

insights2017



NSW

Kids Helpline Statistical Summary New South Wales

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 approximately 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 New South Wales 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. Please consult the Appendix of the *National Statistical Overview* for more detailed information on data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Where to get more information

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Service demand

Attempted and answered contacts

- In 2017, 113,155 of the 339,724 attempts made to contact Kids Helpline counselling service (or 33%) came from New South Wales (NSW).
- Most of these attempts were made by phone (83,750) but also by web chat (25,771) and email (3,634).
- 51,043 of these attempts were answered by counsellors, corresponding to a response rate of 45%. 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 NSW phone contacts in 2016 was 58%.

Trends over time

- From 2015 to 2017 there was an overall decrease of 15% in attempted contacts from NSW across all media. Phone attempts decreased by 26% and email by 19%, while web chat attempts increased by 71%.
- Across all media, response rates for NSW have decreased from 59% in 2015 to 45% in 2017.

Table 1. NSW 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										
NSW	113,447	65,281	58%	99,894	49,003	49%	83,750	35,836	43%	-26%
All States	290,767	169,802	58%	276,960	135,719	49%	248,008	109,793	44%	-15%
Web chat										
NSW	15,078	8,363	55%	21,412	10,355	48%	25,771	11,573	45%	71%
All States	43,464	24,115	55%	65,954	31,765	48%	79,054	35,201	45%	82%
Email										
NSW	4,500	4,500	100%	3,655	3,655	100%	3,634	3,634	100%	-19%
All States	15,886 ²	15,886	100%	13,681 ³	13,681	100%	12,662 ⁴	12,662	100%	-92%
All media										
NSW	133,026	78,145	59%	124,960	63,012	50%	113,155	51,043	45%	-15%
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

- In 2017, Kids Helpline counsellors recorded data in relation to 154,868 contacts from children and young people across Australia, aged 5-25 years. State or territory information was available for 140,007 of these contacts, and of this subset 45,187 (or 32%) were known to be from NSW.
- Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of these contacts from NSW and compares them with the characteristics of contacts from the rest of Australia where the contact's state or territory was known.
- Seven out of 10 (73%) contacts from NSW were female and four in seven (56%) were aged 13-18 years. Four in nine (44%) were known to be from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.
- Compared with contacts from the rest of Australia, NSW contacts were:
 - slightly more likely to be male and slightly less likely to be female
 - more likely to be aged 13-18 years,
 - more likely to come from major cities. and
 - more likely to be from CALD backgrounds and less likely to be from a Caucasian Australian background.
- Other characteristics of Kids Helpline contacts in NSW are similar to those of contacts from the rest of Australia.

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

Contact characteristics		NSW (N = 45,187)		Rest of Australia (N = 94,820)	
		n	%	n	%
Gender					
	Female	22,687	73%	50,245	74%
	Male	7,761	25%	16,515	24%
	Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	689	2%	1,288	2%
	Total	31,137	100%	68,048	100%
	Unknown	14,050		26,772	
Age group					
	5-12 years	3,550	13%	8,100	13%
	13-18 years	15,855	56%	31,109	50%
	19-25 years	8,801	31%	22,992	37%
	Total	28,206	100%	62,201	100%
	<26 but age unknown	16,981		32,619	
Cultural background²					
	Aboriginal &/or TSI	439	4%	711	3%
	CALD	5,022	44%	8,156	33%
	Neither ATSI nor CALD	6,077	53%	16,204	65%
	Total	11,538	100%	25,071	100%
	Unknown	33,649		69,749	
Remoteness³					
	Major Cities	14,937	78%	29,031	70%
	Inner Regional	3,136	16%	8,498	20%
	Outer Regional/Remote	1,004	5%	4,094	10%
	Total	19,077	100%	41,623	100%
	Unknown	26,110		53,197	
Medium					
	Phone	34,181	76%	71,829	76%
	Web chat	9,678	21%	19,713	21%
	Email	1,328	3%	3,278	3%
	Total	45,187	100%	94,820	100%

