HeadStart Newham Being a Parent 9-16;
Peer Led Parenting

Research Report, March 2020

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HeadStart Newham Being a Parent 9-16;
Peer Led Parenting

1. Evidence based programme founded on the Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities; Being a Parent course

2. A manualised Parenting Programme including 8 themed sessions and initial Resilience Workshop/Coffee morning

3. Co-facilitated with Parent Peer Facilitators and sessions Supervised to ensure support for facilitators and quality assurance

4. Supervision of supervisors

5. Regular evaluation from group members and pre and post measures undertaken

CONTACT

NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDED

in partnership with
Newham London

EMPOWERING PARENTS EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

The Being a Parent course study

Aimed to explore:

- Parent recruitment, retention, and experience

- Parent outcomes (goal attainment, parenting styles, wellbeing, child concerns, family relationships)

- Child perceptions of any changes in parenting

Methods:

- Pre and post-course surveys (Jan-Dec 2019)

- Interviews (1 hour each with parents, their children, and course facilitators, Aug-Oct 2019)

- Descriptive attendance data (Jan-Dec 2019)

Who was in the sample? (Jan – Dec 2019)

Survey sample

66 parents from 11 Newham BaP courses

94% female

74% spoke English as a second language (most commonly Bengali)

58% had a child of primary school age

Interview sample

9 parents (8 female, 1 male) who completed BaP

4 children of these parents (3 female, 1 male)

3 course facilitators (3 female)

Attendance data

169 Newham parents attending 1 or more BaP course sessions

%

Percentage breakdown of parents in survey sample by course location (N=66)

Findings: Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment

59% of parents at taster sessions attended the first course session

Effective recruitment involved face-to-face engagement and promotion by schools

Men under-represented on the course **(6%)**

Retention

61% of parents completed the course (5+ sessions)

Parents were motivated by:
- improving parenting and spoken English
- course being free
- crèche
- convenient timings

Barriers to attend included:
- stigma (courses for 'bad parents')
- misconceptions (lack of expertise in peer-led model)
- absence of crèche
- inconvenient timings or location
- language barrier

Findings: Positive course experiences

Parents' were very positive about the course and especially liked…

- ✓ Peer led model

- ✓ Open, non judgemental discussion and sharing experiences

- ✓ Focus on real life experiences

- ✓ Adaptability of facilitators to support members e.g. translation for English as a second language

Parents' expectations could differ from what was offered…

- Professional advice about mental health from psychiatrist / psychologist

- Specific focus on transitions to secondary school

Content was not always relevant for..

- Parents of very young children

- Foster carers (some topics only)

Findings: Goal Attainment

On average, there was no change in goal attainment scores between the start and the end of the course.

This did not follow the same trend as national Empowering parents, Empowering Communities data.

Average pre and post-course goal attainment scores
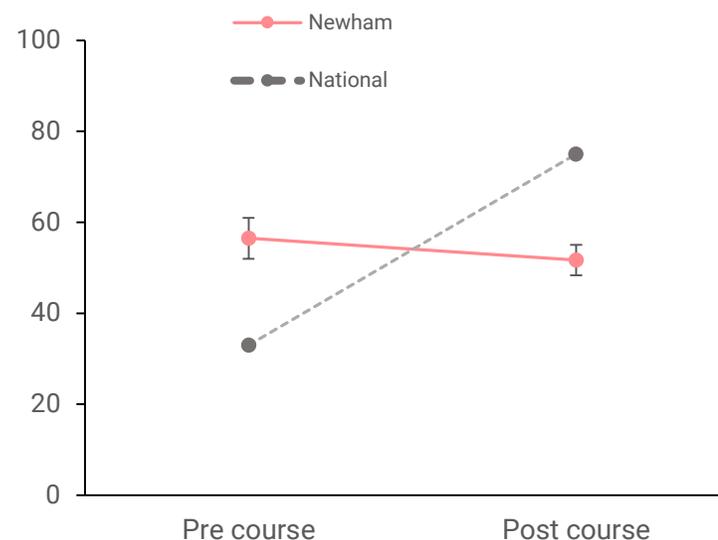
Scores are shown for Newham (N = 30) and nationally (N > 1000). Possible score range = 0-7. Error bars display ±1 standard error.

