Parent Training, Parent Mentoring, and Coaching Guidebook for Parents of Children with Developmental Disorders in Southeast Asia

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Parent Training, Parent Mentoring, and Coaching Guidebook for Parents of Children with Developmental Disorders in Southeast Asia

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Raising a child with developmental disorders can be a challenging but rewarding experience. Parents of children with developmental disorders often face a unique set of challenges, including providing their child with the necessary support and care, navigating the educational and healthcare systems, and coping with the emotional and financial impact of their child's disability. These challenges can negatively impact parents' lives, including their quality of life, sense of isolation, and knowledge in care planning.

Parent training, mentor training, and coaching are three important resources that can help parents of children with developmental disorders. These programs can provide parents with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to effectively parent their child and to advocate for their child's needs.

1.1 What is this guidebook about?

The Parent Training, Mentoring, and Coaching Guidebook is a pioneering program in Southeast Asia that offers invaluable assistance in both individual and group settings, equipping parents with practical strategies to navigate their challenges and cultivate new perspectives.

Figure 1: Synergistic Approach
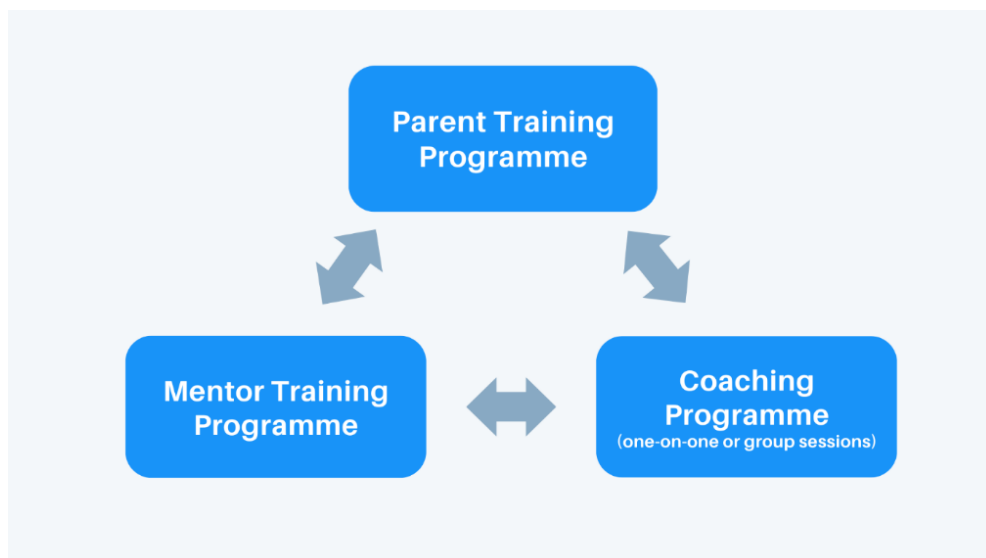
Source: Compiled by authors (2023).

This guidebook primarily aims to harness the full potential of parent training, mentorship, and coaching. By doing so, it empowers parents to acquire the necessary knowledge and

skills to effectively nurture their children with developmental disorders. Additionally, it enables parents to transition into mentorship or training roles, sharing their experiences and wisdom with others. Furthermore, the guidebook emphasises the importance of ongoing personal growth and development through coaching sessions facilitated by a certified life coach. This comprehensive approach ensures that parents continually enhance their parenting abilities and improve their overall quality of life. It is also important to note that these three fields can be used as both stand-alone approaches and as synergistic processes that help parents cope with the challenges mentioned above.

1.2 Who is this guidebook for?

This guidebook is for parents caring for children who have developmental disorders in Southeast Asia. For this guidebook's purposes, the term 'developmental disorder' encompasses conditions defined by the United Nations General Assembly (2012–2013), such as autism spectrum disorders, developmental disorders, and related disabilities. Additionally, it includes the conditions mentioned in the Act on Support for Persons with Developmental Disorders in Japan, like autism, Asperger syndrome, pervasive developmental disorders, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or ADHD, and others (National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities, 2004).

This guidebook is suitable for parents taking care of children with developmental disorders who may or may not have had any of the programs mentioned in this guidebook.

1.3 Common challenges

Parents who have children with developmental disorders often face a unique set of challenges that can vary depending on the specific disability and its severity. Some common challenges faced by these parents include:

- **Emotional strain:** Parents may experience feelings of grief, stress, guilt, and frustration as they come to terms with their child's diagnosis and the challenges associated with it.

- **Lack of understanding and awareness:** Dealing with a relatively unfamiliar condition can be overwhelming for parents, particularly when they lack information and awareness about their child's developmental disability.

- **Financial burden:** The cost of medical treatments, therapy sessions, and specialised equipment can place a significant financial strain on families.

- **Advocating for services:** Parents often must navigate complex systems to access appropriate services and resources for their child, including educational support, therapy, and community programmes.

- **Social isolation:** Caring for a child with developmental disorder can lead to social isolation as parents may find it challenging to engage in social activities due to their child's needs.

- **Balancing family and work:** Striking a balance between caring for their child and fulfilling work and family responsibilities can be challenging for parents.

- **Behavioural and communication challenges:** Some children with developmental disabilities may exhibit challenging behaviours or have difficulty communicating, adding additional stress for parents.

- **Uncertain future:** Parents may worry about their child's future, including issues related to independence, employment, and long-term care.

- **Impact on siblings:** The needs of a child with a developmental disorder can sometimes overshadow the needs of other siblings, leading to feelings of resentment or neglect.

- **Stigma and discrimination:** Parents may encounter stigma or discrimination from others, making it harder for them to access support or participate in community activities.

- **Sleep and self-care:** The demands of caring for a child with a developmental disorder can disrupt parents' sleep and self-care routines, affecting their overall well-being.

- **Access to inclusive education:** Ensuring that their child receives quality education in an inclusive setting can be a challenge for parents.

It is essential to recognise that each family's experience is unique, and the challenges they face may vary. This is especially true amongst Southeast Asian countries, which have a variety of cultures, tradition, social structures, belief systems, economic challenges, and awareness about developmental disabilities. On the other hand, the challenges here are also quite universal and most, if not all, parents can relate to such challenges on varying degrees.

Providing support and resources to parents can help them better cope with these challenges and enhance their child's well-being and quality of life. This is what this guidebook aims to provide.

Chapter 2

Parent Training Programme

2.1 What is the parent training programme?

Parent training (Inoue, 2009) is a type of intervention that helps parents learn how to interact with their children in a way that promotes positive behaviour and development. Parent training programmes typically include lectures, role-plays, and exercises, and they often involve small groups of parents.

Parent training has been shown to be effective in improving parents' skills, reducing stress, and helping children develop adaptive behaviours. In Japan, parent training programmes for children with developmental disabilities have been developed since the 1990s. The Japan Developmental Disabilities Network has been promoting parent training as an important part of family support for persons with developmental disorders.

In a parent training programme, parents learn about the development of children with developmental disabilities, the causes of behavioural difficulties, and positive parenting strategies. They also practice new skills in a safe and supportive environment.

One key principle of parent training is to focus on positive reinforcement. This means that parents learn to praise their children for the behaviours that they want to see more of. By doing this, parents can help their children understand what is expected of them and to develop positive behaviours.

Parent training can also be a valuable source of support for parents of children with developmental disabilities. By participating in a parent training programme, parents can meet other parents who are facing similar challenges, and they can learn from each other's experiences.

It is important to note that, like other interventions mentioned in this book, parent training is not a quick fix. It takes time and effort to learn new skills and to change parenting styles. However, the benefits of parent training can be significant, both for parents and children. This guidebook will provide a concise overview and discuss key aspects of the programme in the following pages. For complete details, please refer to the 'Parent Training Practice Guidebook'.

2.2 Benefits of parent training programmes

Parent training programmes can offer several benefits for parents of children with developmental disorders, including:

- Improved parent–child relationship

  The programme helps parents and caregivers learn how to adjust the environment and make positive approaches to their children. By implementing the core elements of the programme, parents can develop better understanding, communication, and bonding with their children.

- Reduced parental stress

  P-Training helps reduce stress experienced by parents in raising children with developmental disorders. By providing parents with effective nurturing skills and behavioural strategies, they can feel more confident in their parenting abilities.

- Enhanced parenting skills

  The programme focuses on 'positive modification of parents' perceptions' by incorporating behavioural theories. Parents learn specific ways to interact with their children, such as offering praise, providing appropriate instructions, and dealing with inappropriate behaviour effectively.

- Fostering adaptive behaviours in children

  Parent training helps parents learn how to praise and reinforce their children's good behaviours, encouraging adaptive behaviours to develop.

Overall, parent training programme results in the following:

- Increased understanding of their children's developmental disorders

- Improved ability to manage their children's behaviour

- Reduced stress levels

- Increased confidence in their parenting skills

- Improved parent–child relationships

- Increased adaptive behaviours in children and higher self-esteem

- Increased social support

The programme's effectiveness is evaluated based on its impact on the mental health of participants, changes in the parent–child relationship, understanding of children's characteristics and behaviours, and the utilisation of the programme.

Overall, the parent training programme aims to empower parents with the necessary skills and knowledge to support their children with developmental disorders effectively and positively contribute to their growth and development.

2.3 Fundamental concepts

The programme has a set of requirements in its basic platform to be considered high quality. It consists of three key components:

- **Core elements:** These are the essential components of a parent training programme. They include topics such as child development, positive parenting, and behaviour management.

