TTAC

Perinatal and Early Childhood Mental Health Network

Training and Technical Assistance Center

Infant Mental Health and the Pyramid Model Part 2:

From Alignment to Action

Presented by
Gerard Costa, Ph.D., DIR-C, IMH-E®, Kate Sweeney, MSW, LCSW-C,
and Kaitlin Mulcahy, Ph.D., LPC, IMH-E®

Who We Are

The New York City Perinatal and Early Childhood Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC), is funded by the NYC Health Department.

TTAC is a partnership between the New York Center for Child Development (NYCCD) and the McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research

- **New York Center for Child Development** has been a major provider of early childhood mental health services in New York with expertise in informing policy and supporting the field of Early Childhood Mental Health through training and direct practice

- **NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research** houses the Community and Managed Care Technical Assistance Centers (CTAC & MCTAC) and the Center for Workforce Excellence (CWE). These TA centers offer clinic, business, and system transformation supports statewide to all behavioral healthcare providers across NYS.

  TTAC is tasked with building capacity and competencies of mental health professionals and early childhood professionals in family serving systems to identify and address the social-emotional needs of young children and their families.

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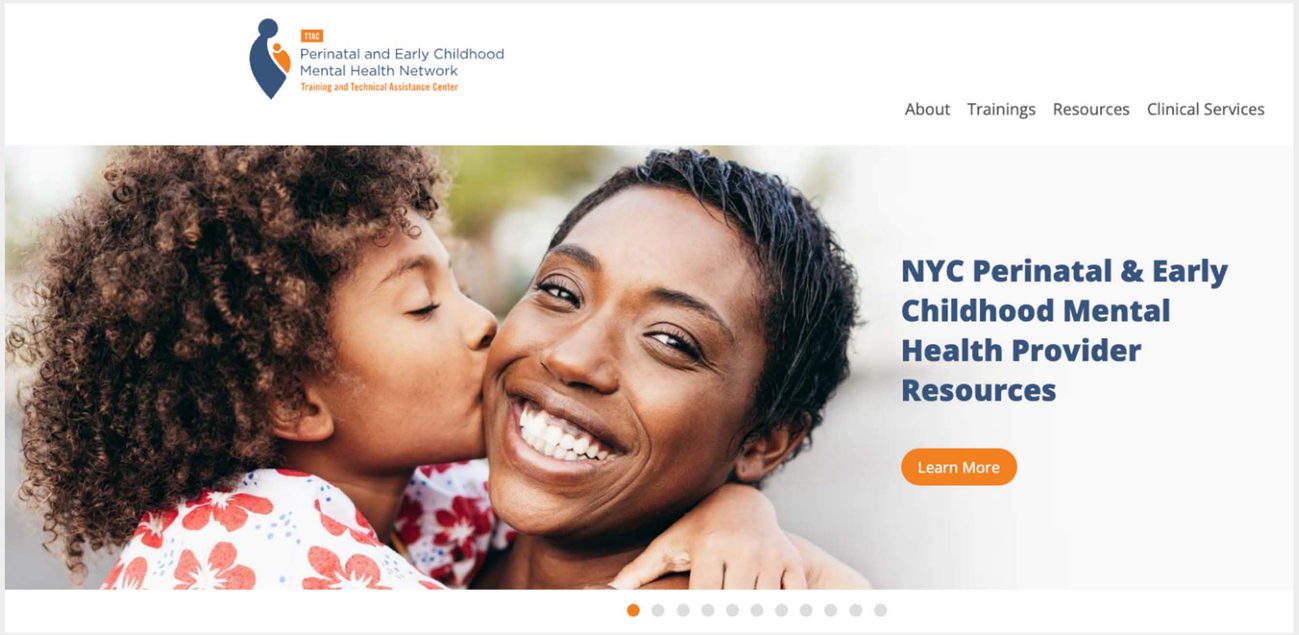

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- View upcoming and archived content, trainings, and resources on the **Trainings page.**
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- Contact the TTAC team by clicking on **Ask TTAC** and filling out our **Contact Us form**
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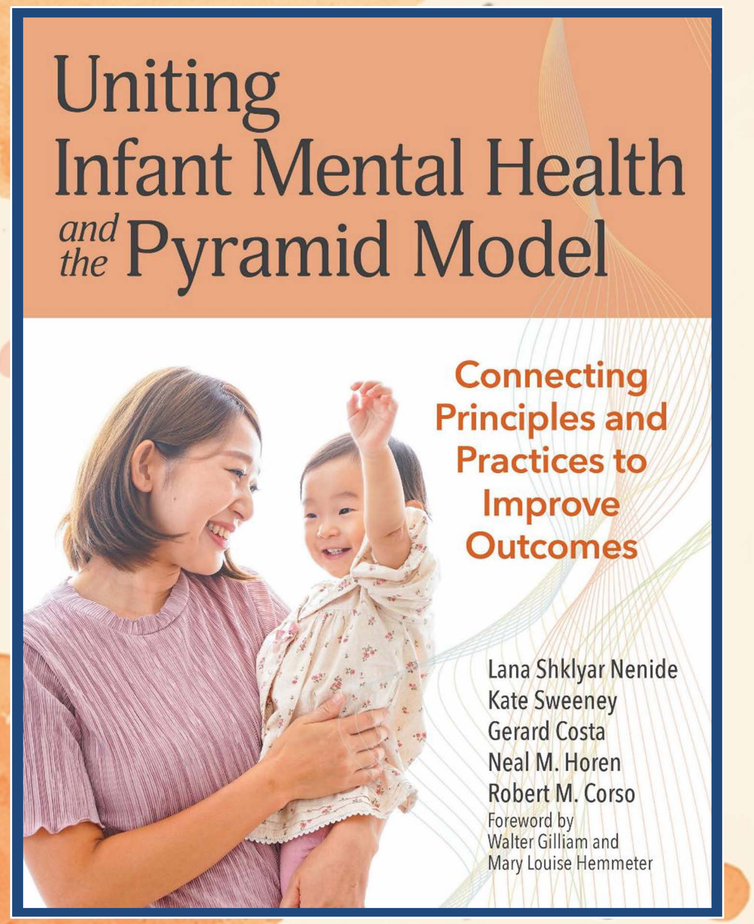
Reminder Part 1

