

But what about the psychological level? What are babies supposed to re-freshen within the human spirit? I suggest that they come to remind us that we, too, once were present and filled with joy in our awareness of others' awareness. If so, a complete theory of human development cannot uncritically assume that the mental life of the infant is simply a state of deficiency waiting to be remedied. Nor can it assume that the remedy is the set of cognitive and emotional skills that enable the infant to become an efficient but hassled adult just like us. Such a theory also needs to pay more attention to the ongoing developmental tasks of adult life. These tasks do not end with parenting our children only to the point that they can successfully reproduce. To go only this far toward understanding ourselves simply ensures that we and our offspring shall continue the cycle of falling asleep to humanity's deeper intuitions and aspirations. We need to broaden our view of parenting to include an openness to the forgotten dimensions of life revealed to us by our infants. If we let them, babies can teach us a lot about capacities we lost during childhood. If we are willing to receive it, they can give us the incentive we need to go about the difficult task of recovering these capacities and making them conscious, deliberate, and enduring elements in our adult lives. If we become purposefully and mindfully present, joyful, and aware of our mutual awareness, we can become clearer and purer reflections of Being's full radiance. To the extent that we complete this ultimate developmental task, we become, in the words used by the Purepecha of central Mexico to describe true shamans, "mirrors so clear that those who gaze into them can see all the way through to the other side."

#### References

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## Editor's Perspective

By Miri Keren



This issue of *The Signal* comes after the 13th WAIMH Congress in Cape Town, South Africa. Each year following each WAIMH conference, we have tried to bring to our members some of the material that was discussed during key lectures and symposia, as well as some personal impressions from participants, especially to those who have not had the opportunity to attend it. From my own point of view, I was deeply impressed by the strength of African mental health clinicians to find creative ways to instill hope into despairing situations of extreme poverty and adversity. I thought of these clinicians' resilience as their ability to see beyond the risk factors and invent intervention strategies that are not written in our Western textbooks for parents and infants in extremely adverse situations. It is like being able to see the sun hiding behind big, thick, and dark clouds.

"Minding our Babies" was the theme of the conference, as it is the core of our daily work. Making our societies to mind our babies is another story...and implies that we need to go one step further to "translate" this psychological concept into words that can be easily understood by all policy makers. This is why Infant Mental Health policy papers from different Affiliates and countries, such as Catherine Mc Guire's (Ireland) and the ZERO to THREE (USA), are so important.

Besides the importance of having a written policy statement, like any declarative document, it is essential to include the action steps that translate policy into practice. Otherwise, health or mental health or early care and education policy makers may very well agree with the principles, but won't necessarily know how to support them or take the action steps necessary to put them into practice.

As mental health clinicians, many of us are trained to facilitate the being and the "reflective Stance," more than the "doing." I personally think that this gap is one of the reasons that explains why many talented clinicians stay in the clinical setting and let "others" deal with the politics of health or mental health or early care management at the policy or societal level. To put in action our main concepts of infant mental health is really not an easy task! For example, it may be difficult for the Argentinian Health Minister to put into action the implications of Clara's study on the link between self and interactive regulation with reflective functioning and healthy development.

Just as WAIMH has many years of history, *The Signal* has gone through several editors, with different agendas. I have been in charge of the editorship for the last 4 years and I have been lucky to be given the opportunity to make it move from the format of a Newsletter, to a more scientific and clinically-oriented publication where WAIMH members can feel free to bring their knowledge and experience for readers to share. In addition, we have now the tradition of inserting two "Corners": the ZERO to THREE one... thanks to Stephanie Powers... and the Affiliates one, thanks first to Mark Tomlinson (South Africa), then to Martin Saint Andre (Quebec, Canada) and Maree Foley (New Zealand)! *The Signal* does not have the strict standards of a peer reviewed journal, such as the *Infant Mental Health Journal*. Still we have tried to maintain a "good-enough" scientific level.

On the personal level, it has been for me a very special intellectual, as well as emotional, experience. Indeed, reaching out to authors in search of interesting papers is not an easy task. Most WAIMH members are very busy and for many, and for me, as well, English is not our native language. I was lucky to have the continuous help of a few colleagues, very committed to WAIMH, such as Minna Sorsa, Hi Fitzgerald, and Debbie Weatherson who worked very hard on the editing. Minna learned to use a new software that enabled us to change the external look of *The Signal* into colored, broad-spaced columns and pictures that resonates extremely well with *Infancy*... This is why we have felt a bit proud like new parents each time *The Signal* is published and is sent to you! I also wish to thank our Editorial Board that has tried to keep their promise to send us two papers per year... Because I became WAIMH President at the Cape Town Conference, this is the last issue that I will oversee as Editor of *The Signal*. I have asked Debbie Weatherson to take over the Editorship of *The Signal* and she will take the lead; Hi Fitzgerald has agreed to assist. Expect many more changes that reflect the growth of this important and ever-expanding world organization!