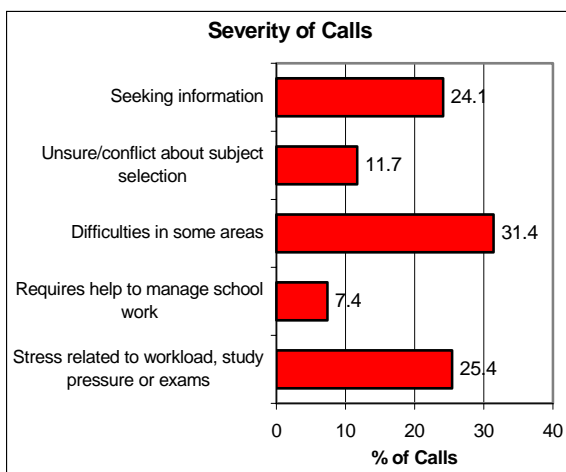


Definition

Literacy, numeracy, learning difficulties, subject options, TE/OP scores, achievement pressure, workload, etc. Includes managing academic and other activities (sporting, social and work commitments and interests).

Every year Kids Help Line (KHL) counsellors respond to between 1,100 and 1,500 children and young people with study concerns, accounting for around 1.4% of all counselling calls received.

The concerns of callers who phone about study range from seeking information, selecting subjects, difficulties managing their school work, to stress related to workload. The graph below shows the proportion of calls in each category.



Analysis of corresponding qualitative information highlights in greater depth the experiences of children and young people with study concerns:

Those callers who **seek study-related information** are most often wanting help with their homework, while information related to changing schools and alternative schooling options are also common issues.

Male, 9, wanted to know what an adjective was.

Female, 14, wanted information about correspondence schooling as she was having difficulty coping with her high school.

Many children aged between 11 and 13 phone during the transition to high school to seek information and ask questions about making new friends, the amount of homework to expect and how things might change for them.

Female, 13, is feeling nervous about starting high school, worried about getting lost, having a variety of teachers, the whole change thing.

Young people also seek information related to dropping out of school, getting a job, going to TAFE or returning to school after a break.

Callers experiencing **uncertainty or conflict about subject selection** are most commonly seeking help to sort through their options in relation to senior school subjects or university subjects.

Children aged between 7 and 14 years are responsible for 70% of calls from students **experiencing difficulties in some areas**. Their concerns most often centre on difficulties with a specific subject such as maths, reading or English. Other common difficulties include keeping up with homework; coping with the workload; concern about disappointing parents; and concerns about failing or having to repeat.

Male, 12, is having problems with writing and spelling.

Older callers (15 to 18 years) who are experiencing difficulties with school work often have concerns about low motivation, not wanting to attend and concerns about how their difficulties will affect future study and career options.

A much smaller proportion of callers are **requiring help to manage their school work**. In contrast to callers who are having difficulty in a particular area, these young people are most often not coping in general with school and finding the work too difficult. The majority are seeking support and help but unsure where to go. Some of their difficulties include frequent unavailability of parents to help with school work, difficulty accessing tutors or lack of support when enrolled in distance education.

One in four study calls are from young people experiencing **stress related to workload, study pressure or exams**. Callers aged between 15 and 18 years make over 70% of these calls.

Four common themes emerge as what is stressful for callers across the age span: feeling overwhelmed by workload; pressure and expectations from parents; pressure to perform well or just pass; and balancing school work with other activities such as sport, extra-curricula activities, work and family obligations.

Male, 13, is having difficulties keeping up with school work and dealing with exams; his parents are putting a lot of pressure on him to succeed.

