

Enhancing the Capacity of Home Visitors with a Reflective Practice Approach

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Background

Fussy Baby Network® (FBN) is a national model prevention home visitation program with a unique approach to family engagement, known as Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN). The FAN approach teaches home visitors to focus on parents' concerns, read parents' cues for engagement, and use the strategies of the approach to match their interactions to what parents indicate they can most use in the moment.

One goal of the FAN is to build capacity and self-efficacy by supporting parents rather than doing for them. The approach also reminds home visitors to notice, understand, and regulate their own feelings, thus building self-awareness and self-regulation, both vital components of reflective practice.

Another essential part of the approach is reflective supervision, which has been found to benefit both practitioners and program participants by helping practitioners manage stress and emotions (Bernstein & Edwards, 2012; Watson et al., 2014).

Measures

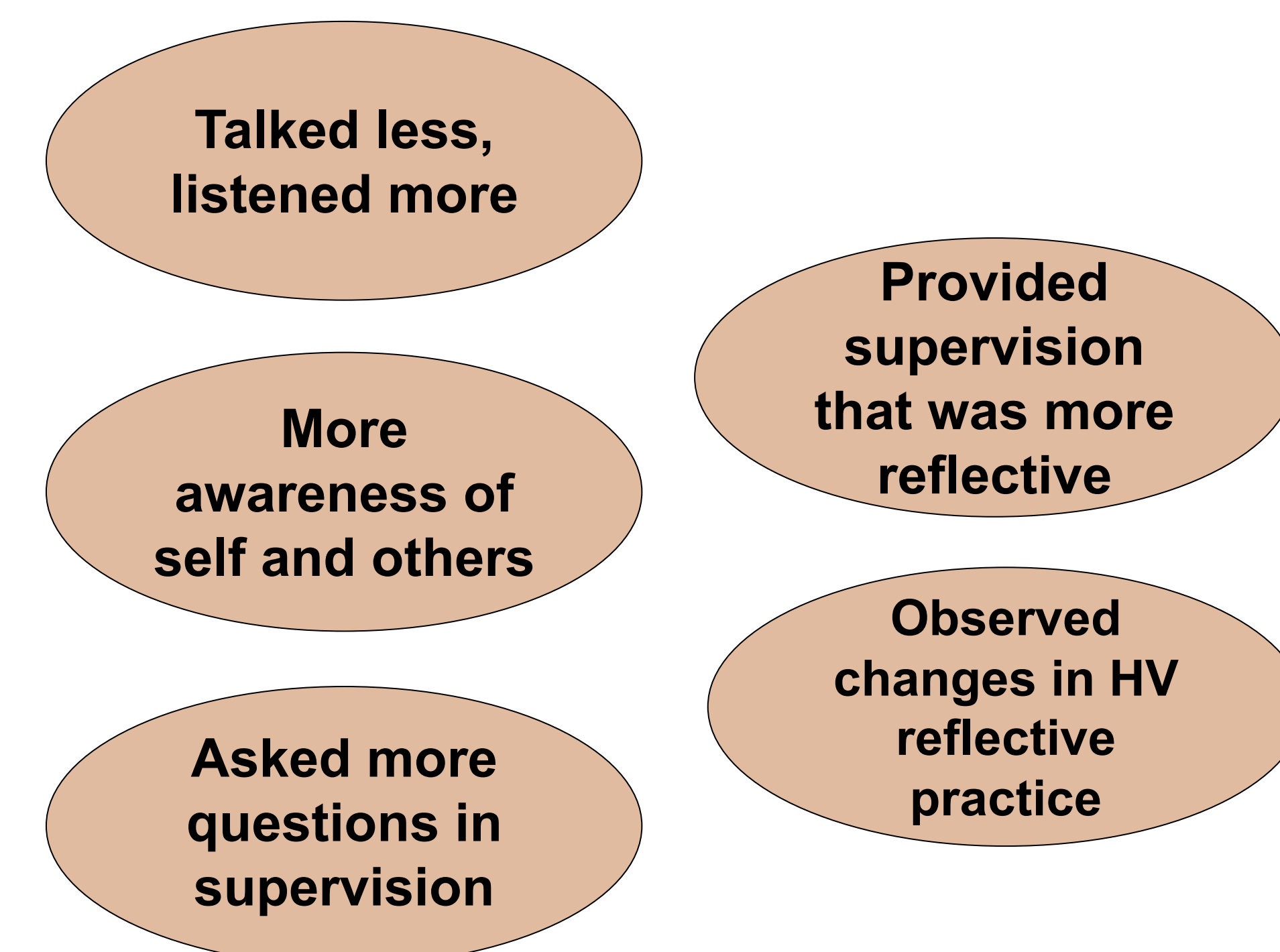
| Tool | Citation |
|---|--|
| <i>Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire</i> : consists of five independently developed mindfulness questionnaires that, based on a factor analysis, represent elements of mindfulness as conceptualized in the psychological literature. | Baer, R. A., Samuel, D. B., & Lykins, E. (2011). Differential item functioning on the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire is minimal in demographically matched meditators and nonmeditators. <i>Assessment, 18</i> , 3–10. |
| <i>Maslach Burnout Inventory</i> : assesses three aspects of burnout—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. | Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., & Leiter, M. P. (1996). <i>The Maslach Burnout Inventory</i> (3rd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press. |
| <i>Reflective Supervision Rating Scale</i> : measures supervisors' behaviors from the perspective of home visitors. | Ash, J. (2010). Reflective Supervision Rating Scale. Unpublished measure. |
| <i>Supervisor Working Alliance Inventory</i> : measures selective properties of the relationship in supervision | Efstation, J. F., Patton, M. J., & Kardash, C. M. (1990). Measuring the working alliance in counselor supervision. <i>Journal of Counseling Psychology, 37</i> , 322–329. |
| <i>Provider Reflective Process Assessment Scales</i> : designed to measure reflective capacity. | Heller, S. (2015). Provider Reflective Process Assessment Scales, Unpublished measure. Tulane University. |

