



Workforce Voice as a Strategy for Well-Being

DISCUSSION GUIDE | March 2026

Introduction

Home visitors work at the intersection of families, systems, and organizations. In these interconnected roles, their daily experiences shape not only outcomes for families and programs, but also their own professional well-being. Because of this unique role, home visiting staff can use their voice to share firsthand knowledge of the supports, resources, and conditions that help them thrive and those that create strain. They can draw on their own stories and reflections — including what makes for a good day at work — and use their voice to illustrate the conditions that support strong practice. They can also point to data and positive outcomes achieved with families and use their voice to highlight the connection between workforce well-being and quality services. Together, lived experience and program data provide a compelling foundation for home visitors to voice workforce well-being needs and priorities.

This discussion guide advances the National Strategy for the Home Visiting Workforce's vision for a sustainable, skilled, and supported workforce by providing actionable strategies and tools for workforce well-being. In particular, this guide is part of a series addressing key workforce well-being topics:

- *Understanding Home Visiting Workforce Well-Being*
- *Strengthening Reflective Culture and Practice in Home Visiting*
- *Cultivating Reflective Supervision for Workforce Well-Being and Resilience*
- *Supporting Home Visitor Safety in the Organization and Out in the Field*
- *Fostering Resilience in Stressful Work Environments*

▶ **Workforce Voice as a Strategy for Well-Being**

Each discussion guide is designed to spark reflection, promote the integration of new learnings into practice, and support actionable next steps.



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- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT -

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Workforce well-being is strengthened when home visitors recognize that their perspectives, experiences, and ideas matter. When home visitors use their voice—through communication, reflection, and participation in team and program processes—they help shape workplace conditions in ways that support their own well-being and effectiveness.

This reflects a **parallel process** across systems. The way staff experience support and voice within their organizations often mirrors how they can engage with families. When staff feel heard, respected, and supported, they are better positioned to create those same conditions for families—listening deeply, building trust, and partnering with families around goals and decisions. When staff experience limited voice or insufficient support, it can affect how they engage in their work—for example, they may be less likely to raise concerns, share ideas, or participate actively in team problem-solving. Strengthening workforce well-being therefore strengthens the quality of relationships and services throughout the system.



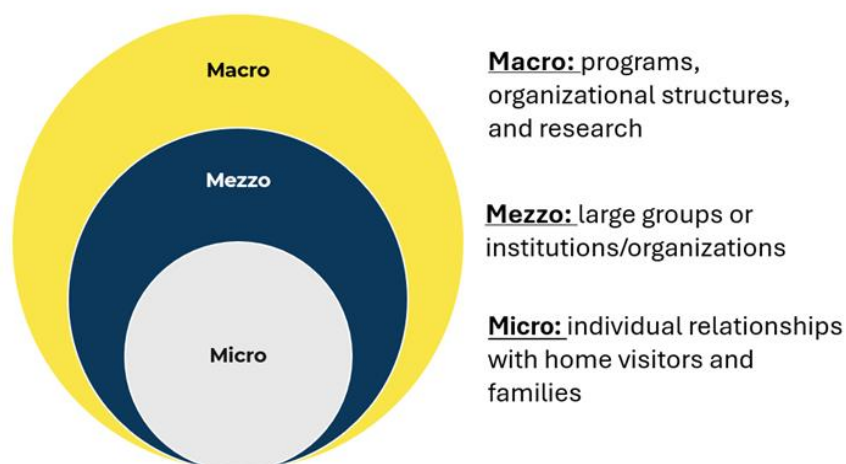
Workforce voice and self-care work together to strengthen workforce well-being. When home visitors use their voice through storytelling, reflection, communication, and sharing data, they help shape the conditions that support professional well-being. Self-care protects resilience and sustains energy for the work. Together, these practices create the foundation for a healthy workforce and stronger relationships with families.

Just as voice matters in work with families, it also matters within teams. Workforce voice is expressed through everyday actions that help shape supportive environments and sustain professional well-being. These actions may include:

- Speaking up for oneself
- Developing problem-solving skills
- Building supportive connections
- Making informed decisions



- Knowing and upholding one's rights and responsibilities
- Seeking and utilizing support
- Taking responsibility for actions and choices
- Recognizing boundaries



Home visiting staff can **use the micro, mezzo, and macro framework**¹ to better understand how they can use their voice to strengthen workforce well-being at the individual, group, and community levels.

Micro level: At this level, practice focuses on **working one-on-one with individuals** to help them make positive changes in their lives. For example, when a supervisor helps a home visitor access professional development or training opportunities.

Mezzo level: At this level, practice focuses on **working with groups (or teams), programs or organizations** rather than individuals. For example, a home visitor submits their “day-in-the-life” story to a local newsletter for National Home Visiting Week.

