



# Defining Early Mental Health

The young child's capacity to:

1. Experience, tolerate, & express a range of emotions without lasting emotional collapse;
2. Form & maintain mostly trusting intimate relationships; and
3. Learn the culturally expected skills considered appropriate for the child's age. (Lieberman AF & Van Horn, P, 2008)





Anna (mom) and Lane, age 9 months  
No identified service needs







New Mexico Association for Infant Mental Health

# **ENDORSEMENT**

***FOR CULTURALLY  
SENSITIVE,  
RELATIONSHIP-BASED  
PRACTICE PROMOTING  
INFANT MENTAL  
HEALTH***

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# New Mexico Association for Infant Mental Health

## NMAIMH [www.nmaimh.org](http://www.nmaimh.org)

### Who/what is NMAIMH?

- A professional membership organization (501.c3 ) that promotes & supports healthy development & nurturing relationships for all infants & young children in NM.
- Incorporated in 2004 to provide a forum for interdisciplinary collaboration by advocating for the application of infant mental health principles in services for infants, young children and caregivers.
- NMAIMH works to implement a ***Strategic Plan for Infant Mental Health in New Mexico (2003)***.





# Endorsement is . . .

- . . . a commitment to quality & competency for:
  - Infants/toddlers and their parents/caregivers
  - Early childhood and mental health colleagues
  - Community and State agencies that rely on infant-family professionals to provide services
  - Funders who want to be sure that they are paying for infant-family services that are provided by competent professionals
- . . . an important step in implementing the ***Strategic Plan*** that has been supported for years by *CYFD* and other funds.



# What Is Endorsement?

- A **recognition** that the professional demonstrates the **specific competencies** needed to work effectively with parents/ caregivers and their infants/toddlers.
- The **competencies reflect specialized infant mental health knowledge** acquired through education, reflective supervision and relevant work experiences with infants/toddlers and their parents/caregivers.





# NMAIMH Chose an Inclusive Interdisciplinary Endorsement System

- Infant Family Associate
- Infant Family Specialist
- Infant Mental Health Specialist
- Infant Mental Health Mentor
  - **Clinical**
  - **Research Faculty**
  - **Policy**





# Endorsement is NOT Licensure!

- Each professional must always practice within the scope of his or her professional license. Endorsement does not change this requirement.
- Endorsement is an overlay of specialized infant mental health competence to your existing practice under your current license.
- Most funding systems have specific licensure requirements as part of their personnel standards for service provision and billing.







# NMAIMH is Well-Connected

- An affiliate of the **World Association of Infant Mental Health (WAIMH)**
  - [www.waimh.org](http://www.waimh.org)
- A founding member of the **Consortium of WAIMH US Affiliates**
  - A NMAIMH member helped with the initial conceptualization and organization of this group

Quick Time™ and a  
d'gcomp resstor  
are needed to see this picture.



# 8 Competency Areas

- Theoretical Foundations
- Law, Regulation & Agency Policy
- Systems Expertise
- Direct Service Skills
- Working with Others
- Communicating
- Thinking
- Reflection





# Competency Examples

- Observes and articulates the infant's and parent's perspectives within a relationship context.

**Infant-Family Associate:** identifies landmarks of typical child development behavior and healthy, secure relationships

**Infant-Family Specialist:** identifies emerging competencies of infant as well as emerging parenting competencies and positive parent-infant interactions

**Infant Mental Health Specialist:** conducts observations, discussions and formal and informal assessments that may lead to a diagnosis of a disorder of infancy or mental illness in family members using available diagnostic tools (DC:0-3R; DSM-IV)





# Competency Examples

## for all

- Establishes trusting relationship that supports the parent(s) and infant in their relationship with each other, and that facilitates needed change
- Works constructively to find “win-win” solutions to conflicts with colleagues (e.g. interagency, peer-peer, and/or supervisor-supervisee conflicts)
- Generates new insights and workable solutions to issues related to effective, relationship-based, family-centered care.
- Remains open and curious



# Competency Examples

- Attends and responds to parental histories of loss as they affect the care of the infant/young child, the parent's development, the emotional health of the infant/young child, and the developing relationship.
- Uses reflective practice throughout work with infants/young children and families to understand own emotional response to infant/family work and to recognize areas for professional and/or personal development.



# Who Recognizes Endorsement?

Over time and with your help --

- PARENTS
- EMPLOYERS
- FUNDERS
- POLICY MAKERS

-- will recognize that Endorsement helps assure quality and adds value.

Endorsement as an **Infant Mental Health Specialist** or **Infant Mental Health Mentor-Clinical** is required for reimbursement of IMH Treatment Services (T1027-HU) through the behavioral health system.



# Who Can Be Endorsed?

Anyone working with or on behalf of infants/toddlers and their parents/ caregivers can be endorsed.



