

mieact

A safe space for
mental health education



ANU Thrive



STRESS BETTER



Practical tools to manage and
respond to stress more effectively

mieact.org.au

Stress Better is a program of Mental Illness Education ACT. All content in this manual is property of Mental Illness Education ACT unless otherwise cited.

Acknowledgements

Mental Illness Education ACT would like to acknowledge the following for their contribution to the development of this resource:

- ⇒ Greg Francis, Volunteer
- ⇒ Tanya Halloran, Volunteer
- ⇒ Megan Mills, Program Director

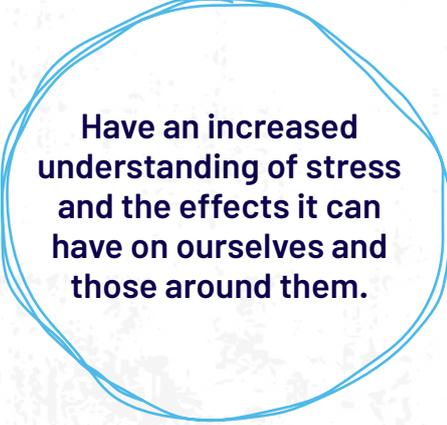
A special thank you to our digital storytellers for having the courage to share their experiences in such a wonderful, real and engaging manner. These stories are the foundation upon which this workshop has been built.

For more information visit www.mieact.org.au

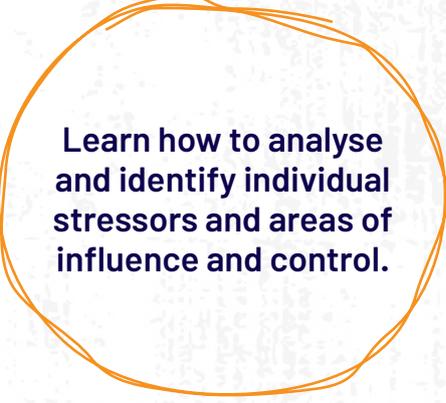




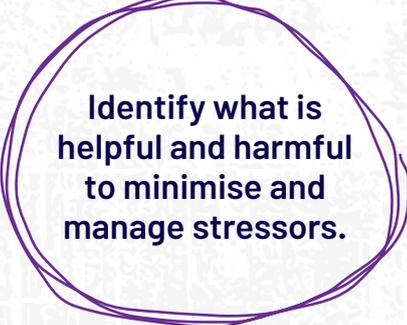
Today's learning outcomes



Have an increased understanding of stress and the effects it can have on ourselves and those around them.



Learn how to analyse and identify individual stressors and areas of influence and control.



Identify what is helpful and harmful to minimise and manage stressors.



Know when and how to seek help for ourselves and others.



Identifying stressors

Stress responses

Cognitive

- ⇒ Memory problems
- ⇒ Inability to concentrate
- ⇒ Poor judgment
- ⇒ Seeing only the negative
- ⇒ Anxious or racing thoughts
- ⇒ Constant worrying

Emotional

- ⇒ Depression or general unhappiness
- ⇒ Anxiety and agitation
- ⇒ Moodiness, irritability, or anger
- ⇒ Feeling overwhelmed
- ⇒ Loneliness and isolation
- ⇒ Other mental or emotional health problems

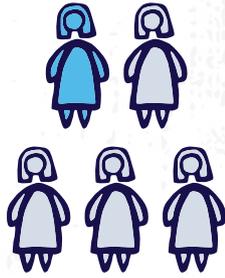
Physical

- ⇒ Aches and pains
- ⇒ Diarrhoea or constipation
- ⇒ Nausea, dizziness
- ⇒ Chest pain, rapid heart rate
- ⇒ Loss of sex drive
- ⇒ Frequent colds or flu

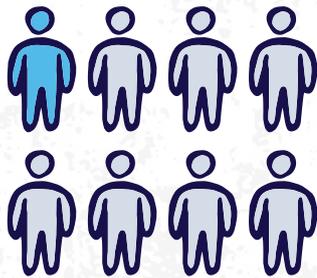
Behavioural

- ⇒ Eating more or less
- ⇒ Sleeping too much or too little
- ⇒ Withdrawing from others
- ⇒ Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- ⇒ Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs
- ⇒ Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting)

