



headspace Mildura would like to acknowledge the Latji Latji, Ngintait and Nyeri Nyeri peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the Country on whose land we work and live, and neighbouring tribes. We also pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the ancient connection they hold with their land, whose sovereignty was never ceded.

We acknowledge the individual and collective expertise of those with a living or lived experience of mental health, alcohol and other drug issues. We recognize their vital contribution at all levels and value the courage of those who share this unique perspective for the purpose of learning and growing together to achieve better outcomes for all.

What is headspace?

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



Mental Health



Physical Health



Substance Use



Work & Study

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

- is having difficulty with something in their life, or concerned about changes in their thoughts, feelings or behaviour
- feels sad, anxious, stressed or worried
- is concerned about their use of alcohol and/or drugs
- would like advice about work or study or assistance with job seeking
- would like to discuss relationships
- would like to discuss their sexuality or gender identity
- would like help with their physical health, contraception or sexual health
- is worried about a friend or family member

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.

We believe that family and friends play an important role in a young person's journey to better their wellbeing.



Get in to Life

All types of families:
 nuclear, extended, blended, single-parent, heterosexual, same-sex couples, chosen family

Welcome to headspace Mildura (hM)

With a focus on early intervention, headspace Mildura is an inclusive, youth friendly organisation supporting young people between the ages of 12-25 years with their social, emotional and physical wellbeing, helping them get back on track and strengthen their ability to manage their mental health in the future.

We know that talking about mental health looks different in different communities and cultures. We're here to support you in a way that feels respectful and right for young people and their family.

For us, family means those who play a significant part in a young person's circle of care, and this is defined by each young person.

Family can include:

Parental & non-parental caregivers: parents, adoptive parents, stepparents, foster parents, grandparents, god-parents, siblings, extended family members, partners, Elders

Significant others: friends, teachers, mentors, kinship relations, spiritual care leaders, coaches, community members

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

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

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

This guide will introduce you to our services, how you can be involved, and where you can find further information and support for you and your young person.

*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

headspace Mildura

With the support of headspace National, headspace services are commissioned by Primary Health Networks (PHN) via a Lead Agency to deliver holistic assessment and management of a young person's health and wellbeing needs. For headspace Mildura, this is Murray PHN with Mildura Base Public Hospital as the Lead Agency.

To facilitate holistic services, we are supported by a Consortium. This group brings together a range of local services who contribute and advise on our services and operations. It is comprised of:

- Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH)
- Sunraysia Community Health Services (SCHS)
- Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC)
- Mallee Accommodation and Support Program (MASP)
- Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS)
- MADEC
- Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC)
- Northern Mallee Local Learning & Employment Network (NMLLEN)
- Mallee Family Care (MFC)

OPENING HOURS

Monday: 9:00AM – 5:00PM
 Tuesday: 9:00AM – 7:00PM
 Wednesday: 9:00AM – 5:00PM
 Thursday: 9:00AM – 5:00PM
 Friday: 9:00AM – 5:00PM
 *Appointments available from 8.30am by request

CONTACT US

📍 Suite 2/125 Pine Avenue, Mildura
 ☎ 03 5021 2400
 📠 03 5023 6760
 ✉ my.headspace@headspacemildura.com.au
 🌐 headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/Mildura/

Common myths and facts about mental health difficulties

MYTH

People don't recover from mental ill-health.

FACT

Just like physical fitness, a person's mental health and wellbeing can decline and improve depending on what is going on in their life at the time, how past experiences have affected them, and other factors such as the type of care and support they receive. Through the ups and downs, people can learn and develop new skills which can help them navigate challenges in the future.



MYTH

Mental health difficulties are caused by genetics.

FACT

Our mental health and wellbeing is influenced by a range of factors. While genetics can play a role, the reasons someone might need support are often complex and varied.

The loss of a loved one, losing a job, relationship break-ups, bullying, stress from exams and family conflict are just some of the things that can affect the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

There are also many factors that promote mental health, such as strong family, Community and cultural supports, being physically active, being engaged in our communities, finding purpose through things like study or work, and access to good mental health care.

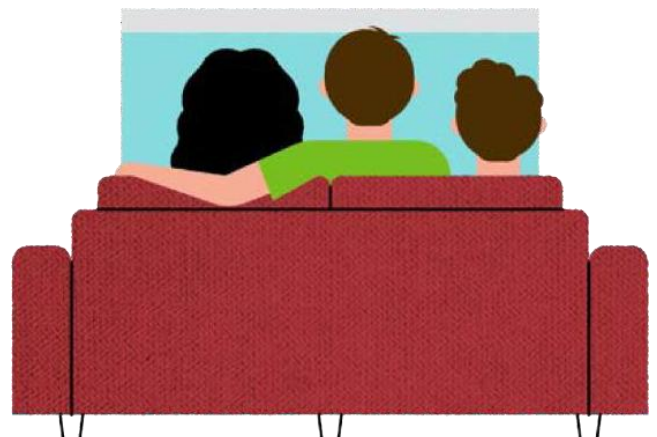


MYTH

Family can't help people experiencing mental health difficulties.

FACT

Family, friends, and school, work and community networks play important roles in supporting young people experiencing challenges. Family have a lasting connection with the young person and can offer care, understanding and practical support that make a big difference to their mental health and wellbeing.



