

Memorandum 37

Proposed Graduate Certificate Program in Infant Mental Health

Submitted by the Center on Infant Mental Health and Development, School of Nursing, UW

1. Definition.

The proposed pathway must be a linked series of credit-bearing graduate courses that constitute a coherent body of study that is designed to enhance the education of matriculated graduate students and post masters students. The body of study may meet the academic requirements for application to specialty certification agencies.

The Certificate Program in Infant Mental Health (2001-2006) located in the Center for Infant Mental Health and Development (CIMHD), School of Nursing (SoN) and the Center on Human Development and Disability (CHDD) has been revised with a proposed start date of Fall 2008. The curriculum and training year of the original Certificate program has been adapted based on feedback from former trainees, surveys of other national training programs, as well as needs expressed by the community. If approved, this new training program will be both university and community-based with a goal of training both University of Washington (UW) matriculated pre-professional students as well as professionals in the community.

This proposed program is a linked series of credit-bearing graduate courses as well as an intensive clinical training/capstone experience that constitutes a coherent body of study (infant mental health). This intensive clinical year is considered to meet the certificate program standards for a capstone experience. This program is designed to enhance the education of matriculated graduate students and professionals from the community. This latter group of students may take courses initially as graduate non-matriculated students but will be encouraged to apply and enroll in the program as they approach 12 credit units (total, including past UW courses taken) so they can be transcribed appropriately.

Our proposed training program has a coursework and practice based training component. A knowledge base in infant mental health will be developed through didactic coursework (5 courses, 15 credits) and a second year clinical intensive/capstone training experience (3 quarters, 9 credits) will provide training in direct service and consultation for trainees. The latter will happen at targeted community sites we have cultivated training relationships and agreements with. Infused into all aspects of the program will be training in leadership and policy issues.

The intensive clinical/capstone year will have two training pathways, both of which more generally will train individuals to support the healthy emotional and social development of infants and their families. More specifically, pathways will be tailored to individual's different backgrounds, career/educational objectives, and current/future type of anticipated practice settings. These pathways are designed after the national Michigan Association Infant Mental Health competencies (Level 2 and Level 3) outlined in the *MI-AIMH Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health* (Michigan Association of Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH), 2002).

Furthermore, in the future this body of study may meet some of the academic requirements for application to specialty certification agencies. That is, training in our program will provide the foundation necessary to pursue endorsement status through MA-IMH down the road. This endorsement is competency based; we hope to provide students with a core of these competencies, standards that are rapidly becoming benchmarks for establishing competence in infant mental health nationally. Official endorsement verifies that an individual has attained a specific level of functioning agreed upon by hundreds in the field and offers them “a professional development plan that focuses on knowledge, best practice skills, and supervised work experiences that lead to increased confidence and credibility” within the field (Michigan Association of Infant Mental Health, 2002). More and more states are considering adopting this (or comparable) endorsement models for infant mental health professionals.

2. Purpose.

The proposed pathway of the GCPAPN must demonstrate the educational mission of the University of Washington by providing students with a concentrated, cohesive area of study and helping participants achieve specified learning objectives and competencies in Advanced Practice Nursing. It must enhance education outside of the requirements for a graduate degree pursued by the student.

The infant mental health training pathways of the revised certificate program will provide a focused, cohesive area of study with specific learning objectives and competencies in infant mental health. As mentioned above, our development of competency objectives is guided by work at the national level for endorsement in infant mental health. It will enhance educational opportunities available for students and enrich -- via coursework and practice based training -- their core of current educational requirements.

