

Wednesday, 17 April, 2019

## “Be strong and don't cry”

**“I got taught at a very young age that emotions and feelings were not something especially men had. You know, you have to be strong and you don't cry and there's lots of things going on. So, whatever was going on inside me was to be pushed down and ignored.” Cameron**

Cameron is one of the lucky ones. He called Kids Helpline when he was struggling as a teenager. More than 10 years later, he's happy, working with young people and a strong advocate for asking for help.

As the latest snapshot into the wellbeing of the nation's young people contacting Kids Helpline is released, it confirms fears Cameron is one of the rare ones. Research from the Kids Helpline Insights Report 2018 released today found young males are seeking help from the 24/7 counselling service in declining numbers and at a rate much less than girls.

It shows only **one in five** (21%) of contacts to Kids Helpline are from boys while almost four in five (77%) are from girls. Since 2007, the proportion of contacts from males has decreased significantly going from about one-third to only one-fifth of all contacts to the service.

Kids Helpline CEO Tracy Adams said this is indicative of the much wider contemporary issue - that is the help-seeking behaviours of men.

“Part of becoming a man has often been to hide their emotions and this is cementing patterns of not asking for help,” Ms Adams said.

“Instead we need to encourage boys from an early age to get help when needed and encouraging men to model this behaviour for kids.

“This means mums and sisters, other women and fathers, brothers and friends letting kids know it's ok show their vulnerability and ask for help about anything, including their mental health and suicide concerns through to peer and family relationships and emotional wellbeing.

“Getting help is a strength, and never a weakness.”

### Main findings Kids Helpline Insights Report 2018:

- Almost four out of five (77%) contacts responded to were from females; approx one in five (21%) were males.
- Since 2007, the proportion of contacts from males has decreased from about one-third to one-fifth of all contacts to Kids Helpline.
- Every day around 375 contacts from children and young people across Australia to Kids Helpline go unanswered.
- Mental health concerns, emotional wellbeing, family relationship issues and suicide-related concerns were the top four concerns.
- **1,825** were Duty of Care interventions – 35 every week. Of these **38%** were related to suicide and **37%** were related to child abuse.
- From 2013 to 2018, 10% increase in proportion of Duty of Care interventions due to a concern about child abuse (27% to 37%).
- More than half (56%) of all contacts responded to were aged 13-18 years.
- A child or young person attempts to contact Kids Helpline every 87 seconds – KHL is unable to respond to half of these.
- In 2015, KHL introduced new category for gender – intersex, trans and gender-diverse. In 2018, 2,467 contacts, or 2%, were from children and young people identifying with this third gender category.

Ms Adams said Kids Helpline acted as a safety-net not just for vulnerable children but all children and young people.

“Our role is critical in filling gaps and reducing pressure on primary health services by providing a pathway to support children and young people who wouldn’t otherwise receive help,” she said.

Kids Helpline is Australia’s only free, confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

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#### INTERVIEWS:

CEO of **yourtown**/Kids Helpline, Tracy Adams  
Leo Hede, Counselling Centre Supervisor  
Tony FitzGerald, Kids Helpline Virtual Services Manager  
Cameron, former Kids Helpline client

#### VISION AND IMAGES AVAILABLE:

VNR available of young males in various activities and Kids Helpline call centre vision.  
Cameron grabs available as audio and video.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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The ‘Kids Helpline Insights 2018: National Statistical Overview’ and State and Territory reports are available on request or can be accessed at [www.yourtown.com.au/reports](http://www.yourtown.com.au/reports)

**yourtown** is a registered charity and public company limited by guarantee providing services young people can access to find jobs, learn skills, become great parents and live safe, happy lives. For over 58 years we’ve been tackling the issues impacting young people in Australia - like youth unemployment and mental health and taking on issues like family and domestic violence. The community, with **yourtown**’s Art Unions, funds most of what we do.

#### KIDS HELPLINE STATISTICS:

- Kids Helpline opened on 25 March 1991 with more than 3,200 young people making a call on the first day and Kids Helpline has responded to more than 8 million contacts over 28 years.
- In 2018, Kids Helpline responded to 143,481 contacts from children and young people nationally. We also had 843,753 unique visitors to the Kids Helpline website with 2,912,200 page views.
- Since 2001, Kids Helpline has initiated 19,116 Duty of Care emergency care actions to keep children and young people safe.
- The average counselling session time via phone in 2017 was 32 minutes and 54 minutes via WebChat. An increase in the complexity of issues and the need for more intensive, longer sessions has seen a 72% increase in the counselling time over the last ten years.
- Top 5 reasons young people use the Kids Helpline counselling service in 2018: Mental Health 27%; Emotional Wellbeing 20%; Family Relationships 18%; Suicide-related 15%; and Dating and Partner Relationships 9%.
- The reasons for contact have changed over the years - the Top 5 reasons young people contacted Kids Helpline in the 1996-2000 period: Family Relationships; Peer Relationships; Partner relationships including partner violence; Child abuse and/or family/domestic violence; and Bullying.
- The cost of operating Kids Helpline has doubled in 14 years going from \$5.5M in 2004 to \$11.3M in 2018
- **yourtown** Art Unions, donors and grants funded 75% of Kids Helpline in 2018.

Kids Helpline is here anytime and for any reason - [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au) or free call 1800 55 1800.

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