

# **Eleventh Family Research Network (FRN) Forum**

## ***“Home Alone – Life after Divorce in Singapore”***

**Monday, 28 April 2014**  
**Auditorium, Level 1, Civil Service College**

ELEVENTH FAMILY RESEARCH NETWORK (FRN) FORUM:  
“HOME ALONE – LIFE AFTER DIVORCE IN SINGAPORE”  
28 APRIL 2014

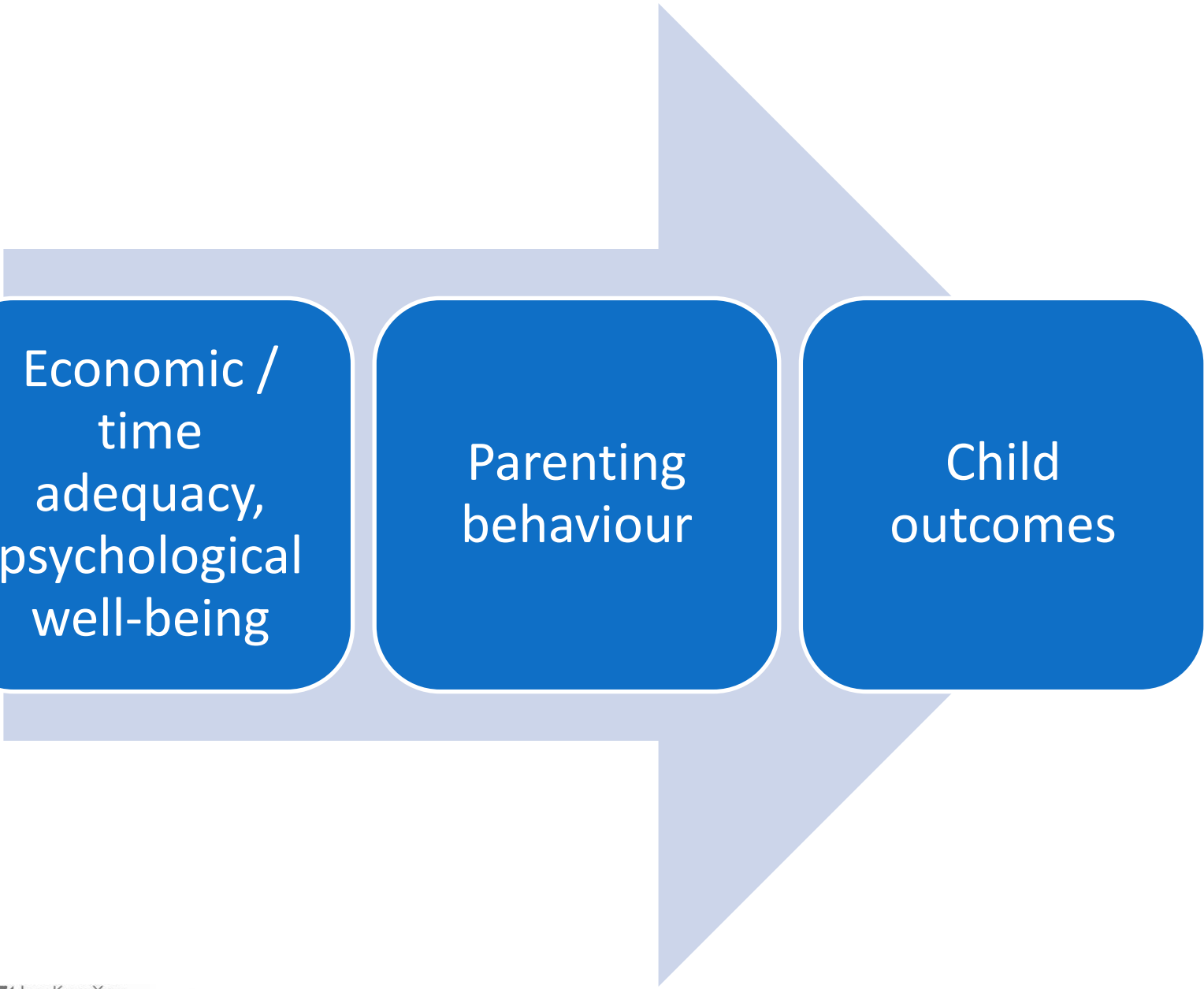
# **PRESENTATION III**

## **Challenges and Coping of Single Indian Mothers – Findings from Project Athena**

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# Challenges and Coping of Single Indians Mothers - Findings from Project Athena