Findings: Challenges of goal setting

We Found:

→ Parents find goal setting hard – easier to identify goals later in the course

→ Easier to set goals for children

→ Goals were not remembered or vague/unrealistic

→ Goals not always reached at end of course

→ Difficulties with rating goal on snap surveys

Findings: Parent communication styles

On average, parenting style scores significantly reduced between the start and the end of the course indicating more effective parenting styles.
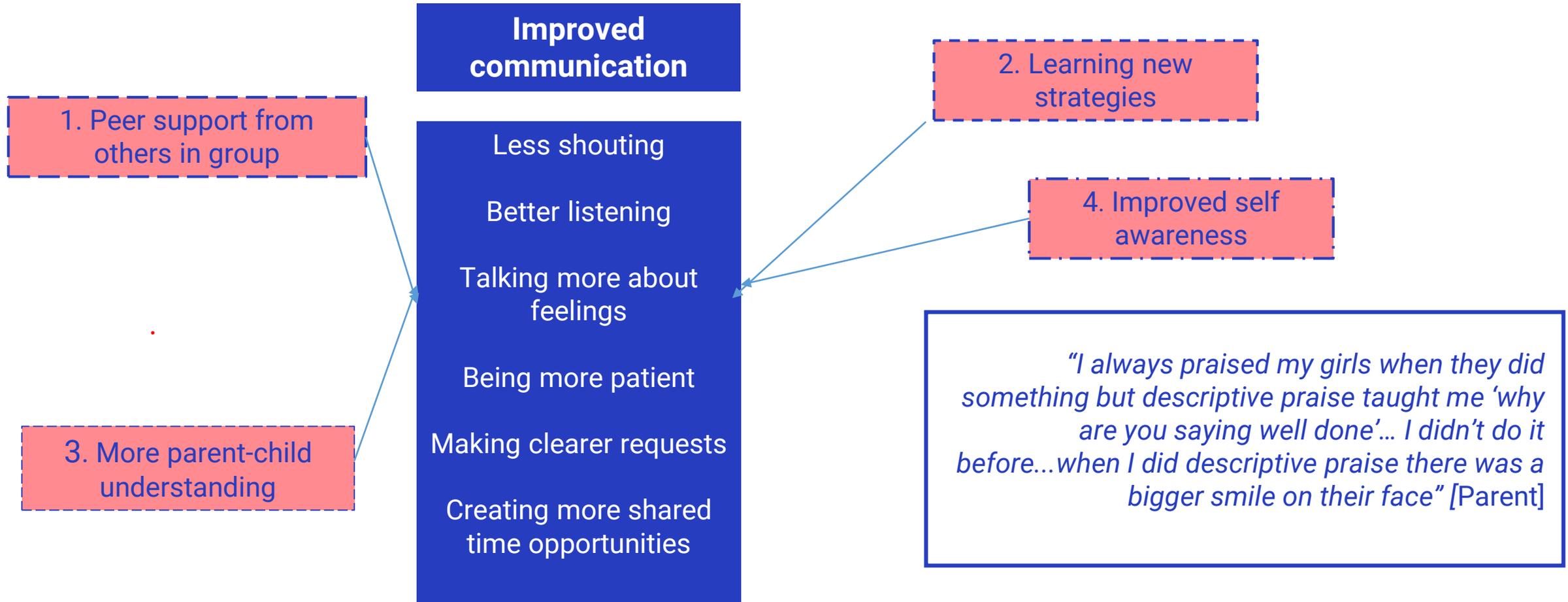
This followed the same trend as national Empowering parents, Empowering Communities data.

Average pre and post-course parent strategies scores
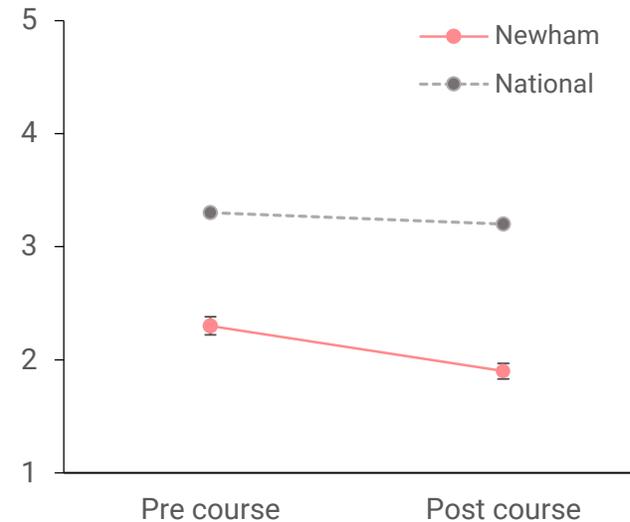
Scores are shown for Newham (N = 56) and nationally (N > 1000) via The Parenting Scale (David, O'Leary & Wolff et al., 1993). Possible score range = 0-7. Error bars display ±1 standard error.

