

**SOUTH SOUTHWEST MENTAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTER  
HHS REGION 6**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**AUG 2018 – AUG 2019**



Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# ABOUT US

The **South Southwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center**, established in August 2018 and funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, exists to build the capacity of the mental health workforce and to bolster organizations and systems to deliver effective, evidence-based promotion, prevention, treatment, and recovery supports.

**S**outh Southwest is a part of a network of technology transfer centers. The South Southwest serves U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region 6, which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. In addition to being in the network of MHTTCs, we are a part of a larger network that supports best practices for substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery through Prevention TTCs (PTTC) and Addiction TTCs (ATTC).

The local nature of South Southwest allows us to be responsive to the needs of our region. The center's work plan is based on a regional needs assessment and guided by an advisory board. We strive to develop collaborative relationships with state mental health authorities, provider organizations, and advocacy groups to achieve the most impactful training and technical assistance support.

Our center provides training and consultation across a variety of content areas, including suicide prevention, trauma-responsive systems, early childhood provider competencies, culturally and linguistically responsive systems, recovery-oriented practices, peer support, and transition-age youth. South Southwest also supports best practices in specific systems, such as criminal justice, schools, and hospitals. We provide training and consultation through our cross-discipline team, as well as through a network of trainers, consultants, and subject matter experts. We are deeply committed to supporting mental health providers and the related workforce in Region 6, and to improving the lives of individuals experiencing mental health challenges.

# THE NEEDS OF THE REGION

## REGION 6: ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, AND TEXAS

An important goal for the first year of the South Southwest MHTTC was to engage a variety of stakeholders from Region 6 to begin to understand the infrastructure, needs, and opportunities within the mental health systems in each state. The SAMHSA Regional Administrator Captain Karen Hearod hosted a meeting with state agency leaders and the three Technology Transfer Centers, allowing for an initial introduction and networking opportunity. South Southwest also conducted a series of phone interviews with stakeholders from across the region, identifying other state agencies, provider organizations, consumer and family-run organizations, universities, and advocacy groups. We also gathered information from agency strategic plans, national databases and reports, and other resources to understand history and trends.

In April, the South Southwest MHTTC and South Southwest ATTC hosted a joint meeting of the Regional Advisory Board. The Regional Advisory Board is made up of behavioral health stakeholders from the five states and tribal communities that make up Region 6. During the two-day meeting, attendees worked to identify the behavioral health needs in the region, and the ways the TTCs could support state agencies, providers, and other stakeholders. Board members and invited guests expressed interest in opportunities to coordinate across the region, as well as opportunities to link substance use and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery.

South Southwest developed a written summary of this research, highlighting the needs and gaps that were identified by stakeholders and other sources. The needs assessment is a critical tool in planning the training, consultation, and organizational support provided by the MHTTC and will be updated to capture trends and new opportunities.



# CENTER HIGHLIGHTS



## PROVIDER PARTICIPATION

# 1,315

PARTICIPATED IN  
TRAINING OR  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
ANY LENGTH

