

# **Early Childhood Mental Health**

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**Supporting Colorado's Caregivers,  
Communities, and You!**

Facilitated by Natalie Holifield, LCSW

# Natalie Holifield, LCSW



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(Denver County)



**Consultant and Call Agent on Colorado's  
Early Childhood Mental Health Support  
Line**

Colorado Department of Early Childhood  
(Statewide)



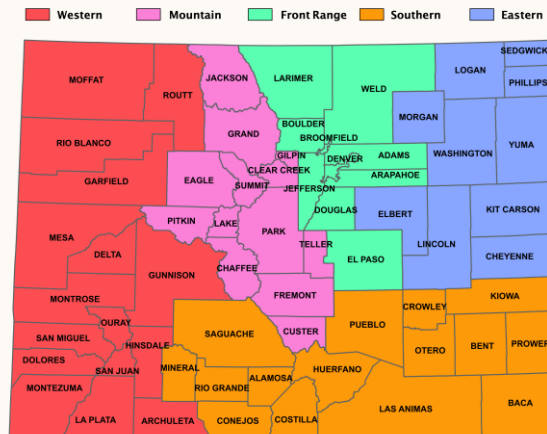
# AGENDA

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- ❖ Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH)
- ❖ Strategies for Supporting ECMH in Your Role
- ❖ Personal & Group Reflection: Library Staff Experiences

## Join our Mentimeter poll and share where you are located.

- ❖ On a phone, tablet, or your computer go to [www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
- ❖ Use this code to access the polling screen: **4829 4195**
- ❖ Drag your mouse or finger over the county where you are located and click submit to see your answer populate on my screen.





# **SHARE OUT**

In what ways are you engaging with young children and their families in your work?

# What is Early Childhood Mental Health?

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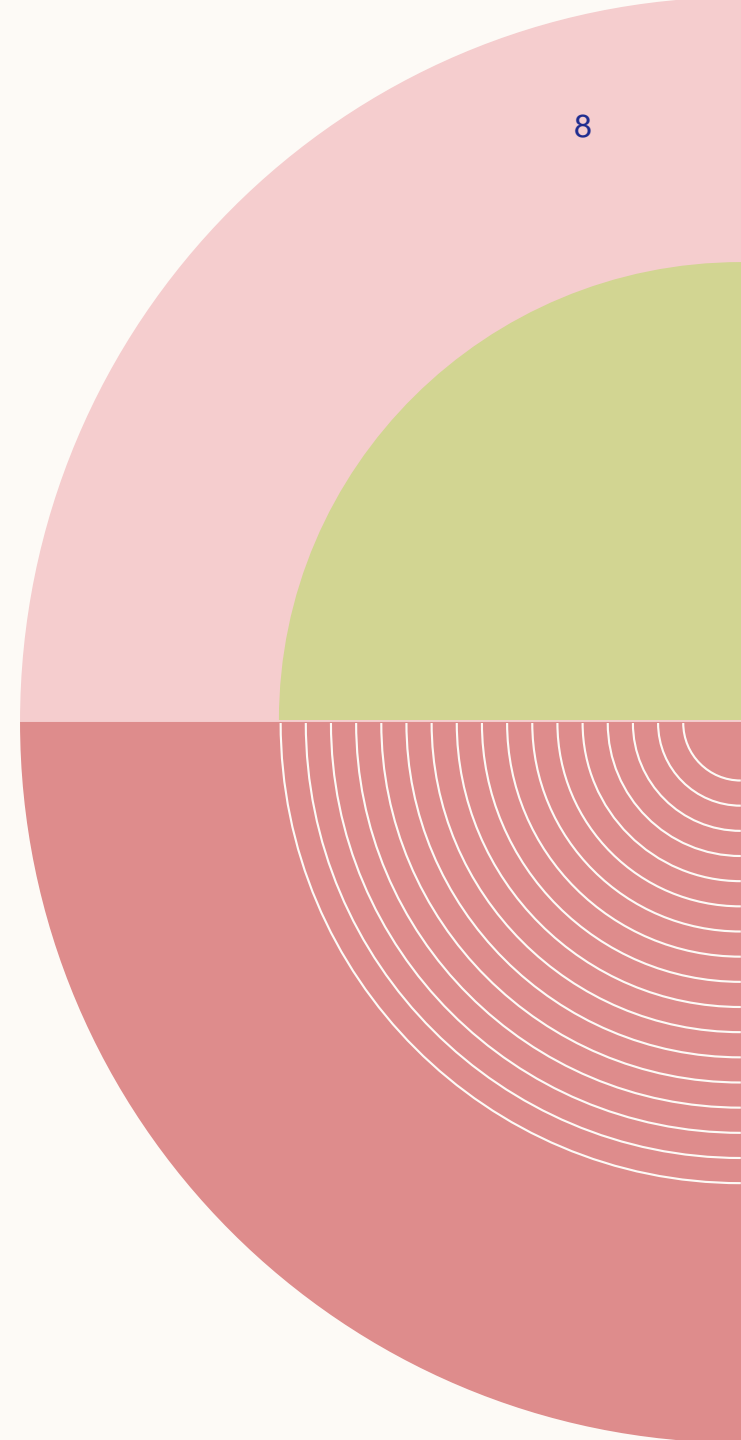
[www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)

