

14 December 2023

Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee
Parliament of Victoria
Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Submitted via Committee website

Dear Committee members

Re: headspace National submission – Inquiry into the State Education System of Victoria

headspace National welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry. headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds. headspace has 155 centres across Australia in metropolitan, regional and remote areas, and offers online and phone support services and resources through eheadspace.

Our work builds the mental health literacy of young people and reduces stigma associated with mental health problems and the associated barriers to seeking help. headspace can help young people with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drugs services, and work and study support. Our work also involves supporting schools and their communities with expert advice and guidance on mental health and wellbeing, responding to loss through suicide, and providing support after major disaster events. At the heart of all our services are young people, their needs, and the needs of those who support them.

headspace National's submission to the Committee's inquiry can be found in **Attachment 1**.

Our submission highlights the:

- critical position of educators and staff in schools that enables them to identify changes in students' behaviours and promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- need for adequate resourcing for schools to build educators' knowledge, skills and confidence to support student mental health, implement wellbeing initiatives, and make appropriate referrals to other services
- importance of strong connections between schools, local health networks and primary health networks, including bringing services into schools to build awareness, reduce stigma, encourage early help seeking, and – where there are workforce shortages in rural, regional and remote areas – support direct access to mental health services and supports.

headspace National would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspects of our submission further.

Yours sincerely

Julia Smith
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Attachment 1: Submission to the inquiry into the State Education System in Victoria

1. Introduction

headspace National welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into the State Education System in Victoria.

headspace National's submission focuses on 'the current state of student wellbeing in Victoria, including but not limited to the impact of State Government interventions, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, to address poor mental health in students, school refusal, and broader student disengagement'.

About headspace

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, providing prevention and early intervention mental health services to 12–25-year-olds across the country. The headspace platform provides multidisciplinary care for mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drugs, and work and study across a range of services. headspace offers in person, online and phone services, and supports young people in school settings.

headspace was established in 2006 to address challenges faced by young people aged 12-25, including:

- a lack of age appropriate and developmentally appropriate services for young people
- a lack of early intervention services
- the need for holistic care rather than a medical model of care
- barriers, which young people in particular experience, to accessing support, including stigma, cost, a lack of services in regional areas, and limited availability of online supports.

headspace now has 155 services embedded in local communities across metropolitan, regional and remote areas. Each centre is run by a local agency, and a consortium of local service providers, influencers and community members come together to guide and nurture their local headspace centres. This ensure the headspace service is deeply embedded within the local system and community. headspace has 37 centres across Victoria, and in 2022-23 provided 105,171 occasions of service to 25,359 young people attending these centres. In addition, 7,755 occasions of service were provided in person or online by headspace Work and Study programs.

headspace also works with schools and communities across Australia, to build the mental health literacy and capacity of young people, their families, the school community and education workforce. headspace delivers a range of school programs that aim to encourage help-seeking, address stigma about mental ill health, and increase awareness and access to mental health support services. In 2022-23, headspace engaged with educators (via the Be You program) and students in 1,929 schools across Victoria. Through our work in schools, headspace has seen the positive impact wellbeing programs can have on students, families and educators, and has observed some of the challenges schools face in implementing wellbeing strategies.

For more details about the full range of headspace programs and services, refer to Appendix 1.

2. Student wellbeing in Victoria

Key takeaways

- Young people are experiencing high rates of mental ill-health. The aftermath of the pandemic, financial concerns, climate change, and worries about the future are all contributing.
- School refusal is increasing among Victorian students.

Students with positive mental health and social and emotional wellbeing are more engaged with learning and tend to achieve higher academic outcomes.¹ In contrast, poor mental health and wellbeing impacts on students' ability to learn and their social interactions at school.²

Young people, more than other age groups, are experiencing high rates of mental ill-health. headspace's 2022 National Youth Mental Health Survey found just under half of young people are experiencing high or very high psychological distress (47%). The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, the trauma of natural disasters, and worries about the future are all contributing. It is vital that young people across Victoria have access to high quality, timely, and accessible mental health services.

