

Nobody's Perfect Parent Program

INFORMATION SHEET

Online Facilitation of Nobody's Perfect Parent Program (NPP)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, physical distancing has been a very important public health measure to contain the outbreak and reduce community transmission. This measure has affected the delivery of in-person Nobody's Perfect parenting groups across the country. During this, and potential future, health pandemics, online platforms offer an opportunity to continue the Nobody's Perfect Parenting (NPP) program through adapted, new approaches that still offer the support provided by in-person sessions.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE IS SAYING

The Nobody's Perfect program was designed for in-person sessions; however, virtual support can overcome accessibility barriers for specific groups. Qualitative research has found that online programs are effective and make a significant positive contribution to the lives of parents and children. Web-based parenting programs can enable new, highly interactive sessions between parents and professionals and can still allow for parental competencies coaching. Not only can knowledge be enhanced, but attitudinal and behavioural aspects of parenting can still be positively influenced through an online platform¹.

This information sheet provides guidance to facilitators who want, and can, deliver the parenting program online. It provides recommendations and ideas, with an aim of ensuring the integrity and quality of the Nobody's Perfect program is maintained.

GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE NOBODY'S PERFECT PARENTING GROUPS

- A maximum of 6 participants per videoconferences session is recommended;
- Ask parents for the optimal length of time for each online session (recommendation: no longer than 1 hour);
- Use online platforms that all participants can access, and familiarize yourself with them before the first session;
- Use closed forum and password protected videoconference meetings for the online sessions;
- Do not record virtual meetings;
- Continue to follow the Nobody's Perfect Parent program approach and refer to your facilitator's guide to conduct online sessions;
- Acknowledge that children may be present during the online sessions;
- Check-in regularly with the group to assess if the meetings and activities are working well on the platform you are using;
- Have a co-facilitator for online sessions, wherever possible. It helps to share the workload and time involved in running online sessions, as well as helps ensure participants are effectively supported with any issues that are raised;
- Focus on creating interactions and connections between the participating parents. The Nobody's Perfect Program's strength is in encouraging parents to support each other. Focus on who they are and the strengths they have to share with others.
- Have regular meetings with other NPP facilitators and master trainers to share reflections, challenges and best practices on the online parent group experience;

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- E-mail a pdf of the certificate of completion when the program is over.

PLANNING AN ONLINE GROUP PROGRAM

- Design a flyer / poster to recruit participants;
- Advertise the group through different venues (e.g., put up posters in grocery stores, access parents through other parents, use your regular social media sites, connect with local public health units and community centres, etc.);
- Before the first class, call parents that signed up for the online session and go through the general format of the group and what they can expect from the sessions;
- During this initial call:
 - assess technological capacity of participants (access to internet, screen, smart devices, etc.) and offer support if possible;
 - assess if there are topics outside the agenda that they want to discuss during the virtual class;
- To be trauma-informed and to create a safe space, parents can choose to participate using audio only for this initial contact.
- Use a mix of techniques to deliver the online sessions depending on individual needs within the group (e.g., one-on-one calls to discuss self-care and stress with participants; videoconference with the whole group; ongoing discussions throughout the week on discussion forum platforms (monitor daily the discussions on any private forums);
- Spend time walking through the electronic platform you will use with parents in the first class;
- When using different platforms:
 - incorporate visuals and small videos on the topics of the week, then pose a few open-ended questions using the discussion forum platform;
 - if the platform can create small groups use this feature when conducting the class via videoconference to break the group in small group discussions;
 - offer a new parent/child activity every week for participants to do;
- Remember to create group guidelines and incorporate energizers and icebreakers;
- During the sessions, ensure to introduce parenting topics at the appropriate time based on the groups' unique stages of development, even in an online environment, according to the NPP approach.
- If children are present, try to engage them with a story or song at the beginning of the session with parents, then have the children do a quiet activity while parents are online;
- Mail participants the parent kits prior to the NPP group, or just use the tip sheets;
- Use your facilitator guide (particularly the "Supplementary Module: One-on-one Virtual Group") to gain ideas on activities that would work well online.

ONLINE PLATFORMS

- When registering parents, let them know how the program will work online. Explain that when participants actively log into the virtual platform they are providing their consent to participate. Participants control which name they refer to themselves as on the platform and they can choose not to use their videos;
- Discuss with participants the risks with online platforms;
- Use platforms where you can create a password to enter the session in order to control access to the session;
- Do not post log in links to the virtual classes publicly. Instead send the link as an invitation to each participant.

OTHER IDEAS FOR FACILITATORS

There are a number of strategies that could be used to ensure participants are prepared and well supported throughout the online sessions, including:

- Pre-record information for participants and make it available to them before a live session (for example a video explaining how to access and use a virtual platform);
- Call parents regularly to assess their wellbeing can be helpful to ensure successful support of the group. (e.g. get information on how they are adjusting with the COVID-19 pandemic, what works well for them, what does not work for them, and any recommendation to improve future digital group). To ensure facilitators learn from each other's online experience, share participants' comments with provincial coordinators / master trainers / whoever is appropriate;
- Mail activity parent kits to participants in advance, in order to ensure they have time to reflect and ask any question in advance;
- Share the Nobody's Perfect tip sheets, they can be a helpful resource before, during or after the sessions: <http://nobodysperfect.ca/professionals/materials/#>;
- Use the local radio or TV service announcement spots, local newspaper or online forums to let parents know where they can access support;
- Offer different times of the day for the online groups, so parents can do a group during young children's nap time or wait until the children have gone to bed;
- Collaborate with other stakeholders to send out information to families (schools boards, community centres; local public health units, etc.);
- Share pictures of themselves with the participants and ask if they would share a storytelling picture with the facilitator; and
- Sift through weekly information pieces for parents from credible sources and creating short concise updates for participants.

¹Nieuwboer, C.C., Fukkink, R.G. &Hermanns, J.M.A., (2013). OnlinePrograms as Tools to Improve Parenting: A meta-analytic review,Children and YouthServices Review, doi:10.1016/j.chilyouth.2013.08.008