

# Kids Helpline Insights 2015

**STATISTICAL  
SUMMARY  
AUSTRALIAN  
CAPITAL  
TERRITORY**



Insights  
Into Young  
People in  
Australia

# Introduction

## WHAT IS KIDS HELPLINE?

Kids Helpline (KHL) is Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. KHL celebrates its 25th Birthday in 2016. In that time, we have responded to more than 7.5 million contacts.

We give children and young people choices, support and someone to listen. Tertiary qualified counsellors provide free, private and confidential support via telephone, web chat and email. Telephone and email counselling is offered 24/7 and web counselling is available from 12pm to 10pm (AEST) Monday to Friday and 10am to 10pm (AEST) Saturday and Sunday.

The KHL website offers an extensive range of resources for self-directed help-seeking by children, young people and adults. KHL's 'Kids Helpline @ School' program, supported by Optus, is helping primary schools across Australia tackle challenges to student wellbeing by delivering video link ups between counsellors and classrooms.

Kids Helpline is a service of **yourtown** and is 72% funded by the community through **yourtown** Art Union ticket sales, donations and corporate support. The remaining 28% is funded through State and Commonwealth Government grants.

## WHAT'S THIS REPORT ABOUT AND WHO'S IT FOR?

This report is an appendix to 'Kids Helpline Insights 2015: National Statistical Overview'. It provides summary data on KHL service demand and client concerns and characteristics for the Australian Capital Territory for the 2015 calendar year. It will be of value to people working in social policy and research roles, journalists and others in the community who are looking to understand the current and changing help-seeking needs of children and young people in Australia.

The 'Kids Helpline Insights 2015: National Statistical Overview' and other related reports can be accessed at [www.kidshelpline.com.au/reports](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/reports)

## NOTES ON DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Substantial missing data in relation to a number of data collection fields, most notably remoteness and cultural background, undermine the reliability of data presented in a number of tables and figures in this report. This is compounded by the small size of the Australian Capital Territory subpopulation and the greater distorting influence of repeat contacts on frequency data in this context.

Please consult the Appendix of the 'National Statistical Overview' for more detailed information on data collection, analysis and interpretation.

## WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

This report has been compiled by **yourtown** Strategy and Research. For further information, please contact

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# Service Demand

## ATTEMPTED AND ANSWERED CONTACTS

- In 2015, 5,429 of the 350,117 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 1.6%) came from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (4,108) but also by web chat (1,077) and email (244).
- 3,293 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 61%. This compares with a response rate of 60% across Australia.
- Note that when phone attempts are adjusted to exclude callers who dropped out before the 21 second mandatory wait message, the response rate for ACT phone contacts in 2015 was 76%.

## TRENDS OVER TIME

- From 2013 to 2015, there was an overall increase of 17% in attempted contacts from the ACT across all media. Phone and web chat attempts from the ACT both increased by 19% while email attempts decreased by 15%.
- The reduction in email attempts may in part be due to a Kids Helpline policy, in the interests of service efficiency and effectiveness, to transition email clients to web chat or phone.
- Across all media, response rates for the ACT have steadily increased (from 54% in 2013 to 61% in 2015). There has been a particularly notable increase in web chat response rates, however (from 39% in 2013 to 55% in 2015).

**Table 1.** ACT attempted and answered contacts – by medium and year of contact, with comparison to all states<sup>1,2</sup>

Medium of contact	2013			2014			2015			% Change in attempts 2013-2015
	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	
PHONE										
ACT	3,462	1,939	56%	3,450	1,994	58%	4,108	2,441	59%	19%
All States	318,633	189,394	59%	300,200	173,752	58%	290,767	169,802	58%	-9%
WEB CHAT										
ACT	903	286	32%	1,022	405	40%	1,077	608	56%	19%
All States	47,335	18,678	39%	49,429	21,082	43%	43,464	24,115	55%	-8%
EMAIL										
ACT	288	288	100%	286	286	100%	244	244	100%	-15%
All States	24,000	24,000	100%	18,832	18,832	100%	15,886	15,886	100%	-34%
ALL MEDIA										
ACT	4,653	2,513	54%	4,758	2,685	56%	5,429	3,293	61%	17%
All States	389,968	232,072	60%	368,461	213,666	58%	350,117	209,803	60%	-10%

1. The data presented in this table are sourced from KHL phone, web chat and email systems databases.

2. State breakdowns presented in this table vary slightly from previously reported data due to the use of different extrapolation methodologies.

