



ONE MISSION, MANY VOICES

Uniting the Michigan
Home Visiting Community

2026 MICHIGAN HOME VISITING CONFERENCE

August 12-14, 2026

Model Day: August 12, 2026

GRAND TRAVERSE RESORT - ACME, MI



Registration Brochure



About the 2026 Michigan Home Visiting Conference

The 2026 Michigan Home Visiting Initiative (MHVI) Conference is an opportunity for home visiting professionals to come together to support one another and learn about the importance of the work that we are doing to promote unity and collaboration with a shared purpose. The focus for the 2026 Home Visiting Conference is: **One Mission, Many Voices: Uniting the Michigan Home Visiting Community**. The conference serves as a space to celebrate the strength of our partnerships with families and deepen collaboration across the home visiting system. Conference sessions will bring home visitors, administrators, and supervisors together to learn from one another and explore how collaboration across roles and perspectives can strengthen Michigan's home visiting community and lead to better outcomes for families.

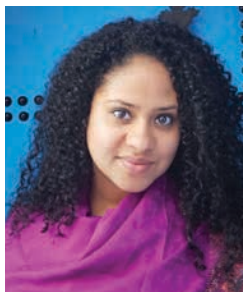
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr. Ghia Kelly, DTL, MSW

Dr. Ghia Kelly is a nationally known facilitator, trainer, and subject matter expert with broad-based experience in systems change, leadership development, maternal and child health, intimate partner violence, racial equity, and mental health and

wellness. She is a seasoned strategic change agent and systems thinker, recognized for successfully implementing and overseeing national, state-level, and place-based initiatives that strengthen cross-sector collaboration, advance equity, amplify community voice, and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities. Dr. Kelly is the CEO of Ghia Kelly Coaching & Consulting LLC, where she leverages her expertise to empower organizations, companies, and system leaders to enhance internal capacity, forge impactful partnerships, and align their vision, values, and goals for greater success. Dr. Kelly has also contributed thought leadership, subject matter expertise, consultation, and technical assistance to various federal and state-level projects focused on mental health, early childhood, community engagement, and health equity. Ghia's educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Public Management, a Master of Clinical Social Work, and a Doctorate in Transformational Leadership.



Lucy Recio, MPA

A trusted executive leader, published author, sought after speaker, and entrepreneur, Lucy Recio weaves threads for social change through her passion for movement building, communications, policy, and advocacy. With a career

spanning nearly 20 years, Lucy has held leadership roles at NAEYC, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, NBCDI, the National Black Child Development Institute, and the Office of the Bronx Borough President in New York City, among others. She has advanced and strengthened the social movement to increase compensation and material supports for the early childhood education workforce, helped secure more than \$54 billion in COVID relief funding for the child care sector, and has played instrumental roles in changing the narrative around our country's child care and early learning systems. She now builds on this expertise at Third Bloom Consulting, a social impact firm she co-founded to nurture communities where changemakers better understand themselves, their internal landscapes, and the change we are collectively creating.



Janet Nickell Horras, BA, CCAP

Janet believes in the power of home visiting to transform and empower families. She is a national leader in the home visiting field and co-founder of the Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals and

currently serves as the Executive Director. She is a founding board member for the Association for State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives and the creator of National Home Visiting Week.

Janet began her career in home visiting in 1989 as a home visitor. She is passionate about supporting home visitors to provide quality services to families.

Visit mhviconference.com
for more information.

Full
Conference
Early Bird Fee:

\$50

Ends June 18, 2026

Full
Conference
Standard Fee:

\$75

Ends July 22, 2026

One-Day Fee:

\$25

*Until June 18,
2026*

\$35

*From June 19–
July 22, 2026*

Registration closes **July 22nd** or when the
conference registrations reach capacity

Click to Register

Attending with Family?

The Michigan Home Visiting Conference provides professional training and continuing education opportunities for adults, which is not always suitable for children. Babies six months and younger in their parents' arms are welcome at the conference in any of the meeting or dining rooms. Parents traveling with children over 6 months old should arrange for other accommodations. Private space will be available for nursing people. Strollers will not be able to be accommodated in the meeting or dining rooms. Conference staff will be monitoring this rule prior to all conference sessions.

