

 **Child
Helpline
International**



Voices of Children & Young People Around the World

Global Child Helpline Data from 2021

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Child Helpline International

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Disclaimer

Data presented and statements made do not capture the full scope of practices and policies of all countries and cases handled by child helplines and other child protection organisations at the national level. The exact data can be requested from Child Helpline International.

Child Helpline International's work is firmly grounded in the principles and values enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including children's right to privacy and protection from harm. To preserve the trust and confidence children and young people place in child helplines every day, any personal details cited in case summaries has been altered and anonymised.



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Key takeaways

In 2021 our child helpline members received

13,835,892 contacts

It's important to differentiate between contacts for which a child helpline was able to provide assistance to the caller (**counselling contacts**) and contacts for which it was not due to the nature of the contact (**non-counselling contacts**).

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.

10,910,650

non-counselling contacts

2,925,242

counselling contacts

MAIN REASONS FOR CONTACT GLOBALLY

In 2021, the main reason globally for making contact was children and young people's **mental health** (28.9% of all counselling contacts). Specific issues raised during these contacts were emotional distress (fear/anxiety and mood problems), as well as self-destructive tendencies (suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts; self-harming behaviours).

The second main reason for contact was **violence** (23.1%). These contacts frequently related to physical violence, mental/emotional violence or neglect (negligent treatment). Many children were also victims of bullying or sexual violence.

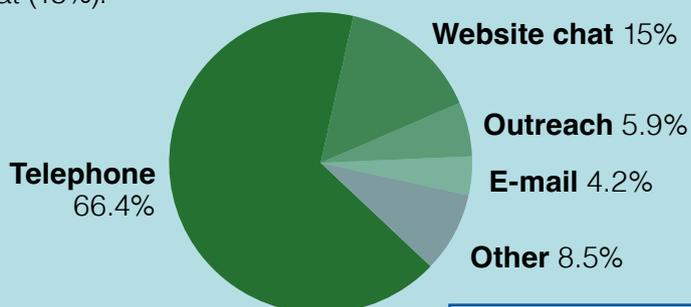
Family relationships were also an important reason, accounting for 11.3% of all contacts, emerging as one of the main reasons for making contact in all five regions.

3 MAIN REASONS FOR CONTACT REGIONALLY

Africa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Violence 2. Physical health 3. Peer relationships
Americas & The Caribbean	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Violence 2. Mental health 3. Family relationships
Asia-Pacific	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to services 2. Violence 3. Mental health
Europe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental health 2. Violence 3. Family relationships
MENA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Violence 2. Mental health 3. Family relationships

METHODS OF CONTACT

Worldwide, **the majority of contacts made with child helplines were by telephone** (66.4%). The next most frequent means of making contact was via website chat (15%).



WHO'S CALLING?

47.8%

of the **contacts made with child helplines came from children and young people themselves.**

The next most frequent callers were adults (40.3%), including those making contact on behalf of a child or young person, and people in a position of responsibility.

Almost 1 in every 3 contacts concerned mental health

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING SINCE THE START OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?

There was a

5% increase

in counselling contacts with child helplines between 2020 and 2021. On the other hand, the **number of non-counselling contacts decreased** by 12.5%.

Data based on 80 child helplines who reported for both 2020 and 2021.

Mental health
28.9%

Violence
23.1%

Family relationships
11.3%

All other reasons
36.7%

Mental health

Emotional distress – mood problems	17.6%
Emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems	17.4%
Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts	17.4%
Self-harming behaviours	7.9%
Concerns about the self	7.8%
All other reasons (including unspecified/other)	31.9%

Violence

Physical violence	24.6%
Mental/emotional violence	19.6%
Neglect (or negligent treatment)	12.9%
Bullying	10.9%
Sexual violence	10.1%
All other reasons (including unspecified/other)	22%

Family relationships

Relationship with caregiver(s)	34.1%
Family health and wellbeing	23.2%
Adoption, fostering and extended family placement	8.8%
Relationship with sibling(s)	8.7%
Unspecified/other	25.2%

Data based on 91 child helplines across 5 regions, unless otherwise specified. Explore the data in more detail in the [Deep Dive into Data](#) section.

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.

Toll-free status data

We obtained information regarding the toll-free status of our child helpline members (data based on 90 child helplines).

Fixed lines:

Free for the child and for the helpline (56%)
Free for the child but not the helpline (40%)
Not toll-free (2%)

Mobile lines:

Free for the child and for the helpline (48%)
Free for the child but not the helpline (37%)
Not toll-free (7%)

#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.

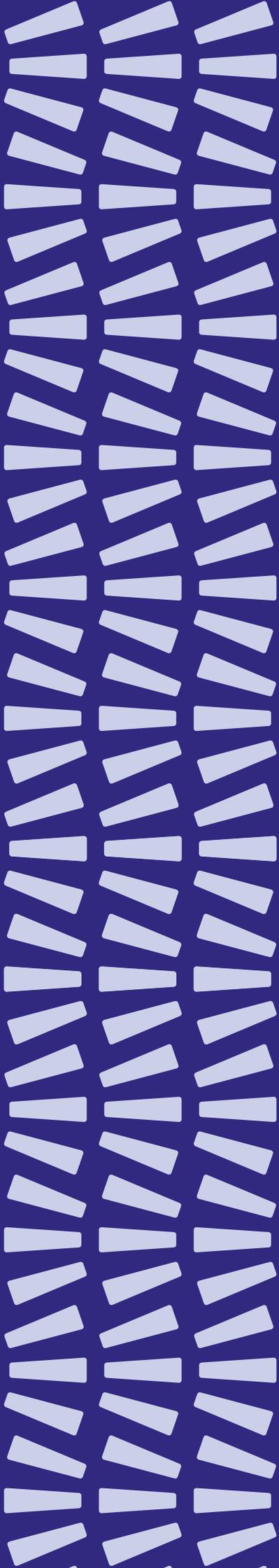
Governments, child protection agencies and thematic expert organisations should work with child helplines to build a highly integrated service network that children and young people can depend on.

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 underrepresented groups of children and young people stand to benefit from increased coordination among child helplines and other actors.





Focus

**Key regional data
and the main
reasons for contact**

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILD HELPLINE DATA

Child helplines have a unique insight into the gap between policy and reality, making them a key actor in advocating for children's rights. They support millions of children every year. They respond to issues ranging from serious children's rights violations, to children who just want someone to chat to on the way home from school. What brings child helplines together is the provision of an easily accessible, confidential system that allows children themselves to tell a counsellor what is going on in their lives. Child helplines also have an insight into the direct experiences of children and young people on a larger scale than any other organisations. Therefore, **the value of child helplines' data on contacts cannot be overstated in informing and guiding policy, learning and practice.**

In order to understand the issues faced by the children and young people who get in touch with child helplines, we survey our members around the world every year to gather information about the contacts they receive. We are grateful to all of our members who have submitted their 2021 data to Child Helpline International, allowing the present report to exist.

COUNSELLING CONTACTS AND NON-COUNSELLING CONTACTS

In 2021, our network of child helplines received **13,835,892 contacts across 83 countries**. That means a child or young person has actively reached out to a child helpline over 13 million times. To better understand these contacts, we categorise them in several different ways. We differentiate between contacts for which a child helpline was able to provide assistance to the caller (**counselling contacts**) and contacts for which the child helpline did not provide assistance to the caller because of the nature of the contact (**non-counselling contacts**). Non-counselling contacts include *inter alia* silent calls, abusive calls, test calls, requests for information and calls that were missed or unanswered for one reason or another.

Specifically, **our child helpline members responded to 2,925,242 counselling contacts in 2021** (n = 91 child helplines). That means a child or young person has obtained **advice, help or support from a child helpline almost three million times**. This represents 21.1% of all contacts and is the number of times a child helpline was able to provide support, advice or another form of counselling to a child or young person, often offering some form of follow-up.

In this following section, we focus on the key data from each of the five regions in which we have structured our network, and we showcase case stories recorded by our child helpline members in each region, representing the voices of the children and young people who have been contacting them.

THE MAIN REASONS FOR CONTACT

Mental health (28.9%) and **violence** (23.1%) were the two main reasons for contact reported by the child helplines globally. **Over half of all contacts worldwide were related to one of these two topics**. This means that half of the time that a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline, it is to discuss a concern related to their mental health or to a situation of violence.

A third main reason why children and young people contacted child helplines in 2021, accounting for 11.3% of contacts globally, was to discuss concerns about **family relationships**.

In this section, we also take a look at these three main reasons for contact, looking at the specific sub-categories under each broad reason. The data clearly shows that it is **physical violence**, in particular, that is **an important concern everywhere around the globe**. For family relationships, the data also clearly shows that **relationships with caregivers** are a principle concern for many children and young people making contact about this issue. **Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts** were a major reason for contacts relating to mental health, showing that **child helplines can be literal lifelines for children and young people experiencing suicidal tendencies, as they provide immediate support, often around the clock.**

Our child helpline members in the African region responded to **2,793,561 contacts** with 14 child helplines in 14 countries in 2021. They recorded a total number of **610,742 counselling contacts** and 2,182,819 non-counselling contacts.



Data based on

14

child helplines

COUNTRIES

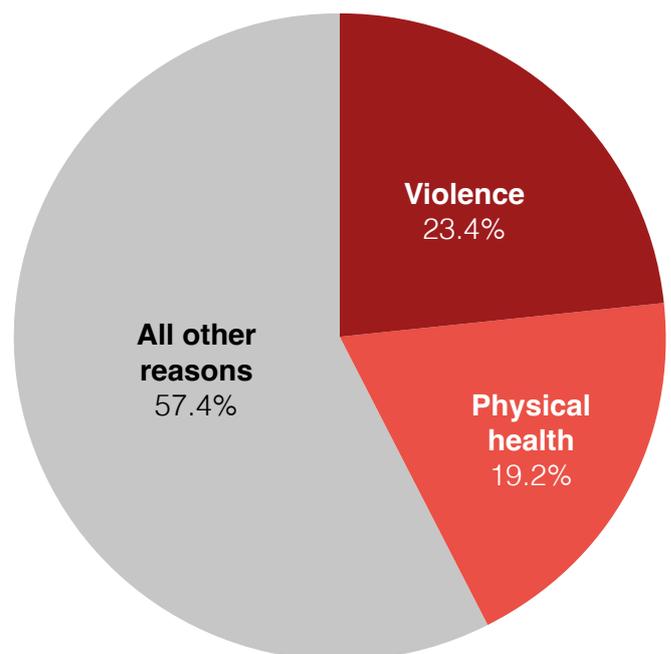
The child helplines receiving the largest number of counselling contacts in this region were based in **Zambia** and **South Africa**.



Explore these numbers further in the *Deep Dive into Data* section.

REASONS FOR CONTACT

Violence (23.4%) and **physical health** (19.2%) were the two main reasons for contact reported by child helplines in this region, with over a third of all counselling contacts relating to one of these issues. This means that **two in every five times** a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline in this region it is to discuss a concern related to physical health or a situation of violence.



“My parents are forcing me to undergo FGM...”

A 15-year-old-girl contacted the child helpline because her parents were trying to force her to undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). She had refused to cooperate, but in retaliation her parents had threatened, mistreated, and verbally shamed her. “The way they’re treating me makes me feel so alone and isolated. I need help.”

After listening to her, one of the child helpline’s counsellors called the Social Welfare Officer (SWO) in the region. The case was referred to the Police Gender Desk (PGD) who immediately started an investigation to ensure the girl’s safety. A couple of days later the child helpline called back to follow up on the situation, and were informed that the PGD had contacted the girl’s family and warned them against FGM and the mistreatment they were inflicting on their daughter. After multiple conversations, the family had finally agreed to stop pressuring and mistreating their daughter. The SWO and PGD agreed they would keep a close eye on the family to make sure that they kept true to their word.

“When dad went away my life became hell...”

A 12-year-old girl called the child helpline shortly before midnight to ask for help because she was being abused by her mother. The woman was melting plastic and pouring it on to her daughter’s arms and legs. The girl had managed to run away and was now taking refuge at a neighbour’s house. The girl needed immediate medical attention and protection from her mother.

She explained that her mother had divorced her father, and since then the girl was no longer going to school. Her mother was forcing her to do all the housework, and if she didn’t manage to complete her tasks, her mother was hitting her with a stick. “After my father left, my life has been hell...”

Although the girl was living in a different town from where the child helpline was based, the counsellor was able to contact one of the social workers on the spot, who in turn contacted the police and took the child to hospital the same night. Her mother was taken into custody. The case was brought to court, and the mother lost custody of the girl, who went to live with her father. She has now been able to return to school.

“If I tell anyone he raped me, he says he’ll kill me...”

After her mother passed away, a young girl went to live with her grandmother and an uncle. She told the child helpline that her uncle had been sexually abusing her since the age of four. For many years she had been living in fear, and she had not told anyone about the sexual abuse because her uncle had threatened to kill her if she did. She was not allowed to visit any other family members.

The girl had eventually fallen pregnant as a result of being raped, and now her uncle was allegedly also raping her child. The baby had recently been admitted to hospital, and was in intensive care, fighting for her life. In the meantime, the girl’s uncle continued to abuse her.

The child helpline counsellor followed the case up with the uncle’s wife, who was devastated and immediately took her niece to the clinic, where evidence was found that the girl had recently been raped. With the young girl’s permission, the matter was reported and the uncle was arrested. The girl’s grandmother also confessed that she had been repeatedly raped by her son. The man was denied bail and remains incarcerated.



Americas & The Caribbean

Our child helpline members in the Americas and Caribbean region responded to **508,893 contacts** with 15 child helplines in 12 countries in 2021. They recorded a total number of **199,897 counselling contacts** and 308,996 non-counselling contacts.



Data based on

15
child helplines

COUNTRIES

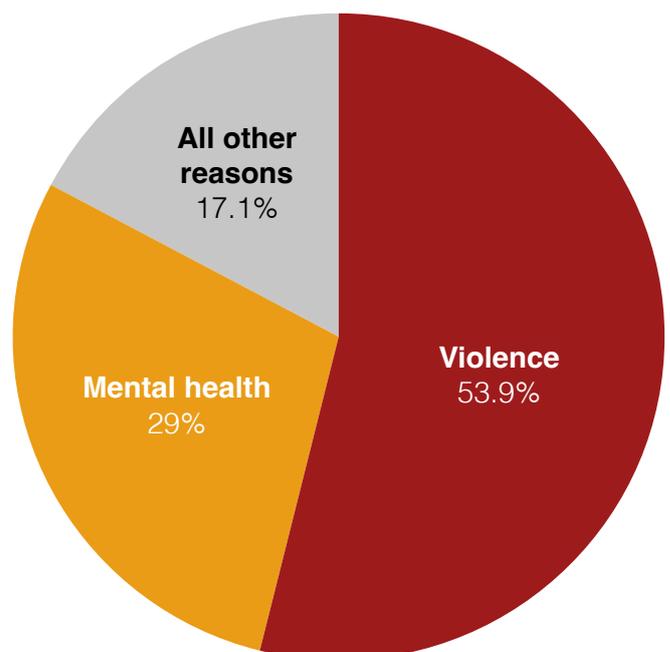
The child helplines receiving the largest number of counselling contacts in this region were based in the **USA**, **Canada** and **Colombia**.

Explore these numbers further in the Deep Dive into Data section.



REASONS FOR CONTACT

Violence (53.9%) and **mental health** (29.0%) were the two main reasons for contact reported by our members in this region. Over three quarters (82.9%) of all counselling contacts related to one of these issues. This means that **four in every five times** a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline in Americas and Caribbean, it is to discuss a concern related to mental health or a situation of violence.



Voices from the Americas & The Caribbean

“I need to know what happens if I report them...”

A 15-year-old girl reached out through online chat about the physical and emotional abuse she was receiving from her parents. The physical abuse included being hit with coat hangers and pieces of wood all over her body whenever they got angry about something, to the point of leaving the girl badly bruised. “They’re always threatening to kick me out of the house, and they call me horrible things.”

