

PUTTING AN INFANT MENTAL HEALTH APPROACH INTO PRACTICE

FOUR LITTLE WORDS

- Observe**
- Protect time and place from interruption
 - Sit quietly, fully attentive to supervisee
 - Allow supervisee to “set the agenda”
 - Remain aware of supervisee’s emotional state
- Listen**
- Invite supervisee to share details of the assessment or home visit or clinical hour
 - Follow supervisee’s lead
 - Remain respectful of supervisee’s pace
- Reflect**
- Be open, non-judgmental & emotionally present
 - Pause, allow time to think before you speak
 - Wonder with the supervisee what the parent and infant might have experienced/felt during the assessment, visit or clinical hour
 - Wonder about the supervisee’s thoughts/feelings in response to the material presented, as appropriate
 - Wonder about the supervisee’s balance between thinking and feeling
 - Wonder about how coherent, organized, flexible, adaptive, consistent & curious the supervisee is
- Respond**
- Allow feelings to be expressed; name them
 - Share supervisee’s pleasure(s) & pain(s)
 - Support and guide, as appropriate
 - Reply with honesty and warmth
 - Remain flexible, adaptive, curious & balanced in your response(s)
 - Avoid offering “advice”