

# Media release



## Steering young men toward mental health support

Mental Health Month (October 2021) is a compelling time to raise awareness around the number of mental health related issues, and the existing stigma still associated with mental health concerns, said **yourtown** Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams.

Kids Helpline, a service of **yourtown**, says mental health, emotional wellbeing and suicide-related issues accounted for 61% or 59,527 of all counselling contacts made last financial year by children and young people.

“There is evidence that seeking professional help by boys or young men may not be improving as much as we would have hoped. We continue to see the portrayal of mental ill-health in a way that perpetuates stigma and myths about mental illness. We are keen to encourage and normalise help-seeking behaviours in males of any age,” said Ms Adams.

Latest data reveals young males have the lowest rates of seeking professional help from Kids Helpline with numbers across all age cohorts falling way behind young women, particularly for those from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, or those in rural or regional areas.

Data released today shows only one in five (22 %) counselling contacts to Kids Helpline are from young men while more than three in four (77%) are from girls. Since 2011, the proportion of contacts for males has decreased significantly going from about one-third to only one-fifth of all contacts to the service.

“We know that help-seeking behaviours of young men is still very low. This is very concerning and suggests that young males may still feel stigma around mental health and fear that it will be seen as weak to seek help, or to talk about feelings,” continued Ms Adams.

Ms Adams said, “With COVID-19 continuing to impact the way we live, socialise and gain education it is more important than ever for young men to reach out and seek support when they need it. However it is simply not enough to ask them to reach out. We also need to design services to meet their needs, ensure that we build on the work done to date to reduce the stigma of mental health and promote positive role modelling so that young men have an example to follow.”

Beyond the pandemic, mental ill-health in young people is likely to be significant and long-lasting. Kids Helpline offers phone, WebChat, email and peer-to-peer group counselling as well as a range of resources.

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

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