

# Media release



## Kids Helpline steps up child protection support

Kids Helpline, a service of **yourtown**, has announced extra counsellors have been engaged to respond to increased demand from children and young people.

“As COVID-19 started to grip Australia early this year, it spurred increased anxiety as well as increases in contacts to the counselling services from children and young people battling the effects of mental health issues, child abuse, self-harm and suicidality particularly during periods of lockdown,” said **yourtown** CEO Tracy Adams.

“The additional funding from federal and state governments to boost mental health services has enabled Kids Helpline to increase counsellor capacity over the past few months. During the months of April, May and June 2020 the service has responded to an additional 4,502 counselling contacts compared to the same period in 2019,” Ms Adams said.

New data has revealed that children and young people are contacting Kids Helpline in increasing numbers relating to significant issues around child abuse, mental health, self-harm and suicidality. Statistics identified 11,256 contacts (49% of all counselling contacts) during April to June 2020 contacted Kids Helpline for support about these specific issues, vs 8,438 contacts (45% of all counselling contacts) during the same three-month period in 2019.

“Our website traffic shows searches for mental health topics during the pandemic grew at a rate four times greater than average versus the same period in the previous year. This also demonstrates more interest in mental health topics than at any time in the past five years.

“As the community continues to battle the personal and economic impacts of COVID-19, we are seeing firsthand the repercussions that the pandemic is having on both the mental health and safety of the nation’s youngest generations.

“We knew an increase in child vulnerability was going to occur, but this is deeper than we had expected.

“We are seeing some very distressed children and young people who have to deal with existing parental abuse and conflict during isolation.

“The intensity of support required by young people contacting Kids Helpline for counselling is definitely increasing,” Ms Adams continued.

Kids Helpline is 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 visit at [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

Facebook: @kidshelpline, Insta @kidshelplineau, Twitter @KidsHelplineAU.

**-ends-**yourtown**** Corporate Communications & Media Advisor – Maree Reason-Cain  
[mreason-cain@yourtown.com.au](mailto:mreason-cain@yourtown.com.au) Phone 0423 843 786