Further, the latest release of the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing data shows that two in five Australians aged 16–24 years had experienced a mental health disorder in the last 12 months.³ Half of all mental health issues emerge before the age of 18.⁴ Suicide is the leading cause of death among young people, responsible for more than 40 per cent of deaths among 15–24-year-olds.⁵

headspace National Schools and Communities teams who interact directly with schools receive ongoing feedback from educators of increasing numbers of students displaying complex behaviours relating to self-harm, vaping, social media use, bullying and suicidal behaviours. Our teams also highlight increasing prevalence of self-harm and suicidal ideation and behaviour in primary school settings.

School refusal – or 'school can't' – is also a concern for young people across Victoria. There are indications that school can't is increasing in Victoria, particularly following the COVID-19 lockdowns. Some research suggests young people are less likely to believe it is important to attend school each day.⁶ Understanding the views of young Victorians who are finding it difficult to attend school will be critical to addressing school disengagement and supporting these students to attend school each day. Collaboration between teachers, families, wellbeing teams and (where relevant) wellbeing professionals external to school is also essential to address school can't and help young people to attend school every day.

¹ Commonwealth Government, (2023). *Review to inform a better and fairer education system: consultation paper*.

² Ibid.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2023). *Latest release: National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing 2023*. Retrieved from: [National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2020-2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/national-study-of-mental-health-and-wellbeing-2020-2022).

⁴ Solmi M, Radua, J., Olivola, M., Croce E., Soardo, L., Salazar de Pablo, G., Il Shin, J., Kirkbrinde, JB., Jones, P., Kim, J., Carvvalho, AF., Seeman, MV., Correll, CU., Fusar-Poli, P. (2022). Age of onset of mental disorders worldwide: large-scale meta analysis of 192 epidemiological studies. *Molecular Psychiatry*, 27(1):281–95.

⁵ Department of Health. (2020). *A report detailing key themes and early findings to support initial advice of the National Suicide Prevention Adviser*.

⁶ Commissioner for Children and Young People. (2021). *Speaking out survey 2021: The views of WA children and young people on their wellbeing - a summary report*. Retrieved from: [speaking-out-survey-2021-summary-report.pdf \(ccyp.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/speaking-out-survey-2021-summary-report.pdf).

3. The critical role of the school community in student wellbeing

Key takeaways

- Educators and staff in schools have a professional responsibility to foster students' sense of school belonging and are uniquely positioned to notice changes in students' mood and behaviour.
- Educator knowledge, skills and confidence to appropriately support student's mental health and wellbeing is essential. This includes the capability to identify students in need of mental health supports, and implement individual learning and support plans when students are experiencing mental ill health.
- However, teachers are teaching and learning specialists with high workloads. It can be difficult for educators to build knowledge and skills, support individual students, and implement wellbeing programs.

As a key environment beyond the home, school communities play an important role in supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing. Having trusted relationships with supportive adults is a protective factor for a young person's mental health, and many educators fulfil this role for young people.⁷ Educators have a key role in building school connectedness, or the sense of belonging that students feel towards school and school engagement, and this too is a protective factor for young people's mental health and wellbeing.⁸

Schools can help build mental health literacy among young people and their families, schools and communities. Providing tools and strategies throughout early childhood and the primary and secondary school years can increase the capacity of young people to draw upon these tools to support them as they experience challenging life events and transitions.

Educators and other staff in schools play a critical role

Fostering school connectedness is a key component of an educator's role. They can achieve this by knowing individual students and how they learn, establishing and maintaining positive relationships with students, and providing safe and supportive learning environments.⁹ Educators also become familiar with friendship groups, how students interact, play and build relationships with others, how children and young people manage stress, and any particular stressors that may be impacting on their wellbeing.

"Connection during a time of hardship or uncertainty is one of our most ancient human desires, yet this year it feels as if face to face connection is under threat. From a student perspective, the relationships they have with staff, friends and family help to shape who they are and how they view the world. In recognising the uncertainty of life, we can help young people to understand the necessity of keeping connected to nature, passions, the present and people around us."

