

New York State Association for Infant Mental Health



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What do we mean when we say IMH?



- Mental health status of infants & toddlers
- An interdisciplinary field
- Infant mental health principles
- Infant mental health practices

The Definition of Infant and Early Childhood Mental

The capacity of the child from birth to age five to;

- **Experience, regulate and express emotions**
- **Form close and secure interpersonal relationships**
- **Explore the environment and learn**

All within the context of the family,
the community and the culture.

(Zero to Three Policy Center Fact Sheet, May 18, 2004)





An interdisciplinary field...

**Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary
includes *ALL* individuals
who work with and in support of
infants, very young children
and their families.**

IMH-informed Practices

Can apply to:

- **Advocacy**
- **Behavioral health**
- **Child welfare/custody**
- **Early care & education**
- **Early intervention (Part C, special education, OT, PT)**
 - **Health (pediatrics, nursing, psychiatry, etc)**
 - **Home visiting**
- **Program development, evaluation, administration**
 - **Research**

IMH Principles

***The theoretical
foundations and values
that guide our understanding
of what infants/toddlers need***

IMH Principles



**1.) Attachment theory,
family systems theory &
trauma-informed approaches**

Attachment Theory

Biologically-based (*John Bowlby*)

The capacity of the caregiver to be sensitive to the child's cues and respond empathically to emotional signals provides the foundation for the child's secure and healthy development. (*Ainsworth, 1969*)

Types of attachment:

- * **Secure** (70%)
- * **Insecure**
 - **Avoidant** (15 – 20%)
 - **Ambivalent/Resistant** (10%)
 - **Disorganized** (12%, 30%, 80%)

IMH Principles



**2.) Babies exist
in the context of their
caregiving relationships
and within the
cultural context of their family**

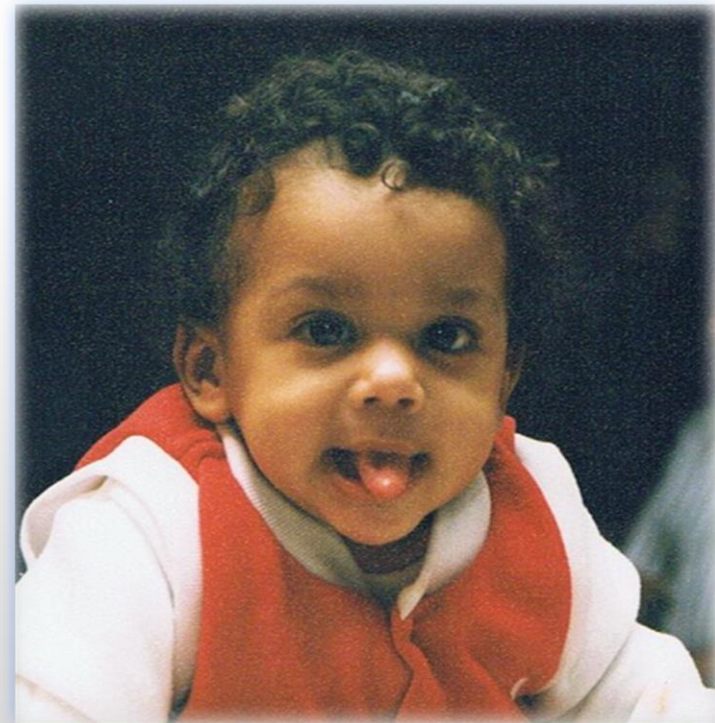
Relationships are Key

"There is no such thing as a baby ... if you set out to describe a baby, you will find you are describing a baby and someone." (Winnicott, 1947)