July 7, 2026, www.ttacny.org



Uniting IMH and PM: Alignment and Integration: It's not for babies anymore!

Welcome and Introductions

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This webinar is the second of a 2-part series rooted in the text, "Uniting Infant Mental Health and the Pyramid Model

Overview

- The ***Pyramid Model and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health*** (IECMH) are two aligned frameworks for professional development and consultation. They both share a foundation in promotion, prevention, and intervention strategies, supporting the social-emotional development of infants and young children by strengthening the capacities of the adults who care for them.
- Building on the foundational concepts explored in Part One, this workshop will explore how these complementary frameworks can be aligned to 'swing between and enhance impact across early childhood settings in policy and practice application. We will begin with a review of a model of professional "formation" that addresses three interrelated ways of development: knowing, doing and being-with.
- Practical strategies for applying both approaches in working at the classroom, program, coaching, and systems levels will be illustrated. Through examples, reflection, and discussion, we will explore strategies for creating responsive environments, strengthening relationships, supporting the workforce, and promoting equitable outcomes for children and families. Participants will leave with practical ideas for advancing an integrated approach within their own settings and systems.

Objectives:

Participants of this webinar will be able to:

- Identify the model of Professional Formation and how it applies to the integration of the two frameworks of the Pyramid Model and IECMHC.
- Examine the role of reflective practice, coaching, and leadership in supporting integrated implementation of IECMHC and the Pyramid Model.
- Explore examples of how programs and systems can ‘swing between’ to align policies, professional development, and family partnerships to support children's social-emotional development.
- Develop action steps for advancing integrated IECMHC and Pyramid Model implementation within their own role, program, or community.

Benefits of framework alignment

Key Message

The goal is **not** to choose one framework over another. The goal is to create a system where ***both frameworks strengthen the workforce and improve outcomes for children and families.***

- Early childhood professionals are endorsing higher than ever needs with respect to social, emotional, and behavioral needs in their classrooms.
- Multiple initiatives can unintentionally feel like competing priorities.
- When IMH and the Pyramid Model are viewed separately, professionals may experience duplication, confusion, or initiative fatigue.
- Integration creates clarity, shared language, and stronger supports.

Before we begin, some reflections:

“Never let the source of a ‘truth’ prejudice you against its value.”

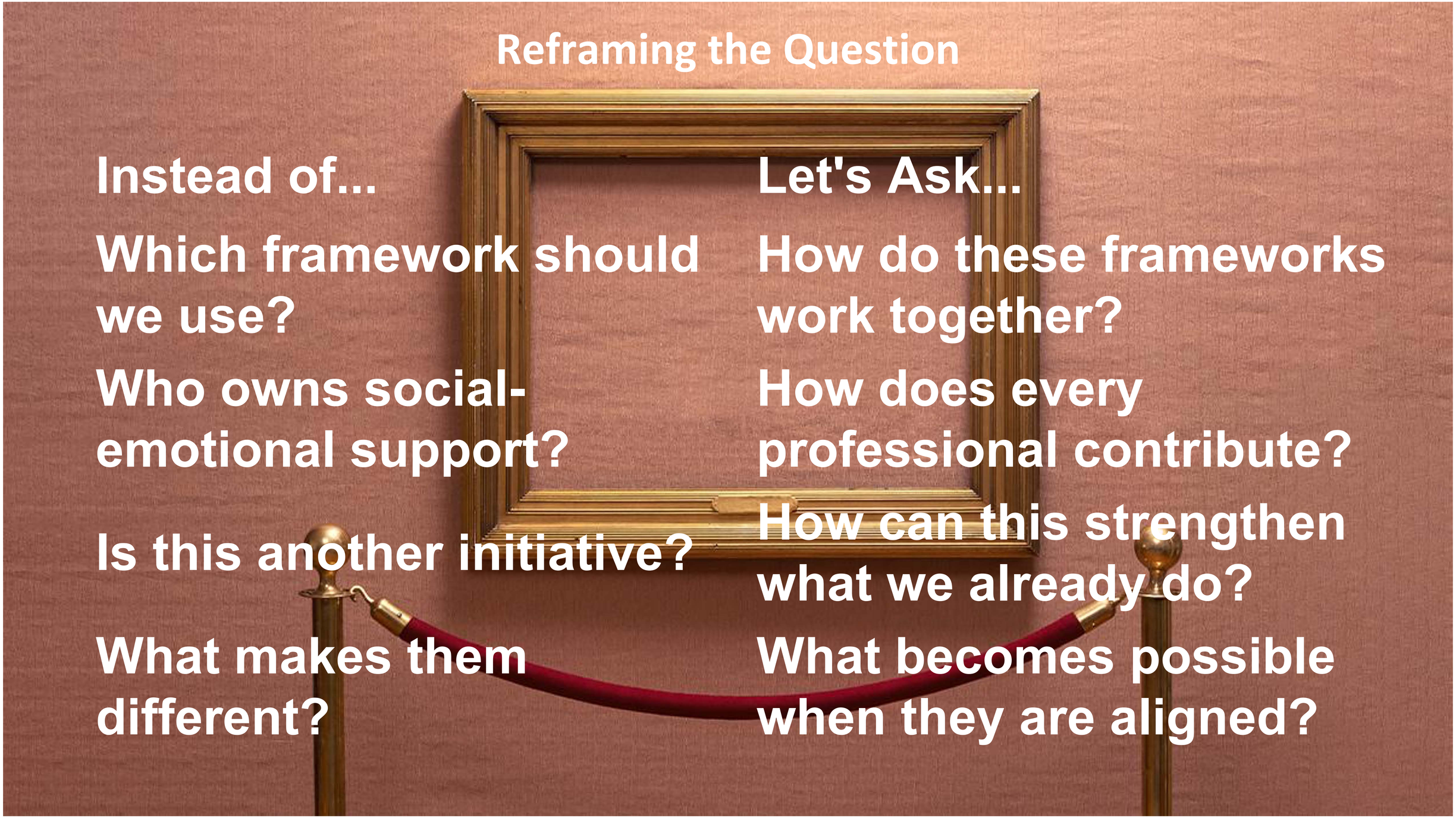
“If you are thinking about your theory when you are with a child, you are not thinking about the child!” (Thanks to Heinz Kohut)