# Who Contacted The Service

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

- Kids Helpline counsellors recorded data about 205,286 contacts from children and young people across Australia who were aged 5-25 years. State or territory information was available for 190,922 of these contacts, and of this subset 2,979 (or 1.5%) were received from the ACT.
- Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of these contacts from the ACT and compares them with the characteristics of contacts from the rest of Australia where the contact's state or territory was known.
- Consistent with contacts from the rest of Australia, approximately seven out of 10 (73%) ACT contacts were female. Compared with the rest of Australia, contacts

from the ACT were more likely, however, to be aged 18 years or younger (76% c.f. 65%), to be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds (43% c.f. 33%) and to be living in Major Cities (98% c.f. 68%). Contacts from the ACT were also more likely to contact Kids Helpline by web chat than contacts from the rest of Australia (19% c.f. 11%).

## TYPES OF HELP-SEEKING

As shown in Table 2, 44% of contacts from the ACT in 2015 were seeking counselling support while 56% were seeking information/referral or other forms of support.

**Table 2.** Characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts 2015 aged 5-25 years – ACT and rest of Australia<sup>1</sup>

Contact characteristics	ACT (N = 2,979)		Rest of Australia (N = 187,943)	
	n	%	n	%
<b>GENDER</b>				
Female	1,371	73%	80,209	70%
Male	504	27%	33,304	29%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	10	1%	540	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,885</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>114,053</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	1,094		73,890	
<b>AGE GROUP</b>				
5-12 years	274	17%	11,304	12%
13-18 years	969	59%	51,028	54%
19-25 years	396	24%	32,937	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,639</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>95,269</b>	<b>100%</b>
<26 but age unknown	1,340		92,674	
<b>CULTURAL BACKGROUND<sup>2</sup></b>				
Aboriginal &/or TSI	6	1%	1,615	4%
CALD	266	43%	15,031	33%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	344	56%	28,252	63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>44,898</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	2,363		143,045	
<b>REMOTENESS<sup>3</sup></b>				
Major Cities	841	98%	40,698	68%
Inner Regional	5	1%	12,723	21%
Outer Regional/Remote	8	1%	6,335	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>59,756</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	2,125		128,187	
<b>MEDIUM</b>				
Phone	2,343	79%	160,404	85%
Web chat	560	19%	20,517	11%
Email	76	3%	7,022	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,979</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>187,943</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>TYPE OF HELP-SEEKING</b>				
Counselling contact	1,300	44%	60,731	32%
Information/Referral/Other contact	1,679	56%	127,212	68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,979</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>187,943</b>	<b>100%</b>

1. Where column percentages sum to more or less than 100%, this is due to rounding.

2. TSI = Torres Strait Islander. CALD = culturally and linguistically diverse. ATSI = Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

3. Remoteness classifications are adapted from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See 'Kids Helpline Insights 2015: National Statistical Overview' for more information.



# Who Contacted The Service continued

## TRENDS OVER TIME

As shown in Table 3, over the last three years, there would appear to be:

- a slight increase in both the proportions of ACT contacts aged 5-12 years and 19-25 years with a corresponding decrease in contacts aged 13-18 years
- a substantial increase in the proportion of contacts known to be from CALD backgrounds
- an increase in the proportion who engaged by web chat, and
- an increase in the proportion of ACT contacts seeking counselling support with a corresponding decrease in those seeking information, referral or other forms of support.

