

media release

New beginnings for young people but many feel increasingly isolated

headspace is offering tips to support young people and families for the return to school

New research released this week by headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation has found young people in critical age groups (12 to 14 and 18 to 21) are reporting significant increases in feelings of isolation¹.

The findings – revealing a substantial uplift since the data was last recorded in 2018 – come as young people in these age groups enter into major transition periods in their lives from next week with return to school, study and work.

Many young people ages 12 to 14 will be starting secondary school for the first time, while those ages 18 to 21 may be starting the shift into further study or work.

Vikki Ryall, Executive Director, Clinical Practice at headspace said young people in these age groups may need additional support from parents and carers, as the impacts of COVID-19 are still keenly felt.

“We know transition periods can be a time of high risk for young people. The move to secondary school from primary or from school into further study or the workforce can feel quite daunting for young people.”

“It’s worrying to see young people in these age groups recording increased feelings of isolation. It’s likely that 2020 caused disruptions, with some young people feeling disconnected from newly formed friendships or new ways of life.”

“We’re encouraging families to tune into to how their young person might be coping. Families play such an important role in preparing and supporting young people to make positive transitions and they can really equip their young person through this time.”

“Things such as planning and helping your young person get organised can be helpful. It also might be helpful to run through some ‘what ifs’ and work through different scenarios together.”

Jade Gooding, Executive Manager of Mental Health at Anglicare NT says, “If families are noticing changes with their young person, it’s important to check in and let them know that you’re available if they want to talk to you.”

“Young people are resilient and with the right support can get through challenging periods in their lives.”

If you or your young person are in need of further support, you can visit [ehespace](#) (online and phone support), contact your nearest [headspace centre](#) or [talk to your GP](#) about options for family counselling.

headspace has also designed a series of online [Interactive Activities](#) that young people can check out to source practical tips for [connecting with others](#), [goal setting](#) and [problem solving](#).

¹ headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey 2020

-ENDS-

For media enquiries please contact: Lila Loveard on media@anglicare-nt.org.au or 8985 0000.

If you, or someone you know, is going through a tough time, you can contact headspace Darwin on 8931 5999.

Notes to Editor:

Insights are captured from the headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey 2020:

- 12-14 year olds and 18-21 year olds have felt an increasing sense of isolation in 2020².
 - Young people aged 12 to 14 (24% in 2018 to 34% in 2020)
 - Young people aged 18 to 21 (42% in 2018 to 50% in 2020)

Tips for families to support their young person through transition periods:

Families play an important role in preparing and supporting young people to make positive transitions. You can help equip your young person for the transition to secondary school by:

- planning and getting organised
- visiting the school and encouraging your child to go to any secondary school orientation days/programs
- doing a trial run with travelling to school, including taking public transport and using a travel card
- inviting older siblings or friends to share information about the school system ie. timetable, changing classrooms
- practising 'what if?' scenarios
- establishing routines including relaxing and fun activities
- Stay connected and interested in your young person's learning

Tips for families if they feel their young person needs further support:

It is affirming for your young person to know that you believe they have the resources and capabilities to manage challenging situations in life and that it's OK for them to ask for help. If they need extra support, you can:

- normalise and validate their feelings and maybe share your own memories of thoughts and feelings at this age going to secondary school
- acknowledge your young person's strengths – maintain opportunities to do things that come easily to them
- include your young person in decision-making in a 'side-by-side' way

² headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey 2020

- encourage your young person to maintain connections with their primary school friends as well as making new friends
- problem solve together in a 'you and me vs the problem' way
- set goals together by breaking things down into manageable chunks

About the headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey:

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation funded the survey and commissioned Colmar Brunton (now Kantar Public) to undertake the survey, the analysis and reporting.

This study was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and received ethics approval from Bellberry Limited Human Research Ethics Committee (ref: 2020-04-395).

The first survey was conducted between July and September 2018 and involved a national telephone survey of 4,065 Australian youth (aged 12-25 years). The telephone survey was conducted by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing or CATI. A quota sampling strategy was used, with quotas set according to age, gender and state/territory that ensured representation as per general population demographic spread. The current survey was conducted between 25 May and 21 June 2020 and involved a national telephone survey of 1,035 Australian youth (aged 12-25 years). The survey was conducted when much of the country was in a stage of government enforced lockdown, or just emerging from a period of lockdown due to COVID-19.

About headspace

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds. Each year, headspace helps thousands of young people access vital support through our headspace centres in 124 communities across Australia^[1], our online and phone counselling services, our vocational services, and our presence in schools. headspace can help young people with mental health, physical health (including sexual health) alcohol and other drug services, and work and study support. Centre details, as well as factsheets and resources for young people and their families and friends, can be located on the headspace website: headspace.org.au

^[1] As at September 2020 and inclusive of licensed headspace centres, satellites and outposts
