



Project CARA of WNC Newsletter November 2020

Serving the pregnant and parenting women of Western North Carolina affected by substance use disorders

This is our monthly newsletter that we will be continually adapting to the needs of our readers. Please [click here to give us feedback](#) on what would be most helpful to you.

What's going on in Perinatal Substance Use?



Featured Person: Dan Pizzo

What is your name and your position?

Dan Pizzo, Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team Social Work Supervisor

What is your favorite part about working with perinatal substance exposure?

It's hard to point to one thing. Ultimately, I believe that healing from our wounds, in the truest form, comes from building long and lasting healthy connections. I can't think of a connection that is more intricately intertwined than that between a mother and baby. From the perinatal physiological connection to the metaphysical connection that continues postpartum. Therein lies an incredible opportunity for healing for a mom struggling with substance use, and by the same token, for baby to build that most natural bond that can set them up for a life of thriving. I feel pretty lucky that my career has led me to a point where I get to be present at this point in a family's life. As a parent in long-term recovery, I have personally experienced the joy of reclaiming and rediscovering lost parts of myself as I learn and play alongside my children and provide a safe and nurturing environment. Parenting and recovery individually can be so hard and the two together can make for an overwhelming life at times, and yet the combination of the two can unlock a profound experience of restoration. Being part of a supportive team that is invested in wrapping around a family as they recover together (rather than apart) has proved to us that forming secure attachments is not only healing for the child but for the parents as well. Over the past decade in the helping field, I have witnessed a shift that has allowed the helping professional to step back from solely individual interventions (medical, behavioral, etc.) to more holistic family-centered support. In doing so, creating more space for nurturing attachments to grow by affirming and believing in the families' recovery process, normalizing challenges, and allowing a family to heal together whenever possible and safe. It can be uncomfortable to move from individual interventions, where there is a sense of more control, toward intensively supporting the whole family unit. However, we have seen that more families are successful walking through the process together, and also that the discomfort of letting go of some perceived control has pushed our team to become more reliant on forming better connections with one another as we walk through the process together.

What is a resource in our area you wish more people knew about?

At the heart of better family engagement on the START team are the Peer Support Specialists, who more easily forge trusting relationships with parents through their close and personal understanding of substance use and recovery culture. In this way, we provide culturally aligned practice. Recently, START has been looking at how racial inequities in the systems we work in have been damaging to the families of color that we serve. Acknowledging our limitations to culturally align with some of our

families due to being of a different race or ethnicity, we have been working to partner with agencies who are better able to bridge that gap and come alongside the family with us, to support them on their journey. **Umoja Health Wellness and Justice Collective** is a Non-Profit that is specifically for (but not limited to) POC to become aware of the racial, inter-generational, historical trauma to build a narrative of resilience. They are currently offering a Domestic Violence Support Group called "Rebuilding through Healing". The mission of this support group is to create a safe, and culturally aligned, equitable space for women, and specifically African American women, and their families who have experienced mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual trauma in an effort to breakthrough systemic and personal barriers to promote resiliency, healing, self-empowerment, and family emotional self-sufficiency. The vision of Rebuilding Through Healing Domestic Violence Support Groups is to provide women, specifically African American women, peer lead holistic methods to uplift an individual's rediscovered self-empowerment, elevating their vision of self and their families. For more information, contact umojahwjcollective@gmail.com.

Want your county or community member to be featured in next month's newsletter?

Email erin.major@mahec.net or [fill out this form](#) with updates or information you'd like to share.

Highlighted Reading

New and Notable

- [Buprenorphine-naloxone use in pregnancy: a systematic review and metaanalysis](#)
- [Overdose among mothers: The association between child removal and unintentional drug overdose in a longitudinal cohort of marginalised women in Canada](#)

Clinical Resources

- [A Collaborative Approach to the Treatment of Pregnant Women with Opioid Use Disorders](#)
- [SAMHSA Clinical Guidance for Treating Pregnant and Parenting Women with Opioid Use Disorder and Their Infants](#) (PDF Download)

Education Opportunities

Project ECHO: Building the WNC Perinatal Substance Use Disorders System of Care (Free Monthly Webinar Series)



Friday, November 13th from 12:30 pm–1:30 pm
Elisabeth Johnson, FNP, PhD at UNC Horizons

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

Project CARA of WNC

119 Hendersonville Road, Asheville, NC 28803
www.mahec.net/projectcara

For Referrals

Call 828-255-5542 or use our online referral form

For questions or feedback on this newsletter, please email erin.major@mahec.net.