

ReachOut's

2023–24



Social

Impact

Report

**REACHOUT**

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*ReachOut's 2023–24 Social Impact Report* was written by Natalie Jurišić and Anneka Diaz. The report is based on an analysis of data collected from a range of sources, including digital analytics and social media data, service delivery data and feedback from users of ReachOut's services through our user surveys. For more information, please contact [research@reachout.com](mailto:research@reachout.com).

ReachOut would like to thank all the young people, parents and carers, and other individuals who work with young people who have provided valuable feedback on our services. We acknowledge those with lived and living experience of mental health conditions and those who support them.

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We acknowledge the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present. We recognise connection to Country as integral to health and wellbeing.

We also acknowledge people with lived and living experience of mental ill-health and recovery, along with their carers, families and supporters. We value the courage of those who share their unique perspectives for the purpose of learning and growing together to achieve better outcomes for all. We recognise their vital contribution to the sector and to the development of ReachOut's services.



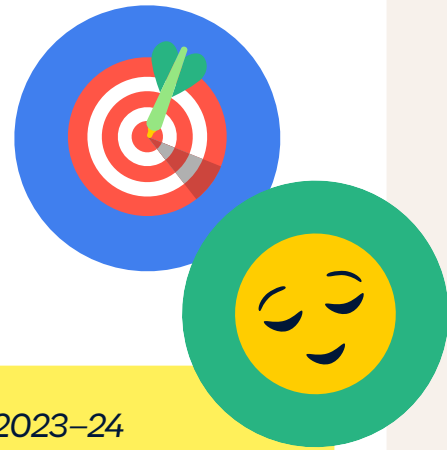
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# Our impact highlights

## 2023-24

ReachOut's 2023-24 Social Impact Report outlines key achievements across the three focus areas of our Social Impact Model – **reach, engagement** and **outcomes** – for the 2023-24 financial year. It illustrates how we are reaching those who need us, how users are engaging with our support, and how they are experiencing positive changes through using our products and services.



### ReachOut's 2023-24

*Social Impact Report* provides clear evidence that our suite of mental health and wellbeing services for young people – and for those who support them – has **social value** and continues to position us to **help young people feel better**.

## Reach

Our social impact data highlights that we are connecting with young people across Australia from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Our reach includes those with high mental health needs and those who find it hard to get support elsewhere. Young people who used our services in the past year told us that the best thing about using ReachOut was our **affordability and accessibility**. Parents and carers using our services reflect a range of family types and backgrounds, including sole parents and those in blended or shared-care families.

**53%**

of our youth users had received a formal mental health **diagnosis**.

**74%**

of our youth users had faced at least one **barrier** to accessing mental health support elsewhere.



**49%** of our youth users couldn't access a professional service because it was **at capacity**.



**7%** of our youth users identified as **First Nations**.



**35%** of our youth users were **sexuality diverse**.<sup>1</sup>



**25%** of caregivers using our 1:1 Coaching service were **sole parents**.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>2024 Annual User Survey; <sup>2</sup>Client intake data.



# Engagement

Our social impact data also highlights strong engagement and satisfaction with our content and services. Young users view our services – whether designed for community connection or for one-on-one support – as **safe and reliable spaces**. Many users engage with us further by following and engaging with ReachOut's social media accounts.

89%

of users of our moderated Online Community felt it was **safe**.

82%

of users of our PeerChat service felt it was **trustworthy**.



88% of youth users find our content **useful**.



27% of youth users first found out about our services through **social media**.<sup>3</sup>



73,000 individual **engagements** were made with our social media posts.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey; <sup>4</sup> "Engagements" include liking, saving, sharing or commenting on a post, clicking a link in a post, or choosing to view a video.

# Outcomes

Users of our services in 2023–24 told us they experienced positive changes in **six key areas**:

- improved **mental health literacy**
- **relief from negative feelings**
- **connection** with others
- **validation** of their feelings and experiences
- **better understanding** of their **own** feelings and experiences
- improved **sense of agency**.

76%

of youth users said our content, social media and videos had increased their **mental health literacy** in some way.<sup>5</sup>

80%

of educators and health professionals said our Schools content gave them greater **knowledge of support strategies** to use with young people.<sup>6</sup>



60% of youth users said our information and support made them **feel better** in some way.



75% of youth users told us our Online Community helped them to **feel less alone** in their experiences.



