

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN SENIOR SCHOOL



Our College is characterised by our Young Adult Ethos, evident by our staff and students:

Pursuing Personal Excellence by:

- setting high expectations and meaningful goals
- persevering when faced with challenges and building resilience
- accessing help and support

Building Positive Relationships by:

- promoting mutual respect and trust
- engaging in teamwork and cooperative learning
- contributing to a productive learning environment

Demonstrating Social Responsibility by:

- behaving ethically
- recognising and supporting the needs of others
- contributing to a sustainable community

The purpose of this document is to provide some useful points of reference for parents to explore as they support their children as young adults.





YOUR STUDENT SERVICES TEAM

The Student Services staff at MSC are a varied team; here to help and assist in the development of sound emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and psychological health.

Staff focus on early intervention to assist students in need, and work interchangeably if required, and will refer to external agencies if considered suitable. Staff are available to meet students, parents, and caregivers confidentially. Academic support and careers advice are also available.

If your child needs support whilst at MSC, please do not hesitate to contact your child's mentor teacher, classroom teacher or a member of Student Services.



Working in partnership with our parents, the goal of MSC is to have our students become positive and contributing members of the community, achieving the goals they set.

The final years of secondary schooling can be very stressful and intimidating at times.

If you are concerned with your child's mental health, discuss this with a GP, medical professional, or a member of the Student Services

Team.

ABSENCE INFORMATION

We pride ourselves at Mindarie Senior College on providing a welcoming, safe and supportive environment, which in turn encourages our students to attend school.

Attendance data is regularly disseminated to our students through their Mentor. In turn, we rely on your support at home as a first opportunity to promote positive attendance and assist us in forming good attendance habits early. This then means that your child is being offered the very best opportunity to reach their potential.

Remember:

- If your child is absent for Periods 1 and 2 this is counted as a ½ day absence
- If your child is absent from Period 3 onwards this is counted as a whole day absence
- If your child signs out during Period 4 or later this is counted as a ½ day absence
- Even if your child has a medical certificate, it's still counted as an absence

The Department of Education's guideline states students should attend school at least 90% of the time. For more information regarding your child's specific attendance percentage so far, we encourage you to make contact with their mentor teacher.



WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE

- Consider the possible challenges to them attending school what or who is causing your child to avoid school?
- Seek help from the school as early as possible Call 6207 5521 with any issues or concerns
- Give clear and consistent messages to your child
- Set clear routines and form good habits early on
- Engage with the school and reinforce our attendance policy
- Be kind, but be firm



ACCESSING HELP TO TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO THE WORKPLACE



As Year 11 and 12 are the final two years of high school, it is important for our young people to understand the next steps in their journey after school finishes.

This may be at the end of Year 12; however, some students may opt to finish school slightly earlier.

There are a few ways in which students can do this:

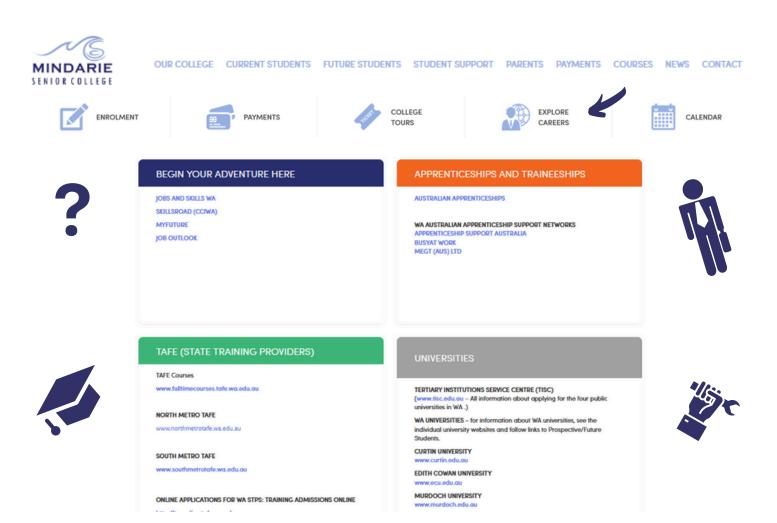
- If they have been offered a full time apprenticeship / traineeship
- If they have obtained full time employment
- If they are accepted into a full time TAFE course

Most importantly, it is ok if your child does not intend to continue until the end of Year 12 as long as they have a viable and positive pathway they would like to pursue.

