

CASE STUDY

Multicultural Youth SA

Multicultural Youth SA's 'Mum and Bubs' Program includes direct service provision and community capacity initiatives. The program includes Circle of Security Training – an early intervention parenting program designed to enhance attachment security between parents and children.

About the program

The Mums and Bubs program is informed by theoretical ideas about multicultural youth development and the challenges facing young people in the transition to adulthood.

Circle of Security (COS) training sessions is a group-based parenting intervention program informed by attachment theory. Attachment theory recognises that the infant and preschool period of development is crucial for laying the foundations for future development of social relationships.

The COS intervention supports parents to increase their awareness of their children's needs and whether their own responses meet those needs. This is particularly important for at-risk young parents from diverse backgrounds who may perpetuate problematic attachment patterns, passed from one generation to the next, that can compromise healthy relationships throughout a child's lifespan.

All interventions are underpinned by trauma-informed and strengths-based practices that meet each family where they are at in their developmental stage.

The programs key activities include:

- **Case management, role modelling and mentoring support for young refugee and migrant parents**, including those disengaged from family and community. This includes support where young parents are experiencing violence, in contact with the child protection system, or need support to contextualise and adapt their parenting practices to the legal expectations of Australia. Young parents are also supported to re-engage with education, training, or employment.
- **Provision of culturally and youth appropriate information and education about parenting**, including resources. This includes running Circle of Security (COS) training.

AT A GLANCE



Target Participants

Refugee and migrant young parents (15-35 years) with children aged 0-12, and soon-to-be young parents



Aim

to provide parenting education and support, enhance attachment security with children, and reduce social isolation and involvement with the child protection system



Organisations Involved

Multicultural Youth SA, Playgroup SA.



Location

Metropolitan Adelaide



Funding

Department of Home Affairs – Settlement, Engagement and Transition Support Program.



- **Referrals to home visiting services** such as Child and Family Health Services and community playgroups –Alongside COS, MYSA runs a weekly playgroup in partnership with Playgroup SA, with an average of 25 participants per session.
- **Group outings** – this includes facilitating excursions and activities such as visits to the zoo, strawberry picking, indoor playgrounds etc.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this program include:

- increased parenting competencies
- stronger parent-child relationships
- expanded social support networks and community connectedness
- less contact with child protection system
- improved child development (social, health, and cognitive)

Research shows that the attachment theory approach underpinning this program results in children showing increased empathy, greater self-esteem, better relationships with parents and peers, enhanced school readiness, and an increased capacity to handle emotions more effectively when compared with children who are not secure.¹

Challenges

The main challenges in implementing the program was around adapting parenting program models, such as Circle of Security, to ensure that they were both culturally, and youth appropriate. This meant we needed to demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness. It became apparent throughout the program that there is no such thing as a 'one size fits all' approach.

Afterhours outreach was also required to ensure mums were receiving support when they needed it, in their homes.

Key Learnings

This experience has generated 3 key learnings for MYSA:

- 1.** This is something we already knew, however running the program has reinforced to us how resilient young mothers are. They face additional barriers to parenting, however they demonstrate immense strength, courage and capacity to care for their families, learn new skills and also continue forging futures for themselves in a new country
- 2.** The importance of building social connections, for both mothers and children. Young mothers in particular benefit from forming connections with other young mothers who can support them in normalising their experiences and providing peer support.
- 3.** The need for cultural awareness training for mainstream services supporting mothers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Support provided by a number of mainstream services can be underpinned, unintentionally, by extremely Western understandings of parenting and interpreting behavior.

3.



For more information, visit www.mysa.com.au
or email: info@mysa.com.au