Contact characteristics	NSW (N = 45,187)		Rest of Australia (N = 94,820)	
	n	%	n	%
Type of help-seeking				
Counselling contact	18,180	40%	39,724	42%
Information/Referral/Other contact	27,007	60%	55,096	58%
Total	45,187	100%	94,820	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, 40% of contacts from NSW in 2017 were seeking counselling support while 60% were seeking information/referral or other forms of non-counselling support. NSW contacts were slightly more likely to be seeking counselling support than contacts from the rest of Australia (60% c.f. 58%).

Demographic trends over time

Table 3 presents the characteristics of NSW 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 little change in the demographic profile of NSW contacts over the last three years.
- The two exceptions are an increase in the proportion of contacts engaging with the service by web chat and a corresponding decrease in those engaging by phone, and an increase in the proportion of counselling contacts and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of information/referral contacts.

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

Contact characteristics	2015 (N = 70,977)		2016 (N = 56,905)		2017 (N = 45,187)	
	n	%	n	%	%	n
Gender²						
Female	26,198	66%	23,646	69%	22,687	73%
Male	13,324	34%	10,461	30%	7,761	25%
Intersex, Trans & Gender Diverse	153	0%	346	1%	689	2%
Total	39,675	100%	34,453	100%	31,137	100%
Unknown	31,302		22,452		14,050	
Age group						
5-12 years	3,826	12%	3,543	12%	3,550	13%
13-18 years	18,110	57%	17,465	59%	15,855	56%
19-25 years	10,039	31%	8,539	29%	8,801	31%
Total	31,975	100%	29,547	100%	28,206	100%
<26 but age unknown	39,002		27,358		16,981	
Cultural background³						
Aboriginal &/or TSI	496	3%	651	5%	439	4%
CALD	6,561	43%	5,179	39%	5,022	44%
Neither ATSI nor CALD	8,052	53%	7,595	57%	6,077	53%
Total	15,109	100%	13,425	100%	11,538	100%
Unknown	55,868		43,480		33,649	
Remoteness⁴						
Major Cities	13,424	69%	14,645	75%	14,937	78%

Contact characteristics	2015 (N = 70,977)		2016 (N = 56,905)		2017 (N = 45,187)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	<i>n</i>
Inner Regional	4,871	25%	3,841	20%	3,136	16%
Outer Regional/Remote	1,050	5%	1,167	6%	1,004	5%
Total	19,345	100%	19,653	100%	19,077	100%
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>51,632</i>		<i>37,252</i>		<i>26,110</i>	
Medium						
Phone	61,498	87%	46,476	82%	34,181	76%
Web chat	7,319	10%	9,083	16%	9,678	21%
Email	2,160	3%	1,346	2%	1,328	3%
Total	70,977	100%	56,905	100%	45,187	100%
Type of help-seeking						
Counselling contact	20,269	29%	18,407	32%	18,180	40%
Information/Referral/Other contact	50,708	71%	38,498	68%	27,007	60%
Total	70,977	100%	56,905	100%	45,187	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.

