

Technical Report

Realist Evaluation Sanctum 1.5



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Executive Summary



Based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the Sanctum Care Group operates the Sanctum 1.5 program, a prenatal care home that supports high-risk and HIV positive pregnant women at risk of having their infants apprehended at birth. The goal of the Sanctum 1.5 program is to improve the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies, reduce the risk of child apprehension, and lessen the burden on the healthcare system.¹

This evaluation aims to understand how and why Sanctum 1.5 leads to successful or unsuccessful outcomes and aid in endeavors to replicate the program in other geographic locations. A former resident of the program was hired as a patient partner and collaborated with the University of Saskatchewan (USask) research team on this patient-oriented research.

Data collection included:

- Document review
- Interview with Executive Director
- Observations of the patient partner
- 10 participant interviews

Participant interviews were analyzed and categorized into seven different sections highlighting phases of the program. The findings describe how the program works in the following phases: before patient entry, entry into the program, detox, relapse, healing, transition to community, and challenges residents find in the program.

Outcomes included: children returned to the care of their mother, development of healthier relationships with others, and improved self-care management through feelings of self-worth, respect, empowerment, and motivation. These outcomes were made possible through the unique characteristics of the Sanctum program.

The success of the residents was dependent on four essential conditions: Sanctum 1.5's harm reduction philosophy; its non-judgmental, nurturing, family-like environment; the provision of a structured environment with clear, concrete routines; and accessible supports after residents graduate the program.

1.0 Introduction

This report provides a description of the Realist evaluation of Sanctum 1.5 that was conducted from May 2020 to December 2021 by Dr. Gary Groot's University of Saskatchewan research team. The first section presents background on prenatal HIV and child apprehension rates in Saskatchewan, a brief description of the Sanctum 1.5 program, and the purpose of the evaluation. The second section outlines the evaluation method. The third section reviews the evaluation findings including participant quotes. The final section presents key takeaways regarding the program's implementation at a staff level.

1.1 Background

In October 2018, prior to the opening of Sanctum 1.5, Saskatchewan (SK) had the highest provincial HIV diagnosis rate in Canada.² A 2014 HIV surveillance report² indicated SK had the highest provincial rate at twice the national rate, with 56% of people living with HIV in SK identifying as female.³ Within SK, a chart review of pregnant women living with HIV from January 2007 to December 2017 reported a total of 55 pregnant women diagnosed with HIV. Of those women, 46% reported unstable housing, and 93% of pregnant women were diagnosed with HIV before conception.⁵

High-risk activities such as injection drug use (IDU) have been found to be the principal mode of HIV transmission in SK and are the main driver of the increase in the risk of vertical transmission among pregnant women living with HIV.⁶ SK has also seen a significant increase in the number of child apprehension cases where the main cause is maternal substance dependency.⁷ Adequate and timely care for pregnant women early in their pregnancy helps build capacity, resilience, autonomy, and reduces substance dependency, leading to a notable decrease in vertical HIV transmission, a significant improvement in overall health status for both mother and child, and a notable decrease in child apprehension.⁸⁻¹³

1.2 Program Description

Sanctum 1.5 is a 10-bed residential care home for pregnant and postnatal women living with or at risk of contracting HIV. Sanctum 1.5 residents include pregnant women who have contracted or are at risk of contracting HIV, or at risk of having their child apprehended at birth due to substance misuse, mental health issues, homelessness, or other children in care. Sanctum's program aims to offer a non-judgmental, harm reduction, and patient-oriented approach focusing on:

- Harm reduction
- Housing
- Prenatal and postnatal health care
- Prevention of child apprehension



Sanctum 1.5 promotes positive outcomes for mothers, such as improved health and social outcomes, prevention of vertical transmission of HIV, and avoidance of children entering the foster care system. As of August 2022 Of the 87 women who have gone through the program, 97% either kept custody of their children or were able to place the child with extended family.

1.3 Evaluation purpose

The evaluation purpose was to understand how and why Sanctum 1.5 works, and for which residents. This report describes how and why the Sanctum 1.5 program results in successful outcomes to aid in endeavors to replicate the program in other locations.

2.0 Methods

To evaluate 'what works for whom, in what respects, and how,' we chose a Realist evaluation approach. (See Appendix for more details about Realist evaluation). This study, including the development of the funding proposal, was informed by the Sanctum Care Group and USask. A formal research agreement was signed in May 2020 between the Principal Investigator of the evaluation, Dr. Gary Groot, and the board of directors of Sanctum 1.5 to collaborate on data collection and dissemination. The primary data gathering methods, which took place between May 2020 and December 2021, are described below. The project was approved by the USask Research Ethics Board (BEH ID 1595) in August 2021. The delay regarding the ethics approval was due to amendments to protocols because of COVID-19 restrictions.

2.1 Patient partner participation

This work would not have been possible without the engagement of a patient partner who had been through the Sanctum 1.5 program. Two patient partners, one from Sanctum 1.0 and one from Sanctum 1.5, were hired as team members and were involved in:

- providing resident perspectives about the program
- creating the interview guide
- recruiting participants
- conducting interviews
- analyzing data from the interviews
- presenting findings

Their insights were indispensable in using appropriate language and avoiding words or questions that interviewees might find triggering. Once the interview guide was completed, patient partners were trained by the researchers to conduct the interviews.

Having a patient partner conduct the interviews, rather than a researcher, created a connection between the participants and patient partners that allowed for more open dialogue during the interviews. Patient partners also had the opportunity to develop research knowledge and skills and received training from the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research (SCPOR).

2.2 Participant interviews

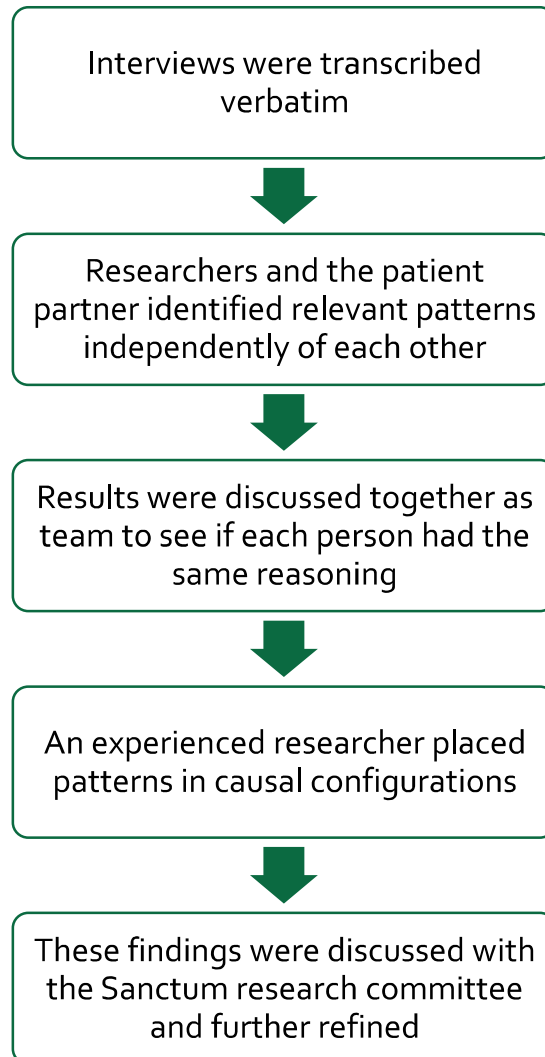
Participants were identified from a list provided by the executive director, however when some participants were not be reached. The patient partner who had graduated from the program used her social media network and snowballing techniques to recruit participants.

Participants were interviewed virtually using the Zoom platform due to COVID restrictions. To prepare participants for the interview, the interview guide topics and consent forms were sent to the participants prior to the interview. A patient partner led the interviews by introducing themselves, obtaining consent, and asking questions from the interview guide.



2.3 Data analysis

The steps in analysis are listed below:



3.0 Findings

Of the twenty-six participants contacted:

- ten did not respond
- six did not show up for interview
- ten participants (38%) were interviewed; all were graduates of the program

3.1 Participant Interviews

Participant interviews were conducted from September 2021 to October 2021 and ranged from 18 minutes to 40 minutes with an average of 26 minutes in duration.

3.2 Participants Characteristics

We obtained the consent of the participants that we interviewed to access their Sanctum records to describe participant characteristics. Of the 10 participants we interviewed, 6 self-identified as Indigenous and 4 as Caucasian. The most common reasons for admission were for high risk of HIV due to: substance abuse (n=10), homelessness (n=7), and domestic violence (n=7). All of the women had older children already in care prior to entering the program, mostly in kinship care. Most women were abusing a single substance (n=7) compared to poly-substance abuse. At least 5 participants had been in foster care as children. Education ranged from some high school (n=4) to high school diploma (n=6) or equivalent.

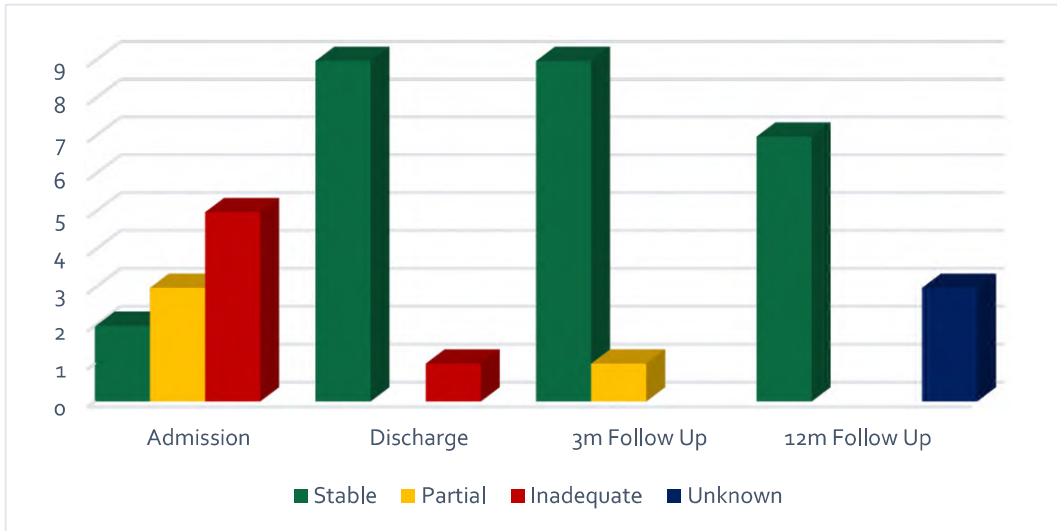
Other data are listed in the table 1 (based on participants first time admission to program):

Table 1. Participant Admission Data (n =10):

Characteristics	Range	Average	Median
Age	23-40 years	30 years	30
Days between referral and admission	1-218 days	40 days	8
Duration of stay	43-458 days	4.6 months	3.8 months
Number of children prior to program	1-3 children	2 children	2 children