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Economic /  
time  
adequacy,  
psychological  
well-being

Parenting  
behaviour

Child  
outcomes

# Introduction

- Some **groups** in society are often more likely to be challenged – **single parents, groups with multiple stressors** (incarcerations, addictions, mental and physical disease).
- **Stressors** can be mitigated by coping methods – some **more adaptive** (problem solving, seeking for resources), some **less adaptive** (passive, ritualistic practices, escape) and by **adequate resources** which alleviate problems.

- **Maternal** emotional well-being is more important than paternal emotional well-being in determining child outcomes because of the **closer connection** between mother and child especially in formative years.
- Social service intervention often attempts to alleviate burdens of this population through a variety of interventions.
- Some are targeted to help single mothers deal with the emotional issues related to their status and empower them with a variety of skills

- This study focuses on single mothers among an ethnic minority population – low income Indians mothers in Singapore
- a sizeable number are single parents because of divorce
- What challenges do they face compared to other low income mothers?
  - What is life like after divorce?
  - What predicts their psychological well-being?
  - How do they cope with stressors?
  - What are the prospects of intervention for this group?

# METHODOLOGY



# Methodology - Quantitative

- Survey administered by female social service professionals / trained volunteers at respondents households.
- Survey used several psychometrically validated instruments, a few used with Asian populations.
- Respondents took around 45 minutes to complete survey
- \$15 Vouchers given in appreciation

# Sampling

- Sample derived from SINDA FSC database. Recipients of bursary, financial aid (School Pocket Money Fund) and intervention programmes.
- Sample naturally comprised low income families (both single mothers and mothers from two parent (intact) families) but on a continuum of needs and disadvantages
- 441 beneficiaries of SINDA accepted invitation out of a database of 700 mothers who qualified for the study
- 63% response rate; non-response largely because of inability to contact respondent

# Methodology – Qualitative

- 54 single mothers, 34 of whom had attended Project Athena (an empowerment programme for single mothers and their children)
- In-depth interview by social service professional who was not a staff of SINDA
- 1 hour discussion on a number of aspects of their life

# SAMPLE BACKGROUND

Demographics; Social Support; Trauma Occurrence; Coping Strategies

# Notes

- “Intact mothers” refers to mothers from two parent families.
- In this presentation, single mothers refer to mothers whose husbands are
  - includes those who are divorced or separated (legally or informally) but NOT those who are widowed, never married mothers or those whose husbands are incarcerated.

# Reasons for Divorce

- Based on the qualitative interviews
  - Abusive husbands and fathers (physically + emotionally & to the children)
  - Alcoholic
  - Did not help with family (financially + child care)
  - Extra marital relationships

# Income and Age

	Median - Single Mothers (n=115)	Median – Intact Mothers (n=273)
Total Family Income (in \$)	789	1500
Per Capita Income (in \$)	215	325
Age of respondent (in years)	41	43

# Educational Attainment

	Percentage of Single Mothers (%) (n=115)	Percentage of Intact Mothers (%) (n=273)
No formal qualification/lower primary	24.6	16.5
Completed primary school education (PSLE)	14.9	17.6
Some secondary school education	20.2	25.3
Completed GCE 'N' levels/vocational institute VITB	14.0	4.4
Completed GCE 'O' levels	16.7	22.3
Completed GCE 'A' levels	1.8	3.3
Polytechnic diploma	.9	4.0
Other diploma/qualification awarded by professional bodies	6.1	2.6
University degree	.9	5.1



