NEWSLETTER

eMpowering our Nation's Resilience:

Celebrating 250 Years of Freedom and looking at Future Opportunities to Strengthen Capacity

Providers,

As our nation commemorates the 250th anniversary of its independence, we have an opportunity to reflect on where we've been, the progress we've made, and the work that still lies ahead.

For generations, organizations and advocates have worked to strengthen mental health and well-being across our communities. From the founding of the **National Mental Health Association** in 1909 to the establishment of **SAMHSA** in 1992, our nation's commitment to expanding behavioral health services has continued to evolve.

RMTAC is honored to contribute to this ongoing legacy by supporting providers and organizations that strengthen opportunities for healing, resilience, and independence. Through **technical assistance**, **training**, and **capacity-building**, we help equip professionals with the knowledge and resources needed to support individuals, families, and communities as they thrive.

We invite you to **partner with RMTAC** as we continue building stronger systems of care. Together, we can create lasting impact while honoring our nation's history and its enduring commitment to opportunity, recovery, and well-being for all.

Past to Present: The History of Mental Health Treatment in America

Closing Soon: RMTAC National Provider Survey

Whether you've attended a webinar, joined a Learning Community, used the Resource Library, or requested support, your feedback helps shape what RMTAC offers next. Share what providers need most by completing the **National Provider Survey**.

Complete the National Provider Survey

Learning & Development

Caring for the Caregiver: Finding Meaning Beyond the Work

Behavioral health professionals dedicate their careers to supporting others through some of life's most difficult experiences. This work is deeply meaningful, but there is a cost to caring, one that BH providers are no stranger to: Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS). Fortunately, there are also proven ways to protect against STS, such as increased self-care, increased boundaries, peer support, and therapeutic interventions.

One effective self-care strategy is lifelong learning. Continued learning can provide a variety of benefits. It can enhance motivation, spark curiosity, and improve overall well-being, serving as an effective self-care strategy to prevent STS.

A study published in **Frontiers in Public Health** found an association between regular reading—such as books, magazines, or newspapers—and an increased sense of meaning in life, as well as greater positive emotions, stronger social connections, and a deeper sense of purpose at work. **(Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2023)**.

Something as simple as picking up a book after a long day can foster a greater sense of meaning and renewal. This raises the question: how impactful could intentional, goal-oriented lifelong learning be? Engaging in learning outside of work may further amplify these benefits, giving BH providers a sense of ownership and autonomy over the direction of their lifework.

In addition to learning, engaging in hobbies and creative activities can also be a powerful self-care tool. According to **Craft Research**, individuals who spent several hours a week for three months learning to participate in a new craft activity showed improvements in cognitive performance and neural efficiency compared with non-participants.

Many individuals also report that sustained engagement in hobbies provides physical, social, and cognitive benefits. These positive effects can help buffer against prolonged stress and repeated exposure to traumatic material.

Creating intentional opportunities to engage in learning and hobbies, whether it's hiking, painting, gardening, playing music, reading, woodworking, or spending time with family, allows for psychological recovery.

These activities serve as reminders that identities extend far beyond professional roles.

The behavioral health field demands compassion, presence, and resilience. Investing in personal growth through continued learning and making time for meaningful hobbies can help sustain these qualities over the long term.

If you are interested in continuing your learning, visit the **RMTAC Learning Hub**. There, you can access online learning modules, recorded events, and reference materials designed to support provider practice.

References

Adams-Price, C. E., Morse, L. W., (2018). Crafts as serious hobbies: Impact and benefits in later life. *Craft Research, 9*(1), 93 – 102. https://doi.org/10.1386/crre.9.1.93_1

Weziak-Bialowolska, D., Bialowolski, P., & Sacco, P. L. (2023). Mind-stimulating leisure activities: Prospective associations with health, wellbeing, and longevity. *Frontiers in Public Health, 11*, 1-11. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2023.1117822

Clinical Corner

A Summer of Support: Helping Newcomer Families Thrive

Summertime recalls barbecue, vacation, and trips to the pool or beach. For newcomer parents, though, it can be challenging to balance work and childcare. Finding safe, educational, and culturally welcoming activities can be difficult for families and providers alike, so we've come up with a few ideas to support during a time when the structure and routine that the school year offers are missed.

School District

In preparation for the end of the school year, the local school district may already have summer programs available that include daily meals, transportation, and learning.

Parks and Recreation or Local Libraries

Municipal public services may provide free or affordable day camps and academies for students.

Community Nonprofits

Organizations like the YMCA can provide scholarships for summer day camps. Local nonprofits may also offer programs year-round to engage and support low-income and/or newcomer families.

