

Development of the Sawa Aqwa (Stronger Together) Family Program for at-risk adolescents in Lebanon

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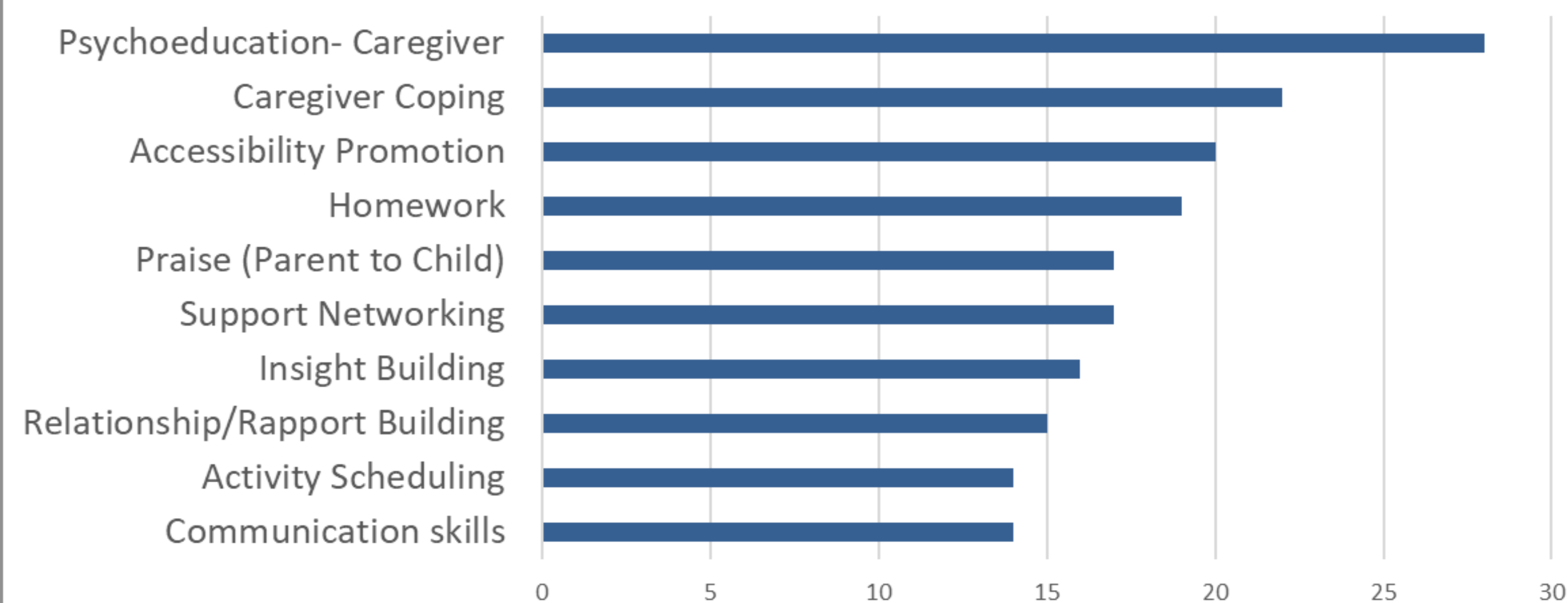
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Systematic Review of Family Programs

- Identified 75 studies of 50 family programs
- No evaluated family programs were found in Lebanon, though 4 parenting interventions were found, 2 of which were effective for a child mental health outcome
- 17 programs were family focused with a child mental health outcome, and 3 were targeted at at-risk adolescents
- Extracted data on effective programs, practice elements (see Figure 1), implementation model, challenges and lessons learned

Figure 1: 10 most common practice elements in effective family programs



Qualitative Interviews with Families

'We lived our life but these children were deprived a lot in their life of a lot of things. These things are the ones that bother us the most. We wish for them not to be deprived. That they live their happiness, that they live their childhood. That is most of all.'
Syrian Father, July 2020

- Interviewed 32 families (parents and adolescents) in the Beddawi area of Tripoli
- And 5 facilitators with experience of working in humanitarian programs for at-risk adolescents
- Purposeful sampling to include diversity in age, gender, nationality, and both high and low risk families
- Thematic Content Analysis using MaxQDA
- Found a broad range of risk and protective factors at the individual, family, community and socio-political level, with cross-cutting themes of gender and nationality

Intervention Development

- Systematic review and qualitative interviews findings compiled
- A theory of change workshop and two intervention workshops attended by local and international family therapists and humanitarian specialists
- Consultation with two Community Advisory Boards (CABs) made up of parents and adolescents
- First draft of the manual reviewed by the CABs, experts in the field, and piloted through mock sessions internally and with the CAB



Pilot

- The **Sawa Aqwa Family Program** is 6 weekly sessions and 1 booster session, delivered by trained non specialist providers, covering family systemic sessions on; *family roles and strengths, emotional regulation, communication, problem management and conflict resolution*
- Piloted with 10 families in Tripoli & North Beqa'a
- Positive trajectories for adolescent and parental mental health, wellbeing, emotional regulation and family functioning
- Implementation and acceptability data used to inform a Randomized Control Trial of the program
 - With implications for improving systemic humanitarian programming for at-risk adolescents

'I am asking for my parents' opinion more before making a decision and they also ask for my opinion more often.'
Lebanese adolescent, September 2021

'Really enjoyed the sessions and the talks we had were really important. The kids are benefiting, their behavior has improved with each other and they are more respectful.'
Syrian mother, September 2021