# 500

PARTICIPATED  
IN TRAINING

>3 HOURS

# 20

RECEIVED TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE

>3 HOURS

# 97

PARTICIPATED  
IN HOSTED MEETINGS

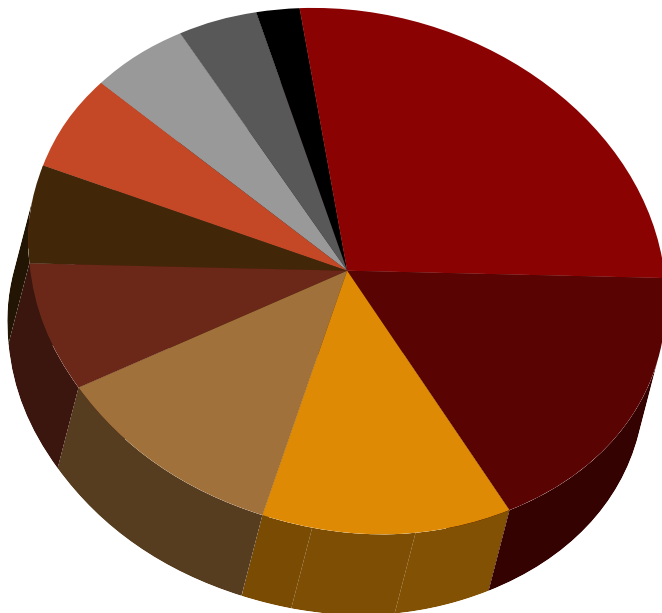
>3 HOURS



## PROVIDER REACH

# 593

REACHED THROUGH  
COMMUNICATION



### TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED

- **MANAGERS OR ADMINISTRATORS (26.4%)**
- **DIRECT CARE PROVIDERS (17.7%)**
- **OTHER (12.7%)**
- **TEACHERS (11.6%)**
- **CASE MANAGERS (7.7%)**
- **CLINICAL SUPERVISORS (6.1%)**
- **COUNSELORS (6.1%)**
- **TRAINERS (5.2%)**
- **MENTAL HEALTH THERAPISTS (4.3%)**
- **PEER PROVIDERS (2%)**

# EARLY CHILDHOOD & TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

When Texas sought to expand the evidence-based practices available for children in the public mental health system, the South Southwest MHTTC provided consultation that led to the selection of the Incredible Years Parent Program for young children and their families. Incredible Years is a group model that strengthens parents' capacity to promote social, emotional, behavioral, and academic skills. Research has shown it is effective in reducing conduct problems.

South Southwest hosted a webinar to familiarize mental health providers in the Incredible Years model and to raise awareness about the training opportunity. Five community provider organizations were selected to participate following a competitive application process. Trainees included family peer support providers and mental health practitioners. Since many providers identify that transportation can be a significant barrier to group approaches, organizations were trained in both the group Basic model and the Home Visiting model. South Southwest is supporting providers in the implementation of Incredible Years through a learning community.

There is a growing recognition in the region that existing child and adult mental health systems may not be meeting the needs of transition-age youth. South Southwest provided consultation to systems interested in enhancing the capacity of the workforce to engage and serve this population, including identifying training resources and evidence-based practices. South Southwest also held several listening sessions with Early Onset Psychosis programs in the region to understand their training needs and explore partnership opportunities.

South Southwest, in partnership with Integral Care, hosted a training on the Structured Interview for Psychosis-risk Syndromes (SIPS). The SIPS training includes a severity rating scale (the Scale of Psychosis-risk Symptoms, or SOPS). The training was targeted to mental health providers working with young people at clinical high risk for psychosis or experiencing a first episode of psychosis. The workshop targeted Coordinated Specialty Care team members, with a total of 59 attendees trained and certified.

## MORE CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

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99%

REPORTED THAT THE MHTTC TRAINER WAS RECEPTIVE TO QUESTIONS

95%

REPORTED ENHANCED SKILLS FOLLOWING TRAININGS



IT RELATED BACK TO WHAT MY FAMILIES ARE NEEDING OR COULD USE TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR LIVES.

— A TRAINEE

# PEER WORKFORCE

Over this past year, several South Southwest MHTTC projects supported peer provider initiatives within the workforce. A peer provider uses his or her lived experience of recovery, plus skills learned in formal training, to provide services in a variety of care settings to promote recovery and resiliency.

In February, the South Southwest MHTTC and the South Southwest ATTC hosted Jimmy McGill, the Arkansas State Opioid Response Coordinator, in Austin, TX for a three-day technical assistance visit. McGill met with state agency recovery staff, the state training and technical assistance (TTA) provider for people in recovery, youth and family members, leadership from peer-run organizations, and recovery consultants in order to identify training and technical assistance for Arkansas, and to gather information on establishing state-level support for peer providers and peer-run organizations.

As a result of training opportunities identified from this visit, the South Southwest MHTTC sponsored Via Hope to provide peer reentry “train-the-trainer” trainings to peer specialists in Arkansas. Reentry peer support specialists utilize their own life experience to assist individuals who are facing mental health challenges and are engaged with the criminal justice system to improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and reach their full potential — all within a peer-supported community of recovery.

South Southwest, in collaboration with South Southwest ATTC, sponsored 16 peers to attend the first annual Region

6 Peer Recovery Conference in Arkansas. The work done in Arkansas was highlighted, along with national and regional efforts to promote peer work.

South Southwest also hosted two webinars to introduce an organizational assessment of factors influencing peer retention. Participants in the webinars included peers, supervisors, and organizational leaders who provided feedback on the draft assessment. The data received from this group was used to refine the tool. The South Southwest MHTTC is currently identifying organizations to use the tool to do a full assessment of peer retention. Results from the organizational assessments will show the need for intensive TA and training within organizations employing peers. It will also allow the organizations to plan for and implement changes around identified peer workforce retention TA areas and provide feedback on progress and obstacles.

