

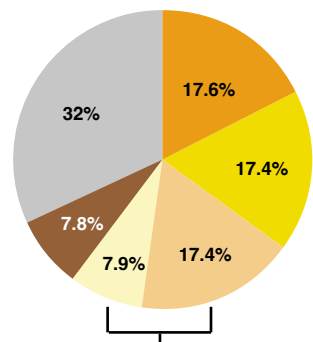
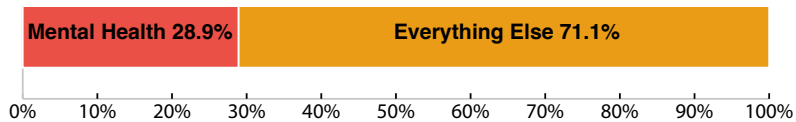
# Children & Young People's Mental Health

## World Mental Health Day – 10 October 2022

**Mental health** was the main reason for children and young people making contact with child helplines in 2021. Worldwide, our child helpline members responded to **808,946 counselling contacts** on issues relating to mental health, which represents 28.9% of all counselling contacts. This means that **almost one in three children or young people** who received counselling did so because of their concerns about their own mental health.

Furthermore, around **one in every four children or young people** who contacted child helplines with a concern about mental health wanted to discuss self-destructive tendencies (suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts, or self-harming behaviours).

### REASONS FOR COUNSELLING CONTACTS 2021



### GLOBAL CONTACTS RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

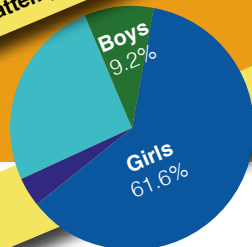
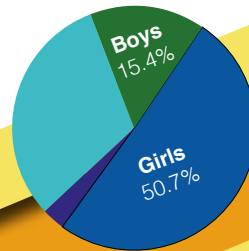
- Emotional distress – mood problems
- Emotional distress – fear and anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts
- Self-harming behaviour
- Concerns about the self
- All other reasons

Self-destructive tendencies = 25.3%

Data from our child helpline members shows that **girls contacted child helplines about self-destructive tendencies four times more often than boys**, accounting for 54% of the contacts compared to 13%. The remaining contacts were from contacts where the gender of the caller was not identified or known, and from a small number of callers identifying as non-binary.

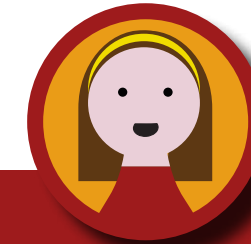
Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts were the main reason for contacts relating to mental health in the Americas and Caribbean region, and the second main reason for mental health contacts in Asia-Pacific and Europe.

Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts



Self-harming behaviour

Suicide risk is an important concern around the globe



According to the World Health Organization, young people are one of the most vulnerable groups whose mental health was impacted by Covid-19, placing them at elevated risks of self-destructive behaviours, including suicidal thoughts and attempts, and self-harming behaviour<sup>1</sup>.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among adolescents<sup>2</sup>, most notably those aged between 15 and 19 years old. Globally it is the third leading cause of death for girls and fourth leading cause of death for boys<sup>2</sup>. Self-destructive tendencies are a prominent concern among children and young people<sup>3</sup>.

The data from our child helpline members indicates that **self-destructive tendencies (self-harm, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts) consistently remain an important mental health concern raised by children and young people** who reach out to child helplines. (Our analysis includes data from 81 child helplines across 5 regions.)

Suicide risk is an important concern in most regions across the globe. **Child helplines can be literal lifelines for children and young people experiencing suicidal tendencies, as they provide immediate support, often around the clock.**

1. World Health Organization. COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide, accessed on 12 July 2022 at <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>
2. World Health Organization. Adolescent mental health, accessed on 12 July 2022 at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>
3. United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind – Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health*, UNICEF, New York, October 2021.