



Free Help!!!

Welcome!

Depression, Schizophrenia, Mental health! All big words which can sometimes make no sense at all to us young folk, yet 10% of us are suffering from a mental illness and 52% know someone who has a mental illness (statistics taken from 2007 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians Mental Health Education Project, which surveyed 631 young people across the Northern Territory). This newsletter is not just for those suffering from mental health problems but for every young person (that's you!), so you have a better understanding of what mental health is and the services aimed at helping young people all over the world deal with this wide spread and important issue.

So firstly, what is this newsletter all about? Well, it is made solely by young people, for young people! It reviews online youth mental health services such as Reach Out and Headspace so you know which of these sites are great and which aren't. The reviews look at not only the information, but also graphics, games and how well they attract youth. So don't be shy, flip the page and check these reviews out!

Youth Beyond Blue...

Youth Beyond Blue contains many graphics including a header that moves, photographs that "depict depressive feelings" and even a comic strip for those comic enthusiasts. Some believed the layout was great because of its animations and lively, bright colours. They commented that the four key points, being Look, Listen, Talk and Seek Help, made on the site were engaging, especially the comment scroll on the bottom of the home page which has helpful comments from young people, including 'Depression is real no matter what anyone says,' and this comments change regularly to keep the site fresh every time you visit. However, one commented that the site was "extremely official looking and doesn't appeal to me at all as a young person," which is a contrast to many of the other websites reviewed, a major downer for such a helpful website.

The majority of reviewers believed the logo was memorable because of its bright colours and was attractive to them as a young person, yet one felt differently, saying it disengaged them. It was obvious from the logo that the website is part of the Beyond Blue organization, another

well-known website which was recognizable to the reviewers. Do you know the Beyond Blue organisation? If not, the website has a link to it at the bottom of the homepage. Overall, the logo reflects the websites purpose, although a reviewer believed the website was "mainly for youth who have established the fact that they have a problem and are looking for help" he believed "This site is not good for kids who have not woken up to that fact and are still struggling. This site would put them off."

A reviewer believed the comic, which seemed unrealistic, made a mockery of the issue of mental illness. The majority also felt the images kept them engaged, once again because of the happy colours, one saying "the graphics grabbed me straight away." Because the words stood out, the websites message was clear, an example being the sign "Getting help isn't beyond you!" Many believed the graphics keep youth engaged and help you understand the issue of mental health better. A reviewer said "the photographs depict 'depression and anxiety' very well and the videos are very engaging and interesting to watch."

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☺ These websites have been reviewed by youth in Darwin, from Multicultural Youth of the Northern Territory and Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians.

☺ The Newsletter has been produced by the Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians.

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The website had no music, so those who love their music, you'll have to use your own CDs as you read through the website. There is however a movie from friends which does require sound, the message being "not to give up." Most reviews felt the sounds kept them interested, yet one believed it made them feel uncomfortable. Although one reviewer believed that because youth were speaking on the video clips and were depicted in the picture, it highlighted the fact that the website is targeted at only youth, however many also believed the sounds and images does not make the website seem youth specific. The images and sounds also helped them understand the issue of mental health better.

The colours of the logo attract the viewer to certain areas of the website and allow the cool links and facts to stand out. It "has a good balance" of bright colours and made the website interesting. The colours are bold yet the cloud animation on the header was calming. One reviewer said they "think yellow and blue are best colours to use," which are the 2 main colours used by Youth Beyond Blue. These colours however do not necessarily "generate a particular emotion."

Thankfully for the reviewers (and you!) no login is required for the website, so you can just go right on through without the hassles of remembering your password and waiting for a personal page to load.

The written blogs and forums "provide a real idea of what young people are experiencing." One reviewer believed the video clips were not blogs but in fact opinions and experiences from youth. She thought a video blog on a depression website "isn't a good idea." "The 'our stories' section is so interesting and helpful." Overall, the website focused on many different age groups, especially those between 18-25. So all you young adults, this website is for you.

