

What is Mental Health Consultation?

Cris Stanek, LCSW

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant

Infant Mental Health?



“Lahwaah, buwha buwhaah, gullygah abawaa mey ayeeyaah. Is that normal?”

“There is no such being as an infant, only an infant/mother couple.”



D.W. Winnecott

What is Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health?

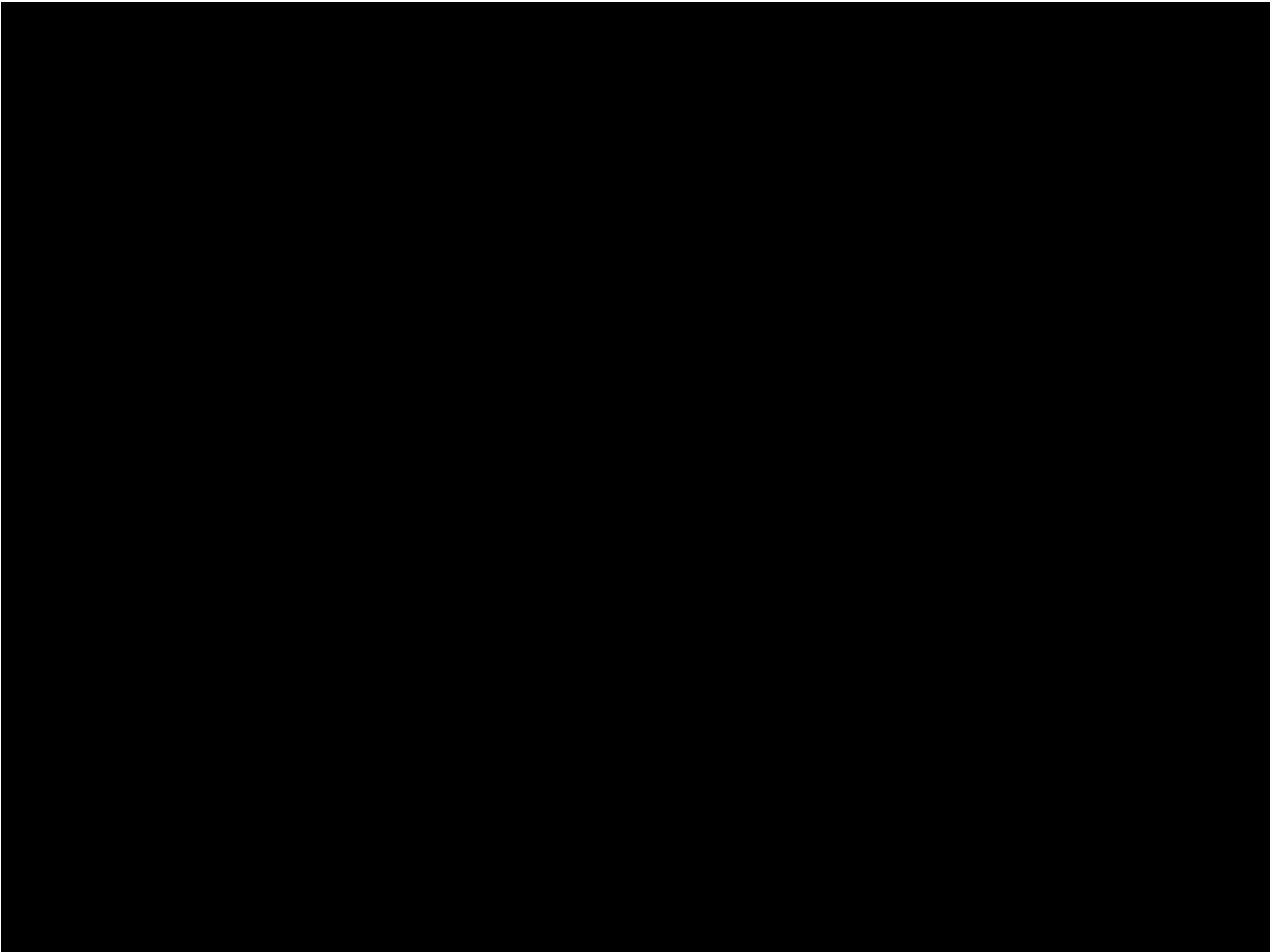
- *“The developing capacity of the child from birth to age five to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community, and culture.” (Zero to Three)*
- Strengths-based perspective: *health, not illness*

