



# Relaxing into Parenting

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# Summary

- Background
- Methods
- Results
- Preliminary conclusions, and
- Implications for practice

# Research Question

- Does Relaxing into Parenting intervention support and enhance first time parent's transition to parenting?

# Background

- Clinical experiences of facilitators
  - Social Worker in primary health setting
  - Counsellor, primary health residential family centre setting
  - Empirical data
- Evidence
  - Little on transition to parenting
  - Reducing anxiety - CBT and 'Mindfulness'
  - Maternal and infant health = important indicators of overall health and well being of a community
  - Couple relationships - little research
  - Social support
  - Pilot program in 2007

# Background continued

- What we did - course content
  - Managing stress, worry and anxiety
  - Getting to know your baby
    - NSWIOP Getting to Know You & Hello Dad
  - Resources in the community and www
    - Family
    - Professional
    - Social
  - Relationships
    - Relationships Australia - Baby Makes Three
    - With family and friends

# Methods

- Recruitment

- First time parents
- Maternity services and general practitioners
- ACT Government intranet

- Group

- Psycho-educational not therapeutic
- Two facilitators
  - Social Worker and Midwife Counsellor
  - Students - Midwifery and Social Work

- Tools

- State Trait Anxiety Index STAI
- Newborn Development Knowledge NDKQ
- Parent Satisfaction Items
- In-depth Interviews

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# Results - Pre-STAI

- STAI was self-administered first session
- Some (n=6) participants had a pre T-anxiety score above the mean for general population
- Most (n=8) participants had pre S-Anxiety score below mean of average working adult population
- All were within +/- 1 SD of mean

# Results – Post STAI

- T-Anxiety score
  - 5 participants experienced reduction
- S-Anxiety score
  - 4 participants had reduction in S-anxiety

# Newborn Development Knowledge (NDKQ)

- Communication & general development
- Vision & mutual gaze
- Tired signs
- Regulation
- Verbal & non-verbal expression
  - Responses true, false not sure

# NDKQ - Communication

- Knew
  - Babies can express and do feel pain
- Learned
  - Babies smile before six weeks
  - Know their parent's faces
  - Experiences impact brain growth

Need further education about importance of enhancing very early brain development

# NDKQ - vision & mutual gaze

- Knew

- Babies are keen to look at their parent's faces
- Babies need physical support to enjoy making eye contact

- Learned

- Babies can see from birth
- Babies brains grow from birth when they make eye contact

# NDKQ - tired signs

- Knew
  - Holding them close settles babies
  - Carrying in a sling soothes
  - Importance of recognising tired signs
  - Wrapping soothes
  - Not waiting for baby to cry
- Learned
  - Act on increased body movement, clenching fists and don't wait until baby cries

*Everyone knew everything about tired signs by the completion of the course*

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# NDKQ - Regulation

- Knew
  - as babies mature they are able to share activities at a greater distance from parents
  - Overall knew little about regulation
- Learned
  - Knowledge increased on all statements and further education is needed about baby's capacity to concentrate