Is it interesting? Well, according to our reviewers it gets approximately 8 smiles.

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Unfortunately, no games on this website. "This makes me believe that if I am a youth who has established the fact that I have depression or a mental health problem, this would be a great tool for me. But If I haven't found out about my problems yet, because of there being no fun in this site, I would be instantly disengaged." Its interactive videos however make up for this.

It is easy to navigate and simple to use, mainly because of its headings and subheadings and because it has a search engine to help you find the information you are looking for.

Overall, its navigation gets 8 smiles.

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So now to the important bit... INFORMATION! It looks at what a mental illness is, what a mental illness is, who is considered to have a mental illness, why people have a mental illness, symptoms, prevention, treatment and cause. It only covers the issues of depression and anxiety however yet links to other

websites and places to get help (such as the Beyond Blue website). It contains fact sheets to help carers and families care for a person who is suffering from a mental illness.

There is an area where you can join a virtual network giving an opportunity to make networks with other young people and provide a safe, youth friendly place to learn and deal with a mental illness.

Final comments made included that it was "great to see the YBB team actually responds to posted stories." "Having a section where young people can order further information material is a great idea." "Getting support for dealing with depression and anxiety from a counselor or psychologist is so expensive that it is not an affordable option for many young people. If a website can provide an affordable and comfortable option where people (of all ages) can find support and someone to talk to then it definitely needs to be promoted."

All up, Youth Beyond Blue gets 9 smiles. An excellent website to check out.

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<http://www2.youthbeyondblue.com/ybblue/>

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Reach Out...

Surprisingly, in contrast to other reviewers, one reviewer felt there was nothing on this website and the colours were too simple. There were animations related to the Habbo community, an online virtual world which allows people to chat to people around the world. There are many photos which visually represent different mental health issues, as well as graphics made to look like graffiti to give it that youthful feel. One reviewer, however, mentioned that there were no "eye-catching designs or graphics."

The logo is easy to remember as it is just a yellow hand, attractive and reflects the website's purpose. The name is understandable but the meaning of it is not fully explained there are "so many cool links and things to do!" it "gives many perspectives" through other people's stories.

There is music and sounds in the awesome game of Reach Out Central (ROC), with "popular music and brands too." ROC makes you a character in a game of role playing. You have just moved into a new house and as you talk to others in the game you must make various decisions as to how you go about dealing with different situations. It stimulates your mind into making good decisions which can be used in real life.

The colours disengaged many of the reviewers because they "aren't used to point to different areas on the site," even though the blues and greens were appropriate colours to use.

There is only a login required for ROC which "isn't a good thing because not many youths would be likely to take the time and create a user account." Yet a login for the forums is a good idea and you can sign up for a newsletter sent by email, a very helpful resource.

The website even has its own on-line TV called Reach Out TV, providing digital stories from young people. It also includes written blogs and stories. "It is good to share and read stories," said one reviewer. There are also competitions for you to try out. You can win some great prizes.

The website focuses mainly on high school and middle school youth. Its mission statement, "web based service inspires young people to help themselves," helps young people understand what the service does.

It gets 6 smiles for its appeal to young people.

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The 'Write a Dream, Write to Scream' tool was very popular with our reviewers. It can be used by young people to get rid of awful thoughts and reduce stress. A reviewer felt that the games could have been better, and she did not understand "how this was suppose to help with mental illnesses" as it "didn't teach anything." It could have "contained more info," but overall the game was "cool with real life graphics. Good story line and gets info to young people in a subtle way and interactive way."

For its games, Reach Out gets 2 smiles, because although some felt the games were great, some also did not feel they were informative. :)

The website links to other helpful sites and services. It has headings and subheadings however these are not clear. The fact sheets allow you to find information easily however they are "not great." "The helpline numbers in Australia was good to see but could have more specific info instead of more websites or directing to yellow pages." There is a search engine, much like Youth Beyond Blue's, allowing you to find specific information easily. The scroll down bar categorises issues frequently viewed. Its simplicity was "ok but could be much clearer."

