

# **Culture and Identity: Promoting Mental Health Development of Infants and Toddlers**

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**Cross Cultural Research during Infancy: Issues of Acculturation in Multicultural Societies**

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## Definitions of Culture

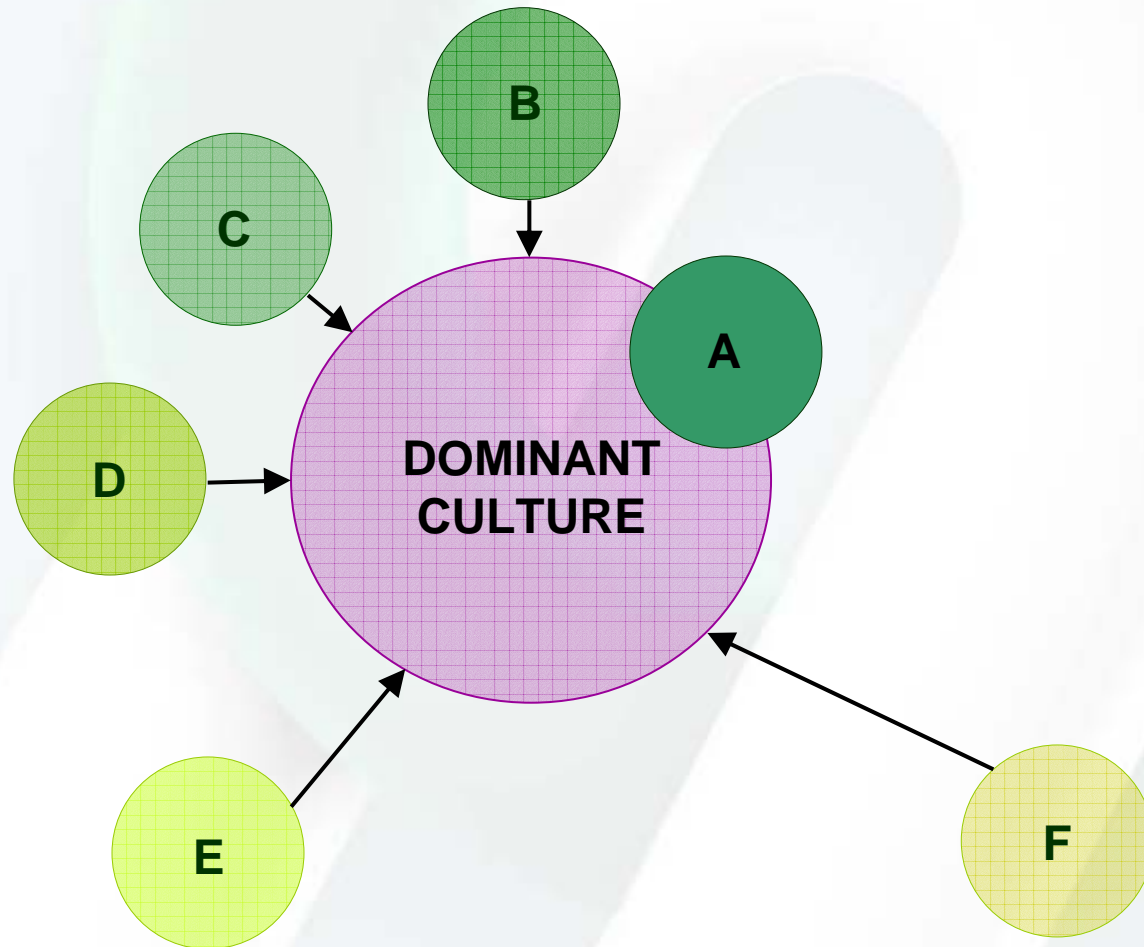
- The social and religious structures, and intellectual and artistic manifestations that characterize a society.
- Includes a society's ***beliefs***, ***values***, and ***attitudes***.

