

February 2022

evaluation snapshot report



how satisfied are families at headspace?

At headspace, family members are acknowledged as an integral part of a young person's circle of care. Family means something different for every young person. Whether family is by birth, choice or circumstance, these people play a significant role in supporting a young person through fostering a sense of belonging and connection. At headspace, we respect and celebrate the diversity of families across Australia.

what does family engagement at headspace involve?

Family inclusive practice is a way of working that values the significance of family in a young person's life. A family inclusive approach actively supports a young person's family and facilitates their involvement in the professional care and support of the young person.

headspace adopts a practice that identifies three tiers of family inclusive practice as illustrated in the Family Inclusive Practice Pyramid (Mottaghipour & Bickerton, 2005; see Figure 1).

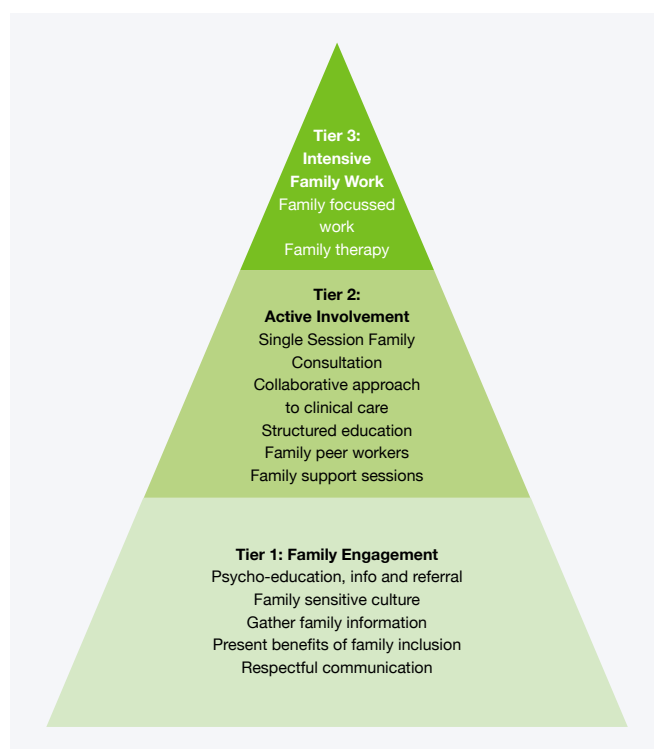


Figure 1.
Family Inclusive Practice Pyramid

The pyramid is a framework that offers a range of ways that family can be meaningfully included at headspace. The nature of the service can be flexible and the family's involvement 'fluid' across the tiers depending on the need and timing.

why is it important?

For most young people, the inclusion of their family will support improved mental health outcomes. The level of family support accessed by a young person has been found to be a positive determinant of access to mental health services (Baker, Burgat, & Stavely, 2019).

Research shows that young people still go to their families for support. National surveys indicate that Australian young people are most likely to seek informal support, with 83.5% seeking help from friends, parents or guardians (71.7%), relatives/family friends (55.3%) and siblings (49.6%) (Tiller et al, 2020).

In addition to this, family members are often the first to notice changes that may signal the onset of a mental health concern and can encourage a young person to seek help, or they can access help on the young person's behalf.

This evidence reinforces that it is crucial for headspace to engage with the families of young people accessing our services, and to get their feedback about the service.

how does headspace get feedback from families?

headspace developed and validated the headspace Family and Friends Satisfaction questionnaire to capture feedback from families in a number of different areas, including: their overall satisfaction, their satisfaction with the headspace centre, staff, and help provided, and their involvement with the service (Nicholas et al, 2017).

The survey is available for families to complete at any time (via the headspace website), and headspace centres actively promote the survey during a 'survey month' each year. In 2021, the survey was promoted across all headspace centres in October (this promotion included posters displayed in headspace centres, survey QR codes on appointment cards and social media posts).