Macro level: At this level, practice focuses on making changes to the larger system through **programs, organizational structures, and research**. Home visitors and supervisors may not always work directly at this level, but their experiences and insights can still influence decisions that affect many programs and families. For example, a

¹ Miley, K. K., O'Melia, M., & DuBois, B. (2017). *Generalist social work practice: An empowering approach* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.



supervisor might share data with program funders showing how a salary scale helped improve home visitor retention. A home visitor might also share their experience on a local steering committee working to strengthen workforce practices across the early childhood field.

Reflective Supervision offers an opportunity to strengthen workforce voice through everyday practices, such as:

- Exploring system barriers and workplace challenges
- Modeling storytelling and constructive communication
- Celebrating small wins in contributions
- Sharing opportunities to contribute ideas that support workplace well-being

Home visiting staff can cultivate five core skills that help strengthen workforce well-being and promote supportive work environments:

- **Recognizing workplace barriers:** Identifying workplace practices, structures, or processes that make it harder for home visitors to access the support, resources, or opportunities they need to thrive. This includes noticing when aspects of the work environment affect staff well-being and thoughtfully raising those concerns through appropriate channels to improve overall support systems.
- **Storytelling and shaping messages:** Using personal stories, team reflections, and available data to highlight the realities of home visiting work. By connecting day-to-day work experiences to larger team goals and organizational values, home visiting staff can help others understand why staff well-being matters and foster a shared commitment to improving it.



- **Building relationships and partnerships:** Creating trusting relationships with colleagues, supervisors, community partners, and leaders to create a culture of staff well-being. This skill focuses on collaboration, shared responsibility, and collective problem-solving to strengthen workforce well-being.
- **Understanding organizational and early childhood processes:** Knowing how decisions are made within and across early childhood programs and organizations helps home visitors better navigate systems and access available supports. This includes understanding how resources such as staffing, time, and funding are allocated and how to participate in conversations that promote workforce well-being.
- **Practicing leadership and mutual peer support:** Taking initiative to care for your own well-being while also supporting colleagues. This includes mentoring and supporting peers, using healthy communication, encouraging reflective practice, and building an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and comfortable expressing their well-being needs.

Reflection

(Gives you insight)

1. **Which actions do you already use (e.g., speaking up, seeking support, setting boundaries) to support workforce well-being across the micro-, mezzo-, and macro-levels?**



2. Review the five core skills listed above (such as *recognizing workplace barriers*).

Which of the core skills feel like strengths for you? Which feel like areas to grow? Why? What small changes could you make to strengthen your own resilience and well-being?

Strengths:

Growth Areas:

3. What are two opportunities (big or small) where you could encourage workforce well-being in your role? Ex: Using regular team or supervision meetings to raise issues related to workforce well-being—such as high caseloads, lack of mental health support, or burnout—and promote changes that improve staff sustainability; serving on early childhood steering committees or workforce task forces to represent the needs and experiences of home visiting staff.



Integration

(Anchors and personalizes your insight)

The following scenario describes a situation that many home visiting teams experience. As you read it, think about how different staff in a program could use their voice to support workforce well-being. Consider how actions might occur at the micro, mezzo, or macro levels.

Scenario: A home visiting team is experiencing high rates of burnout and above average staff turnover. Program leaders are hearing that some home visitors are experiencing secondary trauma—the emotional impact that can occur when hearing about or witnessing families’ traumatic experiences during home visits. Staff are also expressing that they are feeling like their work is not recognized in the community.

4. How might a program leader use their voice to support staff in this situation?

Include which level of the micro, mezzo, macro framework your example represents.

5. How might a supervisor use their voice to support staff in this situation?

Include which level of the micro, mezzo, macro framework your example represents.

6. How might a home visitor use their voice to support staff in this situation?

Include which level of the micro, mezzo, and macro framework your example represents.



Action

(Turns your insight into real-world change)

7. How can you continue building your voice to support workforce well-being?

What resources or supports do you need? Who are your colleagues and connections across the micro, mezzo and macro levels of your home visiting program that can support you?

8. What specific insights or knowledge from your day-to-day work could be elevated to strengthen workplace practices or well-being supports? What is one concrete step you could take to share them?

9. Where do you see a clear connection between staff well-being and positive family outcomes in your program? How might you use data or examples to improve workforce practices?



Workforce Voice Plan-Do-Study Act (PDSA) Example

A Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle is a step-by-step way to test small changes and learn from them before making bigger decisions. PDSA cycles help teams improve their work in manageable steps instead of making large changes all at once. It encourages learning, reflection, and steady improvement over time. It involves four steps:

 PLAN:	 DO:	 STUDY:	 ACT:
Decide what small change you want to try and what you hope will happen.	Try the change on a small scale.	Look at what happened. Did it work? What did you learn?	Decide what to do next—keep it (adopt), adjust it (adapt), or try something different (abandon).

On the next page is an example scenario and PDSA Plan your team might use to strengthen workforce voice. Try it out using the [Blank PDSA Cycle Worksheet](#) from the *Continuous Quality Improvement Toolkit: A Resource for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Awardees* as your template.