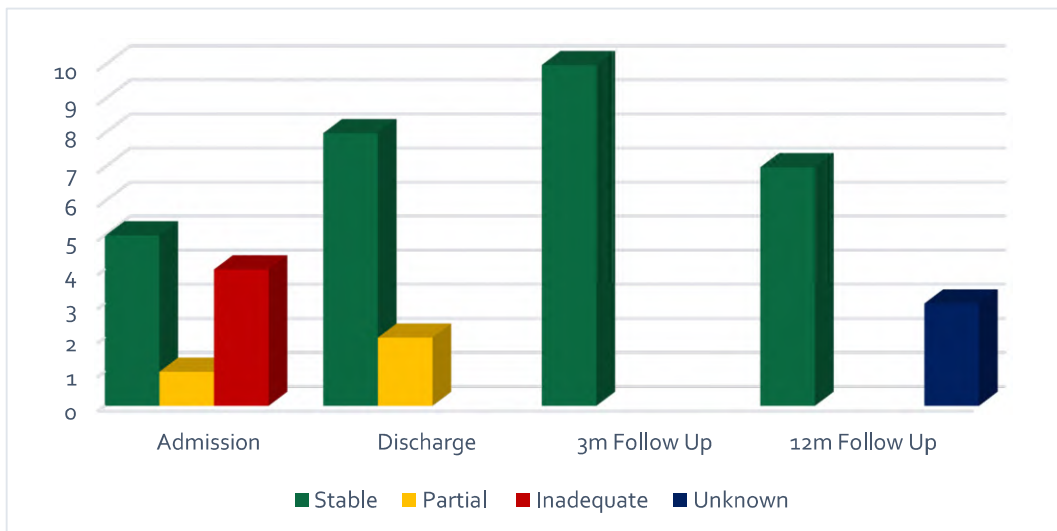
Graphs 1, 2 and 3 show results following Sanctum records with data regarding housing, financial, and community support status based on participants first-time entry into the program. It is then compared with leaving Sanctum (discharge) as well as 3 months and 12 months after completing the program. Unknown data is information that was missing from the health reports mostly due to that data being unavailable at the time of this report. E.g. 12-month follow-up had not occurred.

Housing status is identified as *Stable* if 'housing has been stable for 3 months'; *Partial* means 'housing is not stable, but participant has transitional or shelter support while working on secure permanent housing'; *Inadequate* means 'participant was homeless, couch surfing or in shelter with no plan for housing'.



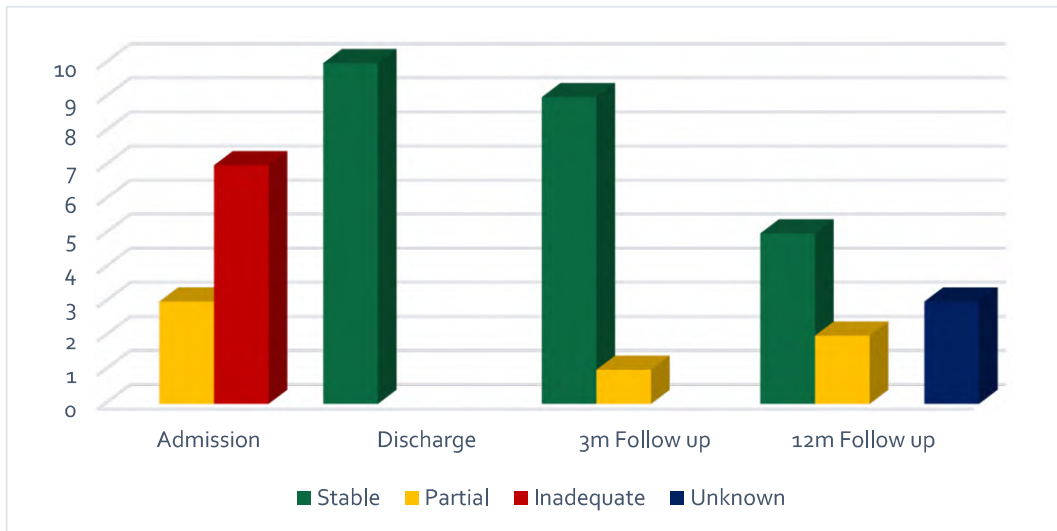
Graph 1. Housing status from admission to follow up

Financial status is identified as *Stable* if 'income has been stable for 3 months either income assistance or employment'; *Partial* is if 'income is not stable for 3 months but are in process of securing income but not yet secured' or *Inadequate* if 'participant no secure income'.



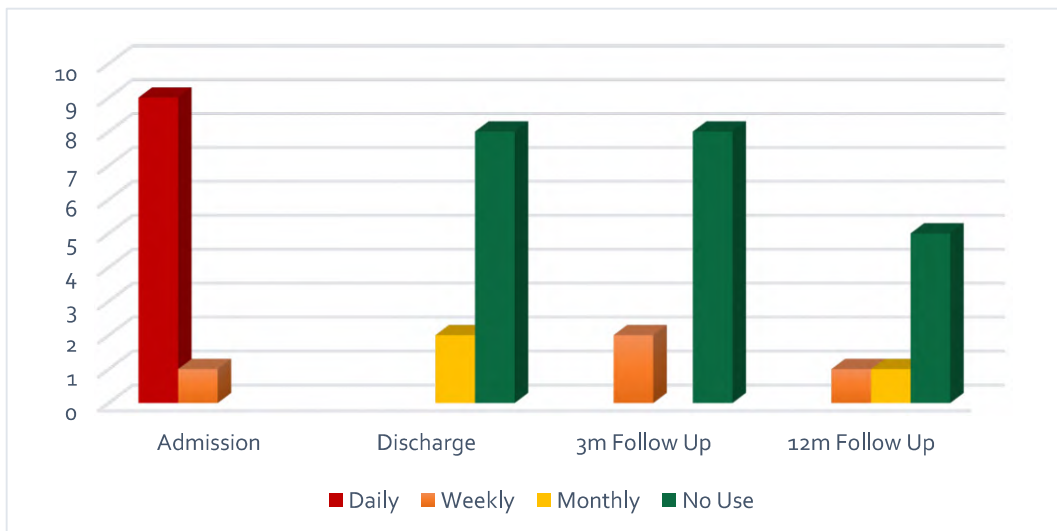
Graph 2. Financial status from admission to follow up

Stable community support status is identified as '3 or more social supports used in last 3 months'; *Partial* is 'supports have been accessed less than 3 times in the last 3 months', or *Inadequate* if participant 'does not have support and or is not engaging with supports'. The most common community support accessed after 3 months of follow up was MHAS (Mental Health and Addiction Services) followed by psychiatry.



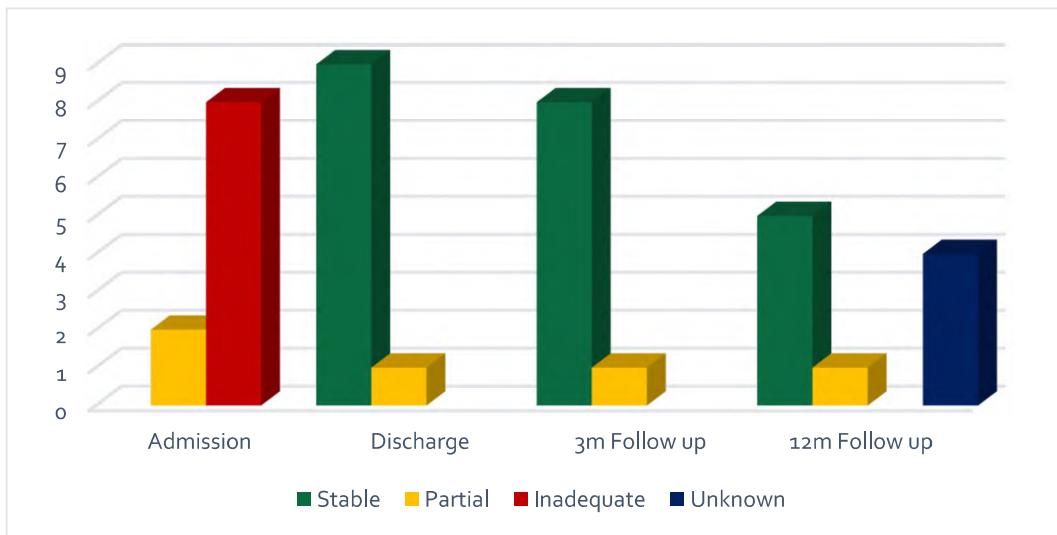
Graph 3. Community support status from admission to follow up

Graph 4 displays how often the participants reported misusing substances, and graph 5 shows their readiness to stop misusing substances. Note that for graphs 4 and 5, data at the 12-month follow-up was unavailable for 4 participants.



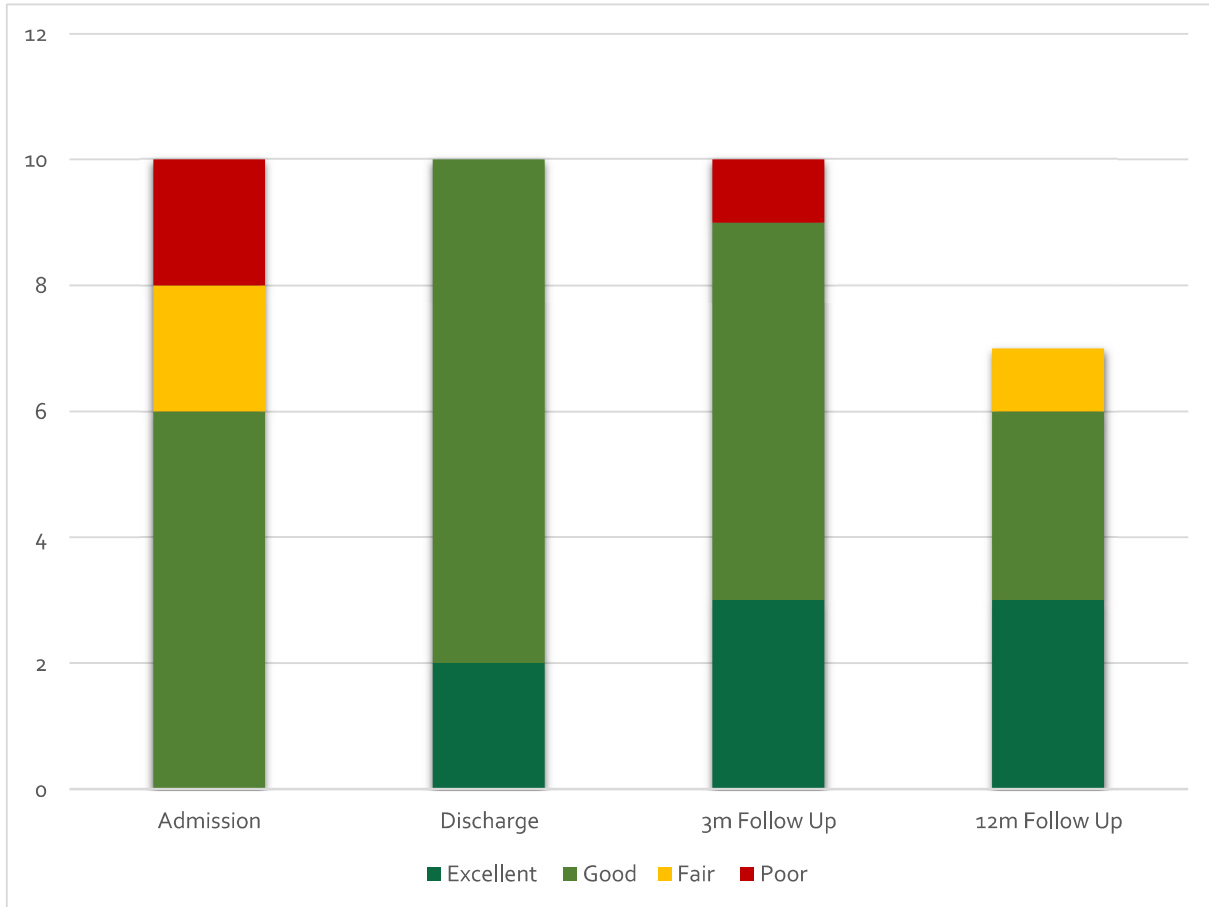
Graph 4: Frequency of substance misuse from admission to follow up

Graph 5 represents participants' thoughts/contemplation about addiction support and substance use cessation. Contemplation of substance use cessation is *Stable* if 'participants connected to support for 3 months and is actively not using substances'; *Partial* if 'participant has some addiction support, is open to resources/discussion, but has not been off substances for 3 months'. *Inadequate* pertains to participants 'who have not contemplated or engaged in addiction support or cessation of substances'. The most common community support accessed after 3 months of follow up was MHAS followed by psychiatry.