It contains similar information as Youth Beyond Blue and does provide information for families, friends, carers and teachers. It also has allocated times for a community forum during weekdays, allowing Reach Out lovers to make networks with other young people dealing with similar situations.

Its information gets 6 smiles from our reviewers.

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Final comments include that it is a shame that the forum is only open at certain times. It is "great that the helpline numbers are clearly visible" which is "really effective incase people need to talk to someone. The information could have been clearer and layout done much better. "The site seems to provide more information for those who are researching the specific addictions, rather than those who actually suffer from them."

Overall, this site gets 8 smiles!

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www.reachout.com

Headspace...

There's a Headspace in every state, and now there's a Headspace here in the territory. **What's in your Headspace?** Is the their motto, but to many of the reviewers, this website was one of their least favorites. A reviewer felt this website had no real focus and way too much blue. But to some, its colour still made them interested in the site. "the colours are cool but too many words!" said one reviewer, while another said the colours were bright and engaging. They all agreed however that the colours were bold and interesting, with "cool contrasts with dark background and bright foreground," but it "is slightly 'gloomy'." they also attracted the reviewers to certain areas of the site. A reviewer disliked the font used on the website.

There were animations of "5 young people smiling" throughout the website. An image pointing out Headspace centers around Australia was a useful link to help you find your nearest Headspace. The 3 dimensional icons also attracted the reviewers, one saying the "people puzzle" logo was a "clever idea" and reflects the websites purpose. "Its logo is very interesting and unique. It seems to reflect the purpose of the site very well." the reviews felt "The graphics were very eye catching and engaging" yet said overall the layout was very poor.

Like Youth Beyond Blue, this website had no sound or music, so once again, get those CDs and mp3s ready. Although a reviewer felt the images made the site seem youth specific, another reviewer said the "about us" section felt like it was "written for adults not children and young people."

"There was a login ID requirement if the reader was keen to share personal stories" but the popularity of the website soon declined, as one reviewer wrote "it doesn't have games or anything!"

It seems games are important for a youth focused mental health website for many young people. This website however could appeal to those who find an interest in writing in blogs and forums.

The target audience was thought to be 12 to 15 year olds yet some aspects led the reviewers to believe it focused more on adults.

The information was not very appealing either. A reviewer stated that the website was "just a pile of information that doest make you want to visit the center."

It thankfully links to other websites, which were said to be "more useful than headspace." it was not simple to operate because it seemed to be very busy, yet, once you have navigation under your sleeve, you can easily find the information you are looking for.

The was "almost too much info" provided and the length of writing was too long. This soon disengaged the reader, and supported the reviewers feelings that the site is not

necessarily targeted towards young people.

There are good statistics and phone numbers for hotlines, and the website has an "ask an expert section," for those who feel more comfortable speaking to and need to speak to a professional rather than another young person. This section however, only focuses on bullying, and needs to be extended to other issues related to mental health and mental illnesses.

Lastly, "the site is very informative in the sense that it gives a lot of personal accounts and experiences." if your not too fond of it, why not visit your nearest Headspace center. They provide youth psychologists and other services to help with "your overall well being."

This site gets 6 smiles.

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headspace Top End

Opening Hours:

9am - 5pm Monday to Friday

Contact Details:

Phone: 1800 659 388

Shop 15 in Palmerston Oasis Shopping Centre

Summary:

Youth Beyond Blue has been voted best website because it appeals most to young people, has relevant information and is easy to navigate. But don't hate on the other websites just yet. Check them all out and find which one best suits YOU. Hopefully this newsletter has helped you in making this very important decision.

Stay tuned for the next edition of the newsletter where more websites will be reviewed.