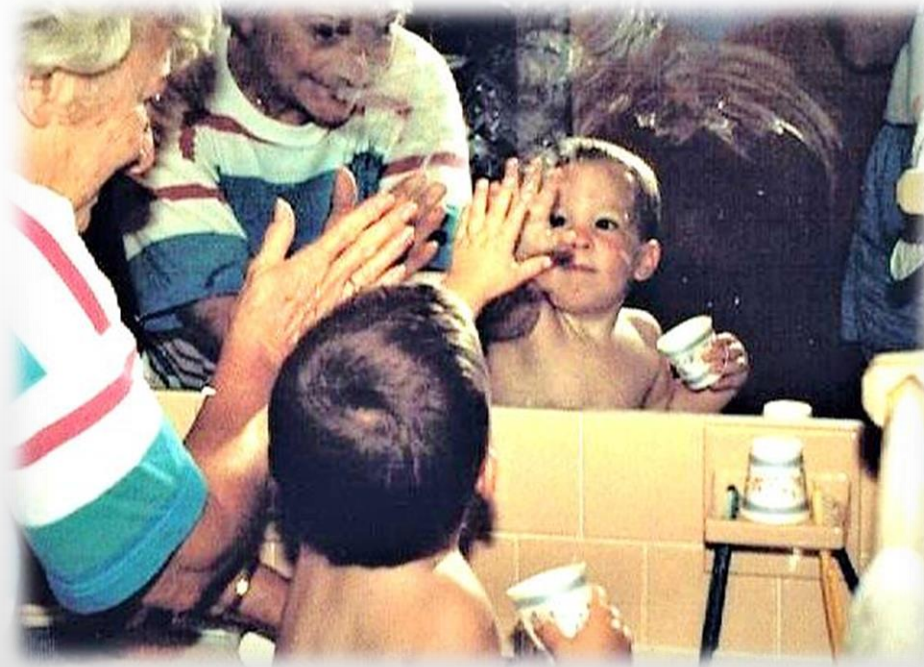
IMH Principles

3.) Experiences during pregnancy and in the first three years lay the foundation for all future development



Development in One Domain Affects Development in Others

Foundational capabilities in areas such as cognition, social emotional, communication and regulation are all intertwined and build subsequent development. *(Shonkoff and Phillips,)*



We can no longer think of mental health and development as separate, they are intertwined.

- Up to 14.2 % percent of US children ages 0-5 experience social-emotional problems that negatively affect their functioning, development, and school readiness *(Brauner & Stephens, 2006)*

- “We know that what happens during pregnancy and in the early years sets the stage for either a sturdy or fragile existence.



- 3 to 5 year olds get expelled (from preschool & childcare) at a higher rate than any other age child. *(Gilliam, 2008)*
- Kindergarten teachers identify SE skills as their biggest challenge.



A child gets on to a trajectory
toward a poor outcome.



When a child gets kicked out of preschool,
what do you think is likely to happen by 17?



IMH Principles

- 4.) Relationships are critical:
the best way to support babies
is to support their parents/families to
build and strengthen
nurturing relationships with them**



Relationships are Key

Children's development depends on the quality and reliability of their relationships".


