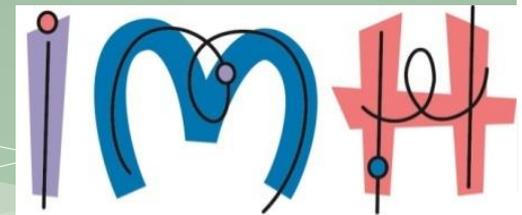


# Reflective Supervision: Supporting and Building Relationships and Resiliency

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WISCONSIN ALLIANCE FOR  
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

— Early Relationships Matter —

**WI-AIMH**



## **PROFESSIONAL HOME**

Those who serve or work on behalf of  
infants, toddlers, and their families.

Cross-Discipline  
Variety of settings  
Variety of Roles

# Taking a moment to settle...



Mind Full, or Mindful?

# For Today: Agenda



- \* Welcome and Introductions
- \* Grounding Ourselves in IMH principles & Holding the Baby in Mind
- \* Witnessing Dyads: What comes up for you? (Exercise)
- \* What is Reflective Supervision and why is it critical to our work and well-being?
- \* Essential Elements of Reflective Supervision (RS)
- \* Setting the Stage for Implementing Reflective Supervision
- \* Next Steps – Implementation Planning

# Word Cloud

- \* Write down 3 qualities that jump to mind when you think about your best supervisor
- \* Write down 3 qualities that jump to mind when you think about your worst supervisor



# Word Cloud Share Out

- \* What do you notice?
- \* What surprises you?
- \* What might this mean to you as you embark on becoming a Reflective Supervisor?



**Best Practice Guidelines**  
for Reflective Supervision/Consultation

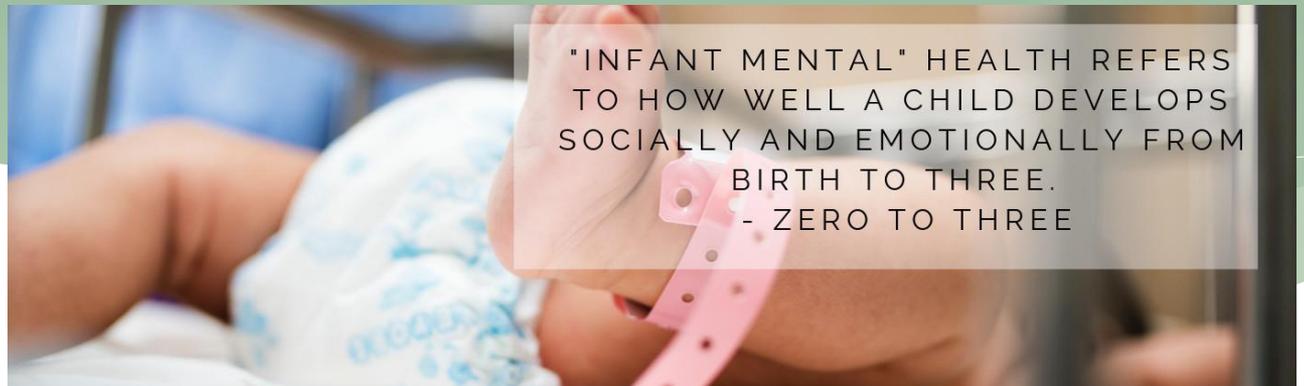


Alliance for the Advancement of  
Infant Mental Health

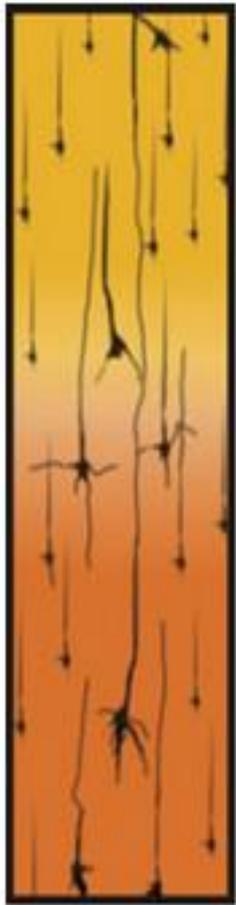


Michigan Association for  
Infant Mental Health  
Learning and growing together.

# Understanding Infant Mental Health promotes Reflective Practices



"INFANT MENTAL" HEALTH REFERS  
TO HOW WELL A CHILD DEVELOPS  
SOCIALY AND EMOTIONALLY FROM  
BIRTH TO THREE.  
- ZERO TO THREE



Newborn



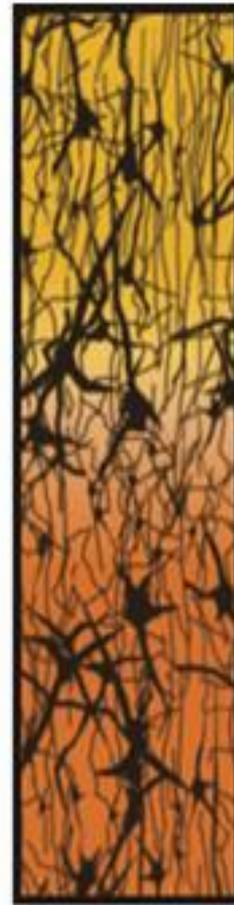
1 Month



9 Months



2 Years



Adult

### Synapse Density Over Time FIGURE 3

Source: Corel, J.L. The postnatal development of the human cerebral cortex. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 1975.

# Infant Mental Health (IMH)

The developing capacity of the child from birth to five 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 culture*

*Adapted from a working definition developed by Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families—Infant Mental Health Task Force*

# IMH Values – Knowing, Doing, Being

- \* The earliest years lay the foundation for future successes.
- \* ***All development occurs within the context of relationships.***
  - \* Children develop & thrive within the context of healthy supportive relationships.
  - \* Our need for supportive relationships never ends, adults also thrive and do their best within the context of healthy relationships.
- \* Developing IMH competencies involves the emotions as well as the intellect.
- \* Awareness of powerful attitudes & feelings is as essential as the acquisition of scientific knowledge & therapeutic skill.