The girl expressed self-harm and suicidal ideation. She had never felt comfortable or safe enough to tell anyone what was going on in her life for fear of retaliation by her parents. She was also afraid of getting her parents into legal trouble. The girl really wanted to understand what would happen if she reported the situation. The child helpline counsellor walked her through the options available to her, and provided her with the much needed empathy and emotional support.

“I keep thinking about killing myself...”

A 14-year-old girl contacted the child helpline because she was constantly thinking about self-harming. “I haven’t done anything yet and half of me doesn’t want to, but the other half does. I constantly think about killing myself.” According to the girl, she wanted to ask her mother for help but just couldn’t do it.

The girl felt she had a good life and that she had a wonderful family and good friends, all of whom she loved immensely and they all loved her in return. And so, she kept asking herself why she was constantly thinking about hurting herself. “Why do I keep feeling so sad, even though I don’t have any reason to be?” She revealed that she had recently taken a pencil sharpener apart and played with the blade in her hand, but put it back together and put it as far away from her as she possibly could.

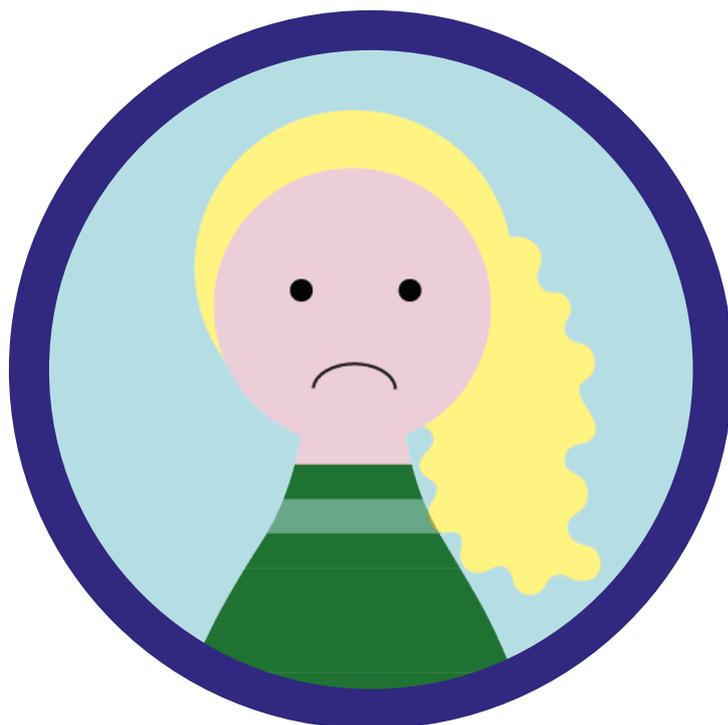
The child helpline counsellor listened to the girl, and encouraged her to start talking to her friends, family or even someone at her school about how she was feeling. The counsellor also advised her about the free mental health support services available in her city so that she could get all the necessary support in relation to what she was experiencing.

“My mother won’t believe me when I tell her I’ve been raped...”

A girl reached out to the child helpline via chat because she wanted somebody to listen to her. She had problems with her emotions and said that she didn’t want to carry on living. The reason she felt this way was because three years ago her stepfather had raped her. “I told my mum about it last year, but she just won’t believe me.”

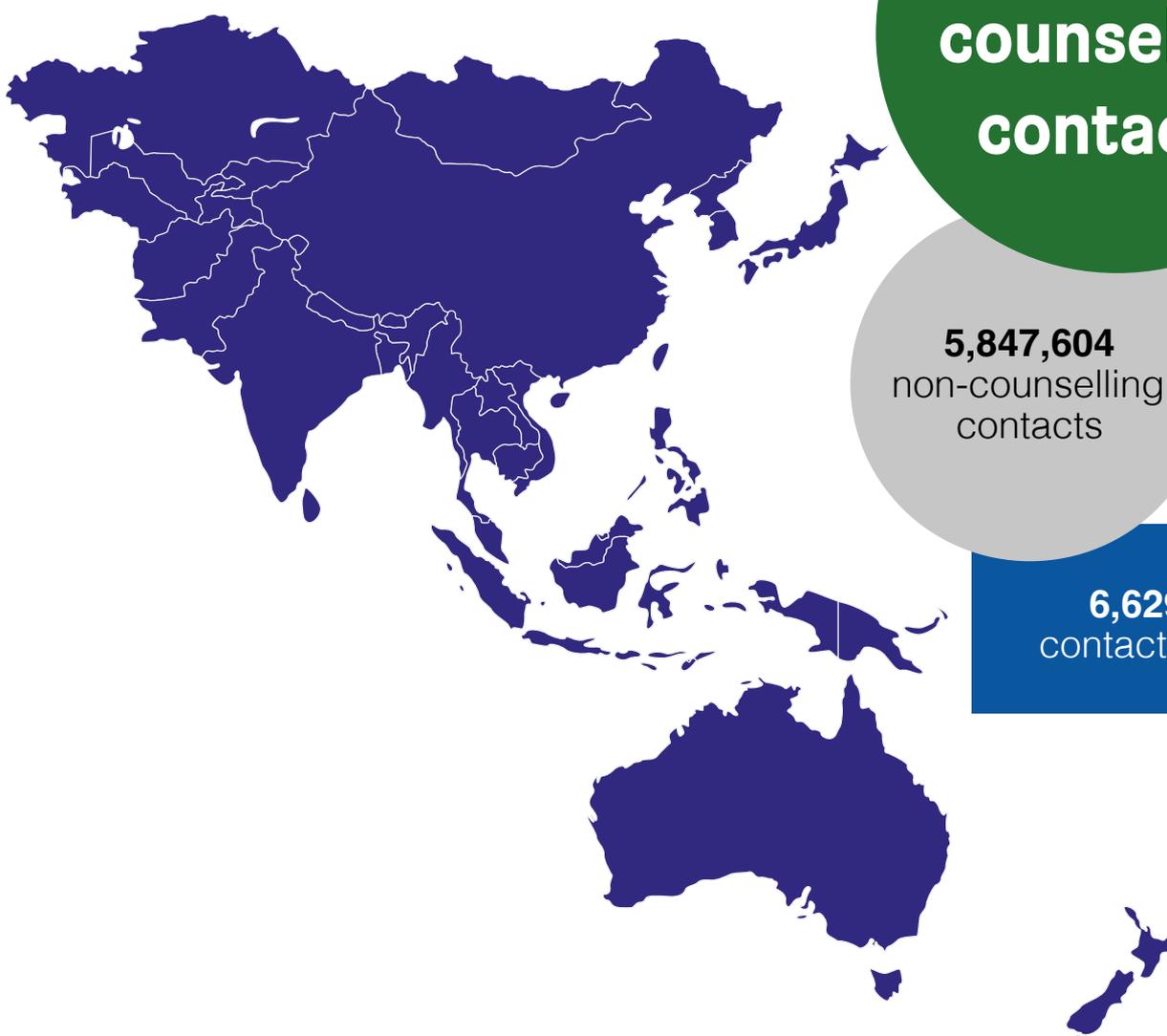
She was asked whether she wanted to make an official report of the rape, but she felt it put her and her mother into too much danger. They were both afraid of the stepfather.

The child helpline counsellor advised her that a conversation with a psychologist would help her understand her emotions and could prevent further trauma and mental health issues in the future.



Asia-Pacific

Our child helpline members in the Asia-Pacific region responded to **6,629,818 contacts** with 16 child helplines in 15 countries in 2021. They recorded a total number of **782,214 counselling contacts** and 5,847,604 non-counselling contacts.



782,214
counselling
contacts

5,847,604
non-counselling
contacts

6,629,818
contacts in total

Data based on

16

child helplines

COUNTRIES

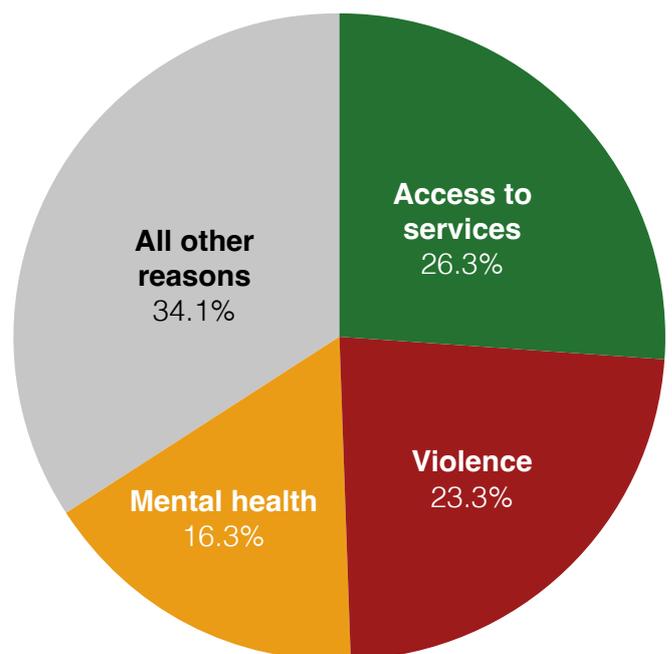
The child helplines receiving the largest number of counselling contacts in this region were based in **India, Japan** and **Australia**.

Explore these numbers further in the Deep Dive into Data section.



REASONS FOR CONTACT

Access to services (26.3%) and **violence** (23.3%) were the two main reasons for contact reported by our members in this region. Almost half (49.6%) of all counselling contacts related to one of these issues. Child helplines also received a large number of contacts relating to **mental health** (16.3%). Almost **two out of three times** a child or young person contacted a child helpline in Asia-Pacific it concerned one of these three issues (65.9% of all counselling contacts).



Voices from Asia-Pacific

“They used to be my best friends...”

An 11-year-old girl shared that two friends from her class had been calling her names for the past three months. This was making her feel sad, and she didn't understand why they had started behaving like this. She had been trying to avoid them but this was difficult, as they were all in the same class together. She had tried asking them why they were calling her names, and they told her they were simply speaking the truth, and this had hurt her very deeply.

The child helpline counsellor asked if she wanted to talk to her teacher about it, but she found this idea uncomfortable, as the two classmates used to be her best friends. The counsellor empathised with the child and suggested that she should try to ignore the two classmates as much as possible and not respond to anything they said to her, so that eventually they would stop. The counsellor invited the child to call back any time she wanted to, and let them know if the suggestion had worked out for her or not.

“It happened to me once, and now it's happening to my little sister...”

A 17-year-old, who identified as non-binary, shared with the child helpline counsellor that they had previously experienced physical abuse at home. Now, they were contacting the child helpline because there was ongoing verbal abuse in the home, and the 17-year old was concerned that this time it was going to escalate into violence towards their 10-year-old sister. “I woke up about 8am because my mum and dad were shouting at my sister.” She had stepped out of her room to listen closely to what was going. She wasn't sure whether her father had actually threatened her sister with violence, but she could tell that he was clearly very angry with her. “I wish I could do more for her.”

The 17-year-old told the counsellor that they had nearly cried for the first time in years today, realising history was repeating itself. “It's all a loop...It's happened to me in the past, and now my little sister is having to go through it. I'm upset that I'm not talking to her about it, helping her defend herself against our parents”. The caller had previously disclosed their own experiences to their school, but no action had been taken to address the issue.

The child helpline counsellor made a child services notification on the same day and has been making follow-up calls to the 17-year-old since, continuing to support them.

“My father slaps me if I don’t do well at school...”

A 10-year-old girl contacted the child helpline via webchat. She was seeking a safe space where she could be heard and feel validated about the stress she felt her parents were putting her under. She was feeling pressure to perform well academically, but she was finding her studies difficult and she kept making mistakes in her work. Her parents had invested a lot of money in her tuition, and they had told her that if she did not gain a place at the school they had determined for her, then she would be a “failure”. The girl was disappointed that her parents were not supportive of her. “I want them to tell me: ‘It’s okay, we all make mistakes.’ Why can’t they just sit with me for a bit, and help me practice and help me improve?”

The child helpline counsellor unpacked more contextual details about how exactly the girl’s parents were pressuring. She revealed that her father slapped her face several times a week if she under-performed, sometimes leaving bruises. Her mother didn’t intervene because she also regarded the father’s behaviour as appropriate. The counsellor spent time gently advising the girl about her right to feel safe and free from physical violence in the home. Together they worked on a plan for her safety which included notifying local child protection about any safety concerns she had in her family home.



Europe

Our child helpline members in the European region responded to **3,816,437 contacts** with 38 child helplines in 34 countries in 2021. They recorded a total number of **1,306,658 counselling contacts** and 2,509,779 non-counselling contacts.

3,816,437
contacts in total

2,509,779
non-
counselling
contacts

1,306,658
counselling
contacts



Data based on

38

child helplines

COUNTRIES

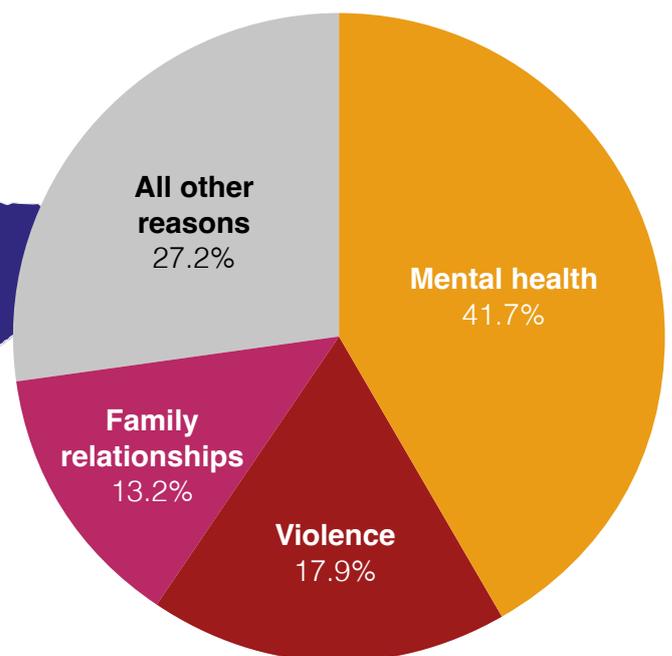
The child helplines receiving the largest number of counselling contacts in this region were based in the **Netherlands**, the **United Kingdom** and **Germany**.

Explore these numbers further in the Deep Dive into Data section.



REASONS FOR CONTACT

Mental health (41.7%) was the main reason for contact reported by the child helplines in the European region. This means that **over a third of the time** that a child or young person reached out to a child helpline in Europe, it was to discuss a concern related to their mental health. **Violence** and **concerns around family relationships** were also important reasons for children and young people making contact with child helplines in this region during the year.



“How do you even begin to tell someone you want to die?”

A child contacted the child helpline via webchat, revealing that she had been in contact once before, due to suicidal thoughts and attempts. She found that chatting with a child helpline counsellor calmed her at times when she was scared of what she might do to herself. “If it weren’t for my family, I would end my life...but I could never do that to them because they would think it was all their fault.”

The child had some contact with health officers regarding other issues but hadn’t told anyone else yet about her suicidal thoughts. “How do you even begin to tell someone that you want to die, that you don’t want to live?”

The counsellor and the child talked about different ways she could find more help and support. Right at that moment, though, the girl’s biggest wish was to be able to relax a little so that she could get some sleep, and so they also talked about some of the things that brought her relief or joy, and made her feel calmer.

“I have horrible dreams about dying..”

A 17-year-old boy called the child helpline because he had been feeling very bad lately. He had experienced a lot of bad and stressful situations during the year. “At the start of the year, my grandmother died. After that, in just a few months, many people I knew who hadn’t even turned 40 years old also passed away. It was hard for me, but somehow, I got over it.”

During the holidays he heard from a friend about a serious car accident in which three 19-year-olds he knew had died. He had thought about the accident for days, afraid that something similar might happen to him. He began having strong panic attacks and started having nightmares in which he died. His panic attacks were occurring at least once a day, and usually in the evening. “The first time I had a panic attack, I thought I was having a heart attack. I’ve had nightmares three or four times so far and they’ve all been really horrible, I’ve dreamt that I was dying.”

It had helped him to read up about panic attacks, and how to deal with them, on the internet and had watched some videos posted by people who also felt similar anxiety. He said he couldn’t talk to his mother about it because he didn’t think she would understand what he was going through.

