

USING THE INTERNET AND GAME BASED TECHNOLOGIES TO PROMOTE HEALTH TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

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Although one in five young people recognise they have a mental health problem, 60% to 80% do not access a mental health service or receive any kind of mental health care. The Internet is increasingly becoming the support of choice for young people, with research demonstrating that they are actively seeking health information and referrals through the Internet.

Inspire Foundation launched a new program called Reach Out! Central (ROC) – an online game-based program that promotes positive mental health for young people 16-25 years. ROC enables young people to identify and work through issues such as depression, anger or anxiety themselves. Content for the program is based on an established school based program that draws on cognitive behavioural therapy to improve young people's coping skills. Reach Out! Central can be accessed at www.reachoutcentral.com.au. It has also been placed on CD ROM to be used as a health promotion tool in schools. The paper will outline theory behind ROC, provide a brief walk-through of the program and present some findings from a preliminary evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN THE CHARTER

This paper highlights the importance of recognising ICTs as both a tool and a setting for health promotion. ICT plays an increasingly important role in the lives of young people, mediating their social relationships and identity development. Accordingly, it is important to consider the need to build the capacity of service providers to utilise this technology in their practice.