



**headspace**

National Youth Mental Health Foundation



# **supporting young people; ways to help when you are concerned about their mental health**

**information for parents, carers, and  
community members**

# about headspace

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation provides tailored and holistic support to young people aged 12 to 25 years to navigate the big issues in life, their mental health, physical and sexual health, alcohol and other drugs issues, as well as work and study.

More than 75% of mental health disorders begin before the age of 25 (Kessler et al, 2005) and by working with young people at such a critical time in their lives, we aim to prevent a disorder from occurring or to reduce its severity.

headspace values collaboration. We work with schools, sporting clubs, local health services and communities. We provide resources for school communities, family and friends. We engage with the young person's world to support them along their journey towards adulthood.

headspace is available to young people through its local headspace centres that are located in 124 communities across Australia.<sup>[1]</sup> Young people can come into a centre and connect face-to-face with professionals such as General Practitioners (GPs), psychologists, counsellors, occupational therapists, social workers and nurses who can support them. headspace centres have been designed with young people for young people. Centres provide a unique space where young people feel they can trust the support they receive from the professionals working in the service and that they genuinely have their interests at heart. The headspace centre network is supported by a national framework to ensure a young person can go into any centre anywhere in Australia and receive the same standards of high-quality care and support.

In addition to headspace centres, eheadspace connects young people to youth mental health professionals 365 days a year. eheadspace provides a free, secure and anonymous service for young people who cannot access help in person, or who prefer to interact online or over the phone.



**Click here to find  
your local  
headspace centre**

# support services

## Support for young people:

- [headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation](#): Information and resources for young people, family and friends.
- [ehheadspace](#): 1800 650 890 - available 9am – 1am, 7 days a week.
- [ReachOut](#) Australia: Online mental health service for young people and their parents.
- [Kids Helpline](#): 1800 55 1800 - available by phone, email or webchat, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- [13 YARN](#): 13 92 76 - 24/7 crisis support offering confidential yarning opportunity with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter.

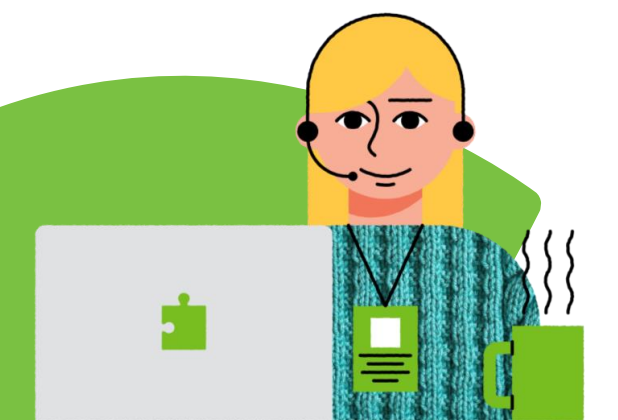
## Support for adults:

- [Parent Line](#): For non-crisis parenting advice or carer support, click on the link and ring a national helpline or the parent helpline for your State or Territory
- [ReachOut](#) Australia: free, personalised, professional support for parents/carers supporting young people 12-18yrs.
- [MensLine Australia](#): 1300 789 978 - available by phone, online chat, or video chat, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- [National Relay Service](#): 1300 555 727 - chat call and captions call options available.
- [National Translation and Interpreter Service](#)
- [Carers Australia](#): Provides delivery of national programs, support and services for carers across Australia.
- [Carer Gateway](#): 1800 422 737 - connect with a new Australia-wide network of Carer Gateway service providers. They will talk through what you need and help you to find local services and support to help you.



