



TASMANIA

IMPACT ON YOUNG PARENTS 2024

A REPORT PREPARED FOR THE
TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT

BRAVE FOUNDATION

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Cultural Acknowledgment

Brave Foundation acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation as the traditional custodians of the lands on which our organisation works. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Brave's work also brings us into contact with people from diverse communities. Brave is committed to respecting the sexuality, gender, culture and heritage of each person we encounter, inside and outside our organisation.

JANA'S STORY

Jana was a 21-year-old Aboriginal woman with a 10-month old baby when she learnt of Brave's program through a Child and Family Learning Centre she had visited. She was trying to flee a violent relationship and secure safe and stable housing for herself and her baby. Jana was also isolated and experiencing social anxiety, but thought a program could help her and her son to make some changes in their lives.

Jana wanted support with parenting and was motivated to do training to prepare for a finding a job. Feeling overwhelmed by the prospect of single parenthood and her experience with post-natal depression, alongside mental health and learning challenges, she sought support from Brave to help identify a pathway for her future.

“... my partner was mentally and physically abusive to me and physically abusive to [baby's name]... When I learned they [Brave] could provide support, I was just like, 'anything that could help me and [son], yes, I'll do it'.”

When she met her mentor for the first time, Jana was nervous and unsure how to take the first steps. Benefiting from the structure of her Pathway Plan and with the support of her mentor, she developed step-by-step strategies to work toward starting her own business including enrolling in study, getting her drivers licence, and securing stable housing.

I was overwhelmed just thinking about being a single mum. It was amazing just to have someone outside my family to support me... knowing she [Mentor] was there to support me and help me with the change to be a single mum, it was just so helpful... and just someone who is accepting of who you are.”

When [Mentor] told me that were going to get our own place, I was really excited 'cause I had always lived with other adults... [but also] I was worried about the new place because we didn't have anything [furniture] and I was like, 'How are we going to get all the stuff we need for the new place?', and [Mentor] just said, 'Don't worry, we'll go together, and we'll go to [support service] and the other places and we'll get you the stuff you need... and we did’.”

Jana's time in the program has also shifted her perception of herself. She really appreciated the support she received from her mentor, and her mentor's ability to provide emotional support during her 'hard days'. This included practical parenting tips and strategies and general encouragement to keep trying when she just wanted to give up.

She'd say, 'it doesn't matter what others think. You're doing what you want to do... and you can do this'. And it was just so amazing to have her there.”

Through her work with her mentor, she gained confidence in herself, her abilities as a parent, and in building social connections.

Now I'm ok with being a single mum, this is ok. And I can do other things, and maybe I have a kid, but that's ok. And I wouldn't change it for anything... I've started to open up, and now I'm like a social butterfly around her [mentor]. I talk all the time... I can go outside with her [mentor] and talk and I'm not worried at all.”

INTRODUCTION

Brave Foundation is driven by a vision where every young parent and their child thrives and belongs and its purpose is to unlock the boundless potential of young parents. To do this, Brave walks alongside young parents in the early stages of their parenting journeys, championing their inherent capabilities and strengths, and connecting them to resources, supports and opportunities that enable their own and their families' wellbeing. Brave maintains a commitment to centring the lived experience voices of young parents in organisational decision-making and systemic advocacy efforts. Accordingly, this impact report begins and ends with the stories of young parents Brave has been privileged to support.

Tasmania holds a special place in Brave's organisational journey as it was incorporated as a not-for-profit and launched in Hobart in 2009. Its first office opened in Kingston in 2014 and shortly after it expanded nationally. Through generous funding from the Department of Communities Tasmania in 2022, Tasmania become the first State where Brave rolled out its flagship Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens (SEPT) program at scale. In a 2023 letter of support from Premier Rockliff, he stated



'I commend the Brave Foundation for its work in Tasmania, and I would encourage other States who are keen to pursue a similar partnership approach with the Federal Government to deliver intergenerational impact for both expecting and parenting young people, and their children.'

Brave provides direct services to young Tasmanian parents, and although the SEPT program is parent-facing, it is also child-focused in practice. The program draws on scientific evidence on the first 2000 days and the critical role of the parents in setting up a strong foundation for children to thrive. Service provision aligns with Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing framework and is focused on supporting young parents' health, wellbeing, and parenting skills, as well as family safety and stability, knowing that this has flow-on benefits for their children and the whole family unit.