**Around
1 million people in
Australia live with
depression**



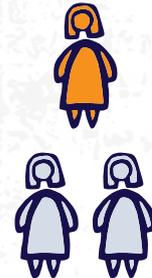
1 in 5 women



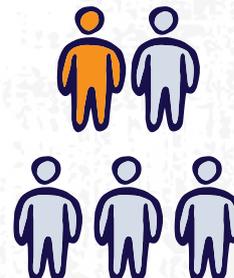
1 in 8 men

are likely to experience
depression in their lifetime

**Around
1 million people in
Australia live with
anxiety**



1 in 3 women



1 in 5 men

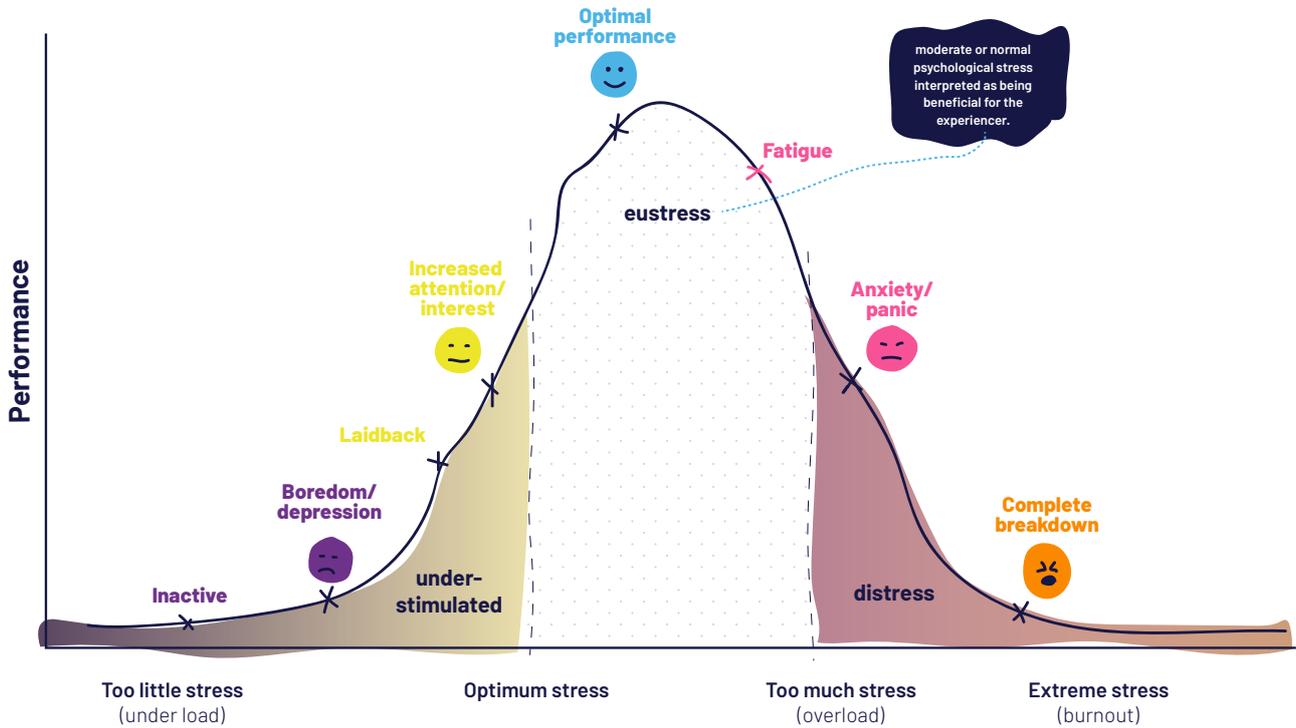
are likely to experience
anxiety in their lifetime

