

i Online Journals i

The Commitment to Excellence MIHOW Accreditation Program (CEMAP®) mentors, reviews, and recognizes sites as they achieve excellence in services for families. Through the CEMAP® Story Project, we are recording changes in families, workers, agencies, and communities as a result of CEMAP®. As part of this effort, the site leader and one outreach worker from four sites, plus a Vanderbilt Center for Health Services (CHS) staff member, are writing a monthly journal entry to share their progress, what they've learned, ideas, and personal reflections.

September 2004

KATHRYN HARRIS MIHOW (HAZARD, KY)

MIHOW Site Since 1996, Serving a Rural Community in Perry County

Administered by a multi-service agency

○ *Emline Montgomery, MIHOW Coordinator*

Being responsible for providing and getting families involved in a MIHOW family activity in Hazard, Kentucky, seems to almost be an impossible feat. In the past, we have tried to hold various activities for our mothers and their children. For example, this past Spring for Valentine's Day, we provided the opportunity for mothers to get a free haircut and/or style at the Cosmetology Department at the Hazard Community and Technical College. We were hoping that this activity would help mothers build self-esteem and to feel good about themselves. All the mothers had to do was call and make an appointment, and the school would bill us so that we could pay for the styles and cuts. Only one mother took advantage of the offer. We had snow during the week that we offered this activity, and the road conditions may have played a part in the mothers not taking advantage of this activity. Also, some of our mothers don't have cars, and some may not even be "allowed" to go places without their spouses or friends.

We were successful with one activity that we held not too long ago. This activity was a Bingo game in which the winners were given various prizes. Some of these prizes were things that their baby or child could use, such as baby formula, baby quilts, diapers, etc. We also had a few adult prizes. Even some of the fathers attended this function.

In the past, we have had some other activities such as "Living Healthy" that involved food and exercise. One other time, we offered a free movie to our mothers. At each of these activities, only a few mothers attended. There were usually more MIHOW workers involved with these activities than there were MIHOW mothers.

All we can do is to continue trying, and that's what we plan to do. Maybe we can get lucky again and find an activity that will get the families involved. ■

○ *Debbie Davidson, Outreach Worker*

September was a fun month since I measured all the cribs of those children who are still sleeping in cribs. I took a soda can with me on my home visits to see if it would go between the bars. I am happy to say all my parents were in compliance for safety. All the baby cribs passed the test. Some of the new parents are still letting the child sleep in the bed with them, but they still use their cribs for naps. I advised them that the baby pantry would provide them with a bed that they could use if theirs was not in compliance. ■

NEW RIVER HEALTH ASSOCIATION (SCARBRO, WV)

MIHOW Site Since 1983, Serving Rural & Urban Communities in Fayette County

Administered by a non-government community primary healthcare clinic & birth center

○ *Debbie Withrow, Site Leader and Regional Consultant*

We've spent a lot of time this month developing forms for tracking the statewide and site objectives for the CEMAP® Story Project.

○ West Virginia statewide objectives:

- 1) 25% of smokers will cut back or cease smoking between the first MIHOW home visit and the first visit after delivery.
- 2) 50% of participant mothers will read to their child from birth to 3 years of age at least 3 - 6 times per week.

Site-specific objectives:

- 1) 50% of all children 12 months of age and above will participate with their mothers in some kind of physical exercise at least 3 times a week.
- 2) 50% of women will have improvement in their diet during pregnancy.

A successful and fun kick-off event was held for the exercise project on Monday, September 27, 2004. Eleven moms and eight children (ages 10 months - 4 years) participated in an exercise session with music and dance with children. The children were lively and entertaining, and even the youngest ones enjoyed the experience. Outreach workers and Group Leaders will encourage exercise during monthly visits and group sessions. The hope is that a monthly exercise session will be held for all participants, in addition to regular group sessions where exercise will be incorporated. At the end of the year, a celebration will be held along with awards for participants. This is an exciting project, and works well with the nutrition objective also selected by New River. [Former MIHOW worker] Linda Stein presented the training on nutrition in September.

○ Unexpected Progress. It was difficult to figure out ways to track the four objectives in an uncomplicated way that didn't add a lot of work to already burdensome paperwork. Outreach workers seem enthusiastic about the project. The tracking methods are in place, and the project is on track. The MIHOW staff has a lot of good ideas for encouraging good nutrition.

