

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION: HRD—Leadership Training for Women on the Lower Rungs of the Organizational Ladder: A Qualitative Study**

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The purpose of this case study, HRD—Leadership Training for Women on the Lower Rungs of the Organizational Ladder: A Qualitative Study, was to determine the responses of a group of women to a series of classes on leadership development and to perceive what they might have gained from this experience. These classes were modeled after those offered by the Academy for Community Leadership and offered to a group of workers who are not normally slated for this type of training.

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Given completion of an eight-week program introducing leadership skill enhancement opportunities, how did the participants describe this experience?
2. At the conclusion of the training, what types of leadership opportunities did participants express an interest in pursuing?
3. What barriers did participants note that might prevent them from pursuing their interests?
4. What unexpected outcomes emerged from providing the Academy for Community Leadership model of curriculum to women who typically do not have access to it?

The participants in the study were Residential Assistants working in a group home setting for an organization that provides residential services for adults with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities in east central Indiana. The women in the study did not hold a designated leadership position.

Through a series of eight two-hour classes the participants were introduced to various topics related to leadership such as leadership styles, teambuilding, workplace diversity, problem solving, communication and action plan development. The data collection methods included a weekly evaluation, journaling, non-participant observation and a post-session interview.

The results revealed that the participants had increased their self confidence, and they felt better prepared to do their current job. They expressed aspirations to continue their education as well as to seek promotions. They came to understand the qualities of leadership that they already possessed as well as areas for improvement.

The results of this qualitative study suggest that leadership training should be offered to groups such as CNAs, direct support professionals and others on the lower rungs of the organizational ladder who are not typically offered this type of training.