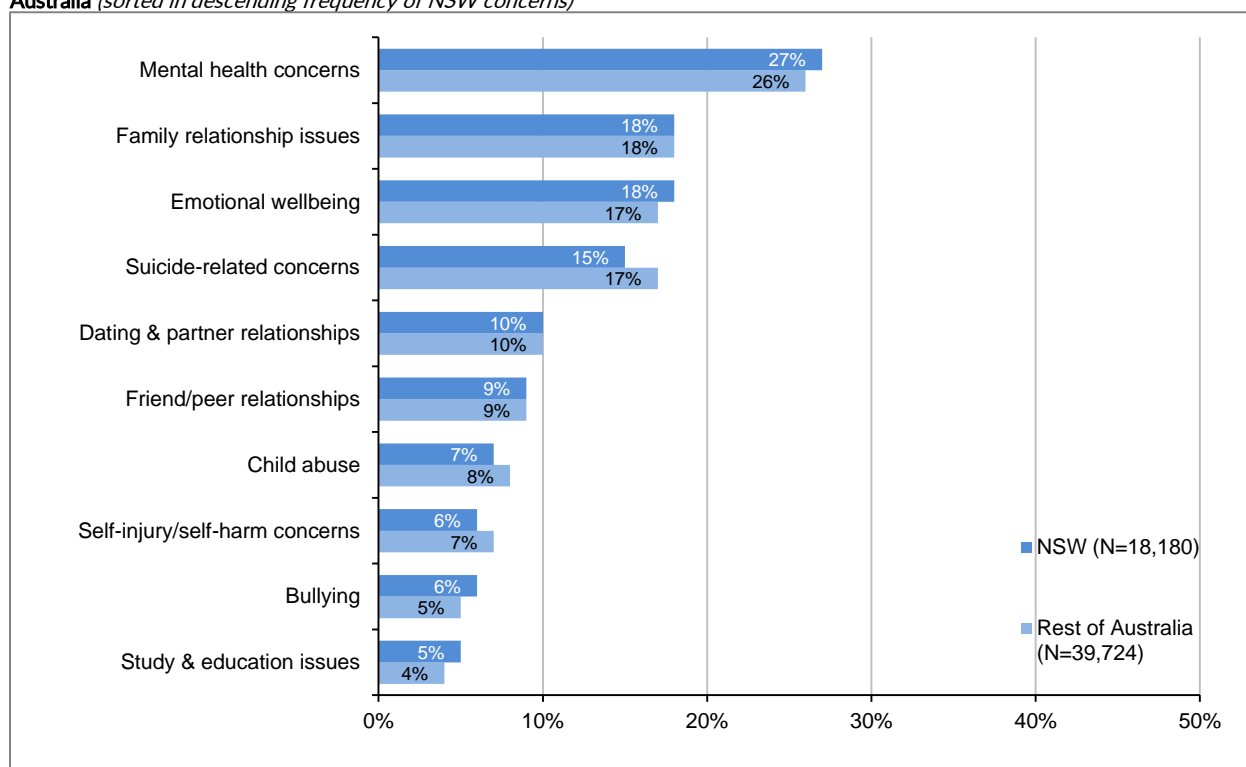
Most common concerns of children and young people who received counselling

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 today.

NSW compared with rest of Australia

- State or territory information was available for 57,904 of these 66,386 counselling contacts and of this subset 18,180 (or 31%) were known to be from NSW.
- Figure 1 shows the 10 most common concerns of NSW counselling contacts in 2017 and compares these 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 children and young people in NSW sought help from Kids Helpline for all of these issues is consistent with the relative frequency with which children and young people elsewhere in Australia sought help for these issues by and large, and that suicide-related concerns relatively less frequently among contacts from children and young people in NSW than is the case for the rest of Australia (15% c.f. 17%).

