



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR Infant Mental Health

CT-AIMH 8-topic Infant Mental Health Training Series *Working in Collaboration to Support Infants, Toddlers and Families with Challenges*

For Department of Children and Families (DCF), Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS), Office of Early Childhood Home Visitors (HV), and their community partners



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood



Virtual statewide training series (due to COVID-19 pandemic)
March- June 2022

The training provided to DCF/EHS/HS/HV staff and community partners by the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) will seek to integrate information about the relationships between infant/toddlers and their caregivers in a practical way. ***Working towards deeper integration between DCF, EHS/HS, HV and their community partners.***

The goal will be to understand more about parents and their young children who are not well integrated into their communities, to understand their relationships and to reflect on what that means for your work. The information will be presented from a strength-based perspective.

The CT Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) provides this training, and the Office of Early Childhood and the Department of Children and Families are sponsors of this training and the resulting reflective consultation groups.

Introduction (for all participants, all facilitators & all presenters!)

March 15, 2022 (10am-12noon)

Meet the presenters and the facilitators and learn about the structure of the virtual training series, including the use of the Padlet (for materials and PPTs).

Topic 1

March 29 (10-12noon) and (1-3pm)
March 30 (10-12noon)

Presenter: Anne Giordano, MA, IMH-E®

Anne specializes in working with infants, toddlers and families; and for more than twenty-five years has worked at EdAdvance (formerly Education Connection) the regional educational service center in western CT. Anne has served as manager of Part C Birth-3 and Early Head Start programs, before moving into the role of Early Childhood Specialist. She has also coordinated numerous state and federal grants addressing the needs of young children experiencing homelessness.

Additionally, for seven years Anne served in the capacity of coordinator of the Region 5, MDE-Foster Care Clinic through Charlotte Hungerford Hospital.

Anne's role as Training Coordinator with CT Association for Infant Mental Health includes developing, coordinating and presenting statewide training in infant mental health for child welfare staff, early care and community providers and home visitors; and facilitating group Reflective Supervision. Anne is endorsed as an Infant Mental Health Clinical Mentor through the CT Association for Infant Mental Health; and presents frequently at local, state, and national conferences on issues related to infant toddler mental health and development.

Topic: Understanding and Observing Infant-Toddler Development; Using Screening Tools to Make Appropriate Referrals; & and Collaborating with Early Child Programs to Best Support Very Young Children and their Families

This day will focus on an overview of the developmental stages of infants and toddlers; a review of social-emotional and developmental screening tools with a relationship-based focus that are appropriate for very young children and their families; interpreting screening results and making appropriate referrals; and collaborating with early childhood community partners.

Objectives:

- a. Understand the developmental stages of infants and toddlers
- b. Recognize potential developmental red flags
- c. Understand the potential impact of infant and toddler development on parents
- d. Understand the benefits of comprehensive screening for infants & toddlers
- e. Describe the various screening tools available for very young children and how to use the screening process as an opportunity to support the parent-child relationship
- f. Identify screening results and make appropriate referrals

Topic 2

April 5 (10-12noon) and (1-3pm)
April 6 (10-12noon)

Presenters: Rebecca Parilla, PhD, IMH-E® & Dana Hillman-Sabato, LPC, RPT-S, IMH-E®

Dr. Rebecca Parilla is a clinical psychologist who has been working in children's behavioral health for over twenty years. She specializes in young children, maternal wellness, trauma, and relationship-based intervention. She currently serves as the Child First National Clinical Director for the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First. Dr. Parilla is endorsed as an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor, Clinical (Level IV-C) by CTAIMH. She has presented at many state-wide and national conferences with topics including maternal depression, the impact of trauma on the developing child, reflective practice and supervision, and mindfulness as a way to mitigate compassion fatigue.

Dana Hillman-Sabato is a Licensed Professional Counselor and serves as the Child First Connecticut Senior Clinical Lead at the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First. Dana has over thirteen years' experience in children's behavioral health and specializes in trauma, attachment, and relationship-based interventions such as Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP). Dana is Endorsed by the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) as an Infant Mental Health Mentor-Clinical and is also a Registered Play Therapist Supervisor through the Association for Play Therapy. Dana is passionate about the use of play and expressive arts to build meaningful, therapeutic relationships and is a trained PeaceLove CREATOR and Life is Good Playmaker.

