

# PARENT HELP

ANNUAL REPORT  
2019-2020

*HELPING PARENTS  
BUILD RESILIENT AND POSITIVE FAMILIES/WHĀNAU*

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# EMPOWERING PARENTS

Parent Help is a Wellington-based not-for-profit organisation.

We support parents and whānau build resilient and positive families through our free parenting Helpline, affordable counselling and parenting courses



# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



## GROWING INITIATIVES

Counselling services in Auckland  
Parenting course for parents of 6-12 years old

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It seems very strange to be reflecting on the events of last year while sitting at home in lockdown in April 2020 and wondering what the current year might hold for us all.

2019 started well with a Board and Management planning meeting held off-site. We can thoroughly recommend an upstairs room in the Thistle Inn on a warm, sunny day with the windows open and a view of the harbour.

The priorities for the year were established with the change from our existing bank and appointing a staff member to manage the relationship with the new bank being high on the list. Also of high importance was the development of a relationship with tangata whenua and the strengthening of relationships with other national organisations working in the same social services space such as Plunket and Birthright.

That an 100% increase in funding applications was a further imperative would come as no surprise with the task of achieving sustainable funding an on-going pressure for not-for-profits. Thanks to Chris and his funding calendar we certainly met the target of an increase in funding applications with a small increase in the value of the grants.

Early in the year we met with a team from MSD representing Safe, Strong Families and rangeCommunities. The Parent Helpline has always “sat” under the Information and Advice service along with organisations such as Citizen Advice Bureaux. We have always maintained that the Helpline is much more than an information service and that it is more accurately, an early intervention service. The purpose of the meeting was for the MSD team to gather information about the issues raised by clients and the responses given in order to gauge the scope of “information” and “advice”

Although the designation of the Helpline has not changed (so far), we received notice of an increase in funding for the next financial year. A small step forward.

In May we began our Te Tiriti o Waitangi journey with a full-day workshop for all staff and volunteers and a follow-up session for staff on applying the Treaty to our work at Parent Help. Both workshops were stimulating and challenging and require us all to meet the challenges. We have begun applying the Treaty by having flyers and parenting brochures translated into Te Reo and using Te Reo in greetings both on the Helpline and in emails.

In May, also, I reported to the Board that the Auckland Project was proceeding well with two paid TSWs and one Counsellor and with the prospect of having a further counselling day due to the increase in clients wanting the service. In February we began the first TSW training for 2020 with three Auckland trainees amongst the group. Two trainees finished the course which was interrupted by Covid-19 and pressure on Zoom availability. We are grateful to the Freemasons Foundation for their continued support of the Auckland Project and their understanding that projects do not always go as planned.

In the middle of the year we got together at the “Koha Keg” – a fundraiser for Parent Help at the Southern Cross Tavern. Thanks to the Tavern and all the patrons who contributed to the keg. It was a very pleasant mid-year break.

In June/July we hosted Francesca, a Psychology graduate from the United States who undertook a four-week internship with Parent Help. Her area of interest, and her research while she was in New Zealand, was “Positive Parenting Strategies among Maori” from an historical perspective. She thoroughly enjoyed her time in Wellington and shared her experience of working with first nation peoples in the U.S.

A highlight of her stay for Francesca was the famous Wellington cat “Mittens” sharing the lift with her to the office and then spending some time checking out Parent Help. She posted her videos of the event on Facebook for all her friends to see – and hear.

Increased funding for the counselling service was discussed at the mid-year Oranga Tamariki assessment which focussed on the contract covering Counselling, Family Therapy and Parent Education. The new contract was signed-off in November with an increase in funding and in the number of individuals and/or families to undergo counselling or family therapy.

Over the year we have welcomed and farewelled a number of staff members who have made a significant contribution to Parent Help. Early in the year Stephen, one of our office TSWs left to work in a funding position with Diabetes N. Z. Dee (Dionne) took over from Stephen and quickly became an integral part of the office.