Supervisor Findings

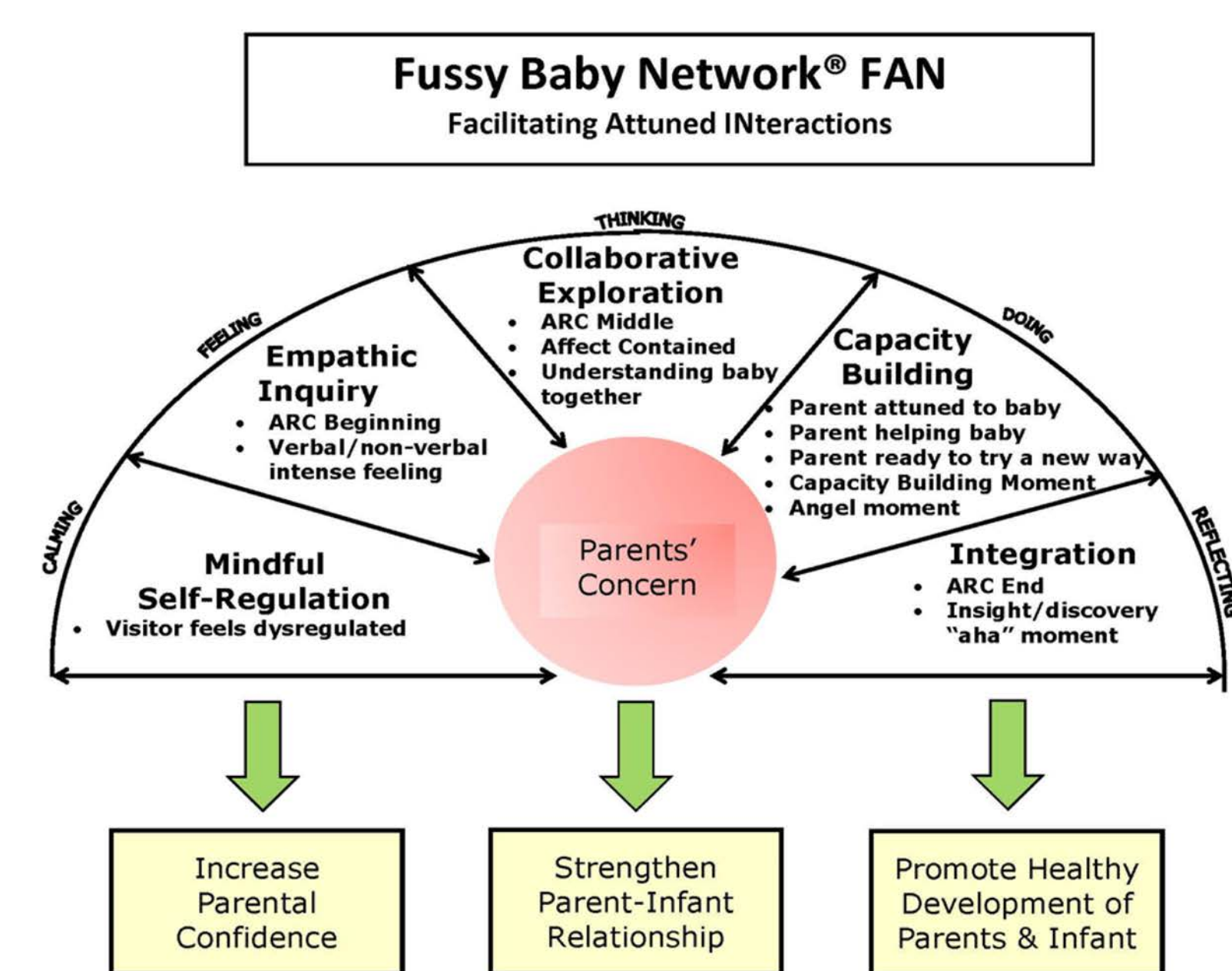
After learning and implementing the FAN, supervisors were better able to:

- Support home visitors around matching their interactions based on parents' cues
- Help home visitors recognize and regulate their own feelings during visits with families
- Encourage home visitors to reflect about themselves and families on their caseload

Supervisor practice changed in the following ways after the FAN training:

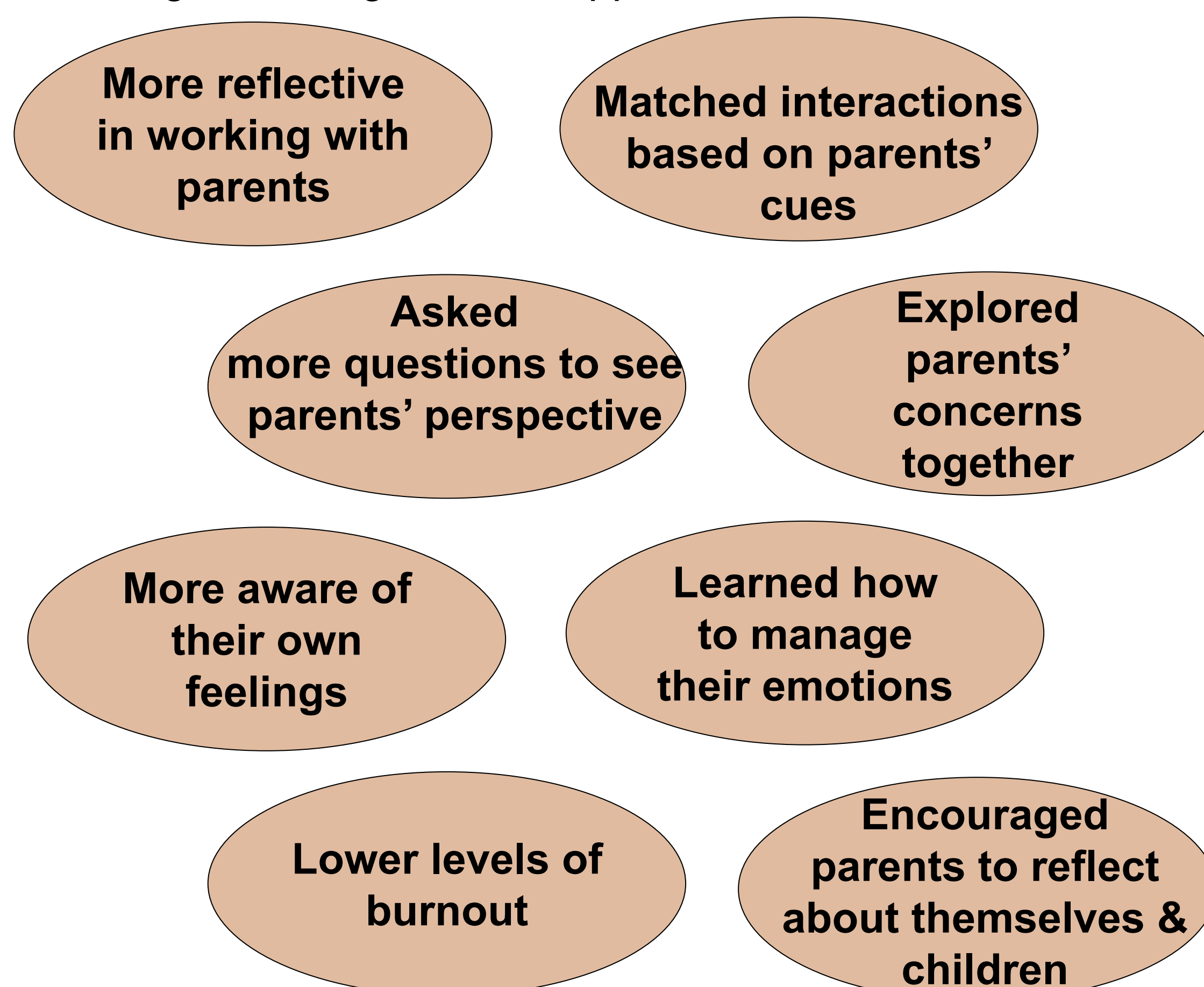


FAN Approach



Home Visitor Findings

Home visitor practice changed in the following ways after learning and using the FAN approach:



Supervision "changed a lot" by the end of the FAN training, according to supervisors.

- Supervisors felt they were better at processing home visitors' feelings/reactions to the work they are doing with families by the end of the training.
- Using the FAN during supervision was critical in learning the FAN approach, according to both home visitors and supervisors

Supervisor perspective of the effect of the FAN approach on home visitor practice:

"It's a different mindset where you are partnering a little bit more with the parent and really trying to dig a little deeper into your relationship with the parent."

- Supervisor at Home Visiting program

Research Design

The evaluation team conducted a mixed-methods quasi-experimental evaluation of an intensive training for home visitors and supervisors in the FAN approach. Qualitative and quantitative methods addressed questions about implementation and impact of the training across program models, as well as comparison between the longer (9 & 12 months) and condensed (6 months) versions of the training. Interviews were conducted pre-training and at the end of the training (at 6, 9, or 12 months). Surveys were administered pre-training, 6 months into the training, and at the end of the training (at 9 or 12 months).

Participants

Evidence-based home visiting programs throughout Illinois using the HFA or PAT models were invited to participate in the FAN Training. The following numbers of programs participated in the FAN Training and evaluation:

- 13 Healthy Families America programs
- 11 Parents As Teachers programs
- 3 programs that included both HFA and PAT models

The evaluation included the following samples:

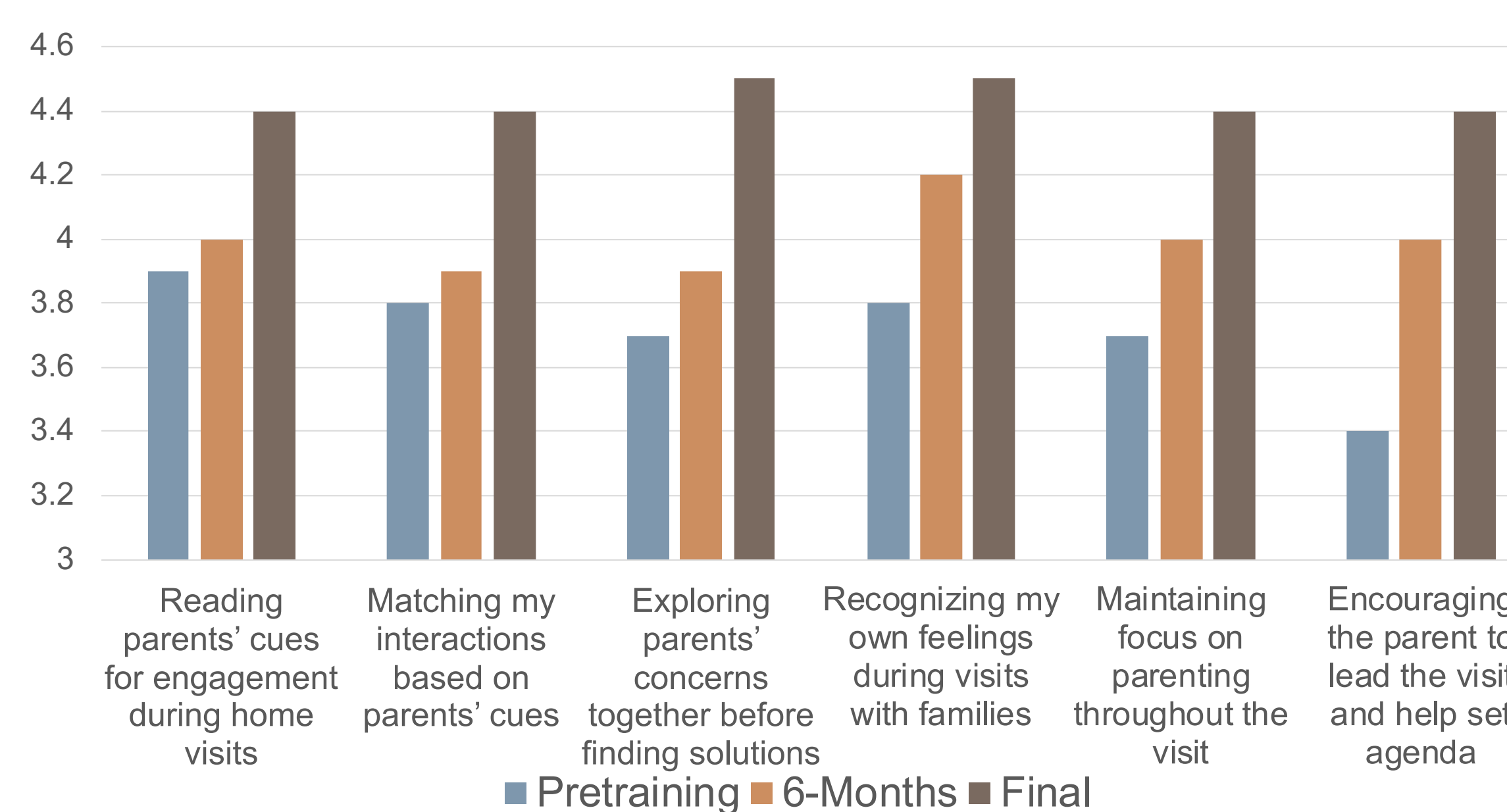
- Program supervisors (N = 24) – Interviews, surveys
- Home visitors (N = 99) – Interviews, surveys
- Consultants (N = 6) – Interviews
- FBN Trainers (N = 4) – Interviews

Of 72 home visitors employed at both pre-training and end of training, 31 from three waves completed all three surveys. Of the 23 supervisors employed at both pre-training and end of training, 14 completed all three surveys.

"I was constantly stressed, and I didn't know what to do. [The FAN approach] helped me very much."

- Home visitor

Figure 1. Self-Assessed FAN Skills of Home Visitors in FAN Training (Response scale 1-5)
Home Visitors' FAN Skills Over Time



Home visitors shifted their perception of their role and felt less pressure to fix parents' problems:

"The FAN has kind of been a little freeing. It has kind of lifted a weight, because I don't have to be a fixer. I'm not a fixer... [Parents] want to be heard, and it's enough to just listen and hold them."

- Home visitor

Discussion

FAN Training increased home visitors' reflective capacity and changed the dynamics of their home visits and relationships with families. Home visitors were more attentive to parents' cues, better able to focus on parenting, and better able to explore the concerns of parents after training. They also reported lower levels of job burnout after the training.

Supervisors were more attentive to home visitor's needs and concerns. Their own reflective capacity increased as they listened more to home visitors and asked more questions rather than providing solutions.

The FAN Training varied in length among programs, and those who participated in a 9- or 12-month training demonstrated greater improvements by the end of the training than those in the shorter 6-month training.

The training and research teams experienced several challenges in implementing and studying the impact of a lengthy training, including staff turnover and program participant attrition. However, sufficient data were collected, and findings were triangulated from data sources: surveys and interviews with home visitors, supervisors, and consultants converged.

Although more research is needed to understand the impact on parents and children, this evaluation of the FAN Training provides implications for reducing burnout and building the capacity of home visitors to work with high-risk families.