Specific Program Aims:

Our training program's specific aims are then three-fold:

- (1) To increase the knowledge base in infant mental health for community professionals and University of Washington graduate students by offering a sequence of infant mental health courses. Students may elect to take all courses and apply for a second year of training to receive a certificate, or they may elect to simply take courses of interest *a la carte* without ever formally applying to the certificate program. Some courses may require permission of the instructor or prerequisites.
- (2) To offer an intensive clinical/capstone training experience where graduate students and professionals (with or currently acquiring graduate degrees) from multiple disciplines (e.g. nursing, education, occupational therapy, social work, speech & hearing sciences) are trained in infant mental health consultation, reflective practice, and providing relationship-based services to families. These are individuals who plan to work with young children and their families in varying contexts, but generally NOT in the role of an infant-parent psychotherapist or exclusively in mental health settings. **(Infant Mental Health Specialist Pathway)**
- (3) To offer a intensive clinical/capstone training experience to train advanced graduate students in mental health fields and licensed (or license-eligible) graduate level mental health professionals from the community who plan to (or are already) doing intensive therapeutic work and assessment with young children and their families. These are individuals who want to learn more about

assessment and infant-parent psychotherapy to enrich their ongoing or future clinical practice with families presenting multiple, complex risk factors (**Infant Mental Health Psychotherapist Pathway**).

Overarching Certificate Objectives:

1. Provide all trainees multidisciplinary learning experiences about major theories related to the social emotional development of infants within the context of their family and/or caregivers.
2. Explore the basis of brain, behavior and learning as they relate to emotional health and social emotional functioning.
3. Expose all trainees to a variety of strategies and service delivery models for infant mental health promotion and mental health disorder prevention.
4. Develop an awareness of intergenerational transmission of emotional well being through relationships and parenting practices.
5. Prepare the infant mental health specialist trainees in assessment, consultation, and relationship-based models of practice in various settings.
6. Prepare the infant mental health psychotherapist trainees with the skills of diagnosis and the relational treatment of mental health problems found in infant-parent dyads (infant-parent psychotherapy), including disorders of relationships and self regulation.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Develop a knowledge base about infant mental health including the historical development, major theories of development, attachment relationships, brain maturation, social emotional competence of children, and existing types of disturbances in infants and toddlers. In addition, infant mental health psychotherapists will focus additionally on in psychotherapeutic theories of change and mental and behavioral disorders in adults and infants.
2. Learn how to establish effective, trusting, culturally sensitive working relationships with families, providers and systems working with young children and families.
3. Develop skills in the diagnosis and relationship-based treatment of infants and their caregivers. In addition, trainees in the infant mental health psychotherapist pathway will develop specific skills in community-based infant-parent psychotherapy treatment models.
4. Develop skills in using reflective practice to inform actions, communication, and working relationships.
5. Develop program development skills for integrating infant mental health into existing service delivery programs.
6. Develop a learning community for life long development as a provider working with infants and caregivers.
7. Begin to develop competencies to qualify for recognition or certification from professional organizations who have defined the criteria for specialization in Infant Mental Health.

3. Curriculum & Program Scope. *The proposed pathway must be organized into a structured progression of classes. It must require a minimum of 15 student credit hours, nine of which must be earned in courses numbered 500 and above. In addition, nine student credit hours must be earned in graded courses. The proposed pathway must*

also include a capstone, unifying experience that provides intellectual cohesion to the program, possibly in the form of an intensive clinical internship requiring students to draw from the entire content of the program. Proposals are encouraged to address the interdisciplinary aspects of the pathway.

Curriculum

The first four quarters will focus on building a knowledge base in infant mental health via didactic coursework. Courses may be taken as a graduate non-matriculated student (GNM: for community professionals) to start or as a matriculated university graduate student. GNM students will be encouraged to apply and enroll in the program as they approach 12 credits so they can be transcribed. Some courses may require permission of the instructor or prerequisites. All of these courses are (will be) numbered 500 and above.

All interested in applying and enrolling for the second year of practice-based training will be required to take this entire sequence of courses. However these courses do not necessarily need to be taken back-to-back in one year; individuals can tailor their coursework pathway to fit with the other demands on their time and take courses over a couple of years if needed before (if) applying to the program. See Appendix A for a flow chart of the ideal course sequence.