**Table 3.** Characteristics of ACT Kids Helpline contacts aged 5-25 years – by year<sup>1</sup>

Contact characteristics	2013 (N = 2,207)		2014 (N = 2,397)		2015 (N = 2,501)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>GENDER<sup>2</sup></b>						
Female	946	75%	1,068	79%	1,371	73%
Male	322	25%	291	21%	504	27%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	-	-	-	-	10	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,268</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,359</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,885</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	939		1,038		1,094	
<b>AGE GROUP</b>						
5-12 years	104	11%	157	14%	274	17%
13-18 years	674	70%	730	65%	969	59%
19-25 years	186	19%	234	21%	396	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,639</b>	<b>100%</b>
<26 but age unknown	1,243		1,276		1,340	
<b>CULTURAL BACKGROUND<sup>3</sup></b>						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	7	2%	5	2%	6	1%
CALD	80	25%	86	26%	266	43%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	227	72%	235	72%	344	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	1,893		2,071		2,363	
<b>REMOTENESS<sup>4</sup></b>						
Major Cities	410	98%	480	99%	841	98%
Inner Regional	8	2%	6	1%	5	1%
Outer Regional/Remote	0	0%	0	0%	8	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>100%</b>
Unknown	1,789		1,911		2,125	
<b>MEDIUM</b>						
Phone	1,834	83%	1,893	79%	2,343	79%
Web chat	235	11%	375	16%	560	19%
Email	138	6%	129	5%	76	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,207</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,397</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,979</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>TYPE OF HELP-SEEKING</b>						
Counselling contact	822	37%	953	40%	1,300	44%
Information/Referral/Other contact	1,385	63%	1,444	60%	1,679	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,207</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,397</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,979</b>	<b>100%</b>

1. Where column percentages sum to more or less than 100%, this is due to rounding.

2. A new gender category was introduced into Kids Helpline data collection from January 2015.

3. TSI = Torres Strait Islander. CALD = culturally and linguistically diverse. ATSI = Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

4. Remoteness classifications are adapted from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See 'Kids Helpline Insights 2015: National Statistical Overview' for more information.

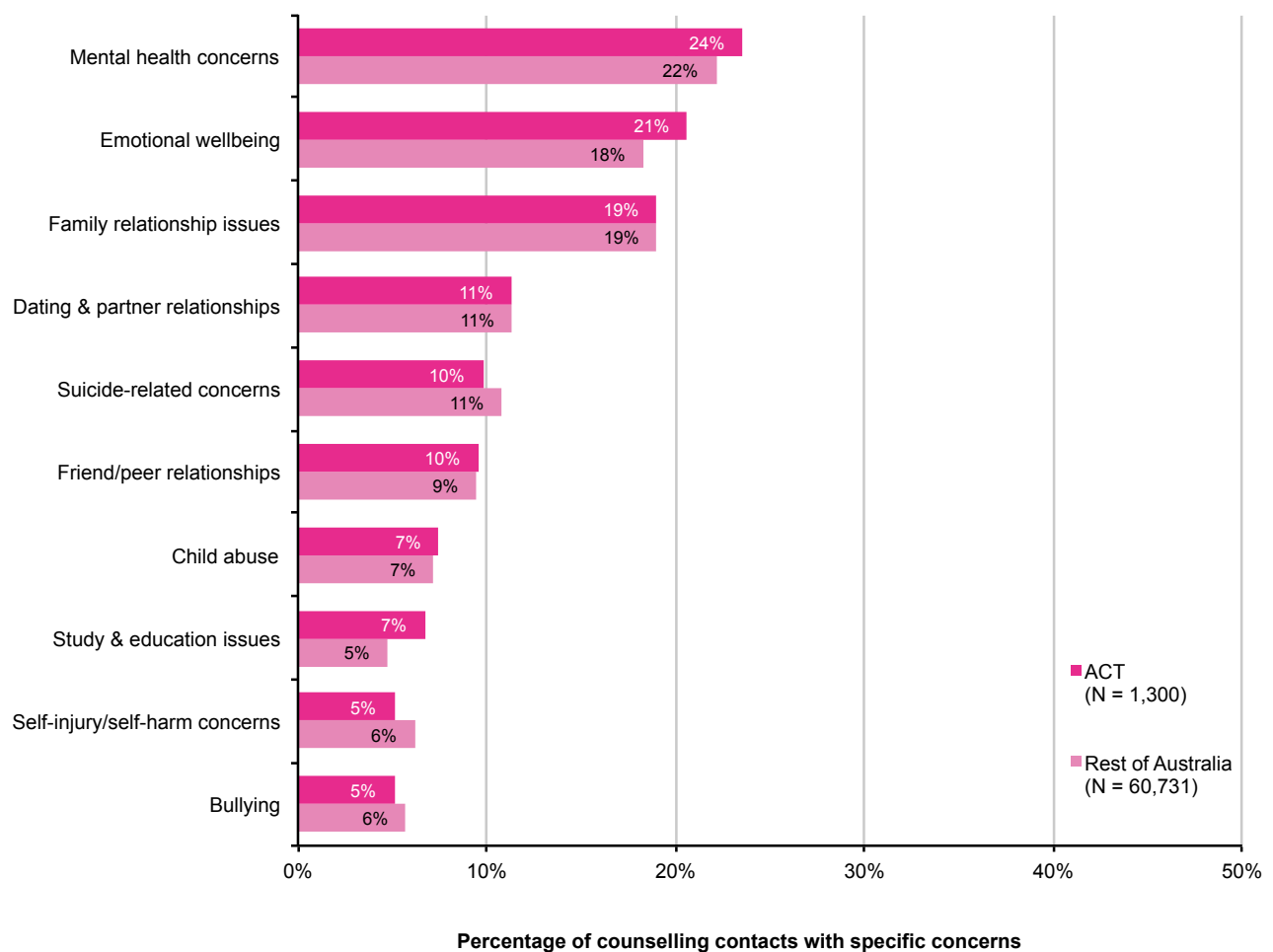
# Top Concerns Of Children And Young People Who Received Counselling