Findings: How communication improved

Improved communication

1. Peer support from others in group

Less shouting

Better listening

Talking more about feelings

Being more patient

Making clearer requests

Creating more shared time opportunities

2. Learning new strategies

4. Improved self awareness

3. More parent-child understanding

"I always praised my girls when they did something but descriptive praise taught me 'why are you saying well done'… I didn't do it before...when I did descriptive praise there was a bigger smile on their face" [Parent]
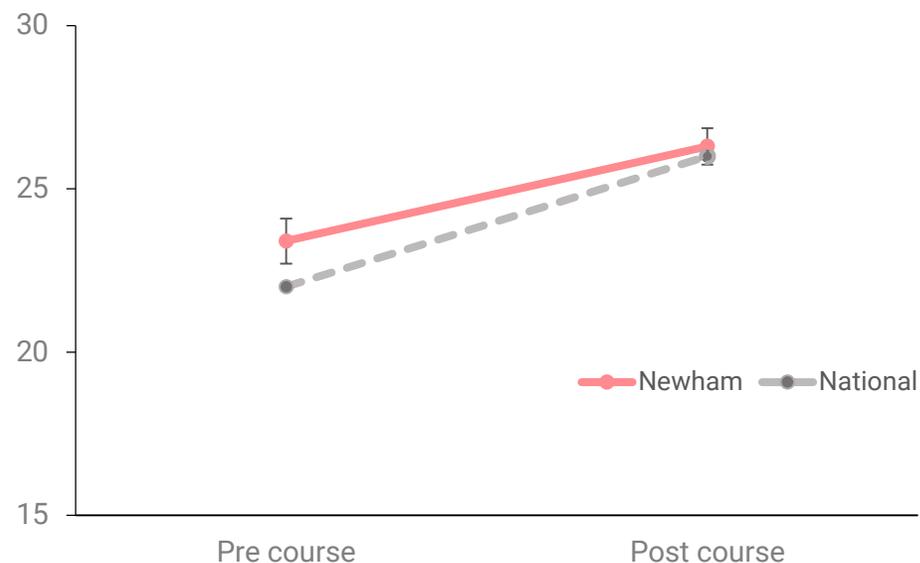
Findings: Parent Wellbeing

On average, parents' wellbeing survey scores significantly improved between the start and the end of the course.

This followed the same trend as national EPEC data.

**Average pre and post-course parent wellbeing scores**

Scores are shown for Newham (N = 57) and nationally (N > 1000), measured via the Short Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (Stewart – Brown et al., 2008). Possible score range = 7-35. Error bars display ±1 standard error.

Findings: How wellbeing improved

Parents told us how their wellbeing improved and the mechanisms leading to change.

Improved

Less anger/better emotional control

Reduced guilt

Prioritising own needs

Feeling less alone

1. Better communication

2. "Good enough parent"

3. "Taking time for myself"

