
UAIMH NEWSLETTER

Utah Association for Infant Mental Health

Issue 4 – July 2004

President's Corner

Introducing Our New President:

Nick Tsandes

Nick Tsandes is the Director of Children's Services at The Children's Center in Salt Lake City. Originally from Wyoming, Nick came to Salt Lake City to attend college. After receiving his MSW from the University of Utah, he decided to make Utah his home. Nick has specialized in working with young children and their families. His current area of interest is the reflective supervision model. Not only does he use reflective supervision in his practice, he conducts statewide training on the model. We are lucky to have Nick for the next year, and we look forward to hearing from him in our next newsletter!

News from UAIMH

UAIMH is moving along! In March, we had our annual Board meeting to re-elect Board members. To ensure rotating leadership, our bylaws require that three Board members stay on for one year, three for two years, and three for three years. Because we just started up last year, a vote was taken to amend the bylaws to allow two of the Board members to serve another year. We feel as if we are just getting started 'for real' at UAIMH and will be happy to serve Utah's infants and toddlers for another year!

Membership Update

Our second year started with a request to our members to renew their memberships. Fifty-seven of you have signed up for another year,

leaving forty members who have yet to renew. The more UAIMH continues to grow, the better we will be able to offer trainings, conferences, and social get-togethers for networking. You will be seeing more of those events within the next year. We are pleased to announce that several of you took the opportunity to join WAIMH along with your UAIMH membership. We now have 15 WAIMH members. We apologize for the length of time it takes to process WAIMH membership. Remember that you will receive the journals for the year.

UAIMH Mini-Conference:

"Maternal Depression and Infant Mental Health"

We were very pleased with the turnout for our first mini-conference, held April 16th, on the topic of "Maternal Depression and Infant Mental Health." Social workers, psychologists, occupational and physical therapists, nurses, pediatricians, and Early Head Start professionals attended the conference. A panel of experts on maternal depression made presentations and facilitated discussion. The panel focused their discussion on screening, the effects of maternal depression, and research.

The mini-conference has been the springboard for developing resources for providers who work with families with young children. The Utah Family Center, in partnership with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), is providing funds to support the development of a "train the trainers" workshop. The workshop curriculum will focus on an empathetic approach that home visitors can use in communicating about the subject of maternal depression with mothers

they are already visiting either through Early Intervention, Nurse Home Visiting or Early Head Start programs.

Thank you to everyone who completed the evaluation forms for the mini-conference. The evaluations showed that practitioners are especially interested in learning more specific intervention techniques to ameliorate and prevent parent-infant relationship problems. This valuable feedback will be used to plan the next UAIMH mini-conference!

A New UAIMH Secretary: Jessi Singleton

In March, the UAIMH Board not only elected a new President, but we also said goodbye to our dedicated secretary, Janice McCaffrey. Janice was lucky to find a great a new job. Her twin grandchildren also keep her busy. Therefore, she could no longer offer her time to her UAIMH secretarial activities. Thank you, Janice, for all you have done!

We are now pleased to welcome our new Secretary, Jessi Singleton. She introduces herself to our membership in the following message.

New Secretary's Message:

I am so excited about serving as the Secretary of UAIMH! For those of you who don't know me, I returned to Utah last summer from Colorado, where I was attending graduate school for my Ph.D. in School Psychology. I am now finishing up my pre-doctoral internship at The Children's Center. Beginning in August, I will be working as a school psychologist for Davis County School District Early Childhood Programs. I am looking forward to the position and I am eager to meet infant mental health professionals in Davis County.

Since becoming secretary for UAIMH, I have been busy inputting members into our website database. It is a slow process, but we now have 50 members in the database. I plan to have everybody in by the end of July. When this is complete, we hope to have a great resource

for referrals and local contacts! Two of my other primary projects for this year will be applying for nonprofit status and looking for funding for future conferences and trainings. It is going to be a great year!

Jessi Singleton
UAIMH Secretary

Intervention & Research

The Benefits of Massage: For Infants *and* for Parents

Touch is the first sense to arise in our development. Researchers have shown that fetuses respond to touch eight weeks after conception. When infants are born, touch is one of their most highly developed senses. Most parents intuitively hold, cuddle, and caress their babies, and research is now showing that close parent-child touch has health benefits for both child *and* parent. Dr. Tiffany Field of the Touch Research Institute (www.miami.edu/touch-research) has been studying infant and child development for decades. Dr. Field and her colleagues have investigated the benefits of massage therapy in many different groups of people. Their results show that massage is beneficial from birth to old age.