The competencies define what is needed across professional disciplines and various work settings to address the mental wellness of our youngest citizens and their families.



# DS Certification & Endorsement

- Does the “Parallel Process” Apply?
  - Does DS I = Infant-Family Associate (L1)?
  - Does DS II = Infant-Family Specialist (L2)?
  - Does DS III = IMH Specialist (L3)?
  - Are Supervisors/Administrators = IMH Mentors (L4)?

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It depends on the job duties and competencies applied while doing your work.






# Infant-Family Associate

- Child Development Associate (CDA) **or** Associate's degree in related area **or** two years early childhood-related paid work experience; and
- \*30 clock hours of relationship-based education and training pertaining to the social and emotional development of infants, toddlers and families

\*See Competency Guidelines for details





When we integrate IMH principles into our work as FIT providers,  
most of us practice as

# **\*Infant-Family Specialists**

(Bachelor's degree minimum)

- We provide services that promote infant mental health; and
- Our services address and support the social-emotional needs and attend to the relationships surrounding the infant/toddler.

\*See Competency Guidelines for details






There may be a subset of FIT staff who work as  
**Infant Mental Health Specialists**

**Specialized Work Requirement:**

2 years, post-graduate, supervised work experiences providing culturally sensitive, relationship-focused, IMH services;

With both the infant/toddler and the parent/caregiver on behalf of the parent-infant relationship






# Infant Mental Health Specialist

## Specialized Work Requirement

Responsibilities will include intervention with:

- a) families & their infants, toddlers because of parental factors which place the infant at risk for impaired cognitive &/or psychosocial development;
  - b) distressed infants and toddlers & their families;
  - c) high risk families whose pattern of living from crisis to crisis &/or pre-existing conflicts severely limit their ability to adequately care for their infant; &/or
  - d) families who are ill-prepared to meet the special needs of their infants.
- 



# Infant Mental Health Specialist

**Specialized Work Requirement:** Infant mental health services will include

- concrete assistance,
- advocacy,
- emotional support,
- developmental guidance,
- ***early relationship assessment, and***
- ***parent-infant/young child relationship-based therapies and practices.***

***These therapies and practices may include but are not limited to:***

- ***parent-infant psychotherapy,***
- ***interaction guidance, and***
- ***child-parent psychotherapy.***

***These therapies and practices are intended to explore issues related to attachment, separation, trauma and unresolved losses as they affect the development, behavior and care of the infant/young child.***

***[This describes work that is more specialized than “typical” services covered through most IFSPs and that most FIT staff are prepared to provide.]***





# IMH Specialist vs IMH Mentor-Clinical?

- IMH Mentor-Clinical professionals will meet all of the IMH Specialist requirements, including the minimum 2 years post-graduate, supervised, specialized IMH work; and
- Demonstrate through the portfolio 3 years of “practice leadership” in IMH; including
- Providing reflective supervision/consultation for 3 years





# IMH Specialist vs IMH Mentor-Clinical?

## Clinical Practice Leader Examples

- Organize and facilitate reflective practice groups and/or IMH study groups
- Provide reflective supervision or consultation to IMH practitioners
- Participate in system of care planning initiatives
- Participate in planning for regional, statewide, or national IMH-specific conferences
- Represent IMH interests in planning for National Early Childhood, Social Service, Child Welfare, Behavioral Health and Public Health conferences
- Work to increase the preference for Endorsed personnel in contracts for services, child care rating schemes
- Work to address reimbursement issues for IMH services
- Leadership in local/state IMH association





## Will all Behavioral Health Professionals be Eligible for Endorsement?

- The work of each professional who supports families with young children is valued and important to the well-being of our state.
- In keeping with the mission of the NMAIMH, the endorsement process is specifically for those who work with ***infants/toddlers and their parents/caregivers to promote infant mental health.***





# Will My Reflective Supervision “Count”?

- **YOU** are the best judge of which supervision experiences have helped you develop your IMH competencies.
- At the same time, the **NMAIMH**, in collaboration with our partners in the 13 other States are responsible for defining what we require regarding RS/C as part of the endorsement portfolios.





# Will My Reflective Supervision “Count”?

- **Reflective Supervision/Consultation Defined**  
[www.nmaimh.org](http://www.nmaimh.org) [Endorsement Materials page]
  - RS/C occurred while you were working with IMH population doing specialized IMH work;
  - Focused on the NMAIMH competencies;
  - Was provided by a supervisor/consultant who was competent to support your development of the NMAIMH competencies
  - 24 or 50 hours in no more than 2 years with a primary (may have had a secondary) supervisor with whom you developed a supportive learning relationship over time.