Appropriately, this impact report is organised by the six wellbeing domains articulated in the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy - Brave works heavily with young parents on five of the six domains. Through quantitative data derived from participant case records and survey-based measures, as well as qualitative data sourced from semi-structured interviews with participants and open-ended survey responses, this report presents a point-in-time picture of young parents involved with the SEPT program in 2024. Brave's internal evaluation work is supplemented by an independent evaluation of the SEPT program in Tasmania, undertaken by the Peter Underwood Centre at the University of Tasmania. Some of the quotes included in this report are drawn from the Peter Underwood Centre project's preliminary findings.

The current report highlights the complex needs and life circumstances faced by many young parents in Tasmania. At the same time, it illustrates the varied and individualised support provided to young parents and the family wellbeing outcomes that are possible through Brave's SEPT program. Tasmanian young parents are strong and resilient but without effective support, they may be isolated and struggle to overcome systemic barriers that compromise their ability to provide their children's healthy development in the early years and to be well within themselves. A strong long-term partnership between Brave and the Tasmanian Government will ensure positive long term wellbeing outcomes for young parents and their children.



TASMANIAN PARENTS SERVED IN 2024

This report includes data from all participants and Brave mentors in Tasmania in 2024, supported by funding from the Department of Communities Tasmania, the Federal Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Office for Women, and the Federal Department of Social Services.

 **177**
young parents referred to SEPT



Figure 1. Number of young parent referrals & participants (including 82 referrals received in 2023 where the young parent participated in 2024)

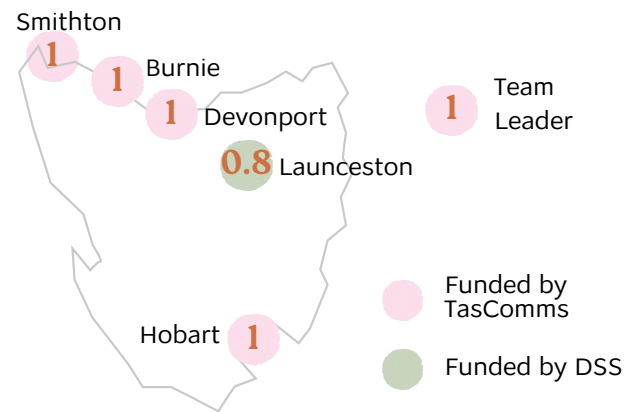


Figure 2. Program delivery footprint by FTE

Figure 3. Gender of participants

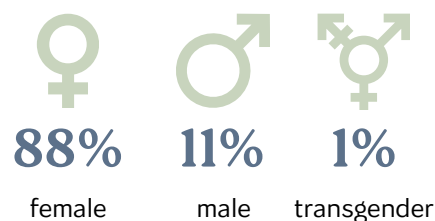
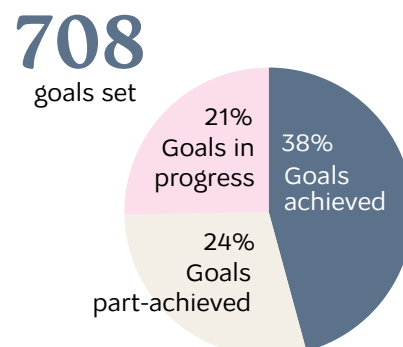


Figure 4. Goal progress outcomes



41%
under 19 years old

43%
First Nations

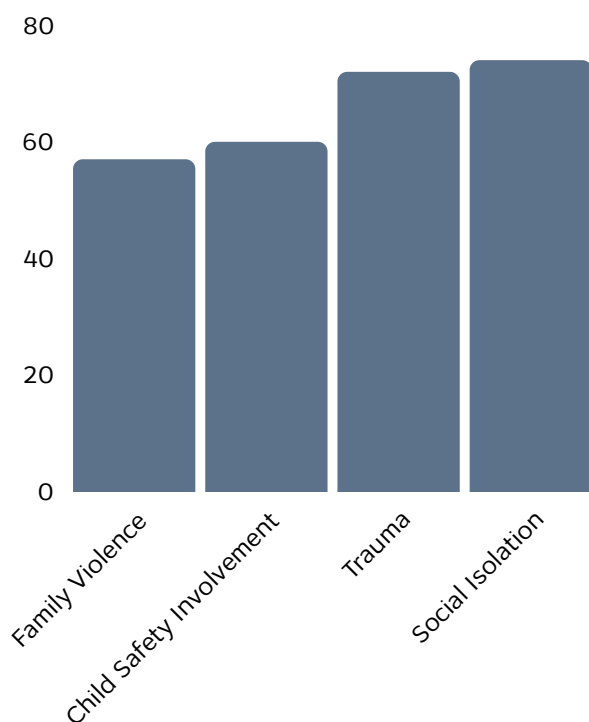
1%
CALD

127
Pathway Plans

WELLBEING DOMAINS

Being loved, safe & valued

Figure 5. Presenting needs to being loved & safe



21%

goals related to being loved,
safe & valued

Figure 6. Change over time to outcome domains relating to being loved, safe & valued (n=55-60)

