

# School holidays with your young person

It is important to ensure that your young person stays involved and remains active throughout the holidays.



## Some general tips:

- Maintain a regular routine (i.e. getting up in the morning, eating three meals a day) to ensure they are not regularly up late or sleeping in very late the next day
- Involve them in decisions and give them responsibility at home (i.e. deciding what to eat for dinner and help prepare it)
- Ask them how they are and acknowledge any extra efforts they put in around the home and other places, such as their casual job or sporting club
- Encourage them to get involved in activities or projects and participate with them when you can (i.e. paint the walls in their bedroom)
- See leaflet 'Activities to try over the summer holidays' for ideas to engage with your children.

## Activities for your young person to try over the summer

### Volunteer

Give back to the community and gain some great experience. There are loads of volunteer opportunities out there. Visit: [govolunteer.com.au](http://govolunteer.com.au), [volunteer.com.au](http://volunteer.com.au) or [volunteeringaustralia.org](http://volunteeringaustralia.org)

### Find a casual job

Earn extra pocket money, gain skills and meet new people. Visit [headspace.org.au/is-it-just-me/work-and-study](http://headspace.org.au/is-it-just-me/work-and-study) for tips on how to write a resume and prepare for an interview.

### Do-It-Yourself projects

Get your creative juices flowing. Revamp your bedroom or create an art piece.

### Keep in contact

Call your friends and invite them to lunch, or go out to the beach, do some shopping or watch a movie.



### Learn something new

You will have plenty of time to practice over the break. Contact your local council, leisure centre or community health centre to find out what is available

### Organise and explore

List places you want to visit and things you want to do. Open up a bank account or take up a photography course. These tasks can be as big or small as you want

### Get active

Get out on the oval and kick a footy with mates, check out the local skate park or go for walks with your dog around the block.

### Additional Resources

**Local Councils**—Check with your local council for holiday programs ,activities and youth centres.

**headspace.org.au** for information around mental health in the form of videos, factsheets, real experiences etc.

**ehespace.org.au** for free online or telephone support.

**au.reachout.com** for information around wellbeing.

**youthbeyondblue.com** for youth mental health information and support.



## Supporting your young

Holidays can take students away from friends and their school supports. Changes to routine can cause some young people to feel stressed, isolated and alone. Being a supportive parent is especially important when it comes to a time of change in a young person's routine or life structure. Below are some signs that may alert you that things are not quite right and there may be a need to talk to someone about what's going on for your young person;



## MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUR CHILD



**Mental ill health is the single biggest health issue facing young Australians**

**Mental health** is about being able to **work** and **study** to your full potential, **cope** with day-to-day stress, **feel connected** to others, and **live your life** in a free and satisfying way



**75%**

of mental health problems emerge before the age of 25<sup>2</sup>



### WARNING SIGNS

that your child may be experiencing a mental health problem:



Loss of interest or feeling 'low'



Doing ordinary things gets harder



Taking more dangerous risks



Withdrawal or feeling overwhelmed



Using alcohol or drugs to escape



Changes in sleeping and eating



**1 in 4** young people experience **depression, anxiety or substance use disorders** in a given year<sup>1</sup>

**Support your child to maintain good mental health by encouraging them to:**



Exercise regularly, eat well and have adequate sleep.



Explore relaxation and coping strategies.



Catch up with friends and loved ones.



Make time to do things they enjoy.

**Get help early, before a smaller problem becomes a bigger problem**

If you are concerned about your child's mental health, contact **headspace**



**headspace**  
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010). Mental Health of Young People, 2007. Canberra: ABS. Cat No. 4840.0.55.001

<sup>2</sup> Kessler, R., Berglund, P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Merikangas, K. & Walters, E. (2005). Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the national comorbidity survey replication. Arch Gen Psychiatry, 62, 593-602.

**headspace.org.au**

## Tips to help you support your young person.

1. **Recognise** their distress or concerning behaviour
2. **Ask** them about it
3. **Acknowledge** their feelings
4. **Get** appropriate **support**
5. **Check in** a short time afterwards

If you believe that a young person is at risk of harm, you should seek professional support from your local mental health service or emergency department and keep the young person safe until help arrives

Support services:  
[www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au)  
[www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)  
LifeLine 13 11 14  
Kiddshelpline: 1800 224 636  
Suicide Callback Service: