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## Dark period for young Australians

According to Kids Helpline, contacts to the national counselling service about mental health issues has more than doubled since 2002 accounting for one-in-ten helpline contacts.

Kids Helpline General Manager Wendy Protheroe said mental health-related issues rose from the fourth most frequent concern in 2006 to number three in 2007, with more than 5000 contacts recorded.

"When combined with counselling sessions regarding suicide, it was the second most common reason for contacting Kids Helpline. In addition, this was the top concern for females aged 19 to 25 years," she said.

Ms Protheroe said that although these statistics are disturbing, a positive is that young people are seeking help to manage these issues.

"Getting help is a critical step to finding a way through what can be very black experience," Ms Protheroe said.

"Forty percent of mental health contacts in 2007 were with ongoing clients and 42 per cent were with young people engaging in deliberate self-harm.

"We are glad that these young people are looking to us for advice and support at this crucial time.

"This is despite evidence that young people are usually reluctant to seek professional mental health care."

A study of Queenslanders aged between 15-24 years showed that 39 per cent of males and 22 per cent of females would not seek help from formal services for personal, emotional or distressing problems.<sup>1</sup>

Ms Protheroe said it was also important that young people contacted Kids Helpline to talk about concerns they have for their friends and loved ones needing help.

"Seven per cent of contacts about mental health were about helping people close to them," she said.

"We offer support to those who call but also extend indirect support to others in need who are not yet ready to or feel unable to ask for help."

Mental health concerns presented to Kids Helpline included: depression, anxiety, psychosis, personality disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and other childhood disorders.

If you or someone you know is experiencing mental health concerns please call Kids Helpline on **1800 55 1800** 24/7 or if you are over 25 years of age visit Beyond Blue [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) for links to services.

### Ends

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<sup>1</sup> Donald, M. et al *The Queensland Young Peoples' Mental Health Survey Report*. Brisbane: Centre for Primary Health Care, School of Population Health and Department of Psychiatry, University of Queensland, 2000.