## Support for everyone:

- [Australian Psychological Society \(APS\)](#): find a psychologist in your local area.
- [Health Direct, Australia](#): government funded service providing quality approved health information and advice.
- [Primary Health Network](#): funds a variety of local mental health services.
- [StandBy](#): 1300 727 247 - supporting anyone who has been bereaved or impacted by suicide at any stage in their life. Accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- [Lifeline](#): 13 11 14 - available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for crisis support.  
Lifeline Text: 0477 13 11 14 - available from 12pm to midnight (AEST).  
[Lifeline Chat](#): available 7pm to midnight (AEST).
- [Beyond Blue](#): 1300 22 4636 - available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#): 1300 659 467 - nationwide service providing 24/7 telephone and online counselling to people 18 years+ affected by suicide.
- [Black Dog Institute](#): not-for-profit facility for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mood disorders such as depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder.
- [eSafety Commissioner](#) Australia: supports people experiencing online bullying or abuse.
- [Head to Health](#): brings together apps, online programs, online forums, and phone services, and digital information resources.
- [1800RESPECT](#): 1800 737 732 - available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling.
- [Butterfly](#): 1800 33 4673 - available 8am – midnight, 7 days a week via phone, online chat, email. Support for eating disorders and body image issues.
- [ACON](#), NSW: supporting LGBTQI+ people take control of their mental health by providing a range of counselling services and a care coordination program for people with complex needs.
- [Sane Australia](#): a national mental health charity making a difference in the lives of people affected by complex mental health issues through support, research and advocacy.
- [Mindspot](#): provides screening assessments and internet-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy (ICBT) courses for Australians troubled by stress, worry, anxiety and depression.
- [This way up](#): trusted Australian provider of evidence-based, internet-delivered Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT) programs.
- Police and Ambulance: 000.





# what is mental health?

Mental health is defined as “a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”<sup>2</sup> So rather than it being about ‘what’s the problem?’ it’s really about ‘what’s going well?’

## the mental health continuum



(The mental health continuum, Be You. Beyond Blue, 2021)

Mental health isn’t a fixed state. Mental health can be thought of as sitting on continuum that we all move along, all the time, depending on how things are going for us in our lives.

Most young people sit at the *Flourishing* end of the mental health continuum, most of the time. However, you may notice some young people show changes in their relationships, their behaviour and learning that significantly impacted their daily activities, and this might suggest they may be in, or are moving towards, the far-right side of the continuum.

The [mental health continuum](#) demonstrates a stepped care approach to supporting young people. Having productive conversations with young people as they move along the continuum, such as how they can maintain their mental wellness, rather than wait until it impacts on their functioning, can be an example of this.

So, how does the continuum look like in real life what conversations can be helpful?

[2] World Health Organization (2005)



# starting a conversation

the “*NIP it in the bud!*” guide to support your young person

## NOTICE

You might notice changes in a young person, for example:

- A noticeable change in how they are feeling and thinking
- Feelings like anger, sadness, fear, not caring about anything, risk taking
- You might see changes in the way your child is behaving or acting
- Not enjoying things anymore
- Changes in eating or sleeping
- Being easily irritated or having problems with friends and family
- Finding they can't focus on things or maintain attention
- Feeling down or that there is no hope or point to life
- Having trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Turning to alcohol or drugs to cope with feelings
- Having negative thoughts or distressing thoughts
- Feeling unusually stressed or worried
- Changes socially like withdrawal, being secretive, acting out of character

## INQUIRE

There's no perfect way to start a conversation about mental health – so it's ok if you're finding it hard.

It can help to do some research first and find a time and place where everyone involved is feeling safe to talk about it.

When asking, it can help to be specific about the things you've noticed. And remember, you're asking to understand.

Understanding your young person's experience can leave you in a better place to respond in a way that helps.

Some ways to try having this conversation might be:

- *Hey, I've noticed you seem to have a lot on your mind at the moment. I'd like to hear how it's been for you.*
- *I've noticed that sleep has been harder for you lately. Have you got some ideas about why that might be?*
- *I haven't seen any of your friends recently. How have things been going?*
- *What can I do to be help?*

## PROVIDE

It's about providing what you think your young person might need at that time. This will include support, listening, and empathy. Responding in a way that shows you're really listening can make a big impact.