70% of youth users in our Online Community **felt validated** in their feelings or experiences.<sup>7</sup>



74% of users of PeerChat said they **felt better** after speaking with a peer worker.<sup>8</sup>



58% of users said our Youth content helped them to **feel ready to try something new** to support their mental health and wellbeing.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5,7,9</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey; <sup>6</sup> Schools Intercept Survey; <sup>8</sup> Post-chat rating data.

# About this report

## Context

In recent years, young people across Australia have experienced an unprecedented combination of challenges. Those challenges continue today and are contributing to the high and growing prevalence of young people's mental health difficulties. Research in 2023 indicated that nearly **4 in 10 young people** aged 16–24 years (39%) said they had **experienced a mental health disorder**, up from 26 per cent in 2007 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020–2022).

The research is clear: there is a growing need for accessible and impactful youth mental health support. ReachOut is responding to this need by embarking on a journey to better understand our impact.

At ReachOut, our purpose is to be the **trusted and safe digital space empowering young people to feel better**. To realise this purpose, we need to target our services and resources so that they have a positive impact on young people and those who support them.

In the last 12 months, 2.5 million people turned to our services for mental health and wellbeing support. This report examines ReachOut's impact by focusing on our **reach**, users' **engagement** with us, and the **outcomes** we are achieving for the young people we support (Figure 1).

By understanding the positive changes that can happen for the young people and parents/carers who use our services, we can learn more about what support resources work best and identify new opportunities to enhance support.

ReachOut is proud to be in the second year of our social impact journey, based on our bespoke [Social Impact Framework \(SIF\)](#) developed in 2022. Our framework rests on a [Theory of Change](#) that outlines how ReachOut's digital mental health services lead to positive outcomes by increasing young people's knowledge, skills and confidence to manage their mental health. Since the development of our SIF, we have iterated our thinking by honing our indicators and only 'measuring what matters'.

In this second social impact report, we demonstrate the positive impact our services have on young people and those who support them and highlight our commitment to continuous improvement.

## A note on data collection

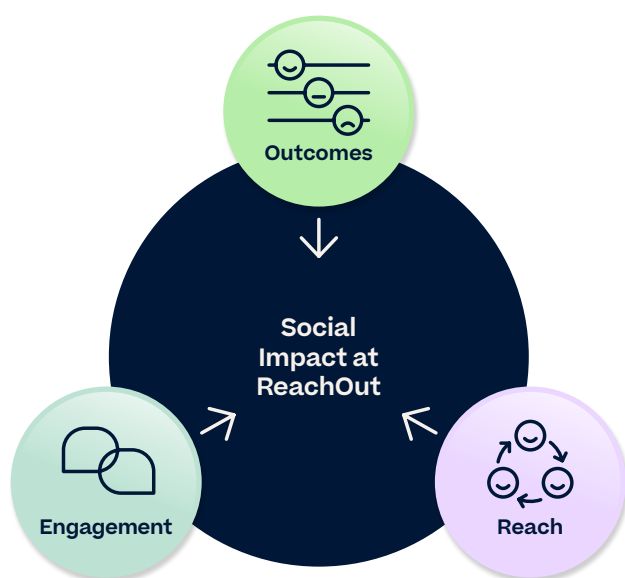
All data included in this report reflects different indicators included in ReachOut's SIF. It has been collected from a range of sources, including:

- brief 'pop-up' intercept surveys, which appear on our website
- annual user surveys, recruiting users directly on our website or via social media
- user feedback mechanisms built into our products and services
- service delivery data
- Google analytics.

Our surveys used self-reported ordinal scales to capture key reach metrics (such as levels of psychological distress in our audiences) and change metrics.<sup>10</sup>

All data in this report relates to Australian user data for the 2023–24 financial year, unless otherwise specified.

**Figure 1: ReachOut's Social Impact Model**



<sup>10</sup> The types of support provided by ReachOut (non-clinical, anonymous, unregulated site entry) mean that it is not appropriate to use validated clinical outcome tools as part of impact measurement.

# Our Reach highlights

## in 2023–24

Fundamental to our digital mental health service model is that we reach young people who need us, as well as those people who support them.

