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While the resources are available freely for these purposes, to realise the full potential of KidsMatter Primary, it is recommended that the resources be used with the appropriate training and support under the KidsMatter Initiative.

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Last updated in November 2012
What is KidsMatter Primary?

Component 1: Positive school community

Session 1: Understanding mental health and wellbeing

Session 2: Designing a positive school community

Session 3: Relationships and belonging

Session 4: The practices of a positive school community

Facilitator Activity Materials

References
What is KidsMatter Primary?

KidsMatter Primary is a flexible, whole-school approach to children’s mental health and wellbeing for primary schools. It works both on its own and as an umbrella under which a school’s existing programs can comfortably fit. KidsMatter Primary provides the proven methods, tools and support to help schools, parents and carers, health services and the wider community nurture happy, balanced kids.

KidsMatter Primary is a national initiative that aims to contribute to:

- improving student mental health and wellbeing,
- reducing mental health difficulties amongst students, and
- increasing support for students experiencing mental health difficulties.

KidsMatter Primary fosters partnerships between the education and health sectors. KidsMatter Primary takes schools through a two-to-three year cyclical process in which they plan and take action using a comprehensive whole-school approach to mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention. It allows for flexibility and can be tailored to schools’ local needs. In this way, KidsMatter Primary builds on the work schools are already doing to address the mental health and wellbeing of their students through national, state, territory and sector-based mental health initiatives and policies. KidsMatter Primary provides a range of resources and support throughout the implementation journey.

Four components

Schools take action across four areas, known as ‘components’. Research has identified that these are the areas where schools can make a real difference in supporting their students’ mental health and wellbeing. These make up the core content of KidsMatter Primary.

Dividing KidsMatter Primary into the four components is a way of making the task of improving students’ mental health and wellbeing in schools more manageable. It also allows schools to focus their efforts more effectively, and include all the significant people and contexts in children’s lives that may impact on their mental health.

The four components of KidsMatter Primary are interrelated. Each is important for supporting student mental health and wellbeing.

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

To read more about KidsMatter Primary, see the Participant Workbook and website: www.kidsmatter.edu.au.
Component 1: Positive school community

In a positive school community, every face has a place, every voice is valued, and everyone has something to contribute.

Evidence of a positive school community is one in which people are connected with each other, all people’s needs are met, and they are involved in meaningful ways. Research confirms that a positive school community promotes children’s mental health and wellbeing. Children who are mentally healthy will be able to enjoy and benefit from family life, relationships and educational opportunities, as well as to contribute to society in age-appropriate ways. They will also be in a better position to adapt to change and cope with life’s stressors. Mentally healthy students arrive at school ready to learn and are more likely to achieve success.

Although KidsMatter Primary focuses on children’s mental health and wellbeing, a positive sense of community is important for everyone at school.

Target Areas

1. A school community that promotes mental health and wellbeing

2. Respectful relationships, belonging and inclusion

Goals

- School staff understand the importance of mental health and wellbeing, its impact on learning, and the significant contributions schools can make to improving student mental health.
- School staff have an understanding of their school community.
- School staff expect and model respectful and responsive relationships within the school community.
- Belonging and inclusion for all school community members is specifically addressed in school strategic planning, policies and practices.
- The school environment and communication reflects the diversity of the school community.
- School leadership and staff create opportunities for students, staff, families and the wider community to be involved in a range of school activities and contribute to school planning.

To read more, see the Component 1 literature summary in the ‘Additional reading’ section of the CD presentation, and the KidsMatter website: www.kidsmatter.edu.au.
Component 1 professional learning

Key learning outcomes

Component 1 professional learning helps participants recognise the importance of a positive school community in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their students. Specifically, participants should be able to:

1. Understand mental health and wellbeing, and how it’s integral to improving educational outcomes for students.

2. Understand the factors that help create a positive school community, and how it promotes mental health and wellbeing.

3. Identify the practices individuals and the school use to create a positive school community, and the things that could be improved.
What it covers

Component 1 professional learning is conducted over four sessions and can be delivered as a one four-hour session, or as four one-hour sessions.

This session enables participants to...

SESSION 1
Understanding mental health and wellbeing
- learn about KidsMatter Primary and Component 1
- develop a shared understanding of mental health and wellbeing
- understand the risk and protective factors for mental health
- value schools working with other significant people in children’s lives as major protective factors for students

SESSION 2
Designing a positive school community
- understand the elements of a positive school community, and how it protects mental health and wellbeing
- reflect on the factors that enhance or inhibit a sense of community at school
- consider the elements in their school that could be enhanced and how to go about designing a positive school community

SESSION 3
Relationships and belonging
- recognise the importance of relationships and a sense of belonging in a positive school community
- consider practical ways to invest in their relationships with students to promote their sense of belonging, particularly for students who may not feel like they belong

SESSION 4
The practices of a positive school community
- understand the impact of feeling included or excluded from a school community
- embrace diversity and develop practices that help people feel included and involved at school
- bring together all the concepts discussed throughout the professional learning that help to create and sustain a positive school community.
Whole-school staff professional learning in KidsMatter Primary

Implementing KidsMatter Primary successfully requires the active participation of the whole-school community. Each of the four KidsMatter Primary components has a professional learning package designed to be delivered to all school staff by you, the facilitator.

Whole-school professional learning can help staff to:

• develop a shared understanding of children’s mental health and wellbeing and recognise the important role that staff play
• understand different school community perspectives, including those of parents, carers and students
• further understand what contributes to children’s mental health and wellbeing
• view examples of good practice and have the opportunity to practise specific skills
• identify avenues or opportunities to enhance their school’s practices relevant to each component
• contribute to the planning for implementation of KidsMatter Primary at their school.

Each component package contains three-to-four hours of content relating to the KidsMatter Primary target areas, and includes:

• a Facilitator Guide
• a CD presentation (including videos and slides)
• a Participant Workbook
• additional reading.

During a typical professional learning session, it’s the job of the facilitator to:

• understand the mental health, wellbeing, and educational concepts
• explain the concepts to the participants
• ask participants to make sense of the concepts, based on their own experiences, by facilitating discussions
• highlight key points for each concept, as noted in the Facilitator Guide
• answer any questions that may be raised by participants (or take questions on notice and respond at a later time)
• invite staff to complete the online feedback form at the completion of the training session.

The presentation process requires facilitators to:

• play video footage of health and education experts explaining key mental health concepts and illustrative school case studies
• lead participants in activities and discussions that relate to concepts presented in the videos and slides.
The professional learning component package supports facilitators to:

- provide consistent ‘gold standard’ presentation of complex mental health and wellbeing concepts
- provide consistent timing of delivery throughout sessions
- engage participants through activities and discussion
- accommodate multiple learning styles through the use of case studies, interviews, animated graphics as well as text-based resources
- offer actual (‘real world’) case studies of KidsMatter Primary to inspire and model implementation in schools.

The professional learning packages have been developed according to a number of adult learning principles. There are a range of models and theories that describe how adults learn best, but a common set of key principles proposed by Bryan, Kreuter and Brownson (2009) is that adults:

- are goal-oriented and need to know why they are learning
- are motivated to learn by the need to solve problems – they are practical and tend to focus on aspects of training that will be most useful to them in their work
- have life experiences and knowledge that they bring to a learning environment – this should be respected and built upon in training
- are relevancy-oriented and need learning approaches to match their needs
- are self-directed and autonomous – they need to be involved in the learning process in a collaborative manner and have the opportunity to shape their learning process.

These sessions have also been based on the following learning and training principles:

- Content must be evidence-based (Mitchell, 1999).
- A combination of didactic and interactive training is most effective for learning (Forsetlund et al., 2009).
- A range of primary and secondary learning strategies and media should be used to cater for different learning styles and to provide opportunities to reinforce learning (Davis, Thomson, Oxman, & Haynes, 1995).
- Practical activities are most effective in leading to change in practice (Hodges, Inch, & Silver, 2001).
- New learning should be explicitly linked to prior knowledge and opportunities should be provided for broader application (Dewey, 1938; Loucks-Horsely, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 2003).
- Learning should be evaluated (Deane, Crowe, King, Kavanagh, & Oades, 2006).
Getting ready for delivery

You have been identified as a facilitator (or co-facilitator). You may be a member of the Action Team or an external support person or critical friend with relevant expertise. You will also have attended training to deliver the Component 1 professional learning to all school staff.
Role of the Action Team

The Action Team is made up of representatives of the school community and is responsible for planning and driving the implementation of KidsMatter Primary.