- **Principles of operation:** These are the guiding principles for implementing a parent training programme. They include principles such as family-centredness and cultural sensitivity.

- **Expertise of the practitioners:** The practitioners who deliver parent training should have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement the programme.

It is also important to disseminate and establish evidence-based basic programmes and implementation know-how. This will help ensure that parent training programmes are sustainable and can be implemented effectively in the community.

2.4 Parent training process

2.4.1 Core elements

Core elements are the essential components of the parent training programmes and include topics such as child development, positive parenting, and discipline. The order of implementation may vary depending on the needs of children and their parents.

The core elements and their content include:

a) **Find and praise children's good points.**

- Focus on children's adaptive behaviour and provide positive situations (praise, activities they like, etc.) after the behaviour.

- Aim to praise and interact with children in a way that is tailored to their characteristics.

b) Classify children's behaviours into three types.

- Classify children's behaviours into three categories: favourable, unfavourable, and unacceptable.

- Learn how to respond to favourable behaviours by praising, and to unfavourable behaviours by planned ignoring, adjusting the environment, and devising appropriate instructions.

- The goal is to sort out the problem in terms of behaviours.

- Start by noting and praising the 'favourable behaviours'.

c) Behaviour understanding (ABC analysis)

- By observing children's behaviour based on the behaviour theory, determine the followings: A) Antecedent, B) Behaviour, and C) Consequence.

- The goal is to understand the reason for children's behaviour by objectively observing it.

d) Environmental adjustment (Strategies before action takes place)

- Consider ways to improve the environment (people and things) around children to make it easier for them to act adaptively.

- This is applicable to the 'A) Antecedent' in 'Behaviour understanding'.

- Depending on children's characteristics, reduce the stimulating items and provide easy-to-understand schedules and rules.

e) Easy-to-achieve instructions for children

- Consider how to talk to and interact with children.

- When encouraging them to behave appropriately, start by suppressing negative emotions such as frustration and anger, feeling calm, then getting close to the child, and using a calm and quiet voice, give easy-to-understand directions.

- It is important to praise children when they try to do a desired behaviour, if only a little.

f) Deal with children's inappropriate behaviour

- The goal is not to focus too much on the children's inappropriate behaviour, but to observe it objectively and deal with it calmly.

- In coping with the 'unfavourable behaviour', 'planned ignoring (wait and then praise)' should be used and praise when seeing the sign of favourable behaviour, even slightly.

- Also 'instruction' techniques, including environmental adjustment, are devised to help children behave appropriately.

- To prevent inappropriate behaviour from escalating, it is important to first establish a positive relationship with the child based on praise.

Figure 2: Core Elements of Parent Training Programme
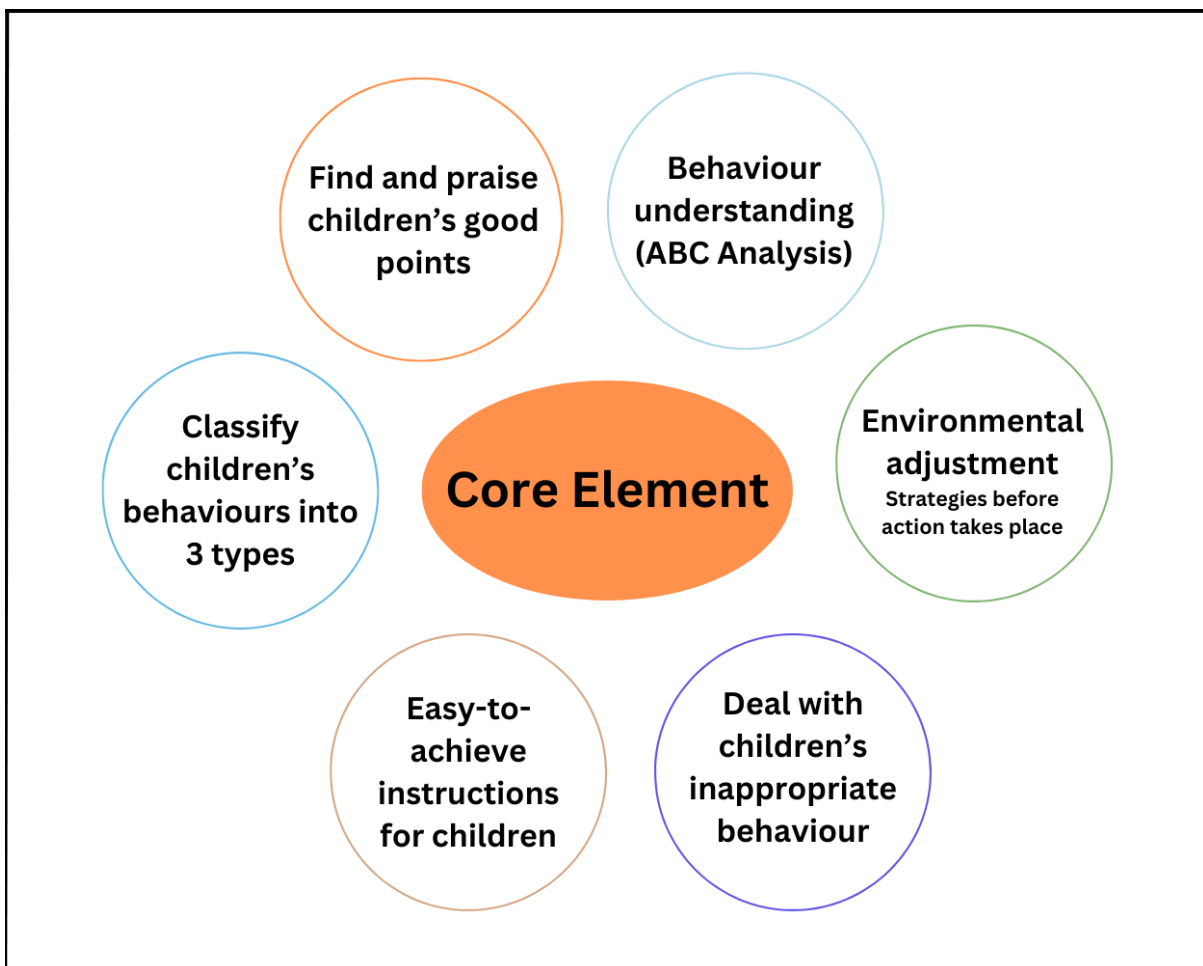
Source: Inoue, 2009.

2.4.2 Content

The content of a parent training programme typically includes:

- Information about developmental disorders

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- Strategies for understanding and managing children's behaviour

- Communication skills

- Problem-solving skills

- Stress management skills

2.4.3 Format

Parent training programmes are typically delivered in a small group format, with each session lasting for 90–120 minutes. The number of sessions in a programme varies, but most programmes last for 5 to 12 weeks. It includes role-plays, group work, and homework for parents to practice and implement what they have learned in their daily lives.

2.4.4 How it works

The programme's basic platform, designed to be delivered in groups, is a valuable resource for anyone involved in the development or implementation of parent training programmes. It provides a clear set of guidelines for ensuring that parent training programmes are high quality and effective.

Here are some fundamental points:

- The programme should have at least five sessions, generally conducted every other week, each lasting 90–20 minutes.

- The number of sessions and duration can be adjusted depending on the needs of the participants.

- It is recommended that the group size be four to five or seven to eight participants, so that the group can function even if some people are absent.

- Parents are expected to attend all sessions, as the contents of each lecture are sequential.

- The programme should include exercises and role-playing, so that parents can gain knowledge from the lectures and practice what they have learned.

- A follow-up session is strongly recommended 2 to 3 months after the programme is completed to help parents review the material they learned and reaffirm the importance of praising their child.

2.4.5 Qualifications and experience

Parent training practitioners are responsible for delivering parent training programmes. Here are some key skills that practitioners need:

- Have several skills.

  o Understand and advise parents on the content of core elements.

  o Suggest appropriate ways of interacting with their children without denying the parents' past relationships.

  o Find out children's progress and the parents' acquisition of nurturing skills from the small things and give parents feedback on them.

- Can be anyone who is involved in children's developmental support.

  o Must have taken a training course for practitioners and continue to develop professional skills.

Here are key considerations for staff for conducting parent training sessions:

- Need a facilitator

  o Leads the lecture and manages the group.

  o Does not give answers.

  o Supports parents in their efforts to modify and learn the way to interact with their child at home by using the other participants' efforts and the facilitators' advice as a guide and praises the parents for their efforts.

- Need a sub-facilitator

  o Supports the facilitator.

  o Observes the participating parents and keeps a record of their comments and changes.

  o Notices subtle changes in the participants' facial expressions and behaviours.

- Staff meetings before and after the sessions

  o Important to ensure that the programme meets the needs of participants.

2.4.6 Group work in parent training

Parent training is often conducted in a closed group, with a fixed number of participants. This has the following benefits:

- **Peer support:** Participants can support each other and share their experiences, which can help them feel less isolated and guilty.

- **Increased motivation:** The supportive atmosphere of the group can help participants stay motivated to participate and learn.

- **Better understanding of child development:** By discussing problems that arise in various situations, participants can gain a better understanding of their children's developmental characteristics.

Some people may be concerned about the difficulties of running a group, such as conflicts between members or the isolation of certain members. However, the parent training programme is well-structured and designed to prevent these problems. If the programme is followed, the group will naturally progress and produce the benefits described above.

