



Australian Government

28 October 2020

Dear parents, guardians and carers,

As parents, like you, we want nothing more than to ensure that all children are healthy, happy and receive the best start in life.

From the very beginning of this COVID-19 pandemic we have been determined that it would not rob our children of a year of schooling or erode their hopes for the future.

With that in mind, many parents, guardians and carers have gone above and beyond to take on the additional responsibility of home-schooling children. And of course, the hard work and initiative shown by school principals and teachers remind us all just how amazing our school communities can be.

We thank you for all your efforts and sacrifices.

Most children are able to cope with the challenges presented this year, but some may feel anxious about how the virus has impacted their lives and what it may mean for the future, especially those in senior years.

We encourage you to read the attached Mental Health and Career Support for Young People factsheet. It contains information and advice for students and parents to help support good mental health. We hope you will find it useful.

By working closely with our health experts, state and territory governments, and community organisations, the Government is committed to ensuring help is always available.

Together, we can get through these tough times and ensure our children have the best possible start for a brighter future.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Scott Morrison in blue ink.

Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

Handwritten signature of Christine Morgan in blue ink.

Christine Morgan
CEO National Mental Health
Commission

Handwritten signature of Dan Tehan in blue ink.

Hon Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Education



Mental Health and Career Support for Young People

The events of 2020, including COVID-19, have changed the way we live, learn and work.

This is particularly the case for young people who are experiencing significant changes to the delivery of education and training.

More than ever before, it is important to have easy access to information and support about studying, training and finding jobs.

It is also important to look after our mental health. The Australian Government is providing a range of initiatives to help families and young people navigate these challenges.

Mental Health

The challenges experienced by Australia's young people during 2020 may stay with them for the longer term.

It is not uncommon to have trouble adjusting and/or to feel unsafe after a traumatic event. Young adults may experience uncertainty and confusion following such events, which may cause sleep disturbances, fear or anxiety.

Parents, guardians, carers and teachers have an important role to play in creating a sense of calm, and reassuring children and young adults, but sometimes it can be difficult to know where to start.

If there are concerns, it may also be a good idea to seek help from a medical professional.

Career Support and Information

The Australian Government is funding the National Careers Institute to be a 'front door' to career information and support nationwide.

The National Careers Institute will be focusing on providing additional information and support for young people navigating post-school pathways.

This will help young people who may be affected by COVID-19 to make informed decisions on the best approach to starting their careers.

Services offering counselling and support

Lifeline Australia: a crisis support service that provides short-term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.

13 11 14 | www.lifeline.org.au

Kids Helpline: a free, private and confidential phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years old.

1800 55 1800 | www.kidshelpline.com.au

Beyond Blue: provides support on a range of mental health issues and is available by phone, online via chat or email.

1300 22 4636 | www.beyondblue.org.au

eheadspace: free online and telephone support and counselling for young people aged 12 to 25 years old, their families and friends.

1800 650 890 | headspace.org.au/eheadspace

Suicide Call-Back Service: anyone considering suicide, living with someone who is considering suicide, or bereaved by suicide, can access the Suicide Call-Back Service.

1300 659 467 | www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

MensLine Australia: a telephone and online counselling service for men, including support for dads who may need parenting assistance.

1300 78 99 78 | www.mensline.org.au

Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling: provides current serving armed forces personnel, veterans and their families free and confidential counselling, group treatment programs, and community and peer networks.

1800 011 046 | www.openarms.gov.au

Face to face support

Your General Practitioner

If you or your child experiences persistent health issues that interfere with your lives, please talk to your General Practitioner, who is your gateway to mental health and other health services. Under a Mental Health Treatment Plan you can now receive 20 Medicare subsidised therapy sessions from an eligible mental health professional.

www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services

School chaplains

The National School Chaplaincy Program supports the wellbeing of students and school communities by providing pastoral care services that assist in crises and build student resilience. Talk to your chaplain or school leaders for further information.

www.education.gov.au/national-school-chaplaincy-program

Psychologists and other clinical mental health support

The Australian Psychological Society provides a simple search tool to connect with a psychologist in your area. Medicare-eligible Australians can also access telehealth consultations during the COVID-19 outbreak.

www.psychology.org.au/Find-a-Psychologist

headspace

headspace provides free or low-cost services to young people aged between 12 to 25 years old, their families and friends. headspace provides holistic care in four key areas – mental health, related physical health, alcohol and other drug use, and social and vocational support. A map of where to access your closest site is available on the headspace website.

www.headspace.org.au

Primary Health Networks

Primary Health Networks support individuals and communities by ensuring patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

www.health.gov.au/phn

Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)

AIME is a mentoring program to keep young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people engaged in education and growing their aspirations.

AIME provides a platform for university students and community ambassadors to give back through mentorship, tutoring sessions, workshops and an established curriculum, across 33 locations, as well as online and through partnerships with 250 schools.

www.aimementoring.com

Positive Partnerships Program

This program builds partnerships between schools and parents and carers to improve educational outcomes for students with autism. It provides current, relevant and evidence informed information through workshops and online resources.

www.positivepartnerships.com.au

Online resources

Student Wellbeing Hub

The Student Wellbeing Hub provides age specific and tailored information for educators, parents and students, including practical, evidence informed strategies in plain language to help reduce the risk of anxiety and depression in children and young people.

www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au

ReachOut

Reach Out provides information resources and self-help tools so young people can take practical steps to understand and manage their mental health. It also offers a safe, supportive and anonymous space for young people to talk to others and share what they are going through.

www.au.reachout.com

Head to Health

Head to Health is the Government's digital mental health gateway providing information, advice, and access to free and low-cost phone and online mental health services and supports.

www.headtohealth.gov.au

Career Support and Information

National Careers Institute

Support for young people to navigate post-school pathways.

www.nci.dese.gov.au

Course Seeker

Information about thousands of online and on-campus courses, provided in a consistent and comparable way.

www.courseseeker.edu.au

Career Planning

Unbiased information about career planning, career pathways and work transitions.

www.myfuture.edu.au

Career Mentoring

The headspace Digital Work and Study Program and Career Mentoring Program supports 15 to 25 year-olds to plan a career, find employment or work towards further education.

www.headspace.org.au/our-services/digital-work-and-study-service/

Employment Services

Every young person who finds themselves in need of unemployment benefits can also get a range of assistance through jobactive, such as Youth Jobs PaTH, to develop their capability, build their confidence, and get the skills that employers are looking for.

www.jobactive.gov.au/path

Transition to Work, a specialist program providing intensive, pre employment support, is also available to young people just out of school who have not obtained a leaving certificate, and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person under 25 years old.

www.employment.gov.au/transition-work