4. Peer support

"When people are saying nice things about you and calling you strong and telling you 'don't give up, carry on', it's really nice to hear those words." [Parent]
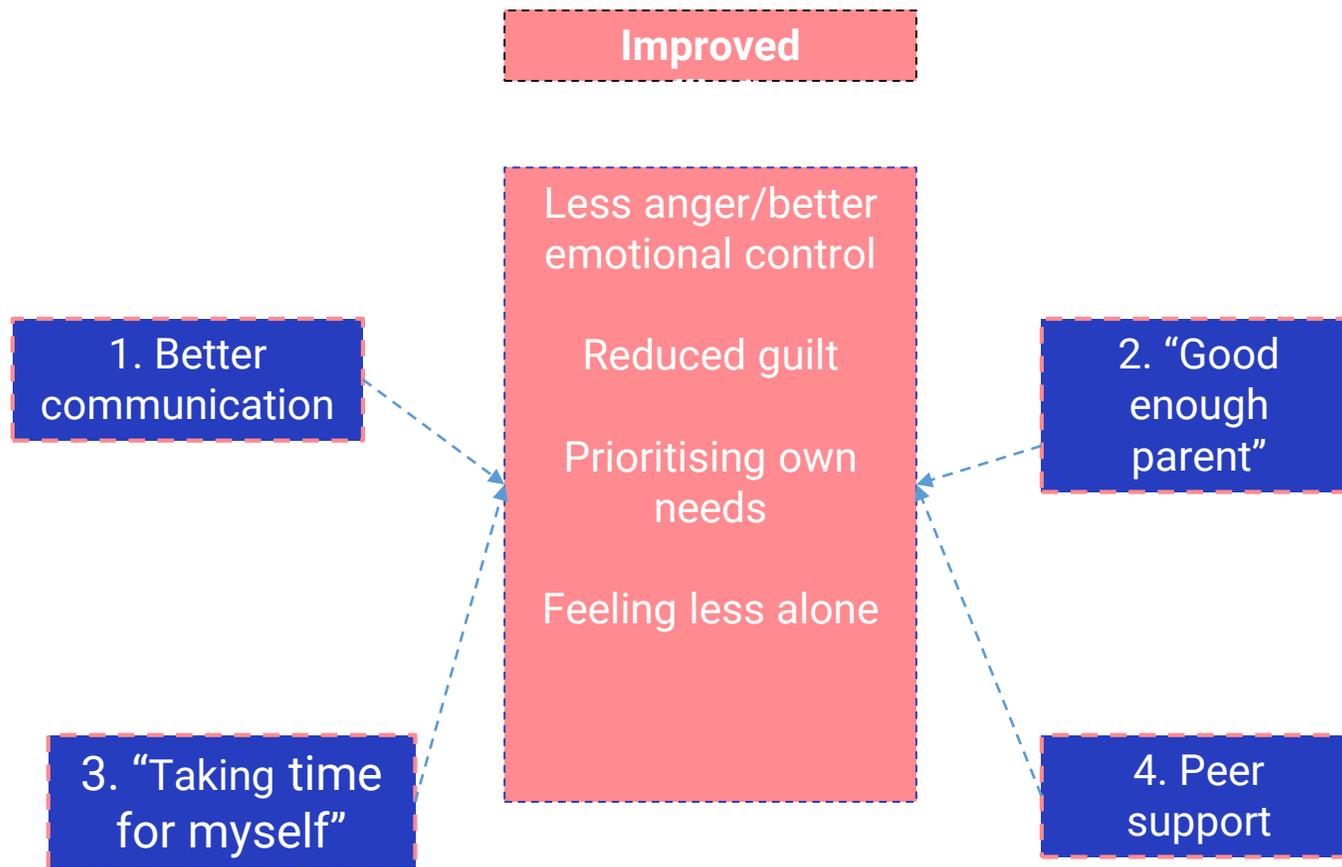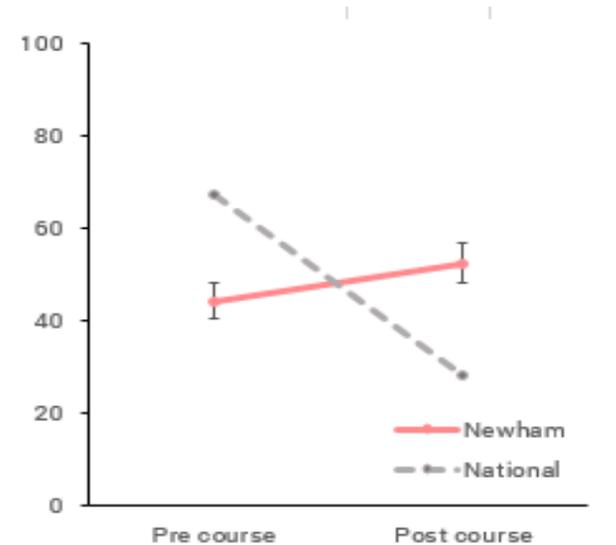
Findings: Child and Family Outcomes

In the survey, parents nominated concerns about their child and rated their level of concern (0-100).

No significant changes were seen to parents' concerns about their children between the start and end of the courses

Average pre and post-course levels of concern.

Scores on the Concerns About My Child questionnaire (Scott et al., 2001) are shown for Newham (N = 37) and nationally (N > 1000). Possible score range = 0-100. Error bars display ±1 standard error

Findings: Child and Family Outcomes (continued)

Parent and facilitators told us about:

→ Improved family communication (including between spouses)

→ Quality time,

→ Improved child behaviour, independence, and resilience.

"My husband noticed a difference, because he said that earlier I wasn't listening at home, not to him, not the kids, and now I listen, I hear, and I'm more supportive." [Parent]

Children told us about:

→ Reduced anger from parents and more praising

→ Increase parental trust in HeadStart

→ Improvements to parents' spoken English

"I feel very proud of myself because my mum said very good to me and she's proud too." [Child, 10]

What next?

→ Continue community based recruitment approaches

→ Explore how to recruit more fathers

→ Ensure third party recruiters share correct information about content of BaP

→ Consider ways to deliver in other languages in future e.g. Bengali

→ Review online digital survey measure for goals and concerns (slide bar)

→ Allow more time for goal setting in session and revisit goal setting training

→ Explore ways to evaluate outcomes for children in future research

Thank you!

We are thankful to all parents, young people, and course facilitators that took part in this study, and to Valdeep Gill, Sawsan Therese and Omolara Balogun for their contributions to fieldwork and analysis.

References

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