




Our Impact 2019-2020

Transformation and adaptation





GriefLine recognises the continuous and deep connection to Country of Aboriginal people as the first peoples of this nation. In this way we respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of our Country throughout Australia. We pay tribute to Elders past, present and emerging and respect the collective ancestry that has brought us all here today.



Index

About us	4
Thank you to our supporters	5
Our impact	6
Message from our Board Co-chairs	7
Griefline organisational structure	11
Our point of difference	12
Who uses Griefline?	13
Transformation and adaptation	18
Facing COVID-19	19
Navigating change	20
Our volunteers	21
July 2020 and beyond	23
Sustainability and growth	25
Valuable partnerships	27
Thank you	28

About us

GriefLine is a free national helpline offering confidential phone counselling and support to anyone experiencing grief, loss, trauma and the many associated feelings they experience as a result. Griefline is also a key stakeholder to the Victoria Police in the provision of counsellor support to victims of trauma.

Our counselling support is available 7 days a week, 365 days a year and provides early intervention and prevention of mental health difficulties which may compound a person's experience of grief, loss and trauma.

GriefLine is available nationally inclusive of remote, regional and rural communities, in addition to all metropolitan regions, Australia wide. GriefLine services are only made possible by the skilled efforts of the highly trained volunteer counsellors.



Thank you

Griefline wishes to thank its many partners and donors who supported our work throughout the year. They include:

Individuals

Brett Michael	Barbara Cooper Estate
Jason Coventry	Justine Cheubino
James Pople	Gerry Melder
Paul Munday	Scott Thompson
Jo Miller	Lisa Swards
Carol Gray	Sue Foley
Estate of the late	Dennis Tarrant
Pat Williamson	

Business

Cabaret Gaming
FACTS Management Australia
Bunnings Moorabbin
Adairs
Moving Mindsets
Eco Style
Mulbury Frames
Tactic Galleries

Philanthropy

Magistrates Court of Victoria
Chamberlain Foundation
Glen Eira City Council
SEMPHN
Melbourne OPC
Emily's Wish Foundation





Our impact



12,582 calls to the Helpline



19,112 volunteer hours



91 volunteers



1,250 calls referred from other NFP's



1,409 referrals from Victoria Police



59 new volunteers trained



28,896 new users to our website



10 university student placements

A message from our Board Co-Chairs

The transformation of GriefLine and facing adversity through COVID-19

GriefLine is a NFP that has survived 32 years in the Australian market sector of mental health helplines. We say survived, because in December 2019 when Sarah became the Chairperson of the Board, GriefLine was still struggling to impact public recognition, corporate support, and government belief that the need for GriefLine services were vital.

As a decades old organisation with a fractured past, public scrutiny was undermining our reputation, we had been derailed in our service delivery and growth strategy, all while fighting for relevance and awareness among the national NFP helplines.

When Sarah was interviewed for the Chair position, the brief was clear, "Are you willing to make the tough decisions this organisation needs, whatever they are?"


At the time it was a good question, however given the year that followed and the turmoil of the pandemic, a better one should have been, "Are you willing to support a team to take risks and implement innovation," as tough decisions are par for the course at Board level. Being innovative, creative and a thought leader is a much tougher KPI to deliver and COVID has taught us, is the key to organisational survival.



Board Co-Chair
Sarah Godfrey



Board Co-Chair
Nicky Mackie



As COVID-19 hit, and despite the need for our helpline soaring to an increase of over 1100%, GriefLine lost government funding in Victoria. Engaging a completely new Board and CEO was not enough to stabilise the declining faith in the delivery model and performance expectations of our organisation. Not when we were expected to compete against the bigger players in mental health NFP who received funding automatically. As an organisation we sat at the precipice of closing our doors.

Something had to change. It was clear the transformation needed to be at the cellular level of the operation. As our uncertain financial forecast crept closer we needed an all-in mentality. Big decisions and agile approaches were our only options to course-correct the direction of GriefLine.

And this is how we did it in 8 months.

