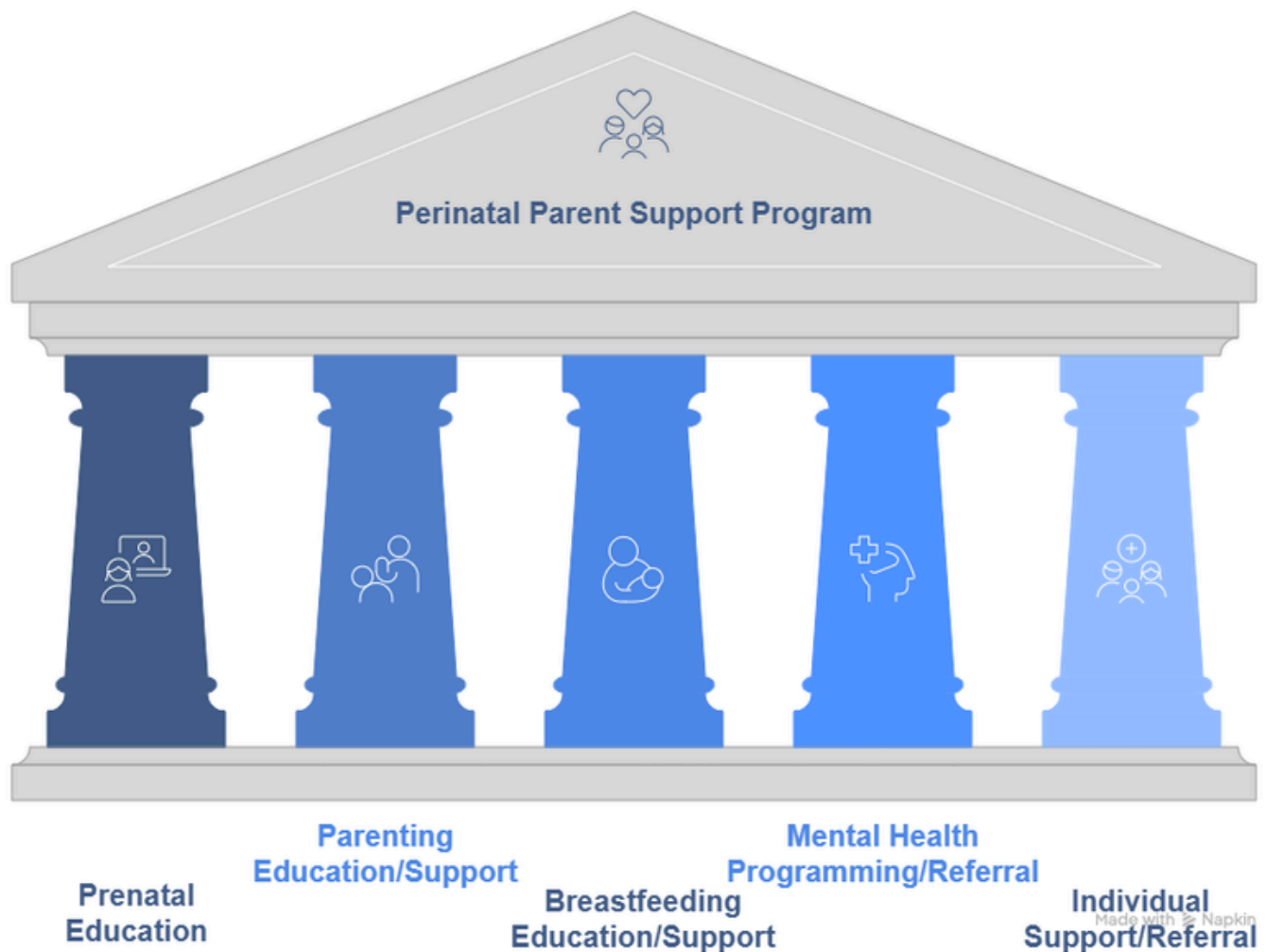




Community
Health Centre
Centre de santé
communautaire

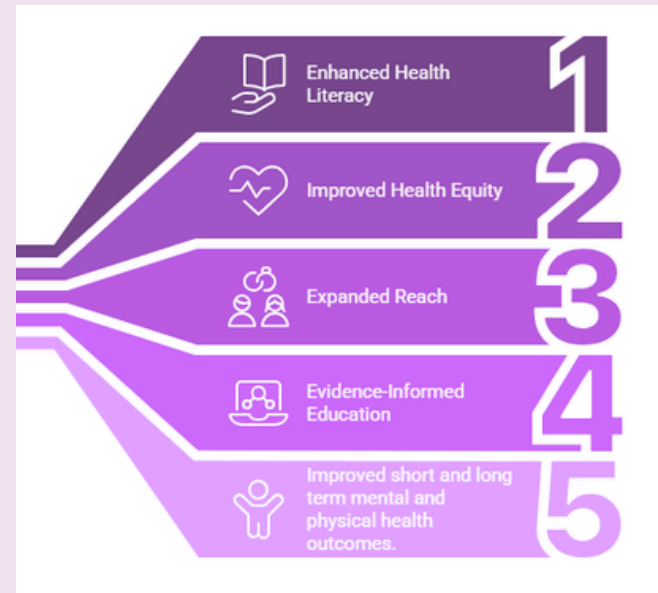
Perinatal Parent Support Program: *Supported From The Start*



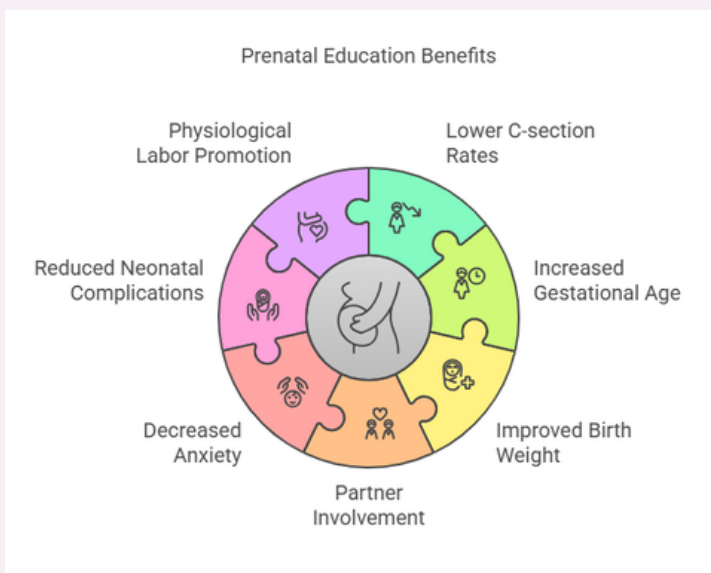
The Perinatal Parent Support Program (PPSP) is a comprehensive educational support initiative designed to assist pregnant and expectant families from early pregnancy through six months postpartum. This document highlights the program's five synergistic pillars while also detailing the participatory evaluation outcomes and the highlights and recommendations for 2024.

Expanding Continuity of Care through Virtual Connection

Carlington Community Health Center (CCHC) has been committed to helping individuals take charge of their health since 1985. In line with its mission to promote the health and well-being of various communities, CCHC offers distinctive programs focused on enhancing health literacy and equity. The virtual delivery of the PPSP enables us to broaden our outreach and content, offering evidence-based education, immediate support, and continuity of care for families while removing numerous barriers to access.



