

Western Australia 2006

Highlights from 2006

- During 2006 Kids Help Line received 58,716* telephone and online contacts from Western Australia. Counsellors responded to 31,900* of these contacts.
- While telephone counselling remains the core service, online services now account for 4% of contacts from Western Australia.
- Kids Help Line counsellors answered **30,587*** telephone calls from Western Australia. Fifty-three percent of these calls were from regional and remote areas of the state.
- Counsellors responded to **1,312*** online contacts (506* from web counselling and 806* email sessions). Twenty-five percent of these contacts were from regional and remote areas of the state.
- Counsellors engaged in **4,285 telephone and online counselling sessions** with West Australian children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years.
- The majority of contacts were about relationships with family and friends, consistent with previous years.
- Compared with national rates, young people from Western Australia made a greater proportion of contacts in relation to relationships with family and bullying, but were less likely to contact about mental health issues.
- In line with national rates over the past three years, the proportion of contacts about emotional and/or behavioural management and mental health increased while concerns about drugs and alcohol, relationships with friends and bullying decreased.
- Current thoughts of suicide were reported in 205 contacts from West Australia while reports of deliberate self-injury (as distinct from suicidality) were received 539 times. These were increases of 38% and 7% respectively on 2005 reports.
- Eleven percent of young people were referred to other support services in their local area.

- Responses required to protect children, such as contacting an emergency service or child protection agency, were actioned during or after 52 counselling sessions with West Australians during 2006.

* State location data was available for 99% of telephone calls and 45% of online contacts. Total figures presented are an extrapolation based on available data.

Location of Clients

Comprehensive regional information is available for all telephone calls from Western Australia. This data demonstrates that 53% of West Australian callers were from regional and remote areas of the state and 47% from the metropolitan regions. The breakdown across the state was as follows:

Region	% of Calls (N=30,388)
Perth Metropolitan	28%
Perth Mobiles	19%
Regional Mobiles	13%
South West	11%
Pilbara/Kimberley	8%
Wheatbelt	8%
Gascoyne/Mid West	6%
Goldfields	4%
Great Southern	3%

Providing Counselling, Support and Connection

Children and young people contact Kids Help Line for a diverse range of reasons. Counsellors are trained to respond to each client according to their needs: support, encouragement, counselling, assistance, information and connection are provided.

Some interactions are with children and young people who do not report any immediate problems, but have heard of Kids Help Line through schools or advertising and want to 'check out' the service to find out what counsellors actually do. Kids Help Line has confidence that if young people test the service in this manner and are responded to in a positive

and respectful way then they are likely to connect with a counsellor if more serious concerns arise.

Forty one percent of all West Australian interactions were with children and young people seeking counselling or support. Some were in crisis and had heard of Kids Help Line's reputation for assisting in these situations. These young people often know what they want and are able to ask for what they need. Others may be facing less critical concerns and are seeking help to consider their options or simply want to talk things through.

The remainder of this West Australia 2006 Report is based on the 4,285 telephone and online counselling sessions known to have been with West Australian children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years

Age, Gender and Background of Clients

Males made 23% and females 77% of contacts. This gender breakdown is consistent with help-seeking trends for other counselling services.

Thirty-nine percent of contacts were from children younger than 15 years of age (see table below).

	Females	Males	Total (N=3,875)
5-9	3.1%	1.3%	4.4%
10-14	26.0%	8.4%	34.5%
15-18	40.2%	10.5%	50.6%
19-25	8.5%	2.0%	10.5%
TOTAL	77.9%	22.1%	100.0%

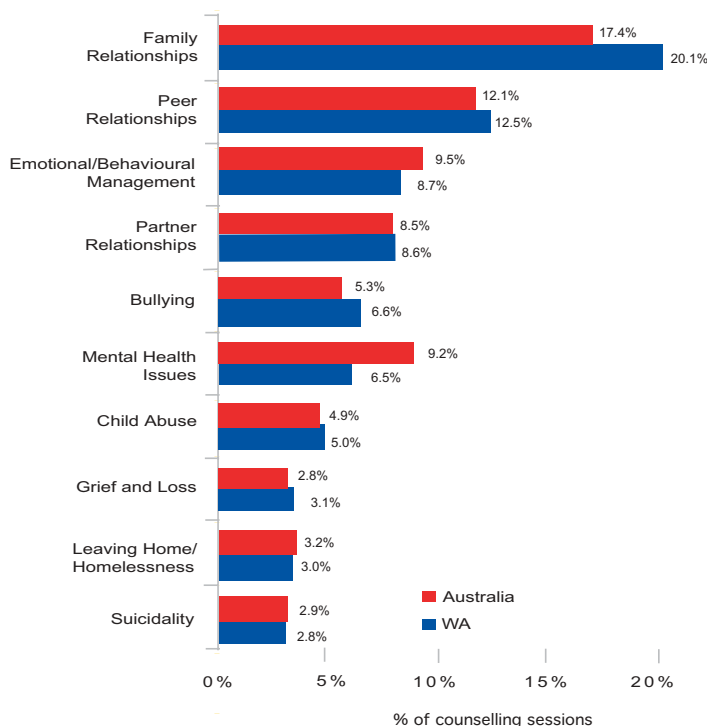
Table columns/rows may not total due to rounding.

