

Mothers in Mind™ helps Farah find her way

Farah had a difficult childhood filled with abuse and neglect. As an adult, Farah experienced ongoing physical and emotional abuse by her partner, since before she was pregnant with her son, Amal.

Once Amal was born, Farah felt isolated and alone. For Farah it was hard seeing other mothers enjoy breastfeeding their babies. She wasn't sure why, but for her breastfeeding didn't feel good. It always left her feeling upset and scared.

As her son grew he began to look more and more like his father, Farah's abuser. Farah reported that she felt disconnected to Amal. She found that she had a hard time understanding what he wanted, and admitted that there had been times when she worried that her son might become abusive towards her. This was making parenting him difficult.

Farah realized that she and her son needed help. At first she tried going to a regular parenting group; however, Farah still felt alone. Everyone in the group seemed to enjoy being with their child. Farah was afraid to talk about the abuse she had experienced and her struggles with her relationship with her son. Farah never returned.

As things continued to deteriorate, child welfare became involved and Farah was referred to Child Development Institute's Mothers in Mind program because her support worker was concerned about the impact Farah's trauma and abuse was having on her relationship with her young son.

Mothers in Mind is an innovative, interactive parenting group designed specifically for mothers who have experienced violence and/or trauma and are parenting children under the age of four.

Farah was hesitant to join another parenting group, but quickly felt at ease. She was surprised to learn that there were other mothers struggling with the same issues she was. Farah was able to talk about her feelings of being a 'bad mom' and felt relieved when she started to understand how her experiences of violence and trauma were making parenting difficult.

Over the course of the ten weeks, the Mothers in Mind facilitators found ways to gently reflect back to Farah all of the moments of connection that they saw between her and her son. Farah had never had anyone notice the positive things she was doing with her son. Things began to shift. Farah began to enjoy being with her son. She started playing with him, found strategies to identify and respond sensitively to his needs and developed skills to better deal with stress and the moments when Amal reminded her of her abuser.

For Farah and her son, the Mothers in Mind program, made a big difference. Farah was able to better understand the impact of violence and trauma on her relationship with her son, and gained the skills and confidence needed to be the mom she had always wanted to be.