

Relationships Count: Supporting the Social-Emotional Competence of Infants, Toddlers, and their Families

Jennifer Champagne, Ph.D., IMH-E
Marian Orihel, M.Ed., IMH-E

Contact Information

Jennifer Champagne
Jennifer.champagne@oakland.k12.mi.us

Marian Orihel
mcorihel@ameritech.net

www.reflectiveconsultation.weebly.com

Objectives

- Identify barriers to developing strong positive relationships and strategies to address barriers
- Learn about reflective consultation project in Oakland County
- Identify ways to provide support and gather information through gentle inquiry and attentive listening
- Recognize the importance of reflecting on *thoughts and feelings* before, during and after home visits

- Consider impact of delaying problem-solving impulses
- Identify and describe the importance of promoting family competence and strengthening parent/child relationships
- Develop strategies to promote gentle inquiry, reflective practice, attentive listening, support without problem-solving, and parental competence



**Relationships Count:
Reflective Consultation
for Early Interventionists**

- Monthly two-hour evening sessions
- Group of 5 teachers and reflective supervisor
- Voluntary participation
- Mandatory attendance
- Followed Infant Mental Health Best Practice Guidelines for Reflective Supervision/Consultation

Goals for Relationships Count

- Help early interventionists feel better prepared to support families during home visits
- Address challenges encountered in working with families in their homes
- Develop skills to be more open and authentic in their interactions with families
- Support families in nurturing strong attachments with their child/children

The reflective consultant...

- established guidelines and format for case presentation and reflective discussion
- planned and implemented relationship-based competency building activities
- taught and modeled gentle inquiry, reflecting on thoughts and feelings, and active listening as a relationship-based approach to providing support and promoting competence

Early Interventionists....

- discussed challenges, strengths, and vulnerabilities during case presentations
- observed, practiced, and experienced providing and receiving support within a relationship-based approach that promoted feelings of competence and confidence

Early Interventionists....

- identified that benefits of participation included learning necessary skills and feeling supported
- identified strengthening the following relationship-based competencies:
 - Gentle inquiry
 - Reflecting on thoughts and feelings
 - Attentive listening
 - Supporting without problem-solving
 - Promoting feelings of competence and confidence

“It reoriented me to remembering that sometimes I just need to be there and I need to be a very good listener. I have to shut off that switch that I have to fix it in order for everyone to feel better.”

“It helps us look at how families are reacting and what that might make us feel about them or make us feel about a situation or what we bring as people into this. It helps us look at what we are bringing into a situation so we can see what those dynamics are and so we can be more aware of what is going on and how to walk with parents on this journey.”

“I have noticed that in the families where they feel most supported, their children seem to make the most progress.”

“Telling people what to do doesn’t work. This way is much slower, but it actually helps families.”

**Parallel Process of
Relationship-Based Competencies in
Early Intervention**

“How you are is as important as what you do”

- Jeree Pawl

“What you do is as important as how you are”

- Doug Davies

G.R.A.S.P.

- Gentle Inquiry
- Reflecting on Thoughts and Feelings
- Attentive Listening
- Supporting without Problem-Solving
- Promoting Competence

Stand By Me

When the night has come
And the land is dark
And the moon is the only light we'll see
No I won't be afraid, no I won't be afraid
Just as long as you stand, stand by me
- Ben E. King