# Ethnicity

	Percentage of Single Families (%) (n=115)	Percentage of Intact Families (%) (n=273)
Tamil	79.8	75.1
Other Indian groups	20.2	24.6

# Religion

	Percentage of Single Mothers (%) (n=115)	Percentage of Intact Mothers (%) (n=273)
Hinduism	56.5	48.4
Islam	33.9	39.9
Protestant-Other Christian	5.2	3.3
Sikhism	2.6	2.6
Roman Catholic	.9	3.3
Buddhism	0	.7
Others	.9	1.1

# Number of Children

	Percentage of Single Mothers (%) (n=115)	Percentage of Intact Mothers (%) (n=273)
1.00	23.5	13.2
2.00	35.7	32.6
3.00	26.1	34.1
≥4.00	14.0	19.1

Proportion of single mothers (n=115) and mothers from **intact families** (n=273) who report source helpfulness in their parenting responsibilities

	Single (%)	Intact (%)
Your parents	48.0	30.8
Your relatives	17.4	17.9
Your spouse/ex-spouse	11.0	66.4
Child father's parents/relatives	2.6	11.0
Friends	4.8	4.3
Neighbours/Colleagues	3.6	8.7
Professional agencies	14.8	10.9
Volunteers	0	3.2
School System	15.4	20.1

# Quality of Social Support Network

Support Function Required	Availability of Support (%)	
	Single (n=115)	<b>Intact (n=273)</b>
Need urgent financial help	48.7	<b>49.4</b>
Need advice on family problems	49.6	<b>57.3</b>
Need advice on personal problems	45.2	<b>56.0</b>
Need urgent help with taking care of children	51.3	<b>47.2</b>
Need advice on dealing with children	47.8	<b>49.6</b>
Take over household responsibilities if you are not able to do this	46.0	<b>54.1</b>

# Quantity of social support network

Single mothers (n=115) and **Intact mothers (n=273)**

Network	Close Family (%)	Close Friends (%)
0	11.7 (24.9)	21.8 (35.1)
1	26.9 (18.8)	31.5 (19.8)
2-4	40.9 (37.2)	32.6 (29.9)
>4	20.5 (19.2)	14.1 (15.3)

# RESOURCE ADEQUACY (TIME AND ECONOMIC)

- Family Resource Scale (Dunst & Lees, 1987)
- “Here is a set of questions to understand whether you and those who live in this household have adequate resources to meet the needs of all who live in this house.....How well is this need met on a consistent basis in your family?” (1= need is never met; 5 = need is always met)
- Basic Needs, Simple Pleasures, House Furnishings, Time for Self, Time for Family,



## Proportion of single mothers (n=115) and intact mothers (n=272) meeting resource adequacy for basic needs

	Never/Seldom met (%)	Met sometimes (%)	Met always/Most of the time (%)
Food for 3 meals a day	11.3 (4.4)	24.3 (17.6)	64.4 (77.9)
Housing	32.2 (13.0)	14.8 (12.2)	53.0 (74.8)
Money to buy necessities	32.2 (20.6)	35.7 (35.3)	32.1 (44.1)
Enough clothes for your family	24.3 (16.7)	27.0 (23.3)	48.7 (60.0)
Money to pay monthly utility and conservancy bills	40.0 (25.9)	29.6 (31.9)	30.4 (42.2)
Medical care for your family	28.7 (25.9)	31.3 (26.7)	40.0 (47.4)
Telephone or mobile phone	17.4 (13.1)	27.8 (21.4)	54.8 (65.5)
Money to buy items for children's educational needs	37.4 (26.8)	35.7 (33.0)	26.9 (40.2)

Proportion of single mothers and **intact mothers** meeting resource adequacy for “simple pleasures in life”

