

Key takeaways

Data based on 85 child helplines across 5 regions, unless otherwise specified. Explore the data in more detail in the accompanying Technical Report.

In 2022 our child helpline members received

12,637,633 contacts

3,765,975 counselling contacts

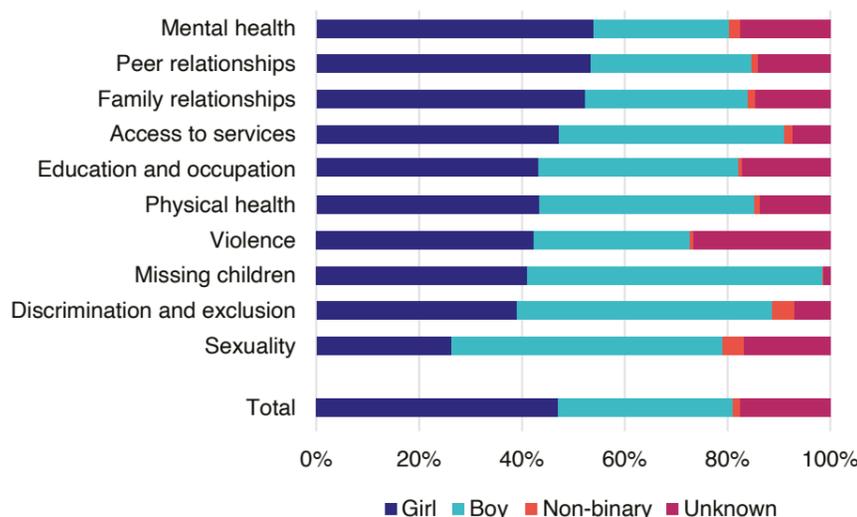
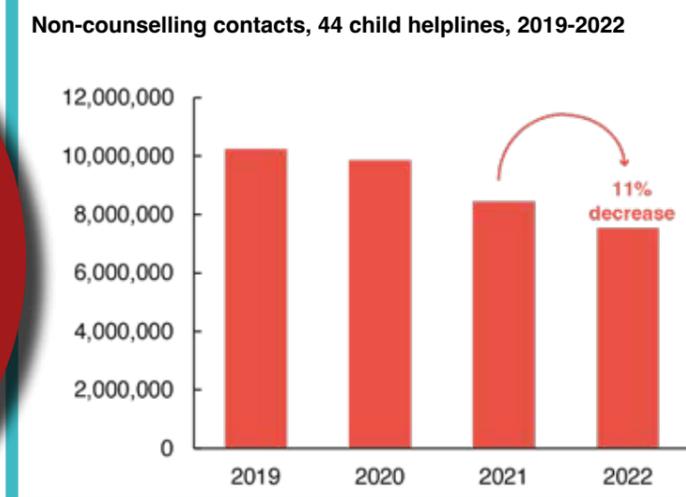
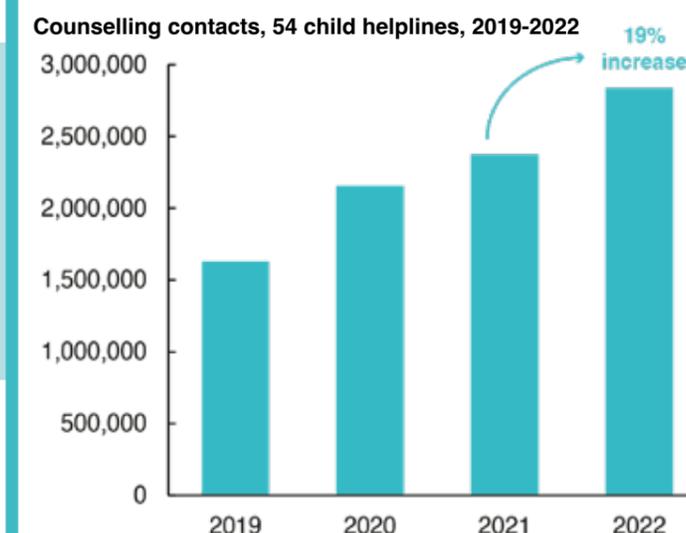
(29.8%)

Over 3.75 million counselling contacts are made with child helplines around the world. This is equivalent to 430 contacts every hour of every day.

