September 2026

evaluation snapshot



connecting young people with specialist psychiatry expertise

headspace Telepsychiatry connects young people at headspace centres across Australia with specialist psychiatry support via video, providing assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

The program overcomes barriers related to location, cost and service availability. During 2023 and 2024, more than 2,200 young people accessed the service through 79 headspace centres across Australia, with most living in regional, rural and remote communities.

An evaluation of headspace Telepsychiatry primary consultations found high levels of satisfaction among young people, who reported feeling listened to, understood, and supported. The program improves mental health and wellbeing by increasing young people's understanding of their mental health and capacity to manage symptoms, while also enhancing access to specialist care in underserved communities. The collaborative model between psychiatrists, headspace clinicians and GPs strengthens coordinated care and builds local program capacity to support young people with complex mental health needs.

headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

about headspace Telepsychiatry

headspace Telepsychiatry supports young people and the mental health workforce in regional, rural and remote Australia by increasing access to specialist psychiatric expertise. Through video-based primary consultations, secondary consultations for headspace clinical staff and GPs, and professional development activities, the program helps strengthen local workforce capability and improve access to youth mental health care across Australia.

headspace Telepsychiatry primary consultations support access to specialist psychiatric care for young people referred by headspace clinicians and GPs. Delivered via video in partnership with participating headspace centres, primary consultations provide psychiatric assessment, diagnosis and treatment planning, with support from local clinicians and, where appropriate, family members or carers. The program is provided at no out-of-pocket cost to centres or young people and is funded through Medicare. By connecting young people with specialist psychiatric care remotely, headspace Telepsychiatry primary consultations help reduce barriers to accessing psychiatry services, particularly in regional, rural and remote communities.



evaluation overview

An evaluation of headspace Telepsychiatry primary consultations was conducted as part of a broader evaluation of services delivered in 2023 and 2024. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, combining analysis of headspace Telepsychiatry service data with surveys of young people and surveys and interviews with headspace staff and psychiatrists.

Client and service data were drawn from routinely collected clinical records and service monitoring datasets. Surveys were distributed to 363 young people aged 12-25 years who received a Telepsychiatry occasion of service in 2024 and had consented to be contacted for evaluation purposes. Fifty-four young people completed the survey, representing a 15 per cent response rate. Additional data came from interviews with 10 key stakeholders and focus groups/interviews with six psychiatrists.

Service data were used to examine service reach, utilisation and patterns of service delivery, while surveys and interviews provided insights into experiences of care and perceived outcomes. Together, the findings provide insights into how headspace Telepsychiatry supports access to specialist mental health care and contributes to positive outcomes for young people, particularly those living in rural and remote Australia.

service uptake

A total of 2,201 young people engaged in the program throughout 2023 and 2024, with referrals received from 79 headspace centres and a headspace digital mental health program.

Young people were included as engaged in the program if they received an eligible referral to the service (n=1990) and/or had at least one appointment booked for a primary consultation with a psychiatrist via video (n=2053) during the evaluation period.

Young people engaged in the program reflected a diverse range of backgrounds and identities. Among those with available demographic data, around two-thirds identified as female, just over one-quarter identified as male, and a small proportion identified as gender diverse. More than half were aged 15-20 years, almost four in ten identified as LGBTIQA+, one in ten identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and one in 20 identified as culturally and linguistically diverse (Figure 1).

headspace Telepsychiatry predominantly supported young people connected to headspace centres in regional, rural and remote Australia, with more than nine in ten participants engaged through these locations. Participating centres were located across all states and territories except the Australian Capital Territory, with Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia accounting for almost four in five young people engaged in primary consultations (Figure 2).

