



Watch Wait and Wonder Intervention TM

What does this look like in the Mothers and Babies Service?

Our experiences and reflections

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The Mothers and Babies Service

- South Island Regional Perinatal Mental Health Service
- Specialist Mental Health Service.
- Canterbury District Health Board – based at Princess Margaret Hospital, Christchurch
- 2 multidisciplinary teams – outpatient team and inpatient team (5.2 beds)
- Service Criteria: 2nd trimester – 12/15 months postpartum, primary caregiver of an infant under 12months old, have/suspected major mental illness, over 18 years
- Primary carer (usually the mother) is the “ funded patient” but we meet with – mother and baby, parents together, family/whanau, other supports.
- Needs Assessment
- Many links with community agencies



Early Struggles for the mother with her baby may include:

- Difficulties with being present (emotionally available), sensitive and responsive to baby's cues/needs
- Struggles to tolerate infant negative states
- Perception of baby as attacking, hostile, rejecting or overwhelming
- Attribution of negative motives to the infant
- Baby does not feel real, or “ doesn't feel like my baby”



We also think about:

- Mothers maps/models of parenting
- Defenses, and previous ways of coping with feelings
- Ghosts in the nursery
- Implicit vs explicit memories
- Fear of repetition “becoming one’s own mother”
- Meaning given – who is this baby to this mother?
- Family/whanau relationships



What might be happening for the baby?

- Infant may experience stress, anxiety, depression, anger
- Risk of baby developing “precocious defense mechanisms”
- What the baby brings – temperament, illness etc
- Baby’s capacity - to communicate, to adapt
- Family/whanau relationships – protective?

Interventions with the mother-infant relationship

- Watch Wait and Wonder Intervention TM
- Watching, waiting and wondering in the moment
- Building teams reflective functioning, and shared language/understandings
- Other interventions (see next slide)



Mother and Child by Frances Hodgkins



Other mother-infant relationship focused Interventions

- Baby Massage
- Mother- baby interaction Music Group
- Building observation skills using the Circle of Security map
- Videotaping and replay of dyadic interaction
- Inpatient - Karitane and nursing interventions
- Brag Group - Baby Recognition and Achievement Group
- Creativity COS



Watch Wait and Wonder Intervention TM and M&B Service

- Training and learning
- Supervision
- Context

- Assessment
- Choice of Intervention
- Timing of intervention
- Level of preoccupation and capacity to focus



Watch Wait and Wonder Intervention TM and M&B Service

- Video recording – client issues
 - - technology issues
- Family/Fathers involvement
- Disruptions to the process
- Care and Protection issues

WWW instructions with our client group:

- Initial Instructions for baseline observation:
“ Be with your baby, on the floor as you would at home”
- Timing: “As long as you feel able....”

Manual timing: 5-10 minutes for 4-6 month olds
up to 20 minutes for 6-9 month olds



Case Example


- DVD clip

- When Observing notice
 - the facts
 - your impressions
 - your wonderings



Watching, waiting and wondering in the moment

- When not using the framework of a full intervention, we may use some of the ideas in this :
- “Here and Now” focus – in the room
- Supporting the parent to observe moments as they present
- Wondering about these together
- Building observation and reflection skills in the parent



Building Team observation and wondering skills.

- Team observation exercises and reflection together
- Thinking about what we bring from our different personal and professional perspectives that has an impact on what we see and react to
- Working and observing together eg. co therapists
- Thinking about different roles

WATCHING = Observing

- Observing is a privilege
- Really noticing and attending encourages infant development
- It seems simple but is often hard to tolerate
- Requires parental sensitivity
- Aiming to be attentive, receptive, not judgmental
- We can develop this skill with practice

- What gets in the way of observing?
For the parent and for us?



WAITING

- Give time and space
- Wait and see what happens next
- Hold your anxiety – don't rush in



WONDERING about:

- The mother's observations of her infant
- The mother's experience of being with her infant
- The mother's observations of herself
- Focus is on what is happening in the room

Crisis and Opportunity in the early perinatal period

- psychobiological disequilibrium in the mother creates an incentive to accept and readiness to respond to intervention
- Disequilibrium in the family promotes greater readiness to seek and accept help
- At this time the infant is most open to change and influence

References and acknowledgements:

- Watch, Wait and Wonder TM

A manual describing a Dyadic Infant-led Approach to problems in Infancy and Early childhood

Elisabeth Muir, Mirek Lojkasek, Nancy Cohen

The Hincks- Dellcrest Centre and Hincks- Dellcrest Institute

- Watch Wait Wonder Introductory Training – Denise Guy and Seonaigh Stevens
- Elisabeth Muir for her supervision
- My supportive colleagues in Mothers and Babies Service
- The courageous mothers who we see in our service
- The mother who gave me permission to show the DVD at this training.