Keeping Babies and Children in Mind

Professional Formation Series in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (KBCM) is a series of seven three-hour workshops which promote awareness about the unique relational, emotional, and social development of our youngest children in the context of caregiving relationships. The series is developed to raise the floor of knowledge for the multidisciplinary professional community who support families of young children, aged pregnancy through age 6. Participants receive professional education in evidence-based practices which support the relational, emotional, social and neurological foundations for all development and learning. Included in the KBCM series are topics on promoting infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH), understanding and responding to trauma, supporting child and family strengths, and utilizing reflective practices and self-care. Participants are also provided many opportunities to reflect on their own histories, culture and experiences, and wonder about how their unique development impacts their work with children and families.

While a participant can take one workshop of the series, the most comprehensive learning will be obtained through attending all seven workshops in order from the same facilitator. The sequence of workshops is:

Workshop 1



Introduction to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health: Growing Through Relationships

Workshop 2



Infant and Early Childhood Development: Relational, Emotional, and Social

Workshop 3



The Influence of Stress and Safety on Behavior: New Thoughts and New Actions

Workshop 4



Encountering Early Toxic Stress and Trauma: The Power of Meaningful Connections

Workshop 5



Relationally-informed Practices: Forming Relationships with Families

Workshop 6



Culturally-informed Practices: Me, My Culture, My Context, and My Community

Workshop 7



Reflection-informed Practices: Caring for Ourselves and Advocating for Others

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health

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KEEPING BABIES & CHILDREN IN MIND

Professional Formation Series in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Workshop 1

Introduction to Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health: Growing Through Relationships



<u>Overview of Topic</u>

This session offers participants an overview of early childhood mental health through the examination of "Guiding Principles In Infant Mental Health"(Costa, 1996,2006). These principles examine the remarkable capacities of the newborn and infants during the first three years of life, and examine the forces- both child and parental- that influence the nature of the earliest unfolding relationships. We will examine the impact of caregiving relationships on early brain development. These principles help the participants to focus on approaching early childhood education and caregiving through a thoughtful and principled approach that highlights the infant's capacities, the parental/ familial forces at work, and ways to understand and address challenges when development does not develop smoothly or when there are delays and disabilities. This session sets the stage for developing a reflective and empathetic stance towards families, respectful of their strengths, difficulties and cultural background.

Recommended Duration: 3 hours

<u>New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines</u>

Theoretical Foundations
Knowledge Areas:
Infant/very young child development & behavior
Relationship- focused practice
Family relationships & dynamics

<u>New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards</u>

Domain I: Social & Emotional Development
Components: Trust & Emotional Security
Self-Regulation
Relationships with Peers and Adults

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Professional Formation Series in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Workshop 2

Infant and Early Childhood Development

Relational, Emotional, Social



<u>Overview of Topic</u>

This session offers participants ways to consider the importance of taking a developmental perspective when working with infants, young children and their families. We start by considering the importance of affect and emotion as foundational capacities in early development. We will consider aspects of the infant-parent relationship on early development. Although "ages and stages" information is a necessary part of professional development, this session will focus instead on key indicators of social emotional readiness. It is anticipated that using a "developmental lens" will enhance a provider's foundational knowledge of infant and child development. This session continues the work of developing a reflective and empathic stance towards families, respectful of their strengths, difficulties and cultural backgrounds.

Recommended Duration: 3 hours

<u>New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines</u>

Theoretical Foundations
Knowledge Areas:
Pregnancy & early parenthood
Infant/very young child development & behavior
Relationship- focused practice

<u>New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards</u>

Domain I: Social & Emotional Development
Components: Trust & Emotional Security
Self-Regulation
Relationship-Focused Practice

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Professional Formation Series in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Workshop 3

The Influence of Stress and Safety on Behavior

New Thoughts and New Actions



Overview of Topic

How do we read an infant or young child's behavior to understand what they are trying to communicate or what they need? How do we use the language of the child's behaviors to strengthen their relationships with important caregivers such as parents/foster parents/ grandparents or other guardians? The ability to appreciate the relevance and meaning of behavior is the aim of this topic. The core message is that "behavior" is a form of communication – particularly important when an infant or child is preverbal, has no language or has neither the developmental level or psychological capacities to "tell us" how they are doing and how "we are doing" with them.

