



Roots Community Clinic

Bisrat's story was a big success for our program this year. She was referred to the Roots Family First Program by Black Infant Health three years ago. When she started our program, she was nine months pregnant, going to be a single mother, and living with her relatives. This year Bisrat expressed to her Family First Navigator that she needed help securing essential supplies, support with finding affordable housing, and rental assistance. Due to the pandemic, she lost her job and was unable to pay her rent. With the many resources available at Roots Community Center, the Navigator was able to help her find an affordable studio apartment and a child care facility through a social service. With the support from our team, she was able to work a full-time job. Now Bisrat rents a two bedroom apartment for herself and her son. She still utilizes our program and is one of our many success stories that we have had here at Roots.

"As we continue to provide our families with housing resources, child care referrals, and community funding for their essential needs, we expect to see more successes in the upcoming year." – Staff



KidConnections Network

A mother requested services for her son (the "Client") as he had been exposed to domestic violence for long periods of time. He initially presented as having bad dreams in which monsters are chasing him, avoiding conversations about his father, having irritable and angry outbursts and verbal aggression, being hyper aware, and being easily startled and scared.

At the beginning of treatment, Mom was unsure of how to help her son and often times was feeling lost and confused. She shared that she felt triggered every time he would scream and cry, and that it was like a "ringing in her ear." She began to share that she was very similar to her son when she was young, and that her mother had not known how to handle her.

We were able to help Mom work on identifying her own triggers and "ghosts in the nursery" while maintaining her calmness. Another thing we started to do was to break down his tantrums. Client had tantrums during sessions, and we were able to time them, assess his triggers and his needs, and monitor his cooldown. We also began to have a reward chart that would aid Mom in tracking Client's behavior and to provide Client with rewards. Mom was able to stick to the chart and even get her son involved with putting stickers on the chart himself.

Instead of feeling helpless or overwhelmed, she also began to think "What if I do something different next time?" or "Maybe it's because I touched him and that made the tantrum longer." Once Mom was able to focus on the chart and track his progress, she began to appear more excited and confident about parenting her son.

The Client was responsive to the interventions and continued making progress! We were seeing weeks of the chart being filled with stickers. We even had tantrum-free days, compared to the beginning of treatment, when we had tantrums two or three times a day. Mom shared how her son was now capable of certain behaviors and no longer needs to put them on the behavior chart.

KidConnections Network

The client was referred to KCN by her mother's case manager at a confidential shelter for survivors of domestic violence. The client had witnessed domestic violence between her parents. The client was very attached to her mother and didn't trust anyone so the client's mother constantly worried about her. The client and her mother engaged in the therapeutic services program and engaged in weekly play therapy sessions and case management services. They also benefited from various resource linkages, including emergency gift cards, COVID testing, and support groups for the client's mother. In addition, the client's mother participated in sessions to learn how to support the client feel more secure and trusting. The client's mother also completed the Triple P program.

At one point in treatment the mother and client no longer had access to transportation to meet for sessions at the office. They were also having some difficulties at the shelter, which were heavily impacting mother's emotions and her ability to be present for client. Therapist responded by meeting the mother and client at a park a few blocks from where they resided so they did not have to worry about transportation. She also provided them with Uber gift cards to help them get to their other important appointments. The therapist continued to help the mother to be emotionally available for the client so that their relationship could develop and flourish. Therapist provided case management services to help the mother locate new housing and are happy to report that mother and client have moved into a new home where they are very happy! The client is feeling more confident and secure now and is willing to play independently and feels safe enough to leave her mother's side and have visits with her father.

Throughout treatment, the client became more visibly happy, active, and talkative. Now, she is more open with the therapist and is usually happy to see her. She no longer has difficulty separating from her mother, so mother is finally able to use the bathroom in peace or make dinner without client wanting to be on her hip!

"[I am] beyond grateful for you," said the client's mother. "We have benefited both emotionally and materialistically (diapers and gift cards). I learned a lot of things from you for myself, not just for [the client]. I feel differently and able to do things differently for [the client] because of you."