***How you are matters greatly!***

# What do Professionals in the Field of IMH actually do?

The field of IMH is **multi-disciplinary and inclusive**

Professionals attend to the social and emotional needs and experiences of the infants and toddlers (**Holding the Baby in Mind**)

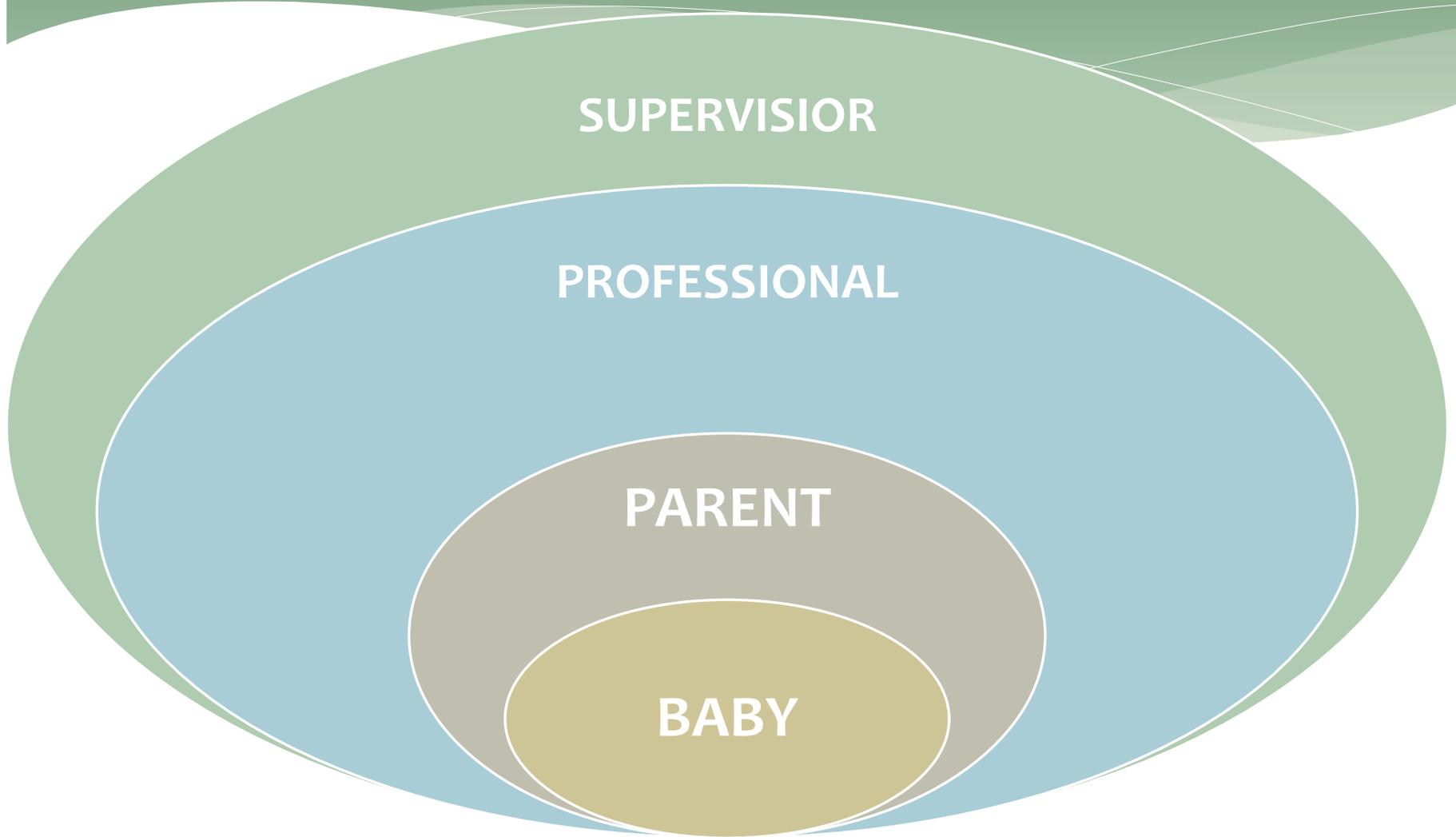
**AND**

Attend to the relationships surrounding the infants and toddlers (often parents and significant caregivers).  
Intervening at the relationship level & focus on what's happening (or not happening) **between** the dyad.

**“There is no such thing as a baby, there is a baby and someone...” D. W. Winnicott**



# The Parallel Process and Concept of “Holding”



# Some Key Themes in Infant Mental Health & Relationship- Based Work

## **Ghosts in the Nursery** – Seminal work by Selma Fraiberg

- \* Knowledge of early development
- \* Understanding attachment relationships
- \* Understanding/honoring the family's story
- \* Parents own experiences of being parented & how the past affects the present
- \* Risk/protective factors (ghosts/angels)
- \* Resilience
- \* Rupture and Repair

# IMH work is emotional and requires reflection



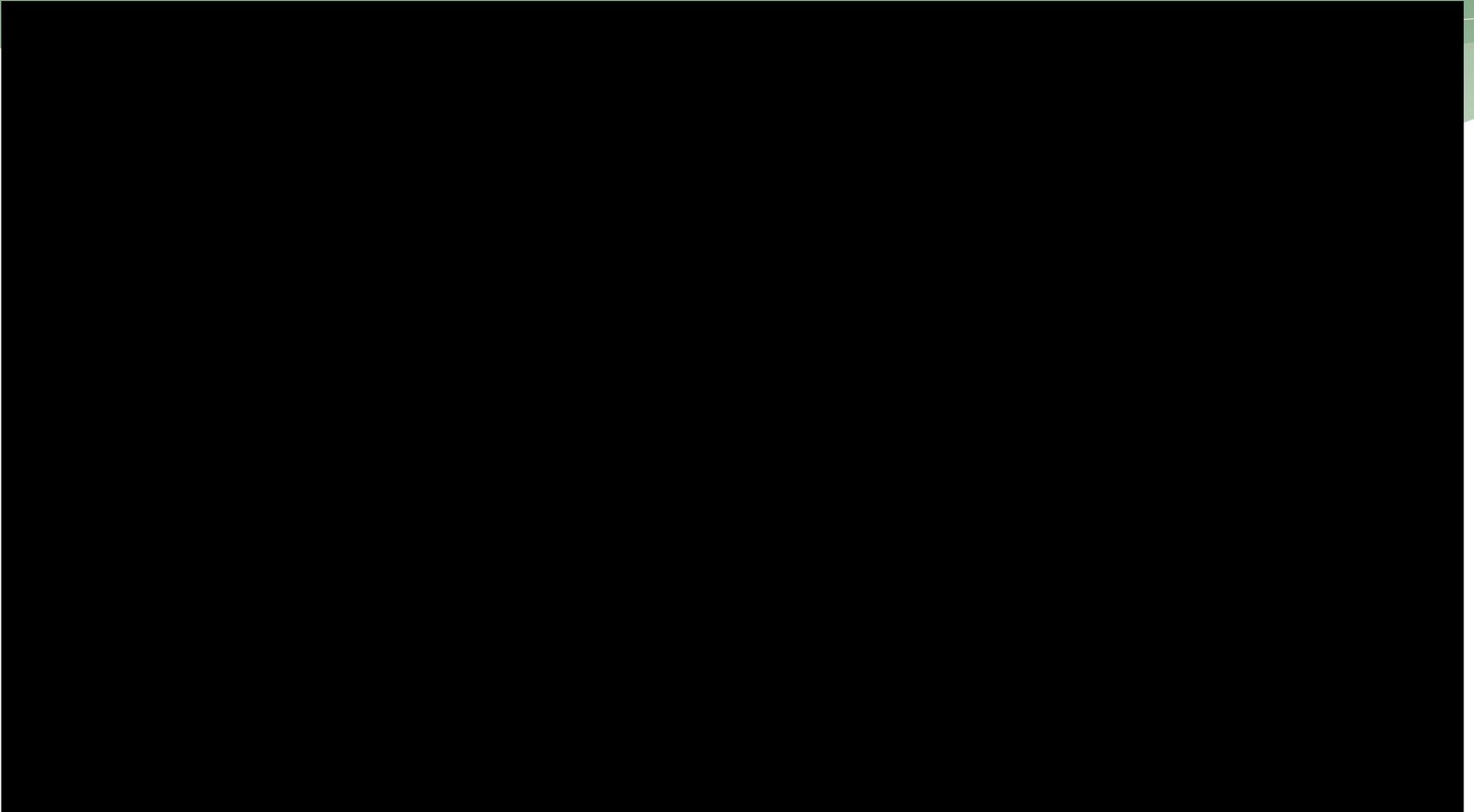
- \* We all experienced childhood
- \* Working with infants, toddlers, young children and their families evokes a range of emotions, and even triggers, at times
- \* Our own experiences may cloud how we view a child, family, situation or experience we are presented with

