

Kids Help Line 2004

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IN BRIEF

Kids Help Line (KHL) is a free 24 hour telephone counselling service available every day of the year to Australia's 3.8 million young people aged between 5 and 18 years.

During 2004 Kids Help Line:

- Received 907,569 phone calls.
- Answered 447,367 of these calls.
- Improved response to calls from 47% in 2003 to 49% in 2004.
- 53% of calls were from rural and remote areas (up from 50% in 2003).
- Improved response to rural and remote young people (47% in 2003 to 52% in 2004).
- The majority of calls were about relationships with family, friends or partners, consistent with previous years.
- Over the past few years the proportion of calls about mental health, homelessness and emotional/behavioural management have increased while concerns about peer relationships and bullying have decreased.
- 12% of callers were referred to other support services in their local area compared with 11% in 2003.

Also Kids Help Online:

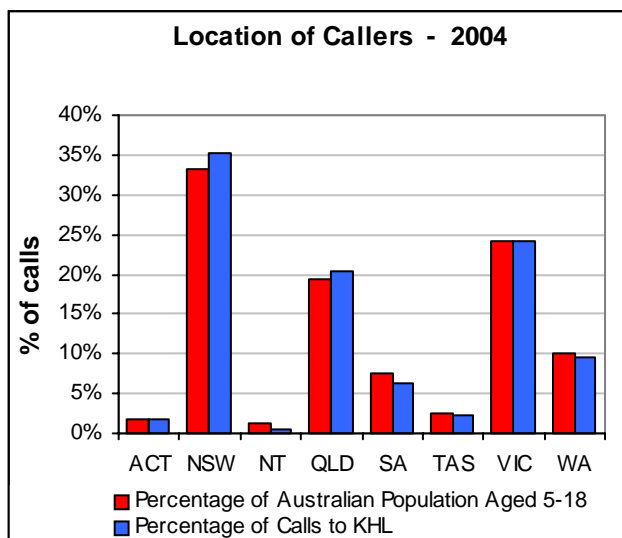
- Responded to 21,578 online counselling contacts (9,798 webcounselling & 11,780 email sessions).
- Online counselling increased by 8,116 contacts compared with 2003.

For more information about online counselling, see KHL information sheet # 27.

www.kidshelp.com.au/research/infosheets.html

Where Did They Call From?

All calls are directed to the KHL counselling centre in Brisbane. The graph below shows the demand by state compared to population.



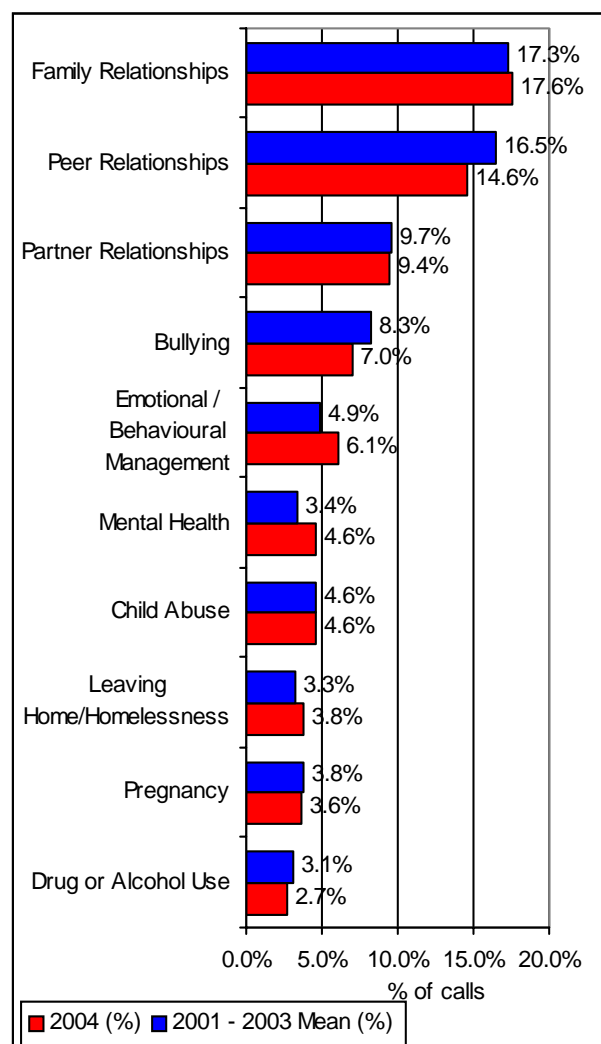
The following report is based on 62,427 calls from children and young people that required counselling for immediate and pressing issues.

Who Called?

