

Be a part of the ripple – Your voice matters: Findings from Prevention United’s National Youth Survey

Authors:

Carbone S¹, Maidment K¹, Houlihan M¹

¹ Prevention United

Note – if accepted for presentation and if logistically possible, we would also aim to bring a member of our Youth Advisory Group (YAG) to co-present.

Background:

In the context of alarming statistics about young Australians’ poor mental health, Prevention United have focused our work on exploring the causes behind this ‘youth mental health crisis’ and promoting ‘upstream’ preventive approaches to addressing this crisis. Since July 2023, we have been supported in this work by our YAG. The YAG noted that they are not able to represent the voices of all young Australians, and therefore wanted to create a mechanism to elevate the voices of young people around the country in our advocacy work.

Approach:

The YAG designed our National Youth Survey to ask young Australians about what impacts their mental health, both positively and negatively, and their ideas on how to address this crisis. The YAG developed the survey questionnaire, which contains both quantitative and qualitative questions, and all promotional materials. The survey was open from May to July 2024, and after completing data analysis we self-published a report containing the findings. These findings will inform Prevention United’s advocacy priorities for 2025.

Outcome:

Young people identified a range of issues that were causing them concern. The findings provide important insight on young Australians’ views on their mental health, whose voices are not often included when attempting to solve this problem, and the implications for policy and future initiatives will be discussed. Apart from the survey findings, this project will impact on Prevention United’s continued advocacy on preventive approaches to youth mental health.

Innovation and Significance:

Unlike a formal adult-led research project, the project was an exercise of young people asking other young people what they think. It was not designed to generate generalisable findings, but instead to create a channel through which we are able to elevate the voices of young Australians in our advocacy.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Prevention United would like to thank Future General Global (FGG) for their funding support for our work. FGG is a philanthropic group committed to improving the mental health of young Australians. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.