	Never/Seldom met (%)	Met some times (%)	Met always/Most of the time (%)
Additional medical supplies such as spectacles	42.6 (34.0)	32.2 (26.6)	25.2 (39.3)
Toys/Entertainment gadgets for your child(ren)	52.2 (49.1)	32.2 (17.0)	15.6 (33.9)
Money to buy things for yourself	63.5 (58.2)	19.1 (14.1)	17.4 (27.8)
Money for family entertainment	65.2 (56.1)	15.7 (18.6)	19.1 (25.4)
Savings of \$500	87.0 (78.6)	8.7 (5.3)	4.3 (16.2)
Money for basic celebration of festivals	59.1 (36.9)	25.2 (30.6)	15.7 (32.5)
Money for basic birthday celebration for child(ren)	72.2 (53.9)	19.1 (23.6)	8.7 (22.5)
Money to fulfill religious obligations	53.0 (37.6)	20.0 (20.9)	27.0 (41.4)

## Proportion of single mothers and intact mothers meeting resource adequacy for time for oneself

	Never/Seldom Met (%)	Met sometimes (%)	Met always/Most of the time (%)
Time to get enough sleep/rest	51.3 (27.7)	23.5 (19.6)	25.2 (52.8)
Time to be by yourself	43.5 (32.6)	18.3 (15.4)	38.2 (52.1)
Time to be with close friend(s)	48.7 (59.6)	35.7 (17.6)	15.6 (22.7)
Time to socialise and make new friends	69.6 (68.1)	18.3 (10.0)	12.1 (21.9)
Time to keep in shape and look nice	57.4 (54.1)	26.1 (16.2)	16.5 (29.7)

# Proportion of single mothers and **intact mothers** meeting resource adequacy for time to be with family

	Never/ Seldom met (%)	Met sometimes (%)	Met always/ Most of the time (%)
Time for family to be together	12.2 (11.5)	20.9 (14.1)	66.9 (74.3)
Time to be with your child(ren)	11.3 (4.5)	18.3 (10.8)	70.4 (84.8)

# Proportion of single mothers and **intact mothers** meeting resource adequacy for house fixtures

	Never/ Seldom met (%)	Met sometimes (%)	Met always/ Most of the time (%)
Adequate furniture for the home	27.0 (13.8)	17.4 (13.1)	55.6 (73.1)
Computer and internet use	39.1 (23.1)	20.9 (17.2)	40.0 (59.7)
Important household appliances (such as fridge and washing machine)	19.1 (9.7)	13.9 (13.9)	67.0 (76.4)

# MATERNAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

- Measured by the General Contentment Scale (Hudson, 1982)
- “Let me ask you a little about how you feel about your life and the different emotions you normally experience. How often do you feel or experience the items that
- 1=none of the time 7=all the time
- Higher scores represent higher levels of depression

Proportion of single mothers (n=115) and **intact mothers (n=273)** on items from General Contentment Scale

Items	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
I feel powerless to do anything about my life	43.5 (58.1)	20.0 (17.0)	36.5 (24.8)
I feel blue.	41.7 (50.9)	20.9 (25.7)	37.4 (23.4)
I am restless and can't keep still.	47.8 (56.3)	15.7 (13.8)	36.5 (29.9)
I have crying spells	44.1 (59.2)	15.0 (16.5)	39.8 (24.3)
I have a hard time getting started on things that I need to do.	43.0 (54.9)	18.4 (19.3)	38.6 (25.8)
I feel downhearted	48.7 (55.1)	20.9 (17.6)	30.4 (27.3)
I feel that my situation is hopeless.	60.5 (68.8)	16.7 (13.2)	22.8 (18.0)



Proportion of single mothers (n=115) and **intact mothers (n=273)** on more items from General Contentment Scale

Items	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
I do not sleep well at night.	34.8 (48.9)	18.3 (10.1)	47.0 (41.0)
I feel downtrodden (pushed down).	51.3 (67.5)	14.2 (14.7)	34.5 (17.7)
I am irritable	58.4 (62.0)	17.7 (18.0)	23.9 (19.9)
I get upset easily.	46.5 (53.4)	15.8 (18.0)	37.7 (28.6)
It is hard for me to have a good time.	41.2 (51.9)	15.8 (14.4)	43.0 (33.7)

