



SUICIDE

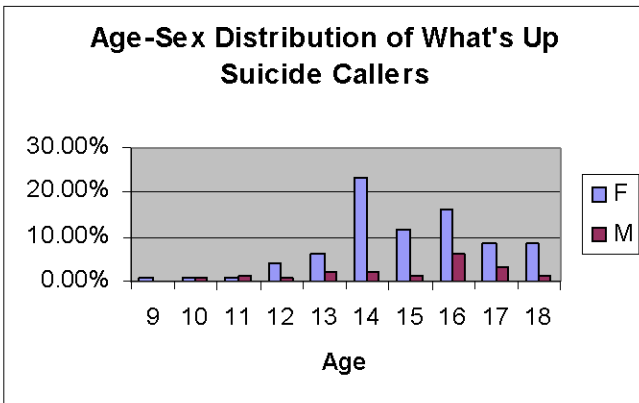
Each week, What's Up Counsellors answer on average 4 to 5 calls about suicide from children and young people around New Zealand.

Has many problems going on in her life at the moment, one bad thing happening after another, feels like she is drowning, low, bad, overwhelmed. Has felt this way over a long period of time. Thinks maybe dying would be the only way to end the stress, but had called hoping we could help her find another way out.

Female aged 17

Age and Gender

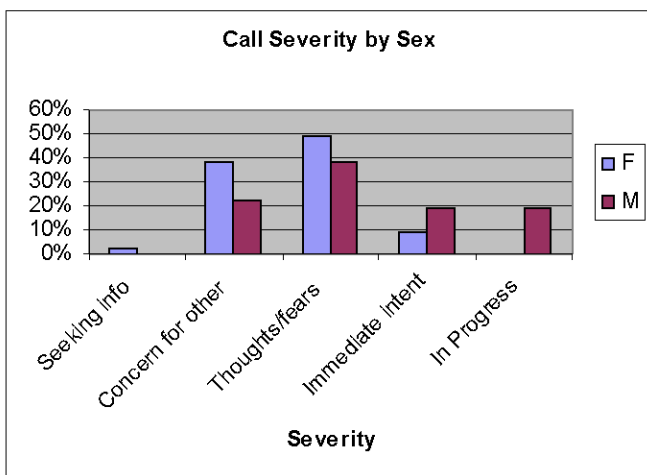
The graph below shows the age and gender breakdown of callers about suicide.



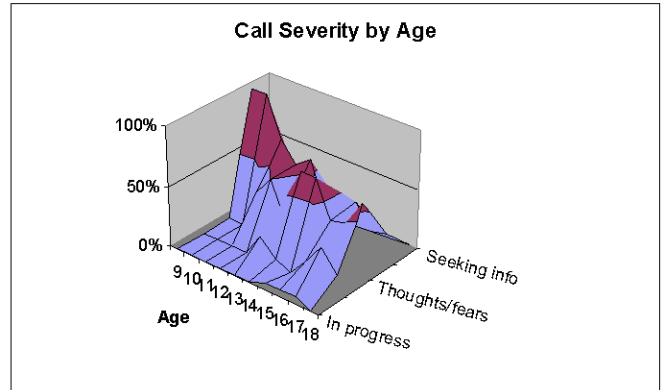
Most calls regarding suicide are received from 14 year olds, with 72% of these being made by females. The second most common age to call about suicide is 16. Whereas females are most likely to call regarding suicide at 14 years of age, males are most likely to call about this issue at 16.

Call Severity

Over 60% of the callers about suicide are reporting concerns about personal safety. Just under half are experiencing thoughts and fears about harming themselves and another 10% are intending to act on these thoughts in the immediate future. A further 3% call What's Up at the time they are acting on their suicide plan.



The graph below shows that severity tends to increase with age, younger callers mostly ringing for information about suicide or expressing concern for others. Callers who are intending to harm themselves or who are in the process of doing so are more likely to be in mid- to late-adolescence.



Outcome of Calls

What's Up Counsellors have an extensive database of relevant welfare and support services. Counsellors have the option of referring callers to another service if they feel that this would be helpful.

Approximately 8% of calls to What's Up about suicide result in a crisis response because the caller was at risk of harm at the time of the call. This involves calling emergency services such as police and ambulance.

Counsellors may also make a contract with a caller to ring back later to ascertain safety and discuss the caller's problems further. This occurs in approximately 15% of What's Up suicide calls.

Caller in a fragile state. Had just broken up with his girlfriend and feeling devastated about this. He had really low self esteem which had started when he was sexually abused as a child. He had trusted his girlfriend with all these secrets. He wanted to end his life, and he had a firearm with him. He felt completely alone and said all his future dreams involved his girlfriend. He felt he had no-one to turn to and just wanted to give up on everything. Despite What's Up's concerns about his safety, he did not want any police involved. The Counsellor made a contract with him to ring again and talk more about his feelings.

Male aged 18

Further information

For further information about suicide in New Zealand, see the Suicide Prevention & Information (SPINZ) website at www.spinz.org.nz.

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