



# Children & Mothers in Mind: *Retrieving the mother-child relationship*

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# Early intervention

CMIM is designed for mothers

who:

- Have experienced family violence, either in a recent relationship, or in their family of origin
- Have at least one child aged between 0 – 4 years living in their care
- No longer live with the perpetrator of



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# Adapting a program to local needs

## Mothers in Mind

### Aims

- Provide trauma-informed parenting information
- Connect participants with other mothers with similar experiences.
- Strengthen mothers' self-care, self-compassion & stress management skills in relation to parenting
- Enhance mother-child attachment



## Children & Mothers in Mind

### Aims

- Enhance understanding of family violence
- Overcome the impacts of trauma
- Connect families with shared experiences
- Increase maternal self-compassion
- Improve developmental outcomes



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# Children & Mothers in Mind

## 22 week program

- 1:1 Supported entrance into the program
- **Connections**
  - 8 week FV psychoeducation group
- **Mothers in Mind**
  - 10 week mother-infant play-based group
- **Case management**
- 1:1 Supported exit from the program





# Children & Mothers in Mind

Designed for mothers & infants (0-4yrs) who have experienced family violence

- **Northern Metro:** Kids First
- **Western Metro:** Kids First
- **Barwon:** The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre
- **Goulburn Valley:** Family Care
- **Inner Gippsland:** Anglicare & Quantum



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# CMIM evaluation – 3 levels of evaluation

1. DHHS evaluation of the FV demonstration projects
2. Continuing evaluation by Canadian MIM designer
  - Pre & Post psychometric measures
  - Demographic data
  - MIM program fidelity
3. In-depth interviews with participants & facilitators (Univ. of Melbourne)
  - Experience of the program
  - Connections to formal & informal supports
  - Impact of external factors in families'



# Key findings of the MIM evaluation

*Before, I didn't take time with them or play with them. . . . Sometimes when I play with them, all my stress and other troubles go.*

*The program, especially the [facilitators]...they gave me self-confidence again. . . I started to feel like I deserve all that and that I can do it. It's hard, but I can.*

*Even if you had your child around, just learning to do small things . . . It's just so small and it's so funny but it's like I feel guilty for doing those things, so to hear that was like - you know what? I'm going to dry my damn hair today.*

*All these [self-care quotes] help - especially sometimes I take them down and read them again. They're very powerful and inside, words can calm you down."*



# Preliminary findings of the CMIM evaluation – participant experiences

- *What I hoped was to not feel alone in a dark place. . . . at that time,... I needed a little bit of support, a bit of structure, and I needed to not resent my daughter, so that group was really good. I needed to interact with her in a healthy way.*
- **Connections** – *"Getting things off your chest without being mindful of your little one"*
- **Mothers in Mind** – *"We came away with something that I could share with my son & reinforce our bond"*
- *I felt a lot more secure in what I was doing in my parenting and it was more of a connection I think. I think our connection is a lot stronger and enjoying those small moments*





# Children & Mothers in Mind

## Strengths of the program

- Brokerage support
- Trauma informed practice
- Group intervention - social connection
- The length & intensity of the program
- Information on child development &



the impact of trauma on brain

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# Children & Mothers in Mind

## Strengths of the program

- The impact on the mother-child relationship

*Attachment Relationship: Zero to Three (2001)*

- *An enduring emotional bond that initially develops with an infant's primary caregiver who is responsible for comforting, supporting, nurturing & protecting the child*



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*The emotional security an infant feels*

# Children & Mothers in Mind

## Program Development

- Program structure
- Supported transition

Connections → Mothers in Mind

- Cultural adaptability of the program



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