



This info sheet is one of 12 two-pagers that highlights key findings and promising practices from the **Co-Creating Evidence (CCE)** study.

Co-Creating Evidence was an evaluation of eight different Canadian programs serving women at risk of having an infant with prenatal exposure to alcohol or other substances.

Peer Mentoring and Wraparound Programs

In the CCE study, 4 programs had peer mentoring as central to their model.

However, to varying degrees, peer mentoring and support were key aspects of all eight programs participating in the study.

At intake, many clients said they had limited social support and felt isolated. **Women said they wanted opportunities for healthier peer connections**, to have the support of other women who understood what they were going through, and to find their community and/or culture.

"I was needing a group for women like me who have been through years of trauma and abuse."

"Knowing that there are people who care about you, that there's a community. That helps me to make positive choices. It makes me want to do better."

The programs created space for peer support to emerge naturally through meals, meeting other clients during drop-in and/or through facilitated sessions such as parenting groups, recovery groups, crafts or cultural activities. At some programs, Outreach Workers had similar lived experiences as participants, which helped staff build trusting relationships, instill hope and demonstrate that recovery is possible.

Peer mentoring can also happen amongst staff and program partners, particularly as trauma-informed and culturally-grounded approaches are brought to life in day-to-day practice. It is the knowledge and experience of staff mentoring staff that can create a systems-wide shift in practice and policy.



Peer mentoring in practice

Programs offer facilitated groups, which can provide women with a safe space to meet, learn, share stories and help each other.

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"It is good to see the moms contributing to the talk and sharing their knowledge."



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"You think you're going through things alone, but women remind you that you are not alone."

"There's a sense of community; the community is really good."

Programs employ staff with lived experience.



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"Because I am experiential, I give women hope that they can do what they need to in order to reduce harm in their lifestyle or to parent."



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"I get a lot of support from the other moms. We get together for dinners or go to the park or go swimming together."

Programs provide opportunities for clients to connect with each other, learn about resources, or try out volunteering or other activities in the community.

The Cultural Liaison helps women (re)connect with each other and their culture by helping them take part in cultural activities such as Round Dances, sweats, drumming, or crafts.

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"I got back into my culture; I'm teaching my daughter how to smudge and do drumming."

