Eudunda Area School
- growing wellbeing step by step

Focus on wellbeing
Eudunda Area School has been a health-promoting school for about ten years and it advocates health and wellbeing across the primary and secondary classes.

Different programs in the school provide opportunities for students to be involved in activities and these include a focus on healthy eating, participation in the annual Australian International Pedal Prix and an open girls’ football team.

The school had been involved in MindMatters which had been incorporated into the Pastoral Care program. When the Success Coordinator, Jenelle Draper, heard about KidsMatter Primary she thought it would be an important addition to the way that the school worked with the ideas and practices of social, emotional and physical wellbeing and success.

“... I liked the idea of KidsMatter Primary being a two – three year process. We can take small steps to bring about change. The KidsMatter Primary initiative needs the involvement of lots of people in the school community. They will ‘get’ the big picture through learning about wellbeing of children and young people and talking the same language.”

Jenelle Draper, Success Coordinator

Launching KidsMatter
The school hosted the Youth Connection Day at the end of Term 2 this year. The aims were to create an innovative event to launch KidsMatter Primary within the school; highlight the importance of a positive school community; make links to the local services and businesses; and really involve the local community in understanding the emotional health of young people.

A Year 4 student described her experience of the day:

Student Leadership Team
Leadership is an important aspect of the school, and students from every year level make up the Student Leadership Committee. All student leaders are members of the significant committees in the school. The Committee meets fortnightly and leaders report back on meetings they attend within the school community.

It has been an important part of the school structure for over four years and the leaders are involved in making decisions about events that involve students. The student leaders have developed a Mission Statement which concentrates the idea of being ‘change agents’ in the school.
The KidsMatter teamwork activities were fun and interesting. Especially having to work together to hold up the gravity pole. We learnt that everyone is important to get the job done.

“... It was a good way to get the name of KidsMatter Primary out there. With the help and guidance of the KidsMatter Primary framework, we aim to develop stronger relationships, improve mental health of students and promote learning for life.

Jenelle Draper,
Success Coordinator

Steps in planning Youth Connection Day
The local council funded the event and the preparations involved inviting community members to connect with the school by contributing to stalls placed along the main street which was closed off to traffic for more than half a day. The staff learned about KidsMatter at a staff meeting. Teachers agreed that it was a positive initiative and its effectiveness could be enhanced by introducing it over time. The formal launch was a public way to attract the community to understand more about young people and emotional health. The Success Coordinator went to the Student Leadership Team and asked for help to plan the event. The student leaders generated the idea of the Purple Brick Road which involved inviting community services such as St John’s; Scouts; drug education and KidsMatter and local businesses to host stalls that provided information and give-away items for students. Other activities offered at the event were a rock-climbing station; a student art exhibition; IT games; story-telling run by older students and a free lunch stall. The Youth Connection Day was a huge success, and more than 250 attended the event.

“We are using the KidsMatter Primary framework and informing parents about the research on the relationship between mental health and wellbeing, and success in learning. We are meeting the goals of the school’s strategic plan to create positive partnerships and build a culture of participation. We’re young in our processes and we are making small steps towards big and small changes.

Jenelle Draper,
Success Coordinator

Wellbeing Action Team
The Wellbeing Action Team consists of the Success Coordinator; the Christian Pastoral Care Support Worker; Early Years Coordinator, a mix of secondary teachers, two Year 10 student leaders plus one Primary Student Leader. These students participate actively in discussions and were responsible for creating the flyer that advertised the Youth and Community Connection Day. This provided them with the opportunity to engage with the community and focus on inclusive community celebration.

Some challenges
Jenelle agrees that there are some challenges for implementing KidsMatter Primary in a combined primary/secondary school. At present, Bounce Back is taught in Reception to Year 9 classes, and it will be introduced in Year 10 in Term 4. Another challenge is to bring the community into the KidsMatter initiative as it has not been actively involved in such a process before. She says that the school is working on what it can bring to the notice of parents and the wider community.

Eudunda Area School
South Australia

- Is in the rural town, Eudunda, about 98 kms NE of Adelaide
- Is a Reception to Year 12 school with 180 students
- Has 60 students in the Primary Unit
- Has a Student Leadership Team
- Has community focus as one of its guiding principles

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