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Teens use social media to provide anti-bullying and positive mental health message

891 ABC Adelaide

By [Brett Williamson](#)

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PHOTO: Adelaide teenagers [Millie Warne](#) and [William Russell](#) are offering support via their social media sites. (ABC Adelaide: [Brett Williamson](#))

MAP: [Adelaide 5000](#)

Two Adelaide teens are using social media to promote positive mental health message and tackle bullying.

William Russell set up a website, [Teen Support Network](#), and a supporting Facebook page in 2012 following the death of his friend, Tony.

Tony had suffered severe depression due to bullying he received about his sexuality leading up to his death by suicide in September 2011.

Mr Russell wanted to honour his friend and a promise he had made to do something to support other teenagers facing bullying.

Millie Warne has experienced bullying herself from a very young age and what began as social exclusion in Year 4 escalated during her teen years.

"Years 8 and 9 were the worst years I had of bullying and Year 10 was pretty bad too," Ms Warne said.

With friends suffering similar circumstance to her own, Ms Warne was inspired by Mr Russell's Facebook page.

She created a Facebook page herself called, What About Me as place to offer positive reinforcement for teenagers and acceptance for those who might feel socially shunned or depressed.

The pair now have more than 12,000 followers.

A gateway to help

Both Mr Russell and Ms Warne stipulate their pages are not there to offer an alternative to seeking professional help.

"We help people that have been bullied a lot, [who may be doing] self-harm, that are feeling a bit suicidal at times," Ms Warne said.

They both use their pages to stimulate conversation and encourage those at risk to seek further guidance or help.

"A lot of young people can't talk to their parents or their caregivers or whoever is looking after them, so it is good that they can have someone else to turn to," Ms Warne said.

Ms Warne said her first goal is to encourage teenagers to talk with their peers about their problems and then find ways to encourage the person to address their concerns with an adult.

Both Ms Warne and Mr Russell have plans to study counselling, with hopes to gain employment in the mental health industry.

"I would like to do some courses in counselling and get What About Me to be a proper, professional organisation," Ms Warne said.

If you or someone you know needs help, contact:

- [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14
- [Kids Helpline](#) on 1800 55 1800
- [Headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation](#)