

# Media release



## KIDS HELPLINE READY TO RESPOND WITH CORONAVIRUS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

As the situation around COVID-19 continues to develop, **yourtown** is reminding children and young people that Kids Helpline is available to children and young people experiencing anxiety or concerns through these challenging times.

Kids Helpline is Australia's only national 24/7 counselling and support service, specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years. [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au) or free call 1800 55 1800.

**yourtown** Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams said, "We are starting to get an increased number of contacts from young people who are worried and anxious with concerns around coronavirus.

"Conversations with some of our young people contacting Kids Helpline has related to their personal concerns for example, 'What if you're in an abusive household? Being home is hard and safe places are being shut', or 'How can we stay calm and not stress as much cause it's all a bit chaotic right now?', said Ms Adams.

"Kids Helpline is well prepared to offer both short term and long term support to the lasting impact that this health crisis may have over many months or even years. It is important that children and young people have access to support services as and when they need it.

"From our previous experience working with young people following major traumatic events, we do not underestimate the psychological support required for the emotional wellbeing of children and young people which may extend far beyond the immediacy of the health crisis perhaps months or years down the road.

"Kids Helpline has created fun and informative tip sheets and resources on the website, as well as access for kids to make contact through WebChat counselling or by phoning a qualified counsellor who is ready to listen to the feelings that they are having," Ms Adams said.

Kids Helpline counsellors advise the following tips for parents to help young people affected:

- Make sure you are communicating from a place of calm. If you seem anxious or distressed, your child may pick up on this and may become anxious or distressed.
- Ask what they know/have heard about COVID-19; this prevents assumptions and allows them to be active in the conversation.
- Talk about some of the positives and kindness that can come out of stressful times, e.g. people getting to know their neighbours better, people helping elderly carry groceries to their car, etc.

- Keep in mind that children may not be concerned about themselves, but may be concerned about their family. They may be hesitant to share fears at first, as they don't want to make you worry about them.
- With social distancing, quarantine and lockdown, families will be seeing more of each other and spending less time apart. This is a great opportunity to bond.
- Coronavirus might mean a disruption to usual routines. Families can talk about and decide on new routines. Kids draw a deal of comfort and safety around routine and consistency.

**yourtown Corporate Communications & Media Advisor:**

Maree Reason-Cain

Phone 0423 843 786 | [mreason-cain@yourtown.com.au](mailto:mreason-cain@yourtown.com.au)