Topic: Attachment, and Unresolved Trauma and Loss

Attachment, the impact of adversity and trauma on the caregiver-child dyad, and how unresolved trauma plays out in relatedness and other capacities such as reflective and executive functioning will be explored.

Objectives:

- a. Have a deeper understanding of attachment and why early childhood trauma is unique
- b. Have an appreciation of the interaction patterns between the caregiver-child dyad that support attachment in early childhood
- c. Recognize the impact of parent's own unresolved trauma and loss on relationship development

Topics 3 and 4

April 27 (10-12noon) and (1-3pm)

April 28 (10-12noon)

May 4 (10-12noon) and (1-3pm)

May 5 (10-12noon)

Presenters: Michele Fallon, LICSW, IMH-E® & Jane Ellison, LMFT, IMH-E®

Michele Fallon, LICSW, IMH-E®, is an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant with 40 years of experience working with young children and their families in a variety of settings. She has written curricula for the Minnesota departments of health and human services on caring for infants and toddlers in foster care, working with young parents and home visiting. Currently she provides infant and early childhood mental health reflective consultation and training for practitioners working with young children and families across disciplines. Michele is also an instructor in the IECHM program at the U of Minn.

Jane R. Ellison, LMFT, IMH-E® is a community leader in early childhood mental health. She has more than thirty years of experience working with young children and their families, including clinical work in private practice, parent education in Early Childhood Family Education, home visiting, family literacy, child abuse and neglect prevention programs and a domestic violence shelter. Ms. Ellison holds licensure in parent education, early childhood education, and Marriage and Family Therapy, a certificate in infant and early childhood mental health from the University of Minnesota and holds Clinical Level IV Infant Mental Health endorsement through MACMH-IEC. Ms. Ellison is the Minnesota State trainer in Child Parent Psychotherapy and has a private practice 'Nurturing Possibilities' through which she provides clinical work with children birth through age five and their families, reflective consultation, and training. Ms. Ellison is a lecturer at the University of Minnesota in the infant and early childhood mental health masters' program.

Together, Jane and Michele co-authored the online course, *Working with Parents of Young Children: Considerations for Special Populations* through CEED at the University of MN and instructional modules for the Faculty Symposium on Integrating Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Principles into Existing Curricula.

Topic: Integrating a Trauma Lens into Infant Mental Health Practice (1& 2)

This presentation will include an exploration of the impact of trauma on young children and their families, using the four lenses of development, attachment, trauma and culture. The presentation will define trauma for infants and young children, identify trauma effects and why these matter.

- The presentation will offer strategies for engaging families, suggest tools to use, and discuss how to apply the strategies and perspectives to one's work.
- The presentation will provide an opportunity for participants to explore how trauma impacts parenting, and how working with young children and families in the context of trauma can impact the practitioner.

Objectives:

- a. Understand why trauma matters and its impact on relationship development
- b. Identify the effects of trauma on the young child, the parent, the relationship, and the practitioner
- c. Identify strategies for engaging families in the context of trauma
- d. Identify techniques for increasing reflective capacity in the families with whom we work
- e. Learn the value of establishing safety, acceptance and validation before asking for too much change
- f. Consider how this work impacts the practitioner, in tone, presence and emotional availability

Topic 5

May 24 (10-12noon) and (1-3pm)
May 25 (10-12noon)

Presenters: Heather Bonitz Moore, ATR-BC, LPC, IECMH-E® and Jeanette Radawich, LCSW, IMH-E®

Heather Bonitz Moore is currently an Instructor in Clinical Child Counseling at Yale University, Child Study Center where she is a Parent-Child Consultant for Family Based and part of the Senior Clinical Consultation and Training team for the Minding the Baby Program. Prior to joining YCSC Ms. Moore worked as the Director of Clinical Practice overseeing multiple in-home clinical models and outpatient treatment in an FQHC. She has supervised clinical and case management staff, provided in-home treatment and private practice outpatient psychotherapy focusing on trauma. Ms. Moore is also the Endorsement® Coordinator for CT-AIMH and facilitates Reflective Supervision/Consultation groups for CT-AIMH and other groups in CT.

