

MUSIC AND MOTHERHOOD

FACILITATING CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR MOTHERS AND THEIR BABIES

MUSIC AND MOTHERHOOD

Advice and Top Tips for Practitioners

Music and Motherhood ran from July 2015 until March 2017. It was funded by Arts Council England, and was a consortium between the Royal College of Music (RCM), the RCM/Imperial College London Centre for Performance Science (CPS), Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Imperial College School of Medicine, and CW+ (Chelsea and Westminster Hospital Arts Programme).

The project included a series of 10 week creative workshops for mothers and babies. The information provided here is intended for use by practitioners who wish to run similar creative sessions in the community. In particular, the resources are designed to support those seeking to work with mothers who may be experiencing symptoms of postnatal depression (PND).

This pack contains logistical guidance on the process of setting up creative workshops, but does not focus on the creative content itself as this will be bespoke to each individual project.

This pack includes:

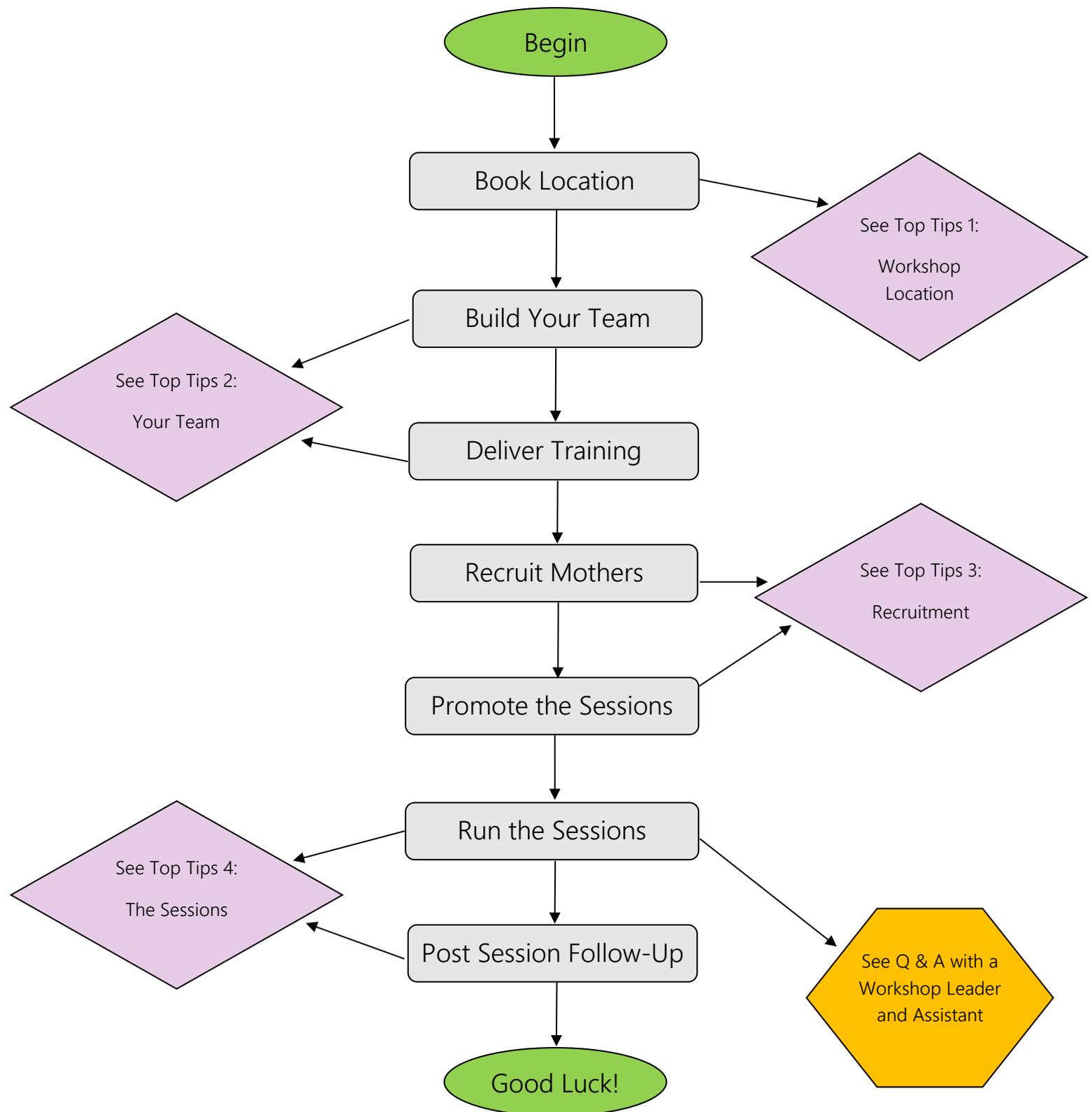
- A flow chart of procedures for setting up workshops see page 3
- Choosing a location see Top Tips 1; page 4
- How to hire a team see Top Tips 2; page 5
- How to recruit mothers see Top Tips 3; page 6
- Practicalities of running the sessions see Top Tips 4; page 7
- A checklist to ensure the sessions run as smoothly as possible see Top Tips 4; page 8
- Advice from a Workshop Assistant see page 9
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Compiled by Sarah Yorke, Music and Motherhood Project Officer, 2017.

