

insights2017



ACT

Kids Helpline Statistical Summary Australian Capital Territory

Insights into young people in Australia



Introduction

What is Kids Helpline?

Kids Helpline has been operating for 27 years and is Australia's only 24/7 counselling and support service for children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

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 8am to midnight (AEST) seven days a week.

The service operates a substantial website with a diverse range of resources for self-directed help-seeking by children, young people and adults. In addition, support from Optus enables Kids Helpline to deliver an early intervention and prevention program in primary schools called *Kids Helpline @ School* through their Digital Thumbprint Program.

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 this report is about and who is it for

This report is an appendix to *Kids Helpline Insights 2017: National Statistical Overview*. It provides summary data on Kids Helpline service demand and client concerns and characteristics for the Australian Capital Territory in relation to the 2017 calendar year. It will be of value to people working in social policy and research roles, journalists and others in the community who need to understand the current and changing help-seeking needs of children and young people in Australia today.

The *Kids Helpline Insights 2017: National Statistical Overview* and other related reports can be accessed at www.yourtown.com.au/insights/annual-overviews.

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

yourtown:

PHONE 07 3368 3399

EMAIL yourtown@yourtown.com.au

WEB yourtown.com.au

For media enquiries:

PHONE 07 3867 1395

EMAIL media@yourtown.com.au

How to cite this report

yourtown (2018). *Kids Helpline Insights 2017 Statistical Summary ACT*. Brisbane. Author.

Service demand

Attempted and answered contacts

- In 2017, 6,915 of the 339,724 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 2%) came from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (4,828) but also by web chat (1,790) and email (298).
- 3,539 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 51%. This compares with a response rate of 46% 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 2017 was 63%.

Trends over time

- From 2015 to 2017 there was an overall increase of 27% in attempted contacts from the ACT across all media. Phone attempts increased by 18%, web chat by 66% and email by 22%.
- Across all media, response rates for the ACT decreased from 61% in 2015 to 51% in 2017.

Table 1. ACT attempted and answered contacts – by medium and year of contact, with comparison to all states¹

Medium of contact	2015			2016			2017			% change in attempts 2015-2017
	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	Attempts	Answered	Response rate	
Phone										
ACT	4,108	2,441	59%	4,841	2,615	54%	4,828	2,457	51%	18%
All States	290,767	169,802	58%	276,960	135,719	49%	248,008	109,793	44%	-15%
Web chat										
ACT	1,077	608	56%	1,506	699	46%	1,790	784	44%	66%
All States	43,464	24,115	55%	65,954	31,765	48%	79,054	35,201	45%	82%
Email										
ACT	244	244	100%	536	536	100%	298	298	100%	22%
All States	15,886 ²	15,886	100%	13,681 ³	13,681	100%	12,662 ⁴	12,662	100%	-20%
All media										
ACT	5,429	3,293	61%	6,883	3,850	56%	6,915	3,539	51%	27%
All States	350,117	209,803	60%	356,595	181,165	51%	339,724	157,656	46%	-3%

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

2. In addition to 15,886 emails received and responded to in 2015, 535 outreach emails were sent.

3. In addition to 13,681 emails received and responded to in 2016, 413 outreach emails were sent.

4. In addition to 12,662 emails received and responded to in 2017, 418 outreach emails were sent.

Who contacted the service

Demographic characteristics

- Kids Helpline counsellors recorded data in relation to 154,868 contacts from children and young people across Australia who were aged 5-25 years. State or territory information was available for 140,007 of these contacts, and of this subset 3,105 (or 2%) were known to be 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 two out of 10 (2%) ACT contacts were transgender but a greater proportion of ACT contacts were from males (31%) than was the case for the rest of the nation (24% of contacts from males).

- Compared with the rest of Australia, contacts from the ACT were:
 - more likely to be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and less likely to be either Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or from a Caucasian Australian background,
 - more likely to be from 19-25 year olds and less likely to be 13-18 year olds, and
 - more likely to be living in Major Cities.

