

## WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE? SELF-IDENTIFIED GOAL SETTING BY BIRTHING PEOPLE WHO USE SUBSTANCES (BPWUS) IN THE PARENT CHILD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### Authors:

Lockhart R<sup>2</sup>, Campbell S<sup>1</sup>, Fana N<sup>1</sup>, Lunney S<sup>1</sup>, Gander S<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Horizon Health Network, <sup>2</sup>Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick, <sup>3</sup>Memorial University, <sup>4</sup>NB Social Pediatrics Inc.

**Background:** The Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) is a three-year, trauma-informed intervention that provides support, advocacy, and service connection to birthing people who use substances (BPWUS). BPWUS often experience enormous personal and systemic barriers when attempting to access resources and services. The Difference Game has clients identify items from a list of 31 options that would “make the biggest difference in their life”, and then rank the five most important to address. From these, clients and their PCAP advocates prioritize and plan their goals. This approach empowers BPWUS to guide their own journey and build self-efficacy.

**Methods:** This retrospective observational study describes the trends in Difference Game responses from PCAP clients. Responses were recorded at two time points, at least three months apart. Descriptive statistics describe demographic data and trends in response frequencies.

**Results:** The sample consisted of 43 clients aged 19 – 40 (M=26), who had an average of two children. “Dependable transportation” (81.4%) was the most frequently identified goal at time point 1, followed by “more education” (74.4%). At time point 2, more education (71.1%) was the top response, followed by “money to buy necessities” (53.3%) and “more control over my life,” (53.3%). Top priorities across both time points were “housing”, “more education”, and “dependable transportation” and “money to buy necessities.”

**Conclusion:** Overall, this study highlighted that many basic needs of this population are not being met. Empowering BPWUS to identify and select their personal goals is essential to improving service access and promoting self-efficacy among BPWUS. The Human Right to Social Service states that everyone has the right to a food, clothing, housing and necessary social services, and that motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. This study demonstrates the BPWUS’ and their children’s rights are being violated and require special attention.

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