At the end of the year Chris, who had been the Manager since October 2018, resigned to take up a position with Laura Fergusson Trust. You will be missed in the office, Chris, but will continue with PH in your new role as a Parent Help Board member.

In October our Chair, Arti Chand, tendered her resignation from the Board. During her time as Chair Arti oversaw a number of major initiatives aimed at future-proofing the organisation including an I.T. upgrade and the decision to increase the senior management team with two new positions, i.e. Director and Manager, being established. I especially appreciated the latter decision as it made it possible for me to take a number of weeks away from the office! Thank you, Arti, for your support and friendship.

My thanks to the office team in Wellington and Auckland – Trine, Ali, Patricia, Preet, Dee, Mary, Heather, Pam and Viola - and our volunteers throughout Aotearoa for the fantastic work you all do every day to support the families who use our services and to help keep children safe.

To Gael Woods, new Chair of Parent Help and the Board – Doug, Nicola, Samara and Chris – my appreciation for your support and leadership.

Dale Powles

Executive Director

2019



Parent Help

# Parent Helpline

0800 568 856

Available from 9am to 11pm - 7 days a week

Parenting can be a hard job and often challenging

You can call us for support and practical advice on your parenting issue

Parent Help provides the Child Abuse Prevention Parent Helpline

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# TELEPHONE SUPPORTWORKERS

Our Helpline is staffed by a combination of paid Telephone Support Workers (TSWs) during office hours and volunteer TSWs after hours.

In 2019 - 2020 our volunteers and staff spent a total of 36,060 minutes on Helpline calls – an average of 23 minutes per call over a total of 1716 calls made to the Helpline. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that volunteers are the lifeblood of our helpline.

Our TSWs are highly trained and highly skilled with, currently, 60% holding a post-graduate qualification in counselling or a related field and 30% in the process of completing their studies. Parent Help trains prospective TSWs twice each year with each training being undertaken over an eight week period. Modules include self-awareness, listening and micro counselling skills, child and adolescent development and behaviours and recognising child abuse and family harm. Trainees are required to re- search and discuss particular issues with a great deal of role-playing involved. Following a period where trainees “practice” taking calls in the office under supervision to gain confidence, they are put on the monthly roster to take Helpline calls at home.

We are extremely conscious that our volunteers are working independently from their homes. This requires Parent Help to ensure that all TSWs have the very best possible support, are able to de-brief at the time of a difficult call and receive regular clinical supervision. Ensuring that best practice is maintained and that our TSWs feel supported and confident is a priority. We do this through monthly clinical supervision as well as having a senior member of staff available for spot debriefs at all time.

Parent Help regularly evaluates the Helpline service. We offer call backs to all our callers and often assess the initial call’s advice and strategies given at time of the call back. The number one response from our call back assessments are that having *“a real person on the end of the line who was warm and understanding and listened made all the difference”*.

# VOLUNTEERS

Ana, Dale, Elia, Florence, Irena, Isadore, Jen, Judith,  
Kaye, Laurel, Manisha, Meredith, Michelle, Sarah, Sarah P.  
Sonia, Stephanie, Taih, Zosia



# BOARD

**Arti Chand (Chair) to October 2019**

*Lawyer, Arti Chand Tax Law*

**Gael Woods (Chair) from February 2020**

*Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu*

**Douglas Pauling**

*Company Director*

**Nicola Pauling**

*Director, Voice Arts Trust*

**Prithul Samara Fischer**

**Chris Mulder from February 2020**

*Manager, Laura Ferguson Trust*



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At least twice a year, volunteer Telephone Support Workers come together to develop their skills and knowledge aimed at ensuring callers to the Helpline receive the best possible support and information.

## Understanding Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Jen Margaret of Groundwork: Facilitating Change led us through an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi: why an understanding is critical to work effectively within the community, government and private sectors in AotearoaNew Zealand; an appreciation of the context, intentions and on-going significance of the Treaty; and an understanding of why we have a treaty, what it says, colonisation and its impacts and current Treaty issues.