### What our Reach data tells us

We reach diverse young people – and diverse families – who need mental health and wellbeing support



More than half of young people aged 14–25 years who have used our services (**53%**) have received a formal mental health diagnosis at some stage in their life.<sup>11</sup>

Among **young people** using ReachOut services:



**7%** identified as **First Nations**



**21%** spoke a language other than **English** at home



**35%** were **sexuality diverse** (non-straight)



**10%** were **gender diverse**.<sup>12</sup>



**5%** of parents/carers who accessed our Parent/Carer services identified as **First Nations**.<sup>13</sup>

Among **caregivers** using ReachOut's 1:1 Coaching service:



**25%** were sole parents



**20%** were in a custodial parenting arrangement



**5%** were part of a blended family.<sup>14</sup>



We reach a key network of professionals educating and supporting young people in schools



**70%** of users of ReachOut Schools content are educators, wellbeing coordinators or counsellors.<sup>15</sup>

Schools play a significant role in the lives of young people and provide a structured learning environment. They are therefore ideal environments in which to share mental health and wellbeing information with young people (Conley & Durlak, 2017). Mental health literacy education in schools can also help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health (Marinucci et al., 2022).

<sup>11, 12</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey; <sup>13</sup> 2023 Annual User Survey; <sup>14</sup> Client intake data; <sup>15</sup> Schools Intercept Survey.

## Putting accessible, affordable mental health within reach

Young people who experience mental health challenges often avoid seeking professional help due to stigma, lack of awareness about where to get help, or barriers to accessing affordable services (Radez et al., 2021). Young people may also struggle to find appropriate online mental health resources, due to complex service requirements, unreliable information, or privacy concerns, leaving them without the support they need (Pretorius et al., 2019).

### Young people who use ReachOut face substantial systemic barriers

Almost 3 in 4 young people (74%) using ReachOut services faced at least one barrier to accessing mental health support elsewhere.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 2: Systemic barriers faced by young people using ReachOut's services**



**62%** of young people who've received a mental health diagnosis and used ReachOut **can't get into a professional service** because it's at capacity

### Young people value ReachOut's free and accessible mental health support

According to young people aged 14–25 years who had used ReachOut in the last year<sup>18</sup>, **'the best thing about using ReachOut was ...**

*... [it helped] me to find an **affordable** way to access mental health support.'*

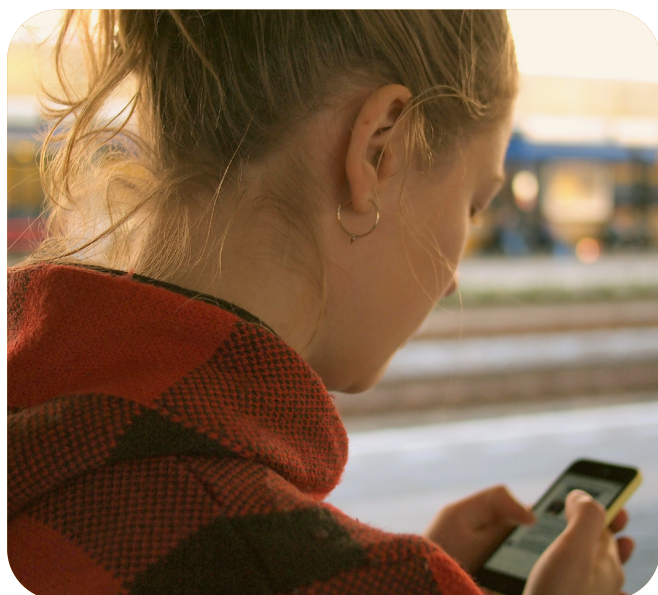
*... it's **free** ... and puts information out there for people who need it. Thank you so much for doing this. Mental health is a huge issue.'*

*... services are readily available and **accessible** to a multitude of individuals.'*

*... **being able to connect** with Australians all across the country and exchange our lived experiences.'*

<sup>16, 17, 18</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey

### April's story



*'As a full-time uni student, to say the cost of living is on my mind is an understatement. On top of study, I currently work five days a week to be able to keep up with my essential living costs, including food and petrol.'*

*The burden of the cost-of-living crisis has really impacted my mood and mental health. I often feel lost and distraught, I've experienced panic attacks and I find myself shutting off from people.'*

*For me, the biggest sacrifice that I have to make at the moment is when it comes to my mental health. I simply can't afford to access support that is expensive, like going to talk to a psychologist or other clinical treatments. I rely on free services like ReachOut when it comes to mental health support, which does help.'*

# Our Engagement highlights

## in 2023–24

Measuring and reporting on user engagement helps us to understand and demonstrate the value of our information and support services for users. The more engaged our users are, the more likely they are to experience positive change. Our service quality and satisfaction measures demonstrate that ReachOut's users are *highly engaged* with our information and support services.

