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# DIGITAL LITERACY PILOT PROGRAM

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## Evaluation Report



The Evaluation Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
**DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**



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Prepared for



Center for Inclusive Design  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering is “pioneering a digital literacy curriculum to empower individuals receiving Medicaid long-term services and support. The materials focus on foundational skills, access to online healthcare resources and promoting digital equity. The iPad-based training was delivered to pilot program participants by actively engaged digital literacy coaches.”

Individuals who participated in the Digital Literacy Pilot Program were called “learners” and people who supported learners were called “coaches.” The experiences of learners and coaches about the usefulness of the content and suggestions for program improvement varied depending on the ability of individual learners.

### KEY FINDINGS



#### LEARNERS

- 88.2% will use what they learned in the training to help manage their health
- 88.2% reported the content was relevant to them
- 83.4% would recommend the training to a friend or colleague
- 77.8% thought the amount of content covered was “just right”
- 72.2% reported the pace of the training was “just right”
- 94.4% liked completing the training online and using an iPad to do so
- The health lessons, cyber security lessons, and online etiquette lesson were most beneficial
- Learning Activities, Course Presentations, and Knowledge Checks were the most useful program components
- Learners had varying comfort levels using technology. Most learners were comfortable using the internet and iPads, while fewer were comfortable with email and online learning platforms



#### COACHES

- Coaches were essential to the digital literacy program. Successful coaches understood their learners’ abilities, helped learners navigate challenges in accessing and understanding content, and supported an appropriate pace for completing modules.
- For learners with more severe developmental disabilities, aspects of the course were still useful for the learner *and* the coach, particularly in instances where a family member provided care.
- The guidebook could benefit from summary documents, such as a syllabus and calendar, that condenses the information while allowing coaches to dive deeper, if needed.



#### PROGRAM STAFF

- Given the varying developmental disabilities of learners engaged in the program, ensure program staff have a deep understanding of the challenges and limitations learners and their coaches may face in completing course materials.
- Establish clear parameters for the training, such as age and ability recommendations.

# EVALUATION OVERVIEW

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## EVALUATION FOCUS



Evaluators collected information about learner and coach experiences with the pilot program. Evaluators asked about learner satisfaction with the program content, pace of the modules, online learning platform, and overall suggestions for improvement. Additionally, evaluators gathered feedback from coaches about training preparation, the utility of the coach's facilitation guidebook, and ways they supported their learners.

## DATA COLLECTION



Evaluators administered a learner survey, conducted individual interviews with coaches, and facilitated a focus group with coaches. The survey was distributed using Qualtrics to 27 learners; 18 participants completed a survey (67% response rate). Evaluators analyzed survey data using SPSS IBM Statistical software. Given the small sample size of the pilot program, evaluators produced descriptive statistics.



Because many learners have developmental disabilities, evaluators interviewed coaches to speak on their learners' behalf. Evaluators spoke with four coaches representing six learners. Interviews were conducted by phone, recorded, and professionally transcribed. Evaluators convened a virtual focus group that included five coaches representing seven learners. The focus group was recorded and transcribed. Evaluators analyzed interview and focus group data using NVivo Qualitative software. Evaluators coded information into general themes and noted important outlying information, when appropriate.

## POPULATION

The pilot program included learners and coaches from nine Colorado counties. Coaches were providers, family members, or friends of learners. Survey data were representative of learner location and the relationship they held with their coach. Similarly, interview and focus group participants represented perspectives from different areas of Colorado and various relationships with their learners.

Learners typically have some level of cognitive, emotional, or learning disability that requires significant understanding and support from their coach related to completing the course *and* collecting program feedback. Additionally, participants may have hearing impairments, sight impairments, or lower literacy levels. Therefore, it is critical to ensure program content is compliant with federal accessibility standards and coaches understand the extent to which they may need to support their learners in completing material.

# RESULTS

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## COACHING

Every learner was supported by a coach who was a provider, family member, or friend of the learner. A coach's role was to guide learners through the course. While coaches were not expected to have expertise in digital technology, they were expected to be comfortable using a variety of technologies to support learners who may be less comfortable with technology.

