

Navigating personal pathways to sustain self and other mindedness within (infant-parent) - therapist, therapeutic interactions.

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As we learn our craft as infant mental health (IMH) specialists, it is common for us to ask: "What should I say, what should I do, what should I have said or done?" This workshop explores practical ways to navigate our own mindedness, in the moment of interactions with the infant-parent unit and the wider infant-family unit. Creating, practicing, and crafting these unique pathways can optimise our capacity to listen, to be sensitive responders, and to remain anchored in a secure state of mind. Identifying and navigating personal pathways to security is a core competency in the practice of IMH. It provides the therapist with a secure base from which to meet pain, grief, loss, hopelessness, and at times unbearable agony; all raw experiences, often prevalent in the day-to-day experiences of babies, their families and the IMH specialist.

This workshop will also use attachment theory as the underlying framework to explore a primary, but not so often talked about experience within the therapist: fear. I will present current work on fear in therapy and IMH training and explore "*the fear-safety framework*" (Foley & Ribaud, 2018) that can be used by supervisees and supervisors as an adjunct within a reflective supervision practice. Understanding, navigating, and containing fear in the therapist within a therapeutic setting can greatly improve the therapeutic efficacy of the therapist which in turn creates a "transitional space" (Winnicott 1971) for the healing experiences of the infant with their parent and family.