

## The Diversity Informed Tenets for Infants, Children and Families: Summary

### The Ten Tenets:

- ❖ **Self-Awareness Leads to Better Services for Families**
- ❖ **Champion Children’s Rights Globally**
- ❖ **Work to Acknowledge Privilege and Combat Discrimination**
- ❖ **Recognize and Respect Non-Dominant Bodies of Knowledge**
- ❖ **Honor Diverse Family Structures**
- ❖ **Understand That Language Can Hurt or Heal**
- ❖ **Support Families in Their Preferred Language**
- ❖ **Allocate Resources to Systems Change**
- ❖ **Make Space and Open Pathways**
- ❖ **Advance Policy That Supports All Families**

### What are the Tents?

- The Tenets are a set of ten guiding aspirational principles that raise awareness of inequities and injustices embedded in our society by empowering individual practitioners, agencies and systems of care to identify and address the social justice issues intricately intertwined with all work with and on behalf of infants, children, & families.
- Tenets are **not a cultural competency framework or toolkit; they are not a know-how to work with families; or a manualized model for working with families.**
- They are a way of thinking and being, a stance
- *A framework to support us in taking responsibility for **what we do and how we do it** (intent vs. impact) in regards to promoting or impeding social justice in our work*
- Can be seen as a barometer for yourself, your supervisor, your organization, or a system
- Some have referred to them as a navigation tool, a compass to guide them/us in our work toward equity and inclusion
- They are a set of inspirational principles grounded in equity and inclusion for work with families.

### What is the Tenets Initiative?

- The activities of the Tenets Initiative consist of a set of activities designed to help professionals , agencies and systems understand (1) how our backgrounds and experiences shape our work and interactions with others, (2) how our overlapping and intersecting social identities, which inform how we move in society, are often related to systems of oppression, domination and discrimination (Cooper, 2015), (3) develop strategies for integrating the Tenets into the work with children and families

- The Irving Harris Foundation is the fiscal sponsor of the Tenets Initiative and supports the Tenets Workgroup in coordinating the dissemination of the Tenets (the workshops we facilitate).
- The Tenets are currently being disseminated by a core group of people (the Tenets Workgroup) across the US and abroad

### The Tenets' Guiding Principle

- Work on diversity, equity and inclusion is NOT about the other, but about ourselves. It starts with the self
- The grounding Tenet is Tenet #1 from which all of the other Tenets are built of **“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.”**
- It follows that 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 Tenets 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).

What are the Core Concepts of the Tenets’ Framework? (See “Core Concepts” handout for definitions)

- Diversity-Informed Practice
- Equity
- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
- Intersectionality
- Privilege
- Reflective Capacity
- Social Justice