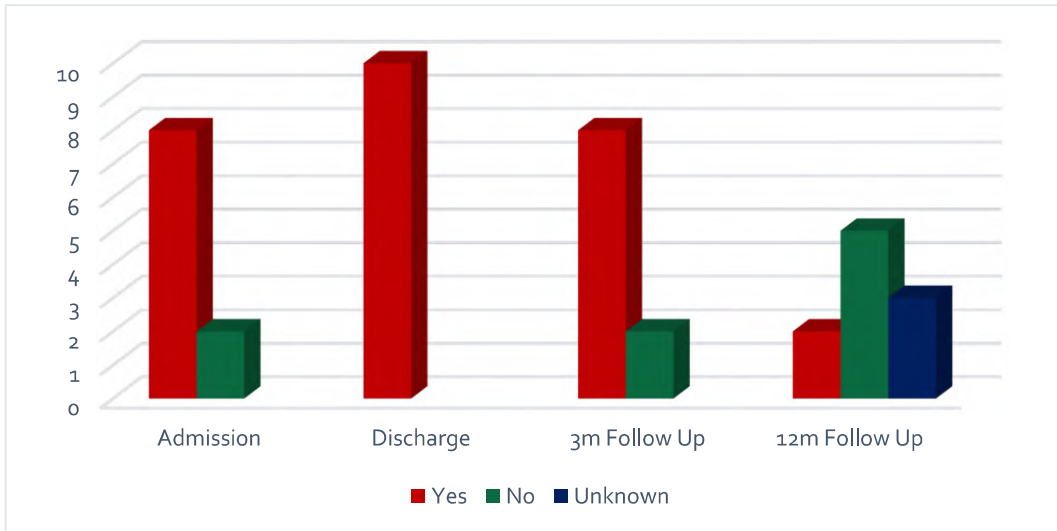
Graph 5: Contemplating substance use cessation from admission to follow up

Graph 6 displays self-reported mental health status of the participants during and after Sanctum. Data was unavailable for 3 participants at follow-up. Mental health status is identified as *Stable* if the 'participants has one or more mental health diagnoses and has been receiving therapy medication, or counselling for 3 months'; *Partial* is if 'participants have one or more mental health diagnoses and some support/therapy for less than 3 months'; and *Inadequate* represents 'participants with one or more mental health diagnoses and no support/ therapy'.



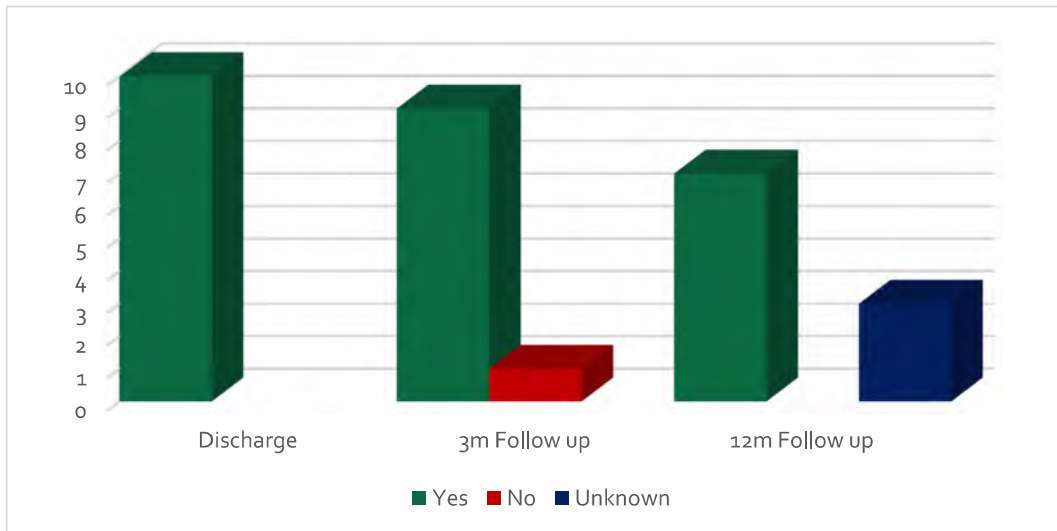
Graph 6: Mental health status from admission to follow up

Graph 7 shows whether participants had an active case with the child and family service involvement from the Ministry of Social Services (MSS) between admission to 12 months after Sanctum.



Graph 7: Active file with MSS from admission to follow up

Graph 8 shows if participants had custody of their children born within the Sanctum program and follows their custody status 3 and 12 months after their stay at Sanctum.



Graph 8: Custody of baby from discharge to follow up

3.3 Main Evaluation Findings

Based on the analysis of the interview data, main phases of the program were identified as:

- ✓ before entry,
- ✓ entry,
- ✓ detoxing,
- ✓ healing, and
- ✓ transition into community.

At each of these phases, participants experienced unique conditions and motivations that led to successful outcomes. Realist evaluators describe these as context-mechanism-outcome configurations.

Table 1.0 includes the main evaluation findings or realist evaluation statements regarding how and why Sanctum 1.5 works. The relationships in the table are described in the following way:

- Context: Program characteristics or other conditions that lead to the underlying causes of program outcomes are *italicized*;
- Mechanisms: Underlying causes of outcomes appear after because;
- Outcomes: Program outcomes are **bolded**.

In total, there were 16 statements about how and why the program worked at the various phases of implementation.



Table 2. How and why Sanctum 1.5 works

Before Entry
WHEN pregnant mothers are given <i>a chance to keep their babies</i> , they enter the program <u>because</u> they are motivated to get better for themselves and their babies and retain custody.
WHEN Sanctum <i>respects harm reduction and personal choice</i> , there is more uptake of Sanctum services <u>because</u> mothers want to get sober
Entry
WHEN mothers have <i>a safe place with basic needs met</i> , they settle in the program <u>because</u> they feel secure and supported to take care of themselves and their baby.
WHEN mothers <i>hold and care for their baby</i> , they increase their efforts to stay sober <u>because</u> they bond with their baby.
Detoxing
WHEN mothers are welcomed by <i>nurturing, non-judgmental staff</i> , they stay in the program <u>because</u> they feel accepted as a person.
Relapse
WHEN <i>other residents or partners are using</i> , mothers' sobriety is threatened <u>because</u> of the presence of unhealthy triggers.
IF <i>mothers relapse and leave during the program</i> , they can return and regain sobriety <u>because</u> they feel accepted by staff.
Healing
WHEN mothers receive <i>culturally responsive Indigenous supports</i> , they heal more completely <u>because</u> of spiritual reconnection with who they are.
WHEN mothers <i>receive professional supports and services</i> , they heal more completely <u>because</u> of their raised awareness of unmet needs.
WHEN mothers have <i>unconditional emotional support from staff in a supportive family environment</i> , they gain self-confidence in essential life skills, <u>because</u> they learn how to build healthier relationships with others.
WHEN mothers have <i>a structured environment with clear, concrete routines</i> , they are better prepared to take care of themselves and others <u>because</u> they feel in control.
Transition to community
WHEN mothers <i>maintain ties to the Sanctum program and receive ongoing support</i> , they continue to have life successes (e.g., children back from foster care) <u>because</u> they feel empowered to reach out for help when needed.
Challenges
WHEN mothers <i>believe staff decisions are equitable</i> , they are more accepting of those decisions <u>because</u> of feelings of inclusivity.

3.4 Sample Quotes

For the statements in Table 2, this section supports the findings by offering sample quotes from the interview participants. Note: *WHEN mothers are surrounded by partners who are not ready to become sober, they risk not graduating from the program because* it triggers their relapse – was not raised directly by the participants. Instead, this idea was discussed during meetings with the patient partner and the Executive Director. The sample quotes are separated by the different phases of the program.

3.4.1 Before Entry

Many participants feared losing custody of their baby. When participants were told that they could keep their babies in the Sanctum program, they felt motivated and a desire to bond with their babies. Having time to reconnect and stay with their baby while detoxing was also a significant motivator.

WHEN pregnant mothers are given a chance to keep their babies, **they enter the program because** they are motivated to get better for themselves and their babies and retain custody.

Well, when I found out that I was going to be able to bring my baby home from the hospital, that definitely made it—you guys are making me cry—but that was the big thing, bringing my baby home from the hospital and actually giving me a chance.

Many participants mentioned that harm reduction was a reason to enter the Sanctum program. Their feelings of having their personal choice respected was also important.

WHEN Sanctum respects harm reduction and personal choice, there is more uptake of Sanctum services because mothers want to get sober.

Harm reduction. And I don't know if that's like a good response or nothing, but if I had to say what was the most appealing to me, was the harm reduction.

3.4.2 Entry

Participants said that when they entered the program, Sanctum was a safe haven. The feeling of a safe and clean environment helped participants bond with baby. The program provided an environment where others were not misusing substances. In addition, Sanctum taught them to take care of themselves first.

*WHEN mothers have a safe place with basic needs met, **they settle in the program** because they feel secure and supported to take care of themselves and their baby.*

They help you, because when you're there, you kind of, you live a different kind of lifestyle because it's kind of a safe haven right in the middle of the hood, and they teach you that it's better to be living clean and sober because then you're a better parent, because there's no way a drug addict can be a parent at the same time, it just doesn't work. But if you do want to use drugs, they do help you know that you need to be using clean supplies and stuff like that if you are going to be using.

Participants felt safe, thankful, and cared for. They described having a strong bond with their baby, that motivated their efforts to remain sober. Participants knew that they needed to stay sober to provide good care to their babies. They were worried about going back to using if they didn't have custody of their baby.

*WHEN mothers hold and care for their baby, **they increase their efforts to stay sober** because they bond with their baby.*

*Well, they're not apprehended right away, **you get that bond with them, you decide** if you want to be sober and leave with your baby or not. Making sure, again, you have healthy meals, a roof over your head.*

3.4.3 Detoxing

During the detoxing phase, participants mentioned that having a gentle approach to detox was important so that they did not feel forced into detoxing. They appreciated how the program was nurturing and that staff wanted participants to succeed.

WHEN mothers are welcomed by nurturing, non-judgmental staff, they stay in the program because they feel accepted as a person.

