

# SETTING UP A PHONE COUNSELLING ROOM AT YOUR SCHOOL

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Best practice guide



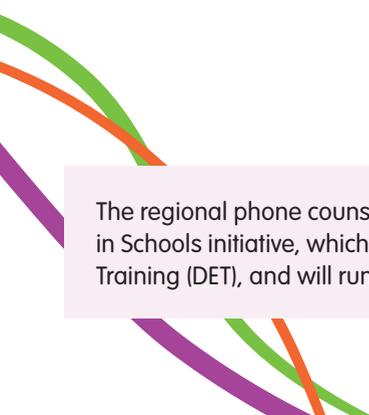
**headspace**

National Youth Mental Health Foundation

The regional telephone counselling service supports students in Victorian government secondary schools from years 7 to 12 who may be experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues.

Students can step away from their class schedule to speak to a qualified **headspace** mental health clinician in a quiet, safe and private space on the school grounds between 9am – 4pm.

The phone counselling service supports young people living in rural, regional and remote areas (generally, those Victorian government secondary schools more than 60km from a **headspace** centre) who cannot easily access face-to-face counselling.



The regional phone counselling service is part of the Enhancing Mental Health Support in Schools initiative, which is funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET), and will run from the start of term 3 until the end of term 4 2018.

## How to set up your counselling room

For students to access phone counselling, it's important that your school sets up a counselling room that is private, safe, quiet, comfortable and free of distractions.

The atmosphere in the room should encourage students to engage in conversation and feel relaxed. If possible, the room should be a dedicated space for counselling only.

### The room should:

- Have access to a landline telephone
- Be away from busy areas and not have visible windows to people walking by
- Be a space where the school representative (likely to be the wellbeing coordinator) can observe the commencement and conclusion of the phone call by seeing the young person entering and exiting the counselling room (note, this is also important for safety and risk assessment purposes)
- Be in a consistent location, this allows young people to have a predictable experience
- Be sound proof, or be adequately spaced from public areas to avoid intrusion of privacy
- Have water, tissues and natural light
- Where possible have defined boundaries between counselling room, waiting area and public areas so that there is no sense of intrusion on personal space.

Another important consideration is that students do not feel a sense of anxiety or stigma in the waiting area of the phone counselling room. It's a good idea to think about pre and post appointment processes so students leave and return to class feeling supported and safe.

## How to refer a student

You can arrange a phone counselling appointment for a student by calling the regional phone counselling number **1800 959 050** and providing:

1. student's name
2. contact details
3. parental consent (where appropriate).

## More information

For more tips and guidance on how to set up a counselling room at your school talk to your **headspace** centre.