“Don’t believe everything you think”

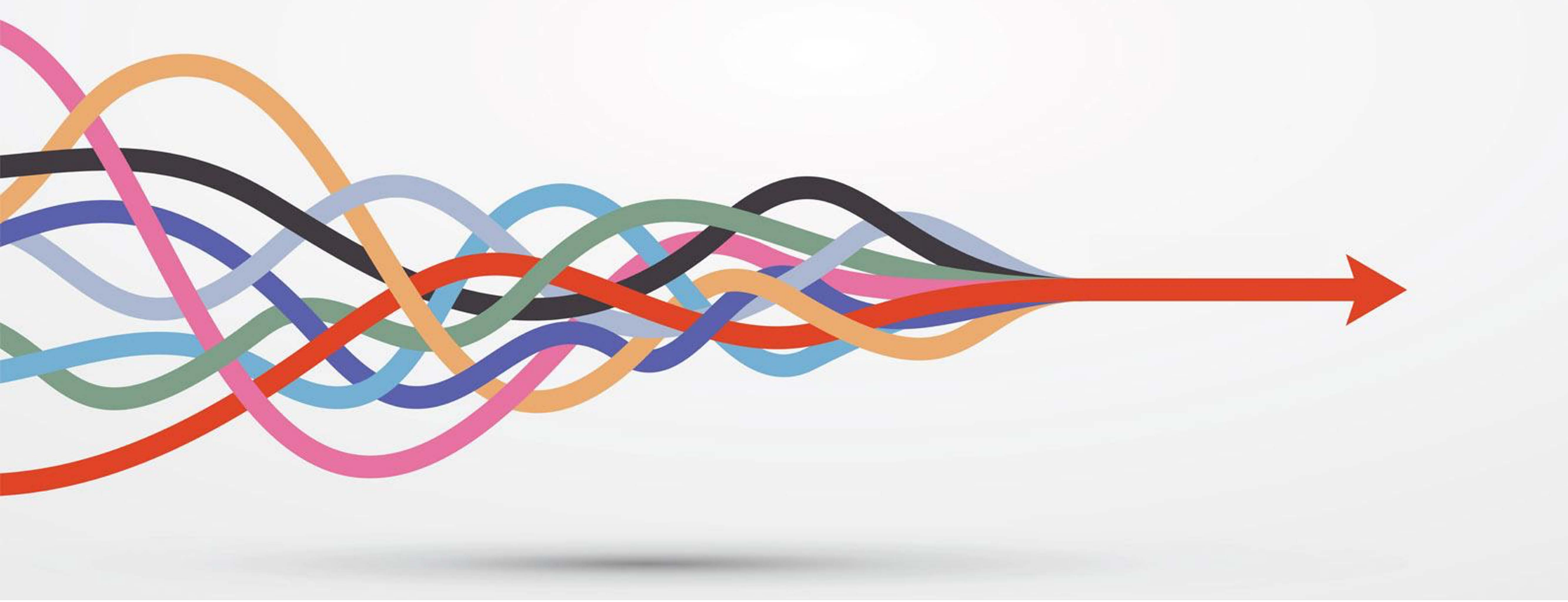
(Robert Fulghum)

(Wonder about what other perspective can teach you!)

Reframing the Question



Instead of...	Let's Ask...
Which framework should we use?	How do these frameworks work together?
Who owns social-emotional support?	How does every professional contribute?
Is this another initiative?	How can this strengthen what we already do?
What makes them different?	What becomes possible when they are aligned?



Integration is not about blending frameworks together —it is about intentionally aligning them, so each enhances the effectiveness of the other.

A Shared Goal: Children + Families Thrive + Education Workforce is Supported

What Does Each Framework Bring?