This workshop in May 2019, and a subsequent workshop on applying the Treaty, marked the beginning of Parent Help's "Treaty journey". Although a very full – and long – day, the workshop was very well received by the TSWs. In particular, the actions which took place post-signing, the impacts of colonisation and details of Treaty settlements proved to be an eye-opener for many.

*Ehara ko te ia o te wai  
Ehara hoki ko te pupuhi o te hau  
Engari ko te whakatika kē o ngā rā  
Ka tae ora te waka ki uta*

*It is not the direction in which the current flows  
Nor is it the direction in which the wind blows  
Rather it is the setting of the sails  
That enables a canoe to reach its destination*

The workshop on applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi was aimed at equipping participants with knowledge and strategies to support applying the Treaty within their work with a focus on Te Tiriti application in the context of Parent Help. We were tasked with identifying strategies for effective action and responding to challenges in doing so.

*"Thank you for a most enjoyable day of increasing my knowledge around Te Tiriti o Waitangi. I thought Jen's presentation was excellent and the day was well balanced with listening and doing. It is always good to meet up with like-minded people and to have those informal chats and catch ups. Thank you for the healthy lunch and snacks and goodie bags. The office staff were most supportive and helpful to us TSW's." K.*

## Raising Resilient Children in an Overindulgent World - *and* – Three Potential Goals for TSWs

We all met again on the morning of 19 October to listen to Madeleine Taylor discuss the importance of TSWs building an awareness of the current world and the impact of new trends and dynamics on parenting and children. The aim of the workshop was to be able to understand the dynamics that parents are impacted by and to have some tools for working with them.

It was an interesting and lively session with much to consider when responding to callers on the Helpline.

Dr Sarah Hayward, our clinical supervisor, led the afternoon workshop – a practical session covering “Three Potential Goals for TSWs”, namely, understanding the parents concerns; identifying the factors affecting the child’s behaviour and development and supporting the parent to develop a parenting plan. With exercises and role playing Sarah described the function of behaviour and a framework for discussing problem behaviour as well as the common causes of child behaviour problems and guidelines for introducing a parenting plan. The workshop gave us a “blueprint” to accurately assess the caller’s needs and to provide the caller with effective strategies.

# OUR SERVICES: HELPLINE



It is rewarding for staff and volunteers that the Helpline is seen as a highly skilled and trustworthy resource for parents, whanau and caregivers to share their parenting concerns knowing that they will be listened to and helped to come to a decision to suit them and their families.

*“t recently rang Parent Help in Wellington and the lady I talked to was amazing! I didn’t get her name but I called at around 4ish on the 20<sup>th</sup> August and spoke about my 11 year old son. So thank you so much for your help and support it means a lot” D.*

Calls are diverse and – as Preet reported last year – no two days are the same. Helpline calls are increasing in their intensity with aggressive and angry behaviours common across all ages, even in children under 5 years old. Most parents of children up to five are seeking reassurance that they – and their child – are on the “right track”. However, there are increasing concerns being noted at early childhood centres of children whose behaviour is unsafe to both themselves and others.

*“Caller rang to get help with managing the behaviour of her 4 year old son. He constantly hits and shouts at his parents. Caller distressed that he swears at her and gets angry when she is wanting to do things in the house. He is very nasty towards his 2 year old brother. Caller feels responsible as she has not been well for a long time. She was diagnosed with PTSD after her father’s Death and also with post-natal depression”*

Anger and aggression towards parents and siblings is evident particularly with children between 6 and 12 years . This group is the largest cohort and is represented in up to 34% of all calls received. Much of the angry behaviour reported by parents centres around screen time with parents finding it difficult to set clear and consistent boundaries. A disturbing statistic is an increase in anxiety and depression being reported by parents of children in this age range.