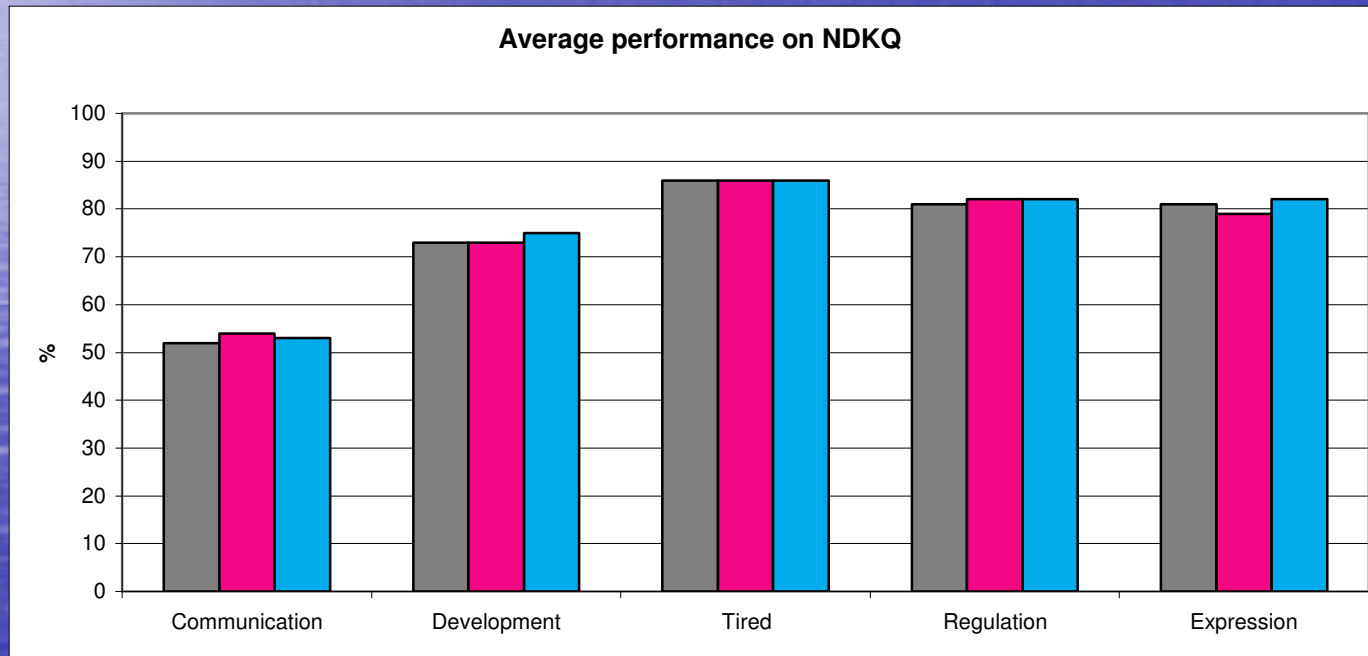
# NDKQ - verbal & non-verbal expression

Knew a lot but greatly increased their knowledge about:

- Learned
  - Babies recognise sounds in utero
  - Babies copy mouth movements

Need to know more about differentiating infant's cries

# Performance on NDKQ Pre Course



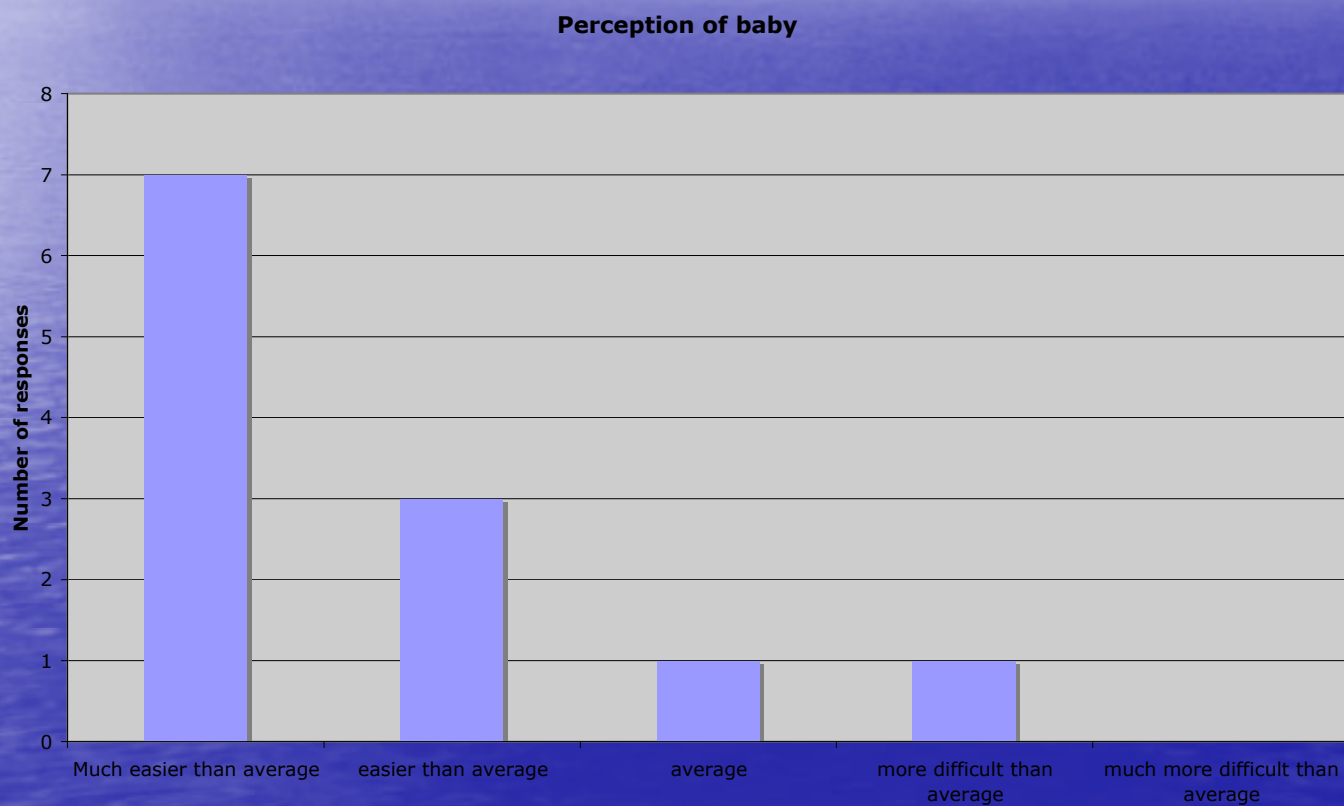
# Parent Satisfaction Item - degree of satisfaction with being a parent



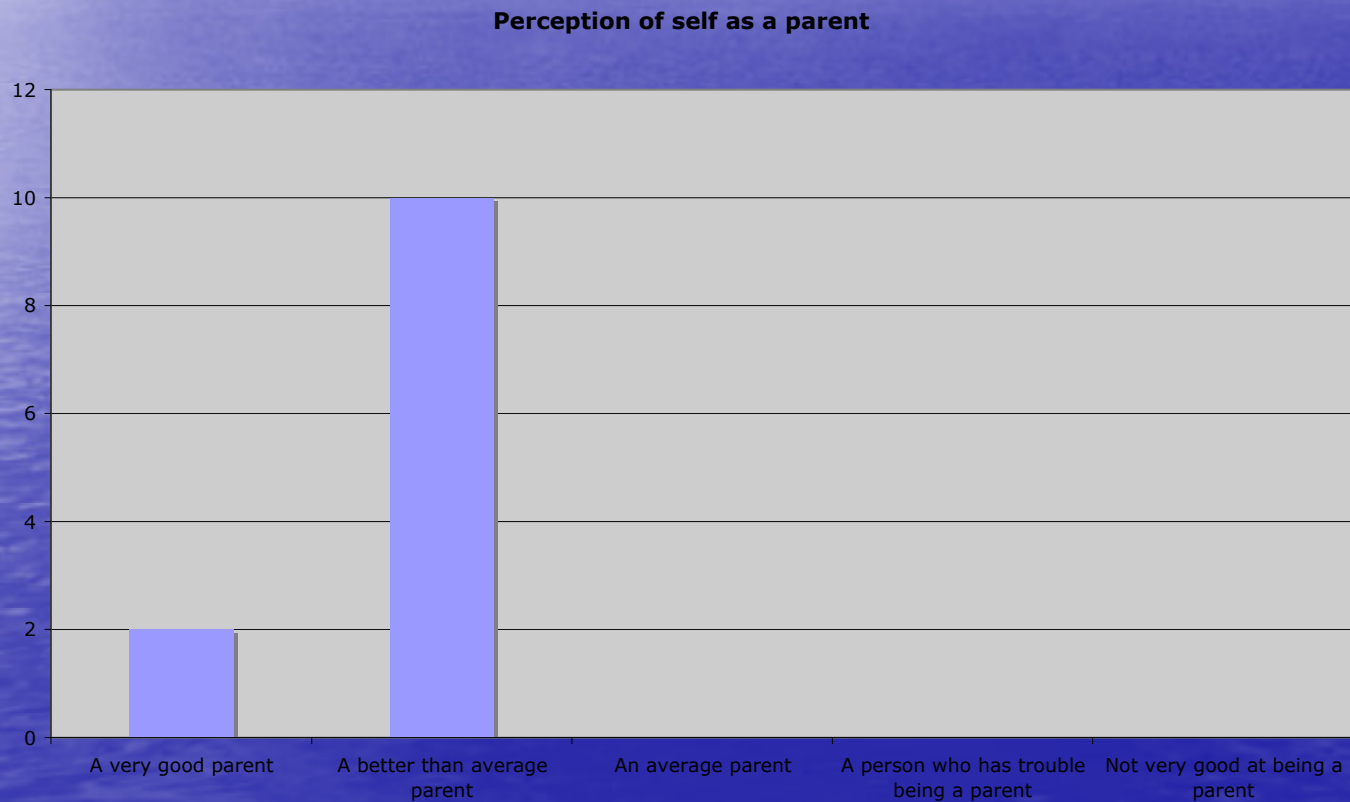
■ Satisfaction in your role as a parent scale

