

LEND TRAINEE BIO

NAME: CHRISTIAN MEYER

DISCIPLINE: SOCIAL WORK

Past/current experiences working in the field of disabilities:

I currently work as a full-time social worker and clinician in the field, providing individualized mental health support, service linkage, and clinical consultancy to people with developmental disabilities, their families, and disability service professionals across the lifespan. Before becoming a social worker, I served in various roles where I had the opportunity to partner with members of the disability community and allies to meet their goals and promote systems change. These included working as a direct care staff, being a supervisor at an Adult Day Program, and providing services to individuals in a community mental health center. I am passionate about cultivating clinical relation

Goals for your LEND training experience:

There are several goals that I have for my LEND training. First, I hope to gain a greater understanding of the intersections between service/healthcare systems that folks with disabilities interact with regularly. Services and professionals across disciplines often lack communication and coordination with each other, which leads to adverse health outcomes for the community. I believe that part of my role as a social worker is to help bridge some of these gaps. Secondly, my aim is to increase my network and knowledge of professionals in other fields that serve people with disabilities. This will help me to link future families and individuals to essential services and provide education regarding the roles of other fields.

What you wish to contribute, in the future, as an advocate/professional/family member in the field:

As a professional in the field, I hope to contribute by providing evidence-based, individualized mental health support to folks with the highest support needs and their families. There is a lack of access to mental health services for people with IDD, thus I hope to help alleviate part of this shortage. Additionally, I plan to earn my PhD in social work, so that I can contribute to advancing research and services in the field regarding home-and-community-based services (HCBS), the PDA profile of Autism, and bridging the gap between the disability and mental health service systems. I am passionate about the strengthening of disability services in Illinois and hope that my LEND training will position me to move towards leadership in this space.