



**headspace**

National Youth Mental Health Foundation

# Welcome Pack – for Family and Friends



[headspace.org.au](https://headspace.org.au)

**headspace** National Youth Mental Health Foundation is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

**headspace** acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present who we share this great country with.





# Contents

- 2 What is **headspace**?
- 2 Mental health difficulties and young people
- 3 Common myths and facts about mental health difficulties
- 4 How **headspace** can help
- 5 What happens when a young person visits **headspace**?
- 6 How long will an appointment take?
- 6 How much will an appointment cost?
- 6 Can I access **headspace** on behalf of my young person?
- 7 How can I support my young person while they are waiting for an appointment?
- 7 Consent and confidentiality
- 8 Self-care
- 8 Families with English as a second language
- 8 How can I contribute to **headspace**?
- 8 Further information and support





# Welcome to headspace

headspace is a family and friends inclusive service.

headspace believes that family and friends play an important role in a young person's journey to better wellbeing.

We understand that there are many different types of family and friends that are important in a young person's life. These include:

## All types of families:

nuclear, extended, blended, single-parent, heterosexual, same-sex couples

## Non-parental care-givers:

partners, foster parents, grandparents, god-parents, adoptive parents, other family members

## Significant others:

friends, teachers, mentors, kinship relations, spiritual care leaders

We know from research that involving family and friends in a young person's care can lead to better health outcomes for young people<sup>1</sup>. Wherever possible, we advocate for and provide meaningful opportunities for family and friends to directly participate in our services.

How you can be involved in supporting your young person will depend on many things – including the young person's age, life experience and their feelings about family involvement.

All family and friends involvement at headspace is respectful of the privacy and confidentiality of young people.

This pack will introduce you to our service and where you can find further information and support for you and your young person.

<sup>1</sup> Hopkins, L., Lee, S., McGrane, T., & Barbara-May, R. (2016). Single session family therapy in youth mental health: Can it help? *Australasian Psychiatry*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/1039856216658807



# What is headspace?

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. We deliver services and support to young people aged 12–25 and their family and friends in four key areas:



mental health



physical and sexual health



work, school and study

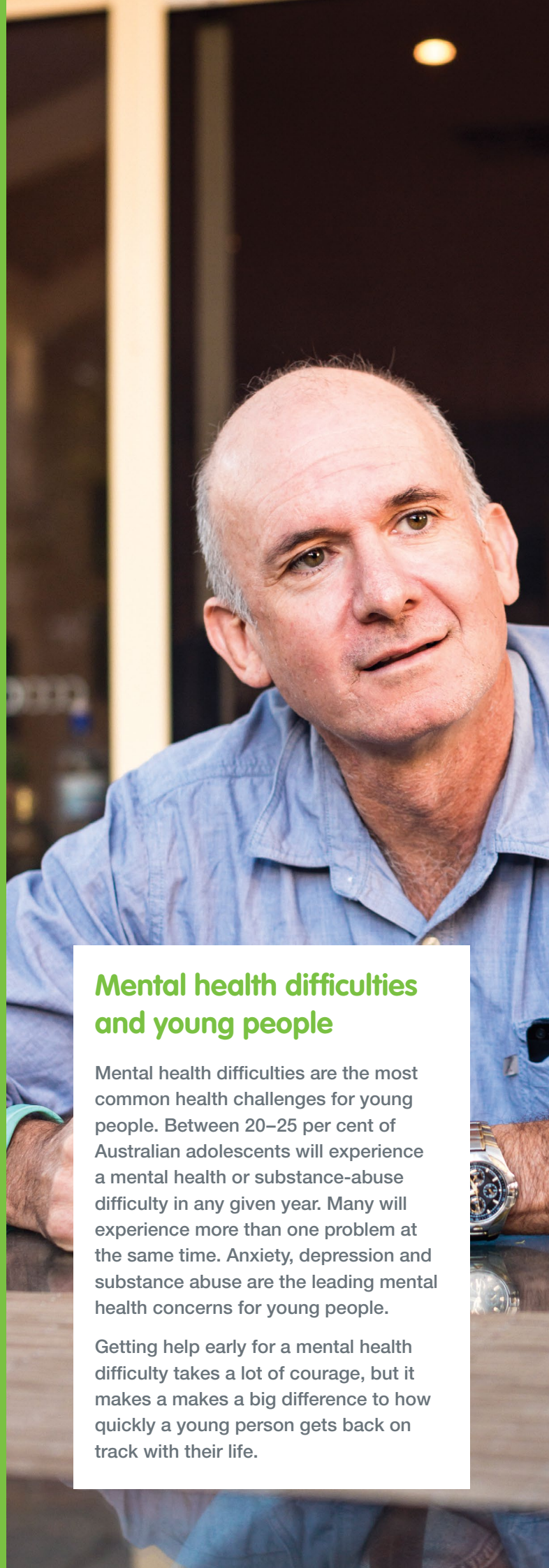


alcohol and other drugs

headspace is a good place to seek help if a young person:

- needs help with any type of health issue
- is having difficulty with something in their life
- feels sad, anxious, worried or worthless
- is concerned about their use of alcohol and/or drugs
- is worried about a friend or family member
- needs advice about work or study
- needs to discuss relationships, sexuality or their sexual health.

