

# Kids Help Line 2003

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## IN BRIEF

Kids Help Line (KHL) is a free 24 hour telephone counselling service available every day of the year to Australia's 3.8 million young people aged between 5 and 18 years.

### During 2003 Kids Help Line:

- Received 1.1 million phone calls.
- Answered 523,825 (93,843 more than 2002).
- Improved response to calls from 41% in 2002 to 47% in 2003.
- 50% of calls were from rural and remote areas (up from 42% in 2002).
- Improved response to rural and remote young people (36% in 2002 to 47% in 2003).
- The majority of calls were about relationships with family, friends or partners, consistent with previous years.
- Over the past few years the proportion of calls about bullying have increased while concerns about child abuse and peer relationships have decreased.
- During 2003 the proportion of calls about suicide, mental health and grief decreased after having increased across previous years.
- 11% of callers were referred to other support services in their local area.

### Also Kids Help Online:

- Responded to 13,462 online counselling contacts (6,108 webcounselling sessions & 7,354 emails).
- Online counselling increased by 5,169 contacts compared with 2002.

For more information about online counselling, see KHL information sheet # 27.

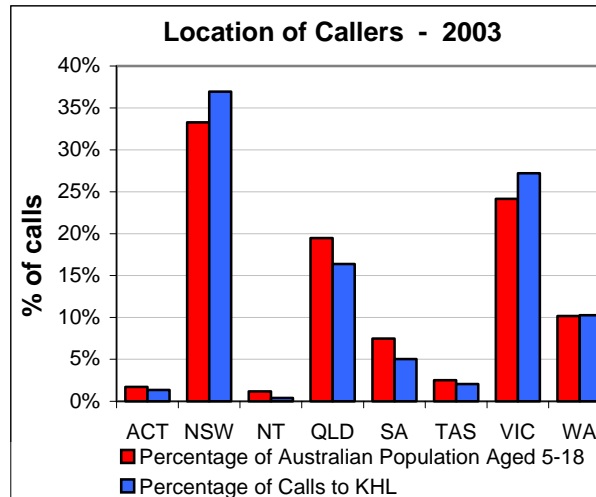
[www.kidshelp.com.au/research/infosheets.html](http://www.kidshelp.com.au/research/infosheets.html)

## Who Called?

- ♦ Males made 28% of calls and females 72%. This gender breakdown is consistent with help-seeking trends in most human service agencies.
- ♦ Fifty-four percent of callers were younger than 15 years of age.
- ♦ Counsellors recorded ethnic background for 26% of callers. Of these, the majority were Anglo-Australian (85%). However 8% of callers were of a non-English speaking background, 4% were from an Aboriginal/Indigenous background and 3% were of another English speaking background.
- ♦ Young people contacting the service for the first time accounted for 39% of calls during 2003.

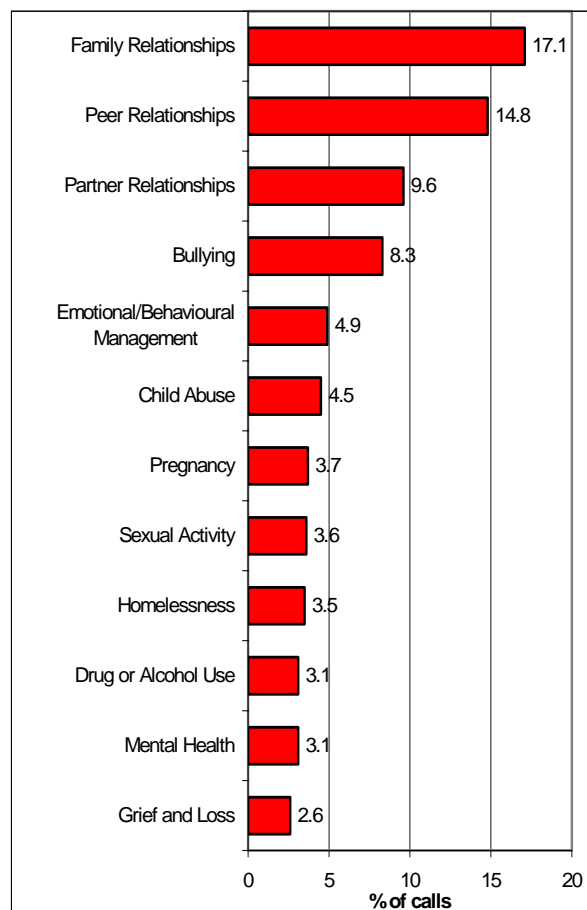
## Where Did They Call From?