If your family members or your own child care providers are traveling with you, [click here](#) to view the Traverse City Tourism website that includes a number of fun activities. Due to conference budget considerations, family members will not be able to join you in the meeting rooms or for conference provided meals. Conference meals are provided for the registered attendee only. There are a variety of dining options for any family members who may be attending the conference with you within Grand Traverse Resort. Please [click here](#) to see the overview of convenient choices.

General Information

- Participants are responsible for their own lodging arrangements and payment.
- A majority of the workshop presentations can be used towards in-service training requirements for the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH) Endorsement®.
- While attendance at this Conference will count towards an Endorsement® application or renewal, it may not fully satisfy a knowledge/skill area.



Model Day

Wednesday, August 12, 2026
1:00-5:00 p.m.

Early Head Start

Pamela Waddell

Our Early Head Start (EHS) Home-Based Model Day session will offer a supportive and interactive opportunity for all participants. We will discuss and share topics of interest in home-based programs and highlight resources and materials available to support your important home visiting work. The session will also celebrate building relationships with children and families, while exploring strategies for staff self-care and wellness.

Family Spirit

Maddy Lamma

Family Spirit National will showcase key tools and resources that can support the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's Family Spirit-Healthy Start Home Visiting Network. Participants will receive updates on the model and explore strategies to strengthen services for families through shared learning and best practices. The session will also offer opportunities for connection, discussion, and collaboration across tribal programs, helping teams build stronger partnerships and improve service delivery within our tribal communities.

Healthy Families America & Parents As Teachers

CQFS Team

Join us for HFA and PAT Model Day, a collaborative afternoon where we will come together to celebrate, connect, and reflect. As we revisit our earlier visioning, we will also take space to acknowledge the loss, transitions,

The intent of the Model Day sessions is to provide model specific guidance therefore, those registering for Model Day should choose the model that they are currently implementing. Model Day sessions are not open opportunities to explore home visiting models. Please choose **"I will NOT attend Model Day"** if you are not currently implementing one of the models listed on the registration form.

and changes that programs and teams have experienced along the way. Together, we'll honor the resilience of our home visiting community while looking ahead with clarity and hope. Throughout the afternoon, you'll have opportunities to explore multiple topic areas, learn alongside peers, and engage in meaningful conversations that strengthen our shared work. Participants will leave with a renewed sense of unity and purpose—feeling energized, supported, and empowered in their work with families.

Healthy Start

Peggy Vander Meulen

Healthy Start projects will showcase tools and resources that enhance maternal and child health, share approaches to promote racial equity, and offer opportunities to engage in advocacy. There will also be a time to discuss issues of mutual concern and to support and encourage each other.

Maternal Infant Health Program

Cherie Ross

This interactive event will begin with a welcome, introductions, and staff acknowledgements. Participants will also engage in a hands-on training session for the Maternal Infant Health Program Care Coordination Portal (MCCP), designed to strengthen practical skills, support onboarding, and provide a dedicated space to troubleshoot training needs as MIHP users prepare to go live this fall—please bring a laptop to fully participate. The session will

conclude with a networking opportunity and closing remarks, offering time to connect with peers and share insights. As a reminder, Model Day attendance is mandatory for each MIHP Coordinator (or an authorized designee).

Nurse Family Partnership

Sarah Bryant

Join us for Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) Model Day at the Michigan Home Visiting Conference, a dedicated opportunity for model-specific learning, collaboration, and connection. NFP team members will improve nursing practice by focusing on navigating challenging conversations and strengthening assessment skills related to Intimate Partner Violence and the Danger Assessment, supporting violence prevention, client safety, communication, and clinical decision-making. Administrators will have a breakout session providing the opportunity to connect with the Government Affairs Manager and Network Manager to discuss topics directly impacting program operations, funding, policy, and implementation. This day is designed to strengthen both clinical practice and program leadership while creating space for shared learning, networking, and meaningful dialogue across roles within the home visiting community.

Model Day continued...