How headspace Mildura can help

INFORMATION AND SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, THEIR FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS CAN BE ACCESSED THROUGH:



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.



headspace online

headspace online is our national online and telephone support service and includes:

- online & phone counselling and support for young people and family
- information for family about mental health and wellbeing, and ways to support a young person going through a difficult time
- work & study support for young people, including career mentoring
- opportunities to connect and hear from other people who might be going through similar situations to you

.....
You and your young person can each create a headspace account to access the range of online resources & services, at headspace.org.au.



headspace Mildura centre

The headspace Mildura centre provides in-person information and support to young people aged 12-25 for anything affecting their health and wellbeing. Information and support is also available for family and friends.

All services are provided by qualified professionals who have specific expertise in working with young people – including doctors, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, alcohol and drug workers, counsellors, vocational workers. We can also connect you with a more appropriate service if needed

.....
Family or friends can make a referral on behalf of a young person with the young person's consent by phone, email, [headspace Mildura website](https://headspace.org.au) or in-person at the centre.



Please note

headspace Mildura provides time-limited services for mild to moderate difficulties. It is not an emergency service. If someone is hurt, you are worried about someone's safety, or you or your young person need immediate/crisis support or medical assistance, please contact:

- **Emergency Services 000 (24/7)**
- **Mildura Base Public Hospital Mental Health & Wellbeing Services (03) 5022 3500 or 1300 366 375 (24/7)**
- **Lifeline 13 11 14 (24/7)**
- **Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 (24/7)**

If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander:

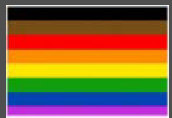
- **13YARN 139276**

If you are unsure on the best service for your young person, please contact us during business hours and we can help direct you to the most appropriate support.

Our commitment to inclusive practice

We understand that some young people may experience additional or greater barriers to accessing help for mental health difficulties. These people might be:

- Young men
- Sexuality and gender diverse young people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples
- Young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- Young people who use alcohol and other drugs
- Young people experiencing homelessness young people with disabilities
- Young people in rural/remote communities.



We are committed to inclusive practice. Inclusive practice involves being responsive to the needs of, and actively welcoming and accepting all young people, irrespective of their culture, language, gender, sexuality, lifestyle, values and beliefs, abilities, appearance or socio-economic differences.

As an inclusive service, we:

- Acknowledge and respect all young people treat all young people fairly
- Do not discriminate against or judge young people challenge negative stereotypes
- Help young people to attend to their immediate basic needs before engaging them in treatment (like food, housing, safety, employment and daily living skills)
- Offer flexible, tailored and culturally safe approaches to treatment.





What happens when a young person visits headspace Mildura

Complete referral via our online form available on our website, over the phone or in person.



Young Person (or elected contact) will be contacted (within 72 hours) by an Engagement & Assessment (E&A) Clinician, who will ask few questions to help determine pathways of support, which may include booking an initial assessment or focused support session. They will also be sent a link for a brief online headspace survey* to be completed before their appointment. Sometimes, the E&A Clinician may also contact a family member or another support person with the young person's consent.



Young Person attends their first appointment (in person at the centre, via phone or telehealth) where they can share what's impacting their wellbeing and talk about what is going on for them and what they might like help with. A family member or friend may also attend this appointment if the young person feels comfortable with this.



The E&A Clinician will work with the team to develop the best treatment plan based on the needs and presentation of the young person.



The E&A Clinician will contact the young person (and/or the nominated family member to talk about the possible options based on the assessment information and young person's goals. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Brief intervention and problem-solving with a qualified mental health clinician
- Early intervention and supportive counselling with one of our clinical team
- Access to a doctor and/or sexual health nurse
- Study or vocational assistance with a vocation consultant or case manager
- Substance use assistance from an alcohol and drug counsellor
- Skills groups/workshops
- Referral to an agency/professional 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 Mildura can support this).

IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE



APPOINTMENT LENGTH

First appointments can last up to 90 minutes, while ongoing counselling appointments usually last 50 minutes to an hour. Sessions with a GP or nurse are generally shorter and between 15 to 30 minutes.

COST

Services at headspace Mildura are free or low cost and this will be confirmed before an appointment is made.

We also try to ensure we refer you to someone who is either free or low cost. Some external private practitioners might charge a gap fee (with a Mental Health Treatment Plan), but we can talk you through this if this is the case and provide some options.

INTERPRETER SERVICES



headspace Mildura services are provided in English. However, we are happy to arrange an interpreter at no cost to support the young person or their family and friends engaging with the service. It helps if we know this in advance if possible. We find that most people prefer a telephone interpreter service, but we may be able to arrange a local interpreter for some languages.

For more information on mental health in a language other than English, please speak to a headspace clinician or visit Mental Health in Multicultural Australia at mhima.org.au.

Some key headspace factsheets are also translated in different languages and available in centre or on the headspace website.

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PLAN

Mental Health Treatment Plans (MHTP) are completed by a GP and allow a young person (or their Family and Friends) to access support from a Private Practitioner (both within and outside of headspace Mildura) with a Medicare rebate.

A MHTP will usually provide 6-10 sessions (based on the program of the Private Practitioner) in one calendar year; but to start with, you will be referred for up to 6 sessions. Practitioners can set their own fees and you may be required to pay a gap fee.