**4829 4195**



# **EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

# CONTINUUM OF NEEDS & CARE






Treatment

Crisis

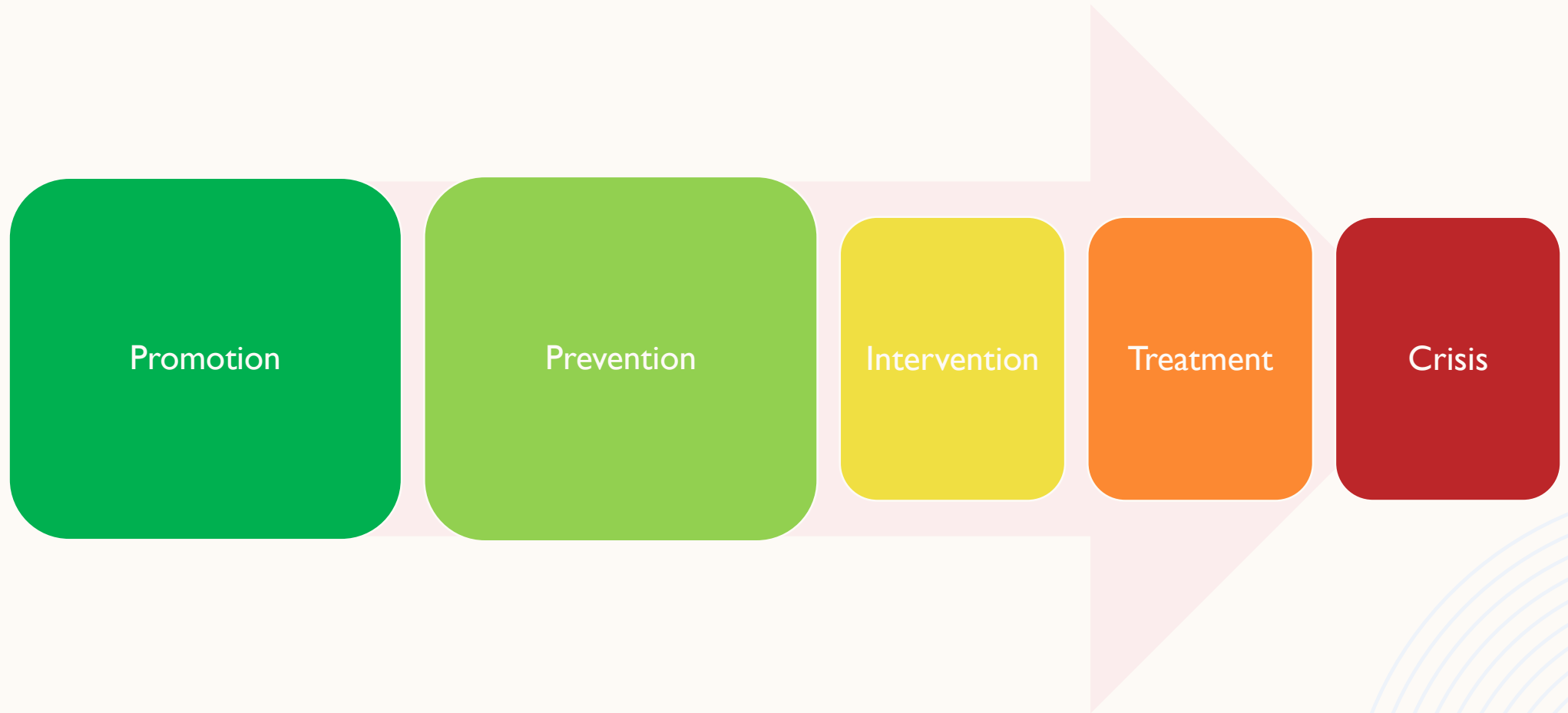
# AN INCOMPLETE UNDERSTANDING

Often, understandings about Early Childhood Mental Health (and mental health generally) are reduced to one section of this continuum of care.

- Diagnoses
  - Therapy and Treatment
  - Institutional Interventions
  - Labels and Categorizations
  - “Fixing” People and Problems
  - Being Unwell
- 

# EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

## A MORE ACCURATE PICTURE



# EVERYONE HAS MENTAL HEALTH

.....even babies!

When we talk about Early Childhood Mental Health, we are talking about **skills**, **behaviors**, **relationships**, and **feelings**.

Early Childhood Mental Health refers to children's ability to:

- ❖ Express and regulate a range of emotions
- ❖ Build and maintain healthy relationships
- ❖ Communicate and problem solve
- ❖ Learn, grow, and explore their environments
- ❖ Acknowledge the needs of self and others (and make thoughtful choices with this knowledge)
- ❖ Develop a positive sense of self

# CAREGIVER & COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- ❖ Children do not live, learn, or grow in isolation.
- ❖ We cannot talk about Early Childhood Mental Health without talking about the connection between children and their caregivers and communities.

Caregivers & Community = Parents/Guardians/Family

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Caregivers & Community = Teachers/Daycare Providers/School staff

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Caregivers & Community = Professional Service Providers