2.4.7 Options in parent training

The age and disability characteristics of children subject to parent training vary widely. If core elements based on the basic platform are not sufficient, optional programmes can be added additionally.

Here are some examples of options:

- **Understanding a child's characteristics:** Learn about your child's specific characteristics that affect their behaviour.

- **Setting individual target behaviours:** Set individual tasks for each family to work on for each child's unique and characteristic behaviours.

- **Considering alternative behaviours:** Identify alternative behaviours that your child can engage in instead of the challenging behaviours.

- **Responding to inappropriate behaviour using warning and timeouts:** Learn to use warning and timeouts to respond to inappropriate behaviour but use them carefully. Get professional advice if you are unsure.

- **Adjusting environment to meet the characteristics of autism spectrum disorder:** Arrange the environment to promote positive and prevent inappropriate behaviour.

- **Token economy:** Learn to create and use a Token Chart to plan and reward desired behaviours.

- **Special time:** Use playtime, without any distractions, as an opportunity to give your child positive reinforcement.

- **Cooperation with schools and kindergartens:** Parents and teachers can use communication cards to track and reward children's appropriate behaviour at school.

- **Understanding and responding to adolescents:** Learn how to apply the thinking methods and skills you learned in the program to address behavioural problems that arise during adolescence.

- **Stress management:** Learning stress management skills can help parents see their child's behaviour more positively.

These options can be added to the Basic Platform to provide more individualised and comprehensive support to parents.

2.5 Recommended programmes

Here are three programmes targeted to parents of children with developmental disabilities, based on types of parent training programmes conducted in Japan. These programmes aim to help parents learn how to modify their children's behaviour and acquire the necessary parenting skills through behaviour therapy and behaviour analysis.

The three programmes are:

- Seiken/Mamenoki/Nara Method

  - **Origin:** Based on a programme developed at the University of California-Los Angeles in the United States for parents of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

  - **Group activities:** Participants learn about the theme of each session through lectures and group work and practice the theme of each session at home as a homework assignment. In the next session, they share the homework implementation results amongst the group members, putting importance on the peer support amongst participants. The number of sessions is about 10. The group work especially emphasises role-playing.

  - **Purpose:** The programme emphasises finding appropriate behaviours of children and praising them (giving positive attention to them). Although it is based on behaviour theory, explanation is given using familiar everyday expressions rather than technical terms.

- Hizen Method

  - **Origin:** Based on the practice of behavioural therapy at the Hizen National Sanatorium (now the Hizen Psychiatric Center).

- o **Group activities:** In the first half of the session, lectures on behaviour theory are provided for the whole group members and, in the second half, participants discuss in small groups of about three people how to apply the contents of lectures to practical use at home. The number of sessions is about 10. Homework is to make a record of one or two specific behaviours at home.

  - o **Purpose:** The lectures in the first half of the session are designed to help parents understand the basics of behaviour theory so that they can respond to new problems. In the second half, specific ways to deal with individual problems are discussed, focusing on improving children's problematic behaviours and establishing adaptive behaviours.

- **Tottori University Method**

  - o **Origin:** Based on the applied behaviour analysis, the programme was developed to help parents learn communication skills and adaptive behaviour of their children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who have intellectual disabilities and has now evolved into a programme for all developmental disabilities.

  - o **Group activities:** The course consists of lectures and group work, and homework is done in each family. The number of sessions is about six to eight. In the group work, participants fill in the worksheet with common examples often seen at home and discuss them. Participation of a parent mentor as assistant therapist is also encouraged.

  - o **Purpose:** Since ASD and/or intellectual disability are targeted for the programme, adjusting environment, and acquiring alternative favourable behaviours are encouraged for responding to the inappropriate behaviour. The homework assignment focuses on the problems in nurturing and interactions amongst each family.

These parent training programmes have demonstrated positive outcomes in practice and research. When implementing parent training programmes, please customise them to fit the specific needs of each institution or facility by referring to the reference materials.

Participant feedback

Parents who participated in local government–led parent training programmes shared their feedback on how they are applying the knowledge and skills they learned to their children.

- **Exercises, role-playing, and homework** helped participants to think about how they would normally say things in the same situation, and to practice giving praise to their children.

- **Praise** was a common theme in the feedback, with parents saying that they learned to focus on the good things their children do, and that this helped them to calm down and feel more positive.

- **ABC Analysis of Behaviour** helped parents to understand the reasons for their children's behaviour, and to see how they could prevent problematic behaviours.

- **Adjusting the environment** was another important topic, with parents saying that they learned to create a more structured and predictable environment for their children, which helped reduce stress and frustration.

- **Instructions** were also a key focus of the training, with parents learning how to give clear and concise instructions, and how to wait for their children to respond before giving praise.

- **Planned ignoring ('wait and then praise')** was another technique that parents learned, and they said that this helped them deal with challenging behaviours in a more positive way.

- **Follow-up sessions** were also helpful, with parents saying that they appreciated the opportunity to talk to other parents who were facing similar challenges, and to get advice from experienced professionals.

Overall, the feedback from parents who participated in parent training programmes was positive. They said that they learned a lot, and that the skills they learned have helped them improve their relationships with their children.

2.6 Sustaining parent training programmes in the community

Sustaining parent training programmes is essential for ensuring that children and families have access to the resources they need. There are many challenges to implementing and sustaining parent training programmes in the community, including:

- **Budget and evaluation:** Securing funding for parent training programmes can be difficult. It is also important to evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes to ensure that they are meeting the needs of participants.

- **Time and space:** Finding time and space to implement parent training programmes can also be challenging. It is important to consider the needs of participants when scheduling programmes and finding a suitable location.

- **Staff training:** Staff who deliver parent training programmes need to be trained in the content of the programme and in the skills necessary to deliver the programme effectively.

- **Childcare services:** Providing childcare services for participants can help make parent training programmes more accessible.

Some local governments and medical institutions have implemented parent training programmes by:

- **Securing funding:** Securing funding from government or private sources

- **Coordinating operations:** Working with other organisations in the community to coordinate the delivery of parent training programmes

- **Cooperating with local organisations:** Partnering with local organisations that can provide childcare services or other support services to participants

Organisations that have implemented parent training programmes have provided the following feedback:

- **Start small:** It is important to start with a small programme and gradually expand it as needed.

- **Review the content:** The content of the programme should be reviewed regularly to ensure it is relevant to the needs of participants.

- **Share information:** It is helpful to share information with other organisations that are implementing parent training programmes.

Overall, real pleasures can be had in conducting parent training in the community and these include the following:

- Developing collaboration amongst various organisations surrounding the children and their families

- Sharing the joy of having conducted the parent training by seeing the children's growth and family changes

Chapter 3

Parent Mentor Training Programme

3.1 What is parent mentor training?

A parent mentor (is a parent who has experience raising a child with a developmental disorder and has received training in counselling and support, thereby earning the distinction of being a 'trusted advisor'. They can provide empathetic support to other parents of children with similar developmental disorders, offer information about community resources, and share their experiences (Parent Mentor Guidebook Development Committee, 2018).

Parent mentors can provide support that is different from the support offered by specialised organisations. They can offer support from the perspective of a parent who has been through similar experiences, which can be very valuable to other parents. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan recommends parent mentor activities as an effective family support system.

Parent mentor activities are becoming increasingly common in local governments throughout Japan, with the hope of bringing it to other countries in the ASEAN region. These activities are not only used for developmental disorders, but also for other types of disorders and disabilities. A comprehensive parent mentoring guidebook was also created to help government officials, supporters, and parents of children with developmental disorders understand and promote parent mentor activities.

Mentoring activities are currently limited to developmental disorders, but their results are effective for other types of disorders and disabilities as well. For example, mentoring activities have been shown to be effective for people with intellectual disabilities, epilepsy, and mental and physical disabilities. In some areas, mentors also work with people who have other types of disorders and/or disabilities, as these are sometimes combined with developmental disorders.

Mentoring activities are one of the activity systems that facilitate the daily consultations conducted in various parent associations, large and small. The scope of mentoring activities is expected to expand in the future.

3.2 Benefits of parent mentoring

Parent mentors are a mechanism for families with children with developmental disorders to support each other and other families with similar challenges.

- Parent mentors share their experiences and perspectives on parenting a child with a developmental disorder. This can help other families feel less alone and isolated, and it can also provide them with valuable information and support.

- Parent mentors also work with supporters and professionals to create a system of support for families. This system can include things like providing information about resources, offering counselling, and connecting families with other services. By working together, these multiple parties can create a community where families feel supported and understood.

The goal of parent mentoring is to create a community where families can come together to:

- **Share their experiences.** This can help families to feel less isolated and alone, and it can also help them to better understand and support their children.

- **Learn from each other.** Families can learn from each other's experiences and perspectives, and they can also learn about different resources and services that are available.

- **Provide support for each other.** Families can provide each other with emotional support, practical support, and advice.

3.3 Advantages and disadvantages for parent mentors

Advantages of mentoring activities for mentors:

- Meet peers and receive appreciation and strength from users: Mentors can meet other parents who are raising children with developmental disorders, and they can receive appreciation and strength from the users they are mentoring.

- Look back objectively on their own child rearing and their own problems: Mentors can reflect on their own experiences raising children, and they can gain new insights into their own parenting.