Infant Mental Health

- Reflective practice
- Multidisciplinary Lenses
- Recognition of unconscious processes
- Relationship-focused lens
- Parallel process
- Workforce wellness
- Family relationships
- Consultation

Pyramid Model

- Evidence-based teaching practices rooted in inclusion of all children and families
- Universal promotion and prevention
- Classroom implementation strategies
- Social-emotional teaching practices
- Behavior as communication
- Positive behavior support
- Coaching for implementation

Together they provide both the why and the how.

Everybody Benefits:
How professionals strengthen one another

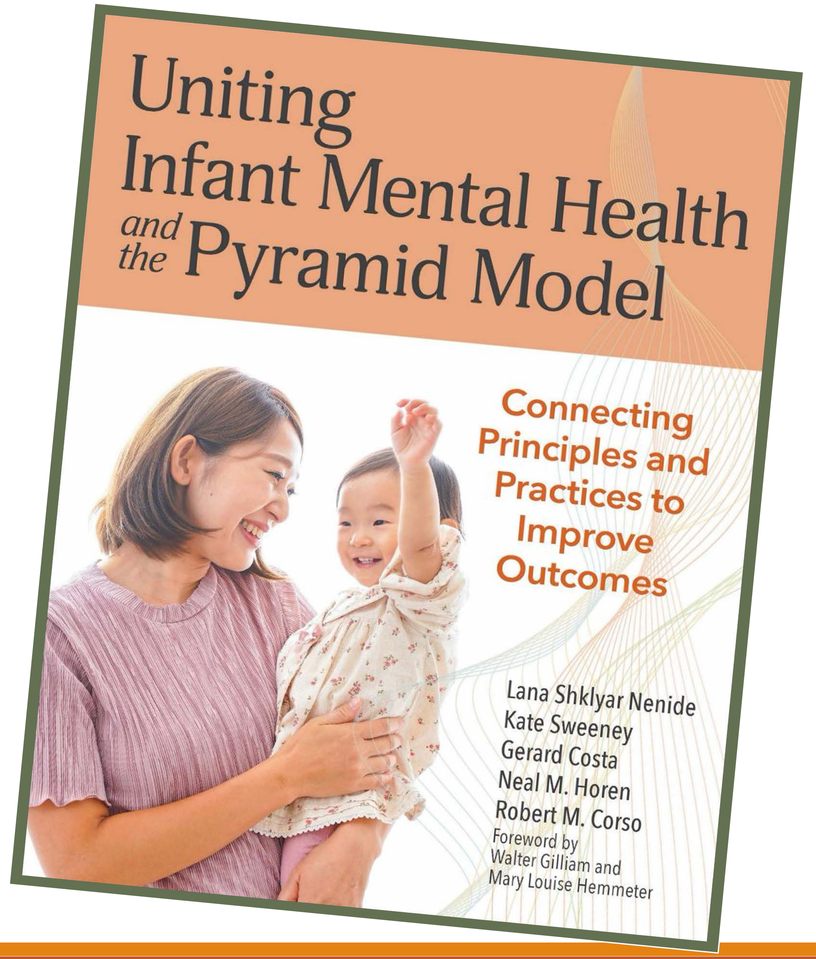
Role	Contributes	Benefits From
IMH Consultant	Reflection, relationship lens	Concrete implementation strategies
Pyramid Coach	Practice change, fidelity	Deeper understanding of emotions, relationships and environment
Program Leadership	Systems alignment	Shared expertise and coordinated supports
Teachers	Classroom practices	Emotional support and reflective partnership
Families	Essential knowledge of their child	Consistent, relationship-based support

Everyone has a role — and no one has to do it alone.

From Part 1:

Myths and Misconceptions: Why this book?

- The term Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
- IECMH as an EBP
- Pyramid Model is too Behavioral
- IMH and the Pyramid Model are not synergistic



How Did the Book Happen?

Growth in Alliance for IMH states! (Next slide)

Growth in PM states! (Next slide)

Ignorance –confusion – competition (Yes- we are human!!!)

Opening Conversation between Alliance and PM Leadership

3+ Years of Meetings with national partners in both frameworks- “The IMH-PM Consortium” – Over 40 individuals in the group!

