

FOR STUDENTS

Wellbeing support over the school holidays

It's been a big year and this guide provides tips to continue looking after your mental health and wellbeing over the school holidays and services to reach out to if you need support.

Actions to support positive mental health over the school holidays

- Exercise boosts mood and mental health – make it fun!
- Nourish your brain by eating healthily – it will also improve your mood
- Prioritise sleep to support mental and emotional wellbeing
- Explore relaxation techniques and coping strategies
- Stay in touch and catch up with friends and loved ones
- Make time to do things you enjoy
- Practice positive self-talk – and remember you are not alone
- Seek professional help if needed.¹

Feeling it: [mindfulness resources and activities for students](#). Smiling Mind gives you tips on looking after yourself, understanding and managing emotions, being mindful, being kind to yourself, navigating uncertainty and preparing for change.

You may find that these actions are not enough to look after your mental health. Here are some signs you may need some support.

Signs that you or a friend may need mental health support

Keep an eye out and seek professional help for changes that last two or more weeks such as:

- Loss of interest or involvement in activities normally enjoyed
- Feeling 'low', unusually stressed or worried
- Ordinary things get harder
- Being easily irritated or angry
- Taking more dangerous risks, like using alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawal or feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulties with concentration and motivation
- Having a lot of negative thoughts
- Changing in sleeping and eating.^{2 3}



¹ headspace – a parents guide to school issues and stress <https://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/parents-guide-tips-for-managing-stress-and-problems-at-school/>

² headspace 'mental health and you' poster <https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Mental-Health-Posters-mgpdf.pdf>

³ headspace – how to talk to your children about mental health <https://headspace.org.au/gads/>

Supporting your friends

You and your friends are **most likely to turn to each other for support** before seeking out an adult or service provider. You and your friends can support each other by:

- contacting 000 if a friend needs urgent assistance or is at risk of harming themselves or others
- reaching out to a friend, offering support and letting them know you care
- letting your friend know you may need to tell a trusted adult about your concerns.

Having these types of conversations can be difficult. Information on how to support a friend is available on the headspace website: [How to help a friend going through a tough time](#).

Mental health support

- **Your local GP** can provide you with additional support
- **headspace Counselling:** Victorian Government secondary school students, including those who have just finished schooling, can access counselling services from headspace. During the holidays, you can self-refer by calling your [local headspace centre](#).
- **eheadspace:** 1800 650 890 www.headspace.org.au/eheadspace
- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 551 800 www.kidshelpline.com.au
- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au
- **Beyond Blue:** 1300 224 636 www.beyondblue.org.au
- **Head to Help:** 1800 595 212 www.headtohelp.org.au
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467 www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- **Contacting 000** if you need urgent assistance.

Self-harm and suicide prevention resources

- [Getting a mental health care plan](#) (ReachOut)
- [What you need to know about self-harm](#) (headspace)
- [How to help when someone is suicidal](#) (SANE Australia)

Family violence support and resources

- **Safe Steps:** 1800 015 188 www.safesteps.org.au
- **1800RESPECT:** 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au
- **What's okay at home:** www.woah.org.au
- [Family violence support](#)

Eastern Victoria bushfires: first anniversary

We are also approaching the first anniversary of the 2019–2020 summer Eastern Victoria bushfires. The anniversary may trigger worry or anxiety levels that are similar to what was experienced during the event. For more information:

- **Emerging Minds:** [Traumatic events: anniversaries and other triggers](#)
- **Trauma and Grief Network:** [Understanding and managing anniversary reactions](#)

Mental health resources

- [Mental Health Toolkit](#)
- [Understanding mental health – fact sheet](#) (Orygen)
- [Learn how to handle tough times](#) (headspace)
- [Get into life \(to keep your headspace healthy\)](#) (headspace)