Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

Building resilience and social connections to improve young people's mental wellbeing: VicHealth's Mental Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2019

Irene Verins

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Our health promotion model

1. We aim for

ONE MILLION MORE VICTORIANS
WITH BETTER HEALTH AND WELLBEING

2. By influencing

PEOPLE

ENVIRONMENTS

3. Via change at various levels

Building public policy for health in all sectors and at all levels of government

Creating environments that support health where people live, work and play

Strengthening community action for social and environmental change

Developing personal skills that support people to exercise greater control over their own health

Re-orienting service delivery and organisational practice to promote better health

INDIVIDUALS

COMMUNITY

ORGANISATIONS

POLICY

4. Using a mix of actions

- Introducing cutting-edge interventions
- Empowering through digital technologies
- Undertaking pioneering research
- Leveraging cross-sectoral knowledge

- Utilising social marketing
- Fostering public debate
- Providing tools and resources
- Developing strategic partnerships

- Advancing best practice
- Supporting policy development
- Strategic investments and co-funding
- Building capacity in individuals, communities and organisations
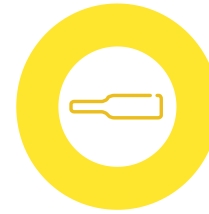
We focus on 5 health imperatives

Promote
healthy eating

Encourage
regular
physical
activity

Prevent
tobacco use

Prevent harm
from alcohol

Promote
mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing

Promote mental wellbeing

A dynamic state in which the individual is able to develop to their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others and contribute to the community.

↑

More opportunities to build resilience and social connection for young people & women

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Why focus on young people & women?

Youth & young adulthood are characterised by critical transitions

75% adult mental health conditions emerge by age 24 and half by age 14 years

1 in 4 young Australians currently has a mental disorder

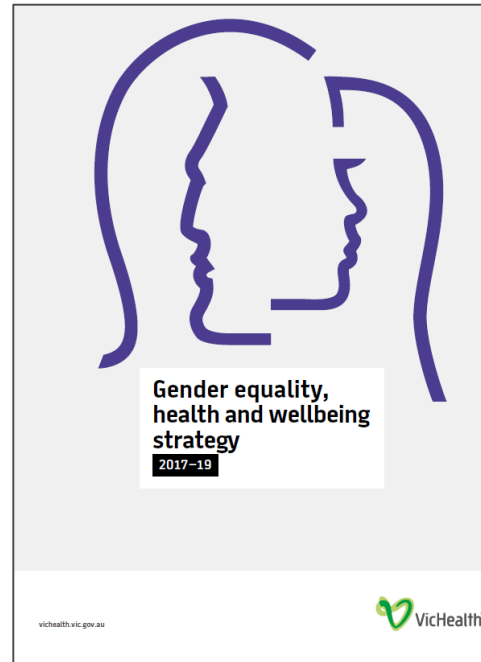1 in 4 report limited access to social support when needed

1 in 8 are lonely

Young women face the highest risk of experiencing partner violence

Gender-based violence is associated with mental health disorder, dysfunction and disability

VicHealth strategies for young people & women

VICHEALTH MENTAL WELLBEING STRATEGY 2015–2019

vichealth.vic.gov.au

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Gender equality, health and wellbeing strategy 2017–19

vichealth.vic.gov.au

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YOUNG PEOPLE AND RESILIENCE

Young people, health and wellbeing strategy 2017–19

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Focus for today

1. Future trends

2. VicHealth's Mental Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2019

3. Case studies

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Future megatrends trends impacting young people's mental wellbeing

Bright Futures
Megatrends impacting the mental wellbeing
of young Victorians over the coming 20 years

A megatrend is a long term change affecting societies, governments and economies over a long period of time.

Megatrends occur at the intersection of smaller trends (environmental social, technological, economic, demographic), where they cluster and form major impacts into future

Megatrends

Skills & educational levels are rising rapidly as the job market is   becoming increasingly competitive

Advances in technology & increased automation are placing high & low skilled, routine manual job tasks at risk

Entry level jobs are disappearing

Rise of freelancing, portfolio work & flexible work models

Young workers will be working more autonomously & independently but this may be more precarious

Transitions between education and employment are prolonged (eg. 4.6 years)

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Megatrends

Increased use of online environment

Increased exposure to pornography, bullying & online gambling

Broader social networks create greater comparisons & increased pressure

Personalised marketing and ease of purchase (cashless economy) = young people getting into debt

New technologies allow better treatment options for mental wellbeing

Less stigma, more conversations, more e health services and apps

Increasing global awareness that factors beyond the individual eg poverty, poor education, homelessness and cultural background, contribute to mental illness

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Challenges

Megatrends identify both challenges and opportunities relating to youth mental wellbeing over the coming 20 years

Young people will be required to have levels of adaptability, autonomy and confidence

Young people are moving into a world of work that is vastly different from their parents

Many young people are anxious about job prospects, and once in work, some are finding the precarious new conditions stressful and isolating

Stress, anxiety and loneliness are on the rise, particularly for those on lower incomes

Social Connections are protective

Social support is a protective factor (perceived more powerful than actual)

Social support can act as a 'buffer' to stressors

Loneliness can have a stronger negative influence than the impact of stress and anxiety

Young people are more connected online than ever before

https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/young-victorians-resilience-and-mental-wellbeing

Resilience is necessary

Ability to adapt, cope and bounce back from adversity

It's not inherent but develops over time through interactions between person and their social environment

3 key protective assets are associated with development of resilience

Personal life skills

Supportive relationships

Connected, safe and cohesive communities

https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/mental-wellbeing-strategy

Evidence

Evidence gaps exist for resilience and social connections at community level

- How do organisations, settings and communities build resilience and social connections?