The counsellor normalised the boy’s feelings and explained to him why panic attacks occur. They suggested some techniques that could help him when he felt another attack coming on. In addition, he agreed with the counsellor that he would talk to his school psychologist about his feelings and ask for further help.

“I’m not sure I’m ready to become an adult...”

An almost 18-year-old boy wrote to the child helpline about how he felt overwhelmed with his problems, and the expectations other people had of him. “I’m incredibly tired of everything around me. Absolutely everybody wants something from me.” He was also afraid of becoming an adult, not feeling ready for adulthood at all. He mentioned several things that were worrying him, including upcoming exams and issues at school, family problems and concerns about love. He felt lonely, unsure and confused, and admitted that he had suicidal thoughts. He needed somebody to talk to, because his loneliness and lack of support were adding to the hard time he was having transitioning to adulthood.

The first step to help him was to let him know that asking for help was something good and to encourage him to write more about his problems. The counsellor invited him to make further contact with the child helpline, and to describe his situation more fully. The counsellor also explained that suicidal thoughts could appear whenever somebody was in crisis, and it was very important to seek help and support at such times.



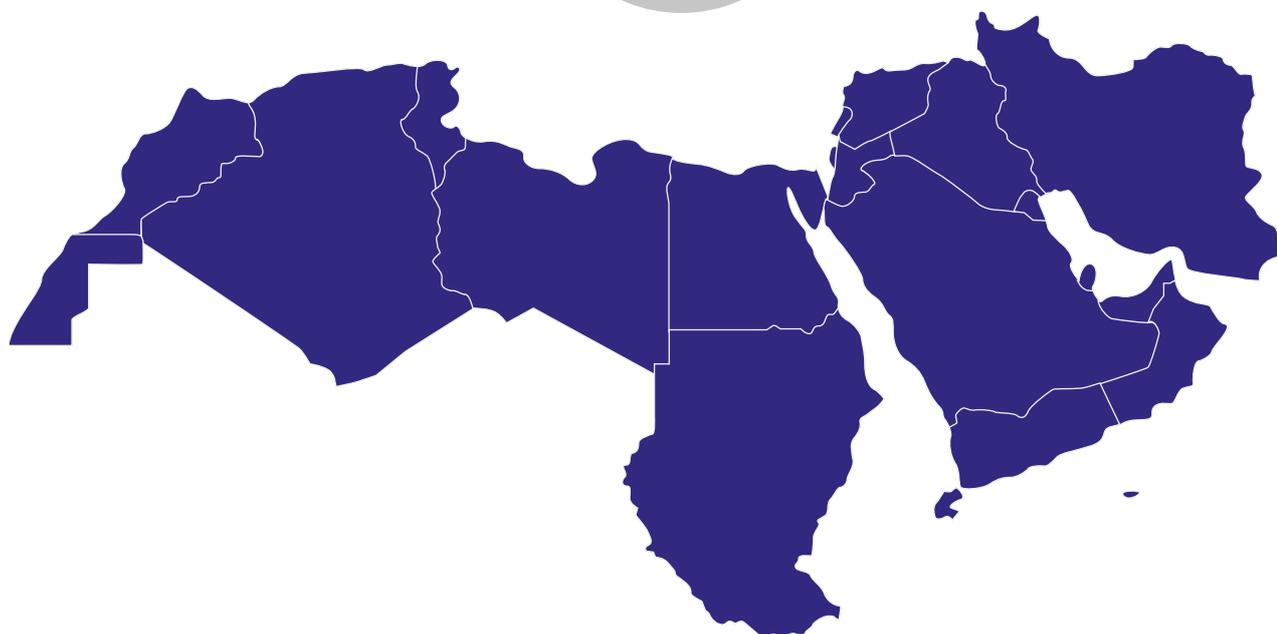
Middle East & North Africa

Our child helpline members in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region responded to **87,183 contacts** with 8 child helplines in 8 countries in 2021. They recorded a total number of **25,731 counselling contacts** and 61,452 non-counselling contacts.

87,183 contacts in total

61,452
non-
counselling
contacts

25,731
counselling
contacts



Data based on

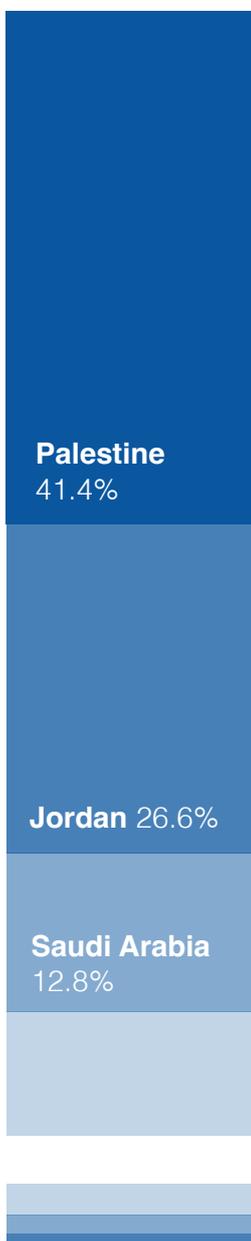
8

child helplines

COUNTRIES

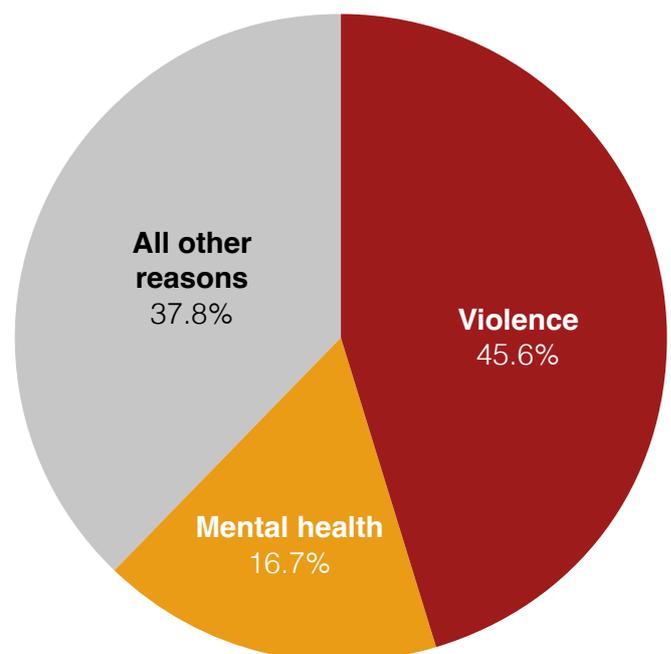
The child helplines receiving the largest number of counselling contacts in this region were based in **Palestine, Jordan** and **Saudi Arabia**.

Explore these numbers further in the Deep Dive into Data section.



REASONS FOR CONTACT

Violence (45.6%) was the main reason for contact reported by the child helplines in the MENA region. This means that **almost half of the time** that a child or young person reached out to a child helpline in MENA it was to discuss a concern relating to a situation of violence. **Mental health** concerns were also significant reasons for children and young people making contact with child helplines in this region during the year.



Voices from the Middle East & North Africa

“I don’t like anyone anymore after the war...”

A 13-year-old boy called the child helpline several times to talk about how he had been afraid since the last war. He had been isolated from his family, and he mentioned being bullied, saying that he did not want to talk to anyone or play with. “I don’t like anyone anymore after the war.”

After talking with him for a while, the child helpline counsellor noted that the boy’s sanctuary was in his artwork. Drawing served as a shelter from his anger and fear. He asked the counsellor if she could send him crayons to draw with, since the family’s circumstances were very difficult and they could not afford such items. The counsellor clarified that the child helpline wasn’t able to provide material aid, but nevertheless encouraged him to continue drawing with the resources available to him. He said that his sister liked drawing as well, and that he would do this activity with her so that he wouldn’t be all on his own.

The counsellor supported him and encouraged his self-esteem. When the boy called again about a week later, the counsellor noted that his voice sounded different; he sounded more optimistic. He followed the plans that he and the counsellor had agreed on, and said that his teacher had brought him crayons, which made him very happy. He was now drawing for everyone in his class.

“They don’t want to live with their father...”

A man contacted the child helpline about his nephews, who were being subjected to the most severe forms of abuse, physical and psychological violence and neglect. After their parents’ divorce, the children had continued to live with their father and his new wife. They had been prevented from visiting their mother, who had since died.

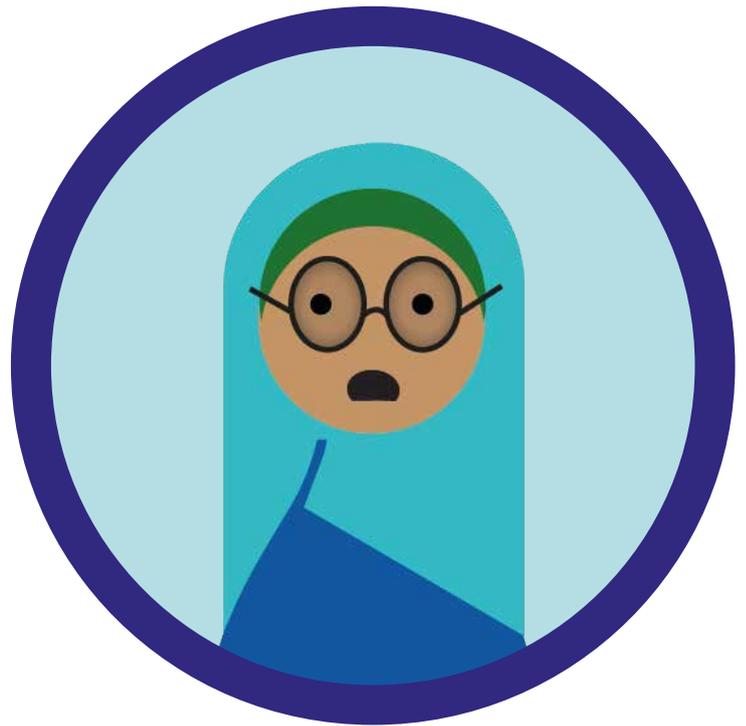
The children fled their father’s house and went to their uncle’s house to seek help. They told him that they did not want to live with their father because of the severe and continuous beatings they were getting, as well as psychological violence and verbal abuse.

Their uncle contacted the child helpline immediately after receiving an unwelcome visit from the children’s father, who had threatened to take the children away again by force. The child helpline team referred the report to the relevant authorities immediately.

“I’m afraid to go home. I can’t bear it any longer...”

The child helpline received a call from a 15-year-old girl who had been sexually abused by her father for the past five years. “I’m afraid to go home. I can’t bear it any longer...”

The child helpline contacted the Family Protection Department urgently, and action was taken. Her father was placed under arrest and subsequently sent to prison. The girl is now residing with other family members and is receiving psychological care and support.



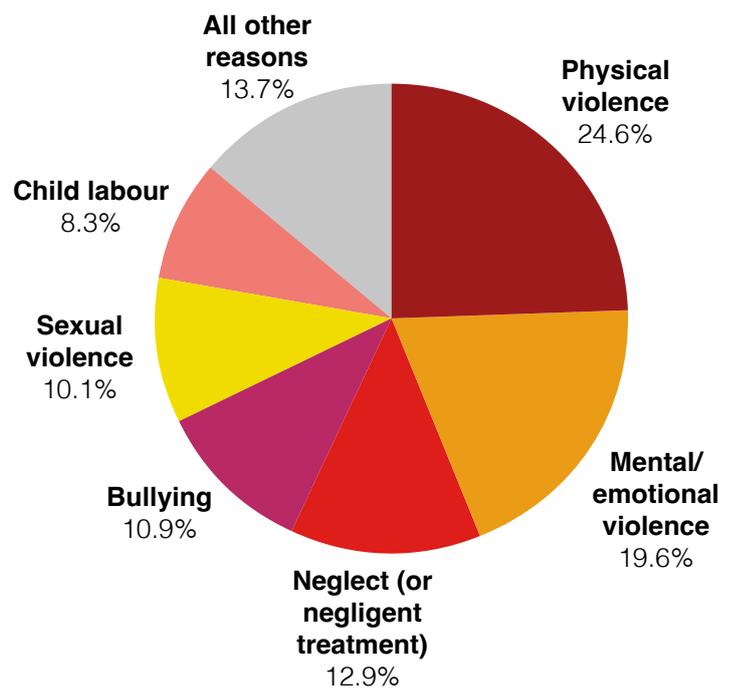
Violence

According to UNICEF data collected between the years 2005 and 2013, around the world more than half of children aged 2-14 years old regularly experienced some form of physical violence at the hands of their parents or caregivers^{1,2,3}. **This is approximately 6 out of every 10 children.** Research shows that violence against children and violence against partners – and in particular violence against women – are closely related⁴. These forms of violence often occur simultaneously in the same households⁵.

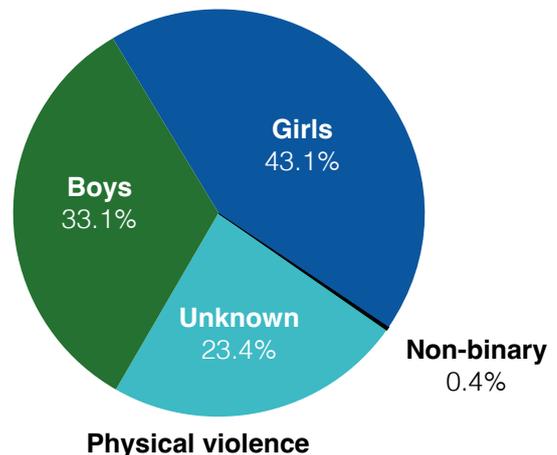
Data from our child helpline members shows that physical violence is a significant concern raised by children and young people who reach out to child helplines. **Physical violence against children and young people is a concern that is being raised time and again across all regions.** Our child helpline members support children and young people facing these difficult situations through referrals to child protection agencies or sometimes through direct interventions.

Around the world in 2021, **one in every four** children or young people who contacted the child helplines because of concerns about violence wanted to discuss **physical violence**.

These analyses include 88 child helplines from 5 regions, representing a 97% response rate for this question.



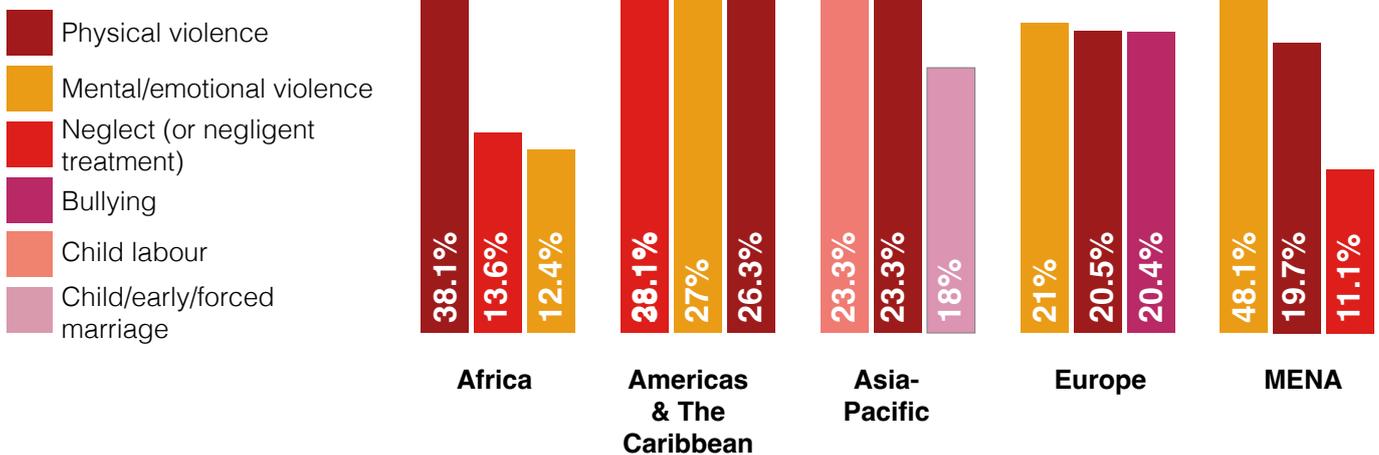
The data from our child helpline members shows that **girls contacted child helplines about physical violence more than boys**, accounting for 43% of the contacts compared to 33%. The remaining contacts were from contacts where the gender of the caller was not identified or known, and from a small number of callers identifying as non-binary.