- **Reading Tip Sheets for Parents** – Available in 13 languages, this tip sheet offers families with young children ideas to help them become successful readers.
- **Sesame Workshop** – Sesame Street offers resources to help families navigate resettlement.
- **Boys and Girls Clubs of America** – Local chapters of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America offer summer camps that offer daily meals.
- **US Department of Education Newcomer Toolkit** – This toolkit can help US educators feel better prepared to work with and support refugee and asylee

students and families.

Advisory Board Spotlight

Farduus Y. Ahmed, MSW, LCSW

Assistant Professor, University of Colorado Anschutz – Department of Psychiatry

Farduus Y. Ahmed is a nationally recognized leader in immigrant and refugee mental health whose work embodies the core values and priorities of RMTAC.

As an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Colorado Anschutz and Clinical Director of the Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Program, she brings more than 18 years of experience advancing trauma-informed, culturally and linguistically responsive behavioral health care for communities affected by forced displacement, war, and gender-based violence.

A former refugee and founder of International Survivors and Families Empowered (iSAFE), Ms. Ahmed has dedicated her career to strengthening community capacity, expanding access to equitable care, and elevating the voices and lived experiences of immigrant and refugee populations.

Her expertise spans complex trauma, FGM/C, migration-related stressors, intergenerational trauma, culturally shaped family dynamics, and the psychological impact of resettlement. As a multilingual clinician, she provides psychotherapy in Somali and leads community-engaged initiatives that bridge clinical practice, cultural knowledge, and community leadership.

Her commitment to training, mentorship, and systems-level consultation directly supports RMTAC's mission to build a skilled, culturally responsive behavioral health workforce nationwide. Through her scholarship, teaching, and advocacy, Ms. Ahmed continues to shape the field of refugee mental health and strengthen the equitable, community-centered systems of care that RMTAC is proud to champion

Partnerships

Mental Health America

Mental Health America (MHA) is the nation's leading nonprofit dedicated to promoting mental health, well-being, and early intervention. Through a network of 130+ affiliates, MHA advances public education, drives policy advocacy, develops innovative screening tools, and expands access to community-based support. Their work reaches millions annually through research, national campaigns, and direct services that strengthen prevention, recovery, and resilience.

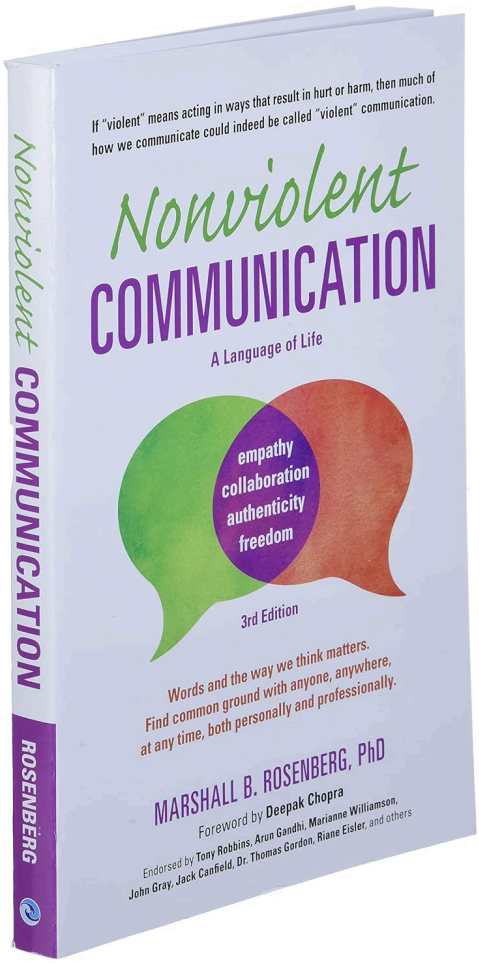
RMTAC's Lead Clinical Consultant was honored to present to the MHA Board of Directors, sharing insights on the intersection of immigration and mental health. The presentation showcased RMTAC's commitment to supporting behavioral health providers through training, consultation, and practical resources designed to strengthen care for refugee and newcomer populations.

The discussion generated thoughtful conversation around shared priorities, and the RMTAC team is excited to continue partnering with MHA and its affiliate network to advance this important work together.

Mental Health America (MHA)

Summer Book Club

Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life:
Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships



Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life: Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships
(Part of Nonviolent Communication Guides)
by **Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.**

The Nonviolent Communication Guides series presents a communication framework developed over 40 years that centers on compassionate connection rather than judgment or coercion. Nonviolent Communication (NVC) operates on the principle that behind emotional pain and conflict lie unmet needs, and that identifying these needs creates pathways to mutual understanding.

Be on the lookout for our Book Club meeting date, and we encourage you to join us for the conversation.