Between January and October 2021, 411 families of young people responded to the survey, representing 110 of the 135 centres that were operational at that time. Of the 393 who provided a response to the question 'what is your relationship to the young person attending headspace', 80 per cent indicated they were a parent or step-parent – and 87 per cent of parents/step-parents were female (see Figure 2). When asked the gender of the young person they were supporting, 62 per cent indicated their young person

was female. Most survey respondents were early in their engagement with headspace, with 23 per cent indicating their young person had attended less than two sessions (see Figure 3).

Of those who responded to the survey, 247 provided comments about what they liked about headspace and 250 provided comments on how we could make headspace better. These themes are integrated throughout this snapshot report.

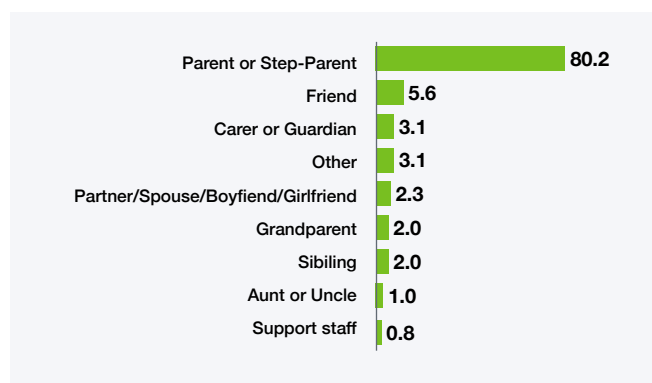


Figure 2.
Family member's relationship to young person (n=393)

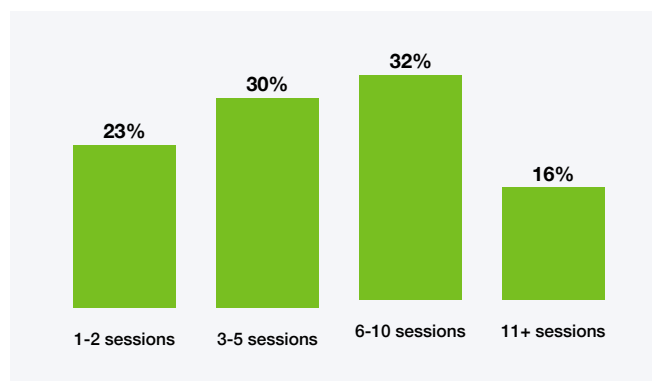


Figure 3.
Number of sessions the young person has attended (n=366)



what does our data tell us?

Families are highly satisfied with headspace

headspace recognises that for young people to experience the full range of benefits of having their family engaged throughout their experience at the service, it is critical that family members value and trust headspace and have a generally positive experience. In 2021, there were very high levels of overall satisfaction, in particular:

- 96 per cent agreed that headspace plays an important role for young people in their communities
- 88 per cent agreed that headspace is a service that they trust
- 87 per cent agreed that they would recommend headspace to other families
- 86 per cent agreed that they were generally satisfied with headspace

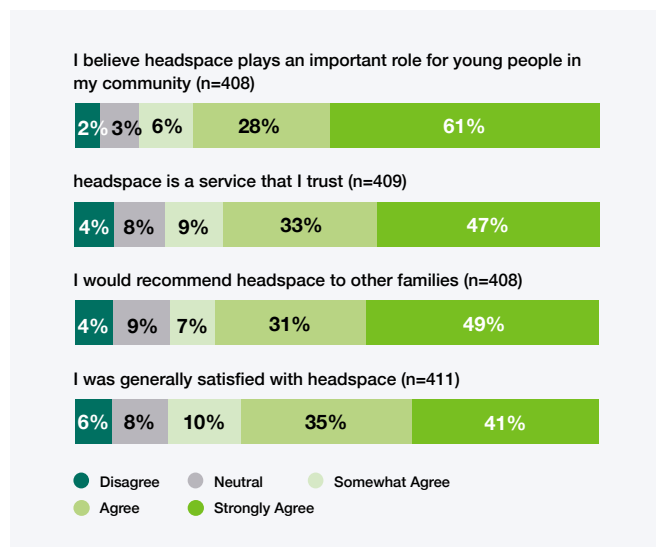


Figure 4.
Overall satisfaction of family and friends¹

As an enabler to ongoing engagement and support for families, these results indicate a high level of trust and general satisfaction with headspace. Some quotes that show this include:

