

Mental wellbeing starter pack

This is a collection of a few useful apps, services and resources you can turn to if you're looking for support for you or a mate.

Of course there are many more out there, but here's a few to start you off.

With thanks to headspace Miranda for the original design of this resource

apps for anxiety



ReachOut Breathe helps you reduce the physical symptoms of stress and anxiety by slowing down your breathing and your heart rate with your iPhone or Apple Watch. Research shows that slowing your heart rate can increase feelings of calmness in your body. Using simple visuals, ReachOut Breathe helps you to control your breath and measures your heart rate in real-time using the camera in your phone. This means that you can actively address the onset of physical stress symptoms such as shortness of breath, increased heart rate and a tightening of the chest.



Smiling Mind is a FREE mindfulness meditation app developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to your life. Just as we eat well and stay fit to keep our body healthy, mindfulness meditation is about mental health and looking after the mind. Our programs are designed to assist people in dealing with the pressure, stress, and challenges of daily life.



Mind Shift is one of the best mental health apps designed specifically for teens and young adults with anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxious feelings, Mind Shift stresses the importance of changing how you think about anxiety. Think of this app as the cheerleader in your pocket, encouraging you to take charge of your life, ride out intense emotions, and face challenging situations.



Everyone has worries that pop into their head from time to time, but sometimes they won't go away and start to impact your everyday life. **ReachOut WorryTime** interrupts this repetitive thinking by setting aside your worries until later, so you don't get caught up in them and can get on with your day. This means you can deal with worries once a day, rather than carrying them around with you 24/7.

apps for depression



MoodMission helps you learn new and better ways of coping with low moods and anxiety. Tell MoodMission how you're feeling and it will give you a tailored list of 5 Missions that can help you feel better. Missions are activities and mental health strategies that are quick, easily achievable, and backed up by scientific evidence.



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headspace tips for a healthy headspace (ok a website not an app):
<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/learn-how-to-handle-tough-times-to-help-your-headspace/>

Developing your own positive ways to handle tough times can make you more resilient, develop your self-awareness and build your confidence. All these things help to keep your headspace healthy. Visit this website to help develop your very own personal coping strategy.



What's up is an amazing free app that uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) methods to help you cope with Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and more. Use the positive and negative habit tracker to maintain your good habits, and break those that are counterproductive. We particularly love the "Get Grounded" page, which contains over 100 different questions to pinpoint what you're feeling, and the "Thinking Patterns" page, which teaches you how to stop negative internal monologues. Try it out for yourself.



notOK is a free app developed by a struggling teenager (and her teen brother) for teenagers. The app features a large, red button that can be activated to let close friends, family and their support network know help is needed. Users can add up to five trusted contacts as part of their support group so when they hit the digital panic button, a message along with their current GPS location is sent to their contacts. The message reads: "Hey, I'm not OK! Please call, text, or come find me."

other apps



Recovery Record is a great app for anyone recovering from an eating disorder and wanting to develop a more positive body image. Keep a record of the meals you eat and how they make you feel using the app and complete questionnaires that'll help you track your progress over time. One user calls Recovery Record a "remarkable recovery tool"; "It helps me stick to my meal plan, provides an outlet to vent about my food concerns and helps me stay intact with my body to work with it rather than against."



nOCD was designed with the help of OCD specialists and patients to incorporate two treatments: mindfulness and Exposure Response Prevention Treatment. You can receive immediate, clinically-supported guidance when an OCD episode strikes, take weekly tests to assess the severity of your OCD, and have motivational support along the way.



LoveSmart provides you with scores and information on the health of your relationships. It focuses on key relationships factors such as friendship, communication, conflict and sensitivity. It gives you insights for improvements



Breakup Shakeup provides ideas for fun, easy things to do to help you cope after a breakup. The app teaches you that planning activities and increasing your social support will help you recover faster.

who can i talk to in a crisis?



Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Somewhere in Australia there is a new call to Lifeline every minute. People call Lifeline's 24 hour crisis line 13 11 14 about:

Suicidal thoughts or attempts

Personal crisis

Anxiety

Depression

Loneliness

Abuse and trauma

Stresses from work, family or society

Self-help information for friends and family

services available:

24 Hour Telephone Crisis Line – 13 11 14

Online Crisis Support Chat

Service Finder - free directory of local health and community services

Mental Health Resource Centre

Mental Health Line 
1800 011 511

**The Mental Health Line is a 24-hour telephone service
operating seven days a week across NSW**

who can i talk to?



