

# 2013/2014 Foundations of Infant Mental Health Training Program



## How to Measure a Relationship May 8, 2014

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# Learning Objectives

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- ▶ Participants will be able to outline the psychological tasks of childhood as an indicator of resilience
- ▶ Participants will be able to define when challenging behaviors reach the level of clinical symptoms
- ▶ Participants will assist in a multidisciplinary fashion to design developmentally informed and relationship-based interventions to promote optimal developmental outcomes
- ▶ Participants will use case material to practice the above skills

# Training Experience

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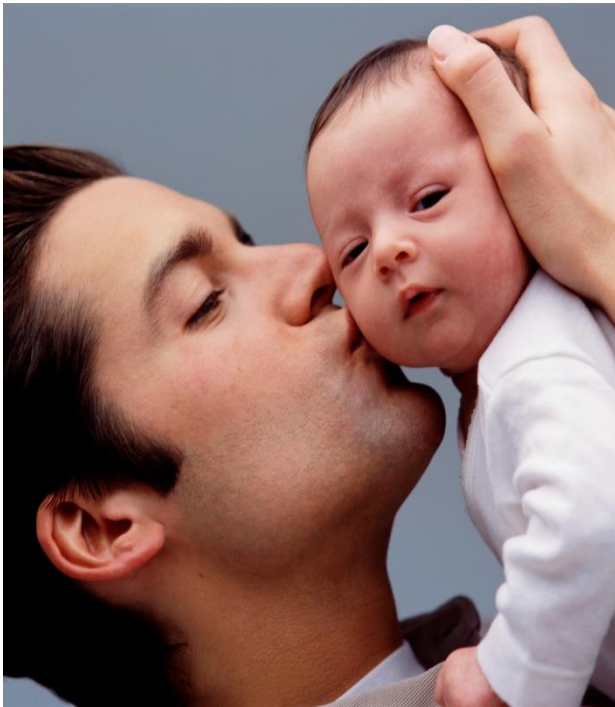
## Each participant will experience:

- ▶ A collaborative learning experience
- ▶ A practical review of the content learned over the past 9 months
- ▶ A focus on the value and complexity of culture
- ▶ A non-judgmental approach to engaging families that celebrates strengths
- ▶ An shared understanding that ‘Life is not the SAT’s’ and we can embrace multiple right answers

# What All Babies Need

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## ► Relationships of Support



