

Media release



Australia's foremost kids counselling helpline uses live streaming video platform to get teens to open up about mental health

yourtown's Kids Helpline is challenging the very nature of communicating with teenagers who may be experiencing mental health concerns by tapping into an innovative campaign created by M&C Saatchi.

Designed to challenge ways that young teens seek help about mental health and wellbeing, the 'Truth 'n Loot' campaign will come to life on streaming platform Twitch in late August and early September. Australian gaming influencers Naysy, Chanzas, Panda and the duo Skill Up and Laymen Gaming, will share the message that 'talking really helps' during live-streamed play of the gaming phenomenon Fortnite.

Four live Twitch Fortnite battles will give teens the opportunity to engage in conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

"The partnership between Kids Helpline and Twitch aims to encourage conversation, particularly with teenage boys, by reaching them at the early intervention stage of any mental health concerns. Mental health concerns are the number one reason children and young people contacted Kids Helpline last year. Through this collaboration we are encouraging teens to talk about what's worrying them every day instead of waiting for a crisis situation," **yourtown/Kids Helpline** Head of Marketing and Fundraising Tracey Gillinder said.

"Half of all mental health issues in adulthood emerge by age 14 and three quarters by the age of 24," Ms Gillinder said.

yourtown identified that contacts from young boys to Kids Helpline during 2018 sits at 21% or one in five of the contacts in 2018, compared to 77% from females over the same period.

"Too many teenage boys are reluctant to ask for help. They are not big talkers and often keep concerns to themselves, we hope these gaming sessions show young boys how simple conversations can change the direction of an entire life by reducing the stigma around help seeking.

"We need to encourage boys from an early age not to hide their emotions and for adults to let boys know it's OK to show their vulnerability and ask for help about anything, including their mental health and wellbeing concerns. Seeking help is a strength, and never a weakness," continued Ms Gillinder.

Ms Gillinder said Kids Helpline acted as a safety-net not just for vulnerable children but all children and young people aged 5 to 25 years.

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service available anytime and for any reason – kids helpline.com.au or free call 1800 55 1800.

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