

# Media release



Tuesday 21 April 2020

## KIDS HELPLINE REGISTERING ONE CALL EVERY MINUTE

Kids Helpline has been hit with a sharp spike for mental health counselling, with children and young people attempting to contact the service every 69 seconds.

“This is an extraordinary moment in time as we face unprecedented demand on our counselling service. We are currently experiencing a 40% increase over the same time last year from children and young people,” said **yourtown** Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams.

“2020 has proven to be a year of turmoil for many young people, from bushfires to COVID-19, some of our young people have told us how their family was already struggling due to the bushfires and now their parent/s are desperately trying to find work or access income,” said Ms Adams.

Data from March, shows that the majority of young people’s concerns related to COVID-19 and the main topics of Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Physical Health concerns. Counselling contacts mentioning COVID-19 were more likely to be made by young adults (Millennials - those born between 1981 and 1996) than other age cohorts that did not mention the virus.

Millennials is a cohort of young people for whom Kids Helpline plays an important role in their support structure for mental health concerns.

“We are seeing these young adults contacting Kids Helpline as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown and pandemic. They are worrying about and struggling with the impact this is having on their daily lives – whether that is school or university closing, not being able to do team sport or go to the gym, travel and holiday, as well as not being able to see their friends or boyfriend/girlfriend,” said Ms Adams.

“Our findings suggest that these young people may also have larger concerns about what this means for their future, for Australia or for the planet. We are also seeing some very vulnerable children and young people who are having to now deal with existing parental abuse and conflict during lock-down.

“Level of ongoing contacts to Kids Helpline shows that we are a fundamental, reliable and trusted part of the child protection and mental health systems. Kids Helpline provides those in need with 24/7 access to qualified counsellors who they trust, using channels of communication that work for them, be that phone, email or WebChat,” said Ms Adams.

“Kids Helpline is needed more than ever as we continue to experience young people making contact as the current pandemic is compounding or triggering existing mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, eating disorders and suicidal ideation, as young people find the normal coping strategies are no longer available, additional support services are closed or the anxiety that the

pandemic has produced in them has left them less resilient to deal with these conditions,” Ms Adams continued.

“Physical distancing doesn’t mean isolation,” Ms Adams said. “If you would like to talk about things that worry you, or anything at all, you can contact Kids Helpline on free call 1800 55 1800 or via WebChat or email at [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

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