

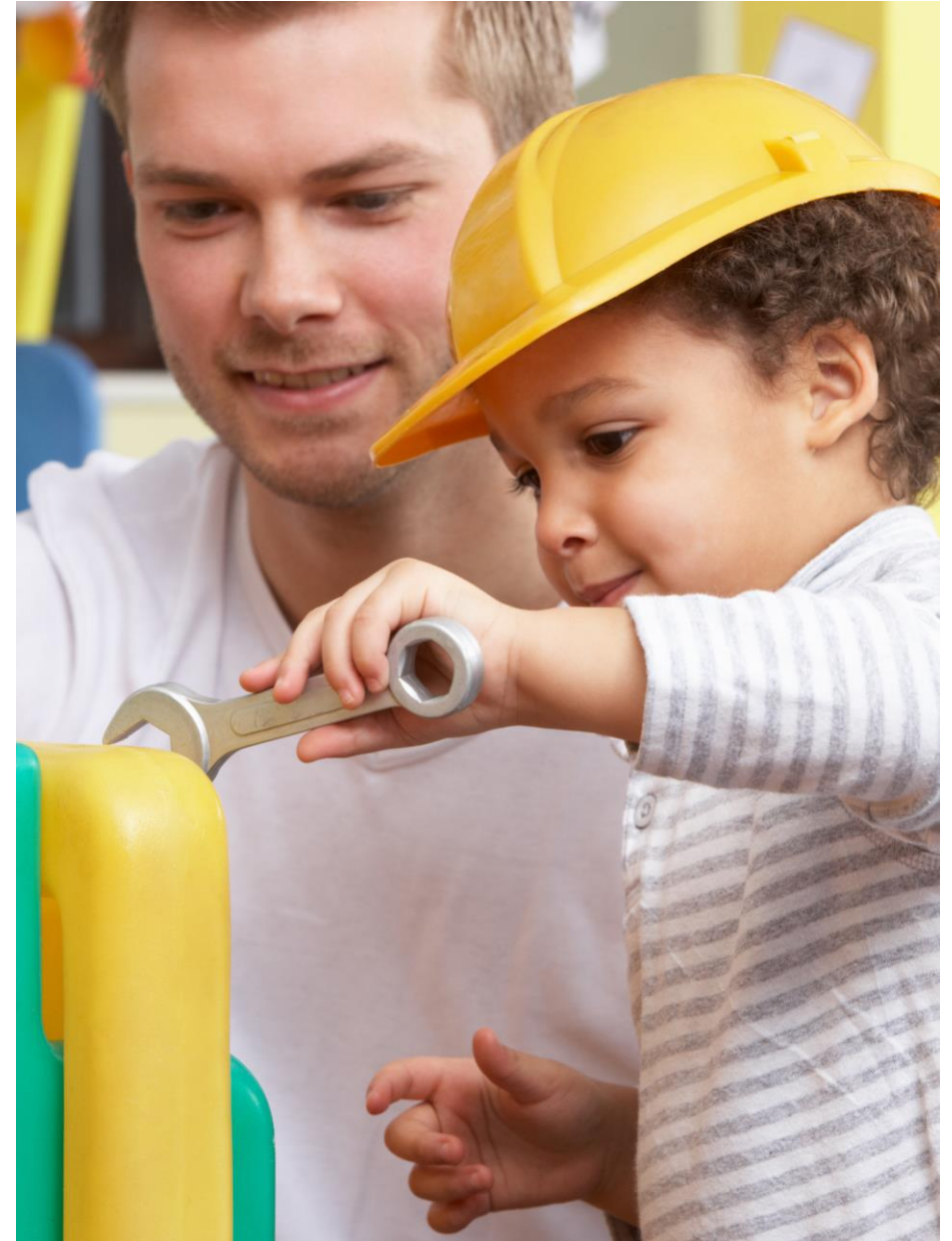
# Reflective Supervision and Consultation (RS/C)

Noelle Hause, Senior Manager of IECMH  
Professional Innovations  
ZERO TO THREE  
April 2, 2024

**ZERO TO THREE** is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure that ALL babies and toddlers have a strong start in life.

**ZERO TO THREE:**

- trains professionals and builds networks of leaders,
- influences policies and practices, and
- raises public understanding of early childhood issues.



# Take a Moment to ...

## Take Inventory

Why am I here? What do I already know about Reflective Supervision and Consultation (RS/C)?

## Notice Emotions

How do I feel about being in this training today?

## Actively Engage

What is my learning style?

## Link

How will this content inform or benefit my work with infants, young children, and families?

## Integrate

How will I integrate the information about RSC into my scope of work?



*\*Coined by Jeree Pawl and adapted by Carmen Rosa Noroña*





## Learning Objectives

- Summarize the foundational components of Reflective Supervision and Consultation (RS/C)
- Identify key skills associated with Reflective Supervision and Consultation (RS/C) with respect to your professional role and scope of work
- Describe desired outcomes of Reflective Supervision and Consultation (RS/C)



## Agenda

- What is Reflective Supervision and Consultation (RS/C) in IECMH?
- Fundamentals of RS/C
- Foundational Considerations for RS/C: Equity, Power, and Privilege; Ethical Guidelines
- Benefits of RS/C
- Planning for and applying RS/C to your scope of work





**What is reflective practice  
in IECMH?**

# Reflective Practice as Defined in the IECMH Field

Reflective Practice - a process in which a person reflects on ones' own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that arise when working with expectant parents; infants, young children, and their families; and professionals.

RS/C  
REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION  
and CONSULTATION

There now seems to be as many *ways of practicing* for which there are disciplines, and as many *ways of being* for which there are professionals practicing.



