

Addressing racism and systemic inequity through Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

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BETWEEN

**NEW YORK
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Who We Are

The New York City Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC), is funded through **ThriveNYC**, in partnership with the **NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)**

TTAC is a partnership between the New York Center for Child Development (NYCCD) and the McSilver Institute on Poverty Policy and Research

- **New York Center for Child Development** has been a major provider of early childhood mental health services in New York with expertise in informing policy and supporting the field of Early Childhood Mental Health through training and direct practice
- **NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research** houses the Community and the Managed Care Technical Assistance Centers (CTAC/MCTAC), which offer clinic, business, and system transformation supports statewide to all behavioral healthcare providers

TTAC is tasked with building the capacity and competencies of mental health and early childhood professionals through ongoing training and technical assistance

<http://www.TTACny.org>



Visit our Website

TTACNY.org
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NYC Early Childhood Mental Health **TTAC** Training and Technical Assistance Center

TTAC is funded by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene through [ThriveNYC](#).

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Events

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Sensory Integration and Self-Regulation: Sensory Contributions to Young Children's Social-Emotional Development

Monday, November 26, 2018

Foundations of Social-Emotional Development in Infants and Toddlers E-Learning Modules

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NYC DOHMH Bureau of Early Intervention E-Learning Modules



Foundations of Social-Emotional Development in Infants and Toddlers
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The Early Childhood Mental Health Network



Get to know the Early Childhood Therapeutic Centers (ECTCs)
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The Power of Our Practice: Addressing racism and systemic inequity through Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation



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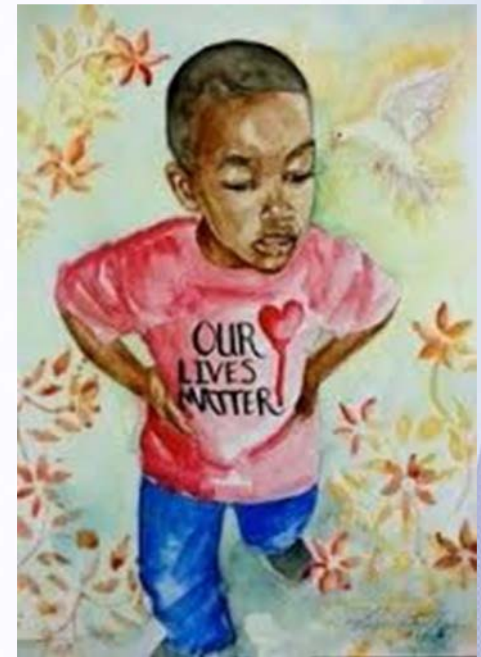


"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."

—Rep. John Lewis

Structural Racism and Inequities

- All American institutions suffer from and struggle with structural racism
- The Early Care and Education system is no exception
- From access to expulsion children of color are disproportionately ill effected



Early Care & Education's Role

- Matters in terms of mental health, racial identity formation and systemic oppression
- Equity in access is an explicit goal of the field
- Attending high-quality early education has positive benefits, especially for children from low income families

Inequities Exist in Early Care and Education

- African American children are least likely to be enrolled in high quality ECE programs (Barnett, Carolan, & Johns, 2013)
- Harsher disciplinary practices for the same behaviors as White peers (Kirwan Institute, 2015; Raible & Irizarry, 2010).
- African American children are 3.6 times more likely to be expelled than white children (Gilliam 2005, Department of Education 2016)



Implications of Expulsion



As much as 10 times more likely to:

- Fail a grade in school
- Hold negative school attitudes
- Drop out of high school
- Face incarceration

-Meek and Gilliam, 2016

Reasons for Suspension & Expulsion

Complex and Multi-Determined, including:

- Low program quality
- Inadequate knowledge of child development
- Early childhood trauma
- Racial Bias



(Meek & Gilliam, 2016; McCann, Shivers, & Means, 2018)

Why Emphasize Structural Racism?

Increasing evidence that racism is a
major contributor leading to
discipline disparities



(Adamu & Hogan, 2015; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Racial Bias in Perception



