



Media Release

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App to help students check-in with friends during stressful exam-time

As students across Australia prepare for end of year exams, *beyondblue* has partnered with ReachOut Australia to encourage young people to check in with their friends in the stressful weeks ahead.

Asking if someone is okay can make a world of difference, especially if that person is struggling, but it's not always easy to know what to say.

A free *beyondblue* smartphone *app* – Youthbeyondblue The Check-in – offers young people step-by-step advice to make that conversation easier.

The Check-in app suggests ways to raise the issue, questions to ask and even places to have the conversation. Users can set reminders for follow-up chats with their friend and link in with professional support services.

Third-year university student Locket Lee, 20, said most young people found it easier to talk someone their own age: "I think young people open up to each other because we're all in it together and we're all going through the same pressures.

"This time of year is always stressful; most students are preparing for final exams and applying for internships and graduate jobs.

"Sometimes you get rejected over and over; it's really disheartening and it takes a lot to keep trying."

One in four young people has a mental health condition and according to Mission Australia's 2016 Youth Survey Report, coping with stress, school and study problems topped the list of concerns among 15 to 19-year-olds.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Causes of the Death report showed suicide accounted for more than one third of deaths among people aged 15-24.

***beyondblue* CEO Georgie Harman** said the Check-in app was designed to help young people have difficult conversations that could have a positive impact on a friend's mental wellbeing.

"School and university students are heading into one of the most intense and mentally challenging times of the year and, speaking from experience, it can be really tough – there's a lot of pressure, expectation and a fear of failure," Ms Harman said.

"It's also a life-changing time for young people – students are moving from school to university or further study, while others step into a career.

"We know that when things get tough, young people are more likely to confide in their friends than seek professional support for their mental health and that's why we developed the Check-in app – to support young people as they support their friends."

ReachOut CEO Jono Nicholas said the organisation's recent survey about exam time pressures showed 50 per cent of 15-18-year-old respondents displayed worrying levels of stress over exams, with most pressure coming from themselves.

"These findings are not surprising, with the increased focus on performance determining university entry and future career paths combined with increased social pressures and distractions creating a 'perfect storm' for exam stress," Mr Nicholas said.

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“Helping parents and friends to talk things out and support a young person during this stressful time is important, and smart tools like *beyondblue*’s Check-in app can really help a friend with that difficult conversation.”

Download the free **Youthbeyondblue The Check-in** app from the Apple store or Google Play. The app was launched in 2014 and has had more than 23,000 downloads.

For more information go to: www.youthbeyondblue.com/thecheckin

To organise media interviews, please contact the *beyondblue* media team.

Mental health professionals are available 24/7 at the *beyondblue* Support Service – 1300 22 4636 or via beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3p-12am ADST) or email responses (within 24 hours).

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