

Mental Health

Problem

Adolescent mental health challenges are increasing, with high rates of depression, anxiety, and early substance use. Schools often lack scalable, evidence-based resources that both improve mental health literacy and empower young people to support peers safely, without putting responsibility or burden on students. Existing programs tend to require specialised training, external facilitation, or do not integrate well into school routines. There is a strong need for digitally delivered, youth-co-designed mental health education that aligns with curriculum requirements and supports behaviour change over time.

Solution

Mind Your Mate is a co-designed digital program combining web-based classroom lessons delivered by teachers through an online platform and a self-directed smartphone app that provides ongoing peer-support tools, mental health literacy content, and help-seeking guidance outside school hours.

Developed with teachers, psychologists, and diverse young people, the program improves understanding of depression, anxiety, substance use, and peer-support strategies while ensuring students are signposted to safe adult help.

Evidence & Stage of Development

A cluster RCT across 12 schools demonstrated:

- Significant reductions in depressive symptoms (Cohen's $d = -0.31$)
- Reductions in anxiety symptoms (not statistically significant)
- High acceptability among teachers and students

Potential Applications

- Secondary schools (Years 8–10) through health, PDHPE, or wellbeing curricula
- Government mental health initiatives (e.g., school mental health funding schemes)
- Peer-support and wellbeing programs run by education departments
- Youth service organisations needing scalable digital prevention tools

Creators

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Publication

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