

media release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00AM (AEDST), THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER 2019

study suggests young people are getting better with headspace

17 October 2019

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation has today released the results of the first longitudinal study examining the impact of the support young people received at headspace, and the effect it had on their lives. The study, depicting positive outcomes, reinforces a continuous improvement commitment from headspace to understand the long term impacts of the service.

According to the study of more than 1,900 young people:

- The vast majority of participants reported high or very high levels of psychological distress upon entry to headspace.
- All age groups reported a decrease in psychological distress (K10) while at headspace and most age groups reported further improvement after leaving¹.
- The greatest improvements seen from young people were in general wellbeing, coping and participating in day to day activities while at headspace². General wellbeing and relationships with family continued to improve for participants after leaving headspace.
- Participants experienced a decrease in the number of days they were unable to work or study (days out of role) while at headspace and these gains were maintained at the time of follow up³.

The study also showed that headspace had helped participants develop skills to deal with mental health issues (80%) and reduced the impact of mental health on their lives (78%), highlighting the important role that headspace plays in equipping young people with the tools and resources to better manage their mental health day to day.

Most participants (84%) reported that headspace positively impacted their mental health literacy and helped them to better understand their mental health problems (86%).

The study showed that a small proportion (8.7% of total participants) had a negative experience with headspace, citing lack of connection with or changes in practitioner, wait times and issues with appointment times.

headspace CEO, Jason Trethowan said the youth mental health service would take on all the learnings from the study.

“We can see encouraging improvements about the impact headspace has on the lives of young people, however, we know there is much more we must do to address lingering distress in young Australians and wait times to access services.

¹ Kessler 10 Measure of Psychological Distress

² MyLifeTracker (MLT) measure of quality of life

³ how many in the last two weeks they were unable to carry out most of their usual activities and study, work or home

“Long term studies such as this aren’t typically undertaken in the mental health system, so we are pleased to have created the systems and infrastructure to better understand the impact of headspace on the lives of young people” Mr Trethowan said.

To view the full report, please visit: <https://headspace.org.au/assets/headspace-centre-young-person-follow-up-study-Sept-2019.PDF>

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About headspace

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds. headspace has 110 centres across Australia in metropolitan, regional and remote areas, as well as online and phone support services through eheadspace. 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.