The South Southwest sponsored Via Hope to provide the “Demystifying the Peer Workforce” training in Wichita Falls, TX. Demystifying the Peer Workforce is a two-day workshop designed to provide participants with an understanding of the role of Peer Specialists, the value they add to the organizations where they work, and common challenges experienced when implementing peer support services in traditional mental health provider settings. Participants came away with a greater appreciation of how peer support services and clinical services can complement one another, and an awareness of how to effectively support peer support services within their organization.

## MORE CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

96%

REPORTED MHTTC TRAININGS WERE RELEVANT OR VERY RELEVANT

95%

REPORTED THEY WERE SATISFIED OR EXTREMELY SATISFIED WITH MHTTC EVENTS



I FOUND THE IN-DEPTH NATURE OF ALL THE INFORMATION VERY HELPFUL.

— A TRAINEE

# SUICIDE PREVENTION

Each state in Region 6 is actively engaged in strategic suicide prevention activities. The South Southwest MHTTC worked with suicide prevention coordinators to identify current needs and gaps, and to begin to outline opportunities to enhance existing efforts in the region. South Southwest also facilitated a one-day planning retreat with members of the Oklahoma State Suicide Prevention Council. Joined by several new members, the meeting focused on reviewing the Council’s vision and mission, identifying opportunities for the collective impact based on the efforts of each member, and noting ways to measure and communicate the outcomes in the state.

South Southwest also partnered with Kognito to offer training in the At-Risk elementary, middle, and high school programs. This avatar-based online training prepares educators, administrators, and staff to identify students in psychological distress and conduct discussions with students that build resilience and connect them with support. Studies have shown that the program increases the number of students that teachers connect with, discuss concerns with, and refer to support. One school district in Texas used Kognito to train all staff and reported using the skills immediately with students.

## MORE CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

**79%**

REPORTED THEY HAD SHARED INFORMATION FROM A TRAINING WITH OTHERS

**98%**

AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE THAT MHTTC TRAINERS WERE KNOWLEDGEABLE



ALL OF (THE TRAINING CONTENT) WAS VERY USEFUL FOR ME. I LEARNED A LOT AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO APPLY MOST OF IT TO MY JOB.

— A TRAINEE

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM KOGNITO TRAINING

South Southwest offers Kognito, a web-based avatar training program for schools to provide skills in identifying students with significant concerns and helping them access appropriate care.

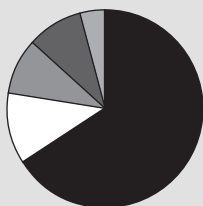
**303**

SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS COMPLETED THE TRAINING



I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT I CAN HELP A SUICIDAL STUDENT SEEK HELP.

88.4% OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY AGREED WITH THIS STATEMENT POST-TRAINING



#### OUR TRAINEES WERE:

- 66% TEACHERS
- 11.6% PARAPROFESSIONALS
- 9.3% HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
- 9% OTHER
- 4.1% ADMINISTRATORS



I WOULD MAKE SURE THAT I AM USING REFLECTIVE STATEMENTS ... TO OPEN THE DOOR FOR CONVERSATION TO CONTINUE.

— A TRAINEE



# SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

The South Southwest MHTTC partnered with the state agencies supporting school mental health in the region to build infrastructure and capacity. A team from each state joined us in participating in the National School Mental Health Learning Collaborative, co-facilitated by the MHTTC Network Coordinating Office and the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH). The kick-off event was a two-day learning session in Columbia, MD, where participants were led through formal presentations and case studies that introduced best practices for developing Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems (CSMHS). This event was followed by six virtual learning sessions that explored core components of a comprehensive school mental health system. These materials became part of the National School Mental Health Curriculum package.

Each state's school mental health efforts offered unique strengths and challenges, with many barriers shared across the region. South Southwest, in partnership with the NCSMH, conducted an assessment of the state infrastructure supporting school mental health. Through surveys and interviews, summary reports were developed to describe the school mental health landscapes in 2019. Four of the five states in the region were in their first year of a five-year school mental health grant (Project AWARE) and used the opportunity to document their status at the beginning of this important initiative.

In states with significant workforce shortages, partnerships between schools and mental health provider organizations are important to meeting students' mental health needs. South Southwest hosted a series of webinars for community mental health providers to increase their capacity to provide school-based services and supports. The series focused on increasing community providers' understanding of school systems, overcoming barriers to effective partnerships, and communicating the value of partnerships

with school administrators. Several community mental health providers shared examples of best practices in documenting impact, telehealth, and integrated primary and behavioral health on school campuses.

