



# Evaluation of a Collective Reflexive Coaching Device to Sustain Early Childhood

## Education Managers Well-being during COVID-19.

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### Background

Work well-being of early childhood education and care (ECEC) managers is essential to provide educational quality services to children (Corr et al., 2017). If some factors are known to influence work well-being, such as job stress, burnout, depressive symptoms, self-compassion, and work engagement (Cumming & Wong, 2019; Rothmann, 2008; Zessin, 2015), COVID-19 pandemic appears to be deleterious (Bigras et al., 2021), particularly because of the frequent adjustments induced by public health measures and staffing shortages. In a previous study, ECEC managers expressed a need for support to face the challenges encountered during the pandemic (Bigras et al., 2021). Therefore, a professional coaching process, through a collective reflexive coaching group, had been implemented (Bigras et al., 2021).

### Objective

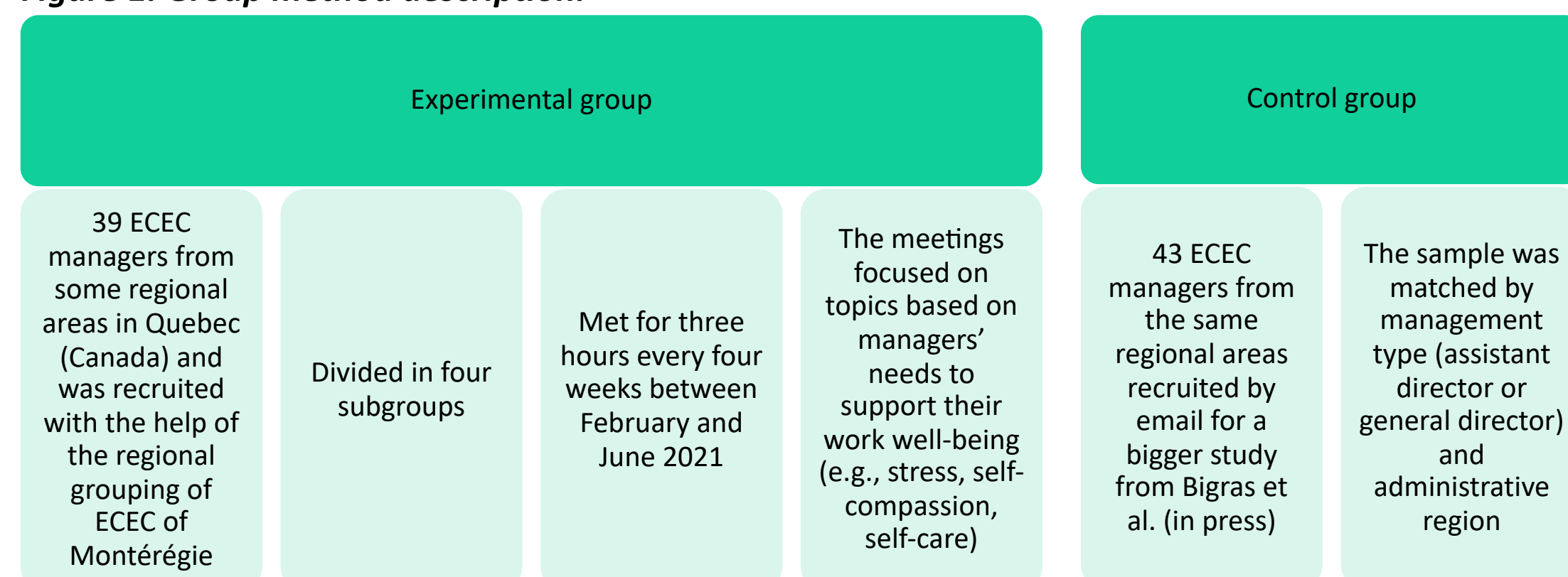
Evaluate the effects of a **collective reflexive coaching device** intended for **ECEC managers** on the factors linked with **work well-being during the pandemic** :

- self-compassion
- burnout
- work engagement
- work-related stress
- depressive symptoms

### Method

This research uses a quasi-experimental design (pre-post) with a control group. Quantitative data were collected with an online questionnaire (LimeSurvey) completed before the first meeting and after the last one for both experimental and control groups. Social desirability was measured for the two groups, at both pre and post times.