### What our Engagement data tells us

Young people rate the quality of ReachOut's mental health and wellbeing content very highly

Our **content on our website**, including our videos, is seen as:



Useful – **88%**



Easy to understand – **87%**



Covering a good range of topics.<sup>19</sup> – **86%**

*'[ReachOut] is one of my go-to starting points ... when I'm feeling overwhelmed ... or feeling helpless and looking for useful info, trustworthy links [or] resources.'*

**(Young person aged 14–25 years, 2024 Annual User Survey)**

*'I enjoy reading articles that are relevant to emotions or situations I may be feeling or experiencing.'*

**(Young person aged 14–25 years, 2024 Annual User Survey)**

### Young people see our services as safe and trustworthy spaces

Among users of ReachOut's moderated **Online Community**, which offers peer-to-peer connection:



**89%** felt it was safe



**84%** felt it was trustworthy.<sup>20</sup>

*'The ReachOut mods [moderators] help make it such a wonderful community.'*

**(Young person using the Online Community, 2024 Annual User Survey)**

Among users of ReachOut's **PeerChat service**, which offers 1:1 support with a peer worker:



**80%** felt it was safe



**82%** felt it was trustworthy



**70%** said the service helped them to feel comfortable talking about their worries.<sup>21</sup>

*'[It] was easy to open up to someone I can trust and who understands me without judgement.'*

**(Young person using PeerChat, 2024 Annual User Survey)**

<sup>19, 20, 21</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey



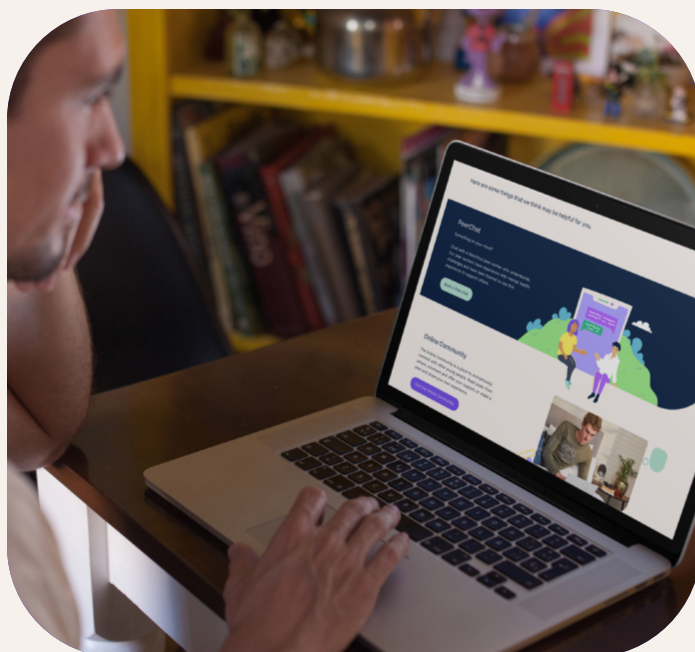
Users of ReachOut's services have high satisfaction, reflecting our commitment to and success in providing engaging support



**67%** of **young people** using our **Youth website** and **Online Community** were satisfied with their experience.<sup>22</sup>

*'All the articles are so helpful and everyone on the Forums [is] wonderful ... The ReachOut mods help make it such a wonderful community.'*

**(Young person aged 14–25 years, 2024 Annual User Survey)**



**78%** of **young people** using the **1:1 PeerChat** service would recommend it to others.<sup>23</sup>

*'The peer worker understood what I was going through because they had [a similar experience to me]. It ... really helped.'*

**(Young person using PeerChat, 2024 Annual User Survey)**



**77%** of visitors to **ReachOut Schools** were satisfied with their experience.<sup>26</sup>

*'Thank you for providing such an informed, accessible platform for schools to use. The support available for students, families, and staff [are] incredibly valued by our school.'*

**(Feedback from Educational Psychologist Consultant, 2023)**



Every **parent and carer** who completed a post-session survey of the **1:1 Coaching** program was satisfied with the support they received.<sup>24</sup>

*'Engaging with this program has come at a time when our family really needed it. I can't recommend this service highly enough.'*