- Encounter new values: Mentors can learn about different parenting styles and approaches, and they can encounter new values that they can incorporate into their own parenting.

Disadvantages of mentoring activities for mentors:

- **Struggle to find time for consultation activities:** Mentors may have difficulty finding time to participate in mentoring activities, especially if they are also raising children.

- **Feel stress during the activities:** Mentoring activities can be stressful, especially if the mentor is dealing with a difficult situation.

- **Need a coordinator or other person to consult with:** Mentors need to have a coordinator or other person they can consult with if they are struggling with mentoring activities.

Overall, mentoring activities can be a rewarding experience for mentors, but they also come with some challenges. It is important for mentors to be aware of the potential benefits and drawbacks of mentoring before they decide to participate.

3.4 The nature and role of parent mentors

Parent mentors are a valuable resource for parents of children with developmental disorders. They provide support that is different from that provided by professional organisations. They are highly empathetic and approachable, and they are well-informed about resources and services in the community. They also share their experiences of parenting, which can help other parents to feel less isolated and alone.

3.4.1 Characteristics of parent mentors

Parent mentors provide support that is different from that provided by professional organisations. They have the following characteristics:

- **Highly empathetic and approachable:** Parent mentors are parents who have experience raising a child with a developmental disorder or other types of disability. They understand the challenges that parents face, and they can provide support that is both empathetic and practical.

- **Well informed:** Parent mentors are connected to local support organisations, and they have access to reliable information about resources and services. They can share this information with other parents, and they can help parents navigate the complex system of support.

- **Empowering:** Parent mentors share their own experiences of parenting, and they can help other parents to feel less isolated and alone. They can also help parents to develop coping skills and to advocate for their children.

3.4.2 Activities of parent mentors

The activities, which can be conducted in each region, of parent mentors include:

- **Group counselling:** Parent mentors hold group counselling sessions at mentor offices, parent associations, and day services. These sessions provide a safe space for parents to share their experiences and to get support from other parents.

- **Support book preparation classes:** Parent mentors often hold classes on how to write support books. These classes teach parents how to share their experiences in a way that is helpful and informative.

- **Educational events:** Parent mentors also organise educational events, such as workshops and talks. These events provide parents with information about developmental disorders, parenting, and resources in the community.

- **Support staff for parent training and parenting classes:** Parent mentors often work as support staff for parent training and parenting classes. They provide support to parents during the classes, and they can help parents to apply the information that they learn in the classes to their lives.

Parent mentors are not experts, and they do not aim to solve problems. They provide support by offering information, sharing their experiences, and connecting parents to resources. They believe that parents are the experts in their own children's lives, and they support parents in making their own decisions.

Parent mentors are also not parental role models. They believe that there is no one right way to parent, and they respect the diversity of parenting styles. They hope that meeting with various mentors will give parents the opportunity to encounter different values in parenting.

3.5 Building safe parent mentoring relationships

Mentoring can be a powerful and beneficial experience for parents, but it can also be a double-edged sword.

- The mentor's high level of empathy can be both a blessing and a curse. It may lead to excessive support, which can be helpful for some mentees, but can also be overwhelming or smothering for others. It can also lead to the mentee feeling like they are not understood or blamed.

- The mentor may experience a range of emotions while mentoring, such as feeling troubled by their inability to answer the mentee's questions, insecure about their own advice, or even reliving painful memories from the past. It is important for mentors to be aware of their emotions and to manage them in a way that is helpful and appropriate. They should seek support from their supervisor or peers if they are struggling to cope with their emotions.

Parent mentor activities can be a valuable resource for parents in the community, but it is important to remember that the mentor is both a parent and a support person. Mentors need to be trained to protect both the parents who consult with them and the mentors themselves. Mentor training helps ensure that mentoring activities are conducted in a safe and comfortable manner.

3.6 Parent mentoring process

3.6.1 Parent mentor programme management

To carry out parent mentor activities, it is necessary to have the following:

- **The understanding of local governments and support organisations:** Parent mentor activities are a valuable resource for parents of children with developmental disorders, but they require the support of local governments and

support organisations. Local governments can provide funding and resources, and support organisations can provide training and support for parent mentors.

- **A system to train mentors and provide backup:** Parent mentors need to be trained in counselling and support, and they need to have access to backup support. A system for training and supporting parent mentors is essential for the success of parent mentor activities.

- **Cooperation with various organisations:** Parent mentor activities often involve cooperation with various organisations, such as schools, day services, and community centres. These organisations can provide space, resources, and referrals for parent mentor activities.

- **A system tailored to each region:** The challenges and needs of parents of children with developmental disorders vary from region to region. A system for parent mentor activities must be tailored to the specific needs of each region.

The challenge is to create a system that is:

- **Efficient:** The system should be efficient and effective in providing support to parents of children with developmental disorders.

- **Flexible:** The system should be flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of parents and communities.

- **Sustainable:** The system should be sustainable over the long term.

3.6.2 Recruiting and selecting parent mentors

To become a parent mentor, you must:

- Attend a training course.

- Register as a mentor with the local government.

- Have experience working with parent associations.

Some conditions can be set for the smooth operation of mentoring activities:

- Parents who have just received a diagnosis should wait until their child is at least in elementary school before taking the training course.

- The age groups of the participants' children should be well balanced.

- Mentors should be a little older than the mentees' children so that they can empathise, provide information on local support organisations, and share their experiences.

Having experience working with parent associations is very important for mentoring activities because it allows mentors to:

- Make use of their experience of mutual support at parent associations.

- Obtain a wide variety of information from the network of parents.

- Work with local institutions as a parent association.

Many municipalities require a recommendation from a representative of a local parent association or a support organisation as a prerequisite for the training course.

3.6.3 Recruiting staff

Staff members for the mentor training will be mainly from local support centres for persons with developmental disorders, health centres, and other organisations that provide backup for mentoring activities in the community. This is because these organisations have experience working with parents of children with developmental disorders and can provide valuable insights into the needs of mentees and mentors.

The mentor training includes role-plays of active listening, which requires one staff member for every six participants. This ensures that there is enough support for participants to practice their active listening skills and receive feedback from staff members.

Staff members of these multiple local support organisations can cooperate with each other during the mentor training. This can help build relationships between organisations and create a network of support for mentors and mentees.

Staff members can also learn about the support for the mentees by mentors during the mentor training. This can help them to better understand the role of mentors and how they can support mentors in their work.

3.6.4 Holding a kick-off meeting

Before conducting parent mentor training in the community, holding a kick-off meeting for related parent groups, support groups, government officials, and key persons is recommended. This is to gain community understanding of what parent mentors are and what parent mentor activities are.

The kick-off meeting should cover the following topics:

- The purpose and role of parent mentor activities

- The importance of collaboration between mentors and professional supporters

- Family support issues in the community

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It is also important to set aside time for group discussions on family support issues to understand the needs of each area within the community.

The kick-off meeting may be a good opportunity to establish a 'Parent Mentor Activity Planning and Steering Committee'. This committee can consider how to:

- Recruit, train, register, and publicise mentors.

- Coordinate mentoring activities.

- Provide a backup organisation.

The kick-off meeting is an important opportunity to build support for parent mentor activities and to ensure that they are well-received by the community. Ideally, the meeting should be held in a central location accessible to all stakeholders. If possible, it should also be well-publicised ahead of time to ensure that as many people as possible attend especially as it is focused on building consensus and moving forward with parent mentor activities.

3.6.5 Content of training

The syllabus presented here is a list of the essential elements for mentoring activities that have been developed over many years of mentor training and activities in various regions. These elements can be considered the standard for mentoring activities.

However, it is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list of all the elements that are necessary for successful mentoring activities. There may be other elements that are specific to the needs of a particular community or group of mentors.

It is also important to hold follow-up courses regularly after the completion of the programme. This will help ensure that mentors can maintain their skills and knowledge, and that they can provide the best possible support to their mentees.

a) Role and ethics of parent mentors (2 hours)

As a parent mentor, it is important to be aware of the ethical guidelines that govern confidentiality and neutrality in mentoring. Below are examples of ethical guidelines from the Parent Mentor Institute.

Purpose

Parent mentors who have completed the training are expected to create a community environment where parents and families raising children and persons with developmental disorders can live a high quality of life together by promoting mutual support amongst parents in the community.

Role

- As fellow parents, provide support for understanding and parenting fellow children.

- Provide information on developmental disorders and related disorders, etc.

- Provide information on local resources.

- Assist, to the extent possible, in creating opportunities for consultation at specialised institutions.

Ethics

- Respect the human rights of the parent mentees.

- Matters learned during consultations must not be divulged to others without the consent of the mentee and his/her family. This obligation of confidentiality continues even after the mentor's activities are suspended or terminated. In addition, personal information related to the consultation, such as consultation-related documents, must be strictly managed.

- It must not be done for personal, organisational, commercial, or political purposes and must not be coerced.

- Strive to improve their knowledge and skills in counselling. On the other hand, they should be aware of the limitations of their own abilities and skills.

Respect for the human rights and confidentiality of the mentees are of utmost importance in the support activities provided by the parent mentor. It is essential to respect the mentee's decision when referring the patient to a specialised institution, and the counsellor's permission is required when sharing information with other institutions. Because the mentor's activities are rooted in the community, it is necessary to be more sensitive to the privacy of the mentees. Group consultations are also subject to 'group confidentiality', and mentors are required to be able to explain their confidentiality obligations to participants other than themselves. Mentors should also be aware of exceptions to confidentiality, such as the obligation to report abuse. It is a good idea to keep learning about confidentiality and raise awareness of it throughout the course of mentoring activities.

