

Media release



Kids Helpline says that supporting students leaving school is important for their mental health and well-being

“Transitioning from high school can be a time of heightened risk for mental wellness. It can be layered with difficulties that can originate in the transition period as students leave one life behind and begin another,” said **yourtown** Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams.

“One group of particular concern in this transition from school are young men. Kids Helpline, a service of **yourtown**, notes that according to Mental and Behavioural Conditions ABS data, 1 in 5 males aged 15 – 24 have a mental or behavioural condition. Yet males are significantly less likely to seek support, with only 21% of contacts to Kids Helpline in 2018 coming from males.

“We also know that early interventions and the right support can change the trajectory of a young person’s life. We would like to change the culture around male help-seeking around mental ill-health. Young men in need of support may feel they are not able to reach out proactively, often discouraged from reaching out for fear of seeming ‘weak’. There is a perception among young men that they are invincible. Mental health just isn’t on their radar. They tend to believe that you just ‘harden up’ when times get tough or you feel overwhelmed. We want to let young men know that no one is bulletproof. Schoolies is the ideal time to watch out for their mates and for themselves,” Ms Adams stated.

“Partying can seem like a time of celebration and is often an outlet after stressful exams. But, it’s also important to remember that young people who have just finished high school and are in transition to further education, training or employment may also be grieving and coping with a huge amount of change, which may result in higher levels of vulnerability, stress and emotional distress. This can make them more at risk of mental health and well-being issues,” she said.

“While the majority of young people at Schoolies party safely and respectfully, the risky and damaging behaviours we see some engage in at Schoolies are deeply concerning. We know that half of all mental health conditions appear before age 15 and a further 25% emerge in late teens and early adulthood. These risky behaviours we are seeing could be a sign of a young person experiencing mental or emotional distress,” said Ms Adams.

“We would like to extend the focus on safety and wellbeing well beyond the end of the party. Our tertiary qualified, professional counsellors are experts in supporting young people at any time and for any reason. Kids Helpline provides support to young people aged 5 – 25. It is the only free, 24/7 counselling service to provide support to young people throughout childhood, adolescents and into early adulthood,” continued Ms Adams. If young people want to talk to someone they can call Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or use WebChat or email services. www.kidshelpline.com.au

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