Program staff emphasized the importance of adapting to a learner's needs and abilities to build mutual trust and respect. Staff encouraged coaches to be flexible with the time learners spent on material and the need to revisit content to reinforce concepts. Program staff conveyed the importance of creating a positive learning environment to support inclusivity across learners.

## PREPARATION

Program staff provided coaches with a facilitation guidebook intended to support coaches in navigating course materials and supported their facilitation of the course. Additionally, coaches participated in two orientation sessions before beginning the training with their learner(s).

The time coaches spent preparing to train their learner(s) varied depending on their previous training experience, comfort level with technology, and familiarity with Moodle. Moodle is the online Learning Management System used to deliver the training. Coaches noted their preparation time ranged from "none" to "I could not begin to calculate the number of hours I have spent trying to learn [the training] well enough ... to teach [my learner]."



### *Guidebook*

Coaches participating in the focus group expressed the guidebook was thorough but lengthy. While useful as a reference document, it was intimidating to approach so much content initially. The guidebook could benefit from a summary document that condenses the information while allowing coaches to dive deeper, as needed.

Several coaches suggested developing a syllabus to serve this purpose. A syllabus would support coaches in understanding their progress against the suggested training schedule. The syllabus could be organized by day rather than date to emphasize that learners will progress at different speeds and include bulleted lists of what program staff expect a coach and learner accomplish during each meeting.

Another coach mentioned developing a calendar with meeting links to help them keep track of activities within the program, such as orientation sessions, check-in meetings, and evaluation activities. The coach expressed, "It's all laid out, so you know what's coming and when you should check things off. Something as basic as that would help."

## LEARNER SUPPORT

Overall, learners provided positive feedback around their experiences working with a coach. Survey respondents ( $n=18$ ) agreed or strongly agreed with the following:

- Meeting their coach in-person was convenient.
- Their coach supported them in learning about new topics.
- Their coach listened to them when they experienced challenges.
- Their coach clearly communicated.
- Their coach helped them work through difficulties with technology.
- Finding a time to meet in-person was easy.

Coaches are an essential component of the digital literacy program. Successful coaches will understand their learner(s) abilities, help learners navigate challenges in accessing and understanding content, and support an appropriate pace for completing modules. Not all content will be relevant to all learners, so it is incumbent upon the coach to understand what content their learner is capable of understanding and carrying forward after completion. As one coach stated, "I would give [a new coach] the advice to think about how unique each [learner] is, to honor that and to make sure they tailor the information to that person's needs all of the time."

For learners with more severe developmental disabilities, aspects of the course could still be useful for the learner *and* the coach, particularly in instances where a family member or loved one was providing care. Caregivers may not be familiar with using technology to manage care or the latest aspects of cyber security, which can change frequently.

"I already knew this stuff because [my learner] has a device, but it was actually a good review for me with the cybersecurity on these things. [The course] is very good about how to set up an iPad, all the things you need to think about as you're managing a device and thinking about managing healthcare online."

