

The Baby Mat Project: Similarities and differences between the experiences and perceptions of mothers and therapists

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309707

Dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in
Clinical Psychology in the Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand

JANUARY 2014

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ABSTRACT

The early relationship between mother and child is formative of a child's later wellbeing. Disruptions in the mother-infant bond can result in insecure attachments. There therefore exist certain interventions which endeavour to avoid the development of insecure relationships and instead begin to develop more secure mother-infant bonds. Such interventions include the Ububele Baby Mat project run in Alexandra township, Johannesburg. As this intervention is still developing, the Ububele team requested that research be conducted on this intervention. This research aims to better understand the Ububele Baby Mat's influence on those caregivers who access the Baby Mat service, and also to record the subjective experiences of the therapists who facilitate the mat service. The current research was therefore aimed at exploring the subjective experiences of both the mothers and therapists involved in the Baby Mat intervention and further to explore any similarities or differences between these two groups' experiences. Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with mothers who accessed the Baby Mat service and with both the therapists who facilitated the mother participants' sessions. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings showed that in general mothers had a positive experience of the Baby Mat service and of the therapists on the mat. Another finding was that there were more similar experiences than different ones between mothers and therapists.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of this research report has been the most challenging undertaking I have ever embarked on in the course of my academic career. I therefore take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the individuals who have contributed to the completion of this report.

- To Carol Long, who undertook the task of supervising my research, thank you for the dedication and support you have poured into my work. Thank you for the encouragement when my strength to finish this project was failing. Your cheerful smile and spirit along with your countless efforts to get me going have really been a blessing and have finally paid off!
- Ububele Baby Mat Project: thank you for your willingness to have me embark on a project of this nature. Thank you to the accommodating therapists who were always eager to make time for my interviews.
- A heart-felt appreciation to the mothers who enthusiastically participated in this research, your stories meant a great deal and also gave me a deeper understanding of the complexities of motherhood.
- To my family and friends who took an interest in my research and cheered me on when I was feeling too discouraged to finish my report. I greatly appreciate the emotional support you gave me. I love you all
- Last but not least, I would like to thank God for the strength to start and finish my research report. Thank you Lord for the answered prayers and for never leaving my side.

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