The Action Team plays a central role during the professional learning event. Members will need forewarning that there is an opportunity for them to report on Component 1 during Session 1. This report will include work commenced to date, such as the ‘How might KidsMatter Primary build on what we are already doing?’ activity from the Getting Started event, and initial results of the KidsMatter Primary surveys.

The Action Team can also assist you in the delivery of the professional learning, and can:

• provide a context to understand the school community so you can tailor the session if necessary – the information must be meaningful to participants
• write down and collate ideas generated during the session for further action
• take away the suggestions, ideas and questions from the session to inform their planning – specific gaps may require further discussion or action at a staff meeting
• help with logistics – eg scheduling school staff and session times
• provide administrative support – eg photocopying materials, identifying space for physical activities
• email to staff the Component 1 literature summary (found in the ‘Additional reading’ section of the CD presentation) for pre-reading ahead of the training session.

Some general topics to help you and the Action Team reflect on the school are provided below.

Points for discussion prior to session delivery:

• What is the current knowledge of staff about KidsMatter Primary?
  • Has the school staff briefing presentation been conducted yet (available on the website)?
  • What is the current attitude of staff towards KidsMatter Primary?
• Are there any particular staff wellbeing issues that need to be considered?
• Who will be present and/or invited to the whole-school professional learning sessions (teaching staff, administration staff, support staff, parents and carers, community members)?
• Where is the school up to in its KidsMatter Primary implementation?
  • Has the school completed the KidsMatter Primary surveys?
  • Have staff completed the ‘How might KidsMatter Primary build on what we are already doing?’ activity from the Getting Started training?
  • In what other ways has the school community been consulted about the issue of mental health and wellbeing?
• Has the Action Team started its component planning?
• How will the Action Team incorporate ideas from the professional learning?
• To allow more time for the Action Team report in Session 1, consider providing all staff with a general recap on KidsMatter Primary at the staff meeting prior to the training session.
• If you will be including parents and carers in the training session, be especially mindful of the need for student/family privacy and confidentiality.

Additional points for the delivery of Component 1:

• How does the school describe their community? Who is it made up of?
• Are there any specific issues for this school that need to be considered when delivering a session on promoting a positive school community?
• What work is already being done to promote a positive school community?
• What are the strengths and challenges the school is facing?
• What is the school hoping to get out of the professional learning?
• What changes are possible or likely in the school community in coming years (eg changes in demographics, school staffing, student population)?

The responses to the KidsMatter Primary surveys are particularly useful for determining the strengths and challenges in the school community.
### Your checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>CHECK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FACILITATOR MATERIALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CD presentation*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator Guide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Workbook</td>
<td>1 per participant</td>
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<td><strong>GENERAL MATERIALS</strong></td>
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<td>Sticky notes</td>
<td>For each table</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Butcher’s paper or a whiteboard</td>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markers</td>
<td>1 set</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pens</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Diversity Walk – profiles</td>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Walk – facilitator instructions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking out our school environment – facilitator instructions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Component 1 information sheets for school staff, parents and carers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Details of the Employee Assistance Program (see page 12)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The CD presentation can be played on a computer. Ensure that the video can be heard easily by all participants.*
Self care and personal disclosures

Talking about childhood and school experiences can sometimes trigger unpleasant memories for people – even facilitators. This often occurs when people discuss feelings of exclusion.

It’s important to remind participants at the beginning of each session that the KidsMatter Primary materials focus on the children they work with and their families. Although sharing thoughts and ideas is important, the disclosure of personal stories is not advised.

Participants should also avoid using the names of students or families during group discussions.

It’s a good idea to have a list of contacts available for participants (either school or community-based agencies) in the event that personal feelings arise that they would like to address further. Include the contact details of any employee assistance programs (EAPs) available to school staff. Again, the school Action Team and external support or critical friend can help to identify the relevant personnel within the school.

Some useful contacts for adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TELEPHONE</th>
<th>WEBSITE</th>
<th>SERVICE PROVIDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifeline</td>
<td>13 11 14</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beyondblue</td>
<td>1300 224 636</td>
<td><a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANE Australia</td>
<td>1800 187 263</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sane.org">www.sane.org</a></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Psychological Society (APS)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.psychology.org.au/FindaPsychologist">www.psychology.org.au/FindaPsychologist</a></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Symbols used in this guide

- Group discussion
- Reflection
- Activity
- Video
Understanding mental health and wellbeing
Session 1:
Understanding mental health and wellbeing

What it covers
This session enables participants to:

• learn about KidsMatter Primary and Component 1
• develop a shared understanding of mental health and wellbeing
• understand the risk and protective factors for mental health
• value schools working with other significant people in children’s lives as major protective factors for students.

Session outline

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TIME (minutes)</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SESSION 1 Understanding mental health and wellbeing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Start

5

Introductory activity: Carousel

KidsMatter Primary recap

10

Introduction to Component 1
- Video 1: Introduction to Component 1
- Video 2: Little things can make a big difference

20

What is mental health?
- Discussion: What is mental health?
- Video 3: What is mental health?
- Video 4: Why is mental health important at school?

40

Risk and protective factors
- Discussion: What helps and hinders children?
- Video 5: Risk and protective factors

55

Summary

60
Component 1: Positive school community

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay my respects to Elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.
# Component 1: Session 1

## Facilitator Notes

### Slide 1
**Component 1: Positive school community**

**Notes**
- Welcome participants to the first KidsMatter Primary professional learning session for their school.

### Slide 2
**KidsMatter Primary collaborating organisations**

**Notes**

### Slide 3
**Acknowledgement of Country**

**Notes**
- Acknowledge the traditional owners of the land you’re gathered on. Personalise this as you wish.
- Acknowledgement of Country is a way for the wider community to demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Component 1: Positive school community

WHAT'S NEXT?

5 things about KidsMatter Primary

1. A flexible, whole-school approach to mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.
2. A framework—not a program.
3. Enables schools to identify how they can better support students’ mental health and wellbeing across 4 components.
## Introductory activity: Carousel

**5 min**

**Purpose**
To begin to establish a safe professional learning environment, and orient participants to the content of the session.

**Instructions**
1. Number participants off as ‘ones’ and ‘twos’.
2. Ask participants to form two circles (‘ones’ on the inside, ‘twos’ on the outside) so they are facing a partner.
3. Ask the following questions (after each question, ask the outside circle to move two people to their right so that they are discussing their answer with a different person each time):
   - **Where would you rather be right now?**
     This question is intended to release any tension participants may have about attending the session. When participants consider where they would rather be, they often think of safe or relaxing environments – you can explain that is the kind of environment you hope to create today.
   - **What would you like your students saying about your school when they leave?**
   - **What do you like your students saying about you when they leave?**
     These questions tap into participants’ values and vision about the kind of school, and professional (or parent, if applicable), they want to be. This is intended to orient participants to the content of the session by creating a space for reflecting on the school environment and experiences they want to provide for their students.
   - **What do you expect this professional learning to be about?**
     This is an opportunity to gain insight into any expectations and assumptions participants hold about the session, which you can address in your introduction and throughout delivery. Clarify that your role as facilitator is not to provide all the answers, but to help participants develop their own ideas for what will work in their school setting.

**Conclusion**
Invite volunteers to share their answers to each question (noting that the second and third questions relate to each other and can be discussed together). Draw on themes in participants’ responses that allow you to introduce the content of this professional learning – promoting a positive school community.
Component 1: Positive school community

SLIDE 6
5 things about KidsMatter Primary

1. A flexible, whole-school approach to mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.
2. A framework – not a program.
3. Enables schools to identify how they can better support students’ mental health and wellbeing across 4 components.

SLIDE 7
5 things about KidsMatter Primary

4. Driven by a school Action Team.
5. Independently evaluated and shown to be effective.

SLIDE 8
Report from the Action Team

WHAT'S NEXT?
Purpose of the professional learning

- To increase awareness and understanding as a staff group of what contributes to student mental health and wellbeing.
- To encourage ALL staff to have a voice in contributing to planning for improving students’ mental health and wellbeing.
**SLIDE 6**

5 things about KidsMatter Primary

Key messages

- KidsMatter Primary is a whole-school framework for supporting students’ mental health and wellbeing. It is informed by current evidence about children’s mental health and wellbeing, and enables schools to systematically plan actions for mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.