Counsellors recorded cultural and linguistic background of the young person in 22% (963) of counselling sessions. Of these, 12% were with young people who identified as Indigenous. A further 12% identified as being from a non-English speaking background. The remainder of young people did not identify as being from either of these backgrounds.

Concerns of Western Australian Children and Young People

The following data is based on 'main problem' classifications that may not represent the complexity of issues for which young people seek counselling. Counsellors classify the main problem as the issue where the majority of counselling work took place in the session.

The 10 most frequent concerns about which young people from Western Australia contacted Kids Help Line are shown in the graph below along with national data for comparison.



Nature and Severity of Main Concerns

1. Relationships with Family

Of the 861 contacts about family relationships:

- 45% were related to frequent or major family conflict or disruption
- 32% reported occasional family conflict or disruption
- 12% of young people contacted because they were worried about a family member; and
- 11% were related to family breakdown, separation or divorce.

2. Relationships with Friends and Peers

Of the 534 contacts regarding relationships with friends and peers in 2006:

- 39% reported occasional or one-off friendship problems
- 31% were concerned for a friend's well being
- 19% concerned significant relationship problems; and
- 11% disclosed having difficulty making or maintaining friendships.

3. Emotional and/or Behavioural Management

Of the 374 contacts about emotional and/or behavioural management in 2006:

- 51% of callers needed to talk through emotions or behaviour
- 27% were experiencing difficulty managing emotions or behaviours
- 13% were seeking management strategies
- 7% were extremely distressed at the time of their call; and
- 2% were concerned about another person.

4. Relationships with Partners

Of the 370 West Australian young people who contacted about relationships with partners:

- 58% were experiencing significant relationship difficulties or relationship breakdown
- 28% were seeking help with negotiating a relationship
- 11% involved wanting to establish a relationship; and
- 3% had concerns for their partner's well-being.

5. Bullying

Of the 284 contacts from young people about bullying:

- 40% were about frequent or continuous harassment
- 38% were related to episodic incidents
- 14% were about isolated incidents; and

- 8% were seeking information or concerned for a friend.

6. Mental Health Issues

The proportion of contacts in relation to mental health has continued to increase over the past four years. Of the 277 contacts about mental health issues in 2006:

- 36% had a clinically diagnosed mental health issue
- 33% were experiencing mild or occasional symptoms or concerns
- 23% were severely distressed with a mental health concern having a major impact on their life
- 4% were concerned about or caring for a significant other; and
- 4% were seeking information.

7. Child Abuse

During 2006 Kids Help Line counsellors responded to 216 contacts about child abuse accounting for 5% of West Australian counselling contacts. Of these counselling sessions:

- 49% related to physical abuse
- 35% had concerns about sexual abuse
- 12% related to emotional abuse; and
- 4% were about neglect.

Counsellors implement their statutory duty of care obligations if they assess that a child is at risk of injury or harm at the time of the call.

8. Grief and Loss

Of the 133 contacts made to Kids Help Line about grief and loss:

- 47% needed to talk through the experience
- 38% were acutely distressed from experiencing a recent loss; and
- 15% related to extreme distress and an inability to resume a usual lifestyle.



9. Homelessness and/or Leaving Home

Of the 128 contacts about leaving home and/or homelessness:

- 35% said they were thinking about leaving home
- 26% were from young people who had left home and had nowhere to stay
- 19% had been told to leave home
- 19% had left home and had somewhere to stay; and
- 1% were at risk of harm or severely distressed.

10. Suicidality

Of the 121 contacts where suicide was the main concern:

- 52% were with young people having suicidal thoughts or fears
- 28% were from young people who either had an immediate intent or were making an attempt at the time of the contact
- 17% were worried about a friend; and
- 3% were seeking information.

Note: a more accurate reflection of suicidal thinking in young people, regardless of the main issue recorded, is demonstrated through counsellors assessing children and young people in relation to current thoughts of suicide (see *Deliberate Self Injury and Suicidality* section).