# Relationships Matter

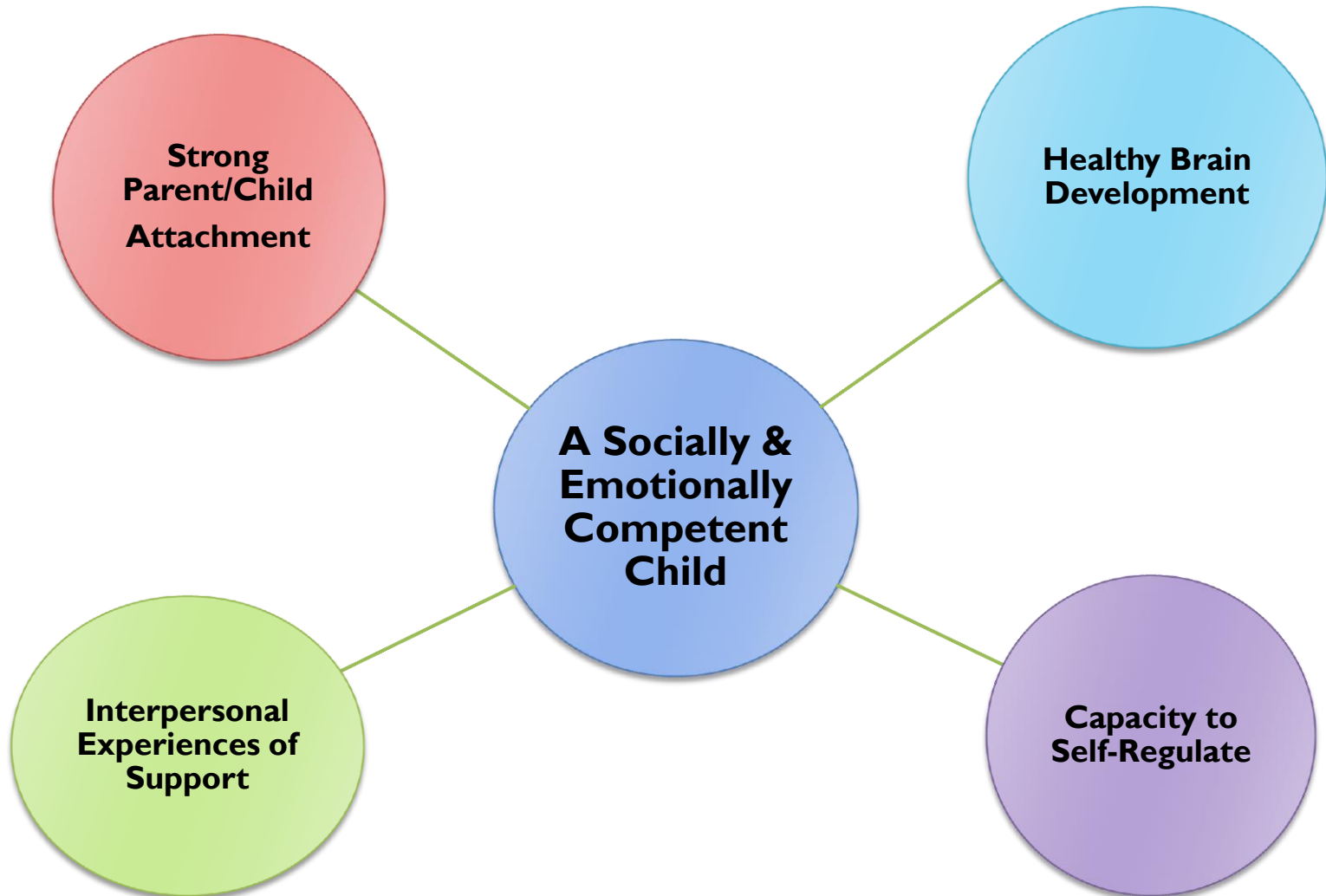
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- ▶ Development occurs in the context of a relationship
- ▶ Relationships build the brain structure
- ▶ Relationships teach about emotions and stress recovery
- ▶ Relationships build language skills & motivate motor development
- ▶ Relationships facilitate cognitive and social-emotional development



# Recipe for a Healthy Baby

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# Psychological Tasks of Childhood

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- ▶ To develop a strong secure attachment bond
- ▶ To learn to modulate external sensory input
- ▶ To learn to manage my internal affective states
- ▶ To effectively communicate and get my needs met
- ▶ To effectively adapt to my changing world

© 2012



"Every child deserves someone  
that is hopelessly in love with them,  
Will love them unconditionally,  
And provides them with a mirror image  
of themselves as brilliant and beautiful"

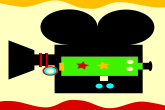
*Barbara Stroud*



# How do We Know Development is Off Track

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- ▶ When we see...
  - ▶ Behavior that indicates developmental delay
  - ▶ Limitations in social –emotional expression
  - ▶ Unmanageable affective response
  - ▶ The absence of a caregiving resource of support
- ▶ When we feel ...
  - ▶ Frustrated by the child's behavior
  - ▶ Hopeless by lack of progress
  - ▶ Empty because the caregiving system lacks joy
  - ▶ Disorganized because the child's responses just don't make sense