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



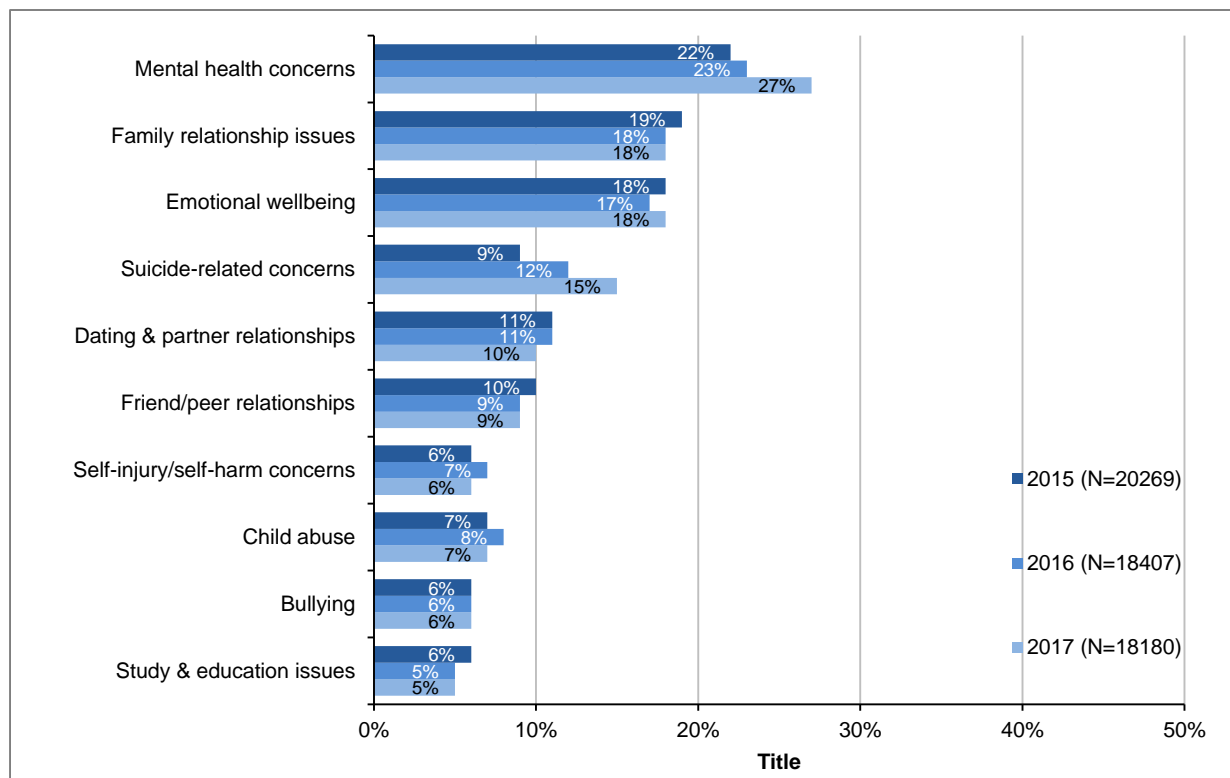
1. Up to four concerns per contact may be recorded. Accordingly, percentages may sum to more than 100%.

Trends over time

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

- The key observation to note from the data is that the frequency with which children and young people in NSW are contacting Kids Helpline about these various concerns has remained very consistent over the short-term, although mental-health-related contacts and suicide-related contacts appear in the short-term to be increasing.

Figure 2. Most frequently recorded concerns of NSW 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 NSW 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 observation to be noted from the data in Table 4 is that the frequency with which children and young people in NSW are contacting Kids Helpline about all these different concerns and classes of concern is quite consistent over the short-term.