6 Australians die by suicide every day



5 of whom are men

The Yerkes-Dodson Curve



Strategies to minimize, manage and optimize stress

Lifestyle

- Move (get your heart pumping)
- Eat a balanced diet
- Reduce stimulants
- Reduce consumption of drugs and alcohol
- Connect with nature
- Identify a hobby 
- Learning time
- Focus on the positives

Environmental

- Spend time on positive relationships
- Create a sanctuary
- Humour
- Music 
- Reading
- Set boundaries

Relaxation

- Stretching
- Breathing
- Mindfulness (senses)
- Audio (body scan)
- Sleeping
- Sleep hygiene
- Watching TV/movies
- Organising your time



Types of stress-related mental illness

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD)

A person feels anxious on most days, worrying about lots of different things, for a period of six months or more.

Social anxiety

A person has an intense fear of being criticised, embarrassed or humiliated, even in everyday situations, such as speaking publicly, eating in public, being assertive at work or making small talk.

Panic disorder

A person has panic attacks, which are intense, overwhelming and often uncontrollable feelings of anxiety combined with a range of physical symptoms.

Someone having a panic attack may experience shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness and excessive perspiration. Sometimes, people experiencing a panic attack think they are having a heart attack or are about to die.

If a person has recurrent panic attacks or persistently fears having one for more than a month, they're said to have panic disorder.

Specific phobias

A person feels very fearful about a particular object or situation and may go to great lengths to avoid it, for example, having an injection or travelling on a plane. There are many different types of phobias.

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

A person has ongoing unwanted/intrusive thoughts and fears that cause anxiety. Although the person may acknowledge these thoughts as silly, they often try to relieve their anxiety by carrying out certain behaviours or rituals. For example, a fear of germs and contamination can lead to constant washing of hands and clothes.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

This can happen after a person experiences a traumatic event (e.g. war, assault, accident, disaster). Symptoms can include difficulty relaxing, upsetting dreams or flashbacks of the event, and avoidance of anything related to the event.

PTSD is diagnosed when a person has symptoms for at least a month.

