

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TRAINING

Newsletter: Quarter 1 / Issue 1 / February 2026



OUR MISSION

The National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA) was established to fill a need for a unified national voice for Latino populations in behavioral health.

NLBHA's Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) Program plays a crucial role in promoting mental health education, reducing stigma, and connecting individuals to vital resources.

MHAT prepares individuals and communities to safely and appropriately respond to persons experiencing mental health challenges.

All MHAT training courses offer NAADAC approved CEU's, and because these training courses are SAMHSA sponsored, they are free to the public and meet SAMHSA's fidelity standards. All trainings are offered via Zoom, giving access to the most rural communities in the State.



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QUOTE "DICHO" OF THE QUARTER

SPA – "Sé amable contigo mismo; estás haciendo lo mejor que puedes."

ENG – "Be gentle with yourself; you're doing the best you can." - Paulo Coelho

Our interpretation: This quote reminds us that true happiness and well-being are not dependent on others, but are the responsibility of the individual. It highlights the importance of self-care, self-love, and self-awareness.

A REFLECTION BY OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR



NLBHA MHAT is proud to have the National Eating Disorders Association as an Affiliate, sharing the same mission to help individuals, families and their communities in attaining the highest levels of wellness. February 24th through March 2nd is Eating Disorders Awareness Week, and throughout February we recognize **Eating Disorders Awareness Month**, a time to pause and remember how closely mental health, self-image, and physical health are intertwined. Eating disorders affect individuals across all ages and backgrounds, yet they are often misunderstood or go unnoticed. Awareness is not just about recognizing symptoms, it's about creating space for honest conversations, compassion, and timely support for those who may be struggling, as well as for their families and caregivers.

February 6th and 7th is an emphasis on mental health, recognizing a **Time to Talk Day**, a simple but meaningful reminder of how important it is to check in with one another. Sometimes support doesn't come from having the right answers, but from being willing to listen without judgment. A single conversation can ease isolation, reduce stigma, and open the door to help. In our work, we see time and again how connection, especially when it feels safe, can make a lasting difference.

We're also reminded of **Random Acts of Kindness Day** on February 17th, which feels especially relevant in the behavioral health field. Kindness doesn't have to be grand or planned. It can show up in patience during a difficult conversation, encouragement offered to a colleague, or a small gesture that reminds someone they are seen. These moments matter more than we often realize.



Dr. Susie Villalobos

February MHAT Newsletter, 2026

As we move through February, I encourage you to take a moment, whether personally or professionally, to reflect on how awareness, conversation, and kindness show up in your own life and work. These observances are not just dates on a calendar; they are invitations to care more deeply for ourselves and for one another.

Thank you for the work you do each day to support mental health and wellbeing in our communities. It does not go unnoticed. The MHAT NLBHA team works to support mental health in our communities, by providing training that is relevant and evidenced-based. Please visit our website for more information regarding our free trainings (State of New Mexico and El Paso County regions). [Mental Health Awareness Training.\(MHAT\) Trainings - NLBHA](#)

Warmly,

Dr. Susie Villalobos

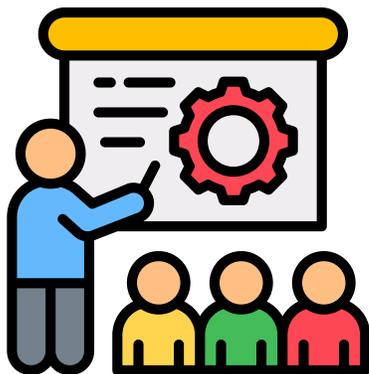
Senior Director, MHAT, NLBHA

MHAT NATIONWIDE SUCCESS



The Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) program strengthens mental health literacy by training community members to recognize, respond to, and connect individuals experiencing mental health challenges to appropriate care. NLBHA, an MHAT grant recipient, has been an active host of trainings, tailoring these evidence-based approaches to address stigma, access barriers, and cultural needs within Hispanic and Latinx communities. Through this work, NLBHA helps build trusted, community-based pathways to early intervention and support.

SAMHSA Overall Training Metrics



- **244,680** individuals trained in mental health related practices and activities
- **487,459** individuals trained in prevention or mental health promotion

- **543,459** individuals referred to mental health or related services
- **80%** of individuals demonstrated improvement in knowledge/attitudes/beliefs toward prevent and/or mental health promotion



Source: SAMHSA

AFFILIATE HIGHLIGHT

National Eating Disorders Association



National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

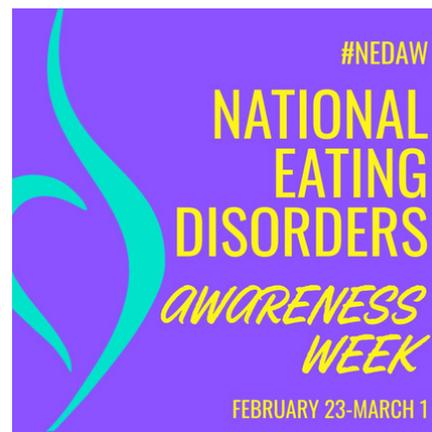
National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (NEDAW), taking place February 23-March 1, 2026, is a time for communities across the country to come together to raise awareness, share knowledge, and reflect on the realities of eating disorders. Eating disorders impact people of all ages, genders, races, backgrounds, and body sizes—yet many individuals go unseen or unsupported due to persistent myths and misunderstandings.