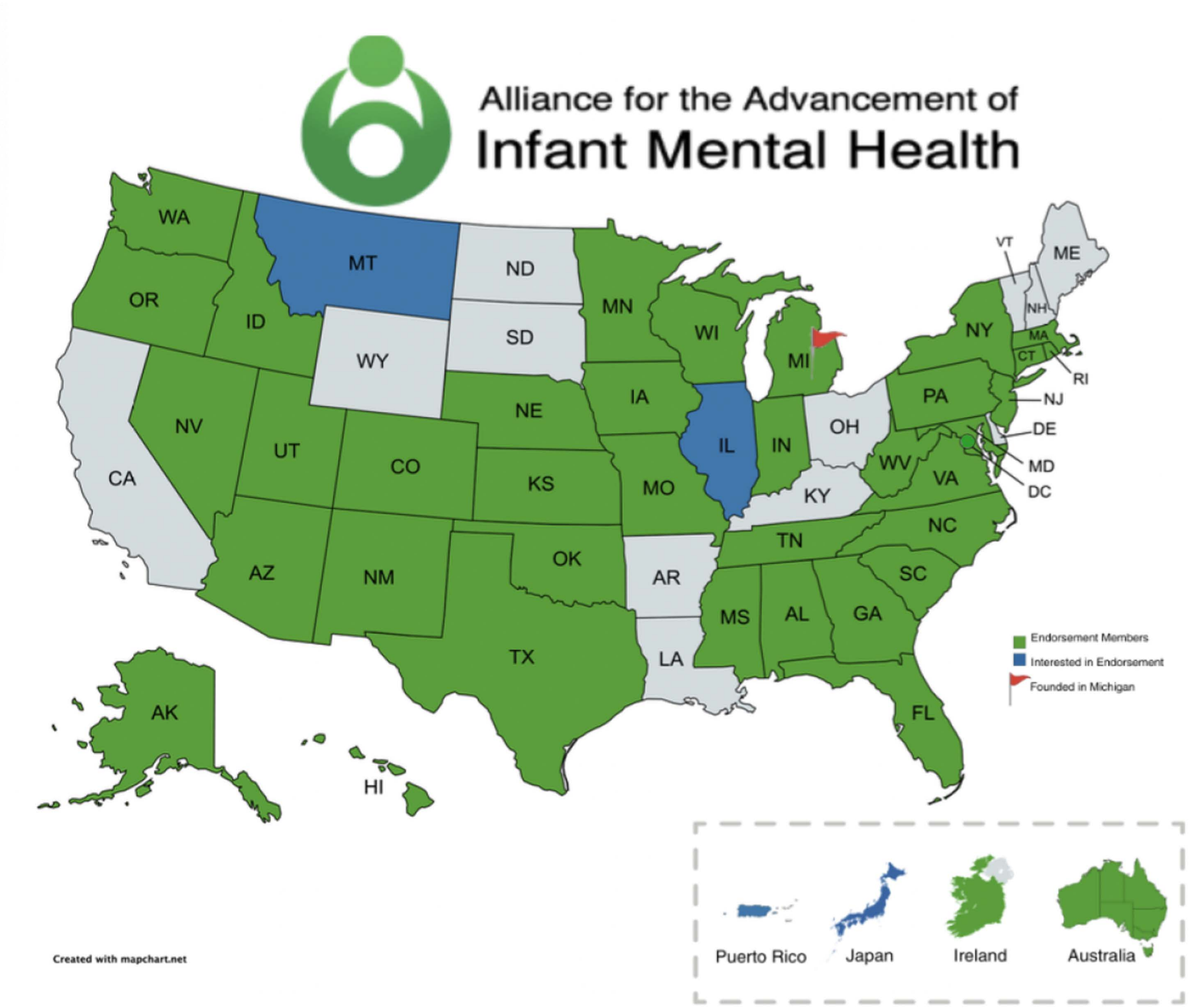
Crosswalks developed between Alliance Endorsement and PM!

Invitation to prepare a much-needed book: ***One Child: Two Frameworks!***

Practitioners of both frameworks *COLLABORATING!*

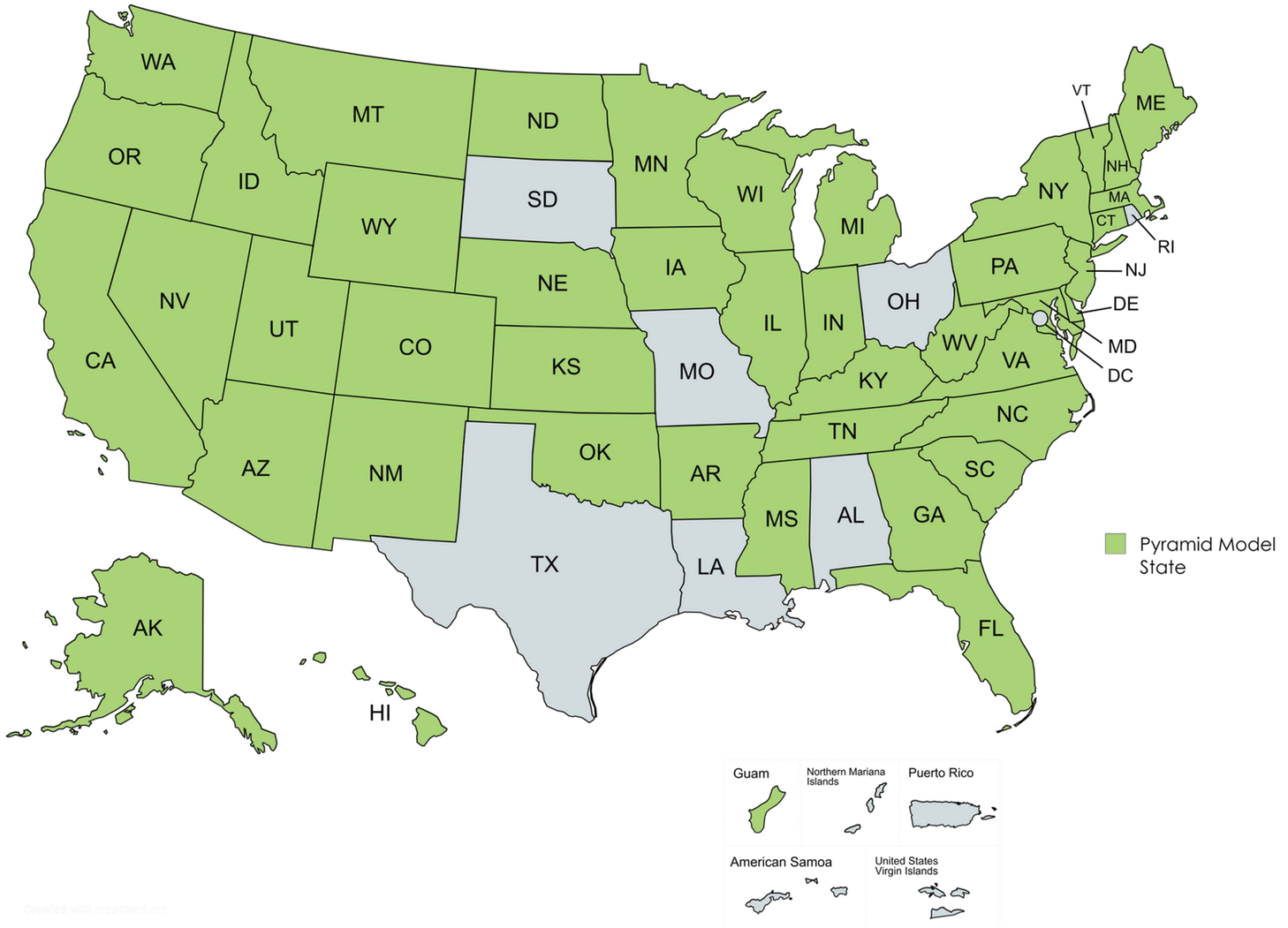
Unfolding Integration!