Here are some statements that might help:

- *“I can hear this is really tough for you”*
- *“It sounds like it's been impacting lots of areas of your life”*
- *“Thank you for sharing with me, I care about how you feel and what you're going through.”*

Taking the time to try to understand, can show the young person you're a safe place to go to for support and might mean they end up sharing more. In trying to find the best way to offer some support, it can help to share the decisions with the young person.

Some statements that might help include:

- *“I'd like to find a way that I can be helpful for you. Would that be ok for you?”*
- *“It sounds like home is a bit stressful now. Would you like to have a go with me at figuring out some ways to take some of that stress away?”*
- *“I'm not feeling very confident about the best way to help at the moment. Would it be ok if we called a service to help us figure out the best way forward?”*

If you have immediate concerns, take them to your local Emergency department or phone 000 and stay with them.

# free online support, wherever and whenever you need it

There are lots of things for your young person to think about like school, study, work, relationships, physical and mental health. Whatever it is they're facing, headspace is here to help.

## Develop self-help skills

There are interactive exercises that allow your young person to manage their own mental health. These bite-sized activities help them reflect on their own needs, build their everyday skills and set goals to improve their mental health.

## Join the community

Our safe and supportive online community provides a great way to connect with others and share resources that are helpful.

Our regular group chats bring young people together and explore topics that are important to the community. Our peer-led chats are held every week, where young people can share tips and experiences with others. There are also chats run by our professional clinicians who explore topics and provide resources, strategies and advice to help build their skills.

## Chat privately with professionals

Young people can chat privately with our professional counsellors over the phone or webchat, seven days a week between 9am – 1am (AEST). It's a safe space if they want some advice, unsure of what help they need or maybe just want to talk things through.

## Get support with work and study

Young people can get support with their work and study goals by speaking with our work and study specialists via webchat, video chat, email or phone and it's free. We can help young people with everything from writing resumes and job applications through to planning course options, practicing interviews and managing their mental health with their work and study. Visit [headspace.org.au/workandstudy](https://headspace.org.au/workandstudy) to register or call 1800 810 794.

## Resources and tips

There are heaps of resources available which can be a great starting place to gather information that's relevant to them.



There are many ways young people can get the support they need just from visiting the headspace website and creating an account.

# seven tips for a healthy headspace

There are small steps that you and your family can take to support your family's mental health.

## 1. Get into life

Set a goal or task that you want to achieve for the day - it can be something small like making your bed, going for a walk or calling a friend. Try some new hobbies and keep doing the things you love as best you can like reading, drawing or exercising.



## 2. Learn skills for a tough time

It might be helpful to learn new coping skills to maintain and improve wellbeing. Try journaling thoughts and feelings, practise some breathing exercises, explore mental health apps or websites, create a new routine, or take a digital detox.

## 3. Create connections

When we can't physically connect with friends and loved ones, there are so many other ways to stay connected. Try connecting by video chat or phone with friends and family. Online video and board games can also be used to connect with others.



## 4. Eat well

Minimise unhealthy snacks. It's good to develop coping strategies that are not related to food. Be sure to nourish your body with things like: fruits and veggies, foods high in fibre, fermented foods like unsweetened yoghurt, olive oil, and fish.

## 5. Stay active

Try doing an online fitness program or a yoga class, challenge your friends to a push-up challenge, get outside for fresh air or have a living room dance party – all great free ways to keep up physical and mental health.



## 6. Get enough sleep

Try to stick with a sleep routine. Go to bed and wake up at the same time as much as possible and aim for at least 8 hours of sleep a night. Switch off from electronics 30-60 mins before bed.

## 7. Cut back on alcohol and other drugs

Be mindful of your use of alcohol and other drugs. Try a short break – start with a few days and then try a week, consider alternatives like herbal tea, water or a smoothie, and find new activities to keep you engaged.