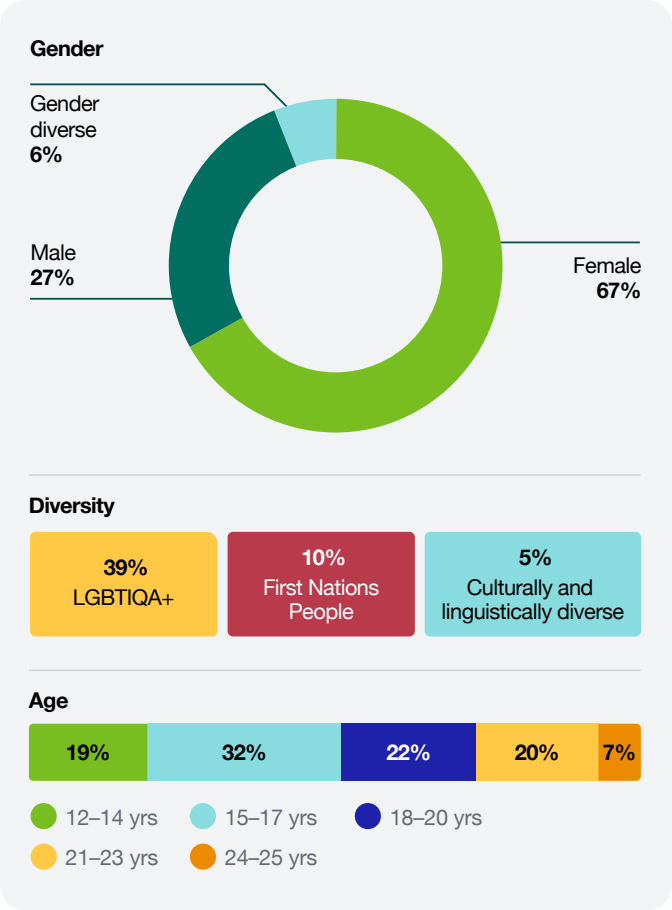


Figure 1: Demographic characteristics of young people engaged in headspace Telepsychiatry primary consultations in 2023 and 2024

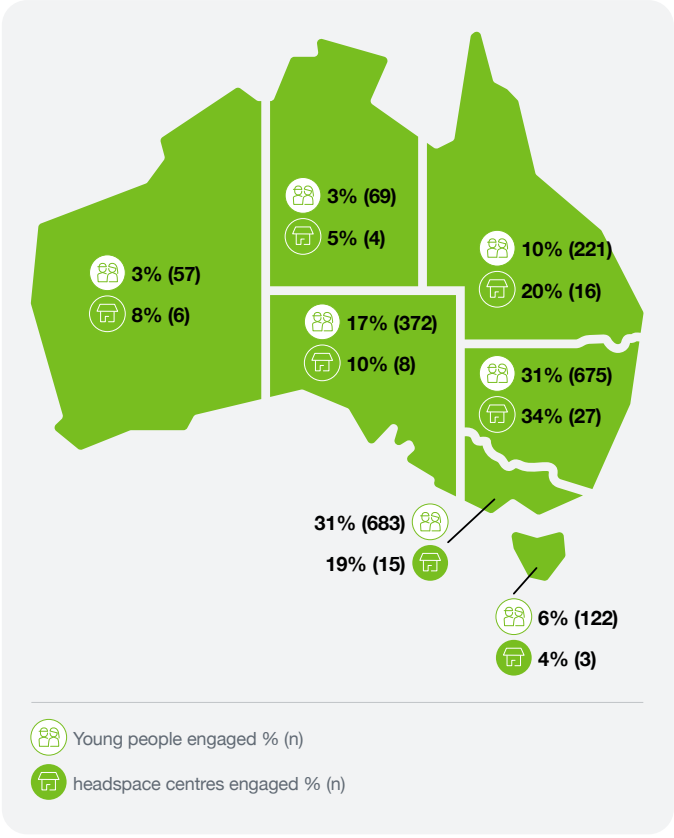


Figure 2: Proportion of young people engaged in headspace Telepsychiatry (n=2199) at headspace centres (n=79) in each state or territory. Figures do not sum to 100 per cent due to rounding.

findings

Provision of diagnostic support

Evidence of the program providing diagnostic support and clarification was available for 480 young people who received a diagnosis from headspace Telepsychiatry between 1 July and 31 December 2024.

The psychiatrists identified 23 different mental health conditions among 480 young people, demonstrating the breadth of presentations supported through the service. Anxiety disorders were the most common diagnosis, often occurring alongside other conditions, particularly depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Depression was the second most common diagnosis and frequently co-occurred with anxiety and PTSD. Diagnosis data reflected the broad scope of presentations in young people supported by headspace, with nearly three-quarters receiving more than one diagnosis.

mental health disorder diagnosed	Frequency % (n)
Anxiety	**46% (225)**
Depression	**26% (124)**
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	**23% (110)**
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	**20% (96)**
Complex trauma and PTSD (C-PTSD)	**18% (85)**
Autism spectrum disorder	**17% (81)**
Eating disorder	**14% (69)**
Obsessive compulsive disorder	**13% (61)**

Table 1: *Frequency of mental health disorders diagnosed in young people (n=480) by a headsapce Telepsychiatry psychiatrist between 1 July and 31 December 2024. Disorders diagnosed in more than 10 per cent of young people are included. Young people can be diagnosed with more than one mental health disorder meaning total percentages and counts will exceed 100 per cent and overall sample size.*

"Probably the primary benefit is a pathway for our over 18 young people to access assessment and review for ADHD… there's been a huge uptick in young people approaching the service, wondering if they have ADHD and wanting to learn more about that and prior to Telepsychiatry there was no bulk billing service able to provide that."