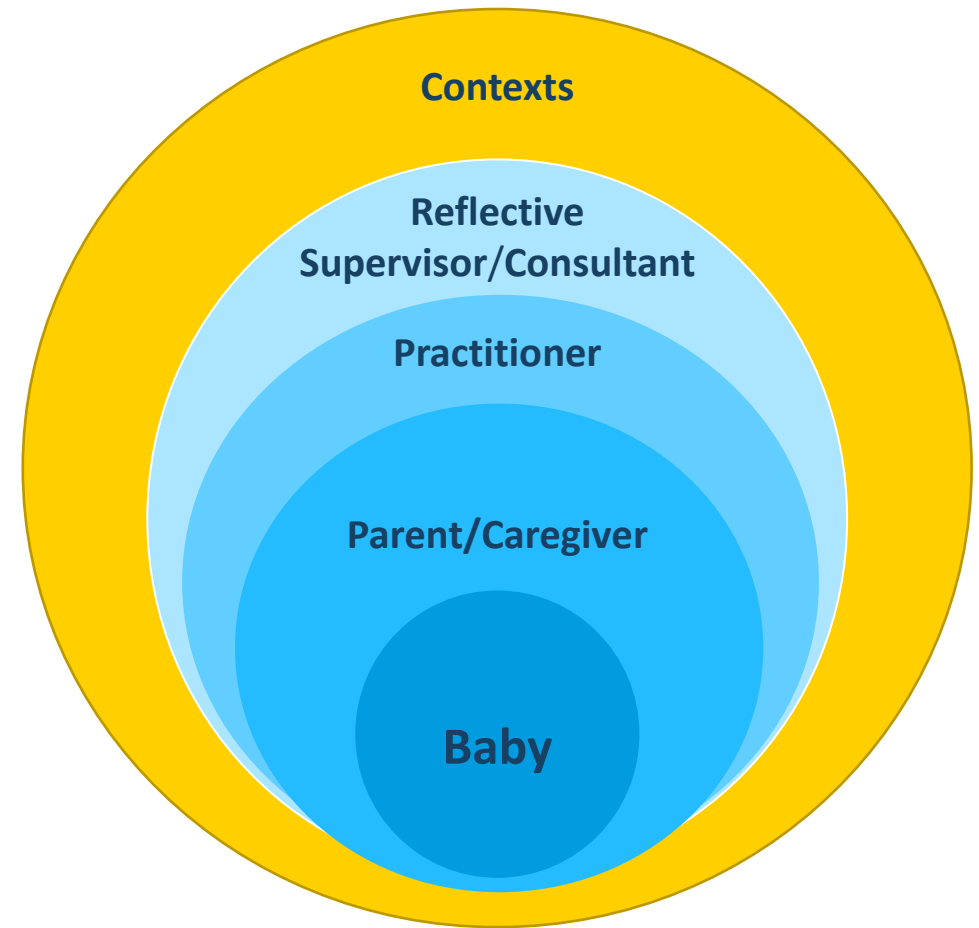


# Fundamentals of IECMH RS/C



# Fundamentals of RS/C in IECMH

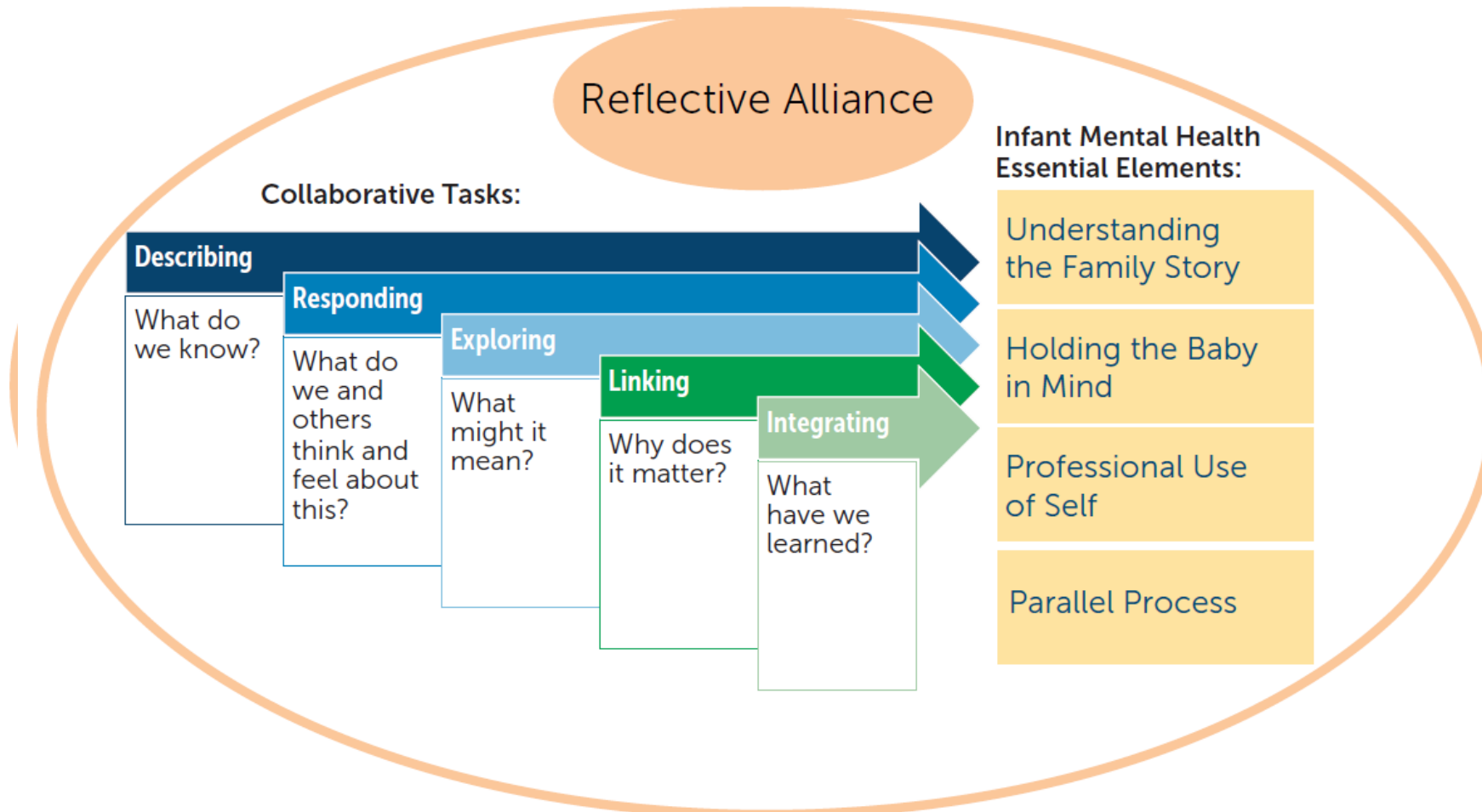
1. Responsive Relationships
2. Understanding the Family Story
3. Shared exploration of the parallel process
4. Professional “Use-of-Self”
5. “Keeping the baby in mind”



All within multiple contexts and points of  
intersectionality

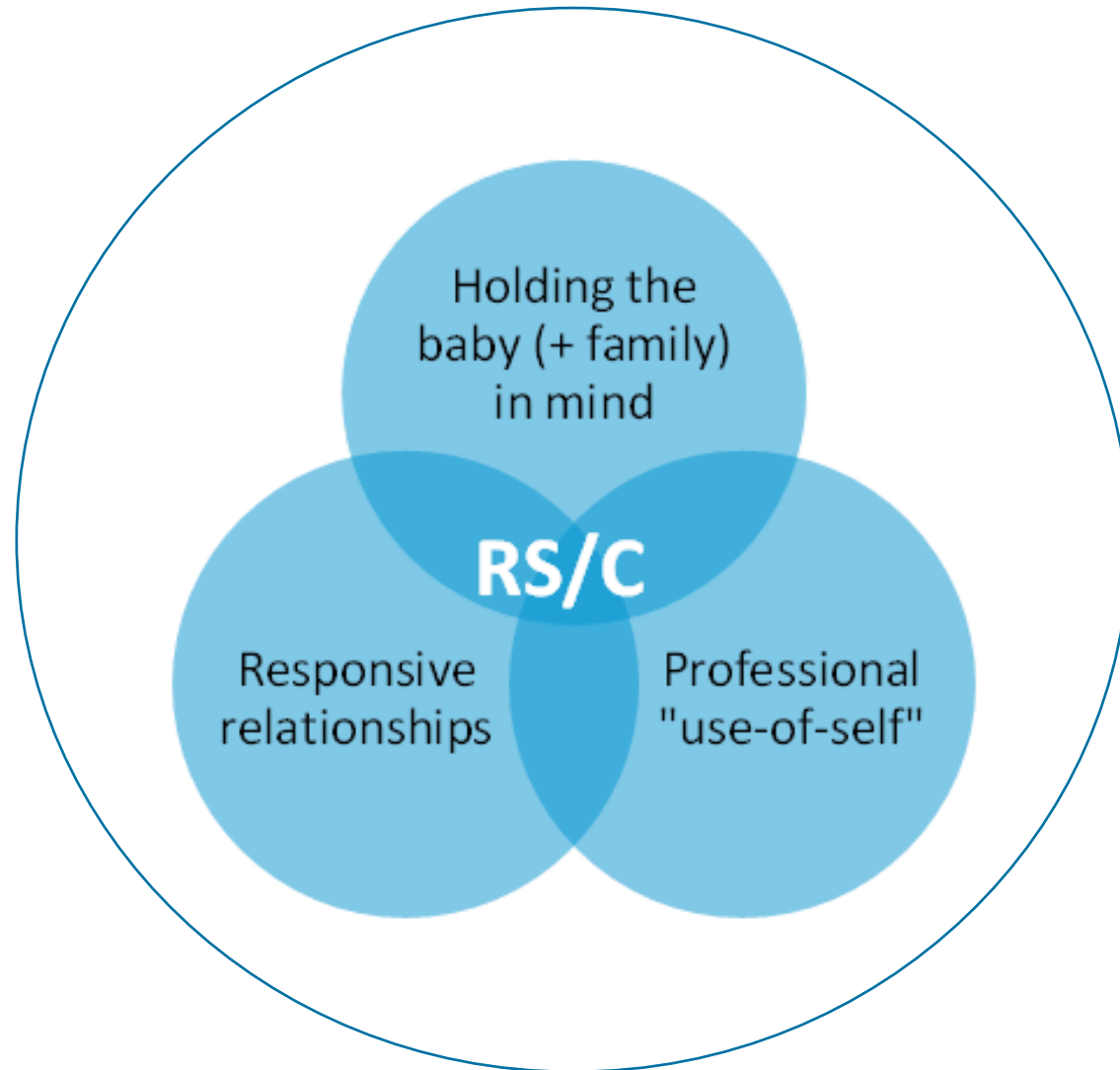
Watson, C.L., Harrison, M.E., Hennes, J.E., Harris, M.M.  
(November, 2016)

