

Parent-Infant Mental Health: the way ahead



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Overview

The logo for Warwick University, featuring a blue stylized mountain peak above the word "WARWICK" in blue capital letters.

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- 1) National strategy –Perinatal Mental Health and Children and Young People’s Mental Health
- 2) Multi-disciplinary team workforce development - Perinatal and IMH Competencies Framework
- 3) Importance of early identification - Intergenerational transmission of trauma and attachment status
- 4) 1001 Critical Days – neurobiology of the infant brain and biochemical structuring
- 5) Pathways -from prevention up to Tier 4
- 6) Share information about what is happening in other localities

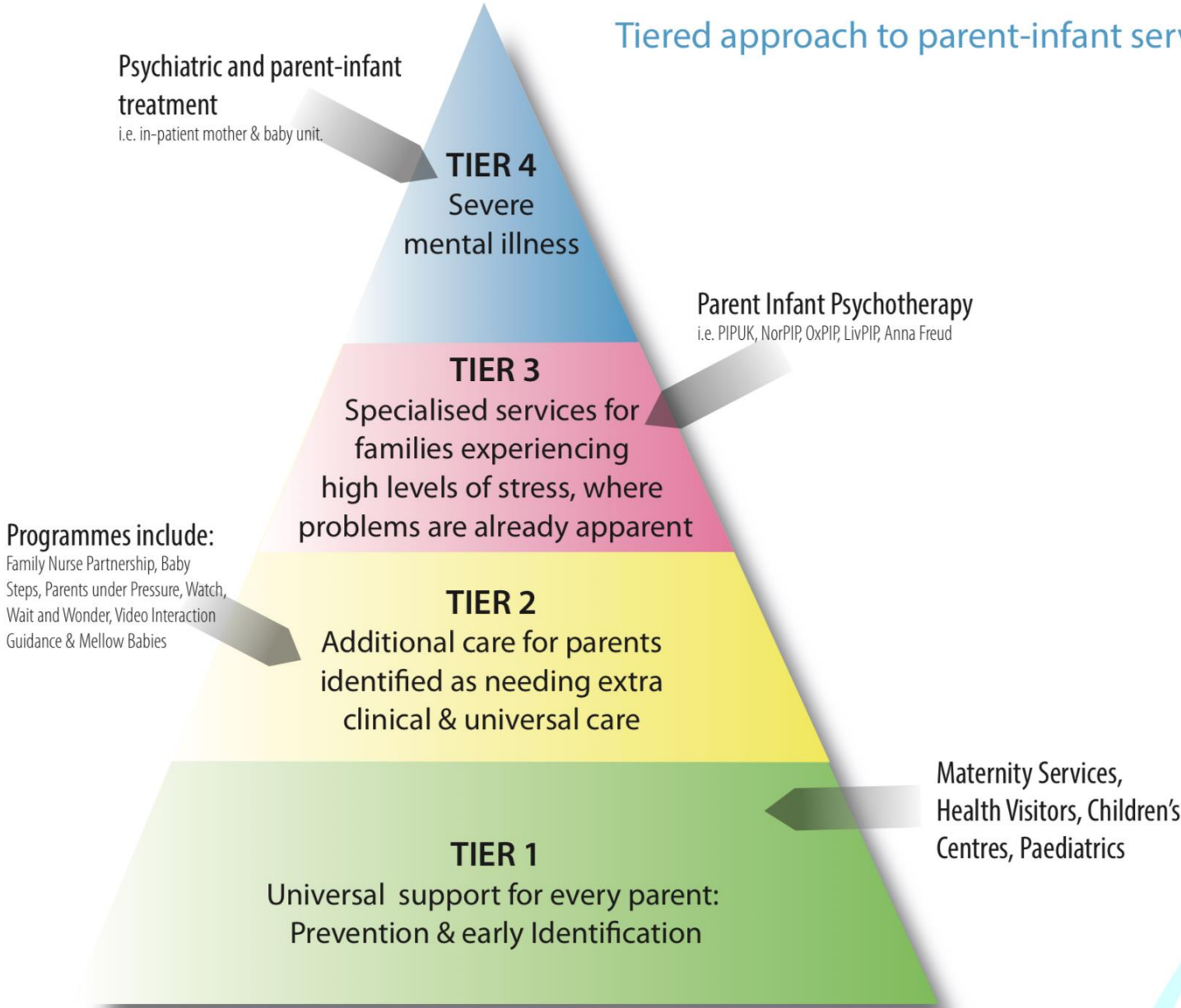
Five Years Forward View for Mental Health(2020/21)