Physical violence was the largest concern relating to violence in the African region, the second largest in the Asia-Pacific, European and MENA regions, and the third largest in the Americas and Caribbean region. This indicates that, when it comes to violence in general, **physical violence in particular is an important concern everywhere around the globe.**

Violence:

Main three specified reasons per region
(% total violence contacts per region)



1. World Health Organization. *Corporal punishment and health*, accessed on 15 July 2022 at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/corporal-punishment-and-health>
2. Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A and Kress H (2016). *Global prevalence of past-year violence against children: a systematic review and minimum estimates*. *Pediatrics*;137(3):e20154079
3. United Nations Children’s Fund, *A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents*, UNICEF, New York, 2017
4. UN Women and Social Development Direct (2020) *Child and Adolescent Abuse Prevented, RESPECT: Preventing Violence against Women Strategy Summary*
5. *Ibid.*

Mental health

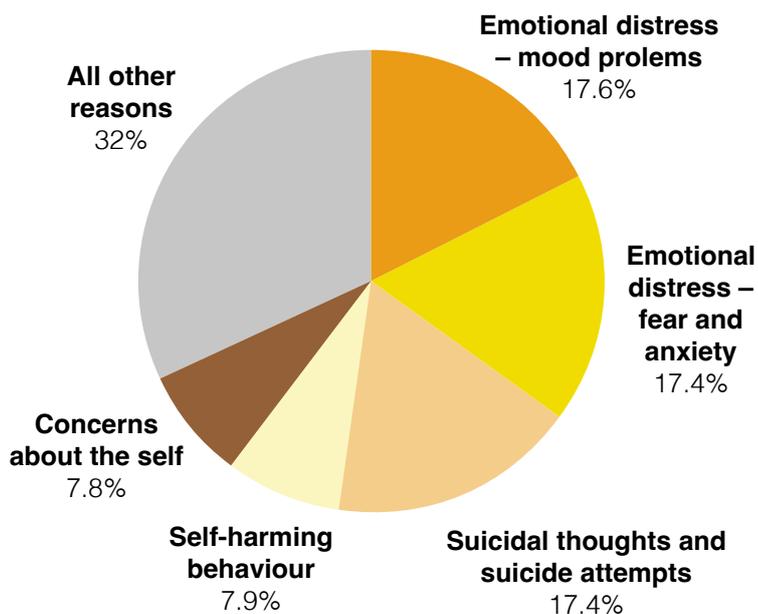
According to the World Health Organization, young people are one of the most vulnerable groups whose mental health was impacted by Covid-19, placing them at elevated risks of self-destructive behaviours, including suicidal thoughts and attempts, and self-harming behaviour¹.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among adolescents², most notably for older adolescents aged 15-19 years. Globally it is the third leading cause of death for girls and fourth leading cause of death for boys². Self-destructive tendencies are a prominent concern among children and young people³.

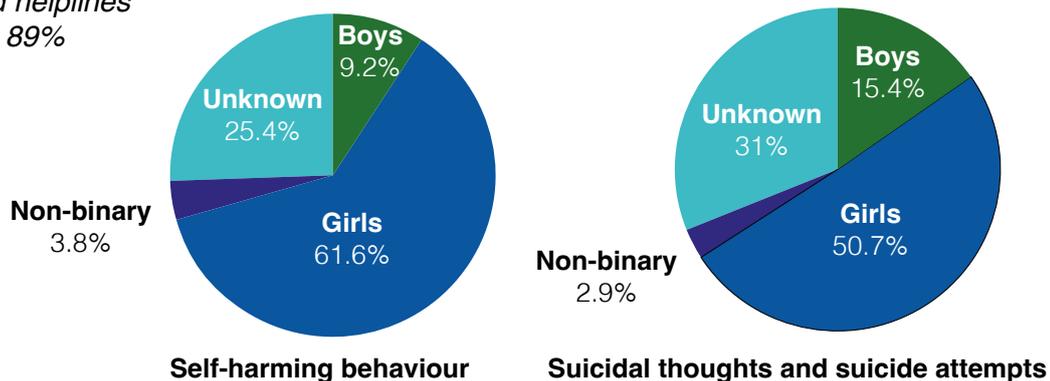
The data from our child helpline members indicates that self-destructive tendencies (self-harm, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts) consistently remain an important mental health concern raised by children and young people who reach out to child helplines.

Around the world in 2021, **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).

These analyses include 81 child helplines from 5 regions, representing an 89% response rate for this question.



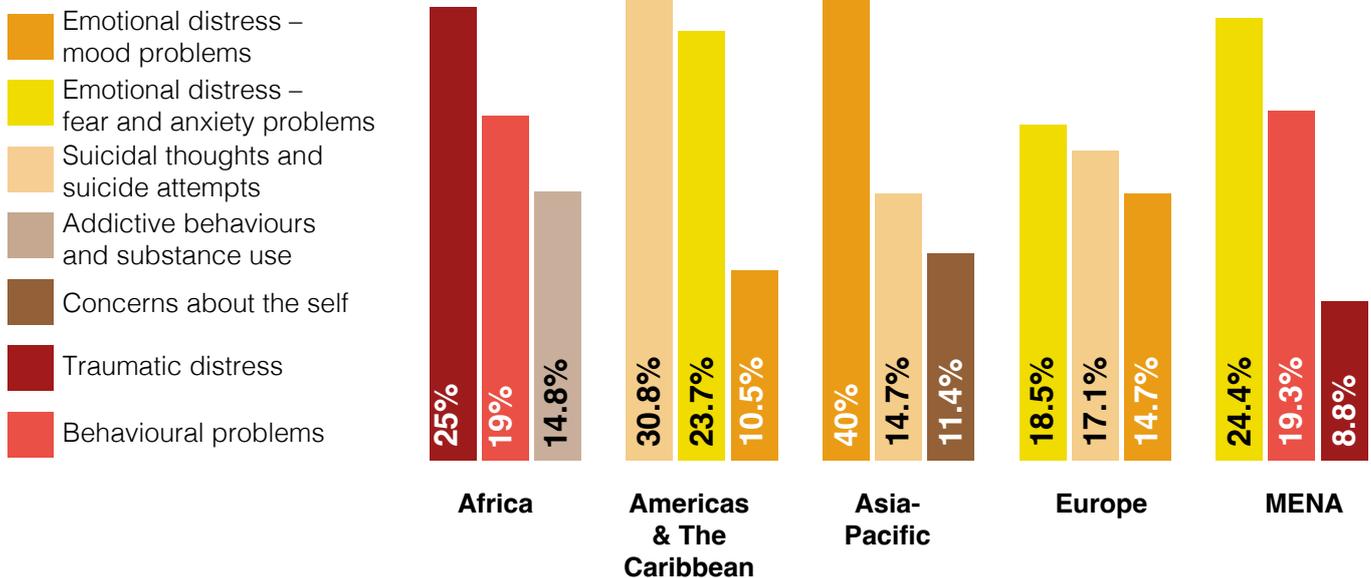
The data from our child helpline members shows that **girls contacted child helplines about self-destructive tendencies far more than boys**, accounting for 54% of the contacts compared to 13%. This means that girls contacted child helplines for concerns of self-destructive behaviours **four times more often** than boys. 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. 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.**

Mental health:

Main three specified reasons per region
(% total mental health contacts per region)



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

Special Commentary: Violence & Mental Health



**United
Nations**

Dr. Najat Maalla Mjid
Special Representative of the
Secretary-General
on Violence Against Children

<https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org>

Over 1 billion children are exposed to some form of violence every year. Early exposure to violence can have devastating effects on children's physical and mental health, not only while they are still children, but also later on in life. As such, it is not surprising that the two main reasons why children contacted child helplines around the world in 2021 were due to their experiences of violence and concerns about their mental health.

The Covid-19 pandemic and multiple humanitarian crises around the world – whether caused by conflicts, climate change or natural disasters – have made these issues even more prevalent. The urgency of ending violence against children has not diminished: On the contrary, it has increased due to the impact of the pandemic and these various humanitarian crises, together with food insecurity and forced displacement.

The human and economic costs of violence are huge for children and for the whole of society. Exposure to violence, stress, exclusion and crisis causes immediate *and* long-term physiological and psychological damage, which will cost up to \$393 billion (US dollars) annually¹. Ending violence against children will save as much as 8% of GDP in welfare, health, education and other services.²

It is urgent that we act to protect children against violence and prevent the devastating impact it can have on their mental health. An integrated investment approach is needed, in which specific focus should be made on investing in quality community services and ensuring these services are provided by skilled professionals.

The best protection against all of these negative consequences is the support of an available and caring adult. Child helplines play this crucial role as first line support for those children who might otherwise not have adults in their lives who are available to protect them.



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While the pandemic of the past two years has heightened online risks, it has also brought about a growing interest among children and young people in supporting each other online, and in accessing online solutions such as child helpline channels through chat and other digital platforms. As both trends illustrate, children need direct access to reliable, timely and trustworthy online protection resources. It is in this light that my office has launched the **POP initiative – Protection through Online Participation** – in partnership with ITU, Child Helpline International and others.

The POP initiative has the goal of better understanding how digital platforms are being used by children and young people to access safety and protection. As access to the internet grows, online protection systems need to be reinforced and enhanced. Every child with access to the online world should also be able to access safety and protection.

I commend this report, it is the evidence we need upon which to act. I personally urge all policy and decision-makers to take note of the insights it brings, and to take the actions necessary to ensure the availability and accessibility of child helplines **everywhere**.

1. *SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf (unicef.org)*
2. *Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/49/57), December 2021*

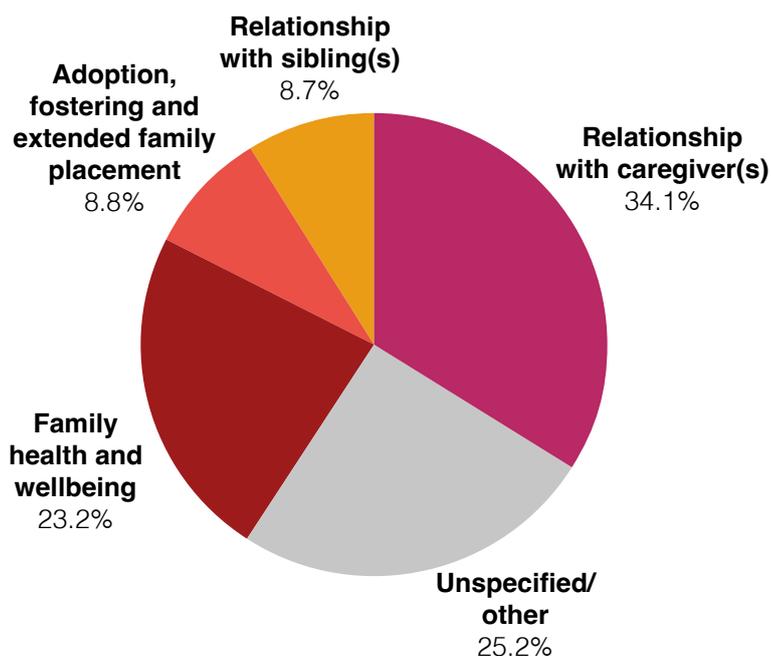
Family relationships

Family relationships, in particular healthy attachments to caregivers, are essential to the development and wellbeing of children^{1,2,3}. When the opposite is true, children may develop insecure attachments. Examples of family predictors of insecure attachments include child abuse, neglect, parental depression and situations where children perceive their caregivers as unavailable, for example after a difficult divorce. However, these attachment styles are open to change depending on life experiences⁴. For this reason, **child helplines can play an essential role in supporting children and young people in having more secure and positive interactions with family members.**

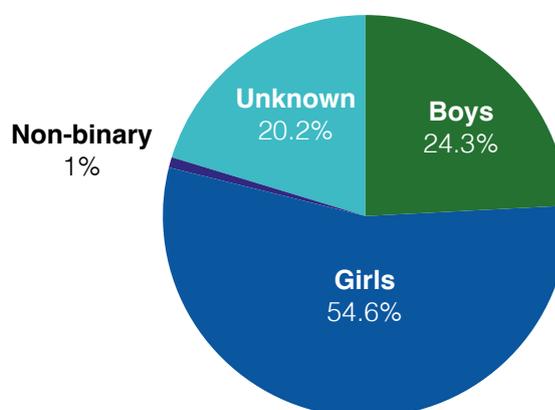
Data from our child helplines indicates that the relationship between children and young people and their caregivers is an important concern raised by children and young people who reach out to child helplines. It is important for children and young people to have healthy and comfortable relationships with their caregivers, and child helplines can support children and young people in this respect by providing guidance and, in some cases, acting as a mediator between them and their caregivers.

Around the world in 2021, **one in every three** children or young people who contacted the child helplines concerning family relationships wanted to discuss their **relationship with their caregiver.**

These analyses include 78 child helplines from 5 regions, representing an 86% response rate for this question.



The data from our child helpline members shows that **girls made contact with child helplines about relationships with caregivers more than twice as often as boys**, with girls accounting for 54% of contacts and boys for 24%. The remaining 22% of 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.

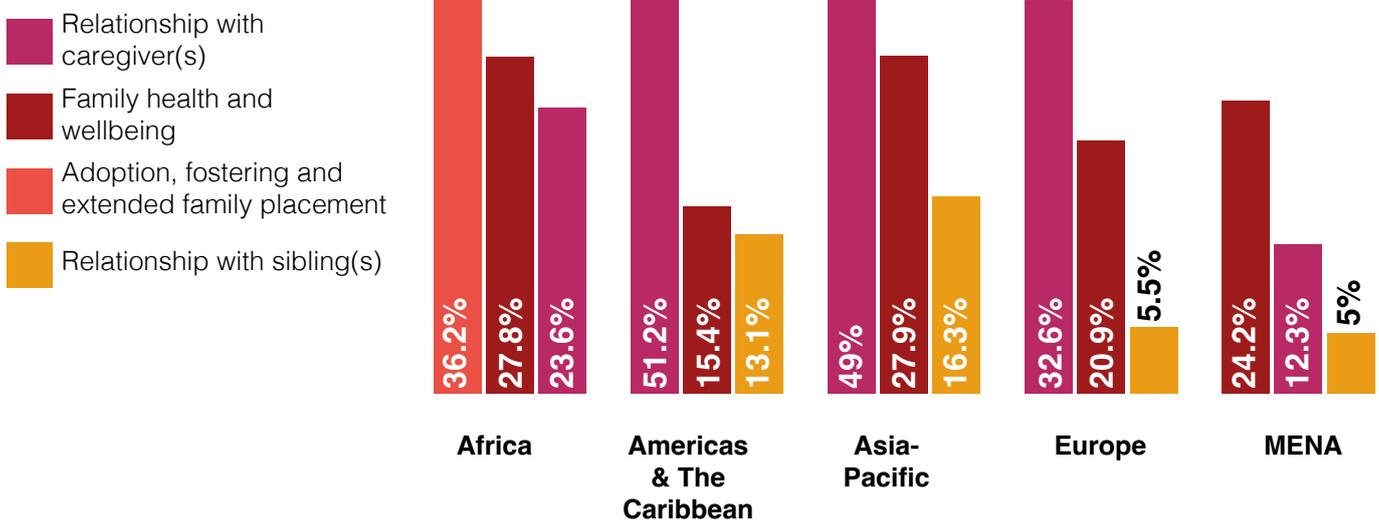


Relationship with caregiver(s)

Relationship with caregiver was the main family relationship concern in the Asia-Pacific and Americas & Caribbean regions. It was the second largest family relationship concern in Europe, and the third in the African and MENA regions. **This shows that relationships with caregivers is an important concern everywhere around the world.**

Family relationships:

Main three specified reasons per region
(% total family relationship contacts per region)



1. UNICEF, *Caregiver mental health and well-being: The key to thriving families*, accessed on 15 July 2022 at <https://www.unicef.org/blog/caregiver-mental-health-well-being-key-thriving-families>
2. Bowlby J (1973). *Attachment and loss: Volume II: Separation, anxiety and anger*. In *Attachment and loss: Volume II: Separation, anxiety and anger* (pp. 1-429). London: The Hogarth press and the institute of psycho-analysis.
3. Sutton TE (2019). *Review of attachment theory: Familial predictors, continuity and change, and intrapersonal and relational outcomes*. *Marriage & Family Review*, 55(1), 1-22
4. Van Ryzin MJ, Carlson EA & Sroufe LA (2011). *Attachment discontinuity in a high-risk sample*. *Attachment & human development*, 13(4), 381-401

Voices of concern

Violence

“The only time I feel safe is when I’m hiding under my bed...”