– Digital Literacy Pilot Program Coach

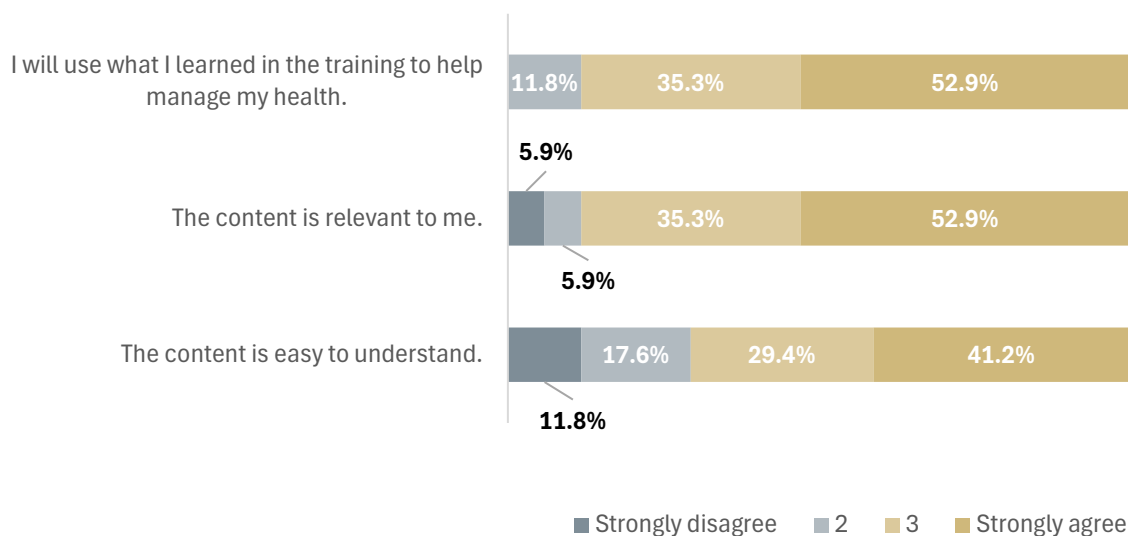
## TRAINING CONTENT

### GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Overall, learners and coaches responded positively to the Digital Literacy Pilot Program. Most survey respondents reported they will use what they learned in the training to help manage their health and that the content was relevant to them (see Exhibit 1). Furthermore, 83.4% of respondents would recommend the training to a friend or colleague.

Fewer respondents reported the content was easy to understand. Nearly one in three respondents (29%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the content was easy to understand. This likely relates to the extent of a learner's development disability and their coach's perception of how easy it was for the learner to understand the course material.

Exhibit 1: Most learners will use what they learned in the training to help manage their health and the content was relevant ( $n=18$ ).

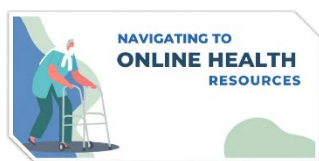


As an example of differing perspectives, one coach stated, "There were no lessons that were inappropriate or unnecessary or not needed or repetitive. They were all well thought out." In contrast, another coach shared, "There were particular [lessons] ... that were way above [my learners] language-wise and speed." Another coach described how they vetted content knowing what their learner could or could not understand. The coach said,

"We sat down, and I just skipped through stuff. I'm like, 'This doesn't apply.' I mean, [my learner] does not have any of the skills needed to pull up an app from a doctor's visit, read the results, and interpret them. [My learner] does not have the literacy skills or cognitive skills." The relevance and ease of understanding likely relates to a learner's developmental disability.



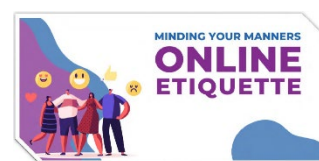
## SPECIFIC CONTENT



The health lessons, cyber security lessons, and online etiquette lesson were the most useful lessons within the training. The cyber security lessons were mentioned most frequently and supported their learners to look for red flags online, ask questions about what they were seeing, and have a plan for remaining safe online. Some coaches felt the cyber security lessons were important reminders for themselves, particularly when a coach was a family member supporting their learner daily.



One coach stated, “The safety and healthcare [lessons were] interesting for [my learner] and the safety [lesson] for just even myself – who helps daily with [my learner’s] iPad – was helpful to me as I pass on that information. We are getting information from it. We are just going to have to modify it for [my learner’s] learning needs.”



Another coach expressed, “The health stuff was interesting for [my learner]. [My learner] was very interested in knowing how to get to a portal and we called [my learner’s] doctor and had them send an invitation.”

The online etiquette lessons allowed coaches who were family members to feel more confident in their learner’s ability to independently use social media apps to connect with friends and family. While building independence is important, another coach stated, “I think coaches need to understand that ... [the learner] is going to need ongoing support with the device to keep up with the security and safety.”

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

When asked what additional topics the training could include, coaches reported the training covered enough material and topics. Several coaches were excited for the electives to come online, and one coach suggested a course on how to connect with others socially using digital technology. The coach explained the importance of connection and relationships to support the well-being of their learner. Survey respondents suggested the following as possible topics:

- Purchasing apps
- Keeping social media accounts private
- Account safety
- How to use entertainment apps, such as YouTube, Netflix, and Amazon

## TECHNICAL ISSUES

Coaches and learners shared several technical issues that impacted their experience. First, several participants mentioned an issue with lessons failing to show up as “complete” after completing them. This led to confusion when continuing with material the following session and recalling where to continue the lesson.

