

# Bounce Back & Thrive!

## Summary: 5-Year Evaluation Results (2010 - 2016)

### Background

**Bounce Back & Thrive! (BBT)** is an evidence-based 10-session resiliency skills training program for parents based on **Reaching IN... Reaching OUT Resiliency Skills Training** for service

providers working with young children. BBT helps parents help their children build the resilience necessary to handle life's inevitable bumps in the road. The program focuses on families with children under 8 years.

BBT has been formally evaluated since 2010. **In addition to the original pilot study (2010-12), there have been three additional evaluation studies** of the impact of BBT between 2012-16. These subsequent studies have measured outcomes in a variety of demographic groups.



### Participants

#### Pilot Study

BBT was piloted by Reaching IN...Reaching OUT (RIRO) in partnership with 16 family-serving organizations in 16 diverse communities in Ontario, Canada. Parents were enrolled if they were experiencing significant challenges – poverty, low literacy, family violence, teen parenting, children with special needs, living in communities experiencing violence or in First Nations or remote areas (see chart for demographic information).

#### Ongoing Evaluation Studies 1, 2 & 3

In all three studies, BBT was offered as part of the ongoing services in a variety of child- and family-serving organizational partners in diverse Canadian communities (see chart on this page for demographic comparison).

**Study 1** – Parents attended 18 BBT groups between September 2012 and June 2013. Although the groups were similar to the pilot study demographics, there were about half the number of lower income families, slightly higher education levels and more aboriginal families.

**Study 2** – Parents participated in 27 BBT groups held between Fall 2013 to Fall 2014. They contained a greater number of lower income families living in neighbour-

hoods at risk and living with unemployment. There were also the greatest number of teen and aboriginal parents and children with special needs. Finally, more parents had attended or graduated from college or university than the pilot or Study 1.

**Study 3** – Parents enrolled in 21 BBT groups offered by new BBT Trainers from Winter 2015 to Spring 2016. These parents differed considerably from those in the pilot and previous two studies. More than three-quarters had attended college or university. There were not as many single parents and children with special needs. And fewer families experienced the serious challenges seen in the previous studies. However, nearly two-thirds of these families spoke a language other than English at home, most emigrating from Asia and the Middle East.

BBT Group Demographics				
	Pilot Study	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
# Parents attending	161	194	234	261
# Parents in evaluation	119	119	153	170
Gender:				
Female	91%	79%	89%	90%
Male	9%	21%	11%	10%
Parent age (median)	29.8	31.9	31.1	30.2
Single parents	51%	41%	32%	21%
Education:				
Less than HS graduation	41%	44%	32%	8%
HS graduate	19%	16%	18%	10%
Some college/university	39% (2	15%	22%	19%
College/univ. graduate	catag. comb.)	26%	29%	63%
# Children	353	441	485	490
# Children/ family (median)	2.2	2.6	2.3	2.4
Children w/ special needs	30%	19%	35%	10%
Lower income	74%	37%	79%	17%
Unemployed	51%	42%	73%	13%
'At-risk' community	58%	31%	63%	16%
Remote/ isol. community	16%	5%	21%	15%
Family violence/ abuse	-	29%	42%	8%
Teen parents -under 20yrs	16%	7%	21%	2%
Aboriginal parents	10%	24%	35%	8%
Newcomer parents	6%	2%	6%	7%

## Measures

Parents in the pilot study completed two measures which examined the impact of the BBT resiliency skills training groups on themselves and their children, the “Bounce Back Subscale” (BBSS) and the *Post-training Survey*. Beginning with Evaluation Study 1, two subscales from the 21-item version of the *Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21)* as well as the resilience item from the *2009 European Social Survey (ESS)* were added.

To measure change in parental attitudes, the three subscales were administered at the beginning and end of the training.

The “Bounce Back Subscale” (BBSS) is a 15-item Likert-type self-report measure with ratings on a 5-point scale. It was developed to look at parents’ beliefs and attitudes affecting their own resilience and parenting. Four factors emerge for the 14 original items: 1) optimism-pessimism; 2) attitudes about their children and parenting; 3) attitudes related to self-efficacy and self-regulation; and 4) attitudes about set-backs and challenges. The resilience question from the ESS is the 15<sup>th</sup> item.

Beginning with Evaluation Study 1, the “Depression Subscale” (DASS-D) and “Stress Subscale” (DASS-S) from the DASS-21 were also administered. These subscales are self-report measures each containing seven items and rated on a 4-point scale.

