Making the Most of Your Mental Health Consultation

Region V
Leadership and Professional Development Conference

Amy Hunter, LICSW, Georgetown University
October 26, 2017

Presentation Objectives

• Define “effective” early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC)
• Identify the qualifications, skills and characteristics of effective ECMH consultation.
• Discuss roles and responsibilities
• Describe core components of effective consultation programs
Ground Rules/ Shared Agreements

- Take care of yourself
- Suspend certainty
- Turn off or mute cell phones
- Go out on a limb
- Maintain confidentiality
- Demonstrate respect

“I Already Know This”
Reflection

• What do you think of when you think of early childhood mental health consultation?

• What do parents think?

• What do stakeholders think? (e.g. community, boards, primary care, community agencies/referral sources, etc.)

Learning about ECMHC

• How do parents and family members learn about consultation availability?

• How do staff learn about the consultant’s role and services?

• How does ECMHC work within the other child and family serving community agencies?
**Definition of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:**

“A problem-solving and capacity–building intervention implemented within a collaborative relationship between a professional consultant with mental health expertise and one or more individuals with other areas of expertise - primarily child care, child development, and families – or individuals with child care responsibilities.”

(Cohen & Kaufmann, 2000)
Defining ECMHC (cont’d)

• Promotes social emotional development

• Addresses children’s challenging behavior

• Primarily indirect services

• Impacts child, family, staff, and outcomes

Defining I/ECMH Consultation (cont.)

• Culturally sensitive

• Family focused
Child- and Family- Centered Consultation

- Child observations
- Parent consultation
- Staff support for individual and group behavior management
- Modeling/coaching
- Link to community
- Training on behavior management
- Modeling and supporting individual child
- Education on a child’s mental health
- Advocacy for family

Child and Family Centered Video
Classroom Consultation

• Discussing aspects of the classroom that impact all children or small groups of children
• Exploring teacher practices related to their interactions with all children (e.g. how the teacher supports social emotional development)
• Exploring teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, values

Programmatic Consultation for Staff and Programs

• Classroom observation
• Strategies for supportive environments
• Training on behavior management
• Support for reflective practices
• Promote staff wellness
• Address communication issues
• Promote team building
• Training on cultural competence
Programmatic Consultation

Child and Family and Programmatic On-Line Lesson
What ECMHC “Isn’t”

- Formal diagnostic evaluations
- Therapeutic play groups
- Individual therapy
- Family therapy
- Staff therapy
- Family support groups

SCENE 1...TAKE 1...

- Read the Scene on the front of the card
- Discuss your Take on the scene and decide:
  - What type of consultation is indicated?
  - What might be the role of the Mental Health Consultant?
Philosophy

- Individuals select two cards
- Chose your best one
- As a group reach consensus on your philosophy

The Effective Consultant: Qualifications & Characteristics

- Education/Knowledge
  - Masters degree in a related field, e.g., social work, psychology
  - Core content knowledge
- Respectful
- Trustworthy
- Open-minded/non-judgmental
- Reflective
- Approachable
- Good listener
- Compassionate
- Team player
- Flexible
- Patient
Consultant Knowledge

• Child development
• Typical and atypical behavior including:
  • Attachment
  • Separation
• Medical and genetics information
• Cultural understanding
• Treatment alternatives
• Family systems
• Early childhood systems
• Adult learning principles

Skills and Experience

• Ability to work in group settings
• Observation, listening, interviewing and assessment
• Sensitive to community attitudes and strengths
• Cultural competence
• Respect for diverse perspectives
• Ability to communicate
• Familiar with interventions and treatments
Specialized Experience

- Separation and loss
- Substance abuse
- Maternal depression
- Abuse and neglect
- Teen motherhood
- Working with fathers
- Early childhood mental health including:
  - Aggressive behavior
- Medical concerns including:
  - Prematurity and low birth weight
  - Failure to thrive
- Developmental delays including:
  - Speech and language
  - Learning
  - Developmental disabilities

Relationship: How we are is more important than what we are
Elements of the Consultative Stance

- Mutuality of endeavor
- Avoid position of expert
- Wondering not knowing
- Understanding another subjective experience
- Consider influence
- Hearing and representing all voices
- Centrality of relationships
- Parallel process
- Patience

Johnston & Brinamen, 2006

Successful MH Consultation

- is not based on the frequency of services provided or on the amount of money spent on the mental health consultation.
Roles and Responsibilities

- Support staff in addressing individual challenges that effect work
- Provide crisis stabilization
- Work with families on resolving behavioral challenges
- Refer when indicated

Child- and Family-Level Outcomes

- Prevent preschool suspensions and expulsions
- Improve dyadic relationships
- Reduce missed work days for parents

