

# Media release



**Monday 16 March 2020**

## **Kids Helpline urge parents to get behind National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence**

“Bullying causes enormous distress and anxiety to children and young people. It is important that communities and parents work together to provide an environment that is safe from harassment, aggression, violence and bullying,” said **yourtown** Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams.

“We have identified that bullying is a concern discussed primarily in contacts to Kids Helpline from 5–12 year olds, with 15% or one in seven of all contacts from this age group discussing bullying in 2019. It is worth noting, however, that teens in the 13–18 year old age group are a major audience for bullying-related content on the Kids Helpline website. Children and young people aged 5–25 registered a total of 314,126 page views for help-seeking about bullying in 2019 up from 85,106 page views in 2018, with 3,557 direct counselling contacts. Bullying of children and young people can happen in person and online via digital devices, particularly outside school hours.

“The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (**Friday March 20**) is an opportunity to share anti-bullying strategies and ‘take a stand together’, beginning with how we behave particularly around our children,” continued Ms Adams.

Kids Helpline, a service of **yourtown**, stated that evidence suggests bullying is a learned behaviour and it is critical that parents role model positive behaviours to break the cycle of bullying.

“The National Day of Action is an important opportunity to reaffirm to adults to be positive role models within their family unit as bullying or violence in any form can have immediate and long-term effects on children and young people. Young children bystanders may feel uncomfortable witnessing bullying or violence but may be unsure of how to stop it from happening,” she said.

Parents should be aware of how their behaviour is being observed by their children, not just at home but when watching their kids on the sports field or driving them to school.

“During 2019, Kids Helpline had 576 counselling contacts from children and young people relating to exposure to family violence.

“Kids Helpline delivers child-specific support to those experiencing exposure to family violence. If we can intervene early with targeted therapy, a child who has been traumatised by this exposure may have significant positive outcomes.

“Without early intervention, young children may carry the trauma of that family violence well into adulthood. This can include difficulties in developing positive relationships, and a heightened risk of alcohol misuse, drug dependence and criminal behaviour later in life. The cost to these children and the community is immeasurable. We cannot afford not to ensure we do everything we can to prevent this happening,” Ms Adams continued.

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**yourtown** is a charity with services young people can access to find jobs, learn skills, become great parents and live safer, happier lives. For over 59 years, we've been tackling the issues impacting young people in Australia – like mental health and unemployment, and taking on issues like family and domestic violence.

If you or someone you know is impacted by domestic or family violence contact DV Connect on 1800 811 811.

If young people want to talk to someone they can call Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or use WebChat or email services [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

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