At the end of the program, parents were also asked to complete a 69-item parent self-report survey (a 64-item version was used in Study 3). The “Post-Training Survey” was designed to gather information about knowledge gain, use of the resiliency skills, impact on parent and child behaviour as well as overall parent satisfaction.

As part of the process evaluation, parents in the pilot and three evaluation studies also completed “Parent Feedback Forms” rating the usefulness of the content and effectiveness of the delivery each session. They were also asked about content they found most important, their success in using it in daily life and suggestions for improvement of the program.



## Results\*

### Resilience, parenting, depression and stress

\*Results are for Studies 1, 2 & 3 combined. Pilot results, represented by a shaded [P], are listed separately, where applicable.

- **Parents showed a significant positive change in attitudes** associated with greater resilience as well as more positive attitudes about their children and parenting (*mean change BBSS = 4.49, t = 11.16, df446, p < .001; [P] t = 4.76, p, .001*).
- **Parents with the least ‘resilient’ attitudes** to start (lowest BBSS scores) **showed the greatest positive change** in attitudes related to resilience and parenting by the end of the skills training program (*BBSS, r = -.49, n=467, p < .001; [P] r = -.45, p < .01*).

Parents’ attitudes became more ‘resilient’ and positive toward their children and parenting. Those with the least ‘resilient’ attitudes to start gained the most by the end of the program.

- **Parents showed significant positive change in ratings of their ability to “return to normal after things go wrong”** (i.e., capacity for resilience) (*mean change ESS resilience item = .34, t = 5.56, df446, p < .001*).
- **Parents showed a decrease in depression scores** (*Mean change DASS-D = -1.27, t = -7.05, df441, p < .001*).
- **Parents who scored most poorly on the “Depression Subscale” to start showed the greatest improvement** (*DASS-D, r = -.53, n = 467, p < .001*).
- **Parents reported a decrease in stress-related signs over time** (*Mean change DASS-S = -1.53, t = -8.79, df438, p < .001*).
- **Parents who reported the most stress-related signs to start showed the greatest improvement** (*DASS-S, r = -.68, n=467, p < .001*).
- **When the results from the resilience, depression and stress subscales are combined – parents who initially scored most poorly improved the most, and conversely, those who scored the best to start gained the least.**

### Use and impact of the skills training

Some of the highlights from the “Post-Training Survey” include:

- Parents rated **their knowledge** about supporting resilience in themselves and their children as being

**significantly higher** at the end of the program as compared to the beginning (based on a 5-point scale; parent resilience, mean difference = 2.6,  $t = 39.1$ ,  $df_{416}$ ,  $p < .001$ ; [P] diff = 1.8,  $t = 19.2$ ,  $p < .001$ ); child resilience, mean difference = 2.09,  $t = 39.51$ ,  $df_{416}$ ,  $p < .001$ ; [P] diff = 18.5,  $t = 1.9$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

- The **greater their change in knowledge** of building resilience in their children, the **greater the positive change in their attitudes related to resilience** (Jonckheere's Trend test,  $z = 2.68$ ,  $p < .01$ ; ([P]  $z = 1.87$ ;  $p < .05$ )
- **97% parents said they use the BBT content** with their children. ([P] 99%)
- **96% parents reported using the content** they learned **at least once a week (59% use it every day)** with their children. ([P] 97% & 61%)  
Here are some of the ways they are using the training:
  - 95% model the resiliency skills with their children ([P] 95%)
  - 94% help their children practice calming strategies ([P] 92%)
  - 95% help their children look for positive things ([P] 93%)
- **The top five resiliency strength areas parents developed**, comparing their ratings before and after the program, were (on a 5-point scale; combined  $df_{378}$ )
  - Handling their emotions (mean change = 1.6 points;  $t = 20.2$ ,  $p < .001$ )
  - Controlling their impulses (mean change = 1.5 points;  $t = 20.0$ ,  $p < .001$ )
  - Solving problems, using thinking skills (mean change = 1.2 points;  $t = 15.0$ ,  $p < .001$ )
  - Believing in themselves and their abilities (mean change = 1.3 points;  $t = 13.9$ ,  $p < .001$ )
  - Being a "realistic" optimist (mean change = 1.2 points;  $t = 13.3$ ,  $p < .001$ )
- **Other ways the program specifically helped parents personally** (mean change = 4.2-4.5 for all on a 5-point scale; [P] top 4 ratings all at 4.4 points out of 5):
  - Improving their ability to "respond" instead of "react" to challenges
  - Understanding the link between their thoughts and reactions
  - Finding positive things to appreciate in their lives [P]
  - Feeling more hopeful/optimistic about the future [P]
  - Believing more in their ability to bounce back [P]
  - Believing they can handle and reduce stress better [P]
- **Top rated ways the program helped parents with their children** (Studies 1, 2 & 3 mean change = 4.5 for all on 5-

point scale; [P] top 4 ratings all at 4.6-4.7):

