

*A program to restore a parent's confidence in their capacity to assist their struggling child or young person.*

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## Description:

A 6 session, individualised coaching program for parents who have a child who is struggling with mental health and/or social/behavioural issues. An optional introduction and review session can be included. The program is designed to provide parents with fresh awareness and guiding principles to optimise the way they support their child's wellbeing. Parents are supported to manage their feelings and reactions towards their struggling child and to consider their role in encouraging their children's potential for healthy development.

## It aims to:

- Optimise the way you support your child's wellbeing
- Shift focus to yourself rather than trying to change your child
- Promote more autonomy and responsibility in your child through how you manage yourself
- Help you get back on track as a loving and firm leader
- Establish a longer-term project of parent leadership. This is not a quick fix, but with changes to old patterns of interaction, the child is helped to improve the way they manage their own life challenges.

## Key message:

**Parents are not to blame for their child's difficulties** - many complex factors contribute to symptom development including genetics and their broader family and social environment. However, parents can contribute to sustainable improvements in their child's mental health and wellbeing by adjusting how they interact with their child.

## Hope building: From child project to parent project

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It's natural to want to fix and change a child who is struggling to manage life. Hence it may be a surprise to hear that this program is designed to focus on the parent rather than change the child. A repeated idea in this program is that **when parents shift their energies away from trying to fix or change their child and invest in what is in their control as parents, new hopeful pathways open up**. Changing another is outside of anyone's control. Changing oneself however is always achievable. When a parent discovers ways to promote more autonomy and responsibility in their child through changing themselves, they can recover hope and confidence. Even gradual changes can make a huge difference to a child's path towards adulthood. Moreover, a parent's changes can have a ripple effect and be of benefit to the whole family.

## Program structure

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### INTRODUCTION

An opportunity to ask questions and help your coach to understand your particular family story.

#### STAGE 1: SESSIONS 1-3

##### **Stepping back: Observation and awareness**

Learning to observe the parent-child interactions when stress is high

Parents are assisted to:

- Promote responsible independence
- See the familiar worry cycle
- Understand the value of a calmer parent

#### STAGE 2: SESSIONS 4-6

##### **Stepping up: Adjusting parent's part in interactions**

Learning to adjust parent interactions to promote the child's growth in responsibility and wellbeing

Parents are assisted to:

- Change what is in the parent's control – holding limits
- Connect without worry
- Harness parent leadership & big picture change

The manuals include information/worksheets for each session to support the parent's change efforts.

This program can be equally useful for one or both parents to attend. It can be very helpful for just one parent to work on changing the way they manage interactions.

*“This program helped me be involved and engaged with the kids but not experience the intensity of emotions alongside them. I developed an understanding that me being a functional, deliberate and less reactive adult is important to help my kids develop fully as young people.”*

## How do I find a Parent Hope Coach? Where can I get more information?

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For more information on the program including resources for parents and details of trained practitioners offering the Parent Hope Project program in your state or territory, please visit our website:

[www.parenthopeproject.com.au](http://www.parenthopeproject.com.au)