A family-centred recovery orientated practice framework for infant and early years mental health

Informed by biopsychosocial ecological and developmental theories of reflective, representational, and transactional infant mental health practice.

Infants and young children are active participants and recipients in the therapeutic process

Supporting caregiver health and mental health
- Facilitating caregivers to optimise their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.
- Facilitating caregivers to enhance their health and wellbeing.

Building family capacity and social connectedness
- Reducing family social and environmental problems by developing support networks and using a collaborative care planning process.
- Increasing caregivers’ emotional availability to their infants/children.

Facilitating regulation of infant/child emotions and behaviour
- Understanding the neurobiological development of emotions and behaviour.
- Finding the underlying meaning of the behaviour.
- Preventing future mental health problems.
- Developing social and emotional wellbeing.

Growing caregiver understanding of self, others & relationships
- Understanding the internal representations of caregivers, infants/young child and family.
- Supporting caregivers to become more reflective.
- Changing internal working models and templates of relationships.

Enhancing the caregiver – infant/child relationship
- Facilitating the development of secure relationships between caregivers and infants/young children.
- Focusing on relationships as a key to emotional regulation.

Increasing caregiver knowledge
- Providing knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs of infants and young children.
- Promoting the capacity to develop parenting skills.

Optimising developmental outcomes
- Facilitating the social, emotional, physical and developmental wellbeing of infants/young children.
- Screening for developmental concerns.
- Referring for assessment and intervention.

Enhancing caregiver parenting skills
- Developing practical skills in caregivers to support social and emotional, and physical development in the infant and young child.

Conception (zero) 4 years

Prevention Tertiary care

Supported by an understanding of and contribution to the evolving knowledge and evidence base in infant mental health through incorporating its application into clinical care; evaluating and researching the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions for infants, young children and their families; and sharing information and outcomes.