During 2015, Kids Helpline counsellors responded to 70,210 contacts from children and young people who were seeking help about specific problems or concerns (i.e. counselling contacts). Analysis of the types of issues and concerns raised by children and young people in these sessions provide a valuable insight into the concerns of young Australians today.

## ACT COMPARED WITH REST OF AUSTRALIA

- State or territory information was available for 62,031 of these 70,210 counselling contacts and of this subset 1,300 (or 2%) were known to be from the ACT.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of ACT counselling contacts in 2015 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by counselling contacts from the rest of Australia where state or territory information was known.
- The key observation to be noted from the data is that the frequency with which these concerns are raised with counsellors by ACT contacts is consistent with the frequency with which these concerns are raised by contacts from the rest of Australia.

**Figure 1.** Most frequently recorded concerns of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 2015 aged 5-25 years – ACT compared with the rest of Australia (sorted in descending frequency of ACT concerns)



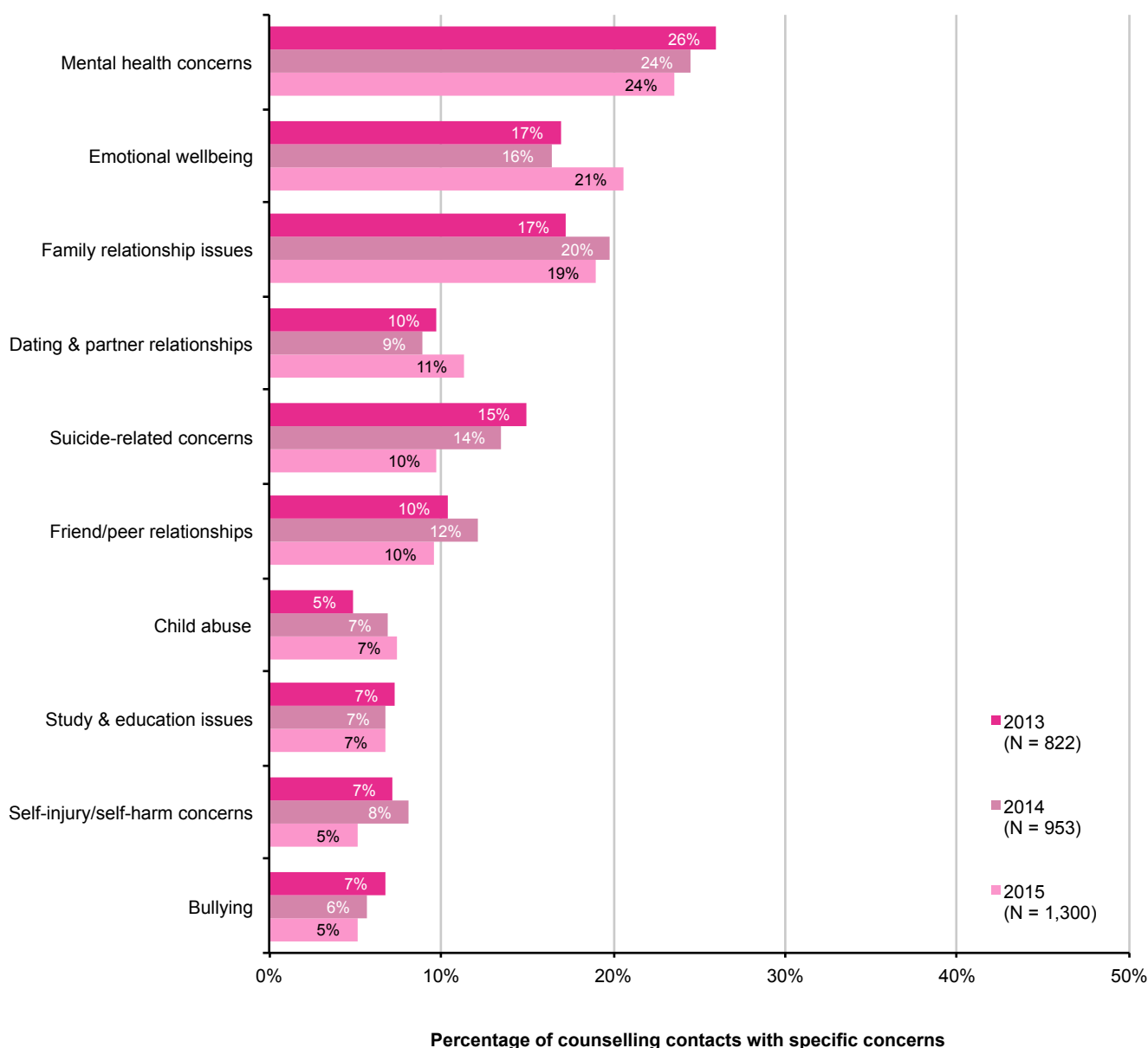
\* Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