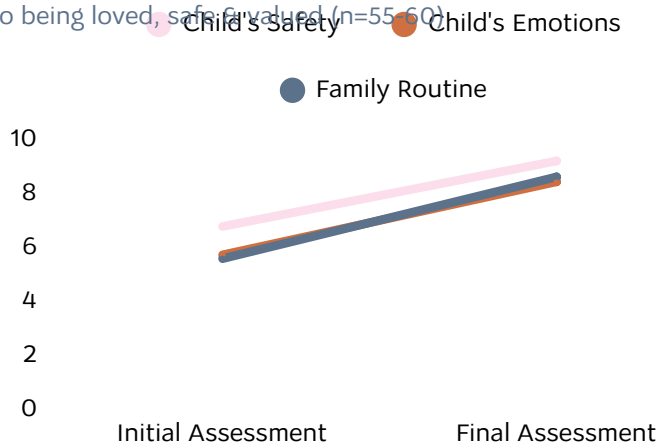
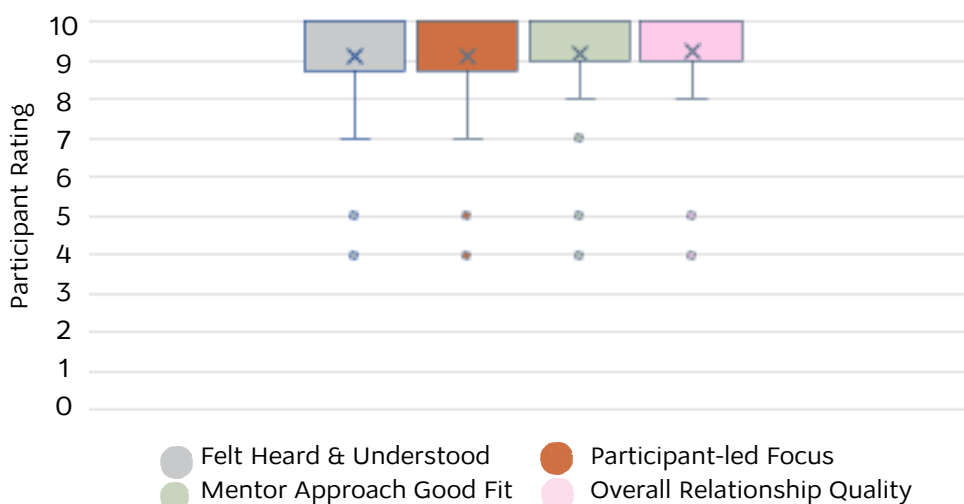


Figure 7. Participant Session Rating Scale scores - mentor relationship quality (n=33)



I'd feel a lot more alone, with Brave it feels like she walks through life with me. Sometimes I can call [Mentor] and just go, 'This week's really sucked. This is what's happened', and just, I don't have many friends, so having someone to vent to as like an emotional support, it's really nice as well, um, 'cause she's not like, counsellors you can vent to, but then they give you like, their psychological advice and you want someone who's compassionate and emotional and that's what [Mentor] is."

"I found that I wasn't really being listened to by people in the Education Department, so it was really nice having, you know, someone else advocate for me and my goals because so many people just sort of shrugged it off because of me being a young parent, but it was nice having someone, like, constantly, they're like pushing for what I want as well."

I lost nearly all of my friends when I was pregnant. I think I went from a big group of friends to, I've got one friend that I talk to... But yeah, since I was pregnant and I had bub, they just, they would message me forgetting that I'm pregnant and be like, 'Oh, do you want to come out?' I was like, 'Nah, I can't. I'm pregnant. I can't drink.' And then just eventually, the invitations started declining, and then just out of nowhere, I had, they just stopped completely. I said to [my mentor] once, 'I've had the baby. I want to try and go for walks.' She offered, like whenever we had a catch-up, we would go for a walk along the waterfront. She would help me with that because I had no one to go with because I don't really like doing stuff alone."