# Cultural Learning

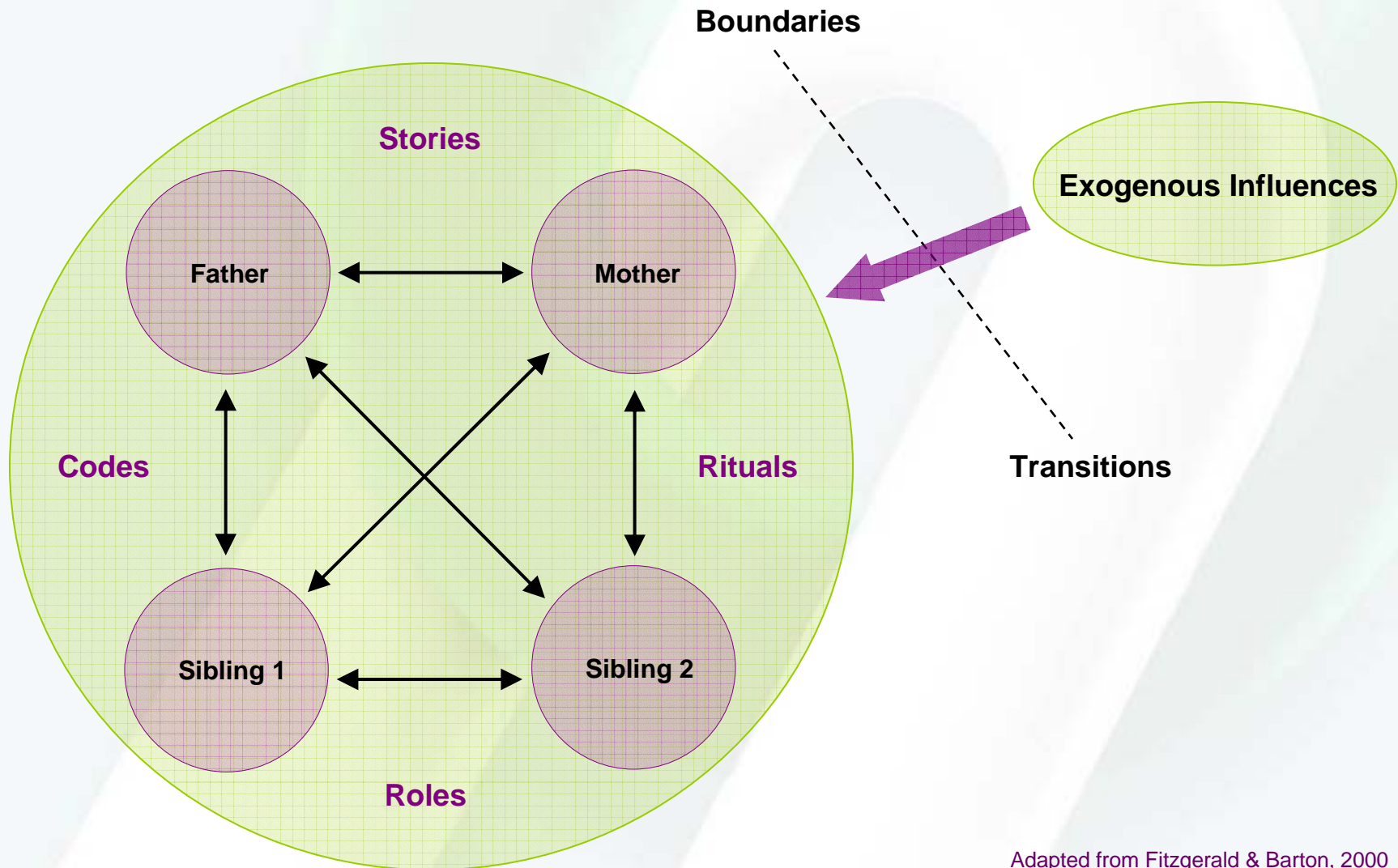
- Cultural understanding occurs by age 5
- New cultural patterns are learned easier by young child than others
- Values are determined by culture of origin
- Understandings of culture of origin interferes with understandings of a second culture
- Old habits are not changed easily