All calls are directed to the KHL counselling centre in Brisbane. The graph below shows the demand by state compared to population.



## What Did They Call About?

Approximately 20% of all calls involved immediate and significant concerns. The main problems about which young people contacted KHL are shown in the graph below. These top twelve concerns account for 79% of calls.



KIDS HELP LINE INFOSHEET

## Family Relationships

The majority of calls about family relationships (55%) were from children and young people experiencing frequent or major conflict and disruption in their family or family breakdown. A further 32% phoned about occasional family conflict or disruption. The remaining 13% of young people called because they were worried about a family member.

## Relationships with Friends & Peers

Forty-three percent of peer relationship calls were about occasional or one-off friendship problems, while 16% concerned significant relationship problems. Twenty-eight percent of calls were from children and young people concerned for a friend's well being. The remaining 13% of peer relationship calls were from young people having difficulty making or maintaining friendships.

## Relationships with Partners

Of the 7,290 young people who phoned about relationships with partners, 43% stated they were experiencing significant relationship difficulties or relationship breakdown. Another 33% were seeking help with negotiating a relationship. Of the remaining calls focusing on relationships with partners, 19% involved wanting to establish a relationship and 5% were from young people concerned for their partner's well-being.

## Bullying

Bullying remains the 4th most common reason for calling KHL, accounting for 8% of calls in 2003. Ninety-four percent of callers had been bullied at least once with 37% of these young people experiencing frequent incidents or continual harassment. A further 44% reported episodic incidents while 19% phoned about an isolated instance of bullying.

## Emotional/Behavioural Management

Emotional/behaviour management issues were the main concern for 3,730 children and young people. These callers had concerns about managing their emotional and behavioural responses including anger management, violent behaviour and coping with traumatic experiences.

Half (49%) of these clients were needing to talk through emotions or behaviour. A further 29% were experiencing difficulty managing emotions or behaviours while 6% were extremely distressed. The remaining young people were seeking management strategies (14%) or concerned about another person (2%).

## Child Abuse

Of the 3,398 calls relating to child abuse, 85% concerned physical or sexual abuse. Of the 1,616 callers who phoned about **physical abuse** 56% stated they were victims of ongoing abuse while 16% had experienced an isolated incidence of abuse and 7% were at risk of injury or harm at the time of their call. For 7% of children the abuse was not longer occurring but issues resulting from the abuse were unresolved. The remaining 14% were seeking information.

Seventy percent of the 1,262 callers who phoned about **sexual abuse** stated they had been sexually abused at least once, with 23% of these reporting the abuse occurs on a regular basis while 59% were seeking ongoing support for issues resulting from past abuse. The remaining callers were currently at risk of sexual abuse (15%) or were seeking information (15%).

## Sex-Related Issues

The majority (55%) of the pregnancy calls were made by individuals who required information about pregnancy or were unsure if they were pregnant. Other common themes included distress about telling significant people (15%) confusion/indecision about options (13%), concerns about a pregnant friend or partner (15%) and urgent need for medical or emotional support (2%).

Of the 2,705 calls concerning sexual activity 33% were from young people seeking information about sex. Other common themes included uncertainty about beginning sex (19%), concern about a specific sexual activity (31%) and young people needing to talk about a sexual experience (14%).

## Leaving Home & Homelessness

During 2003 KHL received an increase in calls about leaving home or homeless issues (2,638 calls). The majority (67%) of young people had left home or been told to leave, with half of these callers having nowhere to stay. The remaining 33% were seeking information or contemplating leaving home.

## Drug & Alcohol Use

The majority of the 2,369 calls about drug or alcohol use were from young people with concerns about drug use (82%) while 18% were concerned about alcohol use. While 17% of concerns about **drug use** related to experimental use, 35% concerned frequent or habitual use. Urgent intervention was required in 3% of these calls. The remaining drug related calls were from young people seeking information (22%) or concerned about a friend's drug use (23%).

## What Were Their Additional Concerns?

In 21% of calls, the young person had an additional and significant secondary concern. These concerns were most likely to be related to relationships with family, friends and partners or emotional/behavioural management, child abuse, mental health, suicide or grief and loss.