- Better understanding their children's emotional needs
- Looking more for the strengths and positive things to appreciate in their children [P]
- Improving their relationship with their children [P]
- Using more empathy and having more patience with their children [P]
- Feeling more confident about their parenting abilities [P]

Parents said their children were calmer, more patient and handled frustrations better. And they were less afraid of making mistakes, so they were more confident and kept on trying. Also nearly half of the parents saw their children using the skills with other children and adults.

- **78% of parents reported already seeing positive changes in their children** (attributed to skills parents modeled with their children). ([P] 82% parents; top 5 changes indicated by [P])  
The top reported changes were:
  - Calming down better (77%) [P]
  - Persevering (72%)
  - Showing more patience (68%) [P]
  - Handling anger, frustrations better (63%) [P]
  - Trying new things, being less negative (62%) [P]
  - Feeling better about making mistakes (60%) [P]
  - Handling negative thinking with help (58%)
  - Being more confident & empathic (both 56%)
- **47% of parents reported observing their children already using resiliency skills** (that parents modeled) **with other children and 48% with adults.** ([P] 49% & 52%)

### Satisfaction with the program

- **Parents rated the overall helpfulness of the parent group to them as parents and to them personally very highly** (mean rating = 4.7 and 4.6 respectively on a 5-point scale; [P] both 4.6).
- **They were also very satisfied with the BBT program** (mean rating = 4.7 on a 5-point scale; [P] 4.7).



- They also rated the **content** and **delivery** of their sessions very positively (mean rating = 6.5 for both on a 7-point scale for all sessions combined on Parent Feedback Forms; ([P] 6.5 & 6.4).
- When asked whether they would recommend BBT skills training to other parents, 95% of the parents responded “Yes” (4% said “Maybe”) ([P] 100%).

## Summary

Results from the three evaluation studies have replicated and confirmed key findings from the original BBT pilot project.\*



Taken together, 561 parents attended 84 BBT groups in diverse Canadian communities and completed the evaluation.

Parents’ attitudes became more ‘resilient’ and positive toward their children and parenting. Those with the least ‘resilient’ attitudes to start gained the most by the end of the program. Greater change in parents’ knowledge about building children’s resilience was significantly related to positive changes in their attitudes related to resilience and parenting. Parents also reported less signs of stress and depression by the end of the program. And those with the highest levels to start experienced the greatest gains.

Parents rated the skills training highly and used the skills regularly in their own lives and modeled them with their children. This resulted in greater calmness, perseverance and confidence in parents and children.

In turn, parents began to recognize more strengths and positives in themselves and their children. Increased empathy and patience led to closer parent-child relationships. Finally, parents reported believing more in their ability to bounce back and feel more optimistic and hopeful about the future.

### What parents say...

*“The strategies were very useful, but I think most of all I realized that I have to work on my resilience first. This is the first great step.”*

*“I learned new things about me that translate directly to my kids. I have finally realized that the more calm and collected I act, slowly they act the same.”*

*“It makes you a better parent – relaxing your body, rethinking before you act, controlling your impulses, knowing your thinking habits....”*

*“It is so good to learn how to challenge our own and our children’s thinking. It taught me how to find my children’s strengths instead of always feeling bad about their shortcomings.”*

*“The group helped me see the child’s perspective better. It taught me to calm down and think before reacting.”*

*“This program helps you realize how unique and special your children are. Helps you think positive when life is not going your way.”*

*“BBT helped me have a happier, calmer relationship with my children and learn to deal with stressful situations better.”*

*“I would recommend it because there are very good tips on how to think most positively about yourself, so you can be a better role model for your children.”*

Source: “Post-training Survey”



\*The pilot project in which BBT was developed and tested was conducted by **Reaching IN...Reaching OUT (RIRO)** in collaboration with its founding sponsor – the Child & Family Partnership (YMCA of Greater Toronto, Child Development Institute, University of Guelph and George Brown College) – and more than 30 partner organizations across Canada. Three-year project funding (2010-12) was provided by the Social Development Partnerships Program of the Government of Canada. Opinions expressed in this summary are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada. For details about BBT and the pilot project, go to <http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/programs-bb&t.htm>