

Media release

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Encouraged by Decrease in Bullying

“Although the 2008 statistical summary that What’s Up, the free nationwide telephone helpline for children and young people in New Zealand, released earlier this week shows that relationship problems with family, friends or partners as well as bullying accounted for about 50% of the year’s calls, the good news is that the severity of bullying reported decreased significantly” says Murray Edridge, Chief Executive of Barnardos New Zealand.

“Bullying has been a main concern for young callers since the helpline opened in 2001. Over the seven years that 0800WHATSUP has been publishing information on the calls it has received, there has been remarkably little variation in the main issues affecting children and young people in New Zealand”, explains Grant Taylor, Executive Director of What’s Up.

“To me, the stand-out feature of the 2008 figures are the “good-news” signs in the data that the health and well-being of our kids might be improving in some areas. This is consistent with the findings of the Youth 2007 survey published late last year. Like 0800WHATSUP, many people have been working hard for a long time to make life better for our children and it is pleasing to see some evidence that things are improving. This does not mean that the work is done. It means that the work is worthwhile, that it really makes a difference and should be continued”, adds Mr Taylor.

“It is very encouraging to see that bullying has decreased in severity and that the other top issues children and young people are concerned about are not as serious and critical as they used to be. That indicates that parents are listening to their children when they report bullying incidents and are doing something about it to help their children”, concludes Mr Edridge.

ENDS

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