



Vodafone
Foundation

Media Release

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Mobile app released by *beyondblue* makes it easier for young people to reach out to friends who are struggling

A new mobile app launched today by *beyondblue* will make it easier for young people to have important conversations with friends who they are concerned may be experiencing depression or anxiety.

The free Check-in App, which can be downloaded from the App Store on iTunes or the Google Play store, lets young people choose options to construct a unique, step-by-step plan for approaching a friend they are worried about.

The app provides a range of things young people can say to their friend, and where and when they can say it, along with tips from other young people who've reached out to a friend.

Users are also able to review how their planned conversation went, set reminders to follow up with their friend, and access ideas about what to do next, particularly if things didn't go well.

***beyondblue* acting CEO Dr Brian Graetz** said young people often avoid asking friends if they are going through a difficult time because they're afraid they'll say the wrong thing or make the situation worse.

"The Check-in App is designed to take the fear out of talking to a friend about why they seem down or stressed, or have stopped doing things that they usually enjoy," he said.

"Research shows that one in four young people aged 16 to 24 will experience a mental illness, but only a quarter of those will seek support from a health professional. This is extremely worrying, as suicide is the biggest killer of young Australians, and each year accounts for the deaths of more young people than car accidents.

"While there is no substitute for professional help, checking on a friend can be a powerful step towards them seeking the support they need."

Throughout the development of the Check-in app, young people from around Australia, who have experienced depression or anxiety, have provided feedback.

Samantha Atkins, 18, who was involved in this process, encourages all young people to download the app and learn what it's about. "The Check-in app makes it less scary to let people know you are there for them when they're having a tough time. This is a great skill to have," she said.

***beyondblue* youth Ambassador Bronwyn Collins**, 25, said being approached by a friend when you are struggling can also be a powerful source of hope. "When you have depression or anxiety it often feels like you are alone, but for someone to ask how you are, is a reminder that you aren't alone and you are worth something to someone," she said.

The Check-in App was developed because *beyondblue* won the 2013 Vodafone Foundation App Aid competition after receiving more than 700 crowd-funded donations. *beyondblue* raised more than \$16,500 on the crowd funding website Pozible, which was matched by a donation of \$10,000 from the Vodafone Foundation and a bonus \$25,000 for winning the competition by having the most supporters.

Head of the Vodafone Foundation, Alyssa Jones, said *beyondblue* has delivered an important tool to help young people bridge a difficult conversation with a friend in need.

"From the outset, the enthusiasm we've seen for *beyondblue*'s Check-in App demonstrates the community need for a tool like this. Many of us have been in a similar position, where we've been concerned about a friend, but we didn't know how to tackle the conversation," she said.

"The Check-in app is a great guide to having a positive conversation. We're proud the Vodafone Foundation's App Aid initiative was able to help *beyondblue* make such a positive difference to the lives of young Australians."

Dr Graetz said *beyondblue* is extremely grateful to the Vodafone Foundation and Two Bulls for helping bring the Check-in app to life.

The free Check-in app can be downloaded from the App Store on iTunes or the Google Play Store. For more about App Aid, visit www.vodafone.com.au/aboutvodafone/vodafoneaustraliafoundation/appaid.

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