

## Introduction

Low and middle-income countries such as India are home to 95% of the world's children with disabilities (CWDs) under the age of five years. In India, 4.95% of the child population is estimated to have disabilities, but less than 10% are being accurately diagnosed. Even less are receiving appropriate treatment.

Barriers to early identification include lack of trained professionals, limited services, long clinic waiting times, large distances, lack of transport, low social support, and stigma.

The Covid-19 pandemic further hindered access to rehabilitation services.

## Health Coaching

Healthcare coaching is a client-centered, goal-oriented approach that aims to empower caregivers to self manage and promote the development of children with disabilities

It is based on the concept of Family Centered Care (FCC) which recognises the importance of the family unit in a child's life and rehabilitation process. Benefits of health coaching include

- Building capacity for caregivers
- Empowering caregivers in to be more involved in the rehabilitation process
- Providing expert care from a distance

## Health Coaching At Inspirium

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Inspirium Holistic Care (an occupational therapy clinic in Mumbai, India) had to rapidly shift to providing rehabilitation services online. Elements of health coaching were used to empower caregivers to provide rehabilitation services from their homes and to ensure children continued to receive regular therapy.

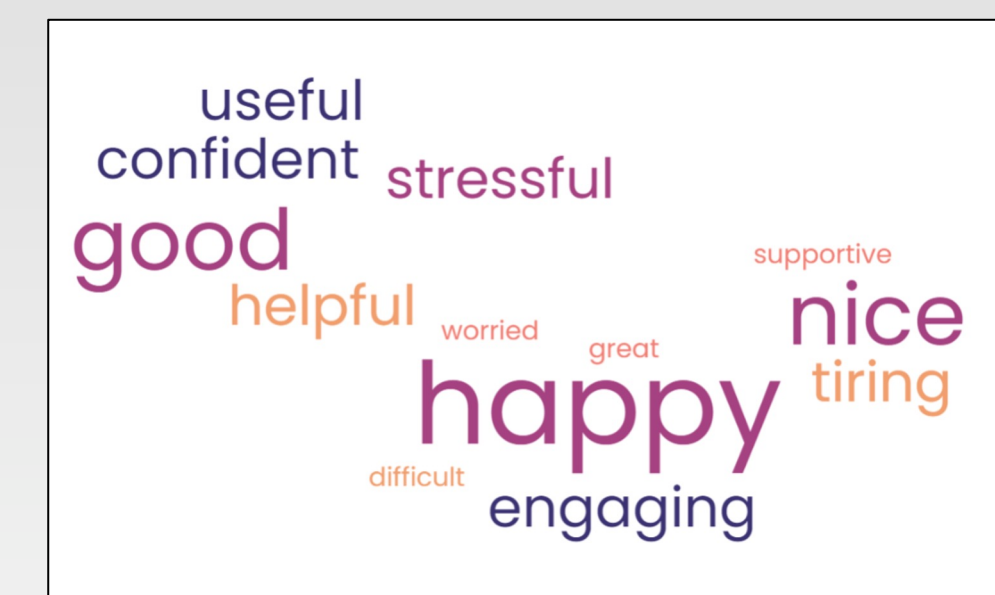
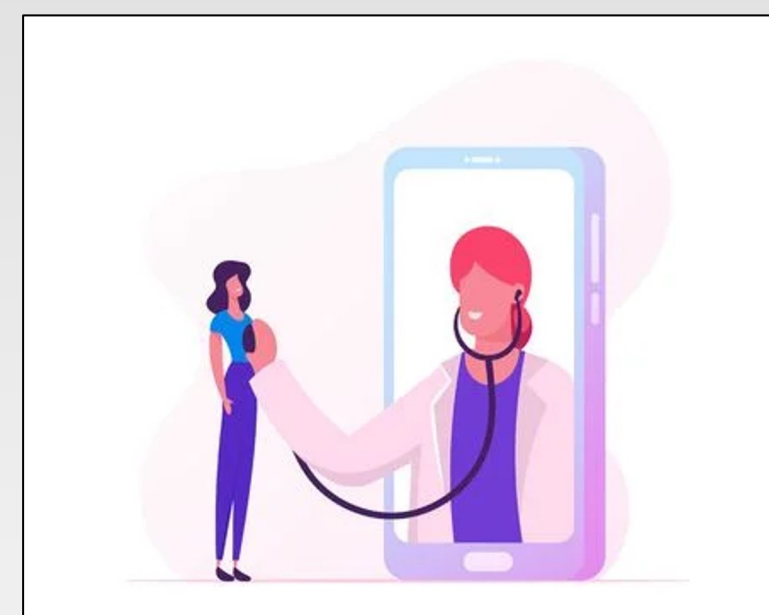
Parents were extensively trained over video calls. First, the OT would demonstrate an activity. The parent would then be asked to practise the activity till they are comfortable with it. Lastly, they would be asked to teach the activity back to the therapist and doubts would be discussed.

