

# Evaluation of an online mental health suicide gatekeeper resource for parents and caregivers

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# Background

- Mental disorders are common in children & adolescents
- Low rates of professional help-seeking
- Parents often viewed as ‘gatekeepers’ to treatment and support
- Parents report having insufficient knowledge and skills to:
  - Recognise mental health problems
  - Respond to concerns or disclosures
  - Access support when it is needed



# Aim

- To develop an online mental health and suicide gatekeeper resource for parents and caregivers.
- Evaluate the acceptability and effectiveness of the resource.



# Resource development

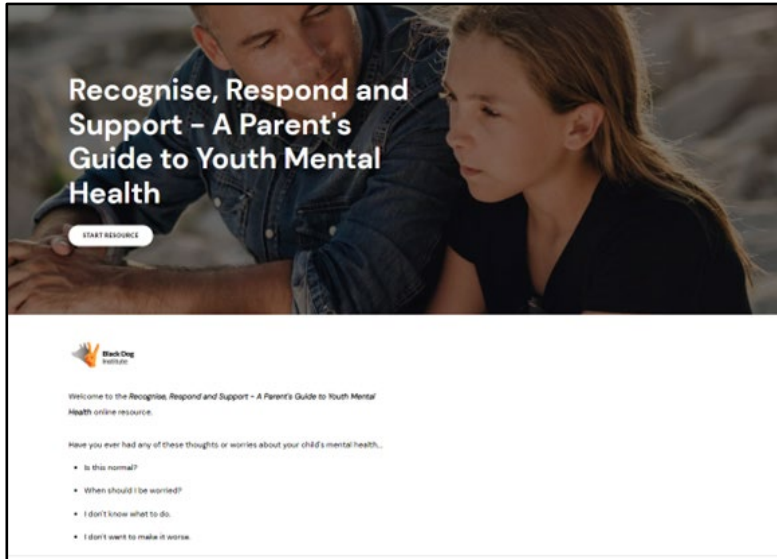
- Survey with 631 Australian parents/caregivers
- Qualitative interviews with 14 parents/caregivers
- Resource prototype testing with 9 parents/caregivers and 2 staff from Education Departments
- Findings:
  - 40.9% confident to identify a mental health problem
  - 45.6% confident they knew what to do and where to seek help
  - 36% confident to respond to a suicide disclosure



- Resource preferences
  - Digital self-help resource
  - Target both children and adolescents
  - Focus on anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide
  - Positivity, empowerment and simplicity
  - Conversation starters and scripts, practical strategies, lived experience perspectives, navigating mental health system, medication, crisis information, working with the school, self-care.



# Recognise, Respond and Support – A Parent’s Guide to Youth Mental Health



- Interactive digital resource
  - Targeted to parents/caregivers of 5–17-year-olds
  - Evidence-based information
  - Help-seeking guidance and resources
  - Lived experience perspectives
  - Downloadable information sheets
  - 90-120 minutes to complete

# Recognise

- Introduction to mental health
  - ‘Well to unwell’ mental health continuum
  - Potential risk factors
- Signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, suicide and self-harm in children and adolescents
- How to identify when help is needed

The screenshot shows a webpage titled "Understanding anxiety". The header includes the text "Recognise, Respond and Support = A Parent's Guide to Youth Mental Health" and "Module 1 of 11". The main content area explains that anxiety is a universal emotion that can be helpful and is a normal response to stress. Below this is a section titled "Anxiety performance curve" which includes a small image of a person and text explaining that anxiety can be helpful in some situations but can also be unhelpful in others.

The screenshot shows a webpage titled "What are the signs of anxiety in children and adolescents?". The page is marked as "50% COMPLETE" and has an "EXIT RESOURCE" link. The main content area is divided into two tabs: "PRIMARY-AGE CHILD" and "ADOLESCENTS". Under the "ADOLESCENTS" tab, there is a list of signs of anxiety in children and adolescents, including recurring fears, perfectionism, reassurance seeking, separation difficulties, social interaction issues, and physical complaints.



# Respond

- Information and strategies on:
  - How to initiate a conversation
  - What to do if a young person does not want to talk
  - How to respond to a disclosure of suicide or self-harm
  - Common reactions
  - Safety planning

Recognise, Respond and Support - A Parent's Guide to Youth Mental Health

## How to have a conversation with your child about their mental health

Click on the start button below for steps and tips to have the challenging conversation with your child.

Start

Recognise, Respond and Support - A Parent's Guide to Youth Mental Health

## How can I support my child?

After learning that your child is having mental health difficulties, you may be wondering what is going on and feel...

- like a failure
- worried about the future
- ashamed/frustrated
- like it's my fault

Click on the images below to reveal quotes from parents on how they felt when they learned their child was experiencing mental health difficulties.



# Support

- Information on key mental health professionals
- Step-by-step guidance
- Accessing support at school
- Managing a crisis situation
- Self-care
- Promoting positive conversation about mental health

**Recognise, Respond and Support to A Parent's Guide to Youth Mental Health**

VIDEO CONTENTS

1. SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD
How can I support my child?
Seeking professional help
Creating a supportive home environment
How schools can help
2. SELF-CARE TIPS FOR YOU
Looking after yourself?
3. SUPPORT IN A CRISIS SITUATION
What to do in a crisis situation
Crisis support services
Additional Resources

**Lived experience: A young person on talking about mental health at home**

The audio below is a young person talking about their personal experience with how they felt they could talk to their parents about their mental health struggles.

**Supportive home environment**  
a young person talks about mental health at home

EXIT RESOURCE

**Recognise, Respond and Support to A Parent's Guide to Youth Mental Health**

VIDEO CONTENTS

1. SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD
How can I support my child?
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3. SUPPORT IN A CRISIS SITUATION
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**What happens next?**

Click on the numbered icons from one (1) to six (6) to familiarise yourself with what will occur when you make an emergency call to '000'

1. Answer the operator's questions

2. Provide location details

3. Don't hang up

4. Wait for emergency services

5. What are the emergency details?

6. What service do you require? Not sure? say "services"

**What happens if we present to the emergency department of a hospital?**

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# Evaluation

- Randomised controlled trial with 380 parents/caregivers
- Access to resource for 4-weeks
- Pre, post & 12-week follow-up surveys assessing:
  - Self-efficacy to recognise, respond and provide support for mental health problems and suicide risk,
  - Perceived knowledge
  - Stigma
  - Literacy
  - Help-seeking attitudes, intentions, and barriers.



Thank you



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