

How Toughlove parents cope with children

By Betty Monson
Special writer

"When your child stopped responding to tender, loving care, Toughlove was the answer."

These are the words of a Farmington parent who has turned to the Toughlove organization for support in dealing with problem children.

Toughlove is a peer-group program for parents who meet to share their problems and give emotional support to one another. The Farmington group meets every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the city of Farmington council chambers, 2360 Liberty.

Founded in Sellersville, Penn. in

1977, the group was organized by family counselors Phyllis and David York after their own daughter had been in serious trouble.

After a long chain of events, the young woman had been arrested and jailed for holding up a cocaine dealer — twice. Even then, she had thought her predicament was amusing.

At that point, the Yorks' love got tough. They refused to visit or talk with their daughter.

"Our friends dealt with her in jail and in a rehabilitation program, and it took nine months before she thought it wasn't a lark," said David York.

Because they were counselors, the

'Our 14-year-old daughter is trying to take over the family. She criticizes, butts into arguments, and goes out of her way to make all of us miserable.'

—Toughlove parent

Yorks knew that many other parents of teenagers were in the same boat. So they wrote a manual about their method, and began an organization to help parents set up their own Toughlove network. Today, with 400 of the programs throughout the United States, more

than 50,000 names are on the mailing list.

AT FARMINGTON'S first Toughlove meeting early in May, participants came from all over the surrounding areas: Wixom, Redford, Detroit, Plym-

outh, Livonia, Southfield, West Bloomfield, and Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Among the 40 participants were retirees, persons in their fifties, forties and thirties. There were married couples and single parents.

All had common needs: to know that others shared their discipline problems; to learn firm and effective dealing with their unruly adolescents; a need for normal life for themselves and their non-problem children; for support during the family crises.

Participants wore first-name-only nametags. The discussion leader asked how many parents had tried private counseling with their children? Two-thirds raised their hands.

How many had persisted with their counseling for more than 10 visits? Again, two-thirds.

How many needed support from other parents? Nearly all.

"Toughlove is a good springboard for helping each other. Together we stand in strength. It gives me security," said Al Schoenrade, of Redford.

FARMINGTON HILLS resident Maria Schneider has yet another reason to attend Toughlove.

"I'm not having a crisis at the moment. But I need ongoing help to be firm after I've drawn the bottom line," she says.

Problems vary from participant to participant. "Our sixteen-year-old daughter, who is in every other way a good kid, has fallen 'in love' with a 19-year-old junkie," says a parent.

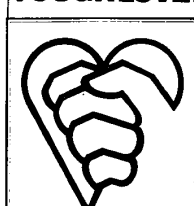
"There is no reasoning with her, even though she knows he has stolen from us and is abusing her trust. She says that if we forbid her to see him, she will leave home and go live with him," the parent says.

Other parents have problems with children playing hooky or failing in school. Some children are runaways, violent or in trouble with neighbors or the law. Many had an alcohol or drug abuse problem.

"Our 18-year-old son was coming home at all hours after hanging out with his dope-smoking friends. He'd get high on drugs and be abusive to the family and destructive of our home. When his money ran out, he'd steal from us and others," said a parent.

Though Toughlove was fashioned to deal with out-of-control adolescents, it may be used as well with adult children living at home, or those living away from home who make upsetting demands on their families.

TOUGHLOVE



COMMUNITY SERVICE FOUNDATION
SELLERSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA 19380

"I THOUGHT MY problems were tough, until I heard some of the other ones," said a newcomer. "Our son has learning disabilities."

Trading information and experiences is an important part of the program.

"Has anyone else felt so depressed that she cried all the time?" an attractive, thirtyish woman asked.

Many heads nodded in the affirmative.

"That's one of the early stages," another woman consided. "I got over it, once I stopped feeling sorry for myself and started to take matters in hand. That's what we're here for — to help each other take charge."

Despite serious problems being discussed at meetings, the parents have a ready sense of humor. Children's manipulative antics are often worthy of publication in a humor magazine.

Likewise, parental attempts at control are sometimes smile-inducing.

"Years ago, when our boarding school teenager told me his sad story of having too few little luxuries there, I gave him an extra \$20. He used it to run away to a motel and party-down for the night," said a parent.