Mentoring activities must respect the interests of the mentees and be neutral. It must also not be linked to commercial or political matters for a particular individual or organisation. For example, there are various interests at stake if, as a mentor, you strongly recommend a supplement or therapy that happens to be effective for your child in your consultation activities. It is important to provide information impartially as one of several options and allow the consultant to choose specific recommendations.

Maintaining and improving one's professionalism in mentoring activities will not only help in raising one's own children but also in protecting one's mental and physical health in mentoring activities.

Finally, we must not forget that mentors are themselves parents. Consultation activities while raising children are greatly affected not only by one's physical condition but also by the physical condition of one's children. If one sacrifices his or her life and child rearing for consultation activities, both the mentee and the mentor will be unhappy. We need to create an atmosphere in which we can clearly state what we cannot do and what we can do, while helping each other with our colleagues and professional organisations.

b) Overview of support for developmental disorders and understanding support systems in the community (2 hours)

Developmental disorders vary widely in their characteristics and needs. Mentors can learn about the characteristics and supports of developmental disorders by attending a lecture from a local support provider. This will help mentors understand the needs of children with developmental disorders, even if their own children do not have a developmental disorder.

The lecture could cover the following topics:

- The different types of developmental disorders
- The signs and symptoms of developmental disorders
- The support available for children with developmental disorders
- The role of mentors in supporting children with developmental disorders

In addition to the lecture, mentors should be given pamphlets and other materials from local support organisations. This will give mentors a resource to refer mentees for additional support.

It is also important to allow sufficient time for mentors to ask questions about the different support organisations. This will help mentors find the best support for their mentees.

c) Basic consultation skills (1 hour)

The purpose of this course is to learn about the importance of family support, the different forms of mentoring activities, and the skills and techniques needed to be an effective mentor.

One of the most important skills for a mentor is active listening. This means listening to the mentee with full attention and without judgement. It is important to allow the mentees to express their feelings and to explore their options.

It is also important to be empathetic to the mentees' situation. This means understanding how they are feeling and why they are feeling that way. Empathy allows the mentor to connect with the mentees and to build trust. One important point is for mentors to be

aware of their biases and how they might affect their interactions with mentees. It is also important for mentors to be respectful of the mentees' confidentiality.

d) Active listening role-play (3 hours)

Mentor-led consultation is typically conducted in pairs or groups, but in training, one-on-one counselling is used to learn the characteristics of this type of counselling.

The training programme consists of three-person pairs: a mentor, a mentee, and an observer. Each pair is assigned an instructor, and the roles rotate so that each person has a chance to play each role. Each role-play lasts 5 minutes, and then the group reviews the role-play. The instructor provides feedback and advice on what went well and what could be improved.

This training method allows participants to learn the skills and techniques of mentor-led counselling in a safe and supportive environment. It also allows them to observe how other mentors interact with mentees, and to get feedback on their own performance. It is important that participants are encouraged to ask questions and share their experiences, and that the instructor is available to provide support and guidance.

e) Creating a resource book (1 hour)

A resource book is a collection of information and resources that can be used to support mentoring activities. It can include brochures, pamphlets, websites, and other materials from local support organisations.

Having a resource book can help mentors to:

- Provide mentees with information and resources that they need.
- Stay up to date with the latest information and resources.
- Collaborate with other mentors to share information and resources.
- Improve the quality of their mentoring activities.

To create a resource book, you can start by:

- Preparing a clear file with transparent pockets.
- Collecting as many pamphlets from local support organisations as possible during the training sessions and exchanging information.
- Categorising the information and resources in the file.
- Keeping the resource book up to date.

Sharing the resource book with other mentors can help improve the quality of mentoring activities in the community.

f) Group consultation methods (3 hours)

Group consultation is the most common form of consultation conducted by parent mentors. It is a basic skill that can be used in settings such as tea parties (mentor cafés).

The advantage of group consultation is that it allows various information and ideas to be shared. This can be helpful for mentees who are looking for different perspectives or who want to hear from other parents who are going through similar experiences.

However, group consultation is not suitable for everyone. Some people may feel uncomfortable discussing personal matters in a group setting, and it can be difficult to get everyone's thoughts and ideas heard. It may not be for people who want to have their thoughts and ideas listened to in detail.

It is important to be mindful of confidentiality when conducting group consultation. This means getting everyone's consent before sharing any personal information, and being careful not to discuss anything that could identify the mentee.

The group will practice a mock consultation and exchange ideas, including feedback and advice from the instructor. This will help mentors to learn how to conduct group consultation effectively and to develop their skills in active listening and providing support.

Group consultation can be a valuable tool for mentees who are looking for support and advise from other parents. It is important, however, to create a safe and supportive environment for group consultation.

3.6.6 Creation of activities

Training mentors is only the first step in activating mentoring activities in the community. Mentors need to have a place to gain experience and support, and the government and backup organisations must take the lead in creating this space. Without a place to participate in activities and receive support, the motivation of mentors who have completed the training may decline.

By working with mentors to plan activity opportunities such as group tea parties (mentor cafes) and support book preparation classes, mentors can develop their identity, skills, and confidence as mentors. These activities can also help mentors to feel comfortable participating in mentoring relationships, which is essential for the success of mentoring programmes.

3.7 Parent mentoring: A systemic approach

3.7.1 Parent mentor coordinator

The coordinator is responsible for matching mentors with mentees, monitoring the success of mentoring activities, and coordinating with mentors and clients. They also need to be familiar with the characteristics and specialties of each mentor, and they may need to step in and help mentors who are feeling overwhelmed by their responsibilities. Other roles include compiling post-activity reports and planning follow-up training. Coordinators may be experienced mentors or support centre staff and may vary from regions where experienced mentors are in charge to regions where support centre staff are in charge.

3.7.2 Parent mentor steering committee

The parent mentor steering committee is responsible for developing and implementing policies, activities, and training for parent mentoring activities in the community. They are also responsible for reporting on activities. It comprises representatives from the local government, parent associations, support organisations, academic experts, mentor coordinators, and the mentor secretariat. The committee also provides support to mentor coordinators when they need help.

3.7.3 Parent mentor office

The parent mentor office is a central location and serves as a point of contact where people can go to get information about mentoring activities in the community. It is also a place where mentor coordinators and mentors can meet to plan and coordinate their activities. The location of the office will depend on who is responsible for coordinating mentor activities.

The secretariat is responsible for starting up the parent mentor office and publicising mentoring activities. This includes launching a website and creating brochures.

3.8 Mentor registration

After completing the training, mentors will be registered on a list of mentors in their region. The registration will include the mentor's contact information, age, address, training history, child's disorder(s)/disability(ies) and the child's age, days, and times when the mentor is available, and types of activities the mentor is willing to participate in.

Currently, there is no certification for parent mentors. The title simply indicates that the person has completed the training and is active in the community. Some mentors may choose to limit their participation. For example, they may only be willing to help make support books or participate in group counselling. Mentoring activities can vary widely, so mentors do not have to participate in all of them.

When registering, mentors will be asked to sign a code of ethics for mentoring, which will be determined by each region. The registration may also be renewable annually, so that mentors can take breaks from mentoring if needed.

3.9 Follow-up and support session

The development of mentoring activities in a region can be divided into three stages:

- **The start of mentoring activities and the holding of training sessions.** This is the initial stage, where the focus is on raising awareness of mentoring and training mentors.

- **The organisation and implementation of mentoring activities in the region.** This is the middle stage, where the focus is on putting mentoring into practice and making it available to people in the region.

- **The rooting of mentoring activities.** This is the final stage, where mentoring activities are fully established and become a part of the fabric of the community.

In the final stage, it is important to ensure the existence and coordination of specialised organisations that support mentoring activities. This is because there may be cases that are difficult for mentors to handle, and it is important for them to have access to specialised support. Backup organisations can include support centres for persons with developmental disorders, medical institutions, etc.

It is also important to provide a place for mentors to share their thoughts, questions, complaints, and concerns with each other. This can be accomplished through regular meetings or other activities, such as having teatime after each activity. This will help mentors to feel supported and to learn from each other.

A common format for reporting mentors' consultation activities should be created and reported to the Mentor Coordinator and the Mentoring Office. This format should include the following information:

- **When** the activities were conducted

- **Where** the activities were conducted

- **What** activities were conducted

- **Who** conducted the activities

- The **number** of consultants or participants

These records are important documents for reporting the results of mentoring activities to the local government. They can be used to track the progress of mentoring activities, identify areas of improvement, and demonstrate the value of mentoring to the community.

3.9.1 Creating a sustainable environment for mentoring

Mentoring activities are important for the community, but they can also be demanding for mentors who are parents. In addition to the support from professional organisations, a few other environmental arrangements can help mentors continue their activities. These include:

- **Planning for the mentor's absence on the day of the activity.** This can be done by providing mentors with flexibility in scheduling activities, or by providing backup mentors who can step in if the primary mentor cannot attend.

- **Making sure that there is enough time for the mentor to be available.** This can be done by scheduling activities during times when mentors are most likely to be available, or by providing mentors with opportunities to participate in activities that can be done remotely.

- **Securing the necessary budget for expenses such as transportation and, depending on the activity, honoraria.** This can help offset the costs that mentors may incur when participating in activities and can help make mentoring more accessible to all parents.

