



## Practice strategies for assessment: Infants and toddlers online course

By building your confidence in assessing infants, toddlers and parents, you can begin to strengthen families' skills in providing responsive care that nurtures and supports the foundational mental health needs of infants and toddlers.

### About this course

When thinking about infant and toddler mental health, it is vital to acknowledge that babies are born wired to connect, relate, grow and explore. But they need a responsive and secure relationship with a parent or caregiver to thrive. This course builds on the foundational knowledge of the *Keeping the infant and toddler in mind* course by expanding on the ally, advocate and awareness of relationship framework that promotes the mental health of children aged 0–5 years.

The introduction of three core reflective practice skills combined with the framework guides learners to intentionally keep infant and toddlers developmental and relational needs at the centre of assessment interactions. It presents five practice strategies to develop learners confidence to: prepare to work relationally; nurture responsive parenting; discover the infants experience; create connections through play' and develop shared understandings.

### Why was this course developed?

This course was developed to increase clinicians' understanding of this critical period of development, ensure responsive parenting assessments and enhance clinicians' skills in observing, and describing infant and toddler cues, needs and interactions with parents. It is the first course in a series of three and will be followed by practice strategies courses on formulation and implementation.

### How was this course developed?

This course draws on current infant mental health research, clinical insight from perinatal and infant mental health practitioners and includes a fictional family case study which was developed in collaboration with child and family partners.

### Who is this course for?

This course is for anyone who works with parents, infants, and toddlers. It broadens the assessment context from an individual adult-oriented perspective to a relational family-inclusive practice context.

### What is included in the course?

This course features reading materials, interviews with practitioners from range of disciplines and parents. Each of the five practice skills are explored through a family case study, practice demonstrations, clinician's practice reflections and application of reflective activities to the case study. The demonstrations include sessions with an individual parent, a family session, and infant and parent play interaction. It is designed to be undertaken individually but can also be used as a prompt for conversations between colleagues.

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