Imagine an infant, Leonardo



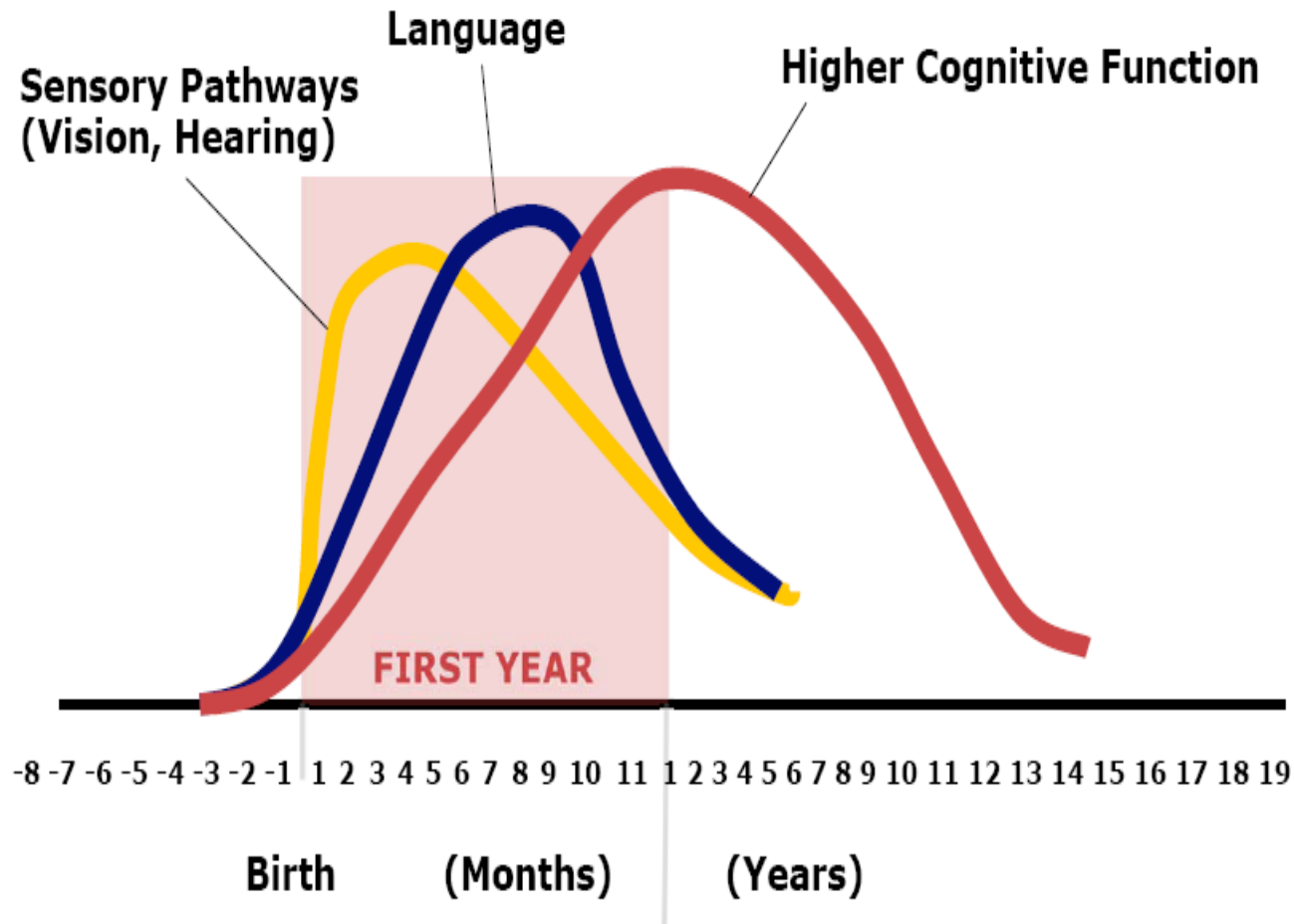
Imagine another scene...





It's Neuroscience!

Synapse Formation is Most Rapid Early in Life



Toxic Stress/Trauma/ACES

- Looks like Challenging Behaviors, Anger, Aggression, ADHD, etc.
- Changes Brain Structures and Pathways
- Children suffering from trauma *MAY* be less engaged and less ready to learn than their peers
- *MAY* diminish concentration, memory, and organizational and language abilities

Resiliency or Protective Factors

Core Protective Systems

Capabilities

Attachment
&
Belonging

Community
Culture
Spirituality

“Nurturing the healthy development of these protective systems affords the most important preparation or ‘inoculation’ for overcoming potential threats and adversities in human development. Similarly, damage or destruction of these systems has dire consequences for the positive adaptive capacity of individuals.”

Ann Masten, 2009

Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

- Teachers with access are half as likely to report expelling
- Decreases in teacher-rated acting-out behavior problems
- May be related to lower staff turnover, improved teacher effectiveness, and higher program quality

Mental Health Consultation

- About building the capacity of the caregivers in a child's life.
- Prevention and early intervention approach
- Promotes children's social emotional development, health, and well-being.

Mental Health Consultation

- Currently available in Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care, MCHIEV,
- Programs receiving Preschool Development Grant (PDG), Expansion programs, and Prevention Initiative (PI) funding may also access it using their professional development line item.

What are the qualifications of an I/ECMHC?

- Master's + 5 years of experience
- Ability to maintain consultative stance
- Collaboration skills
- Cultural humility
- Commitment to ethical behavior and reflective practice

What does an I/ECMHC do?

- Wonder with you
- Focus on strengths (teachers, environment, staff, child, family)
- Seek to understand
- Allow time and space for problem solving
- Provide professional development trainings
- Assist and empower in referral processes

What three ways could a
I/ECMHC be of use to you?

Thoughts or Questions?



Thank You!

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Caregiver Connections

www.CrisStanek.com