A good fit with Component 1
Hilltop Road Public School is highly regarded as a school that makes positive links with the school and local community. This reputation was highlighted and recognised by the 2011 Outstanding Achievement and Contribution in promoting Social Harmony and Unity in the Community in the New South Wales Cohesive School Community Award.

When staff completed Component 1, Action Team members decided to renew community attention on mental health and wellbeing in a different way. They chose the annual Mothers Day Brunch, which always attracts large numbers of women including mothers; aunties and grandmothers, to enjoy brunch; massages; make-up and fashion stalls as well as health and wellbeing information. The Action Team ‘relaunched’ KidsMatter by hosting a stall alongside local community health agencies.

The team made a large display, ran a continuous slideshow with simple messages like, ‘Do you want your child to be happy?’ and displayed photos and videos from KidsMatter resources. Visitors received a showbag with KidsMatter items after having a conversation at the stall.

We thought: Yes! The KidsMatter framework will support our needs! We were confident that we had a cohesive community, which would enable KidsMatter to be effective. We were interested in the initiative because it addressed the needs of students in terms of mental health and it also assisted our school to be more inclusive of parents and the wider community.

Jane Rowley
Assistant Principal

We were really happy with the response to the Mother’s Day stall. The openness about mental health took us by surprise. We had some wonderful conversations with women related to concerns about their children and also about their own lives. We were able to refer some of the women to other agencies.

Jane Rowley
Assistant Principal
Stress Management program

One stall at the Mother’s Day brunch run by the Cumberland Women’s Health Centre provided a range of information about wellbeing including relaxation techniques. It generated a lot of interest which led to the Centre hosting four one and a half hour sessions on Stress Management in the school Community Resource Centre in Term 3.

The leadership team wanted to make it accessible to a wide range of mothers and provided free child care. The workshops were highly successful and even had a waiting list.

Safely learning about mental health

Following the success of the first workshops the Cumberland Women’s Health Centre offered another set of four workshops on self-esteem.

Opportunities to inform families

The school now takes different approaches to inform families about KidsMatter and mental health and the connections to learning. The families of new students who enrol for Kindergarten in 2013 attend transition sessions.

Parents attending an Expo discover KidsMatter at a dedicated stall and learn about the methodology of teaching social and emotional learning across the school.

All classes allocate a lesson every Tuesday, at the same time, for Bounce Back as part of Component 2.

Teaching the whole child

The commitment to teaching the whole child is highlighted through the evolving implementation of KidsMatter at Hilltop Road Public School.

The focus on Component 2 enabled a group of mothers to ask if they could have a parallel meeting, to understand more about what their children were learning in Bounce Back.

“... KidsMatter has helped us to emphasise mental health in our school. We know that there are different understandings of what is meant by mental health in our families. Due to the response, we understand that community members feel happy and safe enough to attend workshops and learn about the impact of emotional health on other aspects of life.

Jane Rowley
Assistant Principal

... Mental health is part of our core business which is to teach the whole child. We know social and emotional learning underpins academic success. We want students to have a range of social skills, know how to make friends and resolve conflict in a positive way. We want to keep parents informed and include them as much as possible.

KidsMatter has brought our school community even closer together.

Jane Rowley
Assistant Principal

Hilltop Road Public School
New South Wales

- Is about 25 kms west of Sydney CBD near Parramatta
- Enrols 620 students from K – Year 6
- Has the school motto: ‘The School for Me’
- Is culturally diverse with 64 first languages represented in the community

www.hilltoprd-p.schools.nsw.edu.au