The young person can obtain a MHTP through their family GP. If they don't have access to a GP, headspace can assist with available GP options (including the headspace Mildura GP when available).

We will advise you and your young person if a MHTP is required and headspace Mildura staff will be able to contact the nominated GP and request a MHTP and the purpose for this.

Private practitioners cannot start their sessions with the young person until they receive a copy of the MHTP from the GP.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE

ACCESSING HEADSPACE MILDURA ON BEHALF OF A YOUNG PERSON

If your young person is not ready to access our services themselves, we encourage you to contact us to discuss what might help them to take that step, ways we might engage your young person or how you can be supported to care for your young person. If you would like to speak with a headspace staff member for advice, please call us. You may be booked for an appointment or offered support over the phone. If your young person is already engaged or is willing to engage with us, ask us about the support and involvement we offer to family and friends.

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



CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Consent

headspace is a voluntary service. Health professionals can only provide treatment to young people who give consent. This is something we will ask a young person when they attend. Young people under the age of 18 can consent to treatment without parental permission provided they understand the consequences of engaging with the service and are assessed as having the capacity to understand the treatment.

Nonetheless, support and involvement from others is always encouraged and, regardless of their age, 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. Please speak to us if you would like a copy of our Consent Policy.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Best practice is to respect the young person's confidentiality as well as involving family meaningfully. When a young person speaks with a headspace clinician, nothing they say can be passed on to anyone else without their permission unless the young person:

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

In these cases, we will provide only necessary information to appropriate services or support people and where possible will inform the young person or family. If you have any questions about confidentiality, please speak to a headspace clinician.

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR YOUNG PERSON WHILE AWAITING 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, take their feelings seriously. Show empathy and respond with care
- Be available while also allowing them their own space
- Spend time with them. Do things together that you both enjoy
- Take an interest in their activities, and encourage them to talk about what's happening in their life
- Provide a 'listening ear'. Don't rush to 'fix' things or find solutions
- Encourage and support friendships and connections with communities
- Encourage activities that promote positive mental health, such as exercise, eating well, regular sleep and doing things they enjoy
- Support them to participate in spiritual or cultural practices that are important to them
- Give positive feedback. Share what you notice about their qualities and strengths
- Let them know that you love them. They may not always admit it, but this is likely to be very important to them.
- Encourage use of online supports available, including headspace online

Learn more about young people's mental health and wellbeing, and how family can support them using the resources on the headspace website: headspace.org.au/family

HOW TO GET INVOLVED AT hM

FAMILY INCLUSION IN THE CARE OF THE YOUNG PERSON

headspace Mildura respect the choices, privacy and confidentiality of the young people using our services; we value the inclusion of family and friends in a young person's care and will work with young people to involve family in ways the young person is comfortable with.

Here are some of the ways family can be included:

- talking with the young person's clinician before or after a session
 - attending some sessions with the young person
- contributing to the development of the young person's care plan or safety plan
- attending a group information session or peer support session for family
- having the option of checking in with the clinician if family becomes concerned about the young person's wellbeing



headspace Mildura also offers **Tuning in to Teens (TinT)**, an emotion-focused Parenting Program; parents or carers are able to participate in TinT irrespective of whether their young person is engaged with headspace Mildura. Please contact us if you would like further information or to register your attendance.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES

headspace puts the voices of young people and their family front and centre.

Young people and their family can offer valuable ideas and insights based on their own experiences of headspace and/or the mental health system. This is what we call 'participation', and it is how we make sure the services we provide meet the needs of young people, their family and communities.

Family and friends' involvement in the delivery of our services is important to us; you can become involved by providing feedback or becoming a family representative.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

We value feedback from young people, their family and communities, and use it to help improve our services. Here are some of the ways you can provide feedback about the services you and/or your young person receive at headspace:

- via the family survey automatically generated by email after a session with a clinician
- in person at our centre – via survey or by speaking with one of our staff
 - by phone
- via the headspace Mildura webpage - Feedback: [headspace Mildura | Youth Mental Health Centre & Services](#)

We take feedback seriously and do our best to respond to it as soon as possible. It helps build our understanding of what we are doing well and how we can better meet the needs of young people and their family.

Become a family representative: Family & Friends Reference Group

Family representatives help improve headspace services by sharing insights and ideas from the perspective of someone who supports a young person experiencing difficulties.

headspace Mildura's Family and Friends Reference Group (F&FRG) is a diverse group of volunteers that provide consultation and guidance to headspace Mildura on the engagement of, and provision of support to, family and friends of young people engaged with the service.

The type of contribution a Family Representative makes depends on their availability and interests. Examples include:

- Providing ideas on how the physical layout and facilities of the centre could be more welcoming to the local community
- Reviewing documents such as centre brochures or policies
- Meeting with centre staff a few times a year to share ideas and hear updates on the work of the centre and provide input into how the centre is run
- Sitting on interview panels for new staff members
- Attending meetings with other services or organisations.

For more information on becoming a family representative, contact: Mitch Rodd, Community Engagement Officer my.headspace@headspacemildura.com.au Or head to our [website](#).





At headspace Mildura, we encourage self-care. Worrying about someone you care about is tough, and while supporting a young person experiencing mental health difficulties can be deeply rewarding, it can also have an impact on you – and it's essential to look after your own mental health and wellbeing.