Jeanette Radawich is a Parent-Child Consultant for the Family-Based Recovery Program [FBR] in New Haven, CT and an Assistant Clinical Professor of Social Work at the Yale Child Study Center. The FBR program provides intensive in-home substance use treatment and parent-child dyadic work to families with a child under the age of 36 months. Ms. Radawich worked as an in-home clinician at the Yale Child Study Center for many years. She provided various services addressing substance use, homelessness, and the parent child relationship. Ms. Radawich is endorsed by the Connecticut Association of Infant Mental as an Infant Mental Health Mentor-Clinical.

Topic: Observing Parents/Caregivers-Child Relationships

- Recognizing our own triggers and vulnerabilities, managing reactivity, and moving from reactivity to reflection
- Fine-tuning observation skills using multiple video case presentations for viewing and learning

Objectives:

- a. See how learning from this session will facilitate an increase in reflective awareness
- b. Enhance ability to observe parent child interactions
- c. Increase sensitivity to parent-infant interactions (especially when unresolved trauma is involved)
- d. Understand the importance in developing strategies to emotionally regulate, slow down, & reflect, which is different than being in constant reactive mode (through video and case presentations)

Topic 6

May 31 (10-12noon) and (1-3pm)

June 1 (10-12noon)

Presenter: Carlita Elias, PsyD, IMH-E®

Dr. Carlita Elias, Psy.D. is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Manchester CT. She also serves as Vice President of the CT-AIMH Board of Directors. She has focused her career on the field of infant and early childhood mental health and has been a champion for infants, toddlers, young children and their families in Connecticut for many years. She has previously worked as a clinician for Child First, a Head Start Mental Health Consultant, and program manager for a trauma informed therapeutic childcare program. She is a registered facilitator for Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) and COSP-Classroom and is a certified FLIP IT trainer. She is also a registered provider of Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP). She provides training and workshops on topics related to infant and early childhood mental health, addressing challenging behaviors in early childhood and incorporates and anti-racism and equity perspective in all aspects of her work.

Her professional interests include maternal mental health, infant and early childhood mental health, intergenerational trauma, attachment/relationship based therapeutic modalities, and reflective supervision. She holds a national Endorsement as a Level III Infant Mental Health Specialist and is a Reflective Supervisor. She received her degree in psychology from the Graduate Institute of Professional Psychology at the University of Hartford where she has been an adjunct instructor for Child Psychotherapy, Family Therapy, and Professional Practice Seminar. Dr. Elias lives in CT with her husband and three teenage children.

Topic: Culturally Responsive Framework for working with young children and their families

Understanding the values, beliefs and assumptions that we bring to our work. Looking at culture in family systems, how culture affects caregiving/parenting, and how culture affects early attachments.

Objectives:

- a. Understand where one finds "culture" when working with infants/toddlers and their families
- b. Learn what skills a home visitor needs to glean a family's culture
- c. Understand the importance of family priorities and daily routines in promoting development
- d. Understand how one's own cultural experience can impact interactions with families

Topic 7

June 22 (10-12noon) and (1-3pm)

June 23 (10-12noon)

Presenter: Dr. Brenda Jones Harden

Dr. Jones Harden is the Alison Richman Professor of Children and Families at University of Maryland School of Social Work and Professor Emerita of the Early Childhood Education program at the University of Maryland College Park. Dr. Jones Harden's work centers on the development and mental health of maltreated, foster, prenatally drug-exposed, and other children at-risk; prevention science and program evaluation; and the effects of early intervention programs such as Early Head Start and home visitation.

Topic: Family Time: Promoting Parent-Child Relationships in the Context of Child Welfare Visitation

Participants will learn why visitation is important for infants, young children, and their families and how to optimize visitation to ensure the best outcomes for young children and their families.