Having Material Basics

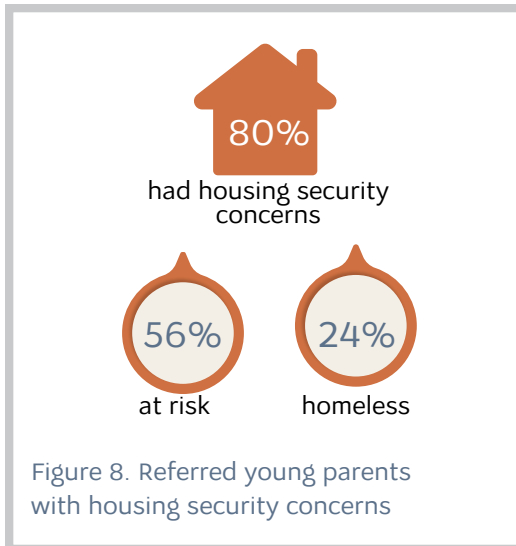


Figure 9. Change over time to outcome domains relating to having material basics (n=53)

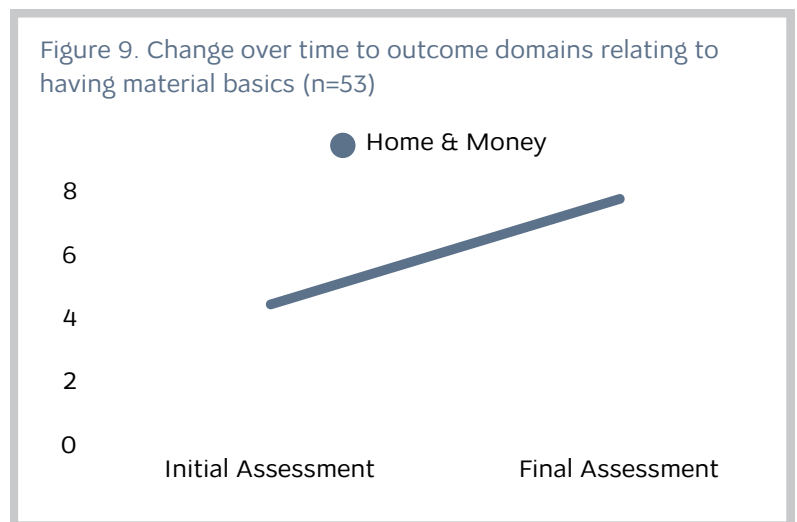
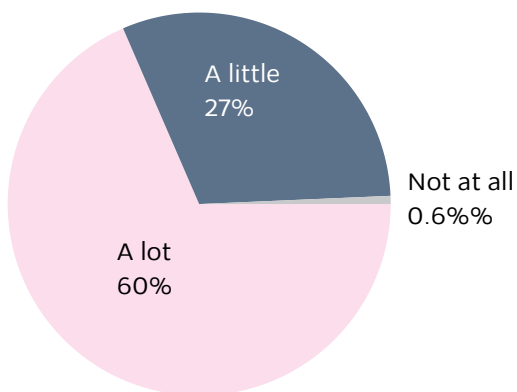


