AAIMHI WA Infant Mental Health Competency Framework

The framework offers the workforce a professional development plan that focuses on knowledge, best practice skills, and reflective work experiences that lead to increased confidence and credibility across the many disciplines in the infant, early childhood and family services sector. The AAIMHI WA Endorsement® will inform prospective employers, agencies and peers about culturally sensitive, relationship-focused practice promoting IMH.

There are four levels of competency within the AAIMHI WA Endorsement®:
(I) Infant Family Worker
(II) Infant Family Specialist
(III) Infant Mental Health Specialist
(IV) Infant Mental Health Mentor

Each level recognises the educational experiences, specialised in-service training experiences, and work experiences appropriate for best service outcomes for infants, young children and families.

AAIMHI WA specifically acknowledges the particular importance that Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people have in our society. Work will continue in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities and in consultation with elders to make these competencies meaningful and relevant for infants and young children and their families in these communities.

To purchase copies of the AAIMHI WA Competency Guidelines®, please contact Cherie Braden at aaimhiwatraining@gmail.com

AAIMHI WA Competency Guidelines® Booklet.
Adapted for the Australian workforce by AAIMHI WA and approved by MI-AIMH March 2015.

AAIMHI WA Members: $20.00
Non Members: $25.00

March 2015

Australian Association for Infant Mental Health
West Australian Branch Incorporated
Western Australia is leading the way internationally

AAIMHI WA is an Affiliate of the World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH).

It is the first affiliate outside the United States of America to have a licensing agreement to use the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH) Competency Guidelines®.

In close collaboration with MI-AIMH, (Michigan USA), AAIMHI WA has reviewed and modified the MI-AIMH Competency Guidelines® to ensure that all terms and conditions are culturally appropriate for the WA context.

Implementation of AAIMHI WA Competency Guidelines® is supported and guided by MI-AIMH, a long term leader in the field of infant mental health (IMH).

The knowledge we have about early development and relationships is a “treasure that should be returned to babies and their families as a gift from science…”

- Selma Fraiberg

Supporting an interdisciplinary approach to infant mental health

AAIMHI WA is a professional interdisciplinary organisation. It aims to support organisations and the workforce across a multitude of professions to help give children and their families the best possible start in the important, early years of life. AAIMHI WA recognises the need to have interdisciplinary competency guidelines that are based on the principle that all development occurs in the context of relationships.

Building competency in IMH requires the development of a unique knowledge base and skill set specific to infancy and early parenthood, as well as reflective practice supervision experience that leads to best practice.

An interdisciplinary group of MI-AIMH leaders worked for several years to develop a set of guidelines, reaching consensus about existing research, practice, and policy developments in infant and early childhood mental health. Their efforts resulted in the competency guidelines.

They are organised around eight core competency areas:

- Theoretical foundations
- Law, Regulation & Agency Policy
- Systems Expertise
- Direct Service Skills
- Working with Others
- Communicating
- Thinking
- Reflection

The competency based endorsement is linked to the guidelines and is a workforce development system that recognises the professional development of infant and family service providers within the diverse and rapidly expanding infant and family field. The AAIMHI WA Competency Guidelines® is the first stage of the workforce development plan in IMH and the endorsement process is the second stage of competency building being implemented in WA by AAIMHI WA.

How will AAIMHI WA Competency Guidelines® and the Endorsement® benefit professionals and, ultimately, the children and families we serve?

The Competency Guidelines® provides a key focus on building both capability and capacity in the West Australian workforce. AAIMHI WA recognises the value and importance of a competency based framework. In order to promote and support the optimal development of infants, young children, and their families (conception to five years) professionals require:

- Direction for building knowledge, skills and reflective capacity in infant mental health which is grounded in theory and best practice guidelines
- A framework for developing systematic training in IMH in WA
- A system for maintaining increased competency in IMH workforce
- Quality assurance for families
- A model of workforce development to promote IMH which can be delivered across service and disciplines at universal, promotion, prevention and intervention levels.