# Top Concerns Of Children And Young People Who Received Counselling continued

## TRENDS OVER TIME

- Figure 2 shows the 10 most common concerns of ACT counselling contacts in 2015 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by ACT contacts in 2013 and 2014.
- The frequency with which children and young people in ACT are contacting Kids Helpline about these concerns has remained largely consistent over the short-term, although there would appear to be a slight increase in the proportion contacting about emotional wellbeing issues and a decrease in the proportion concerned about suicide.

**Figure 2.** Most frequently recorded concerns of ACT Kids Helpline counselling contacts aged 5-25 years – by year (sorted in descending frequency of 2015 concerns)



\* Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

# All Concerns Of Children And Young People Who Received Counselling

Table 4 presents the complete list of 49 issues that counsellors use to classify the concerns children and young people seek counselling for. It shows:

- the frequency with which children and young people in the ACT in 2015 raised concern about each issue
- trend data for the last three years to enable analysis of short-term changes in the frequency with which different issues are being raised by ACT contacts, and
- aggregated totals for 11 “concern classes” which group a number of concerns together conceptually, thereby giving a sense of the overall frequency with which broad groupings of concern are arising in the subpopulation.

Key observations to be noted from the data in Table 4 are:

- the frequency with which children and young people in the ACT are contacting Kids Helpline about all these different concerns and classes of concern is quite consistent over the short-term; however
- there would appear to be a slight increase in the frequency with which child abuse and family violence concerns are raised.

**Table 4.** Number and proportion of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 5-25 years with particular concerns and classes of concern – ACT by year