School Educator who attended SAFEMinds "Nip it in the Bud" training

With a good sense of a student's 'baseline', educators are well positioned to observe signs of poor mental health and wellbeing, including students acting out of character, unexpected outbursts of emotion, constantly talking about problems, or avoiding friends.¹⁰

⁷ State of Victoria. (2021). *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Final Report, Volume 2: Collaboration to support good mental health and wellbeing*, Parliamentary Paper No. 202, Session 2018–21 (document 3 of 6).

⁸ Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation. (2015). *Student Wellbeing*. NSW Department of Education and Communities. Retrieved from: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2015-05/apo-nid235341.pdf>.

⁹ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2011, *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, AITSL, Melbourne.

¹⁰ ReachOut Australia. *Mental health support tips for teachers*. Retrieved from: <https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/mental-health-support-tips-for-teachers#:~:text=Signs%20to%20look%20out%20for%20include%3A,too%20much%20or%20not%20enough.>

Educators are required to establish and maintain relationships with parents or carers.¹¹ This enables them to understand students further and hear opinions from different perspectives. It also creates further opportunities to share information about student mental health and wellbeing.

Educators and other staff need support to promote student mental health and wellbeing

Teachers and other staff can be very skilled at noticing signs of poor mental health and wellbeing among students. However, many find it challenging balancing supporting individual students, implementing wellbeing programs and feeling responsible for the mental health of young people, with meeting their workload, and maintaining their own wellbeing.

Educators have limited non-contact time and are often managing high workloads and varied priorities. A Grattan Institute survey conducted in 2022 found more than 90 per cent of the 5,442 teachers surveyed don't have enough time to prepare effectively for classroom teaching – their core role – and 74 per cent reported not having enough support for struggling students with complex needs.¹² Even where teachers find time, they can be hampered by the complexity of the mental health and wellbeing system, with a lack of clear referral and support pathways for young people.

Teachers can also find it difficult to build their skills to better support students. Educators tell headspace National that attending professional learning is not achievable due to workload challenges and the inability to find relief teachers. Schools have limited capacity to release educators from their teaching loads to engage in mental health and wellbeing training and implement wellbeing strategies.

Without adequate and appropriate training, educators can be left without the knowledge, skills and confidence to appropriately support individual students.

This is particularly critical for young people with mental health issues who have not yet sought support from a mental health clinician or service, or those who do not have access to sufficient care. In these situations, educators can become 'accidental' counsellors and care givers – making it essential that the teacher has the skills, knowledge and confidence to support the student.

Educators can also find more practical supports useful, such as:

- time relief to liaise and meet with families, mental health clinicians and other support staff, to develop and implement individual learning and support plans
- support to effectively implement individual learning and support plans
- information from mental health clinicians to enable educators to better understand the student's needs and support them. This information is sometimes provided to the young person to pass on to the educator, but the educator is not always best placed to interpret and act on this information
- current and clear information about referral options for students in their local area.

Programs such as **NIP it in the bud** (see Appendix 1 for details) can be useful to support educators. This program helps educators, families and friends to notice behaviour changes in children and young people, start a conversation about the changes, and provide support or refer families to services.

“Being provided with a structure and examples of appropriate/useful language to ask questions increased my confidence. These were very relevant to my role.”

School Educator who attended SAFEMinds "Nip it in the Bud" training

¹¹ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2011, *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, AITSL, Melbourne.

¹² Hunter, J., Sonnemann, J., & Joiner, R. (2022). *Making time for great teaching: How better government policy can help*. Grattan Institute. Retrieved from: <https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Making-time-for-great-teaching-how-better-government-policy-can-help-Grattan-Report.pdf>.

4. School-based mental health and wellbeing programs

Key takeaways

- There are proven, evidence-based programs schools can implement to foster positive relationships, build mental health literacy, and improve help-seeking. Adopting a trauma-informed approach is important.
- Victoria's Schools Mental Health Fund is a useful approach to enabling schools to select programs and interventions that meet local needs.

Promoting mental health literacy and implementing wellbeing initiatives across schools and in collaboration with families can assist with increasing understanding and reducing the stigma and discrimination that young people can experience in relation to mental ill-health and early help-seeking. These can be focused on the following.

