



"The Mellow Group has given me friends and self-confidence. It has helped me to improve my relationship with Habib and control my own emotions. I can now plan my future."

A Mum's Story

Monzurra is a 28-year-old single mum with a young son Habib. Relationships in her wider family broke down, her husband left her and she was forced to live in a bus terminal. She had run out of food and brought Habib to the Baby Home when he was 7 months old. Habib was very weak and suffering from dehydration. The family support team at the Baby Home intervened. Monzurra got the opportunity to attend a Mellow Mums group. She was concerned she would be judged and that her child might be taken from her. She found she was welcomed and felt safe and supported. She learned how to care for Habib and was also able to talk about her own upbringing. She now works as a cleaner. Habib is doing well has put on weight and is happy. He is 14 months and learning to walk.

Promotion and prevention in community context

Mellow Parenting
Supporting babies and children to stay out of institutional care in Tajikistan

Rachel Tainsh

"I had post-delivery stress, felt helpless, but the activities helped because I shared with other parents"
 - Mellow Mum

Tajikistan has traditionally relied on institutional care and limited income support to children with disabilities and other children at risk. Parents are in general poorly informed about the harmful effects of institutionalisation on their child's welfare and development.

Mellow Parenting programmes are evidenced based, group relationship early interventions.

Aims of the study

Enable family support centres to prevent children being placed in institutional care by strengthening parent-child relationships.

Methods

Training was delivered to 23 new Tajik Mellow Parenting facilitators in 2010 and 2013 plus ongoing support. Family support centre teams identified mothers and children who might benefit.

8 Mellow Parenting Groups at family support centres were delivered between 2010-2014

Further training for 15 facilitators took place in March 2016.

" I beat my child until his tooth came out. I was really angry and took my anger out on him. I now know this is wrong. I am now more able to manage my anger and don't beat him any more".
 - Mellow Mum



"After week 3 of the group I called my daughter in Russia and told her we had to take the 3 children all under 5 out of the Baby Home. We are now back together".
 - Mellow Gran

Results

68 mums and 68 children attended 14 week groups. Only 1 mum dropped out.

24 mums were identified who wanted to place their children in the baby home, 4 with a disability. Following the group, no child entered the Baby Home, 1 child already placed in the baby home was taken home, 1 mum started her own business, 3 completed their schooling, 2 went to university and 8 found jobs. All have been able to access other forms of support.

Qualitative feedback from an external evaluation highlights benefits to parents including self-esteem, knowledge and confidence.*

*Dr Glenn Laverack (2013) An Early Years Service for families in Dushanbe: Creating an alternative to the institutionalisation of vulnerable and disabled young children under 6 years old. www.healthprom.org

Outcomes

- Early intervention enhanced
- Parent-child relationships strengthened
- Infants supported in the community and prevented from entering institutional care
- Vulnerable mothers empowered



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