Whole School Approaches to Mental Health

Generation Next
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Mental Health
“A state of wellbeing in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”
 Planning for whole school change

 Professional learning, shared understanding and focus for staff

 Partnerships with parents and carers, health and community agencies

 Action within and beyond the classroom
KEY MESSAGES

✓ Connectedness is key
✓ Common language and understanding are essential
✓ Wellbeing is everyone’s business
✓ Help seeking is the norm
✓ Improving mental health improves learning
A whole school approach to mental health involves:

Enhancing school environments so that young people feel safe, valued, engaged & purposeful.

Development of social and emotional skills

Hearing the voice of children & young people.

Developing strategies to enable a continuum of support for students with additional needs

Collaboration between families, schools & health.
Risk and protective factors

Risk factors – Increase the likelihood of a child or young person experiencing mental health difficulties or a disorder.

Protective factors – Act to strengthen a child or young person’s mental health and wellbeing and improve resistance to risk factors, making it less likely that they will develop mental health difficulties.
Risk and protective factors

- Child abilities and needs
- Family circumstances and relationships
- School practices and environment
- Life Events opportunities and stressors
- Societal access, inclusion and social cohesion
The presence of more protective factors, regardless of the number of risk factors, has been shown to lower the level of risk.
Resilience
RESILIENCE

The capacity to deal constructively with change or challenge, allowing the person to maintain or re-establish their social and emotional wellbeing in the face of difficult events.

It involves thoughts, feelings and actions.

Whole School Matters Sept 2008 draft p11
You are here: Home » Resources and Downloads » Staff Matters

Staff Matters

The Staff Matters website provides information and professional development ideas for promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

The resources on the site use a universal and health literacy approach within the educational context.

Staff Matters is a key Focus Module of the professional development program and the MindMatters school implementation and recognition process. Consult the Professional Development Calendar for specific dates in each state and territory.

Mental Health Help for pressing and individual mental health and work issues should be obtained directly from national helplines and mental health information and/or employer and union websites.
Fostering Mental Health and Resilience

- Develop appropriate school policies and procedures for everyday functions
- Create alliances between the school, parents, caregivers, families and services
- Promote resilience among staff as well as students
- Encourage help-seeking
- Deliver coherent social and emotional curriculum
- Focus on caring and encouraging relationships
- Enhance protective factors
Health Promoting Schools Framework

- Curriculum Teaching and Learning
- Organisation Ethos and Environment
- Partnerships and Services

Mind Matters

Principals Australia Institute www.pai.edu.au
Component 1: Positive school community

Component 2: Social and emotional learning for students

Component 3: Working with parents and carers

Component 4: Helping children with mental health difficulties
Schools can enhance mental health in young people when they build caring relationships, provide opportunities for participation and contribution, set high but achievable expectations and facilitate the development of social and emotional skills and spiritual understandings.
Continuum of connection
Community

Caring relationships and connections
High but achievable expectations

Authentic participation and contribution
Social & Emotional skills & spiritual understandings

mindmatters
Creating a Whole Student Approach

Student
Strongest predictors of a ‘yes’

- smiles at me
- says hello to me
- talks to me
- shows he/she is proud of me and
- takes an interest in what I do

Moderate predictors

- organises fun activity
- notices my effort
- sets interesting work
- encourages me to join in
- helps me learn from my mistakes

Youth Perspectives on Relationship and learning conference presentation Helen Cahill, Australian Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne
Teaching help seeking

• *teach it as a strength*
• *be explicit*
• *model it*
• *Building a help seeking culture*
Australian Partners in Wellbeing for Secondary Schools

**mindmatters.edu.au**
MindMatters: a whole school mental health and wellbeing framework, offering tools and free professional learning for all secondary school communities. Implemented by Principals Australia Institute.

**beyondblue.org.au/senseability**
SenseAbility: a strengths based resilience program with modules and resources designed for those working with young Australians aged 12-18, from beyondblue.

**teachers.reachoutpro.com.au**
ReachOut Teachers Network: mental health and wellbeing teaching resources and online training activities; an initiative of the Inspire Foundation.

**headstrong.org.au**
HeadStrong: the creative way of thinking, talking, and teaching about mood disorders and resilience. A free to download curriculum resource for Health and Physical Education teachers, from the Black Dog Institute.

**responseability.org**
Response Ability: aims to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people; an initiative of the Department of Health and Ageing, implemented by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health.

**headspace.org.au**
headspace: the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. headspace School Support provides information and assistance to Australian secondary schools affected by suicide.
WHAT’S ONE LITTLE THING YOU CAN DO?
KidsMatter Primary
www.kidsmatter.edu.au

MindMatters
www.mindmatters.edu.au