Adapted from E.W. Lynch, 1992

# Degree of Marginalization of Subcultures to Dominant Culture

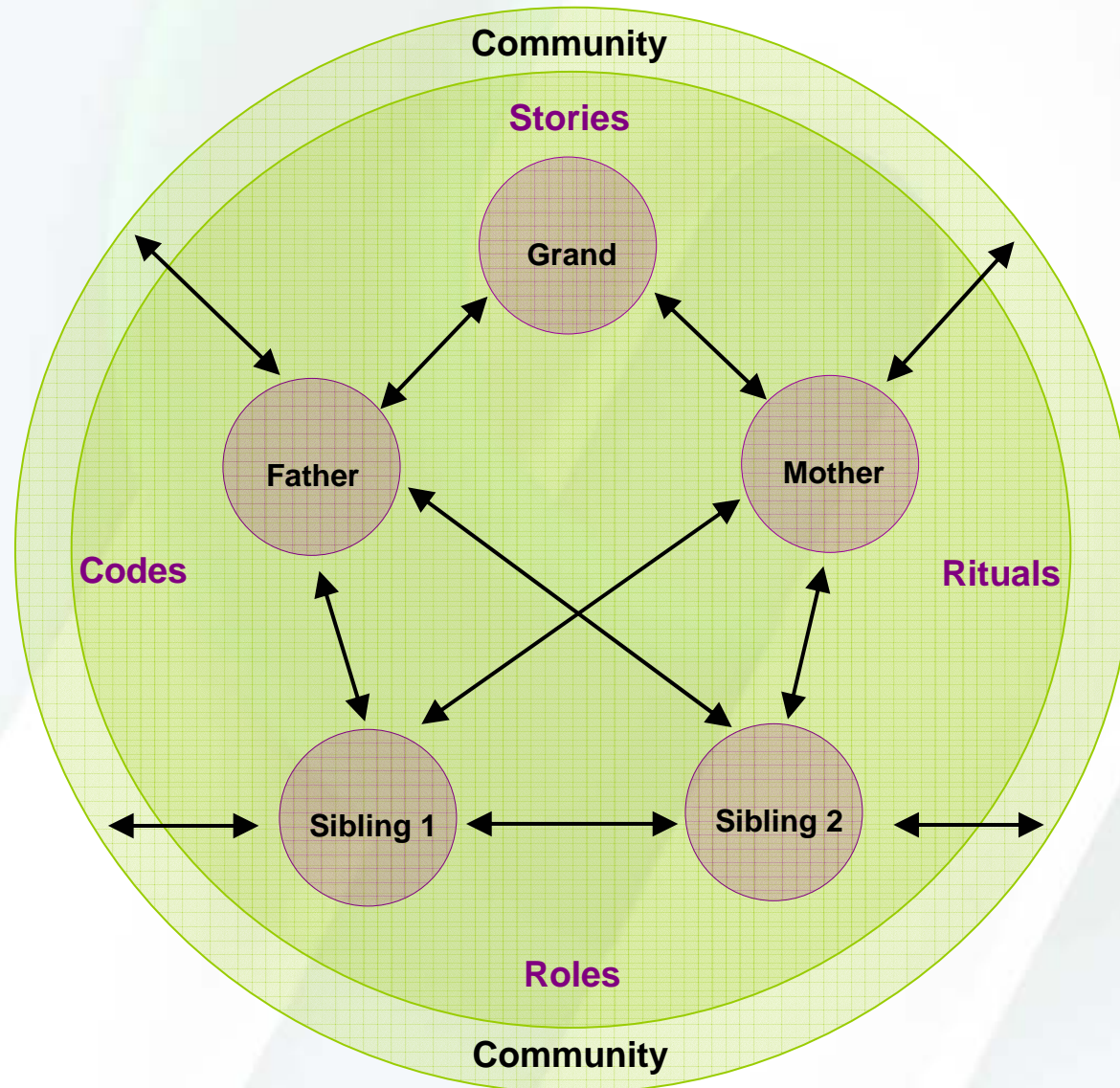


# Anglo European Perspective on Possible Transactional Linkages in a Primary Family System



Adapted from Fitzgerald & Barton, 2000

# Alternative Perspective on Possible Transactional Linkages in a Primary Family System



# Contrasting Beliefs, Values and Practices

## *Anglo-European*

Personal control over the environment  
Change  
Time dominates  
Human equality  
Individualism/privacy  
Self-help  
Competition  
Future orientation  
Action/goal/work orientation  
Informality  
Directness/openness/honesty  
Practicality/efficiency  
Materialism

