

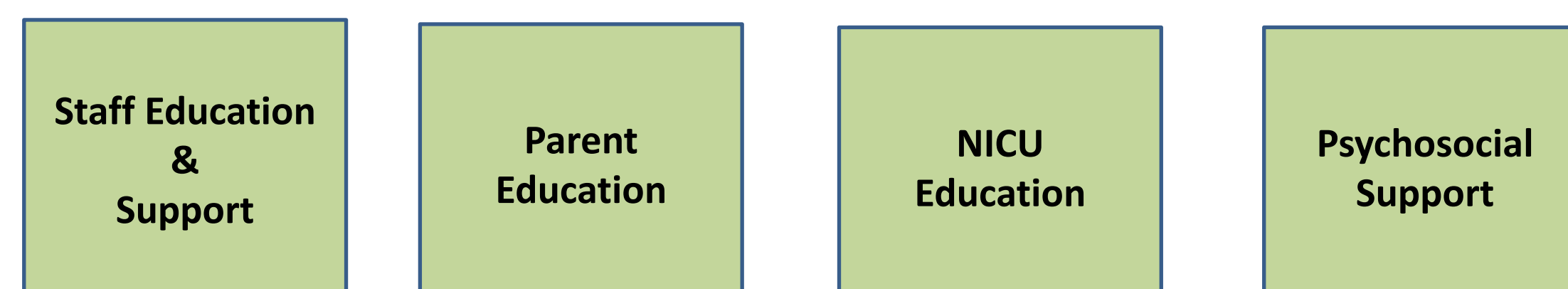
# Heart to HEARTT: Supporting Nurses to Partner with Parents Caring for Critically Ill Infants

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## Background

- Infants are physically and emotionally separated from their parents in the NICU
- Family Integrated Care (FiCare) is a model of care where parents are integral members of their infant's care team
  - <http://familyintegratedcare.com/>
- 4 core components to support successful parent engagement – The FiCare Pillars



- Implementation of FiCare is supported by staff and parent education programs, a peer-to-peer parent support program, and adaptation of unit policies and procedures to enable greater parent participation
- FiCare was first piloted at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto and further evaluated in an international cluster randomized controlled trial (cRCT) involving 13 intervention and 12 control NICUs<sup>1,2</sup>
- FiCare is associated with improved developmental outcomes for infants and decreased mental health risks for parents
- FiCare Plus** was developed to extend this model of care, in the first two weeks, for **critically ill infants**

## Objective

- To determine how FiCare Plus can support parents to **safely and meaningfully** become engaged in the care of their **critically ill infants, specifically in the first two weeks**

## Methods

- A cross sectional survey of NICU staff at 2 hospital sites in Toronto
- Descriptive and thematic analysis performed.

## Results

- 68% of staff felt education programs could be improved to help them understand and support families better
- Nursing education needs were identified as follows: to receive further education related to **parent readiness, establishing and sustaining engagement, providing emotional support, and strategies to support bedside parent education**

## Innovation

- The Heart to HEARTT staff refresher was developed in collaboration with NICU parents and consists of short videos, slide shows and resources focusing on parents' perspectives.



## References

- O'Brien et al., *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth*, 2013; 13(512). <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2333/13/512>
- O'Brien et al. (2015) *BMC Ped*, 15(1), 210. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-015-0527-0>
- Theresa Wiseman

## Survey Results

Study Survey was developed in collaboration with parent advisors

**The Need**

Recognizing stages of parent readiness in the first two weeks  
Recognizing families as members of the team - not visitors  
Strategies to establishing and sustaining engagement  
Strategies to support bedside teaching and communication

**The Knowledge**

Understanding the Family Journey  
Understanding trauma in the NICU  
Understanding toxic stress