Table 2. Characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts 2017 aged 5-25 years – ACT and rest of Australia¹

Contact characteristics	ACT (N = 3,334)		Rest of Australia (N = 159,989)	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Female	1,633	67%	71,299	74%
Male	757	31%	23,519	24%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	60	2%	1,917	2%
Total	2,450	100%	96,735	100%
Unknown	655		40,167	
Age group				
5-12 years	298	13%	11,352	13%
13-18 years	1,021	46%	45,943	52%
19-25 years	905	41%	30,888	35%
Total	2,224	100%	88,183	100%
<26 but age unknown	881		48,719	
Cultural background²				
Aboriginal &/or TSI	7	1%	1,143	3%
CALD	427	53%	12,751	36%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	379	47%	21,902	61%
Total	813	100%	35,796	100%
Unknown	2,292		101,106	
Remoteness³				
Major Cities	1,202	99%	42,766	72%
Inner Regional	11	1%	11,623	20%
Outer Regional/Remote	4	0%	5,094	9%
Total	1,217	100%	59,483	100%
Unknown	1,888		77,419	
Medium				
Phone	2,350	76%	103,660	76%
Web chat	643	21%	28,748	21%
Email	112	4%	4,494	3%
Total	3,105	100%	136,902	100%
Type of help-seeking				
Counselling contact	1,532	49%	56,372	41%
Information/Referral/Other contact	1,573	51%	80,530	59%
Total	3,105	100%	136,902	100%

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 2017: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

Types of help-seeking

The Kids Helpline counselling and support service responds to two broad categories of help-seeking: those children and young people seeking counsellor assistance for a particular concern or problem (*counselling contacts*), and those seeking information, referral to other services, or some other form of non-counselling support, like general conversation or playful engagement (*non-counselling contacts*, also called *information, referral and other contacts*).

As shown in Table 2, 49% of contacts from the ACT in 2017 were seeking counselling support while 51% were seeking information/referral or other forms of support. ACT contacts were more likely to be seeking counselling support than contacts from the rest of Australia (49% c.f. 41%).

Demographic trends over time

Table 3 presents the characteristics of ACT contacts over the last three years to consider whether there have been noteworthy variations in the client group over the short term. Key observations from the data in Table 3 include the following:

- There would appear to be moderate variation in the characteristics of ACT contacts over the last three years, including:
 - a decrease in the proportion of female contacts and a corresponding increase in the proportion of male and intersex/trans/gender diverse contacts
 - a decrease in the proportion of contacts aged 13-18 years and a corresponding increase in 19-25 year-olds
 - an increase in the proportion of contacts known to be from CALD backgrounds and a corresponding decrease in contacts from a Caucasian Australian background, and
 - an increase in the proportion of contacts seeking counselling support with a corresponding decrease in those seeking information, referral or other forms of non-counselling support.
- Substantial missing data, a very small subpopulation, and the greater likely influence of repeat contacts on percentage frequencies in this context, significantly undermine the reliability of these observed differences. Accordingly, observed differences may not correspond to actual differences in the characteristics of children and young people from the ACT contacting Kids Helpline over this period.

Table 3. Characteristics of ACT Kids Helpline contacts aged 5-25 years – by year¹

Contact characteristics	2015 (N= 2,979)		2016 (N= 3,334)		2017 (N=3,105)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	<i>n</i>
Gender²						
Female	1,371	73%	1,617	72%	1,633	67%
Male	504	27%	628	28%	757	31%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	10	1%	12	1%	60	2%
Total	1,885	100%	2,257	100%	2,450	100%
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>1,094</i>		<i>1,077</i>		<i>655</i>	
Age group						
5-12 years	274	17%	270	13%	298	13%
13-18 years	969	59%	1,167	57%	1,021	46%
19-25 years	396	24%	610	30%	905	41%
Total	1,639	100%	2,047	100%	2,224	100%
<i><26 but age unknown</i>	<i>1,340</i>		<i>1,287</i>		<i>881</i>	
Cultural background³						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	6	1%	6	1%	7	1%
CALD	266	43%	381	51%	427	53%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	344	56%	358	48%	379	47%
Total	616	100%	745	100%	813	100%
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>2,363</i>		<i>2,589</i>		<i>2,292</i>	
Remoteness⁴						
Major Cities	841	98%	1,268	98%	1,202	99%
Inner Regional	5	1%	21	2%	11	1%
Outer Regional/Remote	8	1%	4	0%	4	0%
Total	854	100%	1,293	100%	1,217	100%
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>2,125</i>		<i>2,041</i>		<i>1,888</i>	
Medium						
Phone	2,343	79%	2,525	76%	2,350	76%
Web chat	560	19%	614	18%	643	21%
Email	76	3%	195	6%	112	4%
Total	2,979	100%	3,334	100%	3,105	100%
Type of help-seeking						
Counselling contact	1,300	44%	1,501	45%	1,532	49%
Information/Referral/Other contact	1,679	56%	1,833	55%	1,573	51%
Total	2,979	100%	3,334	100%	3,105	100%

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 2017: National Statistical Overview* for more information.