Day 1

Thursday, August 13, 2026

Model Day

Wednesday, August 12, 2026

Parent Learning Community

Autumn Williams

This session is for all parent leaders currently involved in the statewide Parent Learning Community. This is an opportunity for parent leaders who are presenting to dry run their presentations for peer feedback one last time before presenting.

Local Leadership Group

Evi Lindquist

This session is for Local Leadership Group Coordinators only.

Peer Navigator

Annie Heit

The Perinatal Peer Navigator Program (PPNP) Model Day offers dedicated time for PPNP staff from across the state to come together, reconnect and strengthen their collective practice. This interactive session will center on peer to peer sharing, creating space for participants to reflect on what is working well within the program and where additional support or refinements may be needed. Attendees will engage in open dialogue, learn from each other's experiences and celebrate the meaningful impact of the PPNP in their communities. The session will also highlight the launch of the updated PPNP Implementation Guide, providing an overview of new elements and resources designed to support consistent, high quality program delivery.

8:00-9:00 a.m.

Check-In and Breakfast

9:00-9:10 a.m.

Welcome/Introductions

9:10-9:15 a.m.

Poetry Out Loud: Knock-Knock

Performed by: Eliza Aldridge, 2026 Michigan Poetry Out Loud Champion

9:15-10:30 a.m.

OPENING KEYNOTE

Rooted Together: Transforming Home Visiting Through Purpose, Partnership, and Possibility

Dr. Ghia Kelly, DTL, MSW

Home visiting professionals play a vital role in strengthening families and shaping early childhood systems. While providers across programs, disciplines, and communities may approach the work from different perspectives, we share one mission: helping children and families thrive. Achieving that mission requires strong collaboration among providers and systems, while ensuring that the voices of families remain at the center of the work. In this inspiring keynote, Dr. Ghia Kelly challenges participants to move beyond siloed approaches and embrace authentic partnerships with families and providers rooted in trust, shared vision, and mutual respect. Through storytelling, reflection, and practical strategies, participants will explore how elevating family voice and strengthening collaboration across home visiting and early childhood systems can lead to more responsive, coordinated, and impactful support for families. Attendees will leave energized and equipped with ideas for sustaining hope, strengthening

cross sector partnerships, and ensuring that the voices of families guide the work.

10:30-10:45 a.m.

Break / Visit Exhibitors

10:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT SERIES (100)

101: From Conception to Kindergarten: A Unified Continuum of Care for Preventing Interpersonal Violence

Jessica Edel, Ph.D.; Amanda Barratt

This interactive session introduces a unified, trauma-informed strategy that brings together perinatal support, doula care, early childhood education, and childcare access as an integrated continuum of care. Participants will explore how many differing partners can work together to strengthen protective factors such as caregiver confidence, stable and affordable childcare, high quality early education, safe attachment, and economic stability. Attendees will leave with actionable tools, cross-training strategies, and collaboration practices that all center on supporting safe, strong, and connected families from conception through kindergarten.

Day 1 continued...

Continuing Education applications will be submitted for nursing and social work. Once continuing education approval is received, each breakout sessions will be updated to indicate the discipline(s) for which it has been approved.



Day 1

Thursday, August 13, 2026

102: Daddy as a Doula: Engaging Fathers as Birth and Postpartum Support Partners in Home Visiting Programs

Porsha Black; Shonte Terhune-Smith

The Daddy as a Doula pilot, developed and implemented in Genesee County, uses a culturally responsive, "doula-adjacent" approach that equips fathers with skills to support their partners emotionally, physically, and through advocacy. The curriculum was co-developed with Genesee County Health Department and YOLO Lactation and Doula Services, incorporating father-centered learning, hands-on practice, and peer mentorship. This presentation shares lessons from the co-design process, focusing on how user voice strengthened cultural relevance while offering strategies for integrating father-inclusive practices into home visiting.

103: Supporting Caregivers with Cognitive Impairments

Janet Evans; Aimee LaFear

This presentation will give background on the historical treatment of people with cognitive impairments, how we define the population, and the personal/societal beliefs that contribute to ongoing stigma for parents with cognitive impairments. We will discuss many hands-on, concrete strategies for adjusting how a home visitor works with a cognitively impaired parent to improve the parent's feelings of acceptance (thus their engagement) and understanding of the content. We will discuss the need for a variety of short- and long-term natural and service-based supports for the family's success. We will discuss safety of the infant/young child, the involvement of CPS, and the role of home visitor as an advocate for the parent and family. The presentation will include a mix of lecture, participant activity, and case study.

