

## **Infant Mental Health Week 4<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016.**

The Western Outcomes Group, along with Fermanagh and Omagh Locality Planning Groups and Family Support Hubs are organising a series of networking events during Infant Mental Health Week for parents to inform them of the services that are available in their area in ensuring that parents are supported. The events will be held in local venues.

'Vena amoris' is Latin for 'the vein of love' and is the central message in the Western area when celebrating the upcoming Infant Mental Health Week 4<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to think about the positive emotional health and wellbeing in babies, children and young people which starts in the womb and continues to be essential to enable them to do well throughout life.

Kieran Downey Western Trust Director of Women's and Children's Services and Chairperson of the Western Outcomes Group commented:-

"Together we are making a commitment to ensuring an emphasis is placed on positive emotional health very early in life which will in turn improve health outcomes, life expectancy, educational and economic outcomes and reduce crime and violence. Untreated mental health problems create enormous distress for children, young people, their families and carers, and this negative impact continues into later life, affecting future generations."

Even if you are not a parent, or cannot attend the events, you can still take part in this UK wide initiative and share the goals of infant mental health which are:

- Child Safety - Protect children from harm
- Child Wellbeing - Improve child functioning
- Family Wellbeing - Strengthen families

- Permanency - Timely permanent home and family

Supporters are being asked to paint their ring finger pink or blue and Twitter or Facebook their finger using the hashtag #veinoflove to spread how parents and carers can ensure the emotional wellbeing of not only their children, but future generations by promoting these messages:

- Zero tolerance of smoking during pregnancy
- Zero alcohol in pregnancy
- Attachment-focused behavior in pregnancy
- Breast-feeding
- Parents/carers reading to children.

For further information please contact:

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