



Mental Health Consultation Evaluation

Summary of Interviews with Home Visitors, Supervisors, & Mental Health Consultants

Overview

Colorado MIECHV conducted an evaluation to understand how mental health consultation is implemented in home visiting models in Colorado. Specifically, the evaluation aimed to answer the following questions:

How is the role of the mental health consultant (MHC) defined for the home visiting context?

How is mental health consultation currently being implemented in CO MIECHV programs?

What are the barriers and facilitators to implementing effective mental health consultation in home visiting programs?

Participants*



16 home visitors and supervisors from 6 home visiting agencies participated in individual interviews



4 mental health consultants representing consultants across all three models participated in individual interviews

*Mental health consultants serving MIECHV programs are funded by various sources including: MIECHV, Project LAUNCH, CO state funds, and other foundations.

The Role of the Mental Health Consultant

How is the role of the mental health consultant (MHC) defined for the home visiting context?

Home visitors, supervisors, and mental health consultants (MHCs) predominantly define the role of the mental health consultant as a **support system for home visitors**. Additionally, MHCs also see themselves as reflective supervision providers. Interview responses by home visitors, supervisors and MHCs identified the following prominent themes when defining the role of the consultant: **capacity-building and psychoeducation, work guidance to home visitors, case-assessment expertise, addressing mental health concerns with families, and acting as systems-connector to other agencies.**



Capacity-Building, Psycho-education

MHCs provide capacity-building by conducting training and education sessions, facilitating reflective practices, and providing support to home visitors' professional and personal well-being.



Work Guidance

MHCs help home visitors maneuver through their daily work. They also provide home visitors with guidance on how to develop a safe and nurturing environment with their families.



Expertise

MHCs provide expertise in assessing cases, helping home visitors solve work-related problems, and also providing guidance with paperwork and data-related issues.



Family Mental Health

MHCs help home visitors address mental health concerns with their families by helping them navigate difficult situations, providing strategies/activities that can be used with families, and also breaking down mental health stereotypes.



Systems Connector

MHCs act as systems connectors to other agencies by providing referrals and professional references to home visitors and families, as well coordinating with other mental health agencies to provide services when needed.

I think her role is very healthy for us, speaking from my own experience. She provides mental health support for us and the families. She has helped me establish my ideas, and has provided guidance about how to better apply my services to the families... [MHC] is always willing to help and provide her opinion on the best, or most appropriate way to help these families and their children.

- Home Visitor



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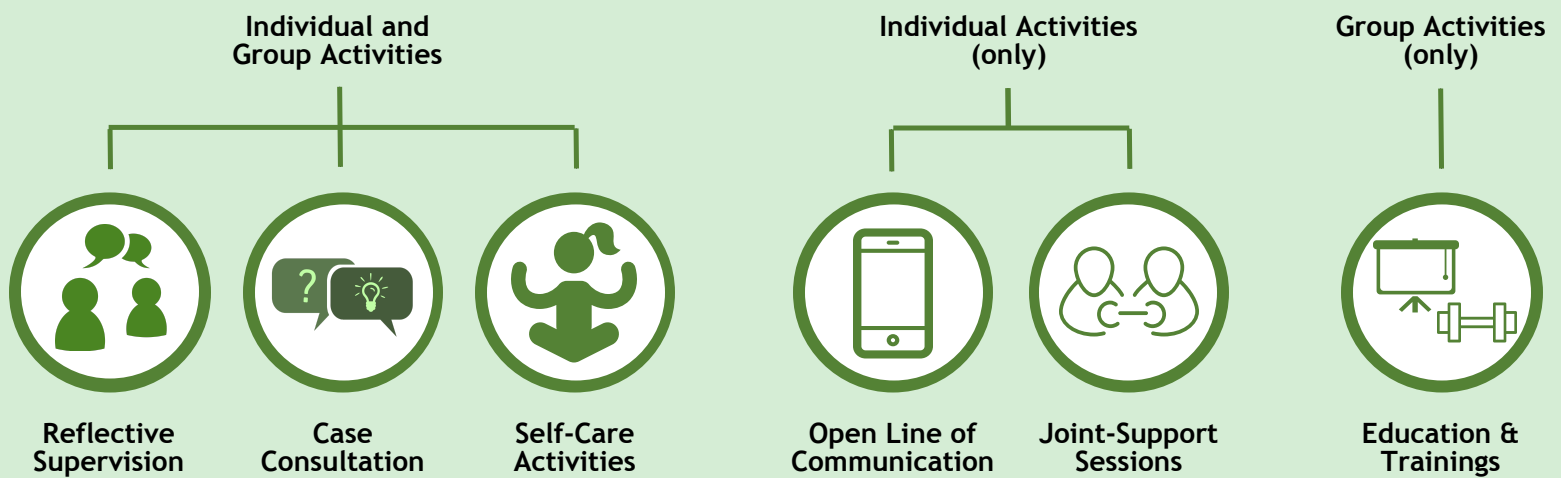
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Implementation of Mental Health Consultation in Home Visiting