- The framework allows schools to tailor their actions to their local needs - rather than a single, prescriptive program – and is supported by an implementation process and a range of evidence-based resources.

- Schools take action across four areas – known as ‘components’ – that research shows can make a real difference to student’s mental health and wellbeing:
  - 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 audit what they are doing well and what they could do better across each component. Strategies are developed for implementation within and beyond the classroom.

**SLIDE 7**

5 things about KidsMatter Primary

Key messages

- The Action Team drives KidsMatter Primary in schools, and is responsible for representing and incorporating the views of all school community members into the planning for each component.

- KidsMatter Primary was successfully piloted in 100 schools nationally during 2007 and 2008 and was shown to be effective in achieving mental health and wellbeing outcomes for students.

- Refer to the Participant Workbook for more information and the KidsMatter website for resources and background reading.

**SLIDE 8**

Report from the Action Team

Notes

- Ask the Action Team to introduce themselves to participants.

- This is an important opportunity for the Action Team to provide a brief summary of the school’s starting point in Component 1 using the:
  - ‘How might KidsMatter Primary build on what we are already doing?’ activity from the Getting Started event (and later provided to all staff), outlining the strategies already taking place to promote a positive school community
  - results of the KidsMatter Primary surveys (and any other available data) which highlights the strengths and challenges in the school community. Report on only the main themes arising as the topics will be explored together during the session.

- It’s not uncommon for schools to initially rate themselves quite positively in the Component 1 Staff Survey. An important part of this professional learning is to invite staff to test the assumptions they hold about their school, and enquire into whether the perceptions of staff are shared by all members of the school community.
COMPONENT 1: SESSION 1

SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 9
Purpose of the professional learning
- To increase awareness and understanding as a staff group of what contributes to student mental health and wellbeing.
- To encourage ALL staff to have a voice in contributing to planning for improving students’ mental health and wellbeing.

SLIDE 10
A positive learning community

What do we need from each other to get the most out of today?

WHAT’S NEXT?
Why and what?

Why are we here?  What are we going to do?
**SLIDE 9**

**Purpose of the professional learning**

**Key messages**
- KidsMatter Primary professional learning serves two purposes (outlined on slide).
- The professional learning:
  - is a forum for your opinions and ideas
  - marks the beginning of an ongoing conversation about mental health and wellbeing in the school
  - enables the Action Team to incorporate all staff views and suggested approaches into their strategic planning for each component.

**Notes**
- Once school staff understand the KidsMatter Primary approach and how the Component 1 concepts relate to their school, they will be ready to engage more broadly with the whole-school community (through Action Team planning).

**SLIDE 10**

**A positive learning community**

**Notes**
- It can be useful to name mental health and wellbeing as the area of focus for the professional learning.
- This professional learning encourages all participants to contribute their views and ideas, so it’s important that they feel safe doing so.
- It is recommended you ask participants how they wish to work so as to ensure the session promotes the voice of all staff in a respectful space.
- If you’re presenting to a group you know well, reminding them of your existing working agreement may be sufficient – it’s strongly suggested you discuss this, however, so that expectations are clear.
- It can be helpful to record and display suggested rules and refer to them as needed throughout the session.
- It is important to remind participants that they will have various experiences themselves (or with families) that may be triggered during discussions. This prompt can ensure that participants are aware and mindful of each other’s needs during the session.

**Background information**

Common working agreements/ground rules for a successful session:
- Listen to each other
- Respect different perspectives
- Share only what you are comfortable sharing
- Respect confidentiality
- Engage in one conversation at a time

The Participant Workbook includes a list of support services in the event that any issues arise for participants on a personal level. The school’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may also be a useful source of support to mention. The Action Team may like to display the EAP phone number in the staff room.
Component 1: Positive school community

Slide 11: Why and what?
- Why are we here?
- What are we going to do?

Slide 12: Video 1
- Introduction to COMPONENT

Session Overview
- Slide 11
- Slide 12
- Slide 13
- Slide 14
- Slide 15
- Slide 16
- Slide 17
- Slide 18
- Slide 19
- Slide 20

What's next?
- Video 2
**Why and what?**

**Key messages**
- **Why are we here?**
  - To begin a journey of reflection and growth about the way our school supports students’ mental health and wellbeing.
  - To raise awareness of strengths and challenges in our school community.
- **What are we going to do?**
  - Build a shared understanding of mental health and wellbeing, and the factors and practices that enhance and inhibit our sense of community.
  - Build a strong foundation for our school to further address the big issues relating to mental health and wellbeing.

**Notes**
- Narrow the focus from introducing KidsMatter Primary in general, to beginning Component 1.
- Explicitly communicate the objectives of the professional learning as well as the process to be undertaken.
- Encourage participants to look for opportunities to enhance their own professional practice and the way their school supports students’ mental health and wellbeing as well as reflect upon what already works well.

**Video 1: Introduction to Component 1**

**Purpose**
To introduce the content of Component 1 to participants.

**Instructions**
1. Play Video 1 (1:28).
2. Clarify understandings of Component 1 by inviting any comments, questions, or concerns, and then summarise in line with the video’s key messages.

**Key messages**
- Component 1 looks at the benefits of a positive school community for student mental health and wellbeing, and also educational outcomes (eg students get along better with others, are more fully engaged in their learning, and feel more positively about themselves).
- Component 1 invites schools to discuss what a ‘positive school community’ means to them. The challenge is to celebrate aspects of their community that are positive, while critically reflecting on areas to improve in order to become more positive for all members of the community.
WHAT'S NEXT?

Discussion

What is mental health?
SLIDE 13

Video 2: Little things can make a big difference

Purpose

To present a concrete example of one school’s Component 1 strategy early in the session to help participants develop a clearer understanding of what action their school could take.

Instructions

1. Describe the following Component 1 strategy from Wagaman Primary School:
   
   To help students and their families feel more welcome and included at school, Wagaman Primary School in the Northern Territory identified all of the different nationalities in their school community and replaced the traditional school bell with music from each of the nationalities that make up their school.

2. Play Video 2 (0:43).

3. Briefly discuss the impact of this strategy on the family using the following prompt questions:
   - What did you notice? (prompt for visible responses from the parents: eg pleasure, surprise, satisfaction, sense of being noticed and respected)
   - Why do you think this strategy had such a big impact on this family?
   - What would it be like to now work with this family as a staff member?
   - How would this help their child and your student?
   - What planning might have taken place to come up with this strategy?

Key messages

- It can sometimes be hard to understand, at first, exactly what schools need to do for each of the KidsMatter Primary components – concrete examples help.
- Small, well-planned strategies can have a big impact on people’s experience of a school community.
- This strategy was simple, but it required a lot of planning and problem-solving using the KidsMatter Primary implementation process – a rich understanding of the school community and school perceptions is required to use this process successfully.
Component 1: Positive school community

Component 1: Session 1

Slide Order

Slide 14
Discussion
What is mental health?

Slide 15
Video 3

What’s Next?

Video 4
Why is mental health important at school
**Discussion: What is mental health?**

1 **Purpose**
   To stimulate discussion and develop a shared, holistic understanding of mental health as a staff group.

2 **Materials**
   - ‘What is mental health?’ worksheet in the *Participant Workbook* (page 13)
   - Whiteboard/butcher’s paper and markers

3 **Instructions**
   1. Ask participants to spend **one minute** writing on their worksheet any words or associations that come to mind when they think of mental health. Encourage them to write freely, without filtering their thoughts too much.
   2. Return to the whole group, and ask volunteers to share what they’ve written. Write responses on a whiteboard or butcher’s paper.
   3. **Play Video 3** (2:33), which offers a variety of perspectives on mental health from students, parents, and experts.
   4. Compared to what was written on the whiteboard/butcher’s paper, ask:
      - *What stood out to you?*
      - *What do these perspectives add to our understanding of mental health?*
      - *Did we tend to focus on the negative side of mental health or the positive side? Why might that be?*
      - *Is having good mental health about always being happy? Why? Why not?*
      - *Is ‘resilience’ the same as or different from mental health? Why?*
      - *How important are the relationships we have with other people to our mental health?*

4 **Conclusion**
   Draw together participants’ responses and articulate the key elements of a holistic understanding of mental health. Mental health is complex, and developing a shared understanding as a whole staff group may take time. This discussion is a starting point for an ongoing conversation across the school community – a range of mental health definitions are included in the *Participant Workbook* (page 14) that may assist.

