

Western Australia 2004



IN BRIEF

During 2004 Kids Help Line:

- Received 89,606 calls from Western Australia (9% of the 907,569 calls made to KHL nationally).
- Answered 47,520 calls from Western Australia.
- Response rate to calls decreased slightly from 54% in 2003 to 53% in 2004.
- 57% were from rural and remote areas of Western Australia (WA).
- The majority of calls were about relationships with family, friends or partners, consistent with previous years and national data.
- Over the past few years the proportion of calls about emotional or behavioural management have increased while concerns about relationships with friends and sexual activity have decreased.
- Compared to national rates, young West Australians made a greater proportion of calls about family relationships and bullying, but were less likely to call about relationships with partners and sex related issues.
- 11% of callers were referred to other support services in their local area.

Also Kids Help Online:

- Responded to 1,852 online counselling contacts (768 webcounselling sessions & 1,084 emails).
- Online counselling increased by 482 contacts compared with 2003.

Where Did They Call From?

percent of callers were from regional areas of Western Australia with 43% from the Perth region. The breakdown across the state was as follows:

Region	% of Calls
Perth	29.5%
Wheatbelt	14.3%
Pilbara/Kimberley	9.1%
South West	9.4%
Gascoyne/Mid West	9.2%
Great Southern	5.5%
Perth Mobiles	13.1%
Goldfields	3.8%
Regional Mobiles	6.0%

The following report is based on **5,860** calls from children and young people who required counselling for immediate and pressing issues from Western Australia.

Who Called?

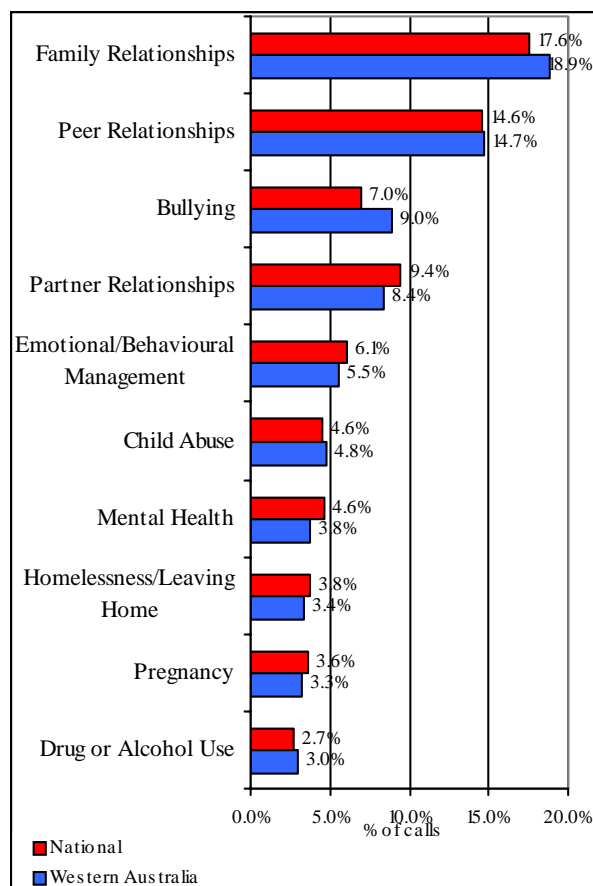
Females made 76% of calls and males 24%. This gender breakdown reflects help-seeking trends across human service agencies. The age breakdown of callers is shown in the table below:

5-9 yrs	5.6%
10-14 yrs	48.0%
15-18 yrs	46.4%

Counsellors recorded the young person's ethnic background for 30% of calls. Indigenous young people made 12% of calls from WA - three times the national rate of 4%. In contrast, young people of non-English speaking backgrounds made 3% of calls from WA - 50% lower than the national rate (6%). The remaining callers were Anglo-Australian (83%) or from other English-speaking backgrounds (2%).

What Did They Call About?

The main problems about which young people in Western Australia contacted KHL are shown in the graph (below). These top ten concerns accounted for over 75% of calls.