In 2025, 36 U.S. states associations for infant mental health, as well as associations in Ireland and Australia, make up a global network of professionals dedicated to supporting the mental health of infants and young children.



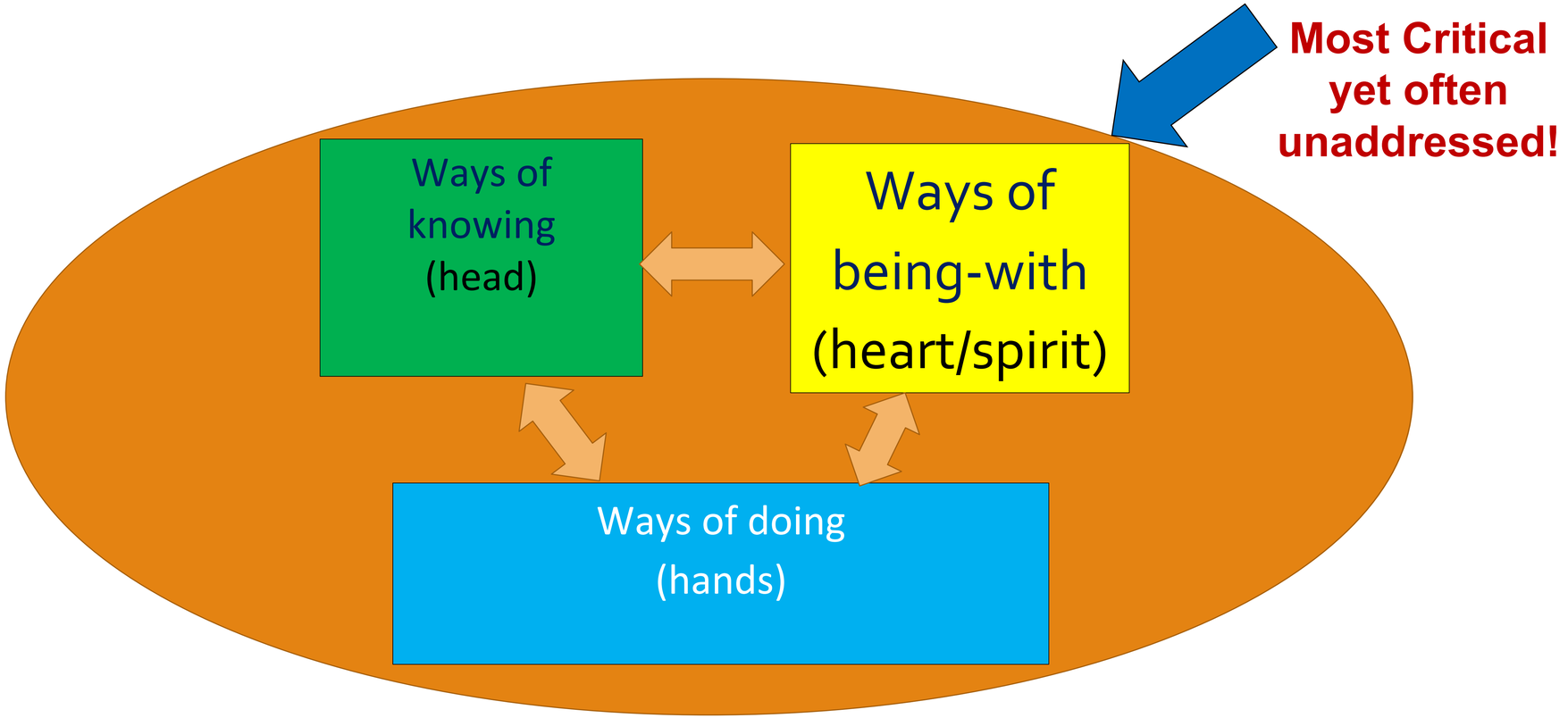
https://www.allianceaimh.org/

Pyramid Model State Leadership Teams

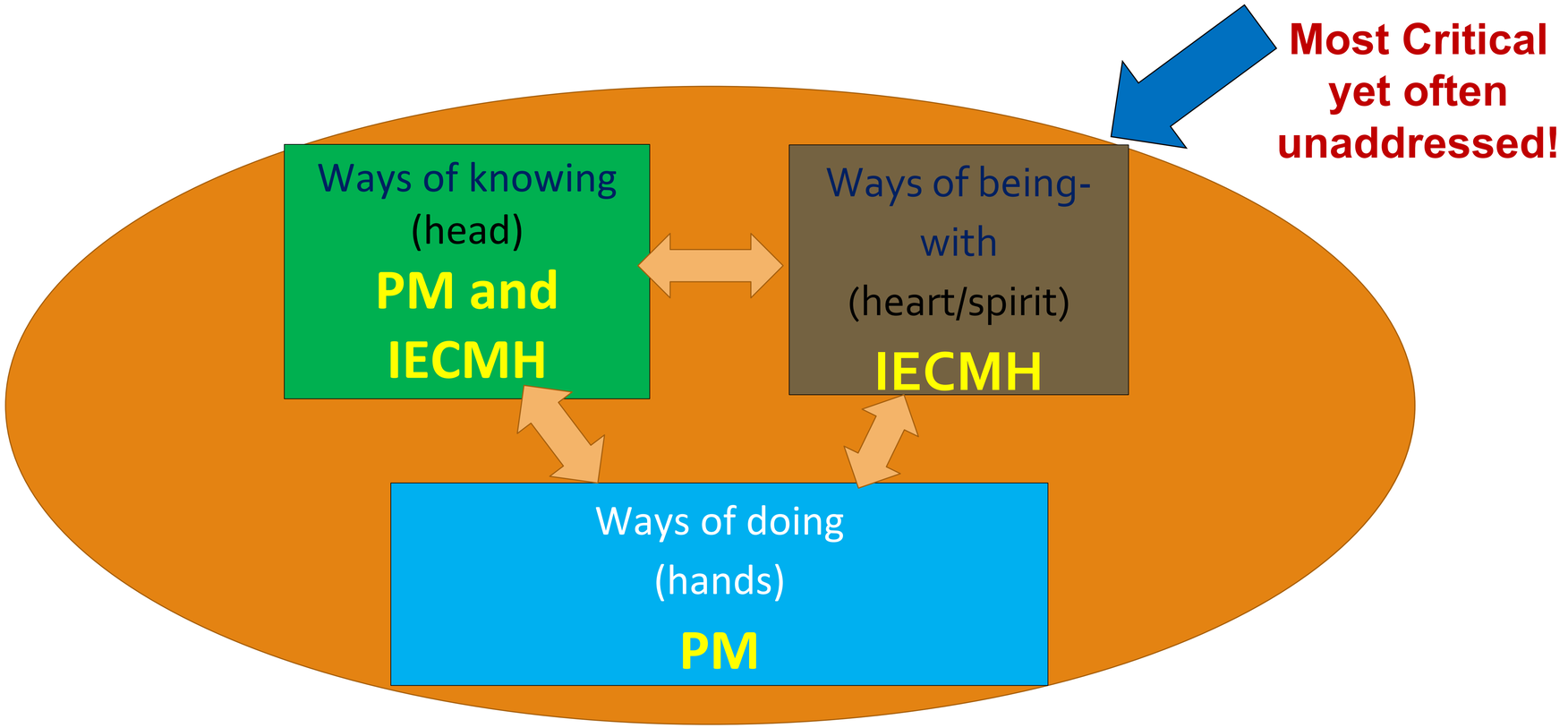


A Brief Visit with the Book

Formation


Most Critical yet often unaddressed!
Ways of knowing (head)
Ways of being-with (heart/spirit)
