Investing in Our Community

Practitioner's Kit for Primary Care Triple P
- Manual
- Flip Chart

touchstone
THE MAGAZINE OF MOUNTAIN AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER
spring 2018
AN AUTISM DIAGNOSIS HELPED PRISCILLA FINALLY MAKE SENSE OF HER WORLD

The Positive Parenting Program Helped Her Make That World More Accessible to Her Daughter

Now, She Will Bring that Accessibility to Other Families

Priscilla doesn’t want other parents to feel the same way she did when her daughter was younger – unsupported, judged, and alone. For years, she struggled as a single mother of an undiagnosed child who behaved differently than the others in her class, and Priscilla struggled with teachers and school officials criticizing her parenting style. She could not find many parenting resources in her area, and from the few she did, the information did not relate to her situation. They left her feeling even more like a parenting failure.

“Being a single parent of a child with a disability that was undiagnosed for quite a while, trying to find resources and support, and all the judgments people throw at you – it was horrible,” Priscilla recounts.

“I really doubted my own ability to be a parent because of all that.”

It wasn’t until her daughter was seven that they were actually both diagnosed with autism within a year of each other. That was when Priscilla’s whole life made sense, and she could see it mirrored in her daughter’s actions. The diagnosis was affirming for both of them to have a clearer understanding of themselves. When Priscilla later discovered the Triple P Positive Parenting Program, she found that the parenting strategies she had been using that her daughter responded well to were very similar to the ones in the program.

“The Positive Parenting Program is a research-based curriculum that reduces problem behavior in children and improves parents’ well-being and parenting skills,” says Kimberly Siefert, MAHEC Triple P coordinator. “Every parent needs help sometimes, and this program makes it simple to put in practice right away.”

“I went through the whole gamut of people telling me it was my parenting and that if I would just discipline her better then she wouldn’t be the way she was. That was just not the case at all.”

Priscilla has been active in outreach and advocacy work with families for several years now and wanted to be able to provide Stepping Stones to the area to further support those struggling with their child’s disability and understanding how to help them find their place in the world.

“We couldn’t have found a better fit to teach this program in the Henderson and Transylvania areas,” says Molly Coffey, MAHEC Triple P coordinator. “Priscilla has been through it all herself and is so passionate about empowering parents. With her knowledge and experience, we know this will make a huge difference in the lives of so many, just as it has done for her.”

The Stepping Stones program touched close to home for Priscilla – so much so, that reading through the training material brought tears to her eyes. It’s not just helping make the world accessible to the child, it’s also making it accessible to the adult involved. It was what she had so desperately needed those first several years of her daughter’s life that she could now provide to other parents who are finding themselves in similar situations.

“Realizing how much of the world was not accessible to me growing up and seeing a parenting program that’s looking at accessibility not only for the children but for the parents was really huge,” she says. “I love doing community outreach and empowering people to where they have that self-confidence. It’s so amazing to see.”

More information about the Triple P Positive Parenting Program is available at www.mahec.net/triplep.

“I very much get what parents are going through because not only did I live it - what their child is now going through - but I also have a child who was not diagnosed until she was seven.” – Priscilla

From our President and CEO, Dr. Jeff Heck

Current estimates are that healthcare services contribute less than 20% to the overall improvement in the health of an individual. That may surprise some people, but common sense tells us that healthy communities also depend on good jobs, child care, housing, access to fresh food and clean water, and education. It is the reason why MAHEC partners with communities, public health efforts, education and child services organizations. MAHEC trains medical students, residents, and other healthcare learners in the most up-to-date healthcare services, but we also always consider the whole person and the community in which they live. We believe that true healing occurs in healthy communities. Addressing these social determinants of health is really the essence of population health.

And, since our children are the future, it’s important that we give them a head start. That’s why MAHEC partners with organizations to provide the Triple P: Positive Parenting Program, offering classes and resources for parents, and supporting our Child Care Health Consultants who are making sure child care centers are safe learning environments and the staff are prepared to care for children of all abilities.

Please support MAHEC in our efforts to promote health through good healthcare, prevention, and addressing complex issues such as safe pregnancies, early mental health treatment, safe opioid prescribing, and all practical healthcare education. You will find us working alongside other like-minded organizations. For example, through community trainings and peer support specialists, we’re working on building compassionate professional care and support for women with substance use disorders, while our school nurses are committed to making sure child care centers are safe learning environments and the staff are prepared to care for children of all abilities.

I encourage you to be an advocate for your own health, your family’s health, and the health of our community. Read about MAHEC’s involvement inside this magazine, learn about our other projects on the “In the News” section of our website, and share this information with friends and family. Our community is stronger when we work together, and we could not do it without you.