A supervisor has noticed signs of burnout among her home visiting staff and hears that some do not always feel connected to decisions that affect their work. During a team huddle, a few home visitors share that they have ideas for strengthening workplace practices but are unsure when or how to raise them. The supervisor decides to create a structured opportunity for staff to use their workforce voice in a focused and supportive way.



Sample PDSA Plan

PLAN for your change idea	
What is your aim? What change will you test?	We aim to increase home visitors' comfort and clarity in using their workforce voice to share ideas that strengthen workforce well-being. We will test adding a recurring 15-minute "Workforce Voice Check-In" to monthly team meetings.
State the question you want to answer. Make a prediction about what you think will happen.	If we... create a structured and predictable space for workforce voice during team meetings... Then... home visitors will report increased comfort and clarity about when and how to share ideas to strengthen their work environment.
With whom? (start small)	The supervisor will pilot this change with one team of six home visitors.
When? (set a start and end date)	Pilot for two consecutive monthly team meetings, beginning in March. Review results at end of April.
What will you measure? What data will you collect? (keep it simple)	# of staff who contribute during the check-in # of ideas or reflections shared Informal survey: • (Rate 1–5) I feel comfortable using my voice during team discussions. • (Yes/Somewhat/No) I understand when and how I can raise ideas or concerns within my role. • Open-ended: What made it easier or more challenging to contribute?



DO: Try out the change idea on a small scale

Describe what happened.
What observations did you make?

One week before the team meeting, the supervisor shared with home visitors that a new 15-minute “Workforce Voice Check-In” will be added to the agenda. The purpose was explained in advance: to create consistent, supportive space for sharing ideas and reflections that strengthen workforce well-being.

Staff were invited to reflect ahead of time on one observation, idea, or example of what supports strong practice or what creates strain. They were also told that participation is encouraged but not required. 5/5 invited staff attended (1 had a home visit scheduled at the same time).

During the meeting, the supervisor:

- Reviewed the purpose of the check-in.
- Established clear expectations (respectful listening, no immediate problem-solving required).
- Invited all to share verbally or, if preferred, submit written reflections.

Staff were engaged and respectful of each other.

Four chose to participate during the discussion (three shared verbally and one submitted a written reflection). One home visitor chose to listen only.

Ideas related to scheduling flexibility and communication practices were raised.



STUDY your findings and compare them to your predictions	
What did the data tell you?	5/6 staff attended 3/5 shared verbally 1 attendee and 1 non-attendee submitted a written reflection 1 attendee chose to listen during the discussion Comfort with using voice during team meetings- 3/6 Clarity on when and how to share ideas and reflections- 5/6 Reflections: • “As a newer staff member, I appreciated being able to listen first before jumping in.” • “Having the option to submit a written reflection made it easier to organize my thoughts.”
Summarize and reflect on what you learned.	The structured time and advance notice helped staff feel more comfortable using their workforce voice and clearer about when and how to share ideas. Offering different ways to participate, including written reflections, made the space feel more approachable and inclusive.
ACT based on what you learned from the test	
Will you adapt, adopt or abandon this change idea?	Adapt: adjust scheduling and add a reflection prompt to support preparation.
What will you try next?	• Review team calendars to reduce scheduling conflicts and increase full participation. • Share a “What Matters to You?” reflection prompt in advance. • Continue offering verbal and written participation options.



Resources

[National Strategy for the Home Visiting Workforce](#). Building on decades of research and informed by practitioners and leaders, the National Strategy for the Home Visiting Workforce describes a clear, long-term plan to engage the field and key partners in positioning this vital workforce for even greater success, reach, and impact. The National Strategy includes three key pillars—creating pathways to careers, strengthening the workforce, and improving workforce well-being.

[Improving Home Visitor Professional Well-Being: A Resource for State and Tribal Home Visiting Programs, Model Representatives, and Local Programs](#): This brief provides a summary of the *Supporting and Strengthening the Home Visiting Workforce* (SAS-HV) project on home visitor well-being.

[The Landscape Framework: Telling the Story of Home Visiting in Your Community](#): This presentation, delivered at the 2019 National Home Visiting Summit, describes the Landscape Framework as a way to combine data, stories, and design to highlight strengths and needs within home visiting systems. It offers a structured approach to helping the home visiting field tell its story clearly and effectively.

[IHI “What Matters to You?” Conversation Guide for Improving Joy in Work](#): This guide helps leaders guide conversations with colleagues about “What matters to you?” conversations, learning as they go, and resolving issues that arise from such conversations.

[Time to Move Forward: Resilience and Trauma-Informed Care](#): This article highlights the important role of positive experiences and resilience for both clients and health workers. It provides a useful picture of a self-regulation skills card that can support a client, family member or health professional.

[Tips for Giving a Powerful Elevator Pitch](#): This tipsheet includes tools and strategies to create an attention-grabbing pitch, which can support teams in advocating their needs as it relates to workforce well-being.