**We keep young people at the heart of our services**



## Mental health difficulties and young people

Mental health difficulties are the most common health challenges for young people. Between 20–25 per cent of Australian adolescents will experience a mental health or substance-abuse difficulty in any given year. Many will experience more than one problem at the same time. Anxiety, depression and substance abuse are the leading mental health concerns for young people.

Getting help early for a mental health difficulty takes a lot of courage, but it makes a big difference to how quickly a young person gets back on track with their life.



## Common myths and facts about mental health difficulties

**Myth:** There is no hope for people with a mental illness.

**Fact:** There are many supports, treatments and community services available. People with a mental illness can lead active, productive and healthy lives.

**Myth:** Mental health difficulties are caused by genetics.

**Fact:** Mental health difficulties occur due to a complex combination of factors. These factors can be biological (due to a family history of mental health difficulties), psychological (e.g., trauma, loss, neglect) and/or environmental (e.g., stress, money problems, social pressure).

**Myth:** Non-qualified people cannot help people with a mental health difficulty.

**Fact:** Friends and family can offer important help and support. When family and friends speak and act positively towards a young person with a mental health difficulty, they create an environment that builds on a young person's strengths and promotes understanding and respect.





# How headspace can help

Information and services for young people can be accessed through:



## 1 The headspace website

Our website includes information about mental and physical health, work and study, drugs and alcohol, how to get help and how family and friends can support a young person going through a tough time.

To access the **headspace** website visit [headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au).



## 2 eheadspace

**eheadspace** is our national online and telephone support service. It is staffed by experienced youth and mental health professionals.

Young people in contact with **eheadspace** can access a range of information and support as well as short-term treatment, where appropriate.

To access **eheadspace** visit [ehespace.org.au](http://ehespace.org.au) or phone 1800 650 890. Web chat, telephone and email support is available to young people, as well as their families and friends, from 9am to 1am AEST, 365 days of the year. Email access to eheadspace is available 24 hours a day.



## 3 headspace centres

**headspace** centres provide young people with access to a range of health workers who have specific expertise in working with young people – including doctors, psychologists, social workers, alcohol and drug workers, counsellors, vocational workers, occupational therapists and youth workers.

Young people can make an appointment at a centre in person or by phone or email. Family or friends can also make an appointment on behalf of a young person, if the young person consents to the appointment.

To find out about information and support available to family and friends of young people with a mental health difficulty, see the Further information and support section.



## Please note

**headspace** provides time-limited services for mild to moderate difficulties. It is not an emergency service.

If you or your young person need immediate support or medical assistance contact:

- Emergency Services 000
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

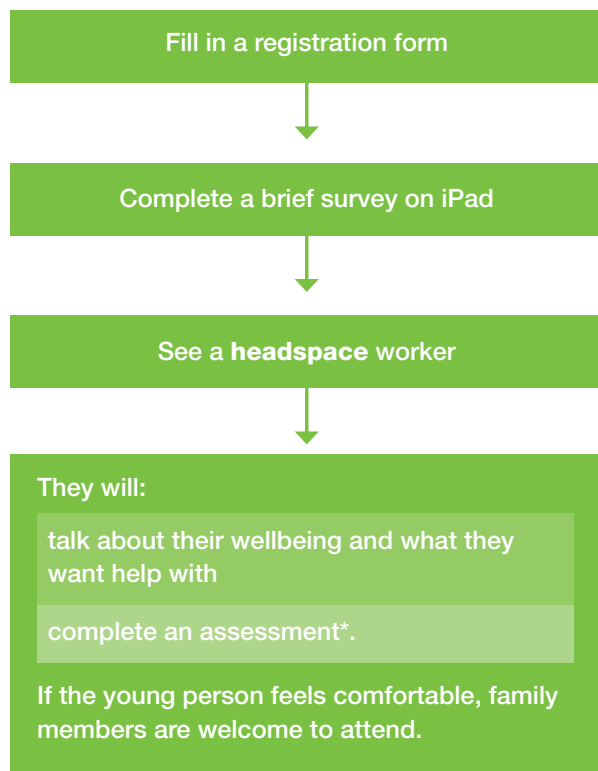
If your young person is experiencing more severe difficulties, they may be eligible for specialist clinical mental health services. For contact details, see the Further information and support section.