Ways of doing (hands)

Formation
Principle Strengths of PM and IECMH



Three Selves

- Public
- Private
- Secret

All of us choose our work, professions, careers on the basis of ALL THREE selves, so

Formation MUST engage all three!

The Pyramid Model: Strategies and Practices

Tertiary Intervention:
Few Children

Secondary Prevention:
Some Children

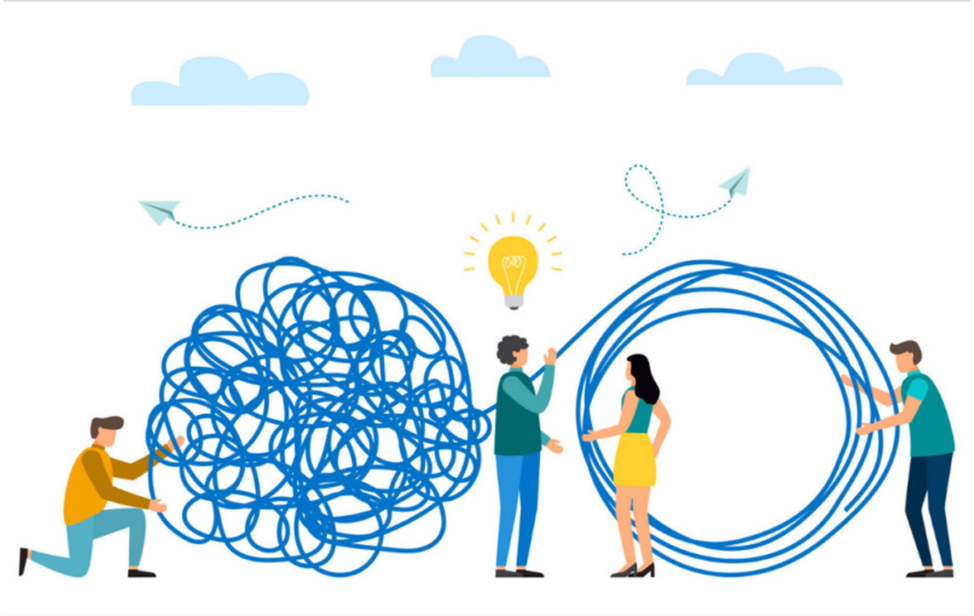
Universal Promotion:
All Children

Success factors for framework alignment

Critical Success Factors for Integration

Alignment Across Systems:

Integration Happens at Every Level



Level	What Alignment Looks Like
State	Shared vision, coordinated professional development, aligned policies
Leadership	Integrated implementation planning and workforce supports
Program	Reflective supervision alongside implementation coaching
Coach/Consultant	Shared problem-solving and complementary expertise
Practitioner	Relationship-based practice paired with effective instructional strategies
Family	Consistent, strengths-based partnerships

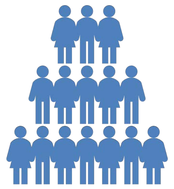
Building Systems that Support Collaboration

This Doesn't Happen by Accident!

Systems can support collaboration by:

Relationships:
Developing a shared vision across initiatives.

Responsibility to equity:
Creating common language around relationships, prevention, and responsive practice.



Role Distinction:
Clarifying the complementary roles of coaches, consultants, leaders, and practitioners.

Reconciled Professional Development:
Aligning professional development rather than offering disconnected trainings.

Relationships:
Building structures for regular communication and shared problem-solving.

Resource allocation: Using data collaboratively to strengthen practice and improve outcomes.

Organizational Structures That Support Alignment at a Program Level

Leadership

- Communicate a clear vision for integration.
- Model collaborative relationships.

Reflective Structures

- Schedule reflective supervision and coaching.
- Encourage consultation across disciplines.

Reconciled PD

- Cross-train staff on both frameworks.
- Create opportunities to learn together.

Relationships/Teaming

- Include multiple perspectives in planning.
- Share responsibility for supporting children and families.

Continuous Improvement

- Review implementation data together.
- Celebrate progress across teams.

Leaders can support alignment by asking…

- How are we supporting relationships among adults?
- Where are our coaching and consultation efforts connected?
- Are staff receiving consistent messages?
- Do families experience one coordinated system?
- What structures help professionals solve problems together?
- Where are opportunities to reduce duplication?

Alignment at a practitioner level

Role distinction: Establish role clarity between the coach and the consultant and coordinate messaging

- Coach: Implementation Support, Practice-based Coaching, data tracking
- Consultant: meaning behind the behavior, 'stress detectives', family-program connections

Relationships: IECMH Consultant supports PM Coach to support classroom staff in cue reading, attunement, regulation, and reflectivity; PM Coach supports IECMH Consultant on shared classroom practice language and concepts

Alignment at a practitioner level

Reflection: Include specific attention to reflection on the self of the practitioner in Practice-based Coaching cycles to amplify use of reflective practice

Professional Development: Collaborate on the recommended PD to recommend to practitioners and deliver PD together

Resource allocation: Aligning together on time in and out of the classroom; establish one collaborative plan with clear responsibilities

What Does This Look Like in Practice?

Integration reduces fragmentation and increases coherence.

Instead of...	**We Create...**
Separate coaching and consultation	Coordinated supports around shared goals
Multiple improvement plans	One integrated implementation plan
Different language for the same concepts	Shared vocabulary across disciplines
Independent problem-solving	Collaborative decision-making
Competing priorities	Collective ownership of outcomes

When do we enter consultation?

Consultation is a prevention strategy. We don't just call in Consultant at the top of the Pyramid

1. A consultant recommends Program-wide implementation
2. A teacher/coach requests support from a consultant around a climate at the program
3. A coach feels stuck/disconnected/ineffective in supporting program-wide implementation
4. A coach feels disengagement for a teacher who was previously engaged and connected
5. A consultant is requested by a coach/teacher who are concerned about an individual child who is very withdrawn

What else are we missing?

Alignment at a child/family level

- **Role distinction**: Collaborate together to ensure consistent messaging to families; establish a primary point of contact to avoid confusion
- **Relationships**: Ensure that relevant information about the child/family is shared with both Coach and Consultant; Work with each other to reduce any competition/splitting
- **Reflection:** Both Coach and Consultant are aligned in supporting the adults in the family to be reflective about their child
- **Resource allocation:** Aligning on time spent with the child/family and how we use our time to advocate on behalf of the family

Effective Workforce.
Nurturing and Responsive Relationships.
Reflective Practitioner.

Joint and Integrated

FORMATION and MENTORSHIP!

“Swinging together”

Pyramid Model and IECMH Consultation:

"Swinging together"

Reflection

- What comes up for you as you are meeting and learning about these frameworks and their integration?
- What do you believe happens next?

Parting thoughts…

Everyone deserves care and support - no one is above needing safe and reflective space

- The work with other humans (particularly little ones) is emotional, hard

"No one should do hard things alone"
- Jeree Pawl

- Successful collaboration is not the same as duplication of effort

- It's not about the model/framework competition or position hierarchy - both bring support, strategies, resources for ultimate wellbeing of babies and young children