Throughout the week, individuals, schools, organizations, and advocates participate in educational efforts and community conversations that challenge stereotypes and reinforce an important truth: **Every BODY Belongs**. This message reminds us that there is no single look, story, or background that defines who can be affected by an eating disorder, and that understanding and support should be accessible to all.

National Eating Disorders Awareness Week invites everyone to listen to lived experiences, deepen their understanding, and consider how we can create more inclusive, compassionate spaces for those who may be struggling, as well as for caregivers and supporters.

To learn more about National Eating Disorders Awareness Week, explore educational resources, and find ways to engage, visit [**nationaleatingdisorders.org/nedaw**](https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/nedaw).

Concerned you or someone you love may be struggling, take our screening test available in Spanish at [**https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/espanol/**](https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/espanol/).



Voices from the Community

Promotores Supporting Behavioral Health in Doña Ana County



Josie Mendoza



Maria Retana

Josie Mendoza and **Maria Retana** are Community Health Workers and Promotoras in Doña Ana County who grew up in rural areas working in the fields since a young age. Their experiences taught them the value of hard work, compassion, and service. Today, they dedicate their lives to serving their community—advocating, empowering, and connecting families with resources to improve their health and wellbeing.



Anabel Canchola

passionate about reducing stigma and strengthening community wellness through trust and relationship-building.

Anabel Canchola is a community health worker (promotora) serving individuals and families in Doña Ana County with a focus on behavioral health access, education, and advocacy. Her work centers on culturally responsive outreach, mental health education, and connecting community members to local resources. She is

About Our Role:

As Promotoras, we support individuals and families in our community by sharing health information, emotional support, and connecting them with resources. We work to bring hope, education, and understanding to help people live healthier lives.

Working Day:

A typical day includes doing outreach in the community, attending health fairs and events, and providing information about health and emotional wellbeing. Making sure our community receives the support they need.

Connection & Trust:

People feel comfortable talking to us because we share their culture, language, and beliefs. We understand their challenges because we come from the same background. This helps build trust and allows us to have open conversations about mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Challenges and Strength:

Some of the challenges we see are the stigma about mental health, language barriers, and fear of being judged. But our community is strong—our faith, family, and unity help us move forward and heal together.

Final Thoughts:

We are honored to collaborate with NLBHA and to help spread the word about the important work they are doing through the Talk Saves Lives sessions for suicide prevention. Sharing this message with our community helps raise awareness, reduce stigma, and remind everyone that their lives matter and that help is available.

UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS



2026 National Latino Behavioral Health Conference

When:

September 9-11, 2026

Where:

Albuquerque, NM

What to Expect:

- Community-Defined Programs
- Evidence-Based Methods
- Traditional Healing Practices
- Plenary Sessions
- Super Exhibit Hall



Take advantage of Early Bird Registration
[See special rates](#)



American Psychiatric Association Event

When:

April 11, 2026

Where:

Hispanic Cultural Center
Albuquerque, NM

What to Expect:

- Health Fair
- Youth Summit
- Entertainment
- Community & Networking



Rooted in Community, Guided by Learning.

See our upcoming trainings and [reserve your spot!](#)

February 12, 2026
10AM-11:30AM MST

Talk Saves Lives - An Introduction to Suicide Prevention for the Latinx and Hispanic Communities

[Register Here](#)

February 19, 2026
9AM-1PM MST

Intervención Verbal (Crisis Prevention Institute) - en Español

[Register Here](#)

MHAT Contact Information

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 [MHAT Program](#)

 [/MHATNLBHA](#)

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SAMHSA Resources

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- Text, Call, or Chat 988lifeline.org
- Available 24/7
- Disaster Distress Support
- 200+ local crisis contact centers at FindTreatment.gov

988 en Español

- Texto “AYUDA” a 988
- Llamar al 988, pulsar 2
- Chat en linea988.org

SAMHSA’s National Helpline:

1-800-622-HELP (4357)

 samhsa.gov

 [Helpline Resources](#)

 [/SAMHSA](#)

 [/SAMHSAGOV](#)

 [/SAMHSA](#)



2026 **REGISTRATION** *OPEN*
National Latino Behavioral Health Conference
September 9-11, 2026 | Albuquerque, NM



National Latino Behavioral Health Association **NLBHA** **25 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

WWW.NLBHA.ORG