## TRAINING BENEFITS

Learners experienced a wide variety of benefits from completing the training. Learners expanded their experience with basic technology functionality – such as setting up a new device, adding apps, and practicing using a touch screen. Learners also experienced greater confidence to use digital tools independently, felt proud upon completing lessons, and could connect with people easier. One coach stated,

“I already knew [some of the material] because [my learner] has [an] iPad Mini, but it was actually a good review for me with the cybersecurity on these things. [The training] is [also] very good about how to set up an iPad, all the things you need to think about as you are managing a device and thinking about managing healthcare online.”

## USEFUL COMPONENTS

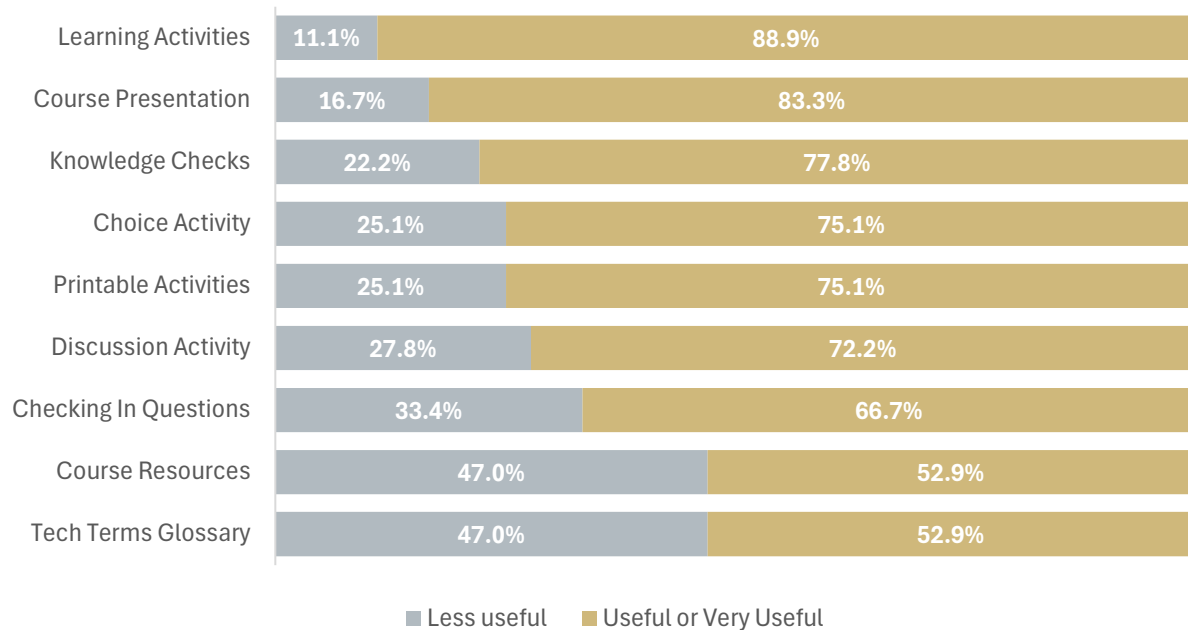
The training included features to support learner engagement and development. Exhibit 2 outlines each component and an explanation for how it supports learners. Respondents were asked how useful each component was to the training. The top three most useful components were Learning Activities, Course Presentations, and Knowledge Checks. The Course Resources and Tech Term Glossary were least useful by comparison. During the focus group, one coach mentioned the Printable Activities were challenging since you had to have access to a printer *and* know how to print from an iPad (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 2: Core Components of the Digital Literacy Pilot Program

Component	Description
Tech Terms Glossary	Glossary that includes common technical jargon relevant to each course
Course Resources	Collection of webpages, PDFs, and videos related to the course topic as a supplement
Learning Activities	H5P is an abbreviation for HTML5 Package and represents the platform program staff used to create many of the interactive learning materials for this course
Course Presentation	A series of self-paced slides that includes various interactive elements
Knowledge Checks	Different types of knowledge checks that pop up during interactive videos, including Fill-in-the-blank, Multiple Choice, and drag the words
Checking In Questions	Prompts that allow learners to reflect and communicate their grasp of the current topic and readiness to move on to their coach
Discussion Activity	Activity that allows learners to engage with a prompt in three different ways – discussing in person, recording their voice, or typing a response
Printable Activities	Digital literacy coaches are occasionally prompted to help their learners print and fill out a document as a part of one or more courses. The

	printable activities include a Person-Centered Program Plan and a Cyber Security Response Plan.
Choice Activity	This activity appears in several courses in the Next Steps area and is meant as “homework” to complete outside the training. One example prompts learners to “Find Health Information Online.”