It is important to remember that mentors are not professionals, but rather citizens who are volunteering their time to help others. By making these environmental arrangements, we can help ensure that mentors are able to continue their important work in the community.

3.9.2 Encouraging mentors in each region to interact with each other

Currently, mentors in different regions have limited opportunities to exchange information with each other. This is because each region has its unique support system for developmental disorders, and mentoring activities in each region may also be unique. However, as mentoring activities are spreading throughout Japan (and the rest of Southeast Asia), there is a growing need for mentors to learn from each other and share their experiences.

One way to address this challenge is to create opportunities for mutual exchange amongst mentors. This could be done through conferences, workshops, or online forums. By creating these opportunities, mentors can learn from each other, share their experiences, and develop best practices for mentoring.

Creating opportunities for mutual exchange amongst mentors is a future challenge, but it is essential for the success of mentoring activities. By working together, mentors can ensure that all children with developmental disorders have access to the support they need.

3.9.3 Start a mentor café!

The mentor café is a new initiative that will provide a space for parents to connect with mentors and learn more about developmental disorders. The café will be a casual and welcoming environment where parents can ask questions, share their experiences, and make friends.

The mentor café is expected to serve three main purposes:

- **To provide information and support to parents.** The café will offer various resources, including information on developmental disorders, support organisations, and government programmes. Mentors will also be available to answer questions and provide support.

- **To build a community amongst parents.** The café will be a place where parents can connect with each other and share their experiences. This can be helpful for parents who feel isolated or alone.

- **To promote mentoring.** The café will be a place where parents can learn more about mentoring and how to become mentors themselves. This can help increase the number of mentors available to children with developmental disorders.

The mentor café will be open to all parents, regardless of whether they have a child with a developmental disorder. The café will be staffed by mentors who are trained to provide support and information.

The café will be promoted through a variety of channels, including posting the schedule on each mentor office's website, in local government publicity and announcements, and placing flyers at health centres, boards of education, and hospitals. It is important to make sure that the mentor café can continue for a long time, while also respecting the reasonable limits of the mentors who operate and participate in the café.

The mentor café is a new and exciting initiative that has the potential to make a real difference in the lives of children with developmental disorders and their families. By providing information, support, and community, the mentor café can help improve the lives of all involved.

Chapter 4

Coaching for Parents of Children with Developmental Disorders

4.1 What is coaching?

Raising a child with a developmental disorder can be challenging and stressful for parents. In addition to the physical and emotional demands of caring for a child with special needs, parents may also face social isolation, financial difficulties, and a lack of support. Professional coaching can help parents cope with these challenges and improve their quality of life.

Professional coaching is a collaborative process (Celestine, 2021) between a coach and a client that helps the client achieve their goals, improve their quality of life, and develop the skills and confidence they need to cope with the challenges of raising a child with developmental disorders. Coaches are trained to help clients identify their strengths and weaknesses, set goals, and develop a plan to achieve those goals. Coaching can be done in a one-on-one setting or in a group setting.

Professional coaching can benefit any parent of a child with developmental disability. However, some parents may be more likely to benefit from coaching than others. For example, parents who are struggling to cope with the challenges of raising a child with a developmental disability, parents who are feeling isolated or unsupported, or parents who are looking for ways to improve their relationships with their spouse, other children, or extended family may be more likely to benefit from coaching.

4.1.1 Coaching benefits

Professional coaching can offer several benefits for parents of children with developmental disabilities, including:

- **Improved coping skills**: Coaches can assist parents to develop healthy coping mechanisms for stress. This can help reduce the negative effects of stress on physical and mental health.

- **Increased self-awareness**: Coaches can aid parents to become more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. This can help parents to set realistic goals and develop a plan to achieve those goals.

- **Improved relationships**: Coaches can assist parents to improve their relationships with their spouse, other children, and extended family. This can help reduce stress and create a more supportive environment for the entire family.

- **Increased knowledge**: Coaches can provide parents with information about developmental disorders, available resources, and strategies for dealing with challenges.

- **Increased confidence:** Coaches can help parents to develop a positive outlook on their situation and their child's future. This can aid parents to feel more confident in their ability to cope with challenges and achieve their goals.

Specifically, and for the purposes of this guidebook, parents can experience benefits from professional coaching in four categories:

- **Physical:** Coaching can help parents to develop healthy coping mechanisms for stress, which can have a positive impact on their physical health. Coaches can also provide guidance on how to manage the physical demands of caring for a child with special needs.

- **Emotional:** Coaching can aid parents to deal with the emotional challenges of raising a child with a developmental disability, such as grief, guilt, and anger. Coaches can provide support and guidance and help parents to develop a positive outlook on their situation.

- **Relationships:** Coaching can help parents to improve their relationships with their spouse, other children, and extended family. Coaches can provide tools for communication and conflict resolution and assist parents to find ways to balance the demands of their child's care with their own needs.

- **Environment:** Coaching can help parents create a supportive environment for their child. Coaches can provide guidance on how to adapt the home environment, find appropriate educational and recreational opportunities, and connect with other families of children with special needs.

These are just some benefits that parents can experience from professional coaching. The specific benefits that a parent experiences will depend on their individual needs and circumstances.

4.1.2 Cultural considerations in Southeast Asia

Professional coaching, while a relatively new field especially in Southeast Asia, has had a long history albeit in different fields including athletics, business, and psychology. Contemporary coaching, however, took off in the 1980s and 1990s (Grant and Cavanagh, 2018) and emphasised the importance of self-awareness, personal growth, and self-actualisation.

Professional coaching is becoming increasingly popular in Southeast Asia. The region is home to a rapidly growing economy and a young and dynamic population, both of which are factors driving the growth of the coaching industry. According to a recent study by the International Coaching Federation (ICF) (2023), the leading global organisation for coaches and coaching, there are over 8,000 ICF-accredited professional coaches in Asia today, with practitioners growing more than 86% in 2023.

With the growing popularity of coaching in the region, it is important for coaches who work with families in Southeast Asia to be aware of the importance of family and community because these are two key concepts in the region's diverse culture. Coaches should also be aware of the potential for family and community to create pressure for parents. By being aware of these nuances, coaches can help parents to navigate the challenges of raising a child with a developmental disorder and to find ways to thrive.

The importance of family and community

In Southeast Asia, there is a strong emphasis on family, considered the central unit of society, and community. This means that families are often very close-knit and rely on each other for support. This can be a source of strength for parents of children with developmental disabilities, as they can get support from their extended family and community. However, it can also create pressure to conform to traditional expectations. For example, parents may feel pressure to keep their child's disability a secret, or to have another child in the hopes that the next one will be 'normal'. Coaches who work in these settings need to be able to incorporate these concepts into their coaching work.

Different ways that families in the region view disability

There are different ways that families in Southeast Asia view disability. In some cultures, disability is seen as a sign of bad luck or a punishment from God. In other cultures, disability is considered a natural part of life. It is good to point out, however, that due to disability laws and campaigns that are implemented in the region, there is now a growing awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities. Still, it is important for coaches to be aware of the different ways that families view disability to be respectful of their values and beliefs.

The need for coaches to be respectful of the family's values and beliefs

Coaches who work with families in Southeast Asia need to be respectful of the family's values and beliefs. This means being sensitive to the cultural factors that may influence the family's views on disability. It also means being respectful of the family's decision-making process. Coaches should not try to impose their values or beliefs on the family. Instead, they should work with the family to find solutions that are right for them.

Here are some practical examples of how coaches can be respectful of the family's values and beliefs:

- **Ask questions:** Coaches should ask questions to learn about the family's values and beliefs about disability. This will help the coach to understand the family's perspective and to tailor their coaching approach accordingly.

- **Be culturally sensitive:** Coaches should be aware of the different ways that families in Southeast Asia view disability. They should avoid making assumptions about the family's values and beliefs, and they should be respectful of a family's culture.

- **Be flexible:** Coaches should be flexible in their approach and be willing to adapt their coaching style to meet the needs of the individual family.

4.2 Understanding coaching

Coaches can help their clients achieve their goals and enhance their quality of life by sticking to the following key principles and values:

Client-centred: In other words, the client is the expert. The coach believes the client has the answers they need to achieve their goals. The coach's role is to facilitate the client's journey, not to lead it. The coach's focus is on the clients' goals and needs, not on the coach's own agenda.

Present- and future-focused: Coaching is about helping the client focus on the present moment, develop a plan, and act so they can achieve their goals in the nearest possible future. The coach does not dwell on the past or worry about the future but should instead help the client to stay focused on what they can do right now.

Collaborative approach: The coach and client work together as partners. The coach does not tell the client what to do, but instead help the client to find their own solutions.

Mutual trust and respect: The coach and the client must have a strong foundation of trust and respect for the coaching relationship to be successful. This means that the coach must be honest and transparent with the client, and the client must be willing to be open and vulnerable with the coach. The coach does not make promises they can keep, and respects the client's values, beliefs, and choices.

Empowerment: The goal of coaching is to empower the client to achieve their goals. This means that the coach should not try to control or manipulate the client but should instead help the client identify their strengths and resources and to take charge of their life by making their own decisions.

Supportive and non-judgmental: The coach creates a safe and supportive environment where the client feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings. The coach does not judge the client and their goals.

Commitment to client's success: The coach is committed to helping the client achieve their goals and is there to support them through challenges and to celebrate their successes.