Provider-Level Outcomes

Gain Skills
- ECE: Teaching feelings, managing behavior
- HV: Engaging families

Improve Fidelity
- ECE: Teacher-child interactions
- HV: Dosage

Improve Outcomes
- ECE: CLASS scores
- HV: Retention

Program-Level Outcomes

MHC
- Increased supportive policies
- Increased reflective supervision

Staff
- Reduced staff stress and burnout
- Reduced staff turnover

Child
- Improved attachment and resilience
- Improved school readiness

System-Level Outcomes

- Increases in ongoing developmental screening with referral and follow-up
- Earlier identification of mental health problems
- More-appropriate referrals for specialty services


Mental Health Consultation is Effective When

- consultants engage in both family and child consultation and program level consultation
- program level consultation may be getting more “bang for the buck”
- integrated into day-to-day
- “part of the team”
Mental Health Consultation is Effective When

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<th>Strengths based</th>
<th>Individualized and comprehensive</th>
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<td>Relationship based</td>
<td>Family focused</td>
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<td>Preventative</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
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<td>Culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
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<td>Promote staff wellness</td>
<td>Promote strong community partnerships</td>
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The consultant has:
- experience with young children and families with low-incomes
- a long term commitment to the program
- an approach consistent with program’s philosophy and best practices
Getting Off to a Good Start: High Quality Service

• Clarify roles and expectations up front
  • Written agreements
  • Widespread communication
• Integrate into ECE program
  • Attend activities/events
  • ECE program-level accommodations

How do others introduce you?
Are teachers your champions?
“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”

Albert Einstein

Reflection: A Critical Element of IECMHC
Homework: Assess Your MH Consultation
How do you Know if it is Working?

• Adopt a Process: Consider
  • Survey staff
  • Survey families
  • Survey your consultant
  • Survey community members
Quick Survey Tools

- How is the Mental Health Consultation in the Program? Survey for Families
- How is the Mental Health Consultation in the Program? Survey for Staff
- Assessing Your Program’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: How do you know if your mental health services are effective?

Is it Working? How is it Working?

- Is it Effective?
- Is it Sufficient?
- How do you know?
- What are the outcomes?
Mental Health Consultation Resources

Mental Health Consultation Tool


Making the Most of Your MHC PD Suite on ECLKC

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/making-most-your-infantearly-childhood-mental-health-consultation-services
Center of Excellence (CoE): Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Tips and Tools

Over 400 pages of Resources

http://samhsa.gov/iecmhc/
More Resources

- Center for Effective Mental Health Consultation
  http://www.ecmhc.org/

- What Works? Study
  http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/78358.htm

- Mental Health Consultation in Child Care (K. Johnston & C. Brinamen)

- Family Connections

- Mental Health Consultation in Early Childhood (Donahue, Falk, & Provet)

- Special Issue: Current Issues and Practices in Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Infant Mental Health Journal May/June 2012 Volume 33, Issue 3

- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Zero to Three, May 2013, Vol 33 (5)

To Continue the Discussion, Join MyPeers

Email health@ecetta.info and say “I’d like to join MyPeers”
Reflections/ Thoughts

For More Information Please Contact:

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National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Toll-Free: 888-227-5125

Email: health@ecetta.info

Website: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/health
Assessing Your Program’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: How do you know if your mental health services are effective?

1.) Does your program currently have a licensed or certified mental health professional providing consultation to your program?

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2.) Does your mental health consultant have a positive relationship with families?

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4.) Do you believe your mental health consultant understands the unique needs of the children and families in your program?

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<th>Well</th>
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5.) Do you have a scope of work, job description, contract, or interagency agreement to outline the work of the mh consultant?

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6.) Have you surveyed your families to determine if the families are familiar with the availability of services from your mental health consultant?

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7.) Are mental health services available in the community if and/or when children or families need more mental health support?

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8.) Do you regularly provide feedback to the mental health consultant on the effectiveness and quality of their work?

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<th>Regularly but not Often</th>
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9.) Does your program have an interagency agreement to facilitate referrals to community mental health providers?

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The following questions ask your opinion about the beliefs of staff and families. What are sources of evidence for the answers to these questions? In other words, how do you know the answers to these questions (see sample surveys that may be distributed to staff and families)?

10.) Do families feel the services of the mental health consultant are helpful? How do you know?

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11.) Do families feel the services of the mental health consultant are accessible?

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12.) Do families believe the mental health consultant services can be accessed in a timely way?

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14.) Are staff familiar with the process to access the services of the mental health consultant?

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17.) Do staff feel the mental health consultant services are frequent enough?

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Survey for Families

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