NMAIMH competencies addressed:

Direct Service Skills
- Observing and listening

Working with others
- Building and maintaining relationships
- Empathy and compassion

Reflection
- Contemplation
- Parallel process

I would like to share some reflection on my experience with the Children Youth and Family Department’s Home Visiting Project at the University of New Mexico, Center for Development and Disability.

I am, by training, a psychologist. I have spent my professional life living in proximity. I worked for thirty some years in the field of developmental disabilities and have only recently moved to the early childhood field. I say that, but I have studied human development. I have used the work of Piaget, and neo-Piagetans like Uzgiris and Hunt and the work that comes from their research, such as The Carolina Curriculum, in my work with people with severe and profound developmental disabilities. I adapted this work to derive functional habilitation goals. For example, some people were assigned bathing goals, which were renewed year after year--for many years--when they did not even know they had a hand...or how that hand could be used. So, I went back to the basics. I put my foot in the field, watched them as they went through their day, noted the skills they had, and the challenges they experienced. I created scripts that would meet them where they are and move them along by encouraging them to explore their world...hoping they’d encounter that hand...and learn how to use it...Some folks even learned to partially participate in their daily baths! Being close to the action helped to foster success.

When I joined the Home Visiting Consultant Team at ECLN in November of 2016, I encountered a whole new world, with new terms, new acronyms, new programs and I attempted to not be overwhelmed as I took in this new space. I decided that if I were to learn this work, I would have to get close to it...see it, feel it, breathe it, be IN it. I set up times and dates when I would be able to shadow my Home Visiting Consultants. I travelled to the programs in the towns where they provided services to the babies and families in New Mexico. I brought along my mascot, Algernon, purchased in Roswell, as we spent time with home visitors. We participated in professional development activities, conducted warm hand offs, sat in on staff meetings, celebrated the good things that home visitors were doing in the community and took photographs to commemorate the event. Being IN the work was fun!
When I first came to this work, I realized that many of the Home Visiting Program Managers maintained a small caseload. My first thought was, “how do you have time for that?” As I created infrastructure for the ECLN Home Visiting Consultant team, I could not imagine also having to meet with programs routinely, travel every month for consultation and follow up. After I put one foot in the field, it became obvious. That is how the program managers keep their finger on the pulse of the action. That is how they know what the home visitors that they supervise experience. That is what better equips them to lead the team, to foster personal and professional growth for their staff. It helps them to stay real. Real in the expectations that they have for the home visitors. Real in the way that they interact with programs in the community. Real with the people they encounter during service provision. Real in the response they make with those that support and monitor their work. It is truly the parallel process. Like home visitors go into the world of the family, putting one foot in the field is going into the world of the program staff, meeting them where they are, without judgment to be truly IN the work.

**Questions to encourage discussion and reflection…**

- How do YOU keep one foot in the field?
- How do you use the parallel process during the Onda development?

**References:**


