



## It's time to end bullying

**14th March 2018** – The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence falls on this Friday and **headspace** Orange has aligned with the day of action whilst highlighting their zero tolerance approach towards bullying.

Australian research suggests that up to one in four students have experienced some level of face to face bullying and a further one in five have been the victim of cyber bullying<sup>1</sup>. It is likely that these statistics are much higher due to young people either not reporting bullying or not knowing who to report the behaviour too.

Emily Smith, Clinical Lead at **headspace** Orange, says that bullying needs to be spoken about often and not just one day a year. The long term effects of bullying can be quite severe and may affect a young person's physical and mental health, school performance, as well as having negative effects on their families and relationships.

"It's important for parents to talk to their children about bullying. If they suspect their child is being bullied or bullying others, we encourage them to ask their child about their experience, name and validate their child's emotions and explore with their child their preference for addressing the bullying concern. Parents and young people may wish to contact the school to talk about ways to address the issue and if they need further support, to call the **headspace** Orange team," comments Smith.

Talking about bullying ensures that the problem cannot go unnoticed and allows teachers, parents and guardians to be aware of issues they may not have noticed.

"Sometimes young people can be quite caged about the topic so ask them questions like 'who do you sit with at lunch?', 'do you feel lonely at school?' Remember to be empathetic and if they aren't willing to talk to you, ask them who they would be comfortable speaking to," Smith suggests.

Sharna Lord, **headspace** Orange's Community Engagement Officer, believes that one of the first steps to take to address the concern of bullying is to reject the idea that bullying is in any way normal or an expected part of growing up.

"By accepting that bullying is normal, you're validating the behaviour of bullies and sending the message to victims that being upset or hurt by bullying is a weakness. Bullying should never be accepted and if anyone sees it happening or experiences it, we urge you to speak up," explains Lord.

Lord asserts that bullying is often underplayed as a joke and believes that validating a young person's experience may be the first time they've been reassured that the treatment they are experiencing is unacceptable.

"It seems simple, but it can be the first step to creating a space where our peers feel safe. If you witness bullying, don't ignore it; say something, tell a teacher or trusted adult, and if it's safe to do so, tell the bully to stop."

Working together to reject the behaviour of bullies and encouraging victims to speak out will help create safer and supportive environments for young people

If you are a young person with something going on, please visit [www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/orange/](http://www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/orange/), drop into the centre at 264 Peisley Street or call 6369 9300.

– ENDS –

### About headspace:

Marathon Health is the lead consortium for headspace centres located in Bathurst, Orange, and Dubbo. The primary focus of **headspace** is the mental health and wellbeing of young Australians. **headspace** helps 12 – 25 year olds going through a

<sup>1</sup> <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatsBullying/FactsAndFigures/Pages/FAQs-Prevalence.aspx>

tough time through a national network of over 100 **headspace** centres. **headspace** also offers online and telephone counselling services through **eheadspace**. **headspace** can help young people with general health, mental health, education and employment and alcohol and other drug services. **headspace** was established by the Australian Government in 2006. From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016, **headspace** centres across Australia are now managed by Primary Health Networks. Primary Health Networks receive funding from the Australian Government to support **headspace** centres. Visit [headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au) to find a **headspace** centre or access help.

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