**Background information**
- Mental health is how we think or feel about ourselves and what is going on around us, and how we cope with the ups and downs of life.
- Mental health is not mental illness or ‘problems’ or ‘difficulties’. Mental health is part of our overall sense of wellbeing and includes the positive aspects that create a fulfilling and meaningful life (eg confidence, optimism, persistence).
- Mental health is not about being happy all the time, but being able to manage life’s challenges effectively in ways that enable us to live a life we value.
- We know from research that children experience a range of challenges and stressors in their day-to-day life. Component 1 focuses on promoting positive mental health for every child, while Component 4 focuses on mental health difficulties that children can experience.
- Respectful and responsive relationships form the foundation of good mental health, especially for children.
Component 1: Positive school community

WHAT’S NEXT?

Discussion

What helps and hinders children?
Video 4: Why is mental health important at school?

Mental health is our core business

Purpose
To provide participants with a rationale for why mental health matters at school.

Instructions
1. Play Video 4 (2:00).
2. Ask participants:
   - What comments stood out in the video for you?
   - How does promoting ‘mental health’ fit with the work we already do for ‘wellbeing’?

   The message here is that mental health is part of our overall sense of wellbeing.
3. Use Slide 17 to reinforce the impact of effective mental health initiatives on educational outcomes:
   - Major international studies demonstrate that schools see significant academic improvement in their students when they embed comprehensive mental health and wellbeing practices throughout the school.
   - The pilot evaluation showed that KidsMatter Primary appears to be positively associated with the level of student academic achievement, equivalent to six months more schooling by Year 7 (over and above any influence of socioeconomic background).

Key messages
- Schools are a main place where people gather and, as such, provide a rich opportunity for children to develop their social health – an important part of mental health.
- Children with good mental health are more able to persist in learning, confront challenges, and eventually gain mastery.
- Children who are mentally healthy are more motivated and committed, have positive relationships with others, and are better placed to meet life’s challenges.
### Purpose

To develop participants’ understandings of the risk and protective factors for mental health, and highlight the significant impact of protective factors at school.

### Materials

- List of risk and protective factors for children’s mental health in the *Participant Workbook* (page 15)
- Whiteboard/butcher’s paper and markers

### Instructions

1. Convene a whole-group discussion about the things that help and hinder children’s learning in their setting across the following three areas: students, family, and school. Write responses on a whiteboard or butcher’s paper.

2. Invite the group to think about the things that help and hinder children’s mental health in the same three areas. Direct participants to the list of risk and protective factors to fill any gaps.

3. Ask participants:
   - *Are the factors that influence mental health any different to the factors that influence learning?*

   The message here is that the factors that influence learning are largely the same as the factors that influence mental health. By addressing these factors, schools will be effective in both promoting mental health and educational outcomes.

4. **Play Video 5 (4:13),** which confirms understandings of risk and protective factors and the role school plays.

5. **Use Slide 20** to explain the socio-ecological model in which the school is a significant part of an interacting system around a child. Every setting has a role to play in supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing – the best outcomes are achieved when the main people in children’s lives come together.

### Conclusion

Family is most important in a child’s life, but the school environment, school staff, and peers (particularly for older students) can also provide risk or protective factors for students. School may be the only environment where some students can access supportive and responsive adults.

### Key messages

- There are many things that help or hinder a child’s mental health or wellbeing – these are known as risk and protective factors.
- **Risk factors** increase the likelihood or risk of experiencing a mental health difficulty.
- **Protective factors** act to strengthen mental health and wellbeing, or improve resistance to risk factors making them less likely to develop mental health difficulties.
- Research has shown that the presence of just one protective factor for a child who may have many identified risk factors can be enough to protect that child from developing a mental health difficulty.
- Schools are well-placed to promote children’s mental health – by being supportive, and implementing strategies that may help to reduce the number of risk factors and enhance the number of protective factors present in a child’s life.
SLIDE 21

School as a protective factor

SLIDE 22

Session 1 summary

- Mental health is:
  - how we think or feel about ourselves and what is going on around us
  - how we cope with the ups and downs of life.
- Academic results and educational outcomes are enhanced when we support mental health and wellbeing.

SLIDE 23

Session 1 summary

- KidsMatter Primary helps schools celebrate and strengthen the protective factors they provide for their students.
- KidsMatter Primary brings together the significant people and settings in children’s lives.

END OF SESSION
SLIDE 21

School as a protective factor

Key messages

• Research shows that many school staff report feeling stressed and under-prepared to manage the responsibility that comes with nurturing the mental health and wellbeing of their students. Considering all the other responsibilities and pressures on school staff – it’s important to validate these concerns.

• KidsMatter Primary uses a whole-school approach to supporting wellbeing that respects the boundaries of each staff member’s role. There is much school staff can do to use their existing relationships with students as a protective factor.

• The pilot evaluation showed that by engaging with KidsMatter Primary, school staff enhanced their knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their students.

SLIDE 22

Session 1 summary

SLIDE 23

Notes

• Summary messages for this session are on the slides.

• Completion of this session will depend on whether this professional learning is being run as a single session or multiple sessions. At this stage, it may be helpful to give a brief overview of the session to come.

• Encourage participants to take a moment to reflect on the session, and make a note of any new learnings or ideas on the summary page of their Participant Workbook (page 17).
Designing a positive school community
Session 2:
Designing a positive school community

What it covers
This session enables participants to:

• understand the elements of a positive school community, and how it protects mental health and wellbeing
• reflect on the factors that enhance or inhibit a sense of community at school
• consider the elements in their school that could be enhanced and how to go about designing a positive school community.

Session outline

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TIME (minutes)</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>SESSION 2 Designing a positive school community</td>
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Recap previous session, if necessary

Start

5

Introductory discussion: The feel of a school

What is a positive school community?
Video 6: Building a positive school community

15

Discussion: Our sense of community

35

Component 1 in action
Video 7: Component 1 in action – school story
Reflection circle

55

Summary

60
Component 1: Positive school community

WHAT'S NEXT?

A sense of community is...
"a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared (belief) that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together."

---

Session 2
Designing a positive school community

Discussion
Introductory discussion

COMPONENT 1: SESSION 2
SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 24

SLIDE 25
### Session 2: Designing a positive school community

**Notes**
- If necessary, repeat the summary slides from the first session.
- This may be important if you are running four one-hour sessions.

### Introductory discussion: The ‘feel’ of a school

**Purpose**
To have participants reflect on the signs of a positive school community.

**Instructions**
1. Introduce the idea that every school has a ‘feel’, and it’s one that members of the school and visitors pick up on.
2. Ask participants to think about the positive school communities they’ve worked in or visited, and how being at that school made them feel.
   
   Now invite participants to figure out something that was happening in these positive school communities that helped create that feeling (a key observation) – for example, how reception staff greeted visitors, welcoming signage out the front of the school, a particular quality in the interactions between staff members and students, a quiet, productive environment.
3. Ask the group for volunteers to share their key observations of what they see happening in positive school communities.

**Conclusion**
Highlight that small things often have a powerful impact on the feeling people get from being in a school. Component 1 is about becoming consciously aware of the elements that contribute to the feel of a school.
SLIDE 26

What is a sense of community?

A sense of community is...
“a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared [belief] that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together.”

(Trimble & O’Gara, 1996)

SLIDE 27

What is a positive school community?

A school that surrounds members with protective factors for good mental health.

A cycle of continuous improvement in promoting mental health and well-being in a planned, strategic way.
### Slide 26

**What is a sense of community?**

**Key messages**

- Every school has a ‘feel’ – usually known as its culture, or climate. This can also be referred to as its ‘sense of community’ (definition for a positive sense of community on slide).
- Communities have a powerful influence on their members by helping to meet their mental health and wellbeing needs, which are:
  - To feel respected – treating people in a courteous, thoughtful, and attentive manner.
  - To feel important – communicating to people that they are of value, believed in, and that their opinion matters.
  - To feel accepted – making people feel accepted in their own right, with their own uniqueness.
  - To feel included – making people feel part of things, part of the group, and connected to others.
  - To feel safe and secure – communicating to people that they are cared for, looked after, and protected.
- Schools play a critical role in ensuring that these needs are met for all community members. The ways that schools meet these needs is often informed by legislation, incorporated into policies and implemented on a day-to-day basis in practices – for example, staff wellbeing and bullying policies.