Recommended Duration: 3 hours

New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines

Theoretical Foundations
Knowledge Areas:
Infant/very young child development & behavior
Infant/very young child & family centered practice
Relationship- focused practice

New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards

Domain I: Social & Emotional Development
Components: Trust & Emotional Security
Self-Regulation
Relationships with Peers and Adults

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Professional Formation Series in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Workshop 4

Encountering Early Toxic Stress and Trauma

The Power of Meaningful Connections



Overview of Topic

This topic is always provocative and many participants will have some difficulty in thinking about the impact of trauma or loss in infants and children. It is also possible that some participants have encountered loss in their own lives, so this material is not "neutral". Anyone's wish to be silent or "take a break" should the material be difficult will be respected. Trauma and loss can be experienced in various ways by infants and young children. This session will explore the developmental context of exposure to trauma and disasters in infants and young children. Particular emphasis will be placed on the impact of trauma and loss on the developing brain. Participants will gain an understanding of how they can respond to and support infants and young children following a traumatic event. Discussion will include how aspects of the caregiving relationship can support the restoration of positive growth and development in infants and young children.

Recommended Duration: 3 hours

New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines

Theoretical Foundations
Knowledge Areas:
Infant/very young child development & behavior
Infant/very young child & family centered practice
Attachment, separation, trauma, grief, and loss

New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards

Domain I: Social & Emotional Development
Components: Trust & Emotional Security
Self-Regulation
Relationships with Peers and Adults

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Professional Formation Series in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Workshop 5

Relationally-informed Practices Forming Relationships with Families



Overview of Topic

This session will help participants recognize the importance of supporting and fostering the primary relationships in a child's life. We will consider the importance of relationships and emotional connections as fundamental to work with infants, young children, and families. Participants will come to understand the importance of understanding their relationship with the child and with the child's family and how to strengthen these connections on behalf of parent/child relationships. The implications of relationship-based work including the concepts of parallel process and use of "self" will be discussed. We will consider ways to build strong relationships in our work while also maintaining professional and emotional boundaries.

Recommended Duration: 3 hours

New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines

Theoretical Foundations

Knowledge Areas:

Infant/very young child & family centered practice

Relationship-focused Therapeutic Practice

Family Relationships and Dynamics

New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards

Domain I: Social & Emotional Development

Components:

Relationships with Peers and Adults

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Professional Formation Series in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Workshop 6

Culturally-informed Practices

Me, My Culture, My Context, and My Community



Overview of Topic

This session will help participants recognize the importance of recognizing how culture supports and forms "who we become" and "what we believe". We will consider how a family's cultural beliefs are carried out in their caregiving and expectations around child development. It is important for professionals working with diverse families to be aware of their own cultural frame when they come up against beliefs or practices that are different than their own. Professionals can encourage open dialogues with families when they practice respectful curiosity in their work. It is also important to understand how culture supports the emerging social/emotional development of young children. Cultural beliefs and practices influence the child's development in all areas and must be considered when we decide what is normal or atypical in development.

Recommended Duration: 3 hours

New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines

Theoretical Foundations
Knowledge Areas:
Relationship-focused Therapeutic Practice
Cultural Competence

New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards

Domain I: Social & Emotional Development
Components:
Relationships with Peers and Adults

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Professional Formation Series in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Workshop 7

Reflection-informed Practices
Caring for Ourselves and Advocating for Others



Overview of Topic

This session will help professionals become aware of the personal feelings and reactions that get stirred up in our work with infants, young children, and families. We will discuss why it is important to engage in a process of reflection so that we can better use these feelings to understand ourselves and the infants, children and families we serve. The nature of reflective practice allows workers to feel that they are not in this work alone and that they can count on the lessons and support of others to help them determine the course of their work. Staff members are helped to understand the profound, yet often unexamined role their own feelings, reactions and subjective experiences with infants and families has on their work. We will also review ways that professionals can care for themselves so that they reduce the risk of compassion fatigue or burn-out that relationship-based work can induce. Professionals will be made aware of the importance of advocating for policies and actions that promote relational and emotional health.

Recommended Duration: 3 hours

New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines
Theoretical Foundations
Knowledge Areas:
Relationship-focused Therapeutic Practice

New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards
Domain I: Social & Emotional Development
Components:
Relationships with Peers and Adults