

Mental Health Consultation in Minnesota

Mental Health Consultation is a mental health prevention service. It is focused on building adult capacity to support infant and young children's emotional development and to prevent, identify, or reduce mental health challenges.¹

Mental Health Consultation includes a combination of training, reflective consultation (active listening, the exploration of the teacher's attitudes and beliefs about the situation, and problem solving) and skill building to support teachers, supervisors, directors, aides, food service and transportation staff in early learning environments so that they can support the social emotional development of young children.

Benefits of Mental Health Consultation

Reduce staff stress and turnover in child-serving agencies.

- Research shows that mental health consultation in childcare improves childcare staff retention and morale.²

Decrease mental health symptoms in young children.

- A randomized clinical control trial demonstrated that mental health consultation not only prevented mental health disorders in young children, it also reduced mental health symptoms in young children demonstrating impulsivity and hyperactivity.³

Reduce the educational disparities experienced by children of color.

- Research shows that both teachers of color and white teachers worry about the behavior of African American boys more than African American girls, white girls or white boys.⁴
- Research also shows that MH Consultation can decrease or eliminate educational disparities.⁵

Reduce the expulsion of children from childcare and early learning.

- Research shows that MH consultation reduces the expulsion of children from childcare.⁶

Increase early learning staff competence in addressing trauma, adversity and early childhood and family mental health conditions.

- Increase the capacity of staff to serve high risk, distressed families.
- Improve access to early intervention and clinical care tailored to young children struggling with mental health and developmental challenges.

Availability of Services

Mental Health Consultation is available in all 87 counties and within two tribal nations. Mental health professionals under contract with the State of Minnesota with expertise in young children's development and early childhood services provide the service.

Financial Benefits

Minnesota spent over \$5 million in 2016 providing intensive mental health services to 68 young children who were expelled from childcare. Mental health consultation could have prevented the expulsion of those children from childcare, prevented their need for day treatment, and served an additional 900-1200 children at a fifth of the cost.

Cost

Mental Health Consultation serves approximately 700-1000 children at 50-100 childcare centers and family childcares a year at an annual cost of 1,000,000.

For More Information

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Story: A childcare center was ready to expel a preschool aged child for running from the classroom, refusing to cooperate with teachers and destroying property. The mental health consultant was brought in to help the childcare staff explore ideas to support the child and family.

A meeting with the parent, the childcare staff and the consultant was arranged to explore the concerning behavior, the parent's perspective about the behavior, and to problem solve the situation. The parent revealed that the child had experienced trauma, she had been expelled from other childcare programs and her parent felt mistreated by previous providers.

As a result of the meeting and the consultation, the team of teachers and the director were able to develop a plan to safely intervene with the child with the new information they received from the parent. They were successful, and most importantly they felt good about not expelling the children from their care. The consultation also supported the mother in seeking out trauma intervention services for her young child.

Mental health consultation supported the childcare center staff, the child and the child's mother.

"I don't think I would still be working here if it wasn't for our time together." — a provider

¹ Zero to Three, 2017

² Shivers, E. M., Guimond, A., Steier, A, 2015

³ Gilliam, W.S., Maupin, A. N., & Reyes, C. R. (2016)

⁴ Gilliam, WS., Maupin, AN, Reyes, C.R., Accavitti, M., Shick, F., 2016

⁵ Shivers, E. M., Guimond, A., Steier, A, 2015

⁶ Perry, Dunne, McFadden, Campbell, 2008