

Media release



yourtown shines spotlight on teens unsafe secrets

This Child Protection Week (1 – 7 September) Kids Helpline, a service of **yourtown**, is encouraging parents to start a conversation with young teens.

yourtown Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams, said this is a good time to remind families to keep an eye on their children's mental wellbeing following the recent launch of the third season of controversial teenage series 13 Reasons Why.

In 2018, Kids Helpline enacted 1,825 Duty of Care interventions, which involved contacting emergency services or another agency to protect a young person who is experiencing or is at risk of imminent or significant harm. 38% of these interventions were related to a suicide attempt and 37% were related to child abuse.

"Young people see Kids Helpline as a safe space and often disclose things such as child abuse or suicide-related issues to our counsellors. Often, these are things that children or young people have kept secret from family, friends or other trusted adults such as teachers," said Ms Adams.

"To gain a greater understanding of the different perspectives between parents and teenagers around serious issues, Kids Helpline surveyed children and young people aged 12 to 25 years of age to determine what topics they are keeping secret from their parents. 90% of teens said that there are things they keep from their parents, with many keeping unsafe secrets about their own or others' safety or wellbeing," Ms. Adams continued.

"Children can be groomed to keep unsafe secrets, particularly when there is a power imbalance or a secret that involves threats or bribes. Meanwhile, adolescents and older young people are far more likely to seek help from friends or peers, which often results in young people being torn between keeping a promise to a friend or being seen as untrustworthy, especially in regards to secrets where a friend or peer may be in danger in some way."

"This means that for some young people being able to access free, private and confidential counselling via a helpline service is the only support they feel they can access," Adams stated.

Kids Helpline gives children and young people choices, support and someone to listen. It is Australia's only national 24/7 counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years – free call 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelpline.com.au

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/13-reasons-why>

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