Confidentiality: The coach keeps the client's information confidential. The coach does not share the client's information with anyone else without the client's permission. Confidentiality is essential for the client to feel safe and comfortable in the coaching relationship.

These are just some key principles and values of coaching. Different coaches may emphasise different principles and values, but all coaches are committed to helping their clients achieve their goals, including enhancing their quality of life.

4.3 Core coaching skills

Core coaching skills are important because they help coaches create a successful coaching relationship. A good coach needs to have the following skills:

Active listening

Active listening is a communication skill that involves paying attention to what the other person is saying, both verbally and nonverbally. It also involves asking clarifying questions and summarising the other person's points. Active listening is an essential skill for coaches because it helps them understand the client's goals, needs, and challenges.

Here are some tips for active listening:

- Pay attention to the other person's words and body language.

- Ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand what the other person is saying.

- Summarise the other person's points to show that you are listening.

- Be patient and non-judgmental.

Powerful questioning

Powerful questioning is a skill that allows coaches to help clients explore their thoughts, feelings, and options. Powerful questions are open-ended, thought-provoking, and challenging. They help clients see things from different perspectives and to come up with their own solutions.

Here are some tips for powerful questioning:

- Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

- Ask questions that start with 'what', 'how', 'why', or 'who'.

- Ask questions that challenge the client's assumptions.

- Ask questions that help the client to see things from different perspectives.

Providing effective feedback

Feedback is information given to someone about their performance. Effective feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. It helps the person to improve their performance by providing them with information about what they are doing well, what they could improve, and how they can improve.

Here are some tips for providing effective feedback:

- Be specific about what the person is doing well and what they can improve.

- Be timely with your feedback. Do not wait too long to give feedback.

- Make sure your feedback is actionable. Tell the person what they can do to improve their performance.

- Be respectful and constructive.

Building rapport and trust

Rapport is a feeling of mutual trust and understanding between two people. Trust is essential for a successful coaching relationship. When clients trust their coach, they are more likely to be open and honest, and more likely to follow through on their goals.

Here are some tips for building rapport and trust:

- Be genuine and authentic.

- Be present and attentive.

- Be respectful and non-judgmental.

- Be a good listener.

- Be supportive and encouraging.

Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment

A safe and supportive environment is essential for a successful coaching relationship. When clients feel safe and supported, they are more likely to be open and honest, and more likely to take risks.

Here are some tips for creating a safe and supportive environment:

- Set clear boundaries.

- Be respectful of the client's privacy.

- Be non-judgmental.

- Be supportive and encouraging.

- Create a confidential space.

Goal setting and action planning

Goal setting and action planning are essential skills for coaches. Coaches help clients set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals. They also aid clients to develop action plans to achieve their goals.

Here are some tips for goal setting and action planning:

- Help the client to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals.

- Help the client to develop an action plan to achieve their goals.

- Be supportive and encouraging.

- Help the client track their progress and adjust their plan as needed.

These are just some core coaching skills that coaches need to develop. By mastering these skills, coaches can assist clients to achieve their goals and reach their full potential.

4.4 The coaching process

The coaching process is a collaborative effort between a coach and a client. The client comes to the coaching relationship with a goal or set of goals that they want to achieve. An individual coaching session typically lasts about an hour and can be done every week or every 2 weeks. Depending on the goal, these sessions generally last up to 3 or 6 months. Group coaching, on the other hand, normally lasts from 1 up to 2 hours with ideally a maximum number of six to eight participants.

Below are some key steps in the whole process, whether it is individual or group coaching. It is important to note, however, that the coaching process can be customised to the specific needs of the client.

- **Assessment:** The coaching process typically begins with an initial meeting between the coach and the client to assess the latter's current situation and their goals. During this meeting, the coach will get to know the client and their goals, as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

- **Planning:** At the initial meeting, the coach will work with the client to develop a coaching plan to achieve their goals. The plan will likely include setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals. The coaching plan will also be flexible, so that it can be adjusted as needed.

- **Implementation and follow-up:** Through a mutually agreed schedule, the coach and the client will have regular meetings, either in person or online, or a mixture of both. All throughout this phase, the client will also start implementing the action plan and SMART goals agreed upon previously, with enough flexibility for changes

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along the way. During these meetings, the coach will help the client to track their progress, identify challenges, and develop solutions. The coach will provide support and encouragement to the client.

It is important to remember that the coaching process is a journey, and it is not always easy. There will be times when the client feels stuck, or when they feel like they are not making progress. This is the reason regular follow-up meetings are necessary in the coaching process.

- **Evaluation:** The client will constantly evaluate their progress and determines whether they have achieved their goals. This can be done off sessions or during the sessions. This is also the time when the coach and client can give each other feedback.

Through all this, the client should do their best in following the action plan and to take accountability for their actions (or inaction). They also have the right to cancel the coaching sessions if they feel it is not the right platform for them.

4.5 Coaching tools

Coaching tools refer to resources and aids coaches use to facilitate the coaching process and enhance their clients' understanding and progress. These tools can be physical, digital, or conceptual in nature. Examples of coaching tools include assessments and questionnaires for self-assessment, goal-setting templates, progress tracking sheets, visualisation exercises, personality assessments, and various models or frameworks used for problem-solving and decision-making.

Coaching tools serve as practical aids that help structure coaching sessions; provide a framework for goal achievement; and enable clients to gain insights into their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. These tools enhance communication and collaboration between the coach and the client, leading to more effective and efficient coaching outcomes.

Here are several common coaching tools used in both individual and group coaching settings:

- GROW model

The GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) is a popular framework for coaching. It stands for Goal, Reality, Options, and Way Forward. The GROW model helps coaches and clients to structure their coaching conversations and to focus on the client's goals.

GOAL: The first step in the GROW model is to define the client's goal. The goal should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). What do they want to achieve? Why is this goal important to them?

REALITY: The next step is to assess the client's current reality. This includes identifying the client's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the challenges they are facing.

OPTIONS: The third step is to generate options for achieving the goal. The coach and client will brainstorm a list of possible options, and then they will evaluate the options and select the best one.

WAY FORWARD: The final step is to develop a way forward. This includes creating a plan for implementing the chosen option and tracking the progress towards the goal. What are the specific steps the client will take to achieve their goal?

- SMART goals

SMART goals (SMART Goals, 2016–2017) are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. They are a helpful tool for setting and achieving goals.

SPECIFIC: Goals should be specific, clear, and easy to understand and measure. For example, instead of saying 'I want to lose weight', one could say 'I want to lose 10 pounds in 6 weeks.

MEASURABLE: Goals should be measurable, meaning they should have a clear way to track progress and determine whether the goal has been achieved. For example, you could track your weight loss on a weekly basis.

ACHIEVABLE: Goals need to be achievable. They should be challenging, but they should also be realistic and within the client's reach. For example, if you are not used to exercising, setting a goal to run a marathon in 6 weeks is probably not achievable.

RELEVANT: Goals should be aligned with the client's values and priorities. For example, if the overall goal is to get in shape, losing weight is a relevant goal.

TIME-BOUND: Goals should have a deadline. This helps to keep the client on track and to ensure that the goal is achieved. For example, you could set a goal to lose 10 pounds by your birthday.

There is, however, a more comprehensive type of SMART goals that pushes the goal-setting exercise to the next level – SMART-ER goals (Garvey, 2019).

EVALUATE: It is important to assess a client's progress by checking it against the original goal or plan and ask the following questions:

- How often should I revisit my goal?

- How will I measure my progress?

- What factors should I evaluate and when?

READJUST: The original plan must be flexible enough to adjust to keep moving in the direction of the goal. A lot can change along the way and without a Plan B, an unexpected obstacle could result in failure. Some questions a client can ask are:

o How will I adjust to account for obstacles or breakthroughs?

o Which factors can be easily tweaked, and which are more rigid?

o What external deadlines do I have and how can I adjust them?

The coach can expertly guide the client in navigating through this process and get the client back on track in no time.

▪ The Empowerment Dynamic

The Empowerment Dynamic (Emerald, 2016) is a highly effective tool in changing the mindset and perspective of clients by flipping certain 'roles' they subconsciously play in their day-to-day lives. The key concept here is self-awareness. With self-awareness, clients can change their mindsets from being a Victim ('Why am I always the one suffering?') to Creator ('I have good problem-solving skills!'), from Persecutor ('You're not helping me at all!') to Challenger ('Let's see how we can work together to resolve this'.), and from a Rescuer ('Oh, poor you! Let me take care of that!') to Coach ('How can I help?'). The following figure is made by authors referred to the source.

