To describe an interprofessional cultural competency training program that was developed as part of a larger Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) project addressing aging and mental well-being of African American elders. The project is a partnership of an academic research center and a senior community center.

CBPR, an investigative model that integrates community input and ownership with researcher expertise, presents opportunities to train health professional students in culturally relevant care by engaging students with community members to learn about diverse cultural values, health beliefs and practices.

In Touch: Mind, Body & Spirit, using CBPR principles, is a partnership between the Jefferson Center for Applied Research on Aging and Health with Center in the Park (CIP) an urban senior center. The goal of the partnership is to support positive mental health and address mental health disparities in African American older adults. As part of In Touch, a series of cultural training opportunities for health professional students were developed including: interviewing Center members concerning aging, health and mental well-being, an exploratory qualitative interview study to assess African American elders and geriatric physician views on patient-provider communication, delivery of health workshops by geriatric fellows --“Ask the Doc”, and development and implementation of an interprofessional cultural competence course. CIP staff and members were essential participants in development and implementation of training activities.

Students in occupational and physical therapies, nursing, public health, and medicine participated in various training activities designed to enhance understanding of culturally-based values and beliefs and the impact on health and well-being of African American older adults. Program evaluations and students’ shared reflections suggest the feasibility and promise of involving communities to facilitate students’ cultural understanding and competence. Involvement of students in CBPR can improve their knowledgebase and