



# FUNDACIÓN CENTRO SAN JUAN DE JERUSALÉN



## SER PADRES EN LA NUEVA NORMALIDAD

QUITO-ECUADOR  
2020

## FIRST SUPPORT GROUP

TOPIC: "Parenting in the new normal"

DATE: Thursday 22 October, 2020

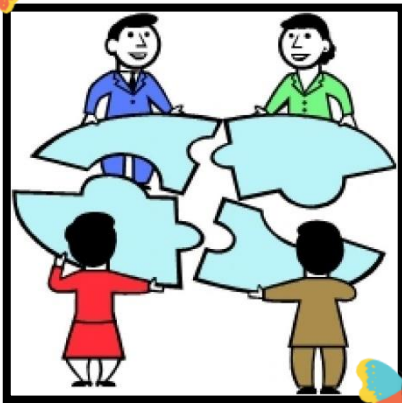
ADDRESSED TO: Parents of the family

Goals:

- Provide a virtual, interactive space in which parents can share their experiences, and feel the trust and support of others.
- Describe internal tools that will let them strengthen themselves in order to continue the work of their parental role as a resilient person



### 1. Introduction



#### ❖ What is a Support Group?

Support groups are groups of people who are experiencing similar situations in their lives, and who meet periodically to share their experiences. A support group is a safe place to exchange ideas about how to cope with difficult matters.

### 2. Development



#### ❖ The new normal

That which conforms to certain standards, or habitual or current characteristics, without excess or lack.

David, a child psychologist at the Foundation, says that before quarantine, all of us were living according to a routine; each person's "own normal", with regard to our housework, jobs, and studies.

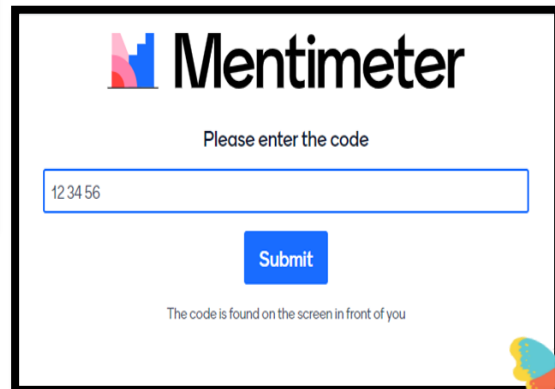
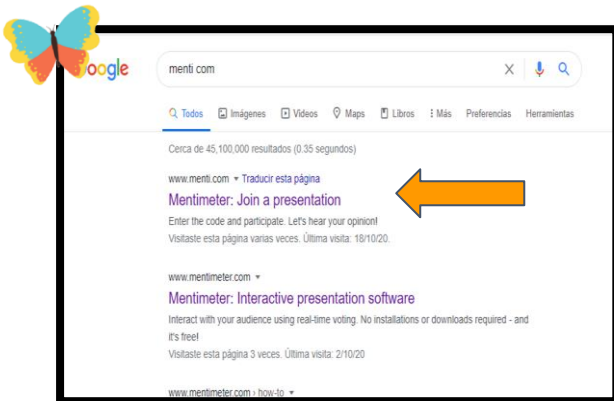


Now, we have adapted to this new normal in which family members have had to adapt to constant changes in the family dynamic and in their own responsibilities; thus, many of them are filling more than two roles at a time. For example: completing work duties, helping the children with their online classes, and working from home. Other changes that we have had are:

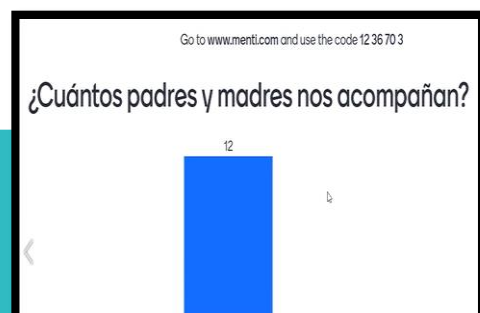
- Using face masks
- Disinfecting our hands and materials or utensils.
- Social and familial distancing
- Little by little, returning to work outside of the home
- Continuing to telecommute, and continuing with online classes.
- Being limited when going from place to place, whether by public or private transportation
- Constant fear of contagion

## ❖ Tools for group development

With the goal of creating a dynamic, participatory support group, the psychology department of the Foundation uses a tool called "Mentimeter". By means of a code given by the facilitator, the participants can enter and reply to questions in an anonymous fashion; then, the responses can be reflected upon by the group.

