

REFLECTIVE FACILITATION/CONSULTATION

The State of Alaska is supportive of using *Alaska's Competencies for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health*® as a framework for developing workforce capacity in early childhood mental health (birth to five years). Individuals practicing in the early childhood mental health field can earn an Alaska endorsement which recognizes their education, training, leadership roles, and work experiences within the field through the Alaska Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. This endorsement is voluntary, and can be used to inform prospective employers, agencies and peers about culturally sensitive, relationship-base practice promoting early childhood mental health.

A requirement for professionals working toward achieving an endorsement is participation in reflective facilitation/consultation. Facilitation/consultation must be provided by or co-facilitated with a professional who qualifies at Level III or IV-Clinical of *Alaska's Competencies for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health*®. Currently, there are no facilitators/consultants endorsed at Level III or IV-Clinical within the State of Alaska. **The Reflective Facilitation Group is designed to build capacity in Alaska for providing reflective facilitation/consultation that will help professionals meet the requirements for endorsement.**

17 states make up the Infant Mental Health Association's League of States and use the competencies and endorsement standards that were originally developed by the Michigan Infant Mental Health Association. Endorsement is reciprocal for applicants between each participating state and will be transferred to Alaska when it becomes available here. Through the League of States a number of facilitators/consultants have been identified and are willing to provide reflective facilitation/consultation by distance through phone or video conferencing. The State of Alaska can assist programs in locating a currently endorsed facilitator/consultant to co-facilitate the required *Facilitation Group*.

Reflective facilitation/consultation is distinct due to the shared exploration of the parallel process. That is, attention to all of the relationships is important, including the ones between practitioner and facilitator, between practitioner and parent, and between parent and child. It is critical to understand how each of these relationships affects the others. Of additional importance, reflective facilitation/consultation relates to professional and personal development within one's discipline by attending to the emotional content of the work and how reactions to the content affect the work. Finally, there is often greater emphasis on the facilitator's/consultant's ability to listen and wait, allowing the professional to discover solutions, concepts and perceptions on his/her own without interruption from the facilitator/consultant.

The primary objectives of reflective facilitation/consultation include the following:

- form a trusting relationship between facilitator and practitioner
- establish consistent and predictable meetings and times
- ask questions that encourage details about the child, parent and emerging relationship
- listen
- remain emotionally present
- teach/guide
- nurture/support

- apply the integration of emotion and reason
- foster the reflective process to be internalized by the professional
- explore the parallel process and to allow time for personal reflection
- attend to how reactions to the content affect the process

Reflective facilitation/consultation may be carried out individually or within a group. For the purposes of this document, reflective facilitation/consultation refers specifically to work done in the child/family field on behalf of the child's primary caregiving relationships.

It is important to remember that relationship is the foundation for reflective facilitation and consultation. All growth and discovery about the work and oneself takes place within the context of this trusting relationship. To the extent that the facilitator or consultant and professional(s) or consultee(s) are able to establish a secure relationship, the capacity to be reflective will flourish.

“When it’s going well, supervision is a holding environment, a place to feel secure enough to expose insecurities, mistakes, questions and differences.” Rebecca Shahmoon Shanock (1992)

Supervision is “the place to understand the meaning of your work with a family and the meaning and impact of your relationship with the family.” Jeree Pawl, public address

“Do unto others as you would have others do unto others.” Jeree Pawl (1998)

Information adapted from the Michigan-IMHA website: <http://www.mi-aimh.org/reflective-supervision>