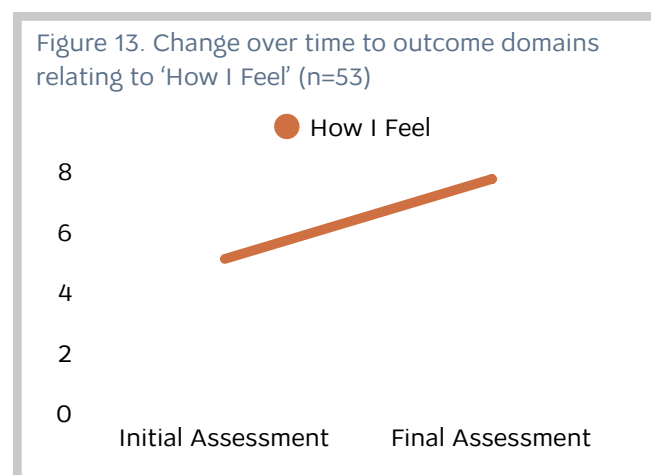
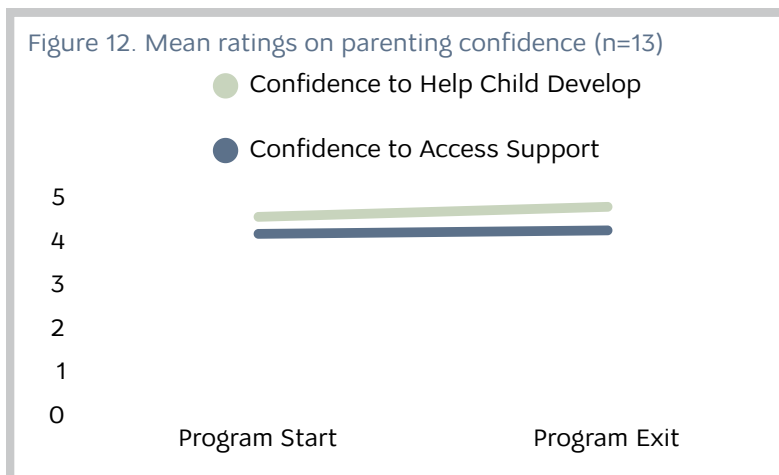
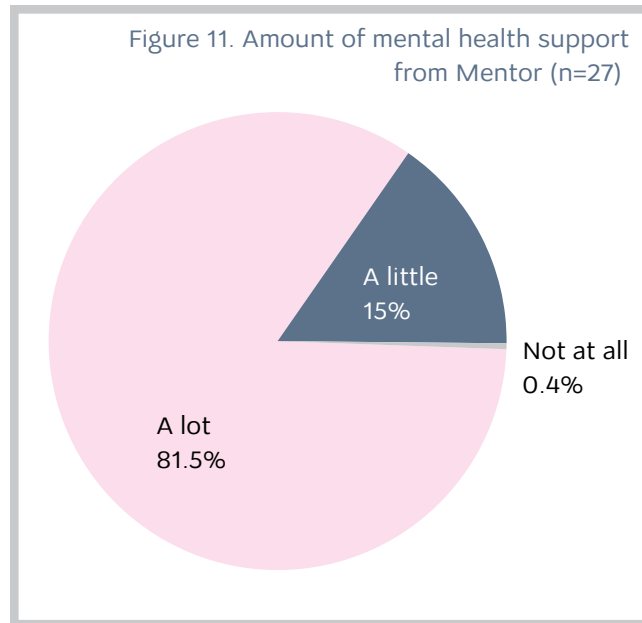
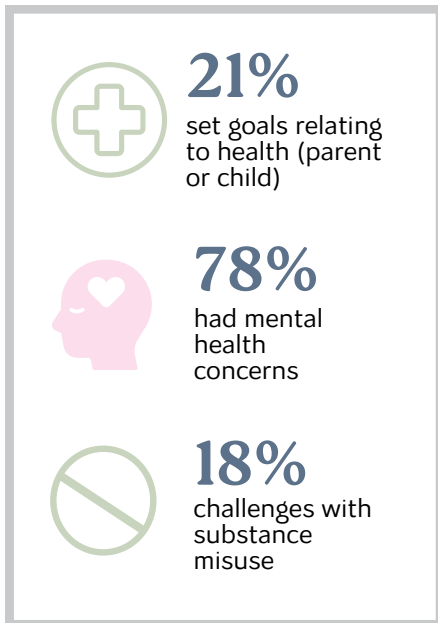
Figure 10. Amount of housing support from Mentor (n=15)



“He [son] got his 1st Birthday, Christmas, food when I couldn’t put it on the table and so much more due to money issues I had. He got so much help from so many different disability services and doctors on trying to help him talk. Now his enrolled in a school (ECIS) to help him with his abilities that he can’t quite reach yet.”

“I wouldn’t have been connected with YFCC without SEPT which has now led to long term accommodation with housing connect. I wouldn’t have been able to have certain necessary household items without SEPT. I also received driving lessons through Brave which has now led to me having my licence which is a necessity for me having two young children.”

Being Healthy



“My child has grown into a bright, happy child as I was able to get help and support that I needed to be the best parent I could be.”



“I had quite a few things [goals to work on with Mentor], like wanting to get the kids into some kind of sport... So I've got the kids into yeah, swimming every like, once a week now...”