Concern and concern class	2013 (N = 822)		2014 (N = 953)		2015 (N = 1,300)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>MENTAL HEALTH &amp; EMOTIONAL WELLBEING</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>55.6%</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>54.1%</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>53.9%</b>
Mental health concerns	214	26.0%	233	24.4%	306	23.5%
Emotional wellbeing	139	16.9%	156	16.4%	268	20.6%
Suicide-related concerns	123	15.0%	129	13.5%	127	9.8%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	59	7.2%	77	8.1%	66	5.1%
Loss & grief	22	2.7%	26	2.7%	59	4.5%
<b>FRIENDS, PEERS, PARTNERS &amp; DATING</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
Dating & partner relationships	80	9.7%	85	8.9%	147	11.3%
Friends/peer relationships	85	10.3%	116	12.2%	124	9.5%
<b>FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>19.0%</b>
Child-parent relationships	100	12.2%	134	14.1%	184	14.2%
Other family relationships	27	3.3%	42	4.4%	37	2.8%
Changing family structures	18	2.2%	20	2.1%	30	2.3%
Parenting own children	2	0.2%	3	0.3%	4	0.3%
<b>IDENTITY &amp; SELF-CONCEPT</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
Self-concept (global)	33	4.0%	28	2.9%	65	5.0%
Body image	7	0.9%	15	1.6%	25	1.9%
Sexual orientation	13	1.6%	5	0.5%	17	1.3%
Gender/sex identification	2	0.2%	7	0.7%	7	0.5%
Disability-related concerns	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	4	0.3%
Cultural identity	6	0.7%	4	0.4%	3	0.2%

\* Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Totals provided for class of concern will be less than the sum of the individual concerns that make up that class due to the fact that multiple concerns within the class may have been identified in a single contact.



# All Concerns Of Children And Young People Who Received Counselling continued

**Table 4 Continued.** Number and proportion of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 5-25 years with particular concerns and classes of concern – ACT by year

Concern and concern class	2013 (N = 822)		2014 (N = 953)		2015 (N = 1,300)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>VIOLENCE &amp; ABUSE (NON-FAMILY)</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
Bullying - school related	46	5.6%	51	5.4%	61	4.7%
Bullying - other	9	1.1%	3	0.3%	6	0.5%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	10	1.2%	16	1.7%	15	1.2%
Dating & partner violence	1	0.1%	3	0.3%	10	0.8%
Harassment & assault (non-sexual)	3	0.4%	7	0.7%	7	0.5%
Sexual harassment	6	0.7%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
<b>CHILD ABUSE &amp; FAMILY VIOLENCE</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
Physical abuse	29	3.5%	24	2.5%	44	3.4%
Sexual abuse	5	0.6%	19	2.0%	18	1.4%
Emotional abuse	7	0.9%	21	2.2%	31	2.4%
Neglect of child	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	6	0.5%
Exploitation by family member	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	3	0.4%	4	0.4%	5	0.4%
Living-in-care issues	1	0.1%	5	0.5%	4	0.3%
<b>SCHOOL, EDUCATION &amp; WORK</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
Study & education issues	60	7.3%	65	6.8%	87	6.7%
Employment issues	5	0.6%	11	1.2%	23	1.8%
School authority issues	1	0.1%	4	0.4%	6	0.5%
<b>PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL HEALTH &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Physical health concerns	14	1.7%	26	2.7%	23	1.8%
Pregnancy-related concerns	5	0.6%	9	0.9%	13	1.0%
Sexual activity	20	2.4%	16	1.7%	14	1.1%
Physical/sexual development	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.4%
Contraception/safe sex	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	4	0.3%
<b>HOMELESSNESS &amp; BASIC NEEDS ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
Homelessness	15	1.8%	14	1.5%	12	0.9%
Practical/material assistance	1	0.1%	8	0.8%	12	0.9%
Financial assistance/concerns	0	0.0%	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
<b>SUBSTANCE USE, ADDICTIONS &amp; RISK-TAKING</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Drug use	5	0.6%	12	1.3%	11	0.8%
Alcohol use	5	0.6%	7	0.7%	9	0.7%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
Physical risk-taking	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Gang/cult involvement	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>OFFENDING, ABUSIVE OR VIOLENT ACTIONS</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
Illegal/offending behaviour	6	0.7%	1	0.1%	5	0.4%
Abusive or violent actions	7	0.9%	6	0.6%	1	0.1%
Sexual violence/offending actions	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%

\* Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Totals provided for class of concern will be less than the sum of the individual concerns that make up that class due to the fact that multiple concerns within the class may have been identified in a single contact.



**Kids Helpline**  
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**24/7 HELP FOR CHILDREN  
& YOUNG PEOPLE AGED  
5-25 YEARS**

This regional report is supported by the **Kids Helpline Insights 2015: National Statistical Overview**, which provides extensive data about the issues affecting children and young people across Australia, and **Kids Helpline Insights 2015** summary report. These can be accessed at [www.kidshelpline.com.au/reports](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/reports).

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