

ENGAGING IN DUAL-LEVEL REFLECTION: EXPLORING THE PERSPECTIVES OF
COUNTRY TRAINERS AND PROGRAM FACILITATORS TO UNDERSTAND THE
IMPACT OF A VIOLENCE PREVENTION PARENTING PROGRAM IN JAPAN

By

Abigail Delyea

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ABSTRACT

Over the decades, robust research has documented numerous detrimental effects of physical and emotional punishment on children. Not only is this type of punishment harmful to children's well-being, but it is also a violation of children's universal human rights. As a result, parenting supports, including psychosocial education and intervention programs, have been developed to prevent and respond to emotional and physical punishment of children. *Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting* (PDEP) is an evidence-informed parenting program aimed at reducing punitive violence against children and strengthening parent-child relationships to promote healthy development. PDEP has been implemented in numerous countries worldwide, including in Japan since 2014. PDEP's evidence base is largely informed by assessments of parent participants, including their changes from pre-program to post-program based on quantitative methods. In Japan, PDEP's existing evidence is based on assessments of parents' attitudes and beliefs at pre-program, and then again at post-program. Globally, understanding PDEP Country Trainers' and Program Facilitators' experiences implementing the program with parents, as well as their own understanding of the approach, had been unexplored. Additional research examining PDEP Country Trainers' and Program Facilitators' experiences delivering the program to parents contributes to a deeper understanding of the PDEP parallel process and the program's mechanisms of change within the Japanese context. Using a qualitative, grounded theory approach, the study explored the perspectives of PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators implementing the PDEP program in Japan. Individual interviews were conducted with Country Trainers and Program Facilitators to understand their experiences engaging in PDEP training approach, the parallel process of program delivery, and their perspectives of the program's mechanisms of change. The goal of the study was to better understand the impacts of the PDEP program and the parallel process on parents from both Country Trainer and Program Facilitator perspectives in Japan. Findings from the study offer a

deeper understanding of the program's functioning and processes and contributes to the PDEP's global evidence base.

Keywords: corporal punishment, punitive violence, physical punishment, emotional punishment, parenting, child rights, discipline, Japan

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Dedication

To my dad, Brandon Delyea, who has been the greatest example of strength and resilience, and who has shown me guidance and love that carries through adversity.

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Chapter 1: General Introduction

Introduction

Punitive violence, including physical and other emotional forms of punishment, is the most common form of violence against children around the world (Durrant & Ensom, 2017; Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2020; Heilmann et al., 2015; Lindahl, 2010; World Health Organization, 2020). Despite its noted inconsistency with international child rights laws and conventions, widespread social acceptance and persisting legality of corporal punishment continues to exist worldwide, (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006) and influence parenting practices in many countries (Heilmann et al., 2021). In April 2024, the World Health Organization estimated that at least one billion children, equivalent to 1 in 2 children worldwide, continue to experience punitive violence (also referred to as corporal punishment) every year (Krug, 2024). Additionally, previous research has reported that corporal punishment varies (World Health Organization, 2020) based on cultural and communal differences in parenting practices (Rodríguez et al., 2009; Engulu & Harris, 2017; Gershoff et al., 2012). Variability of parenting and disciplinary practices is associated with family models, socioeconomic status, religions (Lansford et al., 2012), occurrences of war or community violence (Eltanamy et al., 2021), natural disasters (Hafstad et al., 2012), and history of colonization (Muir et al., 2019). Given these considerations over the years, international non-governmental organizations, in partnership with States Parties, have led global efforts to combat the epidemic of punitive violence against children, with the aim of abolishing corporal punishment (End Corporal Punishment, 2025; Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2020; Lindahl, 2010). As of late 2025, 70 countries and 16 territories have achieved the full ban of corporal punishment against children in all settings, and an additional 25 States Parties have indicated their commitment to law reform (End Corporal

Punishment, 2025). Despite this global progress toward law reform and the recognition of children's rights, it is estimated that less than 15% of the world's children are legally protected from corporal punishment in all settings, including the family unit (Save the Children, 2023).

The family unit cannot be understood without acknowledging the cultural, systemic, and historical contexts that have influenced parenting and traditionally accepted disciplinary practices within diverse societal contexts (Holloway & Nagase, 2014). It is well accepted that parents tend to engage in practices with their children that reflect the cultural models of child rearing from which they were raised (Holland & Quinn, 1987), including beliefs and practices that are passed down through generations, as well as shifts in cultural adaptations to parenting (Holloway & Nagase, 2014). In Japan, nuclear families are the most common family structure; however, traditionally, households were multi-generational, with three generations residing together. Overall, family size has declined in Japan throughout the second half of the 20th century (Jones, 2024). In 2022, Japan's national fertility rate of 1.26 was a record low for the country, and the country's annual number of births was below 0.8 million children for the first time since 1899 (Jones, 2024). Despite the notable decline in live births in Japan, the rate of child abuse has increased substantially (Goto et al., 2020). In the Japanese context, child abuse has been partially associated with a reliance on traditional parenting practices and dominant ideologies of child-rearing that idealize child compliance and obedience (End Corporal Punishment, 2023). Many traditional values of parenting and family hierarchical models continue to be reflected in contemporary Japanese households, emphasizing and prioritizing values and practices of interconnectedness, family cohesion, duty, respect, and interdependence of family generations (Goto et al., 2020). Moreover, in Japan, there is a reliance on punitive disciplinary practices that include corporal punishment, emotional punishment, and strict obedience and compliance of children both within the home as well as educational settings.

In Japan, discussions regarding child rearing and corporal punishment are noted in the literature as early as the late 1800s and occurred throughout many changes in the country's history, including periods of increased militarism during times of war, economic growth during the post-war recovery, following natural disasters, and national religious shifts (Miller, 2016). The literature on the Japanese history of familial and cultural parenting practices draws attention to three periods of dramatic change focused on the family as an institution (Holloway & Nagase, 2014). The first of these periods occurred in the late 1860s when Japan first became immersed in a large wave of Westernized ideas regarding child-rearing, marriage, and other aspects of family life, which occurred after a long period of institutional and cultural isolation, with little input from Western nations (Holloway & Nagase, 2014). Subsequently, the impact of several wars during the *Shōwa* period in the following decades led to shifting ideas surrounding discipline, obedience, and responsibilities within the family (Miller, 2016). Lastly, starting in the mid-late 1900s, during the *kōdō keizai seichōki* period, the Japanese economy grew substantially for many years, vastly impacting cultural and societal views around the responsibilities of children within the home, the education system, ideas about employment, as well as a shifting ideology about child compliance and discipline (Kumagai & Ishii-Kuntz, 2016). Around this time, the country experienced an increase in youth crime rates, a slowing economy after a long period of economic growth, and an increase in negative attitudes towards the Japanese education systems and their use of *taibatsu* (the term used within Japanese culture to define corporal punishment) (Miller, 2016). A series of tragic events involving parental use of corporal punishment made national news headlines during these years, labelling the use of physical punishment as a 'national' problem. This media coverage emphasized the increasing public debate over the use of corporal punishment in Japan (Miller, 2016).

In 2018, police data from Japan depicted a 20% increase in suspected child abuse cases compared to the year prior (CGTN, 2019). The following year, corporal punishment in Japan

captured the attention of local and international audiences due to several more cases of tragic child deaths resulting from punitive violence (i.e., corporal punishment) administered by parents (Kyodo, 2019). A number of these cases of punitive violence occurred in 2019, including the death of a 10-year-old girl whose parents reported that they were trying to ‘discipline’ their child using corporal punishment (Japan Times, 2019). In response to these high-profile cases, human rights advocates and child-serving agencies reiterated calls for the Japanese government to increase efforts to prevent punitive violence against children, including law reform efforts to legally ban corporal punishment.

Following intense advocacy and awareness-raising efforts, in 2020 Japan legally banned the use of corporal punishment against children in all settings, including the home. In doing so, Japan became the 59th country at that time to achieve full prohibition. This ban marked a notable shift in the country’s social and public acceptance of punitive violence against children in the context of child-rearing and parenting. In addition to this monumental legal reform, behavioural change initiatives, including implementing universal parenting psychosocial education to help support parents to stop using corporal punishment, were promoted in Japan (Mori et al., 2015).

One psychosocial parent education program that has been widely implemented in Japan is the *Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting* (PDEP). PDEP is a universal and child rights-based parenting program that was first introduced in Japan in 2014, as a component of Save the Children Japan’s (SCJ) Great East Earthquake Relief Initiative (Stewart-Tufescu, 2018). As the implementation of parenting support in the context of a national disaster has proven to be an essential component of response planning and recovery (Masten & Narayan, 2012), PDEP was established as a central component of SCJ’s domestic program following the Great East Earthquake. PDEP was also profiled as a core component of SCJ’s national campaign to reduce punitive violence against children (Stewart-Tufescu, 2018).

PDEP is a transformative parenting program that provides parents and other caregivers with information about child development, children's rights, and effective parenting and introduces non-violent parenting strategies based on conflict resolution skills (Ateah et al., 2023; Durrant et al., 2014). Following the introduction of PDEP to Japan by SCJ, a new Japanese not-for-profit community organization called Kidzuku was initiated to expand and scale the program across the country. Kidzuku collaborates with SCJ and other Japanese community organizations to deliver the program to Japanese families free of charge. Currently, Kidzuku and the PDEP community partners continue to facilitate the growing number of PDEP programs and facilitators across the country.

Since PDEP's introduction to Japan, evidence of the program's effectiveness has been promising and growing. Previous research has found the program to be effective at changing the perspectives of Japanese parents by decreasing their approval of physical and emotional punishment; decreasing their perceptions of children's behaviours as willful misbehaviour, by increasing their understanding of children's developmental norms; and increasing parents' self-efficacy to use non-violent conflict resolution skills to address typical parent-child challenges (Durrant et al., 2020). Post-program assessments have found the program to be highly relevant and effective, with the majority of Japanese parents reporting feeling more prepared to constructively respond to everyday parent-child conflict without violence following their participation in the PDEP program (Durrant et al., 2020; Stewart-Tufescu, 2018).

In 2024, with the ongoing implementation and expansion of PDEP in Japan, there was an opportunity to diversify how the program was being evaluated, and to deepen our understanding of the program's overall impact, including exploring the experiences of the Japanese PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators – the individuals who are responsible for delivering the PDEP program directly to parents. To date, the majority of existing studies of PDEP in Japan have focused

solely on the perspectives of parents who have taken the program, and have relied on quantitative assessments, including measuring pre- and post-program changes via standardized questionnaires. There were no published studies in Japan that had examined the impact of the program from the perspective of the Country Trainers and Program Facilitators. There was also a dearth of PDEP research using in-depth qualitative approaches.

PDEP's Parallel Process

A key component of the PDEP program's training model is the Parallel Process. The Parallel Process is a part of the PDEP mentoring structure in which certified PDEP Country Trainers model the core concepts of the program to PDEP Program Facilitators who then model these concepts with the parents. The most important outcome of the Parallel Process is that parents will then exemplify warmth and structure within their own relationships with their children. The Program Facilitators engage in a parallel mentoring process that also ensures their alignment with the PDEP program principles and their ability to guide parents throughout their learning journey. As a result, Program Facilitators engage in many interactions, observe the PDEP program principles in action, and have valuable insight into the program's mechanisms of change and impact on Japanese families.

Using a qualitative grounded theory approach, my study sought to address two notable gaps in our understanding of the PDEP program in Japan. By conducting in-depth, individual interviews, my study explored Japanese PDEP Country Trainers' and Program Facilitators' perceptions of the program and its processes, with an overall aim of gaining insight into their valuable observations and interactions with parents using the Parallel Process. The knowledge gained from the research is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of the PDEP program in Japan, how

and why the program works (i.e., mechanisms of change), and has further added to the PDEP evidence base globally.

Positionality Statement

Presenting one's positionality and social location is an important element of the research process. Acknowledging the impacts of personal positionality includes an ongoing process of reflexivity, which involves "self-monitoring, and a self-responding to, our thoughts, feelings, and actions as we engage in research." Current literature on reflexivity in qualitative research highlights the importance of researcher positionality and heightened awareness of the power researchers hold within the research process (Kovach, 2009). With a commitment to reflexive and anti-oppressive practice, as the Master of Social Work student conducting thesis research, I offer the following positionality statement to situate my work:

I identify as a cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied female. I am Canadian-born and residing in Canada, and I am English-speaking, middle-class, and Caucasian. I originated from a blended family and from a Christian background. In relation to social work, most of my practical knowledge and experience have been gathered through my career in child welfare, where I was first introduced to the world of social work through a child-centred and strengths-based lens. Currently, I am a child welfare worker, a graduate student, and a certified PDEP Facilitator. I consider myself to be an advocate and a feminist. I believe in the importance of equity, social context, and shared lived experience. I am a partner, daughter, granddaughter, friend, auntie, cousin, and sister. When reflecting on these facets of my identity, I recognize that being an advocate and a feminist, as well as having access to education and many employment opportunities, are privileges. These privileges contribute to the power that I held throughout the completion of the study.

In making this statement, I acknowledge that several facets of my identity come with an unearned privilege, including my settler ancestry as a Canadian-born person and the several parts of my identity that have been historically seen as normative within the Western culture and systems from which I completed the study. With these aspects of my identity in mind, while completing the project and disseminating its findings, I believe that it is crucial to acknowledge the unearned power that I hold and was committed to the completion of the project with a personal awareness of my own biases and privilege that may have influenced this research.

To assist in my preparation as a student-researcher, I was able to engage in several opportunities to increase my understanding of the PDEP approach and my appreciation and understanding of parenting in the Japanese context. In June 2023, I completed a five-day PDEP Facilitator training in Winnipeg, Manitoba, through Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network. This training was the beginning of my PDEP journey and was my first experience with an in-depth analysis of the research documenting the harms of punitive violence against children. As a child welfare worker, I have experience in talking about the harms associated with corporal punishment with the families with which I worked in the Canadian context. However, through this training, I truly came to understand the basis for how I had advised families over the years. I have always been an advocate for children's right to be free from violence and brought this into my work with Winnipeg Child and Families Services.

Following the PDEP Facilitator training in October 2023, I co-facilitated my first PDEP parent program. As a PDEP Facilitator, I felt empowered to share with the parents' information about new ways of being with, and responding to, their children in times of parent-child conflict that do not include physical and other emotional forms of punishment. In my PDEP sessions, most parents were astonished to learn about the harms associated with corporal punishment, and they

approached each session with curiosity about how to change their parenting for the betterment of their children. This curiosity and determination within my initial facilitation experience was empowering, and I carry that with me as a certified PDEP Facilitator. In 2025, I co-facilitated my second and third PDEP parent programs.

In December 2023, I participated in a 13-day field visit to Japan with Dr. Stewart-Tufescu, during which I met with the Kidzuku and Japanese PDEP teams. While in Japan, I observed a three-day PDEP Country Trainer candidate training and a four-day Program Facilitator training. This included the honour of meeting six PDEP Country Trainer candidates and 11 PDEP Program Facilitator trainees, all from different regions of Japan, who are part of the PDEP expansion plan facilitated by Kidzuku. This field visit was my first engagement with the international social work community, which significantly broadened my knowledge of different approaches to social work practice. Despite the variety and differences that exist cross-culturally, the universality of PDEP provided a common base and understanding that we all shared with one another throughout the training. The experience of engaging in social work training in Japan was truly an amazing opportunity. As a social worker and student who has only experienced the Canadian social service systems, I learned much through my engagement with the Kidzuku and the PDEP team. I felt very humbled by Kidzuku, the Program Facilitators, and the Country Trainers who welcomed me into their learning space, and by those who shared their experiences of PDEP with me along the way. These experiences and the cross-cultural engagement with amazing social workers, early childhood educators, PDEP Facilitators, Country Trainers, and families from Japan were valuable learning opportunities that have fueled my thesis research.

In the following chapters, I outline the rationale, methodology, and findings of my thesis research. Chapter 2 provides an expanded and comprehensive review of the literature and serves as

the foundation for this proposed study, including the justification for the elimination of punitive violence globally, a review of the parenting literature from Japan, and a fulsome description of the PDEP approach, including the training and mentoring model. Chapter 3 describes the overall purpose and research questions, the proposed methodology and data collection procedures, and feasibility. Chapter 4 details the findings of my study, including data analysis and coding processes conducted. Chapter 5 discusses the findings in the context of the existing literature and offers practice implications and knowledge mobilization initiatives. Lastly, Chapter 6 provides the summary conclusion of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Punitive and Disciplinary Violence

Over several decades, a robust body of literature has documented the harms and risks associated with punitive violence, including physical and other emotional forms of punishment in the context of discipline in response to perceived child ‘misbehaviour’ (Afifi et al., 2022; Durrant et al., 2014; Durrant & Stewart-Tufescu, 2017; Fortier et al., 2022; Gershoff 2002; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). In 2002, a meta-analysis of 88 studies documented the association between corporal punishment by parents towards their children and ten negative outcomes (Gershoff, 2002). These effects include an increased likelihood of experiencing mental and physical health issues, substance use disorders, aggression, injury, antisocial behaviour, negatively impacted cognitive development, attachment issues, and violence in adult intimate relationships. Subsequently, an updated meta-analysis was completed in 2016, reviewing 75 studies published over 5 decades, including over 160,000 children, and found further and stronger evidence to support these negative outcomes associated with corporal punishment; no evidence has found corporal punishment to be a benefit to children’s health and development (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). The analysis of this cumulative research illustrates the overwhelming evidence to support the elimination of corporal punishment and has been used to justify advancements in approaches to prevent and reduce punitive violence against children around the world. This research further illuminates that corporal punishment is a violation of children’s rights to protection from violence, as well as their rights to development, health, and safety (End Corporal Punishment, 2024).

Terminology

The conceptualization of and terms used to describe corporal punishment against children vary between cultures and communities (Waterston & Janson, 2020). Corporal punishment is

commonly conceptualized as the use of force to correct or discipline children and is often described as spanking, hitting, slapping, or shaking (Durrant et al., 2020). The phrase ‘corporal or physical punishment’ is consistent with the definition provided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 8 (UNCRC), which states that “Corporal or physical punishment is any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light,” (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006). In the literature, the term ‘corporal punishment’ encompasses other emotional forms of punishment, including all acts intended to cause psychological pain for the purpose of controlling, correcting, or modifying children’s behaviour (Beazley et al., 2005; United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006).