Learning



28%

goals related to learning

Figure 15. Status of employment (n=29)

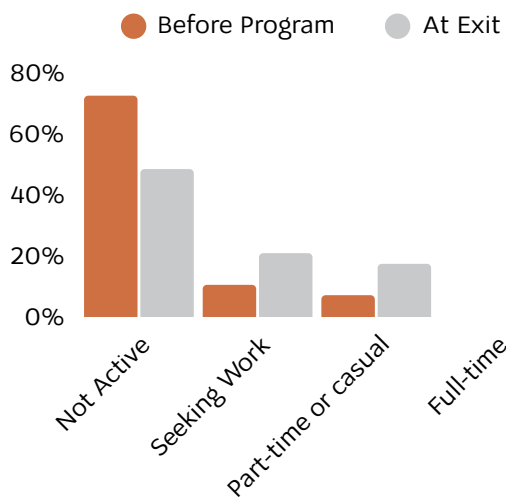


Figure 14. Change over time to outcome domains relating to children's learning & parents work (n=53)

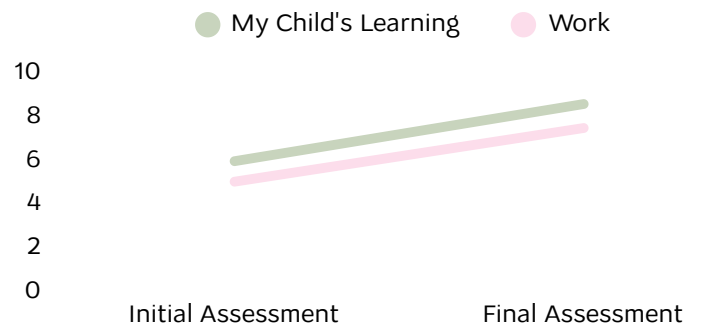


Figure 16. Status of study or training (n=29)

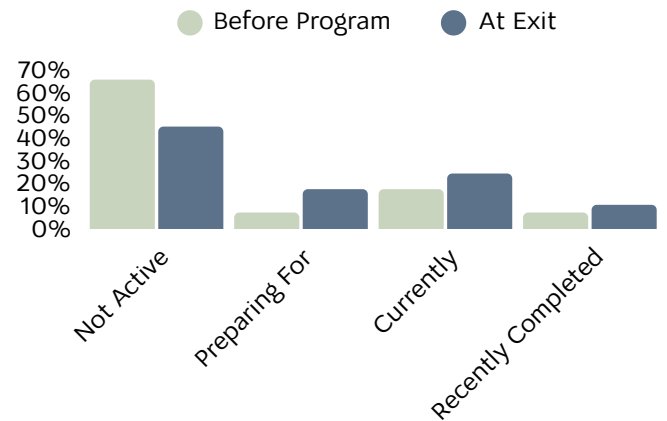


Figure 17. Amount of employment support from Mentor (n=29)

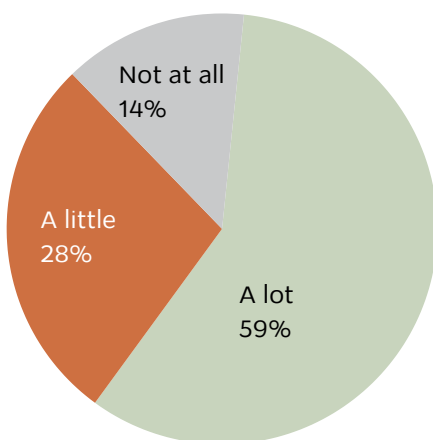
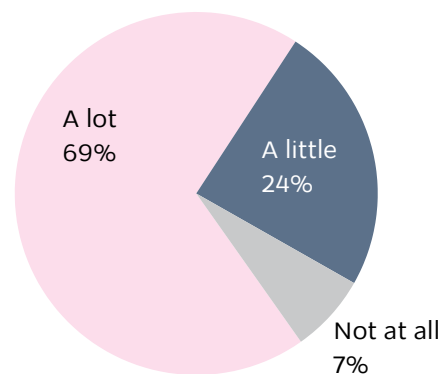


Figure 18. Amount of education or training support from Mentor (n=29)





Get [son] into childcare. Go to TAFE and study Aged Care [are next steps]. [Mentor] showed me how to enrol and get this started so I feel ok about this.”



“I was having a lot of trouble with [name of college]. I completed Year 11. I fell pregnant with my first in Year 11 and I continued until I was about 15 weeks going on campus. And then I did it online. Yeah, and especially toward the end of Year 11/start of Year 12, like contact with [college] just sort of fell off and they weren't like sending me new work and stuff like that consistently. Like I was hounding them myself but like [Mentor] was consistently, you know, emailing them, calling them, like, trying to set up meetings because, like, they just weren't listening to me and they weren't paying attention to me. And I was so scared of failing. And you know, then we looked at other options because I brought up potentially moving away from [college] and looking at a school or pay for other options. And she helped me with that. And she helped me with my application to the Tasmanian E-School and contacting them and everything like that.”