Your GP can provide you with support for mental health concerns, and can discuss a lot of the options with you, they can write a referral for you to see the right service for you.



If you ever feel that you:

are down, stressed or can't stop worrying

can't deal with school or finding it difficult to concentrate

worried about your health

want to cut down on your drinking or drug use

want to talk about sexuality, identity or sexual healthcare

having difficulties with friendships, relationships or bullying

headspace Wollongong is a place you can go to talk to someone about any of these issues.

We are located on Atchison Street near Spotlight, and only 5 minutes walk from Wollongong Train Station. All of headspace Wollongong's services are free.

call us on 02 42207660 or email headspacewollongong@gph.org.au



at **eheadspace** you can talk 1-on-1 with an eheadspace clinician via an online chat, email or over the phone. You can also join group chats which cover a variety of helpful topics and are a great way to learn from other people's experiences.

headspace.org.au/eheadspace



We are **Kids Helpline**. Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25
call on 1800 55 1800



Butterfly Foundation for eating disorders offers a multitude of services and programs that provide support, treatment, prevention, early intervention, education and training.

How do i help a mate?

Helping a friend who's having a tough time

When you see a friend having a tough time, it's a good idea to reach out and offer support. You might have noticed they don't seem like themselves, or they're not acting the way they normally do. Finding the words to start a conversation isn't easy, especially when you don't know what kind of help you can offer. It can make a big difference to someone experiencing difficulties.

It can be as simple as checking in, letting them know that you care and that you're there to help them. Let your friend know what changes you've noticed, that you're worried about them and that you'd like to help.

Even if they don't open up much at first, simply showing you have their back can give your friend strength and hope. This also tells them that you're someone they can talk to if they do decide to open up later on.

What if my friend doesn't want any help?

Some friends need time and space before they feel ready to get support. Being afraid of things changing or being judged, can be a big factor in why people don't seek support when they need it.

You may need to be patient with your friend and try not to judge them or get frustrated if you can't get through to them at first. Remind them that you are there if they need you. Give them time.

Sometimes you might need to involve someone else – this may be a trusted adult. If you do decide to tell someone, try to let your friend know that you're planning on doing this first and encourage them to get involved in the discussion.

Letting someone else know can be a difficult decision to make, especially if they don't want help. You might be worried they may lose trust in you. There's a chance your friend might feel like this at first but remind them it's only because you care. In the long run, they will usually understand why you got someone else involved.

If your friend is at risk of harming themselves or somebody else, you need to seek help straight away, even if they ask you not to. If your friend needs urgent help you can call 000. You could also ask someone you trust, such as a parent or teacher for help.

What can I say to help my friend with their mental health?

It's important to encourage your friend to get further support. You can say things like:

- 'Have you talked to anyone else about this? It's great you've talked to me, but it might be good to get advice and support from a health worker.'
- 'It doesn't have to be super intense and you can make choices about what's best for you.'
- 'Your GP (general practitioner) can actually help you with this stuff. You can find one that bulk bills, so you don't have to pay. I can go along with you, if you want?'
- 'There are some great websites you can check out to get more information. Have you heard of headspace or ReachOut or youthbeyondblue?'
- 'Did you know that you can get free and confidential support online or over the phone from places like headspace, Kids Helpline and Lifeline? All of these services are anonymous and can help you figure out what's going on for you and where to go for the right support.'
- 'I know you're not feeling great now, but with the right support, you can get through this. Lots of people do.'
- 'It's OK to feel this way and I'm here to have your back.' Make sure you validate your friend's concern and let them know they're not alone.

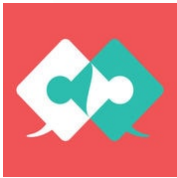
Looking after yourself

Supporting a friend through a tough time can be difficult, so it's important that you take care of yourself, too. You can check out our tips for a healthy headspace fact sheets to look after your own wellbeing and build your mental fitness every day.

