



# THE TENETS

DIVERSITY-INFORMED TENETS FOR WORK  
WITH INFANTS, CHILDREN & FAMILIES

## CORE CONCEPTS

### DIVERSITY-INFORMED TENETS FOR WORK WITH INFANTS, CHILDREN & FAMILIES

#### **Diversity-Informed Practice**

Diversity-informed practice is a dynamic system of beliefs and values that shapes interactions between individuals, organizations and systems of care. Diversity-informed practice recognizes the historic and contemporary salience of racism, classism, sexism, able-ism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other systems of oppression and strives for the highest possible standard of inclusivity in all spheres of practice: teaching and training, research and writing, policy and advocacy, as well as direct service.

#### **Equity**

Equity refers to the value-based concept that seeks to ensure that all people have access to the biological, economic, political, and social resources needed to optimally develop and achieve wellbeing. A central premise of equity is the acknowledgement that all people begin their developmental journey with differing levels of resources related to and/or determined by social positioning factors such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, ability, sexuality, and nationality. Realizing equity will require unequal distribution of resources based on the needs of each individual.

#### **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health**

"Infant mental health is defined as the developing capacity of the infant and young child to experience, express, and regulate emotions; form close and secure relationships; and explore the environment and learn, all in the context of cultural expectations (ZERO TO THREE Infant Mental Health Task Force, 2001). A major premise of infant mental health is that babies' emotional, social and cognitive development and competencies unfold in the context of ...relationships; thus supporting both the infant and the...caregiver is crucial to optimize the young child's functioning." (Osofsky & Lieberman, 2011, p. 120)

#### **Intersectionality**

"The term, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, describes the overlapping and intersecting social identities that often affect and inform how we move around society. Often these identities are related to systems of oppression, domination and discrimination. Intersecting identities are not mutually exclusive, but rather work together to construct how one is perceived in society. The framework proposes that these identities need to be considered simultaneously and that they reflect an overarching analysis of power hierarchies present within identities (Cooper, 2015)." (Intersectionality in Social Work, 2018)

#### **Privilege**

Privilege is unearned (and institutionally granted) power, status, and/or authority based on social positioning factors such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, ability, sexuality, and nationality. It gives you advantages, favors or benefits over non group members. Privilege works on an individual, social and institutional level. "Privilege and discrimination are made possible because of one another and both are products of a paradigm and a mindset defined by hierarchy and exclusion, in which value is afforded to a few at the expense of the many" (Banerjee Brown, 2017, p. 19).

#### **Reflective Capacity**

Reflective Capacity refers to the "ability to imagine, think, and plan; to generate new awareness; to construct new understandings and to use this process to transform practice" (Brandt, 2014 as cited by Tomling & Heller, 2016, p. 6). Diversity, equity and inclusion work begins with ourselves and it is not possible to look at ourselves without increasing our capacity for deepening self-awareness and therefore our reflective capacity. The stance that we take is that each person's reflective capacity is plastic and that critical reflexivity evolves from intentionality, time, space and practice. "Critical reflexivity is more than individual self-awareness. It also requires that we constantly evaluate ways in which we contribute to liberation and oppression" (Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011, p. 211).

#### **Social Justice**

Social justice refers to the value that calls for actions aimed at "decreasing or eliminating inequity; promoting inclusiveness of diversity; and establishing environments that are supportive of all people" (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2010, p. 70).

## RESOURCES

The following materials have informed the Tenets Work Group's understandings of these Core Concepts:

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