

# **Evaluation of the Toughlove Programme: Supporting parents to support teens**

Toughlove Auckland

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# 1. Executive summary

## 1.1 Introduction

Toughlove is a philosophy and a framework for action that underpins a programme designed to help parents deal with difficult teen behaviour. It is based on the implementation of consequences to address challenging teen behaviour by parents making changes to their own behaviour. These changes are developed and supported with the help of like-minded parents experiencing similar difficulties. At the centre of the programme delivery is the weekly group meeting that, following a prescribed format, assists in supporting behavioural change by helping group members to develop goals by 'taking a stand' and setting 'bottom lines' to deal with unacceptable teen behaviour.

The programme is licensed to the Yorks, its American founders, and New Zealand is bound to adhere to the programmes' intent and delivery. Although regional implementation is autonomous, Toughlove's national body has a responsibility to maintain the programme's Toughlove's integrity.

Toughlove Auckland (TLA) is regarded within Toughlove as taking a leadership position to ensure the programme continues to be delivered within its region. Through funding from the Ministry of Social Development, the Community Organisation Grants Scheme and a number of other charitable organisations, including The Lion Foundation, The Trusts Community Organisation and Pub Charity, and the time and dedication of a core group of volunteers, TLA has been able to maintain a consistent presence in Auckland in direct contrast to declining participation in the programme throughout the rest of New Zealand. TLA has secured the employment of a full-time salaried chief executive officer, separated governance from operations and developed a 2008–12 strategic plan containing three key goals. These are to:

1. market TLA - including raising awareness and creating positive perceptions about the programme
2. build the existing organisation - including increasing funding and increasing the pool of volunteers with required skills supported by paid staff
3. grow the programme - including understanding the needs of TLA's audience and implementing alternative delivery modes

TLA commissioned Litmus Limited to undertake independent research to assist in the realisation of its organisational goals. Specifically, the research provides an evaluation of TLA's current relevance, effectiveness and outcomes, efficiency and sustainability to inform improvements for the programme.

The research evaluation was conducted over a seven-month period from October 2011 to April 2012 and adopted a mixed-methodology approach. This included a documentation review, workshop with the TLA Board, focus groups and in-depth face-to-face interviews with volunteers and parents, in-depth interviews with TLA representatives and key agencies dealing with at risk families, an online survey of parents involved with TLA between 2006–11, evaluation of TLA's enrolment forms for new parents (October 2011 to February 2012) and an analysis of TLA's own client evaluation surveys (July 2009 to October 2011). A total of n=242 responses were taken into consideration when preparing this evaluation.

## 1.2 Summary of findings and conclusions

### Relevance

The purpose and focus of the Toughlove programme, which is to help parents who are experiencing challenging, unacceptable teen behaviour to develop strategies, skills and to provide support, is highly **relevant** on many different levels.

Its goal, to positively change teens' behaviour and improve relationships within the home by parents changing their own behaviour, with the ultimate goal of **improved life options** for teens, is as critical today as when the programme was invented in 1979 and introduced to New Zealand in the 1980s. It is also clearly **aligned** with three of the Prime Minister's five 'results areas' for New Zealanders – reducing long-term welfare dependency, boosting skills and employment and reducing crime.<sup>1</sup>

Toughlove is **unique** in its focus on parents (rather than teens), and it is clearly positioned as a programme that supports parents who have reached crisis point<sup>2</sup> when all other options have failed to make a difference. Parents currently benefitting the most from attending TLA groups are most typically experiencing **extreme** anti-social behaviours, including alcohol and drug abuse, theft, violence, promiscuity, staying away from home, self-harm and mental health issues that are unlikely to be resolved in the short term.

A key feature of the programme is the support offered to parents and it is because of this, and its weekly group meetings, that Toughlove is readily **equated with Alcoholics Anonymous**. Toughlove is also **benchmarked against Parents Inc**. Its unique focus on helping parents to deal with 'tougher' issues and behaviour **fills a gap** in Parents Inc.'s otherwise comprehensive, yet generalist, stable of parenting courses.

TLA is identified by referral agencies as a **specialist service** and a valuable extension to their own offer to parents; this is especially relevant when referral agents' skills are inadequate and resources are stretched. Even trained psychologists and counsellors dealing with parents and difficult teen behaviour feel less able to offer the same support as people who have first-hand **experience** of this behaviour. **Direct referral** agencies are wide ranging and varied but typically include other parenting groups, schools and the New Zealand Police. **Indirect referral** also happens through pamphlets and information available at any of the other agencies that people experiencing these difficulties may visit, for example, general practitioners.

### Effectiveness

TLA is extremely **effective** for the majority of parents who take part in the programme. **Ninety-one percent would recommend Toughlove**.<sup>3</sup> It is also

<sup>1</sup> Three of the Prime Minister's five Results areas for New Zealanders include reducing long term welfare dependency, boosting skills and employment and reducing crime Press Release Key, J. (2012, March 16)

<sup>2</sup> All data sources in this evaluation support

<sup>3</sup> Litmus online survey of parents who had attended TLA between 2006–11

**effectively achieving** the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes as identified during a workshop with TLA's Board and illustrated in Toughlove's programme logic<sup>4</sup> that is included in Appendix 2. **Eighty-four percent<sup>5</sup> agree** Toughlove has given them **confidence** to deal with their teens' behaviour and given them **skills** and shown them ways to **change their own behaviour**. **Thirty-two percent agree** that Toughlove has led to **better education, training and employment** opportunities and choices for their teens.

Toughlove is also **effectively meeting the needs** of many parents who **do not continue** with the programme **over a long period** of time. Some feel equipped to make changes after reading the Toughlove parents' manual or attending just a few sessions to practise the principles. They feel comfortable in the reassurance that Toughlove is a lifeline for life if needed. Evidence points to a **decline** in the average number of **sessions attended**.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, TLA's effectiveness is **compromised** by a number of factors.

- First, its **low visibility** and **brand management** compromise its effectiveness. **Advocacy** is the strongest promotional mechanism for Toughlove and many parents who take part have been recommended by friends and family and Toughlove volunteers and its representatives. These parents are typically more prepared for the **experience** and have a better understanding of the **programme's intent**. Increasingly, **searching the internet** for information and organisations to help with challenging teen behaviour leads people to Toughlove, but their needs and expectations are less likely to be matched by the actual experience than when introduced by parents who have experienced Toughlove.

Toughlove is largely **invisible** in the wider community and many who take part are unwilling to broadcast their experiences of the programme, **preferring to distance** themselves from the difficult period in their lives and/or because of feelings of **inadequacy and shame**. As a consequence, its underlying principles, values, the programme experience and its audience are often **misconstrued** by potential referral agencies and parents who could benefit from the programme.

In the absence of active management of the brand, the **name acts as a surrogate**. **Toughness** is a relative not absolute construct, and one that is open to individual interpretation. A focus on 'toughness' is at odds with society's **current emphasis on rewarding** rather than punishing for behavioural change, and it is in conflict with the anti-smacking debate and legislation introduced in New Zealand in 2009.<sup>7</sup>

- Second, TLA's **current audience is limited**, does not extend to all demographic and ethnic groups and is characteristically female and European. This is in the context of Auckland as the fastest growing, most ethnically diverse community in New

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Toughlove programme logic in Appendix 2

<sup>5</sup> Litmus on-line survey of parents who had attended TLA between 2006 - 2011

<sup>6</sup> Litmus online survey of parents compared with Toughlove enrolment form analysis for new parents attending between October 2011 to February 2012

<sup>7</sup> Pre-2001, a Labour-led government considered and rejected amending the law at the request of the United Nations. Anti-smacking law was introduced in New Zealand under section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 following on from a referendum when 88% of the population was in favour of no smacking

Zealand.<sup>8</sup> However, evidence suggests that **audience engagement** comes from the extent to which **individuals feel comfortable** the core delivery mechanism – the weekly group meeting. This includes the group size, composition, personal connection, buy in to the underlying principles and the **sharing of personal stories in a public forum** and the roles they are required to play.

It is the public sharing of personal stories that **deters individuals and communities** who **value their privacy**.

**Engagement with the group** is predicated on a host of factors from the severity of the problems experienced and discussed to the age of the group members and the length of time they have been attending. The changing composition of attendance of group members also compromises connection and can counter the forging of strong relationships within the group.

- Third, its effectiveness is compromised by **limited choice of locations** (and, to a lesser, extent times). Convenience of location is a key factor influencing attendance, especially for the more financially disadvantaged. More locations and different community venues would **increase access** to a wider range of population groups and make it easier for people to find a group where they **feel they belong**.
- Fourth, **inconsistency in the quality** of experience across the different groups reduces the programme's effectiveness as people feel disappointed if the group is poorly facilitated and they are less able to have their say and be supported.
- Fifth, **one main touch point**, and a **predetermined programme structure and formula** for success (long-term commitment to attendance with a weekly group meeting and ongoing support and involvement), limits access as increasingly time-poor people **combine physical and digital** sources of information and connection. They become familiar and adept at combining a wealth of information from multiple sources and engaging in **physical and digital domains**.

### Efficiency

Overall, TLA is **being managed** in an **efficient** manner. It is a well-established programme that has recently moved away from a total reliance on volunteers and has implemented policies and systems. TLA is guided by a **strategic plan**, an agreed set of outcomes, one full-time chief executive and dedicated board members and volunteers. TLA has just celebrated its **21st anniversary** and, over the period of its existence, it has supported many parents.

The programme offers **value for money** for parents who pay a one-off life-time fee of \$40 to attend as often as they like.

### Sustainability

TLA is at a crossroads. It has **arrested the decline** in popularity of the programme experienced by other regions in New Zealand<sup>9</sup>, largely due to structural changes and the dedication of committed volunteers.

<sup>8</sup> Auckland is the most ethnically diverse and fastest growing population centre in New Zealand – Briefing Paper for the Royal Commission on Auckland's Governance, April, 2008

<sup>9</sup> The number of Toughlove groups throughout New Zealand are declining

Despite this, attendance in existing groups is **dwindling**, numbers attending are unpredictable and new members attend fewer groups on average than in the past. Recent attempts to initiate new groups have been unsuccessful. New group start-up is dependent on the **availability and willingness** of parents to step into **volunteer** roles that, in the past, have required potential volunteers to have been immersed in the experiences of others and in the **sharing of stories over years** rather than weeks or months.

Some of the more established **volunteers** have felt the need to move on as their circumstances have changed and/or their ability to maintain the intensity of commitment impacts on their own personal circumstances and begins to take its toll. Many within Toughlove are **concerned about the future** of an organisation that they know has a positive impact on people's lives.

The **impact of digital** information and communication online is a non-stop phenomenon. It opens up a new world of information and different communication experiences and expectations. Whilst it does not replace personal interaction, it has changed expectations about programme **delivery and access**.

Time-poor people have greater expectations over convenience of access (in a location 'perfect for me'), timeliness and efficiency of sessions and an expectation of being able to **engage at a level appropriate for them**. In today's society it is about meeting individual need rather than applying 'one size fits all'.

### 1.3 Recommendations

To ensure the ongoing success of TLA, based on a synthesis of the evidence, Litmus recommends:

4. increasing the visibility of TLA and managing its identity to dispel negative imagery and myths
5. working in partnership with key referral agencies, demonstrating fit and TLA's unique position (Become embedded in key referral agencies' websites and operation. Advocacy with schools and New Zealand Police is paramount.)
6. distributing information to a wide range of agencies and have pamphlets available
7. ensuring TLA's updated website focuses on the positive outcomes and gives a virtual connection to the actual group experience and any other delivery models (Consider incorporating tools to help parents understand whether or not the programme and its delivery is really for them, for example, online crisis assessment form.)
8. exploring ways to continue to achieve positive outcomes by improving physical access to the programme by increasing locations and types of venues and, therefore, giving people the opportunity to connect with 'people like me'
9. responding to parent needs by delivering shorter, continuous sessions of four-to-six weeks to introduce to the programme's principles and actions
10. allowing parents to connect on different levels to achieve the programme's benefits (For some parents, the Toughlove parents'<sup>10</sup> manual alone is enlightening and others may welcome online support, after a face-to-face

<sup>10</sup> Toughlove Parents Manual Phyllis and David York Revised edition 1992

experience. People who shy away from public expression of their difficulties may be happier to have one-on-one session in person or online. Online could be used as an option for providing ongoing support.)

11. exploring the different possible service model combinations and ways to apply the experience of more experienced volunteers and recruit and train new volunteers
12. implementing quality improvement strategies to ensure consistency of service delivery across all touch points
13. developing pricing structures to reflect the different combination of service offers.



## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background

Toughlove started up in New Zealand in 1984. The programme was founded in the United States by Phyllis and David York in 1979. The Yorks were trained family therapists who worked with troubled teenagers and their families in Pennsylvania for 14 years when they found themselves caught up in the same parental difficulties with their three daughters. As psychologists and authors, the Yorks developed and franchised the Toughlove approach. It rapidly became a successful international organisation.

In the 1980s,<sup>11</sup> Toughlove New Zealand had a strong and growing national network. Its popularity began to decline in the late 1990s.

Toughlove Auckland (TLA) has experienced a similar decline evidenced in a decrease in the number of groups and numbers attending groups. There has also been an increase in fallout after parents have attended only a handful of group sessions, and recent attempts to start up new groups have been unsuccessful. Despite these trends, TLA has maintained a consistent presence in the Auckland region, largely as a result of a core group of committed volunteers who are passionate about the benefits of the programme and its positive impact on families. The vision of TLA is acknowledged within Toughlove.

*The programme is going to die, because it is coming back to the expertise side of things. We need to look to what Auckland is doing and be prepared to take step, make changes and take risks by stepping out of our comfort zone. Being more than good-intentioned parents and putting structures into place for good leadership, governance and training.*  
(Toughlove stakeholder)

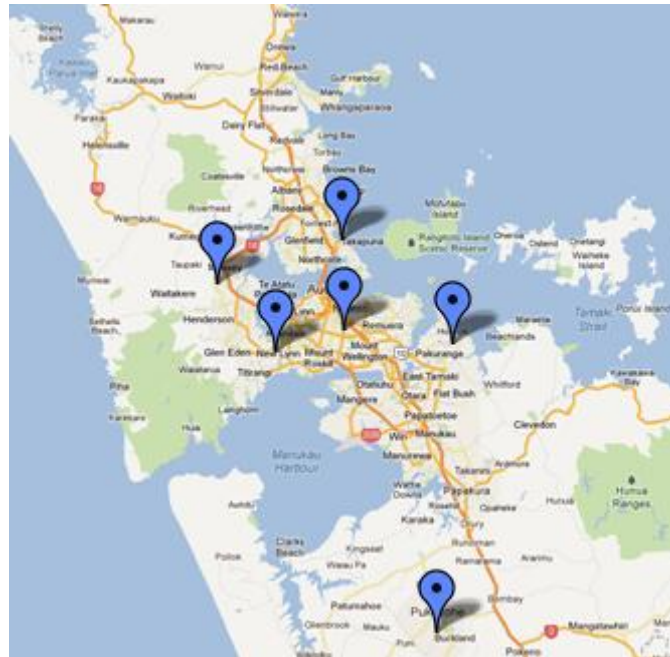
TLA's sustainability has been supported by organisational change undertaken some five years ago. TLA has secured funding,<sup>12</sup> has a full-time salaried chief executive officer and has developed a strategic plan for 2008–12 to guide the organisation's direction and activities. A clear division has been drawn between TLA governance and operations. Monthly board meetings are held with a small core group that is separate from the larger monthly meetings held for representatives and coordinators. These meetings focus on training and quality control across the groups.

Currently, there are six-weekly groups in the TLA region, with the possibility of a new group in Helensville. Current group locations are outlined in Figure 1.

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<sup>11</sup> Founded in New Zealand by Valerie Blennerhasset who, inspired by the Toughlove book she found in a bookshop on Lambton Quay, Wellington, in 1984, formed a group of friends as an informal support group. She participated on a National Radio programme 'Parents' turn to speak' and got letters from more than 60 desperate parents, and Toughlove was formally established in 1985.

<sup>12</sup> Funding sources are: Ministry of Social Development (\$40,000), Community Organisation Grants Scheme funding (\$30,000), other charitable organisations and trusts, for example, The Lion Foundation, The Trusts Community Organisation, Pub Charity (\$30,000).

**Figure 1: Current Toughlove group locations, Auckland, New Zealand**

TLA invited Litmus Limited, an independent research and evaluation company, to partner with them to develop a full research proposal for New Zealand Lotteries grant funding to undertake research to evaluate the Toughlove programme.

## 2.2 Evaluation objectives

The fundamental purpose of the evaluation is to provide information and evidence from key internal and external stakeholders, including TLA parents, to assist in the realisation of the three five-year core goals in TLA's 2008–12 strategic plan. These are to market Toughlove Auckland, to build the existing organisation and to grow the programme.

The specific objectives of the research evaluation are to determine the current relevance, effectiveness and outcomes of the Toughlove programme and to inform programme improvements.

## 3. Evaluation approach

### 3.1 Evaluation approach

The evaluation approach was designed by Litmus and agreed with TLA before it applied for Lottery Grant funding. The evaluation plan and all tools were approved by the Association of Social Science Researchers Ethics Committee. The approach was mixed methodology, using a range of qualitative and quantitative data sources and document review, spanning a seven-month period from October 2011 to April 2012.

A total of  $n=242$  responses have been taken into consideration when preparing this evaluation.

The evaluation sources, approach and timeline are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1: Evaluation sources, approach and timeline**

Evaluation sources	
Date	Activity
Ongoing	Documentation review <sup>13</sup>
5 October 2011	Workshop with TLA Board and management ( $n=3$ ) <sup>14</sup>
5 October 2011	Focus group with TLA volunteers ( $n=5$ , one from each group (excluding the Massey group)) <sup>15</sup>
17 October – 1 November 2011	In-depth interviews with Toughlove representatives and representatives from key agencies dealing with at risk families ( $n=11$ ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parents Inc. (<math>n=1</math>)</li> <li>▪ Lifeline (<math>n=1</math>)</li> <li>▪ School counsellors (<math>n=2</math>)</li> <li>▪ Police (<math>n=2</math>)</li> <li>▪ Child Youth and Family Services (<math>n=1</math>)</li> <li>▪ Toughlove representatives (<math>n=4</math>)</li> </ul>
October 2011	Opt out email from TLA to parents, who attended TLA between 2006–11, requesting participation in online survey ( $n=450$ ) <sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> A complete list of the documentation reviewed is included in Appendix 1.

<sup>14</sup> The workshop was facilitated by Sally Duckworth and Janette Brocklesby, and the programme logic that surfaced is included in Appendix 2.

<sup>15</sup> The workshop and all interviews and focus groups were undertaken by Janette Brocklesby and Sally Duckworth. Interview and discussion guides are included in Appendix 4.

<sup>16</sup> A copy of the letter is included in Appendix 5.

Evaluation sources	
Date	Activity
28 November 2011	Observation of Epsom Parent Support Group <sup>17</sup>
28–30 November	Five face-to-face interviews with TLA parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Māori (n=1)</li> <li>▪ Pacific (n=2)</li> <li>▪ Asian (n=2)</li> </ul>
29–30 November 2011	Three focus groups with TLA parents <sup>18</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attended 1–2 sessions (n=5)</li> <li>▪ Attended 3–6 sessions (n=4)</li> <li>▪ Attended 7+ sessions (n=5)</li> </ul>
27 February 2012	Online survey with TLA parents launched (n=335) <sup>19</sup>
11 March 2012	Online survey closed (n=77) <sup>20</sup>
April 2012	Analysis of TLA new parent enrolment forms (parents starting October 2011 to February 2012) (n=56)
April 2012	Analysis of TLA client evaluation survey (July 2009 to October 2011) (n=71)

### 3.2 Analysis

A series of workshops and meetings was held with the research team. Analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken using a thematic coding framework to elicit key themes and findings. This included:

- reviewing interview and group discussion notes and transcripts to identify recurring and dominant themes
- identifying quotes to illustrate common themes and responses relating to the research objectives and wider contextual issues.

Key themes and findings formed the basis for the development of the questionnaire for the online survey.

Analysis of TLA's recent enrolment forms and client surveys involved a combination of counts and thematic analysis.

<sup>17</sup> Observed by Janette Brocklesby.

<sup>18</sup> Focus groups comprised a mix of parents and caregivers from across the Auckland groups, and each participant received \$50 for their time and contribution. The fact sheet, consent form and koha receipt form are included in Appendix 4.

<sup>19</sup> Online survey questionnaire is included in Appendix 6.

<sup>20</sup> Appendix 7 provides survey response rate information against a comparative survey. Appendix 8 provides information on best practice for increasing the response rate for online surveys. For this survey, participants were entered into a prize draw for one of two \$100 grocery and/or petrol vouchers.

## 4. Defining the Toughlove offer

### 4.1 Toughlove is about a programme and its structure. It is based on the Toughlove philosophy and has an enduring format

*People from twenty years ago might see that the programme has changed, but it has a similar look and feel as it did when I first joined twenty years ago. There may be smarter ways to do stuff (like on the admin side), but the actual programme, what parents are taught and the programme philosophy is set in concrete and part of that programme is subject to intellectual property restrictions. (Internal stakeholder)*

The Toughlove philosophy centres on *the process of change* for families in crisis that are experiencing destructive behaviour from teens. Its purpose is to provide support and education that empowers parents and young people to accept responsibility for their behaviour and actions.

It is based on the principle that, through involvement in Toughlove, families being torn apart by unacceptable teen behaviour will be given *ongoing* support, strategies and solutions to help them through this challenging time.

It is a programme for families where ‘understanding, reasoning, active listening and above all, tender loving care (T.L.C) will not solve problems and not for the many parents whose teenagers will not accept T.L.C. These young people may skip school, run away from home, abuse alcohol or drugs, get into trouble with the law, get involved with others only on their own terms, or act as if they are the only ones who should make decisions about their lives.’<sup>21</sup>

The programme has three phases:

- Phase 1: awareness of the negative influences that adversely affect families
- Phase 2: taking action by parents immediately changing their own behaviour
- Phase 3: continued growth enabling parents to give support to others and, ideally, to move through the programme to become volunteers or take on other roles in the organisation.

In the context of Phase 3, the programme’s continued existence is dependent on parents and caregivers who have benefited from Toughlove staying involved and taking on roles within the organisation.

*It’s been going for twenty-one years – no wonder there is a wealth of information. If I was the person in the situation facing tough times with teenagers I might get involved myself. I don’t have the same knowledge as people at Toughlove who have experienced it themselves. Even though I’m a counsellor, I’d feel hypocritical trying to give the same kind of support. Volunteers have depth of knowledge and experience. (External stakeholder)*

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<sup>21</sup> *Toughlove Parents Manual*, Phyllis and David York, Revised edition 1992.