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- **Perinatal Mental Health Services**
- Deliver and implement evidenced based pathways to deliver integrated services
- Networks to be established in all regions to provide leadership and development of local services
- Workforce development to build capacity and competency across the specialist workforce.
- Competency Framework for Perinatal Mental Health Professionals

Tiered approach to parent-infant services



Competency Framework for Perinatal Mental Health Professionals (2016)

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The 'Perinatal Frame of Mind'

C.01 Ability to think about the **mother's needs**, the **infant's needs**, and the **mother-infant relationship**, as three distinct areas of interest for health and wellbeing.

C.05 Ability to understand the **father/partner's mental health**, and the effect this will have on the mother and the infant.

C.12 Able to identify specialist/additional needs and refer the mother, father or other family members to appropriate specialist services when required.

- 20% of women are affected by PMH problems
- Suicide is the leading cause of death
- Ante natal anxiety and depression is common and associated with postnatal depression
- GAD 7 in the antenatal period predicts depression at all time points after delivery
- 30% of domestic violence starts during pregnancy
- Huth-Bocks (2004) found that women experiencing domestic violence had more negative representations of their developing foetus and that their babies were more likely to be insecurely attached.

Psychic re-organisation during pregnancy

(Stern 1995)

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- Maternal representations of the unborn baby
- The relationship with the unborn baby predicts:
- The quality of the parent-infant interaction in the postnatal period (Benoit et al 1997)
- Infant attachment at 1 year (Theran et al 2005)
- Parent-infant interaction is an important indicator of infant attachment security (DeWoolf 1997)



Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma

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- Ghosts from the parent's childhood invade the nursery (i.e. **the parent-infant relationship**) by unconsciously influencing the way parents think about and behave towards their baby (Frailberg 1975).
- “Unresolved parents” may re-enact with their baby 'scenes from their own unremembered, but still painfully influential early experiences of helplessness and fear'.
- These parents may be less able to parent their baby because the baby’s distress triggers the parent’s stress response system.

Five Years Forward View for Mental Health(2020/21)



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- **Children and young people's mental health**
By 2020/21, there will be a significant expansion in access to high-quality mental health care for children and young people.
- Improving outcomes for children and young people will require a joint-agency approach, including action to intervene early and build resilience as well as improving access to high- quality evidence-based treatment for children and young people, their families and carers.

Why provide Mental health care for children and young people

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- 1 in 5 children in the UK have an emotional behavioural disorder.
- They will present with externalising or internalising behaviour.



What is IMH?

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Infant mental health is the developing capacity of the child from birth to 3 to:

experience, regulate and express emotions; form close interpersonal relationships and explore the environment and learn all in the context of family, community and mental health expectations for young children:

IMH is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development (Zero to 3 2001)

Transgenerational Transfer of Attachment Status

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- Attachment is a bio-behavioural mechanism that is activated by anxiety
- Goal is to reduce stress
- “dyadic regulation of effect” (primary caregiver and infant) jointly regulate the infant’s stress and emotions.
- Infants need help from their caregivers to both **down-regulate** and **up-regulate** their emotional state.

Attachment Style	% of children	Mother's Responsiveness	Child's General State of being	Fulfillment of the Child's Needs
Secure (Group B)	55-65%	Quick Sensitive Consistent	Secure Explorative happy	Believes and trusts His/her needs will be met
Anxious/Resistant Anxious/Ambivalent (Group C)	8-10%	Inconsistent Erratic Intrusive	Anxious, clingy, Demanding, angry Up-regulate in times of stress to maintain closeness	Cannot rely on his/her Needs being met
Avoidant (Group A)	10-15%	Disengaged Dismissing Punitive	Not very explorative emotionally distant Down-regulates in time of stress to remain close	Subconsciously believes That his/her needs will Not be met
Disorganised (Group D)	Up to 15%	"atypical" "anomalous" Frightening	Depressed Angry Passive Non-responsive	Severely confused with No strategy to have His/her needs met

Attachment

- For professionals who come into contact with families and young children, neglect can be identified by observing the interactions between mother and child and the baby's behaviour in general.
- A mother who does not engage with her child and a baby who is unnaturally passive are both signs that indicate neglect (Cardiff et al, 2012)
- **Frozen awareness/watchfulness**

The CAF triangle



- **Neglect and children under one:**
More than a quarter of serious case reviews, where neglect was a factor, related to children aged under one.
- **Psychopathology in adolescence:**
- Disorganised attachment at a year is perhaps the best predictor we have of serious psychopathology in adolescence
- (Cassidy & Mohr, 2001).

