

Media release



Kids Helpline data reveals children are turning to mental health counselling in increasing numbers

Kids Helpline's latest data confirms that COVID-19 lockdown and containment measures, along with other aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, has impacted on the mental health of Australian children and young people. Kids Helpline reported mental health & wellbeing counselling experienced an overall increase of 24% nationally since the pandemic hit. Nationally, the increased use of technology has seen demand for WebChat counselling increase by 62% over the same period, March to July 2019.

"In Victoria the longevity of the lockdown measures and uncertainty around education and the increased restrictions and disruptions to the community has led to the vulnerability of the state's children and young people, resulting in a 28% spike in demand in Victoria between March and July 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. Victoria saw a surge in demand of 8% in July compared with the previous month," said **yourtown** Head of Advocacy and Research Kathryn Mandla.

Mental health issues weigh heavily on the minds of young people connecting to Kids Helpline. The service has revealed the top 5 concerns raised with Kids Helpline nationally across the pandemic as:

1. Mental health concerns
2. Emotional wellbeing
3. Family relationship issues
4. Suicide-related concerns
5. Friend/peer relationships

According to Ms Mandla, while Kids Helpline is very glad to be there to answer cries for help, the service was also dedicated to providing support and information as early intervention measures to reduce vulnerability to harm before it occurs.

"Mental health is a national issue, the importance of a national service like Kids Helpline offering virtual counselling services anytime for any reason by phone, online web counselling or email cannot be underestimated. We provide easy access for young adults seeking independent resources on our website. Kids Helpline offers tools and techniques, which young people can readily engage in to help boost their psychological well-being," Ms Mandla said. <https://kidshelpline.com.au/coronavirus>

If young people want to talk to someone they can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, e-mail or web counselling www.kidshelpline.com.au – **Facebook:** @kidshelpline, **Insta** @kidshelplineau, **Twitter** @KidsHelplineAU.

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