"I am absolutely so thankful to 2 of your staff members we have had dealings with, that have made the time for my [young person]. I can tell they are helping break through barriers and win trust ... even though it's still early days. They are amazing. They have made more headway than any other professionals we have had access to over the yrs."

parent, female, VIC

"I like that I have been given the opportunity to attend a program to help understand and connect with my teenage daughter. I appreciate that the staff at headspace have made this possible."

parent, female, VIC

headspace services are welcoming and inclusive for families

To ensure families feel included in the care of their young person it is vital they feel welcomed at headspace. The following results indicate that the vast majority of family and friends generally feel welcomed at headspace and included in the services provided:

- 94 per cent agreed that the headspace centre felt like a welcoming place for friends and family
- 94 per cent agreed that the headspace centre felt inclusive and welcoming of diversity
- 84 per cent felt included in the headspace services provided to their family member/friend (Figure 5)

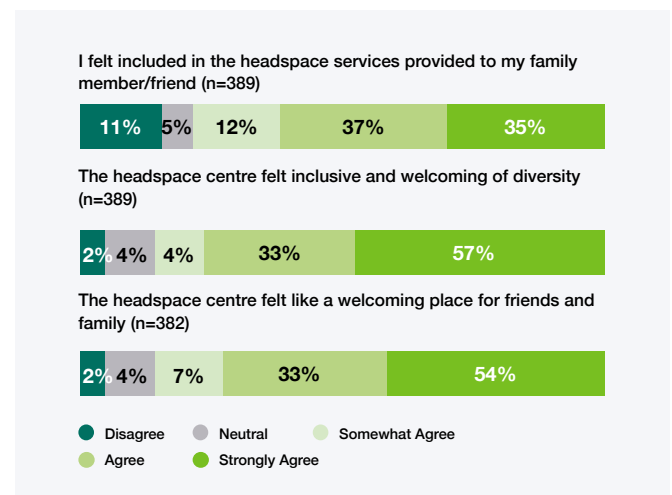


Figure 5.
headspace feeling welcoming and inclusive of diversity

When asked what they liked about headspace, families referenced their interactions with staff, often complimenting both clinical and reception staff. They described staff as being friendly, caring, understanding and professional. These attributes were commonly identified as a key distinguishing feature of their experience with headspace.

"headspace has been so welcoming and supportive of [my daughter] and I am very grateful for the care and support."

parent, female, QLD

¹Figures in these charts sometimes sum to more than 100% due to rounding.

Many families also appreciated the accessible, relaxed, youth friendly, and bright environment of headspace centres:

“The space is lovely, cheerful and colourful as is the atmosphere which is friendly and inclusive.”

spouse, female, WA

“All staff members are so welcoming. The nice quiet waiting area has a nice feel. I’m looking forward to seeing how this impacts my child’s life.”

parent, female, QLD

Families have mixed experiences of timeliness of headspace services

Regarding timeliness of access to services, 81 percent of survey respondents agreed that they could get an appointment in a timely manner – however the level of agreement to this statement varied more compared with responses to other questions, with 13 percent disagreeing (Figure 6). Comments provided also suggested that service wait times were a concern for some families. Some family members also indicated they would like access to more services, with 20 percent of survey respondents disagreeing that the number of sessions available was enough for their young person.

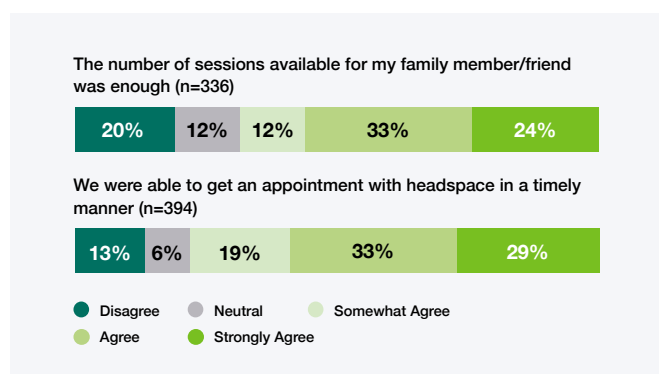


Figure 6.
Timeliness of services and ability to access enough services

Families also suggested a range of improvements to the accessibility of headspace. Suggestions included reducing long wait times, offering extended operating hours (outside of school and work hours), and setting up more service locations.

