



COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

About #ChatStarter

#ChatStarter connects, engages, and promotes the benefits of supportive conversations with young people and children who are going through a difficult time right now.

Developed in response to the challenge of pandemic restrictions and the increasing impacts these are having on the mental health of children and young people, #ChatStarter intentionally encourages people to use the tips and resources freely available to help them have supportive conversations, and to share and promote the benefits with their communities online.

#ChatStarter works by encouraging young people, parents, and their children, to share the ways they enjoy connecting with each other across social media, linking their audiences to a library of tools and resources to support those around them at www.headtohealth.gov.au

#ChatStarter was developed by the National Mental Health Commission in partnership with parents and young people who have experience of mental health challenges and Australia's national mental health organisations who specialise in supporting children, young people, and parents- ReachOut, Butterfly Foundation, Orygen, batyr, headspace, Beyond Blue and Kids Helpline.

We'd like to thank the parents and young people who helped design #ChatStarter. It is through their frank and fearless conversations that #Chatstarter took shape. They told us:

- They needed support to build their confidence to have effective and safe conversations about how someone is feeling today as they face mental health challenges.
- They need access to easy-to-use tools and resources to help them have these conversations
- Conversations have the better outcome when they're participating in a fun activity together
- They want to access and share this information through the social media platforms they use every day

This national online program is supported by social networking platforms Facebook and Instagram to reach more Australians each day. The program is also crowdsourced from a number of different contributors on TikTok to raise awareness on the importance of conversations.

#ChatStarter provides young people and parents with access to free evidence-based resources already developed by the mental health sector on the Department of Health's **Head to Health website**.

How can you get involved in #ChatStarter?

If you want to start a chat with a young person in your life, but not sure what to say or how to say it, you can find #ChatStarters and resources at: <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>

If you would like to share how you start conversations with others, or how you prefer people to start conversations with you, you can:

- 1) Choose one of the #ChatStarters on <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>
- 2) Film a short video (30 seconds) about your experience, and why this helps spark conversation
- 3) Share on your social media platforms with your followers including the hashtag #ChatStarter and website URL.

A small chat can make a big difference!

How can you help spread word?

With your help in any of the following ways, we can reach more Australian young people and arm them with the tools and skills they need to support those around them and intervene early

- Let your stakeholders/networks know about the program and how they can get involved
- Get involved in #ChatStarter and encourage people to visit www.headtohealth.gov.au on how to start and continue a chat safely.
- Share posts on your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok using the hashtag **#ChatStarter**
- Promote **#ChatStarter** across your channels using our key messages (suggestions below) and the social media tiles provided in the communication toolkit download link, to encourage young Australians and parents to create their own content on social media on how to start chats safely with others.
- Use the hashtag **#ChatStarter** in your online engagement

Communication Toolkit – #ChatStarter Materials

The Communication Toolkit includes digital assets and suggested copy to help spread the word online or with your networks and encourage young people and parents/guardians to have conversations with others and share their own version of #ChatStarter.

[DOWNLOAD DIGITAL ASSETS HERE.](#)

Please note, currently this [link](#) includes:

- 10 social media tiles (parents) to support the promotion of **#ChatStarter**
- 10 social media tiles (youth images)
- 2 Social media badges
- 10 social media #ChatStarter tips/badges
- 11 #ChatStarter videos developed by lived experience participants including a combination video
- 5 #ChatStarter translated social media tiles in Arabic, Hindi, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese. ***These will be made available from 12-August.***
- Social media cover photos

Suggested social media copy

Below is suggested copy for social media posts promoting #ChatStarter.