Across the region, there was an interest in supporting schools to implement best practices for children and staff exposed to trauma. Individuals in the region have experienced numerous incidents of natural disasters, community and school violence, and have a high number of adverse childhood experiences. South Southwest brought together state and regional experts to build their capacity to coach districts and campuses in implementing trauma-informed practices. Using the Trauma-Sensitive Schools curriculum, developed by the American Institutes for Research, participants explored the materials and practiced leading components of the intervention. South Southwest is continuing to support coaches in a peer network, sharing lessons learned as they continue to roll out these initiatives.

School-based mental health providers were trained in two evidence-based interventions that have been shown effective in schools. Two regions were trained in Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS), a model that views challenging behaviors as a sign that the demands and expectations being placed on a student may exceed their ability to respond in an adaptive way. The approach works to identify lagging skills and unsolved problems through a collaborative partnership between adults and students. Trainings were also held to support clinicians in implementing Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS). CBITS is a small-group intervention aimed at reducing the distress following exposure to traumatic events.

The South Southwest MHTTC school mental health activities were supported by supplemental funding provided by SAM-HSA to increase the capacity of the workforce to provide school-based mental health prevention, promotion, and intervention.

## MORE CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

95%

REPORTED MHTTC TRAININGS WERE RELEVANT TO THEIR CAREERS

82%

REPORTED IMPROVED CLIENT SERVICES FOLLOWING MHTTC TRAININGS



THE ENGAGEMENT MADE IT EASY TO LEARN.  
— A TRAINEE

# CULTURAL RESPONSIVITY

The South Southwest region is culturally, geographically, and socially diverse, requiring an adaptive behavioral health workforce that can respond to the multiple and varied needs of the population. This year, we took intentional steps to ensure that the trainings and technical assistance we provided advanced the workforce's understanding of the importance of providing culturally and linguistically responsive services and interventions.

In the spring, the South Southwest MHTTC hosted a master trainer workshop for internal staff on the "Implementation of National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS)." South Southwest is working with provider agencies and organizations to understand the importance of applying the standards, and also with training staff and administrators on ways to implement them. After our internal staff training, we held a workshop on this topic at the Prevention Institute in San Antonio for mental health providers and prevention specialists.

This year, we were proud to hire a Behavioral Health Equity Specialist on our staff who recently moved to Austin from Venezuela and has extensive experience working with organizations that advance social equity. She has already brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to enhance our trainings and technical assistance.

Additionally, we held events focused on the issues surrounding communities that are traditionally marginalized. In July, we sponsored a 3-hour webcast, "Broken Borders: Responding to Trauma in Hispanic and Latino Immigrants and Refugees" featuring Luis Zayas, Ph.D., Dean of the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin, and two expert providers in trauma and mental health among Hispanic and Latino immigrants and refugees. The webcast identified the potential traumatic

stress experienced by children and families following immigration and/or deportation, and identified best practice and evidence-based interventions that providers could consider when serving this community. Of the 83 participants providing post training GPRA, 91.6% reported strong agreement or agreement with the statement that they were satisfied with the quality of the training and 94.9% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that they expect to use the information gained from this training.

South Southwest also transcribed the event, and the archived recording is posted on our YouTube channel. We are also developing a white paper summarizing the content of the webcast and including links to resources that may be helpful to providers working with Hispanic and Latino immigrant and refugee communities. The white paper will also be posted to our website for anyone to access.

Because the Southwest region has a significant Hispanic and Latino population, this year we developed a strong partnership with the National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC to address regional needs. South Southwest co-directors attended the board meeting for the National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC, allowing for contributions to planning efforts. South Southwest supported a conference on "Trauma and Mental Health: The Journey of Hispanic and Latino Populations," hosted by the National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC in Dallas, as well as a conference on "Empowering Latinas in the Workforce to Influence Behavioral Health" in San Antonio. We also attended a trainer workshop on their "Culture: An Integral Part of Mental Health Services for Hispanics and Latinos" curriculum. The National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC provided consultation to our center as we developed the web event, "Broken Borders: Responding to Trauma in Hispanic and Latino Immigrants and Refugees."

## MORE CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

79%

REPORTED THEY SHARED THE INFORMATION THEY HAD GAINED IN MHTTC TRAININGS

71%

REPORTED APPLYING KNOWLEDGE FROM MHTTC TRAININGS AT WORK



THE ENTIRE TRAINING WAS BENEFICIAL FOR MY LINE OF WORK.

— A TRAINEE

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