

Getting it together can't be all that hard: Public Infant Mental Health (PIMH), Perinatal and Infant Mental Health (PIMH) and Parent-Infant Mental Health (PIMH)!

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Objectives:

To review current policy frameworks that address infant mental health in the context of national mental health reform, state-based policy development and population health priorities which contribute to child and family health and mental health, to identify challenges and opportunities.

Methods:

An analysis of the present policy environment examines the standards outlined in the WHO's mental health action plan (2013-2020) to consider if public infant mental health is adequately addressed. An example of a community parenting service and its development of organisational strategies to address public infant mental health needs will be presented.

Results: National mental health reform and its emphasis on primary care networks and tiered care presents some opportunities but also, specific challenges. There appears to be shortcomings in public infant mental health priorities in the national mental health reform policy. This presentation outlines an approach to these challenges. Examining the performance of the current policy framework through the lens of public health priorities reveals shortcomings.

Conclusions: Integrating public mental health and clinical infant mental health priorities is complex. Future directions in the field, particularly for systems strengthening, workforce capacity building, public mental health practice (including access to care), re-evaluating the burden of disease, responding to social determinants and community engagement are promoted to address these shortcomings.