It is important to discuss with your child what they want to do to ensure they are happy and successful in future life.

You can help your child to access information on future careers through the Mindarie SC website.

If you click on the 'Explore Careers' tab, it opens up a wealth of information regarding where your child can begin the search for what is next.



STUDY SKILLS

Setting up good study habits is paramount to achieving success.

Have a well-lit, quiet area free from distractions. Encourage your child to create a study timetable and support them with sticking to it.

On Wednesdays, the College is open for students to access the library and teachers for help, support, or a quiet area to work.

To be a well-rounded student, a child not only needs to be motivated towards their schooling, but also have academic resilience (to bounce back from academic adversity).

Parents can support their children by helping them to be motivated to study.

The type and amount of this support can affect a child's motivation to succeed. Parents can influence their child's motivation through:

- The extent to which you affirm your child (praising effort, not just results)
- Your own belief in the value of education and how that is communicated to them
 - Your home's study conditions adequate time and space
- The amount and type of pressure you place on your adolescent to succeed
 - The goals and expectations you have for your child are they realistic?

Being motivated to study and do their best in school is also determined by the adolescent's belief in the value of school. Parents can help their child value their education by:

- Showing interest in their work
 - Arranging the home environment for study
 - Going to parent-teacher nights or communicating with teachers
- Taking what the teacher says seriously
- Seeing all subjects as important



- 1. Manage your time
- 2. Take breaks
- 3. Exercise
- 4. Sleep
- 5. Prioritise
- 6. Clear your schedule
- 7. Ask for help
- 8. Relax

PREPARING FOR EXAMS

Exams can be stressful, but being prepared can help manage stress and allow students to perform at their best.

There are lots of techniques you can try and resources available on the internet to get the most out of exam study.

Mindarie Senior College uses Elevate Education to provide study skills workshops to ATAR students to help improve their study techniques, increase motivation, build confidence, and lift exam performance.

Healthy Eating



You can encourage your child's health by ensuring good food choices are in your home. Eating well has several benefits:

- Reduced risk of physical health problems Assisting the body and brain to
- Better sleeping patterns and energy levels
- function well
- Improved general health and wellbeing

Maintaining healthy eating habits

- Regular, nutritional meals and healthy snacks help keep energy and concentration levels high. Skipping meals can lead to headaches, irritability, lack of concentration and behaviour issues
- Top priority is breakfast before school
- Encourage your child to avoid sugary foods and fast food on a regular basis they are more costly and they have lots of calories, but limited nutritional value
- Junk foods are also high in refined sugar causing blood sugar levels to rise and fall too quickly, leaving you feeling more tired than you were before
- Also leaves you feeling hungry after a very short time
- Try and encourage your child to eat fresh fruit, vegetables and wholemeal carbohydrates which will give them a 'natural' sugar lift
- Take adequate fluids, water is excellent! Drinking water reduces tiredness and improves concentration

Energy drinks and caffeine:

- Have little proven nutritional value!
- · Contain high levels of caffeine which can have the potential side effects of elevated heart rates, high blood pressure, anxiety, headaches and interrupted sleep patterns

Reducing Test Anxiety

Test anxiety has two components - negative thoughts and physical symptoms:

Tackle negative thinking by:

- Identifying negative thinking styles (eg. catastraphising)
- Developing positive self-talk

Tackle physical symptoms by:

 Assisting your adolescent in developing effective relaxation techniques (eg. Formal - yoga, deep abdominal breathing, mindfulness, meditation; or Informal – swimming laps or jogging).

THE ART OF MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness exercises allow you to be able to identify, tolerate and reduce difficult and unpleasant thoughts, feelings, and sensations.

Mindfulness gives you back a sense of control over your thoughts and feelings. Rather than having the sense that you are being pushed around by your feelings and thoughts you learn to develop control over them. Put simply, mindfulness is becoming aware of the here and now. It gives you a space in the present moment to be able to safely deal with distressing and unpleasant things that might happen or be happening to you. It also allows you to look at and plan for the future.