## *Other Cultures*

Fate  
Tradition  
Human interaction dominates  
Hierarchy/rank/status  
Group welfare  
Birthright inheritance  
Cooperation  
Past orientation  
“Being” orientation  
Formality  
Indirectness/ritual/“face”  
Idealism/theory  
Spiritualism/detachment

Adapted from: U.S. Department of Agriculture & U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (1986). Cross-cultural counseling: A guide for nutrition and health counselors. Washington, DC p.3

## **Language as a Cue to Culture Learning**

- Understanding
- Relationships
- Services

# Cultural Self Awareness for Home Visitors: Language and Communication Style

- Language
  - Home Visitor Multi or Bilingual
  - Degree of Proficiency
- Interaction Styles (family communication styles)

# Cultural Self Awareness for Home Visitors: Language and Communication Style

Cultural Communication	Exemplars	Communication Styles
<b>High Context</b>	Asian	Shared experiences
	American Indian	History
	Arab	Implicitness
	Latino	Non-verbal cues/messaging
	African American	Formal, hierarchies
<b>Low Context</b>	Anglo European	Precise, direct
	Swiss	Logical, verbal
	German	Low gestures
	Scandinavian	Environmental cues
		Informal

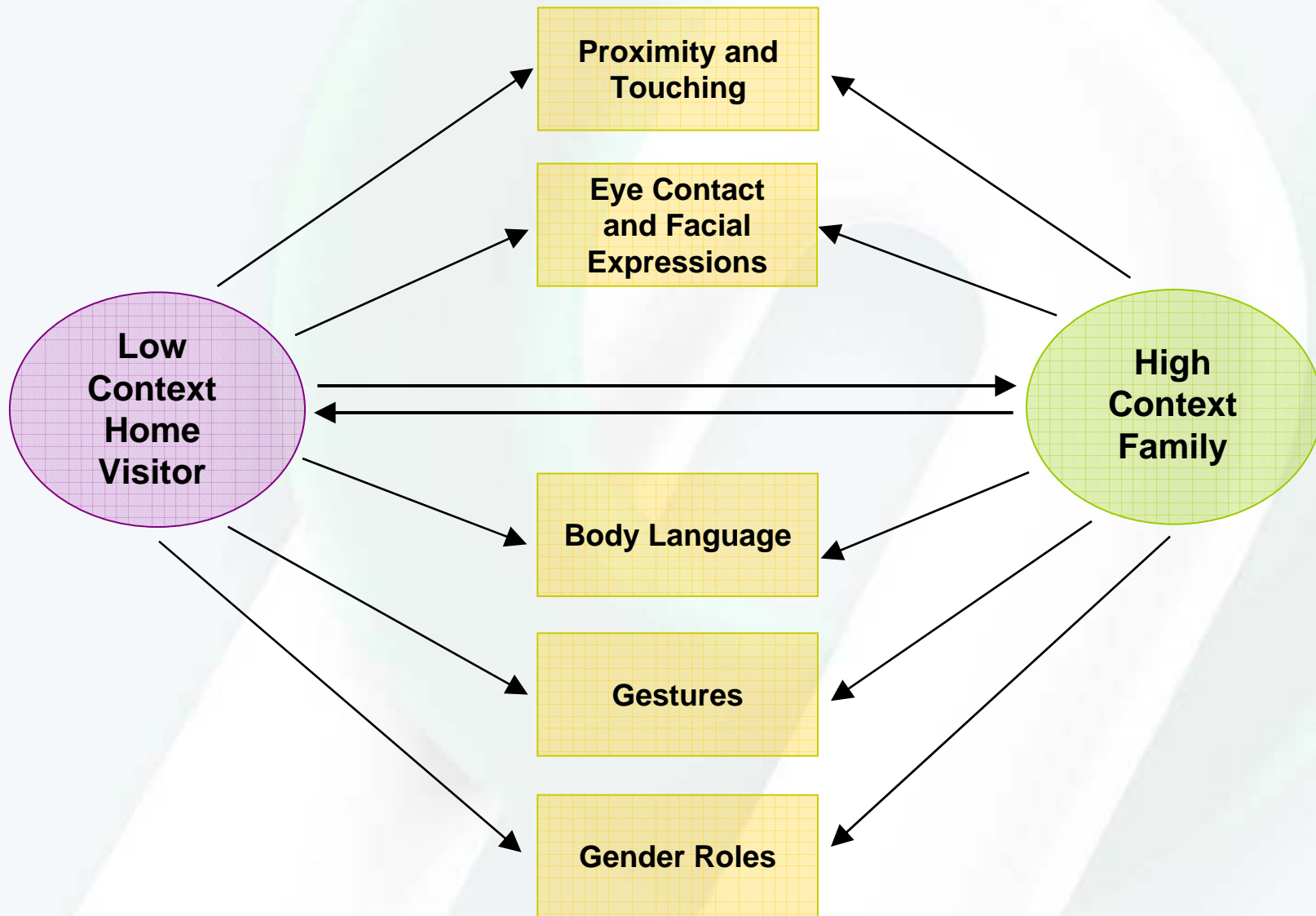
# Sources of BIAS

		Family Cultural Context	
		<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>
Interventionist Cultural Context	<i>High</i>	<b>Concordant</b>	<b>Discordant</b>
	<i>Low</i>	<b>Discordant</b>	<b>Concordant</b>

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## Additional Sources of Bias

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Social Class
- Worldview



## **Principals for Clinical Intervention**

- Infants are social organisms that exist in relationships.
- Individual differences are pervasive.
- Infants in context affect the caregiver's functioning.
- Infant mental health practitioners must attempt to understand behavior intra-organismically as well as extra-organismically.
- The infant mental health specialist affects the infant as much as the infant affects the interventionist.

# **Cultural Self Awareness for Home Visitors: Family Structure and Childrearing Practices**

- Family Composition
- Primary Caregivers
- Childrearing Practices
- Family Sleeping Patterns
- Family's Response to Disobedience and Aggression
- Family's Response to Crying Infant
- Family's Perception of Child's Disability
- Family's Perception of Health and Healing
- Family's Perception of Help-Seeking and Intervention

## Types of Poverty

- Poverty of subsistence (food and shelter)
- Poverty of protection (bad health systems, violence)
- Poverty of affection (exploitative relationships)
- Poverty of understanding (poor education)
- Poverty of participation (marginalization of women, children, and minorities)
- Poverty of identity (due to forced migration, exile, or imposed foreign values)

