

# Media release



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## Setting Aussie kids up for better mental health resources

Thousands of young people experiencing a mental illness will soon have greater access to quality care and treatment after a USQ-led research project was awarded \$5 million in Federal Government funding.

Chief Executive Officer of **yourtown**, Tracy Adams said this five-year USQ research project will be in partnership with support agencies, including Kids Helpline, West Moreton Hospital Health Service, Darling Downs West Moreton Primary Health Network, Education Queensland, Aftercare and Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service.

"As Australia's only free confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25, Kids Helpline will benefit greatly as a translation partner to children and young people who prefer to use a web-based service to seek information, support or counselling for mental health concerns.

"Ms Adams said web-based counselling is the fastest-growing medium of contact at Kids Helpline with young people using Webchat in increasing numbers.

Our research shows that contacts via our Webchat platform increased by 182% between 2012 and 2018, as web-based support for mental health issues becomes a key help-seeking resource," Ms Adams continued.

Associate Professor Sonja March is spearheading the project to develop an online platform giving young people direct access to tailored mental health information and support.

"When designing this research program, Kids Helpline were the first partner we knew we needed to link into. They provide such valuable support to so many young Australians and make a difference in so many lives.

"To work, this platform needs to be integrated into routine practice. Linking to services like those of Kids Helpline means that children don't get lost along the way. Our platform will complement the already fantastic resources and support offered by Kids Helpline," Associate Professor March said.

Associate Professor March's project team includes researchers from Griffith University, The University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, Federation University and The Australian National University.

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For more information about yourtown visit [yourtown.com.au](http://yourtown.com.au) OR [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

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