APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING INFANT AND EARLY YEARS MENTAL HEALTH

Hamilton’s Infant and Early Years Mental Health System Support Committee
CONTEXT

- A community collaborative formed in 2016
- Co-ordinated and integrated cross-sector planning approach
- Evidence-based planning
- Membership is comprised of representatives from organizations with a systems perspective and decision-making capabilities
MEMBERSHIP

- Affiliated Services For Children And Youth (ASCY)
- Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton
- Centre de Santé
- City of Hamilton, Children’s Services and Neighbourhood Division
- City of Hamilton, Public Health Services
- Contact Hamilton
- Early Words Preschool Speech and Language Program, Central-south Infant Hearing and Blind-Low Vision Programs
MEMBERSHIP (CONTINUED)

- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Child Care Centres (EarlyON)
- Lynwood Charlton Centre
- Mohawk College
- McMaster Children’s Hospital
- Offord Centre for Child Studies
- Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg
- Ron Joyce Children’s Health Centre
- Wesley (Newcomer and Children, Youth & Family Services)
Background

- Hamilton EDI data indicated high vulnerability of young children in the area of emotional maturity.
- In 2017, there was a city-wide survey of early learning and child care professionals to develop an understanding of their infant early years mental health knowledge and practice.
Infant Mental Health Promotion conducted a 2-day planning session

Strengths, gaps and opportunities were identified

This led to the development of strategic priorities with short and long term goals
PURPOSE

- Promote public awareness of infant and early years mental health.
- Strengthen infant and early years mental health programming and build system capacity.
- Identify/adopt infant screening tools and develop system pathways.
- Develop education, training and support for early learning and child care professionals.
- To facilitate an evidence-based, integrated and coordinated approach to cross-sector planning for infant and early years mental health services in the City of Hamilton.
Progress Report 2018-2019

- Membership of the Committee was reviewed and expanded to ensure representation from all relevant community stakeholders.
- Completed Infant and Early Years Community Report for the City of Hamilton in consultation with Infant Mental Health Promotion, Sick Kids.
- Collaborated with Mohawk College to enhance the infant and early years mental health curriculum for Registered Early Childhood Educators.
- Increased awareness of Infant and Early Years Mental Health within the early learning and childcare sector.
- Community Collective Impact Commitment signed by partners.
WHY INCLUDE RESEARCHERS ON THE COMMITTEE?

- Community-research collaborations are becoming increasingly common; they are often formed to address community health improvement and knowledge production.
CONTRIBUTIONS

- Community leaders provide relevant knowledge, context and insight into agencies, populations, and communities
- Researchers provide expertise on scientific rigor and conduct of research
- Both groups have access to people with specific skill sets that may be beneficial
- Both groups have awareness of complementary (or overlapping) collaborations or projects in their agencies/institutions
- Both groups may have access to funding
BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY-RESEARCH COLLABORATION

- Increased relevance and feasibility of knowledge production and research
- Improved communication, cooperation, and trust between community leaders and researchers
- Increased ability to work with marginalized or ‘hard-to-reach’ populations
- Enhanced capacity to implement and sustain programs or interventions
- Pooling of scarce resources (knowledge, skills, funding)
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNITY-RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

- Trust and respect amongst partners
- Shared vision and goals
- Effective communication
- Well-structured meetings
- Reasonable time commitment
- Consistent partnership and equal contribution by partners
Early Childhood Education Diploma Program Pathways

- Early Childhood Education Diploma
- Early Childhood Education Diploma (Fast Track)
- Early Childhood Education Diploma (Intensive)
- Early Childhood Education Diploma (Continuing Education – Part Time Delivery)
- Child Development Practitioner Apprenticeship Program
- Child Development Practitioner Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program
- Honours Human Behaviour with ECE Specialization (McMaster University & Mohawk College)
- *approximately 700 Students Per Year
In 2017, the IEYMH Committee conducted a city-wide survey of early learning and child care professionals to better understand their infant & early years mental health knowledge and practice. One gap that was identified:

Gaps in infant and early years mental health training and/or support for early years operators, providers, supervisors and educators

► Short term goal:

  Provide relevant education, training and supports for caregivers working with infants and children with mental health concerns

► Medium-Long term goal:

  Develop a comprehensive training and education strategy for the Hamilton Infant and Early Years Mental Health system*
COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE IMPACT COMMITMENT
Infant and Early Years Mental Health System Support Committee

- Inform and/or update the Committee on their own projects, initiative and/or activities that align with Committee strategic priorities and objectives
Learning Outcome:

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

Create learning contexts to enable, build and maintain caring, responsive relationships* in partnerships with children*, families* and communities that value and respect social, cultural and linguistic diversity* including Indigenous* peoples’ worldviews and Francophone identity.

Courses:

- Child Development and Behaviour 1 and 2
- Inclusion in the ECE Classroom
- Family Dynamics
- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Issues in ECE
Additionally...

- Students took part in our 2nd annual *Infant and Early Years Mental Health Institute “The Conversation Continues”*

- All students complete the online [Introduction to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health](#) with presenter Chaya Kulkarni through Infant Mental Health Promotion, The Hospital for Sick Children, and perceive Professional Development points to add to their e-portfolio required for graduation.

- Offer a post grad certificate in *Infant and Children’s Mental Health*
Thank you

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