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The Baby Mat Project: Similarities and differences between the experiences and perceptions of mothers and therapists

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Supervisor: Carol Long

DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ABSTRACT

The early relationship between mother and child is formative of a child's later wellbeing. Disruptions in the mother-infant bond can result in insecure attachments. There therefore exist certain interventions which endeavour to avoid the development of insecure relationships and instead begin to develop more secure mother-infant bonds. Such interventions include the Ububele Baby Mat project run in Alexandra township, Johannesburg. As this intervention is still developing, the Ububele team requested that research be conducted on this intervention. This research aims to better understand the Ububele Baby Mat's influence on those caregivers who access the Baby Mat service, and also to record the subjective experiences of the therapists who facilitate the mat service. The current research was therefore aimed at exploring the subjective experiences of both the mothers and therapists involved in the Baby Mat intervention and further to explore any similarities or differences between these two groups' experiences. Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with mothers who accessed the Baby Mat service and with both the therapists who facilitated the mother participants' sessions. Thematic content analysis was used to analyses the data. The findings showed that in general mothers had a positive experience of the Baby Mat service and of the therapists on the mat. Another finding was that there were more similar experiences than different ones between mothers and therapists.

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