KidConnections Network

The child client was referred by his mother due to concerns with aggressive behaviors at home and school, and trauma history. The client, brother, and mother fled to the United States fearing for their lives and seeking asylum. The family had been victims of cartel violence in their hometown, where the children witnessed the execution of their mother's boyfriend and watched as their mother was threatened at gunpoint. The family fled, leaving everything behind. The mother reported her child has nightmares at night, does not get along with other kids and was having trouble in school fighting with other kids.

The child client is engaging in therapeutic services to process past events of trauma. Therapeutic services are helping increase his awareness and capacity to regulate his emotions during stressful situations, in order to increase his healthy and positive interactions with other family members. The client's sibling is in a 6+ program. Intensive case management/care coordination has been facilitated between a First 5 therapist and FSP providers to collaborate in supporting the family.

Using flex and emergency funds, the FIRST 5 and FSP Youth teams have been able to assist with groceries, rent, and other necessities, ensuring housing stability and healthy food for the family. The program teams are working to link the family to any and all community resources available for additional assistance and support, including regular access to groceries.

Through his participation in services, the client is receiving psychiatric service and is currently taking medication. Medication has helped the client feel better, saying "I don't have nightmares any more. I feel good, I am not jumping any more. I'm just sitting down and sleeping". The client is open during his sessions and his great communication skill is a great functional strength that contributes to client being able to process his past trauma.

"I feel calmer, I don't feel so desperate. In the past, I used to cry because I was feeling so stressed. My older son will tell me, 'The providers are good. You don't need to cry anymore mami, because they are good and they will help us.'"





Healthier Kids Foundation Screenings

A preschooler took part in a HearingFirst and VisionFirst screening. He was found to have a hearing issue in both ears, after receiving a second screening. A Healthier Kids Foundation's Vietnamese-speaking case manager followed up with the child's mother and explained the hearing results. The Case Manager was able to assist the mother in making the necessary doctors' appointments. After a wax treatment was completed, the audiologist also noticed that the child could hear the tones during the tonal hearing test, but he was slow to react. This resulted in a referral to KidConnection. Once in KidConnection, the child was diagnosed with autism. The child and his mother are now actively involved with KidConnection and other therapy groups. The groups are assisting in the child's social development, and the mother has noticed the tremendous growth in her son.

Healthier Kids Foundation HearingFirst program allowed the child to receive intervention services at an early age. The screening not only flagged a possible physical condition, but it led the family into the healthcare system and linked them to a Primary Care Physician, Specialists, and intervention services.

"I really appreciated all the work that HKF members do for my child and other kids. In my opinion, children are the foundations and the future of the society. Just like how a house needs to have a steady foundation, children need to be healthy in order to contribute their talents to the community, society and country. This program has helped me in paying more attention to my children, value health and preventive care more. I am currently attending a program every Monday for 6 months that was referred by my specialist. I learned a lot how to better raise and taking care of my children. My son is also joining a program that is dedicated for special kids to help them do better at school. Thank you again for all that you are and all you do."

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

The "Smith's" first child was admitted into the NICU at 24 weeks gestation. Though this family was very distressed about their sick baby, both parents/caregivers made an effort to be involved in the scrapbooking and educational classes offered by the FIRST 5 support specialist. The Smiths were appreciative of these classes, and were able to learn how to best care for their premature baby. Often, just sitting and talking with the Family Support Specialist put mom at ease because she was able to ask questions about the condition of her baby. Mom kept track of all of baby's milestones in the March of Dimes baby book provided to each family at the time of admission. The Family Support Specialist made a personalized bag for mom and a onesie for baby. Mom started crying when she received the gift, but they were happy tears, and she was very thankful.

"The special support we received in the NICU helped us make it through this very stressful time in the NICU. Not sure how we would have gotten through it without the help of the Family Support Specialist who knows what it's like to have a really sick baby."