Courses during the first year include: NURS 548 Introduction to Infant Mental Health (IMH), NURS 558 Infancy in Context, NSG 537 Infant Development and Psychopathology, NSG 538 Using IMH Approaches in Practice Settings, and NURS 555 Assessment and Diagnostics for Children under 3. Each course is 3 credits for a total of 15 credits; all of these courses will be graded courses. The curriculum has been modeled on the prior certificate program's courses; however, it has also been adapted based on prior student feedback and we will apply for approval for revised/new courses as needed. Two courses will undergo revisions (NCLIN 540; NURS 555) and two courses will be newly developed (Infant Development and Psychopathology; Using Infant Mental Health Approaches in Practice Settings). Syllabi for these new and revised courses are currently being developed in consultation with CIDR; we expect planning to be complete by Spring 2008 for these courses.

In addition, we will require that all students take an infant observation course (noncredit course) in the community before or during the program. Two community agencies offer this observation course.

Intensive Clinical/Capstone Experience: Practice-based Training Pathways

Starting January of 2009, interested students who have completed the sequence of coursework above may apply for admittance to the Certificate Program (January 15th application deadline, start date Summer or Fall Quarter) for one of the two training pathways described below. They will be required to take a 3 quarter, 3 credit course (total of 9 credits) as part of this intensive clinical/capstone training experience. This course (NCLIN540, Sections 1 and 2) will be CREDIT/NO CREDIT. This will be a consolidating year where trainees will apply the knowledge base learned from the coursework in practice settings and enrich their work with families. Partnerships with community agencies to be used as sites are currently being cultivated. Potential training sites include Boyer

Children's Clinic, Providence Everett Healthcare Clinic, UW Roosevelt Clinic, and Family Services.

The **Infant Mental Health Specialist Pathway** will be designed for those who are interested in bringing infant mental health principles into their current and future work with young children and families. They may be graduate students from non-mental health disciplines or practicing (licensed with a graduate degree completed or in process) professionals from non-mental health disciplines (e.g. nursing, education, occupational therapy, social work, speech and hearing sciences). These students will be in a clinical practicum training experience which will take place in a variety of community settings (early head start, DOH home visiting, childcare, neurodevelopmental centers, medical settings) based on training need and background of the student. It will focus on delivery of relationship-based treatment services, reflective practice, and infant mental health consultation with families and settings. Students will be supervised by staff on-site. These staff will be trained in infant mental health and will receive ongoing support in the form of reflective practice, training and mentorship from CIMHD staff.

The **Infant Mental Health Psychotherapist Pathway** will be a more intensive clinical experience, focused specifically on more advanced training in infant-parent psychotherapy and assessment. This level of training is designed for licensed or license-eligible mental health professionals (advanced psychiatric nurses, psychologists, social workers) as well as advanced graduate students in these mental health fields. Students will learn how to engage in reflective practice as well as how to work therapeutically with families presenting with a myriad of complex risk factors and mental health concerns. Once they are admitted to the program (after completing the coursework) students will be placed in an externship placement (community mental health setting, birth to three neurodevelopmental centers). For some community professionals this can be in the agency they originated from if the appropriate preceptorship is available. Targeted community settings and on-site licensed mental health providers with training in infant mental health will serve as clinical supervisors for these students. These supervisory staff will then receive ongoing support in the form of reflective practice, training, and mentorship from CIMHD faculty and staff.

As evident from the pathways described above, this training program is expected to be very interdisciplinary in nature, both in terms of students enrolled, faculty teaching courses, and preceptors/supervisors and types of community practice settings. Students will be all together while taking the preliminary coursework, which will foster a truly interdisciplinary learning experience.

4. Advisory Board.

The School's Nursing Practice Advisory Board (NPAB) helps the School define target audiences, admissions standards, curriculum, and on an ongoing basis, monitor the progress and quality of academic programs. In addition to NPAB, proposed pathways of the GCPAPN may have additional advisory boards, representing pathway-specific concerns.