**Notes**

- Although the focus of this session is not on policies as such, it will help staff to increase their shared understandings of the principles that underlie these policies.

### Slide 27

**What is a positive school community?**

**Key messages**

- When a school has a positive sense of community, KidsMatter Primary refers to it as a ‘positive school community’.
- A positive school community surrounds its members, especially students, with protective factors for good mental health. There are many elements to this, but KidsMatter Primary sees the following as central:
  - respectful and responsive relationships
  - a sense of belonging and inclusion
  - opportunities for involvement and contribution.
- When it comes to building a positive community, every school is on a cycle of continuous improvement in promoting mental health in a planned, strategic way.
- Establishing and maintaining a positive school community is always on the agenda, from the regular turnover of staff and families, to the need to respond to the ongoing challenges that present themselves to schools.
Component 1: Positive school community

WHAT’S NEXT?

Our sense of community
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>To stimulate discussion on the qualities of a positive school community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Instructions | 1. Ask participants to think about what they see as the qualities of a positive school community while watching Video 6.  
2. **Play Video 6** (3:58). |
| Key messages | Qualities of a positive school community identified in the video:  
- Welcoming  
- Friendly  
- Safe  
- Opportunities for participation  
- Inclusive communications  
- A sense of excitement  
- Respectful language  
- Positive relationships  
- Fairness  
- A sense of belonging |
Component 1: Positive school community

Component 1: Session 2

Slide Order

Slide 29

Our sense of community

What's next?

Video 7

Component in action: School story
**SLIDE 29**

### Discussion: Our sense of community

**20 min**

**Purpose**

To support participants to explore the factors that influence a sense of community in their school.

**Materials**

- ‘Our sense of community’ list of factors in the Participant Workbook (page 19)
- Sticky notes
- Action Team summary report (from Session 1)

**Instructions**

It’s important for schools to celebrate what they are doing well, but this discussion aims to dig deeper by examining the factors that influence people’s experience of the school. Participants can benefit from exploring different perceptions of the school, and testing their assumptions about the experiences of others.

In preparation, familiarise yourself with the list of factors that enhance and inhibit a school’s sense of community.

1. Building on the introductory activity and Video 6, facilitate a whole group discussion around the following prompt questions:
   - What were the comments in the video that stood out to you?
   - Are there any other qualities of a positive school community you would like to add?
   - Which of the qualities does your school have?
   - What are you already doing well, as an individual and a staff group, to create a positive sense of community?

   Remember to use the summary report provided by the Action Team at the beginning of Session 1 to enrich this discussion.

2. Ask participants to look at the list of factors that enhance and inhibit a sense of community, and write on separate sticky notes:
   - the two most significant factors that enhance a positive sense of community for them
   - the two most significant factors that inhibit a sense of community for them.

   Form small groups to discuss responses.

3. Ask each small group to allocate a spokesperson to feed back to the larger group.

**Conclusion**

Make a summary statement about what the school feels they are doing well to promote a positive school community, and the identified factors they may need to work on. Collect participants’ sticky notes and explain that they will be used by the Action Team to inform their planning around enhancing the sense of community in the school.
WHAT'S NEXT?

Session 2 summary

- A positive school community surrounds its members with protective factors for good mental health and wellbeing.
- Identifying the factors that enhance and inhibit our sense of community helps our school as an organisation systematically plan and implement policies and strategies to create and sustain a positive school community.
**Purpose**

To stimulate discussion about ways to enhance a sense of community.

**Materials**

- ‘Component 1 in action – school story’ worksheet in the *Participant Workbook* (page 20)

**Instructions**

1. Introduce Video 7 as an example of how one school (St Mark’s) went about enhancing their sense of community. Encourage participants to identify what they see as effective strategies used by the school, making notes in their worksheet as they watch.

2. **Play Video 7** (8:40).

3. **Spend 10 minutes** facilitating a reflection circle in which participants take turns around the circle to share their thoughts in response to the video by asking:
   - *What is one thing that stood out to you in this school story?*
   - *What is one thing that you’d like your school to explore further?*

   Depending on the size of the group, conduct this in a large circle, or a number of smaller circles.

   It’s important that participants are allowed to share their reflections without being probed or challenged by anyone else. Examples of the observations that might arise are listed below.

   If participants seem stuck on the differences in the contexts of the school on the video and their own school, encourage them to consider how they could adapt the underlying rationale in their setting.

4. **Draw upon themes in participants’ reflection circle statements that address some of the challenges in their school community identified earlier in the session. Use the Video 7 key messages to fill any gaps on the approach and practices St. Mark’s used to enhance their school community.**

**Key messages**

In the video, St Mark’s:

- Clearly identified and defined the barriers to creating their positive school community.
- Employed strategies to understand who was in their community, and the perspectives they held of the school – rather than assuming what their perspectives were.
- Undertook a comprehensive consultation process to find out what was important to their community – communicating that all perspectives were valid – and used this data to inform their actions.
- Developed an inclusive mindset when planning, and constantly asked the question ‘Have we included everybody?’
- Became actively aware of the contexts and backgrounds of their students before setting learning tasks.
- Ensured there were concrete symbols around the school that represented more than one culture, and that communications were accessible by different cultural groups.
- Were open to suggestions and ideas from their community, and didn’t assume they had all the answers.
- Built relationships through face-to-face contact with parents to encourage involvement in school activities.
- Established a welcoming and friendly environment when people entered the school, and in which members of the community felt heard when they talked to the school.
COMPONENT 1: SESSION 2

SLIDE 31

Session 2 summary

- A positive school community surrounds its members with protective factors for good mental health and wellbeing.
- Identifying the factors that enhance and inhibit our sense of community helps our school as an organisation systematically plan and implement policies and strategies to create and sustain a positive school community.

SLIDE 32

Session 2 summary

- Respectful and responsive relationships are the glue that hold a positive school community together.

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<tr>
<td>SLIDE 32</td>
<td>Session 2 summary</td>
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**Notes**

- Summary messages for this session are on the slides.
- Completion of this session will depend on whether this professional learning is being run as a single session or multiple sessions. At this stage, it may be helpful to give a brief overview of the session to come.
- Encourage participants to take a moment to reflect on the session, and make a note of any new learnings or ideas on the summary page of their Participant Workbook (page 21).
Relationships and belonging

Session 3
Session 3:
Relationships and belonging

What it covers
This session enables participants to:

- recognise the importance of relationships and a sense of belonging in a positive school community
- consider practical ways to invest in their relationships with students to promote their sense of belonging, particularly for students who may not feel like they belong.

Session outline

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<td>Start</td>
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<td>Relationships, belonging and good outcomes</td>
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<td>Discussion: Investing in the relationship bank</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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Component 1: Positive school community

WHAT’S NEXT?

SLIDE ORDER

SLIDE 33

SLIDE 34

WHAT’S NEXT?

SLIDE 35

SLIDE 36

SLIDE 37

SLIDE 38

SLIDE 39

SLIDE 40

Facilitator Guide 56
### SLIDE 33
**Session 3: Relationships and belonging**

**Notes**
- If necessary, repeat the summary slides from the second session.
- This may be important if you are running four one-hour sessions.

### SLIDE 34
**Introductory activity: School memories**

**Purpose**
To use participants' memories of their own schooling to highlight the powerful impact of relationships, and other social and emotional experiences, at school.

**Materials**
- Whiteboard/butto's paper and markers

**Cautionary note**
As with all activities that ask participants to reflect on their past, be wary of drawing out disturbing or uncomfortable memories. Ensure participants understand you are seeking significant positive memories only, and only the experiences they are comfortable sharing. If some participants are unable to recollect any positive memories, discuss what their school could have done to promote more positive relationships.

**Instructions**
1. Introduce the activity with the suggestion that memories of school days can be very powerful. There are usually one or two experiences that continue to resonate throughout our lives. Ask participants to recall a significant positive memory from their school days, one they are comfortable sharing with the group. Then form pairs and tell their story to each other.

