

supporting young people

information for parents and carers

About headspace

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds. Each year, headspace helps thousands of young people access vital support through our headspace services in communities across Australia, our online and phone counselling services, our vocational services, and our presence in schools.

how we can help

Many things contribute to someone's mental health. That's why, at headspace, we provide information, support and services across four key areas which may affect a young person's health and wellbeing:

Mental health

We can help young people if they're:

- feeling down, stressed or worried
- experiencing relationship problems or difficulties with their family or friends
- wanting to talk about sexuality or gender identity
- just not feeling like themselves, or if they've noticed changes in their thoughts, feelings or behaviour.

Alcohol and other drugs

Alcohol and other drugs can affect things that matter to young people, and also to their emotional, physical and mental health. It can impact on their work, their study and the relationships in their lives.

If a young person is having a hard time stopping, or cutting back, we can support them with:

- developing a plan to tackle their challenges
- connecting with supports, including professional help like GPs and counsellors
- identifying triggers, and provide them with tools and advice on how to avoid them.

Work, school and study

We can help young people if they're:

- struggling at school or work and feeling anxious or stressed
- unsure of what course they want to do
- needing a hand writing a resume
- searching for a job.

Physical and sexual health

Many headspace centres have youth-friendly doctors and nurses who can assist young people with:

- any physical health issues
- contraception and sexual health advice.

If the nearest headspace centre doesn't have a doctor or nurse, they can still recommend a youth-friendly doctor in your area.

Support for parents and carers

Parents, carers and family can provide vital support for young people when they are having a tough time. headspace is here to help support you through these challenges and transitions.

[Click here](#) for more information.

local supports

- [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.

national supports

Support for young people:

- [headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation](#): information and resources for young people, family and friends.
- [ehespace](#): 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.

Support for adults:

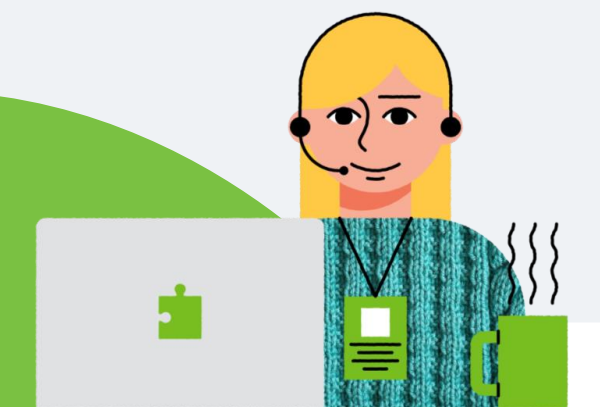
- [Parent Line](#): 13 22 89 - available 8am to midnight, 7 days a week including public holidays. Free telephone counselling and support service for parents and carers with children from 0 to 18 years old.
- [ReachOut](#) Australia: free, personalised, professional support for parents/carers supporting young people 12-18yrs.
- [MensLine Australia](#): 1300 78 99 78 - 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.



[Click here to find your local headspace centre](#)

Support for everyone:

- [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.”² 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 young people showing changes in their relationships, their behaviour and learning that significantly impacts 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.

[2] World Health Organization (2005)



the stress bucket

It's important to remember that stress is a part of life. It is our body's physical and physiological response to pressure. Stress can be healthy and can motivate us to get things done. It can help us focus and problem solve when we're faced with a challenge, but sometimes the pressures we're faced with can be too overwhelming and go beyond our ability to cope. This is distress. Distress can be really unhelpful when we're trying to cope with a challenge.

As parents and carers, it's important for us to support our young people to deal with the stressors of everyday life, rather than try to avoid them all together.

The Stress Bucket represents someone's capacity to deal with stress. We know that everyone deals with stress from time to time, therefore everyone has a stress bucket.

So it's important, as parents and carers, to think about what might be filling up our young person's stress bucket and what we can do to help.



We can support our young people to develop their coping skills by supporting their protective factors. Protective factors can be anything that supports our young people to build resilience and coping strategies. They increase a young person's likelihood to be able to deal with the stresses of everyday life. Think of them as an umbrella. Umbrellas can help protect us from some of the rain or stop some of that stress getting into our buckets, but that doesn't always guarantee we don't get wet.

Things like supportive relationships, a sense of belonging, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, getting enough sleep, having a sense of purpose, spending time in nature and community connection can all increase the chances of a young person being able to cope with day to day stresses.