Jeffrey E. Heck, MD
President and CEO, MAHEC
University of North Carolina Health Sciences at MAHEC
Associate Dean, UNC School of Medicine Asheville Campus

To remove your name from the mail list or update your address, call 828-771-4203, email debbie.manley@mahec.net, or mail the enclosed envelope with your request.
**Building High-Quality, Safe, and Healthy Child Care Environments**

Because the First 2,000 Days of a Child’s Life are the Most Important

---

**Education, Training, and Awareness for Child Care Centers in Buncombe County**

Chrisy Wolfe, BS, H.Ed., can still vividly remember the first couple of weeks she was in child care at age four, and the memories are not pleasant. She had been used to the loving and nurturing setting provided by her grandmother - something she was not experiencing at the center. Between the two of them, they were able to convince her mother to let Chrisy go back to her grandmother’s care.

However, many families depend on child care in order to go to work, which is why Chrisy devotes herself to helping child care centers be the kind of safe, encouraging, learning environment she didn’t have.

Chrisy and Bonnie Garner, MS, CPN, RN, are certified Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) at MAHEC and funded through Buncombe Partnership for Children. Any of the approximately 124 child care centers or family child care homes in Buncombe County can call for help with a variety of issues. Chrisy and Bonnie have built relationships with the staff and centers by providing expertise in personal care, health, nutrition, sanitation, and safety trainings. But first and foremost, they want to make it better for our youngest and sometimes the most forgotten about children.

---

**Overcoming Fears and Building Trust**

Not every child who enters a child care center comes in on equal footing, but the CCHCs assist the center in offering a safe, accessible learning environment.

Having been a pediatric nurse, Bonnie’s specialty is in supporting children with identified or suspected special health needs, including feeding tubes, seizures, or even diabetes.

---

**“The first priority is always child safety.”**

- Bonnie

Having spent part of her career teaching nurses how to provide treatment, she is cognizant of how different a setting this is for both staff and family and how frightening it can be to someone without a medical background.

"Some of the child care staff have no preparation for this - it isn’t what they signed up for," she says. "And the parents had to learn how to do all of this for their child at home but now have to relinquish that care to child care staff so they can go to work."

Bonnie was called in to help a center who had a two-year-old boy with diabetes getting ready to start in just a week’s time. So Bonnie invited the parents into the classroom to introduce their child’s special care requirements to the staff and personalize the medical information by sharing his unique reactions. Bonnie also provided the staff with onsite training in diabetic care for children, and had the family demonstrate how they checked their child’s blood glucose levels, counted carbohydrates in his meals, determined his insulin dose, and administered the injection.

Bonnie worked side by side with the staff and parents to overcome initial fears of both handling equipment and medications and leaving that specialized care in the hands of the center’s staff. As staff progressed in their skills and confidence levels, Bonnie added more information and resources to track the child’s health daily. She participated in additional trainings and follow-up visits as requested, in addition to helping with an action plan. She was instrumental in helping the staff learn the safe and correct approach to caring for the child while balancing his needs for all the typical learning opportunities. Children’s healthcare needs change constantly which makes Bonnie’s follow-up involvement with this classroom a crucial part of CCHC consultations.

---

**It’s All About Health & Safety**

**Bringing Together Child Care Centers and Families Through Trainings and Resources**

Not every child who enters a child care center comes in on equal footing, but the CCHCs assist the center in offering a safe, accessible learning environment.

---

**First Priority is Child Safety:** Bonnie connected the family of a two-year-old boy with diabetes to the child care staff and made sure they were all comfortable with the training and care required.

This bringing together of parent and child care provider is an important role CCHCs provide.

"I think there’s going to be more emphasis on that area when looking at the future," says Bonnie.

"We’re helping build a better relationship between the staff and families so they are cohesive in what they offer the children, especially in infant care. That’s a high demand area and difficult to do."

---

**The Power of Touch:**

Bonnie demonstrates proper infant massage techniques with parents and child care staff to encourage engagement and collaboration.

---

**CCHCs work with individual child care facilities to help create environments that best support the healthy growth and development of young children by:**

- Assessing the health and safety needs and practices in the child care facility
- Developing strategies for inclusion of children with special care needs
- Establishing and reviewing health policies and procedures
- Educating to prevent injuries and infectious diseases
- Connecting families with community health resources and referrals
- Providing health education for staff members, families, and children
- Advocating for children and parents

---

"I feel like we have an impact every time we walk into a center. I can’t ever just walk in and leave without trying to make a positive change."

- Chrissy
The TRACES program is free to participants and available to women living in Mitchell, Yancey, and Madison counties.

For more information about TRACES, contact Program Manager Idania Garcia at idania.garcia@mahec.net or 828-774-6000.

The Changing Role of the School Nurse

There is a growing recognition that school nurses are not just dealing with twisted ankles from soccer practice or even an outbreak of the flu. Every day in the schools, they are handling chronic conditions like asthma and diabetes, and now their roles are evolving further with opioids because even our schoolchildren are not immune to the epidemic plaguing WNC and the rest of the state.