104: Peer Learning for Home Visiting with Newcomer Families

Stormie Drake; Eli Wickline

Curious what happens when home visitors and supervisors across Michigan come together to swap ideas, solve challenges, and lift up the incredible work happening with newcomer and refugee families? This highly interactive learning session creates space for home visitors and supervisors from all models to engage in peer learning grounded in culturally responsive and strengths-based practice for serving newcomer families. You will engage in peer-to-peer discussions, explore real-world challenges,

and share strategies for supporting families that are navigating new systems, languages, and communities. Along the way, you will gain practical strategies for building trust, addressing barriers, and engaging newcomer families with cultural humility and respect. Participants will be able to apply these practical insights immediately in their work with newcomer families and learn about opportunities to stay connected beyond the conference.

105: Regulate, Relate, Reason: Strategies to Support Families Impacted by Trauma

Sarah Birch; Kelly Uhlmann

This session addresses the challenges of working with families affected by trauma. Trauma's impact on adult functioning and parenting will be examined, and participants will learn how adopting the Regulate, Relate, Reason framework developed by Dr. Bruce Perry can be effective in helping caregivers navigate challenging emotional situations. Participants will learn how building relationships through empathetic engagement fosters an environment where learning and change can happen best. Through interactive scenarios participants will practice strategies to support regulation and encourage critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving, in themselves and the caregivers they support.



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Day 1 continued...

Day 1

Thursday, August 13, 2026

106: Empowering Families Early: Michigan's Coordinated Approach through Early On, Build Up, and Help Me Grow

Jennifer Koenigsknecht; Kelly Hurshe

Michigan's youngest children and their families benefit most when early identification, referral, and intervention systems work together seamlessly. Empowering Families Early: Michigan's Coordinated Approach through Early On, Build Up, and Help Me Grow will highlight how these three statewide initiatives collaborate to ensure families receive timely, accurate, and compassionate support from birth through age five. This session will explore how Early On®, Build Up, and Help Me Grow Michigan each play a unique yet interconnected role in helping families navigate developmental concerns. Participants will learn how these systems complement one another—from public awareness and screening, to coordinated intake and referral pathways, to increasing access to early intervention and early childhood special education services. Real-world examples will illustrate how cross-system collaboration improves family engagement, strengthens provider partnerships, and leads to better developmental outcomes for children. Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of Michigan's coordinated early childhood landscape, strategies for strengthening relationships among local partners, and practical tools to help families access the right supports at the right time. This session is ideal for home visitors, educators, supervisors, and anyone working with families who may benefit from early developmental guidance.

107: Informal Support: From Surviving to Thriving

Sammi Alvesteffer; Ashley B. Mastin-Chapman; Whitney Phillips

**Chrystal Seguara-Perez and Kinea Woods-Bey supported the development of this presentation.* In this session parent leaders will discuss how informal supports- trusted relationships with family friends, neighbors, and community members-help families move from surviving to thriving. Participants will explore how natural support networks strengthen resilience, promote well-being, and complement formal services while uplifting the power of community and lived experience.

12:00–1:00 p.m.

LUNCH

1:00–2:15 p.m.

CONCURRENT SERIES (200)

201: Peer Navigator Program Panel

Annie Heit; Ricki Harmon; Breana Frayer; Madeline Vegh; Lauren Lee; Sam Shedd, BA, CADC-DP, CCAR, CHW

This session will feature a dynamic panel of Peer Navigators who work directly with pregnant and postpartum mothers impacted by substance use and child welfare involvement. Peer Navigators bring lived experience and professional expertise to their roles, offering unique insights into the challenges families face and the supports that make a difference. During the panel, Peer Navigators will share their personal stories, highlight successes from the Peer Navigator Program, and discuss strategies that have proven effective in engaging families

and fostering resilience. Audience members will have the opportunity to ask questions, creating an interactive dialogue that bridges practice and lived experience.

