

Press Release
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Youth Depression Support Website TheLowdown.co.nz Reaches Out To Schools

TheLowdown.co.nz website is a friendly and welcoming, interactive online space that has been created to help young New Zealanders understand, deal with and recover from depression. It is backed up with professional support services accessible via email and text.

About 1 in 7 young New Zealanders will experience serious depression over the next 12 months. Young people are more likely to experience depression than adults but often they don't realise how serious it can be, or know where to get help.

Launched last year by the Ministry of Health as part of the National Depression Initiative, TheLowdown.co.nz has been described as "the most visually appealing and advanced in terms of its multimedia use" by a top New Zealand child and adolescent psychiatrist, Sally Merry.

There has been an overwhelming positive response from visitors to the site with comments including, "There aren't many people who can just listen without interrupting and insisting on offering advice ... So thank you Low down team for being there to email when things get unbearable" and "Since I have contacted you (the Lowdown Team) for some support ... I have been thinking positive and making new changes in my life and focusing on happiness, and so far so good. Thanks guys".

This July, Lowdown information packs, including posters, leaflets and info cards, are being sent to 485 Secondary Schools nationwide to spread the word about the website amongst the teaching profession. The packs aim to raise awareness about the resources and professional support services for young people experiencing depression that are available at TheLowdown.co.nz.

The website provides an invaluable tool for teachers and school counsellors who are working with students experiencing depression, or who may be at risk, and will help bolster existing support they are receiving.

The online platform of TheLowdown.co.nz was selected to be user-friendly for youth and was developed and designed in consultation with young people.

The website features personal video stories of support from musicians, actors and TV presenters that young people will identify with as well as stories from everyday young people. The stories aim to help people who are experiencing depression feel like they are not alone and get to a better place.

There is lots of other useful information at TheLowdown.co.nz. Visitors can try the "Self-Test" to see if they might be depressed and encourage them to take action. Or they can read fact sheets and Frequently Asked Questions that give useful advice about depression and tips to help them feel better.

Peer and professional support can also be easily accessed at TheLowdown.co.nz with an online forum and support services available by phone, text or email.

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For further information on TheLowdown.co.nz please contact:
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Notes to Editors

- Details on TheLowdown.co.nz have also been included in the recent Bullying awareness packs that have been sent to schools by the Ministry of Education