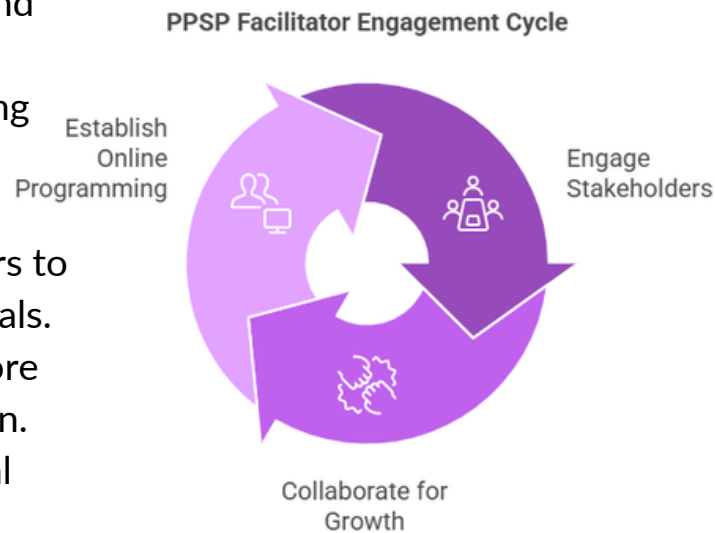
Prenatal Education Improves Health Outcomes



The importance of prenatal education is well-documented, with numerous studies indicating both immediate and long-term health benefits *. These benefits include lower rates of cesarean births, increased gestational age and birth weight, improved partner involvement, decreased anxiety, and reduced neonatal complications. The promotion of physiological labor and birth, a key outcome of the PPSP, further supports maternal and infant health. A growing lack of free prenatal education can significantly impact health equity, making the availability of such programs crucial.

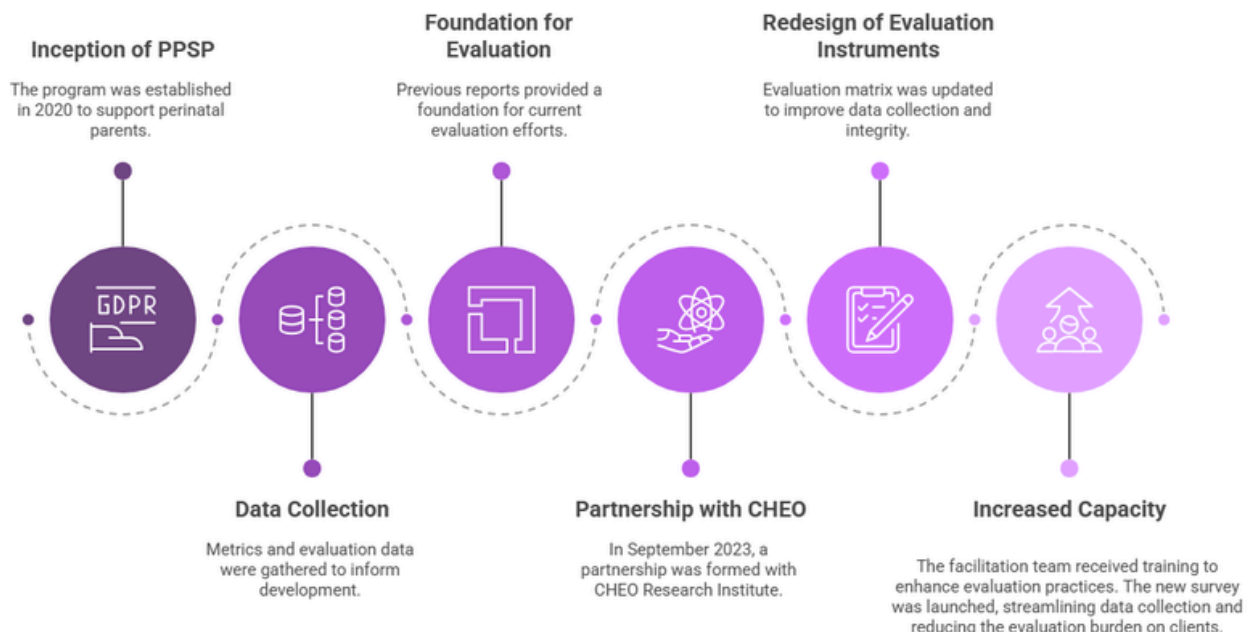
The PPSP facilitators serve as knowledge brokers and system linkage agents, assisting participants in navigating the healthcare system. Beyond facilitating the educational sessions, their roles include:

- Engaging with stakeholders across the five pillars to provide timely support and individualized referrals.
- Collaborating with community partners to explore opportunities for program growth and expansion.
- Establishing online communities to reduce social isolation among participants.