This guidance is not designed to be comprehensive and no responsibility can be taken for any actions or eventualities that arise as a result of engagement with this material.

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Flow Chart of Main Steps



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Top Tips 1: Workshop Location

The Space

- The biggest priority is that the workshops take place in a safe space with first aiders, first aid kits and adequate staff members present.
- The location must be accessible for buggies and wheelchairs, with relevant ramps or lifts and space to park the buggies.
- Ensure to give precise locations on any correspondence with mothers, including exactly how to find the room where the workshop will be held.

Location Staff

- If you are using a venue that has its own staff (such as a Children's Centre), it's imperative to build up a rapport with the location's team. It is really important to have strong ties with everyone who your participants will meet. This will help with the smooth running of the sessions.
- Ensure the location staff know the details of your project (timings, staff and specific room).
- Ask to have a tour of the location and a run through of their fire evacuation routine. Ask if the location team plan to hold any fire drills that could impact upon your sessions – to avoid a nasty surprise!

Health and Safety

- Make sure you know the location inside out. Where are the fire escapes, where is the first aid box, where are the toilets (baby changing facilities etc.)? Mothers and any other members of your team may ask you this information, so it is important that you know the lay out of the building.
- Be aware of the opening hours of the location and if they plan to close early on any of your required dates. For example, do they close in the half term?

Your room

- Ensure you can provide or borrow any equipment you may need (e.g. soft cushions and yoga mats for people to sit on).
- Be aware of the temperature of the room and the time of year that you are holding your workshops. Can the location provide a fan if the room gets too hot? Is there a water dispenser if the participants are thirsty?
- If the lighting in the room is too bright see if you can source or borrow any softer lamps to help make the mood in the room as relaxing and calm as possible.

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Top Tips 2: Your Team

When planning your sessions, you may need to recruit a workshop leader and/or assistant. It can also be useful to have a project coordinator, who is able to supervise each session and provide additional support, both administratively and during the sessions. The correct workshop leader and workshop assistants will contribute to making the sessions a success.

Advertising

- If you need to advertise any roles, make sure that you write the job advert clearly and precisely, including the details of the required working dates (if known).
- Give enough time for the job advert to reach out to as many people as possible.
- Advertise through trusted sources (such as an organisation's mailing list), as well as social media and websites.

Organisation

- Before you meet any potential candidates, map out all the dates of your workshops and ask about availability. This way you will know who can definitely attend each session. If you really like a candidate who cannot make one, or possibly two, of the sessions you could pick a reserve to cover these dates.

The Interview

- You might find it helpful to interview along with a panel of trusted advisors, so you can discuss who you think is the best fit.
- Qualities to look out for include a friendly and personable nature, organised, experience working in a relatively similar field (the experience does not have to be exactly the same as the workshops you are running, but look for transferable skills), an ability to cope under pressure and someone who is able to think on their feet as the sessions progress.

Training

- It is important that all members of the team have sufficient training and support to work with mothers and babies, particularly if you are working with mothers who may be experiencing symptoms of PND.