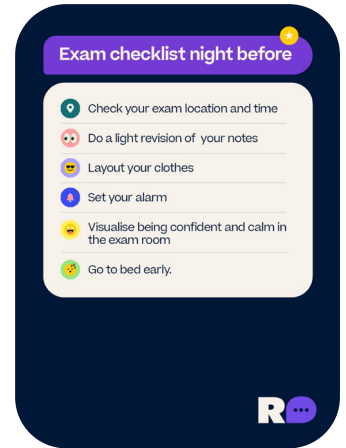
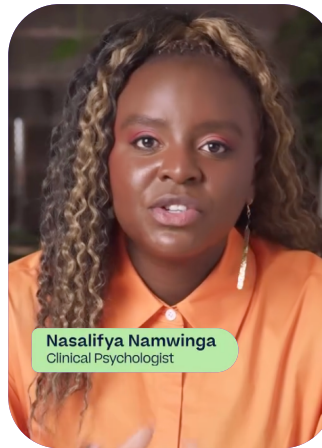
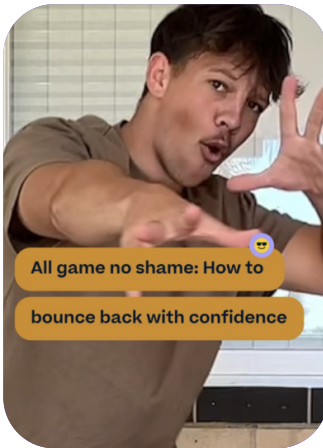
**(Parent/Carer participating in Coaching program, November 2023)**

*'Just talking things through ... to find ways to help [my teen] has been huge for me ... I'm so glad I found you guys. This service is wonderful and it has been really helpful for me.'*

**(Parent/Carer participating in Coaching program, February 2024)<sup>25</sup>**

<sup>22</sup> Intercept 'pop-up' survey onsite; <sup>23</sup> Post-chat user feedback; <sup>24</sup> Post session surveys sent to Coaching participants who had completed two or more sessions (i.e. 47% of Coaching participants); <sup>25</sup> Client feedback data; <sup>26</sup> Schools Intercept Survey.

# Engaging young people in their world: Mental health and wellbeing content on social media



Social media posts are an important way to reach and engage young people with key mental health and wellbeing messages. Almost **3 in 4 young people** surveyed by ReachOut (73%) reported **using social media platforms to support their mental health** (ReachOut Australia, 2024). This was particularly the case for young people who lacked access to, or weren't specifically seeking, professional help (ReachOut Australia, 2024).

Of those 14–25 year-olds who used ReachOut services, 1 in 4 (27%) first found out about them through social media.<sup>27</sup>

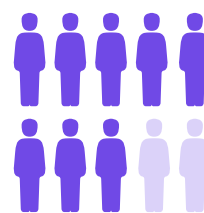
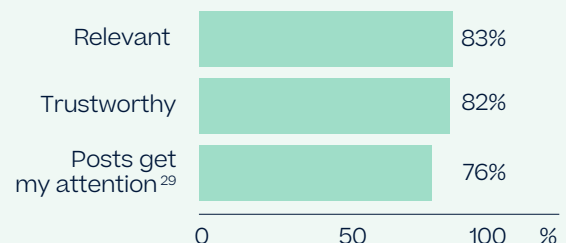
Our ability to reach young people via our social media accounts grew in 2023–24. We saw a:

**13% increase** in the number of ReachOut followers on **Instagram** (for a total of over 24,000 followers)

**58% increase** in the number of ReachOut followers on **TikTok** (for a total of over 1,500 followers)

Of young people who had seen ReachOut's social media posts in their feed, engagement was strong, with viewers rating them very highly on key quality measures (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Quality measures for ReachOut's social media content**



8 in 10 young people (80%) rated ReachOut's social media posts as containing good advice about wellbeing and dealing with mental health challenges.<sup>30</sup>



There were more than **73,000 individual engagements** with ReachOut's social media posts in 2023–24, more than double the number in 2022–23.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey. ReachOut has social media accounts on Instagram, TikTok and Facebook; <sup>28</sup> 'Engagements' include liking, saving, sharing or commenting on a post, clicking a link in a post, or choosing to view a video; <sup>29, 30</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey.

# Our Outcomes highlights

## in 2023–24

Once ReachOut's support reaches and engages users, it is critical that it helps to create some positive change in their lives. In 2023–24, users of our services told us they had experienced positive changes in six key areas (Figure 4) following use of our services.

**Figure 4: ReachOut's six outcome areas**

### 1 Mental health literacy

'I have better knowledge and understanding about mental health.'

### 2 Relief from negative feelings

'I feel better than I did before.'

### 3 Connection

'I feel more connected to others.'

### 4 Validation

'I feel OK about who I am and what I'm experiencing or feeling.'

### 5 Better understanding of self

'I have a better understanding of what I'm/the young person I'm supporting is going through.'

### 6 Sense of agency

'I feel more in control managing challenges to my/my child's mental health.'