# Fundamentals of RS/C in IECMH Collaborative Tasks



# Fundamentals of IECMH RS/C

Shared exploration of the parallel process



Balance of attention to multiple perspectives, patterns, and interaction themes

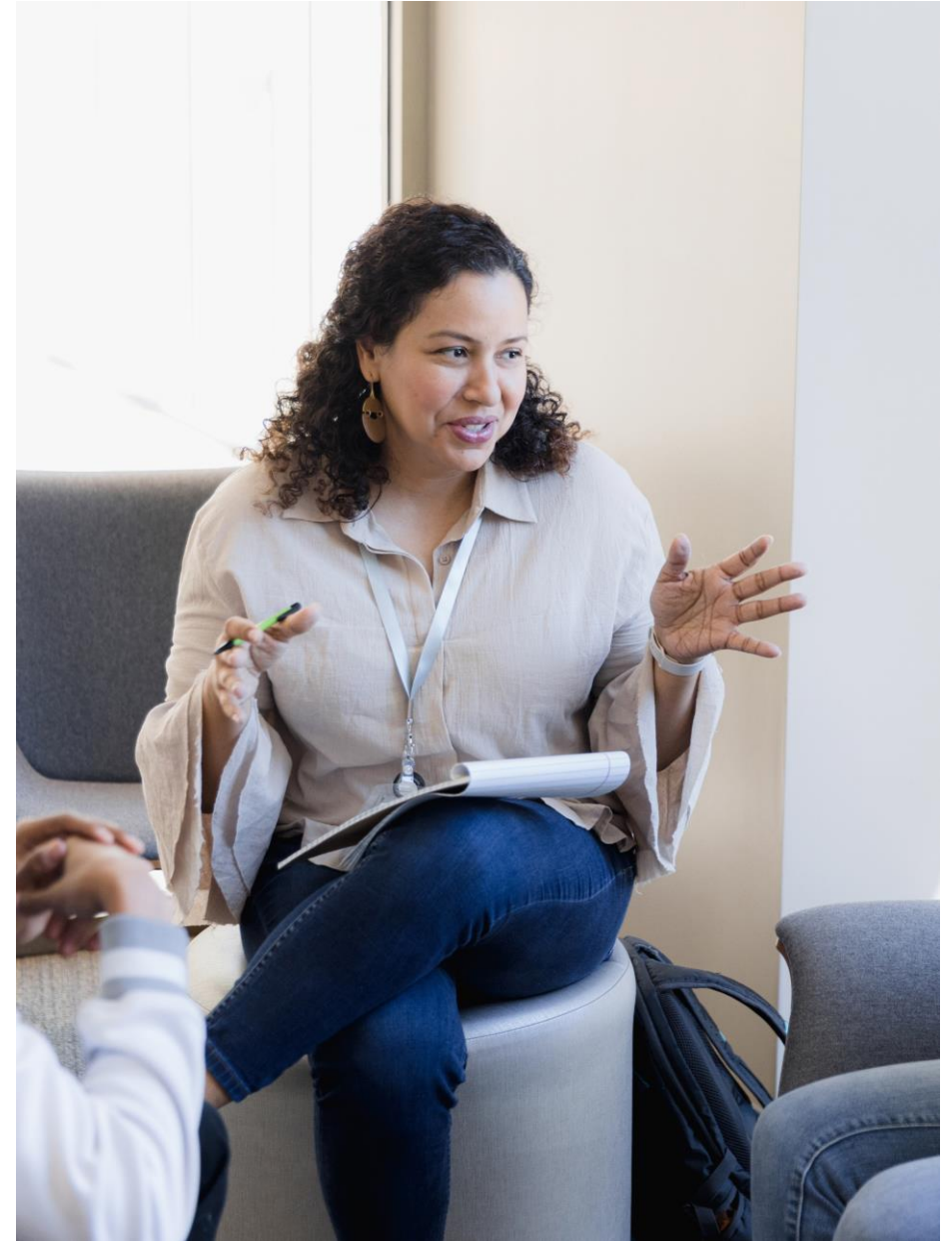




**Fundamentals of RS/C:**  
**Responsive Relationships**

# Fundamentals of RS/C: Responsive Relationships

- recognizes the power of relationships
- purposefully uses the parallel process
- supports staff
- promotes staff well-being
- facilitates staff retention





# Fundamentals of RS/C: Responsive Relationships

3 Descriptive Words ...



# Fundamentals of RS/C: Definitions

- **Reflective Supervisor** typically refers to a facilitator who ...
- **Reflective Consultant** may refer to a facilitator who ...
- **Individual Reflective Practices** refers to personal reflections on, in and for ...
- **Group Reflective Supervision** refers to a group process in which ...
- **Peer supervision** refers to colleagues meeting together ...

*Best Practice Guidelines for Reflective Supervision/Consultation* (Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health, 2018)



# Fundamentals of RS/C: Benefits and Challenges

## Reflective Supervisor

**Benefits:** Cost effective; convenient; allows for multi-level practices

### Challenges:

- Clinical, administrative, and reflective supervision may be combined
- Supervisors may be privy to more personal information
- Group members may not feel comfortable in sharing their deep feelings about the work
- A strong power differential exists

## Reflective Consultant

**Benefits:** Clinical, administrative and reflective supervision do not get “blended” together; Individuals may feel safe to share

### Challenges:

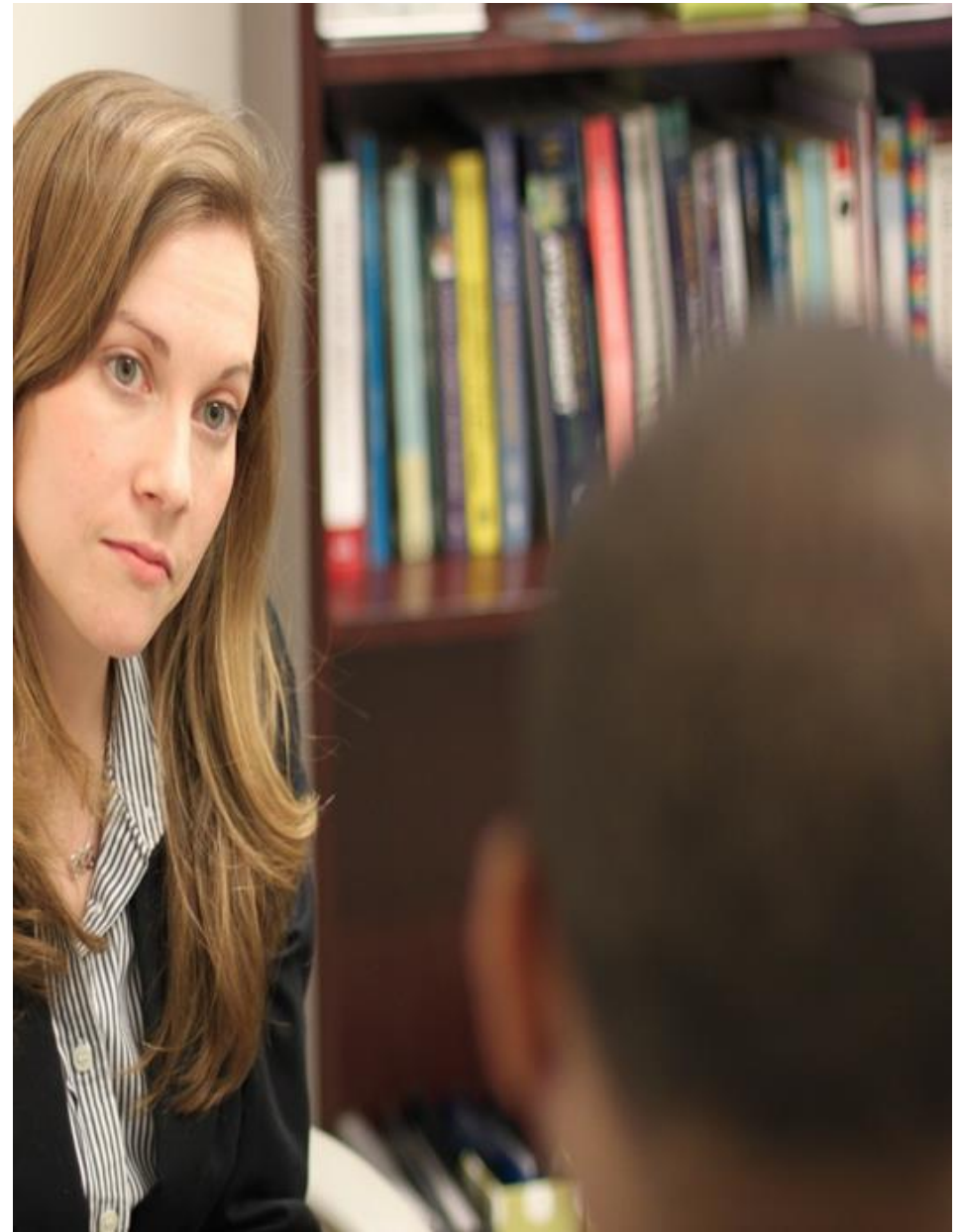
- Group members may not feel comfortable in sharing their deep feelings about the work
- A power differential exists

# Fundamentals of RS/C: Responsive Relationships “Hold the Other in Mind”

Partnership where supervisor holds supervisee in mind through:

- Emotional Availability
- Reflective Functioning and Capacity
- Empathic Response
- Creating a secure holding environment
- Mentalization

(Gold, 2011)





**Fundamentals of RS/C:**  
**Professional “Use-of-Self”**

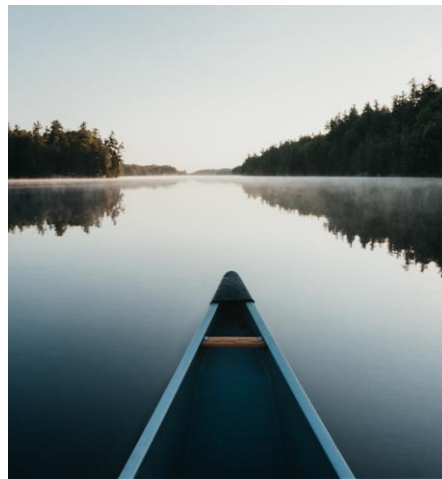


# Fundamentals of RS/C: Professional “Use-of-Self”

Self Awareness



Reflection



Collaboration



Regularity



# Fundamentals of RS/C: Professional “Use-of-Self” Self-Awareness

- Experiences
- Identity aspects
- Role and scope of work
- Power differentials
- Relationships
- Intentionality
- Transference / Countertransference



# Fundamentals of RS/C: Professional “Use-of-Self” Self-Awareness

What do you observe in others?