We grew an investor mindset that could make strategic projections for self-sustainability by:

- Investing in partnerships with other organisation to deliver leading programs and initiatives
- Developing a viable social purpose and investment proposal
- Funding (with the very little we had) a national media campaign

We restructured to build a management team that moved in lockstep, were interchangeable and empowered over powerful

- Replaced the CEO model and adopted a shared executive operation to reduce risk and play to the strengths of an organisational model based on fast paced deliverables.
- Engaged COO and CMO as dual leadership positions to work in unison and diffuse power bases structured to one individual.
- Lifted the volunteer Board responsibility and expectation of participation including a volunteer stakeholder to reflect the volunteer community.
- Modelled dual leadership initiatives by creating Co-Chair positions (instead of Chair and Vice Chair). to create dual leadership positions to work in unison and diffuse power bases structured to one individual.
- Demonstrated a culture of inclusivity and accountability by our actions
- Ensured all voices participated and were heard including stakeholders.
- Invited volunteers and employees to participate in development of programs, training designs and organisational connectivity and purpose.



We became skilled in executing decisions quickly and in manifesting agile approaches to operational needs.

- Invested in creating a revolution of learning by utilising the vast experiences and ideas from the volunteers and front-line employees.
- Leaned into digital network responses and embraced soft phone solutions so our volunteers could work safely from their homes during a pandemic.
- Built trust and transparency around the 'why' of action required, to enable nimble and new solutions.
- Gave autonomy, respect, and responsibility to those needing to make fast and better decisions.
- Reviewed, reworked, and replaced all programs and training practices that did not meet our customer centric expectation.

We went back to the origins of why we existed and asked ourselves how we could do it better.

- Reimagined the delivery service models and explored need versus assumptions of what our help seekers wanted.
- Recognised the volunteers as our primary focus and developed training programs, volunteer pathways, forums and supports to maintain their wellbeing, pride, and ability to perform the vitals service and connect as our own Volunteer Village.
- Strive for healthy and respectful discomfort and discord in our meetings so we are always asking not just 'what next, why, why not,' but 'how about, what if, is it possible.' In this way, we deliberately foster robust discussion, ignition of new ideas and diversity of thought.
- We chased the new normal. Each action leads to a new possibility.
- Focused on continuity of care, seamless response to help seeker needs and a bigger picture mentality of NFP integration with each other and community resources.

It was healing to unashamedly acknowledge our faults and mistakes of the past. This allowed us to commit to one vision that had clear fundamentals- support the community, build a resilient society, and value our volunteers.

The short version is the threat of closing, the surge in demand and the unstable financial forecast was the circuit breaker GriefLine needed. We reached out to contacts who stepped up and funded our new innovative ideas, we widened the concept of what grief and loss can mean to support the community through COVID and we made fast and better decisions about changing and transforming what we wanted GriefLine to be now and in the future.



Has it saved us?

We have no certainty.. At least the public is talking about us, we are receiving recognition for the preventative approach we maintain towards mental health issues and we are back talking to government about a sustainable funding future.

We achieved a first-class response of being referenced on the page of support organisations for the community, for everything from bereavement, to support through trauma such as the Bourke Street attack. What we have achieved is to demonstrate we are not only relevant, but we are an essential organisation within the Federal Mental Health Framework.

With our persistence of purpose, we have been included within the consultation process of the development of a National Digital Mental Health Framework. We are honoured to hold a seat at the table of what is the forefront of our very ethos of innovation and drive for patient pathways of seamless care.

Everything we have done and continue to achieve, is driven by more than agility to change. We have acted fearlessly in face of adversity. We have shown our organisation to deliver rapid transformation and open engagement with new, novel and nimble concepts, we have embraced our volunteers and highlighted the need to care and support them through targeted training, connection to each other and supervision. We embraced unlearning what we had learnt to create the path forward.

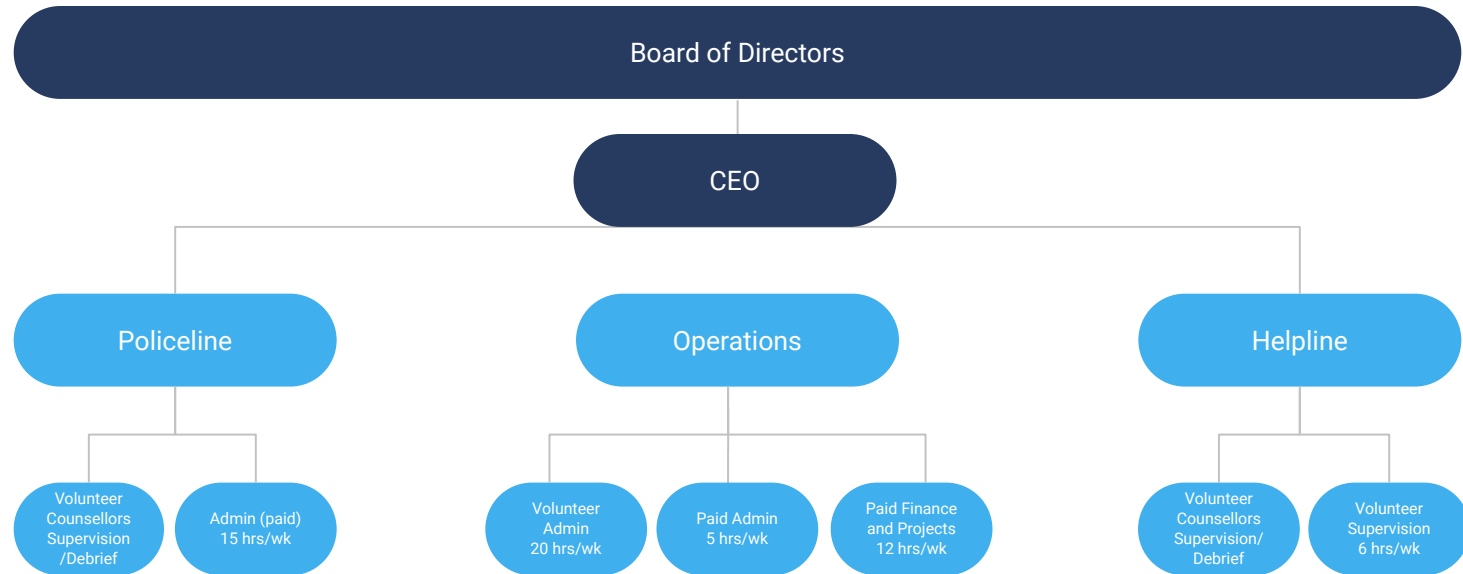
All done on a shoestring budget.

Reimaging GriefLine has opened a window into its true capabilities. It is an exciting time to be part of such a meaningful, relevant, and future focused team.

The Board's main strategic goal was to stabilise the operational foundation and prepare GriefLine for its future. We have achieved this by upgrading technological delivery, reskilling and training volunteers and engaging in reculturalisation across all levels of the organisation. As we near the end of a very traumatic and disruptive year, where grief and loss has been the pronounced mental health issue, from bushfires to COVID-19, and funding levels ceased, we have achieved our goals.

As Co-Chairs of Griefline, and the voice of our volunteers, our board, our leadership team, our employees, and our clients – we are committed and will continue to fight for the relevance and innovative organisation that we represent in the provision of preventative Mental Health care pathways.

Griefline organisational structure - as at 30 June 20





Our point of difference - continuity of care

1

Griefline's support services are available nationally through telephone counselling, online moderated forums and 24/7 online resources and support tools. We seek to reduce the incidence, prevalence and recurrence of mental health disorders. When a person reaches out to Griefline, our purpose is to provide evidence-based interventions to modify risk exposure while strengthening the coping mechanisms of the individual.

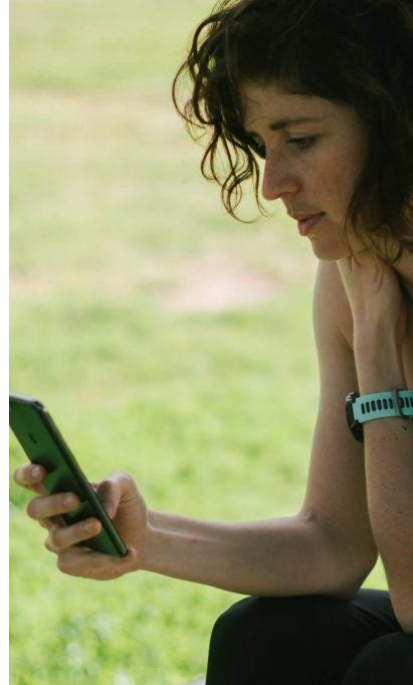
2

Our volunteers are specifically trained to support grief, loss and associated trauma as part of the human experience. When callers require support and strategies versus crisis intervention, they are redirected to us. In 2019/20, 10% of callers were referred to our services by the larger NFP's including Beyond Blue and Lifeline.