High anxiety and depression also featured prominently in calls from parents of teenagers between 13 and 17, together with screen time, social media and peer pressure. These are complex and challenging calls for our Helpline staff with suicidal ideation and destructive and unsafe decision-making being common. An inability

to offer appropriate referral services is upsetting for parent and Helpline worker alike: mental health services are limited throughout Aotearoa and teens often refuse help from school and social service agency counsellors. Of the 390 referrals made during the year the greatest number were made to other social services throughout New Zealand with Police and Oranga Tamariki being 10% and 12% respectively. Oranga Tamariki referrals were frequently for information on such issues as children in care.

*“Caller is very concerned about her 15 year old daughter’s behaviour which has become more difficult over the past year. Daughter is having frequent angry outbursts. Caller says her daughter has always been highly strung but has become more difficult since being bullied on line. She is depressed, irrational, rude, destructive – she smashes things in the home and blames her mother for everything that is wrong with her life. Caller has tried to encourage her to see their GP or the school counsellor but daughter refuses. She was an O.K. student previously but is not achieving this year. She says her daughter has not been involved with drugs, alcohol or smoking and is proud of that”*

# CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION HELPLINE

The prevention of child abuse has been a part of the work of Parent Help since it began in Wellington 30 years ago. Our vision that all children are raised in strong and resilient whānau living free from abuse and neglect informs our practise, with Telephone Support Workers on the Helpline being trained to identify potential child abuse and family harm. Our assessment tools include a simplified version of the Tuituia model used by Oranga Tamariki, which assists in the evaluation of the call and in determining the possibility of child abuse or neglect.

The interest of the child is always paramount in supporting callers to make a report of concern to either Oranga Tamariki or the Police, or when the notification is made direct from Parent Help.

Many calls are for support and assistance around how to stop the cycle of abuse in their families or to check out if their concerns around a child require further action.

Statistical data indicates that 54 calls reported ‘suspected abuse’ and 65 actually admitted that abuse was happening within their family. The most common form of abuse recorded is physical abuse or assault followed by a disturbing statistic around sexual abuse, namely the increasing incidence of sexual-ised behaviour and sexual abuse child on child. Of the four types of abuse, physical, psychological, sexual and neglect, calls reporting sexual abuse were 33% of the total.

Such calls can be distressing and TSWs are encouraged to contact the supervisor immediately after the call to de-brief and to bring the call to clinical supervision. In many cases, parents making the calls are wanting to know the best way to talk to their child about the situation. In the case of abuse by a child a referral to such agencies as HELP Foundation or WellStop is often the most appropriate recommendation.

**119**

indications of  
child abuse



# A TYPICAL HELPLINE CALL

J

*All identifying information including gender has been changed to protect client privacy.*

“My son is all over the place when he gets home from his Dad’s”. the caller complained on the Helpline.

Jordan is 8 years old and his parents separated 7 years ago. He spends a week about in each home where the rules are pretty much the same. Everything has been going relatively smoothly but recently Dad’s new partner has moved in with him and she seems to be much firmer when it comes to rules and discipline.

## **Suggestions from Telephone Support Worker:**

- Discussed the antecedents for Jordan’s behaviour – moving homes and adjustment issues.
- Discussed how children can sometimes find it confusing when there are different rules in different houses , especially if this represents a change from the norm.
- Talked about behaviour being the language of communication for children and how they communicate through their behaviour
- Suggested that his Dad have a talk with Jordan about how, just as there are different rules in his friends’ homes, so there are different rules in his two homes. Finding something that children can understand and relate to as a way of explaining things to them is a really helpful strategy.
- Encouraged the caller to talk the situation through with her ex-partner: by communicating effectively and working together to keep house rules consistent in both homes and focussing attention on Jordan’s best interests they may see an improvement in his beha

# OUR SERVICES:

## PARENTING COURSES

### **Initiating Independence**

In previous years we had been fortunate in engaging with a number of Wellington schools to not only use the school premises for our parenting courses but also for the school to actively participate in informing their communities.