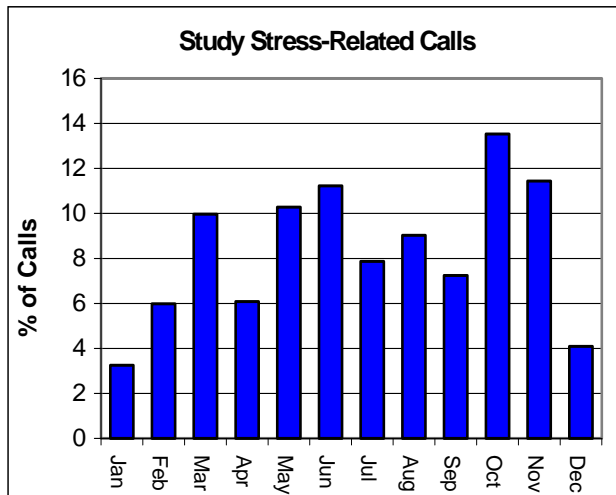
Young people aged between 15 and 18 years also commonly phone when distressed about exams, anxious about passing or failing, waiting on results, disappointed with results, or when worried about getting into university.

Female, 17, is very concerned about her grade 12 results; she wants to be a nurse and is afraid her results aren't going to be high enough.

Children aged between 10 and 13 frequently experience distress related to the impact of commencing high school. These callers often feel overwhelmed by difficulties keeping up with the additional workload, amount of homework, needing to make new friends and having a number of different teachers.

Monthly Call Pattern

Calls received by Kids Help Line related to study tend to be constant all year with the exception of December and January. However, the demand for counselling increases during October and November for calls specifically concerning stress related to workload, study pressure or exams (see graph below).



Client Profile

Females make 68% of calls regarding study and males make 32%. This representation of males is slightly higher than the 25% representation of males across all calls.

Young people with study concerns are mostly located in metropolitan areas (70%) with the remaining 30% in rural and remote areas. This proportion of calls from rural and remote areas is less than the population distribution of 35%. This may be due to the number of rural and remote children who move to larger cities to complete their senior studies.

The table below shows the age and gender breakdown of those who call with study concerns.

AGE	FEMALE	MALE
5-9 years	3.3%	2.0%
10-14 years	31.0%	18.3%
15-18 years	33.7%	11.7%

Counsellors record the young person's ethnicity for 23% of study calls. The majority are Anglo-Australian (73%) with 3% from Indigenous backgrounds and 4% from other English speaking backgrounds.

One in five (20%) of study related calls are from young people of non-English speaking backgrounds. When compared to their Anglo counterparts, NESB children and young people are more than twice as likely to be concerned about study issues (See information sheet 24 for more information on NESB callers).

Outcome of Calls

KHL counsellors spend (on average) 18 minutes talking to young people each time they phone about study issues. The majority (87%) of these callers do not require a referral to another service.

Kids Help Line is able to provide young people with information about other agencies in their community which can provide additional support. Four percent of those who phone with study concerns are referred to other services and agencies, less than half the referral rate (11%) across all problems. Although study-related referrals vary widely, the most common are to State/Territory Education Departments.

Of the remaining callers, 4% make a contract to call their counsellor back, 4% terminate the call before their counsellor can make a referral, 0.4% are unable to be referred to an appropriate service, and 0.1% ask their counsellor to follow up a referral.

Common Coping Strategies

Kids Help Line counsellors recognise that these are not the only ways to cope but they may give you some ideas. Remember that you need to find the strategies that work best for you.

Tackling the Problem / Problem Solving

- Analyse the problem
- Brain-storm solutions
- Decide on priorities and goals
- Set yourself a plan of action
- Obtain information/resources you need to plan and act
- Ask for help and advice
- Assert your wants and needs
- Challenge someone who is causing the stress

Distraction from the Problem

- Talk about topics not related to the source of stress
- Help someone else
- Do other activities that keep both your mind and your body busy

Treat Yourself / Nurture Yourself

- Rest yourself
- Take proper breaks from study or get away from the stressful situation for a while
- Use relaxation exercises
- Feed your body and mind with proper nutrition
- Buy yourself something special
- Take the time to meet with friends
- Take a hot bath or sauna or have a massage

Express Yourself

- Express your feelings to a friend, teacher or counsellor
- Write down your feelings then tear up the paper
- Have a good cry
- Let off your steam without abusing anyone (e.g., screaming or shouting into a pillow or in private)
- Express yourself creatively through such things as poetry, painting, writing, sculpting, and playing a musical instrument, singing or dancing

For more information

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