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Youth urged to live life well

Kids Helpline is urging adults to help children and young people live life to the full this National Youth Week (April 10 to 18).

Kids Helpline General Manager Wendy Protheroe said while the national counselling service supports the Youth Week theme of 'Live it now'; they would add the sentiment of living life well.

"We know what worries kids and we are urging parents and the wider community to help children and young people cope with those worries and live their life well," she said.

"Emotional wellbeing is extremely important but sadly, over the past six years, we have seen significant increases in contacts relating to mental health, self-injury and suicidal thoughts.

"Relationships also remain a key area of difficulty – with more than 18,000 counselling sessions relating to family, friends and partners in the past year.

"This highlights the importance of building young people's resilience and their ability to make positive choices."

Resilience is a person's ability to cope with a challenging situation and it can protect a young person during times of change or increased stress.

"Young people who are resilient tend to be more hopeful, confident and possess higher self-worth when times get tough and they are more able to overcome challenges and recognise when they need support, and who best can help them," Ms Protheroe said.

Kids Helpline's tips for building resilience:

- Let children know they are loved, valued and wanted. Spend time with them and be available when they need you
- Try and ensure there are several (at least one other) adults in a child's life who care about and can support them and act as emotional mentor
- Be interested and involved in activities that are important to them
- Balance affection, warmth and responsiveness with clear, realistic and consistently applied, age appropriate boundaries and limits
- Develop family rituals that help to build a sense of security and belonging
- Consult with children and ask for their opinions
- Have fun with them - laughter, humour and games helps build a sense of trust.

Kids Helpline, Australia's only national children's counselling service, provides 24 hour counselling services to young people aged 5 to 25 years – free call 1800 55 1800 or online at www.kidshelp.com.au

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