*And the way the whole program is ran, I honestly feel like that platform, it's all perfect the way, **the less judgement more nurturing**, that's the way to go with addicts, I think, and that's how people really get through. I think that's why I was so successful, there was just so much nurturing involved, and **everybody really wanted to see me succeed, and I really wanted to succeed too**, so yeah.*



3.4.4 Relapse

Participants described how a major trigger for relapse was being surrounded by others using, even legal drugs like marijuana.

*WHEN other residents or partners are using, **mothers' sobriety is threatened** because of unhealthy triggers present*

*I have to say, like of course, there's still people getting people to drop them off stuff there, drugs, but it was more easier for me [to not use], especially not living in the same city that – I think it might be harder for other people who are part of Saskatoon, they live here and it's just their neighborhood and **all the triggers**.*

Participants described that when they relapsed, they were still able to return to the program and detox in part because they felt Sanctum staff provided a caring environment and accepted them.

*IF mothers relapse and leave during the program, **they can return and regain sobriety** because they feel accepted by staff.*

*And also with the staff, one of the biggest things I also find was when I would disappear for days at a time and I would come back, I would be so scared to come back, because that's how it always is with authority, right, you got to be afraid to come back after you mess up, but as soon as I come in the door, every staff member would be like "**Welcome home**", every single staff member! I was like "What the hell" but it certainly makes you want to come home, you know, and you know you're going to get the talk after but at least getting in the door isn't traumatic.*

3.4.5 Healing

Participants felt that cultural supports were helpful. Supports such as talking with Elders, smudging, and going to sweats were useful in helping them with their sobriety journey.

WHEN mothers receive *culturally sensitive Indigenous supports*, they **heal more completely**, because of spiritual reconnection with who they are.

Well, my struggle with a couple mental, like I'm diagnosed as bipolar and depressant, I'm depressed all the time, and that stuff, and I found that Sanctum also offered a lot of outside help with the elder, also with smudging, they let you smudge in the house, I don't know if they still allow that, but they let me do that before.

Alongside cultural support, other ways that participants stated Sanctum helped with overcoming addictions was having access to professional supports. These included appointments with psychologists, drug counsellors, and trauma counsellors.

WHEN mothers *access/receive professional support* and services, they **heal more completely** because of their raised awareness of their self-care needs.

I got help with my addiction, so I got a drug counsellor, and it was really cool because it just so happened, we were from the same reserve, so that was really nice 'cause we had a lot in common so it was easier to talk to her.

It was just [name], she just helped me figure out how to deal with any, what's it called, triggers and cravings, stuff like that.

Participants were grateful for the emotional support that staff provided as they learned how to take care of themselves and their babies. This allowed mothers to develop confidence in essential life skills such as building healthier relationships.

WHEN mothers have *unconditional emotional support from staff in a supportive family environment*, they **gain self-confidence** in essential life skills, because they learn how to build healthier relationships with others.

They really focus on teaching you to take care of yourself and by them doing that, it's you wake up in the morning and they give you a hug as soon as you see them. "Hi [name], how are you?" They give you a hug, they spend time with you, and by them doing that it teaches you to love yourself because somebody cares and that's all anyone needs is for someone to care.

Participants heard supportive words and built connections with other moms. These connections fostered trust. Many participants described how being able to trust others was one of the most helpful aspects of the program

Because that's how much they help you, you feel like they're family, they are, they're family, you know? They're cooking for you, they're caring for you, it's almost like they're your parents, and then there's godparents, and there's some aunties that come in and uncles, like a big family. And that's what helped me the most, trust them. Was that they made you feel like family and a lot of people don't have that, especially if you grew up in the system and you grew up in the streets, you don't have family. And the number one thing when you do grow up in the street and you do grow up in the system is trust.



Many participants shared that they had not had routine in their lives. They found that the routine that Sanctum provided was crucial for their self-care and the care of their baby. Also, participants said having support in the first months in caring for a baby and learning what to do when they felt overwhelmed helped them gain confidence in taking care of their child.

WHEN mothers have a structured environment with clear, concrete routines, they are better prepared to take care of self and others because they feel in control.

Well, they basically train you on how to care for them, when you end up in a jam and you don't know what to do, they're there for you which definitely prepares you for afterwards, or how to move through situations without going and getting high, that's the biggest thing I think. They teach you to calm yourself first, like put your baby down, go outside for a cigarette if you smoke, go to the bathroom, do whatever you've got to do. They really coach you in how to be super nurturing and how to be nurturing to yourself, I thought.



3.4.6 Transition to Community

When participants were transitioning into the community, they appreciated ongoing connections with Sanctum and the many supports in place to help them build new lifestyles. Common supports were related to housing, food, transportation and legal services related to child protection and custody. These supports helped them continue to have life successes, including opportunities to regain other children in care.

WHEN mothers *maintain ties to the Sanctum program and receive ongoing support*, **they continue to have life successes** (e.g., children back from foster care) *because they feel empowered to reach out for help when needed.*

The supports they had in place for you when you left there, they made [sure] you had housing, set you up with housing, which was incredible. And then they continue to help you in the community, they ran me to lawyer's appointments about my son, they can help me with my legal file to get my older son back, they got my files closed with child protection in like, no time whatsoever.

Participants felt comfortable and safe coming back to Sanctum to ask for support whenever needed because of the family-like environment.

A couple of times me and the other participants, we went back and [name] was like "Go and unlock the donation room door for the girls" and we went and got pots and pans, and I know that even if I showed up at Sanctum today, like "I need help" I know that [name] would throw me a couple of packs of soup in my bag or whatever, right? The staff there was just amazing, and I couldn't have asked for a better experience.



3.4.7 Challenges

When participants were asked if there were ways to improve on the program, they stated that sometimes they felt that not all mothers were treated equally. These feelings could also have been impacted by previous experiences of being treated unfairly.

WHEN mothers believe staff decisions are equitable, **they are more accepting of those decisions** because of feelings of inclusivity.

I think maybe they just need to have more support for people like, I know there's people that just come in and sometimes they give them a little bit more support because they're thinking about how that person is a little bit more because they just got there, but sometimes they need to remember that there is still other mothers there, and they need to help all of them equally and not just like, kind of like favoritism.

4.0 Key takeaways

For the program to successfully serve similar clients in other jurisdictions, the findings from this evaluation suggest four key takeaways. From the perspectives of the participants, staff improve outcomes for Sanctum 1.5 residents through the following approaches:

- A harm reduction philosophy
- A non-judgmental, nurturing, family-like environment
- A structured environment with clear concrete routines
- Accessible supports after leaving the program

- **It was important for the participants that staff were supportive of a harm reduction philosophy and treated participants with respect.**

And it's like they kind of are aware that it's traumatizing to be like "you're never going to do drugs again" that like saying you're breaking up with your boyfriend and he's gone now, you're never seeing him again, right? I love drugs, like honestly, let's be real. It's really hard to walk away from that and not be tempted to go back, so I found that they were really supportive in you trying as much as you could.

- **Participants appreciated when staff and peer mentors provide a non-judgmental nurturing environment.**

It was always really excellent, I'm sure you know everybody's so welcoming there, no judgements. I think that's one of the biggest things is that you can walk into a place where nobody judges who you are.

It felt like a second family, like they have faith in me when I didn't even have faith in myself.

- **Participants appreciated a structured environment with clear, concrete routines.**

There's always staff there always watching to help you for things like that and to help you give your baby a bath properly, the way you should. And the routine and the structure there, everybody needs a structured life and you need routine in your life, like get up, make breakfast, take your meds, get ready for the day and have everything worked out for that week for appointments. There's a lot of people that go there that don't have that kind of structure because we never grew up seeing it.

- **Participants appreciated receiving ongoing support after leaving Sanctum.**

When I needed them, even though it's been way over a year since I've left there, I can still call there, and they'll help me out. [Staff] just helped me before I left Saskatoon with a

meeting with child protection about my oldest son, and she's wrote me letters and done all that support stuff, so I don't think they ever really disappear.

5.0 Recommendations For Staff

Participants and patient partners were asked how Sanctum 1.5 could be improved. The following suggestions were provided along with quotations.

1. Build partnerships with local community supports and organizations

Participants highlighted the significance of Sanctum having connections within the local communities to bridge and maintain ongoing support after leaving the program.

"it was my parent aide. [Name] was my parent aide who I fully got through funding through Child Protection, so I don't know if that's a thing that maybe could be bridged somewhere? Because if that was available, you know, even afterwards, like that would be so amazing. She was so amazing, she got me my furniture grant, she got me all my bill stuff figured out because I had a debt to city and getting situated when I transitioned from Sanctum was probably the scariest and the hardest part."

Some participants mentioned the need to have access to supports at arrival instead of when they were just about to leave the program.

"some of the women right now have been there for four months already and have never once spoken to a counsellor even though they wanted to and it's just never been set up for them. So, I think that they really need to be on the ball like the second they move in there, get them all set up and good to go. There's a lot of things I think they need to work on."

"Just stuff like getting the counselling, getting your birth certificate right away, getting your IDs right away and not just kind of waiting until last minute, I guess."

While there is an array of community supports services available across Saskatchewan, the knowledge of what is available and transition between services can be improved upon leaving the program. For future Sanctum locations, having community partnerships based in locations close to the Sanctum program will be vital.

The partnerships could encompass collaboration with the police, hospitals, housing services, Ministry of Social Services department to reunite families, and other social and community services.

2. Staff Training and Retention

Many participants highlighted that staff did not have experience or training regarding harm reduction work or the ability to navigate emotionally demanding tasks. Staff could be made aware of the emotional challenges of support work. New staff could be prepared through training on harm reduction and trauma-informed care. Additionally, regular mental health check-ins for staff and mental health awareness resources could be made available to reduce burnout and staff turnaround. Other recommendations for staff included:

- Consistent cultural support worker
 - employ a consistent cultural support worker whose specific role is Indigenous education and Indigenous ways of knowing
- More staff for:
 - Nighttime support of mothers and babies
 - Care of special needs babies (e.g., withdrawal)

"I think that's just the only thing, but I think they definitely need more one on one, like I said with some moms that weren't struggling quite as much they didn't really get the attention that they probably needed, and they definitely need more staff there to be able to do that."

"some strong points is that they do have a trauma counsellor in there that helped you work through some of those issues. I think there needs to be a little bit more of that. And yeah, more one on one time, really getting into those issues."

- More specific postpartum support for mothers:
 - Doulas, Indigenous-specific postpartum support, midwives. It was noted that sometimes only a social worker was present during birth and no other support was available .

3. Increased recreational activities, amenities, and diverse programs

It was important for the participants to keep themselves busy and many requested more activities and programming for the residents.

"I feel like that's one thing – like if there's one thing throughout the whole program, I could say that Sanctum could work more on, I feel like there's things like that they could incorporate into the program to keep women busy."

Participants also requested more amenities:

"Let's see, what else I could say...have a lot more bathrooms, two bathrooms. And more laundry facilities, not just one set, because there was a lot of confrontation around that: the laundry time, who was going to shower or use the bathroom. And then arguing with the women like "Oh why are you taking her, I wanted to go here first."

4. Accommodations provided for other children

Many participants requested accommodations that allowed them to be near their older children.