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

Concern and concern class	2015 (N = 20,269)		2016 (N = 18,407)		2017 (N = 18,180)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mental health & emotional wellbeing	10,362	51.1%	9,703	52.7%	10,504	57.8%
Mental health concerns	4,532	22.4%	4,319	23.5%	4,880	26.8%
Emotional wellbeing	3,711	18.3%	3,092	16.8%	3,231	17.8%
Suicide-related concerns	1,877	9.3%	2,237	12.2%	2,690	14.8%
Self-injury/self-harm concerns	1,213	6.0%	1,215	6.6%	1,148	6.3%
Loss and grief	723	3.6%	574	3.1%	606	3.3%
Friends, peers, partners & dating	4,096	20.2%	3,580	19.4%	3,494	19.2%
Dating and partner relationships	2,180	10.8%	1,953	10.6%	1,899	10.4%
Friends/peer relationships	2,023	10.0%	1,708	9.3%	1,694	9.3%
Family relationships	3,825	18.9%	3,386	18.4%	3,237	17.8%
Child-parent relationships	2,699	13.3%	2,400	13.0%	2,276	12.0%
Other family relationships	834	4.1%	726	3.9%	757	4.2%
Changing family structures	448	2.2%	421	2.3%	376	2.1%
Parenting own children	75	0.4%	51	0.3%	38	0.2%
Identity & self-concept	1,498	7.4%	1,401	7.6%	1,374	7.6%
Self-concept (global)	806	4.0%	739	4.0%	731	4.0%
Body image	250	1.2%	182	1.0%	232	1.3%
Sexual orientation	236	1.2%	230	1.2%	164	0.9%
Gender/sex identification	107	0.5%	184	1.0%	163	0.9%
Disability-related concerns	95	0.5%	75	0.4%	78	0.4%
Cultural identity	54	0.3%	50	0.3%	47	0.3%
Violence & abuse (non-family)	1,730	8.5%	1,646	8.9%	1,573	8.7%
Bullying - school related	1,051	5.2%	882	4.8%	844	4.6%
Bullying - other	175	0.9%	162	0.9%	174	1.0%
Sexual assault or abuse (non-family)	242	1.2%	329	1.8%	307	1.7%
Dating and partner violence	146	0.7%	138	0.7%	126	0.7%
Harassment and assault (non-sexual)	79	0.4%	93	0.5%	94	0.5%
Sexual harassment	65	0.3%	72	0.4%	66	0.4%
Child abuse & family violence	1,449	7.1%	1,384	7.5%	1,354	7.4%
Physical abuse	735	3.6%	720	3.9%	645	3.5%
Sexual abuse	274	1.4%	243	1.3%	224	1.2%
Emotional abuse	330	1.6%	355	1.9%	414	2.3%
Neglect of child	81	0.4%	73	0.4%	68	0.4%
Exploitation by family member	1	0.0%	3	0.0%	8	0.0%
Exposure to family violence	152	0.7%	153	0.8%	163	0.9%
Living-in-care issues	92	0.5%	59	0.3%	82	0.5%

Concern and concern class	2015 (N= 20,269)		2016 (N= 18,407)		2017 (N= 18,180)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School, education & work	1,588	7.8%	1,283	7.0%	1,240	6.8%
Study and education issues	1,166	5.8%	897	4.9%	905	5.0%
Employment issues	266	1.3%	306	1.7%	279	1.5%
School authority issues	179	0.9%	105	0.6%	82	0.5%
Physical or sexual health & development	1,063	5.2%	914	5.0%	860	4.7%
Physical health concerns	469	2.3%	433	2.4%	436	2.4%
Pregnancy-related concerns	242	1.2%	228	1.2%	186	1.0%
Sexual activity	282	1.4%	213	1.2%	210	1.2%
Physical/sexual development	49	0.2%	28	0.2%	26	0.1%
Contraception/safe sex	48	0.2%	35	0.2%	22	0.1%
Homelessness & basic needs assistance	530	2.6%	530	2.9%	372	2.0%
Homelessness	309	1.5%	286	1.6%	188	1.0%
Practical/material assistance	182	0.9%	203	1.1%	140	0.8%
Financial assistance/concerns	54	0.3%	57	0.3%	52	0.3%
Substance use, addictions & risk-taking	422	2.1%	426	2.3%	333	1.8%
Drug use	262	1.3%	242	1.3%	190	1.0%
Alcohol use	101	0.5%	116	0.6%	105	0.6%
Addictive behaviours (not drugs/alcohol)	51	0.3%	65	0.4%	43	0.2%
Physical risk-taking	10	0.0%	5	0.0%	12	0.1%
Gang/cult involvement	13	0.1%	14	0.1%	4	0.0%
Offending, abusive or violent actions	243	1.2%	177	1.0%	159	0.9%
Illegal/offending behaviour	128	0.6%	93	0.5%	81	0.4%
Abusive or violent actions	102	0.5%	77	0.4%	65	0.4%
Sexual violence/offending actions	18	0.1%	12	0.1%	13	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



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