Stumbling Blocks. New River Health Association is experiencing a financial crunch. The New River MIHOW site's future is more unstable than before. The new objectives are exciting, but it is hard to implement a lot of ideas and strategies with no funding.

Lessons/Success Stories. The Family Fitness Day was a big success. It was fun for participants as well as a real learning experience about ways to enjoy movement with your children. What a great project!

Personal Reflections. It has been an extremely difficult month for me. I struggle with the knowledge that our program's future is in jeopardy as I try to develop plans and long-term strategies for continuing the CEMAP® journey. I want to see the CEMAP® process completed. I very much want to see the New River site accredited, and the outreach workers rewarded for their dedication and hard work. ■

○ *Kathy Bracken, Outreach Worker*

○ Our CEMAP® journey this month centered on tracking our site-specific and regional objectives [see Debbie Withrow's entry above]. To kick off and encourage moms to exercise with their children we held a special event at New River and invited all of our families to participate. The event was staged to coincide with National Family Fitness Day, Monday, Sept. 27. We hoped to stir some excitement and give moms some good ideas to make exercising with their children fun. On the program was outreach worker Sue Carte leading the Hokey Pokey and head, shoulder, knees and toes . . . Candice Craddock, also an outreach worker, did exercises to children's tapes and MIHOW site co-leader Nonie Roberts did a mean rendition of Toney Chestnut – Toe-Knee-Chest-Nut (nut being head). Those attending had a great time, and we plan to include an exercise component in all playgroups this year and an encore of Toney Chestnut at our October training.

To track the site-specific exercise objective, outreach workers will keep a sheet for each family in their folder titled "Exercise Can Be Fun - Let's Have Fun Together." Site co-leader Debbie Withrow has designed stickers for each month that read "My child and I exercised together three times a week or more in October 2004 . . . and so on. The mom or child will place a sticker on the sheet each month they participate in exercising. We will be sharing ideas and demonstrating simple ways to exercise during visits.

We will track the site-specific objective about diet improvement during pregnancy with a MIHOW NUTRITION RECORD, which is full of colorful images of fruits and veggies and states nutrition concerns and ideas for improvement. We will assess any changes during each trimester until birth and then summarize the nutrition improvements. This record will become part of each mom's folder.

One of our regional objectives will track pregnant smokers, and we will simply ask moms during each month's visit how many cigarettes they average per day during that month. A large label titled "MIHOW Smoking Reduction/Cessation Record Sept. 2004-August 2005" will provide spaces to track each month. A space for average number of cigarettes smoked per day before Sept. 2004 is also included. This label can be stuck right inside the folder and will make it easy to record.

The other regional objective, about mothers reading to their children, will be tracked by our families joining the MIHOW Bookworm Club. Colorful pages with 4 months per page allow room for mom or child to place a Bookworm Club sticker each month they read together 3-6 times per week.

Our site co-leader, Debbie Withrow has done a great job of making the objective sheets and stickers colorful and family-friendly. This makes the process more fun for the families and outreach workers as well. All of these new pages have added to make our family's folders thicker, but I think we will encourage participation and the outcome will be interesting. ■

DELTA COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN CARE (CLARKSDALE, MS)

MIHOW Site Since 2000, Serving a Rural Community in Coahoma County

Administered by a hospital

Lela Keys, Site Leader

The month of September has been a busy one for me. We are working on getting our enrollment back up. We are getting our Mom Packs out again and doing some more publicity. The process of accreditation is one of excitement for me and is a worthwhile effort. Empowering MIHOW workers to evaluate their work based on standards of practice is a skill that can take them far in their career. The accreditation process provides us with the following benefits:

1. Gives a firm foundation to the work that we are doing with the MIHOW concept.
2. Provides increase visibility, credibility and a vision for program growth, especially at a time that funding is becoming so competitive.
3. Establishes ongoing accountability with outside institutions and agencies.
4. Produces helpful data on the perception of the MIHOW program.

I am pleased to be part of this cutting edge process. ■

Lisa Johnson, Outreach Worker

Special Stories. On September 7, we all returned from a nice Labor Day weekend. I placed calls to some of the participants and signed up more applicants for the Box Project.

My Success Story. Another responsibility I have is to assist with The Box Project applicants. On September 8, a young lady walked in to sign up for the Box Project. We began to chat as she filled out the form, and I found out she was pregnant. This gave me an opportunity to introduce the MIHOW program to her. She has since signed up for the program!

Barriers. One of the biggest problems is the contact number(s) for the participants. Some are changed, disconnected, not equipped for incoming calls, or being checked for trouble. It makes it difficult to assure that the participants are home before you take a chance on an unexpected visit. Some are offended by the visit, some show courtesy.

On September 9, one of my participants called me to let me know that I was welcome to her

home. She had no home phone contact but was able to use a neighbor's phone to call me. I thanked her for the invitation and scheduled a visit. I reviewed the MIHOW website and watched the online video. This video for me is a reminder of the purpose of this program. After reviewing the video, I felt motivated. During September 10-30, I placed more calls to participants, traveled to homes for our visits, and worked on the monthly report for September. ■

WOODBINE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION (NASHVILLE, TN)

MIHOW Site Since 2000, Serving an Urban Community in Davidson County

Administered by a multi-service agency

○ *Tonya Elkins, Site Leader*

CEMAP® this month has been a struggle. Sometimes when work is busy, it's hard to focus on what we're trying to achieve. Because I'm the supervisor, sometimes I think that as long as the outreach workers are visiting the moms, what I do doesn't really matter. This month I am reminded that the workers look to me for support, encouragement, and organization. Home visiting is a crucial part of the MIHOW program, but without the supervision and administrative support, the program could not continue to work. We don't want our program to be only good, but excellent. We want our mothers to be proud that they are going through the program and learning new skills to ensure that their children succeed. Seeing the MIHOW families inspires me to go the extra mile, work the extra hour, and make sure that we are offering an effective program. ■

○ *Leslie Hayes, Outreach Worker*

When our CEMAP® journey began at the Woodbine MIHOW site, we were all still relatively new to MIHOW itself. The opportunity that CEMAP® provided to me personally as a MIHOW worker was the focus on attainable, articulated goals and ways to achieve those goals. Part of our focus was to organize and standardize our record-keeping and files. The three of us visited Red Bird Mission (Beverly, KY), our sister site. This was very helpful. We were able to get very useful forms and ideas for record-keeping from them. (Thank you, Red Bird!) Some of the things we have implemented are the Case Visit Schedule, Mother's Strengths and the Phone Visit Log. The Case Visit Schedule has the case numbers and the 12 months of the year in columns. The date of the visit is recorded in the appropriate column for each month. We also include a way to note if we were unable to contact the participant, schedule a visit, or the participant was a "no-show," as well as record cases terminated. The form is updated once a month and provides an easier way to track how often visits are made. An unexpected benefit is how much easier it is to count home visits and terminations all recorded on one form when we do our monthly program report. Another form we have added is a "Mother's Strengths" form. This is set up on one page with twelve blocks so that it should cover a year. The objective of this form is to help us focus on the mother's accomplishments as the year passes in order to encourage and build on those strengths. I confess I have difficulty remembering to use this form and think that it will better serve us if we add it to the bottom of our regular visit forms. The third form that we added is the Phone Log. This helps us track the purpose and follow-up for phone calls not related to scheduling visits. This is also a useful form. The only difficulty I have had using it is locating it when I get a phone call. I don't always have that participant's file near me and then I must remember to add it when I do.

○ As I mentioned earlier, CEMAP® has provided clear goals for us to attain. It has helped to bring things into focus in MIHOW as well as the goals we can achieve with our families. ■

VANDERBILT CENTER FOR HEALTH SERVICES (NASHVILLE, TN)
The MIHOW Program was Started at Vanderbilt University in 1982

○ *Carole Manny, McIHOW Program Coordinator*

○ It's hard to keep focused on CEMAP® while so many other things are going on. Fundraising remains a serious issue, and throughout September, we at the Vanderbilt Center for Health Services (CHS) spent a lot of time on our first ever online auction. But the other day I was gathering quotes to use in the CHS annual report, and I came across several from outreach workers who credit CEMAP® for inspiring positive changes in their programs' services. It was a powerful reminder that despite the strain some of us might feel, CEMAP® is a worthy and essential ambition for MIHOW.

We have continued working on the details of the onsite review that a few sites will be ready for in the spring. We are meeting with the Regional Consultants in Birmingham in October to close in on the final version. I'll let you know where we stand next month. ■

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