- Males made 24% of calls and females 76%. This gender breakdown is consistent with help-seeking trends for other telephone counselling services.
- Forty-nine percent of callers were younger than 15 years of age, compared with 54% for 2003.
- Counsellors recorded ethnic background for 30% of callers. Of these, the majority were Anglo-Australian (88%). However 6% of callers were of a non-English speaking background, 4% were from an Aboriginal/Indigenous background and 2% were of another English speaking background.
- Young people contacting the service for the first time accounted for 39% of calls during 2004.

What Did They Call About?

The ten most frequent concerns about which young people contacted KHL are shown in the graph below along with comparison data for the 2001 - 2003 period. These concerns accounted for 74% of calls.



KIDS HELP LINE INFOSHEET

Family Relationships

Of the **10,967** calls about family relationships:

- ♦ 57% were related to frequent or major family conflict and disruption in their family or family breakdown;
- ♦ 29% reported occasional family conflict or disruption; and
- ♦ 14% of young people called because they were worried about a family member.

Relationships with Friends & Peers

Of the **9,129** calls regarding relationships with friends and peers:

- ♦ 39% reported occasional or one-off friendship problems;
- ♦ 36% were concerned for a friend's well being;
- ♦ 14% concerned significant relationship problems; and
- ♦ 11% disclosed having difficulty making or maintaining friendships.

Relationships with Partners

Of the **5,888** young people who phoned about relationships with partners:

- ♦ 44% were experiencing significant relationship difficulties or relationship breakdown;
- ♦ 33% were seeking help with negotiating a relationship;
- ♦ 18% involved wanting to establish a relationship; and
- ♦ 5% had concerns for their partner's well-being.

Bullying

Bullying remains the 4th most common reason for calling KHL, accounting for 7% of calls in 2004. Of the **4,370** young people who phoned about bullying:

- ♦ 41% reported episodic incidents;
- ♦ 34% were experiencing frequent incidents of bullying or continual harassment;
- ♦ 19% called about an isolated instance of bullying; and
- ♦ 6% were seeking information or concerned for a friend.

Emotional/Behavioural Management

Of the **3,796** calls about emotional/behaviour management:

- ♦ 52% of these clients were needing to talk through emotions or behaviour;
- ♦ 27% were experiencing difficulty managing emotions or behaviours;
- ♦ 14% were seeking management strategies;
- ♦ 6% were extremely distressed; and
- ♦ 1% were concerned about another person.

Mental Health

Of the **2,878** calls about mental health issues:

- ♦ 41% had a clinically diagnosed mental health issue;
- ♦ 30% were experiencing mild or occasional symptoms or concerns;
- ♦ 19% were severely distressed with a mental health concern having a major impact on their lives;
- ♦ 6% were concerned about or caring for a significant other; and
- ♦ 4% were seeking information.

Child Abuse

During 2004 KHL counsellors responded to **2,854** calls about child abuse accounting for 5% of counselling calls. Of these calls:

- ♦ 48% related to physical abuse;
- ♦ 37% disclosed sexual abuse;
- ♦ 9% reported emotional abuse; and
- ♦ 6% were about neglect.

KHL counsellors implement their statutory duty-of-care obligations if they assess that a child is at risk of injury or harm at the time of the call.

Leaving Home & Homelessness

Of the **2,356** calls about leaving home and homelessness:

- ♦ 35% said they were thinking about leaving home;
- ♦ 29% were from young people who had left home and had nowhere to stay;
- ♦ 18% had been told to leave home;
- ♦ 16% had left home and had somewhere to stay; and
- ♦ 2% were at risk of harm or severely distressed.

Pregnancy

Of the **2,242** calls about pregnancy:

- ♦ 55% of callers required information about pregnancy or were unsure if they were pregnant;
- ♦ 15% reported distress about telling significant people;
- ♦ 14% were experiencing confusion/indecision about options;
- ♦ 14% had concerns about a pregnant friend or partner; and
- ♦ 2% were in urgent need for medical or emotional support.

Deliberate Self Injury

During 2004 counsellors recorded whether children and young people contacting Kids Help Line had recently engaged in deliberate self-injury. Almost 8% of callers (4,938) had deliberately injured themselves through actions such as cutting, burning or tattooing skin, pulling out hair or taking overdoses of substances they believed to be non-lethal.

What Were The Outcomes of Calls?

Counsellors were able to assist 74% of young people directly without referring the caller to another agency. Twelve percent of callers required referral to another support service for ongoing support (including crisis response and 3-way linkups) while 11% were referred to their doctor, school/guidance counsellor, mental health worker or other non-specific referrals. In 3% of calls, counsellors were unable to give a referral because either no appropriate service was available or the caller finished the call.

One in five young people (19%) 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 365 callers during 2004.

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24 hour telephone counselling line: 1800 55 1800

Kids Help Line is a service of BoysTown.

Optus is Kids Help Line's major sponsor and has been helping kids connect since 1999.