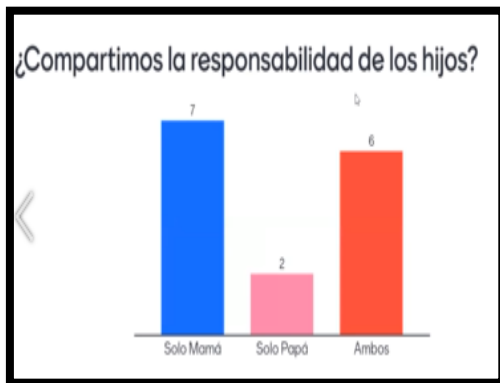


## ❖ Questions



- How many mothers and fathers meet with us?

The answers to this question show that mothers constituted the majority of participants



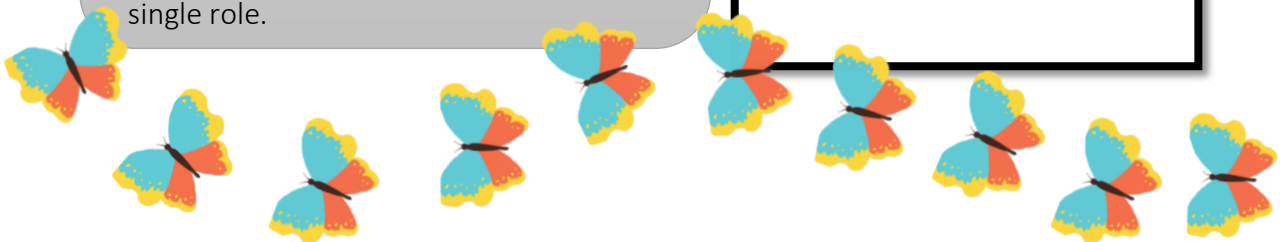
- Do we share responsibilities with regard to children?

In these responses, it can be seen that the mothers assume the responsibility for the children in the majority of cases. In a smaller proportion, both parents assume responsibility, and in very few cases, the responsibility is the father's.

David explains that many adults express that they "are frustrated at being shut in", and that they want to go back to their jobs. However, a small number of them would prefer to continue to stay at home, mainly because they do not want to be separated from their families. The new normal will require everyone to adapt; now that so many months have passed in which we have been totally attached to our families, parents as well as children, we will need some time to get used to the idea of separation.

- What activities do we take on?

The participants show that, for the most part, they have to handle more than two activities at a time; for example: working, managing the home, helping the children, and only one person is dedicated to filling a single role.



Not only is it a question of time management, which can be stressful enough: the emotional cost of having to worry about your job, your children's education and the health and well-being of your family is enormous at this time. Furthermore, in many cases, parents must start working in-person, which creates the anxiety or uncertainty of not knowing how to re-organise these changes in their life, and the stress of not knowing how to do everything.

David says that it is of utmost importance that we as adults are conscious of the situation, with realistic measures to calm ourselves first to be able to contain ourselves emotionally, and ultimately, provide emotional security for our children"



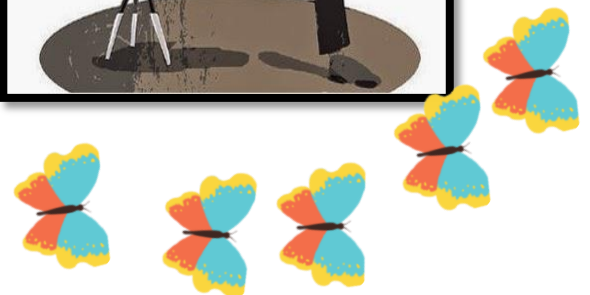
### - What have you felt during this pandemic?

Several participants responded that, during the pandemic, they have had feelings of fear, frustration, anxiety, sadness; however, there was one person who said that they have felt calm, happy, and safe

Carla, a child psychologist, says that many mothers and fathers have also had positive experiences with their children during this pandemic, and that now, as it is beginning to end, it will become a difficult thing. These families approved of the confinement to effectively improve themselves, as the need for intimate connection is very strong, above all for young children.

Ideally, children would have several days to prepare for their parents returning to their daily activities, and recall that before the epidemic, there were still happy times. This has not been an easy situation for anyone during this time; however, we have had a resilient attitude in order to keep going.

Resilience is the ability to confront life's adversities, to transform pain into a driving force, in order to succeed and come out stronger from it. A resilient person understands that they are the architect of their own happiness and their own destiny.



- **What strategies have you used to survive this situation?**

For this question, the participants were able to share strategies that helped them to feel better during isolation, such as:

- Being positive and trusting that, day by day, everything was going to come out okay
- Talking with family about our emotions, coordinating the organisation of activities in the home, and each of us helping one another.
- Converse, increase our faith, and pray together
- Do crafts or activities that we enjoy as individuals or as a family.
- Relaxation, breathing, and yoga
- Making video calls to family since we cannot visit them
- Informing ourselves only through trustworthy sources

❖ **Strategies to overcome this situation**

- **Routine**

Now more than ever, it is important to balance your own routine with that of other family members. Organising time to do household chores, work, or study.