## 4.2 At the core of the programme delivery is the weekly group meeting where any number of like-minded parents set goals to address and deal with the behaviour they want to change by making changes to *their own* behaviour

*It's a little bit like this, there are three, six or seven of us sitting around a table and if any of us had a problem we could sit quietly and think about it individually or we could join forces. When you've got a very, very personal problem that's extremely sensitive, where you are not in a safe place, anything you say is going to be around town tomorrow or you know that some of the people in the group are likely to be judging you as a bad parent, you are not going to marshal the combined resources that are sitting around the table, but if you could find a programme that gave you structure and the discipline and principles to get people working together then you'd hit on something special and that's really what Toughlove is to me. In essence, what makes Toughlove so special is the ability to marshal us all together in a way that allows us to generate ideas in two hours a week whether we have five or fifty people or one hundred people in a group; we can still do it in two hours. (Toughlove volunteer)*

In a group situation, parents set goals for the behaviour they want to change and their response to it (take a stand), make a bottom line (develop an action plan for one week that has active support from the group), build a plan (who, what, when and where needed to achieve the bottom line) and get support from the group. Group participants receive a parent pack with all the relevant programme information including the Toughlove parents' manual.

Although the two-and-a-quarter hour group session follows a set format,<sup>22</sup> it is each parent and/or caregiver's choice as to how many groups they attend and their frequency of attendance. A one-off small life-time fee (\$40) is charged and parents are welcome to return at any time or stay for as long as they need to.

## 4.3 Toughlove is unique. It has an emphasis on parents *supporting* parents and/or caregivers experiencing similar difficult teen behaviour, rather than focusing on the teen

*The thing with Toughlove is it is basic common sense. It's about supporting the parents. They are there to support the parents to deal with the kids. Let's be fair, very few agencies do that. People tend to want to deal with the kids but not the parents – that's where Toughlove comes in. If a parent is really struggling, a support group could be useful. (External stakeholder)*

Toughlove is about parents gaining support from the collective wisdom of other parents who have experienced similar behaviour with their own teens, and not from trained psychologists or counsellors. Through listening to other people's stories, parents can apply learnings to help deal with their own situations and can experience support gained from the knowledge that their experiences are shared by others and they are not alone.

<sup>22</sup> Five components: Large group (five minutes), Small group – success of last week's stand (30 minutes), Large group – information session (40 minutes), Small group – work session stands, bottom lines, plans and support (40 minutes) and Large group – wrap up (20 minutes).

Toughlove parents are united by shared feelings of failure and shame and gain non-judgemental support from others with the same experiences.

*It's kind of like stories from the trenches. And I think sometimes what happens is that parents who have very strong-willed children feel embarrassed to share their struggles. They kind of feel that for 90% of parents whose kids are behaving reasonably well that they will feel judged. That somehow they failed as parents. The beauty of Toughlove support groups is that 'Hey we're all in this together. We feel like failures. The standard things don't work for our kids. Society would blame us for being poor parents, but we're doing everything possible and more and nothing is working – help!' (External stakeholder)*

#### **4.4 Toughlove principles have universal relevance for any parent experiencing problems with their teen's behaviour**

Its approach, founded on each participant setting boundaries and consequences relevant to them with the help and support of the group, makes Toughlove principles relevant to all parents, irrespective of the age of the teen, family structure or ethnicity.

*I first found out about Toughlove on the internet because I was having problems with one of my sons. I just didn't know where to turn. It was so good, I joined for a good six months and I kind of felt as though we were family. You know, the people there were going through the same thing. I wasn't alone. It all worked for me; even now it's still working. I met all types of people in there. I met a lawyer and I was like 'wow she's going through that?!'. I thought, I'm going to look at these people like they are ordinary because they have the same problems as me, just financial wise we're different. I get so tongue tied so I was glad when it was someone else talking but it was interesting because everyone had a different way of representing themselves. (Pacific parent)*

#### **4.5 Summary**

Toughlove is a philosophy and framework for parents to develop strategies to deal with challenging teen behaviour with the ongoing support of like-minded people who have *experienced* or *are experiencing* the same difficulties. Parents move through the programme into volunteer roles, providing a wealth of first-hand life experience in dealing with difficulties with teens. They are experienced in parenting and in the application of the Toughlove approach, not trained counsellors or psychologists.

The programme was invented in the 1979 by David and Phyllis York, trained family therapists, when they experienced difficulties with their own teens. It was introduced by Valerie Blennerhasset in 1984 in response to her search for solutions and strategies to deal with difficulties with teen behaviour in her own family.

At Toughlove's core is the weekly group meeting that, following a prescribed format, helps parents to identify behaviours they wish to change and develop action plans to apply consequences. By making changes to their own behaviour, parents make a positive impact on the family and, ultimately, Toughlove facilitates better life outcomes for young people and society by helping one family at a time.

As a programme that deals with behavioural change and consequences, Toughlove has relevance for all people struggling to deal with difficult teen behaviour.



## 5. Stakeholders perceptions of Toughlove

### 5.1 Toughlove remains unchanged in a changing world, yet its focus on dealing with anti-social teenage behaviour has continued relevance

Toughlove is a known, if mysterious, concept whose philosophy and approach is linked to the 1980s. In the longer term, Toughlove aspires to help communities, one family at a time, by improving outcomes for young people<sup>23</sup> through the application of a model of consequences. Its long-term intent, to improve outcomes for young people by supporting parents, makes it highly relevant to modern society.<sup>24</sup>

### 5.2 Since its inception, demographic, digital and legal changes have reshaped the context within which TLA operates

The programme's delivery, format and philosophy has remained unchanged over time, which challenges access as Auckland's ethnic make-up changes and digital communication becomes commonplace.

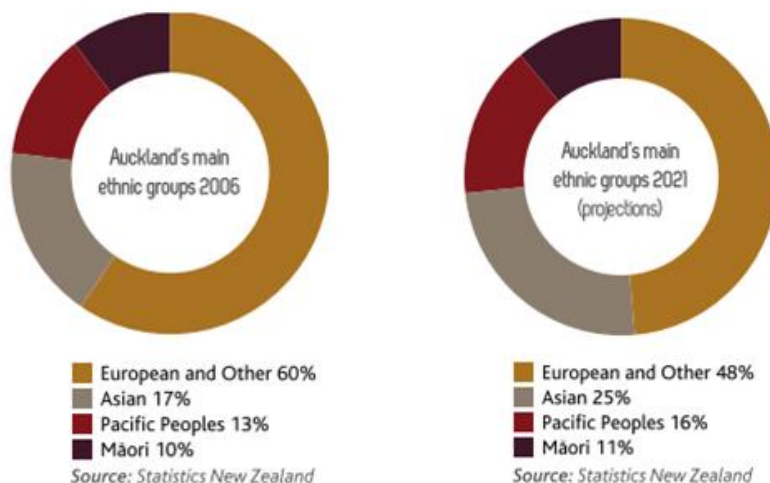
In particular, there are questions around Toughlove's cultural appropriateness especially in Auckland's fast-growing, ethnically diverse community.<sup>25</sup> By 2021, Statistics New Zealand projects just one-in-two Auckland residents will be European. Toughlove is a programme designed largely for European families and less so for Māori, Pacific and Asian families and is based on participants giving a commitment to regular weekly group meetings.

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<sup>23</sup> Refer to Programme Logic Outcomes Framework, Appendix 2.

<sup>24</sup> Three of the Prime Minister's five results areas for New Zealanders include: reducing long-term welfare dependency, boosting skills and employment and reducing crime. Key, J. (16 March 2012).

<sup>25</sup> Auckland is the most ethnically diverse and fastest growing population centre in New Zealand – Briefing Paper for the Royal Commission on Auckland's Governance, April, 2008.

**Figure 2: Auckland's main ethnic groups**

*There has been no change over time. It's the same concept of how the programme is delivered. They are trying to attract people of other cultures, but the common elements are that, by assumption, it's for middle-class parents at the end of their tether who are prepared to make a commitment to attending ongoing regular weekly meetings. Not useful to other cultures who don't want to share in a group; and do you think the materials are still relevant for the internet generation, for younger parents? (External stakeholder)*

Since Toughlove's introduction, rapid changes in technology have increased access to a vast array of information.

*Parents of today are smarter as they have more information on hand. More access to information on the internet. They research and read up. Their expectations are much higher; we have to be excellent in content and delivery. Delivery is massive, we live in a fast-paced culture, parents expect comfortable surroundings, not cold school halls or community rooms, we're looking at webinars and relevance in delivery across a range of touch points with a sense of 'Yes we can!'. We are looking to offer a holistic solution to problems and to facilitate access. Conceptually, what Toughlove is trying to do is awesome but it all comes down to marketing the experience in a way of relevance for today. (External stakeholder)*

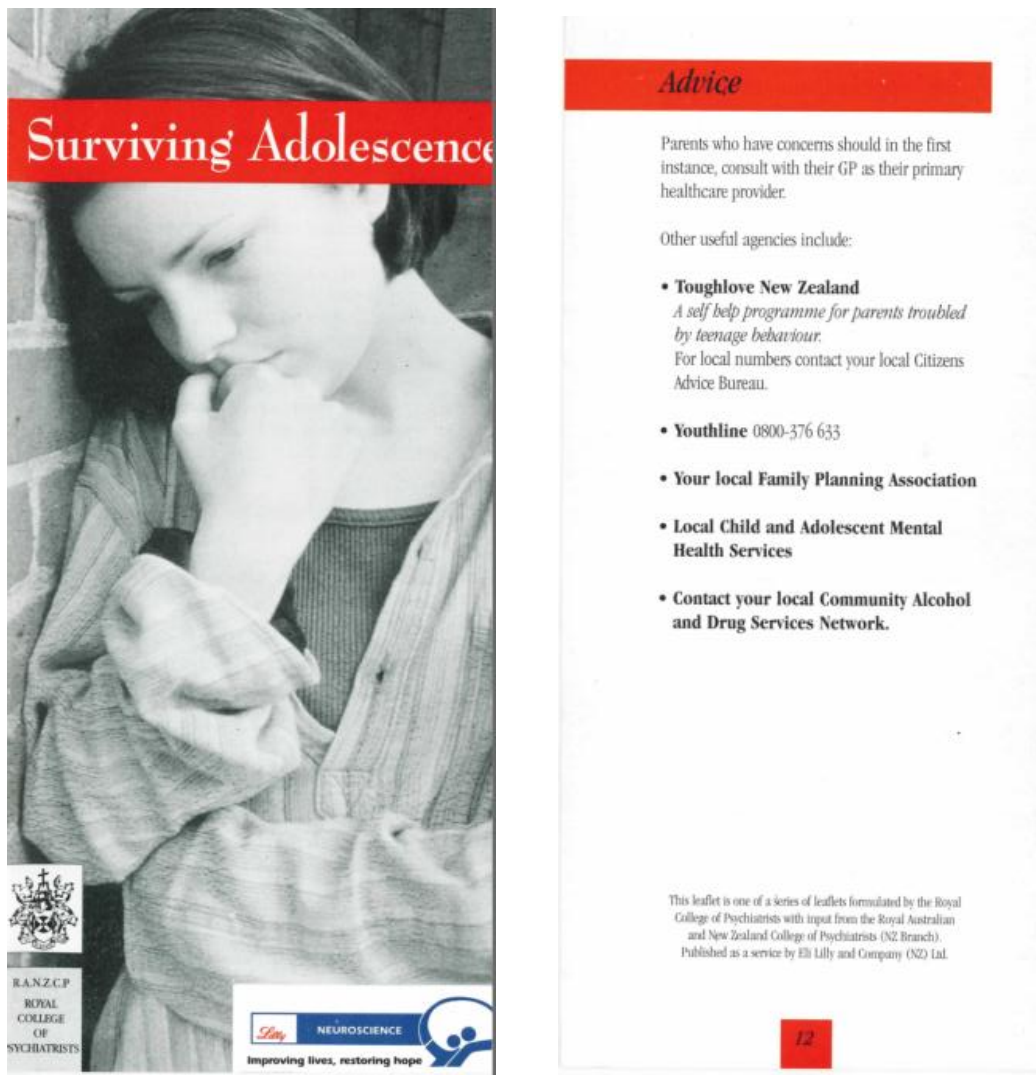
*The one touch point approach limits access especially for younger, more internet savvy parents and caregivers. (External stakeholder)*

It is 'in the vernacular' and many claim to know Toughlove but, in essence, little is known about it and it is most often associated with harsh action that conflicts with the anti-smacking debate and legislation introduced in 2009.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Pre-2001, a Labour-led government considered and rejected amending the law at the request of the United Nations. Anti-smacking law was introduced in New Zealand under section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 following on from a referendum when 88% of the population who took part in the referendum were in favour of no smacking.

### 5.3 Toughlove's identity is based on deficit thinking and is at odds with current positive-parenting approaches

Figure 3: 'Surviving adolescence' pamphlet



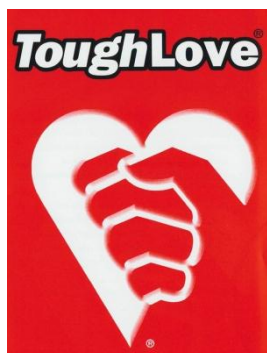
Many of these impressions come from perceptions of the programme delivery as based on dated, deficit thinking. It is a consequences and actions model, with minimal reference to rewarding good behaviour.

*Perception is everything. Conceptually, what they are trying to do is awesome – you can be the parent – but it comes down to marketing the experience. From the outside, it fits a niche, it's unique and it works to give confidence back, but it feels like a talk fest and people have to be comfortable to talk about the crap that's going on and it could get quite depressing. Where is the hope and the positive outcomes? Parenting these days has more of a focus on reward. It's serious and support for people who feel trapped, guilty and betrayed. It's deficit thinking versus how to aim for a goal like how to enjoy*

*being a parent while not losing sight of the role. Everything about it looks cold and uninspiring. (External stakeholder)*

#### 5.4 Impressions of Toughlove are largely generated by the name, which is emotionally charged and implies the application of ‘toughness’ to correct behaviour

Figure 4: Toughlove logo



*When I think of Toughlove, I think of red, black, angry. (External stakeholder)*

Toughness is a relative not absolute concept that is open to individual interpretation.

*I ask the question, ‘Is Toughlove the right name?’ It’s about setting boundaries, parameters and consequences. What I’d call basic behaviour management. When people talk about consequences, there are rewards. I’m a huge believer in rewarding good behaviour too. Toughlove doesn’t do it justice. It sounds plain cruel. (External stakeholder)*

The Toughlove name has connotations about harsh intervention, and stories prevail in the community.

*One of the stories that went around was the one that one parent said that their kid was so out of control that they were advised by Toughlove to change all the locks, so the teenager was no longer allowed back in the house. For the teenager this might probably have been a very sensible thing to if they were putting the property or people at risk. (External stakeholder)*

Toughlove is linked with the behaviour or action as well as the programme. In conversation, Toughlove is commonly used as a verb.

*People tend to find out about Toughlove by word of mouth. They have other services they use regularly and there is a repertoire they are referred to. When parents are stretched and being undermined they need a service for them, one that lets them know they are not doing Toughlove and teaches them how to do it. (External stakeholder)*

*Toughlove is what you practise when you are totally in the pooh. It’s a niche market about how to connect with teenagers when you have no resources. (External stakeholder)*

## 5.5 Accurate information about Toughlove is scarce and misperceptions abound as the flurries of press activity and publicity become increasingly a thing of the past

Toughlove is not easily accessed using internet searches. Some stakeholders have pamphlets and others know about the programme through personal contact with the Toughlove chief executive. For many, it is a concept they are aware of from old American talk shows. Its current invisibility limits its sustainability and future growth.

*My eye is only attuned to them because of my profession and involvement. Otherwise they are pretty invisible. In fact, Toughlove just seems to have dropped off the radar. I'm not sure how to get updated brochures. The advertising and marketing just isn't there.* (External stakeholder)

*I think it is successful because it has been around for years. It's still operating so there must be a demand for it, although having said that some of the groups have closed because of poor attendance, which makes me think it's not necessarily the best, but successful. The key is the drop off. How big is the drop off? They need to promote themselves more. Only by advertising and people going along and benefiting can it expand.* (External stakeholder)

## 5.6 Toughlove's low profile leads to questions about its longevity in its current format, specifically around extending ways to engage with parents and recruiting and retaining volunteers

*Toughlove is shrinking. They need to get online and develop a tool for people. Face to face is fantastic and valuable but not everyone has time to do that. It's really important they are there, but they need to be less like the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff and more about working on intervention at the beginning by working alongside other providers.* (External stakeholder)

Volunteers acknowledge the need for change to ensure Toughlove's future, and this change may alter the definition, role and expectations of volunteers.

Recent attempts to start up new groups and to run six-weekly programmes have both experienced high drop-out rates. Changes in the structure of the way in which the programme is delivered to one of skills training in a finite period, away from ongoing support, brings into question the volunteer status and changes expectations around payment.

*Well I think I have been brainwashed over the years that the programme is the programme and it cannot be tinkered with or changed. It's like the Bible. And yet, it isn't giving us the numbers we need, whether it's the way we do it, but recent new groups have not been successful and we're not overrun for orientation or when we offered the six-week courses.* (Toughlove stakeholder)

*We've endeavoured to do that and deliver them a snap-bang week-by-week where we go through it in priority, and there has been high fall-out rate. Some people don't even complete the six weeks. It's a different way of operating and personally I'd start to get resentful and want to be paid. Presumably they would pay more for that than joining a*

*group and coming on an indefinite basis. It's a good product and I would be like a tutor.* (Volunteer)

*Maybe we should be looking at shorter groups? Two hours max.* (Toughlove stakeholder)

Involvement in Toughlove is a commitment for parents and caregivers and volunteers. Over time, this can take its toll.

*One of the really hard things for me is all or nothing. That's why I had to get out because it was just taking over. I didn't know how to say 'enough'. Then again I suppose it was a bit selfish of me because I was feeling that warm fuzzy feeling of being able to help people, which was also good. I'd go home to my husband and say 'oh this poor family' and he'd say 'I don't want to hear about it anymore. I'm sick of it.'* (Volunteer)

*We ask parents in crisis to come into the group and take on a role. Often seems so unfair.* (Toughlove stakeholder)

*There is so much unnecessary paperwork and out-of-hours work. A huge commitment.* (Volunteer)

*There are people not soaked enough in the Toughlove programme to do it. Others of us are on our knees because we don't have the knowledge or confidence to do all of this. It's a huge responsibility when you are a volunteer.* (Toughlove stakeholder)

Volunteers express concern about the future of the programme but remain committed to ensuring its success.

*I'm ready to retire because I've been there long enough but I feel the responsibility to ensure that it carries on. Things will have to change. No matter how hard you put effort into people they are still very negative about the Toughlove things they need to do, almost don't want to move on, don't want the help you can offer them because it's uncomfortable, but there are friendships and good things do come through.* (Volunteer)

## **5.7 Ongoing sustainability of TLA is predicated on recruitment of volunteers providing first-hand experience. There are concerns over a diminishing pool of volunteers as involvement with Toughlove declines**

*It's like a coaching relationship. Ultimately, the objective is for people to become self-sufficient, but we have a situation where we have people who are in it for the long haul and keep coming to the group even though they don't have many issues and then volunteers are short on the ground. Most people don't even get past the six weeks.* (Volunteer)

Many of the volunteers have been with Toughlove since the early days and have knowledge to share, but care needs to be taken over personal motivations to stay.

*The purpose is to empower parents, but some stay for years on end and it's just not healthy.* (Toughlove stakeholder)

## 5.8 Toughlove's overly modest and diffident culture dependent on individual volunteers contributes to low visibility and leads to inconsistency in programme delivery

*We're not proud of what we do. We have to sell with pride. We say 'It's \$45. We hope you can manage it. Then there's a weekly donation of \$2. We hope you can manage it. You can come along as often and any time you want. We're not standing proud. We're stuck in a rut. (Toughlove stakeholder)*

*We have to train ourselves to represent the organisation. Stand proud and push. We train the reps and leave them to their own devices and they are parents first and foremost. (Toughlove stakeholder)*

It is a culture that, because of the importance of the roles played by individuals and their own experiences and stories, leads to inconsistencies in programme delivery between groups.

*My observation is that the people who are convening the courses need more training and monitoring by Toughlove to ensure that the group isn't taken over by one of two people. The governing body needs to ensure that people stay within the parameters and that people convening the group stay with the principles and are consistent. They are volunteers, and keeping them interested and focused means they have to read from the same song book and they tend to bring their own ideas. It can cause differences between what's taught in different groups. Need a consistent message from management. (External stakeholder)*

## 5.9 In the absence of TLA's active management of its offer and profile, the community draws its own conclusions and there are mixed opinions about Toughlove's religious affiliation and its audience

There are mixed impressions about the programme's religious affiliation. For some, Toughlove is founded on religious beliefs.

*It was Felix Donnelly back in the day. He was a priest who ran sessions of Toughlove when I was a kid. My parents talked about it. It was a big thing to exercise Toughlove in the 80s and early 90s. Felix was a Catholic, Auckland based priest who started the whole Toughlove movement. (External stakeholder)*

For others, Toughlove is secular.

*There's another agenda there with Parents Inc. It's like they are trying to convert you to Christianity. I don't get that idea from Toughlove. (External stakeholder)*

Some believe Toughlove is a programme most suited for lower socio-economic parents and caregivers, as well as for people with no family support and often with layers of financial and social deprivation. For these people, Toughlove is the affordable alternative to unaffordable therapy.

*I'd like to think Toughlove was for anyone with adolescent boundary issues, but feel it is more for people without family support and usually Pākehā. It's not that they exclude anyone; it's just the people that use [it]. Pākehā look to peer support and share stories, other cultures are private. Western society is happy to talk to strangers; others not so open and want family to look OK from the outside. (External stakeholder)*

On the other hand, Toughlove is seen to be equally as applicable to more affluent parents and caregivers.

*I'd like to find out more. Sounds like you have to be tough to be kind. I've seen the opposite from parents who love their kids too much. It's for a diversity of parents. For those in the low socio-economic group whose parents are so stressed, they are barely surviving and often struggling with addiction and kids are left to their own devices to the high-income families obsessed with money. They think they can buy friendship or buy mates by being the kids' friends. It's at both ends of the spectrum, either way, the kids are stuffed. (External stakeholder)*

### **5.10 Although referral agencies see TLA as an essential resource, when their own capacity and skill to deal with unacceptable teen behaviour is challenged, their specific knowledge and/or direct experience of it is limited**

Schools' resources are stretched and they are unable to deal with all the issues they face. They tend to have a repertoire of complementary services they recommend to parents, many of which they have not directly experienced.

Parents most typically turn to the relevant website to gain insight. TLA's current website fails to enlighten on the experience.

*I know it's [Toughlove] filling a need, but I haven't directly experienced it, and the website doesn't give any indication of what to expect – what happens, who uses it and who benefits. It's a very negative site. (External stakeholder)*

For other schools, inaccurate beliefs about Toughlove restrict access.