- Many variables correlate with maternal psychological well-being including their marital status, family income, age, number of dependents, presence of dependent with illness, resource adequacy, social support and resolution of trauma.
- Using hierarchical regression analysis, we were able to control for the effect of different variables.
- Mothers who were less content (i.e more depressed) tended to
  - Have more dependents
  - Less able to meet their basic needs and the need for time
  - Inadequate social support
  - Trauma continues to affect them now
- On the whole, single mothers were more likely to have most of these predictors.

# Post-Divorce Realities – Mother's Distress

- Financial difficulties
- Employment difficulties (attributed to stress of divorce issues)
- Juggling multiple demands
- Housing difficulties
- Tension with ex-spouse
- Concerns about children's well-being
- Stress of managing alone

# Mother's Distress – Suicidal Ideation

- "You know I am a Muslim and I never think of committing suicide. But when the shelter was pressuring me to leave and HDB was not giving me a place and my sister was pressuring me to quickly leave the niece's place at Circuit road, I really felt like ending it."

# Post-Divorce Realities – Children's Well-being

- Nearly 3/4 had problems with school
- Two daughters had become pregnant
- Three sons under police supervision
- Mothers inability to focus on children as they were overcome with personal pain
- Absence of a “father” figure

# Impact of Divorce on Children's Well-Being – Absence of a father to provide direction and discipline

- "The father is absent and they don't have a father to turn to and I also cannot be too lenient with them cos if I do so I might spoil them, it is not only hard for me but also equally hard for my children who have to struggle and cope."

# Impact of Divorce on Children's Well-Being – Mother's psychological well-being and attention to children's education

- "All the time I was sleeping, pain and crying about my ex-husband. I find that I never did good. I believe that if I was healthy, my children can get good results."

# Impact of Divorce on Children's Well-Being – Interruption to education due to housing difficulties

- "When I did not have a house, my children had to go to school from Boon Lay to Tampines. The youngest one did not do well in school and has to repeat primary 1. It was difficult for them to concentrate on studies as they had to travel very far."



# Post-Divorce Realities - Housing

- Often could not maintain loan payment for marital home which was often already in massive arrears
- Difficulty of obtaining rental unit that was conducive
- Relatives/parents not always supportive
- Ex-spouse continue to live in the home

# Post-Divorce Realities – Acrimonious Relationship

- Ex-spouse continues to “harass” for money
- No / Insufficient maintenance
- Quarrels about visitation rights
- Demands for custody
- Children who are attached with the non-custodial parent

# Impact of Divorce on Mother's Well-Being – Dealing with ex-spouse

- "I felt so tormented by him. He wants to control me, and he wants to make sure that my life is in a mess and I end up with psychiatric treatment. He had said he would not give me the divorce and is making sure that I don't do well in life."

# COPING AMONG SINGLE INDIAN MOTHERS

# Coping Strategies / Trauma Resolution

- Measured using Hefner et al (2006) Collectivist Coping Styles Inventory
- Coupled with trauma resolution scales
- Used among East Asian populations where religious and family coping strategies were known to be popular

# Trauma Impact (Then)

Single mothers (n=115) and **Intact mothers (n=166)**

	No or little interference	Moderate interference	A lot or major interference
School or work	21.1 (29.1)	7.4 (12.8)	71.5 (58.1)
Interpersonal relationships	16.8 (31.9)	8.9 (10.8)	74.3 (57.2)
Thinking and judgment	9.9 (17.5)	9.9 (17.5)	80.2 (65.1)
Mood	8.8 (10.8)	6.9 (12.7)	84.3 (76.5)
Self esteem	17.6 (24.1)	5.9 (17.5)	76.5 (58.4)