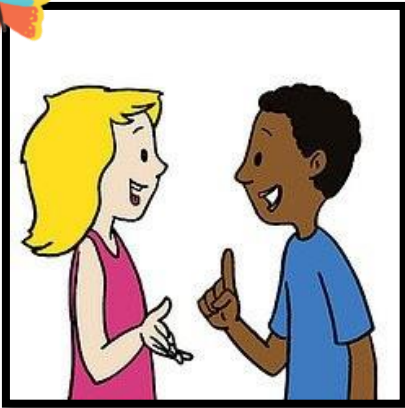
- **Hobbies**

These are activities that bring us pleasure or let us feel alive, like painting, reading, doing puzzles, crafts etc. These activities can be done alone, as a couple, and/or as a family.

- **Ability to adapt**

This means not being stubborn and not trying to control everything. People need to be able to be flexible when facing the new and unexpected, taking whatever comes their way.





### - Assertive communication

With this, it is possible to approach others in a simple, clear, and timely manner, with whatever it is that we feel, want, or think. This is associated with emotional intelligence and the ability to communicate harmoniously and effectively with others. Don't hide or repress your feelings - they will build up and come out in inappropriate ways

### - Internal dialogue

Take care over our thoughts, reflect and develop optimistic thoughts, a sense of humour and feelings of hope. Also, form enriching social relationships and look for social support and help from others, to the best of our ability.



### 3. Psychological strategy to internalise learning in the group

### ❖ The myth of the Phoenix

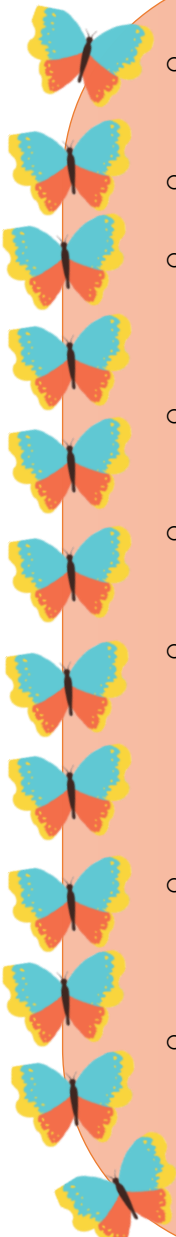


The Phoenix is a fantastic bird, considered a demigod (mythology). It is said that it lived in the deserts of Arabia, Libya, and Ethiopia. For the Egyptians, the Phoenix was a symbol of immortality and the God of protection of the dead, due to its ability to rise from its own ashes. Its name comes from the Greek "Phoenix" meaning "red"; its plumage was red with gold feathers. The honour and respect for the bird was such that a temple at Heliopolis was dedicated to it, to serve as its home (such that afterwards, it was the sacred city of the Phoenix). The bird returned every 500 years to that same place to die and then rise from its own ashes.

There are many similarities between human beings and the Phoenix. This emblematic creature of fire, able to raise itself majestically from the ashes of its own destruction, also symbolises the power of resilience, the unmatched capacity in which we can reinvent ourselves as stronger, braver, more luminous beings. (Valeria Sabater).

## ❖ Imagery based on the myth of the Phoenix

Carla uses the imagery of the myth of the Phoenix with the goal that the participants achieve a feeling of "resurrection from the ashes". For this, the following must be done:

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- Ask the participants for a moment of internal silence with themselves, that they get comfortable wherever they are; that they be in contact with their bodies, their breathing, their emotions, thoughts.
  - Then, ask them to remember the myth of the Phoenix, and tell them that they are going to draw an analogy or find a similarity to each of their lives.
  - Tell them that those who wish to may close their eyes so as to facilitate the visualisation, and say: "Let's look back on a difficult moment during the pandemic. For some, that is the beginning, or when we had already gotten used to it, or more recently".
  - Now they will answer these questions for themselves: What feelings did they have? What did they think? How did they act? Was there a moment in which they felt defeated or even destroyed?
  - Now tell them, "Let's imagine that we have returned to the ashes and that we allow it to pass. Now that we are only dust, let's be aware of this way of being and existing".
  - Ask them again to respond to themselves, has enough time passed like this? Tell them, "Little by little, let's look around at our surroundings, and also inside ourselves. What motivates us not to stay in this place, to mobilise? What are my motivations in life? And what internal and external support can I call upon? What did I learn from every lived experience during this time? How can I take responsibility for myself and create a new reality aside from everything?"
  - Then say, "Let's start by visualising the ash starting to be reborn as a luminous bird of fire, and feel how its body is. This energy is being created and giving a new feeling to our lives. Now, with more lived experiences, with all of the strength and all of the ability to accept help when we need it, to collaborate with others".
  - Finally, ask them to hold on to this feeling of the myth of the Phoenix in their bodies and their minds. Tell them to breathe deeply and start to return to the here and now, to the place where they are, tell them to take two more breaths, and then they can open their eyes.

