

## Poster Number 43

### Project STRONG: Engaging Southeastern Community Substance Use Treatment Organizations in Grant Writing

Teri Browne Aidyn Iachini, Stephanie Clone, Dana DeHart, Kristen D. Seay & Caroline Pantridge

**Background/purpose:** Grant writing is a critical skill for community organizations to engage in research and evaluation. To strengthen the grant writing capacity of substance use treatment organizations serving vulnerable individuals in South Carolina, we created Project STRONG (Strengthening Treatment and Recovery Organizations through Networking and Grantsmanship) to provide technical assistance on this skill and guide nine organizations to plan projects that implement new services and evaluation. Participating organizations attended Community of Practice state-wide meetings and utilized on-site technical support and supplemental technical assistance.

**Methods:** Pre- and post- surveys were administered to the 27 community members from the organizations who participated in Project STRONG. Process notes from onsite technical assistance visits were also collected. Quantitative data were descriptively analyzed; qualitative data were inductively analyzed through first-cycle and second-cycle axial coding using MaxQDA software.

**Results:** 96% of participants participated in all aspects of Project STRONG and reported strong satisfaction with this program. Key themes about the project include: participants appreciated the variety of technical assistance strategies, the delivery method of the technical assistance, and the tools and resources about grant writing and research provided as part of this project. Project STRONG participants had significantly higher reviewer scores on grants resubmitted after completing the project.

**Implications:** Project STRONG is the first capacity-building model to focus on improving grant writing within substance use organizations. This model can be used by other states to help community organizations successfully apply for grants and enhance community engaged research with underserved populations.