



# Children's Mental Health Awareness Month- Supporting Connections

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INDIAN + COUNTRY  
**ECHO**  
LEADING THE WAY >>>

*Growing the Ability to Deliver Quality Healthcare to  
American Indian and Alaska Native People.*

# Sweet Memories

Think of a time when someone gave you a special food treat....

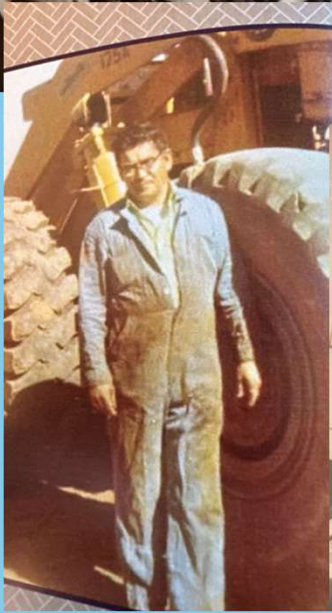


# Relationship is Mental Health

## Areas of Focus:

- Explore mental, emotional, physical and spiritual need for Connectedness -
- Traditional care of children -
- Trauma and parental dysregulation –
- Foundational Concepts in IECMH – Infant Early Childhood Mental Health
- Holding the entire family in mind





# What do we Believe About Children


## Inherently Bad

- Focus attention on bad behaviors
- Remind child about bad behavior
- Distrustful in Intent
- Attribute behaviors as manipulation
- Need for caution
- Anticipate always bad outcomes
- Resentful about children not grateful and appreciative

## Inherently Good

- Focus attention on learning
- No anger toward child for making mistake
- Recognize curiosity
- Make explanation about cause and effect
- Anticipate good outcomes
- Support creativity and imagination
- Have stories about child
- Model kindness and respect
- Listen to child

# In the Circle Way: Teaching of the Spirit



Know that You are Sacred  
Know that you are Honored  
Know that you are Prayed for  
Know that Others had offerings on your behalf  
Know that you are Not Alone  
Know that you were Known before you came to this place  
Know that you have Choices  
Know that you have a Name  
Know that many know your Name  
Know that when you reach, You are also reaching toward others

Dr. Dolores Bigfoot, 2021

# “We knew the how before the why”



## Parental Reflective Functioning Woven Through Indigenous Childrearing Practices

- Pregnancy and birth
- Breastfeeding
- Baby basket/cradle board
- Naming Ceremony
- Co-sleeping
- Baby’s first laugh
- Ceremony for childhood health issues
- Traditional language lullabies
- Intergenerational Non-nuclear family structure
- Ceremonies connecting child to place
- Exceptional children see self reflected back
- Day to day activities that incorporate rhythm, repetition,



# What gets in the way of connection?

Our **Stress Response System** interrupts  
**Relational Connections**



# Stress Response System

## STRESS RESPONSE CONTINUUM & FUNCTIONAL CHANGES IN REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION, CONSULTATION & FACILITATION (RSCF)

	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ZONE OF REFLECTION</div>				<b>MASSIVE STRESS RESPONSE</b>
	<b>STRESS LEVEL</b> → <b>BASELINE</b>	▶▶	▶▶▶	▶▶▶▶	
<b>ADAPTIVE RESPONSE</b>	Rest	Flock	Freeze	Flight	Fight
<b>AROUSAL</b>	Baseline/Rest	Vigilance	Resistance	Defiance	Aggression
<b>SENSE OF TIME</b>	Extended Future	Days Hours	Hours Minutes	Minutes Seconds	Loss of Sense of Time
<b>MENTAL STATE</b>	Calm	Alert	Alarm	Fear	Terror
<b>BRAIN AREAS</b>	Prefrontal Ctx Neocortex	Cortex <i>Limbic</i>	Limbic <i>Diencephalon</i>	Diencephalon <i>Brainstem</i>	Brainstem <i>Autonomic</i>
<b>COGNITION</b>	Abstract	Concrete	Emotional	Reactive	Reflexive
<b>FUNCTIONAL AGE</b>	>15 YEARS	8-15 YEARS	3-8 YEARS	1-3 YEARS	0-1 YEAR
<b>HEART RATE</b>	70-90	90-100	101-110	111-135	136-160

# Support State Regulation

## **Stress Response Continuum – the fuel for calm/chaos -**

- State Dependent Functioning
- Our nervous system reacts and makes meaning

## **Reflection-**

- How do we notice a client or relative's triggers/activation?
- What tools do we use to support co-regulation and regulation with our relatives?
- But first, what real time and daily practice do we utilize to support our own stress response long term so that we can be of service?

# Supporting Connection

- **Serve and Return -**
- **Rupture and repair -**
- **Let the child's behavior be your language –**
- **Observing play – interactive ASQ**
- **What we bring to the interaction -**
- **Get outside!**



# Positive Parental Reflective Functioning- Keeping the Child in Mind

## Reflective Functioning

- A caregiver's capacity to specifically reflect upon her child's emotional internal experience
- Intentions, feelings, thoughts, desires and beliefs- make meaning of others to anticipate the relationship
- Relating to the mental states of both parties and the behaviors associated, moment to moment reciprocity
- Crucial in development of secure attachment and robust development.

More the work of Dr. Arietta Slade

[https://medicine.yale.edu/profile/arietta\\_slade/](https://medicine.yale.edu/profile/arietta_slade/)

# Restoration of Relationships

Build or restore “**reflective functioning**” to hold the basket well

- **Spending time in cultural spaces with cultural mentors-** this is a natural place for gaining reflection on parenting and can be the only spaces that some will receive prevention and intervention
- **Serve and Return**
  - Notice and share attention- **The serve, Return the serve, Give it a name, Take turns, Practice endings and beginnings** – Center for the Developing Child –Harvard
- **Restoring Co-regulation and 3X attunement**
  - Culturally therapeutic moments each day (Prayer, Meditation, Nature time)
  - Bruce Perry 6 Rs -- **Relational, Relevant, Rhythmic, Repetitive, Rewarding, Respectful**
- **Family Spirit, Parents as Teachers, The Incredible Years-** Native adaptations with play
- **Minding the Baby – Slade**
- **CPP – Child Parent Psychotherapy – Lieberman**
- **Nature Therapy – Strengthening primary relationship to homelands**
- **Brazelton Touchpoints –** Provider level intervention on approach and partnering



# Resources

## **More on Serve and Return**

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/serve-and-return/>

## **More on Family Sprit program**

<https://www.jhsph.edu/research/affiliated-programs/family-spirit/>

## **More on Minding the Baby**

<https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/education/practitioner/mtb/>

## **More on CPP**

<https://childparentpsychotherapy.com/>

## **More on Brazelton Touchpoints**

<https://www.brazeltontouchpoints.org/>