Pick Up Your Copy Here

Events

Upcoming Learning & Informational Events

Discover RMTAC's latest events, ranging from insightful webinars to collaborative learning communities via our **Events Page**. Join us to connect, learn, and grow!

This month

PROVIDER SERIES

Provider Series: Supporting Newcomer Youth Navigating Two Worlds: Identity, Bullying, and Belonging

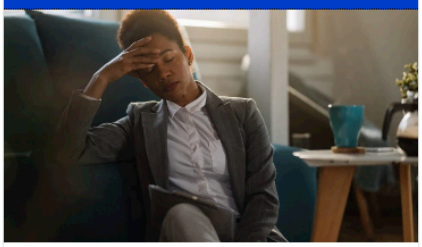
July 9, 2:00 pm CT — in 3 days

WEBINAR

Recognizing and Responding to Domestic Violence: The Power and Control Wheel in Refugee and Migrant Contexts

July 15, 10:00 am CT — in 9 days

PROVIDER SERIES

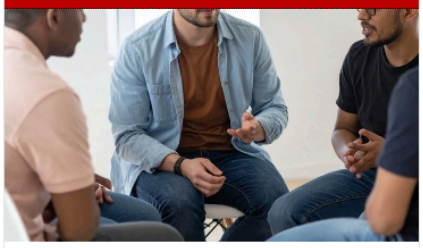


Provider Series: Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma in Humanitarian Work

July 23, 2:00 pm CT — in 17 days

August

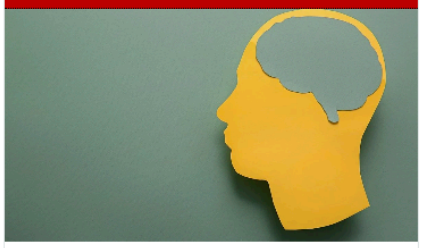
LEARNING COMMUNITY



Reimagining Systems of Engagement with Newcomer Men in Behavioral Health - Session 1

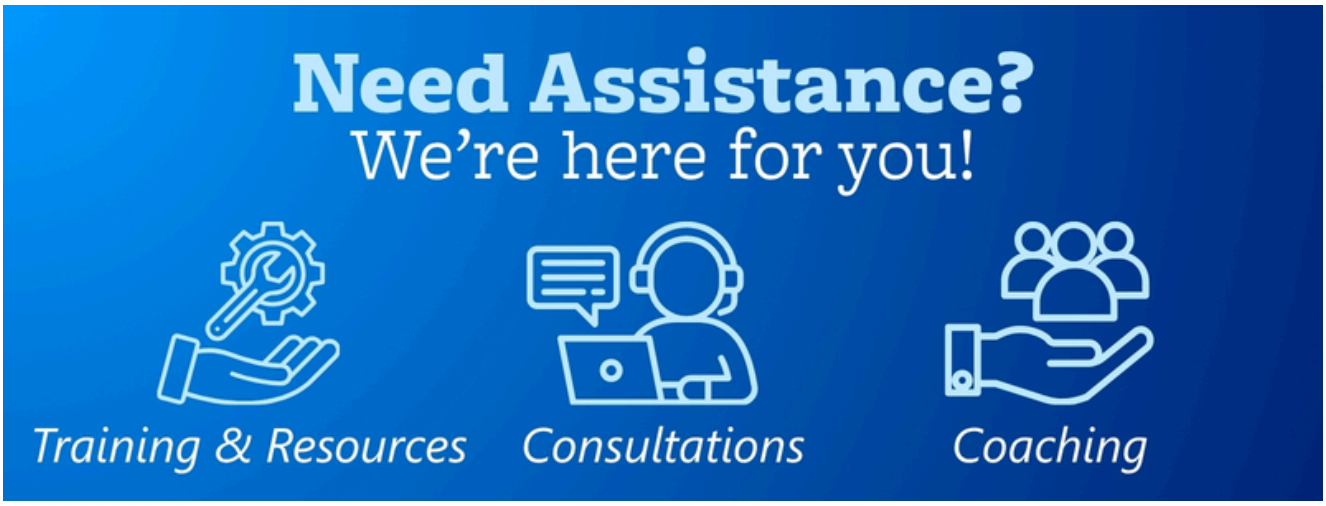
August 5, 1:00 pm CT — in 30 days

LEARNING COMMUNITY



Reimagining Systems of Engagement with Newcomer Men in Behavioral Health - Session 2

August 19, 1:00 pm CT — in 44 days



Contact Us: rmtachelp@rmtac.org

RMTAC

Resource & eMpowerment Technical Assistance
Center for Behavioral Health

Connect with RMTAC on social media!

6002 Jain Ln, Austin, TX 78721