Children’s Rights

Despite the overwhelming evidence of the harms and risks associated with punitive violence globally, up to 1 billion children around the world continue to experience violence in the form of disciplinary practices (World Health Organization, 2020). Additionally, practices of corporal punishment remain common in many nations despite the paradigmatic shift in recent decades with the development of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UN General Assembly, 1989). This Convention, which recognizes children as full human beings with basic human rights to protection, safety, and participation, has been ratified by all UN member states (with the exception of the United States), demonstrating a commitment across the globe to implement children’s fundamental rights (Durrant & Stewart-Tufescu, 2017). Discussions of laws and policies regarding the discipline of children often include a recognition of Article 19 of the CRC, which guarantees the protection of children from all forms of violence, including physical and mental violence (UN General Assembly, 1989). The CRC also outlines the responsibilities of adults

to protect and guide children in ways that are consistent with their developing capacities (Articles 5 and 14), as well as the requirement that discipline be child-specific and foster children's participation and dignity. In alignment with the CRC, a rights-based approach to discipline calls for replacing all physical and emotional forms of punishment with disciplinary practices that foster the growth, participation, and protection of all children (Durrant & Stewart-Tufescu, 2017).

The Japanese Context

On April 22nd, 1994, Japan ratified the CRC. As a signatory to the CRC, Japan, like other States Parties, agreed to uphold children's rights to protection and dignity. However, like many other countries, punitive violence against children in Japan is highly prevalent and widely practiced in the context of child-rearing. Despite child protection laws, including the Japanese Child Welfare Act (1947), the ratification of the CRC and the Prevention of Child Abuse Act (2000) (Kadonaga & Fraser, 2015), child maltreatment rates were steadily on the rise in Japan (Miller, 2016) throughout the early 2000s. This increase in violence against children called attention to this public health and child rights issue and signalled a need to examine the underlying reasons for increased incidences of violence against children in Japan (Kitano et al., 2018; Kobayashi, 2010).

Previous research on corporal punishment, known as *taibatsu* in Japan, has found it to be associated with several societal and historical factors (Miller, 2016; Stewart-Tufescu, 2018). Frequent contributing factors associated with corporal punishment in Japan include traditional gender roles and paternalism, historical conflict and war, impacts of natural disaster, and the legacies of Shintoism and Confucianism, which are the dominant religions in the country (Kadonaga & Fraser, 2015). The family unit in Japan has predominantly been modelled as a middle-class and nuclear family in contemporary and historical discourses (Aoyama et al., 2015). Despite shifting time periods and ideologies across the nation, as well as Western influences, the characteristics of the family unit as

seen in Japanese culture have been sustained, including a gendered ideology of the family and a strong traditional emphasis on child compliance and obedience in all settings (Hashimoto, 2004). The concept of filial piety, or *oyakōkō*, which holds that one's primary duty is to be obedient and respectful to one's older generations, has also played a long-lasting role in Japanese households and disciplinary practices (Hashimoto, 2004). This ideology of intergenerational conduct, which is often associated with many notions of the family unit in Japan and other East Asian countries, stems from the Confucianist religion and outlines the basis of relationships as being maintained through an individual's obligation to fulfill their role in the larger society (Aoyama et al., 2015). Existing in both pre- and post-war eras in Japan, this ideology continues to be represented in many Japanese households, placing children at the bottom of a hierarchical relationship with their parents and older relatives, such as grandparents. These historical factors contribute greatly to how children have been and continue to be viewed and raised within Japanese society and family systems.

Throughout the last decade, the Japanese government, along with civil society, have prioritized child protection issues with the aim of addressing the rates of violence against children. In April 2020, Japan announced their status as the 59th country worldwide to legally ban corporal punishment against children in all settings, including the home environment (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2020; Waterston & Janson, 2020). This marked a monumental change in Japan's history and a change in children's legal status to be protected from all forms of violence, including corporal punishment. Achieving law reform was the persistent and collective efforts of Japanese children's rights advocates and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the country, most notably Save the Children Japan (SCJ). SCJ is a member State of Save the Children International, an international NGO that advocates for children's rights in over 120 countries. SCJ was initiated in 1986 and has since contributed significantly to the child rights movement in Japan by collaborating with the Japanese government to promote programming

and policies that enhance the rights of Japanese children (Save the Children Japan, 2014). SCJ is well-known for its national ameliorate for child poverty, child abuse prevention, and community intervention through disaster and emergency relief efforts, such as the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Kumamoto Earthquake (Save the Children Japan, 2014).

While the law reform was celebrated in Japan, academics, social workers, and other child-serving professionals recognized that a legal ban alone would not be sufficient to eliminate the practice nationwide. In addition to legal reform, additional interventions were needed to increase parental capacity and shift perspectives of compliance towards non-violent parenting techniques (Goto et al., 2020). Thus, organizations across Japan began to invest in interventions targeting the family unit, including support programs for parents aimed at helping them develop non-violent approaches to child-rearing (World Health Organization, 2020). One of these programs, which was first introduced in Japan in 2014 through SCJ, is the Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting program (PDEP; (Stewart-Tufescu, 2018). In 2014, the PDEP program was piloted in Japan, with parent groups in both urban and rural areas, as part of the SCJ's disaster relief plan following the Great East Japan Earthquake. The majority of participants reported a decline in overall acceptance of physical and emotional punishment following the program, and PDEP was found to be successful in reducing parental alignment with punitive violence (Mori et al., 2015) in both disaster areas (following the earthquake) and urban cities (Stewart-Tufescu, 2018). This pilot study provided preliminary support for PDEP's effectiveness in this country and in diverse contexts. Based on the promising pilot outcomes, PDEP was expanded to different regions of the nation (Mori et al., 2015). Following the successful piloting of PDEP in Japan as part of the earthquake recovery efforts, SCJ established PDEP as a key component of its Domestic Program and incorporated it into its national strategy to address punitive violence against children. In 2015, PDEP was introduced to the Greater

Tokyo Area in partnership with several surrounding regions and local governments (Stewart-Tufescu, 2018).

Kidzuku

The current implementation and expansion of PDEP in Japan are led by Kidzuku, a national not-for-profit organization focused on building local capacity to deliver PDEP to parents nationwide. Kidzuku's mission is to assist adults and children by creating healthy opportunities for positive relationship development to reduce violence against children. Kidzuku is the only approved PDEP training program in Japan that can certify PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators. Kidzuku has a long-standing partnership with Positive Discipline in Everyday Life (PDEL), the official founding organization of the PDEP program, which trains PDEP Country Trainers and oversees the program's quality assurance. In 2022, Kidzuku partnered with PDEL to facilitate a strategic country-wide expansion of the PDEP program, including the development of certified Japanese PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators in six regions throughout the country.

Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP)

PDEP originated in 2007 from an academic – NGO partnership between Dr. Joan Durrant, a clinical-child psychologist from the University of Manitoba and Save the Children International (Ateah et al., 2023). The program is a universal, cross-cultural violence prevention program aimed at assisting parents worldwide in developing a deeper understanding of children's rights, conducting research on healthy child development, and acquiring effective parenting skills (Gershoff & Lee, 2020). PDEP was developed with four core aims, including shifting parental goals from immediate compliance to long-term progress, strengthening parents' understanding of providing warmth (Appendix A) and structure (Appendix B) consistently, increasing parental knowledge of children's

development and stages of life, and helping parents to integrate the core components of PDEP into problem-solving collaboratively with their children (Durrant et al., 2017).

Globally, parents can join the program voluntarily by applying through PDEL collaborating community partners that may host or offer it. However, parents or caregivers may also be mandated to attend parenting programs by mandating justice or child welfare agencies. Participants may also be asked to attend to complete PDEP as part of educational training programs, such as certifications for early childhood educators or daycare providers. Despite the underlying reason a parent or caregiver is in the PDEP program, PDEP is applicable to all parents, grandparents, foster parents, and others who care for or work with children in any capacity.

The PDEP parent book has been translated into 16 different languages, and the parent program has been implemented in over 30 countries. The program achieves these aims over nine weekly, two-hour sessions and follows a specific framework to help parents problem-solve at each stage of their child's development, using experiential learning activities (Stewart-Tufescu, 2018).

PDEP Theoretical Model

The program's theoretical underpinnings are based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour. This theory describes the relationships among a person's control beliefs, normative beliefs, and behavioural beliefs, and how these beliefs interact to influence perceived behavioural control and intentions (Ajzen, 2002). In the context of parenting, this theory describes how our personal thoughts and attitudes towards concepts of punishment, obedience, and child-rearing will directly influence our parental decisions and interactions with our children. These individual facets that make up our parenting beliefs will work internally to either inhibit a response toward our child or push us to react in a certain way, often without our awareness. Throughout the PDEP process, the main goal is to shift the underlying attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge about child development and parent-child

relationships to positively influence parenting behaviour. With a focus on guiding parents to shift their perspective from child compliance to problem-solving and long-term goals, as well as to learn effective parenting skills while ensuring their children's rights and developmental milestones are met, PDEP focuses on non-violent conflict resolution skills and problem-solving strategies for parents of all ages (Durrant et al., 2014).

PDEP's Training and Mentoring Model

A key component of the PDEP training ladder and mentoring process is the Parallel Process (Figure 1). The Parallel Process operates throughout all stages of the training and mentoring process, including those with PDEP Country Trainers, Program Facilitators, parent participants who attend the PDEP program, and ultimately, the children via their interactions with their parents. In general, a parallel process is described as mirroring the dynamics of a relationship within a supervisory context to exemplify them appropriately for the person being supervised (Playle & Mullarkey, 1998). This process explains the transference of an experience from the supervisor-trainer bond to the trainer-trainee bond, and has been noted to have a significant impact on effective training procedures, including an increased sense of confidence and preparedness to effectively manage the complexities of providing intervention programs (Hadar & Peleg, 2023).

Haral and colleagues (2023) emphasize a relational view of the parallel process, which explores the idea of how the relationship that exists within one dyad can be modelled by one's experience in another dyad (2023). The PDEP model is based on the notion of the parallel process, within its training and mentoring processes. From this perspective, the PDEP Country Trainers model healthy interactions, respectful communication, conflict resolution, and relationship-building with the Program Facilitator trainees they mentor. In turn, the Program Facilitator trainees exemplify that same behaviour that was modelled to them with their parent program participants.

The primary goal of this process is for the Program Facilitator trainees to then model healthy interactions and behaviours that the parent participants may implement in their relationships with their children.

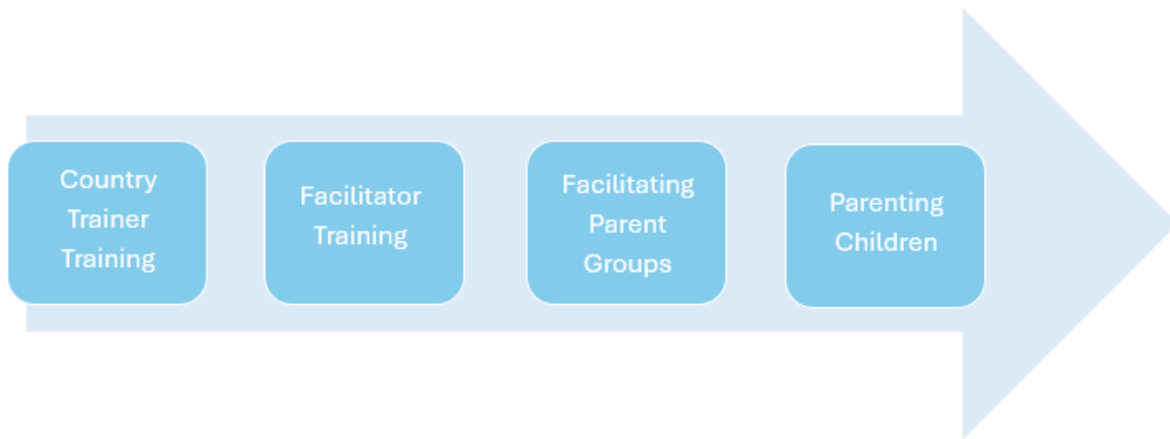


Figure 1. The PDEP Parallel Process

Country Trainer and Program Facilitator Perspectives

As noted, PDEP is provided to parents by certified Program Facilitators who have been trained to deliver and implement the program for parents and other caregivers. The PDEP international training and mentorship ladder (Figure 2) was developed to increase overall program fidelity and bolster facilitator consistency, as well as promote the sustainability of the program across international borders (Gershoff & Lee, 2020). To become a Program Facilitator, trainees are required to complete a 4-day training course provided by a PDEP Master Trainer and or certified Country Trainer. In addition, the Program Facilitator trainees must participate in a robust mentoring process as they deliver their first two PDEP programs to parents. The role of the Program Facilitator is to deliver the parenting program to groups of parents (~16 parents per group). Once Program Facilitators become experienced and well-versed in delivering the parent program, they

may be invited to become Country Trainer candidates to work with PDEP Master Trainers to become eligible to train new facilitators. Country Trainer candidates receive specialized, advanced training and work alongside a PDEP Master Trainer to develop the skills needed to train Program Facilitators. The primary role of the certified Country Trainers is to mentor and support Program Facilitators throughout their parent program implementation and to train new PDEP Program Facilitators in their respective country.

As the only organization in Japan that is approved to certify PDEP Program Facilitators and Country Trainers in partnership with PDEL, Kidzuku facilitates the recruitment and training of individuals who wish to facilitate the program. Kidzuku identifies potential new facilitators in several ways, such as exploring interested individuals who completed the parent program, connections with individuals at other community organizations, or those in other family and parenting related professions. Country Trainers are then recruited from the currently trained Program Facilitators and selected to participate in the advanced training by invitation only.



Figure 2. PDEP Training and Mentorship Ladder

As seen in Figure 2., Program Facilitators and Country Trainers have a unique positionality in relation to the program content and target participants. Both Program Facilitators and Country Trainers have an intersecting role that engages with trainees and parents, the intended beneficiaries of the program. Due to their dual-level engagement with the program and concurrent roles within the Parallel Process, Program Facilitators and Country Trainers have a wide range of unique observations and experiences that have yet to be explored in Japan.

Since the introduction of the PDEP program in Japan, Japanese PDEP Program Facilitators have completed parenting programs with hundreds of participants across the country. During these programs, pre-and post-test questionnaires were used to gather data that have consistently confirmed the effectiveness of PDEP (Durrant et al., 2014, 2020; Stewart-Tufescu, 2018). Previous research has found PDEP to be culturally relevant, effective, and applicable to the family unit in Japan (Durrant et al., 2020; Stewart-Tufescu, 2018). Despite the program's acceptance and effectiveness as evidenced by quantitative data, very few qualitative studies have been conducted on the PDEP program globally (Stenason et al., 2020). My research provided a unique opportunity to further expand our understanding of the PDEP program in Japan through diverse research approaches that enable a more in-depth examination of the program's mechanisms of change from unexplored perspectives.

Additionally, very few studies have incorporated the voices of Country Trainers and Program Facilitators regarding program effectiveness and their experiences with the Parallel Process. As seen in both the mentorship/training ladder (Figure 1) and the Parallel Process (Figure 2), Program Facilitators function as the link between PDEP Country Trainers and program participants. Their perspectives play a crucial role in gaining valuable insight into overall program effectiveness

and indicators of success among those who engage in the program. The literature on Program Facilitator effectiveness supports this, as facilitator alignment with the program principles and overall adherence to the program's guiding principles are key factors in overall delivery success (Martin et al., 2021). Previous research on the PDEP program in the Canadian context (Stenason et al., 2020) highlighted the need to assess the organizational alignment of Program Facilitators with PDEP's perceived utility and purpose, emphasizing that Program Facilitators hold valuable insights into the program's strengths and weaknesses. Stenason (2020) also called for future studies to incorporate the perspectives of PDEP Program Facilitators to further compare theories across varying settings for program credibility and data triangulation. The importance of understanding the unique Program Facilitator perspective is noted across a variety of program types, which state that their perceptions should reflect the program's philosophical underpinnings while also being aware of contextual factors that affect their delivery (McLean, 2003). My research sought to address this gap and to explore the perceptions of PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators within the Japanese context.

Chapter 3: Methodology & Data Analysis

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to conduct a qualitative exploration of the experiences of PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators who deliver the PDEP program to parents in Japan. In December 2023, six Country Trainer candidates and 10 Program Facilitator candidates began their intensive training and mentoring and, following their certification, began delivering PDEP to Japanese parents. This exploration used a grounded theory approach to analyze perspectives gathered throughout the research process, providing insight into the strengths, limitations, and areas for improvement of the PDEP program in Japan. The overall study purpose and research objectives were developed in collaboration with Kidzuku. The specific research objectives of were:

1. To explore Country Trainers' and Program Facilitator candidates' perceptions of the impact of the PDEP program on Japanese parents who have completed the PDEP program;
2. To explore Country Trainers' and Program Facilitator candidates' perspectives on the PDEP program's mechanisms of change; and
3. To explore Country Trainers' and Program Facilitator candidates' perspectives on the PDEP training and mentorship process.

Methodology

Qualitative research aims to explore the meanings and experiences of human life and various contexts (Fossey et al., 2002). The introduction of qualitative methods into mainstream research greatly expanded the strategies for gathering information and capturing the voices observed in rich, robust qualitative data (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Qualitative research is defined as, “the

systematic collection, organization and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or conversation. It is used in the exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context,” (Malterud, 2001, p. 483). Rooted in this definition, my study utilized a qualitative method to examine the perspectives of PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators, and to capture their ideas on and experiences with the PDEP Parallel Process, the training and mentorship processes, and the program’s underlying mechanisms of change for parents’ transformative change.

Grounded Theory

Qualitative research offers a wide range of paradigms and theories that seek to gather participants' perspectives through different methodological approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2007). One of the approaches commonly used in qualitative studies is grounded theory, which served as the theoretical framework guiding the study. Grounded theory is an inductive approach to data collection that is truly ‘grounded’ in its data (Grossoehme, 2014), due to the emerging nature of theory from simultaneous data collection, analysis, and theoretical sensitivity (Glaser et al., 1968). This framework is also rooted in social constructivism, with an overall focus on gathering data from participants through conceptual thinking and concurrent theory-building, rather than traditional deductive, empirical theory-testing (Khan, 2014). Given the study's overall goal of dual-level reflection, a grounded theory approach was best suited to understanding the PDEP’s mechanisms of change through participants' voices.

Participants

Consistent with a grounded theory approach, the study followed a purposive sampling strategy (Chun Tie et al., 2019). The target sample size was the six Country Trainers and 10 Program Facilitators who participated in a dual-level PDEP Country Trainer and Program Facilitator

training in Sendai, Japan, in December 2023. From January to July 2024, these Country Trainers and Program Facilitators candidates implemented the program for parents across Japan and participated in the mentorship process with the PDEP Country Trainers and Master Trainers.

Recruitment of Participants

Relationship-building with participants began with Kidzuku and members of the PDEP team in Japan, in preparation for the program's expansion. In December 2023, I directly observed, met, and engaged with the participants during their training in Sendai. Following my field visit and during the early development of the thesis project, ongoing planning and communication have occurred with Kidzuku, through which mentoring the new PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators occurred.

