

## NYC DHS MOMS Partnership<sup>SM</sup> Pilot Evaluation Report

# Executive Summary

### OVERVIEW

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The New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) partnered with Elevate Policy Lab to establish and pilot the NYC DHS MOMS Partnership<sup>SM</sup> (NYC DHS MOMS), bringing the Mental Health Outreach for MotherS (MOMS) Partnership<sup>®</sup> model and MOMS Stress Management (SM) course to Tier 2 shelters for Families with Children. The NYC DHS MOMS Pilot was implemented in two shelters operated by BronxWorks, a non-profit human services organization serving the Bronx community. Eighty (80) BronxWorks clients participated in MOMS SM over the course of the pilot's 6 course sessions, which took place between August 2021 and November 2022.

Elevate worked with DHS and BronxWorks to design and carry out an evaluation of the pilot, including a pre-post study of participant outcomes. This report describes the NYC DHS MOMS Pilot and the results of the pre-post evaluation study, which includes data from a subset of 69 pilot participants. The evaluation examined participation in and satisfaction with NYC DHS MOMS, as well as outcomes from participant self-reported data. Self-reported data were collected at three time points: before participation in MOMS SM (Baseline), immediately following Class 8 (Endpoint), and three months after Class 8 (Follow-Up).

The pre-post evaluation aimed to answer the following questions:

- Did NYC DHS MOMS participants experience improvements in measures of mental health following participation in the MOMS SM course?
- Did NYC DHS MOMS participants experience increased social support following participation in MOMS SM?
- Did NYC DHS MOMS participants experience increased parenting confidence and self-esteem following participation in MOMS SM?
- Did NYC DHS MOMS participants experience improvements in economic security and mobility following participation in MOMS SM?

### KEY FINDINGS

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#### Participant Characteristics

Almost all clients who completed an eligibility screening were determined to be eligible for participation in the pilot. Of 80 participants in the NYC DHS MOMS Pilot, 69 were included in analysis. More than 80% of participating clients identified as Black or African American, and nearly 30% of participants identified as Hispanic/Latino. The majority of participants were the sole adult in their household, and about half had three or more children under 18 in their household. At the start

of participation in NYC DHS MOMS, very few — 15% — were working for pay, and almost one quarter said they had needed but not received mental health services at some point in the past year.

## **Participation**

Participant attendance at MOMS SM classes was high, with participants attending a median 6 of 8 classes; nearly 20% attended all 8 classes. Participants overwhelmingly reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with MOMS SM at the Endpoint assessment.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Participants experienced significant improvements across a number of mental health measures at the Endpoint assessment and at Follow-Up three months later. Participants' depressive symptoms and depression severity decreased significantly between Baseline and Endpoint and remained significantly lower at Follow-Up; by Follow-Up, almost one-half scored below the threshold for risk of clinical depression. Anxiety symptoms similarly decreased and remained significantly lower, while measures of perceived stress and traumatic stress decreased between Baseline and Follow-Up. No differences were detected in analyses of measures related to emotional regulation and general self-efficacy.

## **Social Support**

Participants experienced significant increases in perceived social support, across all types of support measured and overall. In addition, participants reported significantly greater instrumental support — support to meet concrete and tangible needs — at Endpoint and Follow-Up compared to Baseline.

## **Parenting Confidence and Self-Esteem**

No changes were detected in participants' scores on measures parenting sense of competence or subscales of parenting confidence and efficacy.

## **Economic Security and Mobility**

The percentage of participants experiencing high financial stress decreased significantly between Baseline and Follow-Up. At Endpoint and Follow-Up, fewer participants reported trouble paying for items like clothes and shoes compared to Baseline. Similarly, the proportion reporting trouble paying for hygiene products also decreased significantly from Baseline to Follow-Up.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The NYC DHS MOMS Pilot demonstrated the successful implementation of MOMS services within two BronxWorks shelters and suggested positive outcomes for participating clients. Overall, BronxWorks clients were very engaged with the pilot and MOMS SM course, with high levels of enrollment, attendance, and satisfaction with the program. While this study was limited by its sample size and observational pre-post design, the evaluation findings indicate that participation in MOMS SM was associated with several key outcomes for which the pilot aimed, particularly improvements in participant mental health and social support. These results are encouraging, particularly given the prevalence of mental health challenges and low social connectedness among women experiencing

homelessness — and the potential benefits of improved mental health and social support for both women in shelter and their children. BronxWorks has continued to offer MOMS SM past the conclusion of the pilot, and Elevate is preparing for the future implementation and evaluation of Spanish-language MOMS services at BronxWorks. Elevate and DHS are currently planning for a second pilot phase to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of expanding MOMS services to new provider sites.

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**For the full NYC DHS MOMS Partnership<sup>SM</sup> Pilot Evaluation Report, please contact Elevate Policy Lab at [elevate@yale.edu](mailto:elevate@yale.edu).**

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