# Trauma Impact (Now)

Single mothers (n=115) and **Intact mothers (n=166)**

	No or little interference	Moderate interference	A lot or major interference
School or work	52.7 (66.2)	14.0 (15.9)	33.3 (17.9)
Interpersonal relationships	50.0 (67.5)	19.0 (14.5)	31.0 (18.1)
Thinking and judgment	51.0 (53.6)	17.0 (21.7)	32.0 (24.7)
Mood	50.5 (51.8)	17.8 (20.7)	31.7 (27.4)
Self esteem	53.5 (58.9)	15.8 (19.0)	30.7 (22.1)

# Proportion using aspects of religious coping for single mothers (n = 115) and intact mothers (n=202)

	Never used (%)	Not useful (%)	Quite useful (%)	Very useful (%)
Through prayer or other religious rituals	9.0 (4.0)	7.0 (3.5)	7.0 (7.0)	77.0 (85.6)
Found guidance from my religion	17.0 (8.5)	5.0 (7.0)	4.0 (6.0)	74.0 (78.6)
Found comfort from my religion or spirituality	15.0 (5.5)	7.0 (4.5)	10.0 (7.0)	68.0 (83.1)
Thought about the meaning of the trauma from the perspectives of my religious beliefs.	23.8 (19.3)	7.9 (4.0)	14.9 (12.4)	53.4 (64.4)



# Proportion using aspects of reappraisal coping for single mothers (n = 115) and intact mothers (n=202)

	Never used	Not useful	Quite useful	Very useful
Believed that I would grow from surviving the traumatic event.	13.0 (9.0)	12.0 (10.0)	9.0 (10.4)	66.0 (70.6)
Analysing my feelings provided me with ideas about how to proceed.	13.9 (18.7)	8.9 (10.3)	12.9 (14.3)	64.3 (56.7)
Told myself that I could think of effective ideas.	14.9 (13.3)	10.9 (9.9)	10.9 (14.3)	63.3 (62.6)
Realised that often good comes after overcoming bad situations.	10.9 (12.3)	9.9 (8.9)	19.8 (7.9)	59.4 (70.9)
Realised that the trauma served as an important purpose in my life.	20.2 (17.3)	6.6 (12.4)	6.1 (10.9)	67.1 (59.4)
Told myself that I could make my plans and ideas work.	15.8 (15.3)	11.9 (8.4)	9.9 (9.4)	62.4 (67.0)

# Proportion using aspects of family coping for single mothers (n = 115) and **intact mothers** (n=202)

	Never used (%)	Not useful (%)	Quite useful (%)	Very useful (%)
Followed the guidance of my elders (e.g., parents, older relatives).	34.0 (19.4)	14.0 (12.9)	5.0 (6.5)	47.0 (61.2)
Placed trust in my elders' traditional wisdom to cope with the trauma.	31.0 (21.0)	15.0 (15.5)	13.0 (10.0)	41.0 (53.5)
Knew that I could ask assistance from my family increased my confidence.	39.7 (21.8)	17.8 (14.9)	1.0 (11.4)	41.5 (52.0)
Through family assistance and support.	18.8 (7.4)	11.9 (12.8)	9.9 (8.9)	59.4 (70.9)
Shared my feelings with my family.	24.8 (12.4)	15.8 (11.9)	8.9 (7.9)	50.5 (67.8)

# Proportion using aspects of professional help seeking coping for single mothers (n = 115) and intact mothers (n=202)

	Never used (%)	Not useful (%)	Quite useful (%)	Very useful (%)
Actively sought advice from professionals (e.g., counsellors, social workers, psychiatrists).	59.4 (71.3)	12.9 (4.5)	4.0 (5.4)	23.7 (18.8)
Saved face by seeking advice from a professional (e.g., counsellors, social workers, psychiatrists) I did not know personally.	55.1 (68.5)	25.5 (6.4)	4.1 (3.0)	15.3 (22.2)