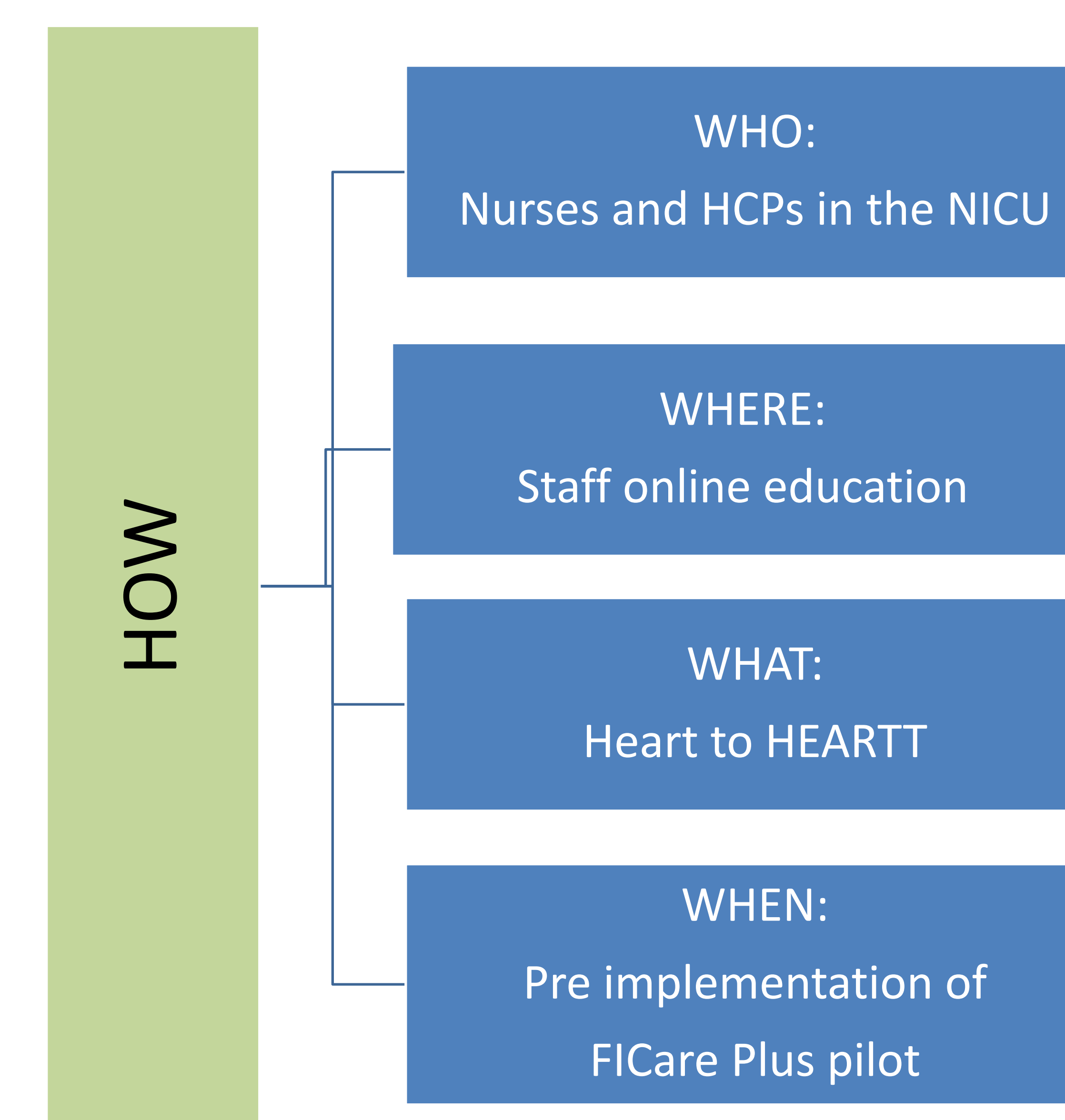
**The Plan**

Researching materials  
Creating materials  
Acquiring parent stories

- The survey was sent to all staff in the NICU via email
- 65 responded – majority were nurses