(Shonkoff, National Scientific Council on the Developing Child



IMH Principles

**5.) There can be both
ghosts and angels
in the nursery
that will impact the
emerging
attachment relationships**





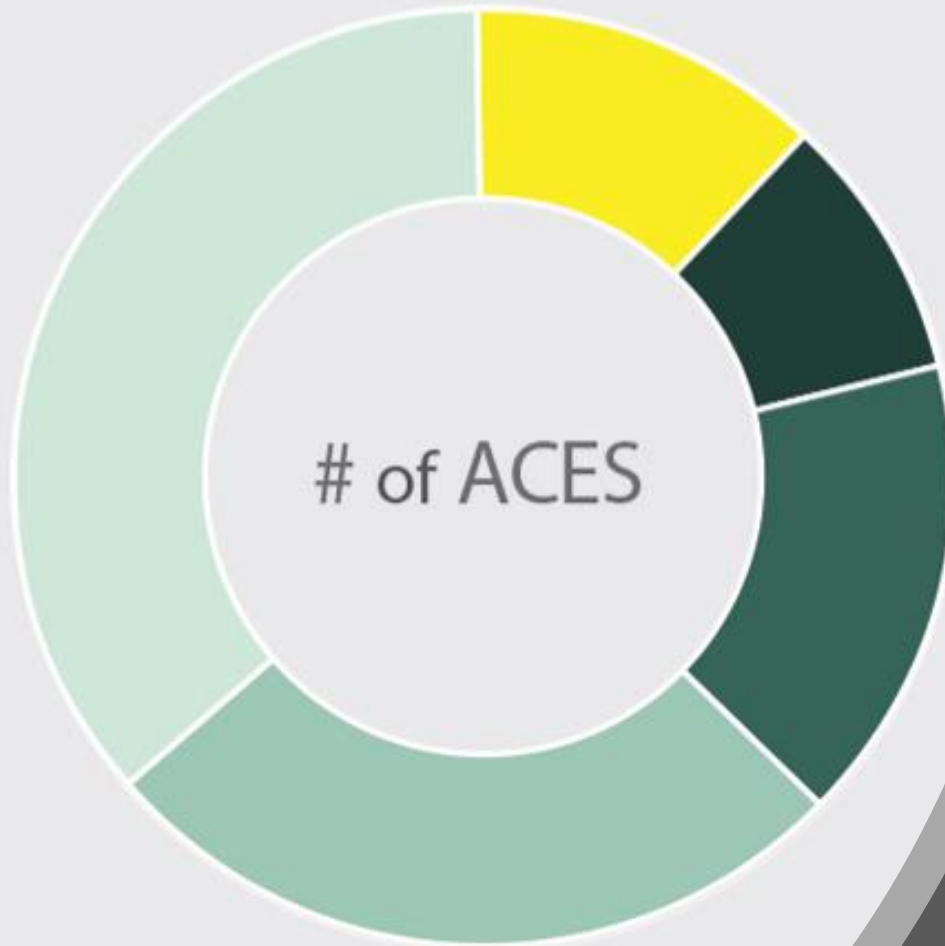
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

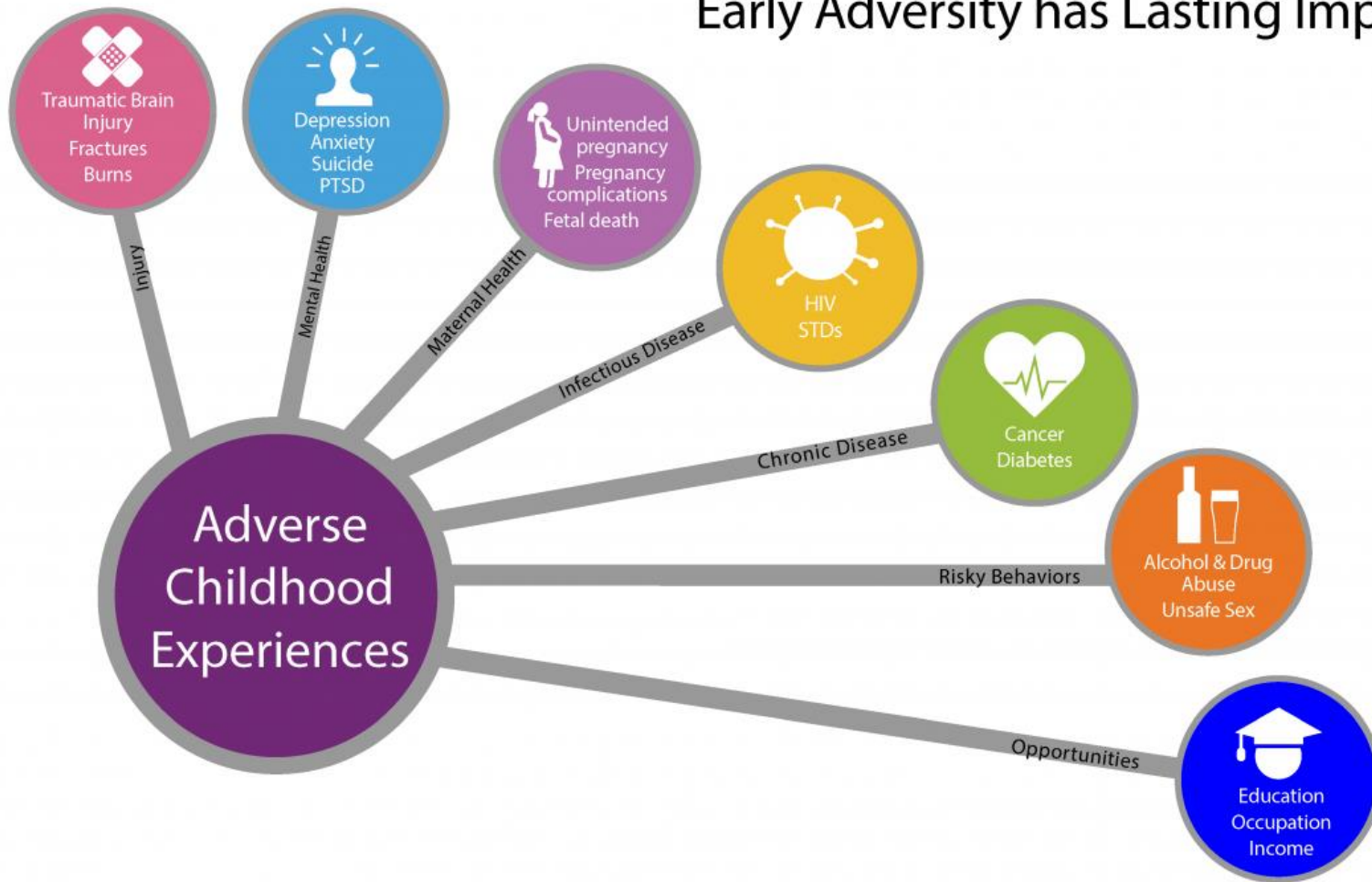
- **Potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years)**
- **Such as experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect; witnessing violence in the home; and having a family member attempt or die by suicide.**
- **Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing up in a household with substance misuse, mental health problems, or instability due to parental separation or incarceration of a parent, sibling, or other member of the household.**