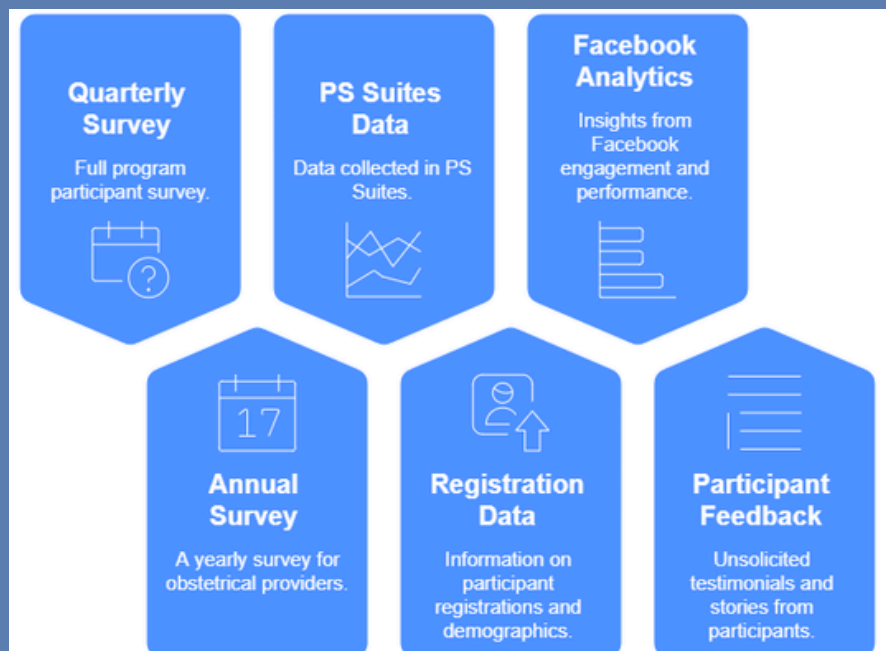
Commitment to Evaluation

Since its inception in 2020, the PPSP has collected metrics and evaluation data to inform program development. Previous evaluation reports have laid the groundwork for the current evaluation efforts. In September 2023, CCHC partnered with evaluators from the Clinical Research Unit of the CHEO Research Institute to enhance the program's evaluation strategies. This collaboration has led to the redesign of evaluation instruments, increasing capacity and ensuring sustainable evaluation practices moving forward.





Our evaluation tools are designed to measure the effectiveness, quality and performance of our program. Each tool is designed to gather specific types of data to produce actionable insights that can guide decision-making and drive continuous improvement ensuring that the program can be responsive to client and community needs.



60

Prenatal Sessions - 5/month

Ongoing cohorted live sessions with ample facilitator connection and follow up

100

Parent Education Sessions - 2x/week

Ongoing sessions with ample opportunity for clients to connect and ask questions weekly

6

Partner Only Sessions - 6x/year

Partner specific programming giving the opportunity for open discussion and questions with no pregnant parents involved

24

Prenatal Breastfeeding Information Sessions - 2x / month

Covering critical info needed BEFORE delivery for the best outcomes

50

Q and A with a Lactation Consultant - 1x/week

Providing access to information from an IBCLC before and after birth

12

High Risk Pregnancy- Roadmap to Successful Breastfeeding 1x/month

Providing more specific information to high risk clients

2

Managing Anxiety for New and Expectant Parents -Series of 4 sessions 4x/year (Lack of funding has reduced this amount from 4-2 in 2024)