*The principle at my current school, which is higher decile, isn't interested in Toughlove because it works against the school's emphasis on rewarding behaviours, but I believe problems are the same throughout. I've worked in multi-cultural schools throughout Auckland and it's hard to stereotype the type of kid. It crosses demographic and ethnic backgrounds. It's more about the personality of the kids involved. (External stakeholder)*

### **5.11 Toughlove's dependence on word of mouth for promotion is limited by a reluctance for parents to reveal their need for Toughlove**

Parents and volunteers alike acknowledge that involvement in Toughlove is not a topic raised or discussed readily with others unless they are facing the same difficulties.



*We're not dealing with things people want to talk about here. (Volunteer)*

*The Toughlove folder – I'd take the name off the red folder. I read it from cover to cover. The contents are good but I kept it under the bed. I didn't let the kids see me reading it and they had no idea I was going to Toughlove. (Parent)*

*To be honest I don't mention it to people that I've gone. It's not appropriate. I mean the school didn't even know we had gone. I took the pamphlet but didn't tell them I was going. Certainly not water cooler or coffee machine type of talk. If someone opened up and started talking about the problems they were having you might say. (Parent)*

## **5.12 The universal uniting definition of Toughlove is its core focus on dealing with the very tough teenage issues**

Toughlove's identity is linked to dealing with challenging teens and taking on issues other parenting groups are ill-equipped to deal with.

*Toughlove is unique because they are prepared to look at the wider angle – depression and suicide, which you won't find in any other parenting course. They have a willingness to take these on. It takes on mental illness, drug addiction and that kind of tough stuff. (External stakeholder)*

Because of the severity of the problems faced, Toughlove is about a commitment to long- term attention to develop trust and help resolve the difficulties.

*'You get out of Toughlove what you put in. If you've only been coming for three weeks you won't benefit as much as if you come for three months because old habits are hard to break' (Volunteer)*

## **5.13 The outside view is that TLA is an organisation whose core function is to provide ongoing support for implementation of skills and strategies rather than teaching of skills**

It is an application and extension of the generalist short courses that Parents Inc. offers. It supports the implementation of consequences for more challenging behaviour taught by Parents Inc.

*Parents Inc. is more about short bites, education and tool kits than support. It is an organisation, whereas Toughlove is a service and ongoing support. Parents Inc. is on the parenting show and they have that cool café in Epsom on Great South Road and a library where you can borrow books. (External stakeholder)*

*Toughlove is different to Parents Inc. Parents Inc. celebrates parenting whereas Toughlove sees parenting as hard. It's a Toughlove approach. Parents Inc. are the generalists whereas I see Toughlove as the specialists. It could work in well with Parents Inc. (although there is the religious bias); Parents Inc. could do the training whereas Toughlove is another notch up. It's for parents who have tried everything else. (External stakeholder)*

*Toughlove shows firmness, fairness and consistency. Success depends on whether or not these people use these tools. (External stakeholder)*

Linking Toughlove with other programmes in the community to demonstrate its fit, unique purpose and value would improve Toughlove's visibility and function.

*They need to find a solution. Link with other organisations, look to have the Toughlove website embedded in the sites of others so people can see the fit and referral is more active. (External stakeholder)*

#### **5.14 Toughlove is perceived to be for people with limited life skills, who have no previous investment in parenting education**

*In group situations they hear that they are not the only ones experiencing these problems and through these situations they learn they have to be cruel, as in strong, to be kind. Not physically cruel, but these people need support because they themselves don't have the life skills. (External stakeholder)*

Many of the parents using Toughlove wish they had had the opportunity to learn an approach before they reached crisis point.

*I wish I'd known about Toughlove earlier. Why is it so invisible? (Parent)*

#### **5.15 Toughlove is perceived to be more like Alcoholics Anonymous and the opposite of Parents Inc. – 'Toughlove is an off load, Parents Inc. is an investment.'**

Toughlove is characteristically benchmarked against Alcoholics Anonymous and Weight Watchers as like-minded people facing similar challenges requiring behavioural change supporting each other to meet hard-earned goals.

*Kind of like a really firm line in the sand. It's a support group of people in a similar situation. 'I have to go and admit this'. They have to do that rather than let the problem get worse. (External stakeholder)*

Because of the sensitivity, sadness and shame, successful engagement is considered to be best when it is continuous and for a 'reasonable' amount of time. This facilitates trust and provides sustained support to practise Toughlove and assist with the most challenging of parenting issues.

*It's unique it lets people share with people with similar problems. You'd probably get the same sorts of successes as Alcoholics Anonymous where people with like minds are dealing with each other. The success is getting people to return week after week to share their experiences of the week and then go onto the next one. Over time you build up a relationship of trust and respect. (External stakeholder)*

Although there is no awareness of the 24-hour support available to parents from group members, this feature is highly valued by those who know about it and it strengthens

perceptions of Toughlove as a support agency, similar in function to Alcoholics Anonymous.

*The programme is unique. Like Weight Watchers and Alcoholics Anonymous. Self-help, but it's in the realm of dealing with young people. I didn't realise there was 24-hour support. This makes my ear prick up. Very valuable. (External stakeholder)*

*If that's what they offer [24-hour support], I wasn't aware of it, but it is just brilliant. It may well be that you want to contact someone at midnight or two o'clock in the morning, you don't want to call the police, but you're beside yourself, so you have another parent to ring. I think that is just great. (External stakeholder)*

## 5.16 Summary

Toughlove remains unchanged in a changing world, yet its focus on dealing with anti-social teen behaviour is as relevant today as in the past.

Increasing ethnic diversity, the move towards digital access for knowledge and support, greater emphasis on parenting using rewards and two decades of anti-smacking debate, culminating in the 2009 anti-smacking legislation, paint a different picture to that in the 1980s when Toughlove was founded.

In 2012, Toughlove is largely invisible and increasingly reliant on its name as a communication device. There is diversity of knowledge and information about Toughlove's purpose, philosophy, approach, experience and audience.

Low visibility contributes to questions around Toughlove's continued existence as the number of groups diminish and, concurrently, its pool of volunteers. An increasing burden is being placed on existing volunteers, which leads to consideration of changes to enhance engagement to ensure the continued existence of the programme.

Irrespective of the lack of detailed and accurate knowledge about Toughlove, stakeholders are united in their definition of Toughlove's purpose. Toughlove exists to support parents and who are facing extreme difficulties with their teens' anti-social behaviour.

## 6. Experiencing Toughlove

### 6.1 First and foremost, successful engagement with the Toughlove is dependent on the experience meeting individual needs and expectations

Parents typically approach Toughlove because they are experiencing difficulties with their teens' behaviour. Personal advocacy for Toughlove, through reading about experiences in articles in community newspapers, calling the Toughlove office or having personal interaction with Toughlove volunteers shapes parents' expectations of the Toughlove experience and what the programme offers. It is the most accurate introduction to informing about the programme fit with individual needs.

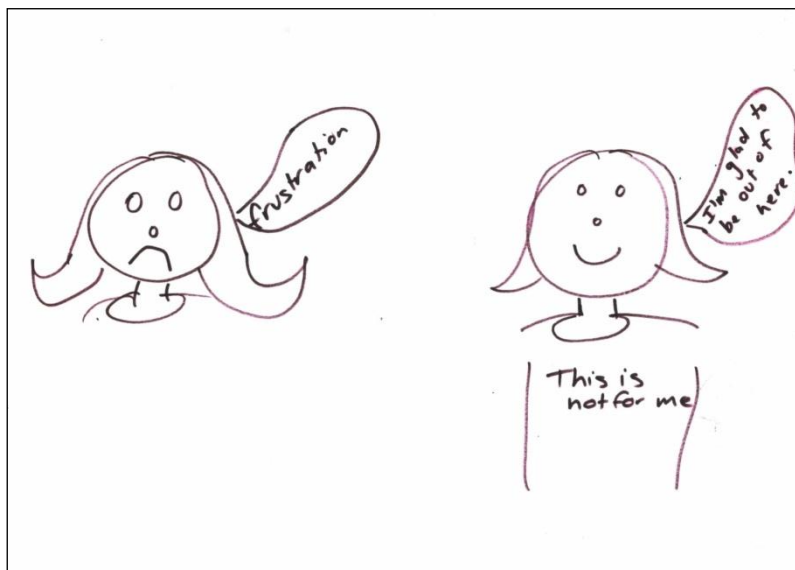
*I had a role model for want of a better expression. My friend, who had learnt so much through Toughlove, and I thought 'I want some of that myself' and gave it a go. (Parent)*

*I saw it on the internet and it said Toughlove is an organisation for parents to support parents because out there in the community there's a lot of support for kids these days and the government is taking a lot away from parents – you know anti-smacking? He said it's not nice to smack your children, but people do and they yell and scream. What we do is support parents into acting with their children in a different way that will help them to become better parents and that's what I liked. That's what I remember and that's exactly what I liked. (Parent, Pacific)*

### 6.2 Although united in a need to deal more effectively with the behaviour of their teens, parents without any experience of Toughlove have differing expectations of the Toughlove programme, which impacts on their engagement

Some parents come along expecting more direction and skills training to deal with less than extreme teenage behaviour than ongoing support and expect to find professionals taking a lead.

Figure 5: Drawing – not for me – skills versus support



*I wanted some kind of answers or skills that was going to help me deal with her. I'd been to positive parenting courses in the past and was looking for something similar. It seemed like a nice, friendly group but couldn't really give me any strategies to help me with the problem I was dealing with. It was like a coffee group where you talk about problems. They didn't seem to have much parenting training or course experience. The one thing I did get from it was that it wasn't just me and that my child was maybe not as bad as some of them out there. (Parent, Māori)*

*I was thinking our son's not really as bad as their children, we're not really at that level. I think I was sort of thinking more Parents Inc. than Toughlove. (Parent)*

Others prefer to adopt a more child-centric approach and see Toughlove as an overly simplistic way of understanding teens. They disagree with the implementation of consequences for behaviours that others may consider require a Toughlove approach.

*That's the \$64,000 question! There are so many variables on the go at the same time. The influence of the peer group is huge, identity formation is happening at this time and teens form sub cultures and parents lose their kids for a year or two. Then there is the Peter Gluckman research that demonstrates that the brain doesn't mature until in early 20s. Other cultures can't believe how much freedom we give our teenagers given how immature their brains are. (External stakeholder)*

*I was expecting more tools from Toughlove. I found out by searching on the internet and it just appeared. It was the closest time and date I could make. I bought the handbook, read it and disagreed with the way it approached a child. For example, if a child needs help and has no money, Toughlove would advise they have to find it for themselves, but sometimes showing love wins over. Punishment doesn't help to bring kids over. (Parent, Asian)*

Some expect a professional to facilitate the group meetings.

*We were lucky; we were taken to one side, similar to one on one. I was surprised at the lack of qualification and expertise. It was just people like us. (Parent)*

### 6.3 The group experience is not for everyone, especially those unprepared for the particular format of the Toughlove group experience

*I felt like I was on one of those television shows. My name is x and my teenager is a drug addict. We both felt it was like in an AA meeting; my husband has been through that, he gave up drinking many years back. They did take us away quite separate from the group but it was all very bizarre to me. I was quite freaked out going, but the people were all very nice. I thought of that movie with Adam Sandler 'Anger Management'. (Parent)*

*I was expecting a seminar with someone talking whereas you get into this group and there was prayer said and it was like we had a little name badge with a colour whether you were red or green and it was really weird. I wasn't sure what was going on – people throwing money into the middle. I was so nervous and I felt very emotional. It was in your face, having to say your names in front of ten or fifteen other people who you've never met and explain a bit about why you are here without even knowing yourself what the group's there for. Having to do your bottom line... (Parent)*

Individuals vary in the extent to which they are willing to discuss their private affairs in public.

*It wasn't for my partner. He doesn't like airing his dirty laundry in public. (Parent)*

*We don't want to talk about our problems. We don't go to counsellors. We don't trust and we worry about the impact on business and jobs. (Parent, Asian)*

### 6.4 Having roles and responsibilities is not desirable for some

*I think it's a gold coin donation at the end of the evening – but what if you couldn't afford it? Then someone had to supply the biscuits next week and then we had jobs to do like ringing people. That freaked me out. (Parent)*

### 6.5 Parents connect if there is an affiliation with others in the group

Common reasons for disconnection include an inability to relate to the severity of problems being experienced by others.

*People there had been referred by the school or the police. They were at rock bottom. One of the kids had been missing for weeks and they didn't know where he was and they were sitting with their heads hung. It was quite depressing. We just didn't go back because we couldn't cope with the stories. The whole thing overwhelmed me. I felt so bad for them. I could see the fear in their faces. I've had enough tragedy in my life. I can't cope with anyone else's. (Parent)*

Feeling like an outsider because of the age or ethnic profile of the group can deter people from attending, even though volunteers are very welcoming.

*Howick has a high Asian population, they deal with things in the family – don't come along to groups and they believe in slow development of young people and find it hard to deal with cultural differences in treatment of teens in New Zealand compared with their own countries. (Parent)*

*I'm Māori, so I noticed a couple of Māori in the group. It doesn't scream bicultural to me, but the format and group stuff could be. Maybe using different language, like hui instead of meeting and hold in maraes would help more Māori to access. (External stakeholder)*

The dynamics of each group are variable and can enable or deter attendance.

*We were getting frustrated by a lack of ability of some people who needed constant reassurance. Some stalwarts in our group kept coming back and discussing what clothes their daughter should be wearing and how slutty that was. Some people have been there for ever. (Parent)*

*When I think about the different dynamics of the people in the group we had one very conservative lady and she was very, very religious, someone else whose issue was so insignificant and people with lots of different beliefs and values. (Parent)*

*The group was well established and for some of those people their kids were long gone and grown up, so I guess I felt like I was the only one in the category of short-term participant. (Parent)*

## **6.6 An expectation by some that Toughlove can only work with long-term commitment to attending groups is flawed**

*I do get the feeling that there is an expectation that you have to be in it for the long haul. I feel our situation is much improved from a few short months of attending and do not feel the need to keep going back each week. The implication is that we must keep attending as change will take a long time to come. I don't need to keep coming. The people in the group have been coming for years and I have to ask 'why?'. Some may need long attendance, but not everyone and that should also be okay! (Parent)*

## **6.7 There is variability in the quality of the group experience**

Some reject Toughlove because their experience of the group is one of disorganisation. For others, a lack of control over the amount of time some people talk detracts from the experience.

*We had a lady from another group come to talk to us. She was so disorganised, not organised at all, and she started off with all these papers and none of them were stacked or together or anything and she kept flipping through them and dropping them on the floor, and she'd pick them up and say the same thing. It went on and on, and it was just embarrassing. (Parent)*

*I went along to two sessions and then a couple more. The first was the best; the second one was pretty good. After that, maybe it was the particular group we were in, there was*

*one lady there, and you basically couldn't shut her up. She was the whole thing. It was always the same; she just had a better idea than anyone else. (Parent)*

Some volunteers feel ill-equipped to deal with the severity of individual parent's experiences.

*I liked how it was introduced in the small group where each parent tells their story. I didn't go back because I was told my child wasn't right because of his mental illness. I don't believe it because in hindsight it was more a drug and alcohol problem. (Parent, Pacific)*

## **6.8 Over and above response to the group experience, proximity, timing and length of group meetings encourages and facilitates attendance and can sometimes deter**

*We went to the Howick one and surprisingly didn't know anyone there. It was a bit unusual. Thank goodness. (Parent)*

*There was one not too far away from Pukekohe, and we decided to go there. (Parent)*

*I stopped going because I moved house and without my vehicle there's no way I'd even think about it. How would I get there? It's mainly transport. (Parent, Pacific)<sup>27</sup>*

Timing of groups impacts on ability to attend.

*I couldn't maintain Thursdays, and I was at the point of wondering if I could get over to New Lynn on Wednesday. The bulk of groups are on Thursdays, and I would be good if they worked across the week. I'm a working mum, and if it wasn't for the New Lynn one I wasn't going to be able to make it. (Parent)*

The environment in which the groups are held can also impact on ability to attend.

*I know it's all about funding and money, but they're held in quite cold environments. They are typically held in community halls with uncomfortable chairs. Everything is just so cold and stark. Because it's all voluntary, people were lugging chairs from somewhere. That's what we had to do. It wasn't arriving, sitting and having a meeting, it was chairs scraping. (Parent)*

The length of the groups makes it challenging for some parents to attend.

*Getting there from work meant it was a big day. I'd leave home early in the morning and then go straight from work, and I had to make arrangements for the children. The group could be shortened. Maybe have the information session just once a month? To be honest, I preferred the sounding board sessions and found the information sessions to be quite poor. (Parent)*

<sup>27</sup> Twenty-three percent of households in the lowest family income quintile have no access to a car. Ninety-six percent of this quintile are percent of people in the lowest family income quintile are Māori and Pacific. Statistics New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1996.



## 6.9 Summary

All parents who take part in Toughlove engage and benefit at some level. Parents who are the least likely to attend for more than six sessions most typically:

- are seeking skills over support
- have experienced parenting education courses in the past
- prefer professionally run courses
- realise their problem is 'normal' and feel confident in their ability to handle it
- pick up the Toughlove skills very quickly
- do not feel part of the group for any number of reasons even though people are very welcoming
- feel uncomfortable with the format, likening it to Alcoholics Anonymous
- feel burdened by the tragic stories
- feel the group is poorly organised and facilitated
- feel it unnecessary to be involved 'for the long haul'.

Over and above this, location, timing and length of group sessions can deter attendance as everyone's personal circumstances are different.

## 7. The success of Toughlove

### 7.1 Regardless of the extent and nature of involvement with Toughlove, the experience has positive outcomes

Even parents who reject Toughlove and who are sceptical of its success, on reflection, accept its positive impact.

*Is there a success rate? Is it monitored? Or is there no line of success? Success will be different for everyone. I'd like to put my finger on one thing Toughlove did for us ... maybe it is just the feel-good factor. Just that I'd actually taken a step to do something to help me. I can't pinpoint what it was but I did feel good in myself. You learn to take the tools and language on board and it's hard to say 'I got that from Toughlove'. (Parent)*

At the pinnacle, skills and strategies explored and developed become a way of life and are instinctively and readily applied to improve the quality of all relationships. In these cases, the non-judgemental support from Toughlove participants forges a genuine closeness, and support is everlasting.

*As far as a programme helping parents, it's brilliant and the best thing I ever implemented. I use it all the time at work and wherever and whenever I connect with people. I stayed with the programme and I have good Toughlove friends. It's about someone who will face the thinking; someone who will be honest with us and not beat around the bush, but will tell us how it is. They come back with real honesty, real depth of friendship. They are different to friends from school who I've known for years, they are unique, open and don't judge my children. (Toughlove stakeholder)*

Successful outcomes are not exclusively achieved through long-term commitment to attending group sessions. Attendance at just one or two sessions and/or reading the parents' manual and parent pack can lead to improvements in confidence and implementation of effective parenting strategies.

*I kept a lot of what was going on in my house secret. I mean my neighbours certainly heard it all but I never actually told anyone what was happening in my house – that crazy single mother and her rabid, feral boys. So Toughlove was a good thing. Straight away that first night made a big difference to me. (Parent)*

*Toughlove confirmed for us that we were on the right track. (Parent)*

*I think the only thing I got out of it was you have to change your behaviour to change their behaviour. What I was doing made it worse. I got this from the book. I started to change the way I behaved and shoved it away in a drawer! (Parent)*

*In the broadest of senses, I didn't have to go back because our dysfunction was relatively normal. It was dysfunctional and it felt pretty out of control, but it actually wasn't that bad. (Parent)*

Even if the philosophy is rejected, exposure to Toughlove and its principles helps parents to develop their own style and coping mechanisms.

*I didn't agree like the rest of them about standing back when they get themselves in crap. I did still help them to fix things and it's really all turned out OK. It was harrowing at the time. A vulnerable and crazy age. (Parent)*

Parents see Toughlove as a value-for-money lifeline for life, even if it is not accessed.

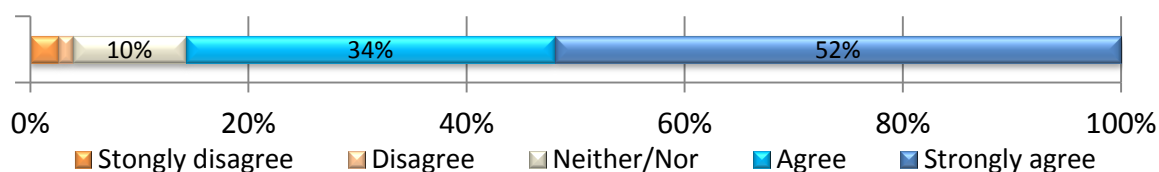
*I have not heard anything from anybody who didn't say they got something out of it. It did what I wanted it to do and if I have more problems I think I'd go back for directions. (Parent)*

*It's the best \$40 I've ever spent and gave me access to a worthwhile service rather than pouring money I didn't have into counselling. (Parent)*

## 7.2 Endorsing positive outcomes from involvement with TLA

Almost nine-in-10 parents who have taken part in Toughlove agree that it has resulted in positive changes for them and their families.<sup>28</sup> (Figure 6)

**Figure 6: Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree that your involvement with Toughlove has led to positives changes for you and your family?**



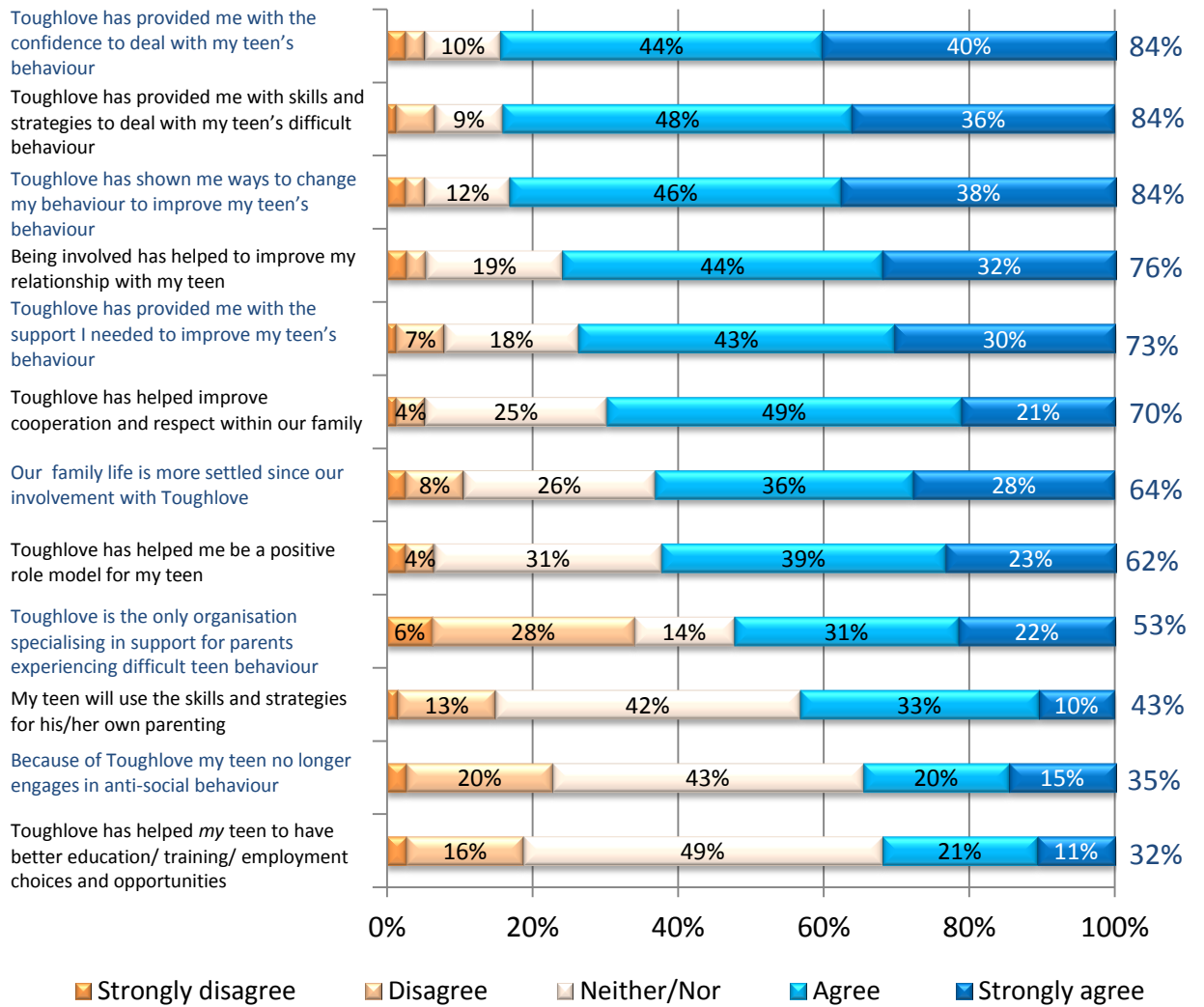
Base: All respondents

Specifically, Toughlove is most successful at improving parents' skills and behaviour to improve relationships within families. Toughlove is therefore successfully satisfying its short- and medium-term intended outcomes.<sup>29</sup> One-in-three parents agree that involvement with Toughlove has improved their teens' education, training and employment choices and opportunities. The programme is therefore extending out towards meeting its longer-term intended outcomes (Figures 7 and 8).

