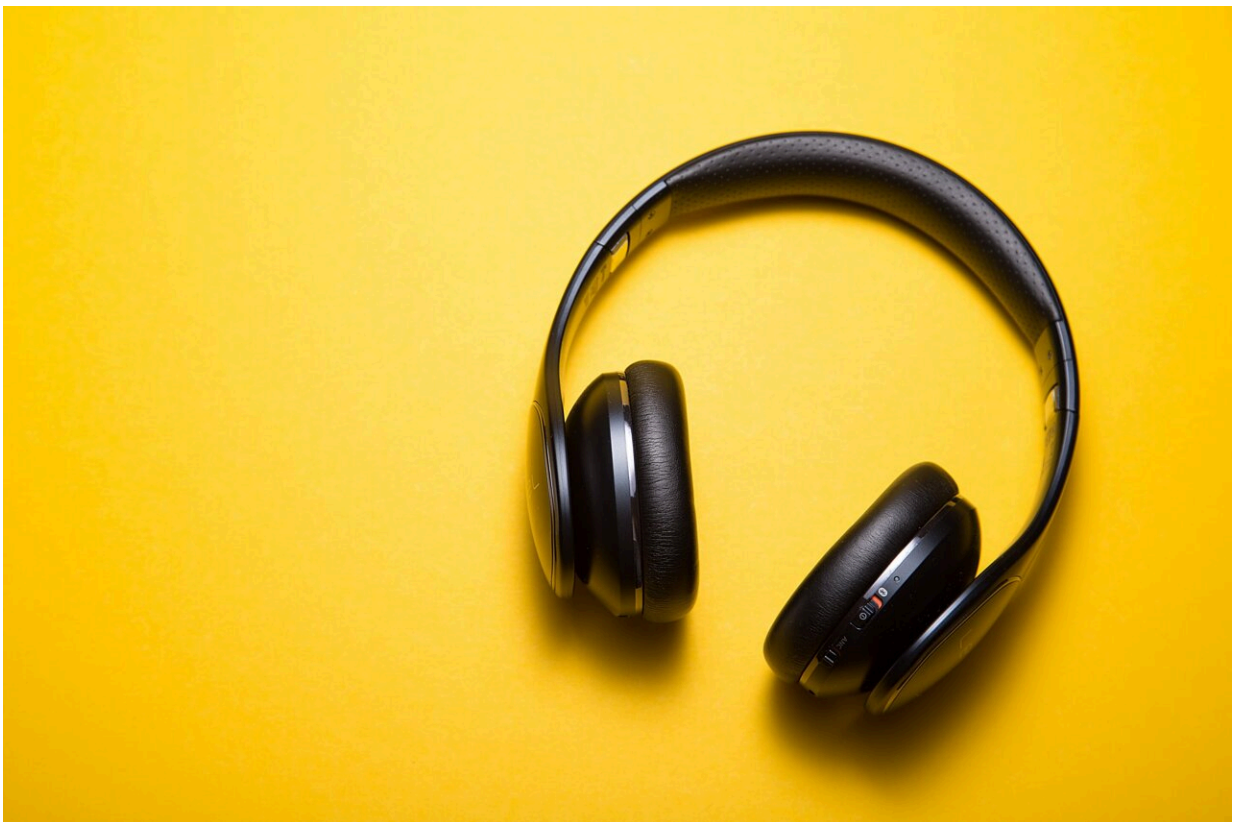


# **New evidence-based app seeks to revolutionize youth mental health literacy using music**

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Western Sydney University has officially launched an evidence-based smartphone app for youth mental health that turns listening to music into

a tool that could help young people to better understand and manage their moods and well-being.

The interactive "MoodyTunes" app was co-designed by [young people](#) and researchers from the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behavior and Development.

Lead researcher and [app developer](#), Dr. Sandra Garrido from the University's MARCS Institute for Brain, Behavior and Development and School of Psychology said the app draws upon evidence-based psychological therapies and over 10 years of research highlighting the important role [music](#), and the arts, can play in well-being.

"The average young person listens to music for up to five hours a day, even more during bouts of depression or challenging periods," said Dr. Garrido.

"Our app builds on this natural attraction to music and capitalizes on the strategies that young people are already drawn to when feeling down, like listening to music, to promote help-seeking behavior in a subtle and sensitive way.

"With existing digital [mental health](#) interventions having as little as 10% engagement, MoodyTunes is designed to help young people use music to learn effective mood management strategies in relevant and engaging ways," she said.

MoodyTunes works in the background as users listen to music in Spotify by prompting them to record the effect that music has on their moods, in turn, creating playlists of the music they love which best supports their well-being.

Preliminary research and testing of MoodyTunes have found that young

people find the concept highly appealing, something that they would use frequently, and believe it could help them learn more about mental health and effective mood management.

Mental Health Commissioner of New South Wales, Catherine Lourey said supporting the development of the app reflects the Commission's desire to provide [universal access](#) to appealing and engaging ways for young people to better manage their well-being.

"This app is a great example of a practical tool that could help young people, including vulnerable youth, better manage their mood and increase their mental health literacy. The innovation of Moody Tunes is its simplicity, coupled with the fact it has been designed by young people for young people and by those who have lived experience of depression.

"Alarming, 9 out of 10 young people with depression do not get professional help, so an easily accessible and simple tool like MoodyTunes could prove vital in a young person's life," she said.

NSW Minister for Women, Regional Health and Mental Health—The Hon Bronnie Taylor said youth mental health has been brought to the forefront in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with initiatives like MoodyTunes helping to shift attitudes and increase mental health literacy.

"We know that youth are less likely to seek help than adults due to stigma and negative societal attitudes towards seeking professional help. MoodyTunes will empower young people to manage their own needs and take those crucial first steps to seeking professional help," she said.

MoodyTunes has been developed in collaboration with The Black Dog Institute and the Children and Young People unit of the Mental Health Branch of the NSW Ministry of Health.

The app was officially launched on November 30 by The Hon Bronwyn Taylor, NSW Minister for Mental Health, Regional Health and Women; and Catherine Lourey, NSW Mental Health Commissioner, at Western Sydney University's newly opened Westmead Innovation Quarter.

**More information:** MoodyTunes is available now and free to download from the [Apple App Store](#) for Apple devices, and [Google Play Store](#) for Android devices.

Provided by Western Sydney University

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