202: From Crisis to Capacity: Rebuilding Trust in Home Visiting When Support Feels Like Surveillance

Steph Thornton

Home visiting works best when families feel seen, not studied. Yet in systems shaped by documentation, reporting, and risk management, many parents — especially Black and Brown families, young parents, and those with CPS involvement — experience support as surveillance. At the same time, home visitors are navigating compassion fatigue, overwhelming caseloads, and unrealistic expectations to "fix" complex crises like housing instability, food insecurity, and postpartum depression. This interactive workshop explores practical strategies for turning those moments of tension into opportunities for trust. Through real-world examples and reflective dialogue, participants will learn how to address urgent social needs while preserving family voice, transparency, and dignity. The session also centers the well-being of home visitors, offering boundary-setting language, advocacy tools, and a simple framework to bring back to reflective supervision. Participants will leave with language they can use in visits, confidence to navigate difficult conversations, and renewed clarity that sustainable relationships — not surveillance — drive better outcomes for families and the workforce alike.

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Day 1 continued...

Day 1

Thursday, August 13, 2026

203: Parent Child Interaction Observation

Mary Mackrain

High-quality parent-child interaction observation (PCIO) is a practical way to strengthen relationships and deepen everyday connections with families and their young children. This session introduces a clear, research-aligned approach for observing, documenting, and sharing interactions in strengths-based, culturally responsive ways. Drawing on Michigan data and recent training efforts, participants will learn how to embed objective, interaction-focused observation into routine practice. Using real examples and video, the session highlights core interaction elements such as proximity, responsiveness, affection, communication, and shared enjoyment. Participants will build skills in distinguishing objective from subjective observation, capturing serve-and-return exchanges, and documenting complete interaction cycles. Guidance is also provided for translating observations into functional, routines-based outcomes and discussing sensitive findings with empathy and partnership. Attendees will leave with practical tools, including checklists, sample language, and steps for using observation to support relational and developmental outcomes.

204: Screen Time Implication for Families and Children

Rich VanTol; Maggie Wisniewski, MBA

Our presentation will share our community experiences over the past several years to inform educators and the public about the implications of too much, unhealthy screen time and its impacts on families, early attachment

bond, distracted parenting, early childhood development domains (emerging early literacy, health, physical activity and social-emotional learning) as well as adopted community-led strategies to mitigate screen time such as the "digital diet" developed by our 35i coordinator and showcasing alternatives to screen time with community "unplug and play" events, playgroups, and one-stop family engagement resources, such as Great Lakes Bay Parents, STEM Pipeline calendar and STEM passport.

205: Confidence Counts: Giving Home Visitors the Tools to Support Breastfeeding Families

Maggie Holland; Maija Ouellette

This presentation will describe a quality improvement project designed to address low breastfeeding performance measure outcomes within our program. Initially, staff were uncertain about their role in influencing breastfeeding behaviors, often noting that "we can't force someone to breastfeed." Through the project, we reframed this perspective and recognized that enhancing the home visitors' knowledge, confidence, and consistency in breastfeeding support COULD positively impact family outcomes. To achieve this, we developed strategies to strengthen staff capacity and created a comprehensive breastfeeding resource binder to use during home visits. This tool provides accessible, evidence-based guidance to address families' questions in the moment. The presentation will outline the projects implementation, the development of resources, and the resulting improvements in staff confidence and breastfeeding performance measures.

206: Relational Leadership: Creating Safety for an Effective Workplace

Andrea Penick

This session explores how relational leadership can strengthen workplaces that serve infants, young children, and families by balancing psychological safety with accountability. Drawing on the work of Amy Edmondson and Brené Brown, participants will examine how leaders create environments where staff feel supported, challenged, and able to speak openly. Psychological safety encourages curiosity, honest communication, and learning, while accountability provides clear expectations, shared responsibility, and commitment to quality practice. Together, these create resilient teams able to navigate conflict and emotionally demanding work. Participants will consider how relational leadership connects with reflective supervision and consultation in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. The session will highlight practical strategies for attuned listening, repairing workplace ruptures, and leading difficult conversations. By the end, attendees will gain actionable tools for building workplaces where professionals feel safe enough to grow and accountable enough to provide high-quality care for families.