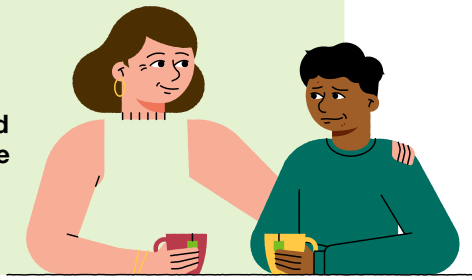
headspace GP, 2025

"I think that diagnostic clarity has been really helpful… and I think that's helpful both for the young person and their family, as well as for the clinician."

Clinical Manager, 2025

98%

of centre stakeholders agreed primary consultations **provided support young people could not have accessed otherwise**



Improving access to specialist support

headspace Telepsychiatry improved young people's access to specialist psychiatry support.

Evaluation findings demonstrate the role of headspace Telepsychiatry providing psychiatry services for young people and family facing significant barriers to accessing specialist mental health support in their communities. Young people, centre staff and psychiatrists described the service as an important pathway to much-needed psychiatry care, particularly in regional, rural and remote communities.

Survey findings showed that most young people (n=42) and nearly all centre stakeholders (n=51) agreed that the service provided support they could not have otherwise been able to access.

Stakeholders also highlighted an ongoing gap in access to ADHD assessment and follow-up care within the broader service system.

"We had no access to child and adolescent psychiatry in our regional area before the introduction of this service."

headspace GP, 2025

"I couldn't see a psychiatrist without headspace."

Young person, 15 years, 2025

findings

Providing timely, affordable and convenient care

Survey and interview findings highlight the role of the program in addressing barriers to accessing psychiatry services for young people and family in regional, rural and remote areas, including social, economic and geographic challenges.

The program reduces the need for extensive travel and enables young people to receive specialist care closer to home. Without access to headspace Telepsychiatry, respondents noted other local services were scarce or wait times often lengthy. Service users and providers reported that the program was easy to access and use.

Young people and centre staff reported that headspace Telepsychiatry offers an affordable and convenient way to access specialist mental health support. Over three-quarters (76%, n=38) of centre stakeholders surveyed identified affordability, proximity, or timeliness of access as the best aspect of the program. Over half (53%, n=18) of young people surveyed who explained why they could not access other psychiatry support highlighted affordability, with one young person describing "the cost involved if we went to a private psychiatrist" as "out of our reach". Many young people also identified living in a rural area as a barrier, due to limited availability of psychiatry services locally, and the time and cost required to travel to appointments.

Nearly 80 per cent (79%, n=41) of centre stakeholders agreed that primary consultation appointments occur in a timely manner, and 82 per cent (n=42) agreed that assessment reports from the psychiatrist were received by the centre within two weeks of the appointment (Figure 3).

Over 70 per cent (73%, n=37) of young people surveyed agreed that the service was easy to use. Centre stakeholder survey results showed that nearly all respondents (96%, n=49) who engaged in primary consultations understood how to make a referral, and 86 per cent (n=44) felt confident referring young people to the service.

"I could not have accessed the support I needed due to high appointment costs, or the cost and logistics of travelling out of a rural area to receive support elsewhere."

Young person, 24 years, 2025

"Without Telepsychiatry young people would have to travel 10 hours roundtrip, and overnight stays to access psychiatry in the city. This is a huge impact for young people and their families to remain in their own community and access quality specialist care."

headspace clinican, 2024

Meeting young people's mental health needs

The evaluation found that headspace Telepsychiatry helped meet a range of unmet psychiatry needs among young people and family. The most commonly reported need was for diagnostic support and clarification of presenting mental health issues, identified by more than three-quarters of centre stakeholder survey respondents (79%, n=42). Around two-thirds (64%, n=34) highlighted the need for advice and review of new and existing medications, while nearly half (47%, n=25) identified the need for care planning, treatment advice and clinical review.

About three-quarters (74%, n=38) of young people agreed that receiving support from the psychiatrist met their needs. Several young people reported that gaining greater clarity about their diagnosis helped inform more appropriate treatment, medication and support tailored to their needs.

