

NeuroRelational Framework (NRF) Training

Training opportunity for NeuroRelational Framework

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) and the Washington Association of Infant Mental Health (WA-AIMH) are excited to share an incredible training opportunity!

The NeuroRelational Framework (NRF) is offered to qualified and selected multi-disciplinary teams across Washington State. This advanced Infant and Family Relational Health (IFRH) training, also known as Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH), focuses on integrating social-emotional capacities with the developmental needs of very young children and their families.

The course is designed with a team approach to learning, offering ESIT Provider Agencies more advanced and intensive knowledge about IFRH to increase capacity to support ESIT families. This course is part of the overall State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), focusing on building and enhancing IFRH practices within the ESIT workforce.

This is an intensive process with high expectations, set up as a hybrid course comprised of self-study (videos and readings), lectures, modeling, and practicing (to self and/or others).

The following information outlines the details for submitting an “Expression of Interest.” We are hopeful your program will find the benefits of this exciting opportunity!

The Course

NeuroRelational Framework (NRF)

The course will be taught by Dr. Connie Lillas with Betty Peralta, MIT, MS-MHC, IMH-E (III), and is designed to support the following objectives based upon the NeuroRelational Framework (NRF):

- Recognize the difference between adaptive and toxic stress in children, parents, and oneself, and eliminate toxic stress patterns whenever possible.
- Identify and enhance levels of socio-emotional engagement across family members.
- Decrease systemic fragmentation of care for young children and their families by building collaboration in teams built from within and outside the servicing agency.
- Promote community relationships by supporting individualized and customized care.



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- Encourage reflective practice as a means of supporting the effectiveness of practitioners working in the field and supporting them in their implementation of the NRF.
- www.NRfcare.org

Pre-requisites for the Course

To maximize the value of this course it is helpful to have a basic understanding of the following principles:

- Understanding the concept of Adaptive versus Toxic Stress. If this is a new concept, prepare by reviewing the following:
 - [Harvard Child Development](#)
 - **Three Key Neuroscience Concepts:** Toxic Stress, Serve and Return, and Brain Architecture
- Some working knowledge of Adverse Childhood Experiences. If this is a new concept, prepare by reviewing the following:
 - [Nadine Burke-Harris](#)
 - Watch the TED Talk
 - [Kaiser Permanente – Initial ACEs study](#)
 - [ACES too High](#)
 - [PACEs Connection](#)
- Understanding the concept of Bottom Up and Top Down:
 - [Brain-Based Approaches to Help Clients After Trauma](#)
 - [Why a Bottom-Up Approach to Trauma Therapy is So Powerful](#)
- Understanding the process of reflective practice. If this is a new concept, prepare by reviewing the following:
 - Mary Clair Heffron, Barbara Ivins, & Donna Weston. (2005). *Finding an Authentic Voice: Use of Self: Essential Learning Processes for Relationship-Based Work. Infants and Young Children*. Vol 18, Nu 4, pp. 323-336.
- Have the time management and organization skills to hold the meeting preparation tasks in mind and plan for completion before each meeting.
- Have the capacity and tolerance for learning from a mixture of asynchronous and synchronous modalities, being prepared to hold the tension of new concepts that may not easily fit into existing service delivery approaches.
- Able to be proactive about one's learning process. When interdisciplinary concepts are foreign or at too fast of a pace, asking for help from colleagues and NRF Faculty are



Washington State Department of
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essential for learning together. Some colleagues will grasp concepts and adopt using them more quickly than others in some domains, and more slowly in others. Ask others for help! Mix and match faster and slower learners on your team! Absorbing the “gist” rather than all the details is important to know going into this course.

Time Commitment – Meeting Schedule

- **What:** Seventeen – 3-hour live synchronous web-based meetings (the first meeting is 2 hours)
- **When:**
 - To be held on **Wednesdays** from **9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon PST**
 - To start on **September 13, 2023**, and to conclude no later than **June 21, 2024**. (Specific dates will be included in course materials.)
- **Process:** Synchronous web-based meetings will consist of large group lectures, large group discussions, small group discussions, demonstrations, and opportunities to practice.

