

**A Bridge over a Chasm:
Ten Ideas to Improve Mental Health and Mental Health Treatment**

Patricia Crittenden, Ph.D.

Director, Family Relations Institute

Patricia Crittenden studied under Mary Ainsworth from 1978 until 1983, when she received her Ph.D. as a psychologist in the Social Ecology and Development Program at the University of Virginia. Her psychology master's thesis, on the CARE-Index, was developed in consultation with John Bowlby and her family systems research, on patterns of family functioning in maltreating families, was accomplished with guidance from Mavis Hetherington. In the last two decades, Dr. Crittenden has worked cross-culturally as a developmental psychopathologist developing the Dynamic-Maturational Model (DMM) of attachment and adaptation, along with a developmentally attuned, life-span set of procedures for assessing self-protective strategies. DMM-based theory and empirical research authored by Dr. Crittenden have been widely published as books, chapters in books, and empirical articles in developmental and clinical journals. In 2004, Dr. Crittenden received a career achievement award for "Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Child and Family Development" from the European Family Therapy Association in Berlin.

*

This plenary talk will describe the state of mental health and mental health treatment and offer 10 ideas that any mental health practitioner, from any theoretical orientation and any locality, can apply in their daily work. Dr. Crittenden has worked for 5 decades in education, child protection, mental health treatment, and forensic applications. In this talk, she synthesizes her experience to 10 practical ideas that practitioners can apply tomorrow to improve the functioning of distressed people and to make their own careers more productive and satisfying. These ideas won't change the world; that's a complex, long-term process. Instead, they will improve individual lives, one day, one hour at a time.

Objectives

1. Enable mental health researchers and practitioners to evaluate the current state of knowledge in mental health and mental health treatment.
2. Focus attention on what we need to know – and what the next steps in gaining better information are.
3. Offer 10 practical ideas to improve the mental health of ordinary people, distressed people, and mental health professionals.