Taking care of yourself and maintaining your own health and wellbeing enables you to best take care of the person you are supporting. It also demonstrates healthy habits for your young person.

Here are a few tips for taking care of yourself.

It takes a village...

Consider the role that other trusted members of your young person's family and Community could play in supporting the young person. This can have the dual benefit of strengthening the young person's connections while also helping you feel less alone with your responsibilities.

Accept care from others

Accept acts of kindness or offers of support. A gift that gives you 'time out' or an opportunity to enjoy something you love can help you feel restored during what might be a tough time.

It's also OK to ask for help when you need it. Identify the people in your life who care about you and can offer a listening ear if you need to share your concerns.

It can be helpful to talk with others who have had similar experiences. These might be trusted family, friends or members of your community.

At headspace Mildura, we can arrange for you to meet with a Family Peer Consultant, who has firsthand experience of caring for a young person with mental health challenges.

Don't let go of what grounds you

Supporting someone going through a hard time can leave you with little space for things in life that bring you joy. Although it can be hard when you're busy caring for others, make time to spend with people who share your interests, passions, family or cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs.

Making a commitment to enjoy the simple pleasures in life can sustain you day-to-day and long term.

What lifts your spirit or gives you energy? Pets, the beach, running, singing, connecting with nature, meditation.

Be kind to yourself

Family sometimes feel responsible for their young person's situation. If self-blame is weighing you down, try to be realistic and have compassion for yourself.

Remember there are many factors that contribute to mental health. Consider: Are your expectations of yourself too high? Imagine if a good friend of yours was in your situation. What would you say to them if they were being hard on themselves? You might encourage them and affirm their efforts.

Listening to these messages for yourself can help with accepting you are doing the best you can.

Be informed

Supporting a young person can lead to worry and a huge feeling of responsibility. Learning about mental health and how to support a young person can give you more understanding, knowledge, skills and tools, and a sense of hope.

See our [seven tips for a healthy headspace](#).

Remember:

Looking after yourself is not selfish. You might be juggling many competing needs and feel pulled in different directions. In addition to caring for a young person, you may be holding down a job, taking care of others such as children and older family members, and running a household.

People who care for others often feel they are being selfish if they attend to their own needs. But neglecting your needs can have consequences on your physical and mental health, relationships and financial situation.



an overview of mental health for family and friends

Good mental health allows us to live life in a positive and meaningful way. It helps us to work or study to our full potential, cope with day-to-day life stresses and be involved in the community.

When a young person experiences good mental health, it helps them be:

- resilient
- flexible
- adaptable
- socially connected.

Changes in young people

The journey from childhood to adulthood is full of physical, social, emotional and behavioural changes. With so much happening, it can be difficult to know the difference between normal behaviour such as occasional moodiness and irritability, and an emerging mental health concern. If a young person shows signs of developing a mental health concern it's important they're supported by their family, friends and health professionals early on.

What affects a young person's mental health?

There is no one cause for mental health concerns. Research tells us that a number of overlapping factors may increase the risk of a young person developing a mental health concern, such as:

- biological factors – family history of mental health concerns
- adverse early life experiences – abuse, neglect, death or significant loss or trauma
- individual psychological factors – self-esteem, perfectionism, coping skills or thinking style
- current circumstances – stress from work or studies, money issues, difficult personal relationships, challenges within the family
- serious illness or physical injury
- alcohol and other drugs use and experimentation.



Feeling down, tense, angry, anxious or moody are all normal emotions, but when these feelings persist for at least a few weeks, or begin to interfere with daily life, they may be part of a mental health concern.

Signs to look out for

Family and friends can often tell when something is not quite right – they may notice the way their young person expresses themselves is different, or other changes in their behaviour.

Here are some common signs that might suggest your young person needs further support.

These include new, noticeable and persistent changes lasting at least a few weeks, such as:

- withdrawing from or not enjoying things they usually do
- changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- isolating themselves and spending more time alone than normal
- being easily irritated or angry for no apparent reason
- declining performance in school, TAFE, uni or work
- loss of energy
- experiencing difficulties with their concentration
- an increase in risk taking behaviour, e.g., using alcohol and /or other drugs, dangerous driving, unprotected sexual activity
- being unusually stressed, worried, down or crying for no apparent reason
- expressing negative, distressing, bizarre or unusual thoughts.



How to support your young person

Reach out to your young person at a time when everyone seems calm to:

- talk openly and honestly
- let them know you're concerned and ask what they need from you
- show empathy and try to understand their perspective
- avoid judgement and reassure them you're there for them
- take their feelings seriously – don't tell them to 'calm down' or 'get over it'
- encourage them to talk about what's happening in their life and remind them that talking about a problem can help
- spend time together and take an interest in their activities
- discuss their strengths with them and give positive feedback
- listen to their concerns – listen openly, attentively, and don't rush to problem solving
- check in often with your young person.

Encourage activities that promote good mental health

Tips that promote good mental health include:

- connecting with others
- staying active
- eating well
- limiting alcohol and other drug use
- getting into life
- sleeping well
- learning new coping skills.

Offer support

Let your young person know there is lots of help available.

- Professional support is available for both you and your young person. Help find an appropriate service, such as a headspace centre or eheadspace and support them to engage/offer to go with them.
- Ask direct questions if you're concerned about suicide. It's OK to ask directly. Research shows that talking about suicide will not make someone carry out the behaviour. You might choose to be specific about what you have seen that's causing you concern.
- If you're worried they might self-harm you can ask directly, try to understand their reasons and encourage them to seek professional support.