TIPS FOR MINDFULNESS

When your mind wanders to thinking, gently bring it back to your breath. For one minute each hour, stop everything you're doing and focus only on your breath,

Practice truly listening without making judgments or thinking ahead about your own dialogue in the conversations.

Notice what you are doing as you are doing it and tune into your senses.

When you are eating, notice the colour, texture and taste of the food.

Recognise that thoughts are simply thoughts; you don't need to believe them or react to them. When you are walking, tune into how your weight shifts and the sensations in the bottom of your feet. Focus less on where you are headed.

Notice where you tend to zone out (driving, emailing, texting, web surfing, feeding the dog, brushing teeth, etc. Practice bringing more awareness to that activity.

Don't feel that you need to fill up all your time doing. Take some time to simply be.

Spend time in nature. This will give your mind an opportunity to rest from the day, allowing space for body and mind rejuvenation.

WH:

Listen to the sounds in the room, feel yor body, see the space you are in, notice the temperature and smells.

Bring attention to the top three priorities of your day. Break work time into small blocks for higher levels of efficiency and take breaks in between.



How to practice gratitude



- Write down 3 things you are grateful for in a diary
- Write about one positive experience you had today
- Try to praise or thank someone everyday

GROWTH MINDSET

Help your child develop a more positive 'growth mindset'

ASK YOUR CHILD:

"When you fail, what is your thought process?"

Do they feel they failed because they didn't have an innate ability OR do they attribute failure to something more in their control?

In a **fixed mindset**, students believe their abilities and intelligence are fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that.

In a *growth mindset*, students understand their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching, and persistence. They believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it. (Carol Dweck, 2012)

Instead of...



I'm not good at this
I give up
It's good enough
I can't make this any better
This is too hard
I made a mistake
I just can't do this
I'll never be that smart
Plan A didn't work
My friend can do it

Try thinking...



What am I missing?
I'll use a different strategy
Is this really my best work?
I can always improve
This may take some time
Mistakes help me to learn
I am going to train my brain
I will learn how to do this
There's always Plan B
I will learn from them

"Failure is an opportunity to grow"

GROWTH MINDSET

"I can learn to do anything I want"

"Challenges help me to grow"

"My effort and attitude determine my abilities"

"Feedback is constructive"

"I am inspired by the success of others"

"I like to try new things"

"Failure is the limit of my abilities"

FIXED

MINDSET

"I'm either good at it or I'm not"
"My abilities are unchanging"
"I don't like "I can either do it, to be challenged" or I can't"
"My potential is predetermined"

"When I'm frustrated, I give up"

"Feedback and criticism are personal
"I stick to what I know"

Sleep

A lack of sleep can affect school work output. It may also lead to mood swings, make teens more vulnerable to illnesses and decreased resiliency.

Good sleep patterns are essential to function at peak performance levels. It helps keep you energised, focused, and motivated. Studies show that teenagers need at least 9.25 hours of sleep to function properly in school and developing a good sleep routine can help you increase the quality of your sleep.

How to create a sleep routine

- Wake up and go to bed at the same time (even at weekends)
- Avoid caffeine after lunchtime
- Have a quiet, dark uncluttered bedroom
- Shut down electronic devices 30 minutes before going to bed

Partying



Partying has become the weekend 'culture' along with the 'need' to have alcohol and possibly other substances.

- It affects sleep patterns, temperament, attitude, and mental health
- School work can be affected as well as family life (arguments re alcohol etc)
- Talk to your children about safe alcohol and drug use. They are more likely to come to you with an issue if you have an open dialogue
- If you are concerned about your child, make a doctor's appointment or seek a counsellor for support

Consider talking with other parents about the details of the party and follow police advice when it comes to hosting a party.

Part-time Work



Part-time work is a fantastic way for teenagers to transform to adult life and is a desire of many teenagers to start making their own money and the joy of spending it!

This can come at a cost to their health and well-being when trying to juggle it all.

Ensure your child is not over-working and is focusing on school first and work second.

Speak to your child's boss if you are concerned about the time, or number of hours they are working

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

As Year 11 and 12 students, social media is likely a big part of your child's life.