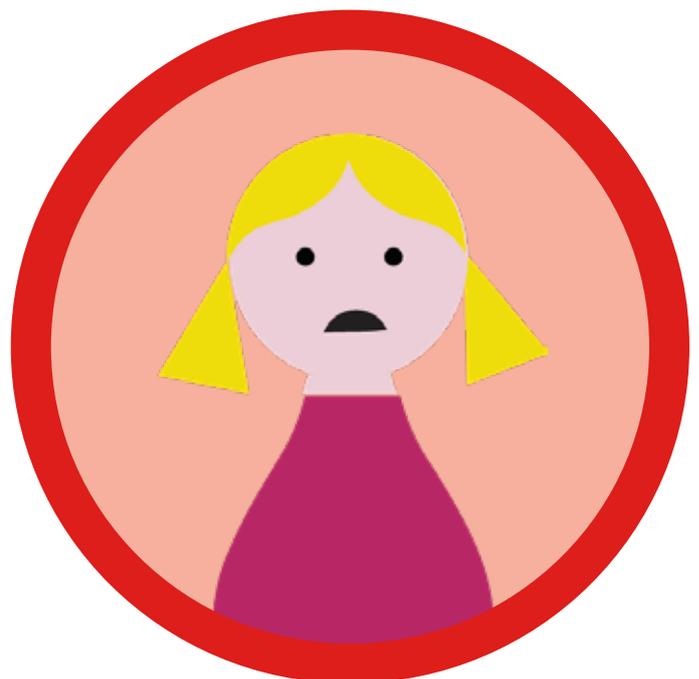
A child contacted the child helpline via webchat wanting to talk about the violent behaviour shown towards her by her parents. She described many different occasions when her parents had abused her, either physically or emotionally. “Even when they’re being kind or saying nice things to me, I’m still afraid because I know what’s going to happen, sooner or later.” Not knowing quite what would trigger the violence, and whether or not she would be abused once again, was one of the hardest things she was having to cope with. “I’m afraid all the time. The only time I feel safe is when I’m hiding under my bed.”

The counsellor informed the child of her rights, of the support and protection available to her and how the child helpline could assist her further if she wanted or needed them to. Although the girl was not ready to take any further steps at the moment, she was invited to contact the child helpline again whenever she wanted.

Mental health

“I am terrified...”

A 13-year-old contacted the child helpline by email, disclosing some level of self-harm and suicidal thoughts, but with very little detail. She was isolated and not in receipt of any support services for fear her parents would be told about her emotional distress against her will. The child helpline formed a relationship of trust with her and was able to clarify the level of risk she was at. The child helpline was eventually able to win her confidence enough that she provided personal identifying information, enabling them to speak with her teacher about her and refer her to the child helpline’s video counselling services. As a result of the child helpline’s intervention, she has been successfully connected to appropriate face-to-face services.



Mental health

"I'm ruining my family's lives with my problems..."

A child contacted the child helpline because she felt she was a burden to her family, ruining their lives with her problems. She was a frequent cutter and self-harmer. Her mother was trying to help her with her issues, but her sister and father criticised her for her actions, telling her she was just faking an illness. Her parents fought often about her situation, and seeing these arguments caused her even more severe anxiety, and she would cut and harm herself again. The child helpline counsellor helped her to calm her down from her most recent anxiety episode and provided her with resources for alternative coping strategies.



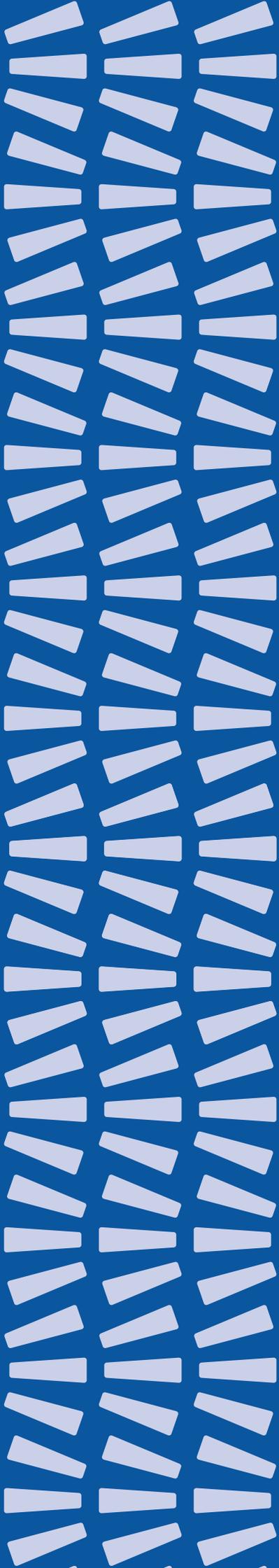
Family relationships

"I sneak out of the house to go to parties..."

A 15-year-old girl contacted the child helpline and reported that her mother had confiscated her phone because the girl had gone to a concert without permission and returned home late. She was studying online and now badly needed her phone to communicate with the teacher and her classmates during the lesson.

The child helpline counsellor inquired after her relationship with her parents, and the girl stated that, while things were okay with her father, her relationship with her mother was bad. She further added that her father defends her whenever she is being scolded by her mother. She admitted that she did not always behave well, sometimes leaving the house without permission to go to parties.

The caller was counselled at length and encouraged to work on her relationship with her mother. The counsellor offered to speak to the girl's mother, but the girl did not want this. A few weeks later, a follow up call was made and the girl indicated that she was happy and was behaving better as a result of the previous counseling session. She said, "I no longer out to parties without asking for permission from my parents. I have become much more responsible!"



Deep Dive into Data

INTRODUCTION

Child Helpline International is a collective impact organisation with 168 child helpline members from 141 countries and territories around the world (as of May 2022). We coordinate information, viewpoints, knowledge and data from our child helpline members, partners and external sources. These exceptional resources are used to help and support child protection systems globally, regionally and nationally, and to help our members advocate for the rights of children and young people to amplify their voices.

In order to understand the issues faced by the children and young people who get in touch with child helplines, we survey our members around the world every year to gather information about the contacts they receive. This section presents the compilation and analysis of the data on the contacts received by child helplines in 2021.

Depending on the requirements of their counselling and research activities, our child helpline members record various information for every contact they receive. In order to understand why children and young people are contacting child helplines we work closely with our members to create a common categorisation of these contacts. This categorisation covers the broad issues or reasons for making contact with child helplines, as well as different types of background information, all of which are divided further into sub-categories. It also includes information on the actions taken by the child helplines beyond the contact (if any).

METHODOLOGY

At the beginning of January 2022, we invited our members to submit their data by filling in an online survey (using the software Qualtrics). The survey was available in four languages: English, French, Spanish and Arabic. It comprised three main sections: background information about the children and young people making contact (9 categories including age, whether or not they were members of vulnerable groups, and the method of contact they used); reasons why the child helplines were being contacted (11 categories including violence, mental health and family relationships); and the actions taken by the child helplines beyond the provision of support during the contact (10 types of action, including direct interventions by the child helpline itself or referrals to child protection services). For all categories, we requested that the child helplines provide the number of contacts received in 2021, disaggregated by the gender of the child or young person concerned (including when the gender was not known, or when the caller identified as non-binary).

RESPONDENTS

We received data from 91 child helplines, representing 69% of the 132 members we asked to submit. In this report, sample size varies across analyses as a function of missing data.

IMPORTANT NOTES

It should be noted that the content and level of detail of information recorded for each contact is the prerogative of the child helplines themselves and is not directed by Child Helpline International. Therefore, these categories might differ from the categories used by some child helplines when they originally collected their data.

It should also be noted that child helplines have differing practices relating to the information recorded. Whereas some indicate the reason given for calling by the child or young person, others indicate the reason identified by the counsellor, which in some cases might not be the same.

Finally, it should also be noted that while an absence of contacts in a particular category could mean that the child helpline did not receive any contacts pertaining to that category, it might also mean that the child helpline simply does not collect that particular data.

OPERATIONAL DATA

OPENING TIMES

In 2021, around half of our child helplines operated 24 hours every day of the week. The remaining child helplines worked specific days with specific hours. More than three quarters (76.9%) of the child helplines operated every day of the week.

These analyses include 91 child helplines from five regions, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Region	# of Child Helplines	24/7	7 days (not 24/7)	Weekdays & Saturdays	Specific hours
Africa	14	9 (19.6%)	2 (8.3%)	1 (14.3%)	5 (11.1%)
Americas & The Caribbean	15	7 (15.2%)	2 (8.3%)	2 (28.6%)	8 (17.8%)
Asia-Pacific	16	9 (19.6%)	6 (25%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (15.6%)
Europe	38	18 (39.1%)	12 (50.0%)	4 (57.1%)	20 (44.4%)
MENA	8	3 (6.5%)	2 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (11.1%)
Total	91	46 (50.5%)	24 (26.4%)	7 (7.7%)	45 (49.5%)

GLOBAL DATA

NUMBER OF CONTACTS

In 2021, our network of child helplines received **13,835,892 contacts across 83 countries**. To better understand these contacts, we categorise them in several different ways. We differentiate between contacts for which a child helpline was able to provide assistance to the caller (**counselling contacts**) and contacts for which the child helpline did not provide assistance to the caller because of the nature of the contact (**non-counselling contacts**). Non-counselling contacts include *inter alia* silent calls, abusive calls, test calls, requests for information and calls that were missed or unanswered for one reason or another.

Specifically, **our child helpline members responded to 2,925,242 counselling contacts in 2021** (n = 91 child helplines). That means a child or young person has actively reached out to a child helpline and obtained **advice, help or support almost three million times**. This represents 21.1% of all contacts and is the number of times a child helpline was able to provide support, advice or another form of counselling to a child or young person, often offering some form of follow-up. Our network recorded 10,910,650 non-counselling contacts (n = 81 child helplines).

	Type of Contact	Number of Contacts
Global	Counselling Contacts	2,925,242
	Non-Counselling Contacts	10,910,650
Total	All Contacts	13,835,892

AGE

Most contacts in 2021 came from young people aged 13-15 years old (23.0%) and 16-17 years old (17.0%), excluding contacts where the age of the caller was not known. The smallest number of contacts related to children in the age groups of Unborn, 0-3 years old and 4-6 years old. The low contact rate concerning these very young ages is to be expected, as these contacts are exclusively from adults on behalf of children, and not all child helplines take those contacts.

These analyses include 85 child helplines from 5 regions, representing a 93.0% response rate for this question.

Age Range	Number of Contacts	%
Unborn	385	0.0%
0-3 years old	61,155	2.3%
4-6 years old	71,037	2.7%
7-9 years old	128,540	4.9%
10-12 years old	345,045	13.2%
13-15 years old	600,953	23.0%
16-17 years old	445,236	17.0%
18-24 years old	388,780	14.9%
Age not known	575,555	22.0%
Total	2,616,686	

METHOD OF CONTACT

Our data clearly shows that **the majority of contacts received by child helplines were made by telephone (66.4%).** The second largest method of contact was through website chat (15.0%). In much smaller amounts, contacts were also received through outreach (5.9%), e-mail (4.2%), other methods (2.7%), walk-ins (2.4%), text message/SMS (1.9%) or mobile app (1.0%). The remaining methods of contact used less than 1% of the time were via social media (0.3%), website forums (0.2%), post (0.1%) and bulletin boards (0.01%).

These analyses include 79 child helplines, representing an 87.0% response rate for this question.

Method of Contact	%
Bulletin Board	0.01%
E-mail	4.2%
Mobile App	1.0%
Outreach	5.9%
Post	0.1%
Social Media	0.3%
Telephone	66.4%
Text Message (SMS)	1.9%
Walk-in/In person	2.4%
Website Chat	15.0%
Website Forum	0.2%
Other	2.7%

REASONS FOR CONTACT

We obtained data from 90 child helplines, representing 99% of reporting child helplines, mapped at a categorical level as outlined by our Data Framework.

Mental health (28.9%) and **violence** (23.1%) were the two main reasons for contact reported by the child helplines globally. **Over half of all contacts were related to one of these two topics.** This means that half of the time that a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline, it is to discuss a concern related to their mental health or to a situation of violence. The remaining eight other reasons for contact accounted for 48.0% of the contacts. We provide more detailed information at a regional level.

Violence against children and **mental health** are identified as Child Helpline International's two main areas of advocacy. Year after year, violence and mental health are consistently the main two reasons for contact globally. We present these two reasons for contact in more detail in this section describing data at the global level of analysis. In the following sections, we present the main reasons for contact at a regional level to account for each region's specificities.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health was the main reason for contact reported by child helplines in 2021. Our child helpline members responded to **808,946 counselling contacts on issues regarding mental health.** This represents 28.9% of all the contacts, or almost one in three contacts who received counselling.

Mental health was the main reason for contact in the European region, was the second main reason for contact in the Americas & Caribbean and MENA regions, and was the third main reason for contact in Asia-Pacific. In 2021, mental health was not one of the five main reasons for contact in the Africa region, where it ranked in sixth place.

Reason for Contact	Region	Ranking in Region
Mental Health	Africa	6th
	Americas & The Caribbean	2nd
	Asia-Pacific	3rd
	Europe	1st
	MENA	2nd

Emotional distress – mood problems (17.6%), **emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems** (17.4%), and **suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts** (17.4%) were the three main reasons for mental health contacts reported by child helplines. These three sub-categories accounted for over half of all contacts about mental health (52.3%). All other sub-categories, including unspecified/other mental health concerns, accounted for 47.7% of the contacts. It is of concern to note that **self-destructive behaviours (suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts and self-harming behaviour) account for almost one-fourth of all mental health contacts** (25.5%).

These analyses include 81 child helplines, representing an 89.0% response rate for this question about mental health in 2021.

Mental Health: Sub-categories	%
Addictive behaviours and substances	3.8%
Behavioural problems	2.9%
Concerns about the self	7.8%
Emotional distress – anger problems	3.3%
Emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems	17.4%
Emotional distress – mood problems	17.6%
Neurodevelopmental concerns	0.6%
Problems with eating behaviour	2.8%
Self-harming behaviour	7.9%
Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts	17.4%
Traumatic distress	2.2%
Unspecified/other	16.4%

The gender of children and young people

Our data shows that girls were more likely to contact child helplines about mental health issues. Overall, girls made contact with child helplines more frequently than all other modalities for gender (boys, non-binary). This was the case in the three largest identified sub-categories of mental health: emotional distress – mood problems, emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems, and suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts. There was an exception for the sub-categories of addictive behaviours and substance abuse, behavioural problems and neurodevelopmental concerns where boys made contact slightly more often.

Mental Health: Sub-categories	Boy	Girl	Non-binary	Unknown
Addictive behaviours and substance use	45.3%	33.3%	0.5%	20.9%
Behavioural problems	42.3%	38.2%	0.2%	19.2%
Concerns about the self	21.3%	63.0%	0.9%	14.8%
Emotional distress – anger problems	29.3%	38.6%	0.7%	31.4%
Emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems	23.0%	55.9%	1.0%	20.2%
Emotional distress – mood problems	27.0%	61.7%	1.4%	10.0%
Neurodevelopmental concerns	35.5%	34.3%	0.2%	29.9%
Problems with eating behaviour	5.8%	69.8%	1.6%	22.7%
Self-harming behaviour	9.2%	61.6%	3.8%	25.4%
Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts	15.4%	50.7%	2.9%	31.0%
Traumatic distress	28.7%	47.4%	0.7%	23.2%
Unspecified/other	16.1%	48.4%	1.9%	33.5%

VIOLENCE

Globally, violence was the second main reason for contact reported by child helplines in 2021. Our child helpline members responded to **792,866 counselling contacts on issues regarding violence**. This represents 23.1% of all the contacts, or almost one in four contacts who received counselling.