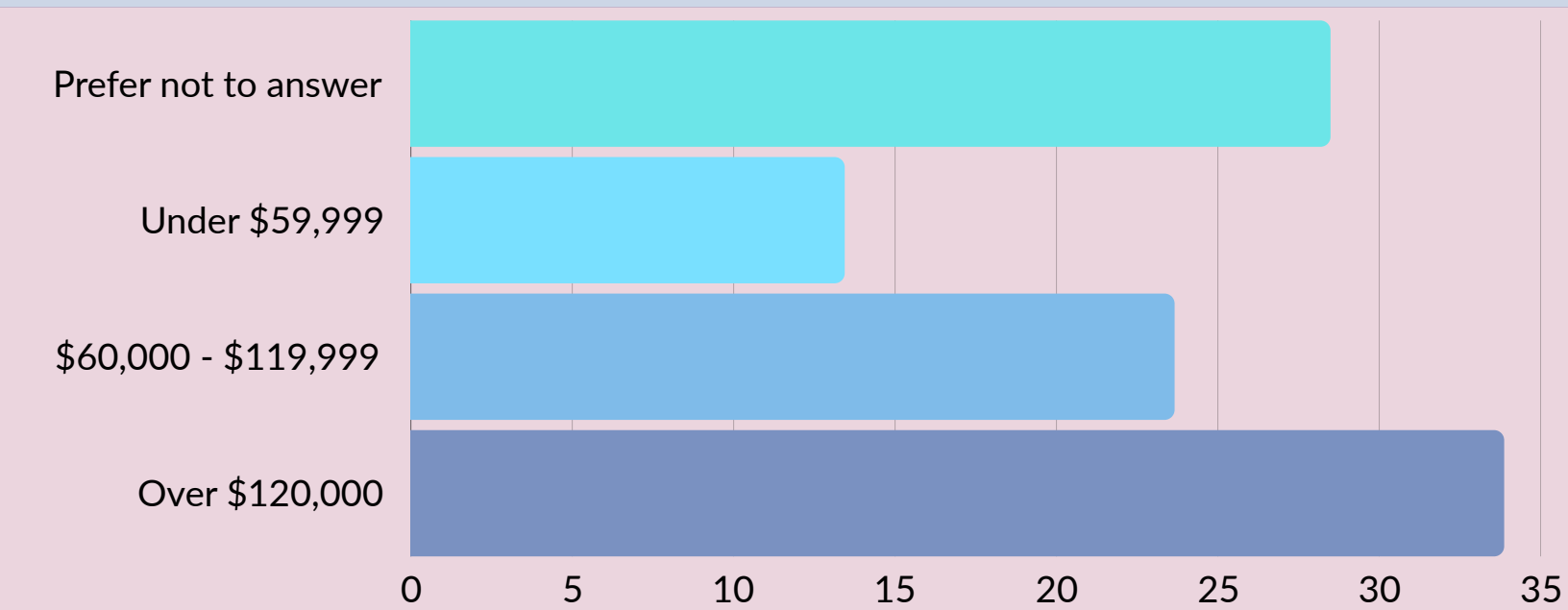
CBT based sessions covering the unique brain changes in pregnancy/postpartum

653

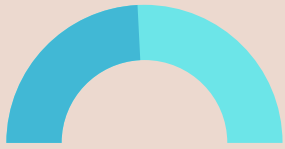
One On One Sessions (Lactation/FSW)

Providing individualized support for lactation, pregnancy and/or parenting issues/concerns. Systems navigation and/or referral