## Implementation

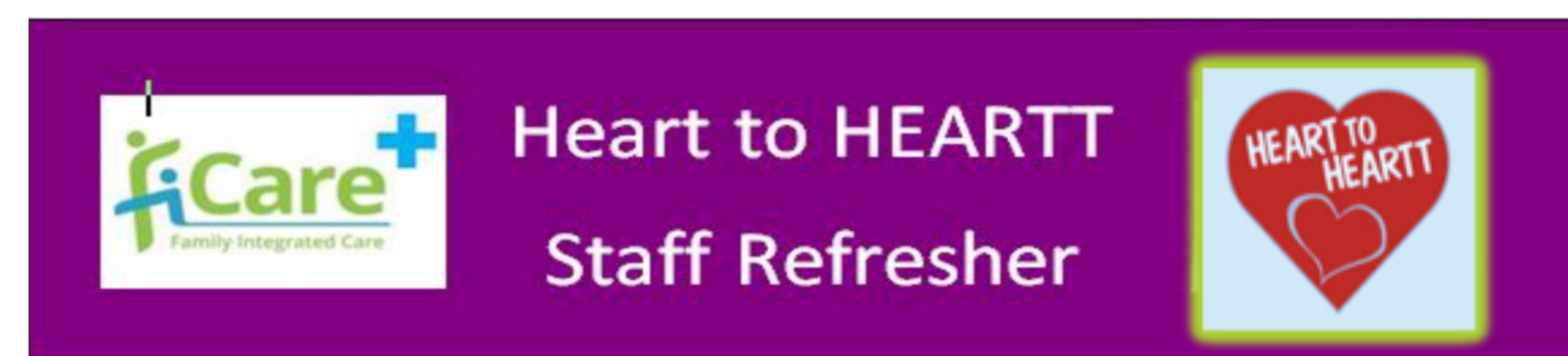
All staff were invited to complete the refresher



Staff received a Heart to HEARTT pin upon completion.

## The Innovation

Development of Toolkit– videos, slide presentations, resources



### Parent readiness: Everyday Trauma in the NICU: The Four Traumas



- Unexpected early delivery or complication, medical status, c/s
- Seeing baby have traumatic medical procedures and life-threatening events
- Witnessing other infants go through similar experiences
- Continuously receive bad news

### Establishing and sustaining engagement: Communication.



- Giving families the voice to speak up
- The impact of empowerment

### Providing Emotional support: Empathy: Empathy versus sympathy.

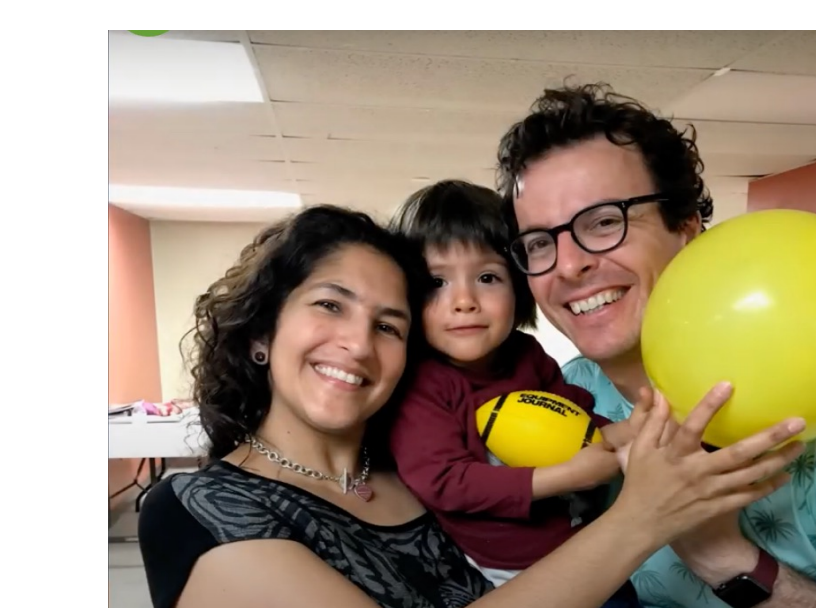


- 4 Elements of Empathy:
- To see the world as **others** see it
  - To be nonjudgmental
  - To understand Feelings
  - To communicate Understanding<sup>3</sup>

### Strategies to support parent education

#### Reality: a veteran parent story

- Sharing their story, Yasmin (co-author) with her husband and son



**Parenting:** invite, teach, model, and support.

#### Resilience and attachment

- Resilience – adaptive, functioning peer support



#### Understanding Stress

- How Stress and toxic stress are expressed

## Next steps

- Post Implementation survey under development
- Areas for improvement – feedback from nurses – moving forward