How is mental health consultation currently being implemented in CO MIECHV programs?

According to home visitors, supervisors, and MHCs, mental health consultation is currently being implemented **individually and in a group setting**. The most common and prominent activities identified by interviewees between both types of consultation are: **reflective supervision, case consultation, and self-care activities**. Notable activities only applying to individual consultation are: **as-needed communication and joint-support family sessions between the home visitor and the MHC**. Education and trainings is another prominent theme only applying to group consultation activities.

Most Prominent Mental Health Consultation Activities



In a group setting, we discuss our families and some of struggles we might be having with them, and as a whole how we deal with that. When we have more stuff come up, then we've gone back to that person who had a similar situation and have been able to bounce ideas off of each other on how to approach the situation differently than we would have in the past, or what we originally would have thought we would do. It's kind of just like, I don't want to say therapy, but that's sometimes what it feels like. It's a therapeutic way to work through difficult situations and families.

- Home Visitor

I do activities. I will bring in actual skills. These might be mindfulness skills, or emotional intelligence skills, or motivational interviewing skills; and I model them with the group so they can potentially implement these with their families... Oftentimes they'll ask me about certain topics, I supply them with specific resources.

- MHC



An overwhelming majority of home visitors and MHCs stated that home visitors are able to apply activities and knowledge gained in mental health consultation to their work and role, as well as for themselves.

Mental Health Consultation Application

- Helps to better understand families' situations
- Helps to better understand actions and decisions taken by families
- Amplifies knowledge to discuss mental health issues with family
- Helps to identify, address, and solve mental health issues
- Helps to recognize own implicit biases and triggers
- Helps with own personal mental health and well-being
- Changes how to think about personal mission and goals
- Increases sense of empathy and compassion
- Helps to recognize importance of work and role

I was trying to figure out a good way to present safe sleep given that I have an extreme bias to one side of the issue. I talked to the MHC about exploring the positives of the other side and presenting both sides in a non-biased way and making sure that my families didn't feel judged.

- Home Visitor

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Mental Health Consultation Barriers and Facilitators

What are the barriers and facilitators to implementing effective mental health consultation in home visiting programs?

Based on interview responses, home visitors, supervisors, and MHCs identified various barriers and facilitators that hinder or help implement an effective mental health consultation. The most notable for each of these were:

Barriers:

- Logistical barriers
- Emotional/personal discomfort
- Busy home visitors
- Busy mental health consultants
- Poor communication

Facilitators:

- Open and comfortable environment
- Mutual positive relationships
- MHC listens to home visitors
- MHC's reliability and availability
- Understanding roles and programs
- Logistical facilitators
- MHC's availability to service families
- Home visitors' educational attainment
- Motivated/dedicated home visitors
- Bilingual consultants
- Trust between MHC and supervisors

Barriers

Home Visitors



Logistical barriers



Emotional & personal discomfort



Busy mental health consultant



Busy/overwhelmed home visitor

Mental Health Consultants



Poor communication

What is hard [about mental health consultation], it takes a few hours from our job and those hours are huge for us... You lose a little bit, but you gain more confidence, you get rid of some stress. It's a balance.

- Home Visitor

I have had a lot of challenges, yes. I struggled a lot in the beginning with trust and just being able to open up to [MHC] and just speak openly. As time has gone on, there are things that I have definitely been able to overcome.

- Home visitor

Facilitators

Home Visitors



Open & comfortable environment



Mutual positive relationships



MHC listens to home visitors



Consultant reliability & availability



Understanding roles & programs



Logistical facilitators



Consultant services to families

Mental Health Consultants



Home visitors' educational attainment



Motivated & dedicated home visitors



Bilingual consultants



Trust between MHC & supervisor

There are big differences in education levels. Often times, that's a huge strength too... Oftentimes it's trying to get a read on people's needs and experiences and trying to create a space that feels safe enough where they can speak to that.

