



Children's Aid Society
La Société d'aide à l'enfance
LONDON & MIDDLESEX

*Community Group Program for
Children Exposed to Woman
Abuse: Participant Feedback
Executive Summary*

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Community Group Program for Children Exposed to Woman Abuse

Background and Objectives

The Community Group Program for Children Exposed to Woman Abuse is a community based therapeutic program for children/youth, 4 to 16 years of age, and their mothers who have experienced woman abuse. The program has offered groups for children and their mothers for 20 years in the London and Middlesex area. The program model is also used internationally. The program offers a safe, predictable environment for mothers and their children to begin the process of healing from the impact of violence in their family. The community based program is operated with the support of the following community partners: At^lohsa Native Family Healing Services, Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, London Family Court Clinic, Changing Ways, Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, Craigwood Youth Services, Eagles Nest, Family Service Thames Valley, London Abused Women's Centre, Merrymount Children's Centre, Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre, Second Stage Housing, Thames Valley District School Board, Vanier Children's Services, Western Area Youth Services, Women's Community House and Women's Rural Resource Centre. It is funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

In August 2007, The Quality Assurance and Research Unit was approached by the coordinators of the program to plan evaluation activities. The purpose of these activities was to determine if the program is meeting the needs of the women and children served. Since research has not occurred regarding the program since 1996, it was also to ensure the program is informed by up to date evidence. Two processes began. A feedback survey was provided to participants and assistance from The Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children (CREVAWC) with evaluating the program was sought. This executive summary will provide the results of the feedback survey.

Methodology

Between September 2007 and June 2009 women who completed a group were invited to give feedback about their experiences using the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8) (Larsen, D., Attkisson, C.C., Hargreavews, W.A., & Nguyen, T.D. (1979)). The CSQ-8 has been tested extensively and has been shown to be a reliable tool. It includes eight items used to measure client satisfaction. Open ended questions were also included in order to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences. Thirty seven out of 45 women (82%) completed surveys.

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Results

Overall, the results from the surveys were positive. Participants expressed satisfaction with the group and appreciation for the help received.

- 95% would definitely recommend this group to a friend.
- 95% would come back to the program.
- Most women said their needs were met by the group.
- Everyone rated the quality of service as excellent or good.
- Women had many positive things to say about the group leaders.

Appreciation was expressed for the following: assistance for their children and understanding how to support them, help with the healing process, support, information, safety planning and concrete assistance. Here is what some women had to say:

I learned how to give my children the support they need.

[What helped most was] that my children and I aren't the only ones out there with our problems. I also learned what my children are going through and how to deal and help them cope.

You've help[ed] us learn to live life again and that we are going to heal with time. Thank you.

Having a group that understood and accepted where I was coming from [was what helped the most]. They made it as easy as possible to make it to group (babysitting, taxi, etc.).

There were also a few suggestions for improvement. These suggestions included: consider the number of sessions (most who commented about this would like the program to be longer) and changes to group topics. Only one participant indicated the group was not helpful.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall participants appear to be satisfied with The Community Group Program for Children Exposed to Woman Abuse and have found it to be beneficial for themselves as well as their children. As the CSQ-8 is a standardized scale that has been used extensively, it is possible to compare results to other studies. The highest possible score for the tool is 32. Participants' average score was in the high satisfaction category

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(28.72). This score is comparable to other large studies that have been conducted in the mental health field (Royse, D., Thyler, B., Padgett, D. & Logan, T.K., 2006)²¹.

The following recommendations are based on the information collected:

1. Group facilitators and managers should review in detail the participants' responses. The information collected (including the positive comments and suggestions for improvements) should be used for program planning.
2. As the majority of responses were positive, the group should continue to offer similar services.
3. Results should be shared with the following stakeholders: the participants, the program's advisory committee, and managers at the Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex.
4. Collecting feedback from participants is an important part of providing excellent services. However, further evaluation methods are needed. In general, feedback surveys tend to illicit positive results (Royse, D., Thyler, B., Padgett, D. & Logan, T.K., 2006). The program should continue to work with The Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children (CREVAWC) on evaluating the impact of the program for both the mothers and children involved.

¹¹ Reference: Royce, D., Thyer, B., Padgett, D. & Logan TK. *Program evaluation: An introduction*. Belmont, CA: Thompson Higher Education.