Helping young people develop some coping strategies is like adding taps to their buckets. These taps help drain out the stress to a manageable level, so their buckets don't overflow. Can you think of coping strategies your young person might already use? Things like listening to music, exercise, mindfulness, writing down their thoughts or speaking to a friend can all act as taps, to drain out the stress and support young people to cope with their day-to-day stress.

starting a conversation

the “NIP it in the bud!” framework can guide a conversation with your young person

Notice



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

Emotions:

- Feeling sad or down
- Feeling unusually stressed or worried
- Easily irritated and annoyed
- Expressing a lot of anger
- Feeling emotionless

Thoughts:

- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Having trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Having negative thoughts or distressing thoughts

Physical:

- Heavy breathing
- Heart racing
- Feeling sick
- Shakes
- Changes in appetite
- Headaches
- Tense muscles
- Significant changes

Actions:

- Changes in relationships and how they engage with others
- Arguing more with others
- Crying
- Not enjoying activities anymore
- Changes in appetite, sleep and hygiene
- Increase in risk-taking behaviours e.g. alcohol or drugs

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. Is there something on your mind that you'd like to talk about?”*
- *“I haven't seen any of your friends recently. How have things been going?”*

Provide



It's about providing what the young person needs in the moment. 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?”*

[Click here for more NIP it in the bud resources](#)

why create a headspace account?

Setting up a free online headspace account is quick, easy and has loads of benefits for you and young people.

Create an account today and get more support, more options and more accessibility. We're here to help.



More support when you need it

- 1-1 professional support with a mental health clinician online or over the phone. These are confidential, free and can be anonymous.
- Professionally-led online community chats by trained clinicians.
- Peer chats with other parents and carers going through similar things, moderated by trained clinicians.



More help with work and study for your young person

- Study options and skill building.
- Starting a career and career mentoring.
- Support with job searching and applications.



More tools for self-care

- Young people can build their own personalised space.
- Add online tools and resources to build a toolkit that works for them.
- Tools are also available for parents and carers, such as access to Partners in Parenting (see the next page for more information).



More access when you want it

- 24/7 access to digital resources.
- Connect with an eheadspace clinician 9am-1am AEST.



[Click here to create your free account](#)

sign up for Partners in Parenting, our online parenting program

Partners in Parenting is an evidence-based online program designed to help build your skills and confidence in supporting your high school-aged young person's mental health and wellbeing.



The program also covers general parenting challenges, such as communication, managing strong emotions, boundaries, conflicts and staying involved in your high school-aged young person's life while they navigate their independence.



There are 10 interactive online modules to explore and you can complete them in any order and at your own time and pace. Each one will only take around 15 to 25 minutes.

Setting up a free online headspace account is quick, easy and has loads of benefits.

Sign up today!

You can access Partners in Parenting via your headspace online account. If you don't have a headspace account yet, you'll first need to create one. Once you have an account, you can access the program via 'Your interactive tools'.



Visit headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/partners-in-parenting/ to find out more and sign up today.

A collaboration between:



MONASH
University



headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation



Partners in Parenting

7 tips for a healthy headspace

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

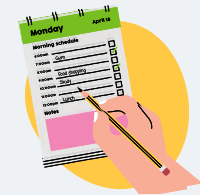
1. Get in to life

- Get outdoors - head to the park with your family or friends.
- Discover a new hobby you could try arts or crafts, reading, or learning a new language.



2. Learn skills for tough times

- Try art as a way to express what you are feeling.
- Build a routine and plan your approach to your day.



3. Create connections

- Find someone you trust that you can talk to about your feelings.
- Join a group – drama, music, sport – it doesn't matter what as long as you enjoy it.



4. Eat well

- Try a whole meal without any processed foods.
- Get creative and make a nutritious meal with a friend.



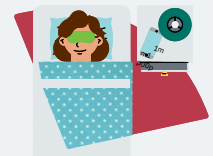
5. Stay active

- Add some physical activity to your daily commute or routine.
- Spend more time in nature.



6. Get enough sleep

- Take a break from screens before bed.
- Set an alarm and try to get up at the same time each day.



7. Cut back on alcohol and other drugs

- Stay busy with other activities at times you find it hard to say no.
- Make plans for early the next day to help keep you on track.