How Common are ACES?

ACE Study



Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts



Impact of Maternal Depression

- 10 to 20% of mothers experience postpartum depression
- Compromises parenting practices
- Can lead to developmental difficulties and delays and impaired social development
- Maternal Depression is treatable.

Brain Research and Toxic Stress

- **85% of Brain Development occurs before age 3**
- **Chronic stressful conditions, without the buffering protection of a nurturing adult, can disrupt the architecture of the brain and lead to lifelong difficulties**
- **Fight, flight, freeze**
- **Children exposed to serious early stress develop an exaggerated stress response with long-term physical consequences ranging from heart disease to depression**

Complex Trauma

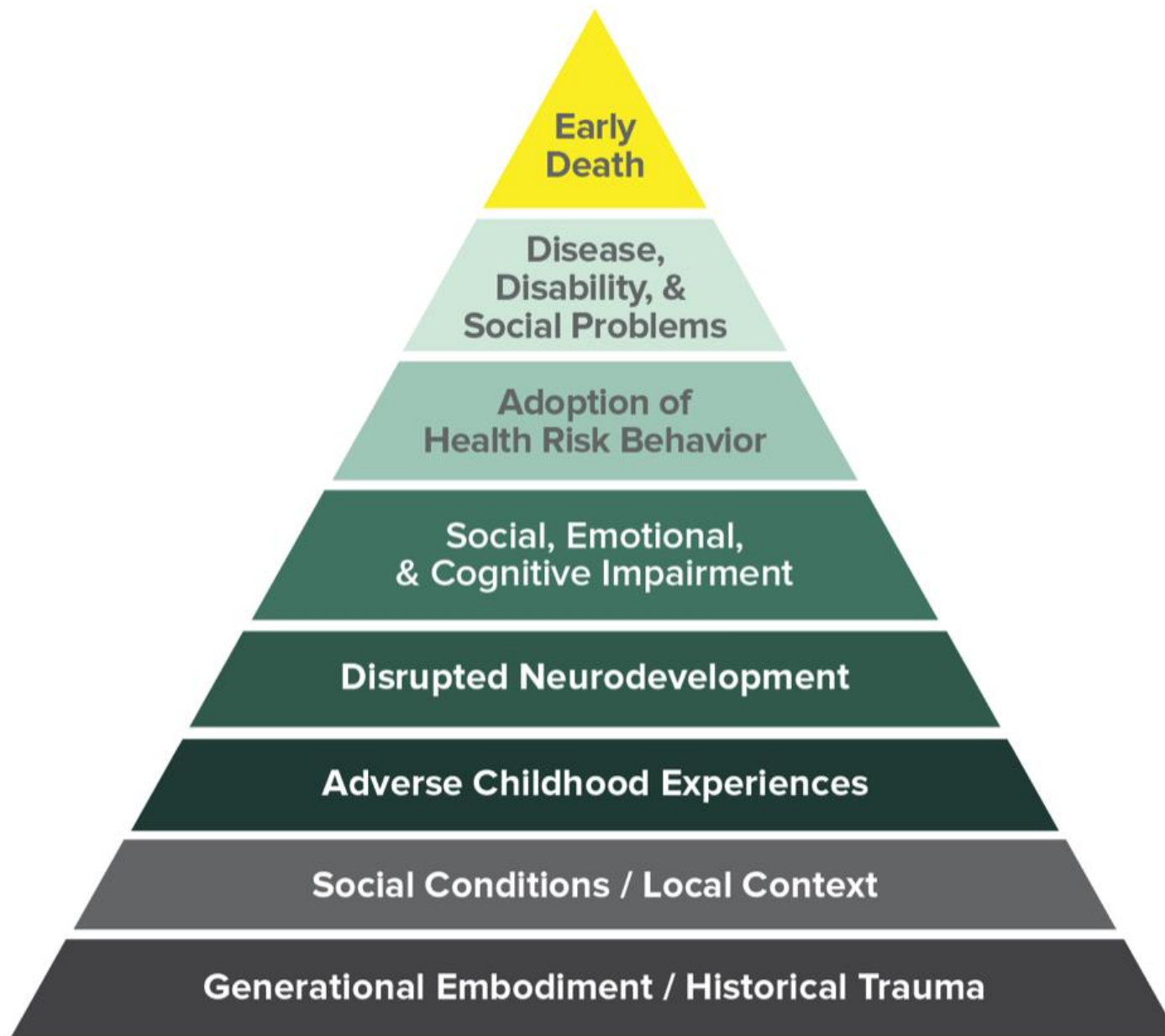
- Exposure to multiple traumatic events, often invasive and interpersonal and the wide-ranging, long-term impact of this exposure.
- These exposures occur within the child's early caregiving system that is supposed to be the source of safety and stability in the child's life - include physical and emotional neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and exposure to domestic violence
- Since they often occur in the context of the child's relationship with a caregiver, they interfere with the child's ability to form a secure attachment bond.

(National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2003)

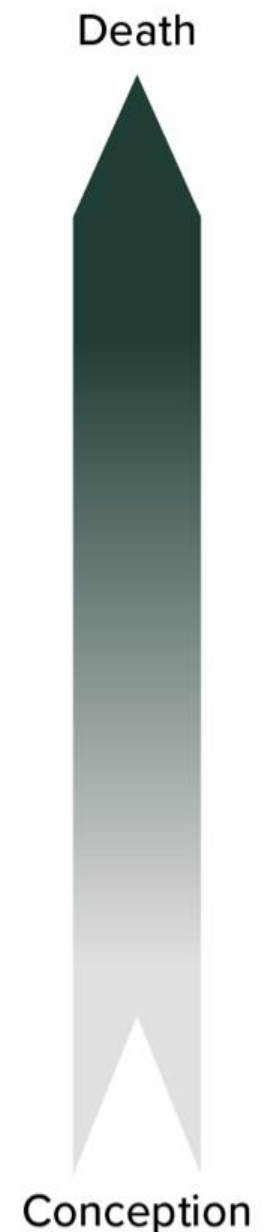
Complex Trauma

Can disrupt
many aspects
of the child's
development:

- **Attachment**
- **Biology**
- **Affect regulation**
- **Dissociation**
- **Self-concept**
- **Behavioral control**
- **Cognition**
- **Self concept**



Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan





- Nobel prize winning economist James Heckman has analyzed the return on governmental and other social investment in human capital at various stages in individual's lives.