Deliberate Self Injury and Suicidality

During 2006 counsellors recorded whether children and young people contacting Kids Help Line had recently engaged in deliberate self-injury (as distinct from suicidality). In thirteen percent of West Australian counselling sessions (539) young people reported deliberately injuring themselves through actions such as cutting, burning or tattooing skin, pulling out hair or taking overdoses of substances they believed to be non-lethal. This is a 7% proportional increase over 2005 reports.

Current thoughts of suicide were reported in 205 counselling sessions to Kids Help Line during 2006 from Western Australia, accounting for 5% of all counselling contacts. This includes

most of the 121 contacts specifically regarding suicide with the balance coming from young people who reported current suicidal thoughts while discussing other concerns. This is a 38% proportional increase over 2005 data

Referral to Other Support

Counsellors were able to assist 72% of young Western Australian people directly without referring them to another agency. Eleven percent of contacts required referral to another service for ongoing support (including crisis response and three-way linkups). A further 13% were referred to their doctor, school/guidance counsellor, mental health worker or other non-specific referrals. In 4% of contacts, counsellors were unable to provide a referral because either no appropriate service was available or the young person finished the call.

Protective Actions

Responses required to protect children, such as contacting an emergency service or child protection agency, were actioned during or after 52 counselling sessions with Western Australians during 2006.

Ongoing Counselling and Intensive Support

Young people with severe, complex and long-standing issues require the continuity provided by speaking with the same counsellor each time they contact a helping service (i.e. ongoing counselling). Case management is a model of care that is sometimes used in these instances to ensure numerous different needs can each be considered and planned for. Sometimes this might mean linking the young person with other more specialised face-to-face services and developing joint or 'wrap-around' management plans.

One in seven counselling sessions were with children and young people receiving either ongoing counselling (9%) or intensive support with a case management plan (5%).

Kids Help Line continued to provide significant one-off and occasional support with 40% of counselling sessions provided to children and young people who were contacting the service for the first time and a further 46% of sessions with young people who were an occasional client.

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Western Australia Yearly Trends Proportion of Telephone & Online Contacts by Year

PROBLEM	2003	2004	2005	2006
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	41.3%	41.2%	42.9%	41.2%
Family	18.1%	18.0%	20.4%	20.1%
Friends	13.8%	14.0%	14.0%	12.5%
Partners	9.4%	9.2%	8.5%	8.6%
SEX RELATED	7.2%	5.8%	4.7%	3.9%
Sexual Activity	2.7%	1.7%	1.9%	1.2%
Contraception	0.8%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%
Pregnancy	3.3%	3.1%	2.1%	2.2%
STDs	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%
ALCOHOL/DRUGS	3.4%	2.9%	3.2%	2.4%
Alcohol Use	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
Drug Use	2.7%	2.4%	2.7%	2.0%
SELF CONCEPT	5.2%	4.6%	5.0%	4.2%
Developmental Issues	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%	1.5%
Self-Image	1.4%	1.4%	1.8%	1.5%
Sexual Orientation	1.6%	1.3%	1.4%	1.2%
CHILD ABUSE	4.7%	4.7%	5.7%	5.0%
Emotional Abuse	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%
Neglect	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Physical Abuse	2.6%	2.2%	2.8%	2.5%
Sexual Abuse	1.7%	1.8%	2.1%	1.8%
SCHOOL	11.7%	10.5%	9.1%	8.7%
School Authority	1.0%	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%
Bullying	9.4%	8.1%	6.5%	6.6%
Study Issues	1.3%	1.3%	1.8%	1.5%
VIOLENCE	3.1%	3.9%	2.8%	3.4%
Assault or Harassment	1.4%	1.6%	0.8%	0.9%
Domestic Violence	0.5%	0.8%	0.5%	0.9%
Sexual Harassment	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%
Sexual Assault	0.8%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%
HEALTH	6.7%	8.2%	7.9%	10.1%
Eating Behaviours	0.8%	1.4%	1.2%	1.3%
HIV/AIDS	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Physical Health	2.0%	1.7%	1.5%	2.4%
Mental Health Issues	3.9%	5.1%	5.2%	6.5%
EMOTIONAL	11.6%	12.4%	13.4%	16.0%
Emotional/Behavioural Management	5.3%	5.9%	7.0%	8.7%
Grief and Loss	2.7%	3.1%	2.9%	3.1%
Loneliness	1.1%	1.0%	1.3%	1.4%
Suicide-Related Issues	2.6%	2.5%	2.2%	2.8%
PRACTICAL	4.8%	5.6%	5.2%	5.0%
Employment/Financial	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.6%
Leaving Home/Homelessness	2.2%	3.1%	3.1%	3.0%
Legal	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%
Life Skills	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%
OTHER	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%