“The wait times for an appointment is concerning. With mental health becoming so common this field is needed so much. More qualified staff to take waiting times down would be very beneficial.”

parent, female, QLD

“Appointments are limited and its very hard to get appointments outside of school hours meaning that young people can miss hours of school over time”

parent, female, NSW

“I have heard how difficult it is to get in but feel very fortunate that this was not our experience and we were able to access support relatively quickly.”

parent, female, NSW

“I wish our child could continue to see their Psychologist at headspace longer because they have built up a trusting relationship with them now and we also cannot get them in anywhere else to take over their continued therapy”

parent, female, VIC

Families feel respected, valued and able to raise their concerns

Families can be involved with headspace in many ways, and it is important for them to feel that they are able to raise concerns and that they are valued and respected by headspace staff. Survey results indicate that family and friends are highly satisfied with their level of involvement with headspace services, in particular:

- 88 per cent agreed that they felt valued and respected as a family member/friend
- 85 per cent agreed that they were able to discuss their concerns with headspace staff (Figure 7).

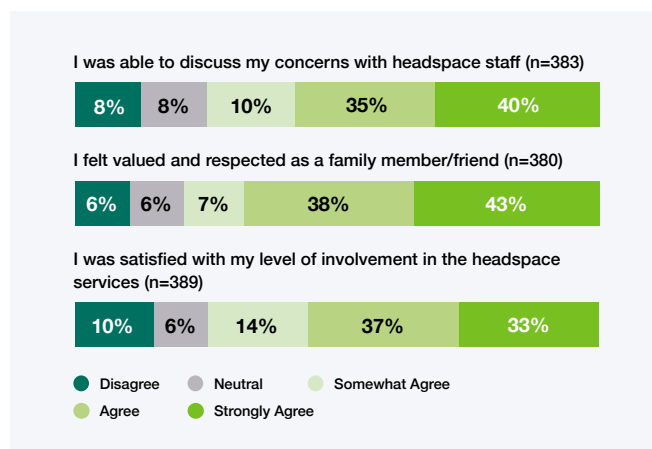


Figure 7.
Level of involvement of family and friends

Families noted how much they appreciated being involved in the care of their young person, as well as being able to access relevant supports for themselves:

“The offering of family therapy on top of the session my daughter has received on top of her individual sessions.”

parent, female, VIC

“I like that I have been given the opportunity to attend a program to help understand and connect with my teenage daughter. I appreciate that the staff at headspace have made this possible.”

parent, female, VIC

"It's a friendly place to go and talk. They support all of the family, not just the person with the issue"

parent, female, WA

Some families reported that they would like to be more involved in the care and support of their young person or kept abreast of services through regular updates. Consistency of service and continuity of care was important to many families, and an area some identified as needing improvement. Some reported that they would like more support for themselves; others requested information and guidance on how they can support their young person at home.

"Maybe have a set series of questions for the patients and info on what they can do in the meantime during appointments, rather than just letting the person go and continue with their life afterwards."

sibling, diverse, VIC

"I would have liked some involvement with the therapist, not to be in the session but just a quick update or input on any ways I could help support my daughter. At times of increased stress I would ask her what strategies the therapist had discussed but she couldn't remember at the moment. Perhaps some written info for my daughter could have helped too."

parent, female, SA

Families feel more hopeful for the future

headspace asks family members a range of questions relating to whether they believe their young person's mental health is improving since coming to headspace, and also whether the family member themselves feels better able to support their young person and whether they feel more hopeful for the future.

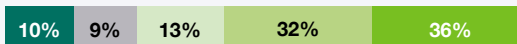
Survey results suggest that headspace is achieving outcomes for family and friends:

- 81 percent of respondents agreed that they feel more hopeful for the future as a result of their contact with headspace
- 77 percent of respondents agreed that their family member/friend's mental health is improving since coming to headspace (Figure 8).

