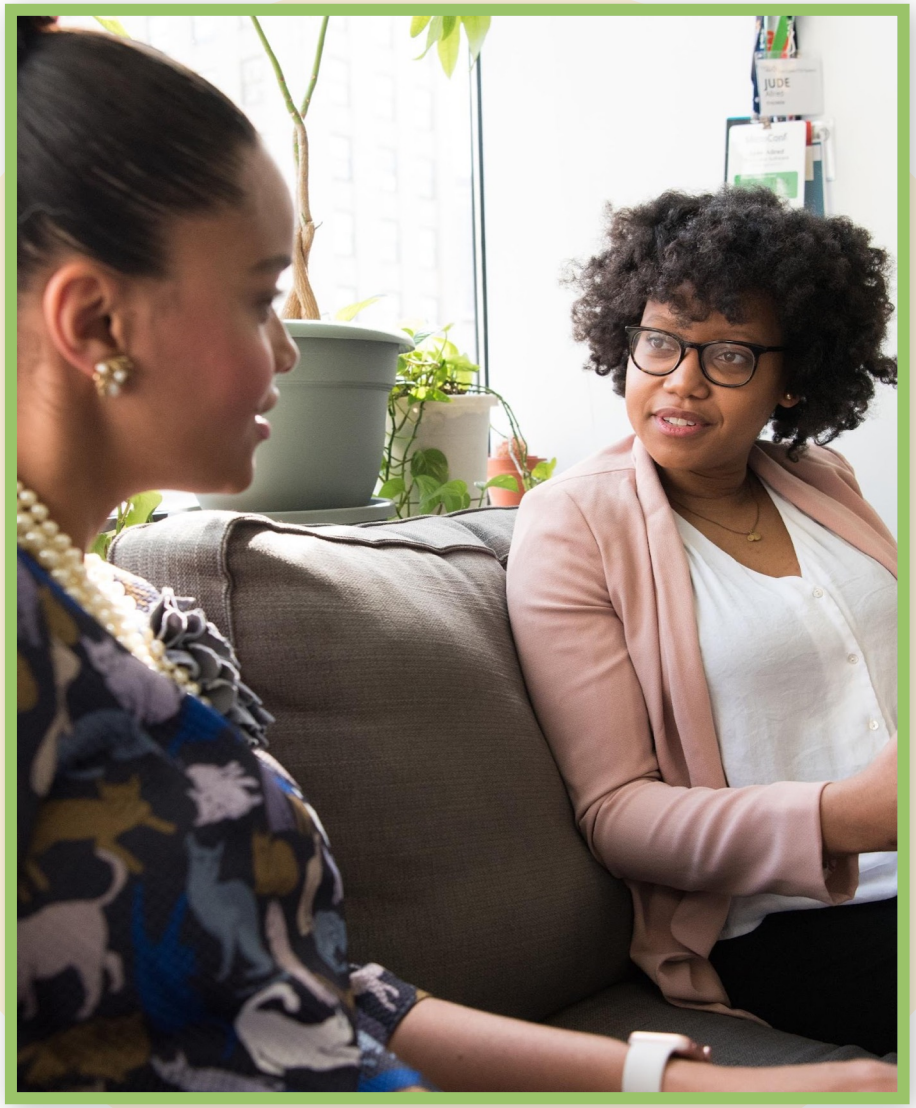
Understanding Mental Health Consultation



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In this session we will:

- Define Mental Health Consultation (MHC)
- Explore ways to implement effective MHC
- Discuss various ways Mental Health Consultants can support Head Start programs



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC)

IECMHC is an evidence-based approach that pairs mental health professionals with people who work with young children and their families.

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Share Your Thoughts



1. What questions do you have about the role of Mental Health Consultation?

2. What are you hoping to learn in this session?

Let's chat!

IECMHC

Infant and early childhood mental health consultants
help caregivers support healthy growth and development in young children.

It's not about "fixing" children or providing therapy.

Mental health consultants:

- Promote strong relationships and a supportive environment for caregivers, such as home visitors and teachers, and with families
- Partner with families and caregivers to understand what babies and young children are telling us with their behaviors, and to co-create solutions
- Equip caregivers with the tools and insights to nurture social and emotional development and healthy behaviors in infants and young children
- Help our children feel safe, supported, and valued where they are
- Support staff well-being

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What IECMHC Is and Is Not

What IECMHC Is

- Indirect service that benefits young children
- Promotion-based and prevention-based
- Provided by a master's-prepared mental health professional
- Builds the capacity of families and professionals
- Supports and sustains healthy social and emotional development of young children
- Delivered in a variety of child-serving systems (early childhood education, home visiting, etc.)
- Delivered in a natural or community setting
- Focused on staff well-being

What IECMHC Is Not

- Direct service and/or therapy
- Focused solely on families
- Always provided in a center-based setting
- Group therapy
- Psychological treatment for staff, families, or children
- Training

Mental Health Consultant Requirements: Head Start Program

Performance Standard 1302.45 & 1302.93

- License Mental Health Professional (MHP)
- Knowledge of and experience in serving young children and their families.
- Integrated into the full operation of the program
- Builds the capacity of adults in the program
- 1x a month
- If not licensed, must be supervised by a licensed MHP

Roles and Responsibilities of MHC

- Support staff in addressing individual challenges that affect work
- Provide crisis stabilization
- Work with staff and families on supporting children with behavioral concerns
- Support the program to refer to outside, complementary services when indicated



Skills and Experience

Ability to:

- Work in group settings (ECE classrooms)
- Observe, listen, reflect and assess
- Be sensitive to community attitudes and strengths
- Show respect for different perspectives
- Use different approaches and strategies and share knowledge of various interventions and treatments



Mental health consultants support providers.

There are three types of MHC services:

Child/Family

Help adults understand and address the child's needs by developing an individualized plan with the family, providers, and home visitors.

Classroom/Group

Work with early learning providers, teachers, and home visitors to improve the care offered to all children by helping to identify and address attitudes, beliefs, practices, and conditions that may be undermining quality relationships between adults and children.

Programmatic

Support administrators, directors, home visitors, and other program leaders in making changes in their care practices and policies for the benefit of all children and adults in their setting.

Programmatic Consultation for Staff and Programs

- Strategies for supportive environments
- Support for reflective practices
- Promoting staff wellness
- Addressing communication issues
- Promoting team building
- Enhancing family engagement
- Exploring policies that impact all children and families



Classroom-focused Consultation

- Emphasize practices that benefit all children in the class
- Teacher practices and reflections
  - Schedules, routines, transitions
  - Problem-solving and friendship skills
  - Emotional literacy
  - Whole-group activities
  - Small-group activities



Child- and Family-centered Consultation

- Individual child observations
- Family consultation
- Staff support for individual behavior plan
- Coaching about a specific child/family
- Link to community services for a specific child
- Modeling and supporting related to an individual child
- Education about a child's mental health
- Advocacy for a particular family



Considerations to expand understanding of MHC

- How do you use your mental health consultant to support all staff and families?
- How do you use your mental health consultant to support staff wellness in the program?
- How do you help families to understand what MHC is?
- How is the mental health consultant fully integrated into the program?

Parallel Process and Levels of Influence

"Take care of staff so she can take care of parents and they can take care of children."

— Brenda Jones Harden





Thank You!

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Questions?



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