Now that I'm moving towards more of a career path I'm asking for more support and seeing and contacting my mentor from Brave a bit more... It was good to be able to talk freely to someone about what you want to do and for them to actually pursue that for you and show you that there are things and processes that you can you can do, with whatever quality of education that you have.”



Participating



4%
goals related to
participating

Figure 20. Mean ratings on confident to speak up & express opinions (n=13)

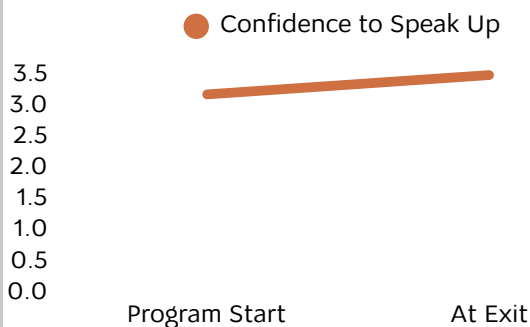
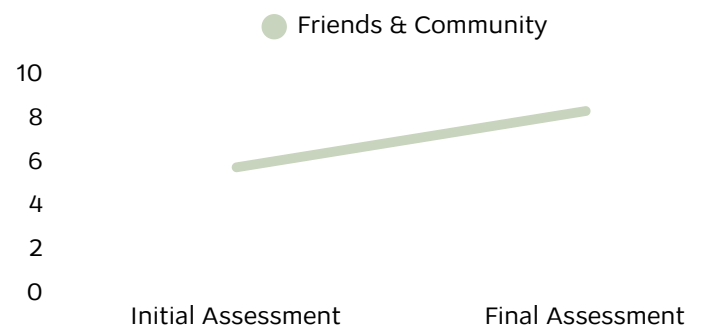


Figure 19. Change over time to outcome domains relating to friends & community (n=52)



... like in terms of advocating, like, it's not only giving me confidence to advocate for myself, but also for my children."

"My confidence [is the most significant change experienced], I just know how to talk to people more now and I know where to get the help I need and can talk to them about it. I can walk up to other mums at the hub and help them and make them feel welcome. [The mentoring journey] made me come out of my bubble."

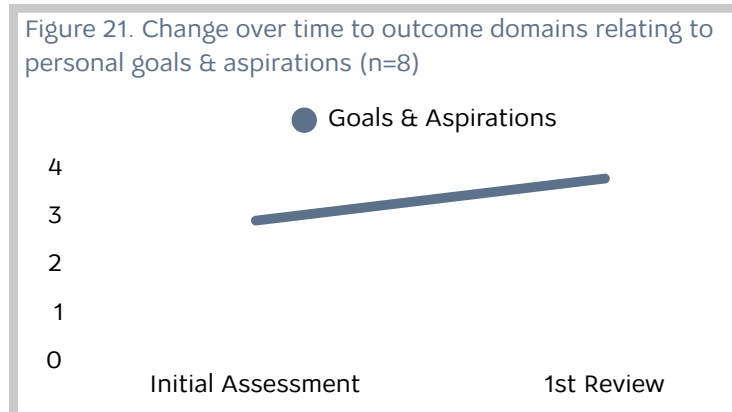


I didn't initially have this goal, but now I do, of wanting to start some study and also kind of finding my place in the community."

"I was able to take my child to group in my home suburb and connect with my community therefore helping my son grow and learn."

Having a Positive Sense of Culture & Identity

While Brave works intensively with young parents on various aspects of personal agency and confidence, it places less emphasis on cultural identity and, as a result, cannot strongly align its quantitative outcomes with this specific wellbeing domain.



The change in myself was the biggest achievement. Having someone tell me I'm doing well and coaching me thru hard times to become a better version of myself. I'm a changed person and a strong resilient mum and partner now!"



"I got involved with Pataway Play... they do it every week. So every week's a different activity, a different aspect on it, learning new things about the culture and being Aboriginal and stuff like that... I've always known we were part Aboriginal, but I never really looked into it much at all until, yeah, obviously, I had [my child], and I needed to know those things so then I could teach them."



I didn't see my growth, I was on my own, one day I had a breakdown. So [my mentor] pulled out some notes from when I first started seeing her and she showed me how I've changed... It hit me that someone actually cares about me. I went home and cried."



"I used to feel badly about being a single mum, but now I'm like, no I'm ok with being a single mum, this is ok. And I can do other things, and maybe I have a kid, but that's ok. And I wouldn't change it now for anything."