Try to remember that you're their friend and not their counsellor. Be realistic about what you can and can't do. Set boundaries for yourself to make sure that you're doing the best thing for yourself, your friend and the friendship.

If you're feeling overwhelmed and need support for you, it might be a good time to reach out for extra help. A good place to start is a trusted adult (e.g., family member, teacher or GP). You can also contact Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800).

How to help a mate - resources



The Chats for life app will help you to plan a conversation with someone that you may be concerned about, who may be struggling or not going well. Designed with and for young people, a series of short videos will give you tips on how you may support their mental health and wellbeing. You can create and access your conversation plans and the video tips on your phone or tablet at any time and schedule chats with your friend or family member.



The Check-in is for anyone who wants to check in with a friend but is concerned about saying the wrong thing or making the situation worse. The app takes you through four steps, getting you to think about where you might check in, what you might say and how might you support your friend. There is also a section showing you things to consider, such as what if my friend denies there is a problem or what if I say something silly. After you have had your conversation you can go back into the app and rate how it went. The app will then give you advice on the next steps. There's also links to where you can get support and tips from young people.



**Black Dog
Institute**



These are some websites you can go to for more information and resources around mental health concerns for you or a friend - they have some great tools, apps and info for you or a mate:

Black Dog Institute

R U OK?

Beyond Blue

Reach Out

headspace

what can i do now?

healthy headspace action plan

It can be hard to make a change, however creating a plan can help. You could explore making a change by using one of the seven tips (see over page) and use the questions below as a start.

- A** What activities are possible? Which seem like fun? What would you like to try or change? *e.g. listen to music, write down my ideas, eat breakfast each day*

- B** When will you do the activities? How often can you do them? *e.g. before bed, twice a week*

- C** How will you know if the activities are working for you? *e.g. I'll laugh, I'll sleep, I'll feel more confident to handle tough times*

- D** What could get in your way? *e.g. I'm busy, I don't have equipment, I am not sure how*

- E** Where can you get support? *e.g. ask a friend to join you, research online, borrow equipment*

You could try these things to help make your changes stick:

- write it down
- set a reminder
- plan it with family or friends
- take note of any benefits
- think about why it's important to you



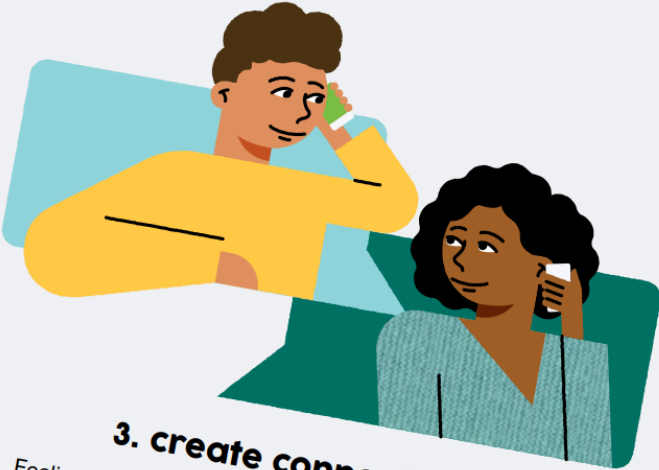
1. get in to life

Keep doing the stuff you love to do and the things that are important to you. It can help keep the fun in your life, give you a sense of accomplishment and purpose, boost your confidence and help to connect with others. Some of these things, such as drawing, fishing or playing the guitar, might just be for fun, but other things like work or study can give you new skills and might help to give you meaning. From reading to exploring somewhere new, there are lots of **activity ideas** that can help you get in to life.

2. learn skills for tough times

There are a lot of different strategies that can help you to manage difficult thoughts and feelings. Things like meditation, taking a digital detox, listening to music, spending time outdoors or writing things down are just a few ways that can help you handle challenging times.