2. After a few minutes, ask for volunteers to share their memories with the whole group (for time management, hear from only six-to-eight participants if facilitating a large group). As they are described, place a tick on the whiteboard/butto's paper in one of two columns labelled A and B. Do not tell the participants your reasons for placing the ticks in each column, but column A ticks should represent memories that relate to the formal learning experience, and column B ticks should represent memories of a social or interpersonal nature.

   To get to the true meaning of the memory, you may need to ask some clarifying questions (eg Why has that memory stayed with you? What did it mean to you at the time? And now?).

3. When the responses are recorded, ask if anyone can work out what differentiates the two lists. Typically, column B holds more ticks than column A. Ask the group why they think it's that personal experiences and relationships always form the bulk of memories of school?

   If this pattern does not emerge in your group, discuss the pattern that does emerge and consider possible reasons.

**Conclusion**
This activity reveals that despite spending many years at school focused on academic instruction, it's often experiences of a social or interpersonal nature that we carry with us well into adulthood. Most commonly, participants remember relationships with significant people (teachers, peers, coaches), and moments within that relationship that made them feel special, valued, or like they belonged.

This activity provides a powerful lead into considering the relationships participants currently have with students at school.

(Activity adapted from Butler & colleagues, 2011)
Component 1: Positive school community

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

**Video 8**

**SLIDE 35**

Relationships, belonging and good outcomes

- Relationship qualities:
  - Sensitive, warm, respectful
  - Frequent positive interactions
  - Genuine concern for the other
- Belonging:
  - Feeling valued, accepted and secure

Adapted from Bergh & Bergo, 2009b

- Good outcomes:
  - Improved mental health and well-being
  - More confidence to take on challenges
  - Fewer behavioral problems
  - More positive attitude towards school
  - Increased academic engagement, motivation and achievement

**SLIDE 36**

Activity

Diversity walk

**SLIDE 37**

Debrief

Step out of the role play...
- What did you learn from this activity?
- What significant relationships would the student in your scenario have had at school?
- What's one thing you and your school could do to enable the student to take a step forward (a protective factor)?
SLIDE 35  

**Key messages**

- A school’s sense of community is greatly affected by the quality of the daily interactions between staff and students and families that make up a relationship.
- The relationships identified in the introductory activity of this session are likely to have included a number of qualities that were beneficial for mental health and wellbeing. Typically, these relationships are warm, sensitive and respectful of people’s needs. They also involve frequent, positive interactions where there is a genuine concern for the other’s wellbeing.
- When people have a network of these quality relationships at school, it promotes a sense of belonging.
- A sense of belonging meets our fundamental human need for feeling valued, accepted, respected and cared about by others.
- Students can also experience a sense of belonging, or connectedness, to learning. Students who have strong aspirations and confidence that they will learn at school, and believe in the value of learning, are most likely to strive and persist. They have a belief that they can master new challenges in learning.
- When people feel like they belong, you see people who are positive, connected, interested, engaged, performing well, and are coping with the ups and downs of life. They also experience feelings of comfort and safety, which liberates them to take on challenges and explore new ideas. They feel less isolated from others, and are better able to perform academically and contribute to their school community.
- A sense of belonging is a subjective, personal experience which can take time to develop, and can also change over time. Note how the diagram indicates that regardless of a student’s experience of belonging, quality relationships are beneficial in and of themselves in promoting good outcomes (indicated by the direct arrow).

SLIDE 36  

**Activity: Diversity Walk**  10 min

SLIDE 37  

**Debrief**  15 min

**Purpose**

To demonstrate the different experiences of belonging that students may have in the same school environment – and the many factors that impact on this.

**Materials**

- Copies of the ‘Diversity Walk profiles’ (cut into individual profiles) in the Facilitator Activity Materials (page 88)
- ‘Diversity Walk – facilitator instructions’ in the Facilitator Activity Materials (page 85)

**Instructions**

Conduct the activity as directed in the facilitator instructions (see the Facilitator Activity Materials).

**Conclusion**

Highlight that this representation of students is a lot like their school environment – many children with a range of different factors impacting on their experience of school. Sometimes staff may have very little information about a child and may make assumptions about them. Emphasise the importance of acknowledging and testing our assumptions about students, and how participants can use their relationships with students to find out more about them, and promote their sense of belonging at school.
Component 1: Positive school community

What’s next?

Investing in the relationship bank
### Purpose
To stimulate discussion on how to create a sense of belonging at school.

### Instructions

1. Invite participants to think about the students in their school who may not feel that they belong, and the ways in which they’ve tried to build relationships with them, while watching this video.

2. **Play Video 8 (2:56).**

3. Ask participants:
   - *What stood out in the video for you?*
   - *What impact did the ‘chain gang’ have on students who were disconnected from the classroom and showed some signs of challenging behaviour? Why?*

### Background information on the ‘chain gang’ strategy

Hastings Primary School:
- identified an issue (students becoming disconnected in the classroom, exhibiting behavioural concerns)
- were open to developing a positive strategy to address it when more traditional discipline approaches had not worked
- used an inclusive approach where all interested students could participate in the chain gang
- did some asset mapping of what skills their staff had (eg a support worker with mechanical skills)
- listened to and supported a student’s idea of extending the group to ‘the links’.

### Key messages

- Belonging is a fundamental need of students. Children have to feel that they are important, and not just another number in the school.
- Children who feel that they belong have fewer behavioural issues, and are more likely to get along with their peers.
- Ways in which schools in the video used their relationships to promote a sense of belonging:
  - The lunchtime ‘chain gang’ (an activity open to all students to keep up the maintenance of the school grounds, which proved particularly beneficial for children who had become disconnected in the classroom).
  - Morning circle time.
  - Posters in the classroom as a reminder to have a ratio of at least six positive comments to any negative comment to a child.
Investing in the relationship bank

Session 3 summary
- Respectful and responsive relationships:
  - require staff and the school organisation to reflect upon their values, beliefs and practices and take positive action
  - help promote a sense of belonging at school for everyone.
- When students feel like they belong it benefits:
  - mental health and wellbeing
  - academic engagement and achievement.

END OF SESSION
### SLIDE 39

**Discussion: Investing in the relationship bank**

**Purpose**
To help participants think of practical ways they can enhance their relationships with students to promote their sense of belonging in the school.

**Materials**
- ‘Investing in the relationship bank’ worksheet in the *Participant Workbook* (page 24)

**Background information**
Whenever school staff engage in strategies to build a relationship, it’s as if they’re making an investment in the ‘relationship bank’. Conversely, when adults experience ongoing conflict with students, or accidentally embarrass or criticise them, it’s as if they’re making a relationship withdrawal. By investing in a relationship, and creating a positive balance, school staff have enough goodwill in the bank to weather any future challenging times with students.

Needless to say, it’s more difficult to build positive relationships with some students than with others. Often, the very students who staff find it the most difficult to build relationships with are often the ones who need it the most.

**Instructions**
1. Explain the metaphor of a relationship bank. Invite participants to consider the students with whom they have a healthy account balance, and those in whom they might need to invest.
2. Remind participants of the practical things different schools are doing to enhance their students’ sense of belonging as highlighted in Video 8. Explain that participants now have an opportunity to think of their own ideas for how they can invest in their students’ relationship banks.
3. In small groups, ask them to write on the worksheet ways of investing in the relationship bank. Encourage them to think of small, everyday things, and larger, whole-school strategies.
4. Ask each group to share some of their ideas with the whole group. Ask for a member of the Action Team to write down the strategies suggested.

**Conclusion**
Affirm the strategies participants already use, and highlight some of the more interesting and innovative new strategies. Remind participants that when a positive relationship develops between school staff and students, it benefits their mental health and wellbeing and makes them more likely to invest in their learning.

Remind participants that their ideas were noted by the Action Team to incorporate into the component planning.

### SLIDE 40

**Session 3 summary**

**Notes**
- Summary messages for this session are on the slide.
- Completion of this session will depend on whether this professional learning is being run as a single session or multiple sessions. At this stage, it may be helpful to give a brief overview of the session to come.
- Encourage participants to take a moment to reflect on the session, and make a note of any new learnings or ideas on the summary page of their *Participant Workbook* (page 25).
The practices of a positive school community

session 4
Session 4:
The practices of a positive school community

What it covers
This session enables participants to:

• understand the impact of feeling included or excluded from a school community
• embrace diversity and develop practices that help people feel included and involved at school
• bring together all the concepts discussed throughout the professional learning that help to create and sustain a positive school community.

