

Media release



Early intervention is essential for young children with suicidal thoughts

Children as young as six are expressing thoughts related to their own suicidality prompting a call for more attention to be given to the lost demographic for suicide prevention services – those aged 6-14.

“The causes are complex, with Kids Helpline acting as a ‘safety net’ for children and young people in a broader social support system having a unique position of being the only free and confidential 24/7 counselling service available to children and young people,” said **yourtown** Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams.

In 2018 Kids Helpline received 12,917 suicide-related contacts from children and young people with 28.5% of these resulting from those aged 10-14 years old. Furthermore, 0.5% of all suicide-related concerns were expressed by those aged 6-9 years old.

This compared to 43% for the main target demographic for suicide prevention intervention, those aged 15 to 19 years of age.

“Counsellors obviously have to make a very critical assessment of what’s required at any time, and they obviously keep working with the young person as a number one priority,” Ms Adams said, however, in 2018 Kids Helpline made 66 calls to emergency and other services to ensure the immediate safety of children under 14 who were deemed suicidal.”

“There is a clear need to know more and do more,” Ms Adams said.

“We must ensure that there is no wrong door for help-seeking and we need to gather more data on the prevalence of thoughts and attempts of suicide so we can tailor the access to suicide prevention assistance accordingly,” she continued.

yourtown is calling for children and young children to be recognised within any broader suicide prevention strategy.

If young people want to talk to someone they can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or use email or web counselling services. www.kidshelpline.com.au –
Facebook: @kidshelpline, **Insta** @kidshelplineau, **Twitter** @KidsHelplineAU.

Kids Helpline cost \$11.3 million to operate in 2018. **yourtown** provided 75% of the funding thanks to the generosity of **yourtown** Art Union supporters and donors.

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