Witnessing Dyads: What  
comes up for you?

# Video 1 – Dad and Baby Conversation

- \* What emotions came up for you as you watched this clip?
- \* What other reactions (thoughts, sensations, wonderings) did you notice?
- \* What's happening with the baby? What do you think the baby is feeling?
- \* How about dad, what's going on with him?

# Dad and Baby



## Video 2 – Baby and Mom’s Shirt

- \* Describe your emotional reaction to this clip?
- \* What’s happening with the baby?  
What do you think the baby is feeling?
- \* What might this caregiver be experiencing?
- \* What else are you curious about?

# Baby and Mom's Shirt



# Video 3 – Baby in Yellow Shirt

- \* What's happening with the baby?  
What emotions might this baby be experiencing?
- \* What might this caregiver be thinking or feeling?
- \* What else did you notice?
- \* What else are you curious about?

# Baby in Yellow Shirt



# Reflective Practices



# Definition of Reflection

- \* Reflection is a skill that develops over time and in the context of secure and nurturing relationships
- \* Includes awareness of one's personal beliefs, thoughts, and feelings as well as knowledge of how these beliefs and practices affect others

(pg. 654 Eggbeer et al, 2007)

# Reflection & Parallel Process

- \* For **Children** – develops through safe, trusting parent-child relationships
- \* Includes: having and expressing feelings in response to something experienced, being curious about feelings, exploring meaning, sharing observations, staying open to what others are experiencing, taking another's perspective

# Reflection and Parallel Process

- \* For **Parents/Caregivers** – develops through relationship-based services & supports
- \* Includes: ability to have and explore thoughts and feelings about the baby, understand the baby's behavior, take the baby's perspective, wonder about baby's experiences, and hold experiences in mind

# Reflection and Parallel Process

- \* For **Professionals** - develops in a supervisory relationship that is safe for learning
- \* Includes: exploration of new ideas, sharing personal thoughts, expressing emotional responses to challenging work with another, more experienced supervisor or consultant

(Shea, Goldber, and Weatherstone, 2016)