Teenagers use social media to communicate, make connections and create valuable support networks. They can also use social media for self-expression, entertainment or to stay connected to current events. Unfortunately, social media can also negatively affect teenagers including disrupting their work and sleep as well as exposing them to negative online behaviour. As social media has become an integral part of teenager's lives it is important to support your child's use whilst encouraging them to do so responsibly. Two key ways to do this are:

Setting reasonable limits

Discuss with your child strategies for how they can avoid letting social media interfere with their studies, work and sleep. Encourage your child to keep their phones away whilst completing school work and to develop a routine that avoids the use of electronic devices prior to bed as a way to wind down and have better quality sleep.

Discuss appropriate online behaviour

Talk about negative online behaviours (including bullying and harassment of others) and discourage your child from engaging in these, both on and offline. Outline what is appropriate and safe to share on social media, both of themselves and others, and provide a safe place for them to turn if they feel uncomfortable by someone's behaviour online.

The Student Services staff are also available so please encourage your child to speak with someone if they are being impacted by online behaviour.

Alternatively, any inappropriate online behaviour can be reported through the eSafety Commissioner – www.esafety.gov.au.



MINDARIE SENIOR COLLEGE MOBILE PHONE POLICY

The Department of Education does not permit student use of mobile phones in public schools unless for medical or teacher directed educational purpose. So that means phones should be 'Off and Away All Day'.

OFF AND AWAY ALL DAY

1st offence

Phone confiscated – student can collect

2nd and 3rd offences

Phone confiscated - parent to collect

4th and ongoing offences

One day suspension and compulsory education session on 'mobile phone use'

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Young people are uniquely vulnerable to mental health problems.

The nation as a whole has seen a surge in schools regarding the number of families seeking guidance on how to best support their children with a mental health concern.

We have also noted an influx in the number of students independently visiting Student Services to book a Pastoral Support Session with one of our trained counsellors at the College, which is brilliant as this means they feel safe.

We have an extensive team in Student Services who can help place your child on the right pathway to receiving optimal care and support, such as accessing GPs who can see patients and families over long periods of time and maintain strong connections long after your child has left Mindarie Senior College.

Watch for thoughts that are:

Global "Everything I do is wrong"

Persistent
"Every day I feel like this"

Permanent "Things aren't going to get better"

Concerns do not need to be negative unless they affect your child's day to day functioning or enjoyment of life.

Other sources of where to access help include:

Urgent Mental Health Telephone Support for Children and Families – 1800 048 636

Available 24hrs / 7days week. Provides support for children under the age of 18 years and their families. Includes a brief assessment of mental health risk and signposting to the most appropriate service, depending on need.

Crisis Care Helpline - 1800 199 008

Kids Help Line - 1800 551 800

Youth Beyond Blue - 1300 224 636

Men's Line Australia - 1300 789 978

Lifeline - 131 114

Crisis Care - 9223 1111

Suicide Call-back service - 1300 659 467

Mental Health Emergency Response Line - 1300 555 788

SARC (Sexual Assault Resource Centre) 6458 1828 and 1800 199 888

Freedom Centre (Diverse sexuality and gender) 9228 0354

www.headspace.org.au

http://au.reachout.com.au

www.lifeline.org.au

https://www.mercycare.com.au/youth-family-and-support/youth/reconnect

Here are some tips on how to promote positive mental health with your young adult:

- Talk about their feelings with them listen to understand
- Encourage them to keep active
- Encourage them to stay hydrated
- Keep in touch with your child set aside a regular time when you might head out and do an activity together so that you can check-in. The activity might be something they are particularly good at
- Encourage your child to eat well
- · Encourage your child to ask for help when they need it
- · Encourage your child to accept who they are
- Promote the use of mindfulness apps so that they learn some coping strategies
- Make sure they get enough sleep! This may mean setting a time limit on their mobile phone use (social media), or storing the phone in another room overnight
- Encourage your child to 'empty their thoughts on to paper'
- Practice meditation and relaxation exercises with your child
- · Set some goals together
- Have some go-to places for support, should the need arise. For example, your GP is a good first option for support with any mental health concern

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ACT-BELONG-COMMIT



The mental health message of Act-Belong-Commit encourages children and young people to deliberately do things to look after their mental wellbeing.