"Receiving diagnoses, a medical report and request for medication that was forwarded from the psychiatrist to my GP has informed my care and supported me in getting the medication and treatment that I need."

Young person, 24 years, 2025

74%

of young people agreed **receiving support from the psychiatrist by video met their needs.**



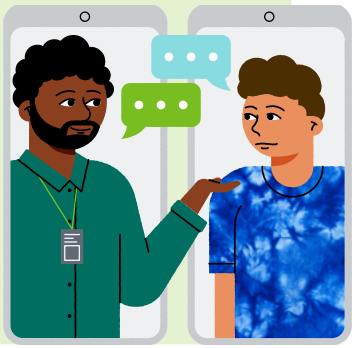
findings

Positive experiences of care

Evaluation findings demonstrated a positive help-seeking experience for young people engaged in the program. More than four in five surveyed young people reported a positive experience of care, including feeling listened to and understood by the psychiatrist, feeling comfortable sharing information, being involved in decisions about their care, and saying they would recommend the service to a friend.

84%

of young people **felt listened to and understood by the psychiatrist**



Young people described feeling "heard and supported", and that receiving a diagnosis validated their feelings. Several young people also described feelings of safety due to the option of having a headspace clinician and family member and/or other support person present for the appointment. This aligned with feedback from centre stakeholders with 92 per cent (n=48) of stakeholders agreeing that primary consultations provided a positive experience of mental health support, and 90 per cent (n=47) agreeing that young people received a supported care experience once referred (Figure 3).

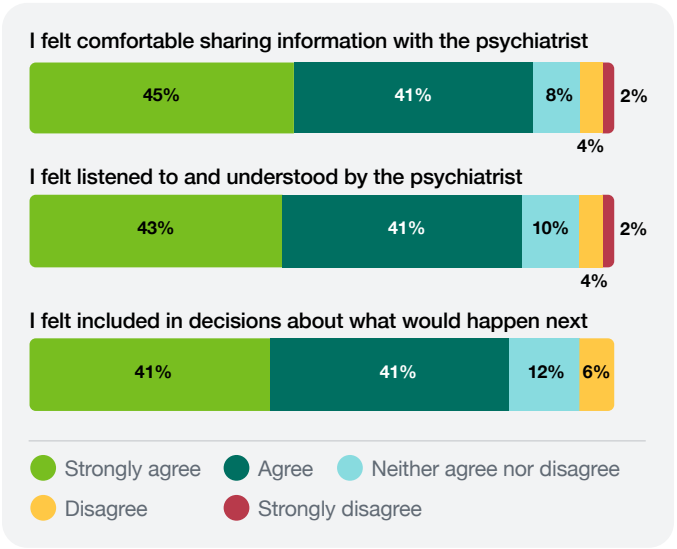


Figure 3: *Young people's experiences of headspace Telepsychiatry primary consultations (n=51).*

> *"I felt listened to and included in my sessions, at the forefront of my care as a person rather than as a puzzle to be solved or just another number..."*
>
> *Young person, 24 years, 2025*

> *"The psychiatrist we saw was very understanding and extremely easy to communicate with and explained things really well..."*
>
> *Young person, 16 years, 2025*

> *"The psychiatrists are knowledgeable and form rapport with young people very easily. They offer support in very youth friendly language and clients feel well understood, included and supported."*
>
> *headspace clinician, 2024*

findings

Building understanding and confidence

The evaluation found that headspace Telepsychiatry helped young people build the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to manage their mental health. Eighty per cent reported a better understanding of their mental health, while 77 per cent reported gaining knowledge and skills to manage their mental health and 77 per cent felt supported to set and work towards mental health goals (Figure 4). Reflecting these benefits, 84 per cent of centre stakeholders (n=44) agreed that the program increased young people's capacity to cope with their mental health issues.