# What our Outcomes data tells us

## Our services help to improve mental health literacy

ReachOut provides young people, and those who support them, with psycho-educational content and practical tools to help build their understanding of mental health.

Nearly 8 in 10 young people (76%) who had read **ReachOut content** on our website, or had seen our social media and videos, reported that it helped them by increasing their mental health literacy:

*'[It answered] many questions that I have, because I have a very small circle of family, and autism. Sometimes I don't understand things and ... ReachOut has answers.'*

*'[I've learnt] more about issues I have, that other people also have these issues, and how to improve on them.'*

*'[I] get ideas on coping methods.'*

*'[I] learn how to navigate tricky situations.'*<sup>31</sup>



Nearly 8 in 10 parents/carers who participated in our **1:1 Coaching** program (78%) said they now knew where to get information about things that influence their teen's wellbeing.<sup>32</sup>

Eighty per cent of educators and health professionals using **ReachOut's Schools content** reported they gained greater knowledge of mental health issues or of support strategies they could use with young people.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey; <sup>32</sup> Coaching service data, based on completion of two or more sessions (i.e. 47% of Coaching participants); <sup>33</sup> Schools Intercept Survey.

## Our services help to relieve negative feelings

Research shows that ReachOut's services help young people to break the cycle of negative emotions, providing relief from these feelings when they access our website or engage with our support tools (ReachOut Australia, 2022).

*'Reading [your] articles has calmed me down. [It has reminded] me that I can get through this stressful part of the day and that it won't last forever.'*

**(Young person aged 14–25 years, 2024 Annual User Survey)**

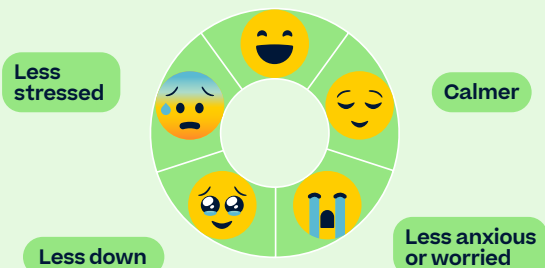
*'It usually has most of the information I need to feel less anxious.'*

**(Young person aged 14–25 years, 2024 Annual User Survey)**

<sup>34</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey, based on young people telling us they felt this way 'a lot' or 'quite a bit'.

**60%** of 14–25 year-olds using ReachOut told us our information and support helps them to feel better in one or more of the following ways:<sup>34</sup>

**More positive about things**



**Post in ReachOut's Online Community**

*'I am feeling better after posting this, [because] I have never talked to someone who isn't family about this. It is a weight off my shoulders for the time being.'* **(May 2024)**

## Our services help to foster connection

A key goal of ReachOut's **Online Community** is to help young people who are experiencing mental health and wellbeing challenges to connect with others going through similar experiences, with the support of experienced mental health moderators.



**75%** of young people using our Online Community told us it helped them to feel less alone in their experience/s. <sup>35</sup>



### Posts from young people in ReachOut's Online Community

*'Sometimes I can feel like I am completely alone in this, so it is comforting to know there are others out there like me.'* (February 2024)

*'Feeling alone is the worst. That's why I love this forum so much, [hearing] about other people going through the same situation and connecting with them.'* (January 2024)

*'It always made a difference knowing RO was there, even if you guys can't "fix" my problems, but at least [I have] a space to write things down, reflect and be listened to.'* (October 2023)

A key goal for some of ReachOut's **Youth content** is to ensure that young people can connect with other services that provide specialised support around issues such as gender identity, sexuality, domestic or family violence, or sexual assault.

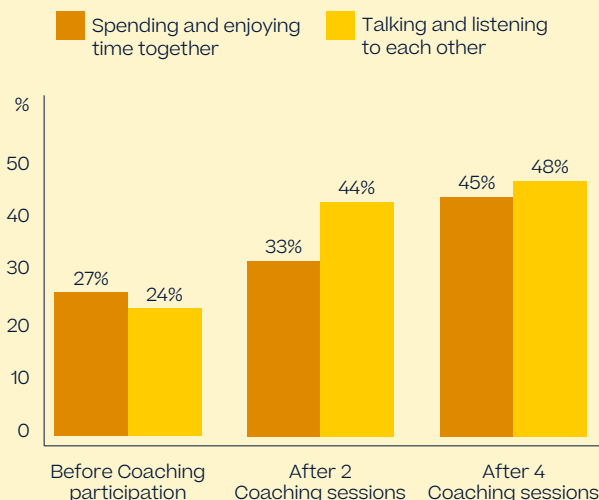


Over **3,400** users on ReachOut's Youth content site clicked a referral link to access specialised support services on external websites.