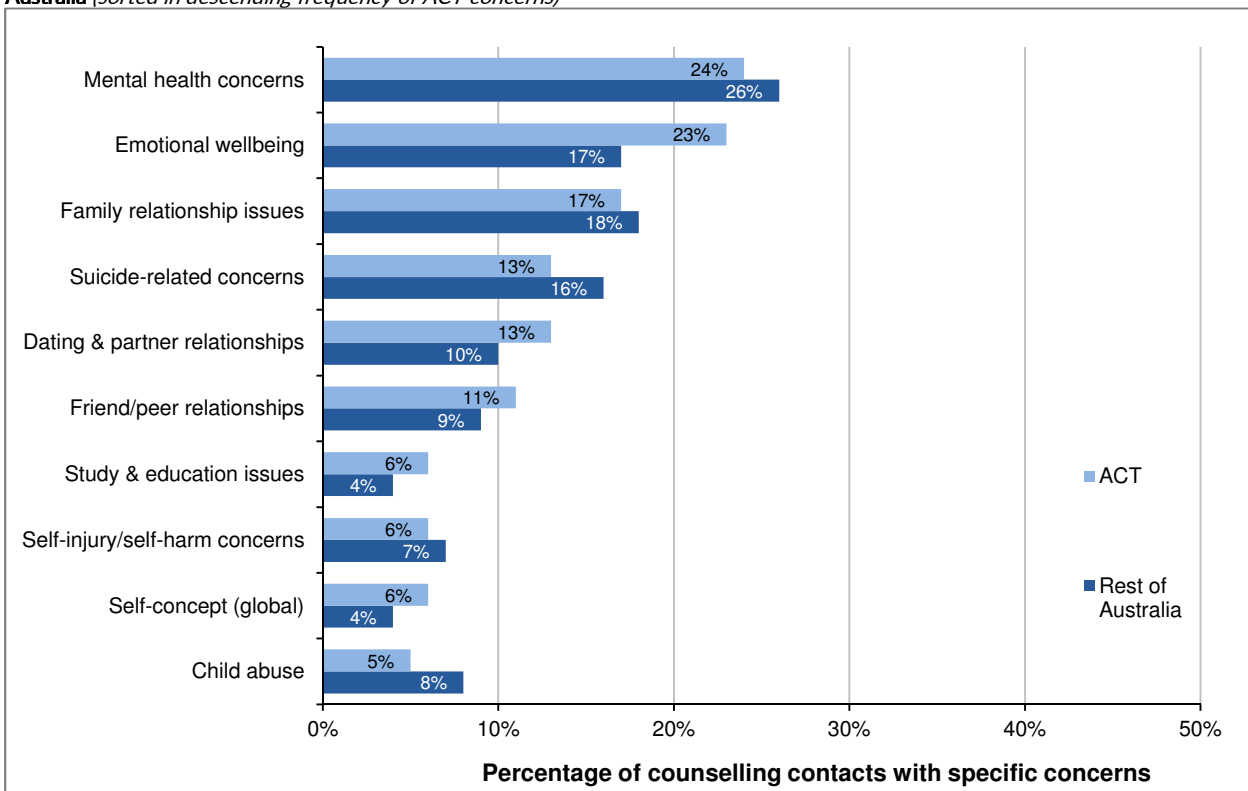
Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

During 2017, Kids Helpline counsellors responded to 66,386 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 help-seeking concerns of young Australians.

ACT compared with rest of Australia

- State or territory information was available for 57,904 of these 66,386 counselling contacts and of this subset 1,532 (or 3%) were known to be from the ACT.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of ACT counselling contacts in 2017 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 observations to be noted from the data are that
 - the relative frequency with which contacts from children and young people in the ACT are about *emotional wellbeing* is higher than that for the rest of Australia, and
 - the relative frequency with which children and young people in the ACT sought help from Kids Helpline for the other issues listed is consistent with the relative frequency with which children and young people elsewhere in Australia sought help for these issues.