Self-care for family and friends

Caring for a loved one who is experiencing a tough time can impact on your health and wellbeing. Looking after yourself is important as it can leave you better placed to provide support to your young person. Get support by talking to someone you trust and seek professional help if you need it. It's important to look after yourself during these times. By doing so, you're also modelling good self-care for your young person.

Other useful websites

- [beyondblue](#)
- [SANE Australia](#)
- [Parent helplines \(Google 'Parentline' along with your State or Territory\)](#)
- [eheadsapce \(online and phone support\)](#)
- [your local headspace centre can direct you to some Family and Friends support groups](#)

Family and friends can provide vital support for young people when they are having a tough time.



Getting support

If someone you care about is in crisis, call triple zero (000). You can also go to your local hospital emergency department. Remember to stay with the person until they're able to access professional support.

If you are feeling overwhelmed and need to speak to someone now, contact:

- [Lifeline on 13 11 14](#)
- [the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467](#)



If you or someone you know is going through a tough time you can get help and support from headspace, your school, TAFE or university wellbeing service or your local health provider. For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre, or for online and telephone support, visit [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au)

If you need immediate assistance call 000 or to speak to someone urgently, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

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

 **headspace**
National Youth Mental Health Foundation



starting a conversation with a young person about mental health

Conversations about mental health are helpful

Family and friends play a vital role in identifying and supporting a young person who's experiencing the impacts of mental ill-health.

Let your young person know that you care about them no matter what they're going through. This is important and helps encourage young people to seek support early to manage the impact of mental ill-health.

Evidence has shown that having supportive loved ones involved in mental health care creates and improves longer lasting, positive outcomes for young people.

Conversations about mental health can be challenging

Talking to young people about mental health can feel hard, especially when you or your young person are uncomfortable talking about sensitive topics like mental health.

There is no 'right way' to have these conversations. Different approaches work better for different people. It's OK to feel unsure about how or when to start these conversations. No one gets these conversations perfect but taking the time to learn more is a great start.

How do I know if I need to have a conversation about mental ill-health?

Family members and friends can often tell when something isn't quite right. You might notice that a young person is acting differently, or there are changes to their behaviour.



If you notice changes, it's a good time to have a conversation about what might be happening in their life.

Tips for having the conversation

Having a conversation can feel overwhelming. Here are some tips for talking with your young person.

1. Check in with yourself

- Ensure that you're feeling calm and open to listening.
- Consider if it is the right time to have the conversation.
- Be aware of your body language and tone of voice.

2. Setting the scene

- Think about where.
- It can help to be side-by-side rather than looking directly at each other. Perhaps go for a drive, a walk, or somewhere your young person feels comfortable.

3. Be prepared to listen

- Listening to your young person is an important part of the process.
- Take their feelings seriously. Listen carefully, reflect back and don't judge (it can be more useful at times to say nothing than to offer solutions).
- Take a 'you and me vs the problem' approach. This lets them know you'll figure it out together.

4. Starting the conversation

- There are many ways to start the conversation. You could begin with general and open questions like: how is [e.g., school/sport] going?
- When focusing on more specific thoughts and feelings, 'I' statements are important: 'I feel like you/I've noticed you [haven't been yourself lately] – how are things?'

How you talk with your young person will depend on their age and understanding. The language you use should feel natural. If your young person talks about their mental health, reassure them that you're glad and relieved that they're talking to you, you're proud of them, and they're not alone in their journey.



To learn more about these tips visit the link via the QR code on the next page.

What if I am concerned about their safety?

If you are concerned about someone's safety it is important that you talk to them directly.

Here are some tips to help you:

- talk openly and honestly (this helps show them that you care)
- let them know that you are concerned about their safety
- acknowledge the difficulty of opening up about thoughts or feelings and reassure them it can help
- reassure them that you'll be there for them and ask what they need from you (they might not know what they need)
- if you're worried about suicide, ask direct questions, such as 'have you ever thought about suicide/ending your life?' (If you're not sure how you might feel hearing 'yes' to this question, seek professional support to help you manage the conversation)
- if you're worried they might self harm you can ask directly, try to understand their reasons and encourage them to seek professional support
- offer to work together to find information and appropriate services, such as headspace, and offer to go with them.

My young person doesn't want support

Sometimes young people might say there isn't anything wrong and/or refuse help (either verbally or through body language). This can feel overwhelming for family or friends who are unsure what they can do. It's OK for you to reach out for professional support in your role as family.

It's OK to raise your concerns again and again. Opening up can take time so it's important to reflect and keep trying. You could also try different approaches.



Sometimes support is continuing to let a young person know you're there until they're ready to access support and that you won't give up on them.

Self-care

Caring for a loved one who is experiencing a hard time can have an impact on you. Looking after yourself is important as it leaves you better placed to provide help. Importantly, it also lets you show your young person how you manage life's ups and downs.



Getting support

For more information and resources for family and friends, or to join a group chat with other parents, visit headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support or call 1800 650 890. You can also search for your nearest headspace centre online, or contact Parent HelpLine.