Total Program Participants 1556*



91% having their first baby



48.4% identify as ethnically diverse

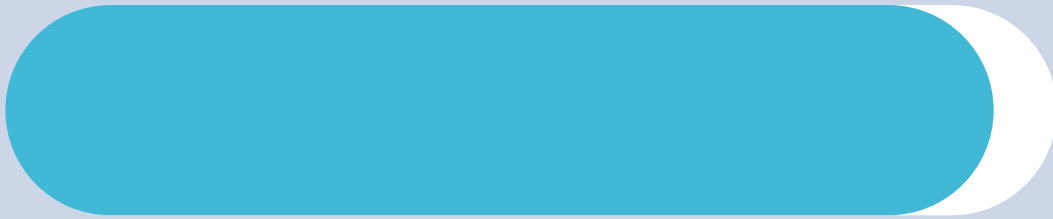


68% indicate partner participation in some or all of the programming

98% WOULD RECOMMEND THE PPSP TO OTHERS

PROGRAM COLLABORATIONS

Champlain Maternal Regional Program, The Ottawa Hospital, Montfort Hospital, Ottawa Birth and Wellness Centre, Ottawa Public Health, Leeds Lanark Grenville District Health Unit, Southeast Ontario District Health Unit, Renfrew and District Health Unit, Regional Obstetrical Care Providers



93% infants still receiving breastmilk at 6 weeks



90.3% Learned how to hand express colostrum BEFORE they delivered



67 % Hand express colostrum in the first 48 hrs after birth



72% Accessed resources they learned about in PPSP



55% Planned to breastfeed beyond one year

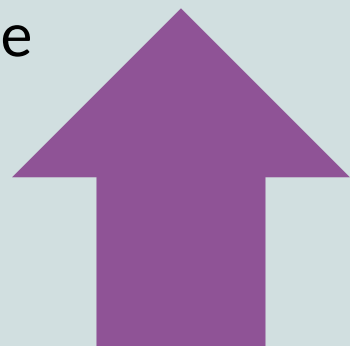
In-hospital supplementation was 20% lower than provincial average AND when clients did supplement 62% supplemented with hand expressed breastmilk and formula instead of formula alone.



85% Indicated reduced anxiety as a result of the programming

91 % Indicated improved Knowledge

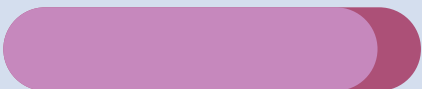
89 % Indicated improved confidence



85% Indicated they had increased responsivity to their infants



91% Indicated that the one on one sessions provided the information they wanted



90 % Indicated improved confidence to parent their baby

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

8



65.5% of participants also viewed recordings alone or with a partner



58% indicated they connected to program staff outside of the group sessions



81.4% only joined through Facebook



100% of participants liked the virtual format of the programming stating that it reduced many barriers to attendance including transportation (83%) and reduced time commitment (91.5%)



85.3% indicated they joined the program during the prenatal period



33 %* indicated they had a cesarean birth * (This makes the breastfeeding outcomes even more remarkable as cesarean birth is a known risk factor for experiencing breastfeeding difficulty).