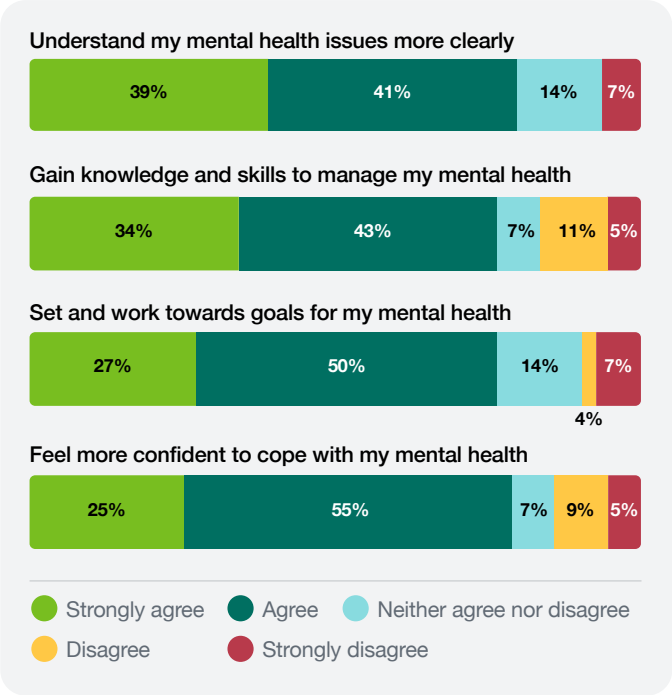


Figure 4: Young people's perceptions of the impact of headspace Telepsychiatry primary consultations on understanding and managing their mental health (n=44). Figures may not sum to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Improving wellbeing and daily functioning

Evaluation findings suggest headspace Telepsychiatry has supported improved health and wellbeing of young people with over two-thirds (68%, n =30) of young people surveyed agreeing that support received from headspace Telepsychiatry helped them feel better day-to-day. Young people reported "feeling less depressed" and "more physically and mentally healthy" since engaging in the service. This was supported by centre stakeholders with 88 per cent (n=46) agreeing that the program had improved the health and wellbeing of young people connected to their centres.

"...it felt like it saved my life. Struggling with thoughts and anxiety made me feel like I couldn't be awake... until I came to headspace. I finally learnt everything about me and how to cope with my brain."

Young person, 18 years, 2025

Survey and interview findings suggest the program contributed to improved social and occupational functioning among young people. Over two-thirds (68%, n=30) of young people and 82 per cent (n=43) of centre stakeholder survey respondents agreed headspace Telepsychiatry support increased the capacity of young people to manage their daily lives and activities. Young people shared improvements in their ability to manage their studies and work, as well as improvements in their relationships with friends and family.

"The success stories are where it's given the young person, I guess a sense of being heard, getting a plan and then the functional outcomes of that...so outcomes in school, work, social life, friendships, reducing alcohol and drug use, becoming more involved with the community."

headspace GP, 2025

68%

of young people agreed **psychiatry support helped them feel better day-to-day**



findings

Strengthening collaboration and coordinated care

Primary consultations contribute to care collaboration and service integration. headspace Telepsychiatry strengthens collaboration and integration across headspace service providers and partners to deliver coordinated, wrap-around support to young people and family. Clinical Leads and GPs highlighted the importance of having a clinician who knows and has worked with the young person present during appointments to both provide support to the young person and be available to provide further information to the psychiatrist if required. Young people also reported valuing this collaborative approach.

Nearly 80 per cent (79%, n=42) of centre stakeholders surveyed agreed the program improved integration of in-person and online support for young people and family at their centre. This was supported by young person survey data with 33 per cent (n=18) of young people reporting having received support from one or more additional headspace digital mental health programs, including eheadspace, Online Communities, regional Phone Counselling Service and headspace Connect.

"The psychiatrist listened to both me and my clinician so if I forgot something I had support and didn't feel alone. This was really great to make sure everything was covered in the appointment and responsibility wasn't solely on me."

Young person, 23 years, 2025

"I like the headspace Telepsychiatry set up because they have clinicians on the ground… so young people have a clinician allocated to them who facilitates…counselling or CBT and then they have the psychiatry input with that. So, it's much more effective that way…and with GPs being based at headspace as well then you have a lot more chance to co-manage the patient with the GP who's local. I think that system works."

Telepsychiatry psychiatrist, 2025

79% of centre stakeholders agreed **Telepsychiatry improved digital and in-person support integration**



key learning, program strengths and opportunities

The evaluation found that headspace Telepsychiatry is helping address inequalities in access to psychiatric care and contributing to meaningful improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of young people, particularly in regional, rural and remote Australia.

These findings highlight the value of the program as an accessible, integrated model of specialist mental health care for young people. The evaluation also identified opportunities to further strengthen the program, including improving access to follow-up psychiatry support, streamlining referral processes, and responding to ongoing demand for ADHD assessment and management support.

headspace is committed to working in partnership with service providers across the headspace network, with the number of centres participating in headspace Telepsychiatry increasing from 79 to 93 centres since the evaluation was conducted, extending access to psychiatry support for more young people across Australia.