<https://heckmanequation.org>

- Findings include:
 - Interventions early in the life cycle of disadvantaged children have much higher economic returns than later interventions
 - Highest returns are in birth to three years

First 1,000 days on Medicaid

A workgroup comprised of stakeholders from health, education and other child serving systems developing a 10-point plan of actions that Medicaid could undertake to improve outcomes.

www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/first_1000.htm



Strengthen economic supports to families

- Strengthening household financial security
- Family-friendly work policies



Change social norms to support parents and positive parenting

- Public engagement and enhancement campaigns
- Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment



Provide quality care and education early in life

- Preschool enrichment with family engagement
- Improved quality of child care through licensing and accreditation



Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development

- Early childhood home visitation
- Parenting skill and family relationship approaches



Intervene to lessen harms and prevent future risk

- Enhanced primary care
- Behavioral parent training programs
- Treatment to lessen harms of abuse and neglect exposure
- Treatment to prevent problem behavior and later involvement in violence

Let's not dismiss
the impact, but
there is
certainly room
for hope!



Key strategies in working with the parent and child

Helping the parent to;

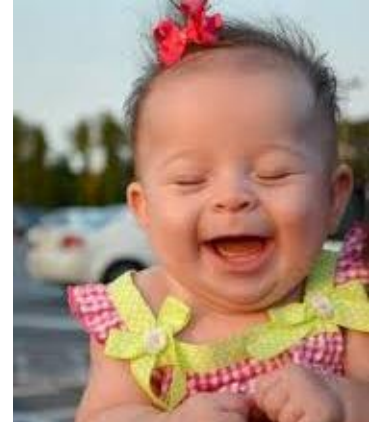
- Understand the child's cues and increase the caregiver's sensitivity and responsiveness to the child's signals relevant to their moving away from to explore and returning to the parent for comfort and support.
- Increase their ability to reflect on their own and the child's behavior, thoughts and feelings regarding their attachment–caregiving interaction and help them to establish more effective caregiving patterns.
- Reflect on experiences in their own histories that affect their current caregiving patterns.

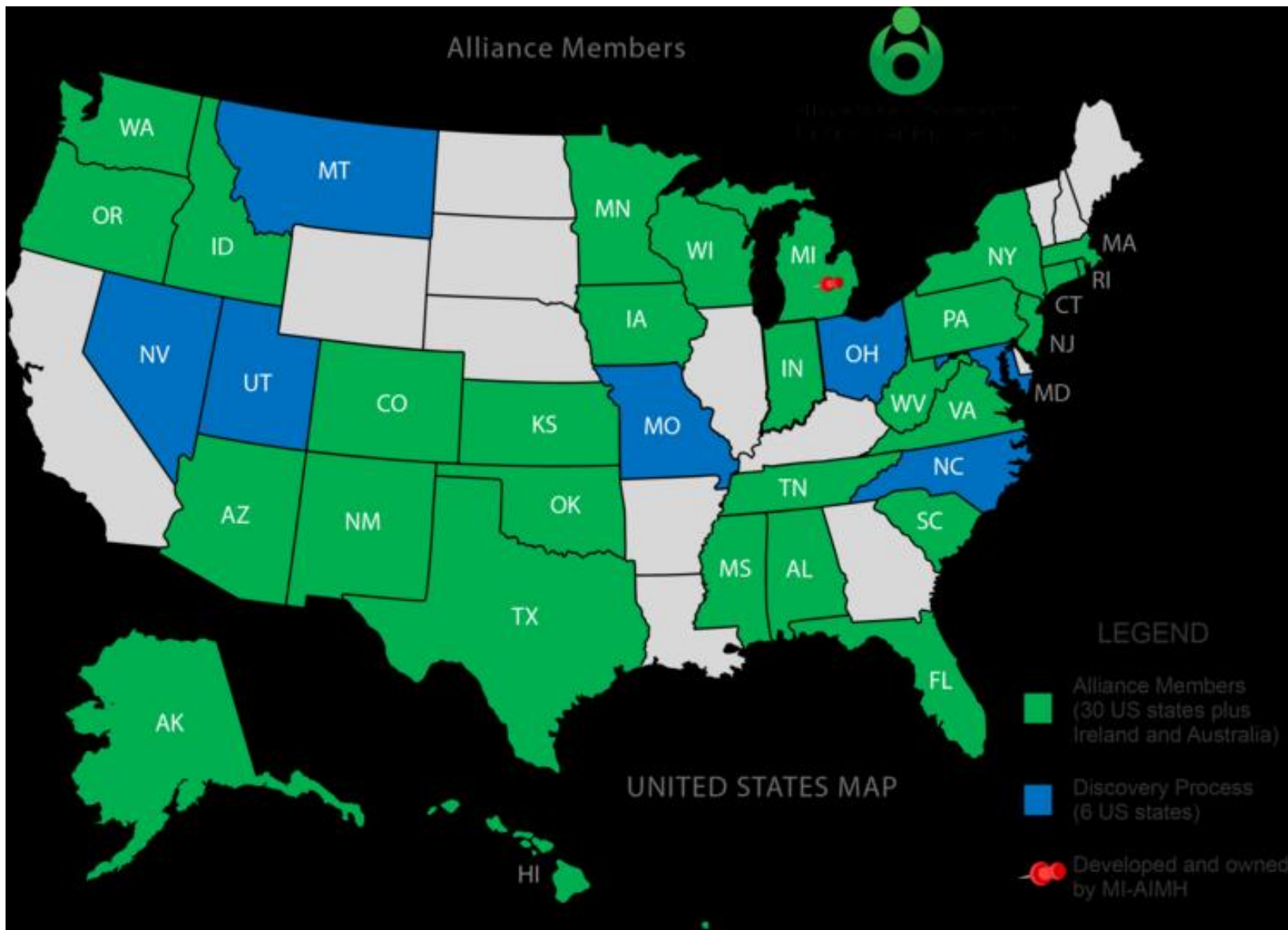
(Circle of Security, 2013)