"I think there should be like more options, not Sanctum 1.5 but maybe another place where if a mom has multiple kids that they could be with them as well, I guess"

"It's not so much visit but have that option to have them living with you as well, I guess, because you really need to – it could be a struggle, like once you go to the community, it could be a struggle to know what it's like to have your baby plus your other children, but then again, it's more, just to be able to have your children around a lot more."

5. Addressing stigma associated with Sanctum residents

There are significant differences between the resident needs for Sanctum 1.0 and 1.5. Residents in Sanctum 1.5 were concerned about confusion between the two programs. For example, mothers mentioned that community services often incorrectly assumed that they were HIV positive. The stigma of being perceived as having HIV might be a barrier for women accessing Sanctum services:

Recommendations include:

- Providing public communication regarding the difference between Sanctum 1.5 and Sanctum 1.0
- Understanding sources of stigma for mothers and addressing them proactively. For example, participants said that Sanctum mothers in labor should be treated in the same fashion as other laboring mothers. Some participants said that for non-emergency labor, mothers can go to the hospital in a car or taxi versus an ambulance. To these participants, use of an ambulance was stigmatizing to them.

6. Ability to stay longer at Sanctum

Many participants requested to be able to stay longer, in case they needed extra help

"Sometimes when a person's just coming off of drugs, they don't even have stability and moving them into different programs once is kind of rushed. I would have liked to stay there a little bit longer."

7. Data entry for Sanctum records

Conversion to a different database is recommended so that there is less manual work needed for data entry and analysis.

There are inconsistencies in Sanctum data, such as confusion between “no” and “n/a” responses. A recommendation is that “no” should be used if the service is applicable but not used; while “n/a” should be used when the service is not needed (e.g., gynecological services as “n/a” for male clients).



6.0 Conclusion

This report describes how and why the Sanctum 1.5 program worked for the 10 participants who were interviewed. Findings show how Sanctum affected residents at differing levels from before entry into the program to when they transitioned into the community. Outcomes included: children back in mother's care, development of healthier relationships with others, and improved self-care management through feelings of self-worth, respect, empowerment, and motivation. These outcomes were made possible through the unique characteristics of the Sanctum program.

It should be noted that we were unable to interview non-graduates due to the difficulty in reaching them either due to homelessness, or limited internet availability. Therefore, this report cannot draw direct conclusions regarding why the program did not work for non-graduates.

The success of Sanctum residents was dependent on four essential conditions: its harm reduction philosophy; its non-judgmental, nurturing, family-like environment; the provision of a structured environment with clear, concrete routines; and accessible supports after residents leave the program.

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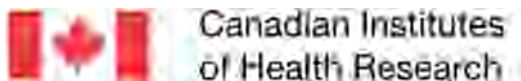
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8.1 Appendix:

Method – Realist Evaluation

Realist evaluations establish what works (and does not work) in a program, for whom, in what contexts, through identification of the how (mechanisms) and why. This type of evaluation is most appropriate for new programs that appear to function as intended but where the 'how and for whom' are not yet understood, and for understanding how to adapt the intervention to new contexts (i.e., Sanctum 1.5).

The goal of a Realist evaluation is the development and refinement of a program theory that identifies how program activities are understood to cause or contribute to outcomes and impacts. In other words, a Realist evaluation seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how and why programs work, in what contexts, and through which mechanisms, rather than focusing simply on whether a program works or does not.

The assumption is that each program has a unique set of characteristics: Context, Mechanism, and Outcomes (CMO) that constitutes its makeup and makes it work (or not work). Realist evaluation assumes that an intervention causes certain elements of context to generate particular mechanisms which in turn lead to observable outcomes (C+M=O or CMO configurations). Contexts are defined as the characteristics of the conditions in which an intervention operates, while mechanisms, which include reasoning and reaction, refer to the ways in which an intervention brings about change.

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WHEN mothers are given a chance to keep their babies, they enter the program because they are motivated to get better for themselves and their babies and retain custody.

"Well, when I found out that I was going to be able to bring my baby home from the hospital, that definitely made it—you guys are making me cry—but that was the big thing, bringing my baby home from the hospital and actually giving me a chance"

"I didn't even actually plan on keeping her and I remember looking at [staff member] the second I saw her and I was like "Can I take her home?" Like, "I'm still okay?"

"Sanctum 1.5, they give you a chance to heal yourself and reconnect with yourself at the same time, and they help you stay with your baby, and they help you care for them during the first few months of life."

"Like you could go this way or you could go that way, but if you go with them, you can have a chance, you can continue living, but if you don't you won't have your baby, you're going to lose yourself and you're going to lose your life."

"I just knew it was my only chance and also I knew I had no chance of keeping my daughter if I didn't get help and so I ended up at Sanctum and then I've gotten both my other kids – well, my son back in my care, I got him back after 6 months or a year after, and then my daughter I had in one of the healthiest pregnancies I've ever had, so that's kind of where I'm at now."

"Next thing you know, your baby's better and you're better and you're seeing your kids again, that you haven't seen in a year, two years, and you're like "Holy shit, just by going with those two women, you have all of this, you get all of this", a chance to be with your other children, a chance to take care of the baby too, right from when it's born, to never even have a case opened with that baby"

"So, when those ladies come it's like a godsend, this thing and you lose everything and you lose your life, or you can go with them, you can try and get better for that baby. You can't fix what's done but you can try and make it better, and then by making that better, you make it better for your other children too."

"Don't know, I was pregnant and same thing, I was homeless, and I didn't know what I was going to do. I had been using at the time, during my pregnancy, so when – my sister-in-law was already at Sanctum, and she told me it was a good program. I wanted to keep my baby with me, so I decided to move there."

"Had two other kids in foster care already and then I was homeless living at a hotel, and they gave me a chance, so I took it."

"I was in a relationship with someone for 13 years and that person was an addict and I was too, so he ended up – my husband passed away and I got into addiction again, and I lost all of my kids, and I lost my home, and I lost him, and I lost everything. And then I found out I was pregnant after he passed away, then I struggled with addiction during that time, and then it came time to, when I had to give birth, thank goodness that they had the program for Sanctum because otherwise it would have taken baby right from me, right from the hospital, that day."

"Because they give them a chance to be a parent and I think once they see that life and they're able to have their child with them, then it just gives them – they want to stay clean and live a better life for their child and it's hard to be separated from your child if that's what's going to happen, if you want to live a drug lifestyle still, then that's exactly what's going to happen, right? I think they show you that you can have a good lifestyle and be a parent, even if it's hard sometimes and that, but it's good."

"Because I already had – my daughter, who I had a few years before, she got taken from me in the hospital and I didn't want that to happen again, and I actually wanted to parent, I wanted to try parenting, so she suggested Sanctum because that's where she moved to when she had my nephew. So, she said that it helped her, so I was like "Okay yeah, I'll try it."

"But I was wanting and willing to do anything I could to keep baby with me, even though I knew that I was struggling still with addiction and I needed some help, so I did the same as [I], I guess you could say, I went there and I bared everything down, and I got all the help I needed which was in every way possible there."

"If I didn't go there I was going to lose custody, my son was going to get apprehended right from the hospital."

"Just the option to bring my kid home, the place was a nice place, everybody was really friendly there."

"What were your motivations for going to Sanctum?"

P: Actually being able to parent a kid of mine."

WHEN Sanctum respects harm reduction and personal choice there is more uptake of Sanctum services because mothers want to get

"I guess it really depends on the person, like if you're really there to **change your life and get sober** or if you're there just because you think you have no other choices. If you're really there to change your life, then you utilize everything, but if you think it's just there for, you're there just for different reasons, you know? You're not ready to change."

*"That's another thing about that place, they give you options and they help you right through anything. **Any decision that you make** and every decision that you make, no matter whether it's with family or with friends or with the babies, anything that's going on with your life."*

*"**Harm reduction.** And I don't know if that's like a good response or nothing, but if I had to say what was the most appealing to me, was the harm reduction"*

"I found that being prebaby I was in a better situation, I can get high and nobody's going to judge me, nobody's going to say fuck all until I have my baby and then you sit down and you do your care plan with your worker. But the harm reduction and the fact that I could still smoke pot and come down off of the hard stuff and nobody was going to judge me, nobody was going to take my baby from me, you still kind of got the dirty looks about smoking pot and stuff but it wasn't like you just went out (inaudible), it was super appealing"

"Obviously they still support you if you're going to choose to still use drugs, but I didn't understand that part, you know? I didn't want to, I can't remember what it's called, I didn't want to have them where they are basically the, you know, when the moms have to go out in the living room, I can't remember what it's called, I didn't want to do unsupervised parenting."

"Also, I hate to say it, but they let me smoke pot, so I was like okay, that makes abstinence a lot easier and it really made you look at harm reduction in a whole different way, right? And now it's legal so it might be a whole different thing but if I didn't have some kind of help"

"And it's like they kind of are aware that it's traumatizing to be like "you're never going to do drugs again" that like saying you're breaking up with your boyfriend and he's gone now, you're never seeing him again, right? I love drugs, like honestly, let's be real. It's really hard to walk away from that and not be tempted to go back, so I found that they were really supportive in you trying as much as you could."

"Well, I think that the staff actually puts a lot into making sure you're prepared before you leave, but with (inaudible) I honestly believe that's a personal choice. I think that the staff certainly aids a lot in showing the girls the kind of life we could have and how good things can be, but I honestly believe that's a personal choice when it really comes down to it, I don't think anybody can be shown or it can just be, I don't know how to describe it, I'm at a loss for words there."

"When she [X] met me at the detox center that day, she just said, she said "What if I have a place you can actually go and bring your baby home with you?" She's like "I'll take you for a tour of it and if you want to move in, we can move you in tomorrow."

"Okay, so, for myself when I first went Sanctum, I was fortunate, I guess, because I was pregnant at the time. What they told me, what I was under the impression was, I could come there, and I could still continue into my addiction but as soon as my baby was born then

that's when shit got real, right? So for me, the way that they view harm reduction as opposed to just complete abstinence because even in my experience prior to Sanctum, my recovery I had, clean years through NA, and AA, and I found that it was really hard to say "I'm going to quit forever" but it's not really hard to say "I'm going to quit for this month" or "I'm going to quit for this week" or whichever, right? And Sanctum kind of adopted that principle and it made it, it didn't make it as intimidating going into it, so I think that that's a really good "

"Oh, I mean they did the – they had certain, they had a guy come in and teach us how to use the Narcan or whatever, they taught us how to use the needles and how to inject to save somebody's life, so I thought that was really good, they sat us down and went over that with us. I feel like they overall just want you to be a better person, so they help support you through your journey, so if you are struggling, they definitely give you the opportunity to figure it out as well as try to get better for baby."

"And another thing, like the fact that you could go and use, and they wouldn't all be shitting on you about it, lack of judgement. But at the same time [name] would kick your ass, right? She'd be like "Well what the hell are you doing out there?" And that's what you needed, but at the same time it's like a gentle kick in the ass, so I don't know, that's probably, I don't know."

"It was just hard to get grounded when I'm half in that lifestyle, but [name] I knew from another life, right, and she came in and she was like "Yo, if you want to parent, if you want to keep your daughter", and I didn't even think that was an option at my point"

"I always really enjoy the program, what better is it to have a program to let you, let struggled women have an opportunity to make that choice, right?"