As is the case throughout Australia, interpersonal relationships with family and friends concerned young people in the Western Australia more than any other problems.

Family Relationships

Of the **1,105** calls about family relationships:

- ◆ 54% were related to frequent or major family conflict and disruption in their family or family breakdown;
- ◆ 31% reported occasional family conflict or disruption; and
- ◆ 15% of young people called because they were worried about a family member.

Relationships with Friends & Peers

Of the **862** calls regarding relationships with friends and peers:

- ◆ 45% reported occasional or one-off friendship problems;
- ◆ 34% were concerned for a friend's well-being;
- ◆ 11% concerned a significant relationship problems; and
- ◆ 10% disclosed having difficulty making or maintaining friendships.

Bullying

Of the **525** young people who phoned about bullying:

- ◆ 46% reported episodic incidents;
- ◆ 31% were experiencing frequent incidents of bullying or continual harassment;
- ◆ 18% called about an isolated instance of bullying; and
- ◆ 5% were seeking information or concerned for a friend.

Relationships with Partners

Of the **491** young people who phoned about relationships with partners:

- ◆ 47% were experiencing significant relationship difficulties or relationship breakdown;
- ◆ 34% were seeking help with negotiating a relationship;
- ◆ 14% involved wanting to establish a relationship; and
- ◆ 5% had concerns for their partners well-being.

Emotional/Behavioural Management

Of the **323** calls about emotional/behavioural management:

- ◆ 53% of these clients were needing to talk through their emotions or behaviour;
- ◆ 25% were experiencing difficulty managing emotions and/or behaviours;
- ◆ 15% were seeking management strategies;
- ◆ 4% were extremely distressed; and
- ◆ 3% were seeking information or concerned for a friend.

Child Abuse

During 2004 KHL counsellors responded to **283** calls about child abuse accounting for **5%** of calls. Of these calls:

- ◆ 50% related to physical abuse;
- ◆ 36% disclosed sexual abuse;
- ◆ 8% reported emotional abuse; and
- ◆ 6% were about neglect.

Kids Help Line counsellors implement duty-of-care obligations if they access that a child is at risk of injury or harm at the time of the call.

Mental Health

Of the **222** calls about mental health issues:

- ◆ 32% had a clinically diagnosed mental health issue;
- ◆ 38% were experiencing mild or occasional symptoms or concerns;
- ◆ 20% were severely distressed with a mental health concern having a major impact on their lives;
- ◆ 5% were concerned about caring for a significant other; and
- ◆ 5% were seeking information.

Leaving Home & Homelessness

Of the **200** calls about leaving home and homelessness:

- ◆ 39% said they were thinking about leaving home;
- ◆ 16% were from young people who had left home and had nowhere to stay;
- ◆ 21% had been told to leave home;
- ◆ 22% had left home and had somewhere to stay; and
- ◆ 2% were at risk of harm or severely distressed.

Pregnancy

Of the **191** calls about pregnancy:

- ◆ 48% were seeking information or if unsure if pregnant;
- ◆ 15% were worried about a pregnant friend or partner;
- ◆ 17% were distressed about telling significant people;
- ◆ 18% were concerned or indecisive about pregnancy options; and
- ◆ 2% were calls where urgent medical or emotional support was needed.

Drug or Alcohol or Use

Of the **174** young people who phoned about alcohol or drug use:

- ◆ 84% were concerned about drug use, either their own or another's; and
- ◆ 16% were concerned about alcohol use, either their own or others

What Were The Outcomes?

Eleven percent of Western Australian callers were referred to other support services (including crisis response and 3-way linkups) and 12% were referred to their doctor, school/guidance counsellor, mental health worker or other non-specific referrals. In 4% of calls, counsellors were unable to give a referral because either no appropriate service was available or the caller finished the call. For the remaining 73% of callers, the nature of their issue did not require a referral.

Forty-three percent of young people who contacted KHL made an agreement to reconnect with their counsellor again on a specific date and time.

Duty-of-Care actions, such as contacting an emergency service or child protection agency, were required for 29 Western Australian callers.