- MHC



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Other Important Takeaways & Quotes

- Some consultants are able to provide:
 - 1) Direct services to families, such as counseling and therapy
 - 2) Training and capacity-building sessions for parents
 - 3) Support to home visitors through family observation
- Consultants are very flexible, as they:
 - 1) Adapt their services to meet home visitor/agency needs
 - 2) Discuss concerns and priorities with supervisors
 - 3) Conduct activity-progress reviews with supervisors
 - 4) Provide capacity-building and Infant Mental Health Endorsement guidance
- Home visitors suggested various ways in which they could better serve clients' needs:
 - 1) Home visitor empowerment
 - 2) More tools and trainings
 - 3) More consultant availability
 - 4) Case-management support
 - 5) More assistance with case management for at-risk clients
- Consultants identified various trainings/professional development that could help home visitors better meet their clients' needs:
 - 1) Positive and conscious discipline
 - 2) Child and brain development
 - 3) Assertive communication techniques
 - 4) Role clarification (what falls inside/outside the home visitor's role)
 - 5) Child welfare training
 - 6) Trauma-informed care
 - 7) Self-care techniques for home visitors
- Supervisor engagement with consultants varies by agency with some actively participating in consultation activities and others excluding themselves to provide more time for home visitors' concerns/support.
- While some NFP home visitors utilize the consultant for their own well-being, others take advantage of their own agencies' wellness programs.
- Some consultants and many PAT home visitors expressed that it would be helpful for MHCs to accompany them to visits, especially for the most challenging cases.
- NFP home visitors expressed that more resources are needed to address families' mental health needs outside of the consultant's role.

Quotes

[MHC] is aware that we provide social support to the families. So, I think [MHC] understands that all the resources or advice that [MHC] provides to us is of total importance to the families we serve.

- Home visitor

The home visitors, they're the ones going into the homes every week, I try not to take that time. I feel like if I'm using that time [with mental health consultant], I'm taking it from them.

- Supervisor



It's very easy to work with [MHC]... I was stressed before... but now I feel different. It is good for us, for my stress.

- Home Visitor

Sometimes they'll ask for articles, books; they ask me to write them letters of recommendation because they want to go back to school. They'll talk in general about some impacts of the work that they'll stop me outside. Some have mental health issues themselves, and so they'll stop and talk to me about how to get a mental health resource.

- MHC

I think they have a good grasp of what our roles are. I don't have any issues with it. In fact, I would talk to the supervisor there. I would from time to time call her and ask if she has any issues, do they have any concerns... their feedback, good, bad and ugly. We need to know that. That way we're checking our work and if we're out of line, we need to know that. I think they have a good grasp of what we're doing and what the roles are.

- MHC

As home visitors, sometimes you feel that you don't have answers for the families... MHC helps you realize that it's okay— [I] don't have to have the answers for everything.

- Home Visitor

Being that this is a small town, there's only one bilingual counseling option that I know of. And so this is a resource that is very limited for my families.

- Home Visitor

This group is very giving, they're very committed to their work and very passionate, but I would say they maybe give too much sometimes. Burnout can be an issue, time management.