SOME EVIDENCE EXISTS

- Secure attachment

- Positive parent-child relationships

- Positive family environment

- Friendships with pro-social peers

STRONG EVIDENCE EXISTS

- Self-esteem, confidence, self-efficacy, emotion regulation, problem-solving, social skills & perseverance
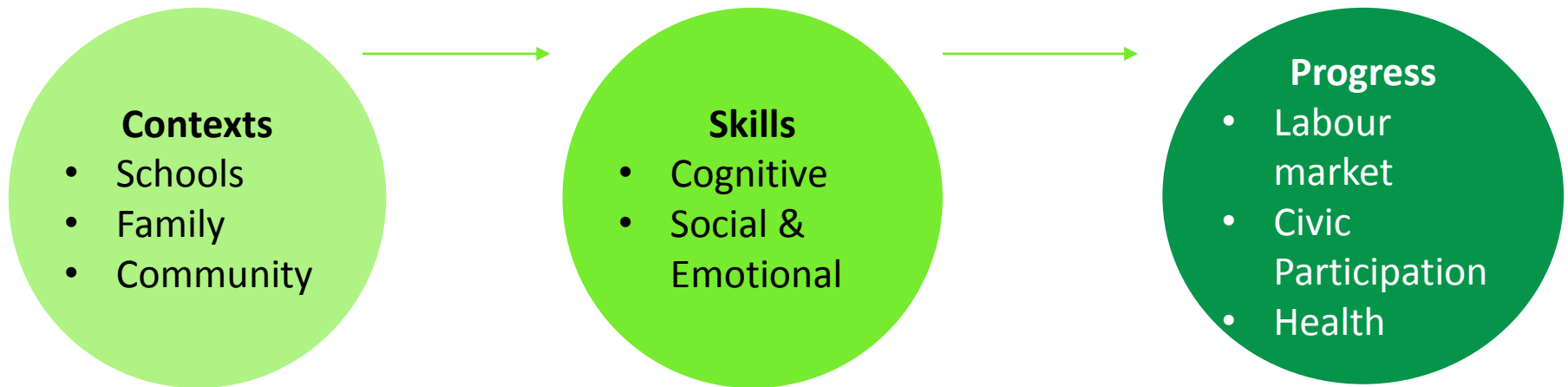
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Case studies of practice

- **Education**
- **Work**
- **Arts**
- **Physical activity**

Case study: Education

The problem

- 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist

- These children will need a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional skills

- Their capacity to achieve goals, work effectively with others and manage emotions will be essential to meet the challenges of the 21st century

- Evaluation required for what works to build these skills

Contexts
- Schools
- Family
- Community

Skills
- Cognitive
- Social & Emotional

Progress
- Labour market
- Civic Participation
- Health

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The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum

The Victorian Department of Education and Training developed a suite of teaching and learning materials for Foundation to year 12.

8 topics of Social and Emotional Learning across all levels of primary and secondary education:

Emotional Literacy; Personal Strengths; Positive Coping; Problem Solving; Stress Management; Help Seeking; Gender and Identity; and Positive Gender Relationships.

Supported by an online professional learning program for teachers

It's open access and able to be downloaded

Case study: Young Workers
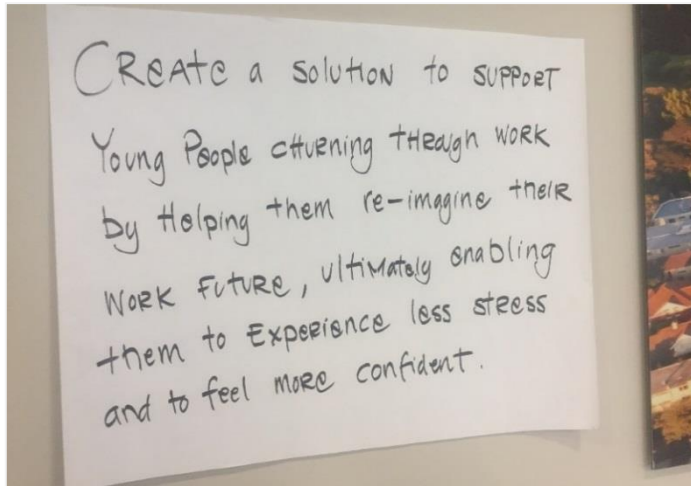
The problem

Young people have fewer professional networks, less job experience, and poorer career curation skills

1 in 3 Young people are un or underemployed, and looking for more work

It is taking longer for young people to move into full time work after completing education: "churn"

This is contributing to rising levels of anxiety, stress and poor mental health

https://youtu.be/651xutHYjI4

TOMORROW ME - YOUNG WORKERS GAMIFICATION PROJECT

Using games to help boost young workers' resilience

Current projects

Case Studies

As part of the Collaboration's work, a series of case studies have been developed to showcase creative ways to promote mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

We have gathered stories about workplaces that strive to 'keep the well, well' (promoting good mental health and wellbeing) and are taking a comprehensive, whole-of-organisation approach.