Weekly sessions were conducted and video based follow-ups were done. The age range of the children whose parents were receiving health coaching was 2 months to 11 years.

A year into receiving health coaching, caregivers perceptions of this approach was understood using in-depth qualitative interview.

## METHODS

- **Design** - a qualitative study using in-depth interviews
- **Recruitment** - Purposive sampling was used
- **Participants** - 5 parents of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (mean age of children was 3.6 years) who received therapy and health coaching services at Inspirium Holistic Care were interviewed
- **Data Analysis** - Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were coded using Dedoose.



Word Cloud depicting some of the most common words from the transcripts

## RESULTS

### Perceived Benefits of Health Coaching

- Parents reported being more engaged with their child during the pandemic
- Parents reported being more engaged and hands on in the rehabilitation process
- Process was 'eye-opening' - parents learned a lot more about their child and how therapy helps them
- Health coaching helped children become more receptive and engaging towards the parent.
- Parents felt more confident in their ability to care for their child

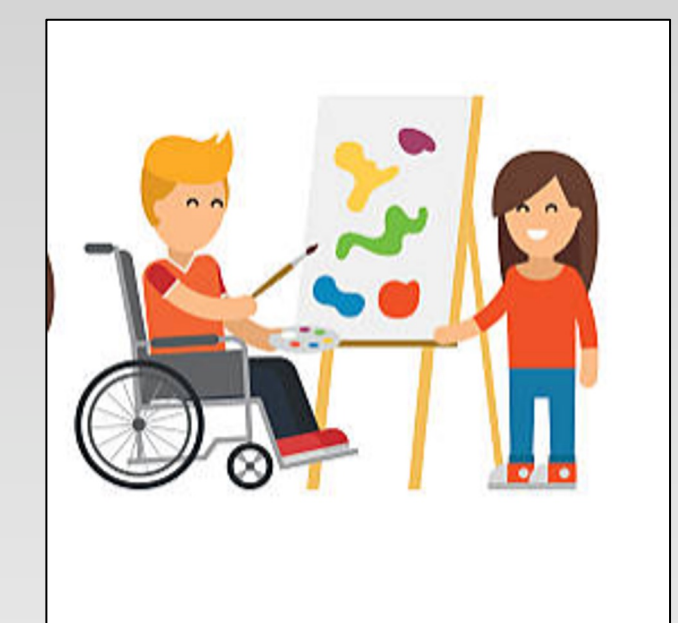
### Perceived Concerns during health coaching

- Worries about the impact lack of therapy services would have on their children in the long term
- Lack of equipment meant many activities had to be modified

## CONCLUSION

Health Coaching has the ability to positively impact many families. Results from the present study show that a majority of the participants felt more confident in their ability to provide rehabilitation services at home. Children also seemed to benefit from increased engagement with the caregivers.

Health coaching holds the potential to make rehabilitation services easily accessible to many. Widespread adoption of coaching could result in more children receiving necessary early interventions, leading to better outcomes and quality of life.



## REFERENCES

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