

Background

In partnership with the Louisiana Public Health Institute, the Louisiana (LA) Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program conducted an evaluation of innovative approaches to increase home visitors' capacity to support families with mental health needs. A 2011 evaluation found that the significant mental health needs experienced by many LA MIECHV families often left home visitors feeling underprepared and overwhelmed, and contributed to job-related stress and burnout. Through the provision of training and structured infant mental health (IMH) consultation, this innovation was designed to increase home visitors' competence and comfort in: 1) recognizing and supporting mental health and trauma symptoms and related child development and parent-child relationship concerns; 2) providing program-based interventions; and 3) facilitating referrals to outside mental health supports and services.

This project aimed to demonstrate improvement in the following priority area(s):

- Priority #2: Development and retention of a trained, highly skilled MIECHV-funded home visiting workforce.

Project Activities and Highlights

Project Activities

- **Training:** Conducted baseline training and follow-up "booster" sessions for home visitors on: 1) parent-child relationships, 2) trauma-informed care, and 3) diversity-informed practice in August, October, and May of 2017.
- **Consultation:** Infant Mental Health Specialists (IMHS) embedded into each home visiting team provided 6,334 consultations to home visitors and team supervisors.
- **NEAR@Home Pilot:** Developed and implemented a NEAR@Home pilot process to systematically introduce and adapt a trauma-informed home visiting approach for LA MIECHV teams. Pilot participants (Supervisors, IMHSs, and one volunteer home visitor from each team) attended a series of collaborative workshops held in February 2018, July 2018, and February 2019.

Lessons Learned

- Involving key staff in programmatic decision making results in improved products and processes that better reflect the program's unique needs and builds trust and support across all levels of the organization.
- Embedding IMHSs into home visiting teams and implementing a systematic and structured approach to consultation promotes relationship-building and consistent collaboration and support for home visitors in addressing clients' mental health needs.

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Findings

- 80% of home visitors described their satisfaction with the booster sessions as either very good or excellent.
- 78% of home visitors stated that their IMHSs often or very often helped them connect clients to mental health services in the community when needed.

Sustainability

- With support from the LA Department of Health's Bureau of Family Health leadership and Title V MCH Block Grant funds, IMHSs have been permanently embedded into all LA MIECHV home visiting teams; efforts to expand IMH consultation in LA continue.

Recommendations for the Home Visiting Field

- Continue to use booster trainings to both reinforce knowledge and skills from previous trainings and to introduce and develop new knowledge and skills.
- Continue to develop staff skills in mental health and self-care by integrating self-care strategies and techniques into trainings, consultation, and other team activities.

Resources

[LA MIECHV Program Information](#)
[Project LAUNCH LA Resources for Patients and Families](#)
[MIECHV Innovation Awards](#)

Average Home Visitor Response: "How Would You Rate the Booster Session" Booster Satisfaction Surveys Across 3 Booster Sessions

