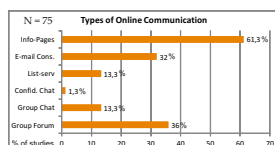# Guiding the Empowerment Process
## A model for online counseling with parents

## Background

Over the last few years, due to Dutch policy on prevention and early intervention, more than 400 municipality centers have been created, offering face-to-face and online sources of support to youth and families.
A recent review of international studies of web-based support programs for parents shows that one third of the programs offered email consultations.

**Types of Online Communication** (N = 75)

- Info-Pages — 61.3 %
- E-mail Cons. — 32 %
- List-serv — 13.3 %
- Confid. Chat — 1.3 %
- Group Chat — 13.3 %
- Group Forum — 36 %

% of studies (0–70)

Professional guidelines to provide text-based support seem to be lacking.
The GEP model operationalizes the role of a parenting practitioner, guiding the parent's process towards empowerment through single session email consultation.

## Our Studies

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review** | 75 studies on online parenting support[d] |
| **Meta-analysis** | 12 experimental studies on web-based programs to improve parenting |
| **Content analysis** | 129 single session email consultations with parenting questions |
| **Model development** | 129 email consultations, the Social Support Model[a] and the GEP model |
| **Evaluation** | 96 parents and the Family Empowerment Scale[c] -adapted |

*single session email consultation*

**worries or stress?**
*email consultation with a practitioner can boost your self-confidence as a parent*

## Results

**Social Support - GEP**

By employing the GEP model, the counseling practitioners provided a significant amount of:

Correlations of 129 email consultations Spearman's rho

- informational support — $r = .38$
- esteem support — $r = .37$
- emotional support — $r = .27$
- network support — $r = .23$

**Topics in parenting questions** — Percentage of 129 email consultations

- family functioning — 40.6 %
- emotional development — 21.1 %
- physical development — 18.8 %
- social development — 12.5 %

Children were 0-21 years
mean 8.2 years, $sd = 5.1$

Receiving an email advice showed **a moderate effect** on the subscale of **self-confidence** (7 out of 14 items).

$F_{(1,94)} = 19{,}555, p < .000, \eta^2 = .172, ES = .33$

## Literature

[a] Braithwaite, D. O., Waldron, V. R., & Finn, J. (1999). Communication of social support in computer-mediated groups for people with disabilities. *Health Communication*, 11(2), 123-151.

[b] Cattaneo, L. B., & Chapman, A. R. (2010). The process of empowerment. A model for use in research and practice. *American Psychologist*, 65(7), 646-659.

[c] Koren, P.E., DeChillo, N., & Friesen, B.J. (1992). Measuring Empowerment in Families (..). *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 37(4), 305-321.

[d] Nieuwboer, C.C., Fukkink, R.G., & Hermanns, J.M.A. (2013). Peer and Professional Parenting Support on the Internet. A systematic review. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social networking* (in press).

[e] Turnbull, A.P., Turbiville, V., & Turnbull, H.R. (2000). Evolution of family-professional partnerships: Collective empowerment as the model for the early twenty-first century. In Shonkoff, J.P. & Meisels, S.J. (Ed.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (2nd ed., reprint 2009) (pp. 630-649). New York: Cambridge University Press.

## Example

Hey!

Saw the site great thnx for being there. I want to ask a question and wonder if it ll cost me (then don't bother).
I'm in a bit of a mess. My daughter is 8, I was 20 when he was born. My parents were always there for us but we all find she's difficult to handel. It's a long story. But now I'm pregnant again (4wk) and sh*t, my boyfriend (ex as of now) doesn't want to know. I really wanted to do it right second time round... sigh! Will have to tell my parents soon (won't fall on good ground). Another child, I think it's sweet, but can I cope? >
Haven't finished my degree (graph design), but started over - a year ago. Still have my final project to do. Feel so stupid.
So I'm in trouble right now, but I would like some advice on parenting my daughter. She's been a puck, feeling my weaknesses I suppose. Think she picks up on the fact that I have other things on my mind. I do want to see to it that she eats properly and that we have some kind of routine. But now this.
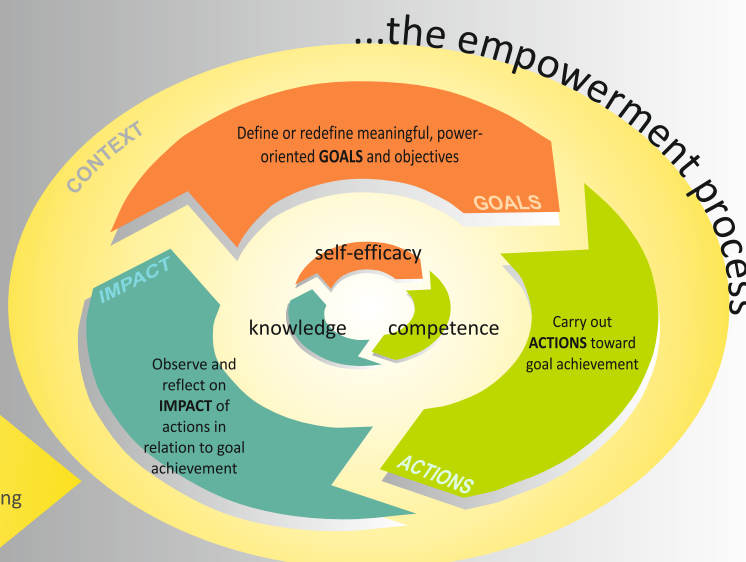
Bye, Fanny.

**CONTEXT — GOALS — IMPACT — ACTIONS**

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**Centrality of the family** **Family choices as the basis of decision making** **Family strengths and capabilities** **Access to resources** **Participation** **Changing community ecology**[e]

## guiding.....

**GOALS**
acknowledge parent's perspective
rephrase parent's or family's goals

**ACTIONS**
encourage decision making
provide a variety of options

**IMPACT**
describe needs of involved family members
identify and encourage the use of new knowledge and skills

**CONTEXT**
refer to resources in the informal network
refer to resources in the professional context
show opportunities for family members to participate in problem-solving
identify opportunities within multiple levels

...the empowerment process

Define or redefine meaningful, power-oriented **GOALS** and objectives

self-efficacy

knowledge — competence

Carry out **ACTIONS** toward goal achievement

Observe and reflect on **IMPACT** of actions in relation to goal achievement

CONTEXT — GOALS — ACTIONS — IMPACT

The Empowerment Process Model (Cattaneo & Chapman 2010, *with permission*)[b]

*single session email consultation*

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