Violence was the main reason for contact in the African, Americas & Caribbean and MENA regions, and was the second main reason for contact in the Asia-Pacific and European regions.

Reason for Contact	Region	Ranking in Region
Violence	Africa	1st
	Americas & The Caribbean	1st
	Asia-Pacific	2nd
	Europe	2nd
	MENA	1st

In 2021, one in every four children or young people who contacted the child helplines about violence wanted to discuss **physical violence** (24.6% of the contacts in this category). This was closely followed by **mental/emotional violence** (19.6%) and **neglect (or negligent treatment)** (12.9%). These contacts accounted for close to half of violence-related contacts (57.1%). A smaller proportion of contacts concerned **bullying** (10.9%), **sexual violence** (10.1%) and **child labour** (8.3%). All other reasons accounted for 13.7% of the violence-related contacts.

These analyses include 88 child helplines, representing a 97.0% response rate for this category of reasons for contact.

Violence: Sub-categories	%
Bullying	10.9%
Child/early/forced marriage	5.8%
Child labour	8.3%
Commercial sexual exploitation (offline)	0.5%
Female Genital Manipulation (FGM)	0.02%
Gender-based harmful traditional practices (other than FGM)	0.9%
Harmful traditional practices other than child marriage and FGM	0.02%
Mental/emotional violence	19.6%
Neglect (or negligent treatment)	12.9%
Online sexual abuse	0.8%
Online sexual exploitation	0.5%
Physical violence	24.6%
Sexual violence	10.1%
Unspecified/other	5.3%

The gender of children and young people

Our data shows that girls contacted child helplines more than boys in most sub-categories concerning violence. One notable exception is child labour, for which boys made contact twice as often than girls. Notably, girls accounted for more than half the contacts in the sub-categories child/early/forced marriage (91.7%), FGM (73.2%), gender-based harmful traditional practices (61.0%) and sexual violence (58.6%). Limited data points were collected for non-binary callers; therefore, we are unfortunately not able to determine any trends.

Violence: Sub-categories	Boy	Girl	Non-binary	Unknown
Bullying	41.8%	44.5%	1.0%	12.7%
Child/early/forced marriage	8.1%	91.7%	0.0%	0.2%
Child labour	62.9%	31.4%	0.0%	5.7%
Commercial sexual exploitation (offline)	5.0%	25.3%	0.6%	69.1%
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	14.8%	73.2%	12.1%	0.0%
Gender-based harmful traditional practices (other than FGM)	38.2%	61.0%	0.1%	0.7%
Harmful traditional practices other than child marriage and FGM	59.8%	37.6%	0.0%	2.6%
Mental/emotional violence	26.5%	45.3%	0.6%	27.6%
Neglect (or negligent treatment)	27.1%	35.8%	0.3%	36.8%
Online sexual abuse	30.6%	46.9%	0.5%	22.1%
Online sexual exploitation	32.2%	49.1%	0.5%	18.2%
Physical violence	33.1%	43.1%	0.4%	23.4%
Sexual violence	17.3%	58.6%	0.6%	23.5%
Unspecified/other	39.1%	51.6%	0.4%	9.0%

ACTIONS TAKEN

Child helplines do more than just taking calls and talking to children and young people. Child helplines undertake all sorts of different actions to help the children and young people who reach out to them in order to provide more support. **Direct intervention by the child helpline** (48.0%) was the most frequent action taken, followed by **recommendations of resources** (13.8%) and **referrals to child protection agencies** (10.9%). These three main sub-categories accounted for almost three fourths of the contacts (82.8%). This means that, when further action was taken by a child helpline, four out of five times it was one of these three actions.

These analyses include 63 child helplines, representing a 69.0% response rate for this question.

Actions taken	%
Direct intervention by the child helpline	48.0%
Recommendations of resources	13.8%
Referrals to child protection agencies	10.9%
Referrals to general healthcare services	6.1%
Referrals to law enforcement agencies	6.3%
Referrals to mental health services	2.9%
Referrals to other organisations	7.3%
Referrals to school counsellors	2.2%
Reports to Child Sexual Abuse Material portals	0.1%
Other	2.2%

AFRICA

NUMBER OF CONTACTS

Our child helpline members in the African region responded to 2,793,561 contacts with 14 child helplines across 14 countries in 2021. Specifically, our child helpline members in the African region received a total of **610,742 counselling contacts in 2021**. In addition, they recorded 2,182,819 non-counselling contacts (n = 14 child helplines).

Region	Type of Contact	Number of Contacts
Africa	Counselling Contacts	610,742
	Non-Counselling Contacts	2,182,819
Total	All Contacts	2,793,561

COUNTRIES

The two countries that received the highest number of counselling contacts in the African region were **Zambia** with 52.3% of all counselling contacts and **South Africa** with 37.5% of counselling contacts. Twelve other countries accounted for the remaining 10.3% of the contacts.

Counselling contacts by country	%
Zambia	52.3%
South Africa	37.5%
Zimbabwe	2.5%
Kenya	2.5%
Malawi	2.1%
Uganda	1.2%
Burundi	0.6%
Tanzania	0.4%
Botswana	0.4%
Sierra Leone	0.2%
Namibia	0.2%
Mauritania	0.1%
Ethiopia	0.04%
Lesotho	0.01%

GENDER

Our data suggests that **boys are more likely to contact child helplines in the African region than girls** – 32.3% of the counselling contacts were made by boys, compared to 37.1% by girls. Boys contacted child helplines 196,400 times and girls contacted child helplines 165,332 times. The gender of 40.8% of the callers was unidentified, and 0.01% of the contacts were made by children and young people who identified as non-binary.

These analyses include 14 child helplines, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Gender – Counselling contacts	%
Boy	32.2%
Girl	27.1%
Non-binary	0.01%
Unknown	40.8%

REASONS FOR CONTACT

We obtained data from 14 child helplines mapped at a categorical level as outlined by our Data Framework. It is important to note that not all child helplines report on every reason for contact at a (sub-) category level.

Violence (23.4%) and **physical health** (19.2%) were the two main reasons for contact reported by child helplines in the African region. Over half of all contacts were related to one of these two topics. This means that **half of the time that a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline in the African region**, it is to discuss a concern related to their physical health or to a situation of violence.

Child helplines also received a large number of contacts relating to **peer relationships** (16.6%), **family relationships** (13.2%), and **education and occupation** (11.4%). More than four out of five times when a child or young person contacted a child helpline in the African region it concerned one of these five categories (83.8% of all counselling contacts). We provide more information below on the main categories of contact in the region by detailing them at the sub-categorical level.

Reasons for contact	%
Access to services	5.0%
Discrimination and exclusion	1.2%
Education and occupation	11.4%
Family relationships	13.2%
Mental health	8.1%
Missing children	0.6%
Peer relationships	16.6%
Physical health	19.2%
Sexuality	1.3%
Violence	23.4%

Violence

Physical violence (36.1%), **neglect (or negligent treatment)** (13.6%), and **mental/emotional violence** (12.4%) are the three main reasons for contacts relating specifically to violence that were reported by child helplines in the African region. These three reasons accounted for nearly two thirds of the contacts relating to violence (62.2%).

These analyses include 13 child helplines, representing a 93.0% response rate for this question.

Violence: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Bullying	9.2%
Child/early/forced marriage	7.6%
Child labour	11.6%
Commercial sexual exploitation (offline)	0.3%
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	0.1%
Gender-based harmful traditional practices (other than FGM)	0.1%
Harmful traditional practices other than child marriage and FGM	0.1%
Mental/emotional violence	12.4%
Neglect (or negligent treatment)	13.6%
Online sexual abuse	0.3%
Online sexual exploitation	0.3%
Physical violence	36.1%
Sexual violence	8.1%
Unspecified/other	0.1%

Physical health

Medical or lifestyle information about HIV/AIDS (50.4%) was the main reason for physical health contacts reported by child helplines in the African region. It accounted for half of all physical health contacts received.

These analyses include 13 child helplines, representing a 93.0% response rate for this question.

Physical health: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
General medical concerns	24.9%
Medical or lifestyle information about HIV/AIDS	50.4%
Nutrition	8.3%
Pregnancy and maternal care	4.8%
Sexual and reproductive health	11.3%
Unspecified/other	0.4%

ACTIONS TAKEN

Direct intervention by the child helpline (43.8%) was by far the most frequent action taken in the African region, followed by **referrals to law enforcement agencies** (13.6%), **referrals to general healthcare services** (12.4%) and **referrals to other organisations** (11.1%). Four out of five contacts when further action was taken by the child helpline related to one of these four actions.

These analyses include 9 child helplines, representing a 64.0% response rate for this question.

Actions taken	%
Direct intervention by the child helpline	43.8%
Recommendations of resources	2.5%
Referrals to child protection agencies	6.8%
Referrals to general healthcare services	12.4%
Referrals to law enforcement agencies	13.6%
Referrals to mental health services	6.1%
Referrals to other organisations	11.1%
Referrals to school counsellors	3.3%
Reports to Child Sexual Abuse Material portals	0.1%
Other	0.4%

AMERICAS & THE CARIBBEAN

NUMBER OF CONTACTS

Our child helpline members in the Americas and Caribbean region responded to 508,893 contacts with 15 child helplines across 12 countries. Specifically, our child helpline members in the Americas and Caribbean region received a total of **199,897 counselling contacts in 2021**. In addition, our network recorded 308,996 non-counselling contacts (n = 15 child helplines).

Region	Type of Contact	Number of Contacts
Americas & The Caribbean	Counselling Contacts	199,897
	Non-Counselling Contacts	308,966
All Contacts		508,893

COUNTRIES

The three countries receiving the highest number of counselling contacts in the Americas and Caribbean region were the **USA** with 39.4% of all counselling contacts, **Canada** with 23.0% and **Colombia** with 16.2%. Seven other countries accounted for the remaining 17.1% of the contacts.

Counselling contacts by country	%
USA	39.4%
Canada	23.0%
Colombia	16.2%
Chile	6.6%
Aruba	4.5%
Uruguay	3.5%
Trinidad & Tobago	1.8%
Costa Rica	1.7%
Brazil	1.2%
Dominican Republic	1.2%
Jamaica	0.5%
Curaçao	0.5%

GENDER

Our data suggests that **girls are more likely to contact child helplines in the Americas and Caribbean region than boys** – 54.3% of the counselling contacts were made by girls, compared to 29.6% by boys. Girls contacted child helplines 108,628 times and boys contacted child helplines 59,245 times. The gender of 13.2% of the callers was not identified and 1.8% of the contacts were made by children and young people identifying as non-binary.

These analyses include 15 child helplines, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Gender – Counselling contacts	%
Girl	54.3%
Boy	29.6%
Non-binary	1.8%
Unknown	13.2%

REASONS FOR CONTACT

We obtained data from 15 child helplines mapped at a categorical level as outlined by our Data Framework. It is important to note that not all child helplines report on every reason for contact at a (sub-) category level.

Violence (53.9%) and **mental health** (29.0%) were the two main reasons for contact reported by the child helplines in the Americas and Caribbean region. Over three quarters (82.9%) of all contacts were related to one of these two topics. This means that four out of five times a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline in the Americas and Caribbean region, it is to discuss a concern related to their mental health or to a situation of violence.

Child helplines also received a smaller number of contacts relating to **family relationships** (5.0%), **peer relationships** (4.5%), and **access to services** (4.0%). We provide more information below on these main categories of contact in the region by detailing them at the sub-categorical level.

Reasons for contact	%
Access to services	4.0%
Discrimination and exclusion	0.4%
Education and occupation	1.3%
Family relationships	5.0%
Mental health	29.0%
Missing children	0.3%
Peer relationships	4.5%
Physical health	0.7%
Sexuality	0.9%
Violence	53.9%

Violence

Neglect (or negligent treatment) (28.1%) was the main reason for contacts relating specifically to violence that were reported by child helplines in the Americas and Caribbean region, closely followed by **mental/emotional violence** (27.0%) and **physical violence** (26.3%). These three reasons accounted for over half of the violence contacts (81.4%).

These analyses include 15 child helplines, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Violence: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Bullying	1.2%
Child/early/forced marriage	0.1%
Child labour	1.6%
Commercial sexual exploitation (offline)	0.1%
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	0.001%
Gender-based harmful traditional practices (other than FGM)	N/A
Harmful traditional practices other than child marriage and FGM	N/A
Mental/emotional violence	27.0%
Neglect (or negligent treatment)	28.1%
Online sexual abuse	0.6%
Online sexual exploitation	0.5%
Physical violence	26.3%
Sexual violence	11.7%
Unspecified/other	3.0%

Mental health

Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts (30.8%), **emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems** (23.7%) and **emotional distress – mood problems** (10.5%) were the three main reasons for mental health contacts reported by child helplines in the Americas and Caribbean region. These three categories represent more than half of all contacts about mental health (65.0%).

These analyses include 13 child helplines, representing an 87.0% response rate for this question.

Mental health: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Addictive behaviours and substance use	3.1%
Behavioural problems	1.4%
Concerns about the self	6.3%
Emotional distress – anger problems	2.8%
Emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems	23.7%
Emotional distress – mood problems	10.5%
Neurodevelopmental concerns	1.8%
Problems with eating behaviour	1.3%
Self-harming behaviour	8.0%
Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts	30.8%
Traumatic distress	2.3%
Unspecified/other	8.1%

ACTIONS TAKEN

Recommendations of resources (56.6%) by the child helplines were by far the most frequent action taken, accounting for over half of all the actions taken. This was followed by **other actions** (20.3%), which either did not relate to our specified actions taken or were unable to be matched to our categorisation. These two main sub-categories accounted for three quarters of the actions taken by child helplines in the Americas and Caribbean region (76.9%).

These analyses include 11 child helplines, representing a 73.0% response rate for this question.

Actions taken	%
Direct interventions by the child helpline	6.0%
Recommendations of resources	56.6%
Referrals to child protection agencies	8.7%
Referrals to general healthcare services	4.3%
Referrals to law enforcement agencies	1.2%
Referrals to mental health services	1.0%
Referrals to other organisations	1.6%
Referrals to school counsellors	0.2%
Reports to Child Sexual Abuse Material portals	0.04%
Other	20.3%

ASIA-PACIFIC

NUMBER OF CONTACTS

Our child helpline members in the Asia-Pacific region responded to 6,629,818 contacts with 16 child helplines across 15 countries in 2021. Specifically, our child helpline members in the Asia-Pacific region received a total of **782,214 counselling contacts in 2021**. In addition, our network recorded 5,847,604 non-counselling contacts (n = 16 child helplines).

Region	Type of Contact	Number of Contacts
Asia-Pacific	Counselling Contacts	782,214
	Non-Counselling Contacts	5,847,604
	All Contacts	6,629,818

COUNTRIES

The three countries receiving the highest number of counselling contacts in the Asia-Pacific region were **India** with 51.5% of all counselling contacts, **Japan** with 19.9% and **Australia** with 12.4%. Twelve other countries accounted for the remaining 16.2% of the contacts.

Counselling contacts by country	%
India	51.5%
Japan	19.9%
Australia	12.4%
Thailand	4.3%
Mongolia	3.4%
Kazakhstan	2.5%
New Zealand	2.4%
Maldives	1.0%
Nepal	0.9%
Papua New Guinea	0.5%
Singapore	0.5%
Philippines	0.4%
Cambodia	0.3%
Hong Kong (China)	0.1%
Brunei Darussalam	0.003%

GENDER

Our data suggests that **girls are more likely to contact child helplines in the Asia-Pacific region than boys** – 45.9% of the counselling contacts were made by girls, compared to 37.7% by boys. Girls contacted child helplines 358,985 times and boys contacted child helplines 295,132 times. The gender of 15.4% of the callers was not identified and 0.9% of the contacts were made by children and young people identifying as non-binary.

