

# Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in Home Visiting

## Supporting the mental health needs of children and families

Mary Mackrain & Deborah F. Perry, 2014

### The Facts



*"The majority of parents that I work with have a history of trauma and chronic stress. I don't know what I need to do, at times I feel like I am failing families." -EHS Home Visitor*



1 in 5 children have mental health challenges.

28%-61% >

of mothers enrolled in home visiting programs identify with maternal depression.



Maternal depression often co-occurs with substance abuse and intimate partner violence.



Children exposed to ongoing adverse experiences can face toxic stress, putting them at risk of compromised brain functioning and later health and well-being.



Research suggests that Home Visitors are not equipped to address the complex mental health needs of high-risk families.

**ECMHC can offset these challenges.**

### 2014 Project LAUNCH Survey Results

\*Seven Project LAUNCH grantees responded to an electronic survey in September, 2014, sharing their recent experiences with the integration of ECMHC across a variety of evidence and promising practice home visiting models including:

- Nurse Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers
- Healthy Families of America
- Early Head Start
- HIPPY
- Bridging Program
- First Born

agree

100%

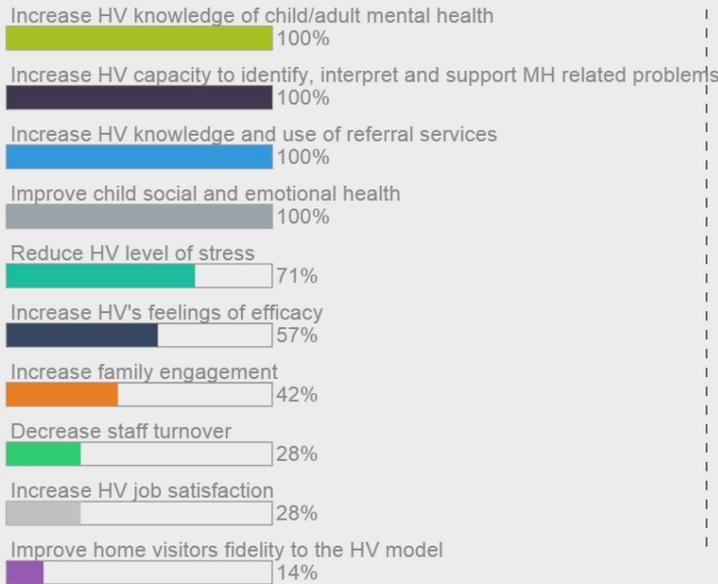
disagree

0%

**Mental Health Consultants  
Need to be a Licensed Mental  
Health Professional**

# ECMHC Goals and Activities

## Critical goals of ECMHC approach:



## Activities performed by the consultant:



## Outcomes Measured

- ✓ Home Visitor Level (86%)
- ✓ Family/Parent Level (71%)
- ✓ Child Level (43%)
- ✓ Model Level (14%)



## Program Snapshot

Wisconsin's Project LAUNCH program is addressing the complex mental health concerns of families by providing mental health consultation to home visitors.

In Wisconsin's approach a masters prepared mental health consultant provides ongoing reflective and clinical support to help home visitors to recognize and support the mental health needs of families. This approach also minimizes the effects of any secondary traumatic stress on home visitors that result from their efforts to support families through ongoing crisis.

As one home visitor reported, "The support of the mental health consultant has empowered me to put control into an out of control situation, and now I know how to incorporate social and emotional strategies to help my families, where before I was hitting a wall."

Project Launch grantees surveyed include: Weld county, CO; New Britain, CT; Washington County, ME; Santa Fe, NM; New York City, NY; Multnomah County, OR; Milwaukee, WI.

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