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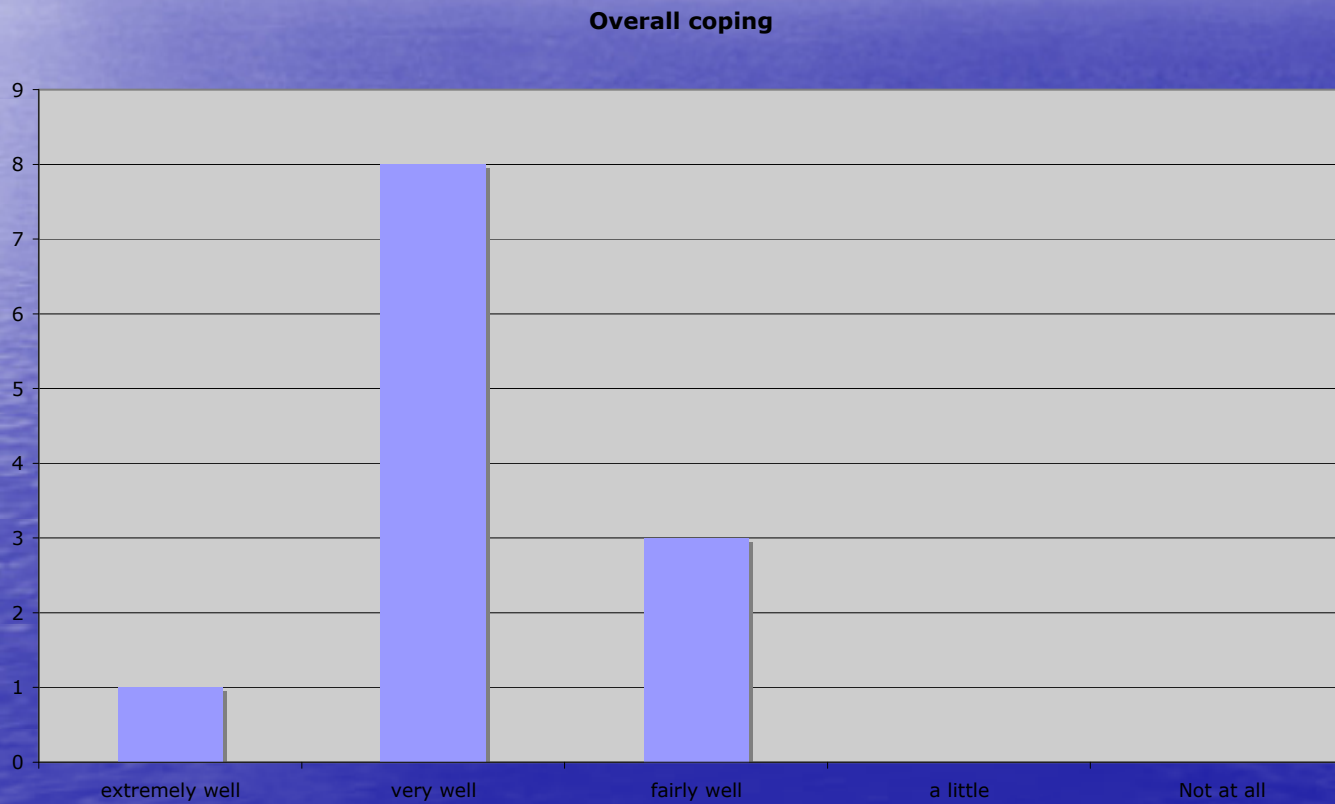
# Perception of baby



# Perception of self as a parent



# Overall coping



# Overall observations

- STAI gave global anxiety levels
- STAI not specific for this project
- All participants were satisfied or better with their parenting regardless of their anxiety levels
- Knowledge about newborn development increased

# In depth interviews revealed

- Participants valued:
  - Getting together and still meet
    - Mothers group
    - Fathers meet
    - Email and social groups
  - Talking about relationships was important and highlighted the need to talk with each other
  - Would recommend the course to others

- Knowledge about resources in the community was valued by participants
- Being able to talk with each other about how they were adjusting to parenting was very important

# Conclusions and Implications for Practice

- Focusing on the transition to parenting is important – it is a process of change
- Relationship building is important
- Highlighting the need for social support
- As a primary health community development program RiP links families back into their community
- Identifies need for further research