



*Natural Wisdom  
Counseling*

# INTRO TO INFANT, EARLY CHILDHOOD, AND FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH: APPLICATIONS FOR EHDI SYSTEMS

JESSICA DALLMAN, MA LPC NCC (IMH ENDORSEMENT IN PROCESS)

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST AT WISCONSIN SOUND BEGINNINGS

EHDI CONFERENCE 2021

“

EVERY RELATIONSHIP HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE THERAPEUTIC...

”





# IMH IN THE 2019 JCIH POSITION STATEMENT

- “...some families may benefit from infant mental health supports” because they “may be at risk for context-specific stressors related to the child being deaf or hard of hearing.”

# WHAT IS INFANT MENTAL HEALTH (IMH)?

- "Infant mental health" refers to how well a child develops socially and emotionally from birth to three.
- Understanding infant mental health is the key to preventing and treating the mental health problems of very young children and their families. It also helps guide the development of healthy social and emotional behaviors.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUONaqn0LZg>



# WHAT IS INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH (I-ECMH)?

- Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development and defined as the developing capacity of a child from birth to age 5 to:
  - Experience, regulate and express emotions
  - Form close and secure interpersonal relationships
  - Explore the environment and learn all in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children
- <https://www.facebook.com/historyofmusic2016/posts/2440825002884086>





## WHAT IS IMH?

- Infant, Early Childhood, and Family Mental Health (aka IMH) is an interdisciplinary, evidence-based framework for approaching early intervention and home visiting which optimizes social, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive development in the context of the parent-child relationship.

# A DEEP LINEAGE

- Selma Fraiberg and *Ghosts in the Nursery*
  - “Why can’t these mothers ‘hear’ their babies cries?”
- Donald Winnicot and “There is no such thing as a baby...”
- John Bowlby (and later Mary Ainsworth, and then Mary Main)
  - Attachment and earned secure attachment
- Rene Spitz
  - Anaclytic depression of infants in orphanages
- Dr. Dan Siegel
  - Interpersonal Neurobiology
- Marinus Van Ijzendoorn
  - Intergenerational transmission of attachment styles

# Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

## The foundation of all future development

*Everyone who touches the life of a child can promote social and emotional well-being*

Social and emotional development, or **infant and early childhood mental health**, is the developing capacity of a child from birth to 5 years old to...



Form close and secure **adult and peer relationships...**



Experience, manage and express a **full range of emotions...**



**Explore the environment** and learn...

...all in the context of family, community, and culture.



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Early connections



last a lifetime.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION

- Early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) is emerging as an effective strategy to help young children and their families increase social and emotional health while decreasing challenging behavior.



# AREAS OF IMH COMPETENCY (FOR ENDORSEMENT)

- Theoretical Foundations
- Law, Regulation, and Agency Policy
- Systems Expertise
- Direct Service Skills
- Working with Others
- Leading People
- Communicating
- Thinking
- Reflection
- Administration
- Research and Evaluation

# COMMON IMH TOOLS AND INTERVENTIONS

- The parallel process
- Emotion Coaching
- Watch, Wait, and Wonder
- Special Play
- Parent-Child Early Relational Assessment and the Brief Early Relational Assessment
- Newborn Behavioral Observation
- Trauma-Informed Care and Trauma Screeners
- Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- Reflective Supervision/Consultation



## IMH AND EHDI: AN IDEAL MATCH

- “Unfortunately, as a group, deaf children and adolescents demonstrate reduced mastery in many of these [social-emotional] areas of competence and thus are at risk for a number of adverse outcomes...” (Calderon & Greenberg, 2011)
- (Greenberg & Kusche, 1989, Marschark, 1997; Meadow, Greenberg, Erting, & Carcmighael, 1981)

**NOW, I FELT THE DEEPER WEIGHT OF MY GENERATIONAL CHAINS. MY BODY, CONFINED BY HISTORY AND POLICY TO CERTAIN ZONES. SOME OF US MAKE IT OUT, BUT THE GAME IS PLAYED WITH LOADED DICE. I WISHED I HAD KNOWN MORE, AND I WISHED I HAD KNOWN IT SOONER...HOW MUCH I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO HAVE A PAST APART FROM THE FEAR. I DID NOT HAVE THAT PAST IN HAND OR MEMORY. BUT I HAD YOU...I WANTED YOU TO HAVE YOUR OWN LIFE APART FROM FEAR. EVEN APART FROM ME. I AM WOUNDED. I AM MARKED BY OLD CODES WHICH SHIELDED ME FROM ONE WORLD AND THEN CHAINED ME IN THE NEXT...FORGIVE ME SON...I AM NOW ASHAMED OF MY FEAR, OF THE GENERATIONAL CHAINS I TRY TO CLASP ONTO YOUR WRISTS...I WISH I HAD BEEN SOFTER WITH YOU. YOUR MOTHER HAD TO TEACH ME HOW TO LOVE YOU, HOW TO KISS YOU AND TELL YOU 'I LOVE YOU' EVERY NIGHT. EVEN NOW, IT DOES NOT FEEL A WHOLLY NATURAL ACT, SO MUCH AS IT FEELS LIKE RITUAL. AND THAT IS BECAUSE I AM WOUNDED...**

*Ta-nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me**



Q&A