**Figure 7: Thinking about the impact of your involvement with Toughlove – to what extent do you agree or disagree that...**

<sup>28</sup> Toughlove online survey, Litmus, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Toughlove Programme Logic Outcomes Framework, Appendix 2.



Base: All respondents excluding unsure

**Figure 8: Toughlove Evaluation Survey – Main themes**

‘Thank goodness for Toughlove’

‘I have also come away with some life-long strategies and it was of enormous benefit to share and not feel like I was an inadequate parent. The support was genuine.’

‘Do not stop offering this. Parents need all the help they can get.’

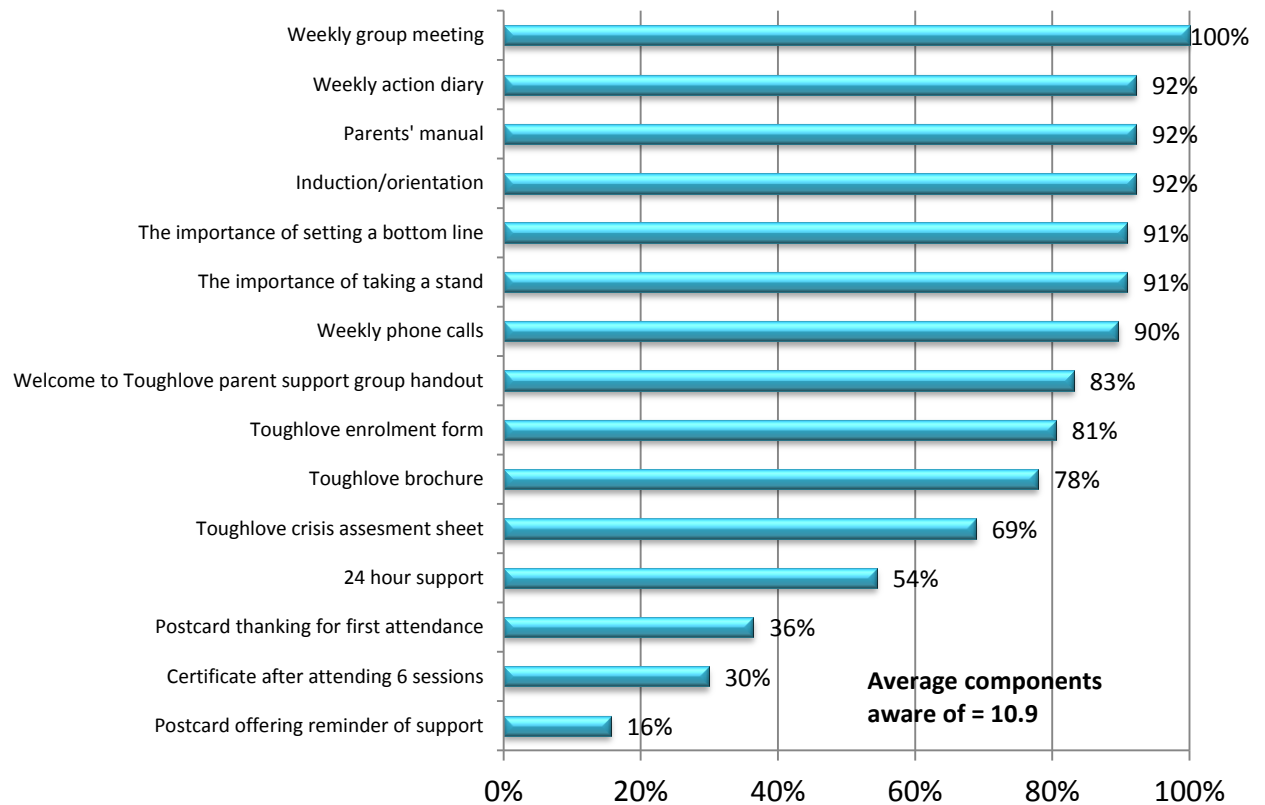
‘It’s an excellent service for the community’

‘I can’t put into words how grateful I am to them’

‘This service has saved my sanity’

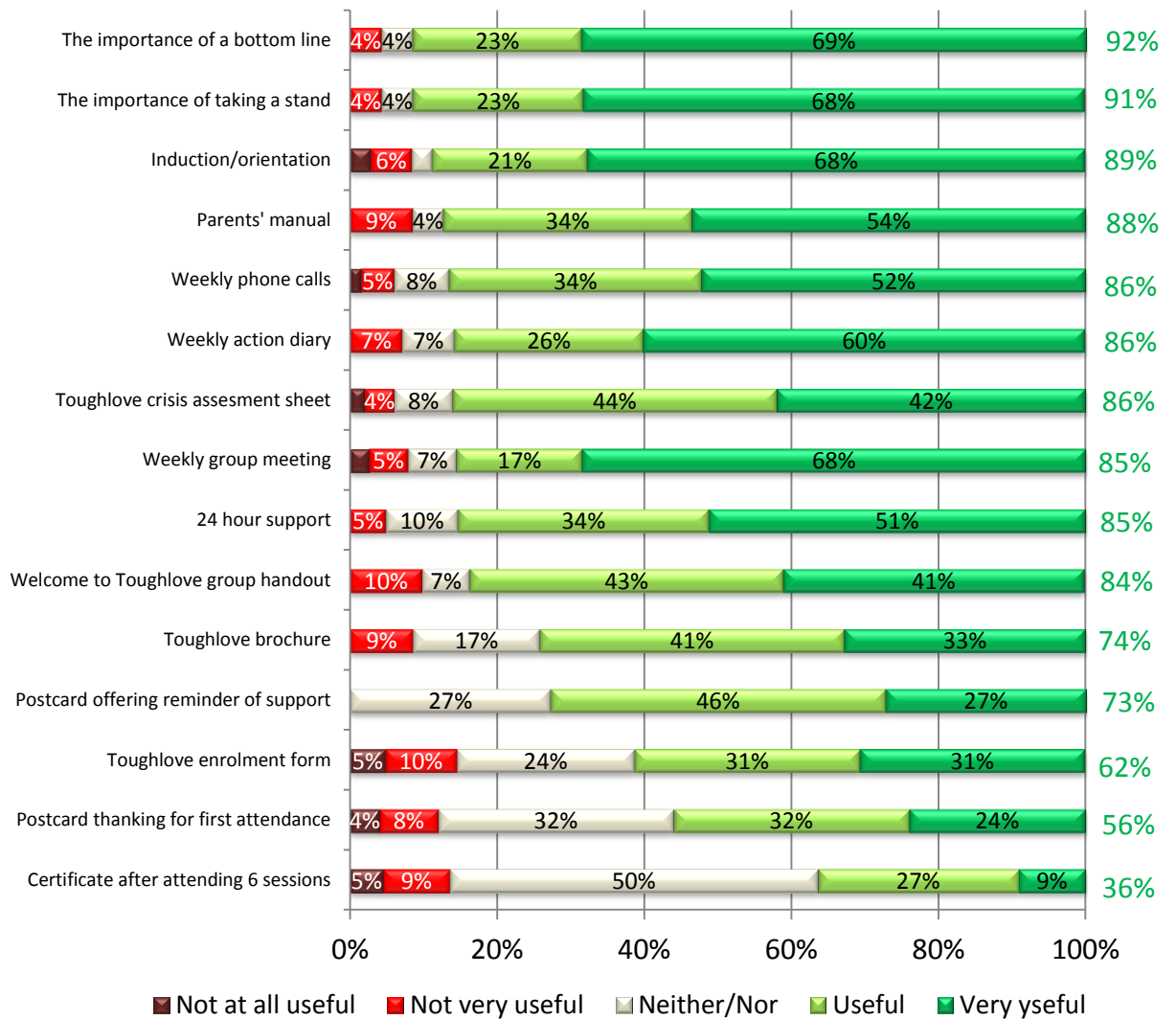
The key components of the programme of most importance to parents are actions – the importance of a bottom line and taking a stand – yet the majority of aspects of the programme are valued by parents, with the exception of a certificate for attending six sessions (of which parents have low awareness) (Figures 9 and 10).

**Figure 9: Which of the following parts of the Toughlove programme are you aware of?**



Base: All respondents

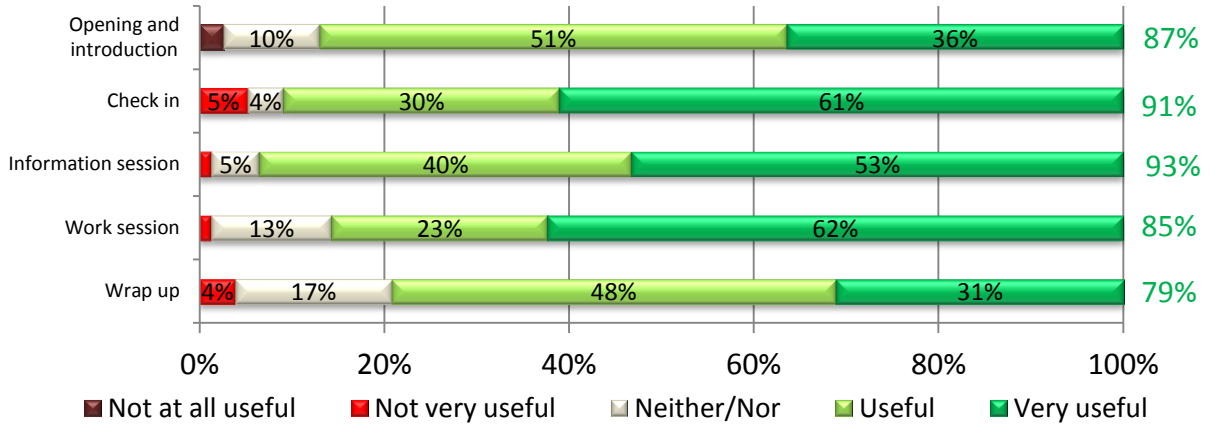
**Figure 10: How useful in providing information about the programme and/or helping you to deal with the difficult teen behaviour has each of these been for you?**



*Base: Respondents aware of each part of the Toughlove programme excluding unsure*

The usefulness of the weekly check in and work session are rated highly (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: The group meeting is broken down into five sections, how useful is each to you?**

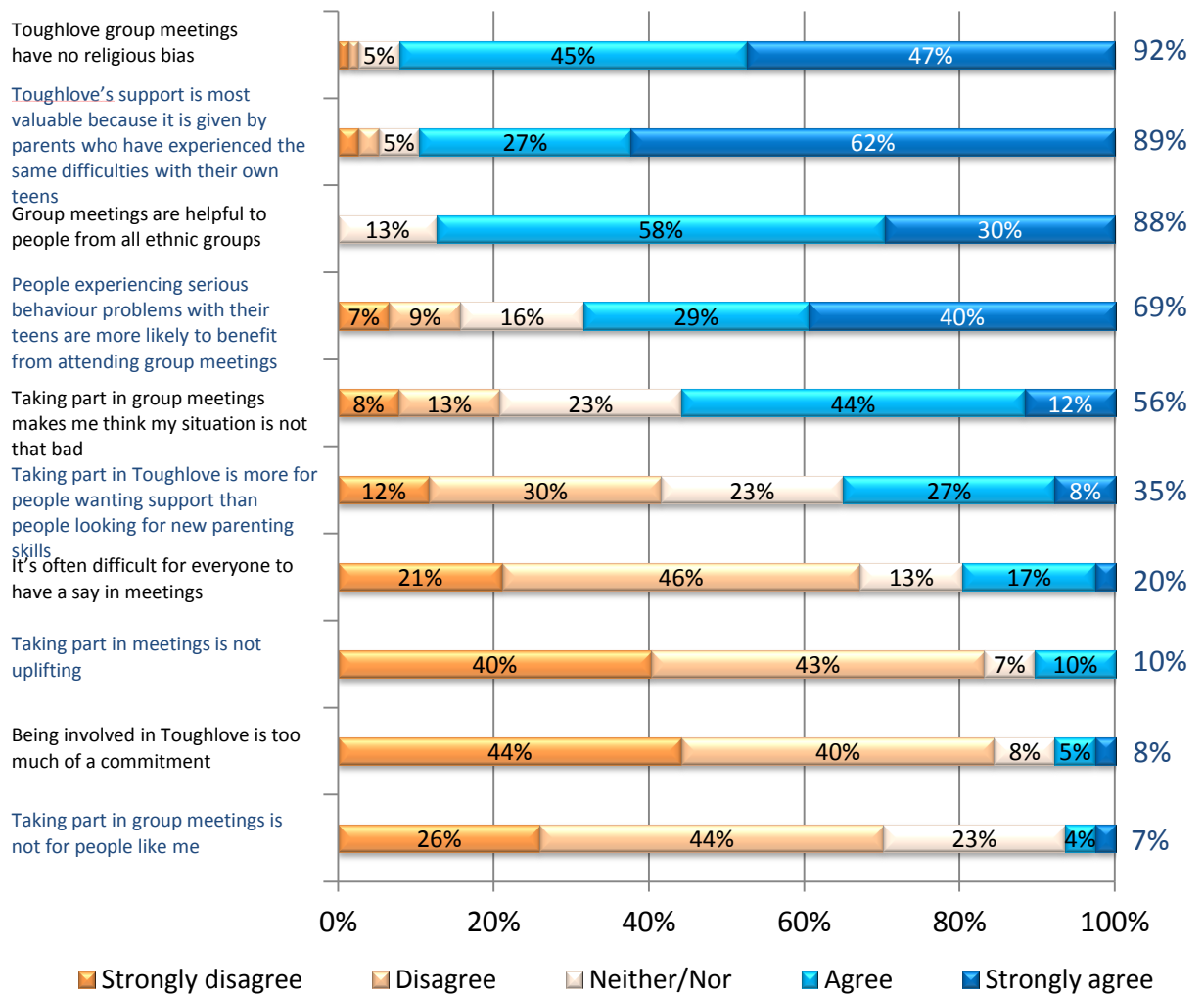


Base: All respondents

### 7.3 Parents value the inclusive experience from a service delivered by parents who have had similar difficulties with their teens' behaviour

Parents who have experienced Toughlove appreciate its inclusivity (no religious or ethnic bias). Its value comes from it being a service delivered by parents who have had similar experiences, which are most typically 'serious problems with their teens' (Figure 12)..

**Figure 12: Thinking about your experience of Toughlove group meetings, to what extent do you agree or disagree that...**



Base: All respondents excluding unsure



The collage in Figure 13, created by parents, illustrates aspects of the Toughlove experience appreciated by parents.

Figure 13: Parents' collage

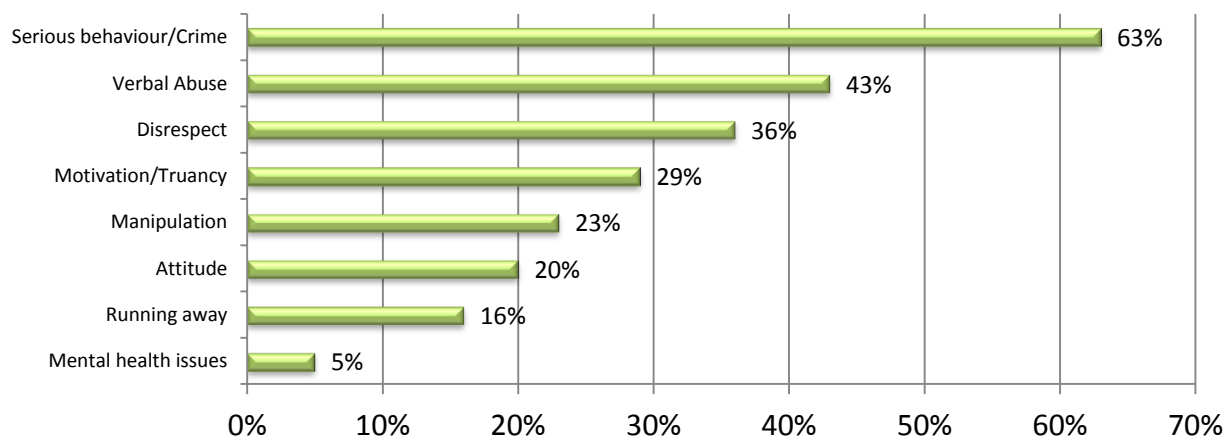


Reasons for attending Toughlove by recent parents<sup>30</sup> encompass the following serious behaviours (Table 2 and Figure 14).

**Table 2: Reasons for attending Toughlove**

Reasons for attending Toughlove	
Serious behaviour/ Crime	Alcohol, drugs, violence, theft, sex, promiscuity
Verbal Abuse	Verbal abuse, anger, swearing, bullying provoking behaviour, answering back, tantrums,
Disrespect	Disrespect
Motivation/Truancy	Motivation, truancy, school attendance, laziness, unemployment, computer addiction, facebook
Manipulation	Manipulation, lying
Attitude	Moody, blaming, non-cooperative, defiance, holding grudges, surliness
Running Away	Running away, not coming home, left home with boyfriend, sneaking out
Mental Health	Self harm, low self esteem, mental health issues

**Figure 14: New parents: Reasons for attending Toughlove**



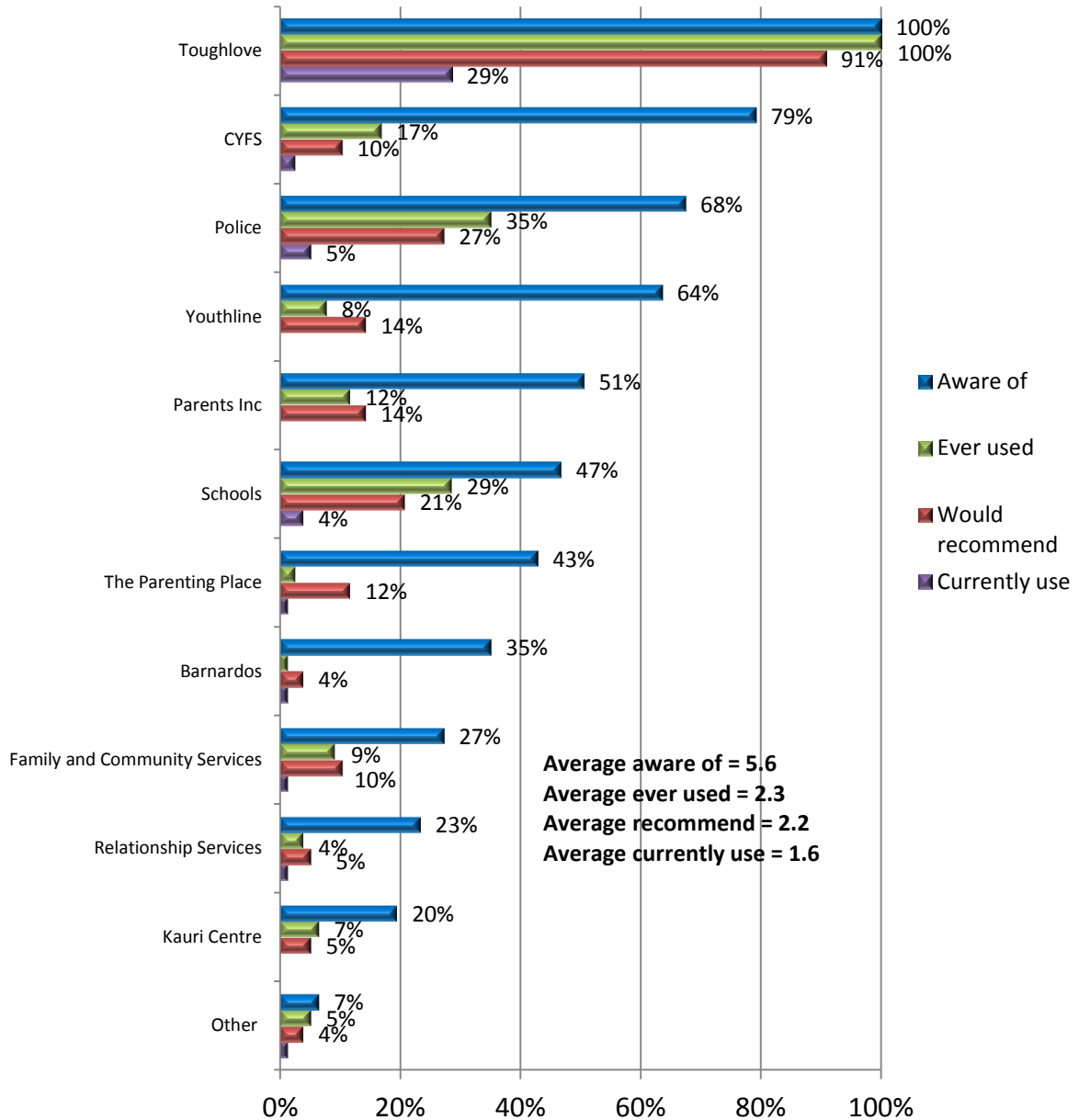
Base: Toughlove new parents enrolment form (n=56) all responses

<sup>30</sup> Toughlove, Client evaluation survey, 2009–11.

