

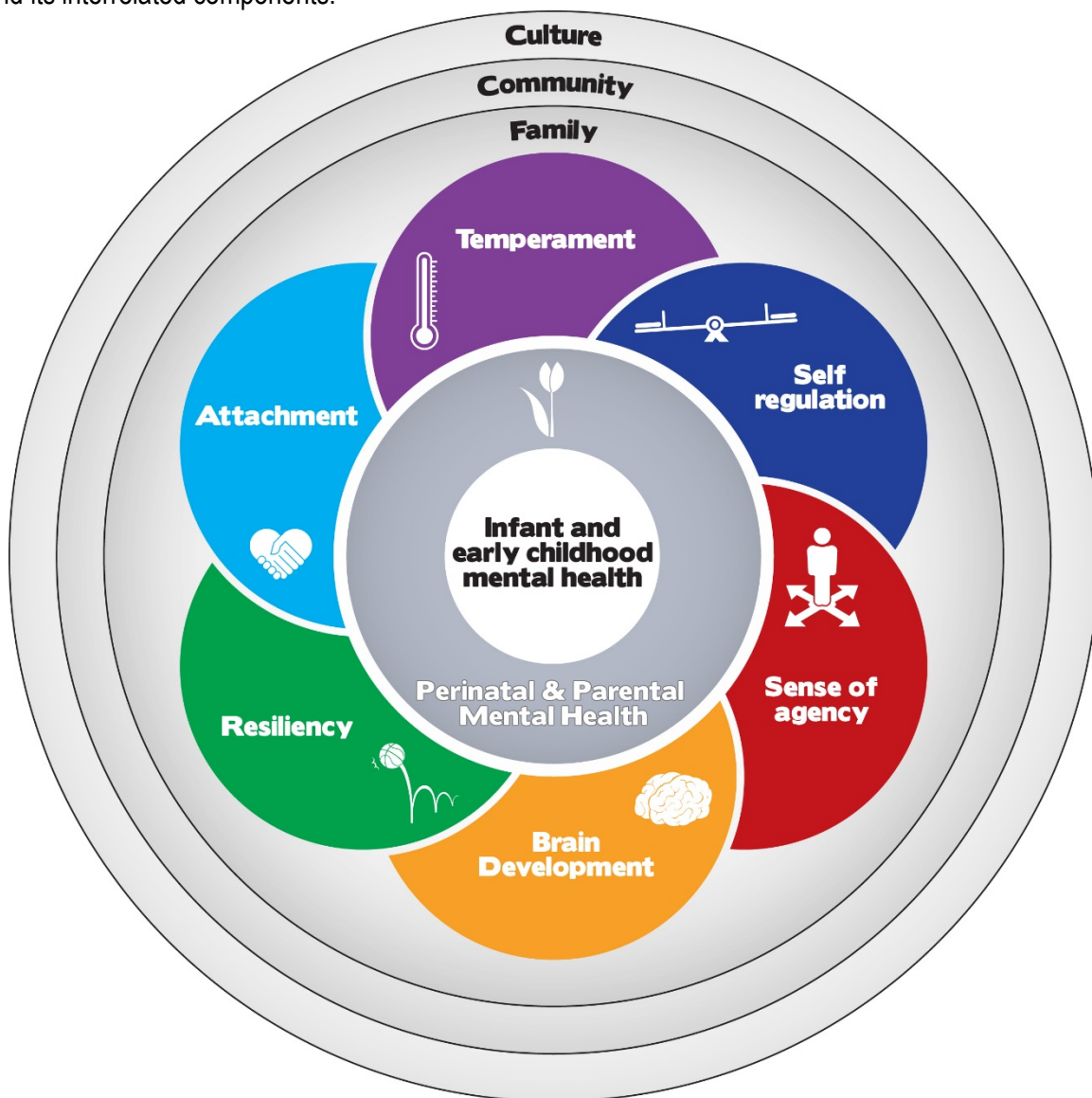
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Guide for Professionals

Mental health refers to striking a balance in all aspects of one's life: socially, physically, spiritually, economically and mentally.¹ It is more than the absence of a mental health condition or illness.

Infants and young children have mental health. It is the “developing capacity of the child, from birth to six years of age, to form close and secure adult and peer relationships to experience, manage and express a full range of emotions, and to explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community, and culture.”²

It is also important to recognize that brain development begins in pregnancy. Therefore, the prenatal period must also be considered in relation to IECMH.

The purpose of this guide is to provide support and information to professionals when they have the conversation about IECMH and its interrelated components:



1. [Canadian Mental Health Association: Mental Health for all \[Internet\]. Ottawa, ON: 2005-2016 \[cited 2016 Nov 2016\]. Available from https://cmha.ca/resources/](https://cmha.ca/resources/)
2. [Clinton J, Kays-Burden A, Carter C, Bhasin K, Cairney J, Carrey N, Janus M, Kulkarni C, Williams R. \(November 2014\). Supporting Ontario's youngest minds: Investing in the mental health of children under 6. \[Internet\]. Ottawa \(ON\): Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health: \[cited 2016 Nov 16\]. Available from http://www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca/sites/default/files/policy_early_years.pdf](http://www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca/sites/default/files/policy_early_years.pdf)