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The quantitative findings presented in this report draw on measures introduced at different points in the organisation's maturity journey, some of which are administered to subgroups of young parent participants based on relevance to their life experiences. The consequence is that some results are based on small sample sizes, particularly when based on repeated measures over time. The reliability of the results for these measures are therefore tenuous; reliability will improve as sample sizes increase over time. Nevertheless, the overall quantitative picture is consistent in terms of demonstrating upwards descriptive trends in all but one outcome aligned with the six domains of Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. For the repeated Family Star Outcome measures, which are based on larger samples, all positive effects are statistically significant, and effect are generally moderate in size.

The rates of social isolation, mental ill health, housing insecurity, trauma, and family violence experienced by young parents in Tasmania and captured through the recording of presenting needs at referral are astoundingly concerning. The voices of young parents included in this report highlight that establishing a relationship with a Brave Mentor who will walk alongside them, without judgement, and offer advice, encouragement, advocacy and system navigation support makes a transformative difference to their lives. Mentoring support through SEPT enables these young parents to stay hopeful, strong, and resilient and to build the parenting confidence and capabilities that are needed to create a strong foundation for their children's development in the early years. Funding to continue Brave's important work and to further expand its reach to young parents in Tasmania will make a transformative difference to Tasmanian families now and in the future. We close with Tina's story.



TINA'S STORY

Tina is a 25-year-old Aboriginal young mum of two children. She was 15-years-old when she had her first child, a son who is being cared for by relatives. Her youngest child, a two-year-old daughter, is in her care. Tina describes a childhood that was characterised by family violence, parental substance misuse and mental ill health.

She left home very young and soon found herself homeless and addicted to drugs and was eventually placed into foster care following a family violence incident with her then partner. Tina talks proudly about her own recovery and how her childhood experiences have shaped the way she now wants to be provide her own children with a stable home environment that sees them flourish. She believes that being a young parent means that she has the energy and purpose in her life to focus on their needs.



I had a bit of a broken childhood... dad's an ex-addict... he was for 20 years... mum is bi-polar, so there's never been a normal. I've been four years sober now... my children have given me purpose. I was quite lost for a very long time... [they] give me drive to stay clean and sober. I'm trying to provide a normal household, you know, no addictions, no violence, no abuse. I get to see my child grow, kind of, how I would have if I didn't have that messed up stuff... I get to break the cycle and I'm really proud of that."

Tina heard about Brave when she was attending a local community centre. At that time, she had just relocated from another state and was hoping to reduce her sense of social isolation and build her support system. Tina had previously experienced valuable support from her previous local services and was hoping for something similar.



... I didn't have a village of support... I don't have many friends, so having someone to vent to as like an emotional support, it's really nice as well, because she's not like counsellors who try to give advice... you want someone who's compassionate and that's what [Mentor] is. Having come from (location), I had a lot of supports there... so finding something similar if not better here was pretty amazing."

Tina admits that being a young parent has its challenges. She has been working with her mentor to address housing and financial instability, build her parenting capacity, and was hoping to improve her relationships with extended family members, in particular, the carer of her eldest child. Her Mentor helped Tina gain stable housing, connect her to funds to help buy a car for independence and to a parenting course and cooking group with other young mums. She was also linked to financial and material aide for clothing and household goods. She and her mentor have worked on ways to better communicate with her son's carers. Tina has found that having a stable relationship with her mentor has made the difference.

“I guess finding the right support system was kind of a key and once I had that figured out, things being pretty smooth sailing... I’ve had workers a lot that come and go when you sign up, Brave, you know, you’ve got a year with them,... it’s been really good and very supporting... I’d feel a lot more alone without Brave. It feels like she walks me through life with me.”

Tina’s message for other young parents is to reach out and get support.

“...a lot of people are worried to reach out if they’re in a #%* up situation because they’re scared of losing their kids. Reality is, there’s so much help out there... you need to reach out and that’s the key to keeping your children and getting on the right track.”

*Name & details changed for privacy. Image not Tina.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Lived Experience

Brave gratefully acknowledges all the young parents and Mentors represented in this report and the generous support of key organisations, such as child and family learning centres, other key organisations and University of Tasmania's Peter Underwood Centre, without which Brave's work in Tasmania would not be possible.

Funders

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- Department of Communities Tasmania
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- Federal Department of Social Services
- Paul Ramsay Foundation
- Equity Trustees
- MyState Foundation



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