

School-Based Counseling Services

- I. East Orange School-Based Counseling***
- II. Montclair Child Development Center - Mental Health Consulting***
- III. NJPAC – MHA Collaboration***

I. East Orange School-Based Counseling 2023-2024

Description: For well over two decades, MHA has applied for and been awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the City of East Orange to provide supportive mental health counseling services to the high school and middle school students in several East Orange schools.

Personnel: This program utilizes the services of one part-time Licensed Clinical Social Worker, working with one or two graduate social work or counseling interns.

Highlights: During FY2024, MHA provided mental health counseling services to students in the following East Orange schools: Cicely Tyson Middle and High Schools, Fresh Start Middle and High Schools, and STEM Middle and High Schools. The Licensed Clinical Social Worker, along with graduate-level counseling interns, served over 60 middle and high school students. Below are some examples of how students utilized their time with the MHA mental health clinicians:

- Future planning for after high school graduation
- Gaining resources to assist with homelessness
- Processing trauma and learning healthy coping mechanisms
- Exploring gender identity

II. Montclair Child Development Center - Mental Health Consulting 2023-2024

Description: In the past fiscal year, MHA continued to provide clinical mental health consultation services to the Montclair Child Development Center (MCDC) at their four locations; Montclair, Glen Ridge, Orange, and Belleville for their Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This fee-for-service arrangement enabled MHA to provide MCDC with a licensed counselor to conduct classroom observations, assessments and in-class supportive interventions. Services and support were also available for staff and parents. Through psychoeducational presentations, both staff and parents are exposed to positive behavioral support strategies.

Personnel: One part-time Mental Health Clinician working 20 hours each week was able to provide evaluations, assessments, and counseling to MCDC preschool students and their families.

Highlights: The MHA counselor participated in an evidenced-based training called “Bee Hive”. This training provides valuable information that can be used in head start programs by mental health professionals. The counselor continued to provide in-person support to children and teachers at each location during the past fiscal year. Resources, such as the Perinatal Health Equity Initiative, were provided to children and their families to help decrease gaps in services. Children were offered individual sessions and techniques, such as mindfulness, play therapy,

emotional regulation, and self-expression to help them understand and regulate their behaviors. The MHA counselor also completed parent and family outreaches and educational series that effectively engaged families in the services offered at MCDC. The counselor provided education to teachers, offering guidance on ways to support the children in the program.

Outcome Data: Over the 2023-2024 school year, 700 hours of classroom support to children and teachers and 100 hours of parent support was provided.

III. MHA Collaboration with NJPAC - New Jersey Performing Arts Center Project 2023-2024

Description: Funded by a grant from the Healthcare Foundation, NJPAC and MHA entered into a collaborative venture. This collaboration enabled MHA to provide mental health support for NJPAC students, parents, and teaching artists as NJPAC implemented their creative programming. In-class support was provided to students when tapping into sensitive themes, and ongoing parent support groups were co-facilitated by IFSS and CBH Clinicians.

Personnel: Part-time Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Highlights: During FY2024, the MHA Licensed Clinical Social Worker provided over 420 hours of Professional and Personal Development Sessions, Direct Services, and Support Groups.

Examples of Professional and Personal Development Sessions:

- Education on neurodiverse students.
- Classroom management: How to address behaviors in the classroom setting.

Examples of Support Groups:

- Parent support group discussing topics such as raising artistic teens, social media use, and racism.
- Coffee Talk, where NJPAC parents are given an opportunity to connect with each other and discuss issues that are affecting their children.

Examples of Direct Services:

- Individual sessions with youth that focused on:
 - Emotional regulation
 - Struggles with socialization
 - Concerns at home
 - Pressure around grades and school performance