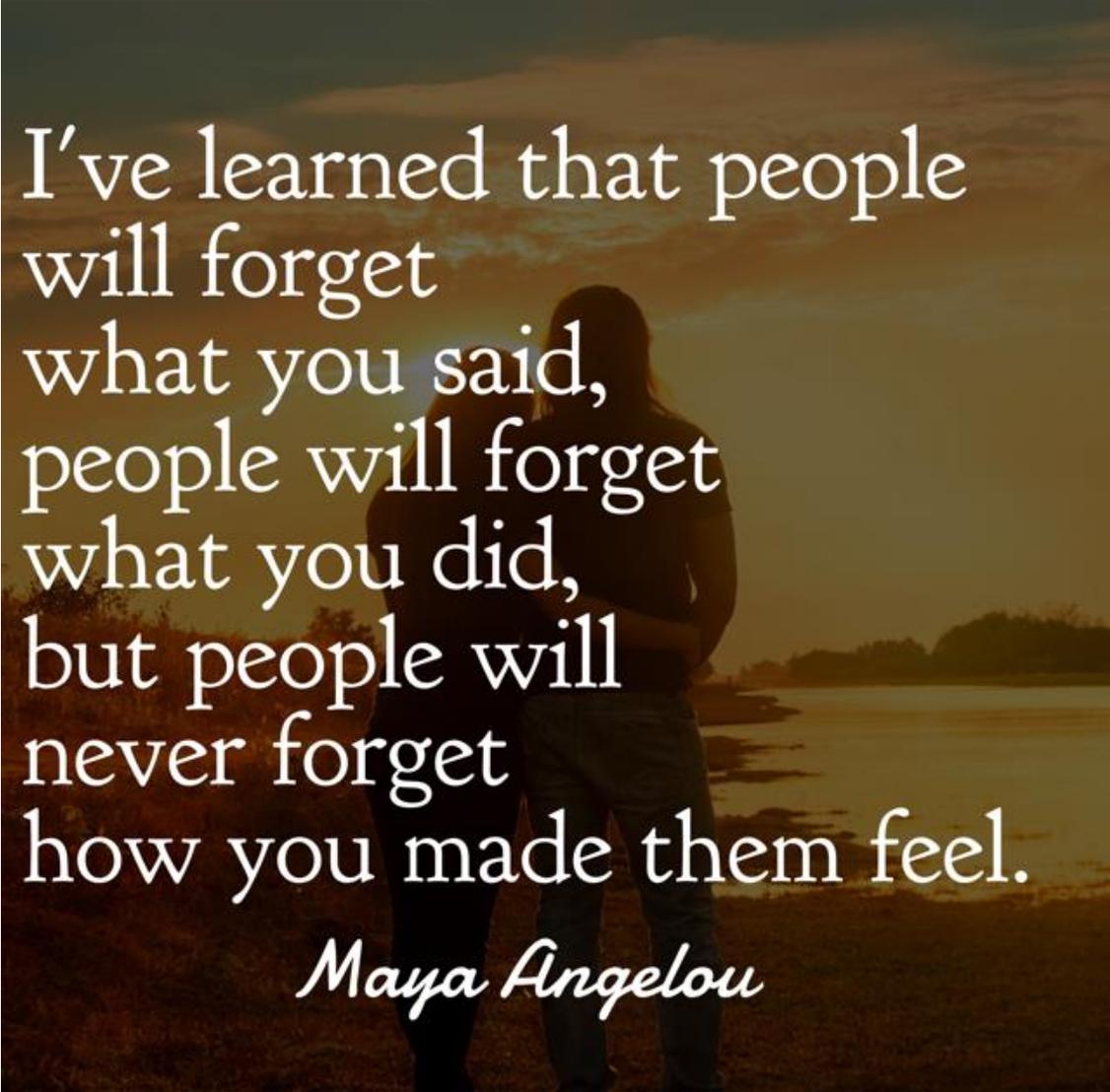
# Group Check In

- \* What does being reflective mean to you?
- \* How do you define Reflective Supervision?



# Relationships Matter!

How does  
Reflective Practice affect  
Organizations?

A person is standing on a beach, looking out at the ocean during sunset. The person is silhouetted against the bright, golden light of the setting sun. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The water is calm, and the beach is visible in the foreground.

I've learned that people  
will forget  
what you said,  
people will forget  
what you did,  
but people will  
never forget  
how you made them feel.

*Maya Angelou*

# Many Hats...



1. Administrative Supervision
2. Clinical Supervision
3. Reflective Supervision

# Defining Reflective Supervision

□ Reflective practice is a way of practicing in which the professional is able to step back from the immediate, intense experience of hands-on work and take time to consider what the experience really means.

- \* What does it tell us about the child and family, and about ourselves?

(Parlakian, 2001)

□ When a provider seeks the support of another, more experienced, worker to regularly and collaboratively engage in reflection about work with families

(Tomlin, Hines, Sturm, 2016)

# Components of Reflective Supervision



- \* **Collaborative** approach to problem-solving & shared goals
- \* **Regular** consistent, predictable opportunity to be together
- \* **Relationship-based/Reflective** in order to step back and consider situations and relationships from multiple perspectives

E. Fenichel

# Safety is Key to Relationships

- \* Safety
  - \* Authenticity
  - \* Explore emotional experience
  - \* Cherish strengths, partner around vulnerabilities
  - \* Wonder together and discover next steps
  - \* Leads to growth

Shamoon-Shanok, 1991 & Heller & Gilkerson, 2009

HOW you are is as important  
as what you do... Jeree Pawl



# Reflective Practices

## Promotes:

- \*Pauses... Mindfulness... Slowing down
- \*Self-Awareness & Self-Regulation
- \*Compassion for self & others
- \*Confidence in developing solutions
- \*Collaboration
- \*Consideration of ALL the relationships

# Distinguishing Characteristics

- \* Relationship-based
- \* **Parallel Process**
- \* Reflective Function
- \* **Mindfulness Practice**
- \* **Ecological Perspectives**
- \* Feelings Matter
- \* **Strength-Based**
- \* **Ruptures & Repairs**

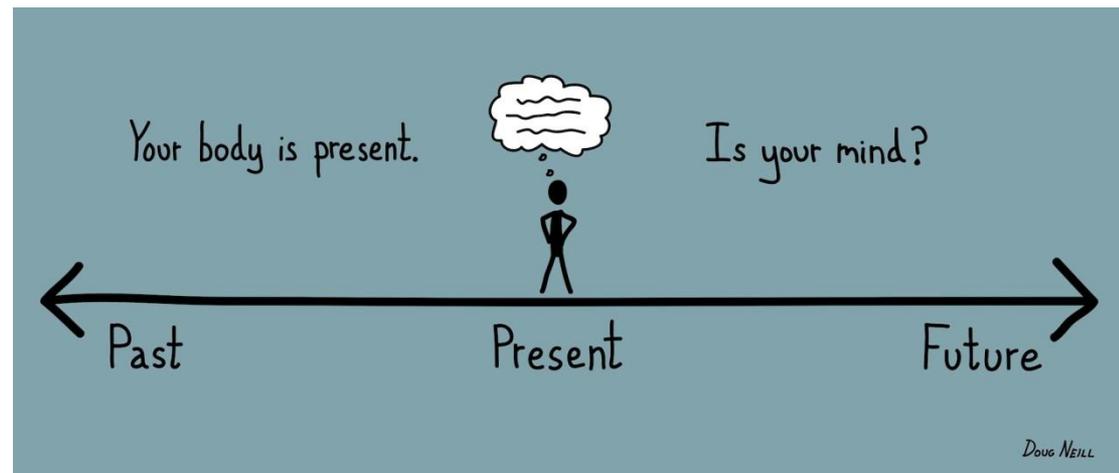
# Parallel Process



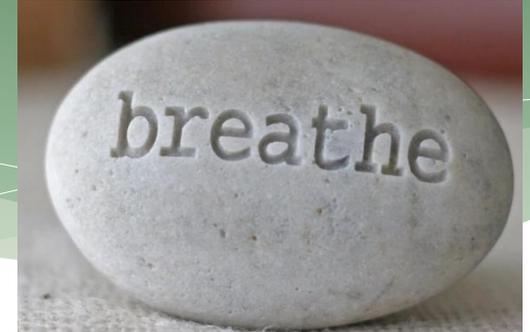
- \* The Ripple Effect--Awareness
- \* ALL different emotions:
  1. happy, joyful, and excited,
  2. anxious, frustrated, and angry,
  3. peaceful, in the moment, and calm.
- \* ALSO... our behaviors... modeling solutions, structure/routine and processes.