- Tone of voice
- Body language

What do you notice about yourself?

- What do you feel in your body?
- What is your emotional state?
- What are your senses telling you?
- What are your responses?
- Does this experience bring up memories?



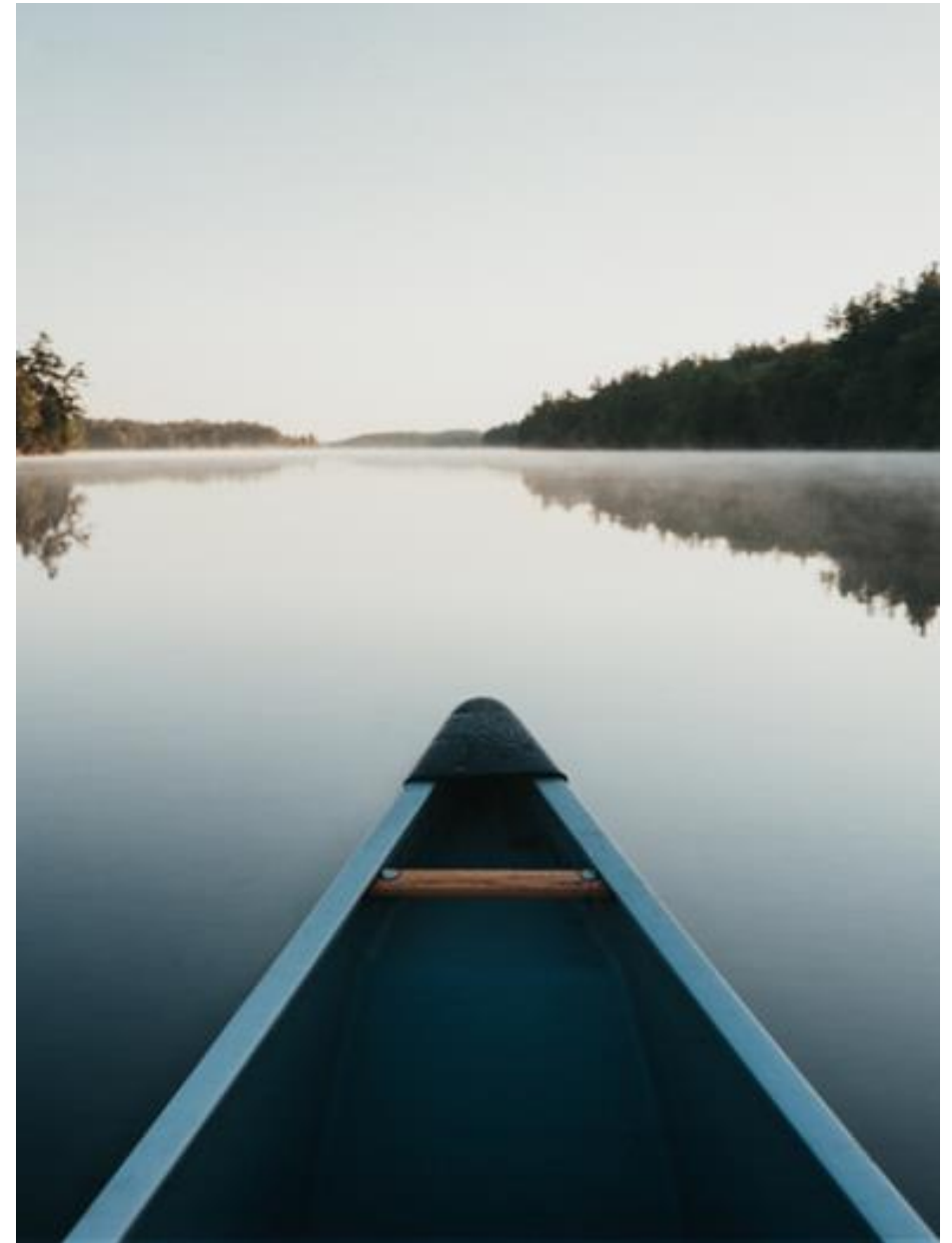


# Fundamentals of RS/C: Professional “Use-of-Self” Self-Awareness



# Fundamentals of RS/C: Professional “Use-of-Self” Reflection

- Consider and wonder
- Explore experiences, feelings, and thoughts
- Sensitivity to others’ perspectives
- Allows the supervisee to experience the kind of relationship that they are expected to provide to infants, children, and their families





# Fundamentals of RS/C: Professional “Use-of-Self” Reflection

## Reflection-FOR-Action

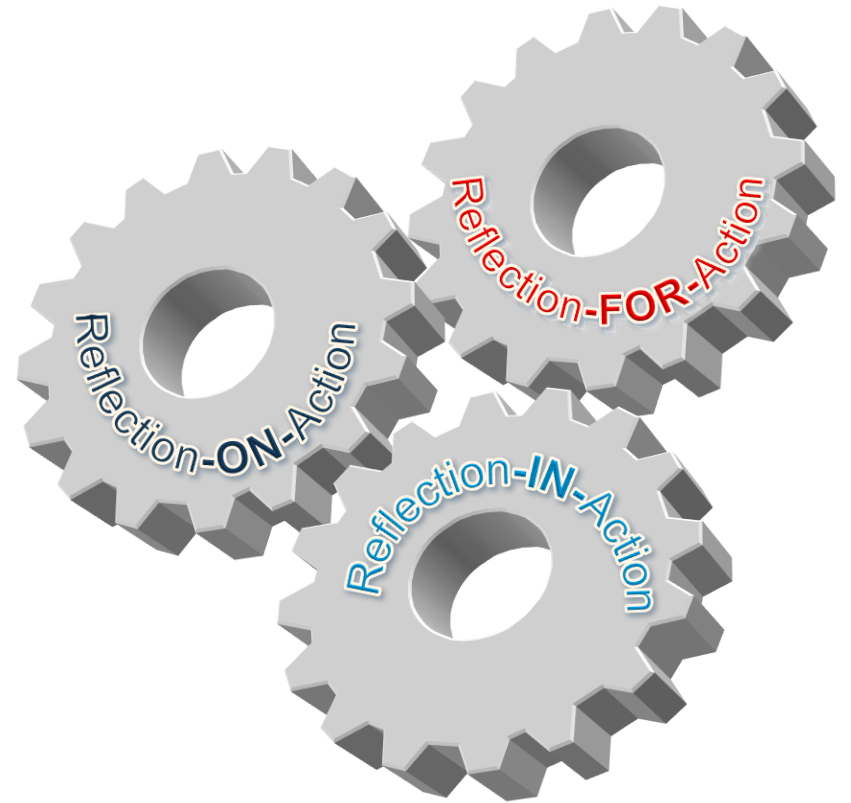
Plan for a session, home visit, activity, event, or meeting