WHEN mothers have a safe place with basic needs met, they settle in the program because they feel secure and supported to take care of self and baby

*"I think **just feeling safe**, that I had a safe place to sleep, like there was always going to be food and having that security."*

*"They help you, because when you're there, you kind of, you live a different kind of lifestyle because it's kind of **a safe haven right in the middle of the hood**, and they teach you that it's better to be **living clean and sober** because then you're a better parent, because there's no way a drug addict can be a parent at the same time, it just doesn't work. But if you do want to use drugs, they do help you know that you need to be using clean supplies and stuff like that if you are going to be using."*

"So, like, I know when I was there it helped me be safe by having a roof over my head and it was a **safe environment**, and like, not being around people that were using helped me a lot too"

"They teach us how to be a mom, they teach us how to have respect, they teach us about routine, about structure, about your appointments, about booking your appointments for you and your baby but most of all, to **take care of yourself** because you can't take care of anyone if you don't take care of yourself. So they really focus on teaching you to take care of yourself"

"I feel like it's very clean and very nurturing, I felt it was definitely a good place for me to have my newborn baby for the first few months. You want a nice, clean, healthy environment. They do a really good job of making sure everything's really clean for how many people were in the house, in supported living. I think they do a really good job of making sure everything is in place, suppers are done, great meals, wonderful food by the way, a home cooked meal."

"It taught me to care for him, it let me leave Sanctum with my baby, leave the hospital with my baby. Those are the main things. Get sober."

"It was really helpful, there's a lot of different staff who are helpful in different ways, and I think it's really important when new moms come into the building they are also accepting and talk to you and not feel left out or if you are feeling lonely or whatever, they're going to help you not, like, you know, if you're wanting to visit with your children, they're going to help you like get that and anything you ask for basically, they're there to help and it's just comforting and you learn so much there."

"I guess more or less you just feel safer there... with the doors being locked and security cams, you know, I think it was really helpful to have the video there for other moms to see and all, just to make sure.

"So, like, I know when I was there it helped me be safe by having a roof over my head and it was a safe environment, and like, not being around people that were using helped me a lot too"

"I would go days and I wouldn't know when I was going to eat next. It's just waking up and being clean and having food in the fridge, it's a different feeling. I think with the one on one thing too, I don't think it's because they don't want to do it, I think it's just they don't have time to do it."

"Yeah, the meals every day, just a place to rest, getting off the dope"

"Yeah, they let me detox there which was huge, I slept for like the first week I was there. They fed me meals, made sure I went to doctors' visits."

"I think with helping with my health, providing meals was the main thing."

"Can you give an example of how Sanctum 1.5 helped your better overall health?"

P: It was just more like the eating, knowing to eat three times a day."

"It was like really welcoming, you know, just to have the seating area, the TV area up in the upstairs and also in the downstairs, and just the different sitting areas. It seemed like there was just – it seemed like a good place to visit around and to talk to different people, and keep busy, you know?"

WHEN mothers hold and care for their baby, they increase their efforts to stay sober because they bond with their baby

"Well, they're not apprehended right away, **you get that bond with them, you decide** if you want to be sober and leave with your baby or not. Making sure, again, you have healthy meals, a roof over your head."

"I did really, really well and I'm so proud of myself and I'm proud of all the other girls that have went through the program because I think there's a really good chance at making a difference after going through there, **because you just bond with your baby, you get the connection** that you need. Like I had my son and I walked out on my son when he was really young, and I didn't have that connection like I do with my **daughter because I didn't allow myself to have it**. Now, I wouldn't do anything to lose her."

"Because back then kids would just get apprehended and torn from their moms, and what would that do? The mom would **just go back and use because she didn't have the baby** or have nobody, you know what I mean?"

"Just to have that **bond with your baby** helps you want to stay sober ...as soon as I held my baby and seen him, I felt super bad, I knew, that's one of the reasons why I stay sober, I don't want him to have to feel – you're a whole different person when you're using and it's not fair to them, and so it's just my baby is my, he really helped me out, same in Sanctum."

"I've seen this woman, she tried to give her baby up for adoption and they helped her with that, and the baby was happy and the mom was happy, and she felt like she did a good thing, that's another thing about that place, they give you options and they help you right through anything"

"They told me when I first came to Sanctum "Okay [name], if you don't get clean, you're going to need to find somebody who will take your daughter" and I was like "Oh my god"

"I wanted to go and stay with my dad but Social Services, they kind of told me I had to, or I'd lose (her?), so I went to Sanctum. I didn't want to lose (her?):"

"What's the biggest part of how they kept you sober?"

P: I didn't want to leave [name] behind. Because if I went to detox here, she'd go to crisis nursery, or if something happened to me, I'd have to have her go to crisis nursery and I don't want her to be alone."

"Because I was using when I was pregnant with her, she was sick so she had to stay in there longer than I did, so another thing Sanctum does is, if your baby is up in the NICU weaning off of the meds before they let the baby go, and that's another thing, they wean the babies off the meds there at Sanctum too, so you can take baby home with your earlier instead of you sitting at Sanctum by yourself. Because they let you go to Sanctum if baby's in the hospital, you eat and you change, they give you your room, you get it set up but they bring you back to the hospital for visits with baby. Because I was breastfeeding so, well trying to anyways, so it's good for the moms to still be there with the babies if they're upstairs in the NICU, they're obviously going to be sick, that's what the program is, right? Because you're sick and you struggle with addiction, because that's what Sanctum is for"

WHEN mothers are welcomed by nurturing, non-judgmental staff, they stay in the program because they feel accepted as a person:

"It was always really excellent, I'm sure you know everybody's **so welcoming** there, **no judgements**. I think that's one of the biggest things is that you can walk into a place where nobody judges who you are."

"Well I mean like there's the needle exchange right there, it's in a core area, so if you are using, it sucks 'cause it's accessible but at the same time they make you want to quit on your own, that it's not like being forced to do it, because nobody will react positively when they're being forced by fear or any kind of that emotional blackmail on getting clean, it won't last. I think they really make it gentle, as gentle as possible, and honestly, I believe that's how to succeed, **a gentle hand** as opposed to – because we're all in pain, that's what it is."

"And the way the whole program is ran, I honestly feel like that platform, it's all perfect the way, **the less judgement more nurturing**, that's the way to go with addicts, I think, and that's how people really get through. I think that's why I was so successful, there was just so much nurturing involved, and **everybody really wanted to see me succeed, and I really wanted to succeed too**, so yeah."

"The support there, it felt like a second family, like they have faith in me when I didn't even have faith in myself"

"Well, yeah, they just had faith in me and I didn't have faith in myself, and that they showed me, reminded me the potential that I had and that I could do that, and just reassured me a lot."

"It was like hell with [name] getting weaned off that stuff, it was to the point where two women had to take turns taking her because I just couldn't, and I couldn't imagine just me being there doing it by myself, like I would have lost my fucking mind. Seriously. You just need to sleep and you're so tired and babies are trying to get weaned off of that stuff, and you feel like shit and you feel bad that it's happened to baby, you've done that."

"So the women are there for you to say at least you're here, you're getting help, we're here to help baby, go lie down, go and rest, we got this. That's what I mean, when those women come, you're literally at your bottom, you're at your bottom because for once, you're struggling with downs and you're starting to feel so sick and you're getting scared and you're in that hospital, and you're looking at your baby, and your baby is dope-sick, and you feel shit for that, because you've got to see that, and to go out and use again or to try and use again while your baby is in the hospital sick, you're at your worst, you're at your bottom and that is your bottom."

"Because when we go there, we're so into addiction and then we have our mental things to deal with and we have a newborn, everything that's going on is a lot. And it just needs to be slowed down, and that place, what it does, is slows you down."

"I always referred it to any of my friends that were pregnant and stuff 'cause they give you a chance to be a mom when everybody else is looking down on you 'cause you've been doing drugs and all that, and it's just a really good program."

"I was used to being alone and in my bedroom all the time when I was a user, not talking to anybody, always afraid to go talk to people just to be judged, you know. It was just good to be able to visit around and whatnot there."

"They taught me to give myself time, I think that's good, just time."

"everybody has different experiences with different staff members, like some staff, they just don't work with you, your personalities are different, you butt heads, but for the most part the staff that are there, they care about you doing better and that they'll always be there for you and there's no judgement from any of them. But there is a few that are there because it's a job and not because they actually want to help."

"I think it runs pretty good, I know the staff when I was there, they were very supportive, they didn't judge, they didn't think anything, they're just there for you."

"It was really helpful, there's a lot of different staff who are helpful in different ways, and I think it's really important when new moms come into the building they are also accepting and talk to you and not feel left out or if you are feeling lonely or whatever, they're going to help you"

"Basically the night before I gave birth to my son, was like my last time using drugs, and of course right when I had him I stopped but I don't think it was that hard, but with Sanctum's help it was possible"

"And they pretty much just, not take over for you, but they show you how to slow down and how to do things slow and that there's no rush, here there's a safe place for 3 months, it's a break, use the best of everything that we have."

WHEN other residents or partners are using, it can threaten mothers' sobriety because of unhealthy triggers present.

"I have to say like of course there's still people getting people to drop them off stuff there, drugs, but it was more easier for me, especially not living in the same city that – I think it might be harder for other people who are part of Saskatoon, they live here and it's just their neighborhood and all the triggers"

"And then it caused a rift too because whoever wasn't smoking weed, they weren't with them, and it caused problems. And they were literally – it also not just caused a problem, like whatever, weed's weed, but it also caused me to get cravings because they would all – when you're an addict"

"I'm just sitting there watching this, and then they all get shitfaced outside and come in all high and laughing and I'm just like "What the fuck? It's not fair! What the hell? It's just not fair." I don't have anything against people that smoke weed, but when you're trying to quit drugs? It's fucking hard enough, not to mention having to see that. You know what I mean?"

"I'm not a weed person and I noticed that they do let the women smoke weed there, and maybe that's great for them and stuff but for me, when I was trying to quit using, it felt really unfair to me that I'm quitting my drug but yet I gotta sit there and they get to have their drug delivered to the door and go to the back and get high? You know? And come back all shitfaced, and still look after the kids, but for me, I didn't think that was appropriate because I couldn't go get high in the bathroom. You know? That kind of disputed the purpose of being there. No drugs should be allowed whatsoever, it's not right, it's not fair."

"One thing I found really hard is with the harm reduction, is everybody, lots of people were constantly on one. And I was finding it so hard to be sober with that. Yeah."

IF mothers relapse and leave during the program, they can return and regain sobriety because they feel accepted by staff

"And also with the staff, one of the biggest things I also find was when I would disappear for days at a time and I would come back, I would be so scared to come back, because that's how it always is with authority, right, you got to be afraid to come back after you mess up, but as soon as I come in the door, every staff member would be like "Welcome home", every single staff member! I was like "What the hell" but it certainly makes you want to come home, you know, and you know you're going to get the talk after but at least getting in the door isn't traumatic."

"Also Sanctum once called the cops on me and that brought me home too. It was like "Holy fuck, somebody gives a shit?!" But it really does make you think, because they're not only caring about me but they're caring about my unborn baby when I'm not, and when I'm not, they are, and that was like, can't even begin to thank them."

"Just being a former drug addict you don't really take care of all those stuff so just like coming into a sober life it's really important to start taking care of yourself and it just seems like they give you those options and they help you with your child if you need, they get you there."