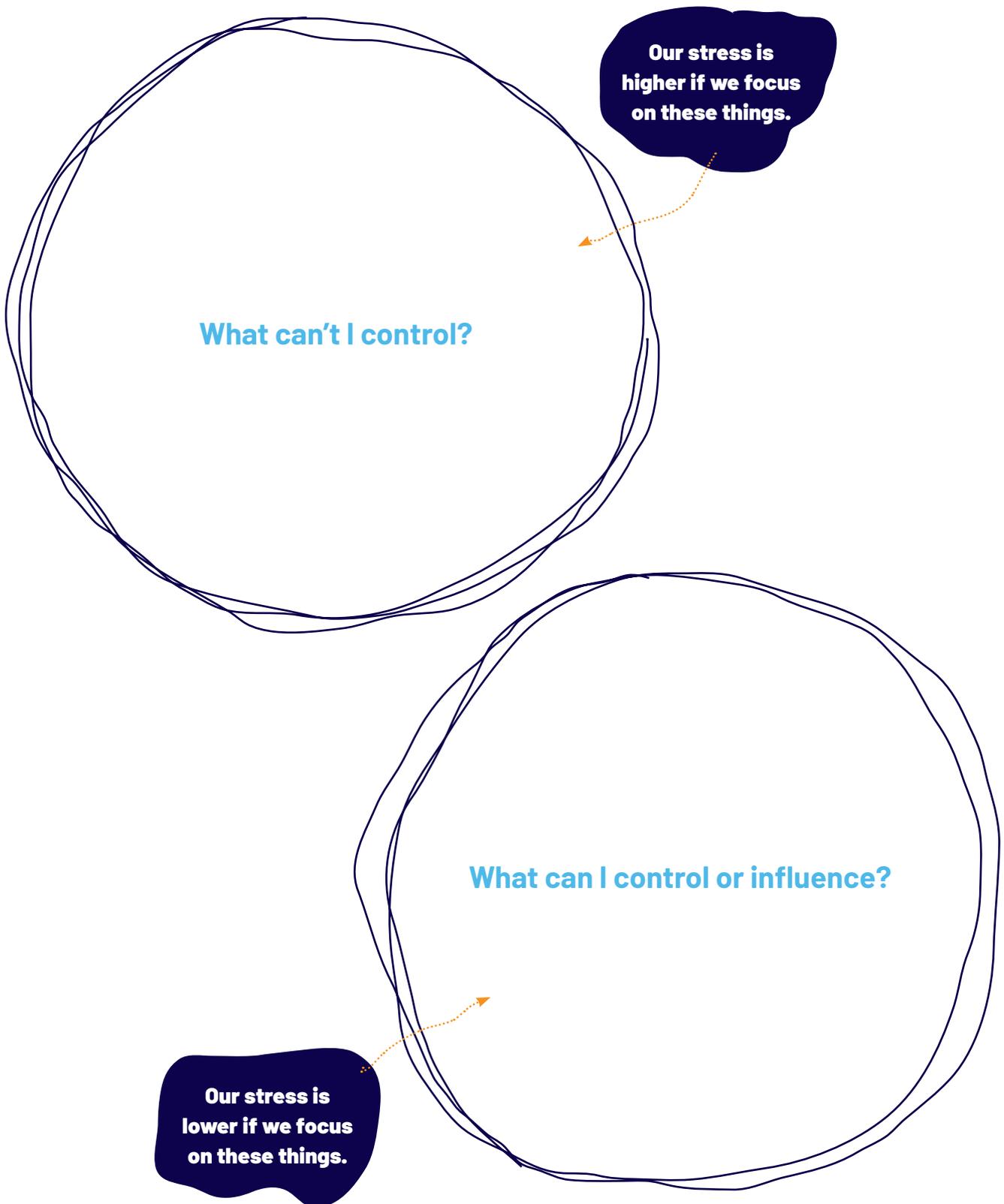


Steve Covey's Circle of Influence



With the things that you have identified as concerns, split them into what you cannot control and what you can influence:

Can we accept that which we cannot control?





My strategy

Over-excited stress response

If you tend to become angry, agitated, overly emotional, or keyed up under stress, you will respond best to stress relief activities that quiet you down.

Under-excited stress response

If you tend to become depressed, withdrawn, or spaced out under stress, you will respond best to stress relief activities that are stimulating and energizing.

What are three strategies that might work for you?

1.

2.

3.

Options for my team:

1.

2.

3.

Tools and Resources

If you are experiencing high levels of stress, maintain a stress response after a stressor has gone away or are experiencing worry or anxiety for more days than not over six months, seek help.

Talk to your GP, a counsellor or call Lifeline on 13 11 14, or get in touch with the following:

ANU Thrive

ANU Thrive is a student-led initiative which aims to promote student wellbeing, offering all ANU students free consultations to discuss anything of concern, as well as a variety of events and informational sessions throughout the year.

They can connect you with the right support on and off campus, help you find useful resources and information, and create a self-care plan. Please note that other times for consultation can be arranged if needed, by emailing.

Free wellbeing consultations every Wednesday Thursday 10am-1pm, face-to-face or virtually (free and confidential)

Book online or email; also follow social media for events

ANU Counselling

ANU Counselling provide counselling services as well as helpful resources to promote, support and enhance mental health and wellbeing. Appointments are made over the phone, and can be offered via Zoom.

If students would like Translation and

Interpretation Services, this is available (students just need to enquire when booking their appointment)

Available during business hours (AEST)

ANU Wellbeing Support Line

24-hour telephone and texts counselling support service available to ANU students experiencing situational stress, emotional difficulties, and mental health concerns.