Kidzuku shared the email invitation (Appendix C) and the project consent form (Appendix D) with the intended participants on behalf of the researcher. The email invitation included the researcher's contact information and requested that the intended participants contact the researcher directly if they were willing to participate in the study. The consent form welcomed the intended participants to ask questions, informed them of their right to participate in the study, and of their right to withdraw their consent to participate at any time. At the recommendation of Kidzuku, an outlook form was also created to invite participants to an alternative method of contacting the researcher. The outlook form allowed participants to provide their contact information directly to the researcher and to consent to the researcher contacting them.

In total, nine participants contacted the researcher and arranged to participate in an interview (See Table 1). Three additional intended participants contacted the researcher to discuss participation in an interview; however, two individuals did not respond further to the researcher's emails, and one individual could not participate due to scheduling issues. All communication

occurred through email, and interviews were arranged between the researcher, participant, and translator. The final sample was composed of three PDEP Country Trainers and six Program Facilitators.

Table 1.

Demographic Profile of Participants

<i>Pseudonyms</i>	<i>PDEP Position</i>	<i>Years of Experience</i>	<i>Number of Programs</i>	<i>Location of Programs</i>
Participant 1	Country Trainer	1	3	Nagoya City
Participant 2	Program Facilitator		3	Sakai
Participant 3	Country Trainer	3	4	Tokyo
Participant 4	Program Facilitator	0.83	3	
Participant 5	Country Trainer	6	15	Miyagi City & Northern Japan
Participant 6	Program Facilitator	0.17	2	Zushi City & Tokyo
Participant 7	Program Facilitator	1	2	Tokyo
Participant 8	Program Facilitator	5	7	Fukushima
Participant 9	Program Facilitator	1.75	5	Sendai & Natori City

Data Collection

Open-ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendices E and F). Semi-structured interviews are the most common qualitative data collection method due to their versatility and flexibility (Taylor, 2005). Additionally, conducting online interviews is a powerful tool in international research (Akyirem et al., 2024). Due to distance restrictions, all data collection for this study was conducted online via UM Microsoft Teams. A Japan-based translation service participated in each interview and provided consecutive translation between English and Japanese. The cost of the translation services was covered by the Faculty of Social Work University of Manitoba Endowment Fund. Each virtual interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim (in English) and analyzed using a grounded theory approach.

Data Collection Tools

The English versions of the interview guides (see Appendix E and F) were reviewed by PDEP content experts and Kidzuku to ensure both program and cultural relevance. The interviews were conducted by myself, with the assistance of a Japanese translator, Ms. Shiho Okada, who was recommended by Kidzuku for translation services, as she has previously provided this service during PDEP training and mentorship sessions. Ms. Okada also currently works with Kidzuku to provide translation support during the PDEP mentorship meetings, which were initiated following the 2023 training. As such, Ms. Okada was familiar with the PDEP vocabulary and terms used within the context of PDEP training and mentoring processes and can translate accurately between English and Japanese. The interview questions were organized according to the stated research objectives within the guide.

Data Analysis

Using a grounded theory approach, data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously throughout this study, a fundamental characteristic of the approach (Chun Tie et al., 2019). As the purpose of this approach is to inductively generate a theory that is ‘grounded’ in the data (Glaser et al., 1968; Glaser & Strauss, 2017), concurrent data collection and analysis, also known as constant comparative analysis (Khan, 2014), allow for ongoing coding and refining of emerging ideas directly from the data (Grossoehme, 2014). Following this method, the data were evaluated at several stages, working towards a final product of an “integrated and comprehensive grounded theory that explains a process or scheme associated with a phenomenon,” (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 13). I followed the coding stages used in a grounded theory approach, as described below.

Initial Coding

After each interview, the initial coding stage of data analysis commenced with the individual interview data. This included several thorough readings of each interview transcript, line-by-line coding, and identifying words and phrases that began to form initial categories (Silverman, 2011). Charmaz describes this as the first step in grounded theory data analysis, as it allows the researcher to take a fresh look at the information, conduct comparisons, and develop a holistic understanding of the participants’ perspectives (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). The categories and codes formed at this initial stage use phrases and vocabulary directly from the transcripts, as grounded theory commits to using the participants’ own words rather than rephrasing or renaming them (Grossoehme, 2014).

Intermediate Coding

In this stage of data collection, further coding was conducted on building on the categories developed in the initial coding stage (Chun Tie et al., 2019). While initial coding is noted by grounded theorists as fracturing the data, intermediate coding begins conceptually reconnecting the

data by developing full categories and connecting sub-groups (Birks & Mills, 2015). Throughout the intermediate stage, initial codes were analyzed across all three research objectives, enabling the creation of themes that spanned multiple objectives. As constant comparison continued in this stage, core categories began to emerge (Holton, 2008), and the categories were inclusive of data obtained through questions across multiple sections of the interview, representing the three different research objectives. The overall goal of this phase was to reach theoretical saturation and to continue deeper comparative analysis (Birks & Mills, 2015).

Advanced Coding and Theoretical Integration

The final stage outlined in a grounded theory analytical approach is advanced coding and theoretical integration. This stage yields a new theory grounded in the data and informed by the study participants' perspectives. The overall goal of this stage was to produce a final theoretical framework by integrating the coding completed in the initial and intermediate stages of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Glaser describes this stage of data analysis as using theoretical codes to weave the fractured story back together into an organized grounded theory (1978). In this stage, the constant comparative analysis continued, and the initial codes, core categories, and their relationships were further analyzed to develop the overarching understanding of how the concepts interact. Overall, by utilizing a grounded theory framework as presented for the study, the goal was to develop a theoretical model that explains the program's training and mentorship processes, the mechanisms of change for parent participants, and the program's overall impacts from the perspectives of Country Trainers and Program Facilitators.

Chapter 4: Findings

The overall aim of the study was to qualitatively explore the experiences of PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators who deliver the program to parents in Japan, to gain a deeper understanding of the program's impacts, what contributes to its effectiveness, and the training and mentorship processes. This chapter presents the findings from the different levels of grounded theory analysis that were completed, resulting in three distinct yet complementary stages that were derived from the data: (1) Training, (2) Mechanisms of Change, and (3) Positive Parenting Outcomes. The stages reflect the inductive development of a visualized PDEP Conceptual Framework (Figure 3), which is presented at the end of this chapter. Within each stage discussed in this chapter, the overall themes, sub-themes, and illustrative data excerpts are presented.

Initial Coding

To begin data analysis, line-by-line coding was conducted, in alignment with Charmaz and Thornberg's (2021) grounded theory approach, allowing for data fragments to be dissected and labelled while assessing the overall meaning of each fragment. As coding commenced, it became evident that participants were providing perspectives on various sections of the PDEP process, including training, mechanisms of change, and overall impacts. As initial coding categorizes fragments of the data and begins comparisons between the codes (Chun Tie et al., 2019), these codes began to clearly sort into content related to three main themes, including (1) training, (2) mechanisms of change during program delivery, and (3) post-program outcomes. The complete coding table for the initial coding is available in Appendix H. Each of these elements, including examples of the independent codes located within each theme, is further explored in the intermediate coding section, where the themes are analyzed in greater detail. The coding tables for each theme are also available in the appendices.

Intermediate Codes

(1) *Training*

This theme encapsulates the perspectives participants shared on the capacity-building phase for PDEP Country Trainer and Program Facilitator Candidates. This involves facilitator training, CTC training, PDEP program practicums, and the ongoing mentorship process among PDEP Master Trainers, CTCs, and Program Facilitators. The findings showed that the *Training* stage is characterized by four sub-themes: (1) provision of information, (2) ongoing problem-solving, (3) experience and reflexivity, and (4) mentorship, which are further explored in the paragraphs below. Table 3 (Appendix I) shows the code breakdown for each identified theme in the training section.

Sub-Theme 1: Provision of Information

Many participants shared that having a clear, accurate understanding of the training materials and information was crucial to program delivery and success. The provision of information for Program Facilitators and Country Trainers begins with the PDEP facilitator training, including two PDEP program ‘practicums’, during which a Country Trainer mentors the new facilitators to lead parent programs. Furthermore, when Program Facilitators are invited to be Country Trainers, they complete further training in partnership with ongoing mentoring from a Master Trainer. Many participants described the provision of information as an ongoing learning process, beginning with formal training and then continuing with ongoing mentorship over many years. One participant shared, “This whole entire process is so helpful. I am going to say that there is nothing about this process that was not helpful for me at all, meaning that all aspects are so helpful, even those that are not successful experiences, they are actually helping me to learn and grow,” (Participant 5). Participants felt that, even though they were challenged while learning to deliver the materials, their

facilitator skills were enhanced through the experiential learning they received during the mandatory program practicums.

Additionally, participants reported continuing to learn throughout the program delivery phase alongside the parent program participants, reflecting a key element of the trainers remaining connected to program delivery with parents. This was exemplified by one participant who stated, “We can learn all together with all the participants. So, in order for that to happen, we do need facilitator skills” (Participant 1). As PDEP is a manualized program, participants felt that they were rooted in the provision of information exactly as prescribed in the manual. Aligning with the manual also appeared to empower participants to feel capable of managing challenging topics in the program. Several participants also felt that their facilitator skills were solidified during the practicum portion of the training, where they were still directly supported by their mentors. “The main part is that we do not sit on the desk and learn. We actually go in front of the participants, and we actually implement the program. So even though this is very challenging, it’s so important” (Participant 3).

Sub-Theme 2: Ongoing Problem-Solving

When participants were asked about the key aspects of their training process that contributed to their readiness and success, many comments focused on their ability to problem-solve across the different stages of PDEP delivery. Six of the nine participants commented on the necessity of collaborative problem-solving with co-facilitators and mentors throughout their training and subsequent program delivery, which they felt was crucial to their ability to deliver the program to Japanese families efficiently and to respond to challenging topics as they arose. For example, Participant 6 stated, “I usually share the difficult questions that I receive from the parents with the mentors. And then I also tell them like this is the answer that I’m thinking to provide, and then after the confirmation, I actually answer them.” Additionally, participants felt that by helping each other

problem-solve, their learning continued, as they gained greater awareness of potential program challenges. Participants spoke about their ongoing problem-solving and anticipating potential challenges as a significant part of their training process, as they stated, “It is actually very important that we can imagine what can occur... all the training prepared me to imagine there are many things that can occur,” (Participant 5). Participants felt that by preparing themselves for potential challenges and increasing their awareness of their ability to collaboratively problem-solve throughout the process with peers, their efficacy and confidence as facilitators increased. One participant also emphasized the importance of external support and of knowing when a challenge falls outside their scope of service delivery. This participant felt that more knowledge about external supports for families was needed to make referrals, if necessary, during the program. “One participant actually shared a situation where her husband was very violent to their daughter and the daughter was really in a serious situation, so she was hospitalized, and they needed intervention. During that time, I didn’t have enough knowledge about how to respond to these serious situations... I definitely needed more experience and the knowledge to better respond” (Participant 4). This insight signals an area for improvement during the training and mentorship process.

Several participants also discussed the importance of recognizing different ways of learning, both at the facilitator and program participant (parent) levels, and that this can pose both challenges and benefits for the individual delivering the program. One participant stated, “I’ve mentored seven facilitators, and everybody has different ways of learning and communicating. So, through these experiences, I feel that I’m more capable of working with more different people” (Participant 1). Participant 1 also shared that some parent program participants are more likely to share a variety of ideas and thoughts during program delivery, which can pose as an additional challenge, due to the manual outlining detailed content, and needing to balance the new ideas in addition to the manual, within the allotted session timelines.

Sub-Theme 3: Experience and Reflexivity

Participants expressed that the training/facilitation experience and reflexive abilities of the Program Facilitators and Country Trainers were a significant factor in overall program delivery. Seven participants shared ways in which preparing the program content, whether through facilitator practicums, individual practice and preparation, or collaboration with other facilitators, contributed to their ability to implement the program effectively throughout Japan. Several participants spoke about the importance of developing their own unique style as a facilitator, while also following the manualized program content, which is not easy. Participants described preparation as including reviewing the program content/slides (Participant 4), familiarizing themselves with the program manual (Participant 3), anticipating what may occur in the program and how to respond (Participants 5 and 9), and participating in the facilitator practicums (Participant 7). Participants also felt that the more experience they gained with the program materials, the more competent they would feel to deliver the program to parents. Participants felt that their program preparation was ongoing and required a degree of reflexivity to continue their learning and problem-solving within the facilitator role in the long term and indefinitely. “In terms of preparation, it’s more what I do to myself to better prepare for the program because there is always something that comes up and we need to follow up in the following session, so the preparation never ends” (Participant 9).

In addition, participants identified challenges in their training experience and in their reflexivity regarding their ability to prepare to deliver programs, including the amount of material and information in the program manual and their understanding of the deeper meaning of the written content. One participant stated, “I spent a lot of time preparing...the slide sets are already prepared in their beautiful form, it was another question for me to think about how I can understand the meanings of each slide so that it actually makes sense to the participants,”

(Participant 4). Another participant shared that, “It was helpful to prepare as well and part of it is that there is so much content in the manual,” (Participant 3). Participants felt that their preparation, program experience, and their ongoing reflexivity were directly related to the PDEP mentorship process.

Sub-Theme 4: Mentorship

The last sub-category within the training component is the ongoing mentorship between Program Facilitators, Country Trainers, and Master Trainers. Throughout the training process, Program Facilitator candidates are continuously mentored by Country Trainers, and Country Trainer candidates receive ongoing mentorship from Master Trainers. The scaffolded mentorship process is a unique aspect of the PDEP training. The majority of participants felt that it largely contributed to their comfort and success as a facilitator/trainer. “I feel that I am really watched over... Whenever the team has issues that they feel they can’t really solve themselves and then we can say ‘let’s ask the master trainer...’. It’s so nice and helpful to have somebody that we know we can rely on” (Participant 3). Other participants provided individual examples of how their mentors continue to support them, including Participant 1, who shared that her mentor would reach out to her to discuss her strengths and areas she can work on. Similarly, several other participants commented on specific examples of collaborative problem-solving within their mentorship relationships and shared how this was significant to their overall learning and confidence as facilitators. “In the mentorship, I have the individual opportunity to talk with my mentor individually, and sometimes, I have a concern... the mentor can sync with me together to solve these problems... I really appreciate that approach,” (Participant 1).

As part of the mentorship, participants recognized that they were actively engaged with their colleagues and mentors within the parallel process and stated that this engagement is rooted in the

components of positive discipline. “One important component is the parallel process. As a close mentor and mentee, I always see the importance of warmth and structure, and even as a Country Trainer, I make sure that I have both of them when I engage with other people,” (Participant 5). Additionally, participants felt that their relationship with their mentor demonstrated the components of the PDEP approach and ultimately increased their overall feelings of safety and security as facilitators. “It’s just like that relationship between the caregiver and the children that we do have that, you know, such assurance in the relationship. When the mentor is around... just their being there matters so much and it gives us assurance... I felt very safe” (Participant 2). Through the parallel process, participants began to identify aspects of PDEP in their mentor/mentee relationships. They felt that this provided a better understanding of how to transfer this knowledge to the parent participants.

In summary, the training section of the findings presented robust data on the mentorship, knowledge delivery, and development of facilitator skills that occur prior to program implementation. The participants shared insights into the provision of information, ongoing problem-solving, and reflexivity they experience during this phase. They exemplified the cruciality of these components to success within the mechanisms of change.

(2) Mechanisms of Change:

Participants shared perspectives on the program’s strategies and modalities for creating lasting, positive change with the parent program participants. Although the program includes very structured, manualized components, participants shared a variety of perspectives on the underlying mechanisms of change that truly influence a positive shift in parent program participants’ adoption of the principles of PDEP in their parenting practices. The findings at this stage indicated that the *mechanisms of change* stage are characterized by the following themes: (1) program content, (2) child-

centred perspective shifting, (3) skill adaptability/transference, and (4) challenging normalized views of children/parenting. A full breakdown of the coding for this section is available in Appendix I.

Sub-Theme 1: Program Content

All nine participants shared significant conclusions regarding the program content, including the materials, program manual, and interactive activities, as PDEP's main vehicle for the mechanisms of change. Participants commented that the program manual outlines all aspects of program planning and preparation, as well as the information provided to parents. Participants felt that their comfort level with the manual, which also outlines session pace and cohesiveness, increased as they gained experience. One participant stated, "The connection throughout the first session through to session nine is very important because I found that the first time that I ran the program that I was very busy focusing on each piece. However, after getting used to it, I could see that as an entire program, it's almost like a spiral, but going up with everyone" (Participant 2). This idea of the program building like a spiral moving upwards begins to describe scaffolding, a crucial element of the PDEP program. Although the PDEP facilitator training also utilizes the idea of scaffolding, which is described as a process through which people assist newer learners (or children) to complete tasks deeper than their current abilities and increase their abilities to overcome or learn the task using their new skills (Huang et al., 2021), the participants in this study did not overtly reference scaffolding when describing their own learning as a facilitator or trainer. In the Program Facilitator and Country Trainer trainings, learning is scaffolded to assist with the acquisition of a large number of materials and new skills; however, study participants did not reference their own learnings/trainings, or the PDEP training structure, as having been designed to utilize the process of scaffolding. However, participants referenced scaffolding when describing how parent program

participants learned to scaffold skill-building with their children and highlighted the importance of parents learning about scaffolding as a crucial part of their child-rearing (Participants 5 and 8).

Additionally, the program content includes all the tools and core concepts taught, including long-term goals, warmth and structure, understanding how children think and feel, and problem-solving. During the interviews, participants offered a wide range of challenges and helpful aspects for each component, providing deep insight into the specific functions of each element of the PDEP approach. Understanding warmth and structure was the most common tool discussed by the participants in this study, as they felt that these concepts provided labels for different desired parenting practices. Participant 8 stated, “These are our keywords when we talk about parenting... Usually we think that there’s no name in what we do and no shape even. However, having these words, warmth and structure, give us how we describe our own parenting, and that makes the parents a lot cooler and calmer to make a decision in their own parenting.” Understanding warmth and structure was also the most frequently mentioned component in participants' discussions of the parallel process. Participants felt that warmth was more difficult than structure for parents to understand conceptually, and that it needed to be taught in conjunction with structure. Overall, several participants felt that parental success in the program depended on their ability to understand these components, as well as other core elements, including information on brain development and temperament.

Along with warmth and structure, the other program tools are taught across a variety of scenarios, a key modality of learning in PDEP. Scenarios are short stories included in the program that are used to illustrate children’s perspectives. Four participants commented on the benefits of scenarios, noting that they felt the scenarios were highly impactful on participants' empathy-building and learning. Additionally, most participants had a clear understanding of the purpose of the

scenario work, which is to assist parent program participants in beginning to shift their perspectives to understand the child's perspective. By utilizing scenario activities as tools to, “help us to have the perspective as a child” (Participant 5), and having witnessed the positive impact that the scenarios have had on parent participants' learning, participants of this study felt that this child-centred perspective shifting was an important overall mechanism of change, leading to the next sub-theme.