Here are some other ideas on where to access support:

- suggest other people the young person could talk to like a trusted adult, GP or online/telephone service like eheadspace
- access your own support – clinicians can work with family members to help them support their young person
- access support as a family – family therapy can sometimes feel less confronting for a young person and can reduce feelings that they are 'the problem'
- attend a group parenting education program such as Tuning into Teens.



If you or someone you know is going through a tough time you can get help and support from headspace, your school, TAFE or university wellbeing service or your local health provider. For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre, or for online and telephone support, visit headspace.org.au

If you need immediate assistance call 000 or to speak to someone urgently, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

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

 **headspace**
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

seven ways to support a young person's healthy headspace

Just like physical fitness, mental fitness requires regular effort. This can be challenging to maintain. Family can support a young person by providing them with the tools to live their lives in a positive and meaningful way.

Good mental health supports young people to positively engage in work, study and social activities. It can help them:

- think flexibly
- problem-solve
- manage day-to-day stress
- feel connected to others
- be resilient when things go wrong.



1. get into life

Doing things that are enjoyable and provide a sense of purpose is essential to good mental health.

This includes fun activities, work or study. Encourage your young person to get involved in activities that give them a sense of accomplishment.

This can boost their confidence and provide opportunities to connect with others. As a support person, modelling 'getting into life' yourself can help make it feel more achievable for your young person.



4. eat well

Eating well fuels the body and energy levels and can improve a person's mood, general health and wellbeing. Together with your young person, create a list of favourite nutritious meals and snacks, or invite your young person to join you at the supermarket, choose food and help cook meals.

We also need to drink plenty of water. Good hydration supports clear thinking and concentration. A good quality drink bottle might encourage your young person to keep their hydration up.



2. learn skills for a tough time

It is important to take the time to think and talk about how to handle tough times. Encourage your young person to build a range of strategies for handling tough times and let them know these will come in handy now and in the future. Different strategies work for different people. You can model skills for getting through a tough time by talking openly about how you are handling it.



3. create connections

Relationships with friends, family (pets included) and others are essential to young peoples' mental health and wellbeing, and offer a sense of belonging.

While young people might often be focused on their friends, they still need family. Encourage your young person to have meaningful connections with friends while also finding ways to spend time with family.

If 'one-on-one' activities feel too intense, then joint activities with other friends or family members can be an enjoyable way to stay connected.

One of the most effective ways family can support young people is to model healthy habits.

It's a good idea to practise some of these tips yourself.



5. stay active

Staying active is critical to physical health, mental agility and mood regulation. If your young person isn't into sport or exercise then activities like dancing, yoga, walking the dog, cycling or walking to a friend's house are other ways of integrating physical activity into everyday life.

One way to encourage your young person to be active is by including some activity in your own life if you can.



6. get enough sleep

Sleep is important for a young person's wellbeing. During adolescence, the 'body clock' changes and young people are more likely to stay awake late at night and sleep into the morning.

You can help by encouraging regular 'winding down' activities before bed and supporting a regular routine in the morning.

Help your young person create a bedroom environment that is free of TV, devices and lights so that sleep will come more easily.



7. cut back on alcohol and other drugs

Family play an important role in supporting healthy decision making when it comes to alcohol and other drugs. From an early age, talk openly with your young person about alcohol and other drugs, including ways they can minimise risks.

Studies show that it's better for a young person to delay the time they start to drink alcohol for as long as possible.

The best way to send a message about alcohol is for family to model responsible drinking.

Understanding change

We all at times say we are going to change something or improve something (i.e., start a new exercise regime) and then life gets in the way and we don't do as we had originally hoped. However, it can be hard to watch your young person participate in harmful behaviours and know how to support them to change. There are several psychological models of change and we describe one below that may be helpful to family and friends.

The Five Stages of Change

Stage 1: Pre-contemplation

This is the stage where the young person resists any idea about change and sees no need for change despite the concerns expressed by family and friends. The young people's apparent motivation can be influenced by a range of factors associated with developmental stage and level of vulnerability.

Young people may:

- Not care about the consequences of their situation or behaviour
- Intentionally give the impression that they don't care about the consequences to project an image that they are in control even when they clearly are not
- Have limited experience and are only beginning to develop their capacity for to understand the link between their actions and consequences.
- The primary areas to focus on at this stage are:
 - Engagement
 - Seek to understand the reasons behind the problematic situation/behaviour
 - Support activities that compete with problematic situation/behaviour

