Activity Description: Bridge to Belonging Learning Lab

The purpose of this activity is to develop your ability to evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. In alignment with CSWE Competency 9, social workers must apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches to evaluate practice through common social work conceptual frameworks (e.g., person-in-environment, ecological systems theory). Through this activity and "memo" assignment, you will learn to select practice or program components for evaluation, make evidence-informed decisions based on findings, and use evaluation outcomes to make changes to practice.

This is a mostly in class activity that requires individual reading before class and a "memo" submission related to what you learned in class. You will be assessed for Competency 9 based on the "memo", while your grade for this assignment will be marked as *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory*.

Description of Lab:

1. **Pre-Class Preparation**: To participate effectively in the lab, you must review the "Global Reach Iowa" nonprofit profile and the "Bridge to Belonging" annual program report on ICON before class. Your goal is to understand the program's mission, the population served, and the specific quantitative measures used to track success across different system levels.

2. **Small Group Evaluation Meeting:** Imagine your group of B2B staff is meeting to discuss the evaluation findings and make practice recommendations to the Board of Directors based on findings. Your goal is to investigate how the program's data informs understanding of practice effectiveness. Use the following questions to guide your 30-minute conversation:

    - Are the current quantitative methods (e.g., data collection, measurement tools, outcomes, etc.) used in the B2B report appropriate for this specific population, or do they contain inherent biases that might distort the interpretation of "success"? If so, what are some ways to address bias?

    - Look at the qualitative findings (e.g., parental feedback about night-shifts). How do these "stories" help explain the statistically significant drop in youth group attendance? Why must an evaluator use both numbers and stories to understand effectiveness?

    - Note where the report describes a statistically significant drop, increase, or change in any measure. In each case, what does that mean? Is it a positive or a negative change? How might a change at one system level be related to a change in another system level (see how many connections you can make).

- As a group, identify at least three program or policy changes that you can advocate for based on the annual report data?

3. **Evaluation Memo:** Submit (on ICON) a 3-paragraph memo (~1 page) addressed to the B2B Board of Directors. You must:

    - Identify Methods: Identify at least two specific quantitative findings from the report (e.g., the $p<.05$ drop in GAD-7 scores or the $p<.001$ correlation in transit usage). Explain to the Board how these specific metrics serve as "evidence of effectiveness" for B2B service delivery. Provide rationale for why these findings should give the Board confidence in B2B practice decisions.

    - Apply Theory: Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, interpret one of the findings from the report. Explain how interventions at one system level may impact outcomes at a different system level.

    - Apply Perspective: The cultural mediation program occurred at the mezzo-level, at the interface between two groups (landlords and tenants), and was ineffective at reducing evictions. Propose a specific change to the Housing Advocacy & Cultural Mediation services to address the 30% eviction warning rate and move from "fixing the client" to "fixing the system". Explain how your recommendation avoids pathologizing the community and instead focuses on increasing B2B's overall service delivery effectiveness.