# Mindfulness Practice

- \* Awareness of the present moment
- \* Promotes reflection vs. reaction
- \* Helps with attunement in interactions
- \* Increases awareness of self and others
- \* Reduces stress



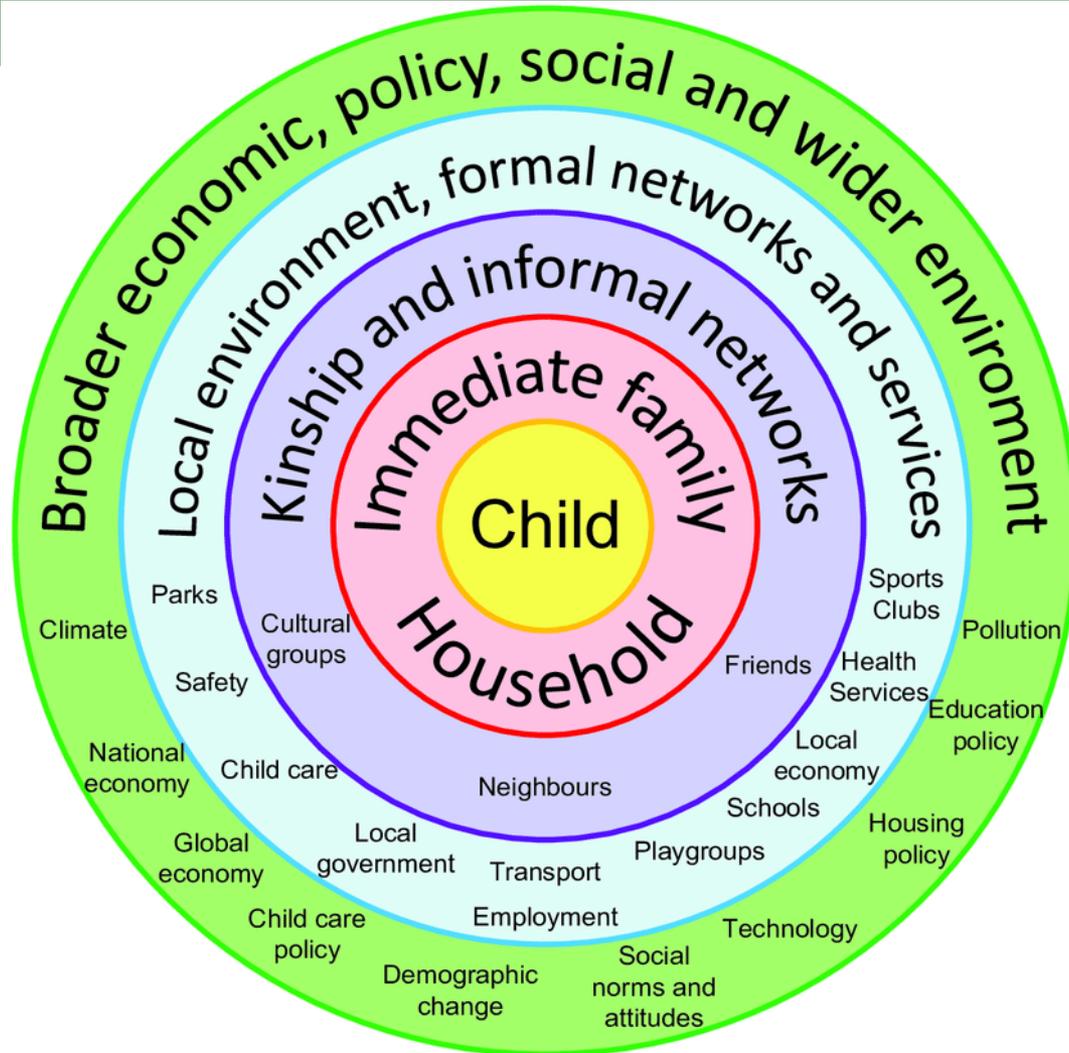
# Mindfulness Doesn't Have to Be Scary...



## \* STOP

- \* Stop
- \* Take A Breathe
- \* Observe - how am I feeling?
- \* Proceed
  - \* Ask - what does the child need from me right now? Not...I think or wish the child was doing
  - \* Approach each situation with respect for the child
  - \* Validate what that child is going through - empathy
  - \* Ask for help!
- \* Loving Kindness - Being kind to ourselves for present emotions - Center for Healthy Minds Practice  
<http://centerhealthyminds.org/join-the-movement/loving-kindness-practice-for-teachers>
- \* Sticker Breathing
- \* Other Activities

# Ecological Perspective



# Strength-based



- \* Uncovering and recognizing:
  - \* Potential resources
  - \* Personal characteristics
  - \* Relationships
- \* Use these resources to support growth
- \* Reduces resistance

# Rupture & Repair

- \* It is inevitable.
- \* SAFE Environment to explore
- \* Learning opportunity
- \* Structure for dealing with mistakes
- \* Relieves distress
- \* Fosters forgiveness and acceptance



# Initiating Reflective Supervision

- \* Introducing Reflective Supervision
- \* Setting the stage & establishing Group Rules
- \* Introducing some structural elements and use of Experience-based Discussion
- \* Capturing the Essential elements with each meeting

*Safety... .. Safety... .. Safety*

# Initiating Reflective Supervision

- \* Striking a balance between flexibility and structure
- \* Benefits of structure
- \* Stepping out of structure
- \* Experimenting with different tools or activities
- \* Periodically checking in—how is this going?

# Establishing Safety, Regularity and Consistency through Structure

- \* Structure is helpful, especially in the beginning, for both reflective supervisors and participants
- \* When starting a new practice, some participants are very sensitive to surprises—knowing what to expect can calm uncertainty or discomfort and help participants feel safe
- \* Structure can serve to “hold” the group process and contain the content
- \* Some structural tools help to maintain a focus on reflection, slowing down and staying in tune with the relational and emotional elements of the process

# Introducing Reflective Supervision

- \* Generate a dialogue
- \* What does it mean to you to practice reflectively? What do you know about reflective supervision? How might learning how to reflect benefit your work and our program?
- \* Gather input and feedback—what's important to you? How can I support you in your growth?
- \* How can we create a space together where we can reflect and explore the work?

***Embarking on the Journey Together.***

***Let's see how this is for us.***

# Some Structural tools

- \* Group Rules
- \* Check-in
- \* Experience - Based Discussion
- \* Mindfulness Moment
- \* Check-out

# Group Rules



- \* Set of guidelines; determined by group members, that maps out what is expected of them
- \* How have you experienced group time in the past?
- \* How can we make our time together feel safe and respectful?