Stage 2: Contemplation

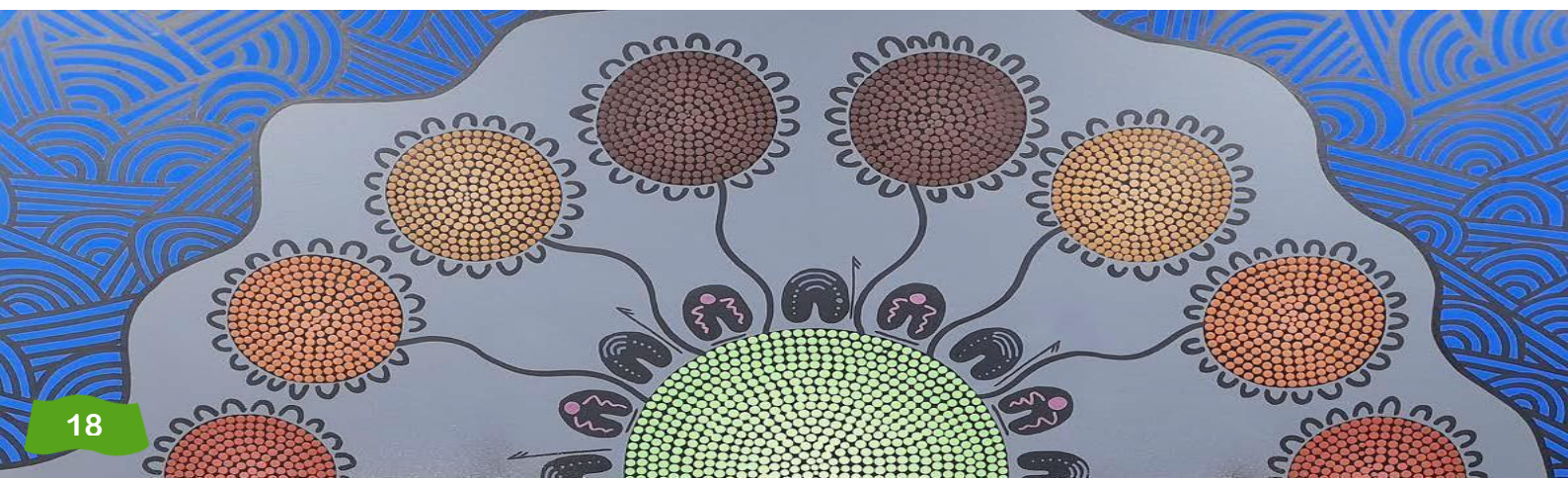
The person is in 'Two Minds' about the need to change: juggling thoughts about the pros and cons of change and whether they have the confidence to do it. This balance between consideration of the costs and benefits of changing can produce confusion and distress.

As with those young people who are not interested in change, contemplators might also mask their true state of mind. Again, there is potentially a developmental component stemming from young people's:

- Need for privacy and reluctance to share personal details about themselves until trust has been built with one another
- Sensitivity regarding the image they project, young people often feel it important to hide their vulnerability
- Inexperience and/or believing myths regarding help-seeking or maintaining behaviour.

The primary areas to focus on at this stage are:

- Build upon a relationship
- Provide space for the young person to discuss their situation/behaviour change in the context of what is important to them
- Build motivation for investment in self-care and a healthy lifestyle
- Address causes of problematic situation/behaviour





Stage 3: Preparation

This is when the young person has made a commitment to change their behaviour. They may research further treatment options/strategies and consider the lifestyle changes that will have to be made.

The primary areas to focus on at this stage are:

- Set realistic goals for change
- Support self-efficacy
- Ensure the young person has an adequate level of stability
- Increase opportunities for supportive relationships
- Help the young person plan to deal with unhelpful relationships
- Encourage the young person to participate in a rewarding activity
- Support the young person's ability to cope effectively with underlying issues.

Stage 4: Action

This is when the young person has confidence in their ability to change and is taking active steps. For example, the young person may begin practicing alternative coping mechanisms, like journaling, rather than engaging in the concerning behaviour.

Unfortunately, this is also the stage where the young person is most vulnerable to a relapse, because learning new techniques for managing your emotions is a gradual learning process.

Support is vital at this stage—this is where the surrounding support system can be the most valuable!

The primary areas to focus on at this stage are:

- Continue goal setting and review
- Provide opportunities for developing new life skills
- Build and reinforce helpful beliefs and values
- Support helpful relationships and reinforce positive participation
- Recognise and celebrate achievement, but offer the option of discussing the downside of change
- Relapse prevention.

Stage 5: Maintenance

This is when the young person is working to maintain the changes they have made. They are aware of triggers and how these may affect their goals. For example, if the young person is aware that a stressful event is approaching, this may increase their self-care strategies to reduce the likelihood of engaging in unhelpful behaviours.

The primary areas to focus on at this stage are:

- Reinforce helpful beliefs and values- reasons to be hopeful
- Consolidate new knowledge and skills
- Strengthen connections with helpful relationships and constructive activity
- Help the young person set and pursue long term life goals
- Relapse prevention

FURTHER RESOURCES

Local agencies	State/National agencies
<p>Anglicare Mildura www.anglicarevic.org.au/ 138 Pine Ave, Mildura 03 5025 9300</p> <p>Offers a comprehensive range of support services for people facing various challenges.</p>	<p>13YARN 13yarn.org.au 13 92 76 (24/7)</p> <p>National phone crisis supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.</p>
<p>CatholicCare Mildura Mildura - CatholicCare Victoria 136 Lime Ave Mildura VIC 3500 03 5051 0000</p> <p>Delivers a range of child, family and youth services, family relationship services, school counselling and pastoral care services, social housing, homelessness services, employment and advocacy services across Victoria.</p>	<p>Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) asco.org.au 1300 022 760</p> <p>Alcohol & drug support service.</p>
<p>Centrelink (Services Australia) 112-124 Deakin Ave, Mildura 13 24 68</p> <p>Delivers social security payments and services to eligible Australians, including retirees, job seekers, students, families, carers, and people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Black Dog Institute blackdoginstitute.org.au</p> <p>Information about supporting someone with depression or bipolar disorder.</p>
<p>Intereach Mildura www.intereach.com.au 1300 488 226 41 Ninth St, Mildura</p> <p>Strengthen and support communities and to improve the social and personal wellbeing of children, families, older people, carers and people with disability.</p>	<p>Carers Australia carersaustralia.com.au</p> <p>Carer counselling, advice, advocacy, education and training.</p>
<p>Mallee Accommodation Support Services (MASP) masp.org.au/ 03 5021 6500 118 Pine Ave, Mildura</p> <p>Focus areas: Family Safety, Homelessness Support, Children, Youth and Families, Residential Services and Social Housing program areas.</p>	<p>Carer Gateway carergateway.gov.au</p> <p>Free services and support for carers.</p>
<p>Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) mdas.org.au 120 Madden Ave Mildura VIC 3500 03 5018 4100</p> <p>Provides a wide range of health, wellbeing, family, and community services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the Mallee region in northwest Victoria, including Mildura, Swan Hill, and Kerang.</p>	<p>Eating Disorders Victoria eatingdisorders.org.au 1300 550 236 or (03) 9417 6598</p> <p>Free, confidential helpline.</p>