Dean of Students & Access and Inclusion

Academic support

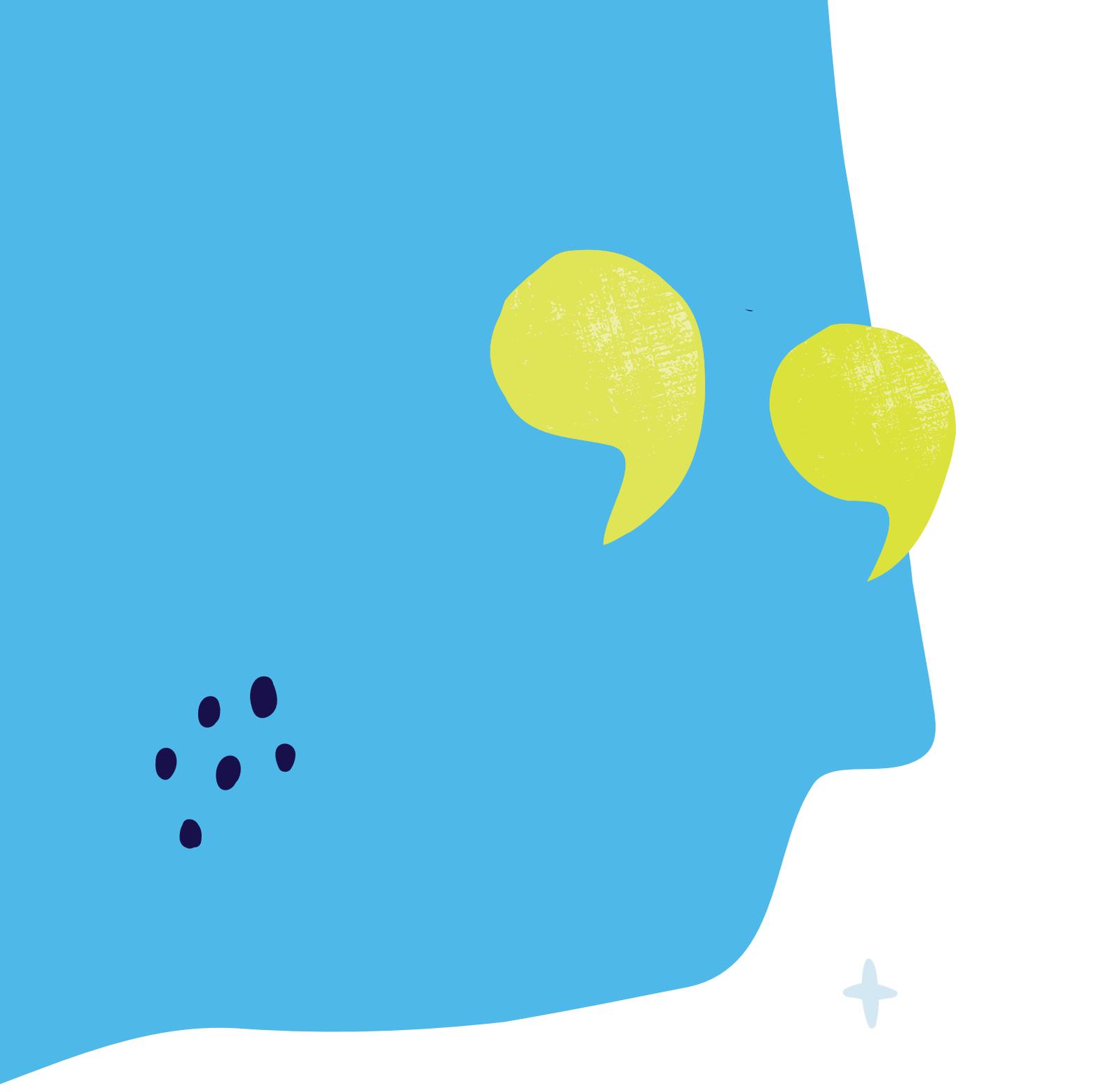
TalkCampus – app for peer support

A wellbeing support app available free of charge to ANU students, where students can get instant peer-support for your mental health any time of day and night

Students can share experiences and interact safely and anonymously

To sign up to TalkCampus, please use your Australian National University email which will unlock the app free of charge.

My options are:



(02) 6257 1195
admin@mieact.org.au
www.mieact.org.au



Level 1, Room 10
The Griffin Centre
20 Genge Street
Canberra City 2601

mieact

A safe space for
mental health education