

# Infant Mental Health and Early Intervention with Under Threes and their Parents

The 10 week course in Infant Mental Health helps professionals address difficulties in the parent-infant relationship.

This highly regarded course considers infant development from the perspectives of psychoanalysis, attachment theory, infant developmental research, social policy and risk assessment. The programme was developed by Child Psychotherapist Peter Toolan. For further information please contact The Northern School of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy.

“Primary relationships in the earliest years of life are fundamental to child development and to later outcomes and life chances.”



## Course Aims

The course offers a practical and theoretical introduction to the foundations of emotional, cognitive and personality development in babies and young children in the context of their primary relationships and experiences. The course explores professional responses to the wide range of struggles families may experience with problems such as: toileting, feeding, sleeping and behaviour.

The overall aim is to deepen the participants' framework of understanding of conscious and unconscious factors involved in early developmental processes and to introduce new thinking about early preventative intervention.

Participants will:

- Develop their framework for thinking about parent-infant relationships
- Develop further understanding and awareness of human development and interaction
- Enhance their observational skills in working to promote infant mental health and development
- Have an opportunity to think about their work from a psychoanalytic perspective

This course is provided to professionals from all disciplines in health care, education and social work and will be of special relevance to:

- Health Visitors
- Midwives
- Primary Care Workers
- GP's
- SureStart workers
- Social Workers
- Community Child Health Practitioners
- MBU Clinicians
- Early Years Workers.

The content is highly compatible with, 'The Solihull Approach', 'The Incredible Years', and 'Wait Watch and Wonder' courses.

## Course Outline

The course begins with a focus on what we know about the capabilities of very young infants. There is an emphasis on observation and the development of observational skills in order to develop an understanding of the link between feelings, needs and behaviour, including the recognition that all behaviour is communication of an emotional state. There are two seminars each week:

### Reading Seminar

In the reading seminar participants are introduced to psychoanalytic concepts which are relevant to infant observation, infant development and link with observations in their own work. The papers are read prior to the seminar and discussed in a small group.

### Work Discussion Seminar

This seminar focusses on participants' own work experiences and provides an opportunity for participants to bring observations of themselves at work and increase their understanding of conscious and unconscious communication.

The seminar includes a planned one-off observation of a young infant and parent. Certificates for CPD will be issued.

All applicants will be required to provide a copy of a current valid enhanced DBS disclosure upon application.

## Course Leaders

**Peter Toolan**, Consultant Child Psychotherapist, Member of All-Party Parliamentary Group for Early Years and Specialist Member of the First-Tier Tribunal (Mental Health).

"I have found the course extremely thought provoking and supportive of my professional and personal development"

Clinical Psychologist