NYS-AIMH Endorsement®



Intended to
**recognize experiences
that lead to competency
and show
evidence of a specialization
in the infant-family field.**





LEGEND

- Alliance Members
(28 US states plus
Ireland and W. Australia)
- Discovery Process
(6 US states)



UNITED KINGDOM



Alliance for the Advancement of
Infant Mental Health

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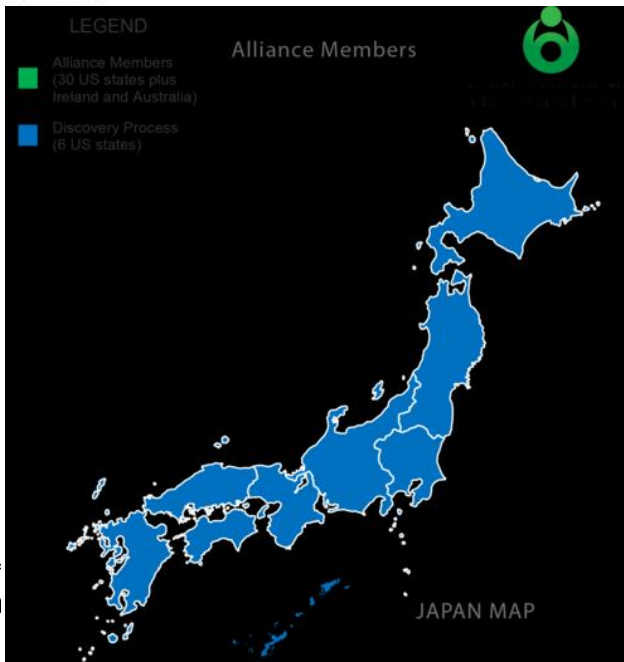
AUSTRALIA MAP



Alliance for the Advancement of
Infant Mental Health

LEGEND

- Alliance Members
(30 US states plus
Ireland and Australia)
- Discovery Process
(6 US states)



