

Youth Mental Wellbeing

Key insights from our Youth Mental Wellness Forum

Why this conversation matters

In a world where young people face unprecedented pressures – from social media to academic pressures – mental wellness has become a critical conversation.

The forum

A crowd of over 200 convened at the Peninsula Community Theatre for the forum titled 'Moving Ahead: Youth Mental Wellness.'

The forum featured keynote speaker **Dr Jodi Richardson** who is an expert on student anxiety. Panellists **Suzi Hyland** (Director of Wellbeing Programs – Padua) and **Danni Vaughan** (Principal Mt Eliza Secondary College) joined her, along with **Connor Scott**, who shared his lived experience managing grief and mental health challenges.

The evening provided an excellent opportunity to share vital information concerning how parents/grandparents/educators can identify and support mental health issues with their children.

Key learnings

Some key points emerged including how important early intervention is and how children who are struggling with their mental wellness are not necessarily broken...they are in fact navigating through their lives.

It is essential to do what we can to 'normalise' conversation with our youth as part of everyday life. It isn't about fixing everything...it's about listening.

An integral aspect of the evening was connecting the attendees with local service providers, many of whom partnered with Peninsula Voice to share information about their services and the support they provide.

Take-away message

Youth mental wellness isn't a solo journey-it's a community responsibility. From classrooms to living rooms the message is clear: listen deeply, act early and lead with empathy.

When we create environments where young people feel seen and supported, we don't just help them to survive. We help them thrive.

Thank-you

A heartfelt thanks to our speakers, panellists and everyone who attended our Youth Mental Wellness forum. Your voices help shape a stronger, more connected community. Special thanks to our musician, Andy Semetas for providing background music as attendees arrived, and to our MCs for the night, Lizzy Gordon and Chris Menage.

"Such an amazingly informative evening on an extremely important topic. Thanks very much for bringing it together and having us there".

About our partners

- [Brotherhood of St Laurence \(Thrive Hub Frankston\)](#)
- [Bayside Health – Peninsula Care Group](#)
- [Chasing Change](#)
- [Family Life](#)
- [Hearspace \(Rosebud and Frankston\)](#)
- [It's okay not to be okay](#)
- [Juniper College](#)
- [Mental Health Safety Net](#)
- [Mornington Peninsula Shire Council – Youth and Family Services](#)
- [Projex J](#), and
- [VIC Police](#)