# CAREGIVER & COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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Caregivers & Community = Communities Members and Leaders

## Early Childhood Mental Health is...

### Individual

- Every child and family has unique skills, needs, and factors contributing to their overall mental health and well-being.

### Environmental

- Mental health is impacted by the physical spaces that children occupy.

### Reciprocal and Relational

- Mental health and social emotional skills develop within the context of caregiving relationships.



# TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

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So why is this information important?

**Because when you (among other caregivers and factors in a child's life) engage with young children, you contribute to that child's:**

- ❖ Worldview
- ❖ Sense of Belonging
- ❖ Beliefs about Adults in the Community
- ❖ Access to Information
- ❖ View of Self

*Which is all a part of mental health!*



# **SHARE OUT**

What do you hope your work and space will communicate to young children and their caregivers?

# PERSONAL EXAMPLE



## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Equity and Access



## MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Connection and Belonging



## ADOLESCENCE

Safety and Productivity



## YOUNG ADULTHOOD

Nostalgia and Comfort

# Art Matters: Because Your Imagination Can Change the World.

Written by Neil Gaiman

Illustrated by Chris Riddell

LIBRARIES ARE ABOUT FREEDOM.  
FREEDOM TO READ, FREEDOM OF IDEAS,  
FREEDOM OF COMMUNICATION.  
THEY ARE ABOUT EDUCATION,  
ABOUT ENTERTAINMENT, ABOUT  
MAKING SAFE SPACES AND  
ABOUT ACCESS TO INFORMATION.