Sub-Theme 2: Child-Centred Perspective Shifting

Four participants commented on the parents' ability to shift their perspectives to be child-centred, noting that doing so is an important mechanism of change and a significant contributor to parents' success in shifting from punishment to discipline. Participant 5 stated that, “It’s very helpful for the parents to experience how and what children can see and understand, because up until then, they may have their own standard to live on... it’s so precious that we have this awareness of what children are thinking and feeling.” Participants felt that the main vehicle of the child-rearing perspective shifting was the scenario work completed throughout the program and felt that the scenarios help the participants can “feel it in their hearts” (Participant 4) and are able to have a deepened understanding of children’s views. Other participants also connected understanding children’s development with the idea of a child-centred perspective shift, as they felt that children’s perspectives could not be understood without considering the impact of their development. “We learn about the children’s development and that actually helps many parents to deepen our understanding of the children in different ways” (Participant 9). Although this was noted as a positive, the parental ability to shift perspectives to the children was also noted to be a challenge. Participants provided examples of how this could pose a challenge for parents, including when parents believe ‘strict’ direction is most helpful (Participant 9), despite potential impacts on children, or when parents are attempting to shift their perspectives in moments of stress (Participant 4).

In addition to the scenario activities throughout the program that enable a child-centred perspective shift, participants commented that this mechanism operates across different components of the program. Within the long-term goals component, three participants spoke about parents' increasing ability to develop goals through a child-centred lens, with one participant stating that this is a new mindset in Japanese culture (Participant 8). “Parents think of what happens when my child becomes 20 years old. Because many parents do not think that way, but all of a sudden, they started thinking amazing things of what they expect for their children when they become adults” (Participant 9). Understanding child-centred perspective shifting within the long-term goals component also highlighted the importance of a new focus on the parent/child relationship, which participants believed enhanced parents’ ability to view the child’s perspective within the relationship context. Two participants shared that this idea of the parent/child relationship is not something that many Japanese individuals are familiar with, and that many Japanese parents do not view themselves in a relationship with their child (Participants 4 and 8). Within the long-term goals component, as participants begin to think about the type of relationship they want with their child, they naturally shift their perspectives to consider what kind of relationship would better support their children.

In line with long-term goals, parents begin to learn about the program's warmth and structure components. Several participants commented on challenges with parents’ ability to learn to express warmth to their children. They felt that, as parents learned to shift their perspectives to how their children feel, the warmth component became more achievable. One participant shared that many parents look for something that ‘they can praise’ when thinking about the warmth component, however, when parents can shift perspectives, they may realize that they do not need a specific reason to provide warmth (Participant 6).

The last component of the program is the problem-solving process, in which participants identified a strong need to adopt a child-centred lens. Not only did participants feel that it is important for parents to engage collaboratively with children in problem-solving, but also that they can hold children's perspectives, and not only their own, in mind when engaging in the problem-solving process. One participant shared that they felt that engaging the child directly in problem-solving and learning to focus on one problem at a time is a new concept for most parents (Participant 1); however, they felt that learning this process included a crucial aspect of perspective shifting to understand that there may be many reasons why the children engage in the behaviours that they did and should be considered simultaneously.

Sub-Theme 3: Skill Adaptability/Transference

Across all program content in the nine sessions, participants felt that skill adaptability and the transfer of skills outside the program were crucial to parents' ability to incorporate the new practices into their child-rearing. Additionally, the participants felt that the program is structured so that their learning is scaffolded and skills are built as the sessions continue. In addition to the knowledge, participants noted that skill transfer was also positively affected by the experiences parents have had throughout the program. "They have accumulated knowledge and experiences, and that's when you use all of them... this is when participants can see the entire picture of the program" (Participant 7). By reflecting on these experiences and practicing the acquired skills, parents can transfer them outside the program context into their relationships with their children. Five participants noted that the problem-solving component was the main opportunity within the program to reflect on their acquired skills. "In this component (problem-solving), we first identify the challenges and then we try to use what we learned until then, which includes the long-term goals as well as the warmth and structure" (Participant 7).

In addition to practicing and reflecting on the acquired skills and the ability to transfer them outside the program, utilizing the skills to reduce situational stress responses within the parenting context was noted. One participant noted that the long-term goals component helped parents reduce stress most by assisting them to shift their perspective within the parenting context. “Part of the long-term goal setting is that we view a stressful, challenging situation kind of differently... when we have that vision, we can actually take these stressful moments, or maybe the failure even between the parents and children, we actually take it as an opportunity to teach our children” (Participant 2). Another participant also noted that stress responses were also impacted by participants learning to focus on one problem at a time, despite typically having more than one contributing factor to the problem. Focusing on one problem at a time was described as a new skill for most Japanese parents, and this skill was crucial in their ability to problem-solve collaboratively with their children (Participant 1). Lastly, another participant noted that acknowledging multiple ways to problem-solve was an important skill for participants to learn throughout the program. By acknowledging multiple ways to solve a problem, participants can work collaboratively in program sessions and with their children outside the program. Participants provided important insight into different components of the program and how skill adaptability and transference challenges typical views that the parents may hold prior to completing the program content.

Sub-Theme 4: Challenging Normalized Views of Children and Gendered Caregiving

The last theme identified within the mechanisms of change category was the challenge to normalized views of children and gendered roles of caregiving. While exploring the program's cultural and contextual relevance with participants, several ideas emerged about how PDEP challenges traditional ideologies of children held by many Japanese families. Three participants noted

that parents in the program are initially challenged to shift their views of normalized ways of interacting with their children. One example of this is parents learning to shift their perspectives on parenting despite other individuals, family, or society believing in more traditional, normalized child-rearing practices that include punitive violence. “In positive discipline, we learn that violence and harsh parenting doesn’t make sense to children, it’s not good. But even though the mothers or parents are learning about that, the adults around them do not, you know, change their conception... it’s more like the Japanese people need to change their own thinking rather than parents only” (Participant 8). A specific example of violence in parenting that was identified by participants as normalized within Japanese culture is physical punishment (e.g., spanking). Participants felt that when parents were spanked by their parents, this behaviour may be viewed as acceptable within the parent-child relationship by those parents. However, participants felt that PDEP helped Japanese families understand the standards of parenting today, despite these standards potentially contradicting parents’ experiences as children. The perspectives shared by participants demonstrated the PDEP program's strong ability to challenge traditional views on punishment and to interact with children.

One participant also felt that PDEP also challenges traditional gender roles within Japanese culture, which strongly position women in the dominant caregiving role, and bear most of the disciplinary responsibilities. Participant 2 stated, “Japanese women tend to work so hard, and they endure so much... often times they believe in self sacrifice for their families.” This participant felt that PDEP is inclusive of all caregivers and does not focus solely on maternal responsibility in parenting, unlike many other child-rearing programs. They continued to state that it is common in Japan to hear that fathers contribute less to child-rearing. A specific example provided by the participant was PDEP's use of the term ‘caregivers’ rather than ‘mothers and fathers,’ and the participant felt this language was significant for equating parental responsibilities.

Another sub-theme identified by participants regarding the challenging normalized views of children and parenting is the program's ability to increase awareness of children's rights principles and to address the lack of child development education within Japanese education. "In Japan, there are not too many people who understand that our children do have their own personality and their feelings as a human being. So, unless they know about positive discipline, usually the parents in Japan are not aware of the human rights... In this program we learn about this in more concrete terms what it means to protect children's rights" (Participant 4). These ideas are tied to the previous perspectives shared around shifting traditional views on punishment. One participant stated that 100% of parent program participants showed increased awareness of children's rights, and that some may have only heard about children's rights for the first time during the program.

Additionally, participants identified a lack of child development education in the public-school setting and noted that this knowledge was helpful to Japanese families. An example of this was provided when a participant shared that, without this knowledge, parents tend to compare their children to other children of the same age and make assumptions about their child's abilities. This participant felt that this was caused by a strong inclination of Japanese culture for individuals to want to be similar to others, and that without child development knowledge, parents may not be able to recognize that it is normal for children to have differing abilities based on their individual developmental pathway. This ability of parents to recognize and understand their child's differences from others was an important mechanism of change, noted by three participants as crucial within the parent-child relationship and positively related to desired parenting outcomes.

In conclusion, the mechanisms of change section of the study findings describes major ideas regarding the key processes of PDEP that change the mindset, perspectives, and actions of parents who complete the program. Participants shared a wealth of information on the program content and

parents' adaptability in skills, as well as on more abstract concepts such as shifting to a child-centred perspective and challenging normalized parenting views. Through discussions of the program's mechanisms of change, participants also began to articulate the program's overall impacts.

(3) Positive Parenting Outcomes (Impacts)

These effects include the many ways participants believe parent program participants are impacted by the program, as well as the different ways they believe the program affects participants' overall parenting practices. Throughout the interviews, participants shared a wide variety of program impacts; however, four themes were identified that form this stage of the model, including (1) personal skills, (2) parenting skills, (3) parent/child relationship/closeness, and (4) child rights understanding/awareness. A complete coding table for this theme is available in Appendix I.

Sub-Theme 1: Personal Skills

Within the positive parenting outcomes category, the first sub-theme identified was the increased personal skills that participants observed. These skills, although participants viewed as incredibly helpful within the caregiving role, were not necessarily specific parenting skills but were conceptualized more as improved interpersonal and relational skills. Emotionally, participants reported that parents who participated in PDEP showed increased emotional openness and decreased negative emotions. Three participants provided specific examples of parents experiencing a decrease in negative emotions, including feelings about their role as parents and feelings towards their children. Participant 4 described that she experienced a mother who shared a large amount of anxiety and worry over her child not becoming independent, leading to harsh interactions with her child. However, following the completion of PDEP, her anxiety subsided, and she felt a newfound sense of kindness and gentleness that she could offer to her child. Other participants noted that parents felt calmer and kinder toward their children. Along with the noted change in emotion, five

participants also commented on shifts in the parents' facial expressions as the program progressed, noting that the parents appeared brighter than at the start.

In addition, participants noted that they observed an increased ability of parents to regulate their emotions, which they attributed to greater overall awareness and reflexivity. Three participants provided examples of how they observed parents in the program setting, demonstrating an improved ability to reflect on their parenting and personal actions. Although participants felt that the increased reflexivity was a strength for many parents, they also noted that it could lead to regretful or shameful thoughts as parents reflected on previous parenting decisions. One participant noted that they have observed parents cry in the program because of this realization. "Usually, half of the participants cry during the program and mainly they reflect on themselves. Then they find out there are moments that they couldn't do what they wanted to or how they wanted to engage, or things that they regret" (Participant 6). However, with increased ability to regulate emotions, participants felt that parents were able to navigate these feelings within the program, thanks to the facilitators' use of the program content to normalize parenting challenges and mistakes.

Participants also identified two strategies that helped parents to increase their ability to regulate their emotions: learning to identify stress triggers and reducing situational stress responses. One participant shared that, specifically in the long-term goals portion of the program, parent participants can learn about their unique stress triggers and what may increase their likelihood of running the emotional 'red-light'. By learning to identify triggers, participants also felt that parents had increased capacity to reduce situational stress responses in the context of parenting. Before understanding the importance of long-term goals and identifying triggers, participants shared that most parents view many parenting situations as very challenging and stressful, which then impacts how they engage with their child, likely in a more negative way. However, situational stress

responses were reduced when parents learned to shift their thinking during stressful moments with their children. “When we have this vision and we can take these stressful moments, or maybe the failure even between the parent and child, we actually take it as an opportunity to teach our children. This is a very big change” (Participant 2). This example, along with many others provided by participants, not only demonstrated the increase in personal skills experienced by those who completed PDEP but also began to show an increase in parenting skills.

Sub-Theme 2: Parenting Skills

Most participants reported that the caregivers who completed the program improved their parenting skills. A wide range of parenting skills were noted as outcomes of the program. Among the components, participants identified parenting skills they observed during their sessions with Japanese parents, including greater understanding of children’s perspectives and behaviours, the ability to identify and regulate their emotions, and a newfound focus on being kind and gentle with their children. One participant noted these observable changes as being a motivating factor for continuing to facilitate the program. Additionally, all components taught in the program were considered skills in themselves and were noted by participants to have a wide range of impacts on parents as they continue the program. These components include long-term goals, warmth and structure, understanding how children think and feel, problem-solving, and self-regulation. Participants felt that not only were parenting skills directly gained through the program's content, but that there was also increased receptiveness to the program within Japanese families. One participant felt that, often at the beginning of sessions, parents may be unsure of their ability to complete the program. However, as the sessions continue, participants noted that there is an expectation for positive change, and it becomes better received as new parenting skills are taught.

As the sessions progressed, participants reported noticing that parents had an overall increase in their understanding of children's behaviours and perspectives, leading to more positive parental views of their children. In the program, parents are provided with extensive information to understand better children's behaviour, including the developmental pathway, individuality and temperamental differences among children, and emotional regulation skills. Two participants shared that having a deeper understanding of the causes or contributing factors that impact children's behaviour was positively correlated to their ability to regulate and cognitively process with their children in the moment. Participant 9 shared an example of how a three-year-old child being able to speak and understand language may lead to a parental expectation that they can act beyond what is appropriate for their age/developmental level, and how it would be important for their parent to understand the developmental reason behind the child's true behaviour presentation. Participants also felt that these skills had a retroactive purpose, stating that parents can use their newly learned information to reflect on their children's previous behaviours and how they could have responded more effectively in the moment.

Additionally, four participants commented on the increased parental ability to understand children's perspectives, which three participants directly correlated with the scenario activities throughout the program. "It's very helpful that we use the scenarios or stories because that's when the participants can really feel it in their hearts... and then they start having the perspective of the children" (Participant 4). Another participant felt that these increased skills led to positive outcomes in parental understanding of their children overall (Participant 9). As a result, participants felt that most parents experienced a positive shift in how they viewed their child/children. This shift was noted to lead to co-occurring changes in parent and child behaviour, as participants shared parents' reflections on how they felt their children had been impacted by their changed perceptions. Five participants shared insight into positive, co-occurring parent/child changes, feeling that when

parents were able to make positive changes in their parenting, their children also made positive behaviour changes. Another participant shared a specific example of a changed parental perception of their child, stating that, “Big changes occur when somebody realizes that children are not our own belongings. Because this program is based on children’s rights... If parents come to realize that the children are totally different people... that is a huge impact overall” (Participant 5). Overall, participants also felt positively impacted by the parents sharing their reflections and newfound parenting skills with them. Additionally, participants felt that parents also brought the knowledge home, rippling its effects onto their spouses, families, and extended families.

Sub-Theme 3: Parent/Child Relationship/Closeness

The third positive parenting outcome identified within the framework is the parent/child relationship, which is categorized by several changes that participants observed within their parenting program families. Participants reported that the overarching theme of this category was PDEP’s ability to facilitate positive change in the parent-child relationship by the end of the program, as evidenced by increased closeness between caregivers and their children, compared to the beginning of the program. Overall, participants felt that the parents’ relationship with their child began to improve. All study participants shared insights into observations they had made regarding improved parent-child closeness, relationships, or interactions. Through the mechanisms of change, participants felt that parents had gained insight that enabled them to remove barriers to understanding their children more deeply and provided the stepping stones they needed to grow in their capacity as caregivers, with a significant positive impact on overall family functioning. “We see that many parents are changing and it’s even more that their family or children are changing by the parents changing...I was really amazed by witnessing these changes that impacted not only the parents but the entire family” (Participant 6). Several participants provided several examples of

observed parent changes that led to increased closeness, such as Participant 3, who shared that one parent participant stated that their two children referred to the mother as ‘evil’ before the program, but after the program, stated that she is a “great and kind mom.” This increased closeness and improved interactions were noted to facilitate feelings of safety and security within the context of caregiving. Despite ongoing differences between parents and their children, the relationship was strong enough to manage these challenges. Many participants noted that the impact on the parent-child relationship was among the most frequently observed effects of the PDEP program on the children of parent participants, and although the facilitators do not meet directly with the children, they received perspectives from many parents.

In addition to observed changes in the parent-child relationship and their interactions, participants felt that children began to shift their perspectives of the parents. Three participants spoke about observations shared with them about children’s changed views of their parents. This information provides deep insight into how the PDEP program’s mechanisms of change extend far beyond the session setting with parent participants and into meaningful change directly with the children of those participants. Participant 7 provided a specific example of this, stating that parents become more emotionally available while caregiving. This idea that children’s perspectives on their parents shift positively following a parent’s involvement in PDEP was also noted by participants, evidenced by changes in the children’s behaviour. Participant 2 stated that one parent shared with them that her daughter had not talked to her in a long time; however, during the program, her daughter began to open up, speaking with her again and has continued to do so following the completion of the program. Overall, participants felt that PDEP’s positive impacts on the parent-child relationship and closeness were lasting and meaningful.

Sub-Theme 4: Child Rights Understanding/Awareness

The final sub-theme in this section is an observed increase in parents' awareness and understanding of children's rights, a concept deeply rooted in PDEP's program and framework. Participants conceptualized this idea by observing PDEP's provision of child rights knowledge, which led to greater understanding of children's perspectives among parents and greater parental ability to acknowledge children as individual human beings. One participant shared that human or children's rights are not something that many Japanese parents are aware of, sharing that, based on their experience, only approximately 10% of Japanese parents are aware of children's fundamental human rights. They stated that nearly 100% of parents who engage in PDEP in Japan are hearing about children's rights for the first time, and that PDEP advocates for this knowledge among the parents in Japan,' (Participant 4). Other participants provided examples of how parenting standards have changed over time, and that many parents may not be familiar with newer parenting practices that align with children's rights, including spanking and other forms of punishment. By increasing awareness and overall understanding of child rights, participants felt that parents were better equipped with child-rearing skills aligned with modern parenting standards that challenge harmful traditional practices.

Other Themes

In addition to the themes listed in the above stages of the model, three additional themes were identified in the data, which are (1) supportive relationship, (2) the parallel process, and (3) normalized challenges. These themes were present within all three original categories (training, mechanisms of change, and impacts). The following paragraphs describe the findings, inclusive of each additional theme, and a complete table of the coding breakdown for each theme can be found in Appendix I.