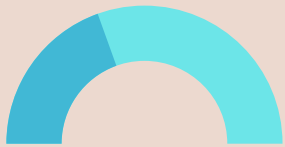
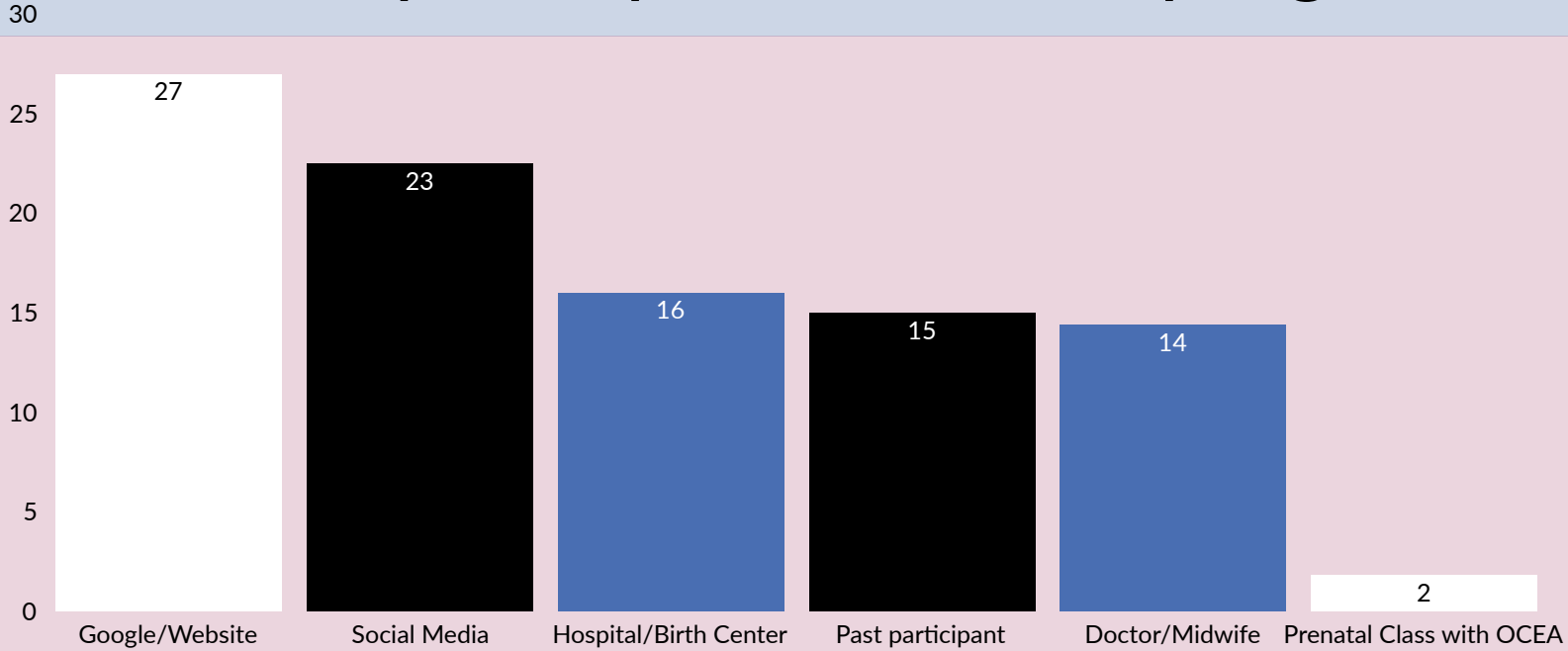
55.7% * indicated they joined the program under 24 weeks of pregnancy *(target is 80%)

“Definitely reduced my anxiety and also helped me feel OK and knowing that other parents have similar struggles, I also learned to trust myself and my instincts more”

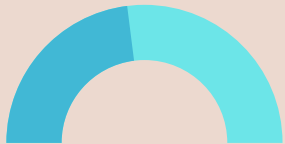
“Thank you so much for all the resources and support you provide - this program (and the staff) is AMAZING”

“I know that even when it’s hard to get out of the house some days, I can join a virtual group to have questions answered.”

How did participants find the program?



39% were told they had a **high risk** pregnancy by their HCP



46% attend **parenting** sessions while still pregnant



850 Families joined Pregnant in Ottawa Free Online Prenatal classes FB group

Clients Stay in until approx. 36 weeks pregnant



540 Families joined Ottawa Prenatal, Breastfeeding and Parent Support Group

Clients join anytime after 24 weeks pregnant and stay in until baby is 6 mos old

18% joined through zoom links/email/ website etc. (Not Facebook)

76% engaged with program content through Facebook groups (Posts, Files, Media etc.)

- Participants reported a **reduction in anxiety, increased confidence, and a stronger sense of community.**
- Many felt more prepared for postpartum challenges, contributing to improved mental well-being.

