



ParentsBeyondBreakup

Empowering families – Creating futures

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Massive surge in distress calls to Suicide Helpline

National Suicide prevention charity Parents Beyond Breakup (PBB) is experiencing a 30% rise in calls to their national Suicide Helpline compared to the same time last year.

“Anecdotally our callers are expressing increased distress mainly linked to the lockdown and effect of COVID 19 on their mental well-being,” said PBB CEO Gillian Hunt.

“In addition, most of our Face-to-Face Peer Support Groups that run weekly across the country, have had to move online as venues close due to the COVID restrictions, and again we are finding that group numbers are up almost 50% on the same time last year,” continued Mrs Hunt.

“Currently approximately 40% of our increased calls are coming from non-custodial parents in New South Wales, with another large proportion from Victoria. When the lockdown in Melbourne first began, we saw a similar trend with our call volumes increasing significantly with the majority of these from Victoria,” she continued.

“Whilst our callers are increasing in number, primarily the causes of their distress remain issues with lack of access to their children, situational distress which is known to be one of the biggest triggers for suicide in men in Australia.”

“The trauma of the Covid pandemic compounded with the situational distress that non-custodial parents are enduring is having a marked impact upon our most vulnerable separated parents,” she concluded.

Background: Who we are

- Parents Beyond Breakup is a national suicide prevention charity that’s been supporting Fathers (and more recently Mums) who are experiencing situational distress through relationship breakdown since 1999.

www.parentsbeyondbreakup.com

Helpline: 1300 853 437

- Since our inception, our delivery model has been based on 'lived experience' – all of our Helpline Operators, Peer Group Support Facilitators, and the majority of our permanent team have themselves experienced relationship breakdown.
- We operate a Suicide Helpline as well as multiple Peer Support Groups nationally.
- Quality assurance data suggests that we prevent over 300 suicides each year, making PBB one of the most effective and efficient suicide prevention charities in Australia.

The Facts:

- For men, relationship issues are the life crisis that is most commonly linked to suicide.
- Separation is the biggest single relationship risk factor for men with nearly 4 in 10 male suicides linked to separation.
- Research shows as many as half of all separated fathers experience thoughts of suicide.
- We know that situational distress, not mental health, is also one of the biggest triggers for suicide in men in Australia.
- Both Mums and Dads are supported by PBB, with approximately 70% of our recipients being men.

What we can add to the conversation:

- Our mission is to keep separating parents alive and in their kids' lives
- We would like to highlight the support available for parents who are in distress.
- We know that they are not always experiencing mental health issues rather that their situation becomes unbearable in a practical sense. The inability to deal with the practicalities they face is strongly linked to their likelihood to suicide.
- We believe that we need to listen, engage and treat men as a significant at-risk group and to provide them peer based practical support.

We are available for interviews, backgrounding or further discussion to highlight the support that is available for parents in distress across Australia.

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