the role of the IRB in assuring that research is conducted in an ethically appropriate manner, particularly when vulnerable populations are to be used as research subjects. In sum, course participants will be equipped to assume leadership roles in ethics and use of human subjects when they return to their research communities.

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