- **Building educator awareness, knowledge and skills in mental health literacy and supports** – for example, headspace's **Mental Health Education Program** delivers mental health education workshops in secondary schools for students and families.
- **Promoting and encouraging early help-seeking** – for example, **NIP it in the Bud** provides educators with tools to start the conversation about mental health. Resources include factsheets for families and educators on identity, relationships, social media, and the future.
- **Upskilling educators and staff in early intervention** – for example, the SAFEMinds program aims to enhance mental health early intervention for children and young people in schools, with a focus on mild mood disorders and self harm.
- **Developing positive, inclusive and resilient learning communities** – for example, **Be You**, a national mental health in education initiative delivered by Beyond Blue in collaboration with Early Childhood Australia and headspace, aims to create communities where every child, young person, educator and family can achieve their best possible mental health.

More information about the Mental Health Education Program and NIP it in the Bud programs can be found in Appendix 1.

There is also evidence that adopting a **trauma-informed approach** to student wellbeing is effective. Trauma informed practices recognise that many young people experience negative life events and that these negative experiences can impact on their behaviour, distress, communication and emotional regulation, and consequently their ability to learn. Educators who are trauma aware can proactively implement strategies and plan teaching and learning activities to support students' growth and learning.¹³ The Australian National University's BRACE Framework is one example of a whole school approach to trauma sensitive practice.¹⁴

In Victoria, the Schools Mental Health Fund enables schools to select from programs and resources across three tiers of intervention: positive mental health promotion; early intervention and cohort-specific support; and targeted support. This approach is effective in enabling schools to select the type of programs required for their learning community.

It is also important to provide educators, schools and families with consistent, evidence-based information about mental health and wellbeing, prevention and early intervention, and how to communicate with children and young people effectively. In addition to the programs noted above, the Child Participation Framework developed by 54 Reasons is a useful resource. This outlines five child participation practice standards centred around the idea that young people are more likely to feel safe talking about their mental

¹³ Stoke, H. & Brunzell, T. (2020). "Leading Trauma-Informed Practice in Schools". *Leading & Managing*. 26:1, pp. 70-77. Retrieved from: https://www.berrystreet.org.au/uploads/main/Files/Research-Articles/Stokes-Brunzell_2020_Leading-trauma-informed-schools_Leading-Managing.pdf

¹⁴ Australian National University. *Supporting Trust in Schools*. Retrieved from: https://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/TRUSTBRACE_0.pdf.

health and wellbeing if they feel their voice is being heard and they are more connected to their families and communities.¹⁵

5. Integration with the broader mental health and wellbeing system

Key takeaways

- Schools are well positioned to recognise when young people are experiencing mental health challenges. However, it is not desirable or appropriate for schools to be responsible for service provision for mental health challenges.
- Education professionals need referral pathways to mental health services with specialist skills in working with school aged young people. These services need to provide support to the young person, as well as build capacity in school wellbeing staff and teachers in order to support ongoing engagement with school participation.
- Building strong relationships between school communities and local mental services can support student and educator mental health literacy, promote early help-seeking, improve access to mental health care, and help school wellbeing staff to feel supported.

While educators and the broader school community are well positioned to support students' mental health and wellbeing, it is not a role they can – or should – undertake in isolation from the mental health and broader health systems.

The Victorian Government has funded secondary and specialist schools to employ a school-based mental health practitioner (psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist or mental health nurse). The practitioners provide mental health prevention and promotion and work with individual students to provide short term support (including counselling).

In addition, part of the role of the mental health practitioners is to work with other services and coordinate supports for students with more complex needs. This is a critical element of the role and needs to be fully supported by schools and the Department of Education. Students are best supported when there are strong links between schools and local health and mental health services, who can provide access to multidisciplinary, holistic mental health care.

Without these links, there is a risk that schools are expected to provide holistic mental health support for young people that is not connected into and guided by mental health services. This creates the possibility of inadequate support for young people, sub-optimal and inefficient care, and increased fragmentation across the health system.

