

What is Infant Mental Health?

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HCMC Mother-Baby Program



**And how does that
make you feel?**





Infant Mental Health Definition

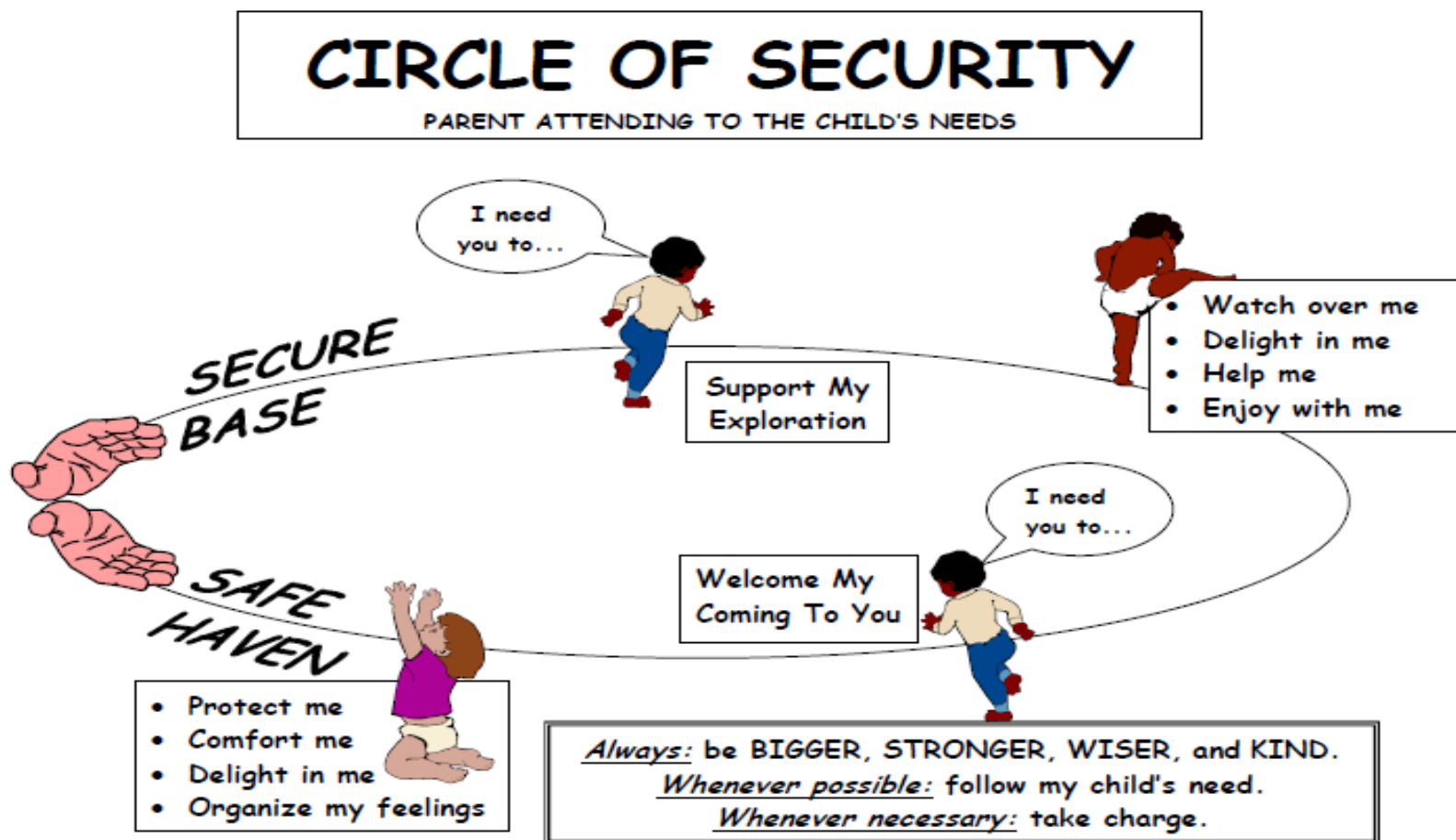
- Refers to how well a baby develops socially and emotionally from ages 0-3
- Development is the outcome of transactions between the child and her environment
- “As young children develop, their early experiences literally become embedded in the architecture of their brains.”
(Shonkoff et al, National Scientific Council on the Developing Child)
- Recognizes that from the beginning, a child works to organize their experience – rather than being a passive container into which experience is poured.

Infant Mental Health Continued

- As recently as 60 years ago, the child's need for a caregiver was seen as important only for food and safety
- We now know that infants need a consistent relationship with a particular person (or 2) in order to thrive and develop
- The quality of the attachment grows over the course of the first year of life and by 11 months of age, we are able to evaluate it

	Birth to 2 months	2-7 months	7-12 months	12-18 months	18 months and beyond
Phase of attachment	Limited discrimination	Discrimination with limited preference	Preferred attachment	Secure base	Goal-corrected partnership
Characteristics	“babyishness” attracts caregivers; preferences limited to olfactory and auditory	Differentiates, may prefer primary caregiver but willingly interacts with other social partners	Clearly expresses preference to small number of caregivers; separation protest and stranger wariness	Proximity to caregiver promotes internal feeling of security	Cooperation with caregiver despite conflicting goals

Circle of Security - Parenting



Parent Capacity

- Ability to function in caregiving role and support baby's forward development
- Provide nurturance, follow the lead in play, delight, safety, reflection
- What limits parent capacity?
 - Adverse Childhood Experiences
 - Trauma
 - Poverty
 - Racism/System harm
 - Psychosocial stress

Questions to Consider

- *How can you support parent capacity in your role at HCMC?*
- *We all need support - how can you get support in your parenting role?*



Mother-Baby Program



Mission:

To support families by strengthening the emotional health and parenting capacity of pregnant women and mothers

- Offers a range of mental health services for pregnant women and mothers with children ages 0-5 years old
- Call 612-873-MAMA for more information or visit <http://hcmc.org/clinics/MotherBabyProgram>



Hennepin County
Medical Center