***Reflective Supervisor sets the tone and models the agreed upon guidelines***

# Using Check-in & Check-out

- \* Each team member provides a 1-2 minute overview of how they are doing at that time
- \* Could lead the group in a few deep breaths
- \* A way to get a “read” of the group
- \* A way to get into the space of reflection and get everyone focused and present
- \* Can be structured or more free-form and creative i.e. *what color are you today and why?*
- \* May reveal important themes, that repeat over time
- \* Can be used at any time to pause and check-in or summarize

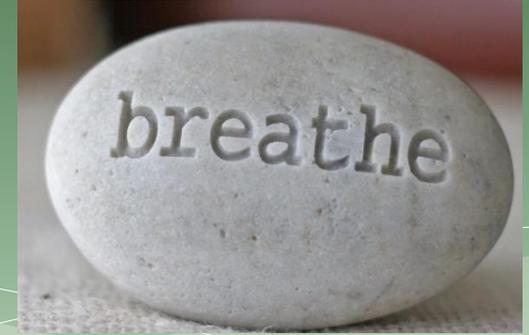
# Experience-based Discussion

- \* Developed by the Portage Project (*Copa & Wollenberg*)
- \* Used to structure conversation about current work
- \* If using within a group, encourages all group members to explore and understand together
- \* There are 3 phases:
  - \* Understanding the Experience;
  - \* Exploring Collective Knowledge of the Group;
  - \* Summarizing the Discussion

# Experience-based Discussion

- \* Structure aligns with the *collaborative tasks* within the RIOS© (Reflective Interaction Observation Scale)
  - \* Describing—“What do we know?”
  - \* Responding— “How do we and others think about this?”
  - \* Exploring— “What might this mean?”
  - \* Linking— “Why does this matter?”
  - \* Integrating— “What have we learned?”

# Mindfulness Moment

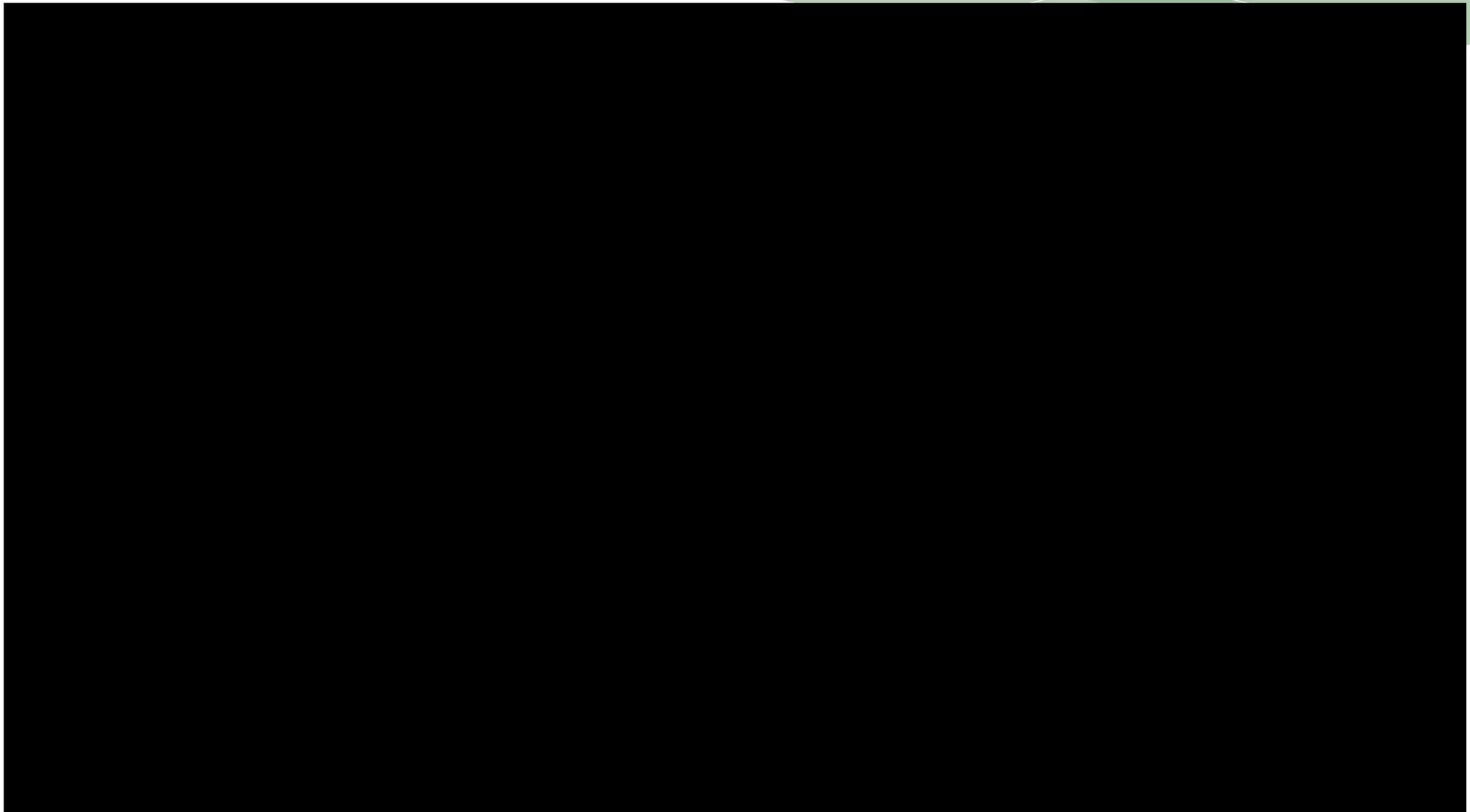


- \* Optional
- \* Ask your staff members if they would like to explore mindfulness
- \* Discuss benefits, misconceptions
- \* How can we intentionally pause and get focused?
- \* Many, many, many creative ways to integrate mindfulness moments into reflective supervision
- \* Simply pausing, closing your eyes and taking three deep breathes is a nice way to get focused and present
- \* Feel free to explore!

