



January 2010



## COAIMH January Newsletter

### BEING WITH: SUPPORTING FAMILIES THROUGH EARLY PARENTING CHALLENGES Teach-In on Friday, February 12th, 2010

What does a nurse practitioner do when a mother calls the pediatric office at the end of her wits with a fussy baby and an angry co-parent? What does the group leader tell the mother when she drops the baby off for childcare? Who supports the group leader as she struggles with the baby all day? What happens when grandparents and neighbors feel they can't lend a hand because the child is "too difficult" to care for? These are the babies who are most at risk for abuse.

Many of us in the field have some ideas and practice wisdom. But as professionals, we need to have more than just our experience. Dr. Linda Gilkerson will be bringing a wealth of knowledge with related practical ideas to the full-day Teach-in on February 12th. She will teach us the theoretical framework and clinical approach developed by Erikson Institute's Fussy Baby Network to support parents who struggle with their baby's crying, sleeping or feeding routines and care during the baby's first year.

Learn to address the concerns of parents with confidence, using five core intervention processes. Not only do these processes support the immediate issues, they promote longer-term parenting capacities.

In addition, you will have the opportunity to connect with our local affiliate, the Fussy Baby Network Colorado at the University of Colorado Denver.

Please go to [www.coaimh.org](http://www.coaimh.org) to join COAIMH and to [www.jfkpartners.org](http://www.jfkpartners.org) to sign up for the training.

### LONG-DISTANCE OPTION FOR TEACH-IN!

If you would like to participate in the teach-in from outside

### TEACH-IN FINALLY HERE!

We have been eagerly awaiting the approach of our February Teach-In with Doctor Linda Gilkerson, and finally the date is upon us. Join us as she speaks about the Fussy Baby Network and how to address some of parents' most urgent concerns. Please see further details inside this newsletter about this exciting event!

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of the Denver Metro area, we will have a webinar offering as well as the on-site training. Please see the registration page on [www.jfkpartners.org](http://www.jfkpartners.org) for details.

## WHY IS THE COAIMH TEACH-IN FOR MEMBERS ONLY?

We have had some questions about why we reserve the Bi-Annual Teach-In for Members Only. Here is the thinking of the Executive Board of COAIMH. Our best answer is because we want Members Only to include YOU!

The Teach-In occurs every other year. It is intended to be an in-depth training and not a conference overview. Its purpose is to increase the quality of our professional workforce at a deeper level than we can do in a conference and workshop time frame. So our first reason is that we are targeting serious professionals who have a commitment to their field of work. The members of COAIMH are made up of many such professionals, and we want you to be one of them.

Our second reason is to encourage all of you involved in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health - in child care centers and preschools, nurse home visits and pediatrics, counseling and mental health settings and the many other places where parents with babies come for support, information and help - to join our organization. Your voices strengthen our efforts to promote a competent, confident and recognized workforce that touches the future by influencing the care of young children and families.

Why do we believe it is so important to work towards having a strong voice to advocate for young children's mental health? We see in our daily lives how hard it is to keep the focus on what may make the biggest difference in the long run - the emotional well-being of babies and their families. In this stressed financial time we see money available for roads and bridges, money supporting businesses and prisons. It takes a long-term view to see the benefit of supporting a workforce that touches the lives of infants and their families.

We know and have the data to show the impact of our work. It lays a foundation of healthy social and emotional development that pays off over the years across every part of our society. It is interesting that our current epidemic of maltreatment and concerning data on infant health does not get the same attention and focus as the less prevalent (although important and related) epidemic of obesity, even while we know the outcomes to be more grave and far-reaching. Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, in his January 21-22 training, made the astonishing statement that at the time of South Africa's reconstruction, the country chose to designate half of their small mental health budget on maternal and infant care! This shows that the will of the community is more powerful than the size of its wallet. So we need your voices to join with ours in developing a professional organization that can advocate for those who have the smallest voices of all.

The cost of the Teach-In, for a full day of training, is \$65. If you add that to the membership cost (see varying rates on website) you get a full year of membership along with the training.

## COAIMH MEMBERSHIP: WHY JOIN?

What do you get for your membership fees? COAIMH is still a new and growing organization. So what do we have to offer you? No big breaks on insurance policies, no discounts with major airlines or department stores. However, here is what we are doing:

Working on an endorsement process for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Professionals

Developing a library of handouts and PowerPoints to make important information more accessible across the State.

Promoting a Calendar of Events focused on the mental health of young children.

Working to shape the discussions related to young children's needs so that the physical and educational do not leave behind the social and emotional.

Developing a resource list of trainers and speakers across the State to help professionals outside of the metro regions get access to needed support and training.

Putting on a major conference every two years to pull together top researchers and educators from our universities, professionals with experience and practice wisdom, and all the rest of us who need to learn from them and from each other.