Who uses Griefline

Our services and support tools are available to all people throughout Australia, no matter where they live. Griefline's most prominent help-seekers fell into the following demographics and segments*:

- 01 | 62% female / 37% male
- 02 | 64% of callers are 45+ years of age
- 03 | 42% of callers are from Vic, followed by 30% from NSW
- 04 | Callers are bereaved, lonely and isolated
- 05 | 10% have been referred by another NFP helpline

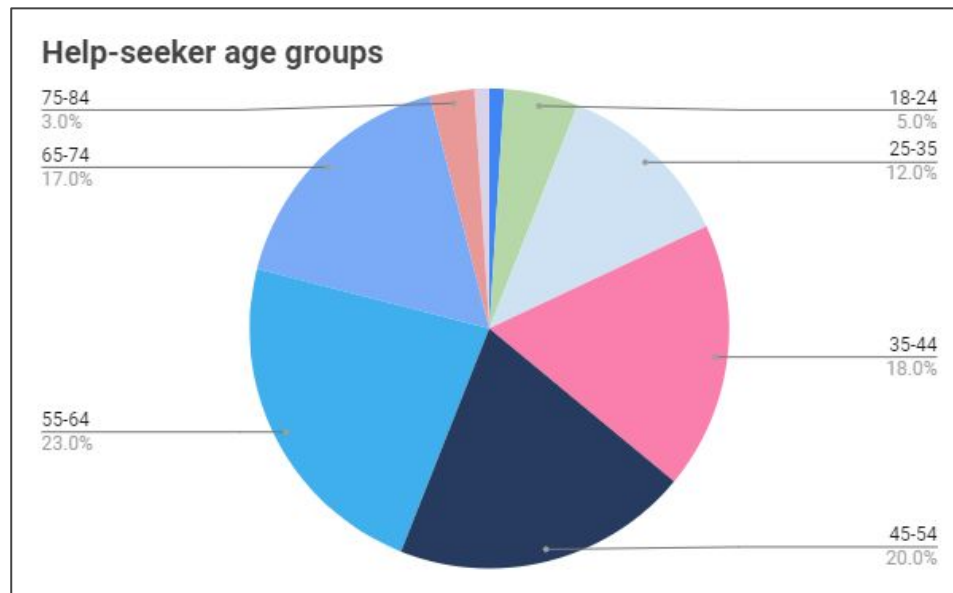


*FY 2019/20 data (sourced from anonymous call record sheets and only includes calls greater than 5 minutes and where caller consented to providing demographic data)