Keeping mentally and physically active, having good friends and helping others or learning new things not only builds self-esteem and confidence, it can reduce stress and help with academic outcomes. As part of our role in Student Services, we encourage students to participate in activities around the College and suggest students still do something they love to do.

Physical exercise is very important throughout life and equally as important in senior school.

Research shows that people who are physically active in high school demonstrate more confidence, leadership, and self-respect. They are better at setting goals and managing their time.

The Act-belong-Commit message is simple:

Do something Do something with someone Do something meaningful

CONNECTING WITH YOUR TEEN

Stay Interested

- Get to know their friends They will make new friends here. Invite them over, get out of the car and meet their parents, become friends with them on FB or follow them on Instagram (if they will let you)
- Know their interests Get to know them during their driving practice (safely!) this is a time they are not on their phones or chatting to friends online. Get
 along to their sporting game watch and encourage them. Spend time doing
 something they enjoy- binge Netflix, or watch a movie
- Know their personal habits Sleep, exercise, food, online activities

Stay Connected

- With your teenager Tell them stories, ask them about their concerns, go on a date
- With the school Contact their Mentor Teacher regarding issues at home that may affect attendance or arriving late to school, illnesses etc
- With the community You're not alone. If there is an unexpected issue that arises, we can refer you to networks/supports in the local community.

How to handle stressful young adults



- Talk with them ask open ended questions
- Listen, non-judgementally
- Use 'start' not 'stop' conversational language (eg "explain what you mean" or "tell me more")
- Pick your battles. Be consistent and fair
- Young people need security provide them with boundaries
- Be a role model: read a book, study, volunteer, talk optimistically, plan your future
- Chat (and laugh) about your mistakes, fond memories, ambitions, regrets
- Have family rituals: communal dinner, movie night, walking the dog, exercise
- Affirm them and praise not only their successes but their ATTEMPTS
- Allow them space and time to process difficult thoughts and feelings
- When they vent try to think of it as a coping strategy. They will vent to the people they trust most.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT

There is no single reason as to why teenagers use drugs or alcohol but it is incredibly important that you, as parents, understand some of these reasons and talk to your children about the dangers of drinking alcohol and using drugs.

Peer Pressure

As your child matures, their social life begins to grow too! This may mean that they see lots of people (including their close friends) consuming various substances at social events. Sometimes their friends may urge each other, and themselves, to try alcohol or drugs because it becomes 'part of the normal teenager thing to do at parties'. Young people are more likely to party safely if they are well informed about the possible risks. Talk to your child about where they are going, what time they plan to return home, who they are going with and their travel arrangements. Let them know that you are available should they need you. You may also want to organise a 'code word' for your child to use over the phone if they secretly wish to be picked up, but they don't want their friends to know.

Escape and Self-Medication

Sometimes, when teens can't find an outlet for their frustration or negative feelings they may turn to drugs and/or alcohol as a coping mechanism as a way to 'numb' their feelings of unhappiness. Whilst this may alleviate unwanted mental health symptoms in the short term, in the longer term it tends to exacerbate them and often may result in drug dependence. The progression from experimentation to a serious disorder is more likely in children with existing mental health disorders.

Boredom

Some young people turn to alcohol and drugs as they think it helps to fill an internal void that they feel, as well as simply giving them 'something to do'. It also provides some common ground for them to get to know one another.

Academic Success

We live in a very competitive society and the pressure to perform can be overwhelming for our young adults. Some adolescents may turn to certain drugs such as prescription stimulants because they think those substances will improve their performance.

Instant Gratification

The effects of drugs and alcohol often work quickly. Young adults may turn to these substances as a quick short-cut route to feeling happy.

Misinformation

Nearly every young adult has friends who claim to be experts on various recreational substances such as marijuana, and they're happy to reassure other people that the risks are minimal. This is why education surrounding drugs and alcohol is so important, to ensure they are getting real facts about the dangers of drug use.

