



MEDIA RELEASE

'At risk' kids speak up

Nearly half of Kids Help Line counselling calls are from significantly distressed, vulnerable or 'at risk' children and young people, according to the *Kids Help Line 2006 Overview – Issues Concerning Children and Young People* released today.

Of the 56,938 counselling sessions engaged in by Kids Help Line counsellors in 2006, more than 21,000 were from children and young people reporting issues such as child abuse, domestic violence, habitual drug and alcohol use, thoughts of suicide and deliberate self-injury, or had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder.

General Manager of Counselling Services, Wendy Protheroe said that although this is a concerning statistic it was important to remember children and young people are "speaking up" with rates of contacts to Kids Help Line remaining high in 2006.

"Although there has been a lot of community concern of late about the high level of young people who are self-harming and experiencing other serious mental health issues, young people are actively seeking ways to help themselves, their family or friends," Ms Protheroe said.

"In 2006, 607,000 attempts were made to reach Kids Help Line with counsellors responding to approximately half of those calls."

Ms Protheroe said 2006 also saw a 30 per cent increase in the number of children and young people seeking ongoing counselling with Kids Help Line counsellors.

"One-in-five counselling sessions were with children and young people receiving either ongoing counselling or intensive support," she said.

"More young people are also taking advantage of Kids Help Line's online counselling service with 32 per cent of these clients receiving ongoing support."

Ms Protheroe urged the Australian community to assist children and young people by making them more aware of help options available to them and by supporting their decision to get help.

"While much has been done to reduce the stigma attached to those who seek counselling, we still need to keep telling our young people it's more than OK to ask for help when they need it."

Ms Protheroe also said parents and friends played an important part in ensuring the continued welfare of children and young people.

"After 16 years of operation relationships remain the top reason Australian young people call Kids Help Line," Ms Protheroe said.

"Good relationships are particularly important because they assist children to develop high self-esteem, positive self-image and a sense of optimism.

"Healthy relationships can reduce a young person's vulnerability to suicide, mental health problems, drug use and other risk-taking behaviour."

For further information, a copy of the complete overview is available at www.kidshelpline.com.au or by contacting BoysTown on 07 3368 3399.



A Major Partner of
Kids Help Line
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Kids Help Line
is a service
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