Additional Theme 1: Supportive Relationship

Participants identified supportive relationships as a crucial part of the PDEP training and delivery process. During the training portion of the official PDEP certification process, participants identified the importance of establishing trusting relationships with mentors, maintaining an ongoing relationship with their mentor during and after training, and receiving ongoing mentorship. Seven participants provided direct insight into the necessity of a supportive, ongoing relationship with their mentors and how this is a cornerstone of PDEP delivery success. Participants described a sense of safety and reliability, stating that they, ‘feel that they are really watched over’ and “it’s so nice and helpful to have somebody that we know that we can rely on” (Participant 3). In addition, participants felt that having a mentor allowed them to experience the early stages of the parallel process, as mentors began to use the program components with them, which in turn enabled facilitators to gain experiential knowledge to use the components with parents. “This is how we do it in the PDEP program, the trainers actually use the warmth and structure with me, and I can now use them for the participants... When I received it from the trainers, I understand, this is how I can work with the participants and not only in my head, but also, I can understand using by experiencing it” (Participant 4).

In the mechanisms of change section, participants reported that supportive relationships began to develop and solidify among facilitators and parents, as well as among parents themselves. Four participants described how they work collaboratively with parents to problem-solve in the group setting. They felt that parents benefited greatly from engaging in this safe space for learning within the supportive relationship. When asked what support looks like, participants provided a variety of examples, including providing warmth, establishing trust, using their name, offering encouragement, listening to suggestions, and more. Participants felt that these actions enabled them to begin building a supportive relationship grounded in the core components of PDEP.

Lastly, participants identified a supportive relationship as present in the positive parenting outcomes following completion of the PDEP program. As discussed above, participants reported hearing feedback from others towards the end of, or following, the completion of the program that they had seen positive changes in their children, spouses, and families, which has led to improved household dynamics and relationships. Although a majority of facilitators do not directly meet the children of the parent participants, they feel they have gained insight into the impact of the supportive relationship that has developed, based on the reflections participants share in session. By incorporating the new skills and knowledge into their everyday parenting, participants felt that parents noticed notable changes in their interactions with their children, which, overall, led to improved, supportive relationships with their children.

Additional Theme 2: Parallel Process

The parallel process was another overarching theme identified by study participants . Within the training component of the framework, participants identified a variety of ways in which they felt the parallel process was an active part of their experience and mentorship, as their mentors began to model the components of PDEP in their relationships with the participants. One example several participants provided was the reception of warmth and structure from the mentors, which increased their overall conceptualization of how the tools function. “The trainers actually used the warmth and structure with me, and I can now use them with the participants... I can actually understand using it by experiencing it” (Participant 4). Other examples derived from the data include positive relationship-building, acknowledging emotional differences, recognizing participants' different experiences, and collaborative problem-solving. One participant also shared that during the training, their mentors said that, while engaged in this process with them, they felt their mentor could “sync” with them, which made them feel more equipped and prepared to work with parents (Participant 1).

Another participant shared that their mentor actively worked to understand their personality and temperament, which enabled them to collaboratively plan and reflect in ways that were meaningful to them (Participant 4).

In the mechanisms of change section, participants noted their shift in the parallel process as they began modelling the components of PDEP with parents, as their mentors had done for them. At this stage, participants described the ways in which they experienced the parallel process differently, as they were now the ones acknowledging emotional differences, focusing on warmth and structure, and modelling the components of PDEP with their parent program participants. Participant 2 provided an example of one mother who presented as very anxious about needing to ask someone to babysit her child while she attends the program, and how this participant, as a facilitator, utilized this as an opportunity to engage in the parallel process by providing warmth and structure to this parent. Over time, this participant noted that the parent became more relaxed, and the facilitator had successfully modelled warmth, self-regulation, and collaborative problem-solving with the parent through the parallel process. Participants also described the parallel process as a means of connecting the children, parents, and PDEP Facilitators or trainers into a larger community, and that this sense of connection to others is a major benefit of engaging in this process. “This part of the process is all about that connection... it’s very true that a lot of us think that parenting is something that we have to do all alone, but we can find that the parallel process is definitely playing an important role for us to get connected to each other” (Participant 9).

A few differences exist between the presentation of the parallel process in the training versus the mechanisms of change categories. Firstly, although focusing on warmth and structure was a theme in both phases, participants also felt that learning to respond with warmth and structure was a key component of the parallel process within the mechanisms of change. As mentees, participants

felt they received warmth and structure from their mentors during the training and mentorship; however, they did not need to reciprocate warmth and structure in their mentee role. However, as a Program Facilitator or Country Trainer, the participants began responding to others (parents) with warmth and structure, as they continued to move the parallel process forward.

A second difference is the stance that participants take on relationship building. As discussed in the training section, mentors began relationship-building with the mentees/participants, and the participants were thus actively involved in the process. However, within the mechanisms of change section, when the participants are now moving the parallel process forward to parents, the participants noted their responsibility and need to be the ones establishing trusting relationships with the parents, as this also acted as an opportunity to demonstrate to parents how they can begin doing this with their children, which is the essence of the parallel process.

Finally, the study led to an understanding of the parallel process as a described outcome to exist within the parent-child dyad, as participants described parents becoming aware of how to incorporate the components of positive discipline within their relationships with their children. At this stage, participants described the use of the parallel process, as evidenced by improved parent-child relationships, and several unique ideas emerged in this section. The first of these ideas, that the parallel process has a direct impact on children, is evidenced by the positive changes in parents' personal and parenting skills, as well as the experiential knowledge they gained while being on the receiving end of the parallel process. Participants describe that, similarly to how they had the components of the positive discipline modelled to them by their mentors, parents had the components modelled to them by the participants, and they are now better equipped to incorporate these components within their parenting practices. Participants also noted that the parallel process impacts their daily lives outside the program and that the skills learned are transferable across all of

their relationships, not just their children. “This parallel process is not between the adult and the children; it actually is everything that we do in society or our social life” (Participant 5).

Additional Theme 3: Normalized Challenges

The final overarching theme identified by participants is normalized challenges, which describe a variety of difficulties or obstacles participants experience. Across the different themes, participants noted many challenges that arose for them and their parent participants, and felt these obstacles were important, necessary, and purposeful for their learning. Normalization is described as a group or society assigning a meaning to normality and regularizing its presence for individuals in that group (Fahlgren & Sawyer, 2011). Within this context, the different challenges that the participants identified were noted as being acceptable, common, and ‘normal’ difficulties for those to experience within the context of PDEP and parenting. In comparison, the training category of the framework had the fewest identified challenges, while the mechanisms of change section had the most. These acknowledgements and discussions of potential challenges provided deep insight into the current experiences of PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators and will assist in guiding the further development of the framework to address these difficulties in future programs.

Within the training section, participants identified three areas where they felt challenges existed, including difficulties with the training, with translation accuracy, and with sharing information. A few participants noted feeling challenged by the large amount of materials, and due to the heavy content load, some participants felt that they did not have the time to process and think about each component. Additionally, they felt they would have benefited from time to practice each component; however, this was not always possible due to the amount of material to cover in each session. Secondly, participants identified the amount of material covered in each training session as negatively affecting their ability to share information with mentors or peers due to time constraints.

One participant shared that they would find it helpful to hear from other facilitators and how they are feeling about the program, but that this is difficult when they are learning so much in one sitting.

During the mentorship sessions, the most common challenge participants shared is translation accuracy and understanding. Six participants emphasized the importance of translation accuracy and how it can affect their ability to relay the information in the manual. One participant shared, “Sometimes the facilitators read the manual, and they find it kind of difficult to understand and part of it can be that the translation is kind of awkward or not natural” (Participant 3). Another participant felt that they need to consciously “think if the language is really fitting because some of the words don’t really resonate to many Japanese people” (Participant 6). However, most participants reported that they can resolve these challenges during mentorship sessions or in collaboration with their peers, which positively impacts overall program delivery through the mechanisms of change.

The mechanisms of change stage contained more challenges identified by the participants than any other section. However, as this section includes the program content itself, most of the challenges listed are those experienced by facilitators teaching the program or by parents receiving the program material during the program. One theme that was derived from the data in this section was challenges with the program tools or materials. One component that participants consistently reported as being challenging for parents was problem-solving. The challenges included difficulty utilizing the full range of accumulated skills, independent problem-solving outside the program, and negative emotions regarding previous parenting/problem-solving practices. Additionally, temperament and understanding the developmental pathway were other commonly discussed components that were noted as challenging.

Another group of challenges identified in the mechanisms of change section concerns parents' ideas about parenting and how these ideas affect their receptiveness to the mechanisms of change. These include pre-existing negative ideas, differing personal/societal views, societal expectations of children, discussing childhood experiences, and a lack of comfort. Two participants raised pre-held negative ideas about the impact of societal expectations, the most common example shared by participants was the long-term goals component, and many parents struggled to think about what kind of person they wanted their child to be outside of an occupation, as they felt this was very important to many Japanese families. Three participants reported that parents have difficulty identifying their own long-term goals for their children because of this societal expectation. Additionally, parents have their own expectations of parenting based on their experiences as children, which participants felt affected their engagement with the program material. "Referring to their own childhood, sometimes, you know, they (parents) have that angry feeling towards their own parents or themselves, and sometimes they have the feeling that I didn't get this as a child. All of these feelings need to be resolved and it's kind of challenging" (Participant 8).

Parent participants identified the most challenging aspects of using the program content with adolescents, which they attributed to adolescents having their own social world, hormonal changes, reflecting on their own adolescent experiences, and balancing independence. While comparing all the components, warmth was most commonly identified as a challenge for parents to provide to adolescents. "When it comes to warmth, it is sometimes hard when our children get older" (Participant 9). Another participant shared that providing warmth to adolescents is challenging because it can be hard to read what is effective or well-received. This participant shared an expression from Japanese culture that it is like "pushing against the curtain" (Participant 8), so you can't perceive the reaction or what is coming back against them. Additionally, parents felt that providing warmth to younger children was easier because their reactions are more evident and they

are more openly receptive to the parent's warmth, whereas gauging an appropriate level of warmth for an adolescent can be difficult.

Lastly, the participants identified a wide variety of challenges within the outcomes section of the framework, reflecting their observations of challenges experienced by parents following program completion. Participants listed several challenges for parents related to their ability to transfer the skills outside the program setting and incorporate them into their lives post-program. These challenges included parental self-doubt, lack of time, lack of balance, and a limited capacity to remember their goals. During program sessions, parents worked collaboratively with other parents and facilitators, and participants felt this increased parents' overall confidence in their ability to use the components. However, when parents complete the program, they feel that they now have to "handle everything by themselves" (Participant 7), and this creates anxiety with some parents.

Additional challenges were identified in this section of the framework and were described by participants as common experiences amongst many parents in Japan. One of these challenges was the parents' ability to identify their own emotions. Several participants commented that this is a crucial skill for parents to be successful in the program. They stated that when parents struggle with it, they feel challenged when trying to imagine how their children may think or feel. Four participants discussed parent-child differences and shared that it takes consistent practice for parents to feel comfortable reflecting on how their child may be thinking or feeling, separate from their own feelings. "They (parents) actually try to put themselves in the children's shoes in the beginning, but they come back to emphasize more on how they're feeling more than what the children might be feeling. It actually takes practice over and over" (Participant 4). One participant shared that in Japan, parents have difficulty viewing their child as their own separate being; therefore, this challenge may

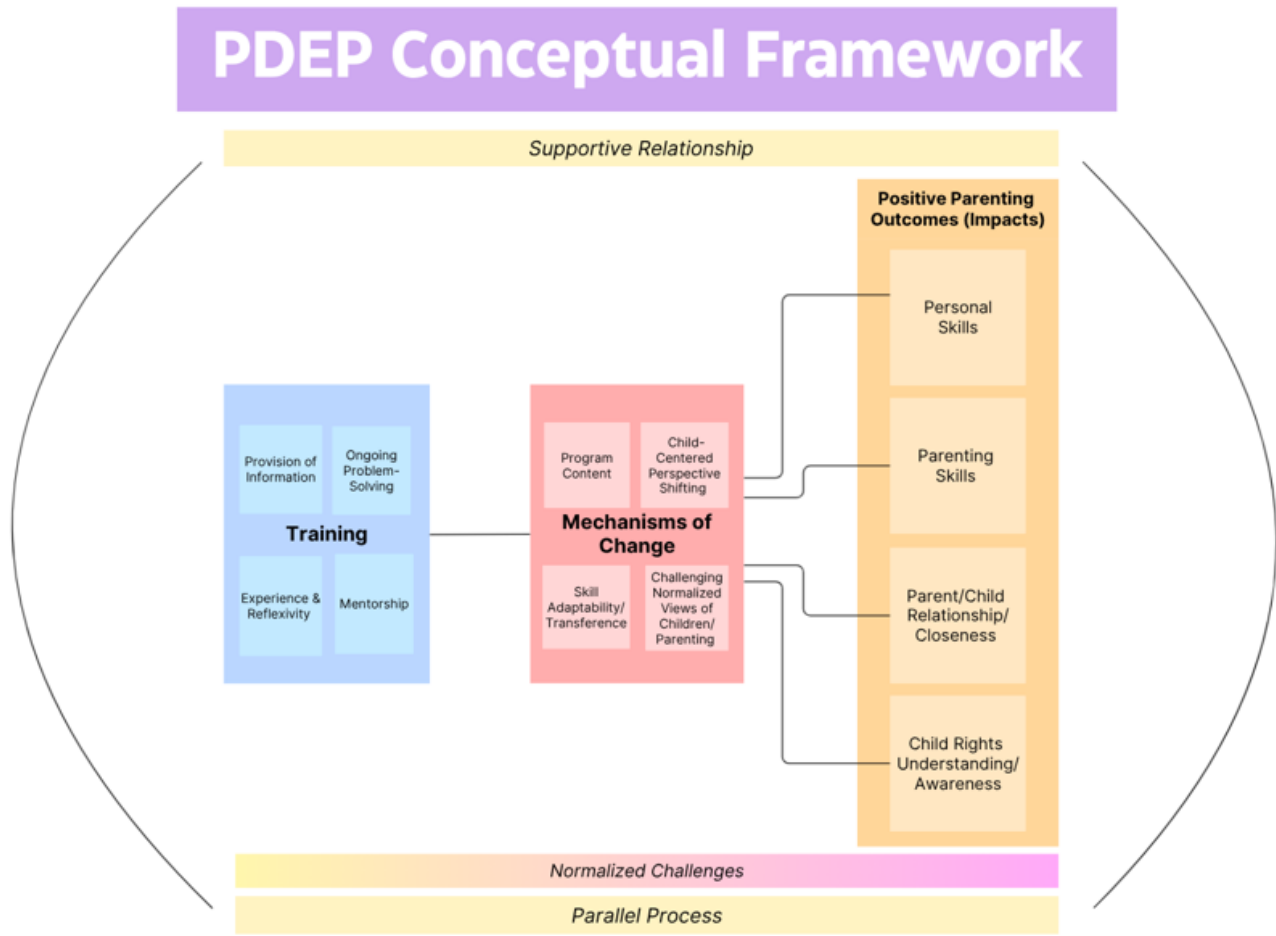
be tied to that ideology, which is challenged within the PDEP program. However, despite this, parents continue to feel challenges shifting their perspectives to those of the children.

Advanced Coding and Theoretical Integration

Final Theoretical Framework – PDEP Conceptual Model

The overall aim of the study was to develop a visualized theoretical framework depicting PDEP's processes and mechanisms of change, grounded in the perspectives and experiences of the Country Trainer Candidates and Program Facilitators. The *PDEP Conceptual Framework* presented here depicts a three-staged model including three categories: *Training, Mechanisms of Change, and Positive Parenting Outcomes* (see Figure 3). Each category includes four subcategories, which represent the themes identified in the collected data for each stage. Additionally, as discussed above, the three themes (*normalized challenges, supportive relationships, and the parallel process*) identified across all three larger categories are depicted in the framework as spanning the three stages, as participants identified that these mechanisms occur across all aspects of the process.

Figure 3. PDEP Conceptual Model



Chapter 5: Interpretation and Discussion

The study explored the perspectives and experiences of three PDEP Country Trainers and six Program Facilitators regarding the implementation of the PDEP program, which continues to be delivered throughout Japan. Through individual interviews, participants shared their experiences with PDEP, including the training and mentorship model, key mechanisms of change, and the program's overall impacts. This chapter provides an overview of the study's key findings in relation to the research objectives, including their connection to broader literature. Additionally, this chapter will include a description of potential implications, knowledge mobilization strategies, recommendations for future research, ethical considerations and study limitations.

Discussion

Perceptions of the Impact of the PDEP Program

The participants in the study clearly articulated their observations of the overall impacts of the PDEP program on its parent participants, including improved personal and parenting skills, increased understanding and awareness of children's rights, and enhanced parent-child relationships. Despite differences in participants' length of experience with the PDEP program, the number of times they facilitated it, the regions they taught in, or their position within the PDEP mentorship framework, similar observations were made among most participants when they shared their perspectives on the program's outcomes. There is existing evidence in the literature to support these ideas, including a few quantitative studies that capture these outcomes through the comparative analysis of pre- and post-program testing. Durrant outlined in 2020 that a majority of the quantitative analyses of program outcomes identify a positive shift in parenting skills and a drastic shift away from punitive or violent forms of discipline (2020). These ideas, as captured by the study participants, led to notable outcomes, including improved parent-child closeness and increased

awareness of children's rights in the parenting context. These findings are also similar to previous quantitative findings on the program's ability to improve the personal skills of parent participants, including increased self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution (Ateah et al., 2023), which support the themes identified by the framework in this study.

Although the study focused specifically on PDEP in the Japanese context, there is global evidence consistent with its findings. Gershoff and colleagues (2017) states, "A comparison of pre- and post- test scores across 13 countries (Australia, Canada, Gambia, Georgia, Guatemala, Japan, Kosovo, Mongolia, Palestine, Paraguay, Philippines, the Solomon Islands, and Venezuela) found that, across countries, most parents believed that PDEP will have positive impacts on their parenting and their relationships with their children" (p. 15). Additionally, previous research has analyzed cross-cultural differences of the program impacts and has found significant similarities to the findings captured in this study. For example, in 2020, Durrant and colleagues compared the impacts of the PDEP conducted in Australia, Japan, and the Philippines. This study found that the majority of parents who completed the PDEP program reported that the program helped them communicate more effectively, control their anger, build stronger relationships, and increase their empathy. The findings from my thesis research mirror these findings in three diverse country contexts (Durrant et al., 2020). These outcomes are also consistent with and supported by existing quantitative data from pilot PDEP programs in Japan, which found high levels of agreement among the program participants, that PDEP helped parents to better understand their children's feelings, improved parent-child communication, and facilitated increased closeness between parents and children (Stewart-Tufescu, 2018).