TALKING TO YOUNG ADULTS ABOUT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit and chat
- Be prepared that you may not know all their answers surrounding alcohol and drugs – maybe do some research together
- Explain that drugs are used for an array of reasons in everyday life, such as illness, and let the conversation flow from there
- Have some basic information up your sleeve but be prepared for your child to already know a fair amount about alcohol and drugs. Not only will they speak about it with their peers, they will have also covered the topic in Year 10 Health as well as some Senior School courses
- Consider making a verbal or written contract surrounding alcohol and drug use whilst they are living at home
- Consider making a verbal or written contract stating that they must call you if the person responsible for driving has been drinking or using drugs
- Try to understand their predicament, and all the compounding factors influencing them at their age. Even if you disagree with them, commit to taking a united approach with them
- Be sure to talk about the risks involved with drinking alcohol and drug use, as well as discussing the outcomes, such as jail
- Avoid using emotional appeals such as trying to bribe them, threaten them or guilt-trip them. This will only cause upset and push them away
- Set realistic goals
- Be clear about your expectations and establish clear consequences

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD THROUGH DRUG AND/OR ALCOHOL ADDICTION

Important website and contact numbers:

Parent and Family Drug Support Line

https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/parentandfamilydrugsupportline or (08) 9442 5050

Alcohol and Drug Support Line

https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/about-us/our-services/alcohol-and-drug-support-service/alcohol-and-drug-support-line/ or (08) 9442 5000

Community Alcohol and Drug Services

https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/getting-help/community-alcohol-and-drug-services/

North Metro Community Alcohol and Drug Service

https://cyrenianhouse.com/nmcads/ or (08) 9301 3200

This service provides free and confidential assessment and referral as well as clinical psychology, group programmes, counselling and case management.

Drug and Alcohol Youth Service (Days Residential)

https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/about-us/our-services/next-step-drug-and-alcohol-services/drug-and-alcohol-youth-service-days/

"The Drug and Alcohol Youth Service (DAYS) is a **free and confidential** service located in East Perth which provides young people (aged 12 to 21) and their families with access to a comprehensive range of alcohol and drug services including:

Shalom House

https://www.shalomhouse.com.au/

This is a specific Men's Rehabilitation Centre. "We offer a holistic rehabilitation program that focuses on bringing restoration to all areas of the resident's life, including finances, relationships, heart issues, employment, education and training for the future. Our program is practical and hands-on, ensuring that residents and all involved in Shalom are valued and contributing members of the community. We offer our services to anyone with a life-controlling issue, whether it be an addiction to substances such as drugs and alcohol or people with anxiety, fear or emotional trauma".

School Drug Education and Road Aware - https://www.sdera.wa.edu.au/

Useful Links

https://www.actbelongcommit.org.au/

WA's longest running mental health promotion campaign encourages everyone to keep active, connect with others and do something meaningful for good mental health and wellbeing.

https://learnmate.com.au/parental-support/

Leanmate is a trusted community marketplace that connects school-aged students who want 1:1 or group study support with tutors all over Australia that are looking to share their knowledge.

https://www.mindarie.wa.edu.au/student-support

Contact details and information about Mindarie Senior College's Student Services team.

https://raisingchildren.net.au/

Provides ad-free parenting videos, articles and apps backed by Australian experts.

https://headspace.org.au/

Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation who provide early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year-olds.

https://livelighter.com.au/

LiveLighter is a public health education campaign which aims to help people to eat well, be physically active and avoid excess weight gain.

http://tisc.edu.au/

The Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) is responsible for processing school leavers' applications for Undergraduate courses at Western Australian universities.

https://www.police.wa.gov.au/

Provides trusted and valued policing for Western Australia. It is responsible for policing the world's largest single police jurisdiction, covering Western Australia's 2.5 million square kilometres with over 150 police stations across 8 metropolitan and 7 regional districts.

https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-guide-healthy-eating

The Australian Dietary Guidelines give advice on eating for health and wellbeing. They're called dietary guidelines because it's your usual diet that influences your health. Based on the latest scientific evidence, they describe the best approach to eating for along and healthy life.

https://au.reachout.com/tough-times/addiction

ReachOut is the most accessed online mental health service for young people and their parents in Australia. Their trusted self-help information, peer-support program and referral information save lives by helping young people be well and stay well.

https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/info-for-children-and-young-people/mental-health-online-resources/

Online resources for mental health information and tips.

https://www.sdera.wa.edu.au/

SDERA helps children and young people make smarter choices by providing a resilience approach to road safety and alcohol and drugs education.

https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register

The national register where your vaccinations are recorded.