To start, the advisory board for the proposed Certificate Program will consist of: Catherine Henderson, PhD (Clinical Faculty, CIMHD, UW; Faculty, Seattle Psychoanalytic Society & Institute), Gail Joseph, PhD (Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology, UW), Rosemary Kelly, MD, MPH (Acting Instructor, Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, UW), and Diane Magyary, PhD (Professor, Nursing, Psychosocial & Community Health, UW).

5. Instructors.

All courses in the proposed pathway must be taught by UW faculty.

See Appendix C. All proposed courses will be taught by UW faculty affiliated with the Center.

6. Admission Process & Standards.

The School of Nursing will publish minimum admission standards supported by the advisory board to reflect the knowledge and skills needed for success in GCPAPN. The proposed pathway must utilize only the published admission process for GCPAPN. In some circumstances, students who have begun UW graduate coursework without prior admission to GCPAPN may apply for the certificate program. Graduate student status is required for admission to the program.

We will adhere to minimum published admission standards of SoN for applicants applying to the program. Interested applicants must have a graduate degree or be in the process of acquiring one. Students will be considered for acceptance to the program if the following criteria have been met:

- 1) Completion of an application and in-person interview at CIMHD
- 2) Graduate student standing at UW or if a community professional, have a graduate degree (completed or in process)
- 3) Submission of all undergraduate and graduate transcripts (official)
- 4) Three professional letters of recommendation, preferably from sources familiar with applicant's work with young children and families and/or related mental health/clinical experience.
- 5) Completion of the five certificate courses mentioned above. If the coursework has not been completed at time of application, which will often be the case, admission will be contingent on satisfactory completion of the courses before enrolling in capstone training year.
- 6) Applicants ideally have current or recent experience working with young children and families or have a commitment to working with this population in the future.
- 7) Proof of completion or ongoing participation (or planned participation) in Infant Observation.

7. Grading/Assessment. *Each participant will be assessed in each course by standards approved by the University of Washington and School of Nursing.*

Each of the courses will establish grading standards in accordance with existing university and the School of Nursing standards. The five knowledge base courses will have a standard range of letter grades while the second year

capstone course will be offered Credit/No Credit. This is in agreement with the grading structure of the prior Certificate program.

8. Minimum Standards for Successful Completion of the GCPAPN. *Successful completion of the proposed pathway must require a) a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for courses required for the Certificate, b) a grade of 2.7 or higher for each course counted toward the Certificate, and c) the successful completion of a graduate degree, either prior to or simultaneous with the completion of the GCPAPN.*

Successful completion of the Certificate Program must require a) a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for courses required for the Certificate, b) a grade of 2.7 or higher for each course counted toward the Certificate, and c) the successful completion of a graduate degree, either prior to or simultaneously with the completion of the GCPAPN.

9. Course Evaluation. *The proposed pathway must agree to periodic evaluation of courses by students and peers to ensure the high quality of the program.*

The certificate program is currently working with CIDR to plan our sequence of courses and will continue to use them for ongoing evaluation by students and peers to maintain the highest standards of training for our program. We hope to have an ongoing process evaluation in place by CIDR for students at the end of each quarter, but also in the middle of some quarters as well. In addition, we hope to have a pre- and post- self-assessment in place which assesses not only students' experience of the program but also the change in knowledge base and competencies in regard to infant mental health. Students will be assessed prior to taking their first course and after finishing the Certificate requirements.

10. Transcripts. *The grades of participants in the proposed GCPAPN pathway will be recorded on a permanent transcript stored on an internal UW system. In order for completion of the GCPAPN to appear on the student's transcript, the proposed pathway must agree to written notification of all graduates to SoN Academic Services.*

We will notify the necessary individuals in SoN Academic Services in writing of all graduates of the Certificate Program so they can be transcribed appropriately. In addition, we will arrange for grades of participants to be recorded on a permanent transcript on an internal UW system.