Perspectives on the PDEP Program's Mechanisms of Change

One of the most novel findings from the thesis concerns the program's mechanisms of change. While previous PDEP studies have documented positive pre-to-post program shifts among parent participants, these studies have not explored in depth which aspects and elements of the program are perceived as most responsible for these changes from the perspective of trainers and facilitators. In my study, Country Trainers and Program Facilitators shared important insight into what they think makes the program work. The accounts point to three interrelated mechanisms: the program content and materials; the adaptability and transferability of the skills outside the program to parents' everyday lives; and the progressive, week-to-week, and active challenge of normalizing views of children and parenting in the Japanese context.

First, participants consistently emphasized the importance of program fidelity and following the program content, manual and experiential activities as key mechanisms of change. Their descriptions align with previous studies that parental change is closely tied to an increased understanding of the harmful impacts of punishment and the positive impacts of discipline; the importance of long-term versus short-term goals for children, understanding neurodevelopment and children's rights principles, and scaffolding and modelling behaviours (Durrant, 2014; Durrant, 2019; Stewart-Tufescu, 2018). The current literature also indicates that the structure and content of the PDEP program instill accurate ideas of discipline, not punishment, in parent participants, and that many parents attribute this change to the new information and skills they acquire throughout the program (Shanks, 2016). The perspectives of the Japanese Country Trainers and Program Facilitators in my study support and extend this previous work by emphasizing how they actively use their PDEP manual and follow the experiential learning activities to shift perspectives, normalize parents' challenges and model problem-solving using non-punitive responses in real time.

Another frequent theme was the transferability and adaptability of skills beyond the program setting and within the context of their own parenting routines. Participants in my study viewed parents' ability to take the PDEP approach into their daily routines as a key driver of change. This finding also provides insight into the acceptability and relevance of the PDEP program in Japan. Transferability and adaptability as mechanisms of change have not yet been explored in depth in the PDEP literature and represent an important area for future research to better understand the sustainability of the program's outcomes. This builds on previous research assessing the relevance of the PDEP program in Japan, which found that nearly 100% of participating parents indicated a willingness to recommend it to other parents upon completing the 9-week program. Similarly, broader parenting-program evidence points to the importance of relevance and implementation in contexts that approximate the realities of parents' everyday lives. For example, a recent review of 53 evidence-based parenting programs worldwide concluded that the transferability of parenting programs to real-world community settings is scarcely understood (Pinto et al., 2024). Aligned with these findings, the review underscores the importance of parents' capacity to generalize and transfer findings from program to everyday life as critical to initiating and maintaining behaviour changes (Pinto et al., 2024).

My study also captured the significance of challenging normalized views of children and parenting that exist within family and societal structures. Participants described how particular cultural norms in Japan have historically shaped the view and roles of children in the Japanese family, and how these normative beliefs have supported the acceptance of physical and emotional punishment as a legitimate parenting approach. Shanks (2016) has argued that normalization processes strongly contribute to parents' justification of physical violence; this is consistent with the present finding that confronting and deconstructing these normalized views in the Japanese context is a crucial mechanism of change in the PDEP program. A related mechanism of change involves

shifting parents toward a rights-based, child-centred perspective. Many participants identified this as a concept that is not yet widely embedded in traditional Japanese parenting, yet felt that PDEP offers concrete tools and reflective spaces that enable parents to begin considering children's rights principles as related to parenting and the parent-child relationship. This shift toward children's rights and child-centredness is also strongly supported in the broader PDEP evidence base (Ateah et al., 2023; Durrant et al., 2014, 2020; Stewart-Tufescu, 2018).

Perspectives on the PDEP Training and Mentorship

The PDEP training framework, including its mentorship process, is a unique feature that distinguishes PDEP from other parenting programs and was identified by almost all study participants as crucial to their ability to implement the program successfully with Japanese families. Although the PDEP training and mentorship ladder was originally "designed to optimize program integrity, facilitator fidelity, and program sustainability" (Durrant, 2016, pg. 95), the findings of my thesis research suggest that it offers several additional benefits not previously reported. All study participants reported that ongoing engagement and relationship-building with their mentors sustainably increased their sense of self-efficacy as a facilitator, their confidence in delivering the program tools, and their capacity to enact the parallel process as their mentors actively modelled PDEP principles. Through this modelling, the Country Trainers and Program Facilitators personally experienced and then replicated key elements of the program, such as ongoing problem-solving, emotional regulation and providing scaffolded information with kindness. In turn, these participants then facilitated these skills with their mentees and parents. Consistent with the literature that emphasizes the parallel process as essential for effective parenting education and program delivery (Golan, 2014), these findings suggest that the parallel process in PDEP is strongly supported and enabled by the program's extensive, structured training and mentorship system, facilitated by

Kidzuku in Japan. The training and mentorship themes identified in my study clearly point to the roles of supportive relationships, problem-solving, and conflict resolution as core mechanisms that facilitators subsequently bring into their work with parents, and that parents, in turn, bring into their interactions with their children.

Finally, the study also highlighted the importance of experience and reflexivity within the PDEP training framework. These themes are prominent in current research exploring the perspectives of professionals who work in diverse capacities to support parents and families. Reflexivity has been described as a method for developing and increasing competence in a particular area of practice, while also requiring a foundational level of knowledge and confidence in order to engage in reflexive practice (D'Cruz et al., 2019). In my study, participants reported that regular contact with their mentors and peers enhanced their likelihood of reflecting critically on their own facilitation, including their parenting, as they felt supported in identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Facilitators with greater experience delivering the program than other Facilitators in this sample described feeling more comfortable with the content and in their ability to be reflexive to guide their PDEP facilitation and mentoring of others. Existing literature also underscores the importance of reflexivity in parenting education, given its central role in fostering healthy parent-child relationships (Slade, 2017). Thus, by engaging in reflexivity throughout all aspects of their PDEP work, Country Trainers and Program Facilitators not only refine their own skills but also model reflexivity through the parallel process, increasing the likelihood that parents will engage in similar reflective practices in their everyday interactions with their children.

Practice Implications

Findings from my thesis research present several opportunities for practice implications, particularly for organizations and practitioners in PDEP training and implementation in Japan and

other contexts. The visual framework developed may serve as a practical tool to guide implementation decisions, training priorities and potentially guide the adaptation of the program in diverse contexts with varying study populations.

A central finding of the study relating to the first research objective is that most participants felt that after taking the PDEP program, parents not only gained an increase in skills and knowledge directly relating to their caregiving role but also gained an increase in relational skills that affected them in many other aspects of their personal and professional relationships. This finding highlights that this program functions as more than a 'parenting intervention' and is a relational skills intervention. In practice, facilitators and partner organizations could position PDEP as relevant to a range of relationships and encourage the uptake of the PDEP principles in wider contexts. This broad framing may increase engagement, widen the relevance of the program and create opportunities for collaboration with services that support adults who may not be willing to attend a parenting intervention per se. This may be one promising avenue to increase male and father engagement in Japan and elsewhere.

The emerging evidence of a bidirectional parallel process also signals practice implications. If children's perceptions of their parents and their relationship improve as parents shift from punishment to positive discipline, PDEP implementation and the related evidence base, may benefit from more systematic approaches that capture children's experiences and perspectives. Doing so is one way to honour children's rights to participation. One suggestion for programs may be to include parent-child activities, children's self-regulation strategies that parents can teach their children at home following the weekly sessions, and follow-up sessions with parents that invite parents to share feedback on how their children perceive their involvement in the PDEP program. Further exploration in this area is promising, as several study participants noted not having enough insight

into the impacts of the program on the children. In sum, involving children's participation could lead to a deeper understanding of how the program impacts children, which may then enhance how facilitators deliver the program and support parents in their transformation, and may ensure that children's voices are more directly reflected in program delivery and the PDEP evidence base.

A key finding from my research was PDEP's ability to challenge normalized views of children and parenting in Japan. While this is a promising finding, there is a need for post-program support to ensure sustained change. Parents who begin to treat children as rights-holders may face resistance from significant others, extended family, schools, or communities that maintain more traditional perspectives, as is common in Japanese society. Implementation in Japan and similar contexts may therefore require additional support to help ensure that their new perspective and practices remain. Additional supports may include PDEP booster sessions, peer mentorship, and Communities of Practice groups, among others. At a broader level, PDEP partner organizations that deliver the full PDEP program might consider complementary public education or advocacy activities to promote understanding of child rights principles, as well as additional self-care and self-regulation programming.

Lastly, the centrality of training, mentorship and experiential learning for Country Trainers and Program Facilitators suggests that these are core elements of the model that require additional training and certification. Programs and funders must allocate sufficient time and financial resources for ongoing and long-term mentoring, reflective supervision, and potentially Communities of Practice for Trainers and Facilitators in Japan and elsewhere. An example may be hosting regional and international networks for sharing successes and challenges. Strengthening these supports is likely to further enhance trainers and facilitators' self-efficacy, reinforce the parallel process, improve

the overall quality and sustainability of the PDEP program, and enhance outcomes for parents and children.

Knowledge Mobilization

The primary audience for the study's findings was the organizations that facilitate the implementation of the PDEP program in Japan. These organizations include Kidzuku and the PDEP community, which continue to build and strengthen the team of individuals who provide this program to families throughout the country. With the results of the study, it is hoped that these organizations have an increased understanding of the voices of the Country Trainers and Program Facilitators, and that their perspectives gathered throughout this study provided meaningful input into the program's successes and strengths, as well as suggestions for improvements that may lead to increased program effectiveness. Additionally, the results were intended to be useful for Kidzuku and the PDEP team in Japan in further developing their PDEP training procedures, with an overall aim of assisting with the progression of PDEP development throughout the country.

Each study participant has also been provided with a summary of the results, with the hope that they can truly understand the contributions they have made, not only to this study but also to the larger body of PDEP trainers and families in Japan. Lastly, conferences such as the Canadian Journal of Child Rights National Conference and the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) Congress are viable options to disseminate the findings of this study more broadly and will be explored.

Limitations

Although PDEP is a manualized program that is taught in many countries around the world, the perspectives and ideas shared by the participants in this study cannot be generalized to all Country Trainers and Program Facilitators. All study participants were recruited from one

organization in Japan, and it cannot be assumed that the qualitative data collected is representative of the other PDEP Country Trainers and Program Facilitators in Japan or other countries. The study also had a target sample of all Country Trainers and Program Facilitators who were trained in Sendai 2023; however, only nine of the 16 targeted participants responded and agreed to engage in an interview. Multiple efforts were made to include all 16 participants in the study; however, these efforts were unsuccessful in recruiting the entire target sample. Therefore, there are perspectives and insights from the other targeted participants that could have largely contributed to the study findings. However, despite not successfully recruiting all 16 intended participants, the data appeared to be nearing saturation as evidenced by an increase in overlapping codes and themes, as well as lessening levels of new information being produced as the individual interviews progressed.

Additionally, this was a cross-cultural study that involved translating English and Japanese via consecutive translation. Although a translator familiar with the PDEP program and vocabulary was used, some of the complex ideas and topics discussed in the interviews may have lost or had their context slightly altered during translation.

As a current certified Facilitator of PDEP, I actively worked to reduce participants' potential perceptions of power throughout our time together. Additionally, participants were aware of my academic advisor and her role as a PDEP Master Trainer, as they had previously received mentorship and training from her and Kidzuku. Appropriate steps were taken to ensure that participants understood that the study would not impact their current position with PDEP or their affiliation with Kidzuku. However, participants may still have altered their responses or provided different answers than they would have with a researcher independent of the PDEP program or PDEP-related individuals.

Recommendations for Future Research

When exploring options for future research, an important direction would be to continue the qualitative exploration of the PDEP program. The current body of PDEP research consists largely of quantitative data, which limits the ability to capture the complex ideas and modalities of change throughout the program. A continuation of qualitative studies on PDEP would deepen understanding of how the program consistently promotes positive parenting outcomes and provides a more robust database to support further PDEP development and implementation.

Additionally, the current body of PDEP literature and data gathering relies mainly on the perspectives of the parent program participants who have completed the program. Presently, very few studies have explored the perspectives of the Country Trainers and Program Facilitators who implement the program. The Country Trainers and Program Facilitators act as the bridge between PDEP experts and the parents who participate in the program. By failing to capture their perspectives, there is a significant gap in the existing body of literature on PDEP and the parallel process. Additionally, there is a dearth of research exploring the impact of PDEP's training framework and mentorship model on trainers' and facilitators' parenting practices. Further research in these areas is warranted.

Lastly, it would be important to further explore the perspectives of Country Trainers and Program Facilitators of PDEP in other countries. This will allow for a deeper understanding of potential similarities and differences across regions, as well as how the program's mechanisms of change function in other locations and cultures. Additionally, it would be important to understand how perspectives on program training, mentorship, and outcomes differ across regions, as this could lead to a fuller conceptualization of PDEP and how the program could be further developed to benefit parents around the world.

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations were undertaken throughout the duration of the study. Due to its cross-cultural setting, appropriate attention and consideration are required to truly posit the study findings and processes within the Japanese context. As a Caucasian, Canadian-born student/researcher, I have my own views on parenting, childhood, discipline, and punishment. Also, as a social worker practicing in the Canadian context, my ideas of family intervention and child maltreatment prevention may vary from those of the PDEP practitioners in Japan. Unique methodological and analytical challenges are frequent in cross-cultural research contexts, and there is an active responsibility to engage with targeted communities throughout the research process (Broesch et al., 2020). Throughout the development and completion of my study, I committed to partnering with Kidzuku to assist with ensuring the alignment of this project and its findings within the Japanese context. Additionally, my initial field visit to Japan contributed highly to the contextualization of this study, as I was able to engage in relationship-building with the Country Trainer and Program Facilitator candidates, as well as actively participating in their training. Due to the cross-cultural nature of the study, it is crucial for the researcher to engage with and search for the acquisition of this contextualized knowledge (Marshall & Batten, 2003).

Another consideration to be made throughout the study is the acknowledgement of the inevitable bias that exists within human beings, especially within the context of complex social issues, such as physical discipline and punitive violence. For my study, I asked Country Trainers and Program Facilitators for their opinions, reflections, and experiences delivering PDEP to program participants. During this inquiry, there was a crucial awareness of the underlying biases that may be held by the study participants towards the PDEP program participants they have worked with, as the program does not require disclosure of why participants are in the program. This unknown causality of program attendance leaves the Country Trainers and Program Facilitators lacking any knowledge of participants' current and historical parenting strategies, actions, and potential

behaviours, which may have created biases and assumptions hidden within the perspectives they shared.

In addition, those individuals who work with parents, families, and children who have experienced trauma or hardship can often experience secondary or vicarious trauma responses or compassion fatigue (Fixsen et al., 2020). Any human service provider who works in roles where they may hear or reflect with others on traumatic life events may experience a negative impact on their overall mental health and wellness, especially when needing to discuss or re-envision those experiences (Kim et al., 2022). Due to the reflective nature of PDEP, Program Facilitators and Country Trainers may have been exposed to distressing stories or experiences relating to violence against children or child abuse throughout their previous program facilitation. In my study, participants were asked questions that had the potential to trigger some topics or conversations that relate to adverse or stressful experiences, either of themselves or those of the caregivers they have worked with. To manage this effect, debriefing was offered and occurred following the interviews, and local mental health resources were provided to each participant (See Appendix G).

Other ethical considerations included ensuring that the confidentiality and informed consent processes were reviewed with each participant. All participants were assigned pseudonyms following their acceptance to participate in the study, and all data were transcribed anonymously and confidentially stored. Data were stored on the University of Manitoba secure online drive and in a password-protected qualitative data management software, Dedoose, which was accessible only to my academic advisor. Lastly, informed consent was reviewed individually with each participant, and all participants signed a consent form to participate in the study. As the intended participants are engaged with PDEP and Kidzuku in a professional, mentoring capacity, they were informed that declining participation in the study or withdrawing from their participation in the study at any time

would not impact their service delivery of the PDEP program, their role as a Country Trainer or Program Facilitator, nor their professional mentoring involvement with Kidzuku and PDEL.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This is one of the first qualitative studies of the PDEP approach conducted from the perspectives and experiences of the Country Trainers and Program Facilitators who implement the PDEP program in Japan, related to three research objectives, including their perceptions of the program's overall impacts, mechanisms of change, and training and mentorship processes.

Participants shared information consistent with current literature on the PDEP program and highlighted gaps that may be addressed in future research to support the continued development and efficacy of this program in Japan and elsewhere. A visual framework was developed to outline the conceptual ideas in the study, including components consistent with the program's underlying objectives and goals. This framework may be useful for future research to better understand mechanisms of change and connect core elements to program outcomes for parents and children.

The study makes a unique contribution to the PDEP and broader parenting program literature by foregrounding the experiences of Country Trainers and Program Facilitators in Japan. Whereas most existing research has focused on parents' perspectives and outcomes, this work illuminates how PDEP is interpreted, embodied, and transmitted by those positioned as the bridge between the program experts (i.e., the trainers and facilitators) and the intended recipients (i.e., the parents/caregivers) and ultimate beneficiaries (i.e., children and families). In doing so, the study offers one of the first in-depth explorations of the parallel process at the trainer–facilitator–parent–child levels within a child rights-based parenting program in the Japanese context.

The PDEP program was developed with an overarching goal to reduce physical and emotional punishment and violence against children around the world. Although the participants in the study clearly aligned with this goal and provided evidence of its achievement through many PDEP programs completed successfully across Japan, there are evidently many more benefits from

this program, as evidenced by my research. Notably, both Country Trainers and Program Facilitators were able to identify ways in which they were personally impacted by the program, and how it improved their own lives and relationships. The study clearly supports the concept of the parallel process and its evidentiary robustness throughout the program training and mentorship ladder, as well as the mechanisms of change, as evidenced by the surplus of positive program outcomes detailed.

Beyond the Japanese context, these findings have broader implications for the global PDEP movement and for child rights-based parenting programs more generally. Findings suggest that the sustainability and integrity of this program depend not only on the curriculum, manualized content, and experiential learning activities, but also on the ongoing support, reflexivity, and mentorship of those individuals committed to delivering the program with fidelity and integrity. By highlighting how PDEP principles are taken up, adapted, and sometimes transformed by Country Trainers and Program Facilitators, the study underscores the importance of investing in people by nurturing long-term relationships, developing communities of practice, and supporting culturally responsive implementation strategies. In this way, the results point to the need for international parenting initiatives to view trainers and facilitators not simply as conduits of information, but as critical agents of change whose own learning and well-being directly shape the experiences of parents and children.

In conclusion, viewing trainers, facilitators and parents and caregivers through a child-rights and parallel-process lens invites a re-imagining of parenting support as a relational, multi-layered practice in which every interaction between program developers, trainers, facilitators, and parents and caregivers has the potential to transform how children are valued, heard, and protected in society.