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Day 1 continued...

Day 1

Thursday, August 13, 2026

207: Noticing the Inside Voice: Strengthening Reflective Practice Through Experience

June Hall

Reflective practice is essential to high-quality home visiting. Yet in the pace of daily work, it can be challenging to pause, recognize thoughts and feelings, and integrate that awareness into practice. This workshop creates a space where learners can slow down, experiment, and deepen their understanding of themselves in relationship. Participants will build skills to increase awareness of their emotional and cognitive responses and to slow moments of reactivity. Together, we will explore how these internal experiences shape engagement with families, and how intentionally noticing and working with them can enhance attunement, support regulation, and strengthen relationships. Through guided exercises, small-group reflection, and applied activities, participants will try out a range of reflective tools, observe their impact, and consider how to bring them into their work, supervision, and home visits.

2:15–2:30 p.m.

Break / Visit Exhibitors

2:30–3:45 p.m.

CONCURRENT SERIES (300)

301: Let's Talk About Sex, Baby!

Carrie Stelma; Susanna Sefton

Have you had clients tell you they don't believe in birth control? Have you heard myths, legends or strongly held beliefs about the reproductive system and didn't know how to sensitively respond? Do you want to feel confident that you

are providing your families all the family planning information they need in a way that respects their cultural practices and beliefs? Then this session is for you! Join us as we share our fun and engaging strategies to talk about sex, reproduction and family planning with clients of all cultures and backgrounds! Note: This session will include graphic pictures of male and female reproductive anatomy as well as explicit sexual content & discussion for educational purposes.

302: Empowered ME: Parent Leadership, Advocacy & Early Connections

DeSiree White

This session highlights the transformative impact of parent leadership within home visiting and public health systems. Through a personal journey rooted in home visiting, it illustrates how meaningful partnerships and intentional support empower families through leadership opportunities. The session also explores the importance of education on early relational health practices and protective factors for family support. Together, these elements contribute to a more equitable early childhood system, while also supporting at-risk communities. The session proposes continued support through foundational partnerships between families and professionals. Investing in systems to ensure parent leaders remain empowered to contribute to future policies and practices.

303: Engaging Support People to Build a Stronger Home Visit

Britney Wright; Kortni Garcia

The presence of support people during home visits helps the mother, child, and support person thrive! But how do we get support

people more involved in home visits? This presentation will discuss outcomes of the efforts of the Western Michigan Perinatal Quality Collaborative Home Visiting Workgroup to do just that. The Workgroup ran a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Cycle with two, rural multi-county, health departments focused on increasing the involvement of support people in home visits. The health departments tried very different approaches yet both found success in the pilot. This presentation will share details of the CQI process, present key learnings, and facilitate large and small group discussions to use the findings of the CQI process in practical ways. The ultimate goal of this session is to help home visitors develop creative ways to better engage support people and the family as a whole.

304: Walking Alongside Parents Using a Culturally Responsive Lens: Meet Us Where We Are

Brandy Hayes; Brittany Franks; Naketta Wallace
**Teresa Valdez supported the development of this presentation.*

Culturally responsive home visiting requires a balanced approach that is both respectful of families' diverse backgrounds and responsible in upholding professional standards and child well-being. This presentation explores how home visitors can build trusting relationships by honoring cultural values, listening with empathy, and adapting practices to meet the unique needs of each family.

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Day 1 continued...

Day 1

Thursday, August 13, 2026

305: Safe at Every Doorstep: Building a Culture of Safety in Home Visiting

Karen Lezan

Home visitors provide vital services to families and communities, often working in unpredictable and high-stress environments. Ensuring their safety is essential—not only for the wellbeing of staff, but also for maintaining trust and continuity of care with the families they serve. This session explores the complex realities of home visitor safety, including

personal, environmental, and situational risk factors. Participants will learn strategies for assessing risk, implementing proactive safety protocols, and fostering a workplace culture that prioritizes both prevention and support. Through discussion of real-world scenarios, tools, and program policies, attendees will leave with practical approaches to enhance safety throughout every stage of their workday—from the office, to the home visit, and back again.