I WAS LUCKY. I HAD AN EXCELLENT LOCAL LIBRARY GROWING UP, AND MET THE KIND OF LIBRARIANS WHO DID NOT MIND A SMALL, UNACCOMPANIED BOY HEADING BACK INTO THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY EVERY MORNING AND WORKING HIS WAY THROUGH THE CARD CATALOGUE, LOOKING FOR BOOKS WITH GHOSTS OR MAGIC OR ROCKETS IN THEM.

LOOKING FOR VAMPIRES OR DETECTIVES OR WITCHES OR WONDERS.



THEY WERE GOOD LIBRARIANS. THEY LIKED BOOKS AND THEY LIKED THE BOOKS BEING READ. THEY HAD NO SNOBBERY ABOUT ANYTHING I READ. THEY JUST SEEMED TO LIKE THAT THERE WAS THIS WIDE-EYED LITTLE BOY WHO LOVED TO READ, AND THEY WOULD TALK TO ME ABOUT THE BOOKS I WAS READING. THEY WOULD FIND ME OTHER BOOKS. THEY WOULD HELP.

THEY TREATED ME WITH RESPECT. I WAS NOT USED TO BEING TREATED WITH RESPECT AS AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD.



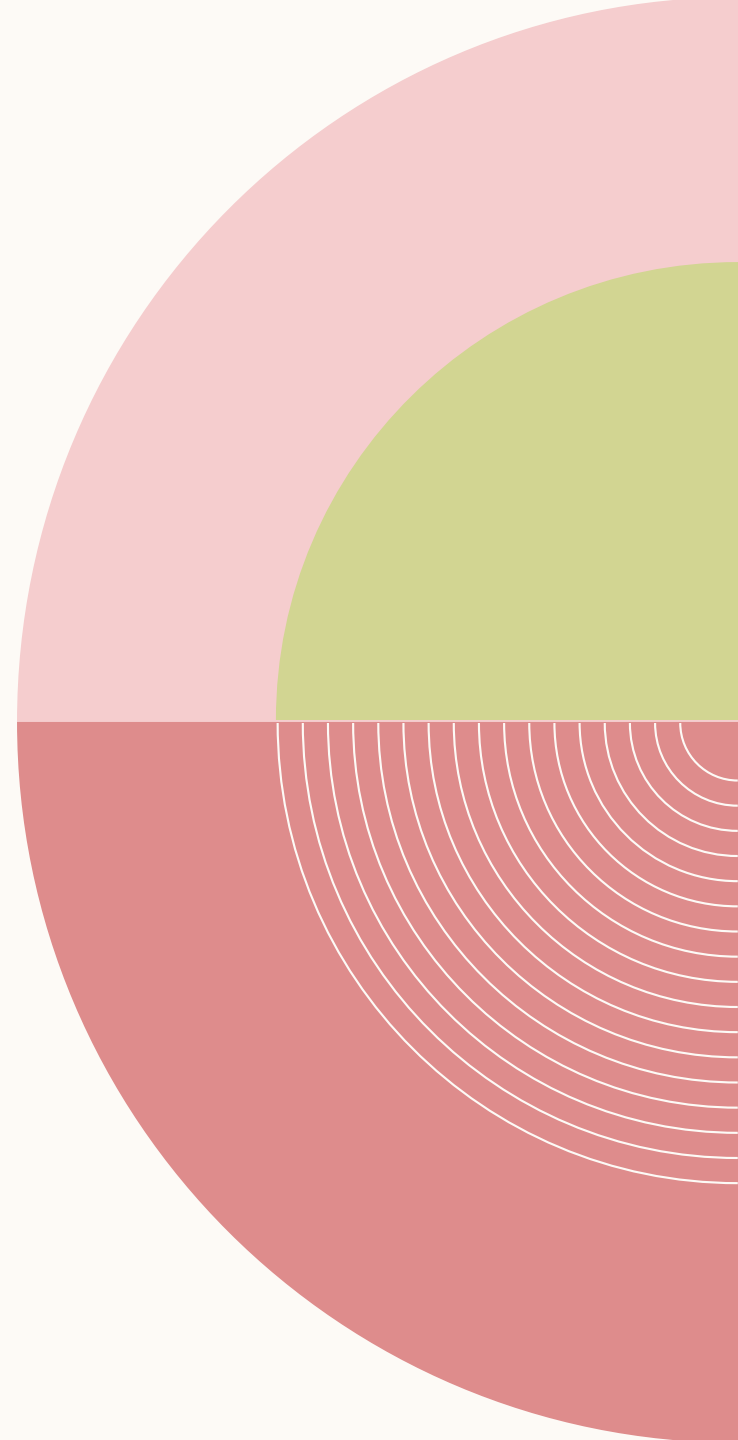
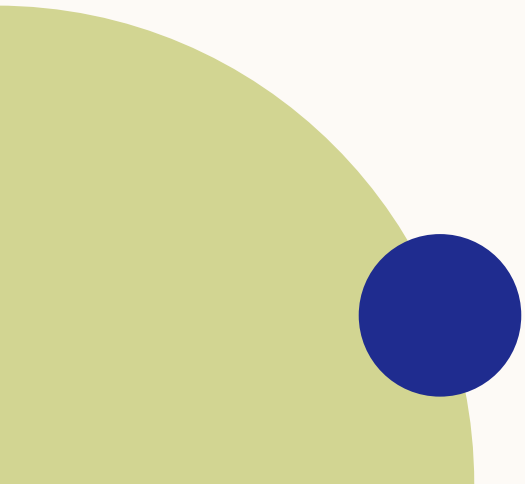