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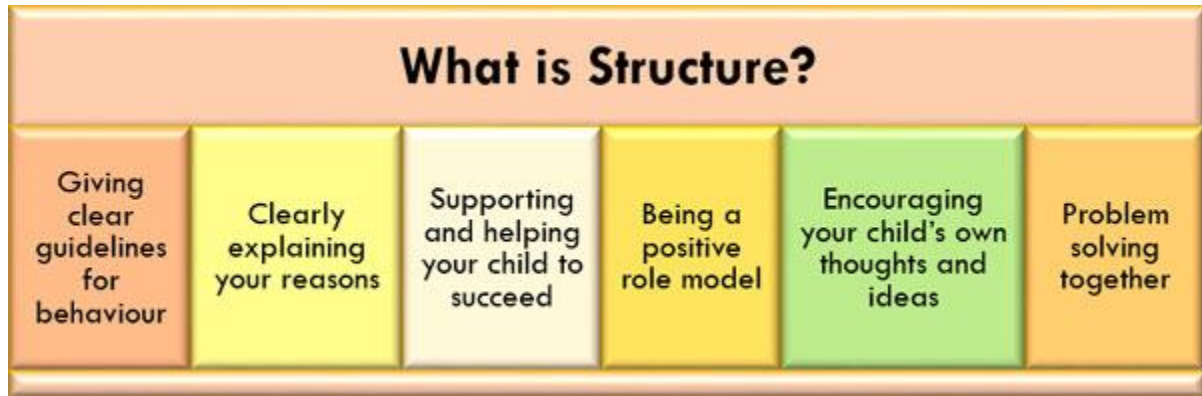
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Appendices

Appendix A. PDEP Chart: What is Warmth?



Appendix B. PDEP Chart: What is Structure?



Appendix C. Email Invitation

Email Invitation to Potential Participants – Program Facilitators/Country Trainers

Subject line: Invitation to participate in study – Engaging in Dual-Level Reflection: Exploring the Perspectives of Country Trainers and Program Facilitators to Understand the Impact of a Violence Prevention Parenting Program in Japan

Dear **Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting Program Facilitator**,

Hello, and good day. In December 2023, you participated in a Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP) Program Facilitator training, hosted by Kidzuku in Sendai, Japan, in collaboration with Positive Discipline in Everyday Life (PDEL). You are also currently participating in the PDEP mentorship process with Kidzuku and PDEL.

This letter serves as an invitation to participate in a study to learn about your impressions and experience with the PDEP program, training, and ongoing mentorship process. The purpose of this study is to explore your perspectives and experiences as a Program Facilitator with delivering the PDEP parenting program in Japan. The intent of this research is to help ensure that the program, training, and mentorship process are relevant and impactful.

If you would like to participate, you will be asked to participate in an **individual interview** with the researcher. Your interview can be conducted with the help of a Japanese/English translator. The interview will be conducted virtually using MS Teams and will last approximately 60-70 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The transcript from the interview will be stripped of any personal identifiers, like names, email addresses, and phone numbers. Only the researcher and the translator will have access to the transcripts. Your privacy and confidentiality will be preserved at all times throughout the duration of the study.

Your responses to the questions will be kept on a OneDrive secure server and accessible only to the researcher, with username and password protection. The intent for use of the information you share during the interview is to assist with the improvement of PDEP program delivery, training, and mentorship processes in Japan. Your privacy will always be protected, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. We will never use your name or identifying information when sharing the study findings.

Although Kidzuku is assisting with the dissemination of this invitation, Kidzuku will not be notified of your response to this invitation. Kidzuku and PDEL will not be made aware of your decision to participate or not participate in this study, and your decision to participate in this research will not impact your current training and partnership with the above organizations.

Abigail Delyea, a student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Social Work, Master of Social Work program, is conducting this research at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. Abigail can be reached through email at delyeaa@myumanitoba.ca. Abigail's advisor of this study is Dr. Ashley Stewart-Tufescu, who can be contacted by emailing Ashley.Stewart-Tufescu@umanitoba.ca.

If you are interested in participating, **please contact Abigail Delyea** at the email address provided above. We will work with you to schedule a time for the interview that is most convenient for you.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Abigail Delyea, at the email address listed above.

Thank you for your interest!

Appendix D. Consent Form

Engaging in Dual-Level Reflection: Exploring the Perspectives of Country Trainers and Program Facilitators to Understand the Impact of a Violence Prevention Parenting Program in Japan

Participant Informed Consent Form

Study Title: Engaging in Dual-Level Reflection: Exploring the Perspectives of Country Trainers and Program Facilitators to Understand the Impact of a Violence Prevention Parenting Program in Japan

Principal Investigator: Abigail Delyea, Student, Master of Social Work Degree, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Mobile: [REDACTED]. Email: delyeaa@myumanitoba.ca

Student Advisor: Dr. Ashley Stewart-Tufescu. PhD, RSW. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work. Scientist, Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba. Phone: 204-474-7876. Mobile: [REDACTED]. Email: Ashley.Stewart-Tufescu@umanitoba.ca. Office: 418A Tier Building | 173 Dafoe Rd. W | Fort Garry Campus Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2 Canada

Funder: University of Manitoba Faculty of Social Work Endowment Fund

Conflicts of Interest and Undue Influence: Please note that there are no conflicts to disclose regarding this study.

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form, a copy of which you can download or print, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, feel free to ask any of the people named above. Please take the time to read this document and any accompanying information carefully. It is very important that you understand:

- What is being asked of you

- What the risks and benefits of participation are
- How the information you provide will be used and stored

Purpose of the Study:

1. I am completing a study to explore the perspectives of Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting Program Country Trainers and Program Facilitators and am inviting you to participate in this study.
2. The results will be used to inform future Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting Program development and facilitation/mentorship practices.

Study Procedures:

1. If you volunteer to participate, you will be interviewed by the researcher, in collaboration with an approved language translator.
2. Participation is voluntary. Even if you participate, you can choose not to answer specific questions and you can also choose to withdraw from the interview after starting. Additionally, you can choose to withdraw from the study at any point throughout the duration of the study.
3. The interview will take approximately 60-70 minutes and will be conducted virtually.
4. Following your interview, the researcher will complete a debriefing session with you, where you can feel free to share any thoughts, feelings, or concerns following the interview. Any comments you make during this session will not be recorded or transcribed and will not be used as data for this project.
5. Your answers will give information about your experience delivering PDEP to parents, your thoughts about the program's core components, and your thoughts about the training and mentoring you received. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.
6. Only the audio from your interview will be recorded and transcribed verbatim using UM Teams' integrated recording tool.

7. You may be approached to participate in a follow up interview, which will also be conducted virtually and will be approximately 20-30 minutes in length. The purpose of this potential follow up interview would be to gather further information for the study, should there be a need identified following the initial interviews of all participants. You are not required to participate in the follow up interview. Should you be requested to participate in a follow up interview and you do not wish you participate, you can communicate this directly to the primary researcher.

Study Risks:

1. If you decide to participate in this study, there are no known risks to your health or safety.
2. During the interview, we will be asking a variety of questions regarding a program that discusses violence against children, corporal punishment, and/or emotional punishment. By discussing these topics, participants may experience psychological or emotional discomfort or distress. This may occur directly during the interview or following the completion of the interview. To address this, appropriate resources will be provided and a debriefing session will be offered to you following your interview.
3. As an employee of Kidzuku there are no known risks to your employment status if you wish to participate in this study.
4. Your participation in this study will have no impact on your employment as a PDEP program facilitator/country trainer with Kidzuku and will not impact your standing with the PDEP program.
5. As a current program facilitator/country trainer of Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting with Positive Discipline in Everyday Life (PDEL), there are no known risks to your current status within the mentorship process with PDEL.

Study Benefits:

1. The information you share will inform future Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting Program development and facilitation/mentorship practices.

2. If you participate in this study, you may gain knowledge and insight into the facilitation and mentorship skills pertaining to the Positive Discipline parenting program.
3. If you participate in this study, you will help to develop and inform potential future improvements to a universal parent support program to prevent violence against children.

Compensation: There is no compensation for this study.

Use and Storage of Information:

1. All the information you provide as a participant in this study is confidential which means we as the research team must keep it safe. We will do our best, however, it is not possible to guarantee absolute confidentiality. We will only share your personal information if required (court order or law). In Japan, the Child Abuse Prevention Act (2000), states the following:

“Any person who reasonably believes that a minor (under 18) is or has been the victim of abuse or neglect shall immediately report to the welfare office or the child guidance office.”

(Child Abuse Prevention Act, Article 6; Child Welfare Law, Article 25).

Due to the topics discussed in PDEP and the nature of this study, information relating to violence against children may be discussed. Should there be information shared during the study that indicates a reasonable belief that a child has been or is a victim of child abuse or neglect, we are bound by the above law to immediately report the concern to Japanese child protection services. Should this arise, the primary investigator will inform you directly of the need to share information.

2. Your information will be stored on a secure platform approved by the University of Manitoba. We will have a file that links your name to your information using a code. We will keep the file with your name, pseudonym, contact information, and code separate from the research information you share with us. Pseudonyms will

be assigned to each participant, and these will be utilized when reporting the results of this study. When we share the results of this study, we will combine everybody's responses. We may use some of your information through quotes. The quotes will not include your name.

3. Your answers will be completely private. They will only be seen by myself, my academic advisor, and the approved language translator.
4. Your name will not be on the transcript from your interview, so no one will know what you said. General descriptions, such as, "the facilitator(s)," will be used in all documents resulting from this study.
5. The transcripts will be securely sent to an approved language translator. This individual will store your data securely and keep your identity confidential. The translator will destroy the transcripts once they have been sent to the research team.
6. The audio-recordings of your interviews will be destroyed following the completion of transcribing the interviews, with the March 2025 being the latest date that the recordings will be destroyed.
7. Your responses from the interview will be destroyed following the completion of the study and publication (October 2027).

Dissemination:

1. The study results will be shared through the publication of a master's thesis, as well as potential journal publications and presentations in relevant academic fields. A summarized report of the study results will also be sent to interested participants.
2. We will share the results from this study with you as a summary by email following the completion of this study, with the latest date being October 2025.
3. A summary of the study results will be reported to PDEL and Kidzuku. This summary will include the themes identified under each research objective, as well as the overall findings and potential implications of the study. The summary will

not include any identifying information and will only include general descriptors. The purpose of this is to potentially influence further developments of PDEP, which will benefit other organizations that have or will implement PDEP as an evidence-based violence prevention intervention.

Withdrawing:

1. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You can choose to do only the activities and/or answer only the questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the study for any reason. You do not have to explain why. You will not be penalized in any way. Should you withdraw partway through the study, all of your information will be destroyed unless you have consented to allowing us to keep it. You may withdraw from the study up to 14 days following your interview. After that date, we will start to analyze the information so it may not be possible to withdraw your information. To withdraw, please contact Abigail Delyea at the phone number or email above. If you wish to withdraw your responses during the interview, the interviewer will ask at each stage of the interview if you still feel comfortable with your participation. If you wish to withdraw from the interview, your responses and contact information will also be deleted.
2. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any point for the duration of the study, without any negative consequences to your employment or position with Kidzuku and PDEL. To withdraw from this study, please contact the researcher via telephone or email, and advise of your wish to withdraw from further participation in the study. At the time of withdrawal, all data that you have provided will be destroyed appropriately.

Questions or Concerns:

Designated University of Manitoba personnel (and/or Funder) may check that this study is being done safely and properly. To do this, they may visit the study site or review the research records. We will tell you if someone outside the research team will be there while you are participating. If this makes you uncomfortable,

please tell a member of the research team, who will ask the personnel to return at another time. This study has been reviewed and approved by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. However, this does not mean that participation is risk-free. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics at humanethics@umanitoba.ca or (204) 474-7122. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, you may contact any members of the research team listed on the first page or the Office of Human Research Ethics.

Consent:

By signing this document, I agree that:

- I have read the above information or had it read to me.
- I have had the opportunity to ask and have answered all of my questions.
- I understand what is being asked of me.
- I will be taking part in a research study.
- I may freely stop or leave the research study activities at any time.
- My information may be shared outside the University of Manitoba.
- I do not waive my legal rights by participating in the study.

Notice Regarding Collection, Use, and Disclosure of Personal Information

Your personal information is being collected under the authority of The University of Manitoba Act. The University of Manitoba is committed to preserving your right to privacy. The information you provide will be used by the University to support our research. Your personal information will not be used or disclosed for other purposes, unless permitted by The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or The Personal Health Information Act. If you have any questions about the collection of personal information: Ph: 204-474-9462 or Email:

fippa@umanitoba.ca

I agree to participate in this study.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I agree to be audio-recorded in this study.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I agree to be contacted for a follow-up interview.

☐YES ☐ NO

Name of Participant

Participant's Signature

Date

Summary of Results:

If you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study, this will occur through email. Please provide an email address below if you would like to be sent a summary of the study results and/or my individual results.

Email address: _____

If you would prefer to receive a summary of the results of this study through mail instead, please indicate your address below. Please note that due to varying geographical distance, this may delay the date on which you receive the summary.

Address: _____

Appendix E. The Interview Guide for Country Trainer Candidates

Date:

ID/Pseudonym:

Research Objectives:

1. To explore Country Trainers' perceptions of the impact of the PDEP program on Japanese parents who have completed the PDEP program;
2. To explore Country Trainers' perspectives on the PDEP program's mechanisms of change; and
3. To explore Country Trainers' perspectives on the PDEP training and mentorship process.

Introduction

Before we begin, thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me today. I want to ask you some questions about your experience as a PDEP Country Trainer Candidate, including the training and mentoring process you've been a part of, as well as your experiences delivering the PDEP program to parents. I want to begin by briefly reviewing a few important guidelines to keep in mind for our discussion.

Please feel comfortable saying what you think and feel throughout our time today. I am here to gather information on your opinions and experiences, whether positive or negative, and your responses today will remain confidential. The information gathered today will be used in my research project and thesis. However, your identity will not be revealed outside of my research committee.

Please note that I will be audio-video recording our conversation to remember what we discussed today. However, this will not be shared with anyone outside my research committee. Any identifying

information recorded during the discussion will also be removed, so your responses will remain anonymous.

Do you have any questions before we start the interview?

******Start audio-video recording******

Introduction Questions (~10 minutes)

- (1) When did you become a PDEP Facilitator? When did you then become a Country Trainer?
- (2) Why did you become a Country Trainer?
- (3) What motivations did you to continue being a PDEP Country Trainer?
- (4) How many PDEP programs have you delivered to parents?
- (5) Where have you delivered parenting programs? (i.e. What regions of Japan?)

Research Objective #1 Questions (~20 minutes)

Objective: *“To explore Country Trainers’ perceptions of the impact of the PDEP program on Japanese parents who have completed the PDEP program.”*

In the PDEP program, you focus on teaching parents’ skills to increase their ability to use positive discipline strategies with their children instead of punitive responses. I am going to begin by asking you some questions about your perceptions of the program's impact on Japanese parents.

- (1) Overall, how would you describe your impression of Japanese parents’ receptiveness to the PDEP program?
- (2) Were there any notable successes of parents taking the program? If so, what were the successes?

- (3) Were there any notable challenges experienced by parents taking the program? If so, what were the challenges?
- (4) Overall, did you observe an impact of the program on the parents? If so, what impacts did you observe?
- (5) Do you think PDEP impacted the children of parents taking the program? If so, what are the impacts?
- (6) Do you feel that PDEP impacts parents differently? If yes, how so? If not, why do you think so?
- (7) What factors do you believe contribute to parents' success in the program?
- (8) In your opinion, does PDEP provide information and tools that are contextually and culturally relevant to the parents you work with? How does this impact parental success?
- (9) Which of the core components of the PDEP – a) identifying long-term goals, b) providing warmth and structure, c) understanding how children think and feel, and d) problem solving– did you find was the most helpful to parents and why?

Research Objective #2 Questions (~20 minutes)

Objective: *“To explore Country Trainers’ perspectives on the PDEP program’s mechanisms of change with parents.”*

In the PDEP program that you have been delivering, you worked with parents to identify long-term goals, understand how their child thinks and feels at different developmental stages, problem solving, and responding with warmth and structure. I am now going to ask you some questions about these mechanisms of change or core components of the program

Identifying Long-Term Goals

In the program, you taught parents the differences between short-term goals (what they want their child to do right now) and long-term goals (what kind of person they want their child to grow up to be and the type of relationship they hope to have with them), and how stress impacts parents' interactions with their child in moments of stress(i.e., what they say and do). You also helped to normalize everyday parenting challenges and frustrations.

(1) In your opinion, what part of this program component was most helpful to the parents?

(2) In your opinion, what part of this program component was most challenging for the parents?

Providing Warmth and Structure

Thinking of the two tools of the program – Warmth and Structure, you worked with parents to understand how to provide safety and security (warmth) along with information and guidance (structure) to develop a loving, affectionate relationship with their child. You also considered the importance of establishing trust, respecting communication, and emphasizing a “teaching” approach with children. You also demonstrated specific ways to give structure and warmth to children at different stages of development.

(3) In your opinion, what part of the warmth component was most helpful to the parents?

(4) In your opinion, what part of the warmth component was most challenging for the parents?

(5) In your opinion, what part of the structure component was most helpful to the parents?

(6) In your opinion, what part of the structure component was most challenging for the parents?

Understanding How Children Think and Feel

In the PDEP parent program, several sessions (Sessions 3-7) are dedicated to helping parents understand the materials of the PDEP model– Understanding How Children Think and Feel. Here

you worked with parents to increase their knowledge of typical developmental processes, to begin to shift parents' attributions of children's behaviour from "bad" to "typical for that stage," to increase empathy for their children's feelings, and to help parents work toward long term processes rather than short term frustrations.

(7) In your opinion, what part of Understanding How Children Think and Feel was most helpful to the parents?

(8) In your opinion, what part of Understanding How Children Think was most challenging to the parents?

Problem-Solving and Responding with Positive Discipline

The final building block of the PDEP model is Problem Solving and Responding with Positive Discipline. In Session 8, you worked to support parents' understanding of the principles of positive discipline, to identify long-term goals, to provide warmth and structure, to understand how children think and feel, and to engage in problem-solving. You also provided parents with the opportunity to think through several challenging situations using the Problem-Solving method.

(9) In your opinion, what part of learning to respond with problem solving was most helpful to the parents?

(10) From your observations, what part of responding with problem solving was most challenging for the parents?

Research Objective #3 Questions (~20 minutes)

Objective: *"To explore Country Trainers' perspectives on the PDEP training and mentorship process."*

We will now change our focus to thinking about the experience you had becoming a PDEP Facilitator/Country Trainer and participating in the mentoring process. You will recall that prior to becoming a facilitator, you participated in a 5-day training that allowed you to become certified in PDEP facilitation. You also engaged in follow up mentoring to support you in delivering your first parenting program with your co-facilitator(s).