Figure 1. Most frequently recorded concerns of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 2017 aged 5-25 years – ACT compared with the rest of Australia (sorted in descending frequency of ACT concerns)¹



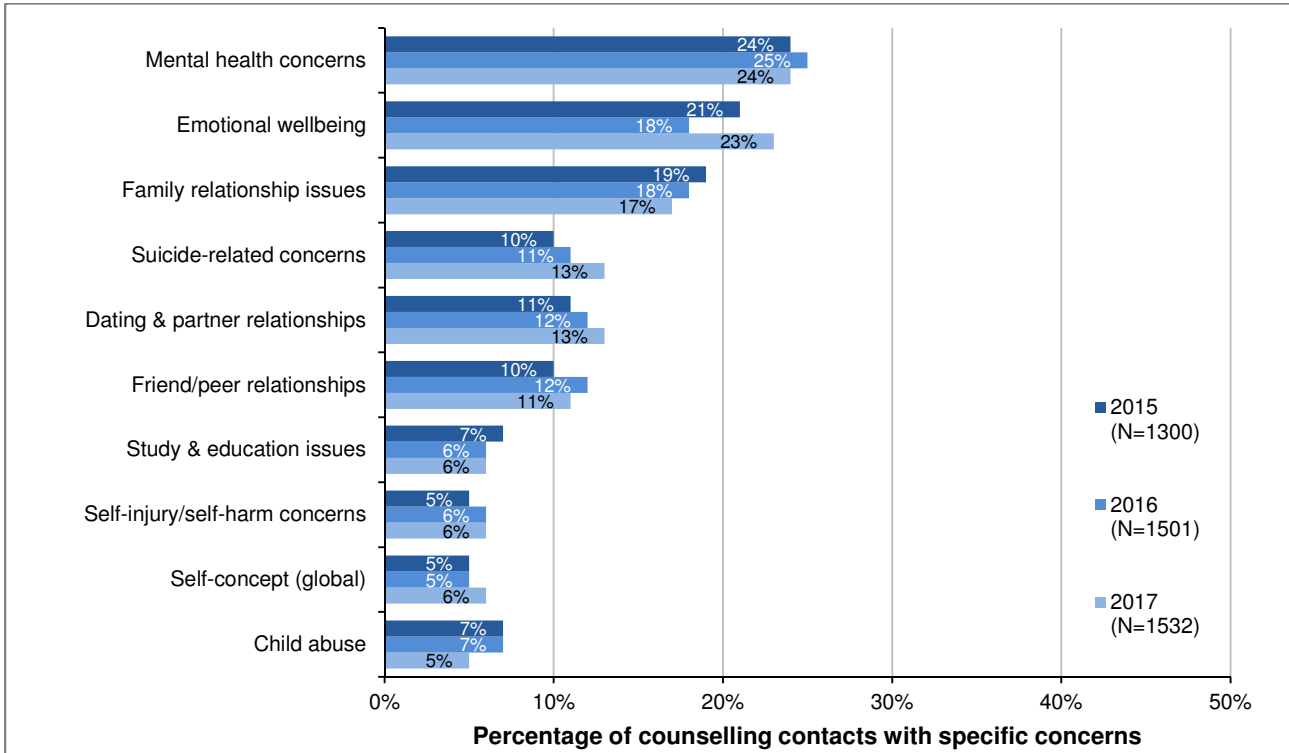
1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

Trends over time

Figure 2 shows the 10 most common concerns of ACT counselling contacts in 2017 and compares this with the frequency with which these concerns were raised by ACT contacts in 2015 and 2016.

- The key observation to be noted from the data is that the frequency with which children and young people in the ACT sought help from Kids Helpline for all of these issues has remained relatively consistent over the short-term.

Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of ACT Kids Helpline counselling contacts aged 5-25 years – by year (sorted in descending frequency of 2017 concerns)¹



1. 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

Children and young people contact Kids Helpline about a very wide range of concerns, and focusing on the 10 most common concerns can obscure that diversity and the emergence of trends in other areas of less common client concern.

To address this issue, Table 4 reports the frequency with which *every concern* in the Kids Helpline’s concern classification system was raised by counselling contacts from the ACT in 2017 and compares this with the frequency with which the concern was raised in 2015 and 2016. Table 4 groups individual concerns under eleven ‘concern classes’ which aggregate frequencies across conceptual clusters of client concern.

The key observations to be noted from the data in Table 4 are that

- the relative frequency with which children and young people in the ACT are contacting Kids Helpline about almost all these different concerns and classes of concern is relatively consistent over the short-term and
- the relative frequency with which *mental health and emotional wellbeing* related concerns (as an aggregated count across several related concerns) has increased from 2015-2017.