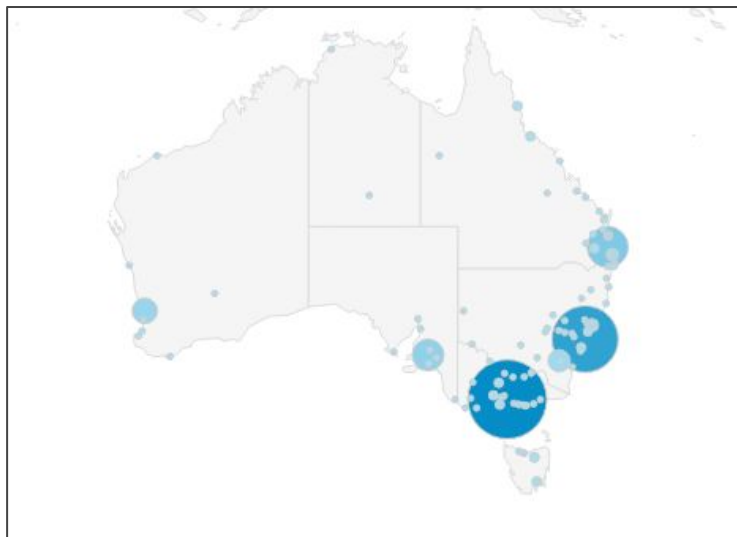
Who uses Griefline age

64%

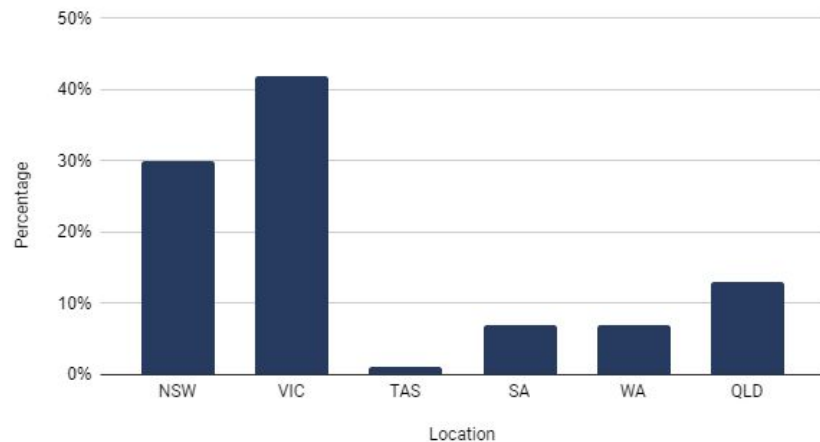
Of callers are aged 45+ years



Who uses Griefline location



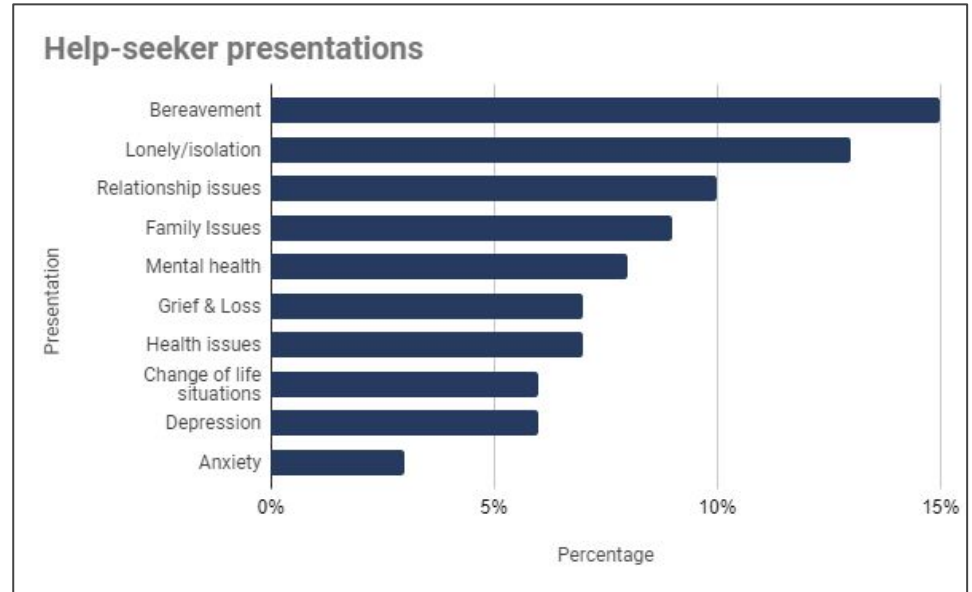
Help-seeker location



Who uses Griefline presentation

1 in 10

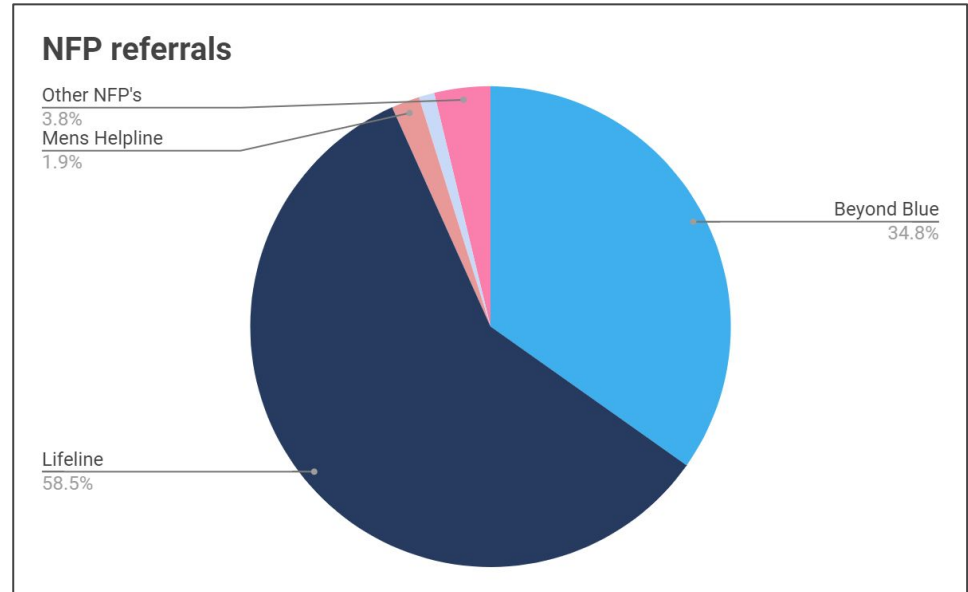