**Figure 1. Group method description.**



### Results

**Table 1. Participants characteristics.**

	Experimental group	Control group
<b>Years of services</b>		
Less than 1 year to 3 years	13%	21%
4 to 10 years	13%	14%
11 to 20 years	51%	42%
21 to 30 years	18%	14%
31 years and more	5%	9%
<b>Higher level of qualification</b>		
Cegep diploma	2.6%	14%
University diploma	97.4%	86%
<b>Sex</b>		
Women	100%	100%
<b>Age</b>		
20 to 30 years old	0%	2%
30 to 39 years old	18%	7%
40 to 49 years old	28%	35%
50 to 59 years old	44%	47%
60 years old and more	10%	9%
<b>Number of the members of the management team</b>	3	3
<b>Size of the establishment</b>		
1 installation	20%	23%
2 installations	39%	35%
3 installations and more	41%	42%
<b>Type of services</b>		
ECEC services only	64%	61%
ECEC service combined with a family care provider services	36%	39%
<b>Subvention for disadvantaged child</b>	44%	42%
<b>Chronic health problems</b>	26%	16%
<b>Living with a relative (chronic health problems/70 and +)</b>	31%	16%
<b>Living with dependent child</b>	64%	46%

**Table 2. ANCOVA analyses for well-being scale.**

	Experimental group				Control group				F	df
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
<b>Well-being at work</b>	4.11	0.49	4.27	0.47	4.34	0.48	4.31	0.4	0.92	1
Pre-test									31.34***	1
Social Desirability									0.19	1
<b>Interpersonal fit at work</b>	4.37	0.5	4.42	0.6	4.58	0.47	4.52	0.53	0.54	1
Pre-test									34.92***	1
Social Desirability									0.25	1
<b>Thriving at work</b>	4.07	0.66	4.24	0.53	4.24	0.69	4.23	0.49	0.89	1
Pre-test									25.29***	1
Social Desirability									0.43	1
<b>Feeling of competency at work</b>	3.95	0.59	4.3	0.49	4.33	0.63	4.42	0.41	0.12	1
Pre-test									35.45***	1
Social Desirability									0.10	1
<b>Perceived recognition at work</b>	3.76	0.59	3.94	0.77	3.76	0.66	3.97	0.65	0.72	1
Pre-test									39.43***	1
Social Desirability									0.03	1
<b>Desire for involvement at work</b>	4.38	0.6	4.43	0.59	4.56	0.49	4.45	0.46	0.83	1
Pre-test									15.94***	1
Social Desirability									2.70	1

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation, dl = degree of freedom.  
\*\*\* p = 0,0001, \*\* p>0,01, \* p>0.05.

**Table 3. ANCOVA analyses for selfcompassion scale.**

	Experimental group				Control group				F	df
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
<b>Selfcompassion</b>	3.03	0.45	3.27	0.64	3.5	0.65	3.45	0.64	3.45	1
Pre-test									82.805***	1
Social Desirability									0.159	1
<b>Self-Kindness</b>	2.96	0.68	3.27	0.85	3.52	0.78	3.4	0.75	3.67	1
Pre-test									52.577***	1
Social Desirability									0.325	1
<b>Self-Judgment</b>	2.85	0.54	3.15	0.72	3.31	0.71	3.36	0.67	0.31	1
Pre-test									52.20***	1
Social Desirability									0.62	1
<b>Common Humanity</b>	2.97	0.53	3.21	0.73	3.16	0.75	3.13	0.8	2.19	1
Pre-test									56.58***	1
Social Desirability									0.37	1
<b>Isolation</b>	3.38	0.81	3.5	0.83	3.78	0.83	3.74	0.87	0.31	1
Pre-test									31.45***	1
Social Desirability									0.50	1
<b>Mindfulness</b>	3.33	0.71	3.47	0.73	3.84	0.74	3.66	0.76	1.12	1
Pre-test									53.24***	1
Social Desirability									0.25	1
<b>Over-Identification</b>	2.87	0.76	3.06	0.75	3.48	0.85	3.45	0.9	0.02	1
Pre-test									62.44***	1
Social Desirability									0.62	1

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation, dl = degree of freedom.  
\*\*\* p = 0,0001, \*\* p>0,01, \* p>0.05.