Exhibit 3: Learners found the Learning Activities, Course Presentation, and Knowledge Checks the most useful.



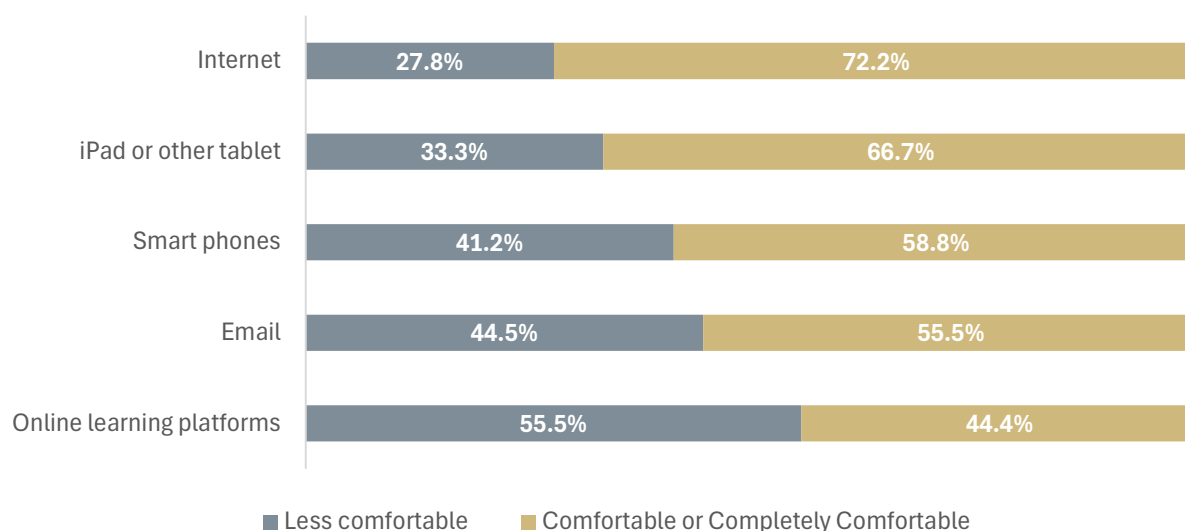
## TRAINING DELIVERY

### COMFORT WITH TECHNOLOGY

Completing the Digital Literacy program requires coaches and learners to become comfortable with a variety of technologies. Both coach and learner use individual iPads to complete modules, set up an email address, and practice general skills like accessing and navigating apps. Learners had varying comfort levels using the internet, iPads, smartphones, and email. Fewer learners were comfortable with online learning platforms like Moodle (see Exhibit 4).

Coaches who participated in interviewees or the focus group confirmed survey data and shared that learners came to the program with varying comfort levels depending on their cognitive and physical abilities. The prep courses were useful for learners with less experience around technology, specifically iPads or Apple products. 78% of survey respondents reported the prep courses prepared them to take the training.

Exhibit 4: Learners had varying comfort levels using the internet, iPads, smartphones, email, and online learning platforms ( $n=18$ ).