Facebook and LinkedIn

- A small chat can make a big difference. Conversations play an important role in recognising someone is going through a difficult time and connecting them to right type of care. But many of us find it difficult to start a conversation about mental health. #ChatStarter is an online program to help young people and parents start and continue conversations in a safe and supportive way. Visit <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>
- Not feeling yourself lately but not sure how to talk about it? It might help to go for regular walks with your parents, siblings, or a friend where you can talk about life's ups and downs in a casual way. For more #ChatStarters visit <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>

- Noticed your child has had a tough day? Take them for a drive for a short-term escape. It might provide a quiet place to chit chat about what has been bothering them. For more #ChatStarters visit <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>

Twitter

- A small chat can make a big difference to someone's mental health. How do you like to start a conversation? Follow #ChatStarter and share your own tips on starting conversations with those around you.
- Have you been baking during lockdown? Here's an idea, why not get your friends on board! Choose some recipes and get your bake-on over zoom so you can chat about your day while doing it. For more #ChatStarters visit <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>
- A small chat can make a big difference but what's your favourite #ChatStarter? Is it Bake & Bond, Yarn & Learn, Walk & Talk or Stretch & Reflect? Create a short 30-60 video on starting conversations with those around you. For more #ChatStarters visit <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>

Suggested newsletter copy

Subject: A small chat can make a big difference

Conversations play an important role in recognising when someone is going through a difficult time and connecting them to right type of care.

Starting a conversation about mental health challenges with someone you care about can sometimes feel challenging. That's why a partnership between the *National Mental Health Commission* and Australia's national mental health organisations who specialise in supporting children, young people, and parents – *batyr*, *Beyond Blue*, *Butterfly Foundation*, *headspace*, *Kids Helpline*, *Orygen*, and *ReachOut* – have today launched **#ChatStarter**

#ChatStarter was designed with the support of parents and young people. The program can open opportunities for us to reach people before they reach crisis point and help them access the right type of care. However, talking may not necessarily be the best way to 'start a conversation'. Sometimes engaging in fun, creative, and productive activities together can transcend barriers to conversation, build trust and help create safe spaces for people to talk about how they're feeling, and the kind of support they need.

Young Australians and parents are encouraged to create their own content on social media on how they start chats safely with others.

Here are some #ChatStarters to help you start the conversation:

1. **Walk & Talk** - Walking and talking can break down barriers and help people feel less confronted than chatting face-to-face.
2. **Yarn & Learn** - Storytelling can help us understand what people are going through. You might like to yarn with Elders or friends about your experiences and how you're feeling. You could yarn with members of your household or virtually with others you trust.
3. **Drive and Debrief** - Going for a short drive with someone, or taking them for a drive if they're not up for it, can provide a short-term escape and provide the opportunity for uninterrupted conversation and a place to calm down or clear heads.

4. **Bake & Bond** - Keeping our hands busy can help someone feel more comfortable in having conversations about challenges. If your child or friend likes baking, encourage them to choose a recipe to make together.
5. **Relate over Reels** - Young people enjoy watching content they relate to - this includes reels and videos on social media. They might share links with you that can help you understand what they're going through that can help guide conversation. Alternatively, you can sit down and watch some videos together which may help conversation flow.
6. **Create & Connect** – This is just for fun - what we draw, write, paint, cook, dance, capture and play can help give insights into someone's experiences. Try photography – why not go bush? Go outside to the backyard or the park nearby if possible and spend time taking photos. You don't need a special camera to capture beautiful colours, textures and reflections.
7. **Dance & Download** - Dancing is a great way to express yourself. You, your family, Elders, friends or anyone in your household might like to pick some songs and dance. If you're in different households, a video call to dance and move is a great alternative to face to face when restrictions are tight.
8. **Stretch & reflect** – Stretching and self-reflecting can spark insight, which can alter the way we see ourselves and those around us.
9. **Celebrate & share**- Celebrate the small things together, a home-cooked meal, a friendly message from a friend, a smile or even a wave from the neighbour, or anything that makes you feel good.
10. **DIY & decompress** – Remember that cool cupboard you wanted to build? Ask your parents or siblings to give you a hand at starting a DIY project to focus your mind on.

For more information, visit <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>