Session outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME (minutes)</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SESSION 4</td>
<td>The practices of a positive school community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start</td>
<td>Recap previous session, if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Activity: The inclusiveness scale (part 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Discussion: Checking out our school environment</td>
</tr>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Inclusion, inclusive practice, and a mindset for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video 9: Introduction to inclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Activity: The inclusiveness scale (part 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Activity: Taking action</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video 10: A final word from the students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Component 1: Positive school community

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

**Inclusion defined**

- Inclusion is about embracing diversity.
- Inclusive practice can:
  - decrease absenteeism, isolation and discrimination
  - increase engagement in learning, involvement and contribution, and a sense of belonging.
  - Feeling included is a protective factor for good mental health and wellbeing.

**SESSION OVERVIEW**

**COMPONENT 1: SESSION 4**

**SLIDE ORDER**

**SLIDE 41**

- Session 4: The practices of a positive school community

**SLIDE 42**

- Activity
  - The inclusiveness scale (part 1)
  - How inclusive is our school?

**SLIDE 43**

- Discussion
  - Checking out our school environment
### Slide 41: Session 4: The practices of a positive school community

**Notes**
- If necessary, repeat the summary slide from the third session.
- This may be important if you are running four one-hour sessions.

### Slide 42: Activity: The inclusiveness scale (part 1)

**Purpose**
To assist participants to reflect upon the inclusiveness of their school.

**Materials**
- Sticky notes

**Instructions**
1. Ask participants to reflect for a moment on what it means to them to be an ‘inclusive school’.
2. Hand out sticky notes and invite participants to write a number between one (a completely non-inclusive school) and 10 (a perfectly inclusive school) that is an overall summary of how inclusive they feel their school is. This number will remain confidential, and will be collected at the end.
3. Ask for two or three volunteers to collect participants’ sticky notes in a container (or on a desk), and have them create a graph by sticking the notes on a wall to show the distribution of scores between one and 10.

**Conclusion**
Ask for a volunteer to provide a summary statement of how inclusive the group thinks the school currently is. Let the participants know that the graph will be revisited later in the session.

### Slide 43: Discussion: Checking out our school environment

**Purpose**
To encourage participants to reflect on how inclusive their school environment is for a diverse range of students and their families.

**Materials**
- ‘Checking out our school environment’ worksheet in the Participant Workbook (page 27)
- ‘Checking out our school environment – facilitator instructions’ in the Facilitator Activity Materials (page 91)

**Instructions**
Conduct the activity as directed in the facilitator instructions (see the Facilitator Activity Materials).

**Conclusion**
This activity highlights that even subtle aspects can make a change to how a new person to the school may feel included in the school environment. This session is about examining and reviewing the messages the school community sends about diversity and inclusion. Facilitating this process with school staff can result in new awareness and in questions that can’t be answered in the session, which is okay (eg understanding the perceptions of students, families, and community members requires discussions with them). The Action Team uses the answers to start its work to implement Component 1 of KidsMatter Primary. Be sure to gather any ideas and hand over to the Action Team for their component planning.
Component 1: Positive school community

Session Overview

Slide 44

Slide Order

Session Overview

Slide 44

Inclusion defined

- Inclusion is about embracing diversity.
- Inclusive practice can:
  - decrease absenteeism, isolation and discrimination
  - increase engagement in learning, involvement and contribution, and a sense of belonging.
- Feeling included is a protective factor for good mental health and wellbeing.

Slide 45

A mindset for success

"MORE changes!!!"
"Not another thing!"

Vs

"How can we make the most of our diversity to add to the richness and life of our school?"

What's next?

Video 9

Introduction to Inclusion
**Slide 44: Inclusion defined**

- Inclusion is about embracing diversity.
- Diversity is about individual differences between people. It includes, but is not limited to, beliefs, religion, culture, education level, language, family arrangements, lifestyle, personality, interests, learning style, abilities and disabilities.
- KidsMatter Primary thinks about ‘inclusion’ as the ideal outcome in which everyone feels part of the school, while the actions taken by the school to facilitate this are known as ‘inclusive practice’.
- A sense of inclusion is a critical protective factor for the mental health of all school community members, as it relates to a fundamental need in every one of us to feel included and part of the group.
- When people feel included they are more likely to participate in school life and take an interest in school planning.
- Inclusive practices embrace the diversity that exists within a school community, break down any barriers associated with diversity, and enable all members to feel part of the school.
- KidsMatter Primary provides information sheets for parents, carers and school staff entitled:
  - ‘Children with additional needs and mental health’
  - ‘Cultural diversity and children’s wellbeing’.
  These sheets can be used in a variety of ways to promote discussion and awareness amongst staff and parents and carers.

**Slide 45: A mindset for success**

- Which mindset is required for inclusion to be successful in a school? One of negativity with a focus on new demands and pressures? Or one of positivity with a strengths-based focus (eg do our attitudes ‘zap’ [energise] or ‘sap’ [drain] people)?
- Because the school community includes a broad range of people from different backgrounds, it provides opportunities to learn from each other and hear a range of world views.
- By embracing diversity, schools can make the most of the different knowledge, skills and perceptions of its community members, which adds to the richness and fabric of the school.
Component 1: Session 4

Slide Order

Slide 46

What's Next?

Activity

The inclusiveness scale (part 2)
What messages do we send about inclusion?

- The physical environment, e.g., signage, student facilities
- The personal environment, e.g., relationships, values
- Communications and activities, e.g., newsletters, websites
- Curriculum materials and teaching practices, e.g., choice of teaching materials, meeting students' everyday needs
To stimulate discussion on the qualities of an inclusive school environment.

1. While watching the video, ask participants to think about their reasons for the score they gave their school out of 10 at the beginning of the session.


Key messages

- Inclusion is about more than increasing access for students with a disability; it’s about respecting all the diversity that exists in a school community.
- This includes (but is not limited to) beliefs; religion; culture; educational level; socioeconomic status; language use; literacy abilities; family arrangements and circumstances; lifestyle and background; personality; interests; thinking and learning styles; abilities and disabilities.
- Inclusive practice involves understanding, respecting, celebrating and honouring differences and welcoming all staff, children and families at the school. It also involves taking steps to break down any barriers that exist to ensure people feel welcomed and part of the school.
Component 1: Positive school community

WHAT'S NEXT?

Creating and sustaining a positive school community

Respectful and supportive relationships

Feeling included and valued

Inclusive practices, opportunities, policies

Creating and maintaining a positive school community

SLIDE 47

Activity

The inclusiveness scale

What messages do we send about inclusion?

The physical environment
- signage, student-friendly

The personal environment
- relationships, values

Communications and activities
- newsletters, website

Curriculum materials and teaching practices
- choice of reading materials, relating to students' everyday life

SESSION OVERVIEW

SLIDE ORDER

SESSION 4

Component 1: Positive school community

Facilitator Guide
### Purpose
To assist participants to re-evaluate the inclusiveness of their school.

### Materials
- ‘The inclusiveness scale’ worksheet in the Participant Workbook (page 29)
- Sticky notes

### Instructions
1. Having watched Video 9, re-conduct the ‘inclusiveness scale’ activity by asking participants to score their school again on the one to 10 scale (encourage participants to move away from ‘five’ if possible). As before, this score will be confidential.

   Invite participants to consider the various areas of inclusion on the slide, and think about what messages they are sending to their school community across the following areas:
   - The physical environment (eg signage, student-friendly)
   - The personal environment (eg relationships, values)
   - Communications and activities (eg newsletters, website)
   - Curriculum materials and teaching practices (eg choice of reading materials, relating to students’ everyday life)

2. Again, collect participants’ sticky notes into a container (or on a desk), and create a graph by sticking the notes on a wall to show the distribution of scores between one and 10.

3. As a group, compare how participants rated their school differently in each graph and discuss any differences as a whole group. Ask them:
   - What areas of inclusive practice in the video stood out to you?
   - Did it highlight any gaps in the inclusive practice of our school?

4. Break participants into small groups and direct them to the worksheet to answer questions about who might not feel included in the school.

5. After participants have discussed who may not feel included, extend the discussion by inviting them to consider ways they could help make them feel more welcomed and included. Encourage participants to write down any ideas on their worksheet.