# PARENTING TASK CONFIDENCE

- Parenting behaviors measured using the Parenting Task Confidence Inventory (Suzuki et al. 2009)
- 20 item scale measured on a 6 point Likert scale
- Many respondents reported high confidence on parenting tasks
- Two items however stood out as areas where mothers found themselves challenged:

*Control your emotions in front of your child*

*Avoid overreacting when your child misbehaves*

# Parenting Task Confidence

Single mothers (n=115) and **Intact mothers (n=273)**

	Not at all confident/ Just a little confident	Somewhat confident / More confident than not	Confident/ Very confident
Control your emotions in front of your child	13.5 (8.0)	32.4 (33.0)	54.0 (58.9)
Avoid overreacting when your child misbehaves	14.2 (9.2)	31.9 (31.4)	54.0 (59.4)

## Mothers who have greater emotional control in parenting

- Reported experiencing less interference currently from previous trauma and had better resolution of the trauma
- Coped by reframing/reappraisal
- Had better met their needs for time for self

# Mothers who scored higher on parenting task confidence

- Less likely to have a chronically ill family member
- Reported greater adequacy of basic needs
- Reported greater adequacy for time for oneself
- Coped by reframing/reappraisal



# PROJECT ATHENA

Programmes – Benefits and Limitations

# Reported Gains from Involvement in Project Athena - Support

- Being with others in similar life stage going through problems; listening to their experiences helped to **normalise challenges**
- Felt **accepted** within group, less concerned that they will be looked down upon when they share their struggles
- Encouragement through the programme to interact with one another allowed single mothers to **forge new friendships**

# Support – Being with others in the same life stage

“The bonding was there as single mothers. It is not basically attendance but its something. We find good friends from the same stage..... Sometimes, in your same status, these are friends you can talk. You can share more and learn more.”

*36yr, single mother, 2 children.*

# Support: Forging Friendships

I: Do you have friends?

R: No

I: What about at the workplace?

R: There I go to work and am not very close to anyone as I tend to keep to myself. Only after coming to SINDA that I have got to know a few other people through (agency staff) who encouraged me to mingle and speak to others.

*49 y, single mother, 4 children*

# Support: Normalisation of problems

“This programme is very good for single parents. As single parents we face a lot of problem. When we attend this course, we see other women; they face more problems than me. I look at them and think that their problem is bigger than me. So I am patient. I take it easy.”

*41yr single mother, 1 child.*

# Reported Gains from Involvement in Project Athena - Skills

- Better **financial management**
- Better understanding of possible **career options** and financial support to pursue courses
- Better **parenting** of their children, awareness of teenage issues and how to deal effectively
- New ways of **coping** with challenges
- Those who were not part of the programme and only received counselling help sometimes reported the lack of **concrete “know-hows”**

# Skills: Financial / Career Options

“Main thing, I am in Project Athena. So they also teach about how to cope with your finances”

*mid 30s, single mother, 3 children*

“(case worker) said that if I want to take courses, Sinda can help. I can take up in Security line...She told me that if I can upgrade, have higher chance.”

*mid 30s, single mother, 1 child*

# Skills: Self-Confidence

“...i first attended this programme as SINDA asked me to join, just for the sake of attending. But as the person talked on how one can be brave, be a good role model to our children, how can one be motivated, to be bold. They taught all these. A lot of things that they taught were very useful. I learnt important key points that I need, the changes I had to make.”

*40 yr single mother, 3 children*



# Skills: Self-Confidence

“It’s very interesting that make mothers understand how to come up in life. How to stand on your own feet. How to be independent. I think for Project Athena, it is very good.”

*32yr, single mother, 3 children*

“They bring out what we have in us. They teach us to be powerful, confident and superwoman. When they say all these things, the power in us is built. It’s very helpful. I feel they have given me more power and lifted me up. I must thank (social worker) for all these. She doesn’t mix with me like an officer, but very loving. She consoles me a lot.”