calls are due to feelings of loneliness or isolation



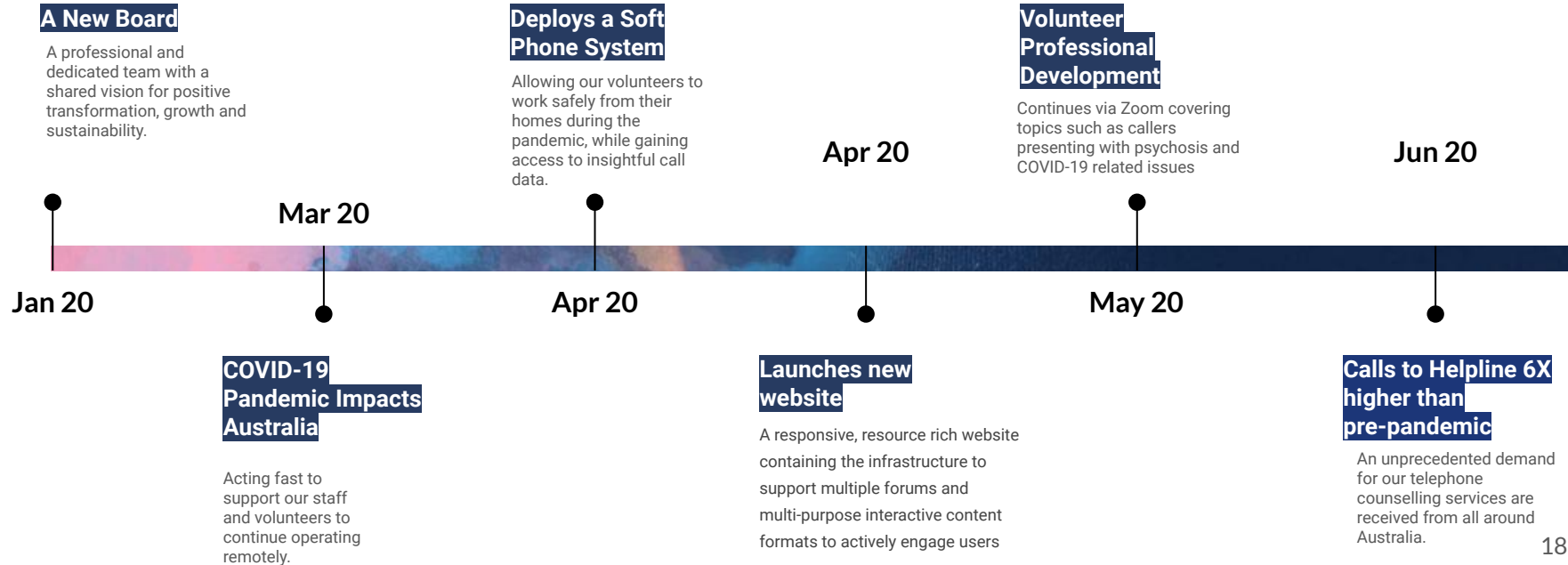
NFP referral sources

Other NPF's include:

- Suicide Line
- Anglicare
- Direct Line
- Alcoholics anonymous
- Relationships Aus
- Cancer council
- Parent Line
- Domestic violence line
- Salvation army
- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement
- Alzheimer's Aus