Counselling contacts are situations in which a child helpline was able to provide assistance to the caller.

Non-counselling contacts include (but are not limited to) silent calls, abusive calls, test calls, missed calls and information requests.

8,871,658 non-counselling contacts
(70.2%)



GENDER DIFFERENCES IN CONTACTS

For nearly all reasons of contact, girls contacted child helplines more often than other modalities of gender. This is especially true for contacts relating to **mental health** concerns, for which girls contacted twice as often as boys, and **family and peer relationships**, where girls constitute a significant majority. Two notable exceptions are **missing children** and **sexuality**, where the contacts were made by boys far more often.

CHANGE IN THE AMOUNTS OF COUNSELLING CONTACTS

We observe a steady and substantial increase in **counselling contacts** over the years, with a 19.4% increase from 2021 to 2022, and a **total increase of 74% across the entire 4-year period** (2019 to 2022).

In contrast, **non-counselling contacts** **dropped considerably** over the past 4 years – from over 10 million in 2019 to about 7.5 million in 2023.

Key takeaways

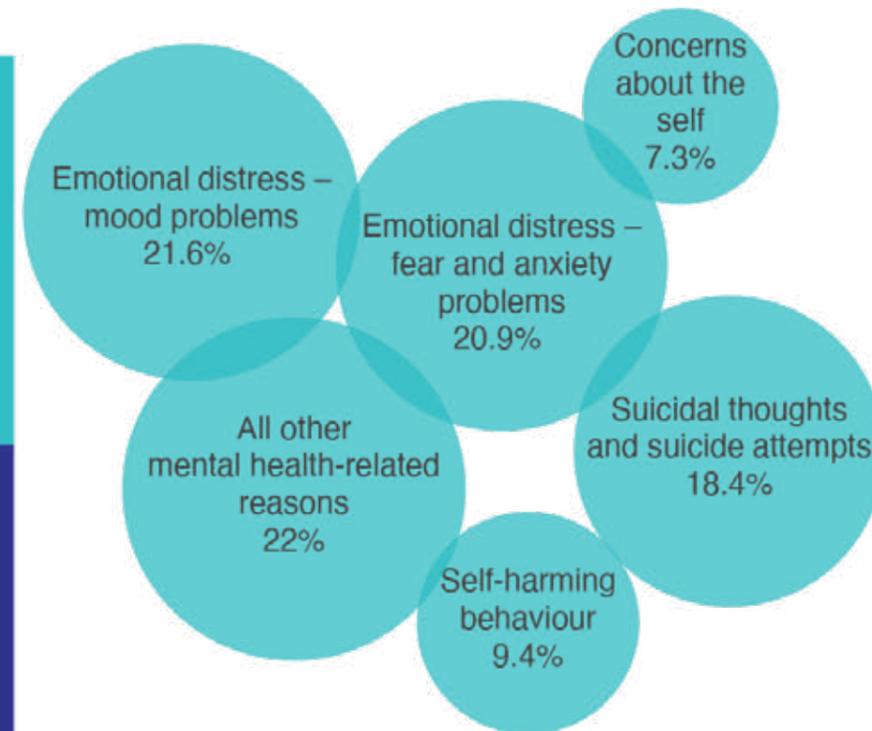
MOST COMMON REASONS WHY CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CONTACTED CHILD HELPLINES IN 2022

Mental health and **violence** were the two most common reasons for contact reported by child helplines globally. Over half of the contacts received are related to one of these two topics. **Access to services** was one of the three most common reasons for making contact in three out of five regions.



WHAT VIOLENCE CONCERNS DID CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO DISCUSS?

Physical violence and **mental/emotional violence** were the main violence-related reasons for contacting child helplines in 2022 accounting for almost one in every three violence-related contacts. **Neglect**, **bullying** and **sexual violence** followed. Together, these five sub-categories accounted for three-quarters of all violence-related contacts.



WHAT MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS DID CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO DISCUSS?