Topics could include:

| Training | Delivered by: |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Paediatric First Aid | St John's Ambulance |
| First Aid at Work | St John's Ambulance |
| Creative Ideas and Workshop Training | Project Coordinator/ Creative Team |
| Postnatal Depression Awareness | Perinatal Health Visitor |
| Health and Safety at Work/ Risk Assessment | Institution/ Organisation |

- Ensure all the team have the relevant documentation and checks – DBS for example (to check that all the team are able to work with specific members of the community).

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Top Tips 3: Recruitment of mothers

Target Audience

- Know your audience. It is important to know places they visit so you can meet with them and discuss the workshops. Think about where would they be, where would they go, who would they speak to (e.g. Mum and Baby Cinema screenings, Baby Weigh Clinics, Clinicians, Community Groups).
- If your participants are potentially vulnerable members of the community you might have to pay more attention to the words you use, how you come across etc. For example, instead of saying "depression" which has potential negative connotations you could say "wellbeing."

Team Work

- Speak to the people that your participants would usually have communication with (e.g. health visitors) and see if they are happy to support your work and potentially refer.
- Ensure people feel included in the project (both mothers and any members of the community who may help you to recruit). If you are personable and they feel that they can contact you whenever they have a question, participants are more likely to get involved and sign post your event.

Resources

- If you visit a recruitment venue make sure you have all the information you need at hand, and that it is easily accessible.
- Always carry flyers; you never know where you will meet potential participants – even on the bus!
- Add webpages and social media information on to any flyers that you have developed as an extra means of information and communication.

Self-Awareness

- Be approachable. Speaking to a stranger on the street can be daunting; a smile goes a long way.
- Be confident in yourself; people can sense if you believe in yourself and your work and are more likely to give you their time if you are genuine and passionate about your project.
- First impressions count, so be aware of your demographic and dress accordingly.
- Be enthusiastic about your work. If you aren't then why should they?

Efficiency

- Take people's details down when you meet them. A busy mum may just grab the flyer and shove it in her bag without having time to look at it properly.
- Have a set phrase that you know will gain the attention of a passer-by quickly. You will have a maximum of about 3 seconds to grab their attention. Usually the word 'free' will help (only if this is true of course!).
- However, don't be pushy. If a person doesn't want to give you their details, that is fine. The flyer will include all the information they need to contact you.

Prior to the Sessions

- A few days before the workshops begin, send a reminder email to the participants including location, times, contact details etc.
- Before the sessions start ask your team to arrive early to familiarise themselves with the location and set up the room accordingly.
- Introduce yourself to any staff members at the venue you are using and make sure that they know how to direct participants to the right room.

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Top Tips 4: The Sessions

Team on the Day

- Ensure that any members of your team feel confident with delivering the sessions. Before it starts answer any questions they may have.
- Depending on the size of your team, ask one member to wait near the reception or main entrance so they can escort participants to the room.

Participants' Arrival

- Be welcoming to all the arriving participants. They may be very nervous coming in to a new place with lots of unfamiliar people.
- Ensure all necessary documentation (such as registration forms) are completed before the session starts.
- For the first session it may be of benefit to write out name stickers beforehand. These can be given upon arrival. It will help the workshop leader and assistants with initial communication. If the participants are with their babies, ask for the baby's name, and write this underneath the mother's.
- Offer assistance where necessary. For example, if this is a mother and baby session they may need assistance holding the baby whilst taking off shoes, sorting bags etc.

The Space

- Complete a risk assessment before the session starts.
- During the sessions look out for any potential hazards such as pen lids, trailing wires, open doors/cupboards and sharp edges.

During the Sessions

- Ask your team to be aware of any questions that the mothers may have and pre-empt what different members of the team may need.
- Be flexible! It may not be your responsibility to sing, give out stickers or contribute to the creativity of the class, but the participants will notice if you are taking part. Remember, these groups are often a success due to everyone contributing.
- If you have any questions about the sessions, feel free to ask your team to clarify. Everyone has different skills and it is important to be clear of your role and those of your team.

After the Sessions

- Once the sessions end and all the participants have safely left the venue, ensure everything is back to its original state.
- If another session is due to take place after the initial one, make sure all participants are able to leave in a calm, yet effective manner as you may have a short turnaround time.
- Have a team de-brief. A member of the team may have questions about the group or want to talk to you about something they felt or saw in the sessions.
- Be aware of your referral process should anything need reporting.
- Ensure everyone knows what is happening for the next session and all equipment is available.
- For the final session prepare hand outs of follow on information of other local activities that they could take part in.

