

CHILD RESILIENCY PROGRAMME
FIVE YEAR FOLLOW UP OF PARENTS OF GRADUATES '08, '09 FOCUS GROUP
RESULTS

The discussion with parents of '08 and '09 graduates was geared towards parents talking about the resiliency programme in which their child has been participating and the improved family connection which they have experienced since their child's involvement in the programme. Ten questions with different sections were asked of the parents and the following discussion emerged (Focus group guide attached).

In response to the questions the parents commented that the goal of the resiliency programme was geared towards improving their child's behavior, to improve their learning ability and to assist with their development. They also commented that the programme assisted them in better communicating with their child, showing more love and assisting them in their school work.

When asked what was good about their child's participation in the programme, the parents agreed that there was improved family connection, improved ability to communicate, improved school connectiveness and at least 98% of the parents stated that they saw 100% improvement in their child's enthusiasm towards doing school work and there was significant improvement in their grades. They also responded that the programme helped their child to socialize with others, lower their conflict level as well as helping them to express their emotions appropriately. One parent also commented that she learnt from her child how to better communicate with others.

In response to what they liked about their child, some of the responses were that they liked their child's ability to share and forgive others, some responded that they loved the fact that their child was not fussy, other comments were that their child was very loving and was hugging more. Other parents further commented that they liked the fact that their child does not hide anything from them. One parent said that her child was very expressive and shared her experience of how her child made her a post card with drawings of the family and wrote that "I love you"! She said that this made her felt very special. The parents however responded that the hardest part of the programme was the time to participate in the workshops.

The participants commented that some of the changes that they observed in their child's behavior was less signs of emotional distress, their child was now showing signs of happiness, more disciplined and helpful, child is no longer shy, more computer literate and was overall more enthused about doing school work. In response to the question of the parents' greatest need or challenge that would improve their relationship at home, an overwhelming response was "money". One parent shared that their child would complain about the amount of money being given to them but that they could not do better due to a lack of adequate funds. This, the parent said was a major issue to which other parents strongly agreed.

In response to questions that were geared towards protective factors, the participants commented that their child's self-esteem was strengthened, child is now feeling good about his/herself, was more satisfied with life, more confident about doing the right things, and their child had a lot to

be proud of. Parents shared that their child was in particular very proud of the different prizes and stars they received as well as the different trips that they were able to participate in. The parents also stated that some of the specific ways in which the programme helped them to deal with the challenges of their child was the fact that they were showing more obedience, child is now doing homework, child is less aggressive and they were now eating together as a family.

When asked how they felt teachers, police, church leaders or other adults in the community have demonstrated caring for their child, the participants commented that persons were communicating more with their child, they were shown more love by these people, and their child would listen whenever they are corrected by any of these adults. In describing how persons working in the programme helped them as parents to deal with the challenges, the participants responded that the persons in the programme took the time to talk to them and to explain the issues with their child, persons working in the programme also helped them to better understand their child and they were better able in expressing themselves as parents.

Some of the positive changes that parents saw in their child was that they wanted to attend and participate in church activities, their overall behavior has improved, their children was getting into less trouble at school and at home and their improved ability to do their school work on their own without anyone having to remind them to do their work. The parents also responded “yes” to the fact that there was:

- Increased belief in God
- There was fewer referrals to administration for discipline
- Better parent/child relationship
- Better attendance at school
- Better attitude at home and at school
- Better performance at school
- Child was more involved in other school activities
- Children demonstrated an increased sense of humour
- Less conflict at school
- Can identify a goal in life
- Can identify someone who cares
- Have demonstrated more moral fiber
- Has insight into their own strength and weaknesses (child knows what he/she is good at doing)
- Engaged in efforts at creativity (i.e. child makes post card)
- Maintains good relationship
- More independent and is able to use initiative

The parents were very hopeful that the skills their child has learnt from the programme will be sustained as the programme had an extremely positive impact on their child. They also responded that their child was not involved in crime and violence, inappropriate sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, suicidal behavior, or has dropped out or expelled from school.

OVERALL COMMENTS

The parents overall were enthused with the programme and expressed confidence in the programme. They also expressed confidence in the abilities of the persons who were involved in the programme in assisting in their child's development. They also commented that the tolerance level of the teachers/volunteers was remarkable and they commented in particular about their level of patience in dealing with their child. Parents also commented about the food provided to their child that it was of very high standard and that their child was now eating some things that they would not have normally eaten.

SUGGESTIONS FROM PARENTS

The parents suggested that a forum be held for the siblings of the participating child one such as the parenting workshop in an effort to improve the relationship and to develop a bond with their peers or siblings. They also suggested that a special church service be held in recognition of the programme and involving the entire family as well as to have a parents' day out.

The parents were informed that they were welcomed to attend church services at Hope any Sunday along with their child and they were also encouraged to declare good over their child at all times and encourage them to always do their best.

The workshop ended with the parents being provided with a meal and a drink.