Following the successful pilot in 2017 and further research and development of the programme throughout 2018, , “Initiating Independence” was presented in June/July 2019 at Island Bay and Berhampore schools with their full cooperation and at Waterloo School during September/October. At the beginning of 2020 we again presented the course at Berhampore School: two-thirds of the course was completed before going into lockdown and the course finished via Zoom.

The programme’s purpose is to provide information and build skills to create improved family relationships. The six sessions are de- signed to empower parents to solve behavioural issues and to help them communicate with and support their child. Each session includes group discussions, practical tasks and the sharing of ideas with other parents, creating a safe and relaxed space in which parents can share their own family stories and issues

Across all three courses the majority of the participants were female and in a partnership. Children’s ages varied from 1.5 years to 14 with the majority of children being in the middle-years (6 – 12 years). The parenting challenges included encouraging independence in the child; personal responsibility e.g. getting ready for school and going to bed; dealing with peer pressure and time management; tantrums; sibling rivalry; anger and parents wanting to generally improve their parenting.

Although the majority of parents identified as N Z European, over the three courses there were a variety of ethnicities listed by participants including Indian, Middle Eastern, Serbian, Brazilian and ‘other’ European.

In 2019 having had a positive response to this collaborative model we went out to schools in the Hutt Valley to use their facilities and to advertise the course through their school community. The response from the contacted schools was disappointing although we appreciated the restrictions on schools and staff. The schools all needed a longer time frame than we were proposing in order to consult with their communities. Most reiterated that they could not agree to our request without community support. Staff availability was a definite factor, particularly if staff were required to open and lock the school building. In some instances there was also a reluctance on the part of the school to nominate parents to attend a parenting course.

To some extent we have mitigated these difficulties by planning to bring the parenting course back into the Parent Help office( although this is not necessarily an easy option for participants with the parking around the CBD), together with investigating community centres and houses which we have hired in the past.

### **Red Cross Refugee Orientation Programme**

Parent Help facilitated the “Parenting in New Zealand” sessions for the Red Cross Orientation programme for new refugee families only once in 2019 due to changes in the refugee settlement

programme whereby fewer refugees are being settled in the main centres, instead being settled in such towns as Levin, Nelson and Timaru.

We thoroughly enjoyed facilitating the Parenting in New Zealand sessions and would like to thank Tracey and Sivagani of Wellington Red Cross for giving us this opportunity over the past couple of years.

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# OUR SERVICES: FAMILY THERAPY AND COUNSELLING

“Children of all ages presenting with anxiety and depression”

“ Social media use affecting ability to function”

“Parents unable to agree – or to keep to – access and custody issues”

“Children threatening to self-harm”

“Developmental delays”

“Sexual harm between siblings”

“Parents modelling destructive relationships”

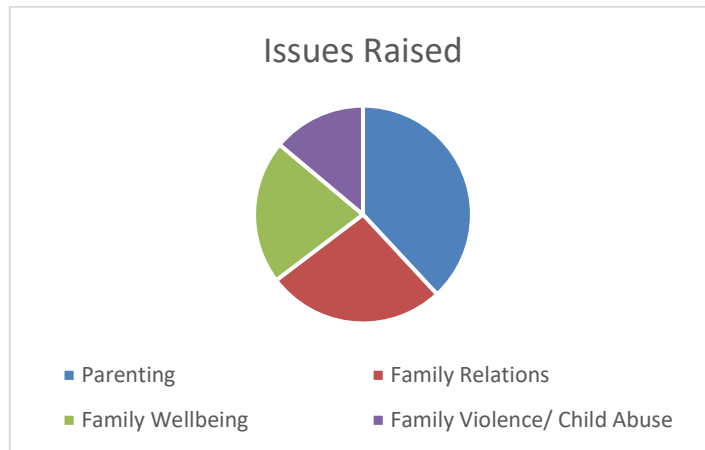
The list above represents a snapshot of some of the issues which came into the counselling room over a period of two months during 2019.