Toughlove does not play the "blame game." It is felt that vital time and energy are lost, worrying over whose fault it is that the children are causing crises.

THE TOUGHLOVE manual asks the question: How do you want to live your life in your own home? It reminds a parent: You are a person too, with

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Following is a quiz from the Toughlove manual. Although taking it won't provide any solutions on how to deal with your children, the answers could indicate whether you are on your way to a problem relationship.

The quiz is divided into three areas: home, school and legal. For the best results, before answering each question consider what has happened in the last three months of your life. After completing the quiz, you can add up your score with the help of the accompanying instructions.

HOME

- You and your spouse argued about your teen-ager's behavior.
- You have withdrawn from your spouse.
- Your spouse has withdrawn from you.
- You have not had a peaceful night's sleep.
- You hated to hear the phone ring when your teen-ager was not at home.
- You or your spouse lost time from work because of your teen-ager.

How often has your teen-ager come home:

- missing dinner.
- high
- late
- stoned
- not come home at all
- drunk

How often has your teen-ager run away:

- overnight
- two days
- a week
- stayed away more than a week

How often has your teen-ager been violent:

- verbally
- physically to the house or furniture
- physically to brothers and/or sisters
- physically to you or your spouse
- physically to other people in the neighborhood

SCHOOL

- How many times has your teen-ager been late?
- How many times has your teen-ager been absent?
- How often has your teen-ager played hooky?
- How often has your teen-ager cut class?
- How often has your teen-ager been suspended?
- How often have you been called by the school?

LEGAL

- How many summons has your teen-ager received?
- How many fines has your teen-ager received?
- How many tickets has your teen-ager received?
- How many accidents has your teen-ager been in?
- How many drug incidents has your teen-ager been charged with?
- How many drinking incidents has your teen-ager been charged with?
- How many times has your teen-ager been arrested?

Now total your score.

- Two boxes in the home category
- Two boxes in the school category
- One box in the legal category

If you score higher, you are already in crisis.



ATTENTION ALL candidates. The Brotherhood-Farmington Hills VFW Post 2269 is extending an invitation to all political candidates to an old-fashioned town hall meeting to be July 22 at 7 p.m. The post is at 23414 Orchard Lake. All residents also are invited to come and ask some of the hard questions we want answered. Here's your chance.

SPEAKING OF THE VFW, that group's Military Order of the Cooties and its auxiliary conducted its state convention earlier this month in Benton Harbor. Elected as the grand president of the ladies' auxiliary was Farmington Hills' own Irene Rodebaugh. She is the outgoing president of her local auxiliary. She holds the chair of trustee, and still is hospital chairman in the auxiliary. She also is Veterans Administration volunteer deputy at the VA in Ann Arbor.

CONGRATULATIONS GO OUT TO Florence "Dingy" Sharp, who recently received a special award on alumni day at Albion College. She was honored for her dedication and outstanding service to the Albion College Alumni Association. She graduated from Albion in 1950 and has served on the board of directors for many years. She recently completed a two-year term as its president.

1977 HARRISON High School graduate Al Jean is adding another chapter to his life by hitching up with Paramount Pictures in Hollywood Hollywood. He left his position as editor of the National Lampoon in New York to take up his new duties. He is part of a team of writers working on a rewrite of "Airplane II" to be released in December. Since going to Hollywood, he has attended the "Grease II" premier party, which took place in a bowling alley. Guests were dressed in '50s garb. He also is working on a script for a movie tentatively to be released as "Cowards."

ADD KEITH DREYER to the list of those joining the medical ranks. A 1976 North Farmington grad, he recently graduated from the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. He will do his postgraduate work at Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital before going into general practice in the Detroit suburban area.