**Table 4. ANCOVA analyses for work engagement scale.**

	Experimental group				Control group				F	df
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
<b>Work engagement</b>	4.76	0.69	4.77	0.67	5.02	0.68	4.82	0.63	0.88	1
Pre-test									44.36***	1
Social Desirability									0.1	1
<b>Vigor</b>	4.7	0.72	4.67	0.75	4.95	0.77	4.65	0.87	0.98	1
Pre-test									23.79***	1
Social Desirability									0.14	1
<b>Dedication</b>	4.74	0.8	4.86	0.69	5.12	0.81	5.0	0.75	0.11	1
Pre-test									35.22***	1
Social Desirability									0.97	1
<b>Absorption</b>	4.85	0.77	4.78	0.84	5.0	0.69	4.81	0.78	0.47	1
Pre-test									38.51***	1
Social Desirability									0.57	1

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation, dl = degree of freedom.  
\*\*\* p = 0,0001, \*\* p>0,01, \* p>0.05.

**Table 5. ANCOVA analyses for burnout scale.**

	Experimental group				Control group				F	df
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
<b>Emotional exhaustion</b>	2.25	1.03	2.28	1.12	2.16	1.18	2.28	1.34	0.007	1
Pre-test									72.01***	1
Social Desirability									0.91	1
<b>Depersonalization</b>	1.07	0.72	1.14	0.79	0.91	0.75	1.05	0.92	0.000	1
Pre-test									48.22***	1
Social Desirability									0.36	1
<b>Accomplishment at work</b>	1.31	0.65	1.23	0.66	1.22	0.87	1.19	0.66	0.07	1
Pre-test									58.14***	1
Social Desirability									0.11	1

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation, dl = degree of freedom.  
\*\*\* p = 0,0001, \*\* p>0,01, \* p>0.05.

**Table 6. ANCOVA analyses for perceived stress and depressive symptoms.**

	Experimental group				Control group				F	df
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
<b>Perceived stress</b>	1.86	0.47	1.66	0.51	1.66	0.53	1.68	0.6	1.65	1
Pre-test									23.04***	1
Social Desirability									0.03	1
<b>Depressive symptoms</b>	0.87	0.47	0.72	0.47	0.75	0.47	0.77	0.57	0.84	1
Pre-test									17.6***	1
Social Desirability									0.04	1

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation, dl = degree of freedom.  
\*\*\* p = 0,0001, \*\* p>0,01, \* p>0.05.

ANCOVA analyses controlling for pre-test scores were conducted. Since the control group ( $M = 0.71$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ) had higher pre-test score on social desirability than the experimental group ( $M = 0.61$ ;  $SD = 0.16$ ),  $t(79.115) = -2.561$ ,  $p = 0.012$ , we controlled for this variable. Table 2 to 6 indicated that each variable is explained by the pre-test scores ( $p > 0.001$ ). Also, the descriptive data at pre-test indicated that participants in experimental group had lower pre-test scores and that they tended to reach the means score of control group on post-test scores for each variable.

### Discussion and conclusion

- Reflective support system could be beneficial to improve well-being of ECEC managers through COVID-19 because their scores improved between the beginning and the end of the meetings.
- It is possible that participants in the experimental group joined the program because they needed support for their well-being.
- Also, in the reflective support system, we talk about stress, self-compassion, well-being, and that could explain why the score of the experimental group tend to improve.
- Therefore, the reflective support system is a place where the managers can shared their experience while being respected and not judged, which could be a fear for the control group associated with social desirability.
- Nevertheless, since managers must perform their job with high quality in ECEC, it seems imperative to ensure that they receive all the support and resources they need to mitigate negative influences of the pandemic on their well-being.

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