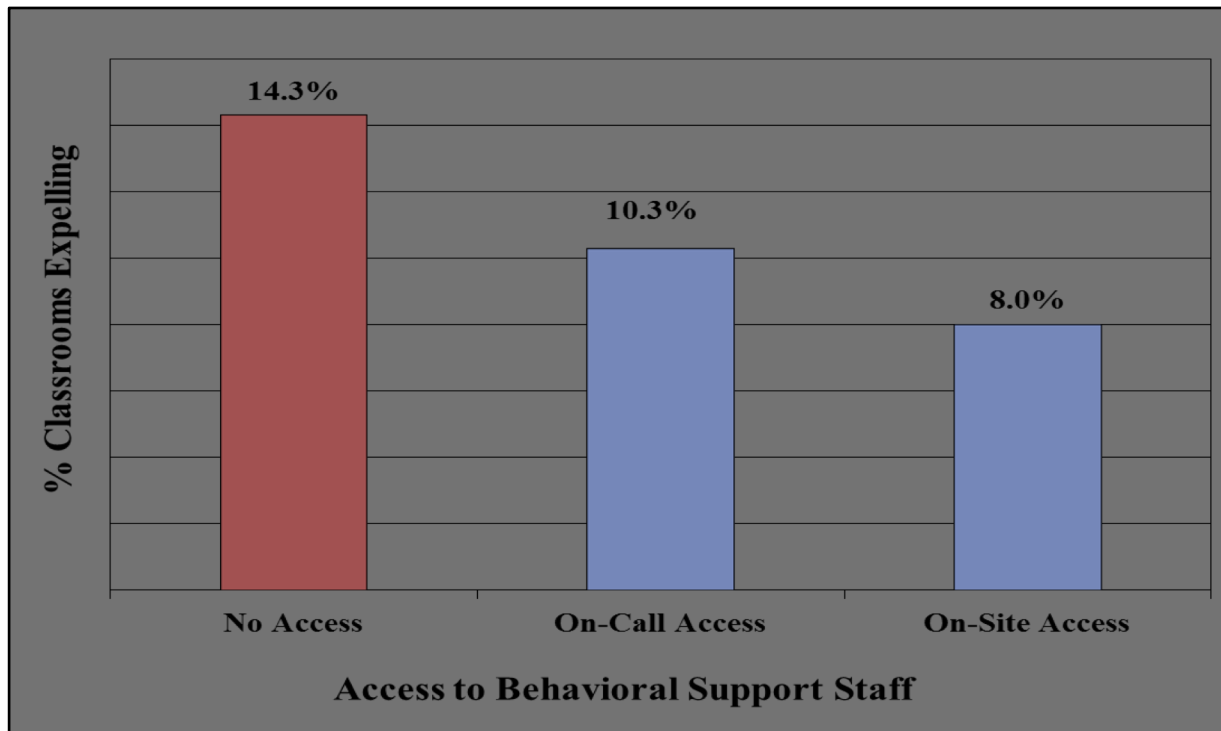
- Teachers look more at African American children than white children when told to expect challenging behavior (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti & Shic, 2016; Yale Child Study Center)
- Knowing about familial stress elicits empathy only when student and teacher are of the same race (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti & Shic, 2016; Yale Child Study Center)

Addressing Inequities

- Awareness of the problem is an essential initial but insufficient step
- Solutions exist at the structural, program and individual level
- Effective interventions are aimed at the institution and adults not children



ECMH Consultations' Impact on Expulsion



Gilliam, WS (2005). Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion Rates in state prekindergarten programs. *FCD Policy Brief, Series No. 3*.

ECMH Consultation Impacts Perceptions of Boys of Color

- African American and Latino boys initially had lower scores than peers on initiative, self-control, closeness and attachment, and higher scores on conflict, expulsion risk and negativity
- African American and Latino boys showed greatest positive growth on all measures, outperforming all peers
- Gains continue over 12 month period
(Shivers, Guimond and Steier, 2016)



How can ECMHC Dismantle Structural Racism ?

- **Personal Level** ~ self awareness
- **Interpersonal Level**~ acknowledge and invite consultees to become aware of and address racial biases and other forms of inequity in their roles
- **Systemic Level** ~ identifying and challenging discriminatory policies and practices & advocating for structural change



Self-Awareness Leads to Better Services

Working with infants, children, and families requires all individuals, organizations, and systems of care to reflect on our own culture, values and beliefs, and on the impact that racism, classism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other systems of oppression have had on our lives in order to provide diversity-informed, culturally attuned services.

Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children and Families



Critical Self Reflection

- Identities
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Biases
- Privilege
- Power
- Oppression



Interpersonal Mechanisms of Change

*Quality of the ECMH Consultant-staff
relationship is the single most salient
predictor of perceived efficacy*



(Duran et al., 2009; Roeser, 2009; Virmani, 2009; Virmani & Ontai, 2010)

Role of Relationship in Reducing Disparities

- Consultative Relationship matters more when:
 - ❖ the focus child is a Latinx or African American boy,
 - ❖ the consultant has “expertise” in equity, diversity/cultureOR
 - ❖ the teacher and mental health consultant are racially/ethnically matched



(Davis, 2019)

The Consultative Stance as a disrupter of bias:

- Parallel Process
- Mutuality of Endeavor
- Considering All Levels of Influence
- Attend to Subjective Experience
- Wondering Instead of Knowing
- Centrality of Relationships
- Avoiding Position of Sole Expert
- Hearing and Representing All Voices
- Practice Patience
- Holding Hope



The Consultative Stance; Johnston & Brinamen, 2006

Parallel Process

A posture of mutuality, reciprocity and positive regard, creates an intersubjective space for critical reflection, uncomfortable conversations and tolerance for the vulnerability essential to examining bias.



