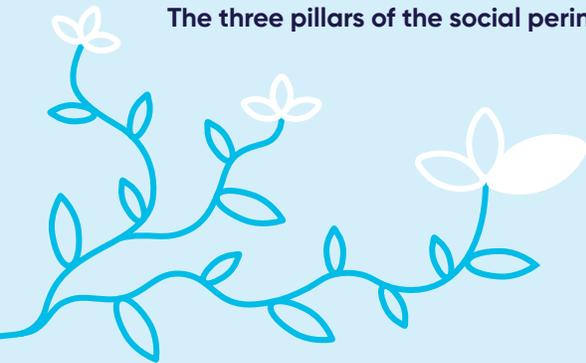


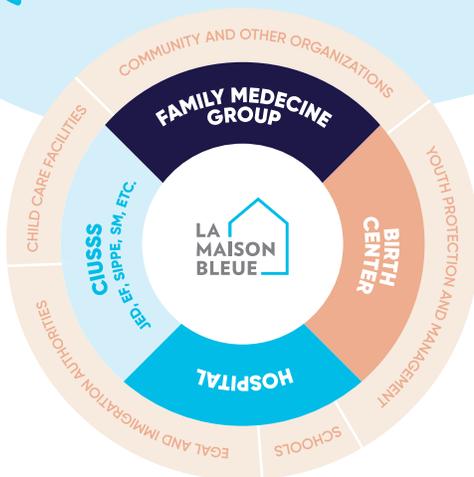
Promity work

The three pillars of the social perinatal care approach explained



The social perinatal care approach

Social perinatal care is based on three pillars of intervention that best support parents and their children in vulnerable contexts. **Interdisciplinarity, portage/empowerment as well as proximity work** – all strongly interconnected – are the essence of La Maison Bleue's teams' daily interventions. These pillars reflect a responsiveness to the diverse needs of families during the perinatal period.



What is proximity work?

Proximity work aims to meet people where they are and connect them to needed, or available, services to best meet their needs. At La Maison Bleue, it manifests as a welcoming, **friendly space** that is firmly rooted in the community. This could not be achieved without physical **proximity to key players in the community and institutional partners** working in the same territory, and more precisely in the same neighbourhood. In other words, proximity workers often act as a link between clients and the resources they need in their local community.

Proximity work also has a **relational dimension**. This refers to reducing the physical distance between workers and clients and creating a warm and welcoming space. Proximity work is based on the development of a sufficiently strong bond of trust which, in turn, fosters people to **respond favourably to the various services offered** to them. Being in a welcoming place greatly facilitates the first and subsequent contacts. Indeed, the development of a relationship is the primary tool used in any social perinatal care interventions. Group interventions, in addition to individualized follow-ups, is also used as a powerful lever in proximity work.

Relevance of proximity work

Put simply, without proximity work, the most vulnerable portion of the population wouldn't have access to services. Proximity work is an essential component of the public health system's because it ensures that services are provided to citizens who really need them, but who are unaware of – or have difficulty accessing – available resources. Therefore, proximity work requires a reflexive approach to determine whether we are really reaching underserved, isolated populations. It also implies flexibility in intervention practices.

Ultimately, proximity work has a positive impact on the person being followed and on the outreach team.

Benefits to the person or family being followed

- Benefiting from a solid relationship based on trust and an intervention adapted to their needs;
- Better knowing and benefiting from the resources available in their community;
- Strengthening their sense of autonomy and ability to navigate the health care system;
- Improving access to needed services;
- Developing a sense of belonging to their community.

Benefits to the team

- Being able to act preventively with families through physical and relational proximity as well as proactive interventions;
- Strengthening and encouraging mutual help amongst families;
- Implementing interventions with external or specialized expertise;
- Facilitating referrals to institutional and community partners through the creation of personal and professional connections with key players.

“We don’t wait for people to come to us. We’re strategically located in our neighbourhoods, and we’re not threatening. We make sure that the institutional fear our clients might feel is not part of their experience at La Maison Bleue.”

– A provider at La Maison Bleue

Professional approach

promoting proximity work

Proximity-based interventions rely on relationships of trust that allow families to be connected to services they need. Other elements facilitating the professional approach to promoting proximity work include:

- **Being comfortable** dealing with populations that may lack trust in their organization or services;
- Having the **empathy** to understand the experiences of people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and realities, including those less familiar with the health care system;
- Being proactive in **reaching out** to families and partners;
- **Knowing all the neighbourhood’s resources** and recognizing the value and complementarity of various services;
- Knowing how to **balance** proximity and the human relationship with families by maintaining a healthy, professional intervention relationship;
- **Being available**, when possible, to answer questions outside of appointment slots, as needed.

Organizational factors

supporting interdisciplinary work

The organization can take certain concrete actions that promote proximity care. These include:



Providing services in a welcoming and accessible environment. For example:

- Being centrally located in neighborhoods where the people we want to reach live;
- Choosing a facility that looks like a home and is less intimidating than traditional institutions;
- Ensuring the location’s geographical accessibility by considering the roads, public transport, proximity to the local CLSC and other services, etc.



Spending time nurturing relationships with partners and promoting their services, such as:

- Being present and partaking in neighbourhood meetings and organizational committees;
- Hosting open houses;
- Visiting neighbourhood organizations regularly.



Providing flexibility and freedom to key players in their choice of intervention modalities. For example:

- Intervening in pairs to respond to certain situations;
- Accompanying a family when going to other organizations;
- Recognizing the appropriateness of casual interactions outside of appointment slots.



Consolidating innovative cross-sectoral collaborations.



Including families in the space and decisions made for them by encouraging reciprocity. For example:

- Consulting families on topics to be addressed in group workshops;
- Displaying the work produced during workshops;
- With permission, posting photos taken during events;
- Inviting families to cook a traditional dish from their country for a party.



Providing opportunities for casual contact such as seasonal holidays or special events.

Read more

La Maison Bleue (2020). Le travail de proximité. [Capsule vidéo](#).

Agir tôt. [Zoom sur le travail de proximité](#).

Loignon C, Dupéré S, Benhadj L, et al. [Perspectives of structurally marginalised patients attending contextually tailored and integrated care practices in Canada: a focused ethnography study](#).

Morin, P., Allaire, J.F., et al. (2015). [Intervention de proximité en CSSS: Une pratique de pointe du CSSS-IUGS. Guide d’accompagnement](#).



Other summary sheets to read



Social perinatal care



Interdisciplinarity



Portage/empowerment