



MIHOW Standards of Practice for Sponsoring Agencies[©]

MIHOW Strength-based Approach: The foundation of all MIHOW services is the recognition that *regardless of living conditions or circumstances every family has strengths*. Helping the MIHOW staff and participants acknowledge and build on these strengths is the fuel that drives each MIHOW program. This process of self-discovery, encouragement, and action begins with the selection and training of outreach workers and continues throughout their MIHOW journey. The workers, in turn, apply the same skills to home visiting, focusing on the needs *identified by the family members* and using the family's strengths to address those needs. This approach sets the stage for healthy living, lasting motivation, and self-sufficiency. As a result, participating families, outreach workers, and the sponsoring agencies become confident and effective activists for improving the health and social services in their communities.

- 1) The MIHOW Strength-based Approach, Standards of Practice, and materials provide the foundation for the development, implementation, and coordination of all MIHOW services.
- 2) The core elements of each MIHOW Program are:
 - mothers serving mothers in their own community
 - relationships beginning in pregnancy
 - manageable caseloads
 - monthly home visits, and
 - opportunities for group involvement.
- 3) Planning and evaluation processes include reflections on the past, visions for the future, and include input from outreach workers and MIHOW families.
- 4) Policies and procedures to ensure the safety of outreach workers during home visits are documented and promoted.
- 5) Family-friendly workplace policies support outreach workers in their roles as parents.
- 6) The training and educational process of each outreach worker:
 - actively involves her in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the training
 - is tailored on an individual basis to address personal strengths and gaps in knowledge and skills
 - is interactive, experiential, and includes peer-to-peer education, case presentations, and mentoring
 - includes shadowing an experienced outreach worker on a home visit and completing the *MIHOW Competencies for Outreach Workers – Level One* before making home visits, and
 - includes continuing education that is regular and on-going and based on the *MIHOW Competencies for Outreach Workers – Levels Two, Three, and Four*.
- 7) The style of guidance and supervision for the outreach workers reflects and models the MIHOW Strength-based Approach.
- 8) Accurate and appropriate records on every participating family are maintained.
- 9) Cooperative and collaborative relationships with health and social service agencies are developed on a local, state, and national level.
- 10) Agency and outreach worker connections with MIHOW workers at other sites and Vanderbilt University are encouraged and supported on a regular and on-going basis, and, at minimum, include attendance at the regional trainings and Annual Conference.