

## Christmas isn't always joyful for young people

**As Australia heads into the Christmas and New Year period, Kids Helpline is reminding families that the festive season can be one of the hardest times for children and young people.**

**yourtown** CEO Tracy Adams said while many look forward to celebrations and time together, others are facing a very different reality.

"For some, this Christmas marks the first without a loved one. For others, it may be their first Christmas after a separation or divorce. Many young people continue to struggle with mental health challenges, bullying, family conflict, or violence," Ms Adams said.

This year has also ended with deep shock and grief following the Bondi terrorist attack, an event that has left many young people feeling unsafe, anxious, and overwhelmed.

"It's common for big emotions to surface during this time, especially when routines change, expectations rise, and memories are close to the surface," Ms Adams said.

"Christmas can amplify whatever a young person is already carrying. Grief, fear, loneliness, and stress don't pause for the holidays. For some young people, they get louder."

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, confidential 24/7 counselling service for children and young people aged 5–25. Support is available by phone and webchat, including throughout the Christmas period.

"We want children, young people, and families to know they're not alone, whether it's 2pm on Christmas Day or 2am when it feels like everyone else is celebrating the arrival of the New Year," Ms Adams said.

"You don't have to wait until things feel unbearable to reach out. Talking to someone can make a real difference."

### Five tips to help children manage grief and loss

Kids Helpline counsellors suggest these simple ways to support children and young people navigating grief and loss during the holidays:

1. **Acknowledge the loss openly:** Avoid pretending everything is fine. Avoid using euphemisms and use concrete words. When someone close has died, naming them and recognising their absence helps young people feel seen and understood.

2. **Lower expectations:** Christmas doesn't have to look the same. It's okay to simplify plans, change traditions, or opt out of activities that feel too hard this year.
3. **Let feelings come and go:** Grief isn't linear. A young person may laugh one moment and feel overwhelmed the next. Reassure them that all feelings are normal.
4. **Create space for remembrance:** Lighting a candle, sharing a memory, or including a small ritual can help young people feel connected while honouring their grief.
5. **Keep support close:** Encourage young people to talk — with family, trusted adults, or a counsellor. Extra support during the holidays can ease feelings of isolation.

If you're worried about a child or young person, or if they're struggling to cope, Kids Helpline is here.

Kids Helpline provides free, confidential 24/7 counselling for children and young people aged 5-25. The service is delivered by qualified professional counsellors and is available via phone on 1800 55 1800 and webchat at [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au).

**ENDS**

### Media Contact

For more information or to arrange a media interview, please contact Jessica Tatzenko, **yourtown** Media & Communications Specialist.



0423 843 786



[jtatzenko@yourtown.com.au](mailto:jtatzenko@yourtown.com.au)