## Reflection-ON-Action

Think about what happened

## Reflection-IN-Action

Reflect in the moment



# Fundamentals of RS/C: Professional “Use-of-Self” Collaboration

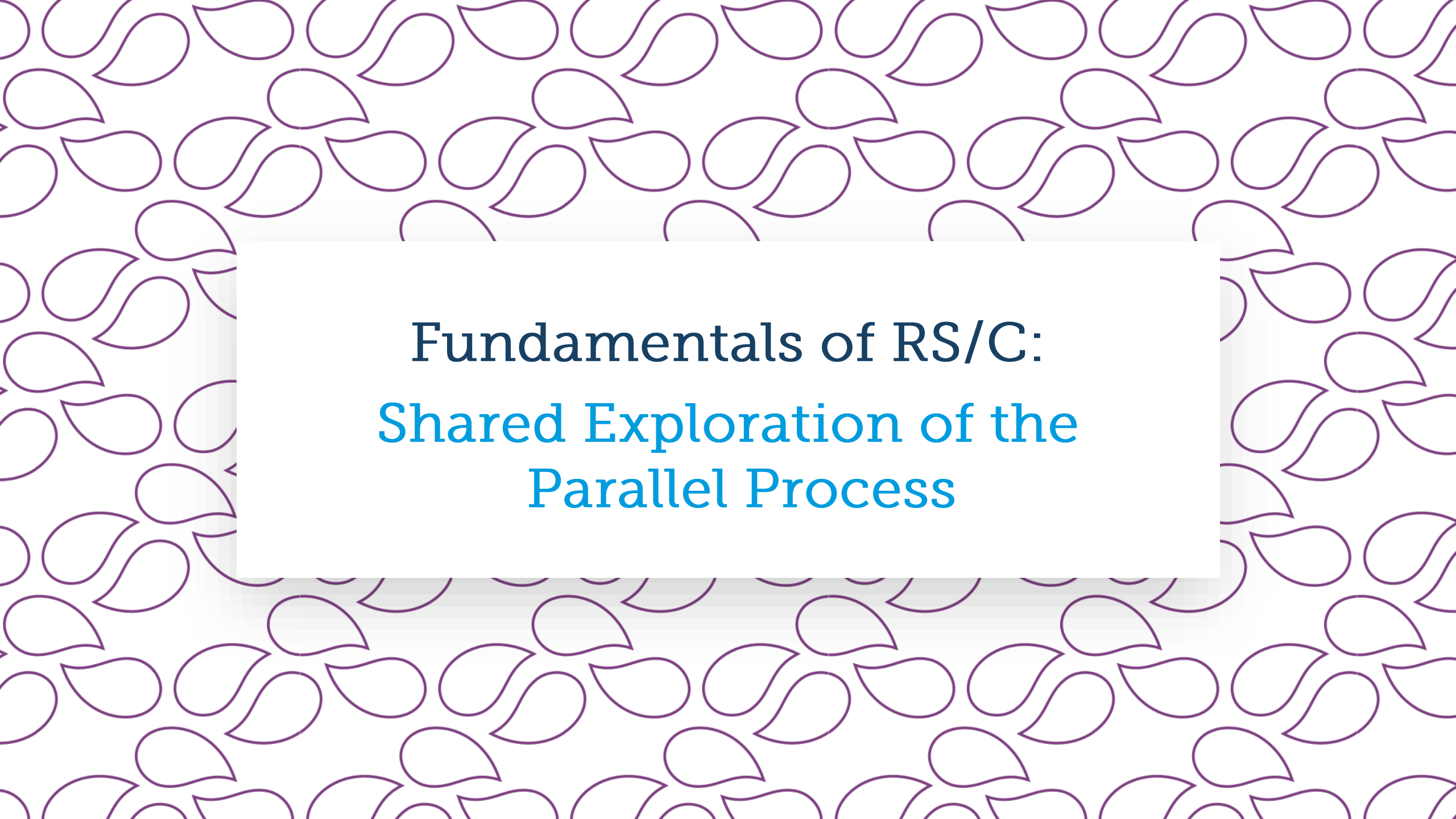
- Open Communication
- Trust, safety, bravery
- Share responsibility and control
- Reciprocal opportunities to learn
- Cultivates mentorship skills
- Offers space and time for intentionality



# Fundamentals of RS/C: Professional “Use-of-Self” Regularity

- Reliable schedule
- Sufficient time
- Protected from interruptions, cancellation, rescheduling or procrastination
- Contributes to sense of predictability, accountability, and security

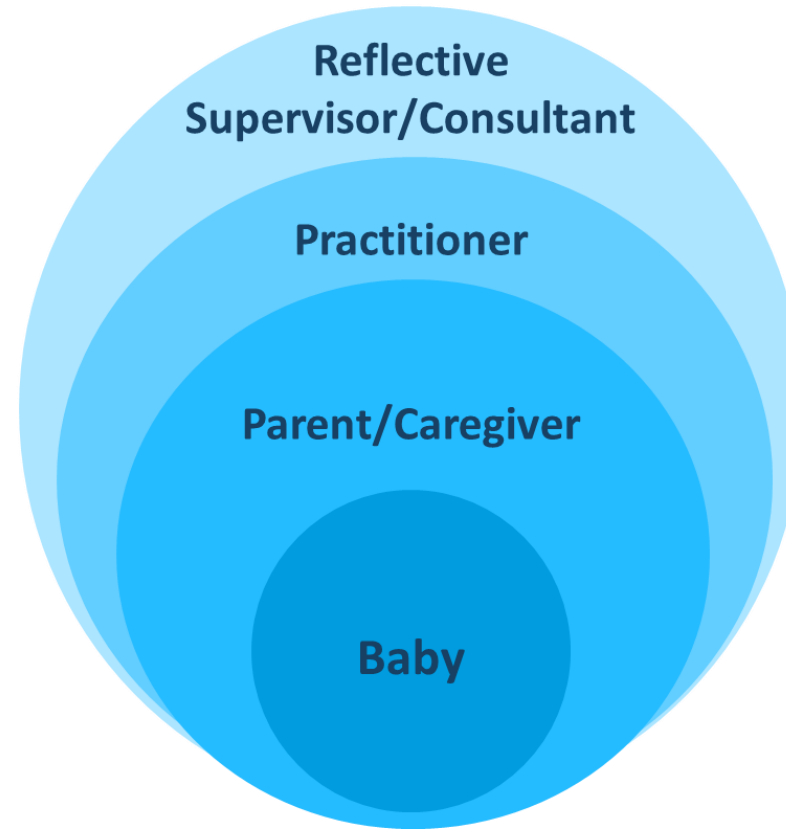




**Fundamentals of RS/C:**  
**Shared Exploration of the  
Parallel Process**

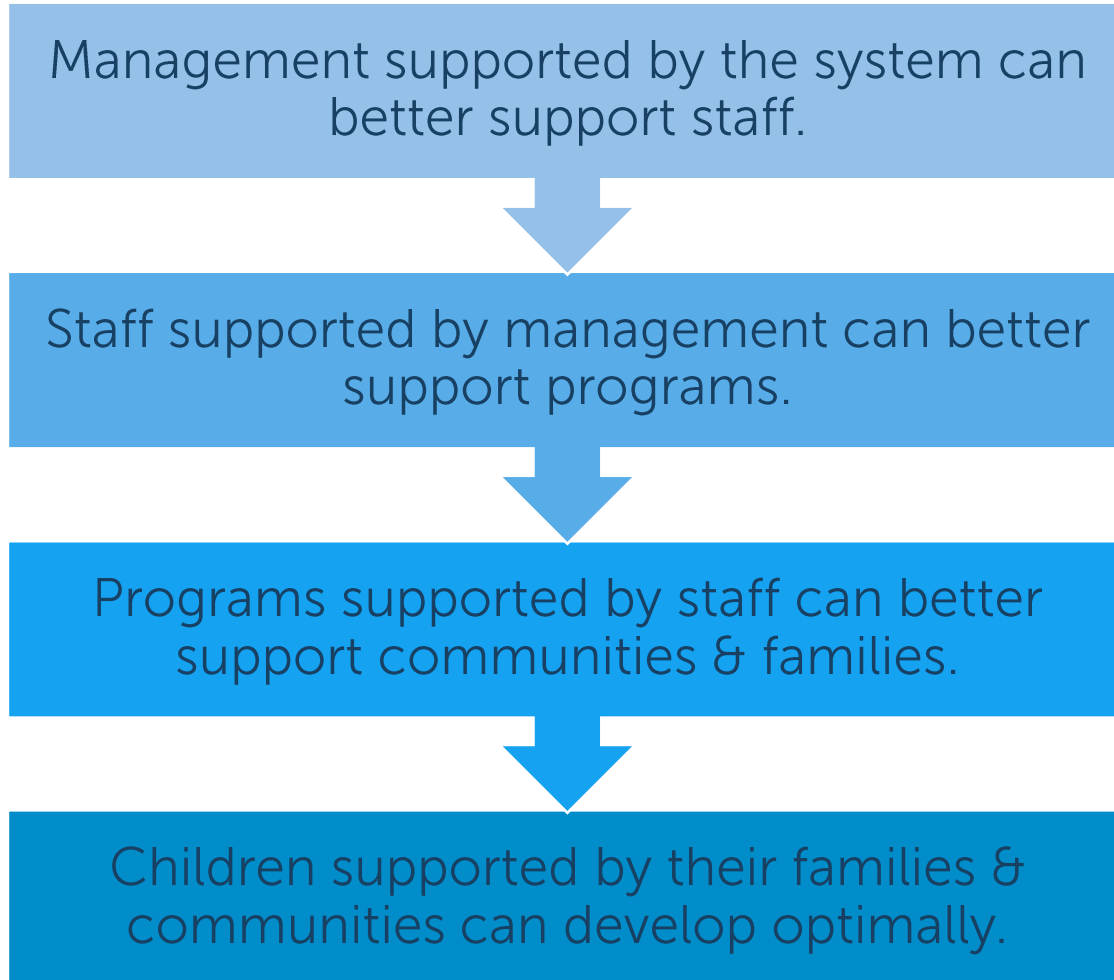
# Fundamentals of RS/C: Shared Exploration of the Parallel Process

In relationship-based services, parallel process describes how relationships can impact other relationships.