Time Commitment – Meeting Preparation

- **Watch:** Asynchronous training videos, 2+ hours in length prior to each class
- **Read** Assigned sections from the NRF Interactive Manual – or NRF Hard Copy of the manual.
- **Use:** Participants will be expected to use the NRF Educational Tools and Data Collection Tools as indicated for their cases and based on their comfort level.
- **Application to Self:** Apply the concepts and theories to yourself. You will be asked to choose a co-regulatory “Go-To” person for walking through this course, and apply strengths and challenges to this relationship.
- **Surveys:**
 - An NRF Fidelity survey will be required for completion three times across the course timeframe. Once at the beginning, in the middle, and at the course conclusion.
 - Each Unit will have a Pre-Unit Survey to assess knowledge of the Unit’s skills before learning.
 - a Post-Unit survey to 1. Assess increased knowledge and comfort with the NRF concepts and tools, and 2. To provide feedback to the NRF faculty on improving and individualizing the process to “Cohort 2” participants.
 - An ESIT course evaluation will be completed at the end of the course.



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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- **Supplemental Material:** Most units will have additional learning material to expand upon concepts highlighted within the unit and can be reviewed at the participant's pace. These can be watched at any time during breaks and before the end of one's subscription.
- **Supplemental Meetings:** Historically, teams flourish when they set aside periodic intervals to get together (face-to-face/remote), debrief the NRF content, and discuss ways the information can be integrated into the existing service delivery process.

Note: Initially, the time commitment may be higher given that this is new information and a more complex way of understanding the impact of toxic stress on the developing child and the impact on the caregiving relationship. Once participants settled into the process, Cohort 1 participants spent approximately 3 hours preparing for the synchronous class.

Expression of Interest is due by Friday, June 30, 2023

[\[Link for NRF Expression of Interest Form \(Application\)\]](#)

Selection Criteria

Every ESIT Provider Agency will have the opportunity to submit an “Expression of Interest” for a multi-disciplinary team to complete the training together. There is capacity for up to 5 teams (with 4 to 6 providers per team) to reach a maximum of 30 participants in the cohort.

Teams will be selected to participate based on the criteria listed below.

1. Team applications must include participants representing at least three disciplines: OT, PT, SLP, Social Worker, Developmental Specialist, Family Resource Coordinator, and/or supervisor/administrator. Whenever possible, the team includes a minimum of one licensed (or in the process of licensure) mental health practitioner in active clinical practice whom the ESIT Provider Agency refers to or has on their team.
2. Because this course is about agency and state-wide systems change, teams are encouraged to apply with one agency administrator on the team that can support the ongoing practice and influence agency culture.
3. Each participant on the team should have completed at **least one** of the following IECMH related trainings: Level 1 Promoting First Relationships (PFR), Circle of Security, Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN) model, Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), or have an endorsement from WA-AIMH.



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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4. Each participant should be a confident and comfortable reflective practitioner and have participated in reflective consultation.
5. All teams from across WA state are encouraged to apply. Priority will be given to teams that applied for Cohort #1 *and teams that belong to agencies from Cohort #1.*
6. Applications will be scored on a rubric measurement for selection.
7. Potential applicant teams will participate in an interview process, including the agency administrative or clinical leader, and NRF faculty. This interview will orient agency leadership to the process and expectations. (Interviews to be completed during July and early August.)
8. Notifications of selection will be made by 08/16/2023.

Expression of Interest is due by Friday, June 30, 2023

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Benefits of NRF Training for ESIT Provider Agency Teams

- Increased individual and team capacity for trauma-informed and neurobiologically sensitive developmental care, improved cultural awareness, and improved sustainability for IFRH practices within the ESIT PA's system of services and supports to families.
- Increased capacity to organize and make use of other training(s), along with practitioner knowledge, in a manner that matches the child and parents developmentally.
- Participants will each receive a year-long subscription to the 3 Steps to Resilience NRF Foundations Interactive Manual.
- Participants will each receive a hard copy of the most current version of the 3 Steps to Resilience NRF Foundations Manual.
- Training aligns with WA-AIMH endorsement competencies.
- Certification as an Informed NRF Practitioner at the Foundations Level at completion with adequate attendance
- CEUs and Clock Hours will be available (DCYF/ESIT will cover the cost of Clock Hours)
- Additionally, due to the exceptional time commitment of this training, DCYF/ESIT will reimburse participating ESIT provider agencies \$200 per participating team member per month to offset the costs of staff release time.

Questions?

Please submit questions to: Laurie.Thomas@dcyf.wa.gov



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