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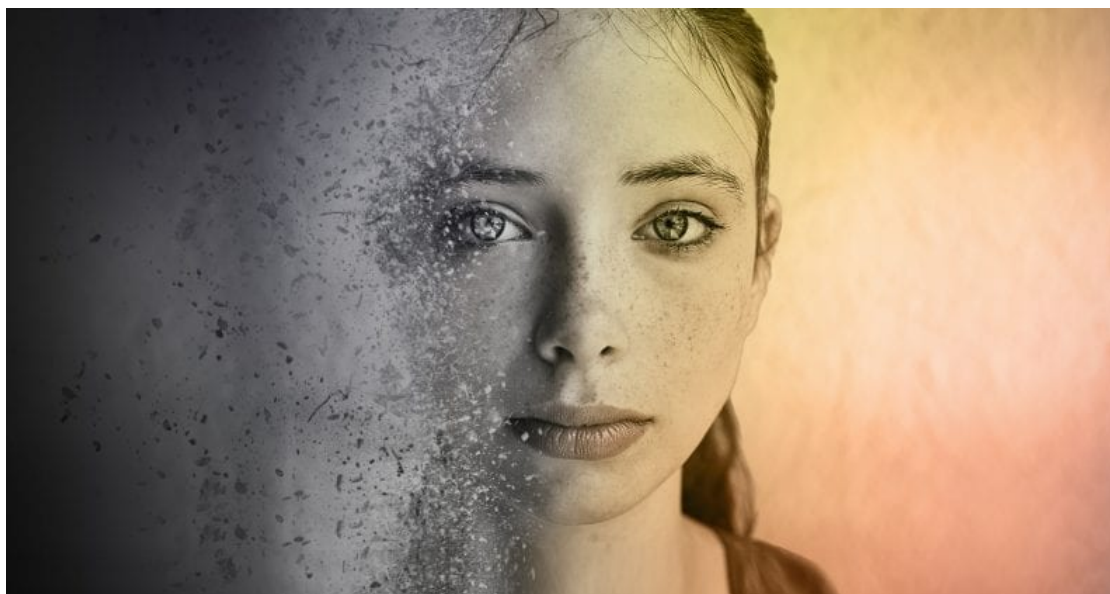
NEWS ([HTTPS://NEWS.CURTIN.EDU.AU](https://news.curtin.edu.au))

Curtin's latest MOOC to address mental health and youth suicide

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 23 April 2020

Curtin University's latest Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) will teach participants the skills needed to recognise and respond to young adults who are dealing with mental health issues and suicidal thoughts.



The six module MOOC titled, "*Talk to me: Improving mental health and suicide prevention in young adults,*" will be delivered through the edX online learning platform. The MOOC will teach those who are in regular contact with young people, including other young adults, parents and teachers, strategies to recognise concerning behaviours and feel better prepared to have conversations about mental health.

The program has been developed in consultation and co-production with mental health practitioners that are part of German National Suicide Prevention Program and consumers with lived experience of mental illness.

Dr Ben Milbourn, from the School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Speech Pathology at Curtin University, said the new MOOC was being delivered in response to the growing need to inform people about the contributing factors linked to poor mental health.

“Poor mental health affects one in five people in Australia and young adults are particularly vulnerable. This MOOC will help people feel confident about approaching the topic of mental health with people who may be impacted,” Dr Milbourn said.

“Participants will learn what mental health is and the impact of stress on mental health, identify and explain contributing factors to suicide and poor mental health, understand why self-harm may be used as a coping strategy, and recognise risk factors for mental health crisis and suicidality.

“Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, this MOOC is being delivered at an important time where people’s mental health may be impacted and people may feel particularly vulnerable and isolated.”

Curtin University Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Professor Jill Downie said the new MOOC will help tackle an important issue that affects many young people around the world.

“Poor mental health is a growing problem and affects people not only in Australia, but all over the world. This new MOOC will allow participants from any country to enrol and gain a better understanding about how poor mental health affects people in their everyday lives and how they can deal with this,” Professor Downie.

“The need for online learning has become extremely important in this current climate and being able to deliver engaging courses to an online audience will allow people who may not have the opportunity to study at Curtin to learn from its academics in a virtual environment.”

Curtin University is also delivering a two-week version of a new MOOC titled, “*Talk to Me: Managing study, stress and mental health at university*” (<https://www.edx.org/course/managing-study-stress-and-mental-health-at-univers>), which will also provide students with the knowledge, skills and understanding to recognise, identify and respond to mental health challenges in themselves and others

The two new MOOCs will be facilitated by Dr Ben Milbourn, Craig Thompson and Professor Sonya Girdler from Curtin University, Frank Zimmermann and Dr Viktor Kacic from Klinikum Aschaffenburg in Germany.

Curtin is the only university in Western Australia in the edX Consortium.

Further information on the MOOC and how to enrol can be found online [here](https://www.edx.org/course/talk-to-me-improving-mental-health) (<https://www.edx.org/course/talk-to-me-improving-mental-health>).

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