# Fundamentals of RS/C: Shared Exploration of the Parallel Process



“When reflective practice participants feel seen and heard, they can provide the same support to families and caregivers, who in turn can embrace the experience of the baby, providing the nurturing, supportive care needed for the baby to grow and thrive.”

*Watson, et al. 2016, p. 17*



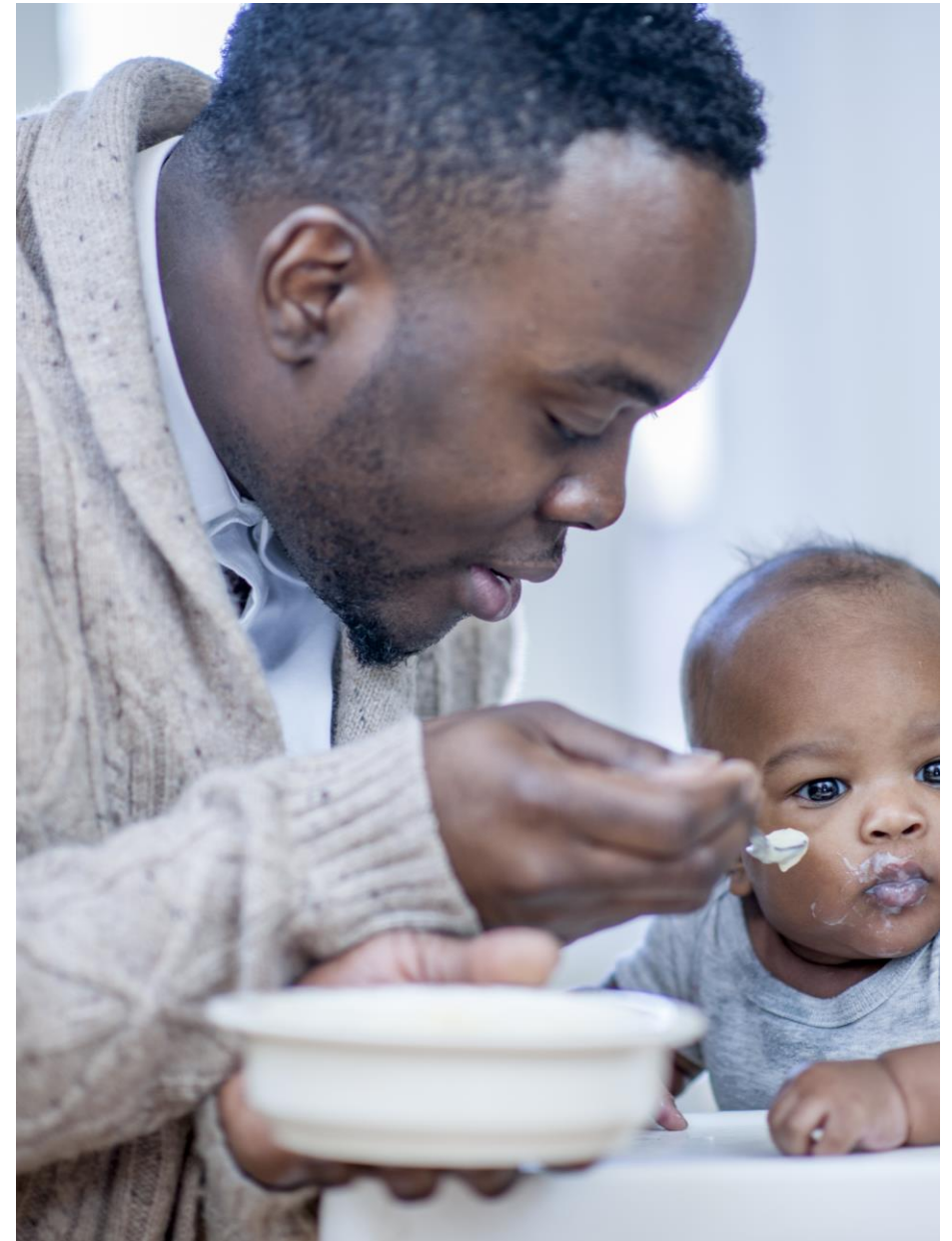


**Fundamentals of RS/C:**  
**Understanding the Family Story**

# Fundamentals of RS/C: Understanding the Family Story

The importance of understanding the child's world through:

- relationships
- environment
- experiences
- history
- culture
- and all other contexts





# Fundamentals of RS/C: Understanding the Family Story





**Fundamentals of RS/C:**  
**“Holding the Baby in Mind”**



# Fundamentals of RS/C: “Holding the Baby in Mind”

The infant/young child is at the center of the work:

- Family
- Culture
- Story
- Health, Relationships, Development
- Protective Factors
- Risk Factors





# Foundational Considerations for RS/C

# Foundational Considerations for RS/C

## Equity, Power, Privilege

- Cultural humility
- Integrate voices
- Commit to the underlying premise of “do no harm”
- Attend to brave versus safe space - and the intersection of the two
- Address power differentials

## Ethical Guidelines

- Be mindful of dual roles
- Engage in mental health crisis preparedness
- Respect limitations, professional boundaries, and scope of work





**Foundational  
Considerations  
for RS/C**

**Equity, Power, and Privilege**



# Foundational Considerations for RS/C: Equity, Power, and Privilege Cultural Humility

## Self-Awareness Leads to Better Services for Families

“Working with infants, children, and families requires all individuals, organizations, and systems of care to reflect on our own culture, values and beliefs, and on the impact that racism, classism, sexism, able-ism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other systems of oppression have had on our lives - in order to provide diversity-informed, culturally attuned services.”

*The Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants,  
Children and Families (Irving Harris Foundation, 2018)*

