

# MOTHERHOOD AND THE MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP IN AN IPV CONTEXT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOTHERS IN MIND PROGRAM IN QUÉBEC.

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## What Did We Do?

We created a French adaptation of Mothers in Mind (MIM). From September 2016 to December 2018, three groups were successfully implemented at Maison Pour Femmes Immigrantes (MPFI) in Quebec City, Quebec.

In total, 14 mothers and children attended the French adaptation of MIM, with 13 of those mothers completing the program. The majority of the referred mothers had already stayed at the organization's shelter, while others were referred by various services for women in the community. Aside from the violence, the mothers also encountered difficulties primarily related to divorce, legal proceedings concerning child custody, and problems of shared custody.

To investigate the implementation, MPFI conducted semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews with 8 mothers, 3 practitioners, and 2 organization coordinators, who were involved with MIM. An inductive thematic analysis was conducted on the data.

## What did we Find?

### What Helped the Implementation Process?

#### Client-Level

- Therapeutic Alliance: Mothers had previously strong and trusting relationships with staff
- Mothers in the program were not in the midst of crisis and were in a place of emotional readiness for healing

#### Staff-Level

- Experienced and motivated practitioners

#### Organization-Level

- Previous experience with implementing new programs
- Mission and values alignment (i.e., equality, respect, solidarity, non-judgement, and demystification of social expectations regarding the mother's role)
- Ability to hire new staff (for co-program facilitation)

## What Were the Implementation Challenges?

- Presenting session topics and leading activities allowed mothers to share important experiences. Leading a group comprised of mothers and children is challenging in terms of level of activity and unpredictability. Maintaining a child-centered focus is a key skill for group leaders.
- Difficulty in finding children's books and nursery rhymes in French that corresponded to the themes addressed in each MIM session.
- Employee turnover and site construction negatively impacted the start time of groups and recruitment efforts.

## What were the Outcomes?

Interviews with mothers who completed the program reported that:

- They had a greater awareness of their children's emotions, needs, and daily experiences.



# Safe and Understood

- They reported becoming less anxious and more confident in their parenting abilities. They also reported feeling more empathetic to their children’s emotions.
- They use more positive parenting strategies for managing their children’s emotions and behaviours. This led to a decrease in coercive parenting practices (i.e., use of physical punishment).
- They appreciated the mother-child activities which they felt deepened their relationship with their children and led to similar activities at home. The activities deepened the child’s attachment and heightened their emotional security, which led to a decrease in their anxiety and aggression.

retaining experiences staff – are challenges found generally for MIM. MIM continues to be a valuable program, which can be adapted to fit the needs of other organizations. It is important to ensure organizations, looking to implement the program, work collaboratively with MIM experts, and are equipped with the resources needed to successfully implement the program.

## What did we Learn?

Overall, there were few challenges in implementing MIM in French. No major changes were needed in the program. Outcomes reported by women interviewed after they had finished the program generally matched those of the program’s logic model and found in English-speaking programs. The few challenges found for implementation – primarily around managing time and activities within group and

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