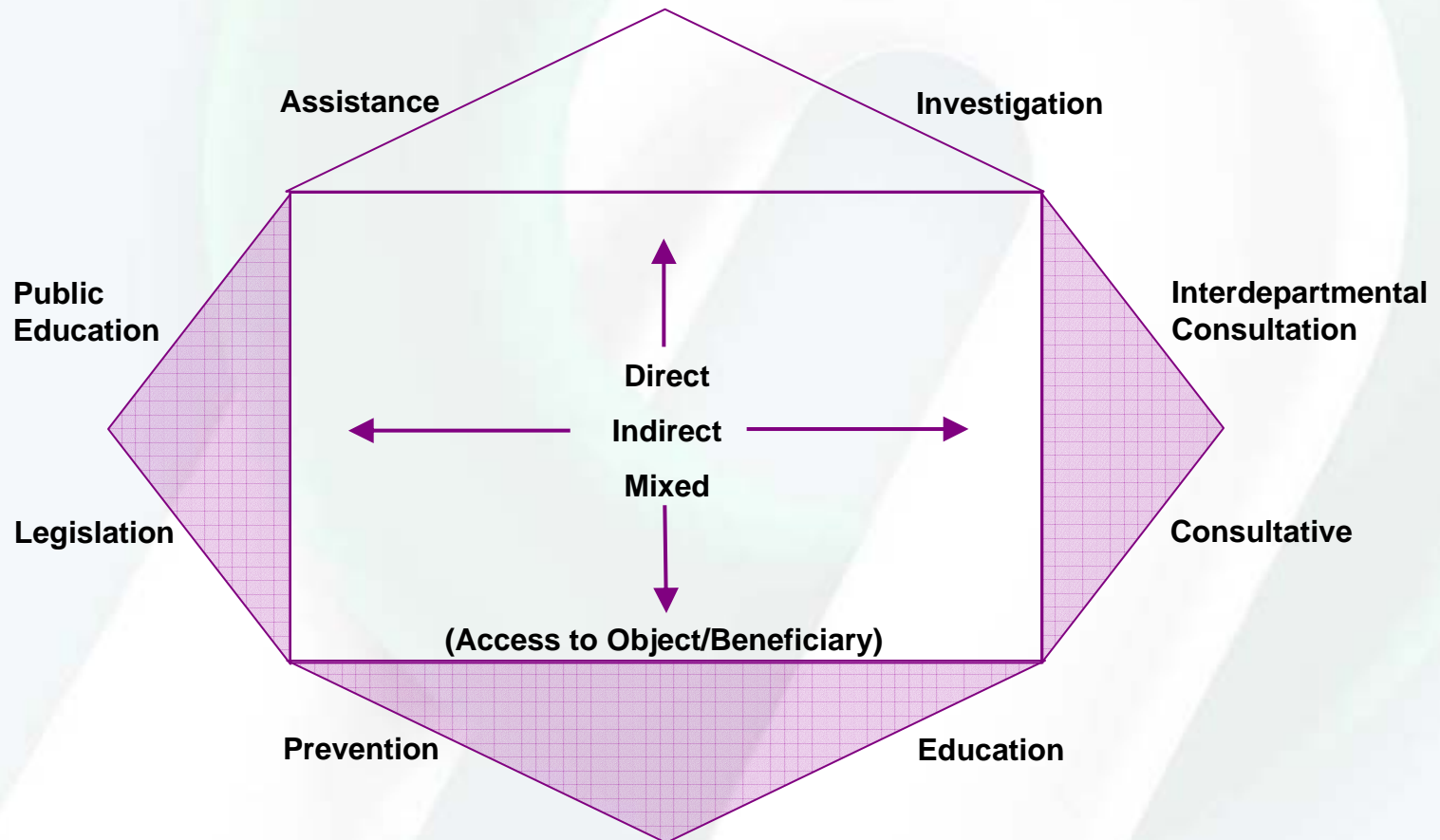
# Mainstream Agents for Psychological Disorders

- Mainstream White America
  - Counselors, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Social Workers, Ministers
- African-Americans
  - Ministers, Root Workers, Voodoo Priests
- Haitian Americans
  - Voodoo Priests
- American Indian
  - Medicine Men, “Singers”
- Mexican Americans
  - Curanderos
- Puerto Rican Americans
  - Espiritistas, Santerios
- Cuban Americans
  - Santerios
- South Asian Americans
  - Herbalists, Family/friends, Diviners

**Number and Proportion of Articles on Infancy from  
Rest of World, in selected journals, PsychINFO, 1996-2001  
(Tomlinson & Swartz, 2003, p.552)**

<b>Journal</b>	<b>Total Number of Articles</b>	<b>First Author Based in Rest of World</b>	<b>Data Collected in Rest of World</b>
Advances in Infancy Research	8	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Annual Progress in Child Psychiatry and Child Development	4	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
British Journal of Developmental Psychology	31	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Child Development	149	3 (2%)	4 (3%)
Developmental Psychology	124	6 (5%)	9 (7%)
Infancy	60	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Infant Behavior and Development	210	7 (3%)	8 (4%)
Infant Mental Health Journal*	90	4 (4%)	3 (3%)
Infant and Child Development	22	3 (14%)	3 (14%)
Journal of Pediatric Psychology	28	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology	20	2 (10%)	2 (10%)
Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development	18	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	764	27 (3.5%)	30 (3.9%)
*Fitzgerald Count:			
<b>Infant Mental Health Journal 2002-2004 (through issue 4)</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>37 (40%)</b>	<b>37 (40%)</b>

# **Eight Components of Infant Mental Health** **(Hoffman, *The Signal*, 3, p. 12-13)**



“It is clear that much more work needs to be done to chronicle the rich cultural variation in infant development and family life so that the resultant knowledge of infant development, infant-caregiver relationships, and the cultural context of early development describes the species, rather than representing a narrow account of development in a particular cultural context.”

Fitzgerald & Barton (2000), p. 25.