Objectives:

- a. Understand infant mental health perspective when working in child welfare and early childhood intervention programs, such as Early Head Start
- b. Explore best practices and research relevant to family time visitation
- c. Learn strategies to enhance the relationships between birth parents and their children who have experienced foster care placement
- d. To learn strategies that promote bioparent and foster parent positive relationships
- e. Identify evidence-based interventions to improve parenting of high-risk parents.
- f. To reflect on personal experiences and feelings in work with families and children

Topic 8

June 29 (10-12noon) and (1-3pm)

June 30 (10-12noon)

Presenters: Grace Whitney, PhD, IMH-E® and Heather Bonitz Moore, MS, ATR-BC, LPC, IMH-E®

Grace Whitney is active in the CT Association for Infant Mental Health and holds the CT Endorsement® in Infant Mental Health. She is the former director of the CT Head Start Collaboration Office, and now does work with School House Connection on the topic of children and homelessness.

Heather Bonitz Moore is currently an Instructor in Clinical Child Counseling at Yale University, Child Study Center where she is a Parent-Child Consultant for Family Based and part of the Senior Clinical Consultation and Training team for the Minding the Baby Program. Prior to joining YCSC Ms. Moore worked as the Director of Clinical Practice overseeing multiple in-home clinical models and outpatient treatment in an FQHC. She has supervised clinical and case management staff, provided in-home treatment and private practice outpatient psychotherapy focusing on trauma. Ms. Moore is also the Endorsement® Coordinator for CT-AIMH and facilitates Reflective Supervision/Consultation groups for CT-AIMH and other groups in CT.

Topic: Reflective Practice, How Infant Mental Health Principles Can Be Integrated in the Workplace, IECMH Endorsement®, and Reflective Supervision/Consultation

Participants will gain an understanding of the concepts embraced in reflective practice (respect, relate, reflect and repair), in practicing responses that promote reflective practice, and in developing plans for infusing reflective practice in their workplaces. They will also gain an understanding of IECMH Endorsement®, best practices in Reflective Supervision/Consultation and be offered an opportunity to participate in a RS/C group for the next 12 months.

Objectives:

- a. Define reflective practice and its importance
- b. Understand how to be reflective
- c. Understand how to promote reflection in others
- d. Understand what a reflective culture is and how it can be fostered in the workplace
- e. Practice strategies for using reflective practice
- f. Learn about IECMH Endorsement®
- g. Learn the best practices of Reflective Supervision/Consultation

Bios for Small Group Facilitators:

Heather Bonitz Moore (above)

Carlita Elias (above)

Anne Giordano (above)

Margaret O'Connell MSEd, LCSW, IMH-E®

Margaret began her journey as a NYC Teacher. She has over twenty years of experience working with children with Special Needs, their families, and Caregivers. She has worked in public and private school settings, Head Start, Trauma Informed Childcare and Home Visiting with Birth to Three. Currently she works in a Private Practice serving with Families and children. She leads a Reflective Supervision Consultation group and supports CTAIMH Trainings for DCF Clinicians and Childcare Providers.

Desirée Caporaso, LCSW, IMH-E®

Desirée graduated from Fordham University with her master's in social work with a concentration in Client Center Management and Specialization in Social Work in the Law. Desirée has over 10 years of experience facilitating evidence-based interventions to youth and families in outpatient and community-based settings. She is endorsed in Infant Mental Health and trained in providing Reflective Supervision and Consultation. Desirée was a center-based clinician for adolescents involved in the Juvenile Justice system, she was a Program Director for a school based early identification and intervention program and for the last 7 years has been a Community Coordinator with the Zero To Three Infant and Toddler Court Team Program. Desirée provides service coordination for the most at-risk youth in child welfare and prides herself on building and maintaining quality relationships with providers, attorneys, judges, child welfare staff, parents, and caregivers. As an active member in her community, Desirée facilitates a group of champion stakeholders to identify gaps and needs in communities that serve infants and toddlers. She is a certified facilitator of Triple P-Group and Circle of Security. Desirée has been actively involved in local and statewide collaboratives and taskforces since the beginning of her professional career. She is a longstanding and active member of a local Regional Early Childhood Council and an active member of the Professional Development Committee for CT's Association of Infant Mental Health. Desirée is life member of Girl Scouts and a Gold Award recipient. She is the proud mother of a 3.5-year-old and infant boys; her family enjoys camping and being outdoors. Whenever asked to describe her role working with families, Desirée's response is "I am one part of a larger team, by working collaboratively and maintaining communication we are providing better services to our families to ensure lasting permanency for the youngest of children. I am honored and blessed to have found my place in the world of Social Work and have some of the greatest colleagues."