# Common Misconceptions

- \* I'm being strength based when talking about families, so I'm doing reflective supervision
- \* It's too much like therapy
- \* Reflective supervision should make you feel warm and happy
- \* Experienced staff members don't need it
- \* Reflective Supervision is just listening
- \* Reflective Supervision requires a mental health background
- \* We have a Pyramid Model coach, that's the same thing

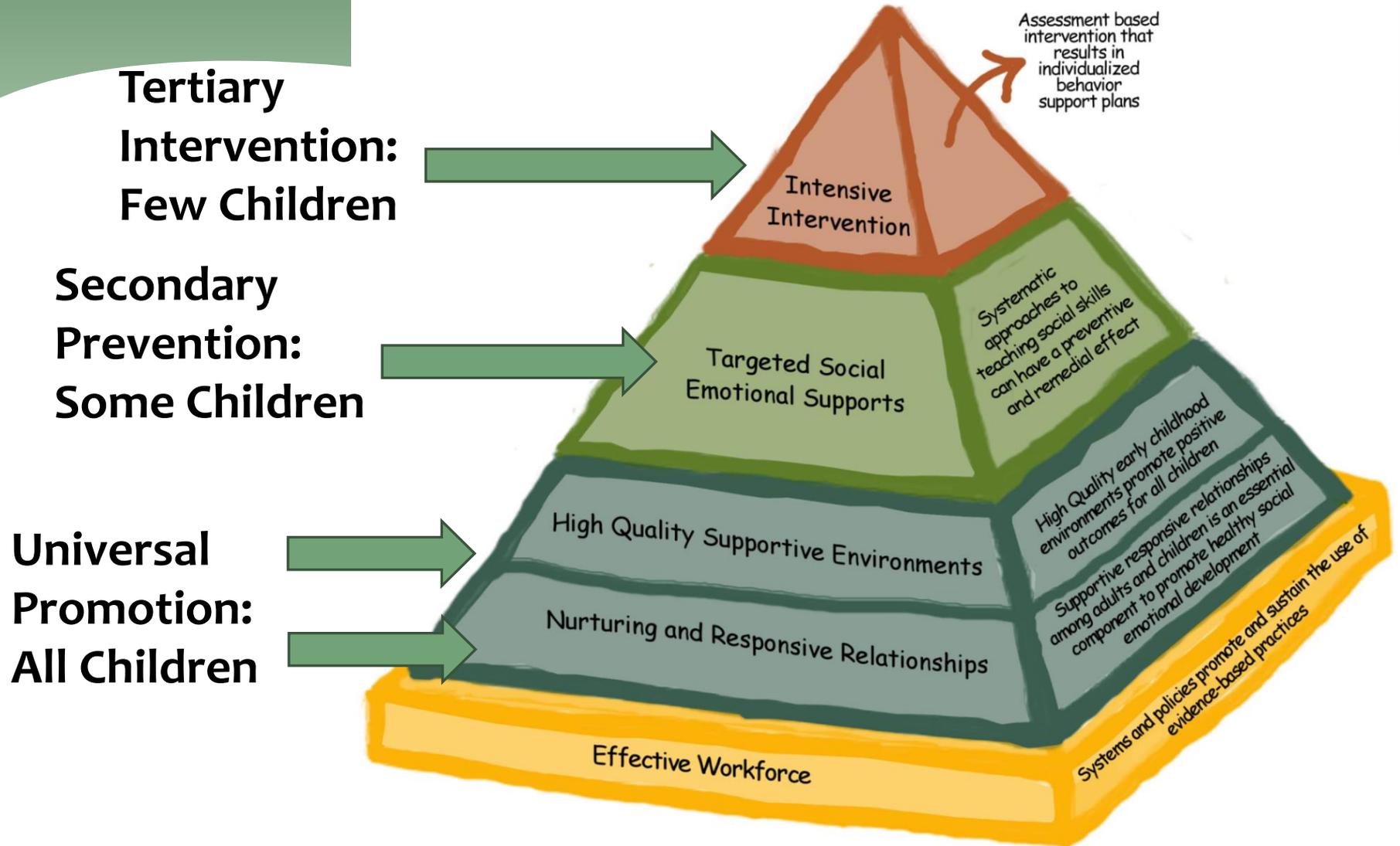
Let's Take A Look



# Why are Reflective Practices Critical to our Work & Well Being?



# The Pyramid Model



# Tier 2 Practices Bring Big Emotion

- \* Emotional Literacy
- \* Friendship Skills
- \* Problem Solving Skills
- \* Anger Management and Impulse Control





What's happening in our brains  
and bodies when we're  
experiencing high levels of stress?

# What we see

- \* Hopelessness
- \* Guilt
- \* Avoidance
- \* Hypervigilance
- \* Social Withdrawal
- \* Minimizing
- \* Anger & Cynicism
- \* Sleeplessness
- \* Insensitivity
- \* Illness
- \* Fear
- \* Chronic Exhaustion
- \* Physical Ailments
- \* Disconnection
- \* Loss creativity
- \* Inability to embrace complexity
- \* Inability to listen
- \* Diminished Self-care



What can an agency do to promote health and well-being; prevent high levels of stress and burnout, and build a resilience across all staff members?

*What's the antidote to stress?*

# Addressing Chronic Stress

- \* Personal resilience
- \* Building nurturing professional relationships
- \* Staying positive
- \* Developing emotional insight
- \* Achieving life balance and spirituality
- \* Becoming more reflective

*(Debra Jackson (2005))*

# Why Reflect?

A person who reflects throughout his or her practice is not just looking back on past actions and events, but is *taking a conscious look at emotions, experiences, actions, and responses*, and using that information to add to his or her existing knowledge base and *reach a higher level of understanding*.

# Reflection:

## To think, meditate, ponder

- \* *Reflection* is the ability to reflect on an action and engage in a continuous learning (Schon, 1983).
- \* It involves paying critical attention to process—our subjective experience (thoughts and feelings) and reflexive actions.
- \* It leads to the development of insight; and is an important component to self-awareness (Journal of Neurology 2010)

# Program Quality and Provider Competency

By gaining and practicing reflective skills, professionals carry forth these qualities with families—using the relationship to bring out the family’s strengths and resiliency.

Likewise, when supervisors or leaders practice reflectively this “way of being” contributes to a healthier, more supportive environment where staff can grow and develop.

# Embedding RS/C in Basic Personnel Processes

- \* Hiring
- \* Job Descriptions
- \* Performance Reviews
- \* Professional Development Goals
- \* Regularly scheduled meetings
- \* Clear rationale for choosing RS practices
- \* MI-AIMH Best Practice Guidelines

[http://mi-aimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/BPGRSC\\_Alliance-logo\\_20170130\\_AM.pdf](http://mi-aimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/BPGRSC_Alliance-logo_20170130_AM.pdf)

# Benefits of RS: Summary

- \* Supports continuous learning
- \* Builds insight and self-awareness
- \* Increases attunement, empathy, acceptance and perspective taking
- \* Strengthen areas of the brain responsible for cognition, regulation, attention and modulating anxiety
- \* Helps maintain an open, curious perspective
- \* Broadens thinking & possibilities
- \* Builds self-confidence
- \* Lessens burn-out and Secondary Traumatic Stress
- \* Increases comfort in holding and containing the feelings of others
- \* Become more emotionally present
- \* Supports the ability to tolerate uncertainty
- \* **Supports a framework of relationship-based work**