Transformation and adaptation



Facing COVID-19

Australians faced extraordinary living circumstances as they were forced to isolate from their communities to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

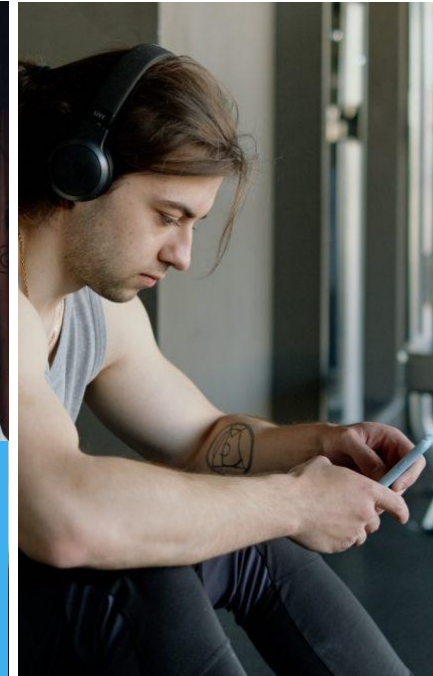
Demand on our helpline surged as we looked to new ways of supporting the community:

- 1,333 calls to the Helpline in April 2020
- Surging to 3,698 calls in May 2020
- Our volunteers were stretched, facing their own challenges during forced lockdowns
- All staff and volunteers deployed to work remotely
- Callers to the Helpline presenting with feelings of loneliness and isolation surged



UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND

CALLS TO HELPLINE 6 X HIGHER THAN PRE-PANDEMIC



Navigating change

As we adjusted to a “COVID-normal” life, we looked at ways that we could support both our dedicated volunteers and the help-seekers reaching out during the pandemic.

Change for the better:

- Professional development for volunteers around helping callers seeking COVID-19 related support
- Exploring partnerships with like-minded corporates to develop more online resources for help-seekers unable to connect with a telephone counsellor
- Exploring partnerships with like-minded corporates to tackle loneliness and isolation in the community
- Gaining access to more reliable call data providing for reporting and decision-making
- Engage a media agency for national PR campaign



Our volunteers



206 Volunteer hours/week*

67 shifts x 3 hours a shift +
5 volunteer supervision/debriefing
hours/wk

19,112 Volunteer hours/year*

10,712 volunteer Helpline hours/yr
+ 8,400 volunteer Policeline* hours/yr



Saving Medicare \$1.43 million

19,112 x \$75 (Medicare rebate
rate for social worker)

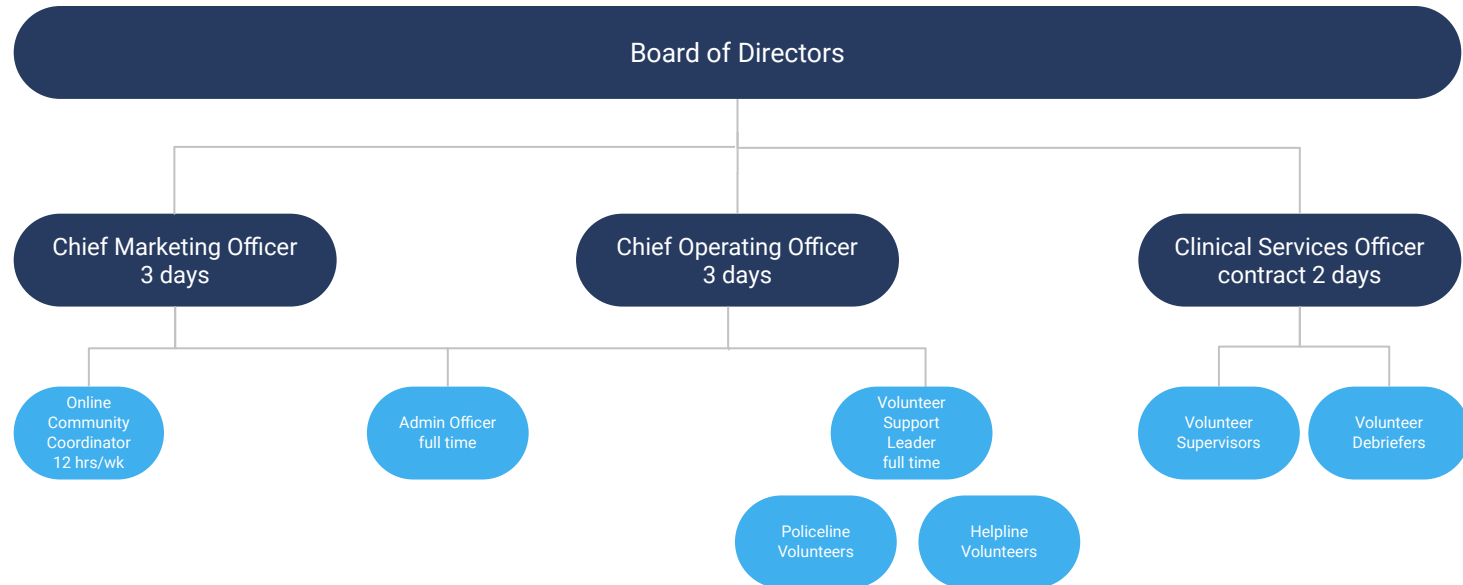
* based upon 1,409 referrals to Policeline @6 x 1 hour counselling sessions per referral



