



# Thinking Up, Down & Around: Infusing Infant Mental Health in a Community Mental Health Setting

Meghan McCarthy Kroll\*, MSW, Sheri L. Hill, PhD, Christy Kimpo, PhD, Victor Place, LMFT



## BACKGROUND

This project began as a small collaboration between a community mental health agency and a university-based infant mental health center. Just over a year later, the program developed out of this collaboration is being recognized locally and nationally for its leadership.



## GREAT BEGINNINGS

As of early fall 2006, the agency had been working with an Infant Mental Health extern and had cleared the use of a *Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood: REVISED EDITION (DC:0-3R)* crosswalk to *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV-TR Fourth Edition (Text Revision)* to bill Medicaid.

The agency approached the center seeking consultation on program development and strengthening their ability to provide relationship-based services for very young children and their families. Simultaneously, the agency management made a resource commitment to program development by hiring the extern as staff.

## Underlying Principles

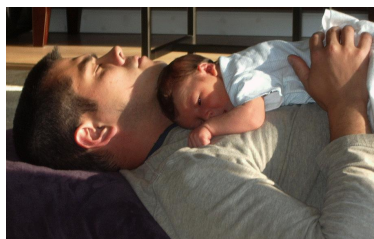
- Foregrounding relationships
- Respecting the regularity of meetings
- Promoting reflective practice
- Building community to decrease isolation
- Looking for outcomes beyond children and families

## Areas of Change

- Building reflective community
- Expanding understanding and knowledge
- Identifying opportunities for growth
- Cultivating community investment

## Primary Change Mechanisms

- Reflective Reading Group
- Systems Group



## SUCSESSES AS WE ENTER TODDLERHOOD

- Expansion into a program which now includes greater clinical capacity as well as continued leadership, coordination and relationship-building with other county providers
- Involvement with a court-led community collaboration seeking to provide Child-Parent Dyadic Psychotherapy for infants, toddlers and their families who encounter Dependency Court.
- Attendance at the Second National Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health System Development Summit (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Oct 11-13)
  - Agency management participation
  - Presentation of agency successes in using a locally developed *DC:0-3R* crosswalk for billing Medicaid for relationship-based dyadic services
- Presentation of *Through the Eyes of the Infant* and *Circle of Security* trainings for other county mental health providers
- Ongoing IMH workgroups at county & state level
- Completion of an IMH Reflective Reading Group with a self-selected small group of experienced mental health practitioners

## We would like to acknowledge key supporters who seeded and cultivated relationships to make this growth possible.

Kathryn Barnard, Professor Emerita & Founder of the Center on Infant Mental Health and Development at the University of Washington, made the initial connections.

Charley Huffine, Medical Director, Child & Adolescent Program, King County Mental Health Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division led the development and ongoing revisions of the crosswalk and ensured its inclusion in the Policies and Procedures Manual enabling billing.

David Johnson, CEO and Mary Tott, Chief of Outpatient Services at Highline West Seattle Mental Health provided institutional support and vision.

Special thanks to Sheri Hill who valued our relationship so much that she enthusiastically put in countless hours working with us.