# The Parallel Process and Toxic Stress



# Holding others in Reflection

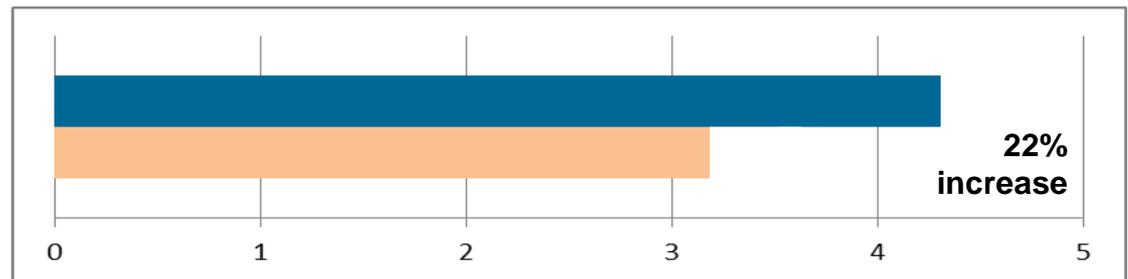
- \* Staying mindful and present
- \* Removing your problem-solving hat
- \* Modeling curiosity
- \* Slowing down, pausing, using silence
- \* Staying tuned in to the emotional content—of all participants

# WI-AIMH RSLC

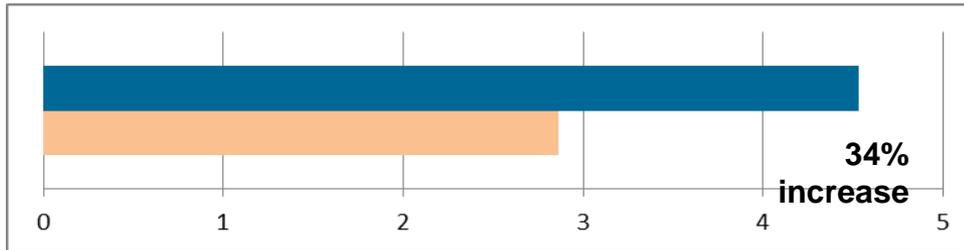


The WI-AIMH Reflective Supervision Learning Collaborative (RSLC) is a 12-month process comprised of in-person learning sessions, and active implementation phases, with built-in support throughout the process.

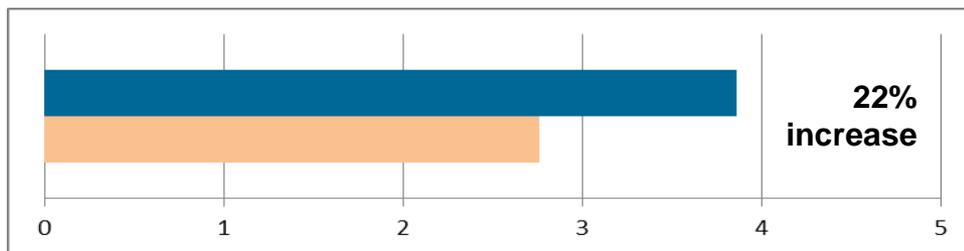
**I am able to consider how my emotional response may interfere with my ability to meet the needs of my supervisees**



# WI-AIMH RSLC



**I am able to discuss my emotional responses to difficult/challenging supervision experiences with my reflective consultant**



**I am able to notice and address tension/mis-attunement with my supervisee(s) or within the parallel process**

# WI-AIMH RSLC



*“The implementation of reflective supervision has had a significant impact on our team. Staff has commented on feeling more supported and less frustrated in dealing with the complexities of their work since starting group and one-on-one reflective supervision. Group reflective supervision has helped build a team dynamic in which staff feels safe and supported while exploring their challenging work experiences through a reflective lens. A feeling of team solidarity and comradery has been nurtured through our team’s reflective supervision journey.”*

# What participants say...



- \* Provides guidance on how to ask questions so staff build capacity.
- \* Help us to be better internal coaches.
- \* “You have what it takes” to do this work.
- \* Connecting with others in the community that don’t really have an opportunity to connect with during their schedules
- \* Support for Supervisors who play dual roles of internal coach and supervisor
- \* Connecting with other professionals who work in other fields - provides a bigger picture.
- \* Supports the multiple roles that Early Child Education Supervisors hold - cook, nurse, sub for teaching staff, etc.
- \* Build capacity for IMH-Endorsement®

# IMH Endorsement®

*Endorsement for:*

*\*Culturally Sensitive Work*

*\*Relationship-Focused Practice*

*\*Promoting Infant Mental Health*

# Endorsement Information

You can visit the WI-AIMH website for more information on Endorsement

<https://wiaimh.org/endorsement>

Contact Ashley Bowers – IMH Clinical Coordinator who oversees the IMH-Endorsement

[IMH-E@wiaimh.org](mailto:IMH-E@wiaimh.org)

# Reflective Practice & IMH Elevator Speech (30-45 seconds)

To craft a great speech, follow these steps.

- \* Identify the audience & goal
- \* Communicate the WHY
- \* Describe the HOW
- \* Explain WHAT you do/they do
- \* Engage with a question (optional)
  
- \* Put it all together.
- \* Practice.



# Setting the Stage for Reflective Supervision

- \* Find a partner
- \* Each person will have about 10 minutes
- \* Role play or talk through how you might:
  - \* Introduce RS and the important elements to your team.
  - \* Introduce the Experience Based Discussion outline and its use during RS time.
  - \* Respond to or address common misperceptions or other barriers to implementation
- \* Switch so that each person has an opportunity to practice
- \* Write down your intentions for implementation and how you might address barriers

# Relationships Matter!



Thoughts, Questions,  
Reflections?

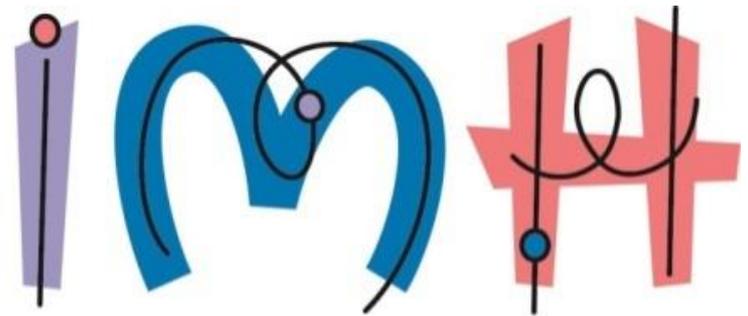
# How to get in touch

Jenny Durand

608/442-8036

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[www.wiaimh.org](http://www.wiaimh.org)



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