Our volunteers are the lifeblood of Griefline

GriefLine services are only made possible by the skilled efforts of the highly trained volunteer counsellors. The volunteers come from all walks of life but with a common commitment to the field of grief, loss and supporting the community through preventative mental health and wellbeing.

Griefline org structure - July 2020 and beyond





CEO resignation

On the 5th October 2020, the Board of Griefline received the resignation of its Chief Executive Officer Kaya Latage.

During her time as CEO, Kaya made a significant contribution to the organisation, leading the staff and volunteers through the challenges of the VIC and NSW bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. Her passion for developing and implementing integrated evidence-based programs helped GriefLine provide essential support for people experiencing grief and loss while sharing her clinical expertise and professional support to our volunteers.

We thank Kaya for her valuable contribution to GriefLine, and we wish her a successful future as she progresses her career.



Sustainability and growth - July 2020 and beyond

1

24/7 resources online

Supporting help-seekers throughout Australia, anytime of the day, no matter where they live.

2

Online forums

24/7 sharing and connection for people dealing with grief loss, loneliness, isolation, first responders and bushfire survivors.

3

Outbound call program

Our pilot program tackling loneliness and isolation in the Victorian community.

4

Information, data & reporting

Partnership with Salesforce NFP Revolent Program to develop and understand the capability of our CRM for better reporting and data transparency.

5

Online volunteer training program

Deploy a new professional online learning program that is market-leading and can be used for businesses and teams working in the field with those affected by grief and loss.

6

Onboarding of 50+ volunteers

Attract, develop and retain volunteers aligned with supporting Griefline mission. Including university students studying psychology, counselling and social work.



Sustainability and growth - July 2020 and beyond

7

Increase reach and recall of Griefline brand

Strengthen the position of Griefline's value proposition to Australian's in the space of preventative mental health and wellbeing. Destigmatising grief and loss, with a clear message that it is a normal human experience.

8

Participation in the National Digital Mental Health Commission

Represented by our board co-chairs Sarah Godfrey and Nicky Mackie, making important connections with other leading NFP helplines to discuss how digital technology can support and improve the mental health of Australians.

9

Development of our Volunteer Village

For our team of volunteers to connect, discuss and share experiences and resources.

Valuable partnerships

With the financial support of our valued partners Murrumbena Community Bank, Rotary District 9800, CEF and Phillips & Cohen Lawyers, we have been able to activate important resources and programs to sustain our 24/7 grief and loss service offering which extends beyond our telephone counselling helpline.

We have already been able to launch our online forums and develop a robust framework of online grief and loss resources for help-seekers experiencing grief, loss, loneliness and isolation, as well bushfire survivors and first responders.

We are excited to also be launching an outbound call program in February 2021 to reach out to the lonely, isolated and vulnerable in the Victorian community. Based on the success of this program, we hope to roll this out nationally throughout the new year.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a headset, is smiling in a call center environment. The background is blurred, showing other workstations and office equipment.

Thank you.

We value your support in our mission to provide compassionate support and continuity of care to Australians experiencing grief, loss and trauma.