



# THE KIDS HELP FOUNDATION TRUST

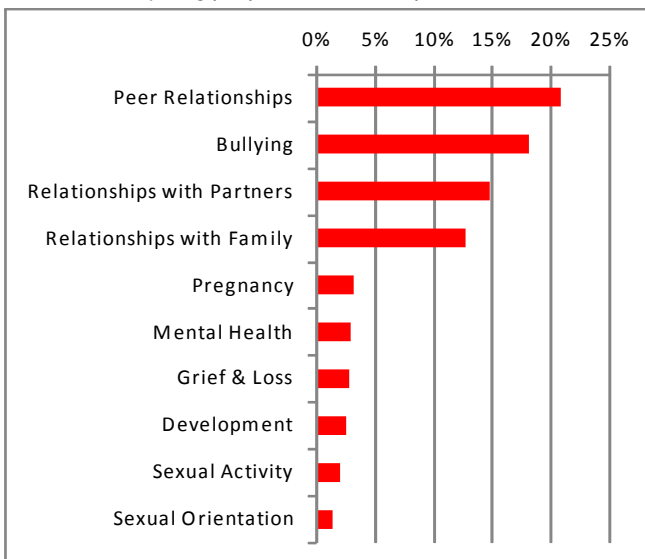
The Kids Help Foundation Trust is a registered charity that provides What's Up, a free, professional telephone counselling service for all NZ's children and young people aged 5 to 18.

The service began in September 2001. Callers can ring between noon and midnight, seven days a week from any telephone, including mobiles.

## Callers

An average of 10,000 children and young people call What's Up each week— about 27% of these calls are able to be answered. Females make 50-55% of calls and 87% of callers are 15 or younger. All calls are treated with respect.

The graph below shows the 10 main reasons (of a possible 38) children and young people call What's Up.



Callers have direct access to counsellors and can choose to call back and speak to the same counsellor again as they work through their issues. Over 80% of callers say they have used the service before.

The service is busiest on weekdays between 12:30pm and 1:30pm and again between 3:30pm and 7:30pm. On weekends and during school holidays, the busiest times are 1:00 pm to 4:00pm and Friday and Saturday nights from 7:00pm to 11:00pm. At these times, callers may have to wait for some time in queue before getting through to a counsellor.

The length of calls varies from only a few minutes for enquiries and questions, to as long as an hour or more for serious issues such as self-harm and mental health. The average length of call across all problem types is about 10 minutes. Feedback is encouraged from callers.

Confidentiality is an important consideration for young people. Counsellors explain confidentiality and the limits on this when appropriate. Many callers choose to withhold their name and location, particularly when talking about sensitive issues.

## Referrals

Where a caller's needs require the involvement of services in the caller's own locality, Counsellors make a referral to that agency as appropriate. This is done either by providing the caller with contact information for the local service or via a direct, three-way phone link.

## Counsellors

What's Up is staffed by a team of paid, professionally trained and supervised counsellors who work out of the call centre in Auckland. All counsellors undergo What's Up's 50-hour Pre-employment Training Programme before beginning work as Trainee Counsellors. Trainee Counsellors must complete 250 paid hours on the phones plus further training.

All What's Up counsellors are supervised while on duty and submit their practice to routine monitoring and continuous review. A two-part system of supervision ensures that counsellors are provided direct supervision and debriefing while on shift, plus at least two hours per month working on professional development with their supervisors.

## Counselling

What's Up promotes a non-judgemental, confidential service where no problem is too small, too embarrassing or too "out of bounds" to talk about. The principle values underpinning counselling at What's Up are empowerment and child-centred practice.

Empowerment involves assisting each caller to clarify their concerns, formulate options, develop strategies for positive change and to identify and understand the consequences of particular courses of action. Callers are encouraged to believe in themselves and to recognise their personal strengths. Respect is accorded to each individual caller's individuality, feelings and the right to make personal decisions. At the same time, productive relationships with parents, teachers, peers and other important people are encouraged.

Child-centred practice commits counsellors to viewing the young person's situation from the young person's point of view, examining the consequences of professional practice on children and young people and making explicit the ideological and ethical base on which decisions are based. It demands that the interests and welfare of the child be paramount, allowing them to challenge adults' interpretations of the child's experience and interests, and to express their own perceptions and beliefs.

What's Up is approved by Child, Youth and Family as a service provider under S 403 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989.

## Funding and Support

The Kids Help Foundation Trust is supported by two Corporate Sponsors, White Pages® and Telecom. Additional funds are derived through donations, fundraising activities, and grants from philanthropic trusts, the NZ Lotteries Commission and Child, Youth and Family.

The Trust runs What's Up in association with Barnardos New Zealand, which provides support with administration and governance.

## Research and Information Services

Non-identifying information is logged after each call into a comprehensive, computerised caller database. Calls are classified into 11 problem categories which are further broken down into 38 sub-categories. Up to of 29 fields of information may be filled in for each call. The time and length of the call and the type and severity of problem is the minimum amount of

information gathered for each call. Where possible and appropriate, counsellors also collect information such as the caller's age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Information gathered on location allows analysis of data by region, town or city.

This data provides a unique window into the issues and concerns of young New Zealanders and forms the basis of What's Up's advocacy platform. It also provides valuable information for policy development at a number of levels within the government and non-government sectors. This information is avail-

able on request for a fee.

The Kids Help Foundation Trust produces a newsletter three times a year, which is distributed to agencies, schools, media and other key stakeholders. Press releases are regularly issued to bring attention to progress with What's Up and highlight the main issues facing NZ children and young people.

## Mission Statement

The Kid's Help Foundation exists to assist people to develop strategies and skills which enable them to more effectively manage their own lives.

An integral part of achieving this vision, is the provision of free, accessible, national services which are founded on the principles of empowerment, child-centred practice and confidentiality.

## Values

- child centred practice
- confidentiality
- empowerment

## Counselling Principles

- Calls are confidential and anonymous (accepting Duty of Care considerations);
- All callers are treated with respect;
- Callers are free to choose the gender of the counsellor to whom they speak<sup>1</sup>;
- Callers are able to access the same counsellor if they wish to call back;
- Callers are encouraged to give feedback about What's Up and the service they receive;
- Counsellors are fully professional: they are appropriately paid, thoroughly trained and held accountable for their counselling skills and knowledge, and their continuing professional development is supported and monitored.

1. Ability to provide this choice is dependent on availability of staff.

## Goals

- To provide New Zealand's children and young people aged 5 to 18 years with a free, multi-cultural telephone help line.
- To offer children and young people anonymous and confidential professional counselling, information and referral services for any problem at any time.
- To provide children with the resources, or access to resources to help them resolve their problems.
- To identify and build awareness of children's problems and unmet needs.
- To collect, analyse and disseminate non-identifying information that supports research and reflects the issues and problems of children and young people.
- To advocate on behalf of children and young people where their interests are ignored, minimised or unrepresented.
- To utilise technological and professional expertise in developing and integrating services to other community groups.
- To raise funds to fulfil the objectives listed above.
- For any other purposes within New Zealand (whether relating to the relief of poverty, the advancement of education or religion or any other matter beneficial to

## Board

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