"They just help me by always being there for you and knowing that even if you do screw up, there's no judgement and they'll help you get back on your feet"

"I think that the staff actually puts a lot into making sure you're prepared before you leave, but with (inaudible) I honestly believe that's a personal choice. I think that the staff certainly aids a lot in showing the girls the kind of life we could have and how good things can be, but I honestly believe that's a personal choice when it really comes down to it"

WHEN mothers receive culturally responsive Indigenous supports, they heal more completely because of spiritual reconnection with who they are

"Well, my struggle with a couple mental, like I'm diagnosed as bipolar and depressant, I'm depressed all the time, and that stuff, and I found that Sanctum also offered a lot of outside help with the Elder, also with smudging, they let you smudge in the house, I don't know if they still allow that, but they let me do that before."

"You mentioned you did some yoga and that helped, what other programs did you do that helped you with?"

P: The cultural support, what do they have, the cultural support, I think that's – yeah, cultural support with [program leader], went to sweats, I got to reconnect with that part of my – yeah, I got to reconnect. I can't remember word for word but yeah, that's all I can say right now.

"Actually I was afraid to use the trauma counsellor [name] right away until after I moved and I think the cultural support I really enjoyed, she's really helpful."

"Because the environment's so open people kind of get tied into each other's stuff, and that kind of helps each other health together, and a lot of the – when the Elder was coming and we do prayers together and stuff, or we do groups together, really encouraging the girls to be together because Sanctum environment is super important, I think, for healing and picking up good positive coping skills."

"Yeah, with the supports also, with [name], she's the cultural support, she helps get through any cravings and stuff too."

"Here there's a safe place for 3 months, it's a break, use the best of everything that we have. And there's a prayer room downstairs, you can go downstairs and see [name], she's an Elder and you can pray with her, and they have also weekly meetings with the women downstairs."

WHEN mothers receive professional supports and services, they heal more completely because of their raised awareness of unmet needs

"I got help with my addiction, so I got a drug counsellor and it was really cool because it just so happened we were from the same reserve, so that was really nice 'cause we had a lot in common so it was easier to talk to her."

"It was just [name], she just helped me figure out how to deal with any, what's it called, triggers and cravings, stuff like that."

"And to be completely real though, I knew that I wasn't going to get out of Sanctum if I was relying on the staff a lot, I knew that if I could prove to them that I was capable of taking care of my daughter without their help. I made a personal effort on my own part to try not to rely on the staff too much, but for things like that, for things outside of physically taking care of my child, I totally relied on the staff."

"At the time I 'believe she was a coordinator of some type, but she really lit a spark under my ass because like so many other girls I was committed but taking off at the same time"

"I think it works because they give you the resources and they give you the courage to know that you can be out on your own with your child and be living sober and clean."

"Sobriety. Like, learning triggers and what to do, and who to talk to."

"They really push you to get your dental hygiene figured out, your basic medical needs, make sure you're ready to get your health back on track. I feel like when I left there, I had everything figured out, they help all the ladies there with that."

"Since I've been there, they had a budgeting class, so they are starting to incorporate some things throughout the house that the girls could do, but they definitely could incorporate more."

"Like the only thing they really went through is HIV and how drug use can have an effect on unborn baby"

"And they also offer programs like Pathways and stuff like that, they didn't just bring Sanctum to the table, they brought all of the community into one place where we had access to it, and that was, that's the main thing, I think."

"They're there to take your blood pressure and make sure you take your meds, especially because most people with addictions, they struggle with mental problems too, like ADHD, which I am, and I have bipolar as well and PTSD and depression, so I mean, that place helped me in every way."

"If we wanted an NA or an AA meeting, they had it online or something, [name] had most of the information for it, but that was it. They didn't really have anything else."

"So definitely some strong points is that they do have a trauma counsellor in there that helped you work through some of those issues. I think there needs to be a little bit more of that. And yeah, more one on one time, really getting into those issues."

"They got me in touch with a counsellor, to great trauma counselling because I did lose a son a couple years ago which was hard, so they got me to deal with that."

"I learned how to be a better mom and I learned to deal with some of the trauma and stuff that I had from the past, through counselling and stuff like that."

"They help you with every kind of aspect of your life, like parenting, trauma, like drug addiction, all that sort of thing."

"We had a parent aide come in and she was nice, she was able to help us with a lot of stuff like going shopping and just needing somebody to talk to."

"I remember my parent aide came in there and she showed me how to do a sleep schedule for my baby."

"And then I got help through [name] with a lot of my trauma, so that was good because I was able to deal with a lot of stuff that I had buried and I didn't deal with it, all the drugs just made me numb to it."

"Because when I left there I was still going to meetings, I was still doing my counselling and stuff like that. As long as I kept myself busy with programming then I didn't have time to be out there doing drugs."

WHEN mothers have unconditional emotional support in a supportive family environment, they gain self-confidence in essential life skills, including how to build healthier relationships

"Those two women walking through the door more than once, more than three times, was basically to me, when you're an addict and you're already at your bottom, was a calling to go get help, and it was different than a treatment centre too, it was different."

"because it'll encourage women like "Hey, they're there to help you, they're not trying to take your baby, they're not trying to diminish you and they're not trying to cut you down, they're there for you."

"Yeah, not living on the streets, knowing how to deal with my addiction, and showing me how to take care of my baby."

"Yeah, because they just talk with you and stuff, like [name] and [name] and stuff, they talk with you and they just encourage you and stuff and I think that's one of the key things to be able to graduate the program, because there's a lot of times where sometimes you're feeling low and stuff and you just feel like you want to give up and some of the staff just talk to you and you feel better."

"By showing them how to budget, how to do things properly like giving a baby a bath. Everybody that I know that went through the house, they were all coming off of drugs, so the staff would do little things here and there to (inaudible). Hard to pinpoint what."

"They helped me to have the confidence to actually do it, like I didn't think I'd be able to and they reassured me that they'll be there for me, they'll help you through it, and yeah."

"Oh, it plays a big impact on their health and their baby's health because when they're there, they're living clean and sober, they're living a healthy lifestyle, they're able to eat healthy foods, and they're able to feed their child and have everything they need for their baby. And if they need any help, or if they don't know how to do something, like if they're a first-time parent and they don't know how to bath their baby or anything like that, they have support there and they're able to show them how, so that's good."

"They helped me build connection with other moms, other women. It helped me be self-reliant on taking care of all the things I need to care for my family because most of the women going in there are just single women and next thing you know there's just you and somebody you're responsible for"

"Well the thing that kept me at Sanctum as long as I was there for was because, just the relationship I had with a lot of the staff. Like my parents, they never told me that they were proud of me, ever, and hearing that from staff every day? I find a lot of the women, they

don't have that either, you know? And then they get there, and they get that love and support from the staff"

"Because that's how much they help you, you feel like they're family, they are, they're family, you know? They're cooking for you, they're caring for you, it's almost like they're your parents, and then there's godparents, and there's some aunts that come in and uncles, like a big family. And that's what helped me the most, trust them. Was that they made you feel like family and a lot of people don't have that, especially if you grew up in the system and you grew up in the streets, you don't have family. And the number one thing when you do grow up in the street and you do grow up in the system is trust."

"I'm so glad that they have this place and they need to have a lot more, like a few more of these places because it's just an amazing program and it's a never-ending thing with them and it's good, it's really good. You get a special bond, like how in life you normally meet people, you click or you don't, and there your guard's already up, the fence is already up in front of you, so who do you want to open the gate for just a little ways? And [name] for me was a real eye opener when I went there, she'll tell you in black and white if you're doing something like "Get your ass over here and get these bottles washed or I'll turn the fricking TV off!" Stuff like that, she'll throw your shoes down the stairs if you don't keep putting them up, that's what I mean, they tell you black and white, they don't piss around. They have [name] where she'll tell you anything and then they have [name], she's awesome too. She drives all the ladies there to go shopping, they all love going shopping with her. Every individual that works there, they go above and beyond."

"One day, I think we ran out of potatoes and carrots or something we ran out of, anyways, the women brought food from their own homes to make that supper, literally. And the ones that worked across the street, they'd come in sometimes to take over, she knew that I liked apple crisp and I was having a bad day, so guess what? She showed up that night, on her own time, to make me an apple crisp after she was done work there. Stuff like that, stuff that family does, like a real normal family would be like. It's amazing, it's just very good, it's a very good program, I'm glad that they have it. Definitely, [!], you and I, we were right at the bottom."

"I was just afraid to go move there with all these people I didn't know, like the first couple days I was there my son was still in the NICU, so it was kind of lonely but the staff made it really comforting."

"The environment? They just made it feel like home, it wasn't so much as a facility, I guess you would call it? They made me feel comfortable and they're really, like, approachable, I guess?"

"Yeah, I mean having good, supported people watching you, if you're going to live in a place where you have to be watched by staff like that, I feel like they need to have some type of sympathy – not sympathy, sympathetic kind of, help us women out. I don't know."

"I had a really good relationship with most of the staff, so I feel like the positive supports from them gave me a better look at myself and how I was doing in my parenting and how other girls were doing in their parenting"

"The support there, it felt like a second family, like they have faith in me when I didn't even have faith in myself"

"Like I could always go to them with anything and it wasn't like talking to staff, it was like talking to a friend."

"Well, [staff], [staff] was a huge support in me staying there, and [staff], she made a huge impact on me being there, and I think that if the staff weren't so welcoming, I wouldn't have stayed. And if they weren't so understanding, I don't think I would have stayed there because how can you stay in an environment where you're not comfortable, right?"

"There was even one time where I really wanted to leave to go and get my cheque cashed at Money Mart and I was like freaking out because I didn't have ID and Money Mart is the only place I could go and they were only open for so long, and it was to the point where the staff were doing changeover and [name] even took [name] into the board meeting with her so I could go and cash my cheque, they were so good. They were so supportive, I never ever was turned down any help from them."

"It was like a good effect, I got along with all the staff so, if I needed to talk about anything, whatever it was, I could just go talk to them."

"It was good in that sense, and I also remember another situation where there was a girl and I guess she didn't like me and I didn't know it, to my face she was all good and stuff, but I guess it all kind of got out, but [name] heard about it before I even did and [name] handled it so good, which I thought was super appropriate. It kind of showed me that even in an environment that could be stressful and can be tense, because they all act like a family, we all acted like a family, and I thought that was really awesome."

"Sanctum is kind of like a family to me when I first was there, even I still am super close with two of the girls that I was in there with, I live across the hall from one of them."

"What's her name, [name], [name's] auntie, she used to come in on Tuesdays and help with sewing and stuff, and she showed me how to make a star blanket."

"Absolutely, I feel like depending on where you are in your parenting when you go into Sanctum, I feel like everybody can take what they've learnt from Sanctum and play a role

with it in their life now. They teach you so many things there, like depending on where you are in your parenting, for making bottles to just changing a simple diaper"

"Yeah, like all the supports and basically if there's anything you're having trouble with or anything you need, you can just ask, and they'll try to accommodate what your needs are, and I think that helps being able to graduate from that program."

"Oh, for sure, it helped me build connection with other moms, other women. It helped me be self-reliant on taking care of all the things I need to care for my family because most of the women going in there are just single women"

"They're there to help you, they help you get your own place, they help you go see your worker, they help you fill out applications, they'll sit there with you for hours." When I was there, because my husband passed away and his family didn't want to give me any help, they helped me do all the legal work with my lawyer and all the things I couldn't handle that came to me unexpected that I couldn't handle, I just looked at them and handed them the phone and they said "You know what, [name], we'll take over, we'll help you with this."