Consider Multiple Influences

- Socio –Political
- Racism and other forms of systemic oppression
- Cultural
- Interpersonal
- Intrapsychic



Attend to Subjective Experience

- Attune to the consultee's attributions and projections , particularly racialized meaning making and othering
- Acknowledging distortions or bias is not synonymous with acceptance
- Identifying bias is first step to irradicating it.



Wondering Instead of Knowing

- Encourage reflective capacity ~ in the service of unearthing the basis for beliefs and biases that lead to distortions
- Elicits providers ideas about why a child is behaving as they are, and suggests that multiply or alternate views exist and can be entertained.
- Insight into & sensitivity toward children's experiences increases (Virmani, 2009; Virmani & Ontai, 2010).



Calling In & Calling Out

Calling In

- Can create openness to explore meaning & understanding across difference
- Use when seeking to understand subjective experience or learn more
- Assists in exploring different perspectives
- Encourages reflection, not reaction

Calling Out

- When words or actions are unacceptable or intolerable
- When public disclaimer seems essential
- To interrupt
- To prevent further harm

Ways to Call In and Call Out

Calling In Questions

- I'm curious. What was your intention when you said that?
- How do you imagine your assumptions, expectations, prior experiences may be influencing your thinking, decision, process?
- Does anyone else have a different perspective?
- What is making you distressed, uncomfortable or worried?
- What goes into that assessment?
- Why do think others haven't reached the same conclusion?
- Can you imagine any other reason for that behavior?

Calling out Statements

- It sounds like you're making some assumptions that we need to unpack a bit.
- I am having a strong reaction to that and I need to let you know why.
- I need to let you know. I don't see it that way.
- I feel a responsibility as your MHC/colleague/supervisor to let you know how that landed with me

*Adapted from Oregon Center for Educational Equity:
What Did You Just Say? Responses to Racist
Comments Collected from the Field & Seed the Way*

Encourage Empathy

- Express understanding of the provider's experience
- Identify and accentuate shared values, goals and analogous experiences
- Usefully distill information about the child's experience ~ family circumstances & trauma



Promote Perspective Taking

- Expect and Elicit Different points of view
- Create agreements related to addressing racism and other systems of oppression that harm children & around how to handle different perspectives
- Demonstrate that various views can be held and heard equally.



Hear and Represent All Voices

The consultant represents the perspective of one participant to another, with the aim of increasing the adults' capacity to communicate directly with one another.



The consultant gives voice to those with no voice

Patience

- Internal change and systemic shifts take time
- A future orientation is at times necessary ~ focus on the children to come, not exclusively on the children currently in the program.



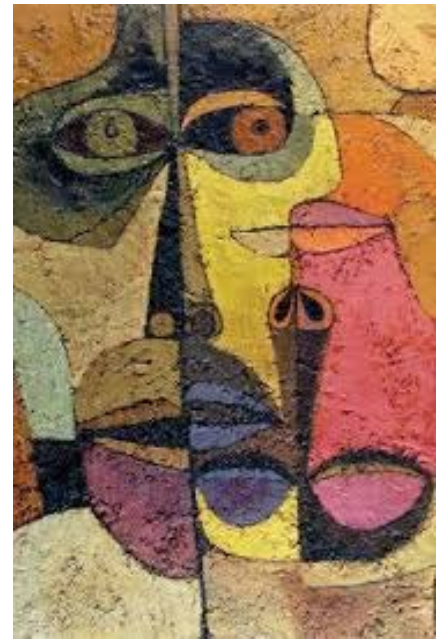
Hold Hope

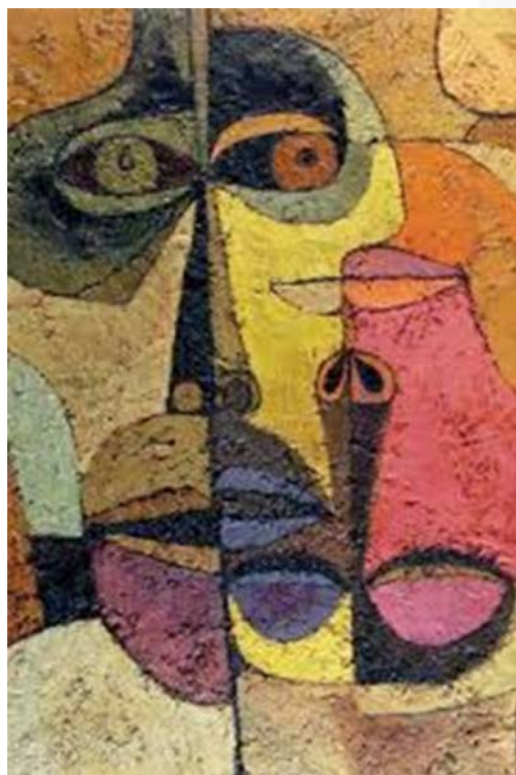
- The ability to step out of the seemingly static system allows the consultant to see possibilities.
- The consultant must maintain her belief in change



Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

- James Baldwin





"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."

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