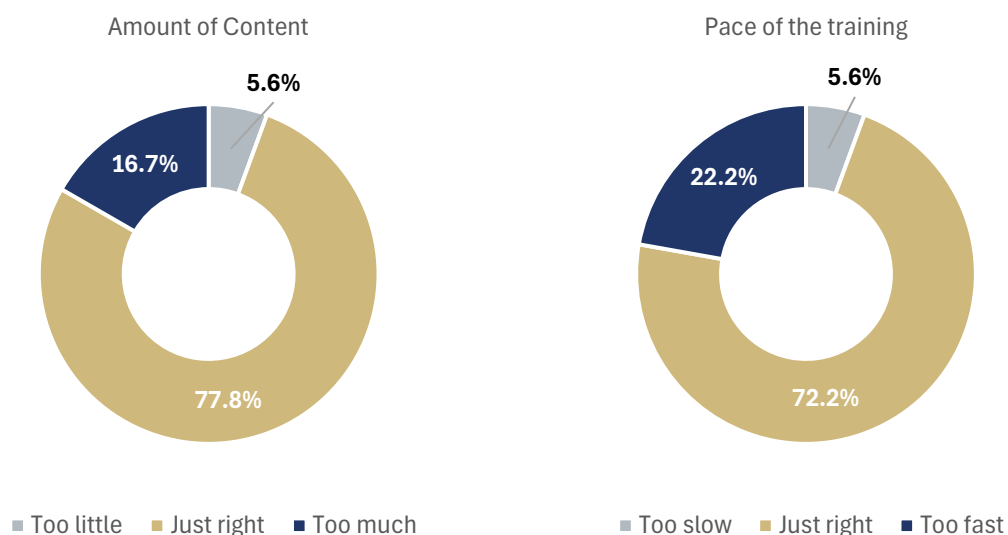
### TRAINING SCHEDULE

The training schedule was intended to be flexible so a coach and learner could decide how much content to cover in each session and how many weeks to hold the sessions. Program staff suggested meeting once or twice a week to cover two lessons so the entire course could be completed in seven weeks. Learners largely agreed the pace of the training and the amount of content covered in seven weeks was "just right" (see Exhibit 5).

One coach stated, "I thought [the modules] were great. I didn't have any problems with [pace or amount of content]. I think each of our training sessions was very manageable and we always felt at the end of an hour together working on it that we had accomplished a lot of things and learned a lot of things. I felt like that was

good.” Another coach said, “The fact that we were allowed to choose our own times for when we did the trainings and when I did the conversations – that worked very easily.”

Exhibit 5: Most learners reported the amount of content covered and the pace of the training were “just right” ( $n=18$ ).



## MOODLE & IPADS

Coaches and learners each received new iPads and kept them afterwards as an incentive to complete the training. Ninety-four percent of survey respondents liked completing the training online with an iPad. Fewer respondents, 61%, agreed Moodle was easy to use. Coaches agreed using a tablet, and an iPad specifically, was beneficial to the experience. A tablet allowed the coach and learner to choose where to complete lessons as opposed to using a stationary desktop.



## PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

Given the varying developmental disabilities of learners who engaged in the Digital Literacy Program, it is paramount that program staff have a deep understanding of the challenges and limitations learners and their coaches face in completing course materials. This understanding is critical in communicating with coaches about their learner's progress, supporting coaches in choosing appropriate learners, and setting expectations around completion of materials.

While there was total recognition and appreciation by coaches for the flexibility to complete modules depending on a learner's ability, coaches felt program staff could better understand the variety and severity of learners' developmental disabilities.

One coach stated, "I feel like the team needs to be educated about it. I think that's where you start. They need to understand what it means to have more severe [developmental disabilities] .... There was just a lack of understanding, and unless you understand what it means to really have mental retardation to that level, they're not going to be able to communicate in an appropriate manner with people like me."

Several coaches noted the challenge in choosing learners who may be appropriate for the program. While they have a better understanding now having completed the modules with their learner(s), several coaches recommended establishing clearer parameters for the training such as age and ability recommendations. One coach asked, "Who are the individuals that ... are going to be using the modes of communication ... [are they] going to be people that don't know how to read or write? Can they see? Can they hear?" Conversely, another coach conveyed the training is appropriate for all learners if the coach is familiar enough with their learner's ability and can curate content accordingly.

## CONCLUSION

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The Digital Literacy Pilot Program is promising in its effort to build foundational technological skills and improve access to and management of personal healthcare among individuals receiving Medicaid long-term services and support. Coaches and learners who participated in the pilot reported satisfaction with training content and delivery. Coaches offered formative feedback for improving the preparation in subsequent offerings.

Program staff should establish parameters around age and ability to support coaches in identifying appropriate learners for the training. Additionally, program staff should ensure team members have a good understanding of developmental disabilities to best communicate with and support coaches and learners across the program.





## MISSION

We strive to make evaluation a valued and widely accepted practice by increasing the use and understanding of evaluation. We collaborate with our clients to support evidence-informed programs, practices, and policies in schools, institutions of higher education, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations.



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