The alternative – where the school community is expected to provide holistic mental health support for young people that is not connected into and guided by mental health services – risks inadequate support for young people, sub-optimal and inefficient care, and increased fragmentation across the health system. Linking young people to mental health services ensures access to multidisciplinary teams, with appropriate clinical supervision and other quality and safety mechanisms. It also avoids blurring lines of accountability between the education and health sectors. Where workforce challenges make it difficult to recruit to mental health practitioner roles, such as in regional, rural and remote locations, innovative approaches to supporting access to care, such as the headspace Regional Telephone Counselling Service, can promote equity in access to specialised services.

headspace and other health and mental health services can offer:

- **programs delivered in schools**, such as the headspace Regional Telephone Counselling Service operated by headspace
- **events and information sessions for students, families and educators**, such as mental health and wellbeing expo days, coordinated by headspace's community awareness and engagement officers.

¹⁵ 54 Reasons. *Child Participation Framework*. Retrieved from: https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/63bc94aea859d812b4df39b4/6417d8e8e2165d55f4548c32_STC01839_54-Child-Participation-Framework-2023_SC.pdf

- **strong links with mental health practitioners in Victorian schools** to facilitate smooth referrals and ongoing care coordination.

Bringing clinicians and other mental health professionals into schools can increase awareness of available services outside school and build the confidence of staff, families and young people in addressing poor mental health. This in turn can reduce barriers to seeking help and encourage early help-seeking.

"Every time I know I'm going to speak with Paula, it makes me happy to get out of bed and come to school so I want to keep talking to you during holidays too"*

Young person providing feedback on headspace Regional Telephone Counselling Service

"Thank you for everything, you have made a massive impact on Sally," (MLC, NSW)*

Parent of student who accessed headspace Regional Telephone Counselling Service

"We've benefited so much from your service and appreciate all of the counsellors for the support they've given to our students. The young people always have positive things to say to me and their friends about the service"

Secondary school staff providing feedback on headspace Regional Telephone Counselling Service

As well as providing information and support, these services help build links between schools and local services. Strong relationships between educators, other school staff, GPs, and mental health clinicians can help bridge the gap between school communities and the mental health system. It can also help school wellbeing staff to feel more supported in their roles, and provide young people with access to multidisciplinary teams (including GPs), a critical element of good mental health care for young people.

Appendix 1: headspace programs and services

headspace provides early intervention mental health services to 12 to 25 year olds. headspace offers young people support across mental health, physical and sexual health, alcohol and other drugs, and work and study – providing an integrated service horizontally across these domains of care.

Our integrated services provide the holistic, multi-faceted support that is a necessary component of a responsive service system model. This includes:

- **headspace centres:** the headspace network of services are youth-friendly, integrated service hubs, where multidisciplinary teams provide holistic support across the four core streams.
- **community awareness:** guided by local youth reference groups and centre staff, Community Awareness Officers at each headspace centre work locally to build mental health literacy, reduce stigma, encourage help-seeking, identify local needs and ensure young people know they can access help at headspace.
- **digital mental health programs and resources:** headspace uses its digital platform to make a range of information and supports accessible to young people, parents and carers, professionals and educators.
- **ehespace:** our virtual service provides safe, secure support to young people and their family and friends from experienced youth mental health professionals via email, webchat or phone. There are also online group sessions led by clinicians or peers, focused on the big issues facing young people and their family and friends.
- **headspace regional telephone counselling service:** headspace offers integrated holistic teleweb support for students in eligible schools in regional Victoria (locations more than 50km from a headspace centre).
- **headspace campaigns:** campaigns focus on stigma reduction, building mental health literacy and encouraging help seeking, while ensuring young people know headspace is a safe and trusted place they can turn to in order to support their mental health.
- **headspace in schools and universities:** Through evidence-based mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention and postvention services, headspace delivers key initiatives designed to support the mental health and wellbeing of school communities. This includes:
 - **Be You** – a mental health and wellbeing initiative for learning communities. In particular, headspace can support secondary schools to prepare for, respond to and recover together where there has been a death by suicide.
 - **Mental Health Education Program** – this program provides free mental health education workshops for schools
 - **University support program** – this provides training and education opportunities to Australian universities to build their capacity and confidence to engage in conversations about mental health and wellbeing
- **programs and resources to support hard-to-reach cohorts of young people:** these include
 - **Visible project** – a community based initiative using artwork as a form of community engagement and awareness.
 - **Yarn Safe** – mental health and wellbeing resources and support for First Nations young people.
- **vocational supports:** headspace centres provide integrated mental health and vocational support to young people to help them remain engaged in work and study, including implementing Individual Placement and Support (IPS) in headspace centres. In addition, headspace provides vocational support via:
 - **headspace Work and Study Online (hWS)** is a national digital program that provides integrated mental health and vocational support via the phone, video conferencing, online messaging and email. hWS works closely with young people across their work/study journey from identifying work/study goals to maintaining a work/study placement, typically for a period of around three months.

