

Friday, 8 April, 2016

Child mental and emotional health contacts close to double in 20 years

Contacts to Parentline by parents concerned about child mental and emotional health has close to doubled in 20 years, a new report revealed today.

Parentline's 2015 Insights report released today about contacts from Queensland and the Northern Territory, reveals that parents and carers contacting the service to talk about the mental and emotional health of their children have almost doubled in 20 years, rising from 5.9% of all contacts between 1996-2015 to 10.1% in 2015.

According to **yourtown** CEO Tracy Adams, the increase in contacts about mental health is likely due to a number of reasons, including greater community awareness and education about mental and emotional health issues.

"Information available to the community about mental health issues such as eating disorders, psychosis, depression and anxiety, has steadily increased over the last 20 years. Knowledge about associated behaviours parents can look out for means more parents recognise possible issues and reach out to us for help or support," she said.

Ms Adams said that being there when parents do reach out is critical to the community and Parentline is working with other agencies and organisations to help ensure children, young people and families access the support needed.

"Parentline's work with the community includes supporting vulnerable parents and carers referred to the service by the Queensland Police," she said.

"Through the Police referral service, Parentline provides support for families experiencing issues like domestic violence, mental health concerns, and alcohol and drug misuse.

"This gives those most needing our support someone to talk to about how we and others can help. It also helps take the pressure off frontline Policing."

Queensland Commissioner for Police Ian Stewart, said Parentline helped support the Queensland Police Service's goal of creating safe communities by being there for parents experiencing what are often complex family issues.

"Parentline assists the Queensland Police by providing professional counselling support that can defuse family conflicts and offer long-term solutions to complex issues. Ultimately, this can strengthen families and the community," he said.

An ongoing survey of Parentline contacts from 2011-15 showed that the service was very effective or effective in helping strengthen families, with 90% of parents surveyed saying it increased their capacity to cope with an issue. Eighty-six (86%) said it increased their understanding about their children, and 85% felt it increased their confidence as a parent. This research shows that Parentline is effective in promoting the positive parenting of our children.

The challenging behaviour of children has consistently been the top reason why parents have contacted Parentline over the last 20 years, remaining at around 15% of all calls each year over the last two decades. The relationship between parents and their children was the second most common reason for contacting the service, followed by parenting strategies and parent relationships. In 2015, Parentline engaged in 8,018 phone and online contacts.

Parents or carers in Queensland and the Northern Territory looking for support can contact Parentline on 1300 30 1300 or parentline.com.au. The telephone and email service operates between 8am-10pm, seven days a week. Web counselling is available from 11am-2pm, Tuesday and Thursday.

Parentline is funded by the Queensland and Northern Territory Governments.

The 2015 Parentine Insights report can be accessed at www.yourtown.com.au/parentlineinsights

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INTERVIEW/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

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