National Latino Behavioral Health Association NLBHA

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TRAINING

Newsletter: Quarter 1 / Issue 4 / November 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.

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

THIS ISSUE

01 Dicho of the Quarter

02 MHAT Award Extended 2026-2029

03 Meet the MHAT Trainers

04 Talk Saves Lives: Suicide Prevention Toolkit

05 Partner Highlight: El Puente de Encuentros

06 Red Ribbon Week with Career Pathways Youth

08 Upcoming Trainings & Events

09 Contact Information & Resources

QUOTE "DICHO" OF THE QUARTER

SPA – "Pies, ¿para qué los quiero si tengo alas pa' volar?"
ENG – "Feet, what do I need them for if I have wings to fly?" **~ Frida Kahlo**

Our interpretation: This quote reminds us to embrace new beginnings with courage, resilience, and hope, recognizing our potential to overcome challenges and pursue new possibilities.

MHAT Award Extended 2026-2029



NLBHA Expands Mental Health Awareness Training Through 2029!

The National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA) is excited to announce that it has been awarded a new three-year grant to continue its Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) program through 2029!

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), MHAT promotes mental health education, reduces stigma, and strengthens community connections to behavioral health resources throughout New Mexico and El Paso County, Texas.

NLBHA offers a variety of FREE trainings, including:

- Mental Health First Aid (Adult and Youth)
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Community Resilience
- Talk Saves Lives: Suicide Prevention
- Verbal Intervention
- Breaking the Stigma: Culturally Grounded Approaches for Hispanic/Latinx Communities

Trainings are available in English and Spanish, with formats varying by course. Continuing Education (CE) credits are provided for eligible trainings, making these valuable opportunities for professionals and community members alike.

Want to bring mental health education to your organization? NLBHA welcomes schools, agencies, and community groups to schedule watch parties and learn together!



Explore upcoming trainings at https://nlbha.org/projects/mhat-trainings/.
For questions or to coordinate a watch party, contact mhat@nlbha.org.

Together, we can build healthier, more informed, and resilient communities!

Meet the MHAT Trainers



Lucila Beaton, LISW-CP/S, LCSW, LCSWC

Lucila graduated with an MSW degree from Yeshiva University. She is an independent licensed clinical social worker specializing as a trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapist. She is also a certified mental health first aid instructor for the National Council on Behavioral Health and a Living Works trainer who provides suicide prevention and intervention training such as ASIST and Safe Talk.

Lucila also offers Triple P parent trainings for levels 2, 3, 4, and 5 and Fearless training in English and Spanish. She is bilingual and bicultural and embraces the intersectionality of being Afro-Latina and all that it entails. She never forgets that she began her career as an ESOL student in the Brooklyn, New York, public school system.

Enrique López-Escalera, JCL, STL, LMSW



Enrique was born in El Paso, Texas and raised in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Since the age of nine he has resided in New Mexico, except for a few years living abroad pursuing higher education. He deeply identifies with the Borderlands and is fully bilingual and bi-cultural. Enrique is a life coach (certified by Transformation Academy). He has post-graduate degrees in Social Work, Canon Law, and Theology as well as a minor in philosophy.

Enrique has 25+ years of experience of serving people directly in southern New Mexico. His range of experience includes spiritual counseling and mentoring in mental and behavioral health. His delivery method is characterized by professionalism, warmth, and simplicity communicating important concepts in easy-to-understand terms.

Talk Saves Lives: Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Talk Saves Lives: Every Conversation Matters

Every September, SAMHSA recognizes Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, reminding us that connection, compassion, and education can save lives.

Through its Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) program, NLBHA offers Talk Saves Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention for Latinx and Hispanic Communities. This free, 90-minute training, available in English and Spanish, helps participants recognize suicide warning signs, understand risk factors, reduce stigma, and support individuals experiencing emotional distress. FREE Continuing Education (CE) credits are provided!

Help spread awareness by sharing SAMHSA's Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit, featuring educational resources, social media graphics, and prevention messages.

Explore upcoming trainings at NLBHA's MHAT webpage.



Need immediate support?

Call or text 988 or visit 988lifeline.org for free, confidential, 24/7 crisis support.

For life-threatening emergencies, call 911.