## 7.4 Parents using TLA most typically also use other organisations

Police and schools are the two other organisations with the highest trial alongside Toughlove. Over nine in 10 parents who have used TLA recommend it (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Which of the following organisations that help parents and caregivers deal with difficult teenage behaviour are you aware of / have you ever used / would you recommend / are currently using?**



Base: All respondents

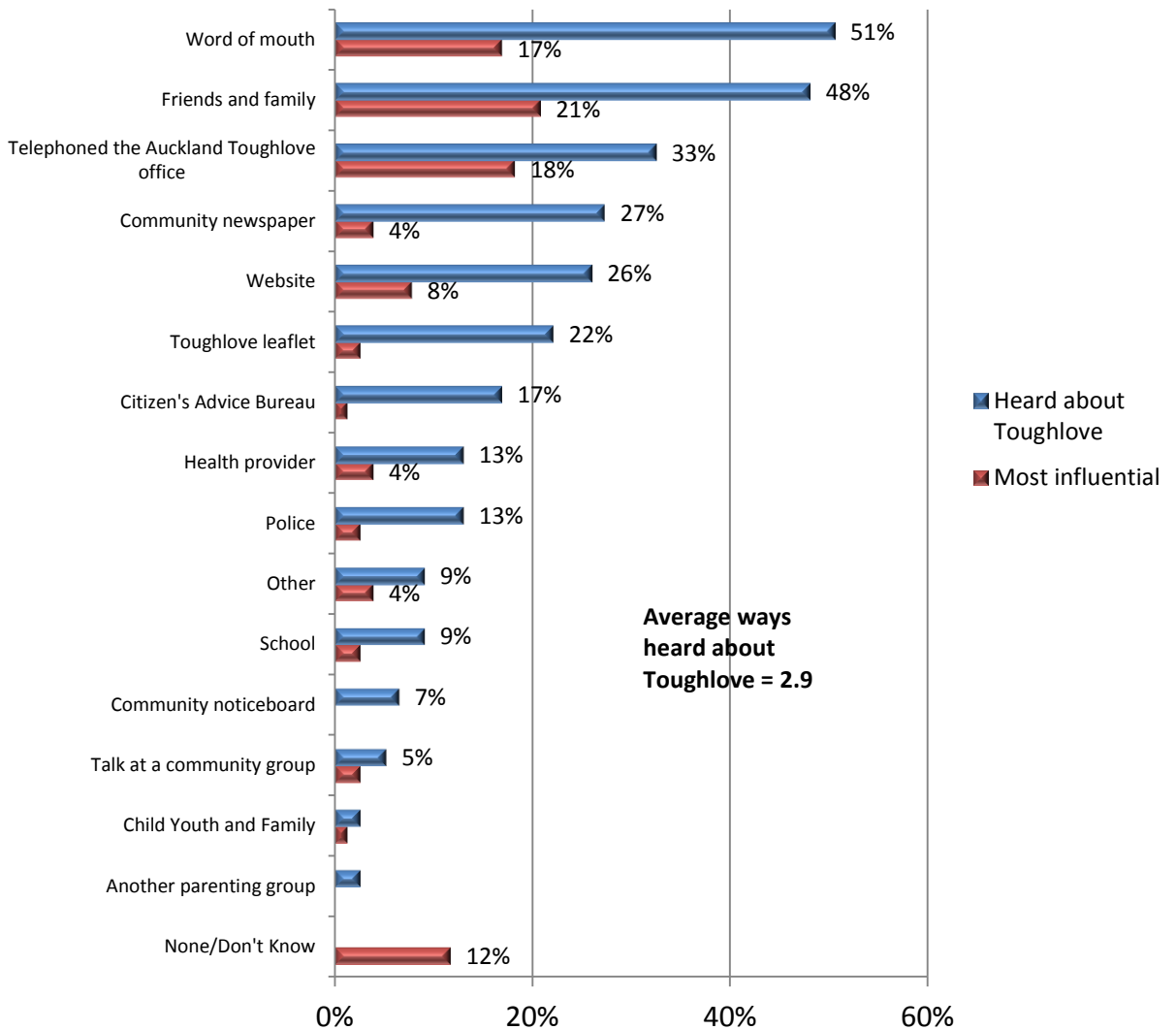
Note: CYFS = Child, Youth and Family Services.

## 7.5 Word of mouth, friends and family and telephoning the TLA office are key ways promoting Toughlove

Friends and family and direct contact with the TLA office are the most influential in encouraging people to attend. As discussed in the previous section, this advocacy sets realistic expectations about the TLA experience.

Community newsletters, websites and the TLA leaflet raise awareness for around one in four parents, but have less impact on attendance (Figure 16).

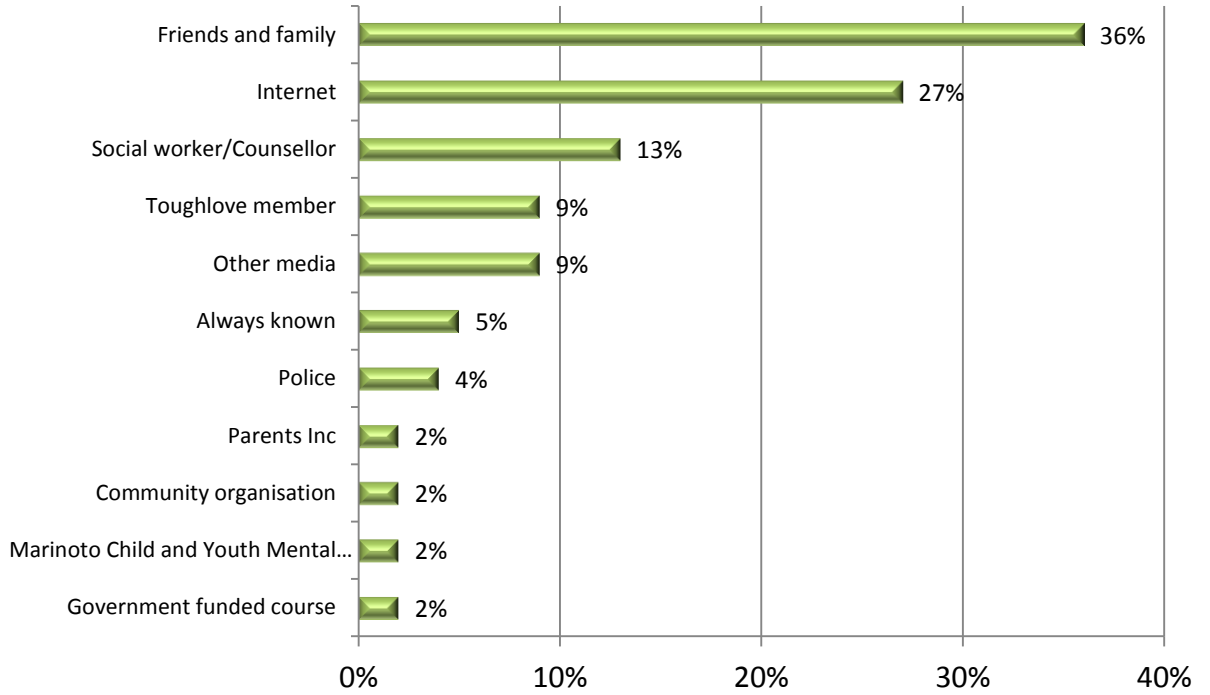
**Figure 16: Which of the following ways have you heard about Toughlove? Which one was most influential in your decision to attend a group meeting?**



Base: All respondents/responses

For new parents, friends and family, the internet and social workers or counsellors are sources of information about Toughlove (Figure 17).

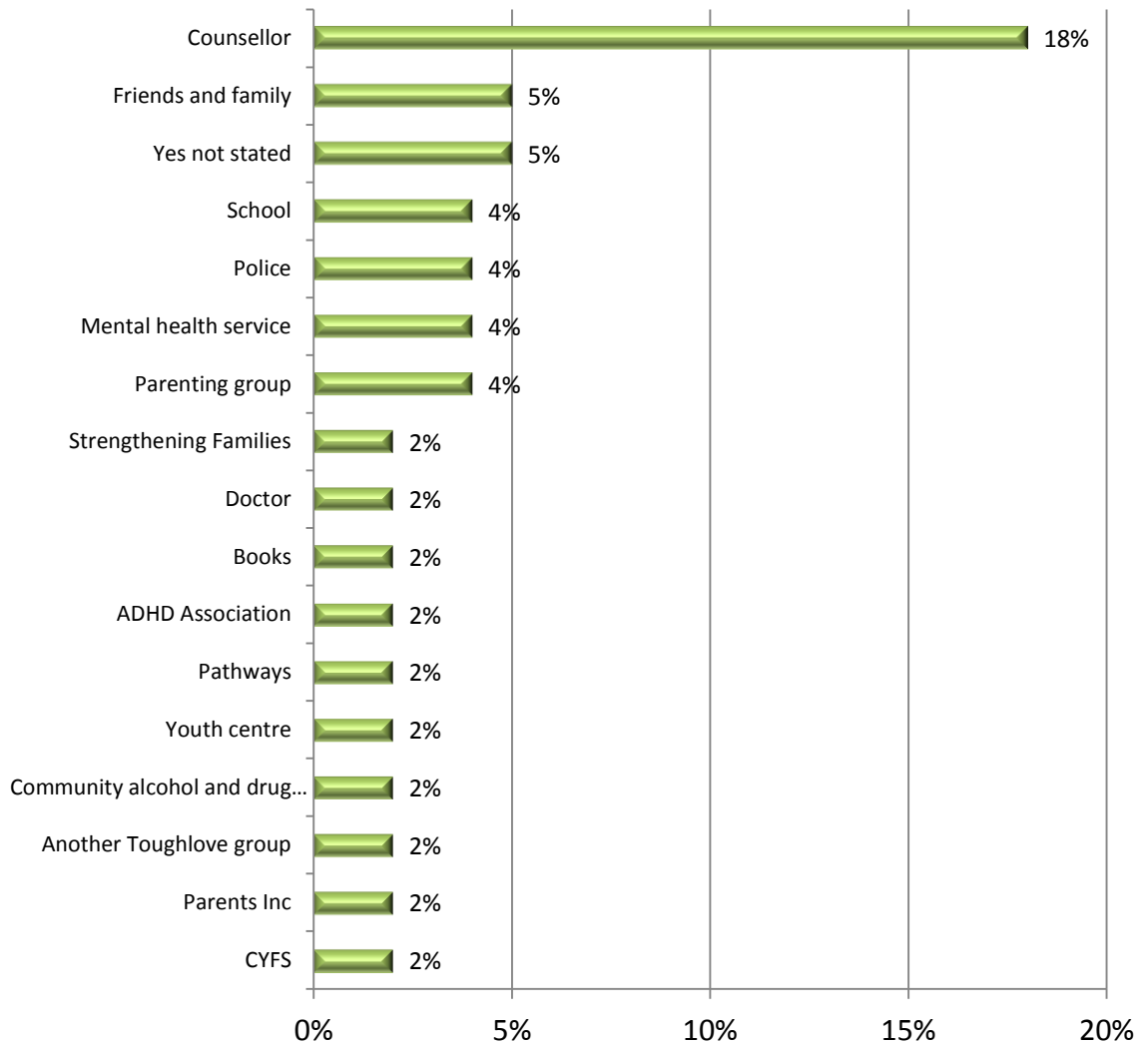
**Figure 17: New parents enrolment form: How did you hear about Toughlove?**



*Base: All responses*

Almost one new parent in five freely identifies counsellors as other places used to help deal with their teens (see Figure 18).<sup>31</sup>

**Figure 18: New parents enrolment form: What other places have you used?**



Base: All responses

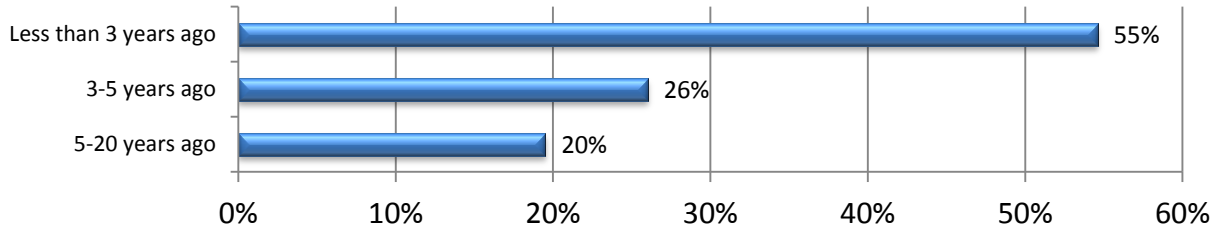
Note: CYFS = Child, Youth and Family Services.

## 7.6 Participants in the online survey span parents who have been involved for a small amount of time to parents with over 20 years of involvement

The longer the involvement the greater the number of sessions attended (figures 19 to 21).

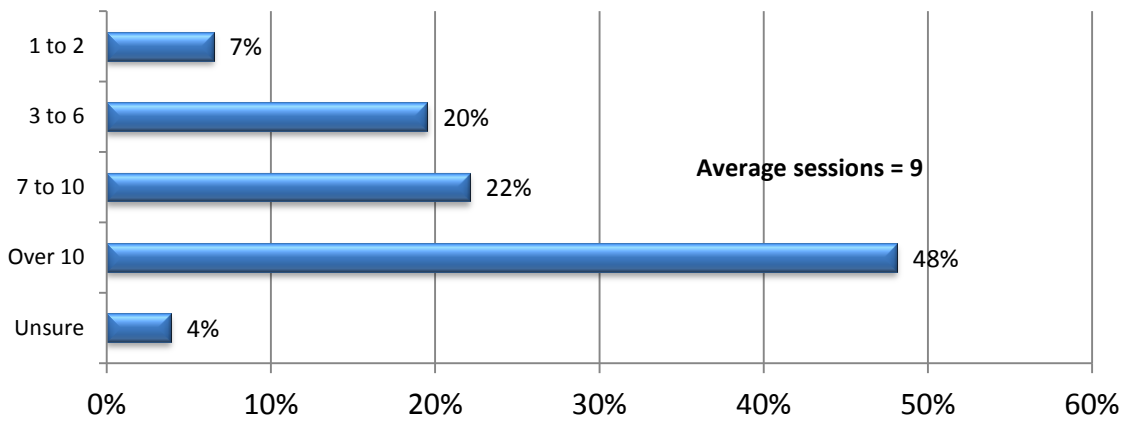
<sup>31</sup> Note this is not directly comparable to the findings from the online survey. In the online survey, respondents were provided with a list whereas on the enrolment form they could freely record responses.

**Figure 19: About how long ago did you first take part in the Toughlove group?**



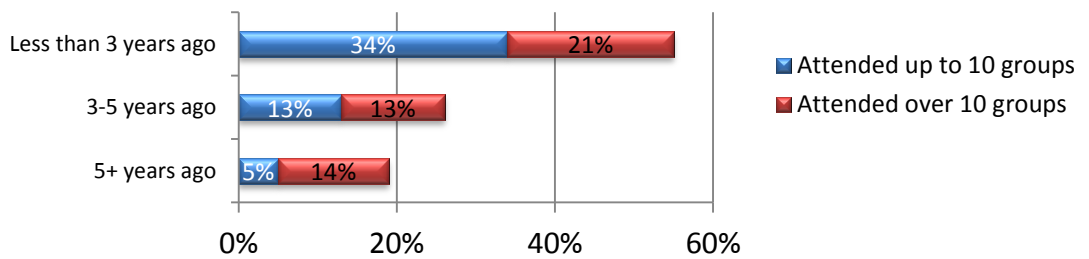
Base: All respondents

**Figure 20: About how many group meetings have you attended?**



Base: All respondents

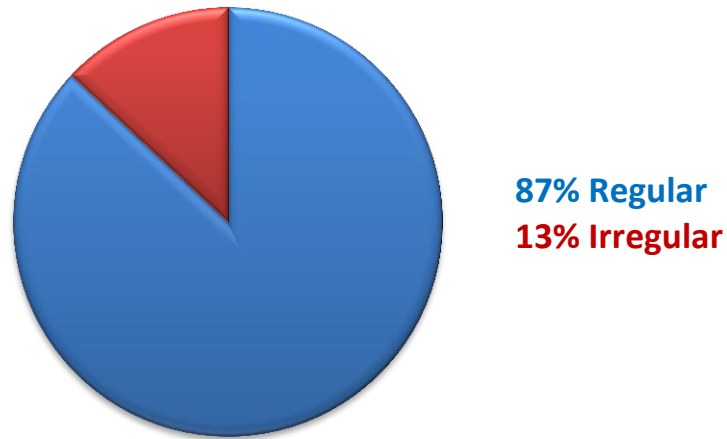
**Figure 21: First took part in Toughlove group session by how many sessions attended overall**



Base: All respondents

Parents consider their attendance to be regular (Figure 22).

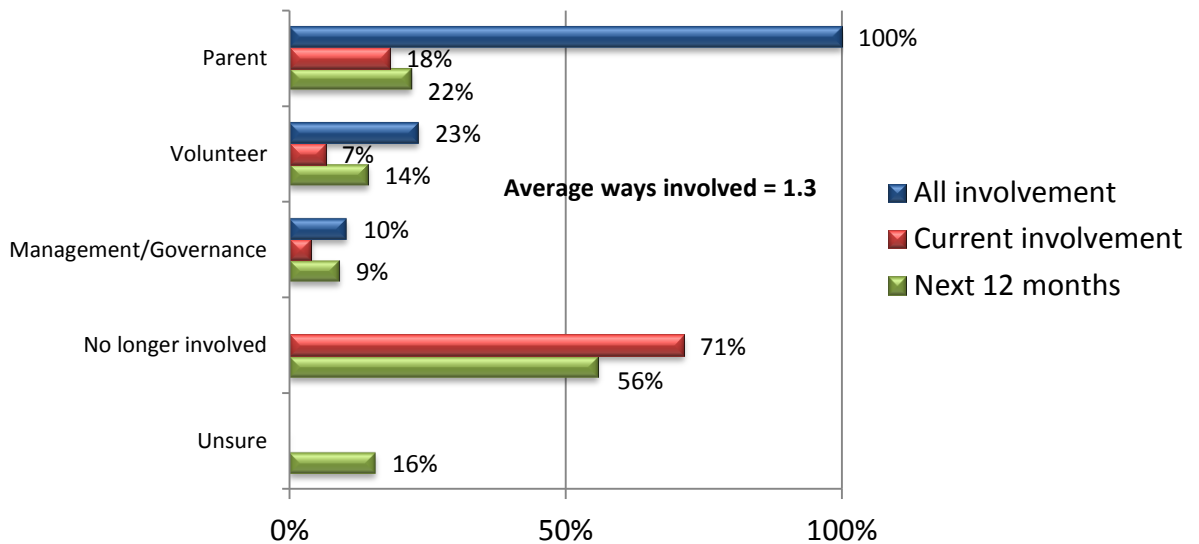
Figure 22: Would you say your attendance at group meetings is/was more typically...



Base: All respondents

### 7.7 Three in 10 surveyed are currently involved in TLA in parent, volunteer and management and/or governance roles

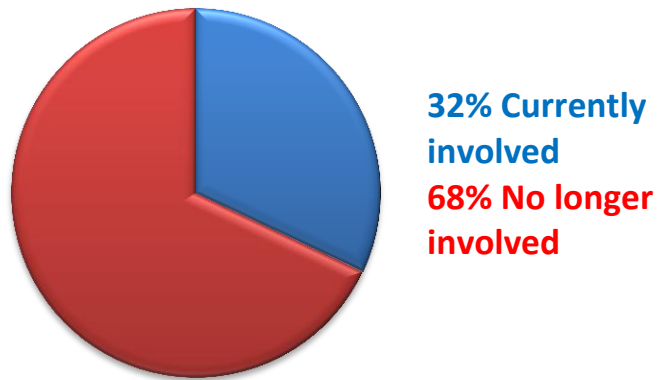
Figure 23: Which of the following ways have you been involved / are currently involved / will be involved in the next 12 months with Toughlove?



Base: All respondents



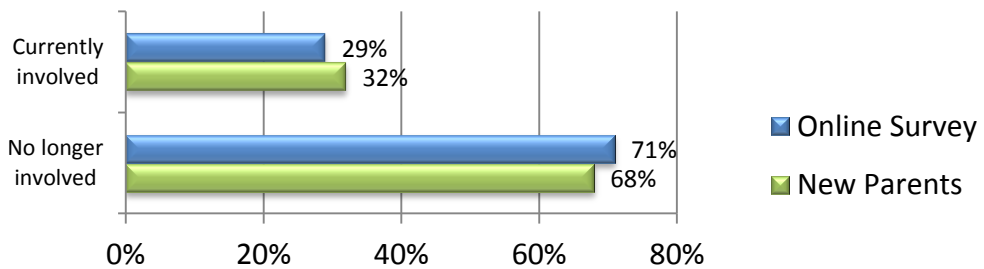
**Figure 24: New parents' involvement**



Base: All respondents

The proportion of people currently involved in Toughlove is consistent between the online survey and the Toughlove new parents' enrolment information (Figure 25).

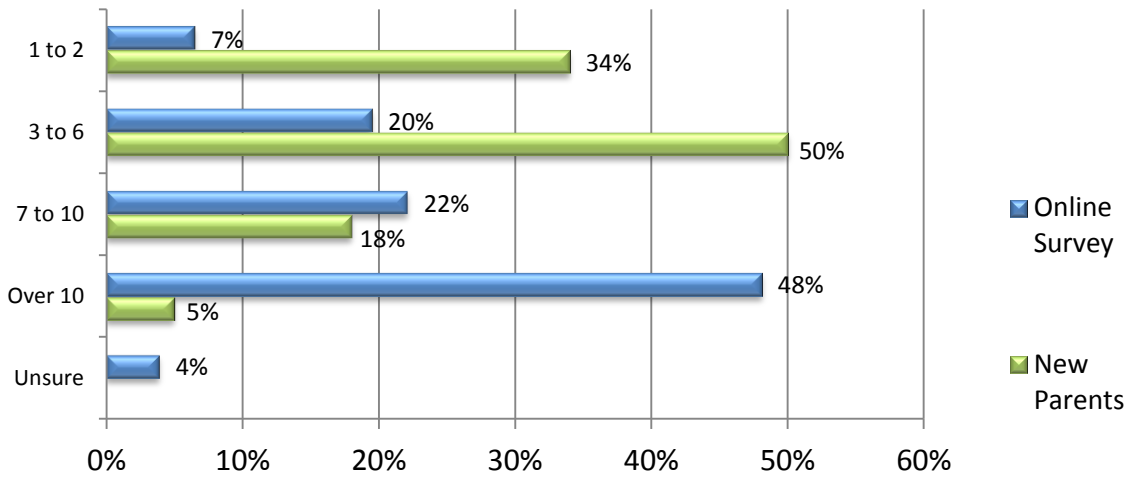
**Figure 25: Involvement**



Base: All respondents

The average number of sessions new parents have attended is less than half the number for online survey respondents, many of whom have had many years of experience with Toughlove (Figure 26).