Our **1:1 Coaching** program also seeks to improve connections between parents/carers and young people. Parents/carers who participated in the program in 2023–24 reported connecting more positively with their teen as a result (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Percentage of parents/carers who 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with statements**



*'Before, I didn't know how to talk to my teens, but after coaching this has improved. Our relationship is much better.'*

(Parent/Carer participating in Coaching program, March 2024)

*'I feel like between my first session and now I have a completely different teen. My teen is smiling and hugging me again.'*

(Parent/Carer participating in Coaching program, April 2024) <sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey; <sup>36</sup> Client feedback data.

## Our services help to validate users' feelings and experiences

ReachOut's services provide a space where the feelings and lived experiences of young people and their parents/carers are respected and normalised. Information and support can challenge stereotypical and negative beliefs around mental health challenges and can help to reassure a young person by recognising their experiences (Estradé et al., 2022).



**70%** of young people using ReachOut's **Online Community** reported it gave them a sense of validation for their feelings or experiences.<sup>37</sup>

### ... Post in ReachOut's Online Community

*'I really was questioning myself a lot after what happened ... But after coming here I really feel like I have done what I can, so thanks for being that external viewpoint.'* (April 2024)

### ... Post in ReachOut's Online Community

*'It also really helps to hear that other people can relate to [my feelings] ... so it is comforting to know there are others out there like me ... After reading all your comments I feel much more at peace with myself.'* (February 2024)

After completing two or more sessions of ReachOut's **1:1 Coaching** program, every participant who provided feedback (100%) said they felt the service listened to them and understood what they were going through.<sup>38</sup>

*'The session has exceeded our expectations. We don't [seek help] very often and weren't sure what to expect, but it's been great. You were very good with reflecting back and I could tell you really heard what we said.'*

(Parent/Carer participating in Coaching program, August 2024)<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey; <sup>38</sup> Forty-seven per cent of Coaching participants completed two or more sessions. Feedback provided by parents/carers who completed a service follow-up survey; <sup>39</sup> Client feedback data.

## Our services help users to better understand their feelings and experiences

Research suggests that hearing about the strengths and lived experience of peers can support young people to gain a new understanding of emotions and issues (Naslund et al., 2016). The majority of young people who had used our services told us our **Youth content** (including our social media content) and **Online Community** helped them to better understand their (or someone else's) feelings or experiences.



Better understood their (or someone else's) feelings or experiences

- Youth content – **64%**
- Youth Online Community – **81%**<sup>40</sup>

*'It helps me to understand myself better and more of how to take care of myself.'*

(Young person aged 14–25 years, 2024 Annual User Survey)

### ... Post in ReachOut's Online Community

*'Thanks for helping me [to] realise this ... I can see now how it has affected me ... I feel much better talking this out and coming to a sort of conclusion.'* (March 2024)

Young people are more inclined to seek help for mental health challenges if they feel able to express their feelings (Pretorius et al., 2019), which is exactly what our Online Community encourages them to do.



**70%** of young people using our Online Community said it helped them to feel better able to talk about stuff.<sup>41</sup>

### ... Post in ReachOut's Online Community

*'Thanks so much for the other tips. I appreciate it. Possibly talking to my counsellor may help.'* (September 2024)

<sup>40, 41</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey.

## Our services help to give users a sense of agency

Mental health educational resources can help to promote positive help-seeking behaviours by supporting personal agency and self-efficacy (Xu et al., 2018). Much of ReachOut's **Youth content** is focused on encouraging young people to take a step – however small – to support their own, or someone else's, mental health and wellbeing.



**58%** of young people who had read our Youth content in the past year said it helped them to feel ready to try something new to support their mental health and wellbeing.<sup>42</sup>

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*'I have reached out to someone, which I got the courage [to do] from reading a ReachOut article.'*

*'I got back in contact with my psychologist and have started to see her regularly again, which is very helpful.'*

*'I always thought that deep breathing was a really dumb coping mechanism for stress, but after really taking in the thought of slow breathing, it [has] calmed me down.'*

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**87%** of young people using ReachOut's services told us they had tried at least 'one new thing' in the last year, because of the information and support we provided.<sup>43</sup>

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Our **1:1 Coaching** service fosters a sense of agency, with the proportion of parents and carers who felt 'confident about themselves as a parent' increasing from 29 per cent before the program, to 56 per cent after completing it.<sup>44</sup>

*'I feel as though I have adopted new skills as a parent, and I feel more confident. Thank you for always listening and being so understanding during the sessions.'*

**(Parent/Carer participating in Coaching program, November 2023)**

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*'I feel confident to manage things that may come up moving forward.'*

**(Parent/Carer participating in Coaching program, April 2024)<sup>45</sup>**

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<sup>42, 43</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey; <sup>44</sup> Feedback provided by parents/carers who received at least two sessions and who completed a service follow-up survey (i.e. 47% of Coaching participants); <sup>45</sup> Client feedback data.



