

# Violence and Covid-19

## An analysis of violence-related contacts with child helplines throughout the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives all around the world, and put some of the most vulnerable among us – children and young people – at increased risk of experiencing violence.

In this report, we have used data on the contacts received by our child helpline members from around the world, both before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, to investigate the effects the pandemic has had on violence against children. We have used 2019 data as a baseline, and data for the years 2020 and 2021 for comparison purposes.

From those data, we can make the following observations:

There was a steady increase in counselling contacts from year to year.

There was an increase in violence-related contacts after the pandemic broke out, to a level at which our child helpline members were registering, on average, 103 contacts a day during 2020. Of these, around a quarter were contacts being made due to the caller being exposed to some kind of violence. Most strikingly, contacts concerning neglect (or negligent treatment) spiked in 2020, doubling in frequency, and then returned to their pre-pandemic levels in 2021. In general, although the pandemic continued into 2021, violence-related contacts during the year subsided.

Throughout the 3-year period, violence-related concerns accounted for around one in every four of the contacts made by girls or young women. This ratio remained fairly consistent across the three years, implying that the incidence of violent-related concerns was not affected by the pandemic. On the other hand, for boys there was a steady decline in the proportion of violence-related concerns being the reason for contacting a child helpline.

We observe substantial variations between child helplines in the amount of contacts made due to violence-related concerns compared to all counselling contacts across all three years. Some of our child helpline members report a decrease, some report an increase, and others report a relatively unchanged share of violence-related contacts out of the total number of counselling contacts they received.

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