

INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING WELL-BEING: The Voices of Latinx Home Visitors and Supervisors

In July and August 2024, two virtual listening sessions were conducted in Spanish: one with 6 home visitors and another with 9 home visitor supervisors, bringing together a total of 15 Latinx participants. The primary objective was to gather insights into their work experiences, challenges, and opportunities for improvement, specifically focusing on factors that impact their well-being.

KEY FINDINGS*

Diversity in Roles and Organizational Context. Supervisors and home visitors worked across sectors, including community health and social services with different responsibilities, from clinical supervision to emotional support. Many participants worked with Latinx or Spanish-speaking families, demonstrating a need for cultural competence.

“Trabajamos con muchas familias latinas, lo que significa que nuestras interacciones deben ser culturalmente relevantes para construir confianza.” / “We work with many Latinx families, which means our interactions must be culturally relevant to build trust.” — Home Visitor

Cultural Understanding and Team Dynamics. The value of working in teams with colleagues who share similar cultural backgrounds was consistently mentioned. Participants emphasized the importance of culturally competent leadership for fostering an inclusive environment.

“Aunque no todos mis supervisores comparten mi cultura, los que son sensibles culturalmente han hecho una gran diferencia en mi bienestar laboral.” / “Although not all my supervisors share my culture, those who are culturally sensitive have made a huge difference in my work well-being.” — Supervisor

Supervision Practices and Emotional Support. Both reflective and clinical supervision were identified as key tools for managing the emotional demands of the work. Supervisors noted the importance of providing safe spaces for home visitors to process difficult experiences.

“La supervisión reflexiva nos da el espacio para hablar de casos emocionalmente difíciles sin sentirnos juzgados.” / “Reflective supervision gives us space to talk about emotionally difficult cases without feeling judged.” — Home Visitor

Safety and Well-Being in the Workplace. Emotional and physical safety were highlighted. Supervisors stressed the need for open communication to manage stress and offering autonomy and flexibility in scheduling visits and refusing high-risk situations. Home visitors mentioned the "safe tagging" system used for ensuring safety during home visits.

“Si alguna vez siento que el ambiente del hogar no es seguro, puedo optar por reunirme en un parque o una biblioteca.” / “If I ever feel the home environment is unsafe, I can choose to meet in a park or library.” — Home Visitor

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Organizational Support for Self-Care and Mental Health

Both groups shared various organizational efforts to promote mental health and well-being, although no specific external programs were mentioned. Internal strategies include:

- Mental health programs led by a director of mental health, offering personal and work-related support.
- Mental health counseling benefits, though some noted a lack of cultural specificity in services.
- Clinical supervision for those working with foster care families, helping to manage vicarious trauma.
- Monthly reflective practice sessions, with the flexibility to take mental health days when needed.
- Integration of mental health support into daily work, with a strong focus on emotional well-being at all organizational levels.

"Las sesiones de práctica reflexiva mensuales son vitales para mantener nuestra salud emocional mientras trabajamos con familias con traumas difíciles."/ "Monthly reflective practice sessions are vital for maintaining our emotional health while working with families experiencing difficult trauma." — Home Visitor

"La flexibilidad para tomar días de salud mental ha sido fundamental para prevenir el agotamiento en mi equipo." / "The flexibility to take mental health days has been essential for preventing burnout in my team." — Supervisor

The self-care practices promoted by their organizations were essential for maintaining both the emotional and physical well-being of home visitors and supervisors:

- Flexibility for mental health days, allowing employees to request time off without hesitation.
- Self-care and wellness hours, actively promoted by supervisors to prioritize staff's health.
- Open communication and flexibility, with supervisors maintaining an open-door policy and supporting personal time off without judgment.
- Work-life balance, providing flexible scheduling to manage personal responsibilities.
- Access to massage and relaxation benefits as part of the organization's wellness program and health insurances.

"Nuestra organización realmente promueve el cuidado personal al darnos tiempo para descansar y relajarnos cuando lo necesitamos." / "Our organization truly promotes self-care by giving us time to rest and relax when we need it." — Home Visitor

Main Challenge: Recognition and Compensation for Bilingualism

Bilingualism was a significant concern across both sessions. Participants noted that while some received a small pay increase for speaking Spanish, the compensation did not reflect the extra workload of translating, cultural mediation, and working with Latinx families. They suggested organizations re-evaluate these structures to more accurately reflect the value and complexity of bilingual work.

"Hacemos mucho más que solo traducir; estamos navegando entre dos culturas y esto debería reflejarse en nuestro salario." / "We do much more than just translate; we are navigating between two cultures, and this should be reflected in our pay." — Home Visitor

Recommendations for Improving Work Conditions

- **Equitable and Competitive Salaries.** Adjust salaries to reflect experience, certifications, and bilingual workload.
- **Access to Culturally Specific Resources.** Provide Spanish-speaking therapists and culturally competent mental health resources to better support employees.
- **Improved Workplace Resources.** Update family visit spaces and ensure access to educational materials reflecting community needs.
- **Recognition of Bilingualism.** Implement policies that fairly compensate bilingual workers for additional responsibilities.
- **Promotion of Self-Care and Mental Health.** Continue to promote self-care practices and provide access to wellness programs, mental health days, and flexible schedules.