In addition, you have the opportunity to shape the organization. If you have an interest, skill or talent that you think could benefit COAIMH, please join and share it with us. We are a small group of volunteers doing this in our spare time and are very happy to have your involvement.

## **AUTISM EDUCATION WEEK: JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 6, 2010**

Governor Bill Ritter has proclaimed this week to be Autism Education Week. Please see the COAIMH calendar for a free presentation on Autism with JFK Partners or go to [www.autismcolorado.org](http://www.autismcolorado.org) for more information. Their free seminar on the afternoon of February 5th has been expanded to accommodate the response, so registration is still open.

## **TOP EXPERTS SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN COLORADO**

The Metro Area has recently been visited by two giants in the field of mental health: Dr. Daniel Siegel and Dr. Bessel van der Kolk. They speak a common language when it comes to the priority and urgency for addressing what happens with babies, toddlers and preschoolers in the first years of life.



Dr. Siegel calls himself an educator and theorist. He is also a practicing psychiatrist and prolific writer. Two books of interest include *The Developing Mind* and *Parenting from the Inside Out* as well as his new book, *Mindsight*. Dr. Siegel was educated at Harvard Medical School and currently is a Professor in the Medical School at UCLA, among other accomplishments. He has pulled together the strands of many sciences to tell the story of the early years of children and how their early relational experiences support the development of their brains. This fascinating work has implications for the mental health of children, adults and our society as a whole. Dr. Siegel has a way of explaining complex material in an organized and understandable fashion. In linking the brain, the mind and relationships, Dr. Siegel talks about the role of reflecting on our experience. He defines reflection as observing with objectivity and openness. This is the core of the Infant Mental Health field's work with Reflective Supervision and Reflective processes in consultation. This kind of reflection can be taught formally in meditative practices. It can also be a way that we approach our work. The deepening of our connections and understandings with other people come out of this way of working - not only in the subjective way we feel about it, but in the changes that seem to happen in our biological nervous system and brain functioning, which becomes more integrated with sustained meditative practices.

For more information visit one of these sites: [www.drdansiegel.com](http://www.drdansiegel.com) or [www.mindsightinstitute.com](http://www.mindsightinstitute.com). There are video clips with Dr. Siegel's lectures on these sights as well as information on the developing field of interpersonal neurobiology.



Dr. Bessel van der Kolk is an internationally recognized leader in the field of psychological trauma and has been working in the field since the 1970's. He is past President of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University Medical School, Medical Director of the Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute and Medical Director of the Trauma Center at HRI Hospital in Brookline, Massachusetts. Dr. van der Kolk weaves the functioning of the brain and the outcomes of research into his discussion of treatment for trauma. He makes a distinction that we are all aware of - the distinction between a narrow definition of evidence based treatment and a broader and more practical one that includes the experiences of clients. Being a researcher himself, he understands both the power and limits of research and brings to light treatments that are action and body based, including EMDR and Somatic Psychology treatments. Having spent a lifetime working with people who have lived through intolerable experiences, Dr. van der Kolk is most interested in treatment that leaves people free of their trauma and able to engage fully in life.

The Trauma Center works carefully with alternative treatments and believes strongly in the need of human beings to be physically active as well as relationally connected and competent. His work with adults and adolescents who were exposed to interpersonal violence throughout their early years reminds us of the value of our knowledge and interventions. The simple connections between babies and parents, the rocking, cooing, talking and gazing that should make up the first months of life are crucial to later development. When they are missed or given in a context that includes abuse, the older child and adult is wired to respond to the world in ways that prevent emotional health. The effects are so damaging that our effective treatments for discrete trauma lose their power to heal, and children are left with multiple diagnoses to cover a multitude of losses and traumatic experiences.

**DSM V Proposal:** As the result of this work, Dr. van der Kolk and Dr. Robert Pynoos lead a committee to include a new diagnosis into the DSM V. The diagnosis is titled *Developmental Trauma Disorder*. As Dr. van der Kolk stated, we have a lot to learn about treating the complex

trauma that results from prolonged interpersonal violence in early childhood. A paper on this diagnosis and other information is readily available if you search using "Developmental Trauma Disorder".

## MEMBERSHIP PAGE ON COAIMH WEBSITE

If you are a current member of COAIMH, you will have access to the new Member Page. This page is developing as a resource for our members. It will include informative hand-outs and PowerPoint presentations donated by members as well as news and opportunities only available to Members. Members will receive their log-in and password in a separate e-mail. Membership is annual, from January through December, and are discounted during the month of January. Please see [www.coaimh.org](http://www.coaimh.org) for more information and to download an application.

Thank you for your continued support of the Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health. We look forward to seeing or hearing from you soon. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach Betsy Rogers at [BetsyRogers@aumhc.org](mailto:BetsyRogers@aumhc.org).

Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health

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