



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Families vital to Aussie kids

**In a report released today, Kids Help Line revealed while calls to the national counselling service regarding mental health are significantly on the rise, Aussie kids remain most concerned about family relationships.**

The service's *2005 Overview – What is Concerning Australia's Children and Young People* highlights kid's major reasons for contacting the Kids Help Line.

Director of Counselling Kath Ellerman-Bull said the report gives an invaluable insight into what is worrying young people in Australia.

“Concerns with family, peer and partner relationships remain the main reason for contacting Kids Help Line, however there is a disturbing increase in the number of contacts regarding mental health, emotional and/or behavioural management and homelessness,” she said.

Calls regarding mental health issues have almost doubled in the past three years and now account for 7 per cent of the service's counselling calls and 19 per cent of the online contacts.

“We are seeing an increase in the proportion of young people contacting us about serious issues which require longer and ongoing counselling, in fact 10 per cent of telephone and 29 per cent of online counselling sessions are now with ongoing clients,” Ms Ellerman-Bull said.

There has been a concerning increase in young people presenting with self harm and issues relating to mental illness.

“Frequently our callers are presenting with complex and multiple issues, for example it is estimated that 80 per cent of homeless people also have a mental illness and usually a young person who is homeless will be having serious problems in their relationship with their family,” she said.

However, for the counselling service as much as some things change others remain the same and relationships, particularly family relationships, are still the top reason for the young to seek help.

“After 15 years the number one reason children and young people contact Kids Help Line is still their relationship with their family,” Ms Ellerman-Bull said.

“Last year we provided more than 9,500 telephone and online counselling sessions about family relationships, sadly more than half of those were with young Australians experiencing frequent or major family conflict or disruption.

“A further 1,200 were seeking counselling about family breakdown, separation or divorce.

**More...2**



A Major Partner of  
Kids Help Line  
Since 1999

Kids Help Line  
is a service  
of BoysTown



**Media contact:**

Kristy Porter - 07 38671223 or 0434077439  
Jessica Tatzenko – 07 38671248 or 0434077478



# MEDIA RELEASE

---

“As a society we are experiencing higher levels of stress on families and consequently more children are experiencing feelings of alienation and disconnectedness from family and community.”

Family remains a central concern for all ages and genders – it was the first concern for children aged to 15 years, during late adolescence it was the second reason for contacting the service and for young adults (19-25 years) family was in their top three concerns, after partner relationships and mental health.

Research indicates supportive family relationships and effective parenting practices and communication between parents and their children assist children to become socially and emotionally competent, resilient, able to cope with adversity, and develop a sense of optimism, positive self image and high self esteem.

“Families are vital in young lives and form the backbone of Australian society,” Ms Ellerman-Bull said.

The top 10 reasons for contacting Kids Help Line are: family relationships, peer relationships, partner relationships, emotional and/or behavioural management, mental health, bullying, child abuse, homelessness, pregnancy and drug and alcohol use.

Kids Help Line, Australia’s only national children’s counselling service, provides 24 hour counselling services to young people aged 5 to 25 years – free call 1800 55 1800 or online at [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

## ENDS

*A copy of the 2005 Overview – What is Concerning Australia’s Children and Young People is available from the Kids Help Line web site at <http://www.kidshelp.com.au>*



A Major Partner of  
Kids Help Line  
Since 1999

Kids Help Line  
is a service  
of BoysTown



---

**Media contact:**

Kristy Porter - 07 38671223 or 0434077439  
Jessica Tatzenko – 07 38671248 or 0434077478