**STRATEGIES FOR  
SUPPORTING EARLY  
CHILDHOOD MENTAL  
HEALTH IN YOUR  
ROLE**

# DISCLAIMER!

You are not solely responsible for supporting the mental health and social emotional well-being of your patrons. My hope is that these ideas will help you:

- Identify and celebrate the ways in which you are already supporting Early Childhood Mental Health in your community.
- Spark ideas or new considerations for strategies that have not yet been incorporated.



# SUPPORTING ECMH



Representation &  
Awareness



Connection &  
Belonging



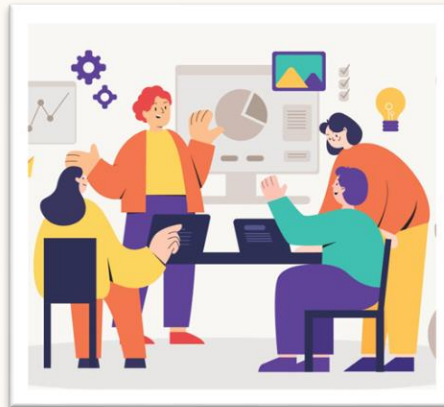
Access



Physical Space



Expectations &  
Rules



Collaboration &  
Training

You are likely already  
engaging many of these  
strategies in your work!



**PERSONAL & GROUP  
REFLECTION:  
LIBRARY STAFF  
EXPERIENCES**

# DISCUSSION

- ❖ In what ways is your mental health impacted in your role (positively or negatively)?
- ❖ Can you think of a time that you struggled with the behavior of or in an interaction with a child or family receiving library services?
- ❖ How can you better understand this interaction through the lens of our conversation about mental health?

9NEWS News Weather Sports VERIFY 9NEWS+ 9NEWS  
MEET THE TEAM NEXT WITH KYLE CLARK CULTURE AND DIVERSITY EN ESPAÑOL

NEXT WITH KYLE CLARK

## Role of libraries changes with community needs

The role libraries are playing in our communities has been changing as people are coming in asking for help with things other than books.