- (1) Overall, how would you describe your experience participating in the PDEP facilitator training?
- (2) Following the training, did you feel prepared to deliver the program to parents? If not, what would have improved your training experience and level of preparedness? If yes, what key aspects of the training program did you find most helpful?
- (3) Overall, how would you describe your experiences with the post-training mentorship process?

A key aspect of PDEP training is the parallel process, which is the idea that trainers want to model for parents, the behaviors, and skills that parents can then use with their children.

- (4) Based on your experience, what are your overall thoughts on the parallel process?
- (5) Throughout your training, what were your observations of the parallel process from your mentors?
- (6) Based on your experiences facilitating PDEP, can you describe how you use the parallel process with your participants?
- (7) How would you describe the impact of the parallel process?

Additional Questions for CTs:

You will recall that prior to becoming a Country Trainer, you participated in a dual level training with a Master Trainer and Program Facilitator candidates. You have also engaged in follow-up mentorship sessions with master trainers and facilitators.

(8) Overall, how would you describe your experience participating in the PDEP country trainer dual level training?

(9) Following the training, did you feel prepared to mentor your new facilitators? If not, what would have improved your training experience and level of preparedness? If yes, what key aspects of the training program did you find most helpful?

(10) Overall, describe your experience mentoring PDEP facilitators?

Concluding Remarks (~10 minutes)

Do you have any final comments that you would like to make regarding the PDEP program?

Do you have any additional comments, questions, or suggestions that you would like to add about implementing the PDEP program to parents in Japan?

Thank you so much for taking the time to reflect on your experiences as a PDEP country trainer/facilitator and for sharing your thoughts and comments on these questions.

******Stop audio-video recording******

Appendix F. The Interview Guide for Program Facilitator Candidates

Date:

ID/Pseudonym:

Research Objectives:

1. To explore Program Facilitators' perceptions of the impact of the PDEP program on Japanese parents who have completed the PDEP program;
2. To explore Program Facilitators' perspectives on the PDEP program's mechanisms of change; and
3. To explore Program Facilitators' perspectives on the PDEP training and mentorship process.

Introduction

Before we begin, thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me today. The purpose of our meeting is for me to ask you some questions about your experience with the PDEP training and mentoring process and delivering the PDEP parent program to caregivers. We want to begin by briefly reviewing a few important guidelines to keep in mind for our discussion.

Please feel comfortable saying what you think and feel throughout our time today. I am here to gather information on your opinions and experiences, whether positive or negative, and your responses today will remain confidential and anonymous. The information gathered today will be used in my research project and thesis. However, your identity will not be revealed outside of my research committee.

Please note that I will be audio-video recording our conversation so that I can remember what we discussed today. However, this will not be shared with anyone outside my research committee. Any

identifying information recorded during the discussion will also be removed, so your responses will remain anonymous.

Do you have any questions before we start the interview?

******Start audio-video recording******

Introduction Questions (~10 minutes)

- (1) When did you become a PDEP Facilitator?
- (2) Why did you become a PDEP Facilitator?
- (3) What motivations did you to continue being a PDEP Facilitator?
- (4) How many PDEP programs have you delivered to parents?
- (5) Where have you delivered parenting programs? (i.e. What regions of Japan?)

Research Objective #1 Questions (~20 minutes)

Objective: *“To explore Program Facilitators’ perceptions of the impact of the PDEP program on Japanese parents who have completed the PDEP program.”*

In the PDEP program, you focus on teaching parents’ skills to increase their ability to use positive discipline strategies with their children. I am going to begin by asking you some questions about your perceptions of the impact of the PDEP program on Japanese parents.

- (1) Overall, how would you describe your impression of the parents’ receptiveness to the PDEP program?
- (2) Were there any notable successes of parents taking the program? If so, what were the successes?

(3) Were there any notable challenges experienced by parents taking the program? If so, what were the challenges?

(4) Overall, did you observe an impact of the program on the parents? If so, what impacts did you observe?

(5) Do you think PDEP had an impact on the children of parents taking the program? If so, what are the impacts?

(6) Do you feel that PDEP affects varying types of parents differently? If yes, how so? If not, why do you think so?

(7) What factors do you believe contribute to parental success in the program?

(8) In your opinion, does PDEP provide information and tools that are contextually and culturally relevant to the parents you work with? How does this impact parental success?

(9) Which of the core components of the PDEP – a) identifying long-term goals, b) providing warmth and structure, c) understanding how children think and feel, and d) problem solving– did you find was the most helpful to parents and why?

Research Objective #2 Questions (~20 minutes)

Objective: *“To explore Program Facilitators’ perspectives on the PDEP program’s mechanisms of change with parents.”*

In the PDEP program that you have been delivering, you worked with parents to identify long-term goals, understand how their child thinks and feels at different developmental stages, problem solving, and responding with warmth and structure. I am now going to ask you some questions about these mechanisms of change or core components of the program.

Identifying Long-Term Goals

In the program, you taught parents the differences between short-term goals (what they want their child to do right now) and long-term goals (what kind of person do they want their child to grow up to be and the type of relationship they hope to have with them), and how stress impacts parents' interactions with their child in moments of stress(i.e., what they say and do). You also helped to normalize everyday parenting challenges and frustrations.

- (1) In your opinion, what part of this program component was most helpful to the parents?
- (2) In your opinion, what part of this program component was most challenging for the parents?

Providing Warmth and Structure

Thinking of the two tools of the program – Warmth and Structure, you worked with parents to understand how to provide safety and security (warmth) along with information and guidance (structure) to develop a loving, affectionate relationship with their child. You also considered the importance of establishing trust, respecting communication, and emphasizing a “teaching” approach with children. You also demonstrated specific ways to give structure and warmth to children at different stages of development.

- (3) In your opinion, what part of the warmth component was most helpful to the parents?
- (4) In your opinion, what part of the warmth component was most challenging for the parents?
- (5) In your opinion, what part of the structure component was most helpful to the parents?
- (6) In your opinion, what part of the structure component was most challenging for the parents?

Understanding How Children Think and Feel

In the PDEP parent program, several sessions (Sessions 3-7) are dedicated to helping parents understand the materials of the PDEP model– Understanding How Children Think and Feel. Here you worked with parents to increase their knowledge of typical developmental processes, to begin to shift parents’ attributions of children’s behaviour from “bad” to “typical for that stage,” to increase empathy for their children’s feelings, and to help parents work toward long term processes rather than short term frustrations.

(7) In your opinion, what part of Understanding How Children Think and Feel was most helpful to the parents?

(8) In your opinion, what part of Understanding How Children Think was most challenging to the parents?

Problem-Solving and Responding with Positive Discipline

The final building block of the PDEP model is Problem Solving and Responding with Positive Discipline. In Session 8, you worked to support parents’ understanding of the principles of positive discipline, to identify long-term goals, to provide warmth and structure, to understand how children think and feel, and to engage in problem-solving. You also provided parents with the opportunity to think through several challenging situations using the Problem-Solving method.

(9) In your opinion, what part of learning to respond with problem solving was most helpful to the parents?

(10) From your observations, what part of responding with problem solving was most challenging for the parents?

Research Objective #3 Questions (~20 minutes)

Objective: “To explore Program Facilitators’ perspectives on the PDEP training and mentorship process.”

We will now change our focus to thinking about the experience you had becoming a PDEP facilitator/Country Trainer and participating in the mentoring process. You will recall that prior to becoming a facilitator, you participated in a 5-day training that allowed you to become certified in PDEP facilitation. You also engaged in follow up mentoring to support you in delivering your first parenting program with your co-facilitator(s).

(1) Overall, how would you describe your experience participating in the PDEP facilitator training?

(2) Following the training, did you feel prepared to deliver the program to parents? If not, what would have improved your training experience and level of preparedness? If yes, what key aspects of the training program did you find most helpful?

(3) Overall, how would you describe your experiences with the post-training mentorship process?

A key aspect of PDEP training is the parallel process, which is the idea that trainers want to model for parents, the behaviors, and skills that parents can then use with their children.

(4) Based on your experience, what are your overall thoughts on the parallel process?

(5) Throughout your training, what were your observations of the parallel process from your mentors?

(6) Based on your experiences facilitating PDEP, can you describe how you use the parallel process with your participants?

(7) How would you describe the impact of the parallel process?

Additional Questions for PF’s:

You will recall that prior to becoming a Program Facilitator, you participated in a training with Country Trainers and a Master Trainer. You will have also engaged in follow-up mentoring sessions as you delivered your first two parent programs.

(8) Overall, how would you describe your experience participating in the PDEP training?

(9) Following the training, did you feel the mentoring prepared you to deliver the program to parents? What would have improved your training experience and level of preparedness to deliver the program to parents? What aspects of the training and mentoring process did you find most helpful?

Concluding Remarks (~10 minutes)

Do you have any final comments that you would like to make regarding the PDEP program?

Do you have any additional comments, questions, or suggestions that you would like to add about implementing the PDEP program to parents in Japan?

Thank you so much for taking the time to reflect on your experiences as a PDEP Program Facilitator and for sharing your thoughts and comments on these questions.

******Stop audio-video recording******

Appendix G. Mental Health Resources Email

Japanese Version:

こんにちは。

インタビューにご参加いただき、また私の研究調査にご支援いただき、誠にありがとうございます。プロジェクトへのご支援に深く感謝申し上げます。

PDEPやそれに関連するトピックについて話す際、難しい会話が生じることがあります。PDEPを提供する方々のセルフケアは常に重要です。メンタルヘルスについて相談したい場合やサポートが必要な場合は、以下に日本国内の無料リソースをいくつかご紹介しますので、ご活用ください。

TELLチャットとライフラインジャパン：このリソースは、日本全国で利用可能なメンタルヘルスに関するオンラインチャットと電話サービスです。

- 0800-300-8355（フリーダイヤル）

- <https://telljp.com/lifeline/>

あなたの居場所：日本在住の方のための24時間365日対応の心のサポートラインです。

- [Ibashochat.org](https://ibashochat.org)

- <https://talkme.ibashochat.org/chat/first>

この研究にご参加いただき、改めて感謝申し上げます。近いうちに結果をお知らせするためにご連絡いたします。

どうぞお元気で。

アビゲイル・デリヤ

English Version:

Hello.

Thank you so much for participating in this interview and for supporting my research. I really appreciate your support for the project.

Talking about PDEP and related topics can sometimes lead to difficult conversations. Self-care for those providing PDEP is always important. If you need help or support regarding your mental health, below are some free resources available in Japan.

TELL Chat and Lifeline Japan: This resource is an online chat and phone service for mental health issues available nationwide in Japan.

- 0800-300-8355 (toll-free)

- <https://telljp.com/lifeline/>

Ibashochat: A 24/7 emotional support line for people living in Japan.

- [Ibashochat.org](https://ibashochat.org)

- <https://talkme.ibashochat.org/chat/first>

Thank you again for participating in this study. We will contact you soon to share the results.

Take care, Abigail Delyea

Appendix H. Initial Coding Table

Table 2.

Initial Coding Codebook

Training

Mentor/mentee relationship	Collaborative problem-solving with peers/colleagues
Valuing independent thoughts/opinions	Aligning with the manual
Referring to external support	Responding with warmth and structure
Ongoing support/discussion	Establishing co-facilitator relationships
Rooted in the core components	Engaged in the parallel process
Difficulties with the training	Reduces stress
Establishes trusting relationships	Improved facial expression
Serve/return process	Facilitates safety and security
Empowering/motivating effect	Facilitates positive change
Relationship building	Balancing new ideas vs. program plan
Ongoing learning	Difficulties sharing information
Requires reflexivity/openness	Impacts daily life
Naturally occurring larger societal context	Requires receptiveness
Impacts children	Individual preparation/style
Time management	Awareness of potential program challenges
Practicum/experiential learning	Focus on warmth/structure
Recognizing differences	Recognizing different ways of
Increasing experience/comfortability with program content	learning/communicating

Mechanisms of Change

Challenges addressing pre-existing ideas	Scenario repetitiveness
Parental regret	Parent/child differences
Challenges with temperament	Challenges using components with adolescents
Difficulty understanding development	Temperaments
Information on the brain	Understanding differences
Understanding children's perspectives	Societal expectations of children
Lack of time	Limited mental capacity/ability to remember goals
Difficulty seeing children as individuals	Challenges in parents' relationships with their parents
"Forcing" children to "be" a certain way	Reducing situational stress responses
Having a "North Star"	Learning to identify triggers
Using parenting challenges as opportunities	Focus on the parent/child relationship
Difficulties balancing warmth and structure	Difficulty including the child in problem-solving
Challenges transferring skills	Challenges focussing on the process
Learning to focus on one problem at a time	Including the child in problem-solving
Reflecting on/practicing acquired skills	Acknowledging multiple ways to problem solve
Challenges modelling	Differing personal/societal views on program
Scaffolding	Challenges providing structure without language
Lack of balance	Difficulty perceiving the child's perspective

Practicality of components
Increasing ability to regulate emotions
Lack of comfortability
Parental lack of warmth in childhood
Learning to express warmth
Facilitator Skills

Difficulty providing structure while problem-solving
Parental desire to provide structure
Language limitations
Desire to categorize tools into their pillars
Safe space for learning
Session pace/cohesiveness

Impacts

Challenges traditional gender roles
Varying timing of change
Parental self-doubt
Alignment with Japanese culture
Changed parental views of children
Increased parent/child closeness
Increased awareness/reflexivity
Challenges with problem-solving
Difficulty identifying long-term goals
Collaborative learning
Expectations of a 'right' answer
Challenges with program materials
Learning through scenarios
Increased parenting skills
Facilitates new relationships
Emotional openness
Pre-existing negative ideas
Understanding warmth and structure

Addresses lack in child development education
Increasing awareness of child/human rights
Challenges traditional ways of interacting
Changed child views of parents
Co-occurring parent/child behavior changes
Differences amongst overall observed change
Differences in thinking/processing
Challenges with translation accuracy/understanding
Difficulty identifying emotions
Parental difficulty discussing childhood
Feelings of guilt/shame about previous parenting
Improved facial expression
Improved parent/child interactions/relationships
Decreased negative emotions of parents
Increased understanding of children's behaviors
Increasing trust/receptiveness of PDEP
Participant empowerment
Challenges traditional views on punishment

Appendix I. Intermediate Coding Tables

Table 3: *Intermediate Codebook – Training*

Provision of Information

Facilitator Skills
Practicum/experiential learning

Ongoing learning
Aligning with the manual

Ongoing Problem-Solving

Balancing new ideas vs. program plan
Time management
Referring to external support

Recognizing different ways of learning
Collaborative problem-solving
Awareness of potential program challenges

Experience and Reflexivity

Individual preparation/style

Increasing experience/comfort with content

Mentorship

Engaged in the parallel process
Rooted in the components of PDEP

Mentor/mentee relationship
Collaborative problem-solving

Table 4. *Intermediate Codebook - Mechanisms of Change*

<i>Program Content</i>	
Learning through scenarios	Temperament
Session pace/cohesiveness	Adherence to the program manual
Scaffolding	Understanding warmth and structure
Information on the brain	
<i>Child-Centered Perspective Shifting</i>	
Focus on the parent/child relationship	Including the child in problem-solving
Having a “North Star”	Learning how to express warmth
Understanding children’s perspectives	
<i>Skill Adaptability/Transference</i>	
Reflecting on/practicing acquired skills	Learning to focus on one problem at a time
Reducing situational stress responses	Acknowledging multiple ways to problem-solve
<i>Challenging Normalized Views of Children/Parenting</i>	
Challenges traditional gender roles	Learning to understand differences
Increases awareness of child/human rights	Challenges traditional ways of interacting
Challenges traditional views on punishment	Addresses lack in child development education

Table 5. *Intermediate Codebook - Impacts*

Personal Skills

Increased awareness/reflexivity	Improved facial expression
Decreased negative emotions of parents	Emotional openness
Learning to identify triggers	Reducing situational stress responses
Increasing ability to regulate emotions	

Parenting Skills

Changed parental views of children	Co-occurring parent/child behavior changes
Increased understanding of child behaviors	Understanding children's perspectives
Increased parenting skills	

Parent/Child Relationship/Closeness

Increased parent/child closeness	Improved parent/child interactions
Improved parent/child relationships	Parent/child differences
Changed child views of parent	Facilitates safety and security
Facilitates positive change	

Child Rights Knowledge/Awareness

Acknowledging children as individuals	Understanding of child perspectives
Increased awareness/understanding of children's rights	Increasing trust/receptiveness of PDEP

Table 6. *Intermediate Codebook - Additional Themes*

Supportive Relationship

Training

Establishing trusting relationships
Mentor/mentee relationship
Valuing different thoughts/opinions

Ongoing support/discussion
Establishing cofacilitator relationships

Mechanisms of Change

Collaborative learning
Safe space for learning
Relationship building

Facilitates new relationships
Participant empowerment
Serve/return process

Impacts

Increased parent/child closeness

Improved parent/child
interactions/relationship

Parallel Process

Training

Experiencing the parallel process
Focus on warmth and structure
Recognizing difference experiences
Collaborative problem-solving

Acknowledging emotional differences
Modelling components of PDEP
Relationship building

Mechanisms of Change

Experiencing the parallel process
Focus on warmth and structure
Recognizing different experiences
Collaborative problem-solving
Responding with warmth and structure

Acknowledging emotional differences
Modelling the components of PDEP
Relationship building
Establishing trusting relationships

Impacts

Experiencing the parallel process
Focus on warmth and structure
Recognizing different experiences
Collaborative problem-solving

Acknowledging emotional differences
Modelling the components of PDEP
Relationship building
Impacts children

Impacts daily life

Facilitates new relationships

Normalized Challenges

Training

Difficulties with the training
Difficulties sharing information

Translation accuracy/understanding

Mechanisms of Change

Challenges with problem-solving
Different levels of observed change
Challenges addressing pre-existing ideas
Scenario repetitiveness
Difficulty understanding development
Difficulties balancing warmth and structure
Including the child in problem-solving
Challenges modelling
Different personal/societal views on program
Desire to categorize tools into pillars
Challenges focussing on the process
Difficulty providing structure while problem-solving
Challenges using components with adolescents
Challenges with program materials
Varying timing of change

Difficulty identifying long-term goals
Discussing childhood experiences
Parental regret
Challenges with temperament
Understanding adolescents
Societal expectations of children
Challenges transferring skills
Language limitations
Lack of comfortability
Challenges using structure without language
Difficulty perceiving the child's perspective/development level
Pre-existing negative ideas

Impacts

Parental ability to view child's perspective
Expectations of a 'right' answer
Parental self-doubt
Parental relationships with their parents
Limited mental capacity to remember goals
'Forcing' their child to 'be' a certain way
Lack of balance

Difficulty identifying emotions
Feelings of shame regarding parenting
Transferring skills outside of program
Lack of time
Parental lack of warmth in childhood
Parent/child differences
Parental desire to provide structure