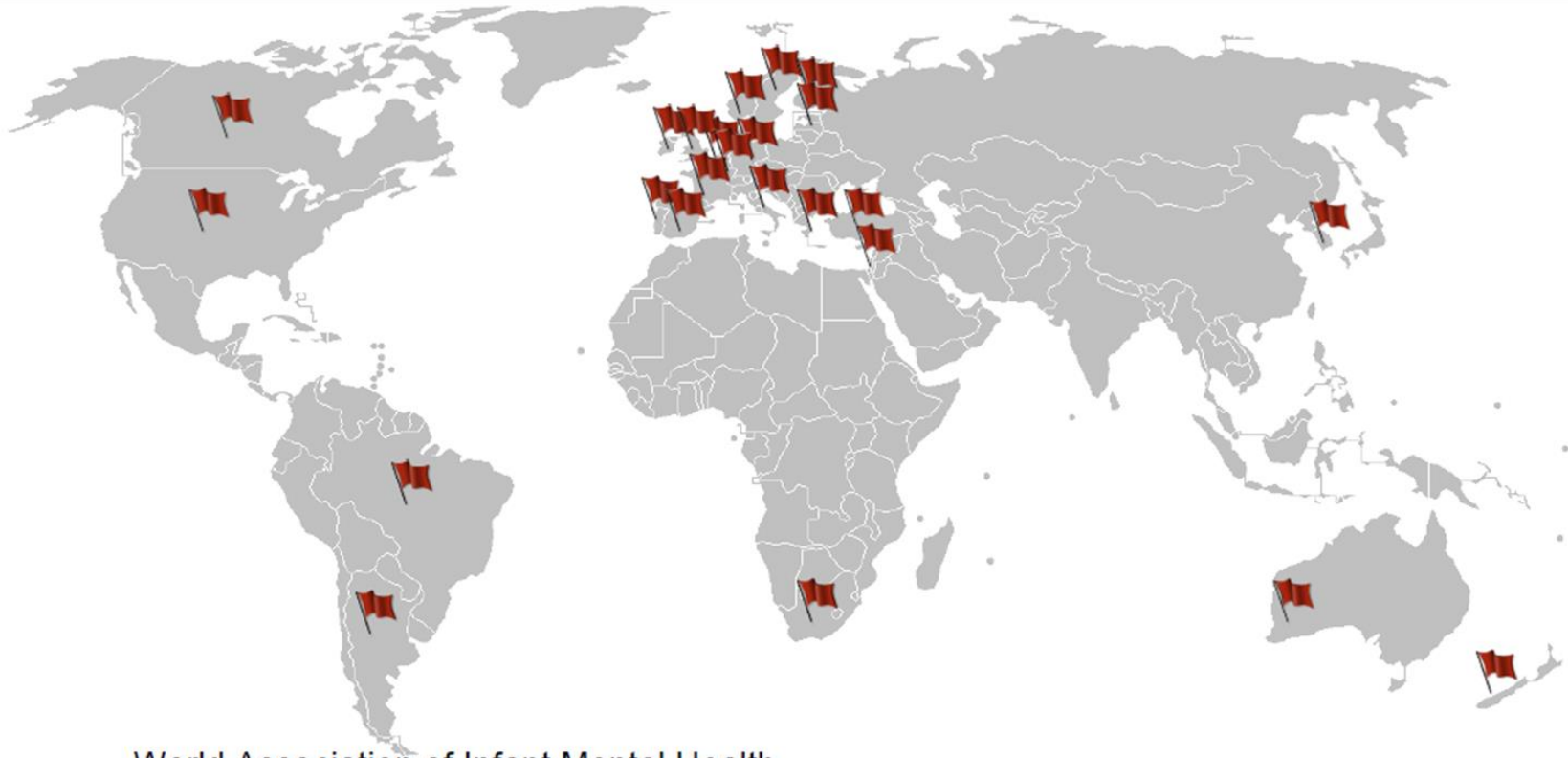
JAPAN MAP

Alliance Members



Alliance for the Advancement of
Infant Mental Health

...And Beyond



World Association of Infant Mental Health

- 6 Continents
- 29 Countries Represented

 Michigan Association for
Infant Mental Health
Learning and growing together.



Alliance for the Advancement of
Infant Mental Health

Summary



Early relationships and experiences set the stage for building a sturdy foundation for a person's, life-long mental health.



Trauma has a profound effect.



Each of us is in an amazing position to carry the principles of IMH into the work we do everyday.



This is cost effective!



*Thank
You*

Wendy Shutts Bender, LCSW-R, IMH-E®

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NYS Pyramid Model Master Cadre Trainer

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