


The Baby's Experience

An infant mental health perspective

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➤ There is no such thing as a baby.

D.W. Winnicott

First Relationships

- Infant Mental Health starts prenatally
 - Everything matters- planned, wanted, welcomed?
- First relationships are important as it helps set the stage for development; including peer relationships, school achievement and future success



Definition of Infant Mental Health

Developing the capacity of the child from birth to age three to experience, regulate, and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn - all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations....

Zero to Three IMH Task Force



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Scenario

- *This baby is learning. He is learning to be handled and held can be uncomfortable and distressing; that desperate crying may lead only to a sharp and angry voice; that his needs and wants are not important and that there is no one to count on*



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Risk Factors

➤ Risk Factors are things that limit or prevent the child from learning and growing in a healthy way

- Untreated or poorly managed mental illness of primary caregiver
- Poverty
- Substance use
- Domestic violence/Community Violence
- Inability to meet basic needs (food, shelter, clothing)
- Unreliability in caregiving behavior
- Inconsistent caregiving behavior
- Parents skewed perception of danger



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Scenario

What is happening is utterly ordinary; a mother is feeding her baby. But what is happening **to the baby** is extraordinary. Because while being fed, she is learning about gentleness, about cries being answered, about her ability to make giants come running. She is beginning to sense the subtle rhythm of exchange with her mother. It is the beginning of learning that she is worth responding to, that she is important, and that something or someone can be counted upon.



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Protective Factors and Risk Factors

- All children experience both
- Children are better able to manage the stress/risk factors when they have a solid foundation to pull from
- The timing of early experiences can matter, but more often than not, the developing child remains vulnerable to risks and open to protective influences throughout the early years of life and into adulthood



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Secure Base

- Every aspect of a child's development is influenced by the presence/absence of a secure base/partnership between the parent and child




berman

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Stillface Video

2:49


- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZhto>


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Trauma Quick Review


➤ Defining Trauma

- By **trauma** we mean a single event, a series of connected traumatic events, or a condition of chronic, **enduring stress that is perceived as life-threatening or so overwhelming that it exceeds one's ability to cope with it.**
- The traumatic event may be
 - sudden and unexpected** (e.g., Hurricane Katrina, 9/11, animal attack),
 - a series of connected events** (e.g., repeated air raids),
 - chronic, enduring situation** (chronic domestic violence or sexual abuse).


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Trauma for Young Children

Examples for young children include **directly experiencing or witnessing** an event(s) that involve **actual or threatened death or serious injury** to the **child or others**, or a **threat to the psychological or physical integrity** of the **child or others**


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Trauma and Brain Development

- Trauma may adversely affect the physical development and functioning of the brain.
- The brain organizes and stores information in a use-dependent fashion—"use it or lose it." Therefore, the more a child is in a state of dissociation or hyperarousal, the more likely this state is to become a persistent trait.



Trauma and Attachment

- Common behaviors after a trauma include
 - Nightmares
 - Anxiety/distress around reminders of event
 - Reenactment of the event
 - Numbingness of event:
 - Social withdrawal, regression in skills, change in play skills
 - Sleep/eating issues
 - Exaggerated startle response
 - Provocative behavior that elicits abuse
 - Aggression
 - New Fears



Trauma in Medical Procedures

- The role of the parent is a critically important component of a successful medical management
- A stressful medical procedure can be more manageable with the comfort of a parent/caregiver
- Active participant in own care



Attachment and Trauma

Children whom have developed an insecure attachment to their primary caregiver will respond to a trauma differently than children whom have developed a secure relationship with their primary attachment figure.



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Impact of Trauma

- Children need assistance in coping
- As early as infancy, children are learning how to manage stress
- It is innate in infants to depend upon another to help manage stress



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Impact Of Trauma

- Intensity
- Chronicity
- Proximity to the event
- Familiarity with victim and/or perpetrator
- Developmental status of the child
- The capacity of the family and community to support the child.



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Trauma and Attachment

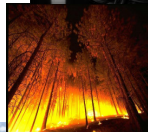
- Children will respond to trauma differently depending upon many factors including the event itself, their attachment relationship and their own ability to cope
- Children with secure attachment relationships will often manage and work through traumatic events more successfully than children with insecure attachment relationships



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Types of Trauma

- Abuse
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Witnessing community violence
- Natural disasters
- Accidents
- Painful medical procedures



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Early Adversity on Children's Development

Harvard - InBrief
4 minutes

- <http://youtu.be/chhQcoHShCo>



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IMH in the Medical Setting

➤ There are many opportunities for discussions about how the relationship is going

- Let's think about a few
 - Well visit
 - Immunizations
 - Post Partum
 - Follow up phone calls
 - Child Development- Crying/Tantruming
 - Missed appointment
 - Frequent appointments



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Toxic Stress Alberta Family Wellness

4 minutes

Time Permitting....

- <http://youtu.be/rVwFkcOZHJw>



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Reflective Supervision

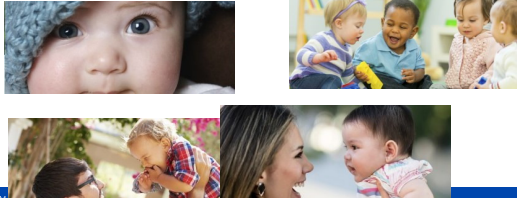
- Cases are provocative
 - What do you do with it?
- The caregiving relationship plays an important role in how children learn about themselves and their environment
- Parents perceptions of their children also impact the child's view of the world



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Infant-Toddler Mental Health Coalition of Arizona

www.itmhca.org



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Resources

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network <http://www.nctsn.org/>
- Play Therapy Association of Arizona <http://www.a4pt.org/>
- ACES <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acesstudy/>
- Grief Resources: New Song <https://www.hov.org/welcome-new-song-center-grieving-children>
- Zero To Three <https://www.zerotothree.org/>
- Infant Toddler Mental Health Coalition of Arizona www.itmhca.org
- The Role of Attachment <http://youtu.be/6bul1meciGE>



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Questions & Discussion