## What Were The Outcomes?

Eleven percent of callers were referred to other support services (including crisis response and 3-way linkups) and 9% were referred to their doctor, school/guidance counsellor, mental health worker or other non-specific referrals. In 4% of calls, counsellors were unable to give a referral because either no appropriate service was available or the caller finished the call. For the remaining 76% of callers, the nature of their issue did not require a referral.

One in seven young people (14%) who contacted KHL made an agreement to reconnect with their counsellor again on a specific date and time.

Duty-of-Care actions, such as contacting an emergency service or child protection agency, were required for 365 callers during 2003.

*Updated: January 2004*



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[www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

24 hour telephone counselling line: 1800 55 1800

Optus is Kids Help Line's major sponsor and has been helping kids connect since 1999.

**KIDS HELP LINE NATIONAL DATA - YEARLY TRENDS**  
**Percent of Calls By Year**

<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>36.6%</b>	<b>38.9%</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>45.8%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>41.4%</b>
Family	17.6%	17.2%	17.6%	15.7%	16.7%	17.6%	16.9%	17.7%	17.1%	17.1%
Friends	12.5%	11.7%	12.5%	12.0%	12.7%	17.1%	18.6%	18.6%	16.0%	14.8%
Partners	7.3%	7.7%	8.8%	10.7%	10.6%	9.8%	10.0%	9.5%	9.9%	9.6%
<b>SEX RELATED</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
Sexual Activity	7.5%	7.2%	5.4%	5.8%	4.9%	3.7%	4.1%	3.4%	3.8%	3.6%
Contraception	1.1%	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%
Pregnancy	6.2%	6.4%	5.7%	5.5%	4.9%	4.4%	4.2%	3.9%	3.8%	3.7%
STD	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
<b>ALCOHOL/DRUGS</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Alcohol - Family	0.5%	0.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Alcohol - Self	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%
Drug Use - Family	0.4%	0.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Drug Use - Self	2.9%	2.9%	3.1%	3.5%	3.4%	3.1%	2.8%	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%
<b>SELF CONCEPT</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
Development	5.4%	5.0%	4.2%	3.9%	3.1%	2.4%	2.2%	1.9%	2.3%	2.2%
Self Image	2.1%	2.6%	2.5%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.5%	1.6%	1.5%	1.2%
Sexual Orientation	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.1%	1.8%	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%	1.7%	1.7%
<b>CHILD ABUSE</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Emotional Abuse	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Neglect	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Physical Abuse	4.4%	4.0%	3.4%	2.9%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%
Sexual Abuse	3.7%	3.9%	3.5%	3.7%	3.2%	2.5%	1.9%	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%
<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
Authority	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%
Bullying	3.6%	3.7%	4.1%	4.6%	5.6%	6.1%	7.6%	8.7%	7.8%	8.3%
Study	1.3%	1.7%	1.5%	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	1.3%	1.4%	1.7%	1.6%
<b>VIOLENCE</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Assault or Harassment	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%	1.3%	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%
Domestic	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Sexual Harassment	1.6%	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%	0.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Sexual Assault	1.5%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%	1.4%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%
<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
Eating Behaviours	n/a	n/a	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
HIV/AIDS	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Physical	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	2.0%	1.8%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.8%	2.0%
Mental	1.4%	1.8%	1.7%	2.0%	2.8%	3.1%	3.1%	3.5%	3.5%	3.1%
<b>EMOTIONAL</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>
Emotional/Behavioural Management	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.9%	4.9%
Grief	1.7%	1.9%	2.5%	2.1%	2.6%	2.6%	2.9%	3.1%	3.1%	2.6%
Loneliness	2.7%	2.4%	2.4%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%	1.0%	0.8%
Suicide	0.7%	0.9%	1.1%	1.7%	1.9%	1.9%	1.7%	2.1%	2.2%	2.0%
<b>PRACTICAL</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
Employment/Financial	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%
Leaving Home/Homelessness	3.3%	3.2%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.4%	3.1%	3.0%	3.3%	3.5%
Legal	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%
Life Skills	n/a	n/a	0.7%	1.4%	1.8%	1.7%	1.9%	1.5%	1.2%	1.0%
<b>MINOR</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
Cults/Gangs	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\* Adult Callers have been removed from the above data.