

ACCEPTABILITY OF THE TRIPLE P PROGRAM AMONG REFUGEE FAMILIES RESETTLED IN AUSTRALIA

A Pilot Evaluation

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Refugee Families in Australia

- There are currently 11 million refugees in the world (UNHCR).
- Between 2012-2013 Australia granted 12 012 people a refugee visa. Nearly 40% of these were children below 17 years old.



Refugee Families in Australia

- Refugee families in Australia receive support from government and nongovernment agencies in:
 - Financial
 - Medical
 - Housing
 - And other basic needs
- What they do not receive is guidance and advice on how to parent their children in a new country and the new cultural context.



Refugee Families and Resettlement

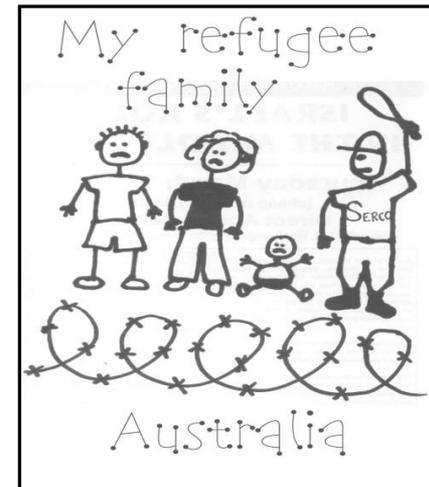
Resettled refugee families are:

- Disadvantaged population on many indices of health and wellbeing (Simich et al., 2005).
 - These impact on future life chances of refugee children
- Impacted by acculturation stress and isolation stress (LCR, 2014).
 - These are the two main types of stressors affecting refugee families in the new country
- Face new parenting challenges caused by a clash between normative parenting practices in the home and host countries as well as acculturation gaps between parents and children (Chia & Castigan, 2006).
 - These in particular can contribute to refugee children emotional and behavioural problems.



Needs of Resettled Refugee Parents

- Due the resettlement challenges, refugee parents often struggle to provide safe and nurturing environment for their children.
- **Thus, they are in need for:**
 - **Knowledge on how to parent** in new communities.
 - **Information on how to cope** with differences in their children's behaviour that may have started due to acculturation and resettlement.
 - **Increased feeling of control** in dealing with situations in their family life, and security in knowing how to parent effectively.



Triple P as a Solution

- **Pros:**

- Large evidence base supporting its effectiveness (Sanders et al., 2013).
- Proven effective in both Australia and international context.

- **Outcomes:**

- Reduces stress and anxiety in parents.
- Increases self-efficacy and effective parenting practices.
- Promotes children emotional, behavioural, language, intellectual and social competencies.



A Pilot Study - Aims

- A pilot study was conducted in a greater Brisbane area.
- **The aims were to :**
 - Explore if refugee parents in Australia find **Triple P** program **acceptable and useful**.
 - Explore the **parenting experiences** of refugee parents resettled in Australia.



A Pilot Study - Methods

- **Participants:**

- 9 refugee parents with children ages 2-13 years old
- Mostly from Congo (Africa) and Iran
- Recruited via contact in a church in Toowoomba

- **Methods:**

- Qualitative focus groups
- Quantitative cross-sectional questionnaires



A Pilot Study -Methods

Questionnaires

Demographic form

Triple P Acceptability Questionnaire:

Evaluates each strategy on its:

- * acceptability,
- * usefulness,
- * likelihood to engage
- * current use

Focus groups

Interview questions:

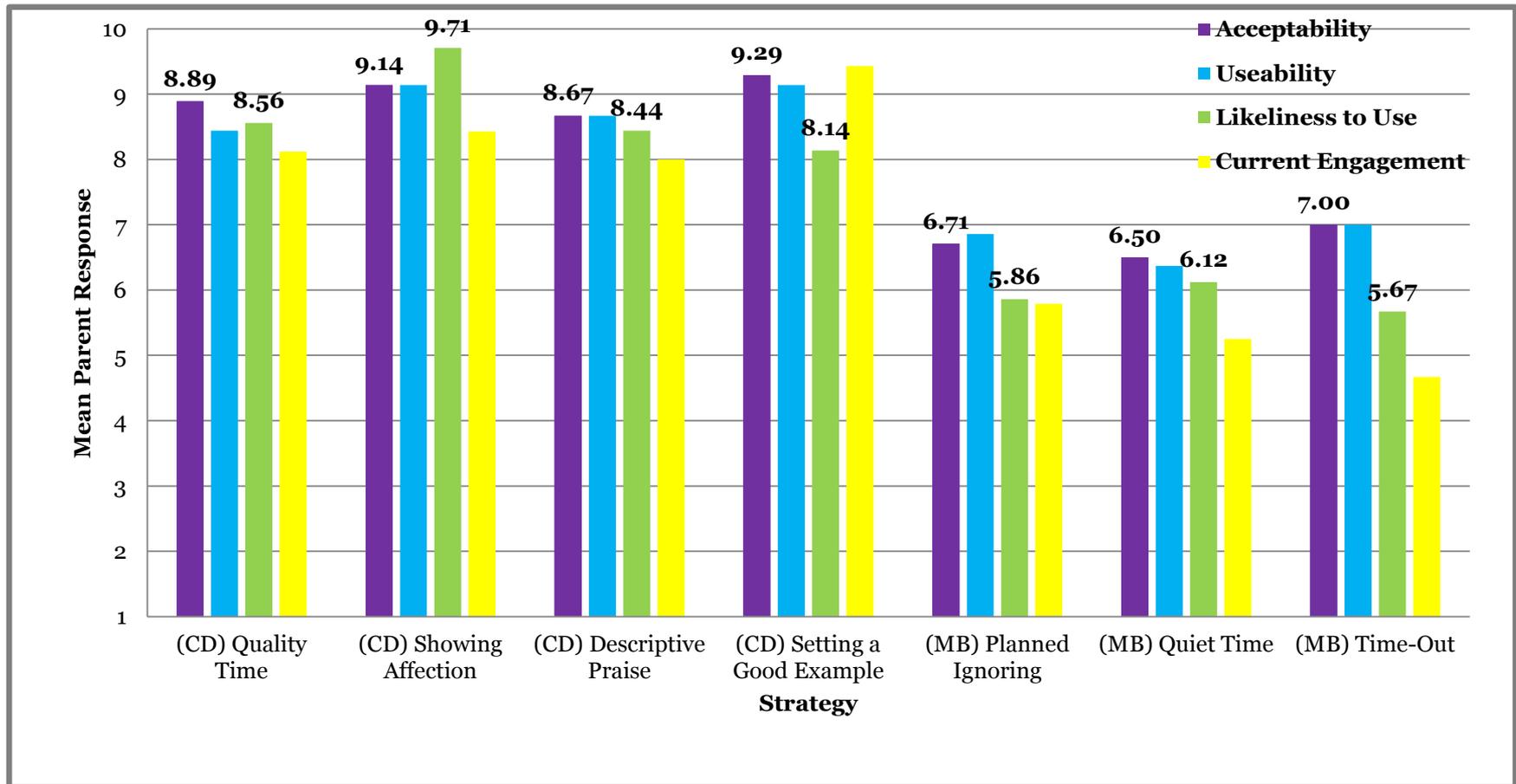
1. What do you enjoy about parenting?
2. Have you noticed differences between parenting in your country and Australia?
3. What do you find difficult about parenting in Australia?
4. What would help you to feel more supported as a parent Australia?

A Pilot Study - Methods

- **For the acceptability study we used a subset of Triple P strategies to address low literacy levels of many parents and reduce assessment burden:**
 - *Strategies for promoting children's development:* Spending Quality Time, Showing Affection, Using Descriptive Praise, Setting a Good Example
 - *Strategies for managing misbehavior:* Planned Ignoring, Quiet Time, Time-out



Findings - Triple P Acceptability



Findings - Parenting Experiences

Theme 1 Strong tradition of physical punishment	Theme 2 Roles of parents	Theme 3 Impact of Australian polices on refugee families	Theme 4 Changes in practices to adhere to child protection polices	Theme 5 Difficulties of single mothers	Theme 6 Increased power of children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that physical punishment is the most effective strategy • Physical punishment cerates fear, which teaches respect • Physical punishment helps to maintain hierarchy within the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are main providers for children • Parents (not school) are major educators: teach how to live and create family • Gender differences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. father is the protector/provider/disciplinarian • 2. Mothers is caring and nurturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance devaluates the importance of parents' roles, especially fathers as a providers • Education diminishes the role of parents as educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents do not use physical punishment to adhere to Australian polices • Parents do not know what strategies to use instead of corporal punishment • Acculturation issues: confused how to properly parent in Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support and respect from communities • Pressure to perform both mother and father role • Being attacked by others, mainly female community members due to suspicion over fidelity of their own husbands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child power inflated by Centrelink, child protection and the police • Children leave home younger as they have financial resources to do so • Greater difficulties with teenagers and lack of support

In Congo you can beat them up. But here you can't. You have to tell them what to do, and if they refuse, you can't beat them up because they can call the police. In Africa they can't call the police and you can beat them as much as you can.

FEAR OF CHILD PROTECTION

I'm scared that one day the police will come here and take the children away and put them with a white family who has more, and after four or five months the children will be happy with that because they can give them more luxury. So it's really difficult.

You get respect when you beat them (...)
African children they are different. They respect the mums when dad goes and beats them when they do something wrong. Children here though they don't have any respect here for their parents.

USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

It's hard when they do something naughty. Back in the country, children are just quiet and listen to adults, but here they want to talk too. My daughter one day she was late for school but her room was untidy. Her father told her she had to clean it before she went to school, but she said no to him because she would be late. So he got his belt and beat her with it.

Conclusions

- Refugee parents face many parenting challenges after resettlement in Australia which are related to:
 - Culture clash – different strategies are found acceptable in the home and host countries
 - Differences in the role of government in family life in the home and host countries
 - Acculturation gap between parents and children
 - Lack of understanding of their culture and practices by the host communities

Conclusions

- Preliminary results indicate that refugee parents find Triple P strategies acceptable and useful.
- Triple P has the potential to reduce high level of stress in the settlement process and increase refugee/ immigrant families adjustment and their children outcomes.
- Next step: RCT is needed to rigorously evaluate program effects on parent and child outcomes in the refugee resettlement context.



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