"My anxiety about being a mom has reduced due to the information I get from this program."

"The services and resources provided through the program are invaluable to new and expecting parents."

"This program has made me a more confident mom."

"It definitely helped me to trust myself more. It reassured me that I was making the right choices for me and my baby."

"The educators are incredibly knowledgeable and break down the information in an easy-to-understand way."

"The PPSP helped both my husband and me with almost every aspect of parenting and prenatal care. Before accessing the program, I had extreme anxiety about birth, breastfeeding, my postpartum mental health, and my ability to parent my newborn.

With the program's amazing support system, I was able to have the birth I envisioned, breastfeed my baby with confidence, and enjoy excellent postpartum mental health. I know this would not have been possible without the PPSP."

"Feeling less alone, less anxiety."

Key Findings:

- Participants reported being **more responsive to their infants**
- They **improved their understanding on Infant and Child Mental Health**
- **Partners** reported appreciating partner specific programming and **felt it better prepared** them for life with a new baby

What Can We Do Better?

Enhancing Program Impact Through Awareness, Variety, and Accessibility



Program Awareness

Expanding outreach to primary HCP's to reach more participants.

Session Variety

Introducing more programming.

Accessibility & Scheduling

Offering flexible timing and recorded sessions to enhance participation.

If participating in Perinatal Parent Support Program has positively impacted your mental health (for example, reduced your anxiety, improved your confidence, reduced sense of isolation, etc.) please tell us more.

- "My anxiety about being a mom has reduced due to the information I get from this program, and it has made me more confident."
- "It definitely helped me to trust myself more. It reassured me that I was making the right choices for me and my baby."
- "I experienced so much anxiety throughout my pregnancy and leading up to my birth. Because getting pregnant had been so difficult, I assumed I would struggle with many aspects of postpartum: mental health, mood, breastfeeding. It turned out to be the opposite. CHC prepared me so well for what to expect and how to navigate challenges. I ended up having an incredibly smooth first two weeks postpartum."
- "The PPSP helped both my husband and me with almost every aspect of parenting and prenatal care. Before accessing the program, I had extreme anxiety about birth, breastfeeding, my postpartum mental health, and my ability to parent my newborn. With the program's amazing support system, I was able to have the birth I envisioned, breastfeed my baby with confidence, and enjoy excellent postpartum mental health. I know this would not have been possible without the PPSP."
- "Gillian enabled me and my partner, new immigrants, to make informed choices and feel confident as parents. I had a wonderful pregnancy and birthing experience because I felt I had access to the resources I needed, and Gillian was always just a message away. Hand expression, mindfulness, breathing exercises, and temperament analysis have helped us along the way. Not a day goes by without using one of the techniques Gillian taught me!"
- "Definitely reduced my anxiety and also helped me feel OK knowing that other parents have similar struggles. I also learned to trust myself and my instincts more."
- "Feeling less alone, less anxiety."
- "Reduced anxiety by being able to ask the questions I had top of mind right when they happened in the Q&A sessions. Helped to calm those doubts immediately and stop worrying about it."
- "I live away from my friends and family, so it was great to connect with others, share experiences, get information, and have questions answered."
- "I know that even when it's hard to get out of the house some days, I can join a virtual group to have questions answered."
- "Helped my partner and I work together better."
- "This program has made me a more confident mom."
- "Very useful information. I learned a lot and feel less stressed about giving birth and breastfeeding because of all the knowledge and help."

Conclusions

The Perinatal Parent Support Program (PPSP) stands as a vital resource for expectant families and addresses diverse needs through its comprehensive structure and evidence-based practices. The ongoing community collaboration, evaluation and accessibility of the program ensures that it remains responsive to the community's needs, ultimately promoting health equity and improving outcomes for mothers and infants alike.

Perinatal Parent Support Program: Supported from the Start A Comprehensive Support for Expectant Families