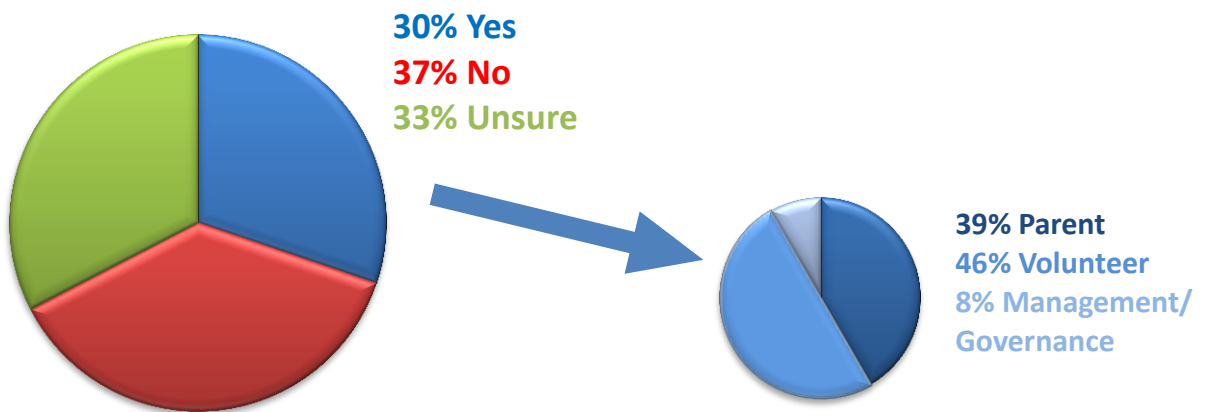
**Figure 26: About how many group meetings have you attended?**



Base: All respondents

For parents no longer involved in TLA, intended future involvement is split (Figure 27).

**Figure 27: Would you consider being involved with Toughlove again at any time in the future? In which of the following ways might you be involved with Toughlove in the future?**

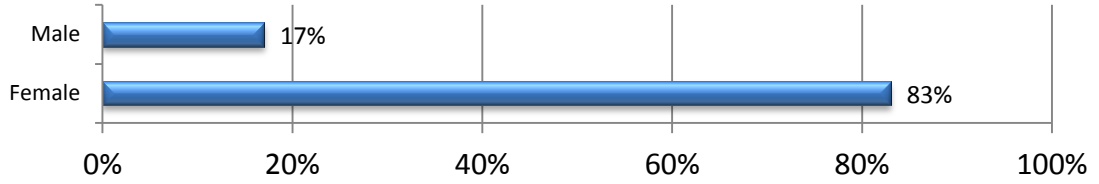


Base: Respondents no longer involved, n=55

Base: Respondents no longer involved who would consider future involvement, n=17

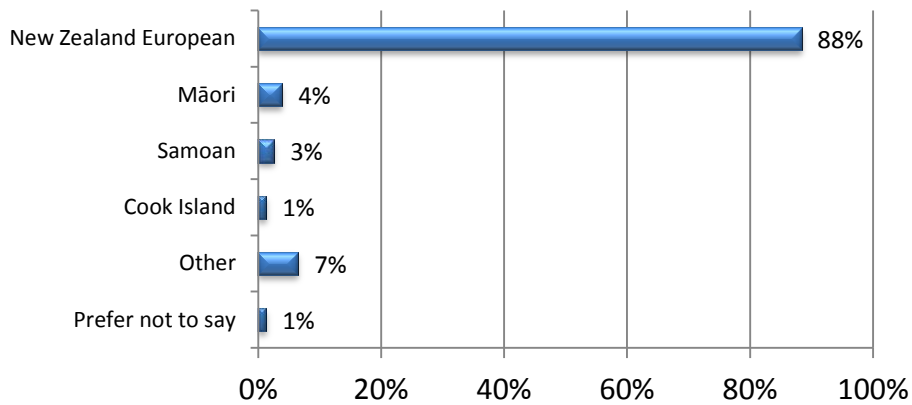
## 7.8 The profile of parents who have attended TLA is characteristically female and European in origin

Figure 28: Are you male or female?



Base: All respondents

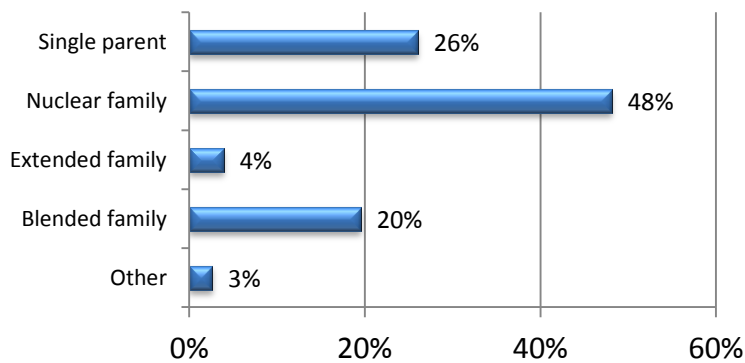
Figure 29: Which ethnic group do you belong to?



Base: All respondents

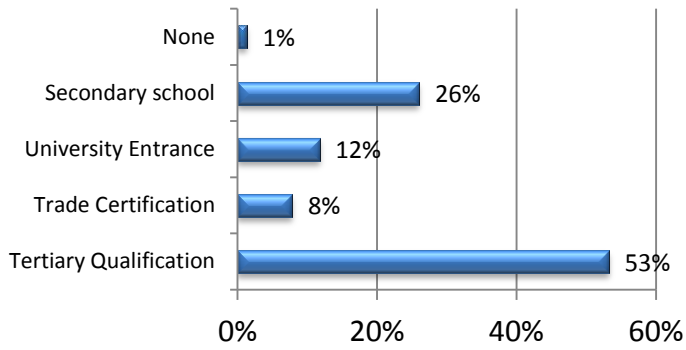
Almost one-in-two parents involved with TLA live in nuclear family households. They are more likely to be over 50 years of age, one in two hold tertiary qualifications and one in three have household incomes over \$100,000 (figures 30 to 33).

Figure 30: Which best describe your type of household?



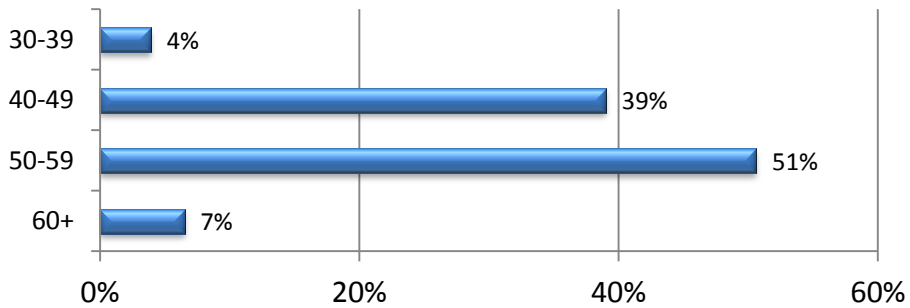
Base: All respondents

**Figure 31: What is your highest education qualification?**



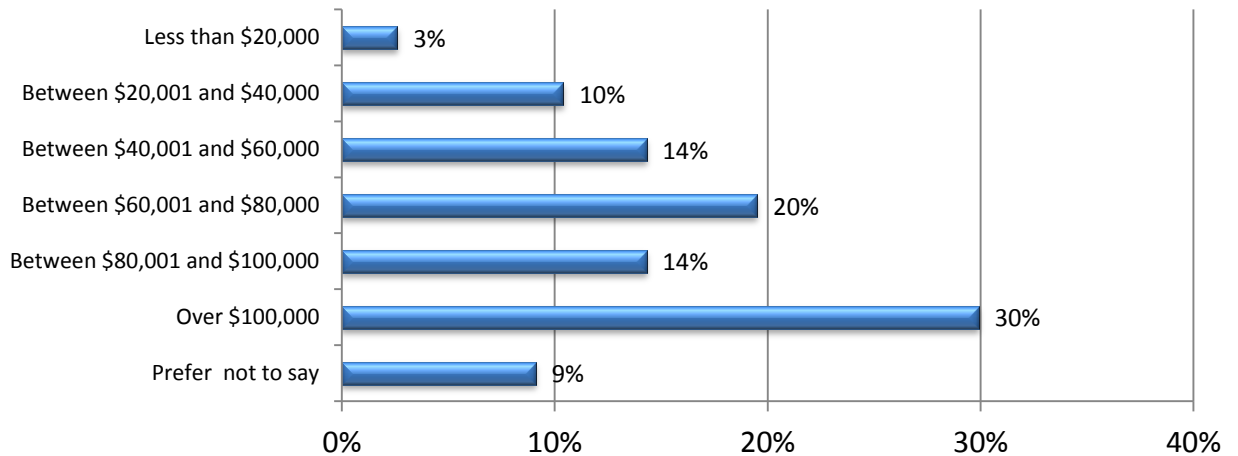
Base: All respondents

**Figure 32: Which age group do you fall into?**



Base: All respondents

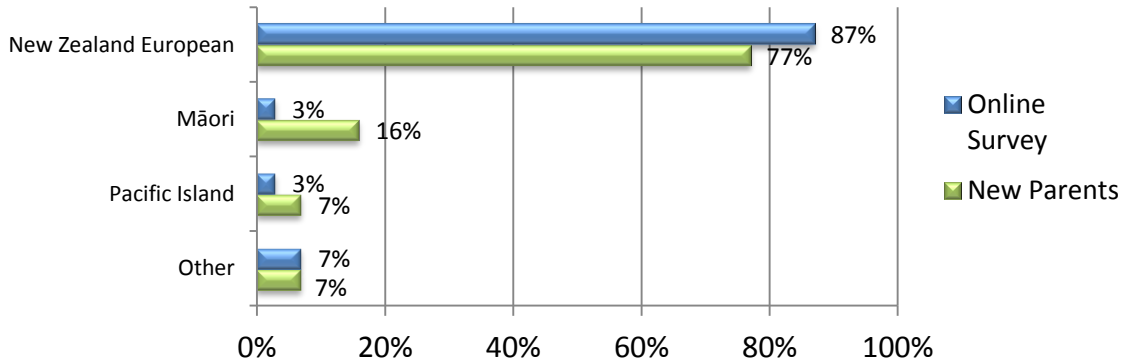
**Figure 33: What is your total household income (from all sources) before tax?**



Base: All respondents

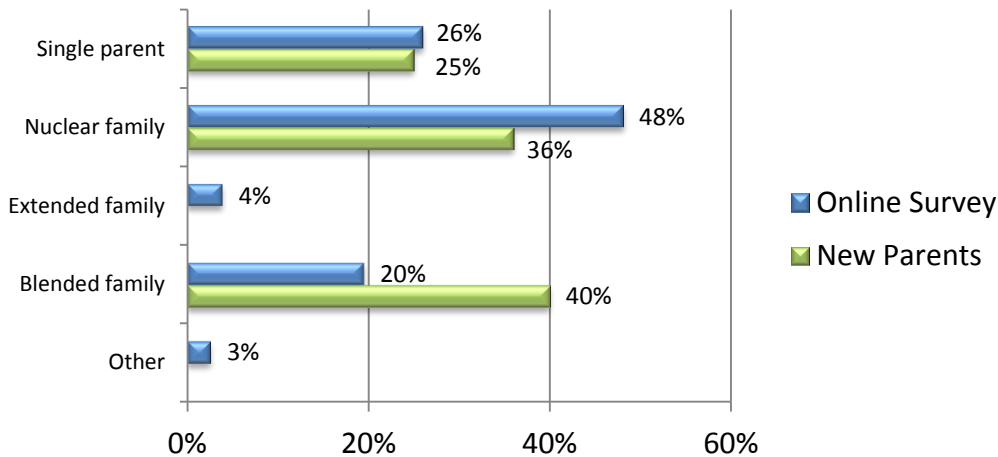
## 7.9 The profile of new TLA parents<sup>32</sup> (excludes longer serving TLA members) indicates an increase in Māori and blended families attending Toughlove

Figure 34: Which ethnic group/s do you belong to?



Base: All respondents excluding no answer and prefer not to say

Figure 35: Which best describe your type of household?



Base: All respondents excluding no answer

## 7.10 Summary

Experience with TLA brings about successful outcomes. The ultimate experience is when skills and strategies become the cornerstone of all relationships and long-lasting friendships and support is forged, yet not all parents require this intensity of engagement.

Even when Toughlove is rejected, involvement helps parents to be more insightful about their circumstances.

<sup>32</sup> From information available on the parent enrolment forms.

Involvement in TLA provides value for money and the promise of a lifeline and lifetime of potential access and support.

Toughlove is positively endorsed by parents because it results in positive changes for them and their families, primarily by providing skills and strategies to change their behaviour. One in three also credit involvement with TLA as improving life outcomes for their teens.

The most valued aspects of the programme are the techniques and an inclusive experience from people who truly understand because they too have experienced similar problems with their teens.

In line with perceptions, TLA parents perceive the programme to be more suited to the most extreme of cases.

TLA tends to be used in conjunction with other organisations, especially police and schools.

Word of mouth and advocacy are the dominant factors in influencing use of TLA, not the website or leaflet.

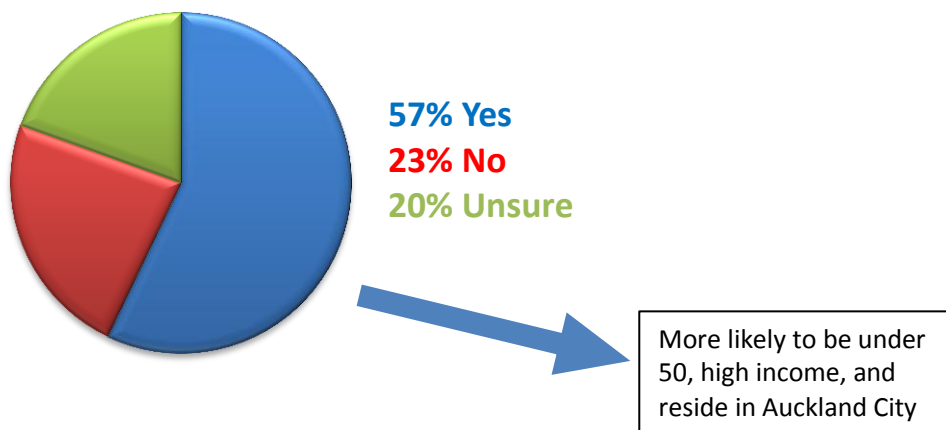
The profile of TLA's parents is characteristically female, European, older, tertiary qualified from high-income households and nuclear families. Analysis of new parents' demographic profiles (excluding people in volunteer roles and management and governance) indicates a trend toward more Māori and blended family households at the expense of European and nuclear family households.

## 8. Future delivery

### 8.1 Although the Toughlove programme is largely predetermined, TLA is the most successful and the most committed to making changes to secure the future of the programme

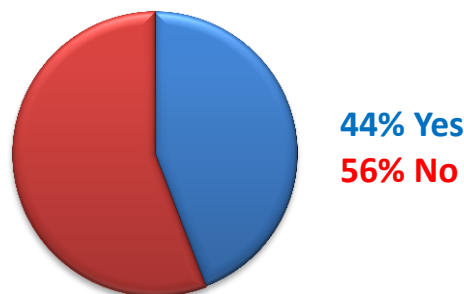
Amongst online survey respondents who are typically happy with the group format, almost one in six are in favour of an online Toughlove support service (Figure 36) and one in four a Skype support service (Figure 37). In both cases, interested parents are more likely to be under 50 years of age, have higher household incomes and to be Auckland City residents.

Figure 36: Would you be interested in an online Toughlove support service?



Base: All respondents

Figure 37: Would you be interested in Toughlove offering a Skype support service?



Base: All respondents

Any digital or virtual delivery of Toughlove will need to be embedded in the existing physical group offer, which has enduring attraction.

*I searched on the internet and it was the only thing I could find for parents, it was close by and I went twice. Most of them were international. I was looking for something specific for teenagers, bad behaviour to support me. I wanted local and not online. (Parent, Māori)*

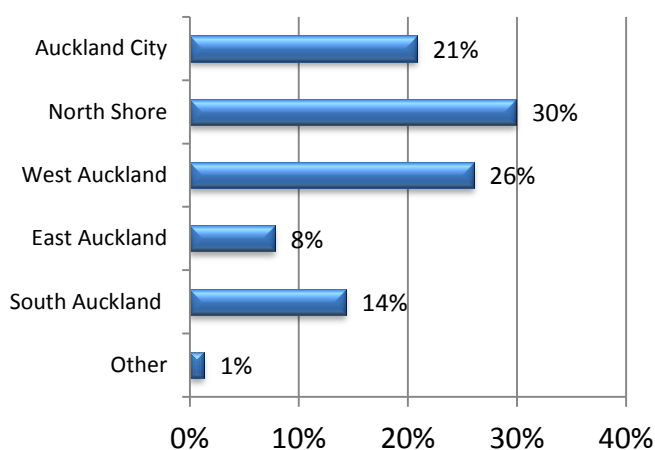
*Yes and no. I'm not sure just how the internet would work but if you're having a problem with your kid, then sitting in front of a PC won't help. The success is parents meeting together. (Toughlove stakeholder)*

## 8.2 Presence in a greater range of locations would increase access for time-poor and financially constrained people

*We need greater access to meetings, some are restricted by transport. There are only a few venues and times. Just having money for petrol is a problem. (Parent)*

Availability of Toughlove in more places in Auckland would provide the basis for tapping into a wider range of communities. (Figure 38). Ethnicity of Toughlove parents has historically been influenced by communities in the group locations, for example, South African in Takapuna, European in Epsom.

**Figure 38: Which part of Auckland do you live in?**

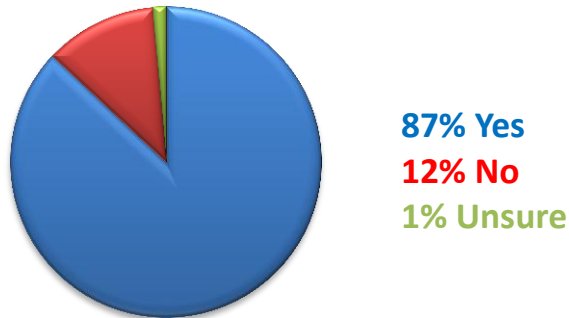


Base: All respondents



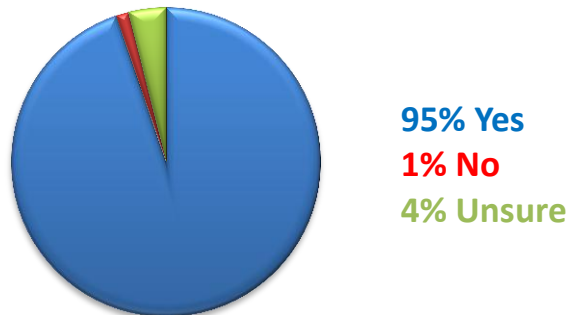
For existing parents, it is restriction of location, rather than day of the week and evening delivery that impedes access (Figures 39 to 43).

**Figure 39: Do the current group locations make it easy for you to attend?**



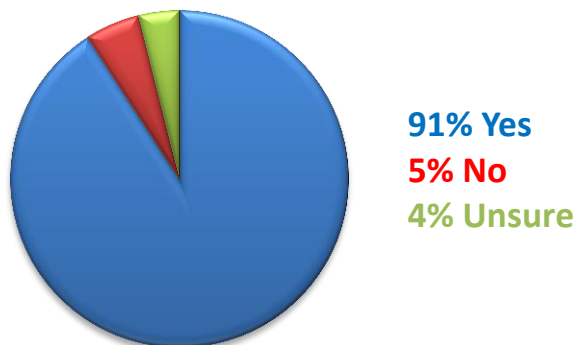
*Base: All respondents*

**Figure 40: Currently, all Toughlove group meetings are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Do these days make it easy for you to attend?**



*Base: All respondents*

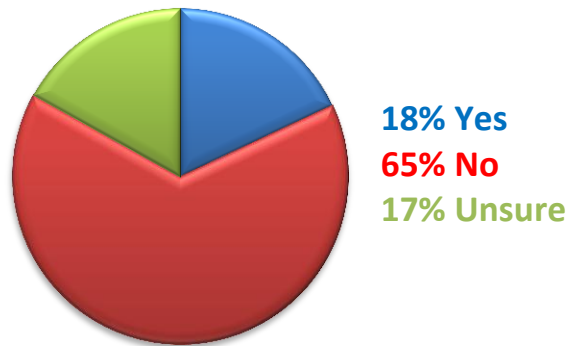
**Figure 41: Do evening groups make it easy for you to attend?**



*Base: All respondents*

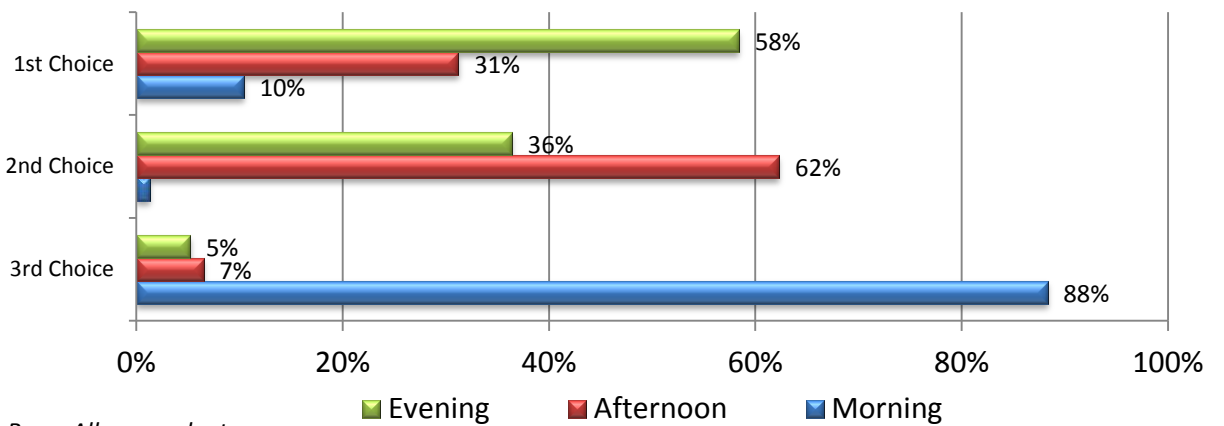
Although greater choice of times would suit individual needs and circumstances.