*Mid 30s, single mother, 2 children*

# Skills - Parenting

“I have benefitted from the programs I have so far attended, they taught me how not to go in the wrong way, not to get sidetracked and how to cope, make right choices so I am very thankful to SINDA; I learn how to talk to children take care of them and what kind of decision am I taking for the well-being of my children. There are other single parents there from I can also learn how they handle and face problems”

# Skills: Personal Emotional Management

“I also want to appreciate SINDA for organizing classes for single parents. They have been very helpful and especially how to manage myself and my anger. In the past I would be violent with my children and take it out on them whenever I am moody or things go wrong at the workplace. But after going to the class I have learned to control and curb my anger .so I am thankful to SINDA for the courses they have conducted.”

43 yr, single mother, 2 children)

“The children need a father, so I allow him to see the children once a week. But he sometimes sends the children late and we do quarrel about this at the void deck. I had complained to SINDA and they sent me to this course which helped me to cope with such things and I am better now.”

*40yr single mother, 2 children*

# Skills: Need for Concrete Know-How

I: Anything else that will help?

R: Training is good. I also need to discover my talents and abilities and if someone can help a person like me in the path of self-discovery it will be helpful. As it is, I am at a loss as to what to do in life.

I: Do you see a counselor?

R: There is FSC near my place and sometimes I do visit them, but it is lousy. I go to (name) and tell them my problems and all they do is listen and not advise at all. I ask them why no advise and they say they can't advise me, then why go and see them, it is like talking to a wall like that. When my daughter was giving me problems the court asked me to go for

counseling, I attended 8 sessions and I told them that I was going to feedback to the court that I wasted my time here. I do not know what I am doing wrong or right, at least some feedback would help and I am not getting it, they say they can't advise.

I: They did not suggest to you to go to some courses?

R: No they did not.

*30s, single mother, 2 children.*



# Reported Gains from Involvement in Project Athena: Addressing Deprivations

“They even put my children in Children’s program. Last year they had one day camp and outings. That benefits a lot. We parents cannot bring the kids out. Last year they also went to Universal Studio, we can’t afford it. We are very thankful to Sinda that they brought them there.”

*32 yr, single mother, 3 children*

# Limitations of Programmes

- While participants benefitted from attending Project Athena, the new gains are not necessarily maintained under difficult circumstances.
- Participants who currently had major financial set-backs sometimes coped in maladaptive ways.
- Without adequate resources, new crisis become overwhelming and this poses a challenge to becoming resilient.

“I am in the second batch of Project Antena. They think I can now fly-fly but how long can I fly. My wings get tired too.”  
*36yr single mother, 2 children*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

# 1. Client Group Warranting Targeted Intervention

- Single Indian mothers experience substantial deprivation and challenges, more than other low income Indian mothers. As such more long term and targeted intervention is necessary.

## 2. Providing Adequate Resource to Enable Resilience

- Psycho-educational programmes while beneficial to participants need to be complemented with adequate resources for a longer period to ensure self-reliance.
- Follow-up and monitoring of participants in programmes is essential.

# 3. Increasing Social Capital

- Single Indian mothers have low quantity and quality of social support networks.
- Programmes such as Project Athena allow network building among people with similar struggles.
- This need to be complemented with friendships with those who have more social, economic and cultural capital.
- Mentoring programmes might be useful.

# 4. Culturally Sensitive Programmes Needed for Some

- While many respondents were open to services from any type of agency, for areas such as counselling, there was greater interest in culturally relevant help.
- Need for greater cultural sensitivity among workers dealing with minority group clients, especially related to issues related to trauma and cultural beliefs about family.



# 5. Religious Community Mobilisation

- Considering the high value given to religious coping, it will be important to mobilise the religious community to be a site for the delivery of social services.

# Acknowledgements

- This study was supported by a research grant from the National Council of Social Services, TOTE Board and the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA).
- SINDA Family Service Centre, especially Ms Renjala Balachandran and Ms Jagjit Kaur assisted with data collection.

# THANK YOU