

Cotton On Foundation partners with Born This Way Foundation to support mental health in SA

Australian-born fashion and lifestyle brand Cotton On have partnered their philanthropic arm, Cotton On Foundation with US-based non-profit Born This Way Foundation, founded by Lady Gaga and her mother, Cynthia Bissett Germanotta, in 2012. Together, they aim to raise \$5m for global mental health, with R2,500,000 being donated to provide mental health support for youth in South Africa.



"We're honoured to partner with Cotton On Foundation for our first global campaign amplifying our mission to build a kinder, braver world together," said Lady Gaga, co-founder of Born This Way Foundation. "We are constantly working to uplift the stories of young people worldwide, and through this partnership, we invite everyone to practice kindness and learn how to better support one another. Our research tells us that kindness is one way we can support each other's mental health."

The two organisations came together to create a range of limited-edition products available from 1 September – 10 October 2023 with Cotton On donating 100% of the net proceeds to Born This Way Foundation, making Cotton On one of the biggest corporate contributors to global youth mental health resources and support in 2023. Customers can purchase items, including caps, T-shirts, tote bags, stationery, and a denim jacket online and in select stores globally. The 'Kinder, Braver, Together' product design was inspired by Born This Way Foundation's mission of supporting youth mental health and working with young people to build a kinder, braver world. An ethos shared by Cotton On Foundation on their journey to create a world where everyone can thrive.

Collective impact

"We are grateful for the support of Cotton On Foundation and the opportunity to expand our collective impact worldwide. Every day, we witness young people around the world leading and transforming the discussion around mental health and calling for increased resources to support themselves, their peers, and their communities," said Cynthia Bissett Germanotta, president and co-founder of Born This Way Foundation. "We hope this partnership will accelerate the delivery of tangible resources, skills, and grassroots support necessary to build kinder, braver communities that value and improve mental health."



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"Cotton On's purpose is to make a positive difference in people's lives, and it is partnerships like this that will deliver significant impact on a global scale. Recently, our team and customers told us that mental health was increasingly important to them and our foundation set out with the commitment to help 10 million people gain access to mental health services. Born This Way Foundation, an organisation that shares our values, is a critical partner in making this goal a reality," said Peter Johnson, CEO of Cotton On.

Established in 2007, Cotton On Foundation has raised over AUD \$170m to support youth globally and is proud to be expanding their impact in the mental health space through this collaboration. Beyond the product line, the collaboration will also support Born This Way Foundation initiatives, including the 'Be There Certificate,' a free online course created in partnership with Jack.org, that provides participants with the knowledge to support peers facing mental health challenges.

To ensure widespread impact, this partnership also calls on young people globally to nominate local mental health organisations in Australia, Brazil, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom, and United States; selected nominees will receive funding up to R 2,500,000 (\$150,000) per country as part of Born This Way Foundation's 'Kindness in Community Fund,' expanding the availability of resources to support mental health in communities where Cotton On operates.

"We are passionate about building supportive communities where collectively we can create positive change," said Tim Diamond, general manager of Cotton On Foundation. "Our unique fundraising model brings our team and customers together to give back – it's pretty incredible. When we established our foundation 15 years ago, we never thought we would be where we are today. We are proud and humbled to be partnering with Born This Way Foundation to increase access for young people to mental health resources and positively impact the communities where we live and work."

Prioritising mental health

Cotton On Foundation and Born This Way Foundation aim to impact young people globally and ignite a transformative movement that prioritises mental health and gives younger generations the tools to take action. With one in seven young people aged 10-19 worldwide experiencing mental health challenges, particularly depression and anxiety, and many unable to access support services, this partnership seeks to increase community-based mental health resources for young people and foster kinder communities, leading up to World Mental Health Day on October 10th, 2023.

"Free and accessible mental health resources, particularly online resources, helped me learn more about how I was feeling and feel less alone as I sought support," said Nikoletta, Born This Way Foundation advisory board member. "I came across several mental health organisations online that provided accessible articles, videos, and referral information. These resources made me realise that many other young people go through similar experiences and helped me let go of my shame. Because of that, I was more open to seeking and asking for support when I needed it. The best part is all these resources were free to me."

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