Training and Workforce Development Activities that Prepare and Support IECMH Consultants

Overview

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) is a developing field that has not yet been institutionalized into higher education. As a result, those interested in pursuing a career in the IECMHC field must achieve their goal through non-traditional avenues.

Levels and Range of Training Opportunities

A variety of trainings and related activities can prepare qualified candidates for the IECMHC workforce and support their continuing education and professional development. Delivery methods vary and may include individual trainings, a training series, or a comprehensive workforce development training and preparation course embedded within an IECMHC service delivery program. *(The counterpart to these endeavors is the provision of supervision, the nature of which is comprehensively reviewed in the Types of Supervision and Oversight Required to Effectively Support Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants in the Field.)* Options for and levels of training include the following:

♦ **Core training:** This type of training explores basic content and topics that are recommended as "foundational areas" to which all IECMH consultants should be exposed.

♦ **Target population training:** This type of training explores content related to a specific population (or populations); it may also include training related to a variety of target populations in cases where IECMHC service access is universal. Considerations of culture, context and equity are central to this type of training.

♦ **Continuing education:** These ongoing professional development opportunities include training endeavors that (1) meet licensing requirements in regard to consultants' professional credentials, (2) enhance consultants' knowledge, skills, and professional growth and development, and/or (3) consider content related to the maintenance and refreshing of model fidelity.

♦ **Training in advanced/innovative practice:** This advanced-level training focuses on nuanced consultation skills and enhanced growth and development for seasoned IECMH consultants, and may include specialized topics to build expertise in a particular area. Such training allows consultants to keep up to date with new research and to become aware of the contribution of expert trainers in the field. It may also support consultants in contributing to the IECMHC field by developing, writing about, and sharing innovative practices of their own.

♦ **Shared multidisciplinary training within community/child systems:** Training in these areas aims to build shared and community-wide capacities to support the needs of a range of populations. Offered to multidisciplinary audiences, this type of training is required of statewide IECMHC programs with integrated service delivery systems.

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♦ **Field work/job skills training:** Field work training includes experiential, site-based work and provides "real time"/"real life" opportunities for skill development. It may also include shadowing of and mentoring by an experienced consultant and/or onsite partnering with and mentoring by a supervisor.

♦ **Manualized model training:** This is related to a particular IECMHC model of delivery or to the structure or functioning of a particular IECMHC program within which a consultant works. Training is accompanied by a program manual detailing the service delivery components of that particular program or model.

♦ **Model fidelity refreshers/training:** Fidelity training offers in-depth information about fidelity to the IECMHC model related to how a consultant delivers IECMHC services. It includes attention to features such as service, dose, frequency, duration, and impact. Additionally, model-focused training provides information on acceptable performance ranges that have a research base linking the manner of delivery to positive outcomes. Refresher trainings are provided regularly to address any model attrition issues.

♦ **Information system training with fidelity monitoring features:** This training covers the integrated use of information technology, including customized IECMHC software, in the day-to-day operations of evidence-based IECMHC programs or models. Information technology is used by consultants working within a particular program or model as a monitoring tool; training on the use of this type of technology provides model guidance and fidelity checks supporting best practices in the model.

Considerations in Regard to IECMHC "Practice Delivery" Environments

Access to workforce development trainings and activities is based on the practice environment within which a consultant works. Access will vary depending on whether the consultant is functioning in an independent capacity, working within a targeted IECMHC program, or functioning as part of a statewide IECMHC program. Regardless of a particular consultant's situation, a number of commonly offered core training activities are strongly recommended for all consultants. Additionally, in relation to IECMHC programs, as the scope and reach of a consultation practice environment increases, the workforce development requirements for its consultants also increase.

Breakdown of Training Possibilities Based on Practice Environments

Independent IECMH Consultants

Independent consultants do not work within an IECMHC program or model. The workforce development activities available to them typically include single-topic trainings, seminars, and/or training series. Comprehensive training programs, including field practice and supervision, may be available as well. Ideally, independent consultants engage at a minimum in the following workforce development activities:

♦ Core training

♦ Target population training

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- ♦ Cultural competency and equity training

- ♦ Continuing education

- ♦ Training in advanced/innovative practice

Consultants Working Within a Targeted IECMHC Program

Targeted IECMHC programs provide services to populations within a certain community or county and have an identified client population or set of identified client populations (e.g., children in state-funded childcare centers; tribal home visiting program). Programs have varying degrees of comprehensiveness in terms of service delivery and also differ in the range of workforce development activities that prepare and support their IECMH consultants. Whatever the range of workforce development activities offered, training may either be embedded within an IECMHC program itself, or, as in the case of independent consultants, accessed through non-program contexts. The amount and level of training available is based on the level of comprehensiveness and sophistication of the IECMHC program. The following workforce development activities may be provided:

- ♦ Core training

- ♦ Target population training

- ♦ Cultural competency and equity training

- ♦ Continuing education

- ♦ Training in advanced/innovative practice

- ♦ Field work/job skills training

- ♦ Manualized model training

Consultants Working Within a Statewide IECMHC Program or Model

Consultants working within a statewide IECMHC program or model engage in comprehensive workforce development activities. The scope, reach, and rigor of the evidence base of the particular IECMHC program or model determines the workforce development requirements and also guides the training sequence, training dose, integrated field work, and supervision components of workforce development endeavors. In statewide programs, there are two categories to consider: those with limited access and those with universal access.

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Statewide program with targeted access: For programs with limited access, geographic reach is limited to a specific location (or locations) throughout a particular state, and the client population eligible for services is based on location. In such programs, workforce development activities may include the following:

♦ Core training

♦ Target population(s) training

♦ Cultural competency and equity training

♦ Continuing education

♦ Training in advanced/innovative practice

♦ Field work/job skills training

♦ Manualized model training

Statewide program with universal access: Programs or models with universal access are scaled up to the state level and may be positioned for replication in other states. Geographic access is unlimited, the general client population (i.e., all children) is eligible regardless of location, and IECMHC is fully integrated into all child-serving systems. In such programs, workforce development activities will include the following:

♦ Core training

♦ Target population(s) training

♦ Cultural competency and equity training

♦ Continuing education

♦ Training in advanced/innovative practice

♦ Field work/job skills training

♦ Shared multidisciplinary training within community/child systems

♦ Manualized model training

♦ Model fidelity training/refreshers

♦ Information system training with fidelity monitoring features

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