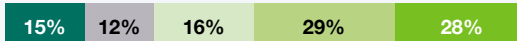
Of this sample, approximately 23 per cent had only received 1 or 2 sessions at the time of completing the survey. For the 77 per cent of respondents who had received at least three sessions, the proportion of respondents who agreed that their family member/friend's mental health is improving increases to 81 per cent.



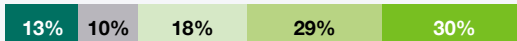
I feel more hopeful for the future because of my family members/ friends contact with headspace (n=379)



headspace helped me to understand and support my family member/friend better (n=356)



My family members/friends mental health is improving since coming to headspace (n=358)



Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

Figure 8.
Improvements to young people and family member's lives

Families commented positively on the help they received for their young person and themselves. They shared experiences of seeing positive changes in their young person, as well as their appreciation for headspace being a place for the young person to feel heard and supported, and somewhere they could get practical help:

"headspace helped my transgender (adult) child transition with confidence and offered awesome support options for family (trans-parent support group). My daughter is doing amazingly well and is getting support from IPS [Individual Placement and Support] now also."

parent, female, NSW

"The most obvious strength I have observed is the change in her demeanor since she began attending headspace. She trusted her mentor and was able to open up. Her life circumstances have coincided with skills she has been taught and together, I now have a much happier daughter who is gaining self-confidence."

parent, female, NSW

"I believe the staff at (headspace centre) helped my son get a job and also helped him with his anger and mental health issues. Thankyou headspace. 😊"

parent, female, VIC

Results from the 2021 Family and Friends satisfaction survey indicate high levels of satisfaction among family members whose young people have accessed headspace services. Families reported high levels of general support for headspace and a strong likelihood of recommending headspace to others. Family members were highly satisfied with aspects of service accessibility, including how welcoming and inclusive they felt the staff and spaces were. Some family members would like headspace to improve the timeliness of the service, and others would also like to be more involved with the service.

Response rates to the 2021 survey were lower than previous years, likely due to centres being asked to promote the survey in October – at a time when New South Wales and Victoria were only just emerging from COVID-19 lockdowns.

These results continue to inform our approach to service improvement across the centre network.

what's next for our engagement of families?

The headspace vision is that families will be provided with the resources, information, and services that will enable them to support their young person's wellbeing.

headspace is embarking on a body of work that will improve the experience of family attending headspace services. This involves developing new resources, supporting family inclusive practice, and creating opportunities for family participation in service improvement. headspace is also supporting and evaluating a range of interventions designed to assist centres with demand management in order to increase the timeliness of services.

At headspace we are also improving our data collection to enable us to gain a better understanding of the breadth of services provided to family members and their experiences. For instance, we aim to integrate satisfaction surveys throughout family members' engagement with the service. These improvements should lead to more comprehensive data collection and more rigorous feedback mechanisms for headspace to continuously improve our services for families of young people.



Methods used

Data for this snapshot were collected from the headspace centre services Family and Friends Satisfaction Survey (January – October 2021), administered through a Qualtrics online survey. headspace developed the 19-question headspace Family and Friends Satisfaction Scale (Nicholas et al, 2017) to measure family and friend satisfaction across five domains: the headspace centre, headspace staff, help provided, involvement of family and friends, and overall satisfaction. The online survey also includes demographic questions and two free text questions. The survey is available for family and friends to complete at any time (via the headspace website), and headspace centres actively promote the survey during a ‘survey month’ each year.

This study received ethics approval (QA2020102) from Melbourne Health.

References

- Baker, D., Burgat, L., & Stavely, H. (2019). *We're in this together: Family inclusive Practice in mental health services for young People*. Orygen.
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- Tiller, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Greenland, N., Liyanarachchi, D., & Di Nicola, K. (2020). *Youth Survey Report 2020*. Mission Australia.



headspace centres and services operate across Australia, in metro, regional and rural areas, supporting young Australians and their families to be mentally healthy and engaged in their communities.



headspace would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians. We value their cultures, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and are committed to making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, by providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate and inclusive.



headspace is committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the provision of health services. headspace welcomes all people irrespective of ethnicity, lifestyle choice, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.