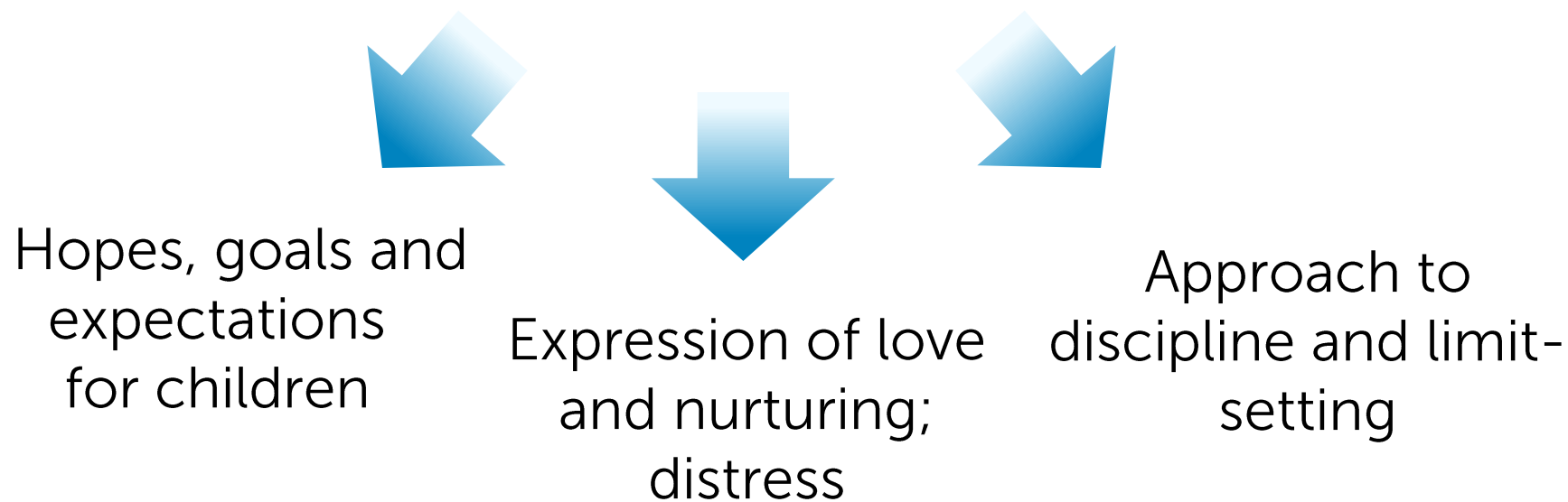
<https://diversityinformedtenets.org>



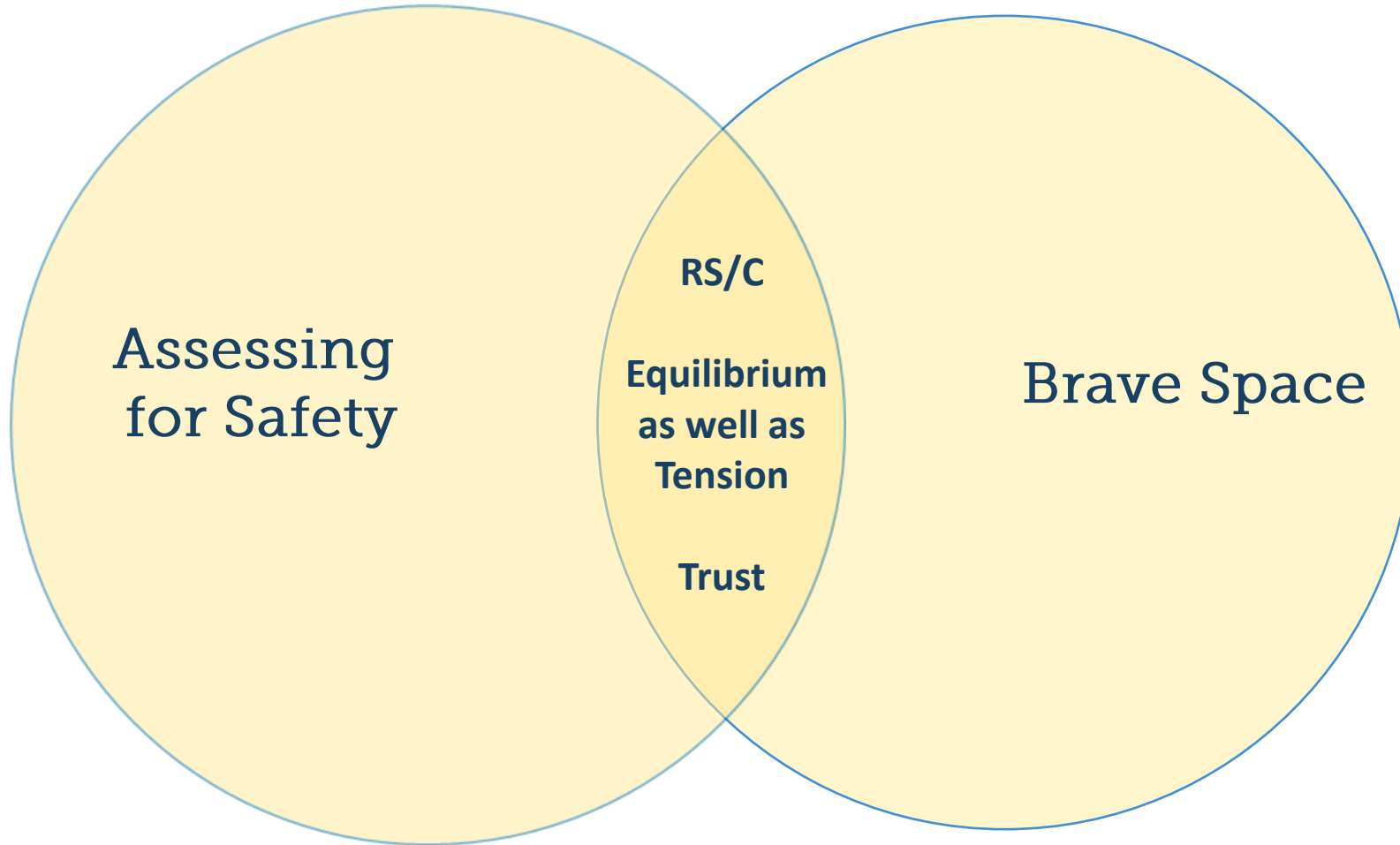


# Foundational Considerations for RS/C: Equity, Power, and Privilege Integrating Voices and Experiences

Culture is mediated through the parenting relationship and influences infant and young child development.



# Foundational Considerations for RS/C: Equity, Power, and Privilege "Do No Harm"



# Foundational Considerations for RS/C: Equity, Power, and Privilege Power Differentials

RS/C aims to address:

- Unspoken power differentials
- Issues of difference OR sameness related to any diversity issue
- Implicit bias
- How power, privilege or prejudice have influenced perspectives





**Foundational Considerations:**  
**Ethical Guidelines**

# Foundational Considerations for RS/C: Ethical Guidelines Dual Roles







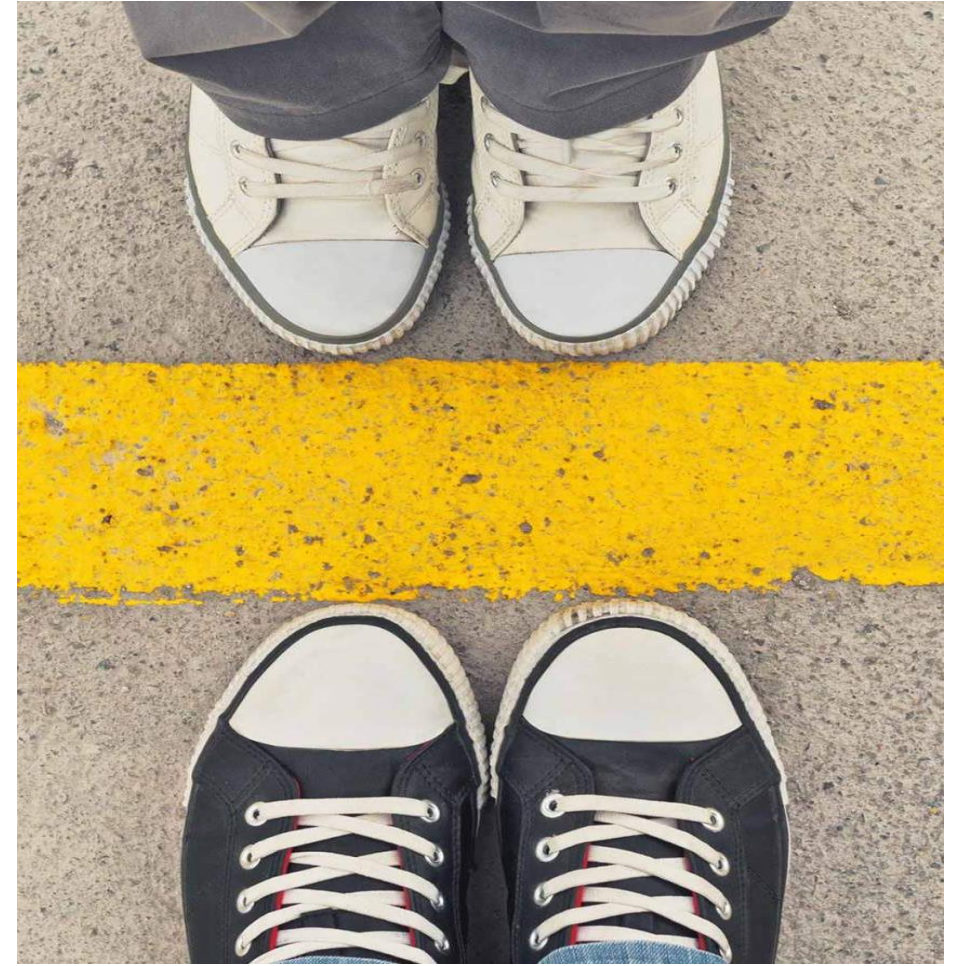
# Foundational Considerations for RS/C: Ethical Guidelines Mental Health Crisis Preparedness

Mental health crises  
preparedness competencies



# Foundational Considerations for RS/C: Ethical Guidelines Scope of Work

Professional boundaries must be established with informed consent between the RS/C dyad





# Benefits of RS/C

# Benefits of RS/C: Research Outcomes

- **Increased reflective functioning**  
(Shea, 2020; Tomlin et al., 2009)
- **Promotion of professional development**  
(Gilkerson & Kopel, 2005; Paradis et al., 2021)
- **Increased insight**  
(Virmani & Ontai, 2010)
- **Help to address and mitigate secondary trauma**  
(Osofsky, 2009; Paradis et al., 2021)
- **Increased meaning and job satisfaction, and reduced burnout**  
(Harrison, 2016)  
  
Self-reported improvements in:
  - Capacity to shift perspective
  - Ability to address personal biases
  - Ability to set boundaries
  - Capacity to slow down and feel heard, validated and affirmed for the work they were doing
  - Ability to assess, focus and respond





# Planning for RS/C



# Planning for RS/C: Why is it a priority?

Our work is marked by ...  
intimacy, intensity, and trust



# Planning for RS/C: Basic Considerations

- ✓ Who will provide RS/C? Who will receive RS/C?
- ✓ What demonstrated competencies will be necessary?
- ✓ When, where, and how frequently will reflective supervision occur?
- ✓ Will group and/or individual opportunities be provided?
- ✓ How will:
  - interruptions be minimized; protected time maximized?
  - the use of RSC be integrated into each role?
  - pathways be created to access RS/C
  - demonstrated competencies be ensured?
  - shared expectations of RS/C be identified and respected?
  - supervisees be engaged at their level of readiness?