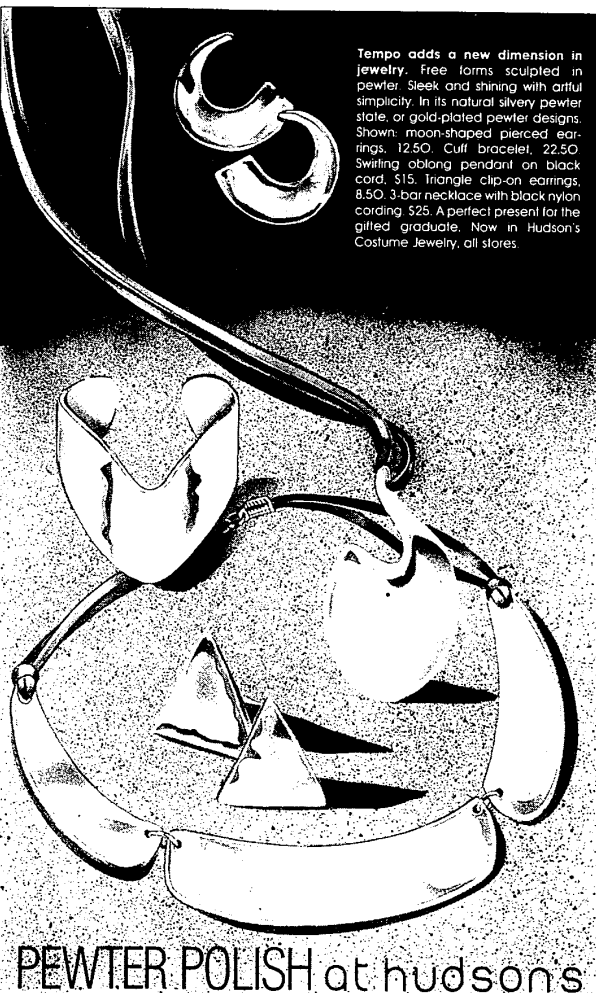
CALLING ALL CLOWNS. Volunteer performers are invited to participate in Clownfest '82, 1-4 p.m. on August 7 at the Detroit Main Library, 5201 Woodward. Reservations may be made by calling 833-4043. Publicity photos will be taken on July 7 at the studios of Tom Sherry 1400 Gratiot. Interested Oakland County clowns are asked to be ready in costume and makeup at 1 p.m. A dressing room is available. Clowns need not be photographed to participate in Clownfest '82.

MAKE IT CLICK is the motto being touted for the upcoming July 4th weekend by your neighborhood McDonald restaurant. The program is to encourage children to "make it click" by buckling up their safety belts or riding in a child safe seat. Each child that visits a participating McDonald's July 2-4 will receive a Ronald McDonald "make it click" decal to place on a safety belt or child safe seat. To further promote child auto safety, participating restaurants will distribute "make it click" promise cards asking children to buckle up for one week. McDonald's is sponsoring the "make it click" program in cooperation with the National Safety Council and the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning. Remember, motor vehicle accidents are the No. 1 cause of death for children over the age of one year. Fewer than 10 percent of the children in the United States ride in child restraints, yet more than 80 percent of all traffic fatalities to children could be avoided if effective child-restraint systems were used.

ANOTHER CONGRATULATIONS goes out to Anne Schenden, a junior at the college of Mount St. Joseph in Ohio, who recently was elected treasurer of the college's Student Government Association for the 1982-83 academic year. She is the daughter of Lawrence Schenden of Farmington Hills.

PAYING FOR THE FAMILY FUN doesn't have to burn a hole through your pant pockets. The Detroit Polo Club plays most Sundays through September at 2 p.m., 2770 N. Milford road, two miles north of Milford and two miles south of M-59. You're invited to pack a picnic lunch and view the action. Admission for adults is \$2. Children 12-years old and younger are admitted free. Coming events include the Jack Glazer Memorial Tournament July 3 and 5, and the Mid-States Circuit 8-Golf Aug. 13 and 15.

KEEP AN EYE OUT for the Farmington Hills Energy Committee's exhibit at the upcoming Founders Day Festival. Al Mackay, Robert Zielg Ziegelman, Dwain Whinery, Tom Duke Jr., Carl Welt, Ted Constantine, Gary Jonna, Frank Blair, Jan Dolan, Judy Gurtin and Dick Miller have banded together to encourage the community to save energy. The winner of a poster contest sponsored by the conservationists will be honored during the parade at the festival, while other entries will be displayed in a tent in the Farmington Downtown Center parking lot. This fall, the committee plans to do an infrared scan of city neighborhoods. A camera loaded with infrared film will photograph homes along various city streets at night. The red and blue areas that result when the film is developed will indicate where heat loss is occurring.



PEWTER POLISH at hudson's