

Supporting Transition Resilience in Newcomer Groups (STRONG): Engaging Newcomer Parents in a Resilience-focused Youth Intervention



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Introduction

- **Supporting Transition Resilience in Newcomer Groups (STRONG)** is an intervention developed to address the mental health needs of at-risk newcomer youth (Crooks, Hoover & Smith, 2020).
- Previous STRONG groups were successful in teaching new skills such as **relaxation, measuring, and managing emotions** (Crooks & Smith, 2018).
- The core components of STRONG are fostering resilience skills, teaching cognitive behavioural skills (e.g., relaxation, problem-solving), and providing psychoeducation regarding distress, emotion, and seeking available support (Hoover, 2019).
- Youths will have more success in accessing mental health care with the support of their family and community agencies (Colucci, Minas, Szwarc, Guerra & Paxton, 2015).

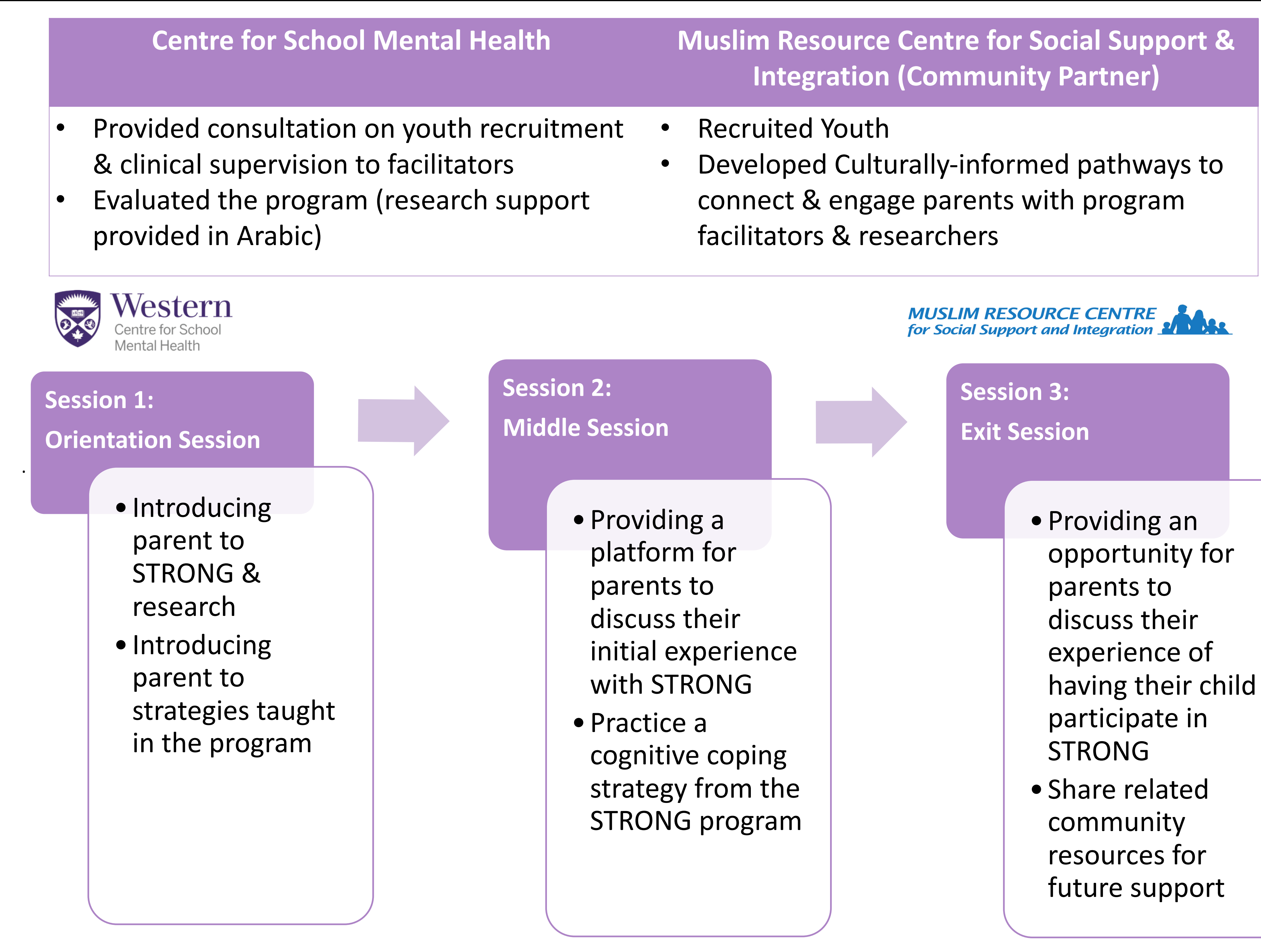
Research Questions

1. What are parents' perceptions of the STRONG program?
2. What was the utility of the newly developed parent sessions for STRONG?

Lesson Learned

- Parents were willing to engage even in an online setting for their children
- In the pilot group completed for this study, all the participating parents were mothers
- The mothers appeared engaged and grateful to have a space special for them
- The mothers appreciated that the sessions were delivered in Arabic and were able to open up and feel comfortable with the facilitator
- Community partnerships are essential in parent engagement

Engaging Parents



Suggestions

- Flexibility is key when working with parents: Our community communicated the mothers for availability
- Mothers were often busy and sometimes dates and session times had to change to fit the mothers' schedules
- Providing a culturally-sensitive space for AMENA parents is important as they value connecting in their main language & connecting on a deeper level
- Give longer time than expected, at times, our sessions went past time because of parental engagement

Empirical Background and Rationales

- Parental involvement in programs can strengthen children's skills and abilities to develop confidence and resilience (Weine, 2008).
- Involving parents in the STRONG program and familiarizing them with the program contents may enhance outcomes for children.
- Integrating parental aspects to STRONG in this study would help parents further understand the content of the program and contribute to the learning process of their children. Also, parents can help in the enhancement of the program through their feedback about the sessions created for the parents.
- The goal of this research is to measure the usefulness of the parent sessions and whether they should be added as a component in future STRONG programs with newcomer families.

Materials

1. **Survey** – The survey asks for parents' feedback regarding two aspects: 1) the STRONG program, and 2) the adjunct parent sessions developed for this study.
2. **Focus group** - The focus group will provide an opportunity for parents to expand on their perspectives and provide specific examples in sharing their feedback about the STRONG program and the parent sessions.

References

- Colucci, E., Minas, H., Szwarc, J., Guerra, C., & Paxton, G. (2015). In or out? Barriers and facilitators to refugee-background young people accessing mental health services. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 52(6), 766-790.
- Crooks, C. V., Hoover, S., & Smith, A. (2020). Feasibility trial of the school-based STRONG intervention to promote resilience among newcomer youth. *Psychology in the Schools*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22366>
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