WHEN mothers have a structured environment with clear, concrete routines, they are better prepared to take care of self and others because they feel in control

"If I was to describe Sanctum it would probably be the best jail I'd ever been in, in the best way to say that. You're structured, you're supervised, it's all controlled to a certain degree."

"There's always staff there always watching to help you for things like that and to help you give your baby a bath properly, the way you should. And the routine and the structure there, everybody needs a structured life and you need routine in your life, like get up, make breakfast, take your meds, get ready for the day and have everything worked out for that week for appointments and this and that. There's a lot of people that go there that don't have that kind of structure because we never grew up seeing it."

"Well they basically train you on how to care for them, when you end up in a jam and you don't know what to do, they're there for you which definitely prepares you for afterwards, or how to move through situations without going and getting high, that's the biggest thing I think. They teach you to calm yourself first, like put your baby down, go outside for a cigarette if you smoke, go to the bathroom, do whatever you've got to do. They really coach you in how to be super nurturing and how to be nurturing to yourself, I thought"

"Then it gave me all the time to get into the routine of staying in the house instead of going out all over the city and getting into a routine, and then I also started to get some of the girls, which kept me closer to home too."

"I need it to be planned or I need to know about it, I don't like sudden things, it causes me to have a lot of anxiety, because again, I never was brought up to know how to deal with those certain things, and Sanctum does those things for us women. They teach us how to be a mom, they teach us how to have respect, they teach us about routine, about structure, about your appointments, about booking your appointments for you and your baby but most of all, to take care of yourself because you can't take care of anyone if you don't take care of yourself.

"But it's just helpful to be on a schedule, I guess, you know, I don't know. They help you schedule."

"And that's another good thing about the program, it's 3 months, so it's not just something that they throw you in for a month or two or three weeks and then that's it. Because to have a good structure and to be able to teach and maintain a good structure to people who don't even know what a structure routine is, 3 months is a very good time, and I see those girls grow, like amazing"

"I wasn't on medication except for prenatal vitamins but just every morning they reminded me it's time for meds."

"Because they have the set med times and they distribute them and that helped, before then I was at home and I would never take my meds, they would sit in the cupboard, and I would always forget to take them."

"Just basic checks all the time, like their vitals and things like that at the very beginning when they come, make sure baby's medical needs are met as well as ours. They get you your proper medications and distribute them in proper manner whenever you need, and same on baby's schedule too. I also feel like they do a really good job if you have appointments and things to go to, watching babies for you."

"I took [name] out a lot with me but there were certain times where it was really nice to have Sanctum staff, at that time running around doing all those different appointments, you feel like you're always running, trying to get everything all done in three months. Because really, three months is not a lot of time, it goes by really quickly.

WHEN mothers maintain ties to the Sanctum program, and receive ongoing support, they continue to have life successes (e.g., children back from foster care) because they feel empowered to reach out for help when needed

"A couple of times me and the other participants, we went back and [name] was like "Go and unlock the donation room door for the girls" and we went and got pots and pans, and I know

that even if I showed up at Sanctum today, like "I need help" I know that [name] would throw me a couple of packs of soup in my bag or whatever, right? The staff there was just amazing and I couldn't have asked for a better experience."

"You know, I still talk to Sanctum staff today, like I love them, they support you all the way. I feel like I always have them to lean on, I'm still dealing with some things in my court, and it's been really frustrating and stressful, and they've been such a good support."

"So, I feel like I'm doing a really good job, I'm still doing my appointments and still connecting with Sanctum, I won't lose that connection just because I feel like having all the support just helps me that much more to stay on the healthy path. So yeah, just keeping in contact with everybody, including speaking with you guys, doing whatever I can to give my feedback on what I went through and everything. Taking care of baby."

"You gotta keep taking care of yourself and that's why Sanctum is good because they help you, they phone and remind you to take care of yourself."

"Oh yeah, yeah, they check up on you. Just if you want to call them, talk or even drop in, they're always willing to talk."

"When I needed them, even though it's been way over a year since I've left there, I can still call there and they'll help me out."

"Even after I left Sanctum, [name] who (inaudible) as a coordinator of some kind, I think she was a social coordinator, [name] had even written support letters form [name] when we were dating, [name] was in jail, the guy I was dating when I was pregnant with [name], and he ended up incarcerated, and we had broken up prior to him going to jail, he was in jail and we just started chatting again, and he told me he was trying to get out and stuff, and he was a part of Sanctum"

"I don't know, and then when you get your own place, they're there for you too. [Name] still phones me and [name] still phones me, [name] phones me, even if I need an answer to something or I'm stressed out for the day, and I don't know how [name] knows but any time anything goes wrong, I don't know what it is with her, obviously we're connected, but she always manages to message me and say "[name], are you okay? How are things going?" If it ain't [name] it's [name], if it ain't [name] it's [name], it's somebody from there."

"It's like anything I needed, Sanctum was there even after I moved out."

"So when you leave from there and you get your own place, yeah, you're a bit scared and stuff but you know what? They've taught you how to do everything and it's not like they're gone, they're still there."

"They came to my first place, they came to Infinity place, they will go with you for as long as you want them too, they're always still there. That's what I mean by they're family, you know what I mean? Because that's what family does."

"The supports they had in place for you when you left there, they made you had housing, set you up with housing, which was incredible. And then they continue to help you in the community, they ran me to lawyer's appointments about my son, they can help me with my legal file to get my older son back, they got my files closed with child protection in like, no time whatsoever."

"So, because you – I don't know, when I needed them, even though it's been way over a year since I've left there, I can still call there and they'll help me out. [Staff] just helped me before I left Saskatoon with a meeting with child protection about my oldest son, and she's wrote me letters and done all that support stuff, so I don't think they ever really disappear."

"And [staff] also, she busted her ass trying to get me as much funding as I could from my Child Protection worker. She would be like "Oh, well, [participant] needs a stroller" and she gave me a grant for a stroller, and "[participant] needs this" and that was always probably the biggest thing, like the struggle of transitioning into not having easy money was really hard on the moms, I think"

"Yeah, like I got a lot of supports. When you're there, there's a lot of supports you can utilize and then still now, yeah, like my son is going to be 2 pretty soon and so I have some supports that I'm still in touch with. Kids First is one, really helpful, you know. And yeah, they just, if you use the supports – and plus also, my kids are in daycare, which is so helpful, that was because of with the help of a support, they're in daycare. Without Sanctum and the supports, they wouldn't be, so."

"I think it had a huge impact because it kind of taught us how to run our own homes when we left there, just seeing the staff keep up with everything and assisting us with everything that we needed help with, it was awesome."

"It's been good, I moved into a more independent housing program and it's been – my son goes to daycare now and I'm working on getting a job and getting my learner's and getting whatever I need. They help me stay sober here too and look at new places for when I move out."

"And then they come and visit you too, and they play with baby or whatever, and if they can't help you right away, they'll send you a bunch of texts to who can help you, like phone this place or phone that place, honestly. I don't know why they never thought of this place years ago, years, years, years ago."

"Just staying at home being a mom, keeping that house, I got my own place, I got my own furniture, even a brand new washer and dryer, getting ready to put my daughter out on her own here, getting her set up, helping her get her own place and all her own furniture, and I'm glad that I'm sober and thank goodness for that program"

You also mentioned you went through the program twice, what made you decide to enter it the second time?

"Just because I had my other daughter, [name], and I knew that if I went into Sanctum it would be a good chance for me to be able to (inaudible) [name] and before [name] came home, yeah. Because it would have been really hard for me to have [name] home at the same time as I brought baby home, and it would have been really hard to parent both, yeah. So I was able to get a little bit of time just with [name] in and then have [name] come home after."

"I remember going to the women's centre, every Thursday me and all the girls would walk there, and we'd walk back with all these clothes and stuff, they'd be donating clothes, you could come pick out clothes at the (inaudible) and we'd all go there and get a bunch of clothes. But because Sanctum made those things available to us, otherwise you wouldn't have known, right?"

"Like they helped me be a mother and they helped me with everything I needed to reach out to all the supports I needed. When I left there I went into Infinity House but I did have a lot of good memories from Sanctum"

"the addiction services, having everything lined up for you when you leave there, basically. I had huge supports, they had parent aide in place, my addiction counsellor, 601, all them."

"[Name] still phones me and [name] still phones me, [name] phones me, even if I need an answer to something or I'm stressed out for the day, and I don't know how [name] knows but any time anything goes wrong, I don't know what it is with her, obviously we're connected, but she always manages to message me and say "[name], are you okay? How are things going?" If it ain't [name] it's [name], if it ain't [name] it's [name], it's somebody from there. And that's what I mean, so when you leave from there and you get your own place, yeah, you're a bit scared and stuff but you know what? They've taught you how to do everything and it's not like they're gone, they're still there."

"How does Sanctum help residents take control of their lives and remain sober?"

P: By offering them different community supports."

"And yeah, they just, if you use the supports-- and plus also, my kids are in daycare, which is so helpful, that was because of with the help of a support, they're in daycare. Without Sanctum and the supports, they wouldn't be"

"They let me stay, they said if they had to fill the bed, I could sleep on the couch, there wasn't really any rush. They do a really good job of trying to help the ladies get on their feet, and

make sure you're good to go into the community."

"It's only been just a month or a little less than a month, but I feel like I have a really good, strong foundation, like I have a really nice little apartment, just getting everything in order, getting a decent environment, a couch, a crib, all the things you need to have baby at home. So, I feel like I'm doing a really good job, I'm still doing my appointments and still connecting with Sanctum, I won't lose that connection just because I feel like having all the support just helps me that much more to stay on the healthy path. So yeah, just keeping in contact with everybody, including speaking with you guys, doing whatever I can to give my feedback on what I went through and everything. Taking care of baby."

WHEN mothers believe staff decisions are equitable, they are more accepting of those decisions because of feelings of inclusivity:

"I think maybe they just need to have more support for people like, I know there's people that just come in and sometimes they give them a little bit more support because they're thinking about how that person is a little bit more because they just got there, but sometimes they need to remember that there is still other mothers there and they need to help all of them equally and not just like, kind of like favoritism."

"Everybody has different experiences with different staff members, like some staff, they just don't work with you, your personalities are different, you butt heads, but for the most part the staff that are there, they care about you doing better and that they'll always be there for you and there's no judgement from any of them. But there is a few that are there because it's a job and not because they actually want to help."

"Like some moms struggled more than others do, and I find that the staff are more focused on ones that are having more issues, and then I don't know, it kind of feelings like the ones that are doing good, they get – well, not forgotten about, but they're not watched as closely, and even if they are struggling and they don't voice it, there's not that one on one time with them."

"It seemed like some of the staff were really sticky on the rules and like kind of rude in a way, you know? Yeah, and like, you know, other staff, if you were doing something wrong, they would let you know or help you out with something, you know what I mean? Rather than get upset with you or get you in trouble."

"Think that's just the only thing, but I think they definitely need more one on one, like I said with some moms that weren't struggling quite as much they didn't really get the attention that they probably needed and they definitely need more staff there to be able to do that."