- MHC



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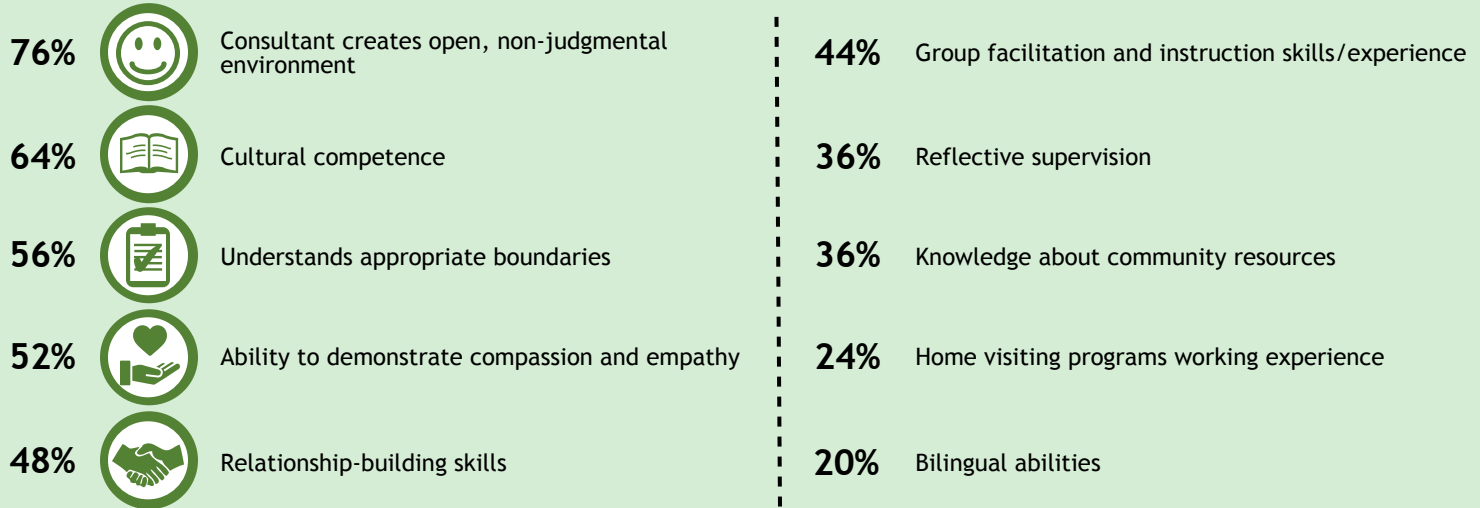
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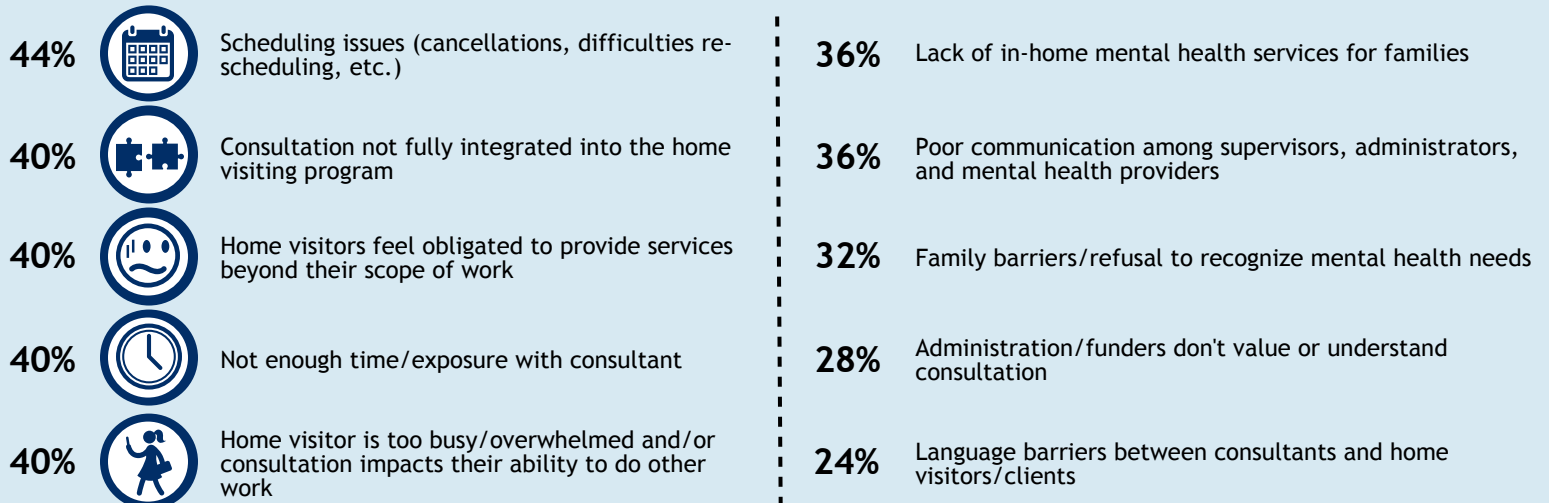
Summary of Multi-Voting Surveys Responses

Most Prominent Consultant Skills and Competencies



Barriers and Facilitators to Mental Health Consultation

Most Prominent Barriers to the Implementation of Mental Health Consultation



Most Prominent Facilitators to the Implementation of Mental Health Consultation

