

# Highlighting Emerging Scholars

By Jennifer Champagne, Early Childhood Consultant, Michigan

Relationships Count: A Professional Learning Series for Early Interventionists

A qualitative study that examines the core components and perceived benefits of reflective consultation for early interventionists.

Reflective consultation is a form of professional development that addresses a relationship-based approach to service delivery. However, there have been few published empirical studies about the construct of group reflective consultation. The purpose of the qualitative study of the Relationships Count series was to examine core components and perceived benefits for early interventionists. The series consisted of monthly group

sessions that were facilitated by an infant mental health specialist. The participants included 10 early interventionists from a large Midwestern county. Data collection methods included interviewing early interventionists and observing, recording, and participating in 10 monthly reflective consultation sessions during 2013-2014. Coding, concept mapping, and comparative analysis of data were used to examine what happened during the series as well as to identify and describe perceived benefits for early interventionists.

The findings indicate core components of facilitation and participation contributed to a relationship-based approach to supporting the professional development of early interventionists. Specifically, the findings indicate that case discussion, observation, practice, and experiences of

a relationship-based approach through reflective consultation were associated with increasing practitioner competencies when working with children and families, specifically: using gentle inquiry, reflecting on thoughts and feelings, active listening, supporting without problem-solving, and promoting parental competence. Early interventionists identified that participation strengthened feelings of competence and self-confidence in their ability to support children and families.

More information about the Relationships Count series including handouts, resources, and the completed dissertation is available at: [www.reflectiveconsultation.weebly.com](http://www.reflectiveconsultation.weebly.com)

## The *Infant Mental Health Journal*: Three Important Publications

The *Infant Mental Health Journal* (IMHJ) announces three issues of relevance to research and practice in the WAIMH community.

The first publication, Special Issue: *New Approaches to Classifying Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood* (Volume 37, Issue 5), September-October 2016, is co-edited by Antoine Guedeney and Charles Zeanah. All of the articles address the recently revised and expanded classification system, *Diagnostic Classification for Infants and Young Children (0-5)*. The revision was chaired by Charley Zeanah with committee members Alice S. Carter, Julie Cohen, Helen Egger, Mary Margaret Gleason, Miri Keren, Alicia Lieberman, Kathleen Mulrooney and Cindy Oser. Contributors to the IMHJ include members of the ZERO TO THREE and WAIMH communities.

The second issue, *Advances in Reflective Supervision and Consultation: Pushing Boundaries and New Ideas into Training and Practice* (Volume 37, Issue 6), November-December 2016, is co-edited by guest editors, Joy D. Osofsky and Deborah J. Weatherston. The articles in this issue offer a variety of perspectives on reflective practice from research faculty and practitioners who work in different

settings and represent a variety of cultures and disciplines including psychiatry, education, psychology, pediatrics, and social work. Authors include: Joshua Sparrow, Mary Claire Heffron, Christopher Watson, Alexandra Harrison, and Astrid Berg, among others.

The third volume, *Psychology of Boys at Risk: Indicators from Birth to Five*, is co-edited by Hiram E. Fitzgerald, Paul Golding and Marvin McKinney. This issue of the *Infant Mental Health Journal* directs the reader to evidence pointing to biopsychosocial factors that elevate risk for poor developmental outcomes for boys from the antenatal period to postnatal age 5. Research, practice, and policy articles collectively challenge the extent to which infant mental health researchers, practitioners, and policy makers are attuned to the vulnerabilities of boys during the earliest years of development. The special issue, to be published in Spring of 2017 (Volume 38, Issue 2) includes contributors such as Allan Schore, Daniel Shaw, Iheoma Iruka, Hiram Fitzgerald, Natasha Cabrera, Leon Putter, Paul Golding, Carolyn Dayton, Marjorie Beeghley, Deborah Weatherston, Paul Golding, Marvin McKinney, and Michelle Sarche. These original articles are expanded versions of papers presented at the 2014 Santa Fe conference on Boys at

Risk, which was organized and supported by the Santa Fe Boys Educational Foundation.

Note: WAIMH members receive the IMHJ (print and/or on-line) at a special subscription rate. [To subscribe to the IMHJ as a WAIMH member or to renew your subscription today.](#)

The advertisement for the *Infant Mental Health Journal* features a central graphic with the journal's title and a circular badge listing related fields: Psychology • Pediatrics, Psychiatry • Social Work, Early Childhood, Special Education • Nursing, and Early Intervention. Below the title, it provides the URL [wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/imhj](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/imhj) and lists the editor, Paul Spicer, PhD. A small image of the journal cover is shown. To the right, a text box describes the journal's focus on peer-reviewed research and offers a 60-day free access trial. A three-step process is outlined: 1. Log in or register for a Wiley Online Library account; 2. Go to 'My Profile' and select 'Trial Access' from the left-hand menu; 3. Enter the trial access code IMHJFREE (case-sensitive). At the bottom, it provides website information for the journal and the WAIMH (World Association for Infant Mental Health), including their respective logos and URLs.