Disorganised attachment

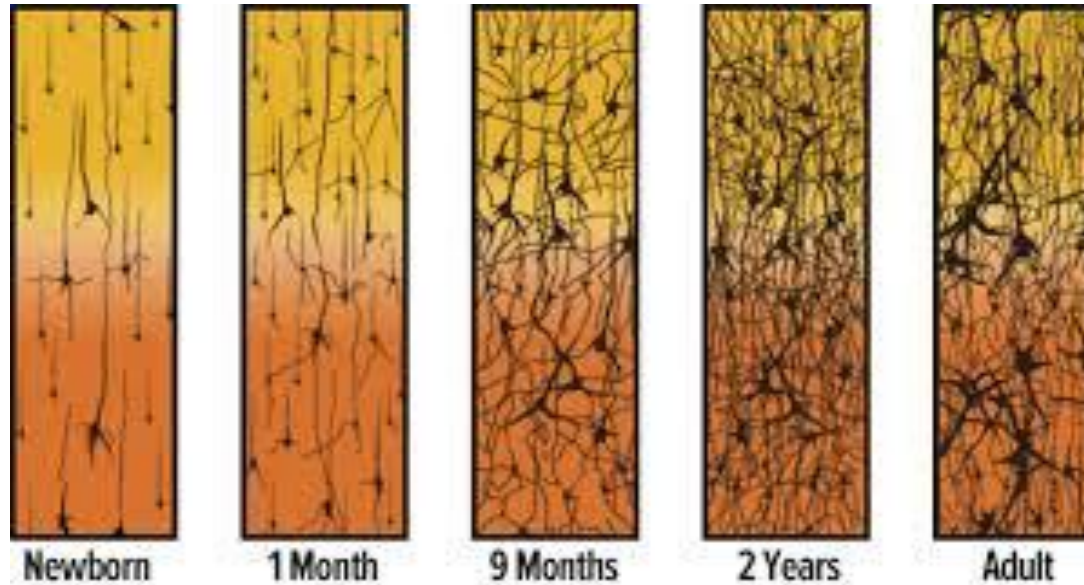
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- 80% of children who have a CPP in the UK have a 'disorganised' attachment



1001 Critical Days

- At full-term a baby's brain has 100 billion neurons, but the brain is not fully developed.
- The baby's brain has to be "wired up" after birth and will increase in weight from 400g at birth, to 1000g at 1 year of age.
- Synapse formation is the ultimate step in wiring a nervous system.
- Experience-expectant mechanisms (light, sound)
- Experience-dependent mechanisms (dependent on PC)



Corel, JL. The postnatal development of the human cerebral cortex
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 1975.)

Biochemical Structuring of the Infant Brain

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- Infants are unable to regulate their stress levels
- The PC's job is to provide sensitive responses when an infant is distressed to enable them to return to normal range
- Types of stress: positive (normal with brief increases in HR and hormones)
- tolerable (time limited or buffered by PC)
- Toxic (strong, frequent/ and or prolonged adversity)

- <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>

- Toxic stress results in high levels of cortisol, which disrupts the developing brain architecture and the infant can be affected in terms of their physiology; behaviour and learning:

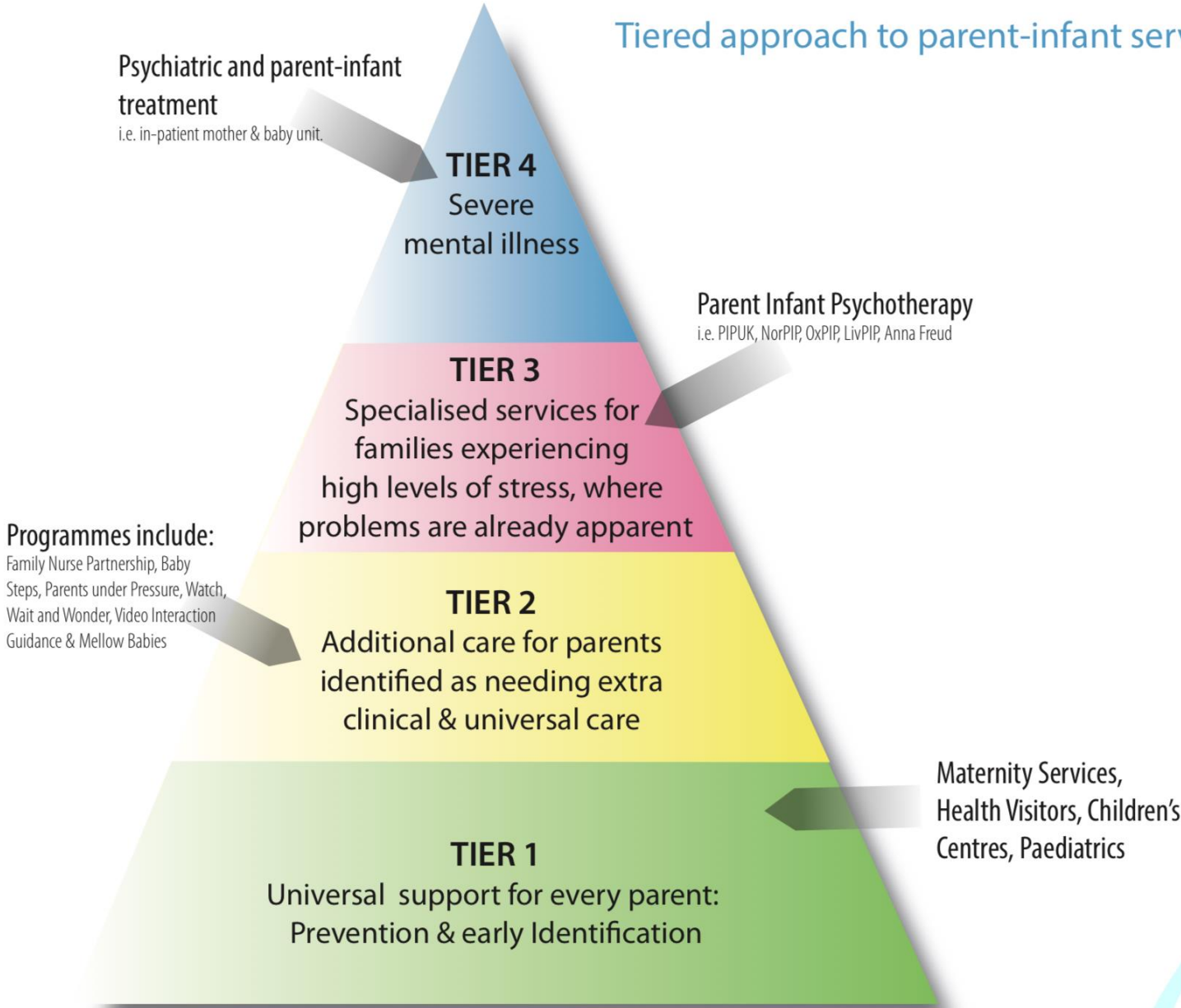
Area	Type of Affect
Physiology	By a hyper-responsive/chronically activated stress response
Behaviour	By maladaptive responses such as behaviour problems
Learning	By linguistic, cognitive and socio-emotional deficits.

Prenatal stress and neurodevelopmental outcomes in children aged 3-16 years

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- Increased risk of:
- child emotional problems, especially anxiety and depression
- Symptoms of attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder
- Conduct disorder

Tiered approach to parent-infant services



What's Happening Nationally



- **Warwick Infant and Family Wellbeing Unit**
- MOOC: Babies in Mind: Why the Parent's Mind Matters focuses on the way in which parents' minds shape their babies mental health development.
- Infant Mental Health Online (IMHOL)
- Warwickshire Infant Mental Health Pathway
- Parents Under Pressure (September)

- **AIMH (UK)**
- Collaboration with the International Journal Of Birth and Parenting Education
- Best Practice Guides produced
- Currently organising National and Regional IMH Hubs
- IMH Competency Framework in collaboration with ITSIEY (pilot in September)

- 1001 Critical Days APPG
- Infant Mental Health Awareness Week 12th June)
- New IMH e-learning modules for midwives to be released during IMH awareness week
- Perinatal Champions and IMH Champions
- Action Learning Sets for London's Perinatal Champions
- Hertfordshire 120 Post IMHOL Practitioners
- Norwich new MBU new community perinatal service (IMHOL places booked)
- East Midlands Clinical Networks new PMH service
- Cumbria and Lancashire new MBU and community services