Massage is a common practice with pregnant women in many countries. It helps them relax and feel less anxious about giving birth. Field and colleagues found that daily massage of pregnant women (by their partners) reduced women's anxiety and back pain, improved their mood, enhanced their sleep, and decreased the chance of labor complications and premature labor. In another study, they showed that massage during labor reduced women's anxiety, depression, and pain. There also was less need for medication and for Caesarian section in massaged women as compared to those who were not massaged. Further, massage was related to significantly shorter labors, a shorter hospital stay, and less postpartum depression. (This is interesting in relation to our recent Maternal Depression conference day!).

An increasing number of births in the United States are assisted by professional birth coaches called doulas, who routinely use massage. Mothers receiving touch from doulas or significant others have been found to explore their newborn infants through touch and massage more immediately after birth, than mothers not receiving such care.

Close touch seems particularly important for young infants and premies. When parents hold their pre-term babies in close skin-to-skin contact, the babies stay warmer and have more regular heart beats and breathing. They are more alert, sleep better and cry less than infants who do not experience this close touch. Touch can also be calming and reassuring for the baby. Close contact is not only beneficial for premies, but also for term babies. A Canadian study found that babies cry less if mothers carry them for longer periods of time during the day, especially in early infancy. Another study found that U.S. infants who were carried in a sling felt more secure with their mothers at one year of age than infants who were not held in this way as newborns.

In Sweden, massage therapists have trained thousands of preschool and elementary school teachers to use massage in their schools. These teachers, in turn, have taught thousands of children to massage each other! Even young children get into the routine of having some quiet time together and massaging each other. Researchers have studied over 100 of these preschoolers. Amazingly, the massaged children interacted better with other children, were less aggressive, more attentive, and had fewer physical complaints at home after six months of massage in the classroom. Massage was especially helpful to the most disruptive children. In comparison to similar children who were not massaged, they became more sociable and less aggressive.

Children with chronic illnesses, such as asthma and diabetes, can also benefit from massage. When parents massaged their children for twenty-minutes a day at bedtime, children's moods improved. Interestingly, the children's parents felt calmer too, just by giving the

massage.

In short, massage can be very effective in improving a wide array of symptoms. In addition, it can easily be taught to caregivers and partners and can therefore be an inexpensive intervention that could touch many lives.

References

- Field, T.M. (2001). *Touch*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
Field, T.M. (1998). Touch therapy effects on development. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 22(4), 779-797.

Ilse de Koeber Ph.D.
UAIMH Treasurer

UAIMH Links

Idaho Interested in Infant Mental Health

On January 30, 2004, Dr. William Blechman, the charter president of the Florida Association of Infant Mental Health, was the guest speaker at a one-day conference held in Pocatello, Idaho, entitled, "Critical Beginnings: Understanding the Importance of Infant Mental Health." The event was sponsored by the Children's Special Health Program (CSHP) Task Force, Pocatello's interagency team of parents, professionals and administrators who meet monthly to integrate services so that families can more easily access and use available services.

Dr. Blechman's interest in infant mental health emerged when he served as president of Kiwanis International and he helped develop one of its major programs called "Young Children: Priority One." As a result of his research in the field of young children's mental health and his belief in its crucial importance, Dr. Blechman left his medical practice in 1994 in order to devote his efforts to advocating for the health of children and explaining their needs to the public and to policy makers.

At the recent conference, Dr. Blechman spoke to approximately 75 parents, professionals, and

university students and discussed why infant mental health has become a critical issue, what changes in society have occurred that have brought infant mental health to the forefront of research, and what can be done to develop systems of care. He acknowledged, "We must now go beyond *preaching to the choir*." He suggested that local leaders and business people need to be recruited as spokespersons for infant mental health, rather than relying only on researchers and practitioners to fulfill this role. He described the "adult field trip," one of the activities from the Child Watch Program, sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund. The adult field trip involves inviting business people, clergy, legislators and other policy makers to visit a variety of community locations, such as child care centers and juvenile detention centers. Discussions of good (and bad) features of child care are encouraged. Talking with youth and youth counselors is also part of the experience. Dr. Blechman indicated that although it may seem obvious to people in the field of infant mental health, this type of effort helps to connect the dots between the importance of nurturing relationships and later outcomes for members of the community at large.

