

Mother and Baby Painting Group: Report

The Start

The Oct 2015 Support from the Start meeting discussed my proposal to run an 8 week Mother and Baby Painting Group. The meeting agreed a maximum budget of £1,300 and suggested that the group be held at First Step to support the delivery of this new initiative.

I contacted First Step but it was not possible for them to provide a venue or referrals.

I then contacted the Musselburgh Health Visiting (MHV) Team and arranged to attend their team meeting on 10th Feb 2016. This team is made up of 4 Health Visitors, 4 Staff Nurses, and 3 Nursery Nurses. Four of the team being present, the meeting was positive about the initiative and we discussed the practicalities about how to bring the project to life. We agreed that:

- all referrals were to come through the MHV team
- the group would be offered to mothers expressing symptoms of PND during a contact visit and with a child under one years of age
- after the referral the referrer and myself would make a joint home visit
- the group would be held in the Community Group Room at the Musselburgh PCC
- I would provide postcards and posters, detailing the group to potential referrals, that would be distributed by the team

After the meeting I emailed Steven Wray and Joyce MacLeod as it was now clear that the delivery of an 8 week group was not going to be possible within the budget, instead I proposed that the agreed funding be used to set up and run a short introductory group thus testing the viability of such a group in this context. This was agreed.

I then contacted the Crossreach PND service with the aim of co-ordinating the initiative with their service. They offered to advertise the group at their central and Milton Street locations.

RESULTS

Referrals:

The group received 8 referrals from 4 members of the MHV team:

4 referrals from 2 Health Visitors

3 referrals from a Nursery Nurse

1 referral from a Community Staff Nurse

I initially did 2 home visits with a referring Health Visitor. We quickly realised that this was difficult to co-ordinate and was costly in terms of the project's budget. We then agreed that instead of joint home visits I would make initial contact with potential group members by phone and where possible referrers would pop into the group on the new members first group session.

The Group

5 Introductory Mother and Baby Group sessions were offered 2 before Easter and 3 after Easter. It was unfortunate that no one attended the first 3 sessions offered. The last 2 sessions proved more successful with 5 of the referrals attending at least one session. The DNA rate for this client group tends to be high. At Midlothian Sure Start the DNA rate for the therapy service is in the region of 50% for initial appointments, in this instance the attendance was 62.5%. I think this was because of the familiarity of the venue and it being the working base of the MHV team.

(the postcodes of those that attended : EH21 7QN, EH21 8QP, EH21 8QP, EH21 6TT, EH21 7DT)

2 of the mothers that attended were due to return to work and college shortly, the other 3 expressed keenness in attending further group sessions should they be offered.

All the DNAs came from the Health Visitor referrals. This could reflect the complexity of the clients that form a significant part of the Health Visitors' case loads. The one mother that did attend from these Health Visitor referrals was a young mother with a history of drug abuse who had social work involvement. She attended the last session and seemed to really benefit from it.

Reflections:

The MHV team enthusiastically embraced the initiative despite short staffing and pressured workloads. They took the time to both make referrals and check -in on their clients in the group sessions. The psychological therapies team also showed an interest and I was joined by a student from their team in the final group session.

I had an evaluation session with Michelle Paul (Advanced Nurse Practitioner) after the completion of the group. We discussed a number of positive features of this type of group being offered within this context:

- groups were kept small (max of 4 couples) to encourage attendance of more vulnerable mothers
- at present women with PND lack local, specialised therapy provision in Musselburgh
- attendance was voluntary, not part of a social work plan
- it built confidence and the mothers spend positive time with their babies playing and creating
- the venue was familiar to the women attending
- the group was secular and not connected with the church
- it was inclusive of both mothers with PND and mothers with PND and more complex needs

I got feedback from a participant that group was too early starting at 9.30am which at the time of booking was the only time available in the Community Group Room.

The future:

The agreed funding allowed for the starting up of the group not the actual running of a group. The take up of this Introductory Mother and Baby Group indicated that a group could be run within this context.

The next step would be to pilot a group or series of groups to evaluate the impact that attendance of the group has on the mothers' sense of wellbeing and their bond with their infant.

Personal Comment:

I have valued the opportunity to manifest this idea within East Lothian. There were a few moments when I was unsure if it would be realised. Then mothers and babies arrived and started playing with the paints together, it then became a project that was worth the efforts of all those involved. I experienced the MHV team as very accommodating and indeed it seemed that not only this team but also the Admin team and Psychological Therapies team went out of their way to support the initiative.

I would be interested in building on the foundations that have been achieved and to provide ongoing sessions for Mothers and Babies needing specialist PND support Musselburgh.

Sarah Wass (Art Therapist) June 2016