Checklist

Below is a checklist intended to assist with the delivery of your workshop:

| COMPLETE | TASK |
|----------|--|
| | Send reminder email to participants |
| | Documentation (e.g. registration forms) complete |
| | Registers prepared |
| | Risk assessment complete |
| | Name stickers prepared |
| | Team know location |
| | Have mothers' details at hand |
| | Flyers – if mothers wish to take one to pass on to other mothers they know |
| | Leaflets with further information of relevant follow on activities |
| | Equipment bag (if required) |

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Q & A with a Workshop Assistant

Could you share how you got involved in Music and Motherhood, and what made you want to be part of the project?
I heard about Music and Motherhood on the RCM Creative Careers Centre weekly jobs bulletin. It really stood out as something which had the potential to make a real difference in women's lives, and have an impact on the community where I live and study. This is the first time I had seen an opportunity to combine my musical studies with an outreach project.

What did being a Workshop Assistant involve?

Initially I took part in the planning and ideas sessions with the talented workshop leaders. We discussed plans for the creative play and singing workshops spanning 10 weeks including possible themes, songs from different cultures, our favourite children's books and suitable engaging games we could use in sessions.

Throughout the class I would offer as much support as possible to the workshop leader through helping organise creative play tasks, giving singing support during vocal sessions to encourage participation, and generally offering any support to the mothers whether it be fun or intimate chat, or grabbing the baby wipes in an emergency!

Could you tell us how being involved in the project has furthered your career options?

Apart from showing some versatility on a performance and teaching based CV, this project actually led me to further work with mothers and babies. After the initial set of sessions, I was invited to help as a workshop leader in some later sessions related to the same research at the RCM.

Through keeping in touch with some of the mothers from the original sessions I was also able to run similar singing sessions over the summer period. It was great to see the mothers keen to share their experience of the sessions with their friend base!

Overall, being involved with these sessions has given me the confidence to get involved with lots more workshop based work which is a great compliment to any CV.

Do you have any advice for students wishing to broaden their experiences?

I would say don't be afraid to try anything that interests you. I had never worked in a mother/ baby environment before but the project really caught my eye as being something important for the community, and it has been an enriching experience.

What have been the highlights of taking part in something like this?

The best part of taking part in Music and Motherhood was the opportunity and privilege to have an insight into the joys and struggles of motherhood, and to meet all of the wonderful, strong women who took part.

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Q & A with a Workshop Leader

Can you share with us why you wanted to get involved in the project?

I got involved with Music and Motherhood because I've worked for many years with mothers and babies but I haven't worked specifically with projects linked with wellbeing so I was really interested to explore that world.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to set up their own workshops?

I would advise other workshop leaders working in this area to make sure they have a large repertoire of material and songs to be able to have the flexibility respond to the mothers that come in to the room. Don't make too much of a plan, as you need to be really responsive.

How did you choose the music and the songs for the workshops?

The songs I used for the sessions came from different places I've gathered them over the years, working in hospitals and sure start centres, and from when I worked abroad, so in lots of different languages. I also then spoke to the mums and asked if there was anything specific they wanted to learn, and responded to that.

In terms of instruments I used a combination of different percussion instruments, tuned and un-tuned because I like the parents to feel they can play something very simply and yet make a beautiful musical sound that will support the voice. So, I used hand chimes quite a lot, tuning forks, singing bowls and drums.

What are your three top tips for working on a similar project?

My three top tips for this work are to be prepared to abandon your plan, allow flexibility and porous boundaries in the sessions, and remember that each mother is the expert of their child.

Could you tell us what you learnt from Music and Motherhood?

On Music and Motherhood I learnt that women, when they first give birth, have a lot of change to deal with and this can impact them in a variety of ways. I remembered the power of music to facilitate connection and the power of the mother's voice to enchant and enthrall their baby.

I was reminded of how powerful something as simple as singing a lullaby can be for parent/child bonding, especially in the world of technological complexity that we live in now. It's about simplicity and trusting the power of the human voice; the power of song to facilitate connection.