# Will My Reflective Supervision “Count”?

## Your Endorsement Portfolio Will Include

- A detailed **reference** (including ratings and narrative comments with examples/descriptions) regarding your demonstration of the NMAIMH competencies from at least one reflective supervisor/consultant (along with 2 other references); and
- A written **essay** describing how your experiences with reflective supervision/consultation were consistent with the NMAIMH definition.





# Why Become Endorsed?

- **Benefits You:** Your competence in the field of infant-family work is recognized.
- **Benefits Families:** Improves our ability to support families.
- **Directly Supports Babies:** Improves services and supports to benefit children aged three and younger.





# Why Become Endorsed?

- **Supports Communities:** Supports Infant-Family professionals in all settings.
- **Enhances the Early Childhood System of Care:** A competent workforce, improves quality, and leads to desired outcomes.





# What is Involved?

- **Portfolio is developed** with the help of an Endorsement Advisor
    - Role of Advisor is **crucial!**
    - Training, Supervision, Work Experiences with infants/toddlers and their parents/caregivers
    - Code of Ethics & Endorsement Agreement
    - Professional References specific to infant-family work
    - College Transcripts
  - **Portfolio is reviewed**
    - Two-level, standardized review process
    - Reviewers are trained and themselves endorsed
  - **Written Exam** (IMH Specialist & Mentor only) - Includes multiple choice (60 questions/90 min.) and essay portions (2/3 questions in 90 min.) that cover topics such as:
    - Attachment theory, early relationship development, infant and toddler development
    - Infant Mental Health principles and practices
    - Family, parenting and child care issues in culturally diverse populations
    - Professional ethics
- 

# NMAIMH

***NMAIMH Making a Difference: Promoting & supporting healthy development and nurturing relationships for all infants and young children in New Mexico.***

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- [Get Started](#)
- [Endorsement Materials](#)

[Resources](#)

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## What Endorsement Materials do I Need?

To become familiar with the NMAIMH Endorsement System, please refer to:

- [Endorsement Brochure](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Endorsement](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions #2 - Specific Endorsement Requirements](#)
- [Overview 8.08](#) – provides detailed information about the endorsement system, application process, and achieving endorsement.
- [PowerPoint presentation](#)

To learn more about how Endorsement makes a difference to babies and their families please look over the Impact Maps. The Impact Maps help define how the NMAIMH competencies are expected to help practitioners fulfill key responsibilities to babies and their families. The maps also delineate the expected results, service objectives and overall goal expected to be achieved.

Providers of *Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-based Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health* all share the following common goal:

**Optimal social, emotional & cognitive development of infants/young children within the context of strong, nurturing parent-infant/young child relationships.**

- [Level 1 Impact Map](#)
- [Level 2 Impact Map](#)

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To begin the Preliminary Application Process, please refer to:

- [Frequently Asked Questions about Endorsement](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions #2 - Specific Endorsement Requirements](#)
- [Overview 8.08](#)– provides detailed information about the endorsement system, application process, and achieving endorsement.
- Endorsement Requirements
  - [Level 1](#)
  - [Level 2](#)
  - [Level 3](#)
  - [Level 4](#)
- [Preliminary Application](#)
- [Reflective Supervision/Consultation Defined](#) helps clarify what reflective supervision and consultation look like.

**When working on your Endorsement Portfolio**, remember to work closely with your Endorsement Advisor from the first draft of your portfolio until you are ready to submit the portfolio for review. As you and your advisor work together, please refer to:

- [Preparation of a Portfolio](#) provides detailed information to guide you in this process.
- [Portfolio Prep Checklist](#) tell you what to include in your completed portfolio and where to send it
- [Reflective Supervision/Consultation Defined](#) helps clarify what reflective supervision and consultation look like.
- Endorsement Requirements
  - [Level 1](#)
  - [Level 2](#)
  - [Level 3](#)
  - [Level 4](#)
- Competency Guidelines
  - [Level 1](#)
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  - [Level 3](#)
  - [Level 4](#)
- [NMAIMH Code of Ethics](#)



# How Can I Get Started?

- Go to [www.nmaimh.org](http://www.nmaimh.org) and click on “Endorsement” for all of the **materials** you will need to better understand this process
- Contact Jacqui Van Horn, the NMAIMH Endorsement Coordinator through e-mail ([info@nmaimh.org](mailto:info@nmaimh.org)) or leave a voice mail message at (505) 331-7138.
- You can download, complete and print a **Preliminary Application** – “Endorsement Materials” - “Get Started” on [www.nmaimh.org](http://www.nmaimh.org)





# Endorsement Process

- When your preliminary application is received, you will be assigned an **Advisor** and sent an endorsement application packet.
- Your **Advisor** will contact you to discuss your plan to build the required portfolio describing your education and experience.
- Your **Advisor** will support you throughout the endorsement process.