**Figure 42: If the groups were held earlier in the evening would it be easier for you to attend?**



Base: All respondents

**Figure 43: If Toughlove group meetings are available mornings or afternoons or evenings, what would be your first, second and third time to meet?**

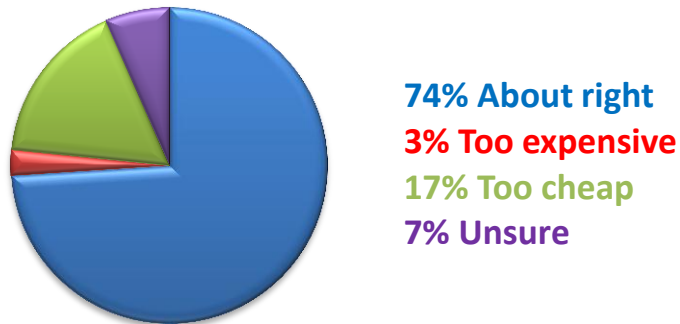


Base: All respondents

### 8.3 Cost is largely a function of perceived value and individuals' financial means

For three-in-four parents the cost of Toughlove is 'about right', and more consider it to be too cheap than too expensive (Figure 44).

Figure 44: Toughlove charges a one-off lifetime fee of \$40. Based on your experience of Toughlove is this:



Base: All respondents

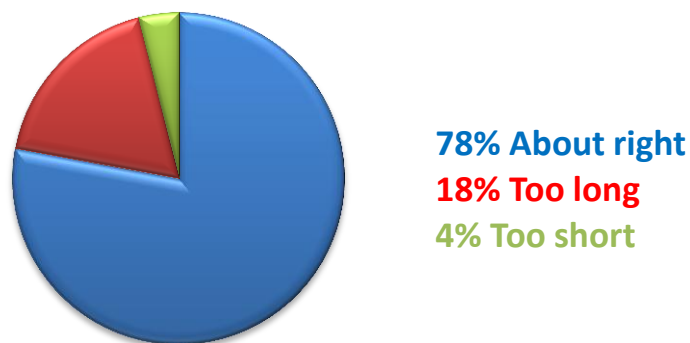
However, increasing the cost could deny access for some.

*'It was a godsend for me. The only way I could afford support, other options were out of my reach. (Parent)*

### 8.4 Three-in-four parents consider the length of the session to be 'about right'

More parents consider the session length to be too long than too short (Figure 45).

Figure 45: Overall, would you say that the length of the session is...?



Base: All respondents

## 8.5 Summary

Greater breadth of offer could be achieved by adding digital delivery to physical presence access. Increasing the number and location of physical groups will also increase access.

Changes to cost and length of group sessions could be explored to increase access and appeal and improve programme viability.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Documents reviewed

#### Toughlove documents

Toughlove Auckland (TLA) strategic plan 2008 – 2012

TLA strategic plan, goals objectives actions

TLA 2012 business plan – priorities

TLA requirements for funding

TLA advertising brief, December 2009

Toughlove wall charts:

- Meeting format
- Check in
- Information session
- Work session
- Wrap up

Toughlove induction presentation

Toughlove new parents' enrolment forms October 2011 to February 2012

Toughlove (red folder) parent pack:

- Parents' manual
- Weekly action diary
- Welcome to Toughlove parent support group handout
- Toughlove enrolment form
- Toughlove crisis assessment sheet
- Toughlove brochure
- Certificate after attending six Toughlove parent support meetings
- Postcard thanking for first attendance from orientation leader
- Postcard offering support if attendance at group meetings has lapsed

## TLA client evaluation surveys:

- January – October, 2011
- July – December, 2010
- January – June, 2010
- July – December, 2009

## TLA website

## Testimonials:

- Bruce Pilbrow, CEO/Director, Parents Inc. (11 August 2011)
- Chris Graveson, Co-ordinator Youth Aid, New Zealand Police (23 November 2011)

## Newspaper releases:

- How Toughlove can help, *North Shore Times* (27 October 2009)
- Toughlove makes homes happy, *Nor-West News* (26 November 2009)

**Other documents**

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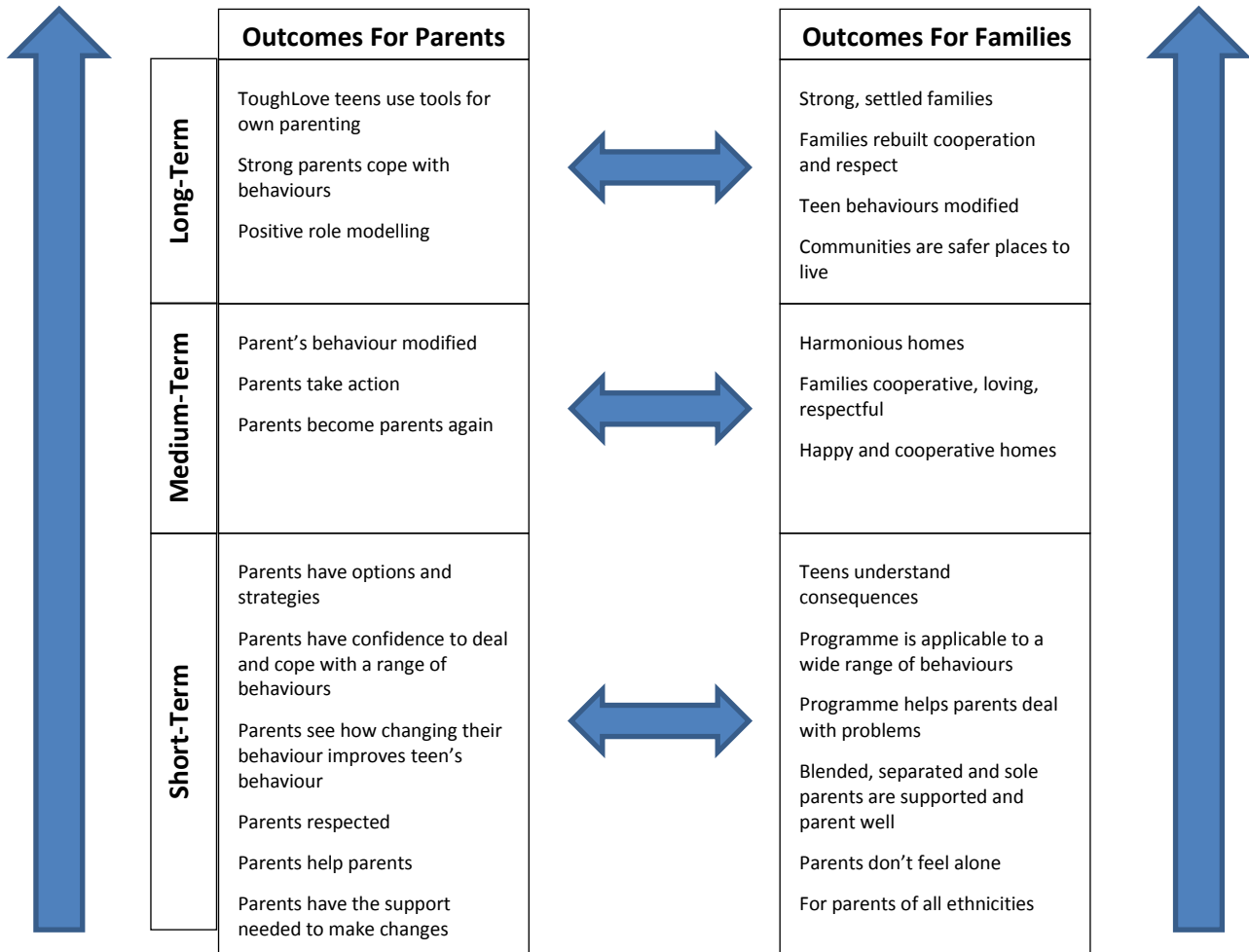
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## Appendix 2: Toughlove Programme Logic



<b>Activities</b>	<b>Programme Design</b> A crisis intervention programme Parenting Adolescents seminars (School-based with PTA endorsement) Provide flexible programme for unique situations Weekly group meetings for parents, life time membership 24 hour support from other parents Small group work for "check in" and to deal with issues, 'take a stand' and set bottom line Corporate programmes	<b>Support Groups</b> Provide orientation to parents Provide shared experiences Parents reflect and discuss issues Parent support-group meetings	<b>Communication</b> Website to direct parents to a group Toughlove Auckland office presence Distribute pamphlets Parent pack with information including manual and weekly action diary Talk to community groups (Rotary, Probus) Success stories in community newspapers
<b>Indicators</b>	Kids stay longer at school Unacceptable behaviour disappears Kids come home at night	Kids attend school (and complete homework) Less intervention needed from outside agencies Improved education/training/employment choices and opportunities	Parents stay at work Families stay together Fewer drugs



## Appendix 3: Discussion guides

### Evaluation Questions: Researcher information only

- To describe the Toughlove programme:
  - What are the guiding principles of the Programme?
  - What are the intended outcomes of the Programme?
  - How do the activities of the Programme link with the intended outcomes?
- To determine the relevance of the Toughlove Programme:
  - How do stakeholders/parents/caregivers of teens perceive the Programme?
  - What audiences are accessing the Programme? What audiences are not accessing the Programme?
  - Is the Programme relevant to parents/caregivers of teens?
  - What other programmes are providing similar or competing services, if any?
- To determine the effectiveness of the Toughlove Programme:
  - What is working well with the Programme and should be continued (referral mechanism, support groups, follow-up, etc)?
  - What is not working well and needs to be improved?
  - What is not working and needs to be discontinued?
- To determine outcomes achieved from the Toughlove Programme:
  - What short-term and intermediate-term outcomes are emerging from the Programme (i.e. progress against intended outcomes)?
  - What unintended positive outcomes are emerging from the Programme?
- To determine programme improvements:
  - Based on the evidence, what improvements are needed to the Programme to enhance relevance, improve effectiveness and achieve outcomes?

### Interview Guide with Toughlove volunteers

*This interview guide is indicative of the relevant subject matter to be covered. It is designed to allow freedom of any additional relevant topics which may arise during the interview to be discussed.*

#### Introduction

- Introduce self/Litmus
- Informed consent
- Time
- Purpose: To understand how people describe the Toughlove programme, its relevance, its effectiveness, its outcomes and any improvements that can be made to better meet the needs of parents, caregivers, teenagers, families and whānau.

Describe and determine the relevance of the Toughlove Programme

- Why do people come to Toughlove? What are they expecting or hoping for?
- Who do you think Toughlove is relevant for and gets the most out of it? Why?
- Who do you think it is less relevant for? Or who do you think would not get much out of it? Why?
- What do you think Toughlove are trying to achieve? How successful are they? And what is the basis of that?
- What does Toughlove offer that other organisations, groups or support networks do not? What does Toughlove offer that is unique?
- What are the other organisations or programmes that are offering parents, families and whānau help and support? What do they offer that Toughlove does not?
- Self-complete: Why are you involved in Toughlove? What do you like about your involvement and role? What, if anything, do you not like or find challenging?

Determine the effectiveness of the Toughlove Programme? Determine what improvements are needed to the Programme to enhance relevance, improve effectiveness and achieve outcomes?

- What elements of the programme help or support parents most? Why?
- What elements of the programme least help? Why? How could this be changed or improved?
- What elements, if any, should be discontinued? Why?
- What other elements might need to be introduced?
- How do you think the referral works?
- How do you think the support group meetings work? What works well/not so well?
- What about the support offered by other parents?
- What about the materials (the manual, getting started, audio cassettes, books, videos, the weekly action diary, orientation packets) – What do you think is useful? What is less useful?
- What about the website? What do you think is useful?

Determine outcomes achieved from the Toughlove Programme:

- To what extent do you know what the guiding principles of the Programme are? How well are these achieved?
- To what extent do you know the intended outcomes of the Programme? How successful do you think the Toughlove is in achieving its intended outcomes?
- What outcomes do you think that parents, families and whānau are looking for?
- To what extent do the two match? What would need to change for there to be a complete match?
- To what extent do you know how what you do and the various activities of the Programme link with the intended outcomes? What would need to change for you to have a better understanding of how the two (activities and outcomes) link together?

Thanks and close

## **Evaluation of the Toughlove programme: Interviews with key agencies and stakeholders**

### **Interview agenda**

1. Describe and determine the relevance of the Toughlove Programme.
  - Your relationship with Toughlove
  - The relevance of Toughlove to your organisation and to parents and in contrast to other agencies
  - Your experience with Toughlove.
2. Determine the effectiveness of the Toughlove programme.
  - Your perception of the elements of the programme which help and support parents most/least
  - Your knowledge of the key elements of Toughlove and how they all fit together
  - Your perceptions of who Tough Love works best for and could work best for
3. Determine outcomes achieved from the Toughlove Programme.
  - Your knowledge of the intended outcomes and how successful Toughlove is at achieving these and what indicators you use to evaluate its success
4. Discuss recommendations for Toughlove's programme in the future
  - Your perceptions on what it should continue to do the same and/or differently

## **Toughlove: Parents/caregivers of teenagers focus groups and interviews**

### **Evaluation Questions: Researcher information only**

To describe the Toughlove programme:

What are the guiding principles of the Programme?

What are the intended outcomes of the Programme?

How do the activities of the Programme link with the intended outcomes?

To determine the relevance of the Toughlove Programme:

How do stakeholders/parents/caregivers of teens perceive the Programme?

What audiences are accessing the Programme? What audiences are not accessing the Programme?

Is the Programme relevant to parents/caregivers of teens?

What other programmes are providing similar or competing services, if any?

To determine the effectiveness of the Toughlove Programme:

What is working well with the Programme and should be continued (referral mechanism, support groups, follow-up, etc.)?

What is not working well and needs to be improved?

What is not working and needs to be discontinued?

To determine outcomes achieved from the Toughlove Programme:

What short-term and intermediate-term outcomes are emerging from the Programme (i.e. progress against intended outcomes)?

What unintended positive outcomes are emerging from the Programme?

To determine programme improvements:

Based on the evidence, what improvements are needed to the Programme to enhance relevance, improve effectiveness and achieve outcomes?

## Interview Guide

*This interview guide is indicative of the relevant subject matter to be covered. It is designed to allow freedom of any additional relevant topics which may arise during the interview to be discussed.*

### Introduction

Introduce self/Litmus

Informed consent

Time

Purpose: To understand how people describe the Toughlove programme, its relevance, its effectiveness, its outcomes and any improvements that can be made to better meet the needs of parents, caregivers, teenagers, families and whānau.

Introduction of participants – When did you go to Toughlove? And what was the main thing you got out of it?

### Expectations/context to Toughlove experience

Going back to when you first considered going to Toughlove... How did you first hear about Toughlove? What did you know about them?

What did you expect or hope for?

What did you think that Toughlove would offer you that other organisations, groups or support networks would not? What other organisations etc. did you also know about or try at that time?

### Describe and determine the relevance of the Toughlove Programme

Using magazine collage pull out words and images that best describe all the associations and feelings you have about Toughlove

How would you describe Toughlove to other people? What would you tell them that they would get out of it?

Who do you think Toughlove is relevant for and would get the most out of it? Why?

Who do you think it is not relevant for? Or who do you think would not get much out of it? Why?

What do you think Toughlove are trying to achieve? How successful are they? And what is the basis of that?

What other programmes or organisations are providing help and support for parents of teenagers? How successful are they do you think compared to Toughlove?

Would you recommend Toughlove to other parents, families and whānau? Why/why not?

Did you consider continuing your association with Toughlove in some capacity? Why/why not?

Determine the effectiveness of the Toughlove Programme? Determine what improvements are needed to the Programme to enhance relevance, improve effectiveness and achieve outcomes?

How well did Toughlove live up to your hopes and expectations? Why?

What are the key things that you learnt that stand out for you?

What elements of the programme helped or supported you most? Why do you think this helped?

What elements of the programme helped you least? Why? How could this be changed or improved?

What elements, if any, should be discontinued? Why?

What other elements might need to be introduced?

Were you self-referred or did some-one refer you? How did that work?

What were the support groups like – what worked well/not so well? What did the facilitators do well? Not so well?

What about the support offered by other parents?

What about the materials (the manual, getting started, audio cassettes, books, videos, the weekly action diary, orientation packets) – what was useful for you? What was less useful?

Have you looked at the website information? What was useful for you?

Determine outcomes achieved from the Toughlove Programme:

Draw a picture of how you felt about parenting your teenager and the relationship that you had before you went to Toughlove and then contrast that with a drawing of how you feel now. What has changed?

During the time you were going to Toughlove what difference did it make to you as a parent? And your relationship with your child? And what about now – What lasting changes, if any, have there been? What one thing would you put that down to?

Koha, thanks and close

## Appendix 4: Information sheet, consent form and koha receipt form for parents and caregivers

### Toughlove Evaluation

#### Parents/Whānau - Information Sheet

##### **What is the purpose of the evaluation?**

Litmus, an independent evaluation company, has been commissioned by Toughlove Auckland to undertake an evaluation of the Toughlove Programme. The purpose of the project is to determine the relevance, effectiveness and outcomes of the Programme and to inform Programme improvements. The evaluation has been peer reviewed by an Ethics Committee.

We wish to invite you to take part in a discussion about your experiences with the Toughlove Programme. We will be asking you to talk about your reasons for participating in the Programme, the expectations that you held, the parts of the Programme which were and were not helpful, and what the outcomes of the Programme were.

##### **Why have I been asked to take part?**

We are talking to parents and caregivers who have accessed and participated in the Toughlove Programme. As part of this evaluation we are also talking to the staff and volunteers of Toughlove Auckland and to other key stakeholders, such as the Police and other agencies who deal with at-risk families.

##### **How was I identified to be contacted?**

Litmus worked with Toughlove staff to identify parents and caregivers who might like to take part in this research. Your name and personal details have remained confidential throughout this process.

##### **What are the potential benefits of participation for me?**

Your involvement with this project will help Toughlove to identify improvements to the Programme that is currently on offer. You will be given koha/gift as a thank you for your time and contribution.

##### **How will my information be kept confidential?**

To assist with reporting, the discussions will be audio recorded and some notes will be taken. Your name, address, or any other identifying information will not appear in any report.

The information collected during the research will be securely stored, with only the evaluators be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project all personal information will be destroyed, except any raw data on which the results of the project depend. Any retained data will be kept in secure storage for three years, after which it will be destroyed.

##### **What will happen at the end of the interview or focus group?**

You will be thanked for your time and given a koha/gift.

**Can I change my mind or withdraw from the project?**

You may withdraw from the discussion at any time. You do not need to give a reason for this and there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind.

**What if I have any questions?**

If you have any questions about the project, please contact:

Sally Duckworth, Litmus, (04) 473 3883, [sally@litmus.co.nz](mailto:sally@litmus.co.nz)

or

Geoff Andrews, Toughlove Auckland, (09) 624 4363, [toughlove.auck@xtra.co.nz](mailto:toughlove.auck@xtra.co.nz)

**Toughlove Consent Form**

I (insert name) .....

of (insert address) .....agree to participate in the evaluation, as outlined in the information provided to me by Litmus. I understand that:

- My participation in the research is voluntary.
- Whether or not I participate will not affect my relationship with Toughlove.
- The evaluation process followed by Litmus will seek to keep my information anonymous. That is, I will not be named in the research report.
- The discussion will be digitally recorded with my permission.
- I can withdraw from this evaluation up until the time of reporting.
- If I withdraw, I can request that any data collected from me be returned or destroyed.
- Digital recordings, notes, and summaries will be stored securely at Litmus and will not identify me.

I have read this consent form, and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this evaluation.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Toughlove Koha Receipt Form

November 2011

I received \$50 for participating in this research.

Name	Signature

## Appendix 5: Introductory/Opt out email for online survey

(Date) October 2011

Dear (name)

### Your opinion is important to us

This year ToughLove Auckland celebrates twenty one years in operation. Over this time it has supported thousands of parents experiencing the negative impact on their families of unacceptable adolescent behaviour.

To make sure ToughLove continues to help parents in the best possible way, we have commissioned Litmus, an independent research and evaluation company, to evaluate the effectiveness of our programme including suggestions for future improvements.

Your feedback is an important part of this evaluation and we will be sending all current and past parents a short online survey and inviting a small number of you to attend group discussions and individual interviews.

### What to do if you do not want to participate

If you are not interested in participating in please let us know by reply email by **(date)**. You do not have to give a reason for not wanting to be involved in the research and you may also decline to take part when contacted by Litmus.

The research will take part over the next couple of months and be completed by the end of the year. It will begin with the group discussions and individual interviews and be followed by the online survey.

Your candid views are essential to help us make informed decisions about the programme's future. Your individual responses are totally confidential and never revealed to us. We will only be provided with a collective response.

I thank you in advance for your time and contribution.

Yours sincerely

**Geoff Andrews,**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**ToughLove Auckland Inc**

## Appendix 6: Online survey

### Online Survey Parents, Volunteers and Management of Toughlove

#### Survey introduction

Toughlove Auckland has asked Litmus, an independent social research and evaluation consultancy, to survey its parents, volunteers and management. The purpose of this survey is to gather feedback about the programme from people who have experienced Toughlove. This information will be used to make sure the programme best meets the needs of people like you.

Your response to this survey is **confidential**. Your answers will be grouped anonymously with others in the final report to Toughlove.

The survey will take **up to fifteen minutes** and in appreciation of your time and valuable opinions, when we receive your completed questionnaire, we will automatically enter you into a **draw for one of three \$100 grocery or petrol vouchers**.

The survey must be completed in one sitting. Once the survey window is closed, you will not be able to return to it. We'd appreciate **your response by Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February**.

If you have any questions about the evaluation itself or the survey, please contact [janette@litmus.co.nz](mailto:janette@litmus.co.nz) ph.: 04 473 3883.

**Section 1. Organisations that help parents and caregivers to deal with difficult teenage behaviour**

Q1. Which of the following **organisations that help parents and caregivers** deal with difficult teenage behaviour are you **aware** of?

- Barnardos
- Child Youth and Family
- Kauri Centre
- Family and Community Services
- Schools
- Parents Inc
- Police
- Relationship Services
- The Parenting Place
- Youthline
- Toughlove
- Other
- None of these

If Toughlove or None of these is selected

Q1A. Are you aware of Toughlove?

**Yes**

**No**            If No Close

Q2. Which organisations have you **ever** used to help deal with difficult teen behaviour?