- **headspace Career Mentoring** connects young people aged 18 to 25 years living with mental health challenges with industry professionals to meet fortnightly over a period of six months via video conferencing and/or the phone to enhance a young person's employment and career opportunities.

Some headspace services provide two additional in-person programs:

- **Early Psychosis Program** – this program is delivered via four centres in Victoria, and in 2022/23 provided 41,668 occasions of service (including direct and indirect) to 1,184 young people.
- **Work and Study (Individual Placement and Support)** – this is delivered in 15 centres and provided 4,659 occasions of service to 672 young people in 2022/23.

Young people in Victoria also receive care via headspace's digital service delivery. In 2022-23, 3,681 service users accessed **ehedspace**, receiving 10,165 occasions of service. In addition, 606 young people experiencing mental health challenges accessed **headspace Work and Study Online** receiving 3,096 sessions.

Online Communities provide safe, supportive and meaningful ways for young people and their families to connect with their peers, in real-time and on topics that are important to them. Peer support chats run Monday to Thursday and are led by our Online Peer Support Workforce who create a welcoming and inclusive space for connection through the sharing of lived experience. In 2022-23, Online Peer Group Chats run by peer support moderators were attended 4,662 times nationally.

Mental Health Education Program

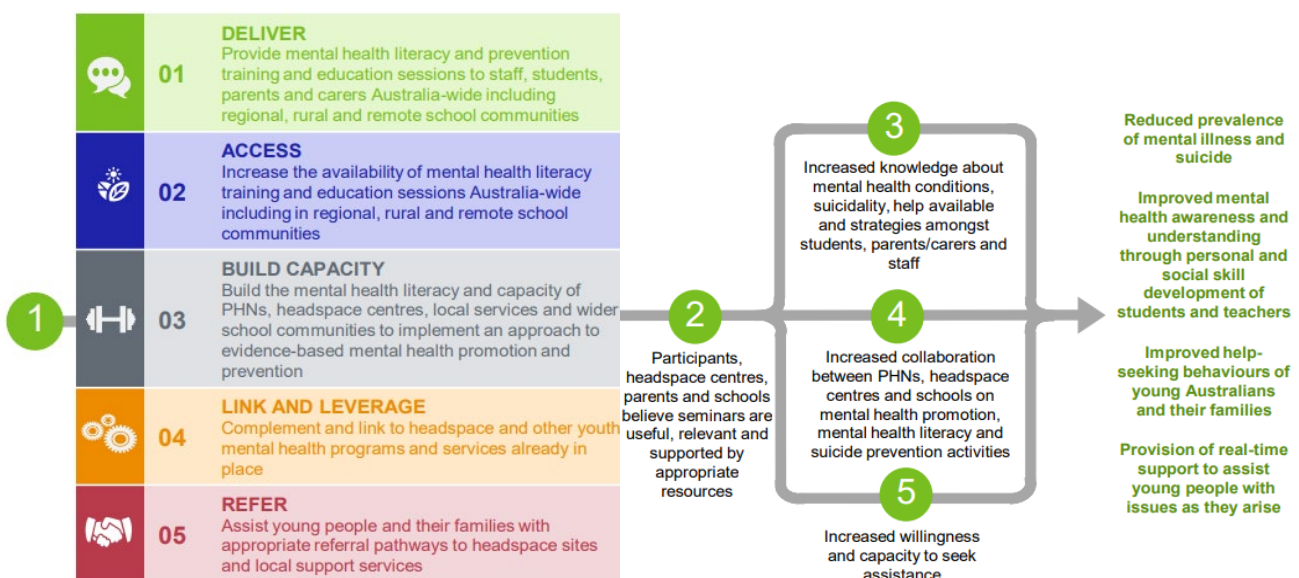
The Mental Health Education Program seeks to lift mental health literacy and strengthen partnerships between schools and headspace centres. It comprises:

1. education sessions for secondary school students and their parents and/or carers;
2. presentations to representatives from schools, education departments, PHNs and headspace Centres.