These analyses include 16 child helplines, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Gender – Counselling contacts	%
Girl	45.9%
Boy	37.7%
Non-binary	0.9%
Unknown	15.4%

REASONS FOR CONTACT

We obtained data from 16 child helplines mapped at a categorical level as outlined by our Data Framework. It is important to note that not all child helplines report on every reason for contact at a (sub-) category level.

Access to services (26.3%) and **violence** (23.3%) were the two main reasons for contact reported by the child helplines in the Asia-Pacific region. Almost half (49.6%) of all contacts related to one of these issues. Child helplines also received a large number of contacts relating to **mental health** (16.3%). This means that two out of three times that a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline in the Asia-Pacific region, it is to discuss a concern related to one of these three issues (65.9% of all counselling contacts).

We provide more information below on these main categories of contact in the region by detailing them at the sub-categorical level.

Reasons for contact	%
Access to services	26.3%
Discrimination and exclusion	1.3%
Education and occupation	3.5%
Family relationships	7.9%
Mental health	16.3%
Missing children	7.0%
Peer relationships	5.6%
Physical health	7.1%
Sexuality	1.7%
Violence	23.3%

Note: *In the Asia-Pacific region, India accounted for half of all counselling contact (51.5%). For that reason, we completed a comparative analysis for the region including and excluding India. Without the Indian data, contacts about access to services drops from 26.3% to 12.6% across the rest of the region, while mental health becomes a main reason for contact at 30.6% (rather than 16.3%). Violence remains an important reason for contact in the region (15.2%). For our reporting, we have included India's data while also highlighting the three main reason for contacts in the Asia-Pacific region, to highlight the significant number of mental health contacts raised in the other countries.*

Access to services

Access to **essential needs** (39.0%) was the main issue for contact relating to access to services reported by child helplines in the Asia-Pacific region, accounting for over a third of these contacts. **Unspecified/other concerns** (19.4%) and enquiries about **general healthcare services** (18.0%) followed. These three sub-categories accounted for three quarters of the contacts relating specifically to access to services (76.5%).

These analyses include 11 child helplines, representing a 69.0% response rate for this question.

Access to services: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Education	13.5%
Essential needs	39.0%
General healthcare services	18.0%
Legal services and advice	0.5%
Mental health services	3.9%
Sexual health services	0.3%
Socio-economic services	5.3%
Unspecified/other	19.4%

Violence

Child labour (23.3%) and **physical violence** (23.3%) were the main reasons for contacts relating specifically to violence that were reported by child helplines in the Asia-Pacific region, closely followed by contacts about **child/early/forced marriage** (18.0%). These three reasons accounted for almost two thirds of all contacts relating to violence (64.5%).

These analyses include 16 child helplines, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Violence: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Bullying	4.4%
Child/early/forced marriage	18.0%
Child labour	23.3%
Commercial sexual exploitation (offline)	1.4%
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	0.01%
Gender-based harmful traditional practices (other than FGM)	0.003%
Harmful traditional practices other than child marriage and FGM	0.002%
Mental/emotional violence	14.3%
Neglect (or negligent treatment)	5.7%
Online sexual abuse	0.1%
Online sexual exploitation	0.2%
Physical violence	23.3%
Sexual violence	7.8%
Unspecified/other	1.5%

Mental health

Emotional distress – mood problems (40.0%) was the main reason for contacts relating specifically to mental health that were reported by child helplines in the Asia-Pacific region. This was followed by **suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts** (14.7%), **concerns about the self** (11.4%), **emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems** (11.0%) and **self-harming behaviour** (7.4%). These five sub-categories represent nearly all contacts about mental health (84.5%).

These analyses include 15 child helplines, representing a 94.0% response rate for this question.

Mental health: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Addictive behaviours and substance use	3.8%
Behavioural problems	1.3%
Concerns about the self	11.4%
Emotional distress – anger problems	3.5%
Emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems	11.0%
Emotional distress – mood problems	40.0%
Neurodevelopmental concerns	0.3%
Problems with eating behaviour	1.4%
Self-harming behaviour	7.4%
Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts	14.7%
Traumatic distress	2.3%
Unspecified/other	3.0%

ACTIONS TAKEN

Direct interventions by the child helpline (75.8%) were by far the most frequent actions taken, accounting for nearly three quarters of all actions taken by child helplines in the Asia-Pacific region.

These analyses include 10 child helplines, representing a 63.0% response rate for this question.

Actions taken	%
Direct interventions by the child helpline	75.8%
Recommendations of resources	6.9%
Referrals to child protection agencies	11.7%
Referrals to general healthcare services	1.8%
Referrals to law enforcement agencies	1.9%
Referrals to mental health services	0.1%
Referrals to other organisations	1.6%
Referrals to school counsellors	0.1%
Reports to Child Sexual Abuse Material portals	0.01%
Other	0.004%

EUROPE

NUMBER OF CONTACTS

Our child helpline members in the European region responded to 3,816,437 contacts with 38 child helplines across 34 countries in 2021. Specifically, our child helpline members in the European region received a total of **1,306,658 counselling contacts in 2021**. In addition, our network recorded 2,509,779 non-counselling contacts (n = 16 child helplines).

Region	Type of Contact	Number of Contacts
Europe	Counselling Contacts	1,306,658
	Non-Counselling Contacts	2,509,779
All Contacts		3,816,437

COUNTRIES

The three countries receiving the highest number of counselling contacts in the European region were the **Netherlands** with 24.6% of all counselling contacts, the **United Kingdom** with 18.6% and **Germany** with 7.8%. Thirty-one other countries accounted for the remaining 41.9% of the contacts.

Counselling contacts by country	%
Netherlands	24.6%
United Kingdom	18.6%
Germany	7.8%
Czechia	5.7%
Israel	4.4%
Denmark, Greece	3.9% each
Norway, Sweden	3.4% each
France	3.2%
Ireland	3%
Austria	2.8%
Poland	2.4%
Spain, Hungary, Belgium	1.8% each
Switzerland	1.6%
Lithuania	1.4%
Bulgaria	0.9%
Finland	0.7%
Romania	0.6%
Italy, Serbia	0.4% each
Azerbaijan, Slovenia	0.3% each
Albania, Latvia, Moldova	0.2% each
Malta, Croatia	0.1% each
Luxembourg	0.08%
Portugal, Bosnia & Herzegovina	0.07% each
North Macedonia	0.03%

GENDER

Our data suggests that **girls are more likely to contact child helplines in the European region than boys** – 44.9% of the counselling contacts were made by girls, compared to 31.7% by boys. Girls contacted child helplines 586,716 times and boys contacted child helplines 414,411 times. The gender of 22.3% of the callers was not identified and 1.1% of the contacts were made by children and young people identifying as non-binary.

These analyses include 16 child helplines, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Gender – Counselling contacts	%
Girl	44.9%
Boy	31.7%
Non-binary	1.1%
Unknown	22.3%

REASONS FOR CONTACT

We obtained data from 37 child helplines mapped at a categorical level as outlined by our Data Framework. It is important to note that not all child helplines report on every reason for contact at a (sub-) category level.

Mental health (41.7%) was the main reason for contact reported by the child helplines in the European region. This means that more than a third of the time that a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline in the European region, it is to discuss a concern related to their mental health.

Child helplines also received a large number of contacts related to **violence** (17.9%), **family relationships** (13.2%), **peer relationships** (10.5%), and **sexuality** (6.1%). More than four out of five times when a child or young person contacted a child helpline in the European region it concerned one of these five categories (89.4% of all counselling contacts). We provide more information below on these main categories of contact in the region by detailing them at the sub-categorical level.

Reasons for contact	%
Access to services	2.4%
Discrimination and exclusion	0.4%
Education and occupation	3.9%
Family relationships	13.2%
Mental health	41.7%
Missing children	0.4%
Peer relationships	10.5%
Physical health	3.6%
Sexuality	6.1%
Violence	17.9%

Mental health

Unspecified/other concerns (20.7%) were the main reasons for contacts specifically relating to mental health reported by child helplines in the European region. Of the *specified* mental health sub-categories, **emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems** (18.5%), **suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts** (17.1%), and **emotional distress – mood problems** (14.7%) are the three main reasons for mental health contacts. These three specified sub-categories represent half of all contacts about mental health (50.4%).

These analyses include 37 child helplines, representing a 97.0% response rate for this question.

Mental health: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Addictive behaviours and substance use	3.2%
Behavioural problems	2.3%
Concerns about the self	7.3%
Emotional distress – anger problems	3.0%
Emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems	18.5%
Emotional distress – mood problems	14.7%
Neurodevelopmental concerns	0.6%
Problems with eating behaviour	3.4%
Self-harming behaviour	8.4%
Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts	17.1%
Traumatic distress	0.8%
Unspecified/other	20.7%

Violence

Mental/emotional violence (21.0%) was the main reason for contacts specifically relating to violence reported by child helplines in the European region, closely followed by **physical violence** (20.5%) and **bullying** (20.4%). These three reasons accounted for close to two thirds of the contacts about violence (61.9%).

These analyses include 36 child helplines, representing a 95.0% response rate for this question.

Violence: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Bullying	20.4%
Child/early/forced marriage	0.01%
Child labour	0.6%
Commercial sexual exploitation (offline)	0.1%
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	N/A
Gender-based harmful traditional practices (other than FGM)	2.11%
Harmful traditional practices other than child marriage and FGM	N/A
Mental/emotional violence	21.0%
Neglect (or negligent treatment)	10.5%
Online sexual abuse	1.6%
Online sexual exploitation	0.7%
Physical violence	20.5%
Sexual violence	11.7%
Unspecified/other	10.7%

ACTIONS TAKEN

Recommendations of resources (34.2%) by the child helplines were by far the most frequent action taken, accounting for a third of all actions taken by child helplines in the European region. The next three most frequent actions taken were **referrals to child protection agencies** (16.0%), **referrals to other organisations** (13.9%) and **direct interventions by the child helpline** (12.2%).

These analyses include 28 child helplines, representing a 74.0% response rate for this question.

Actions taken	%
Direct interventions by the child helpline	12.2%
Recommendations of resources	34.2%
Referrals to child protection agencies	16.0%
Referrals to general healthcare services	5.7%
Referrals to law enforcement agencies	3.6%
Referrals to mental health services	3.9%
Referrals to other organisations	13.9%
Referrals to school counsellors	5.1%
Reports to Child Sexual Abuse Material portals	0.3%
Other	5.1%

MIDDLE-EAST AND NORTHERN AFRICA

NUMBER OF CONTACTS

Our child helpline members in the MENA region responded to 87,183 contacts with 8 child helplines across 8 countries in 2021. Specifically, our child helpline members in the MENA region received a total of **61,452 counselling contacts in 2021**. In addition, our network recorded 25,731 non-counselling contacts (n = 6 child helplines).

Region	Type of Contact	Number of Contacts
MENA	Counselling Contacts	25,731
	Non-Counselling Contacts	61,452
Total	All Contacts	87,183

COUNTRIES

The three countries that received the highest number of counselling contacts in the MENA region were **Palestine** with 41.4% of all counselling contacts, **Jordan** with 26.6% and **Saudi Arabia** with 12.8%. Three other countries accounted for remaining 19.2% of the contacts.

Counselling contacts by country	%
Palestine	41.4%
Jordan	26.6%
Saudi Arabia	12.8%
Algeria	10%
Iraq	3.9%
Kuwait	2.5%
Qatar	1.5%
United Arab Emirates	1.4%

GENDER

Our data suggests that **girls and boys contact child helplines in the MENA region at almost the same rate**. 45.9% of the counselling contacts were made by girls compared to 41.6% by boys. Girls contacted child helplines 11,814 times and boys contacted child helplines 10,704 times. The gender of 12% of the callers was not identified, and 0.5% of the contacts were made by children and young people identifying as non-binary.

These analyses include 8 child helplines, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Gender – Counselling contacts	%
Girl	45.9%
Boy	41.6%
Non-binary	0.5%
Unknown	12%

REASONS FOR CONTACT

We obtained data from 8 child helplines mapped at a categorical level as outlined by our Data Framework. It is important to note that not all child helplines report on every reason for contact at a (sub-)category level.

Violence (45.6%) was the main reason for contact reported by the child helplines in the MENA region. Nearly half of all contacts were related to this topic. This means that half of the time that a child or young person reaches out to a child helpline in the MENA region, it is to discuss a concern related a situation of violence.

Child helplines also received a number of contacts related to **mental health** (16.7 %), **family relationships** (14.9%) and **access to services** (10.3%). More than four out of five times when a child or young person contacted a child helpline in the MENA region it concerned one of these four categories (87.4% of all counselling contacts). We provide more information below on the main categories of contact in the region by detailing them at the sub-categorical level.

Reasons for contact	%
Access to services	10.3%
Discrimination and exclusion	0.2%
Education and occupation	2.4%
Family relationships	14.9%
Mental health	16.7%
Missing children	0.2%
Peer relationships	2.7%
Physical health	5.6%
Sexuality	1.4%
Violence	45.6%

Violence

Mental/emotional violence (48.1%) was the main reason for nearly half of the contacts relating specifically to violence that were reported by child helplines in MENA. **Physical violence** (19.7%) and **neglect (or negligent treatment)** (11.1%) were the other main reasons, and together these three reasons accounted for over three quarters of the contacts about violence (78.9%).

These analyses include 8 child helplines, representing a 100% response rate for this question.

Violence: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Bullying	3.0%
Child/early/forced marriage	0.1%
Child labour	2.6%
Commercial sexual exploitation (offline)	0.1%
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	N/A
Gender-based harmful traditional practices (other than FGM)	0.01%
Harmful traditional practices other than child marriage and FGM	N/A
Mental/emotional violence	48.1%
Neglect (or negligent treatment)	11.1%
Online sexual abuse	0.4%
Online sexual exploitation	1.1%
Physical violence	19.7%
Sexual violence	7.5%
Unspecified/other	6.4%

Mental health

Emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems (24.4%) were the main reason for mental health contacts reported by child helplines in the MENA region, followed by **behavioural problems** (19.3%), **unspecified/other concerns** (16.6%), **traumatic distress** (8.8%) and **concerns about the self** (8.3%). Together, these represent three quarters of the contacts about mental health (77.3%).

These analyses include 6 child helplines, representing a 75.0% response rate for this question.

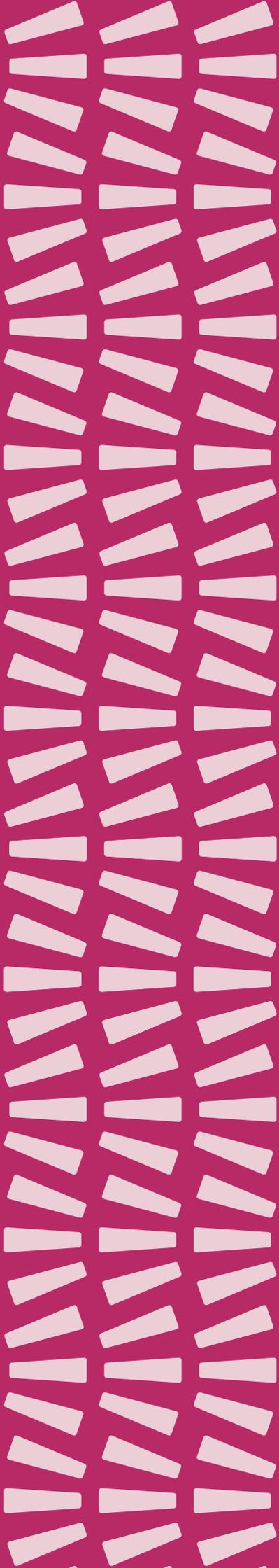
Mental health: Reasons for contact (sub-categories)	%
Addictive behaviours and substance use	2.7%
Behavioural problems	19.3%
Concerns about the self	8.3%
Emotional distress – anger problems	7.0%
Emotional distress – fear and anxiety problems	24.2%
Emotional distress – mood problems	4.7%
Neurodevelopmental concerns	3.4%
Problems with eating behaviour	0.4%
Self-harming behaviour	1.0%
Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts	3.5%
Traumatic distress	8.8%
Unspecified/other	16.6%

ACTIONS TAKEN

Direct interventions by the child helpline (58.1%) was by far the most frequent action taken, accounting for over half the actions taken by child helplines in the MENA region. The second most frequent action taken were **referrals to law enforcement agencies** (28.5%).