# What is the Difference?

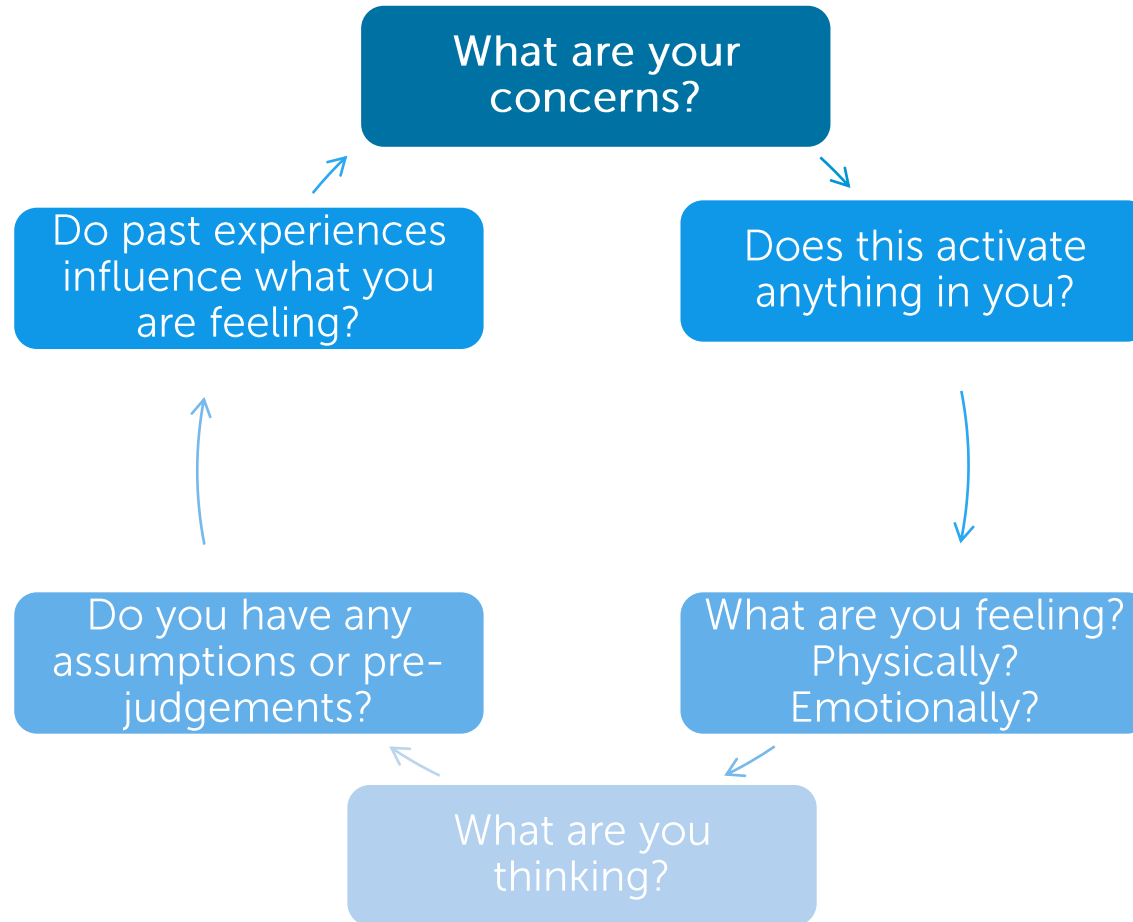
Individual



Group



# Planning for RS/C: Level of Readiness RS/C Supervisors/Consultants



# Planning for RS/C: Level of Readiness RS/C Supervisors/Consultants

Curiosity	Attentive, inquisitive and open to exploring possibilities while remaining grounded
Thinking/Feeling	Allow thoughts/feelings to “stories from the field”
Compassionate	Non-judgmental, patient, empathic to supervisee’s experiences and interactions with the infant and family
Shared Attention	Notices, wonders and responds to the experiences of the infant, parents, and practitioner in response to supervisee report







# Planning for RS/C: Level of Readiness RS/C Supervisees/Consultees

Support	Allow your supervisor to support you through consistent supervisory meetings.
Explore	Explore the relationship of your feelings to the work you are doing.
Think/Feeling	Think more deeply about your work with infants, young children, and families and yourself.
Shared Attention	Increase attention to “self” and “other” and wonder about the relationship between personal and professional.
New Awareness	Take in and use new awareness and insights, personal and professional, which emerge through the reflective supervisory relationship.



# Planning for RS/C: When RS/C is Not Going Well

## Supervisor Behaviors

- Frequent cancellations
- Over-talking
- Taking charge/directing
- Not taking charge (when appropriate)

## Supervisee Behaviors

- Frequent cancellations
- Silences
- Rushing through session
- Providing just the facts



# Planning for RS/C: When RS/C is Not Going Well

- Mistrust
- Limited experience with reflective thinking
- Cultural differences
- Relationship pitfalls



# Planning for RS/C: Culture as a Foundation

Intentional Space



# Planning for RS/C: Supervisor/Consultant-Addressing Relationship Challenges

- Due diligence in preparation
- Practice re-framing
- Assume the best intent
- Wait and see – *trust the process*
- Revisit and probe further
- Discuss with own supervisor
- Address directly – use “I” messages or “Sometimes” statements
- Ask how the supervisee’s needs could be better met





# Planning for RS/C: What Reflective Supervision is NOT

- Psychotherapy
- Religion
- An opportunity to be disparaging and disrespectful
- Administrative
- Clinical case consultation
- An employee evaluation



# Take a Moment to ...

## Take Inventory

What am I still wondering about?

## Notice Emotions

How do I feel about being in this training today?

## Actively Engage

What is one thing I learned?

## Link

How will this content inform or benefit my work with infants, young children, and families?

## Integrate

How will I integrate the information about RS/C into my scope of work?

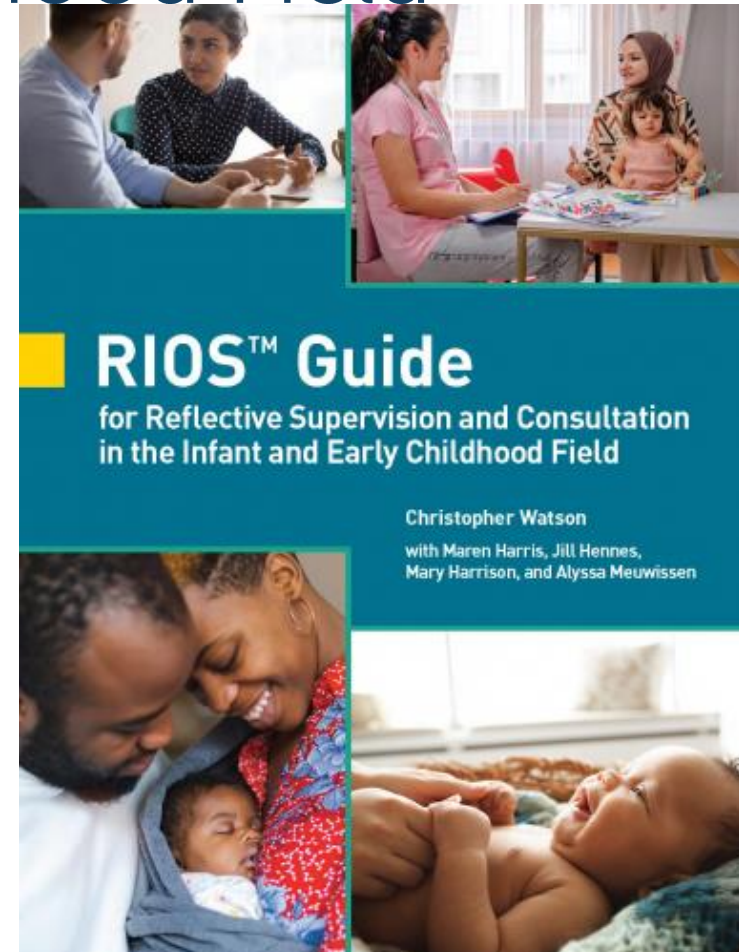


*\*Coined by Jeree Pawl and adapted by Carmen Rosa Noroña*



# RIOS Guide for Reflective Supervision Consultation in the Infant and Early Childhood Field

<https://www.zerotothree.org/our-work/learn-professional-development/rios-resources/>



# New ZERO TO THREE Publication Coming Soon!

Honoring Voices within Infant  
and Early Childhood Mental  
Health: Relationship-Based  
Stories from the Field





# Thank you!

Professional Innovations Division

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Download the Professional Innovations Discussion Paper [Beyond Reflection: Advancing Reflective Supervision/Consultation \(RS/C\) to the Next Level • ZERO TO THREE](#)

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