## What happens when a young person visits headspace?

### At the first visit

The first time a young person visits **headspace**, they will:



### After the first visit

If a young person chooses to continue at **headspace**, they will:

Work on goals with their **headspace** worker, such as:

- brief intervention and problem solving with a qualified counsellor
- early intervention and supportive counselling with one of our clinical team
- access to a doctor and/or mental health nurse for physical or mental health difficulties
- study or vocational assistance with a work and study specialist
- alcohol and drug assistance from an alcohol and drug counsellor
- referral to other agencies best suited to the young person and/or family's needs. If the young person needs a referral from a doctor to access a particular service, **headspace** can arrange this.

\* If you have questions about our assessment, visit [headspace.org.au/health-professionals/headspace-psychosocial-assessment-interview](https://headspace.org.au/health-professionals/headspace-psychosocial-assessment-interview)





## How long will an appointment take?

Appointments usually last 50 minutes to an hour. Sessions with a doctor might be shorter.



## Can I access headspace on behalf of my young person?

Whether your young person is ready to access our services or not, we encourage you to make contact with us and discuss ways we might engage your young person or how you can be supported to care for your young person.



If you would like to talk to a **headspace** worker, please call us. You may be booked into an appointment or offered support over the phone.

If your young person is engaged or is willing to engage with **headspace**, ask us about the support and involvement we offer to family and friends.

**Before making contact with us, it is a good idea to talk with your young person about it first.**

## How much will an appointment cost?



Services at a **headspace** centre are either free or have a low cost. This can be confirmed when an appointment is made.





## Consent and confidentiality

### Consent

**headspace** is a voluntary service. Health workers can only provide treatment to young people who give consent. This is something we will ask a young person when they attend.

**If the young person is under 18:** A parent or legal guardian is the appropriate person to give consent to access our service. In some cases these young people can consent to treatment without parental permission.

**If the young person is over 18:** We will work with the young person to involve their family and friends in ways that they are comfortable with, and that are likely to be beneficial to the young person's wellbeing.

If you would like a copy of our Consent Policy, please speak to a **headspace** worker.

### Confidentiality

When a young person talks to a **headspace** worker, nothing they say can be passed on to anyone else without their permission unless the young person:

- 1) is at risk of harming themselves or someone else
- 2) is at risk of being harmed by others
- 3) has committed a serious crime.

In these cases we will provide only necessary information to appropriate services or support people.

If you have any questions about confidentiality, please speak to a **headspace** worker.

## How can I support my young person while they are waiting for an appointment?

We understand that wait times for appointments may vary. While your young person is waiting for an appointment, here are some ways you can support them:

keep communication open, show empathy and don't rush into judgements

be available without being intrusive or 'pushy'

spend time with them

take an interest in their activities, and encourage them to talk about what's happening in their life

take their feelings seriously

encourage and support friendships

encourage activities that promote mental health, such as exercise, good eating, regular sleep and doing things they enjoy

give positive feedback

let them know that you love them. They may not always admit it but this is likely to be very important to them.

For further information, visit [headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/category/parent-information#categories](https://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/category/parent-information#categories).



## Self-care

At **headspace** we encourage self-care. Worrying about someone you care about is tough, so you must remember to be kind to yourself. Maintaining your own health and wellbeing enables you to best take care of the person you are supporting.

Here are a few ideas:

- Eat well and drink plenty of water
- Get a good night's sleep
- Unplug your phone, television or computer
- Get active
- Engage in a hobby
- Spend time with friends
- Practise gratitude – notice those things in life you are grateful for
- Check in with your emotions in a space where you feel comfortable.



## Families with English as a second language

**headspace** services are provided in English. In some cases interpreters can be arranged in advance to support the young person or their family and friends to communicate with a **headspace** worker during a session.

For more information on mental health in a language other than English, please speak to a **headspace** worker or visit Mental Health in Multicultural Australia at [mhima.org.au](http://mhima.org.au).

## How can I contribute to headspace?

Family and friends' involvement in the delivery of our services is important to us. If you would like to provide input into how we engage with family and friends as a service, please speak to a **headspace** worker.



## Further information and support







If you need further professional support, you may be eligible for a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP). A MHCP allows a person to access rebates for mental health care services. To work out whether a MHCP is appropriate for you, see your local doctor.

The following agencies also provide information and support to family and friends caring for young people.

## National agencies

### **beyondblue**

[beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)

1300 224 636

- Information about supporting someone with depression or anxiety
- Online chat & 24/7 phone support

### **Black Dog Institute**

[blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://blackdoginstitute.org.au)

- Information about supporting someone with depression or bipolar disorder

### **Carers Australia**

[carersaustralia.com.au](http://carersaustralia.com.au)

- Carer counselling, advice, advocacy, education and training

### **QLife**

[qlife.org.au](http://qlife.org.au)

1800 184 527

- Information about supporting people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersex, queer or questioning (LGBTIQ)
- Online chat & phone support

### **Reachout**

[reachout.com](http://reachout.com)

- Information about supporting young people with mental health difficulties

### **Sane Australia**

[sane.org](http://sane.org)

1800 18 (SANE) 7263

- Information about helping someone experiencing a mental health crisis
- Online chat & phone support

## State agencies