As part of the day's activities, Adrienne Akers, UAIMH Board member, shared some of the materials developed by the Utah Expanding Options for Infant Mental Health and UAIMH members to assist Idaho in moving their efforts forward. Dr. Blechman's lecture was intended to kick-off community and state interest and to begin a discussion on how to infuse concepts of infant mental health within a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs at Idaho State University.

Adrienne Akers
UAIMH Board Member

Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming Workshops and Continuing Education Opportunities

- **Video Microanalysis in Infant-Parent Mental Health Practice, Psychodynamic Therapy, Parenting Education, and Supervision.**

Workshop conducted by George Downing Ph.D., with Edward Tronick Ph.D.

Dates: July 23 - 25, 2004 (10am -5pm)

Location(s): July 23: Queen of the Valley Community Benefits Building; 3448 Villa Lane; Napa, CA 94558 **July 24 & 25:** Queen of the Valley Hospital, Conference Rooms 2/3; 1000 Trancas; Napa, CA 94558

During this three-day workshop, Dr. George Downing will present a psychodynamic, clinical approach that employs video technology in treatment, education, parental consultation, professional trainings, and supervision situations. Video technology creates the possibility for observation and elaboration of non-verbal communication and behavioral pattern recognition that can open up new worlds of understanding in the clinical and supervisory process. The program content will focus on practitioner skills and techniques for using video microanalysis in a variety of clinical, evaluation, and educational settings. Video material for the program will be drawn from videos provided by participants and Dr. Downing.

Edward Tronick, Ph.D., renowned researcher, developmental psychologist and Chief of the Harvard Children's Hospital Child Development Unit, has been invited to participate as a discussant in this program.

For more information on this workshop, contact: Mark Ludwig at 510-663-9649 (phone) or malud123@aol (e-mail), or Maureen St. John at 707-253-6961 (phone), or mstjohn@co.napa.ca.us (e-mail)

We apologize that this information may not reach you in time to register. We felt it was

information on a model that would interest you.

- **Understanding Infants**

**University of Utah Continuing Education
Class taught by Dr. Alan Fogel**

Dates: August 9 -13, 2004 (8am – 5 pm)

Location: University of Utah (U of U) Student Union Building, West Ballroom

Additional Information: Class is 2 credit hours. Can be taken for credit (CR/NC grades only) or as non-credit (AOCE). Psychology 2220/222 (Department of Psychology).

Students and the general community can register for the class on the U of U Continuing Education website: www.continue.utah.edu. Upon entering the website, the class is listed under the header "Subject", under "Non-credit" and then under "Psychology." The cost for the non-credit class is \$148.00

If this class interests you, please email Professor Alan Fogel, alan.fogel@psych.utah.edu, as soon as possible. So far not many registrations have been received and there is a possibility that the class will be canceled

- **Critical Issues Conference**

Dates: November 4-5, 2004
Salt Lake Hilton

The Keynote Speaker at the Critical Issues Conference will be Chandra Ghosh Ippen, Ph.D, Child Trauma Research, Department of Psychiatry, San Francisco General Hospital. She will speak on November 4th at 8am.

UAIMH members have been active on the conference planning committee. We are delighted that there will be an opportunity to attend workshops on Thursday, November 4th targeted toward issues affecting young children. Topics include: assessment, parent-infant psychotherapy, and a presentation on a collaborative model

between Community Mental Health, Head Start and Early Intervention.

All UAIMH members will receive more information about this conference by e-mail.

UAIMH Activities

- **UAIMH Website** UAIMH's website is now working! You can find information about UAIMH and renew your membership online! We are also working on networking opportunities. Don't forget to mark the box indicating that you would like your information to be available on the website. This will help in setting up regional networking groups. Check out the website at www.hope.usu.edu.
- **Infant Mental Health Training Committee** UAIMH is looking for volunteers to form a committee that will investigate options for setting up an Infant Mental Health Training Program.
- **Mini-Conference Committee** UAIMH plans on continuing to organize mini-conferences that will be of interest to our membership. We need volunteers to form a committee that can generate ideas for such mini-conferences and help with the organization. If you are interested, please contact Janet Wade at janetwade@utah.gov

For information regarding the World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH), log on to www.waimh.org.

To become a member of UAIMH, log on to www.hope.usu.edu or contact Janet Wade at janetwade@utah.gov

Deadline for submissions to the next UAIMH Newsletter will be October 1, 2004. Contributions are welcome! Please contact Ilse de Koeijer at ilse.dekoeijer@psych.utah.edu.