This section will be regularly updated with new content, including videos so remember to register to receive updates.

VIEW CASE STUDIES

Resource Centre

The Resource Centre is now live!

We've scanned the world and hand-picked a range of free best practice guidelines, case studies and practical tools to support you in promoting positive mental wellbeing in your workplace.

FIND RESOURCES

Guidelines for workplaces

SuperFriend commissioned the Work, Health and Wellbeing Team at Deakin University and the Centre for Mental Health at University of Melbourne to develop guidelines containing actionable strategies that promote positive mental health in workplaces.

These guidelines were made for organisations, teams and individuals to use in developing a work environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing, supports positive leadership styles, cultivates effective communication, and assists all staff to reach their potential and drive optimal organisational performance.

DOWNLOAD PDF

SLEEP RESEARCH

Aussie teens forgo sleep for screens

24
HOURS

6.5-7.5
HOURS — Average

8-10
HOURS — Recommended
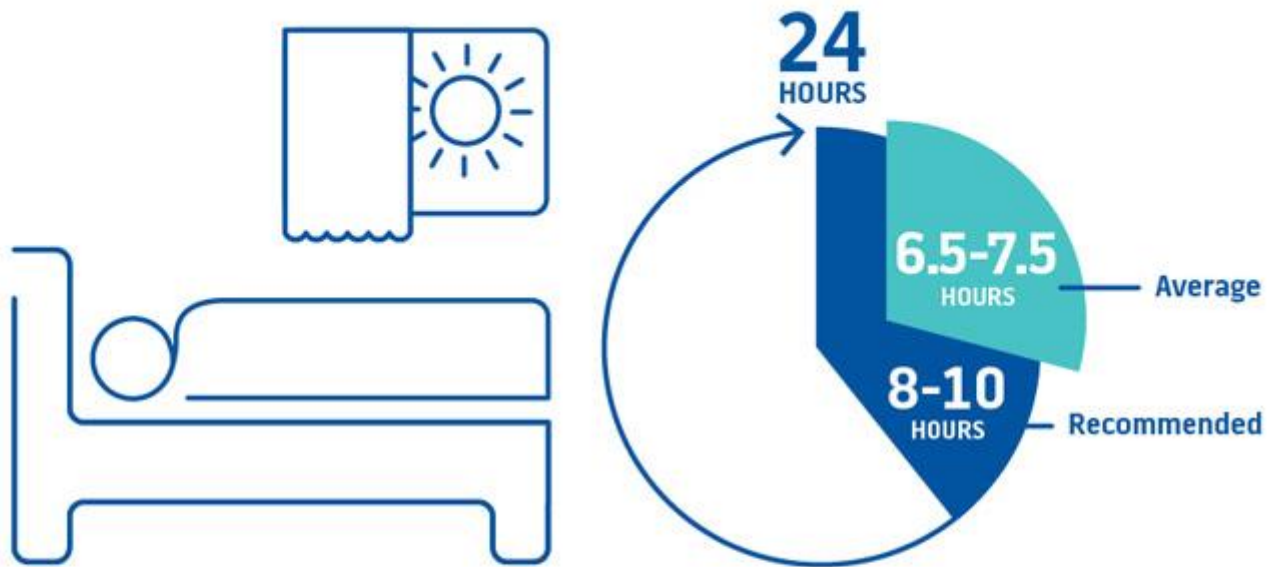
Adolescents are only getting between 6.5 and 7.5 hours of sleep on school nights

**7 hours
14 minutes**

**8 hours
25 minutes**

WEEKNIGHTS

WEEKENDS

Recommended: 7–9 hours per night

**Longer weekend sleep times suggest
many young adults may be missing out
on needed sleep during the week**

Technology use, caffeine consumption and stress may contribute to later bedtimes and sleep difficulties among young people

Parent-set bedtimes, physical exercise and positive social interactions may contribute to young people achieving earlier bedtimes and longer sleep times

Stop using
1 hour
before bed

21 minutes
extra sleep
per night

Teenagers who stopped using their
phones just one hour before bedtime
gained 1 hour and 45 minutes extra
sleep over a school week

Linking mental wellbeing with physical activity for women

Links between physical and mental wellbeing benefits is clear

Less women than men are getting active

62% of women in Victoria say they want to become more physically active

Women's participation in sports and exercise declines as they get older

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WAYS TO GET ACTIVE

https://thisgirlcan.com.au/meet-the-girls/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iISKDZvjaSs

Thank you!

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