Figure 3: Empowerment Triangle
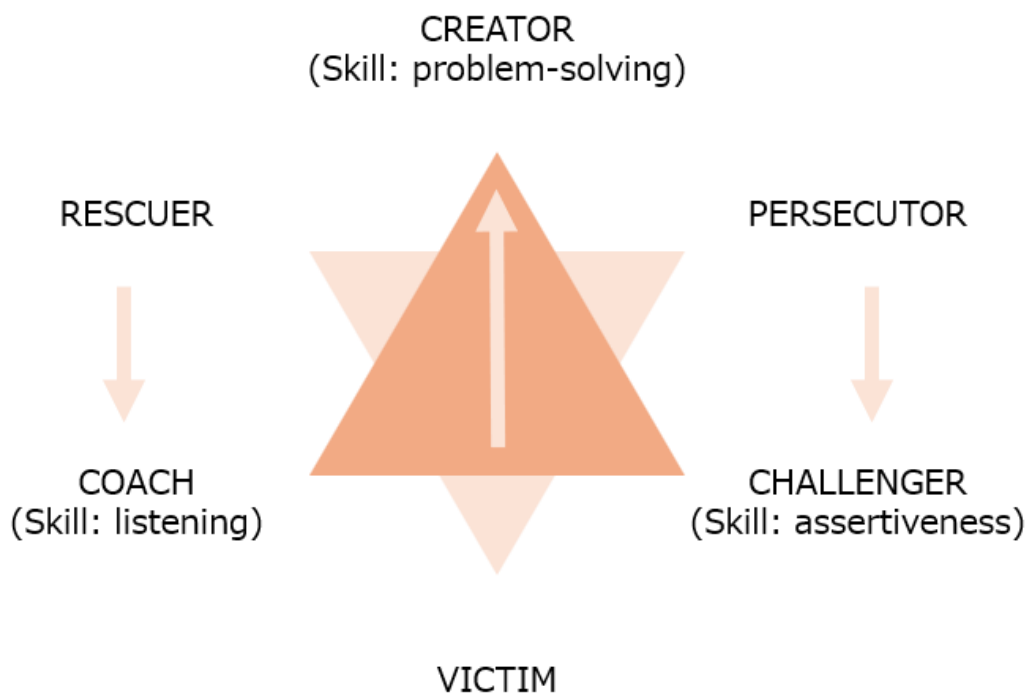
Source: Authors (quoted from Rosalie Puiman's figure).

▪ Visualisation and guided imagery

These techniques involve using your imagination to create a vivid picture of yourself achieving your goal and can be done in various ways. You could close your eyes and

imagine yourself achieving your goal, or you could write down a detailed description of what it would be like to achieve your goal.

Guided imagery is a type of visualisation that involves listening to a recording that guides you through a visualisation exercise.

Both these techniques can help you stay motivated, overcome obstacles, and achieve your goals more quickly.

- Values identification and alignment

Values are the things that are important to you. They are the guiding principles that shape your decisions and your actions. When your values are aligned with your goals, you are more likely to be motivated and to achieve your goals.

Values identification is the process of identifying your values. This can be done by reflecting on your life, your experiences, and the things important to you. Once you have identified your values, you can start aligning your goals with your values. This means making sure that your goals are consistent with your values.

Values alignment is a powerful tool for helping you achieve your goals. When your goals are aligned with your values, you are more likely to be motivated and to achieve your goals more quickly.

- Strengths-based coaching

Strengths-based coaching is a coaching approach that focuses on the client's strengths. The coach helps the client identify their strengths and use their strengths to achieve their goals. It is based on the belief that everyone has strengths.

The goal of strengths-based coaching is to assist clients to identify and use their strengths to achieve their goals. By focusing on the client's strengths, the coach can help the client build confidence, overcome challenges, and achieve their goals more quickly.

4.6 Ethical considerations

For clients to have a positive and productive coaching experience, coaches must take steps to uphold ethical standards in their coaching practice. Here are top considerations to observe:

Confidentiality and trust: Confidentiality is essential in coaching. Coaches must keep all information shared by their clients confidential. This includes information about the client's goals, challenges, and personal life. Trust is also essential in coaching. Clients must be able to trust their coaches to keep their information confidential and to act in their best interest.

Boundaries and professionalism: Coaches must set clear boundaries with their clients. This means avoiding dual relationships, such as becoming friends with a client or

providing coaching to a family member. Coaches must also always maintain a professional demeanour.

Conflict of interest: Coaches must avoid conflicts of interest. This means avoiding situations where the coach's personal or professional interests could interfere with the coaching relationship as coaching a client who is also a business associate. It is also important for coaches to be able to assess whether their clients would be better served by therapy or counselling, and to be prepared to make referrals to appropriate professionals.

Handling sensitive information: Coaches may be entrusted with sensitive information about their clients, such as medical, financial, or personal information. Coaches must handle this information with care and take steps to protect its confidentiality.

Informed consent: Informed consent is the process of obtaining the client's permission to begin the coaching relationship. This means that the client must understand the purpose of coaching, the risks and benefits of coaching, and the coach's qualifications. The client must also give their consent to the coaching relationships.

4.7 How coaching enhances parent training and parent mentor programmes

Professional coaching can provide valuable support to parents who have undergone Parent Training and Parent Mentoring programmes. When combined with these programmes, coaching will give parents the following gains:

Personalised guidance: Professional coaching provides individualised guidance and support tailored to the specific needs and goals of the parent. This is also possible even with group coaching as each coaching participant will have a chance to work on their specific goals. It also allows parents to address their unique challenges and circumstances.

Application of skills: Coaching helps parents bridge the gap between theory and practice by assisting them in applying the skills and strategies they learned during the training programmes. A coach can help parents navigate real-life situations, offer feedback, and provide ongoing support to reinforce the application of learned skills.

Goal setting and action planning: A coach works with parents to set meaningful goals based on their priorities and aspirations for enhancing their quality of life, as well as their aspirations for their child. They help parents develop actionable plans and strategies to achieve these goals, breaking them down into manageable steps. This enables parents to implement the knowledge gained from training programmes effectively.

Continuous growth and adaptation: Parent training and parent mentor programmes provide a solid foundation, but ongoing growth and adaptation are essential. Professional coaching offers a long-term, supportive partnership that helps parents continue their growth journey beyond the initial training. Coaches provide encouragement, accountability, and guidance as parents navigate new challenges and evolving needs.

Emotional support and coping strategies: Raising a child with developmental disabilities can bring emotional challenges. A coach provides a safe and non-judgmental space for parents to express their emotions, offering empathy, active listening, and understanding. They can also help parents develop coping strategies to manage stress, build resilience, and maintain, if not enhance, their well-being.

Customised problem-solving: Coaching helps parents analyse and address specific challenges they face in their daily lives. Coaches assist in identifying barriers, exploring alternative perspectives, and generating creative solutions. This personalised problem-solving approach allows parents to develop strategies that work best for their unique situations.

Confidence building: Parenting a child with developmental disorders can sometimes lead to self-doubt and uncertainty. Through coaching, parents gain confidence in their abilities as they witness their progress and achievements. A coach provides positive reinforcement, validation, and encouragement, fostering a sense of empowerment and self-belief.

Collaboration and networking: Coaches, especially in a group coaching setting, can help parents connect with other families who have gone through similar experiences. In group coaching sessions, for instance, parents have a chance to discuss amongst themselves their situation challenges, and goals while having the opportunity to be coaches amongst themselves. Coaches can facilitate collaboration and networking, creating opportunities for parents to share knowledge, experiences, and resources. This community support further enhances parents' growth and provides a sense of belonging.

4.8 Identifying a qualified coach

Coaching can be a powerful tool for personal development for parents who have children with developmental disorders. However, it is important to identify a qualified coach to ensure that you are getting the most out of the experience. Below are some helpful tips:

Research different coaching styles and approaches: There are many different types of coaching, so it is important to find a style that is a good fit for you. Some coaches focus on helping clients develop specific skills, while others focus on building confidence or self-esteem. There are also coaches who specialise in working within the disability field.

Ask for recommendations from friends, family, or other parents of children with developmental disorders: This is a great way to get started and to learn about coaches who are already working with families in your area.

Check for certifications: Several professional coaching organisations, such as the International Coaching Federation, offer certifications. These certifications can be a good way to ensure that the coach you choose has the necessary training and experience.

Interview potential coaches: Once you have a few potential coaches in mind, schedule interviews with each one. This will give you a chance to learn more about their coaching

style and to see if they are a good fit for you. Some coaches only focus on one-on-one coaching, while some are certified for group coaching so it is a good idea to check.

Consider the coach's location: If you live in a rural area, you may need to find a coach who is willing to travel to you. However, many coaches also offer online individual and group coaching, which can be a convenient option for families who live in remote areas.

Be prepared to pay for coaching: Coaching can be expensive, so it is important to be prepared to pay for it. However, some coaches also offer sliding-scale fees or pro bono services.

Look into coaching services offered by disability organisations: Many disability organisations offer coaching services to their members. These services can be a great way to get help for you at a lower cost.

Lobby for disability organisations or government to create affordable coaching programmes: If no coaching services are available in your area, you can lobby for disability organisations or government to create such programmes. This will ensure that everyone has access to the support they need to thrive.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This guidebook has provided an overview of the merits of Parent Training, Parent Mentor Training, and Professional Coaching programmes in Southeast Asia. These programmes can significantly impact the lives of parents who have children with developmental disorders and who are trying to develop their parenting skills, increase their knowledge, overcome their daily challenges, reduce stress, enhance their well-being and quality of life, and increase self-esteem.

However, much more needs to be done. These programmes need to be adapted and applied in different Southeast Asian countries, preferably translated into local languages so more people can benefit. Disability organisations, as well as national and local governments, need to be on board too to help spread the word about these programmes so that more families can access the support they need.

We urge you to take the following actions to support the development and implementation of these programmes in Southeast Asia:

- Adapt and translate this guidebook into local languages.

- Share this guidebook with your colleagues and partners.

- Use this guidebook as a resource for developing and implementing these programmes in your own country.

Thank you for your consideration.

We believe these programmes have the potential to make a real difference in the lives of parents and families caring for children with developmental disorders in the region.

Together, we can make a difference.

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