Emotional distress was the most common mental health-related reason for contacting child helplines in 2022, whether related to **mood problems** or **fear and anxiety problems**, and accounted for around two in every five mental health-related contacts. Almost as frequent as either of the two different types of emotional distress concerns were contacts related to **suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts**.

Key recommendations

#1 **Every child and young person should have free and unrestricted access to child helpline services**

Governments and the ICT sector should promote children's rights by supporting child helplines so that they can improve their reach and accessibility to all children and young people. In particular, vulnerable groups of children and young people – and their unique needs and service barriers – need to be accounted for in the push for greater accessibility of child helpline services, ensuring that child helplines are always free of cost, and offer a variety of appropriate contact methods.

Child helplines should be strengthened through investments in infrastructure and new functionalities, offsetting service costs, and research and analysis concerning accessibility. Additional considerations include expanding modes of contact, service languages offered, and hours of operation at child helplines.

Funding and support should be made available to raise awareness of child helplines in a child-friendly manner. This would ensure that children and young people know how to use child helpline services and what they can expect. Promotion of regionally harmonised child helpline numbers has a vital role to play in raising public awareness of child helpline services and easing access for children and young people wherever they may be in the world.

#2 **Quality and sustainability of child helplines are crucial to ensuring children's rights**

Child helplines require reliable long-term funding to sustain and evolve their operations, and to consistently improve the quality of services offered to children and young people in need of support and protection. Child helplines provide an essential social service to children and young people within national jurisdictions while contributing to the broader realisation of children's rights. Governments should thus provide sources of long-term funding to facilitate high quality and sustainable child helplines. Telecommunication companies and the ICT industry should waive costs where possible.

Child helplines should receive funding and support towards the implementation of good governance practices, effective data collection and analysis, comprehensive training programmes for staff and volunteers interacting with children and youth, and contingency plans to help keep child helplines operational during national emergencies and technological or infrastructural failure, among other needs.

Child Helpline International has developed a robust Quality Assurance Framework for child helplines. Governments and other actors should support child helplines to implement the quality standards, and to monitor and evaluate the broader social service scene available to children and young people as a wider support network. Special support and measures such as trainings are required, so that child helplines worldwide can deal with the large number of these cases appropriately.

Key recommendations

#3 **Child helpline data and youth participation should inform policy and decision-making that affects children and young people's lives**

Every child and young person has the right to be heard, and it is the responsibility of child helplines, governments and other child protection actors to listen to and act upon the views and needs of children and young people. Children's voices should not only play a role in shaping child helpline services, but should inform decision-making at the highest levels. Governments, INGOs and other actors should implement effective child and youth participation practices to ensure that services and policies affecting young people are relevant to their lives and uphold their best interests as enshrined in the UNCRC.

Child Helpline International and child helplines offer a wealth of data on the issues and trends most affecting children and young people in local, regional and international contexts. Given that psychosocial and mental health are among the main reasons for contacting child helplines around the world, governments and policy makers should address children and young people's access to high quality mental health services, or lack thereof. Such valuable data and the insight it provides into the issues affecting children and young people's lives and their rights should not go to waste.

Governments, INGOs and relevant actors should act on children and young people's voices and child helpline data to implement the kinds of evidence-based changes children and young people need in society. They should sign onto and monitor the implementation of international conventions, such as the UNCRC, that protect a favourable policy climate for children's rights and the work of child helplines.

#4 **Structured partnerships are needed to eradicate violence against all children and young people**

The implementation and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 to end the abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children is the responsibility of all governments and child protection actors. Child helplines play a decisive role in ensuring children's safety as they are frequently the first point of contact for children and young people facing violence, and provide critical counselling services and referrals to the broader child protection network.

Governments, child protection agencies and thematic expert organisations should work with child helplines to build a highly integrated service network that children and young people can depend on.

Structured partnerships are needed to establish clear referral pathways and effective knowledge exchange on topics pertinent to children and young people's lives, and to inform interventions taken to protect children and young people.

Funding should be made available through collaborative partnerships to strengthen child helplines' data collection and the quality of frontline services offered.

The diverse needs of children and young people should be taken into account. In particular, vulnerable and under-represented groups of children and young people stand to benefit from increased coordination among child helplines and other actors.