**Reduced list from Q1.**

If Toughlove not selected in Q2.

Q2A. Have you ever used Toughlove?

**Yes**

**No**            If No Close

Q3. Which organisations are you **currently** using to help deal with difficult teen behaviour?

**Reduced list from Q2.**

Q4. Which organisations would you **recommend** to help deal with difficult teen behaviour?

**Same list as Q2.**

## Section 2. Your involvement with Toughlove

Q5. Which of the following ways have you **heard about** Toughlove?

*Please select all that apply*

- Child Youth and Family
- Citizen's advice bureau
- Community newspaper
- Community noticeboard
- Friends and family
- Health provider e.g. GP, hospital, psychologist, psychiatrist
- Another parenting group e.g. Parents Inc
- Police
- School
- Talk at a community group e.g. Rotary, Probus
- Telephoned the Auckland Toughlove office
- Toughlove leaflet
- Website
- Word of mouth
- Other

Q6. Which **one** was the most influential in your **decision to attend** a group meeting?

*Please select one option only*

**Same list as Q5.**

Q7. About how long ago did you **first take part** in a Toughlove group?

- Less than one year ago
- Between 1 year and up to 3 years
- Between 3 years and up to 5 years
- Between 5 years and up to 10 years
- Between 10 years and up to 20 years
- Over 20 years

Q8. About **how many group meetings** have you attended?

- 1-2
- 3-6
- 7 -10
- Over 10
- Unsure

Q9. And would you say your **pattern of attendance** at group meetings is/was more typically...

- Regular
- Irregular

Q10. In which of the following ways have you **been involved** with Toughlove?  
*Please select all that apply*

- Parent
- Volunteer
- Management/Governance

Q11. What is your **main current** involvement?  
*Please select one option only*

- Reduced list from Q10.**
- No longer involved

Q12. What is the **location or locations** of the groups that you have been involved with?  
*Please select all that apply*

- Epsom
- New Lynn
- Howick
- Massey
- Pukekohe
- Takapuna
- Other

Q13. In the **next twelve months** in what ways will you be involved with Toughlove?  
*Please select all that apply*

- Parent
- Volunteer
- Management/Governance
- No longer involved
- Unsure

**If no longer involved in next twelve months**

Q14. Would you consider being involved with Toughlove again at **any time in the future**?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**If yes in Q14.**

Q15. In which of the following ways might you be involved with Toughlove in the **future**?  
*Please select all that apply*

- Parent
- Volunteer
- Management/Governance
- Other
- Unsure

### Section 3. About the Toughlove programme

Q16. Which of the following **parts** of the Toughlove programme are you **aware** of?

*Please select all that apply*

- Weekly group meeting
- Induction/orientation for new parents (first two group meetings attended)
- Parents manual
- Weekly action dairy
- Welcome to Toughlove parent support group handout
- Toughlove enrolment form
- Toughlove crisis assessment sheet
- Toughlove brochure
- Certificate after attending 6 Toughlove parent support meetings
- Post card thanking for first attendance from orientation leader
- Post card offering reminding of support if attendance at group meetings has lapsed
- Weekly phone call from other parents
- 24 hour support from other parents
- The importance of taking a stand with teens
- The importance of setting a bottom line with teens

#### If weekly group meetings is not selected in Q16

Q16A. Are you aware of the weekly group meetings?

- Yes
- No

#### For each aware

Q17. And how **useful** in providing information about the programme and/or helping you to deal with difficult teen behaviour has each of these been for you?

#### Rotate

**Scale: Very useful, useful, neither/nor, not very useful, not at all useful, unsure**

**List as above**

Q18. Now thinking about the format of the weekly group meeting. This meeting is two and a quarter hours long, followed by tea and coffee and informal mixing. Overall would you say that the **length** of the session is?

- About right
- Too long
- Too short
- Unsure

Q19. The group meeting is broken down into five sections, how **useful** is each to you?

**Rotate**

**Scale: Very useful, useful, neither/nor, not very useful, not at all useful, unsure**

Opening and introduction (big group)	5mins
Check in (small group)	30mins
<i>To discuss last week's stand, bottom line, success and support calls</i>	
Information session (big group)	40mins
Work session (small group)	40mins
<i>Agree next week's stand, bottom line and support</i>	
Wrap up (big group)	20mins

Q20. Toughlove charges a **one off life time fee** of \$40 Based on your experience of Toughlove is this:

- About right
- Too expensive
- Too cheap
- Unsure

Q21. There are currently six Toughlove group meeting locations - Epsom, New Lynn, Howick, Massey, Pukekohe and Takapuna. Do these **group locations** make it easy for you to attend?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q22. Currently all Toughlove group meetings are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Do these **days** make it easy for you to attend?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**If no or unsure in Q22.**

If groups were held on the **weekends** would it be easier for you to attend?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q23. All Toughlove group meetings are held in the evenings. All begin at 7.30pm with the exception of Pukekohe which begins at 7pm. Do **evening groups** make it easy for you to attend?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure



Q24. If the groups were held **earlier in the evening** would it be easier for you to attend?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q25. If Toughlove group meetings were available mornings or afternoons or evenings, what would be your first, second and third time to attend?

*Please indicate with a 1,2 and 3 in the given boxes*

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening

Q26. Would you be interested in an online Toughlove support service?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q27. Would you be interested in Toughlove offering a Skype support service?

- Yes
- No

Q28. Thinking about your experience of **Toughlove group meetings**, to what extent do you agree or disagree that...

**Rotate**

**Scale: Strongly agree, agree, neither/nor, disagree, strongly disagree, unsure**

- People experiencing serious behaviour problems with their teens (e.g. domestic violence, crime, and drug abuse) are more likely to benefit from attending Toughlove group meetings
- Taking part in Toughlove group meetings is more for people wanting support than people looking for new parenting skills
- Taking part in Toughlove group meetings is not for people like me
- Taking part in Toughlove group meetings makes me think my situation is not that bad
- Taking part in Toughlove group meetings is not uplifting
- It's often difficult for everyone to have a say in Toughlove group meetings
- Toughlove group meetings are helpful to people from all ethnic groups
- Toughlove group meetings have no religious bias
- Being involved in Toughlove is too much of a commitment
- Toughlove's support is most valuable because it is given by parents who have experienced the same difficulties with their own teens

#### Section 4. Result achieved from taking part in Toughlove

Q29. **Overall** to what extent do you agree or disagree that your involvement with Toughlove has led to **positive changes** for you and your family?

**Scale: Strongly agree, agree, neither/nor, disagree, strongly disagree, unsure**

Q30. Thinking about the impact of your involvement with Toughlove, to what extent do you agree or disagree that...

**Rotate**

**Scale: Strongly agree, agree, neither/nor, disagree, strongly disagree, unsure**

Toughlove has provided me with skills and strategies to deal with my teen's difficult behaviour

Toughlove has provided me with the confidence to deal with my teen's difficult behaviour

Toughlove has shown me ways to change my behaviour to improve my teen's behaviour

Being involved with Toughlove has helped to improve my relationship with my teen

Toughlove is the only organisation specialising in support for parents experiencing difficult teen behaviour

Toughlove has helped me to be a positive role model for my teen

Because of Toughlove my teen is now no longer involved in anti-social behaviour

Toughlove has provided me with the support I needed to improve my teen's behaviour

My teen will use the skills and strategies for his/her own parenting

Toughlove has helped my teen to have better education/training/employment choices and opportunities

Toughlove has helped improve cooperation and respect within our family

Our family life is more settled since our involvement with Toughlove

#### Section 5. About you

Q31. Are you?

Male

Female

Q32. Which age group do you fall into?

Under 30 years

30 – 39 years

40 – 49 years

50 – 59 years

60 years or more

Q33. Which country were you born in?

- New Zealand
- Australia
- England
- Scotland
- China
- South Africa
- Samoa
- Cook Islands
- Other

Q34. Which ethnic group/s do you belong to?

*Please select all that apply*

- New Zealand European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Māori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Indian
- Other

Q35. Which best describes your type of **household**?

*Please select one option only*

- Single parent household
- Nuclear family
- Extended family
- Blended family
- Other

Q36. What is your **highest education** qualification?

- None
- Secondary school qualification
- University Entrance
- Trade certificate
- Tertiary qualification

Q37. Which part of Auckland do you live in?

- Auckland city
- North Shore
- West Auckland
- East Auckland
- South Auckland
- Other

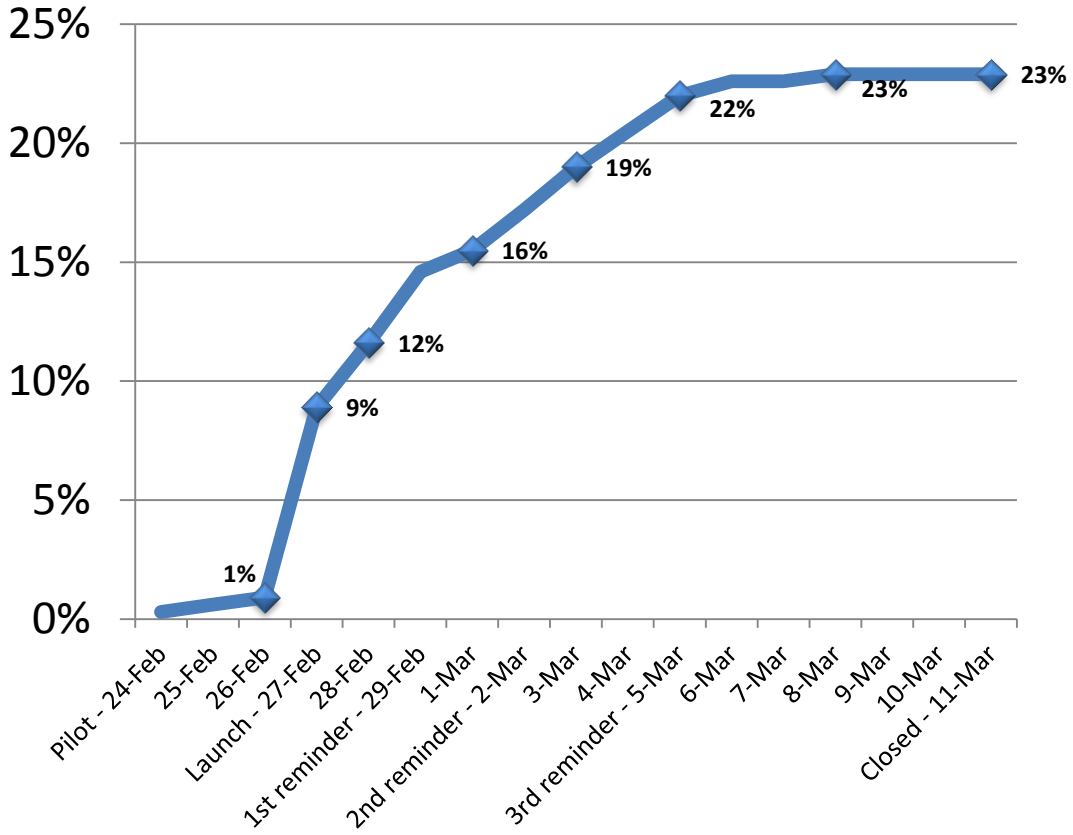
Q38. What is your **total household income** (from all sources) before tax?

- Less than \$20,000
- Between \$20,001 and \$40,000
- Between \$40,001 and \$60,000
- Between \$60,001 and \$80,000
- Between \$80,001 and \$100,000
- Over \$100,000

**Standard thanks and close**

## Appendix 7: Survey response rate information

Figure 47: Toughlove online survey response rate



**Table 3: Online survey and comparative survey statistics**

	Toughlove		Comparative Survey	
Sent	336		146	
	n	%	n	%
Bounced back	0	0%	3	2%
Unsubscribed/opted out	7	2%	2	1%
Clicked on link	105	31%	87	60%
Did not click on link	231	69%	59	40%
Started but didn't complete	5	1%	5	3%
Non-qualifier	1	1%	0	0%
Total responses	77	23%	77	53%
Response rate	23%		53%	

Note: TLA has contact information for 950 parents and email contact information for 450 of these TLA began collecting email addresses late October 2011. The majority of parents on the email database attended TLA between 2006 and 2011. It included 60 current attendees (parents, volunteers, management/governance) and 10 past volunteers.

**Table 4: Survey response data**

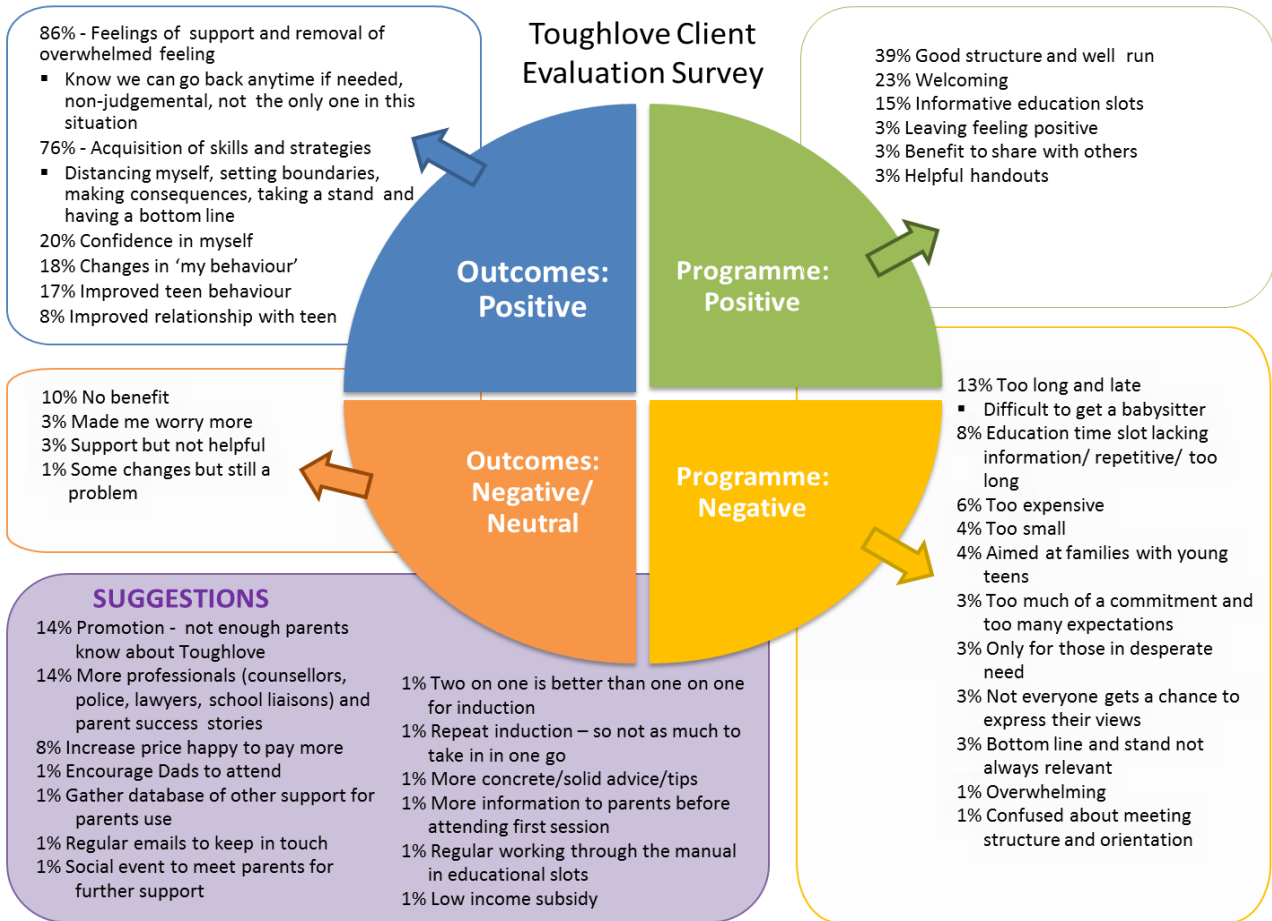
	Toughlove (n=77) (Database = 336)			Comparative Survey (n=77) (Database = 145)		
	Date	Total responses	% of sample	Date	Total responses	% of sample
<b>Pilot</b>	<b>24/02</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>15/03</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1%</b>
	25/02	2	1%			
	26/02	3	1%			
<b>Launch</b>	<b>27/02</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>16/03</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19%</b>
	28/02	39	12%	17/03	32	22%
				18/03	33	23%
<b>1<sup>st</sup> reminder</b>	<b>29/02</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>19/03</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>28%</b>
	01/02	52	15%	20/03	50	34%
				21/03	56	39%
				22/03	56	39%
				23/03	59	41%
				24/03	60	41%
				25/03	62	43%
				26/03	64	44%
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> reminder</b>	<b>02/02</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>27/03</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>48%</b>
	03/03	64	19%	28/03	72	50%
	04/03	69	21%	29/03	74	51%
				30/03	75	52%
				31/03	76	52%
				01/04	77	53%
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> reminder</b>	<b>05/03</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>22%</b>			
	06/03	76	23%			
	07/03	76	23%			
	08/03	77	23%			
	09/03	77	23%			
	10/03	77	23%			
<b>Close</b>	<b>11/03</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>02/04</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>53%</b>

## Appendix 8: Best practice for increasing online survey response rate

- Survey response rates vary widely and depend on a variety of factors including:
  - Length of questionnaire
  - Salience of the issue being researched
  - Engagement with the research sponsor/nature of the relationship
  - Incentive and type of incentive
  - Number of follow up reminders
  - Timing of survey broadcast and specific demands of industry group
  - Day and time of day survey is received
  - Assured anonymity
  - Ability to provide a free response
  - Run time of the survey
  - Personalisation
  - Proximity of topic in headline
  - Perceived value of taking part, especially belief that action will be taken
  - Accuracy of the data base
- Taking into account all of the above influences, response rates can range from 2% to 85%.
- This survey applied best practise in design and implementation and achieved a response rate at the upper end of the range from 15% to 30%. This is the expected rate for a general, medium length survey with a sample of less than 1,000, which provides incentives and uses follow up reminders

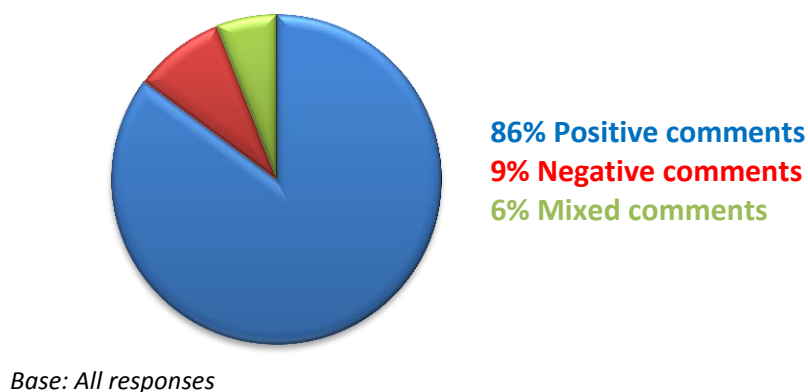


## Appendix 9: Toughlove Client Evaluation Survey Analysis



Base: n= 71 All responses

**Figure 48: Client Evaluation Survey. Could you please describe what changes you have achieved, or if none have been achieved please let us know.**



### Main positive outcomes

- Acquisition of skills and strategies

Distancing myself

Setting boundaries

Making consequences

Taking a stand and having a bottom line

*I have also come away with some life-long strategies and it was of enormous benefit to share and not feel like I was an inadequate parent. The support was genuine.*

- Feelings of support and removal of overwhelmed feeling

Non-judgmental support

Not the only one

There to go back to when you need it

*I would most certainly consider attending again if in need of a refresher*

*Only attended for a short time but would go back in the future if needed*

*The non-judgemental, experienced support has been so helpful when we have been way out of our depth with circumstances we have never imagined or experienced before*

*It felt like no matter how big the problem, the problem is always worthy of solving – I felt very safe and non-judgemental as we are all in the same boat.*

- Confidence

*Attending Toughlove gave me the confidence and strength to carry out the action plans/stands I made to help me with my son*

- Changes in 'my behaviour'

*To change me, I cannot change anyone else*

*Changing 'my ways', which in effect changes the children's behaviour*

- Improved teen behaviour/positive results
- Improved relationship with teen

*My relationship with my Toughlove daughter has improved immensely and I feel more loving towards her and that we are going to have a healthier future relationship*

### **Main negative/neutral outcomes**

- No benefit

*My problem was minor in comparison to others but felt that support/ideas for nipping my problem before it got worse, were not there*

- Support but not helpful

*Received support but not of much benefit*

- Worry more now

*I worry my son - against me, angry, talk back, stealing. But there I heard drugs, alcohol, sex, pregnancy – make me more worry so I stop.*

### **Programme – Positive**

- Felt welcome

*Very welcome – first night left feeling very positive feeling 'we are going to be okay'*

- Left feeling positive
- Benefit to share with others and know you are not the only one

*It's knowing that I'm not alone with my problems. Being able to listen to others and share my experience.*

- Good structure
- Well run
- Helpful hand-outs
- Good education slots

*Education slots are great (when they turn up) which is probably where I learn the most from*

## Programme – Negative

- Too late and too long

*I find the format (7.30-9.30, sometimes longer) too long and too late. Suggest earlier start time. Shorter education slot*

- Too much of a commitment and too many expectations

*I do get the feeling that there is an expectation that you have to be in it for the long haul. I feel our situation is much improved from a few short months of attending and do not feel the need to keep going each week. The implication is that we must keep attending and do not feel the need to keep going each week. The implication is that we must keep attending as change will take a long time to come – I felt the pressure so maybe this should be made clear in case others feel it too when very vulnerable. The people in the group had been coming for years and I have to ask why? For some attendance for a long time may be what is needed; for some (and we feel in this category) it might not require such a long commitment and that should also be okay!*

- Overwhelming
- Too expensive
- Group too small – not enough people to fill the roles
- Too negative
- Only for those in desperate need
- Too cheap/happy to pay more

“But that’s okay!”

“I wouldn’t like to see it become unaffordable”

- Didn’t get a say
- Aimed at families with young teens
- Confused about meeting structure and confused at orientation
- Bottom line and taking a stand sometimes not relevant
- Education time slot too long/ lack info/ repetitive

## Suggestions for improvement

- Encourage dads
- Gather a database of sources of support other than TL
- Regular optional emails to keep in touch
- Discount for low income earners

- Social event bi-annually to meet other parents for more support
- Repeat induction so it is not as much to take in in one go
- More concrete/solid advice/tips in education slots
- Two on one is better in induction than 1 on 1
- More professionals
  - Counsellors/psychologists
  - School liaisons
  - Police
  - Lawyers
  - Parents with success stories
- More promotion

*Promotion. Most parents do not even realise that Toughlove is around until it is too late. I always promote because it is vital that parents get help*