These analyses include 5 child helplines, representing a 63.0% response rate for this question.

Actions taken	%
Direct interventions by the child helpline	58.1%
Recommendations of resources	1.5%
Referrals to child protection agencies	6.0%
Referrals to general healthcare services	2.1%
Referrals to law enforcement agencies	28.5%
Referrals to mental health services	1.2%
Referrals to other organisations	1.2%
Referrals to school counsellors	0.1%
Reports to Child Sexual Abuse Material portals	1.3%



Our Child Helpline Members

AFRICA

BENIN	Sauver l'Enfant ☎138	MAURITIUS	Child Helpline Mauritius ☎+214 2451 http://halleymovement.org/our-programs/child-helpline
BOTSWANA	Childline Botswana ☎11611 http://childlinebotswana.org.bw	MOZAMBIQUE	Linha Fala Criança Child Helpline Mozambique ☎116 http://www.linhafala.org.mz
BURKINA FASO	Allo 116 ☎116 http://www.action-sociale.gov.bf	NAMIBIA	Lifeline/Childline Namibia ☎116 http://www.lifelinechildline.org.na
BURUNDI	Yaga Ndakumva ☎116 http://www.droitshumains.gov.bi	NIGERIA	Cece Yara Child Helpline ☎0800 800 8001 http://www.ceceyara.org
CAMEROON	Lignes Vertes Cameroon http://www.minproff.cm/liens-utiles/green-lines		HDI Nigeria Child Helpline ☎0808 0551 376 http://www.hdinigeria.org
CÔTE D'IVOIRE	Allo Enfant en Détresse ☎116 http://www.famille.gouv.ci	SENEGAL	Centre GINDDI - Allo 116 ☎116
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	Tukinge Watoto ☎117 http://www.warchild.uk.org/what-we-do/projects/drc	SIERRA LEONE	Childhelp Sierra Leone http://www.childhelpsl.org
ESWATINI	Eswatini Ministry of Education ☎116 http://www.govpage.co.za/swaziland-education-and-training.html		EEHR Sierra leone http://eehrsl.wix.com/eehrsl
	SWAGAA 951 Helpline ☎951 http://www.swagaa.org.za	SOMALIA	WAAPO Child Helpline ☎334 http://waapo.org
ETHIOPIA	Adama Child Helpline (ECFA) ☎919 http://ecfaethiopia.org	SOUTH AFRICA	Childline South Africa ☎116 http://www.childlinesa.org.za
GAMBIA	Child Helpline Gambia ☎+2209940239	TANZANIA	Tanzania National Child Helpline ☎116 http://www.sematanzania.org/child-helpline
GUINEA	AGUIAS 116 ☎116	TOGO	Allo 1011 ☎1011
KENYA	Childline Kenya ☎116 http://www.childlinekenya.co.ke	UGANDA	Sauti 116 ☎116 http://uchl.mglsd.go.ug
LESOTHO	Child Helpline Lesotho ☎116	ZAMBIA	Childline Zambia ☎116 http://www.lifelinezambia.org.zm
LIBERIA	My Voice, My Safety ☎+231886521443 +231777521443 https://myvoicemysafety.org/	ZIMBABWE	Childline Zimbabwe ☎116 http://www.childline.org.zw
MADAGASCAR	Ligne Verte 147 Madagascar ☎147 http://www.arozaa.mg		
MALAWI	Tithandizane Helpline ☎116 http://www.tithandizanehelpline.org		
MAURITANIA	LATEF ☎8000 1010 http://www.amsme.org		

AMERICAS & THE CARIBBEAN

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

Friends Hotline
☎8000 4357
<http://friendshotline.org>

ARGENTINA

Línea 102
☎102
<http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/cdnnya>

ARUBA

**Telefon Pa Hubentud
Aruban Youth Telephone Line**
☎131
<http://131.aw>

BOLIVIA

Línea 156
☎156
<http://lapaz.bo/smds/>

BRAZIL

Safernet Brasil
<http://www.safernet.org.br>

CANADA

Kids Help Phone
☎1 800 668 6868
<http://kidshelpphone.ca>

CHILE

Fonoinfancia
☎800 200 818
<http://www.fonoinfancia.cl>

Línea Libre
☎1515
<http://www.linealibre.cl>

COLOMBIA

ICBF Colombia
☎141
<http://www.icbf.gov.go>

Línea 106 Bogotá
☎106
<http://www.saludcapital.gov.co/Paginas2/Linea106-inicio.aspx>

COSTA RICA

Patronata Nacional de la Infancia (PANI)
☎1147
<http://www.pani.go.cr>

CURAÇAO

Ayudo pa mucha i hoben
☎918
<http://www.918.cw>

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Línea de ayuda Familiar CONTIGO
☎+809 N636 3507
<http://lineafamiliar.do>

GRENADA

Sweet Water Foundation Child Helpline
☎+473 800 4444
<http://www.sweetwaterfoundation.ca>

HAITI

Jurimédia
<http://www.jurimedia.org>

JAMAICA

SafeSpot
☎+888 723 3776
<http://www.safespotja.com>

NICARAGUA

Línea 133
☎133
<http://www.mifamilia.gob.ni>

PARAGUAY

Fono Ayuda
☎147
<http://www.minna.gov.py/pagina/1224-fono-ayuda-147.html>

PERU

Télefono Anar
☎0800 2 2210
<http://www.anarperu.org>

SAINT KITTS & NEVIS

The Ripple Institute
<http://rippleskn.com>

SURINAME

KJT
☎123
<http://www.bel123.org>

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Childline Trinidad & Tobago
☎131
<http://www.childlinett.org>

URUGUAY

Línea Azul
☎0800 5050
<http://www.inau.gub.uy>

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2ndfloor Youth helpline
☎888 222 2228
<http://www.2ndfloor.org>

Boys Town National Hotline
☎1 800 448 3000
<http://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org>

Crisis Text Line
Text: 741741
<http://www.crisistextline.org>

National Child Abuse Hotline
☎1 800 422 4453
<http://www.childhelp.org>

Polaris
Text: 233733
<http://www.polarisproject.org>

Stop It Now!
☎1 888 773 8368
<http://www.stopitnow.org>

The Trevor Lifeline
☎866 488 7386
<http://www.thetrevorproject.org>

ASIA-PACIFIC

AFGHANISTAN	Voice of Children ☎0707 199 199 http://www.warchild.org.uk/what-we-do/projects/afghanistan	http://www.syfmyanmar.org
AUSTRALIA	Kids Helpline ☎1800 55 1800 http://www.kidshelp.com.au	NEPAL Child Helpline Nepal ☎1098 http://www.cwin.org.np
BANGLADESH	Bangladesh Child Helpline ☎1098 http://www.dss.gov.bd	NEW ZEALAND 0800 What's Up? ☎0800 942 8787 http://www.whatsup.co.nz
BHUTAN	Child Helpline Bhutan ☎1098 http://www.ncwc.gov.bt	Youthline ☎0800 376 633 http://www.youthline.co.nz
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	Talian Anak ☎121 http://www.japem.gov.bn	PAKISTAN Madadgaar National Helpline ☎1098 http://www.madadgaar.org
CAMBODIA	Child Helpline Cambodia ☎1280 http://www.childhelpline.org.kh	PAPUA NEW GUINEA 1-Tok Kaunselin Helpim Lain ☎71508000 http://www.childfund.org.au
CHINA	Child Emergency Hotline	PHILIPPINES Bantay Bata 163 ☎163 http://www.bantaybata163.com
FIJI	Child Helpline Fiji ☎1325 http://www.msp.org.fj	SINGAPORE Tinkle Friend Helpline ☎1800 2744 788 http://www.tinklefriend.sg
HONG KONG	Parent-Child Support Line ☎2755 1122 http://www.aca.org.hk	SRI LANKA Childline Sri Lanka ☎1929 http://www.childprotection.gov.lk
INDIA	Childline India ☎1098 http://www.childlineindia.org.in	TAIWAN 113 Protection Hotline ☎113 http://www.worldvision.org.tw
INDONESIA	TePSA - Telepon Pelayanan Sosial Anak ☎1500771	TAJIKISTAN NEKI - Child Rights Centre
JAPAN	Childline Japan ☎0120 99 7777 http://www.childline.or.jp	THAILAND Childline Thailand - Saidek 1387 ☎1387 http://www.childlinethailand.org
KAZAKHSTAN	Balaga Komek ☎150 http://www.telefon150.kz	UZBEKISTAN Children & Family Support Centre
KYRGYZSTAN	Helpline for Children ☎111 http://www.crdl.kg	VANUATU Vanuatu Youth Toll-Free Helpline ☎087777 http://vfha15.wordpress.com
LAOS	Vientiane Youthline ☎1361 (girls) 1371 (boys)	VIETNAM National Hotline for Child Protection ☎111 http://tongdai111.vn
MALDIVES	Child Helpline 1412 ☎1412 http://www.gender.gov.mv	
MONGOLIA	Child Helpline Mongolia ☎108 http://108.mn	
MYANMAR	Childline Myanmar	

EUROPE

ALBANIA	Alo 116 Albania ☎ 116 111 http://www.alo116.al	HUNGARY	Lelkisegély-vonal ☎ 116 111 http://www.kek-vonal.hu/igy-segitunk/a-116-111-segelyvonalrol
ARMENIA	FAR Child Protection Hotline & Helpline ☎ 0800 61 111 http://www.farusa.org	ICELAND	Hjálparsiminn / Red Cross Iceland ☎ 1717 http://www.raudikrossinn.is
AUSTRIA	147 Rat Auf Draht ☎ 147 http://www.rataufdraht.at	IRELAND	ISPC Childline ☎ 1800 66 66 66 http://www.ispcc.ie/childline
AZERBAIJAN	Azerbaijan Child Helpline ☎ +99412 4802280 http://www.childhelpline.az	ISRAEL	ERAN (Emotional First Aid in Israel) ☎ 1201 http://en.eran.org.il
BELGIUM	Jongerenlijn AWEL ☎ 102 http://www.awel.be		NATAL Helpline ☎ 1800 363 363 http://www.natal.org.il
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	Plavi Telefon ☎ 0800 50305 http://www.plavitelefon.ba	ITALY	Hello Telefono Azzurro ☎ 19696 http://www.azzurro.it
BULGARIA	National Telephone Line for Children ☎ 116 111 http://www.sacp.government.bg	LATVIA	Uzticibas Talrunis ☎ 116 111 / 800 6008 http://www.bti.gov.lv/lat/uztivibas_talrunis
CROATIA	Hrabritelefon ☎ 116 111 http://hrabritelefon.hr	LIECHTENSTEIN	Sorgentelefon fur Kinder und Jugendliche ☎ 147 http://www.147-sote.li
CYPRUS	Call 116111 Cyprus ☎ 116 111 http://www.call116111.com	LITHUANIA	Vaiku Linija ☎ 116 111 http://www.vaikulinija.lt
CZECHIA	Linka Bezpečí ☎ 116 111 http://www.linkabezpeci.cz	LUXEMBOURG	Kanner Jugendtelefon KJT ☎ 116 111 http://www.kjt.lu
DENMARK	Børne Telefonen ☎ 116 111 http://bornetelefonen.dk	MALTA	Kellimni http://www.kellimni.com
ESTONIA	Lapsemure http://www.lapsemure.ee/forum_est		Support Line 179 ☎ 116 111 / 179 http://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/support-line-179.aspx
FINLAND	Child and Youth Phone ☎ 116 111 http://www.mll.fi/nuortennetti	MOLDOVA	Telefonul Copilului ☎ 116 111 http://telefonulcopilului.md
FRANCE	Allô Enfance en Danger ☎ 119 http://www.allo119.gouv.fr	NETHERLANDS	De Kindertelefoon ☎ 116 111 / 0800 0432 http://kindertelefoon.nl
GEORGIA	Child Helpline Georgia ☎ 116 111 http://www.phmdf.ge		Helpwanted.nl ☎ +31 20 261 5275 http://helpwanted.nl
GERMANY	Kinder- und Jugendtelefon ☎ 116 111 http://www.nummergegenkummer.de/kinder-und-jugendtelefon.html	NORTH MACEDONIA	Alo Bushavko ☎ +389 703 90632 http://www.childrensembassy.org.mk
GREECE	The Smile of the Child ☎ 116 111 / 1056 http://www.hamogelo.gr	NORWAY	Alarmtelefonen for barn og unge ☎ 116 111 http://www.116111.no
	Together for Children ☎ 11525 http://www.mazigiatopaidi.gr		Kors På Halsen ☎ 800 333 21 http://korspaahalsen.rodekors.no

MIDDLE EAST & NORTHERN AFRICA

POLAND	Telefon Zaufania ☎ 116 111 http://www.fdds.pl	ALGERIA	Je t'écoute ☎ 3033 http://www.nada-dz.org
PORTUGAL	SOS Criança ☎ 116 111 http://iacrianca.pt/intervencao/sos-crianca	BAHRAIN	Child Helpline 998 ☎ 998 http://www.mlsd.gov.bh/en/childhood/childhood_care/998
ROMANIA	Telefonul Copilului ☎ 116 111 http://www.telefonulcopilului.ro	EGYPT	Child Helpline Egypt ☎ 16000 http://www.nccm.gov.eg
SERBIA	NADEL ☎ 116 111 http://nadel-decijalinija.org	IRAN	Sedaye Yara ☎ +98 21 42152 http://www.irsprc.org
SLOVAKIA	Linka Detskej Istoty ☎ 116 111 / 0800 112 112 http://www.lidi.sk	IRAQ	116 Child Helpline - Kurdistan Region ☎ 116 http://www.molsa.gov.iq
SLOVENIA	National Telephone Helpline TOM ☎ 116 111 http://www.e-tom.si	JORDAN	Jordan River Foundation 110 Helpline ☎ 110 http://www.jordanriver.jo
SPAIN	Teléfono ANAR de Ayuda a Niños y Adolescentes ☎ 116 111 http://www.anar.org/necesitas-ayuda-telefono-ninos-adolescentes	KUWAIT	Help Hotline 147 ☎ 147 http://kncpp.com
SWEDEN	BRIS ☎ 116 111 http://www.bris.se	LEBANON	Higher Council for Childhood http://std.afalouna.gov.lb
SWITZERLAND	Pro Juventute Beratung + Hilfe 147 ☎ 147 http://www.147.ch		Naba'a http://www.nabaa-lb.org
TURKEY	Gençlik Destek Hattı ☎ 0850 455 0070 http://www.genclikdestekhatti.org.tr	PALESTINE	Sawa 121 ☎ 121 http://www.sawa.ps
UKRAINE	Ukraine National Child Toll-Free Hotline ☎ 116 111 / 0800 500 225 http://www.la-strada.org.ua	QATAR	Hotline 919 ☎ 919 http://www.aman.org.qa
UNITED KINGDOM	BEAT ☎ 0808 801 0677 http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk	SAUDI ARABIA	Saudi Child Helpline ☎ 116 111 / +9661 252 0088 http://www.nfsp.org.sa
	Childline UK ☎ 116 111 / 0800 1111 http://www.childline.org.uk	SUDAN	Child Helpline 9696 ☎ 9696 http://www.fcpcu.gov.sd
	HopelineUK ☎ 0800 068 4141 http://www.papyrus-uk.org/hopelineuk	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	Child Helpline (Sharjah) ☎ 800700 http://sssd.shj.ae
	Muslim Youth Helpline ☎ 0808 808 2008 http://www.myh.org.uk		DFWAC Helpline (Dubai) ☎ 800111 http://www.dfwac.ae
	The Mix ☎ 0808 808 4994 http://www.themix.org.uk		



Every child has a voice. No child should be left unheard.

Child Helpline International is a collective impact organisation with more than 160 members in over 140 countries and territories around the world.

We coordinate information, viewpoints, knowledge and data from our child helpline members, partners and external sources. This exceptional resource is used to help and support child protection systems globally, regionally and nationally, and to help our members advocate for the rights of children and amplify their voices.

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