Table 4. Number and proportion of Kids Helpline counselling contacts 5-25 years with particular concerns and classes of concern – ACT by year¹

Concern and concern class	2015 (N = 1,300)		2016 (N = 1,501)		2017 (N = 1,532)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mental health & emotional wellbeing	701	53.9%	810	54.0%	911	59.5%
Mental health concerns	306	23.5%	377	25.1%	375	24.5%
Emotional wellbeing	268	20.6%	263	17.5%	356	23.2%
Suicide-related concerns	127	9.8%	168	11.2%	194	12.7%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	66	5.1%	92	6.1%	99	6.5%
Loss and grief	59	4.5%	42	2.8%	53	3.5%
Friends, peers, partners & dating	268	20.6%	343	22.9%	343	22.4%
Dating and partner relationships	147	11.3%	179	11.9%	193	12.6%
Friends/peer relationships	124	9.5%	173	11.5%	161	10.5%
Family relationships	247	19.0%	271	18.1%	265	17.3%
Child-parent relationships	184	14.2%	192	12.8%	199	13.0%
Other family relationships	37	2.8%	61	4.1%	41	2.7%
Changing family structures	30	2.3%	40	2.7%	32	2.1%
Parenting own children	4	0.3%	0	0.0%	3	0.2%
Identity & self-concept	115	8.8%	122	8.1%	134	8.7%
Self-concept (global)	65	5.0%	77	5.1%	87	5.7%
Body image	25	1.9%	13	0.9%	16	1.0%
Sexual orientation	17	1.3%	13	0.9%	11	0.7%
Gender/sex identification	7	0.5%	10	0.7%	13	0.8%
Disability-related concerns	4	0.3%	8	0.5%	1	0.1%
Cultural identity	3	0.2%	3	0.2%	9	0.6%
Violence & abuse (non-family)	98	7.5%	102	6.8%	76	5.0%
Bullying - school related	61	4.7%	58	3.9%	39	2.5%
Bullying - other	6	0.5%	3	0.2%	10	0.7%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	15	1.2%	22	1.5%	12	0.8%
Dating and partner violence	10	0.8%	13	0.9%	13	0.8%
Harassment and assault (non-sexual)	7	0.5%	5	0.3%	1	0.1%
Sexual harassment	1	0.1%	4	0.3%	2	0.1%
Child abuse & family violence	97	7.5%	111	7.4%	74	4.8%
Physical abuse	44	3.4%	58	3.9%	33	2.2%
Sexual abuse	18	1.4%	22	1.5%	12	0.8%
Emotional abuse	31	2.4%	30	2.0%	36	2.3%
Neglect of child	6	0.5%	5	0.3%	3	0.2%
Exploitation by family member	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	5	0.4%	10	0.7%	6	0.4%
Living-in-care issues	4	0.3%	0	0.0%	3	0.2%
School, education & work	112	8.6%	114	7.6%	128	8.4%
Study and education issues	87	6.7%	84	5.6%	98	6.4%
Employment issues	23	1.8%	26	1.7%	22	1.4%
School authority issues	6	0.5%	8	0.5%	10	0.7%
Physical or sexual health & development	58	4.5%	48	3.2%	47	3.1%
Physical health concerns	23	1.8%	27	1.8%	30	2.0%
Pregnancy-related concerns	13	1.0%	12	0.8%	6	0.4%
Sexual activity	14	1.1%	10	0.7%	10	0.7%
Physical/sexual development	5	0.4%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
Contraception/safe sex	4	0.3%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%
Homelessness & basic needs assistance	25	1.9%	34	2.3%	16	1.0%
Homelessness	12	0.9%	16	1.1%	12	0.8%
Practical/material assistance	12	0.9%	14	0.9%	3	0.2%

Concern and concern class	2015 (N= 1,300)		2016 (N= 1,501)		2017 (N= 1,532)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Financial assistance/concerns	2	0.2%	5	0.3%	1	0.1%
Substance use, addictions & risk-taking	20	1.5%	18	1.2%	20	1.3%
Drug use	11	0.8%	2	0.1%	5	0.3%
Alcohol use	9	0.7%	15	1.0%	12	0.8%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	3	0.2%
Physical risk-taking	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Gang/cult involvement	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Offending, abusive or violent actions	6	0.5%	16	1.1%	13	0.8%
Illegal/offending behaviour	5	0.4%	9	0.6%	2	0.1%
Abusive or violent actions	1	0.1%	7	0.5%	9	0.6%
Sexual violence/offending actions	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%

1. 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.

Online harassment



Starting work



Respect in relationships



Dealing with peer pressure



We're here.
Anytime. Any Reason.

[kidshelpine.com.au](https://www.kidshelpine.com.au) **24/7**

1800 55 1800 FREE CALL

Kids Helpline is a service of **yourtown** for 5-25 year olds

