

***The Process of Transition to Non-Violent Parenting Norms
among Newcomer Parents in Manitoba***

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Each year, Manitoba resettles thousands of immigrants and refugees. Many are parents coming from cultures where corporal punishment is commonplace. As part of the resettlement process, newcomers are told that corporal punishment is not acceptable in Canada, which often leads to intense fear among parents who believe that their children will be apprehended. These parents are uncertain of how violence is defined in federal and provincial law, and they are unsure of how to teach their children without corporal punishment. A community agency in Manitoba, Mosaic Newcomer Resource Network, provides support to newcomer parents who are struggling with these issues. This agency delivers 'Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting' (PDEP), a program that teaches parents skills in non-violent, non-punitive discipline.

This poster will describe the results of a qualitative study that explored the process of transition among newcomer mothers who took this program. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted with mothers from Africa, Asia the Middle East and South America. They described their struggles with adapting to Canadian parenting norms. Many had been beaten as children. Although they believed that their own parents' violence had been motivated by love, none of the mothers believed that corporal punishment was constructive. They explained that PDEP had provided them with a new non-violent vision of parenting, described the parenting changes they had made, and reported that their confidence had increased since learning about PDEP. They also explained that the program had helped them to better understand their children's perspectives. The findings will be presented according to the four main themes that emerged: 1) the meaning of parenting; 2) a new vision of parenting; 3) conflicting notions of discipline; and 4) navigating the parent-child acculturation gap. Recommendations for professionals supporting newcomer parents will be provided.