DEPARTMENT

## How Denver Public Library Is Improving Services for Its Most Disadvantaged Patrons

And reimagining what a library can be in the process.

5280 Tony Rehagen  
5280 January 2020

## Reimagining Mental Health Care Delivery Through Public Libraries

Central Texas libraries serve as trusted, accessible community hubs for mental health initiative

Published February 18, 2022

Blogger Kaitlin Frick

## The Librarian Listened: Helping Children and Caregivers Handle Mental Health Conditions

September 24, 2019 | Kaitlin Frick

## Children's Librarians: Community Champions for Children's Mental Health Storytimes

 By Camelia Garrick, AmeriCorps VISTA Community Mobilization Coordinator and Desiree Hartman, Senior Program Coordinator

# Quitting Time

The pandemic is exacerbating attrition among library workers

By [Lara Ewen](#) | June 1, 2022

## Groundbreaking Study Explores Trauma, Stress in Frontline Library Workers

The 2022 Urban Libraries Unite Trauma Study addresses a "crisis of trauma" in urban public libraries

by [Andrew Albanese](#) | Jul 07, 2022

## Pandemic stresses increasing burnout among librarians

SEPTEMBER 20, 2022 | [HEALTH](#)

June 2020 | Volume XXXVIII, Issue 2 »

## Library Burnout: It's Common and Okay to Admit!

May 28, 2020

[Sarah McHone-Chase](#), Northern Illinois University Librarian

COMMENTARY

## When they came for the librarians: My profession is under attack — what happens now?

People in my profession are used to mockery and low salaries. We didn't expect constant insults and real danger


[ORSILLO](#)

PUBLISHED AUGUST 14, 2022 12:00PM (EDT)

LIBRARIES

## I'M NOT A SUPERHERO: THE STRESS OF LIBRARY WORK

[Catie McLain](#) | Feb 2, 2018



“We tend to think of our profession as a noble, helping profession and, at the same time, the more stressful elements (problem patrons or coworkers, for example) are not well represented or understood in the larger society, making us feel as if we somehow haven’t earned the right to feel burnout.”

- Sarah McHone-Chase (Northern Illinois University Libraries)

# KNOW THE DIFFERENCE



## BURNOUT

“Burnout is a syndrome that results from workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.” – WHO

Having too much work or too many responsibilities.



## COMPASSION FATIGUE

The physical, emotional, and psychological impact of helping others. An overuse of compassion and empathy reserves to the point you feel you have nothing left to give to others.

An exhaustion and numbness specific to helping others.



## VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Developing your own signs and symptoms of trauma as a result of being exposed to the trauma of others. The “emotional residue” of exposure to traumatic stories and experiences through your work.

A shift in your inner experience; a personal manifestation of trauma.



# REFLECTION

- Are you experiencing burnout, compassion fatigue, or vicarious trauma? If so, how do you know and what do you think contributed to it?
- What next steps are you needing to address it? What personal supports do you need?
- Is there anything that needs to change within the system you work in to support your own mental health and well-being needs?

# RAINBOW REFLECTION

- What aspects of your job keep you in your role?
- In what ways do you feel like you are making a larger impact?
- Which parts of what you're doing do you hope will stick with the children and families who receive your services?
- Did you hear or learn anything (from the presentation, from your fellow participants, from yourself) today that was reassuring?





# EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants (ECMHC) work to build the capacity of caregiving adults to confidently and effectively understand and meet the needs of the children in their care. ECMHC is an indirect capacity-building intervention focused on supporting positive child outcomes by increasing adult skill sets.

ECMHC is...

- ❖ Free of charge!
- ❖ Available in all 64 counties in the state of Colorado.
- ❖ Available to ANY caregiver working with children and young families (including you!)

Learn more at <https://cdec.colorado.gov/early-childhood-mental-health-consultation> -

# THANK YOU

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