<p>Mallee Family Care malleefamilycare.com.au 122 Ninth Street Mildura VIC 3500 03 5023 5966</p> <p>Focus on family, youth and children, disability, mental health, housing and settlement, legal, financial, research and education.</p>	<p>Embrace embracementalhealth.org.au</p> <p>Culturally accessible (and translated) mental health resources, services and information.</p>
<p>Mallee Family Care – Family Relationship Centre www.malleefamilycare.org.au 105 Lemon Ave, Mildura VIC 3500 03 5021 7400</p> <p>Provide high quality health and support services, community programs and groups, as well as outreach services.</p>	<p>Family Drug Support Australia fds.org.au 1300 368 186 (24/7)</p> <p>Phone counselling & support.</p>
<p>Mallee Sexual Assault Service 03 5025 5400</p> <p>Mallee Domestic Violence Services 03 5021 2130 msau-mdvs.org.au/ 144-146 Lime Avenue, Mildura</p> <p>Specialist sexual and domestic violence services.</p>	<p>Gambling Help Online gamblinghelponline.org.au 1800 858 858 (24/7)</p> <p>Online chat & phone support.</p>
<p>Mildura Base Public Hospital – Mental Health Services (24/7) www.mbph.org.au/mental-health 5022 3500 / 1300 366 375 216 Ontario Ave, Mildura VIC 3500</p> <p>For people of all ages who are experiencing crisis or acute psychological distress or mental ill-health.</p>	<p>Mental Health Legal Centre mhlc.org.au 03 9629 4422 or 1800 555 887</p> <p>Free legal service for anyone who has experienced mental illness in Victoria (where their legal problem relates to their mental illness).</p>
<p>Mental Health and Wellbeing Local www.wellways.org/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing-local/ 2/124 Deakin Ave, Mildura 1300 000 667</p> <p>Offer supports and advice through Wellbeing Navigators and Peer Workers and help you explore the services and supports right for you and your situation above age 26 years.</p>	<p>QLife (Lifeline) qlife.org.au 1800 184 527</p> <p>Information about supporting people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, inter sex, queer or questioning (LGBTQIA+) Online chat & phone support.</p>
<p>Murray Mallee Legal Service 1800 243 002 mfclegalcentre.com.au/ 122 Ninth St, Mildura VIC 3500</p> <p>Provides free, confidential legal advice, information, referral and case work.</p>	<p>Rainbow Door www.rainbowdoor.org.au 1800 729 367</p> <p>Free specialist helpline providing information, support, and referral to all LGBTQIA+ Victorians, their friends and families.</p>
<p>The Orange Door www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/ 1800 290 943</p> <p>Help for people who are experiencing or using family violence or who need support with the care and wellbeing of children and young people.</p>	<p>Reachout au.reachout.com</p> <p>Information about supporting young people with mental health difficulties.</p>

<p>Sunraysia Community Health Services www.schs.com.au 137 Thirteenth St, Mildura VIC 3500 03 5022 5444</p> <p>Key services include general dental, physiotherapy, nursing, mental health, alcohol/drug treatment, aged care, and specialized clinics for women's/sexual health and child development.</p>	<p>Sane Australia sane.org 1800 18 (SANE) 7263</p> <p>Helping someone experiencing a mental health crisis Online chat & phone support.</p>
<p>Sunraysia Malee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC) 03 5022 1006 107-111 Twelfth Street https://smecc.org.au/</p> <p>SMECC supports culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people through education and capacity building.</p>	<p>Suicide Call Back Service suicidecallbackservice.org.au 1300 659 467 (24/7)</p> <p>Free 24/7 phone & online counselling.</p>
<p>Zoe Support Services www.zoesupport.com.au/ 0488 963 963 278 Deakin Ave, Mildura</p> <p>Zoe Support Australia is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation for young mums aged up to 25 in the Sunraysia community.</p>	<p>Youth Beyond Blue youthbeyondblue.org.au 1300 224 636 (24/7)</p> <p>Information about supporting someone with depression or anxiety Online chat & 24/7 phone support.</p>



We credit headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation for information contained in this document

For urgent assistance please call Mildura Base Public Hospital Area Mental Health & Wellbeing Services on 1300 366 375 or Lifeline 131114



headspace Mildura is operated by Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH)

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
 hM 400
 Updated January 2026