With a focus on schools in rural, regional and remote communities, these free workshops are facilitated onsite at schools (and/or via webinar during COVID-19). Sessions for students are designed to fit with the school day (in a standard lesson).

The Mental Health Education Program is complementary to Be You and is targeted at educators. It is focused on supporting teachers in schools to promote and protect positive mental health in children and young people.

Program objectives



our workshops



Let's Talk About It:
Mental Health



Looking Out for Your
Friends: Notice, Ask,
Connect



Standing Strong:
Bullying and Mental
Health



Transitions: Primary to
Secondary



Transitions: Leaving
School



Self-Care: Looking after
your Mental Health



Naming and
understanding Our
Emotions



Parent/Carer workshop
Supporting young
people: Notice, Ask,
Connect

For more information about the program or to book sessions, please contact us at: MHEP@headspace.org.au

The Mental Health Education Program is a Schools Suicide Prevention Activities Initiative, headspace Schools, funded by the Australian Government.

learning outcomes

- Understanding mental health and wellbeing
 - Break down stigma about mental health
 - Manage our stress buckets
 - Ways in which we can support ourselves
-
- Notice: how to identify warning signs that a friend might be going through a tough time
 - Ask: how to have difficult conversations and ask your friend if they are OK
 - Connect: how to help your friend access support
 - Strategies for looking after your own wellbeing
-
- Identify the ways your body and brain react to stress
 - Review bullying's impact on mental health
 - Find spaces and activities to help you stand strong
 - Explore who you can talk to and seek support
-
- Understand how transition and change can impact mental health
 - How to manage stress from change
 - Build resilience and healthy coping skills
 - Strengthen connection and belonging
-
- How change and transitions can impact our mental health
 - Common responses and concerns with leaving school
 - Strategies to support yourselves and each other during the transition out of school
 - Support that can help you with the transition
-
- Understand mental health and the importance of looking after ourselves
 - Understand what self-care is and ways to do it
 - Build a healthy headspace action plan
 - Identify where, when, and how to seek additional support
-
- Identifying and naming our emotions
 - Understanding the purpose of emotions
 - Understanding the relationship between feelings, thoughts, and emotions
-
- Understand mental health and wellbeing in young people
 - Notice changes that a young person might be going through a tough time
 - Identify strategies to connect and communicate with young people
 - Increase knowledge about how to support a young person and where to access professional support




headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

NIP it in the bud!

NIP it in the bud! provides a whole school approach to recognising and responding to early warning signs of depression, anxiety, and emotional distress communicated through self-harm. It is founded on a range of evidence-based child and adolescent mental health resources and aims to provide schools and families with the right information and approach to optimise wellbeing and minimise risks for children and young people within the school setting.

There is also a toolkit of resources available to help the whole school community apply the *NIP it in the bud!* early intervention approach. It includes a range of tip sheets, mapping tools, individual plans, brief intervention kits and supporting resources.

NIP it in the bud stands for: notice; inquire; provide.





Notice changes in mood and behaviour that may indicate a young person is finding it hard to manage mental health challenges.

Have you noticed changes in someone's behaviour or your own? Perhaps experiencing feelings of anger, sadness or difficulty focusing or getting good quality sleep. Withdrawing from friends or activities, can be signs of emerging mental health difficulties that may need some extra support.

Inquire - sensitively and competently about the young person's experiences.

This is the time to have a conversation, ask your friend or young person (or yourself) what is going on that may be affecting the behaviour? It's important we take this time to listen and understand what's going on.



Provide - support or referrals to young people. The final step is to provide support; through the inquiry step you may have an idea of what further support may be needed. It could be:

- brainstorming some ideas together on how to ease stress or manage the particular situation
- looking up and reading some online articles
- talking to a teacher, school counselor or family member
- reaching out to a professional mental health service, like your local headspace centre or eheadspace.