# ReachOut PeerChat: Helping to create positive outcomes for young people

Launched in September 2022, ReachOut's PeerChat service offers online text-based peer support for young people aged 16–25 years. The only online service of its kind in Australia, it connects young people to a trained lived experience peer worker for a free and confidential 'chat' session. In 2023–24, young people reported experiencing a range of positive outcomes from using PeerChat, both immediately after a session and over time.

**74%** of young people aged 14–25 years who had used PeerChat in the past year told us they **felt better** after they spoke with a peer worker.<sup>46</sup>

## How do you feel after your chat?



Much better than before

A bit better than before

About the same

A bit worse than before

Much worse than before

*'I was at a really low point and it felt amazing knowing at any time I could chat to someone ... Thank you for getting me through a hard time.'*

*'It helped me navigate my feelings in the moment.'*

*'It made me feel more accepting of myself.'*<sup>47</sup>

PeerChat has helped to **increase awareness of other support services** among users. Over half of youth users (64%) said that PeerChat gave them a better idea of where else to get support. A further 67% of users said that interacting with PeerChat provided them with helpful resources.<sup>48</sup>



Our PeerChat service also plays an important role in helping to **build agency among young people**. It encourages users to think about strategies they could try outside of the chat and helps to give them the confidence to take action to support their mental health and wellbeing.

Among young people aged 16–25 years who had used PeerChat in the past year:

**53%** said the session helped them to come up with ideas about what to do/try

**57%** tried the tips that came out of the session

**53%** tried other sources of mental health support.<sup>49</sup>

*'I can use these strategies [from PeerChat] right through and overcome challenges that, previously, I wouldn't have had the right tools for.'*

*'I have now started to try and think positive all of the time.'*<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Post-chat user feedback; <sup>47</sup>, <sup>48</sup>, <sup>49</sup>, <sup>50</sup> 2024 Annual User Survey.

# Looking to the future

ReachOut's 2023–24 Social Impact Report provides clear evidence that our suite of mental health and wellbeing services for young people – and for those who support them – has **social value** and continues to position us to **help young people feel better**.

The report shines a light on the key strengths of ReachOut's services and emphasises our commitment to building a culture of continuous improvement. It also provides us with a critical data source that helps us to 'manage to impact' – that is, to embed data-informed thinking into the key decisions we make about our products and services, as well as other strategic priorities.



In 2025, we will focus on the following key areas:

- We will continue to **extend and strengthen our reach to First Nations communities** by co-creating new social and emotional wellbeing resources, such as our [Deadly Directions](#) series, and connecting with community on social media channels and through other engagement activities.
- We will prepare for potentially significant **changes to the way young people access mental health information and support** following the introduction of age restrictions on access to social media, including via community or peer support models across young people's preferred digital community platforms.
- Our **new Instagram account for parents/carers** ([@reachout\\_parents](#)) will help deliver important mental health support in ways that are efficient, engaging and helpful.
- We will build on the positive feedback we have had from young people about the high quality of our content by **harnessing AI technology in our service innovation**. We are keen and ready to use 'AI for good' to make it easier for young people to find the help they need.
- We will focus on **understanding and strengthening user engagement** across different elements of our services. We know, through our social impact work so far, that strong engagement is critical in ensuring that our services can deliver positive change/s for users.
- We will seek to **strengthen the impact of our PeerChat service** by exploring improvements to our service delivery model. This follows an in-depth developmental evaluation of the service in 2024.
- We will continue to identify and explore **innovative and better ways to measure the impact of our services**, including those focused on First Nations communities as well as our 1:1 Coaching service and AI-driven service innovations.

Young people are navigating an increasingly complex, rapidly changing world. This creates new challenges and obstacles for them, and for those they turn to for support, in accessing services. Encouragingly, the impact findings outlined in this report show that **ReachOut is making a real difference**. The data also shows promising areas where we can extend our impact even further and create lasting change for young people, families and communities who need our practical, evidence-based mental health and wellbeing support.

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