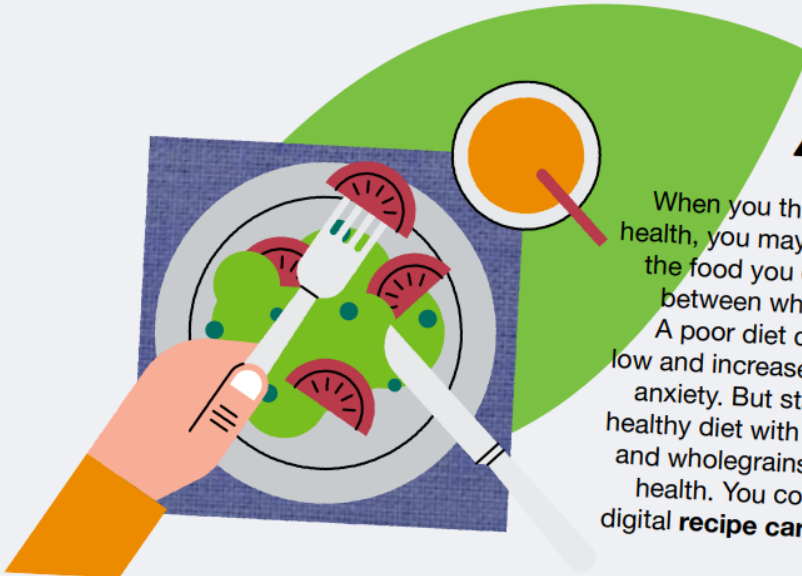
You could try out some **meditation with a soothing playlist**, or some **guided deep breathing** to help.



3. create connections

Feeling connected to others is an essential part of being human. Spending time with friends, family and people in your community can really strengthen your mental health and wellbeing. Planning a catch-up with friends, joining a club or committee, or participating in a team sport or safe online community can help you feel connected and meet new people. The digital **conversation cards** might inspire you to connect further with friends, family or people in your community.

here are seven tips to keep up our mental fitness. to find more information and resources relating to these tips, head to <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/tips-for-a-healthy-headspace/>

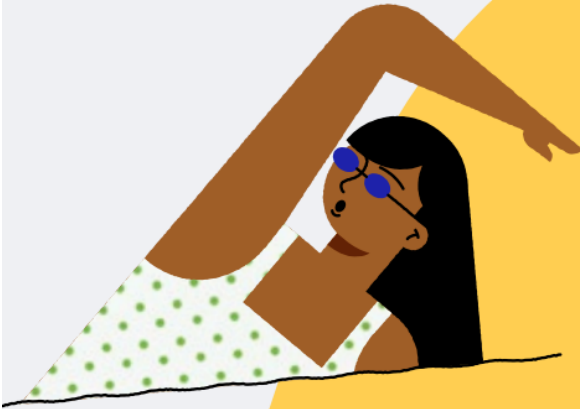


4. eat well

When you think of improving your mental health, you may not always consider changing the food you eat. But there is a strong link between what we eat and how we feel! A poor diet can make you feel sluggish, low and increase symptoms of depression and anxiety. But staying hydrated and having a healthy diet with a variety of fruit, veggies, nuts and wholegrains can actually improve mental health. You could try a new meal from the digital **recipe cards** if you need an idea or two.

5. stay active

Staying active can help you to sleep better, manage stress and boost your mood. Find a way to keep active that you enjoy and incorporate this into your regular routine. Make time to take a break from study or work to do some exercise, whether it be going to the gym, kicking a ball around with a friend or just going for a walk. Whatever it is, start small, and make sure it's something you enjoy. There are easy ways to **get some extra movement** in to your daily life.



6. get enough sleep

Getting enough sleep is good for your brain and body. It improves your mood, sharpens your concentration and increases resilience. Reducing things that keep you from restful sleep – like noise or light that keeps you awake, or active stuff like social media or video gaming – will help you improve your sleep. Try a calming sleep **playlist** to help you get some more shut-eye.



7. cut back on alcohol and other drugs

Alcohol and other drugs may feel like they help you to manage hard times in the short term but remember they can interfere with your mental health and make you feel much worse in the long run. Curbing the amount of alcohol and other drugs that you use (or avoiding alcohol and drugs altogether) will help you manage your emotions better and improve your wellbeing. Swap socialising at the pub for movies, boardgames, cooking with friends (you could try a dish from the **recipe cards**), or you could get out for a walk and talk and explore your local area (the **conversation cards** might give extra chat inspiration).

