**Infant Mental Health: Theory to Practice**

Multi-Disciplinary Training

*The Society for the Protection and Care of Children*

**Training Description**

A ten week training course entitled “Infant Mental Health and Early Childhood Development”. This course focuses on the theory and practice of Infant Mental Health, and Infant-Parent Psychotherapy and provides information on attachment theory and psycho-dynamic practice, secure attachment characteristics, and the social/emotional/attachment development from ages 0-3 years.

**Course Objectives**

* Gain a clear and deep understanding of fundamental theories of Infant Mental Health, Attachment Theory, and Social/Emotional/Attachment Development for children 0-3 years old.
* Gain exposure and practice in working from an Infant Mental Health prospective when serving children 0-3 years old with their parent/caregiver.
* Gain a exposure to assessment and diagnostic criteria in the field of Infant Mental Health from commonly used and rigorously studied tools (eg: Emotional Availability Scales) and the diagnostic manual for infants, the Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood: Revised Edition (DC:0-5)
* Engage in the practice of self-reflection and awareness in order to notice counter-transferential issues and one’s own “ghost from the nursery” (Fraiberg) that arise when working with children 0-3 years old and their caregivers.
* Meet 25 hours of training criteria for the New York State Association for Infant Mental Health Endorsement.

**Rationale**

New York State, and the Rochester area specifically, are experiencing an increased valuing of and demand for Infant Mental Health specialists in all disciplines. Fortunately, The New York State Association for Infant Mental Health’s joined the national trend by adopting The Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health's *Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health®*. The Endorsement® system is the premiere, global effort that identifies best practice competencies across disciplines and settings, offering multiple career pathways for professional development in the infant, early childhood and family field. This course aims to meet many of the educational criteria for the New York State Infant Mental Health Endorsement of 30 hours of Infant Mental Health training, and will allow professionals to purse this post-degree specialization and credential; a specialization and credential in high demand in the Rochester area with 1,000’s of children 0-3 years old and their parents impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Please visit nysaimh.org for further details about the trajectory of Infant Mental Health across the state and the Endorsement process.

**Participants**

This course is applicable for professionals and current students with a strong curiosity, interest and possible current practice in working with parents and infants/young children from a deep, clinical perspective. Additionally, clinicians and professionals may be interested in taking this course in order to be prepared for the NY State Infant Mental Health Endorsement that will be rostering Infant Mental Health Specialists from multiple disciplines, adding to qualified and well trained professionals in our community. Finally, professionals who work as leaders, advocates and policymakers in infant and young child serving professions will find this training useful in imbedding best practices in their particular disciplines and organizations. These disciplines, fields and professions include nurses, child-life specialists, social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists, policy makers, physicians, home visiting professionals, therapists, clinical supervisors, child welfare, attorneys for children, early childhood educators, and program directors.

**Coursework Details**

This course focuses on attachment theory, Infant Mental Health, Social-Emotional Development of children 0-3 years old, the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, in particular trauma and attachment disruptions, assessment and diagnosis of the parent-infant relationship and the social-emotional and attachment health of the infant.

Weatherston (2000) highlights the tenets of Infant Mental Health that are guideposts for this course:

1) Optimal growth and development occur within nurturing relationships.

2) The birth and care of a baby offer a family the possibility of new relationships, growth and change.

3) What happens in the early years affects the course of development across the life span.

4) Early developing attachment relationships may be distorted or disturbed by parental histories of unresolved losses and traumatic life events (“ghosts in the nursery”)

5) The therapeutic presence of an Infant Mental Health specialist may reduce the risk of relationship failure and offer the hopefulness of warm and nurturing parental responses.

Cost

SPCC has a deep commitment to building multi-disciplinary Infant Mental Health Capacity in Western New York. While the full cost of the training is $1000 per participants, we are pleased to announce that through generous support from local partners, we are able to underwrite 50% of the cost for this year's training, resulting in the participant cost of $500. Additionally, some scholarships are available for professionals who are committed to attending but require additional financial support.

Schedule of Offered Trainings

This ten week training is typically offered twice per year, with the first session beginning in the third week of January, and the second session beginning the 2nd week of September. The training meetings occur for ten consecutive Wednesdays from 9:30-11am.

**Instructors**

Sarah Fitzgibbons, LMHC, MT-BC, IMH-E®, Infant Mental Health Mentor- Clinical has spent the past 18+ years practicing, researching, supervising, teaching and developing programs in the field of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, with a specific expertise in infants and young children impacted by trauma, loss, attachment disruptions, child welfare, and parent-child relationship assessments. Sarah currently works as the Clinical Director at The Society for the Protection and Care of Children in Rochester, NY. Sarah holds a Bachelor’s degree in Music Therapy, and a Master’s Degree in Counseling Psychology from Naropa University and completed post-Masters training in Infant Mental Health through the University of Colorado (The Kempe Center). In 2015, Sarah was invited to participate as one of six I-ECMH experts across New York State to become Endorsed at the highest level in the field: Infant Mental Health Clinical Mentor (IMHM-C). She is a governing board member for The New York State Association for Infant Mental Health (NYS-AIMH), and serves as the Endorsement Committee Chairperson for NYS-AIMH. Additionally, she works with national I-ECMH leaders to advance the field, ensure fidelity, and increase capacity. In addition to her role at SPCC, Sarah is an instructor of Infant Mental Health coursework at The Warner School of Education (University of Rochester). Sarah is deeply committed to cultivating and nurturing Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health expertise across our community and state through relationship based, culturally sensitive practice, teaching, supervision, and consultation. Above all other training, education, experience and license, Sarah has been most deeply challenged, enriched and inspired in her professional work through her lifelong role as a mother and daughter.

Megan Smith,MT-BC, LCAT,is an Infant/Early Childhood Therapist in the Family Trauma Intervention Program at Society for Protection and Care of Children in Rochester, NY. Megan is also co-founder and executive director of 501(c)3 Alice's Encore: Community Music & Mindfulness, Inc. As a music therapist, she has experience working with people of all ages and abilities in educational, medical, behavioral health, and private settings. Her clinical and academic research has included Group Music Therapy for Empathy and Self-Esteem Development in Children, and Development of a Model for Music Therapy in the Pediatric Emergency Department. She presents on and trains in the topics of Trauma, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, Mindfulness, and Music Therapy at the local and national level. Megan currently sits on the Training and Education Committee of the NYS Association for Infant Mental Health and the ECDI Social-Emotional Committee.

*"Infant mental health" is defined as the healthy social and emotional development of a child from birth to 3 years; and a growing field of research and practice devoted to the promotion of healthy social and emotional development, prevention of mental health problems; and treatment of the mental health problems of very young children in the context of their families.*

*- Zero To Three*

**Training Schedule**

Class 1- Introduction to the Theory and Practice of IMH

Class 2- The Importance of Attachment Security.

Class 3- IMH & Implications of Pregnancy/Labor/Delivery

Class 4- Social, Emotional & Attachment Development of Infants 0-3 years.

Class 5-

* + Understanding how “problems are defined”
  + Clinical assumptions in IMH
  + The language of interaction in IMH
  + Home Visiting in IMH

Class 6-

* + IMH social history taking
  + Baby as transference object
  + IMH and ambivalence

Class 7-

* + Cancellations, lateness and missed appointments in IMH
  + The IMH specialist’s interaction with the baby
  + Building a referral network
  + Countertransference and the need for reflective supervision.

Class 8- IMH and trauma

Class 9- Multi-disciplinary IMH assessment

Class 10- Multi-disciplinary IMH general intervention