306: Using Reflective Practices and Trauma-Informed Approaches in Home Visiting

Kim Harris; Alyce Hernandez

Are you a home visitor experiencing caregivers who don't follow through...aren't home when you show up...give you a lot of one-word answers...disagree with most of what you say...seem exhausted all the time...and more? Caregivers impacted by trauma may demonstrate unpredictable reactions and heightened sensitivity to stress, including during home visits. This workshop will describe how adversity during early childhood can shape neurodevelopment, causing changes in brain structure and function that impact the ability to cope with everyday stresses throughout life. By gaining an understanding of the neuroscience underlying these responses, home visitors will understand how and why

reflective practices are the most effective methods to work with trauma-affected families. Recognizing these responses can allow home visitors to tailor their actions to specific type of trauma responses. This workshop will provide a range of immediately usable strategies that are particularly useful for families with a history of trauma.

**Advanced Level Session*

3:45–4:00 p.m.

Break / Visit Exhibitors

4:00–5:00 p.m.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. - You've Earned It!

Janet Nickell Horras, BA, CCAP

Join us for a lively conversation about being a home visiting professional. What does being part of a profession mean to you? We will discuss strategies for increasing the appreciation and respect for being a home visiting professional and ideas for leveraging a tiered system for a career ladder without leaving home visiting or becoming a supervisor. Join the movement!

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Day 2

Friday, August 14, 2026

8:00–9:00 a.m.

Check-In and Breakfast

9:00–9:05 a.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

June Hall

9:05–10:15 a.m.

Walking Together: Stories of Partnership, Trust and Growth

Parent and Home Visitor Panel

In this keynote you will learn from the lived experiences of parent and home visitor pairs. Through a facilitated conversation, the pairs will reflect on their home visiting journey, how they overcame challenges, made meaningful connections and built a strong, trusting relationship. Centered on partnership and mutual respect, this session elevates the voices of parents and home visitors as leaders in the field. Their stories offer an authentic look at how trust, collaboration, and relationship based practice create powerful outcomes for families and communities.

10:15–10:45 a.m.

Break / Hotel Check-Out

10:40 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT SERIES (400)

401: Improving Postpartum Well-being in Kent County Michigan

Robin VanDerMoere; Madelyn Olson

Michigan is currently participating in the Home Visiting Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (HV CollIN) focused on Postpartum Well-being. Michigan has an improvement team at the state-level along

with one at the local-level, Kent County Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), who are driving these improvement efforts. Come learn about our experience so far, a new tool for home visitors to use to support postpartum well-being, the Wellness Wheel, and strategies for supporting postpartum well-being with families along with key lessons learned to date. Participants will leave with new ideas for supporting postpartum well-being among the families they work with, information on the Wellness Wheel and the tool itself, and more!

402: Fathers Count: Facilitating & Strengthening Father Engagement

Julie Kozan

Father and male caregiver involvement is a critical, yet often underused component in promoting positive child, family, and community outcomes. This presentation explores practices and approaches for effectively engaging fathers across diverse settings, including early childhood programs, community outreach events, and system-level planning. Participants will gain insight into the barriers that limit father participation - such as systemic biases, cultural expectations, and logistical challenges - and learn practical strategies to create inclusive, father-friendly environments.

403: Connected from the Start: Strengthening Early Relationships for Lifelong Well-Being

Mary Mackrain

Early relational health (ERH), the emotional connection built through everyday interactions between young children and their caregivers, is a powerful foundation for lifelong well-being. This session introduces a three-part ERH video and

reflection series co-created with families and practitioners, grounded in real-life experiences and practical strategies. Participants will explore how connection grows through simple, everyday moments like talking, playing, comforting, and shared routines, and how these interactions build trust, support co-regulation, and promote healthy development. The session highlights how relationships can be strengthened and repaired over time, even during stress or challenge, and centers the voices and strengths of families. Through reflection and application activities, participants will deepen their ability to notice connection, support caregivers in meaningful ways, and embed relationship-based practices into their work. Participants will leave with concrete tools and renewed clarity on how small moments of connection shape resilience, belonging, and emotional well-being.

