

## Background and Aims

Despite their novelty, research suggests online parenting interventions are well received by parents and lead to positive outcomes in both parents and children . With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, many parenting interventions adapted to online delivery, this included Mellow Parenting (MP). MP programmes are group-based interventions intended to support expectant parents and parents of infants/children. MP programmes have been shown to improve parental wellbeing, reduce child difficulties and improve the quality of perceived parent-child relationship . Recent findings suggest that online MP programmes lead to positive parent and child outcomes . Nevertheless, practitioners’ experiences of delivering online MP is yet to be studied. It is pertinent to explore practitioners’ experiences as their insights can reveal the important aspects of parenting interventions and the benefits and drawbacks of online and face-to-face delivery.

## Method and Participants

Semi-structured online interviews lasting ~30 minutes were conducted by the first author. Interview transcripts were analysed by the first and second author using an inductive approach to reflexive thematic analysis, with the aid of NVivo software. Participants =15 MP Practitioners. Inclusion criteria: Delivered ≥1 online MP programme.



73% UK-Based

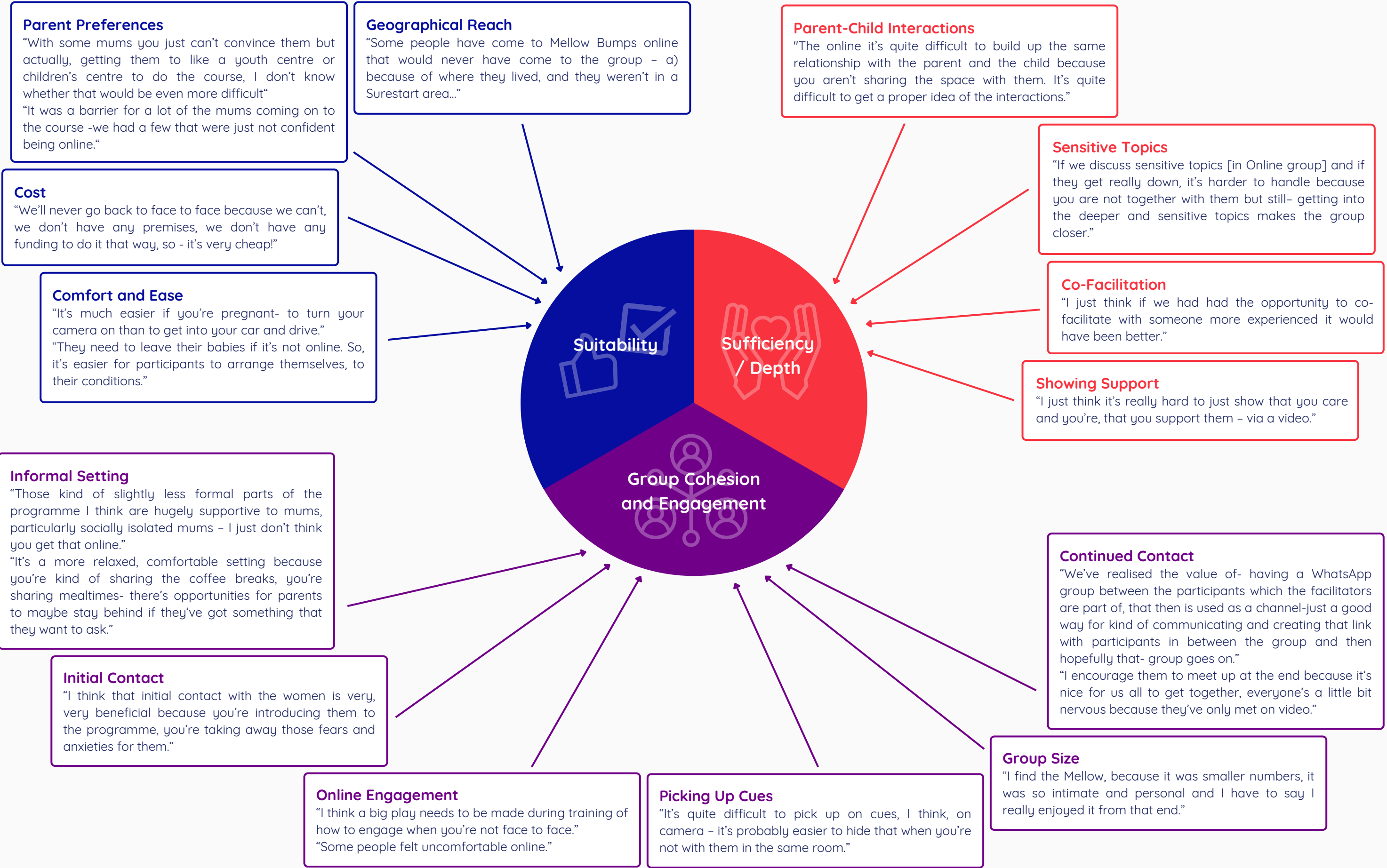


Online-Only Practitioners (N=5)  
2 had delivered >1 Online Group



Dual Practitioners (N=10)  
4 had delivered >1 Online Group | 5 had delivered ≥10 Face-to-Face Groups

## Identified Themes (3) and Subthemes (14)



## Conclusions

The low cost and relative ease of running online interventions were highlighted as reasons to why online was often more suitable than face-to-face delivery. Practitioners also acknowledged parents preferences and how it can be difficult to gauge if they would prefer one delivery format over the other. There were also concerns that online MP lacked depth, contributing factors included difficulty in showing support, limited display of parent-child interactions and discomfort in discussing sensitive topics. Nevertheless, practitioners shared that initial and continued contact with the online group helped with building closeness and ultimately achieved positive outcomes.

References

1. Spencer, C. M., Topham, G. L., & King, E. L. (2020). Do online parenting programs create change?: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 34(3), 364-374. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000605>

2. MacBeth, A., Law, J., McGowan, I., Norrie, J., Thompson, L., & Wilson, P. (2015). Mellow Parenting: systematic review and meta-analysis of an intervention to promote sensitive parenting. *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, 57(12), 1119-1128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dmcn.12864>

3. Raouna, A., Malcolm, R., Ibrahim, R., & MacBeth, A. (2021) Promoting sensitive parenting in 'at-risk' mothers and fathers: A UK outcome study of Mellow Babies, a group-based early intervention program for parents and their babies. *PLoS ONE* 16(2): e0245226. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0245222>