

The problem

- Infant mental health is integral to optimal child development
- Immigrant and highly stressed infants may be vulnerable
- There are excellent IMH services available in many TO communities
- New immigrants and vulnerable families may not commonly access these services

What we sought to do

(GOALS OF INITIATIVE)

To make our infant mental health program more accessible to and effective for highly stressed families by

- Understanding why this is happening:
 - Term recognition?
 - Awareness?
 - Accessibility?
 - Portrayal?
- Knowledge exchange and mobilization
- Adapting our interventions

How we have gone about it?

(ACTIVITIES)

- Literature review
- Community needs assessment
- Survey
 - Focus groups
 - Interviews
 - Networking
- Presentations
- Specific collaborative intervention

What have the results been?

(FINDINGS)

- Infant mental health is an often unknown or confusing term especially in immigrant communities
- Our infant mental health program is not well known
- Services other than MH are used
- Parents are most concerned about infant's behaviour and development
- Need for facilitated referral and enhanced service coordination

Where do we go next?

(FUTURE DIRECTIONS)

- Build upon collaborations and partnerships
- Adapt & evaluate current assessment & intervention to make them more culturally competent
- Introduce innovative activities to address at-risk, identified, & specific needs = Scarborough Postpartum Support Network; Crying Clinic



Aisling Discoveries
Child and Family Centre

Infant Child Treatment ACTION PROJECT Summary

New Directions

Peri-Natal Mood Disorders

Social and economic stressors put Scarborough women, their infants & their families at increased risk for developing perinatal mood disorders.



- There were 7,228 births in Scarborough (Stats Canada, 2007)
- Incidence of peri-natal mood disorders is said to be 13-15% of postpartum women with an incidence of 42% amongst immigrant women/ refugee women.
- Scarborough women born outside of Canada accounted for over 75% of local births in each year between 2003 and 2007.

(IntelliHEALTH Ontario, Extracted: Nov 2011)



New Directions

Peri-Natal Mood Disorders

- **Scarborough Postpartum Support Network:** a community collaboration
 - Enhanced coordination of and expedited access to existing services
 - Targeting service gaps and increasing access to vulnerable, marginalized populations
 - Partnership with adult mental health
 - Research and evaluation



New Directions

Crying as universal link



- Excessive infant crying is stressful
 - We are exploring a pilot project for vulnerable families
 - Would a “**Crying Clinic**” address the concerns parents identify?
 - Would a “**Crying Clinic**” increase accessibility to infant mental health and overcome the barriers of stigma and misunderstanding?
 - Could “crying” be a lead in to infant mental health?
 - Is integration of a “**Crying Clinic**” with primary medical care feasible?

