

CSTE LEAD Newsletter - April 2022

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Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

CSTE LEAD: Leading Epidemiologists, Advancing Data

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CSTE LEAD: Leading Epidemiologists, Advancing Data is a 12-month leadership program for mid-career epidemiologists. Program goals for LEAD are to: 1) Enhance the applied epidemiology workforce and 2) Develop leaders for CSTE activities.

LEADers in Action

Amy Bettano (CSTE LEAD Cohort 1) is a Senior Epidemiologist on the Special Analytic Projects Team in the Office of Population Health at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Amy and her fellow epidemiologists offer support on projects in response to the Commissioner's priorities. The [Public Health Data Warehouse \(PHD\)](#) is the largest data project that the team is responsible for which is comprised of 23 datasets that are linked at the individual level and maintain records from 2011 to 2019 (currently adding data for 2020). Amy helps to prepare data and to manage some of the external research teams working on PHD by providing technical assistance, SAS coding consultations, and data expertise and analysis.

collection, and it typically excludes individuals in institution settings and those who cannot complete surveys on their own. Amy's CSTE LEAD project aims to create disability status flags within the PHD and complete an analysis using these flags to understand inequities in access to and quality of care and patient outcomes.

The greatest lessons learned while leading her CSTE LEAD project and fulfilling her job responsibilities were to set up a comprehensive timeline, scheduling bi-weekly calendar meetings for progress updates, and presenting project progress, even if it's not finished.

"When I realized that I was letting perfect be the enemy of good, I was able to make real headway on the project. Sometimes the most effective way to get unstuck is to give people something to react to even if it is not finished – let them know it's a work in progress and that you welcome feedback."

Her advice to others trying to lead a project or for people in the health department right now is *empathy*. Understaffed and underfunded health departments and additional assigned tasks, while performing other job functions, are some of the significant challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic amongst epidemiologists and government public health roles. Amy tries to remember that not everything is an emergency, compared to the early days of the pandemic. Now that the pandemic has settled into more a predictable pattern, there must be a way to get back to a normal operating schedule: determining what is urgent and what can wait for business hours. Additionally, during the period of transition, she advises to remember that every effort matters, *"Even if you're only making a small change or moving your project forward slightly, you are further ahead than you were"*.

Call for nominations – If you would like to share the work of a LEAD participant and/or LEAD project team in future newsletters, email Jessica Arrazola at WFResources@cste.org.

Announcements

- The 2022 CSTE Annual Conference will be in Louisville, Kentucky, June 19-23, 2022. [Register](#) now before our early-bird deadline May 5!
- Save the Dates! Cohort 1 Final Presentations will be on [Monday, May 23 from 1:00-2:00 pm EDT \(register here\)](#) and [Monday, June 27 1:00-2:00 pm EDT \(register here\)](#). All Cohort 1 and 2 participants, support team members, and colleagues are invited to attend for both dates.
- CSTE LEAD 360 Assessments for Cohort 2 are now available from Monday, April 18 to Friday, May 6. Participants can check Basecamp for more information and guidelines.

Highlights - Cohort 1

The month of March focused on [public health advocacy for leaders](#) through [storytelling](#) and [public narrative translated to public action](#). Craft your leadership narrative using the [public narrative framework guidelines](#) or dive deeper into refining your [health informatics communications toolkit](#). The last group coaching call focused on differentiating the roles of a [coach vs. mentor/advisor](#). Cohort participants discussed tradeoffs and benefits of being supported by both roles such as mentoring is more natural and empowering than coaching, but the coaching role can provide guidance for technical skills and work productivity.

Mentorship was the center of April's curriculum. This month shared [Mentoring Best Practices, Strategies, and Theory](#), [mentoring during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), and [elevating your mentor-protegee relationship](#) with [practical and effective development ideas](#).

The month of February identified tools and resources for Project Management and Facilitation that can be utilized in LEAD projects such as: [Eight Behaviors for Smarter Teams](#), [Conducting Productive Meetings](#), [STD Program Evaluation Tools and Resources](#), and [Project Management Tools](#). Differentiating [What Leaders Really Do](#) from the previous curriculum lesson was connected to the discussion of this month's journal club meeting on [Why Design Thinking Works](#), facilitated by Dora Dumont and Amelia Salmanson. The cohort's discussion highlighted the extent and definition of "customer discovery" and incorporation of innovative design thinking within the realm of public health and government settings.

What are the [crucibles that can influence leadership styles](#)? March's case study [Something's Rotten at the Pink Panther](#), facilitated by Natalie Marzec and Rachel Jantz, discussed leadership vs. management dynamics especially in times of public health crisis and emergencies. [Understanding personal leadership and personality qualities](#) can be a powerful way when working with others such as [promoting a more resilient workforce](#) and improve work performance ([individually or organizational](#)) through [appreciative inquiry](#). Cohort 2 also participated in their first group coaching session where our professional coaches reviewed [group coaching conversations 101](#). Topics of discussion included formal vs. informal coaching relationships and the strengths and challenges of coaching - as LEAD participants were able to practice their own coaching skills with other LEAD participants.

April focused on [Stakeholder Engagement & Boundary Spanning Leadership](#). [Engagement of stakeholders](#) is important to addressing and working towards public health goals and vision. By [mapping stakeholder groups](#) by their interest, influence, needs, and expectations can add more progress and impact to our projects while [sustaining long-term stakeholder relationships and partnerships](#). This month's group coaching call discussed the [do's and don'ts of deep listening](#) and ways we can advance our listening skills to clarify, articulate, draw on meta-view and metaphors,

the first project sharing session on hepatitis C, One Health, and hepatitis A.

If you have feedback on our newsletters, we would like to hear from you. Let us know how we can best support your participation in the program. Email feedback to Jessica Arrazola at WFResources@cste.org.



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CSTE Conference

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