404: From Stigma to Strength: Supporting Moms, Babies, and Families in Recovery

Ricki Harmon; Dawn Vernon; Catherine Sleder; Madeline Vegh

Through storytelling, reflection, and interactive audience engagement, the session will highlight how language shapes stigma, how peer-led relationships build recovery capital, and how supportive approaches strengthen maternal wellness, infant bonding, and family stability. By centering lived experience and practical strategies, participants will gain a deeper understanding of how the Peer Navigator model promotes dignity, empowerment, and sustainable recovery for mothers and their families.

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Day 2 continued...

Day 2

Friday, August 14, 2026

405: Family Panel: Supporting Families Impacted by Substance Use and/or Child Welfare Involvement

Kate Rood

This session will focus on the perspective of families who have enrolled in home visiting that have been impacted by substance use and/or with child welfare involvement. Parents and caregivers will share their stories about how home visiting supported them as well as their recommendations for home visitors working with families. Participants can expect to walk away with deeper understanding of the family experience and with practical tips on how home visitors can support families with these lived experiences through outreach, engagement, and retention strategies.

406: Home Sweet Safe Home: Protecting Providers in the Field

Claire Titcombe; Heather Richards

Home visiting professionals often work in unpredictable environments that can affect their physical, emotional, and professional safety. While some programs provide basic guidance, fewer take a comprehensive approach that considers how individual, program, and agency factors interact to shape safety outcomes. This presentation uses situational awareness—focused on perceiving, understanding, and anticipating risk—as a framework to strengthen safety practices across all levels. At the individual level, it highlights strategies for recognizing environmental cues, managing reactions, and making real-time decisions. At the program level, it examines how supervision, training, communication, and team culture influence safety skills. At the agency level, it explores how policies, resources, and data systems shape decision-making and risk management. Participants will gain practical tools and frameworks to improve safety, support staff well-being, and enhance service quality.

407: Finding the Right Voices: Hire Unicorns, Not Chaos Gremlins

Karen Lezan; Patrick Conley; Maureen Schmidt

Hiring the right home visitor can feel like searching for unicorns - rare, magical, and absolutely worth it! This session will help you avoid onboarding "chaos gremlins" by strengthening how you interview, and support new staff from day one. You'll learn what truly predicts success in home visiting, the best interview questions to reveal fit, red and green flags to watch for, and simple hiring practices

that reduce bias. We'll also cover quick-win onboarding strategies that build confidence, fidelity, and retention, because even unicorns need a great runway. Come for the laughs, leave with practical tools to hire and onboard a strong, stable home visiting team.

12:00–1:00 p.m.

LUNCH

1:00–2:15 p.m.

CLOSING KEYNOTE

Interconnected and Interdependent: Uplifting the Power of Home Visiting and Its Impact on Michigan Communities Through Storytelling, Spoken Word, and Advocacy

Lucy Recio

The stories we tell help us make meaning of the world around us. They can become bridges that connect us to one another and windows that offer insights into worlds we may not know or know little of. As such, they are powerful mechanisms to invite individuals to better understand our experiences, passions, challenges, strengths, and triumphs. So what then is their role in advocacy efforts? How do stories morph and take on new expressions through artistic practices like spoken word? And equally as valuable, what place do they have in shaping public perceptions? Join us at our final session of the 2026 Michigan Home Visiting Conference where we will move through these questions and center, unapologetically, the valuable work and impact home visitors have across the state of Michigan.

2:15–2:30 p.m.

Wrap Up/Conclude



Continuing Education applications will be submitted for nursing and social work. Once continuing education approval is received, each breakout sessions will be updated to indicate the discipline(s) for which it has been approved.



Overnight Accommodations

The host hotel for the 2026 Michigan Home Visiting Conference is:

Grand Traverse Resort
100 Grand Traverse Village Blvd
Acme, MI 49610
www.grandtraverseresort.com
231-534-6000



Overnight rooms for Tuesday, August 11, 2026 - Thursday, August 13th, 2026 are sold out at Grand Traverse Resort.

Please visit the conference website for overflow hotel booking information at the Residence Inn Traverse City.



Conference attendees and exhibitors are responsible for their own individual room reservations and cost.