# When have We Reached Medical Necessity

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- ▶ Challenging behaviors become clinical symptoms when development is derailed, social emotional expression is hampered, and the dyad cannot maintain co-regulation
- ▶ Medical necessity is evident when the child is unable to move about the typical task of childhood as defined by his cultural context, family expectations, and the demands of his community
- ▶ When the psychological tasks of childhood are off line



# When to Make a Referral

Practitioners' Question	Observed Relationship Concern
1. How does this dyad recover or respond to dis-regulation in their relationship rhythms?	Regulation issues- establishing and maintaining a state of calm
2. How does this dyad manage and make use of sensory information?	Sensory regulation – caregiver recovery and support to infant
3. How does the caregiver in this dyad manage personal stress and furthermore, support the stress recovery systems of the child?	Managing stress responses – dyad's established methods of stress recovery
4. What is the capacity of the dyad to maintain a regulated emotional state?	Affective tone of the relationship – how are feelings expressed and experienced in the dyad
5. Do the observed concerns within the dyad negatively impact the child's developmental success?	Will a counseling intervention be sufficient or should a psychotherapy referral be considered

Stroud/Morgan

From: **Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health: Core Concepts and Clinical Practice** (2014)

# Where do We Go Next

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- ▶ Use of the Causal Rubric
- ▶ Case example

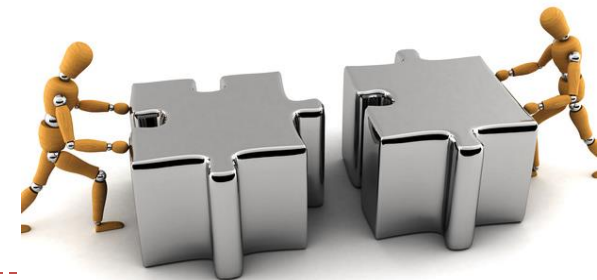


# Relationship Focused Interventions

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- ▶ Where to start – Determining the Cause
  - ▶ State Dependent Concerns
  - ▶ Relationship Dependent Concerns
  - ▶ Environmental Dependent Concerns
  
- ▶ Building Interventions



# Successful Relationships

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**Support  
Balanced Emotions**



**Culturally and Socially  
Appropriate Responses**

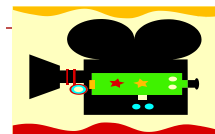


**Increased Emotional  
Understanding**

# Do you see what I see?

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- ▶ I see you – validation of the subjective experience of another
  - ▶ Your experience is true and right for you
- ▶ I want to understand you – reflection of the meaning of the event
  - ▶ Providing a shared meaning making for that experience
  - ▶ Supports cultural understanding
- ▶ I will try to match you emotionally – tell me more about your feeling state
  - ▶ Feeling felt – emotional resonance – affective mirroring
- ▶ Help you to tell the tale – helping the other to build a tolerable narrative of this event
  - ▶ Stories of repair, hope, coherence, inner strength & resilience



# Let Your Behavior be the Guide

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## Modeling by Staff

- ▶ Demonstrate a relationship with the parent of nurturance and support
- ▶ Celebrate the parent's strengths but do not ignore their vulnerabilities
- ▶ Offer assistance and direction in times of stress
- ▶ Respect the personal goals of each family
- ▶ Seek to build a relationship of equality with the parent

## Skill Building for Caregivers

- ▶ Increase sensitive and responsive caregiving
- ▶ Delight in your child's success and teach to challenges
- ▶ Provide calming and emotional regulation in times of stress
- ▶ Respect the individual desires and developmental needs of each child
- ▶ Empower children to feel important in their relationships with caregivers



# References

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- ▶ K. Brandt, B. Perry, S. Seligman, & E. Tronick (Eds.), *Infant and early childhood mental health: Core concepts and clinical practice*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Press, Inc.
- ▶ Stroud, B. (2012). *How to Measure a Relationship: A practical approach to dyadic intervention*. North Charleston, South Carolina.

Presented by  
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Changing the world  
One relationship at a time



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