Partner Highlight: El Puente de Encuentros

El Puente de Encuentros: Cultivating Connection, Leadership, and Collective Healing in New Mexico

El Puente de Encuentros (EPdE) continues to advance healing justice by cultivating culturally grounded behavioral health pathways, mentorship, and community connection across New Mexico.

This fall, EPdE welcomed its 2026–2027 Fellowship cohort, bringing together emerging behavioral health professionals committed to serving their communities. Through mentorship, professional development, leadership opportunities, and community-based projects, fellows strengthen their professional identities while honoring the cultural wisdom, language capita, and lived experiences they bring to the field.

EPdE also continues nurturing its HUB (Healing, Unity, & Belonging), a growing statewide network supporting connection, collective care, and belonging among BIPOC and Indigenous behavioral health professionals, students, and community leaders. Our Summer and Fall HUB gatherings created intentional spaces for relationship-building, shared learning, reflection, and meaningful dialogue. Rooted in the understanding that healing is relational, these gatherings foster solidarity, reduce professional isolation, and strengthen a community of practitioners committed to culturally proficient care.



As EPdE looks ahead, we remain dedicated to building a behavioral health workforce that reflects New Mexico's diverse communities while creating spaces where providers can feel supported, connected, and empowered.

Culture heals. Community sustains. Collective care transforms.

Youth Voices Inspire Healthy Choices During Red Ribbon Week

In celebration of **Red Ribbon Week**, students from the **Career Pathways Digital Storytelling** cohort created substance use prevention flyers promoting healthy choices and community responsibility. **Natalie Aguilar** emphasized supporting others who are struggling, while **Ashlynn Soto** encouraged peers "not to give in to peer pressure and to make choices that are good for them."

The **New Mexico Community Trust (NMCT)** Northern New Mexico Youth Fund awarded a grant to NLBHA's **Connecting Our Voices (COV) Career Pathways initiative**, supporting career education, mentorship, and hands-on learning opportunities for underserved youth in Northern New Mexico. This funding helps students build professional skills and explore future careers.

Follow the Connecting Our Voices Facebook page for youth projects, upcoming opportunities, and community updates! Check us out at **Facebook.com/COVNLBHA**



Flyer by Natalie Aguilar



Flyer by Ashlynn Soto

Youth Voices Inspire Healthy Choices During Red Ribbon Week

Brooklynn Soto and **Jaden Casias** created flyers promoting safe medication disposal to prevent accidental use and protect families.

Through Career Pathways, students develop creative, professional, and leadership skills while making meaningful community contributions.

The next Career Pathways cohort begins November 16, 2026!

Youth interested in participating are encouraged to apply today by completing an application or emailing Elizabeth at elizabeth@nlbha.org.



Flyer by Jaden Casias



Flyer by Brooklynn Soto

Upcoming Trainings & Events

Be the Difference: Get Certified in Adult Mental Health First Aid!

Recognize the signs. Start the conversation. Make an impact.

This **evidence-based training** equips behavioral health professionals with practical skills to recognize and respond to mental health and substance use challenges, provide early intervention, and connect individuals with appropriate resources.

Important Certification Requirement: Participants must complete all online prework before the trainings date and fulfill all training requirements to receive full Adult MHFA certification through the **National Council for Mental Wellbeing**.

Those who attend the four-hour training and complete the required surveys without completing prework will receive a **Continuing Education (CE) Certificate only**, not full MHFA certification.

Thursday, January 28, 2027
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM Mountain Time

Register Here

Rooted in Community, Guided by Learning.

See our upcoming trainings and reserve your spot!

November 19, 2026 9AM-10:30AM MST	Rompiendo el Estigma: Salud Mental 101 **Register Here** – En Español
December 8, 2026 9AM-10:30AM MST	Trauma-Informed Care: Advanced Methods **Register Here**
December 15, 2026 9AM-10:30AM MST	Talk Saves Lives **Register Here**
January 12, 2027 9AM-10:30AM MST	Rompiendo el Estigma: Salud Mental 101 **Register Here** - En Español



MHAT Contact Information

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MHAT Program
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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



We wish you a joyful holiday season filled with peace, warmth, and connection. May the New Year bring good health, happiness, and renewed hope for all.