Our counsellors and therapists continue to manage complex issues along with the important psychoeducational work of helping parents challenged by their children’s behaviour while dealing with the stresses of everyday life. For those parenting on their own the stresses are intensified by a lack of support affecting their ability to parent effectively. Clients often refer to their limited time and lack of patience leading to angry responses when children are acting out.

Helping parents manage their children’s behaviour sits alongside family therapy as an integral part of the work at Parent Help. Often it is a single issue such as learning how to respond to the tantrums of their middle-years child. Or it may be complicated access and/or custody issues and fighting parents. Or it may be an anxious and depressed teen who is threatening self-harm.

Longer term therapy such as an extreme breakdown in the relationship between parent and child calls for a range of modalities to be employed by a therapist who is not only empathetic but adept at holding the emotions of both to enable each to be heard. Parent Help is fortunate to have therapists and counsellors with a wide range of training and experience and able to work with a wide range of clients from quite young children to adults. Art therapy, mental health and developmental issues in children and couples therapy are some of the areas of expertise in our counselling team.

Our therapists work with a wide range of clients of varying ages, ethnicities, genders and family status. While the majority of clients are female, our statistics indicate that men now make up a third of the total clients using the counselling service.



The average number of sessions per client is 6, with a range of short (1 – 3) sessions to long-term work.

During 2019 Parent Help registered with “I am Hope” an initiative to enable those with mental illness and trauma to more easily access counselling. Over a period of six weeks, our counsellors worked with 12 clients over 40 sessions. Demand exceeded funding and the initiative unfortunately came to an end although future fundraising efforts are planned to continue this very worthwhile project.

Management report to the Board regularly on client risk: this year we have worked with two high risk clients and two medium risk clients. This obviously places a high degree of stress on therapeutic staff. With an increasingly challenging working environment it is critical that our counsellors and therapists have access to clinical supervision and regular professional training. New training opportunities are available to all staff and throughout the year counsellors have attended a number of seminars and workshops including “Working with oppositional, defiant and angry children and adolescents”; Gottman Level 2 Couple Therapy and an introduction to Imago Relationship Therapy.

From time to time in all practices safety issues arise which need clarification. One such is the role of Parent Help when a client requests that the agency be one of the client’s “five eyes” as required by Oranga Tamariki but fails to attend counselling appointments. Close contact with the client and social worker managed the possible risk but it would be helpful to have a definitive answer for any similar situations in the future..



HELP US  
HELP PARENTS  
thank you!

Parent Help is a non profit organisation supporting parents  
and positive families/whanau through our free  
parenting helpline 0800 568 856, affordable parenting courses  
and counselling services.

T.04 802 5767 E.admin@parenthelp.org.nz  
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Parent  
Help For Parent and  
Family Support

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# THANK YOU

We are immensely grateful to all the organisations listed and to the many individual donations which have enabled us to continue supporting parents and families throughout Aotearoa. Your continued interest in the work we do supporting families is greatly appreciated.

- COGS Hutt Valley
- COGS Manukau
- COGS Wellington
- COGS Whitiara
- Freemasons Foundation
- GoogleAds
- Kiwi First donors
- Lottery Grants Board
- Menzshed Wellington
- PubCharity
- Southern Trust
- Spark Foundation
- Thomas George Macarthy Trust

# WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

## We need your financial support

As a non profit organisation, we need your financial support to help continue and expand our work. Our wish is for all New Zealand children to be raised in a positive and safe environment.

## What your donation does

- It allows us to provide immediate support to the many parents calling our Helpline
- It helps us offer affordable family therapy for vulnerable families
- It allows us to run low cost parenting courses for parents

## Ways to DONATE

- On our website: [www.parenthelp.org.nz/donate](http://www.parenthelp.org.nz/donate)
- Online via GiveALittle/
- Call Parent Help office on 04 802 5767





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For support and  
early support

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# FINANCIALS

















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# PARENT HELP

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