MAHEC School Health Nurse Lynn Smajrzes, RN, SN, NCCHS, has experienced this shift. She now considers herself a more “holistic practitioner” as she acts as a cathartic for problems that other school staff are unsure how to handle. When she’s not teaching educators how to care for specific medical conditions of the children they’re supervising, she’s finding resources for students without insurance or who cannot afford the copay, delving into her mental health role or assisting with more of a social work role.

“Addiction doesn’t make any sense,” says Lynn. “Along with that are other mental health issues: anxiety, depression, and things related to pressure and stress that seem to be increasing in our students in high schools.”

Last year, in partnership with the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, the nurses in the schools and specifically in WNC want to take action to prevent addiction before it started. Beginning with a group from Asheville High School, the nurses provided resources and asked the students to do some research and create an educational video. When Buncombe County Commissioners became aware of the number of overdoses, they asked the schools to find out what was being done. It all came together as a great place to start, and Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services suggested a summit.

When I realized he was talking about my own kids, it became very personal.”

-Lynn

MAHEC School Nursing Program Manager Alice Ello, MSN, RN, NCCHS, says after the information from the study, the school nurses wanted to take action to prevent addiction before it started. Beginning with a group from Asheville High School, the nurses provided resources and asked the students to do some research and create an educational video. When Buncombe County Commissioners became aware of the number of overdoses, they asked the schools to find out what was being done. It all came together as a great place to start, and Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services suggested a summit.

“When I realized he was talking about my own kids, it became very personal.”

- Lynn

MAHEC School Nursing Program Manager Alice Ello, MSN, RN, NCCHS, says after the information from the study, the school nurses wanted to take action to prevent addiction before it started. Beginning with a group from Asheville High School, the nurses provided resources and asked the students to do some research and create an educational video. When Buncombe County Commissioners became aware of the number of overdoses, they asked the schools to find out what was being done. It all came together as a great place to start, and Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services suggested a summit.

“When I realized he was talking about my own kids, it became very personal.”

- Lynn

They Share a History of Addiction and Aim to Share a Future of Recovery

TRACES Peer Support Specialists

The TRACES program is free to participants and available to women living in Mitchell, Yancey, and Madison counties.

For more information about TRACES, contact Program Manager Idania Garcia at idania.garcia@mahec.net or 828-774-6000.

The TRACES program is free to participants and available to women living in Mitchell, Yancey, and Madison counties.

For more information about TRACES, contact Program Manager Idania Garcia at idania.garcia@mahec.net or 828-774-6000.

The TRACES program is free to participants and available to women living in Mitchell, Yancey, and Madison counties.

For more information about TRACES, contact Program Manager Idania Garcia at idania.garcia@mahec.net or 828-774-6000.

The TRACES program is free to participants and available to women living in Mitchell, Yancey, and Madison counties.

For more information about TRACES, contact Program Manager Idania Garcia at idania.garcia@mahec.net or 828-774-6000.

The TRACES program is free to participants and available to women living in Mitchell, Yancey, and Madison counties.

For more information about TRACES, contact Program Manager Idania Garcia at idania.garcia@mahec.net or 828-774-6000.

The TRACES program is free to participants and available to women living in Mitchell, Yancey, and Madison counties.

For more information about TRACES, contact Program Manager Idania Garcia at idania.garcia@mahec.net or 828-774-6000.
The best way to learn how to reach students about the opioid epidemic is to hear directly from them.

Lynn says the real-life stories were probably what impacted the students and herself the most. The speakers were peer support specialists, who are individuals in sustained recovery that now help others in the community experiencing the same things they went through with addiction. For Lynn, it was gratifying to hear that there’s hope – they made it through to the other side and are still hopeful themselves. But what really got to the students was hearing how it can truly happen to anyone. Lynn says several students broke down during the talks, relating to the people and the reasons behind addiction.

“A lot of kids are dealing with this in their own lives, but they just keep it hush-hush,” she says. “It’s a bit like alcoholism. The family learns how to function around that one person by kind of hiding it. We’d like it to be brought out more and let kids understand that we know it’s a problem, that there are safe people to come to for help, and that this affects everyone.”

The opioid epidemic is not something we can hide from our children, and the students made it clear through the focus groups and the summit that they need and want to know the facts to help each other. The nurses are hopeful that more awareness and education around the topic will enable students to help educate each other – “peer pressure in the most positive way possible,” says Lynn. And she witnessed it firsthand at the summit.

Surrounded by so many community organizations that helped pull it off, Lynn and several other school nurses got to hear students come together with their own ideas of how to reach their classmates. During the last exercise of the day, Lynn rotated among tables of students from different schools, different backgrounds, and different upbringings, to help them formulate their plans into actions to bring back to their own schools and put in practice.

“Whenever I spend time with kids, it gives me hope,” she says. “They have great ideas and amazing energy. We just need to listen to them more. If we can just pave the way a little bit for them, they’re going to be able to do this.”

“I’m thankful that the community came together on this because that’s what it’s going to take. We have to approach this at the community level.”

- Lynn