

Keeping the infant and toddler in mind online course

Curious, reflective conversations with parents about parent-child interactions can promote infant and toddler mental health.

About this course

When thinking about infant mental health, it is vital to understand and acknowledge the significance of intergenerational trauma and mental health difficulties. This course will provide you with an introduction to a relationship-based framework that promotes the mental health of children aged 0-5 years. It describes three interrelated practice positions to reflect upon when working with infants, toddlers and families.

From the **ally** position, you will focus on collaborating with parents to form a trusting alliance. You will also work to understand the psychosocial factors that influence infant mental health.

From the **advocate** position, you will observe and gain an understanding of the significance of brain development, cues for connection, play and developmental transitions during the infant and toddler stages.

The third position, **awareness of relationship**, is specifically focused on the parent-child relationship. It invites you to observe and engage in curious conversations about the parent-child relationship and the family's interactions.

Why was this course developed?

The course introduces a relationship-based framework to promote infant and toddler mental health. This course was developed to increase clinicians' understanding of this critical period of development. It focuses on the importance of establishing safe and empathic relationships with families to promote healthy transitions to parenting and to support parents' capacities to be curious and attuned in their caregiving.



How was this course developed?

This course draws on current infant mental health research, clinical insight from perinatal mental health practitioners and obstetrics, as well as the real-life experiences of families.

Infants, toddlers and their parents generously shared their perspectives of transitioning to parenthood and their experience of getting to know each other, discovering the world and navigating the joys and challenges of parenting.

Who is this course for?

This course is for anyone who works with infants, toddlers and families. It invites you to broaden your working context from being solely adult-focused or solely infant-focused, to consider the whole family. It is also designed to help you develop reflective practice that is more relationship-based.

What is included in the course?

Along with written content and imagery, this course features video footage from parents of infants and toddlers. This footage shows how infants and toddlers use play interactions to share cues for connection, communicate, and express emotions in this period of non-verbal communication.

These interactions also demonstrate how you can invite curiosity and reflective conversations into your work with parents, gain an understanding of the parent's wisdom and an insight into the child's emotional world.