

NM Home Visiting Bits and Bites

April 2023



Mental Health First Aid

Early Childhood
Education and Care
Department (ECECD)
Updates

Story from the Field

Home Visiting, Dates on
the Horizon

For More Information or
to Submit an Article

Mental Health First Aid Anna Garcia, MA, IMH-E®

Home visitors know that a child's mental health is supported by their parents. Parents who have mental health challenges may have difficulty providing care for their children. The Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University states that the foundation for sound mental health is built early in life and shapes the developing brain's architecture. They go on to state that disruptions in this developmental process can impair a child's capacity for learning and relating to others.

While there are many strategies to support a family's mental health, one strategy to support a family struggling with mental health challenges is a skills-based training that provides information about mental health and substance-use issues. Mental Health FIRST AID® teaches how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults. Mental Health FIRST AID® also covers the common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges, how to interact with a person in crisis, how to connect with a person to support, and expanded content on trauma, substance use, and self-care.

While you may already use many of these strategies in your work with families, Mental Health FIRST AID® training may provide additional resources in support of families. Knowing your role, setting clear boundaries, and connecting families to appropriate professional help is also extremely important.

While home visitors are not therapists, it is important to understand how you can support families struggling with mental health challenges. Knowing the mental health resources in your community is important as well as knowing the hotline numbers that families can access 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Additional resources are included in the Home Visiting Tips and Resources for April.

The Mental Health FIRST AID® Action Plan (ALGEE):

- A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- L**isten non-judgmentally
- G**ive reassurance and information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies

References

Early Childhood Mental Health.(n.d.). Center for the Developing Child Harvard University <https://bit.ly/3FU3EWW>

Mental Health First Aid One Pager Flier. (n.d.). National Council for Mental Wellbeing <https://bit.ly/3JM51YR>

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CARE DEPT (ECECD)

UPDATES

We are planning on sponsoring a Face-to-Face Circle of Security® training in Albuquerque, NM for new home visiting staff who have yet to complete this. Please save the following dates: May 22-May 25, 2023, while we work out the logistics. This information will be sent out once everything is finalized.

We are also pleased to announce an opportunity for new staff to participate in an online Spanish Circle of Security® that is being offered through their website. Information on how to register has been sent out to Program Managers as it is not yet available publicly.

Please save the date for the Annual Meeting for Program Managers, which will be held on June 14, 2023 in Albuquerque, NM.

ECECD is planning a series of Baby Showers around the state by region, dates to be announced. Please start thinking about how your program can participate with an activity table, promotional items, etc. This will be a great opportunity for you to promote your program and recruit families!

Please stay tuned to the ECECD website and Facebook Page!



STORY FROM THE FIELD

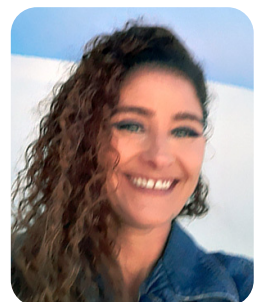
Asilee "AJ" Allen-Ferris, LBSW, MSW
MECA Therapies Home Visitor
Las Cruces/Dona Ana, NM

The home visitor's role in support of a family or child's mental health is an important skill. Mental health is complex for both parties. I received training on Mental Health FIRST AID® in 2016. Learning and practicing these skills is beneficial and supports in being present, scanning for nuggets, and strategizing with the family.

Home visitors utilize screening tools to gauge the family's mental health. These screening tools can provide the home visitor insight into the family's needs and in turn may help to support their mental health. By monitoring for mental health first aid, the home visitor looks for words, behaviors, and non-verbal actions that seem to be off or out of the norm. Scanning for nuggets and noticing when something is off may be challenging to discuss with the family. However, by being present with the family or individual and noticing cues that may not seem normal, helps to bring transparency about the observation which may then be relayed to the family or individual.

It is easy to go into a fix-it mode, especially when someone requires mental health first aid. As I mentioned previously, transparency with the family or individual can go a long way. When I strategize with them, I always try to guide them rather than direct them, which is essential to our relationship. Supporting them to follow their words and thoughts is important, but there are times when re-framing or reflecting with them on something they shared in the moment or in a past conversation is also helpful. Using our words which have been re-framed with their words is powerful, but we must learn to use them effectively and always in support of the family or individual. Families have stories that are so amazing, and the strengths and resilience they demonstrate are beyond some of our imaginations. Home visitors are part of an intimate piece of a family's life and building trust and providing support is the best way we can help parents in helping their children succeed.

Home visiting brings great importance to families and communities. We bring forth the skills and tools of mental health first aid by being present, guiding, and strategizing with them, not for them. Mental health first aid is at the front lines of our world. With the impact of COVID-19, we all have our own stories and experiences and challenges in life. By gaining knowledge, skills, and awareness about mental health first aid, home visitors can be the hero in a family's or child's life.



Asilee "AJ" Allen-Ferris



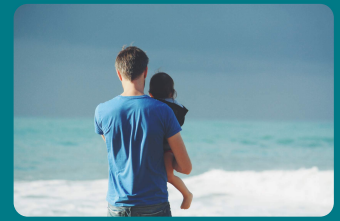
Home Visiting Training Calendar



Previous COL Sessions, Articles, Tips, and Resources



Reflective Practice



Best wishes to Melina Romero on her retirement from Region 9!



HOME VISITING DATES ON THE HORIZON

<p>Apr. 3, 5, 6</p> <p>Mothers and Babies</p> <p>9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>Apr. 6, 25</p> <p>Reflective Case Reviews</p> <p>1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>Apr. 10, 19</p> <p>Reflective Case Reviews</p> <p>9-10 a.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>Apr. 11</p> <p>Community of Learners - Mental Health First Aid</p> <p>10-11:45 a.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>Apr. 13</p> <p>PICCOLO in Practice</p> <p>9-11 a.m., via Zoom</p>
<p>Apr. 28</p> <p>Supporting the Home Learning Environment</p> <p>10-11 a.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>May 3, 4</p> <p>New Home Visitor Training-Interactive Sessions</p> <p>9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>May 4, 23</p> <p>Reflective Case Reviews</p> <p>1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>May 8, 17</p> <p>Reflective Case Reviews</p> <p>9-10 a.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>May 9</p> <p>Community of Learners: Young Parents</p> <p>10:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m., via Zoom</p>
<p>May 11, 12</p> <p>Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3/ASQ:SE2) Training</p> <p>9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., via Zoom</p>	<p>May 19</p> <p>Supporting the Home Learning Environment</p> <p>10-11 a.m., via Zoom</p>	<div style="border: 2px solid purple; border-radius: 20px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Visit the HV Training Calendar link above or HERE to register for events.</p> <p>Individual registration is required to receive a certificate. If you cannot attend, please cancel in advance to allow those on wait lists to register.</p> </div>		

APRIL OBSERVANCES/AWARENESS

Cesarean Awareness Month

National Month of Hope

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

American Counseling Association Counseling Awareness Month

World Autism Month



SUBMIT NEWS!

To submit information to be shared in future newsletters, please send an email to: HSC-ECLN@salud.unm.edu

For more information, visit us below.



[CDD/HOME VISITING](#)



NMECECD.ORG/HOME-VISITING



[ECSC](#)



Family Support and Early Intervention Division
HOME VISITING