### Conclusion
This activity aims to raise awareness of who may feel included and excluded in their school community. It will also motivate participants to think about what inclusive practices the school may need to develop.

Be sure to gather any ideas and hand over to the Action Team for their component planning.
Component 1: Positive school community

Session overview

Slide 48: Creating and sustaining a positive school community
- Respectful and responsive relationships
- Inclusive practices, supported by policies
- Feeling included and contributing
- Sense of belonging
- Creating and sustaining a positive school community

Slide 49: Activity
Taking action

What's next?

Session 4 summary
A positive school community:
- Understands mental health and wellbeing
- Promotes relationships and a sense of belonging
- Develops and maintains policies and practices that enable people to feel included at school
Creating and sustaining a positive school community

Key messages

• By promoting respectful and responsive relationships and developing inclusive practices, supported by policies, members of a school community feel included, are more likely to become involved and contribute (to the degree they desire), and experience a sense of belonging at school. This leads to the creation and sustainability of a positive school community.

• Sustainability is an ongoing issue due to the nature of a school community changing with new staff, students and families each year.

• The way the school works with families is further developed in Component 3: Working with parents and carers.

Notes

• This slide concludes the formal content of the professional learning by tying together the different concepts discussed throughout the professional learning.

Activity: Taking action

10 min

Purpose

To ensure the key messages and learnings from the session are incorporated into a personal action plan for future development.

Materials

• ‘My personal action plan’ worksheet in the Participant Workbook (page 30)
• ‘Planning school-wide action’ worksheet in the Participant Workbook (page 31)
• Scissors

Instructions

1 Invite participants to complete the personal action plan.
2 Ask participants to complete the plan for school-wide action. This is a tear-off worksheet for ideas which they may wish to share with the Action Team.

Conclusion

Remind participants that the opinions and ideas developed in this professional learning will be incorporated into the Action Team’s whole-school planning for Component 1. This is an essential part of KidsMatter Primary, and the way in which the professional learning feeds into whole-school improvement.

Key messages

• Individuals can take action immediately to start enhancing their positive school community.
• The personal action plan can help goals become achievable, and assists participants to:
  • outline a specific, measurable and attainable goal
  • consider the obstacles to progress, and plan in advance how they’ll be overcome
  • make a public commitment (to the group, or a partner) to keep them motivated
  • set a review date to monitor progress.
• It can take time to develop, so participants may need to continue planning outside of the session.
• Some participants may benefit from hearing the ideas of others to stimulate their own thinking.
**Component 1: Session 4**

**Slide 50**

Session 4 summary

A positive school community:
- understands mental health and wellbeing
- promotes relationships and a sense of belonging
- develops and maintains policies and practices that enable people to feel included at school

**Slide 51**

Session 4 summary

- encourages all members of the community to get involved and contribute, and, ultimately...
- supports students’ mental health and wellbeing and educational outcomes.

**Slide 52**

Video 10

*A final word from students*
These slides review the content of all four sessions of the professional learning.

The next step for the Action Team is to continue planning for Component 1 informed by the ideas generated in these sessions.

It is likely that the session will have encouraged participants to reflect, and in so doing, begin an awareness-raising process for themselves as individuals, and collectively as a whole-staff group.

This session is the beginning of the work of the Action Team, who will regularly include staff in the planning and update them of their progress.

Encourage participants to use their Participant Workbook as an ongoing record of ideas and reflections, and to refer to the KidsMatter website for further resources and updates.

To finish the session on a positive note, reinforce to participants that their work to build their positive school community will have a positive impact on student mental health and wellbeing.

Play Video 10 (2:00), which provides a montage of students speaking about the difference their school community is making to their life.
SLIDE 53

Tell us what you think!

- Did you find this training session useful?
- Do you have any thoughts on the KidsMatter Primary resources provided?
- Please take a minute to provide your anonymous feedback at:
  www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/componentfeedback

END OF SESSION
Tell us what you think!

Key messages

• KidsMatter Primary would like to hear what you think of their resources and whether you have found this session useful.

• Every participant, including the Facilitator, is invited to give feedback.

• Individual responses are confidential and go direct to the KidsMatter Primary national team for quality assurance purposes – they will not be seen by the school Action Team.

• Feedback is also an important step in helping us move towards formal recognition as a KidsMatter Primary school.

• The link to the online feedback form is in the Participant Workbook:
  www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/componentfeedback

• You may also be sent a reminder email after the session.

Notes

• Invite participants to complete the online feedback form (they will be commenting on the content of the session, not your presentation).

• Thank the group for their participation and conclude the session.

• After the session, send out a follow-up thank you email to participants (suggested wording):

  Dear staff,

  Thank you for your participation in the recent KidsMatter Primary Component 1 professional learning session/s.

  Your feedback is very important to KidsMatter Primary and will help ensure that these sessions are effective and meet your learning needs. We would appreciate your assistance in completing this short survey.

  1. Your responses are anonymous.

  2. It is important that you give your honest views.

  3. Responses are viewed only by the KidsMatter Primary National team for quality assurance purposes.

  Click here to give your feedback:  
  www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/componentfeedback
Facilitator Activity Materials
Activity
Diversity Walk – facilitator instructions

Background information
This activity aims to demonstrate the different experiences of belonging that students may have in the same school environment – and the many factors that impact on this. The most important insight for participants is the way their own assumptions can enhance or inhibit the actions they take to get to know and build relationships with students.

Participants are provided with a range of student scenarios that include different combinations of risk and protective factors. The range of scenarios add to the richness of the activity, providing insight into the factors at the individual, family, school, and societal levels, as well as life events that may impact on students in their school environment.

Participants are asked to step into the shoes of the student in their scenario. Although they will initially have their own assumptions about how the student feels at school, by the end of the activity, participants may start to understand the experiences that drive the student’s behaviour.

In order to bring together the key messages from the activity, a number of debriefing questions are provided to use at the end of the activity. The level at which these questions are discussed will depend upon your experience and background as a facilitator, the group, and time available.

Instructions
1. Hand out role cards, and ask participants to form a line across the middle of the room, facing you (you can also use a circle).
2. Ask:
   - Can everyone read the role card they have received? If anyone has a role card that they wish to change, please come and take another card.
3. Read out the following:
   - Shut your eyes, if you are comfortable doing so, and imagine the position of the student in the scenario. There is only a small amount of information on the cards, so use your imagination about what things might be like for this child.
   - Take some deep breaths and imagine you are getting up in the morning to go to school as that student. How would you feel about facing the day ahead? What would you be thinking? Are you facing the day with expectant anticipation, dread or excitement? What might you eat for breakfast? What would you wear? How might you feel as you are getting dressed for school? What might you be planning to do at lunchtime?
   - Open your eyes to answer the questions that I will ask you. Respond to the questions according to what is the likely reality for this student, NOT what you believe society should be like.
   - Taking small steps, move forward if your answer is ‘likely’ and backwards for ‘unlikely’ (for a circle – towards the centre for ‘likely’ or away for ‘unlikely’). Don’t move if you are uncertain.
Read out the following questions:

- Do you believe you are a successful and worthy person?
- Are you likely to attend school on a regular basis?
- Do you have many opportunities to receive recognition and praise?
- Do you feel optimistic about the upcoming parent/teacher interview and report?
- Do you feel safe to go anywhere in the school?
- Do you participate and achieve without being harassed or bullied?
- Will you have someone to play with/be with during play times?
- Are you likely to be chosen for a leadership position?
- When the class breaks into groups of choice will you be chosen to be in a group?
- Would you feel comfortable talking to a teacher if you had a problem?
- Will you be keen to attend the next school camp (or excursion)?
- Have you got all the equipment you need to do your schoolwork?
- Will a teacher say ‘well done’ to you at some stage during the day?
- Can you go through school without the fear of receiving racist and/or put-down comments?
- Will you get to share your knowledge/skills successfully during the day?

Although participants started in one straight line, they will end up spread out as some move forwards and some backwards. Some will end up in the same spot.

In order to facilitate the discussion that follows, it may be necessary to ask participants to move closer, ensuring that they remain in the same position they finished in. If there are significant gaps with some participants well ahead or behind the others, it can be useful to comment on that to set the scene for the following questions.

Debrief participants while they are spread out and in their final positions:

- Choose participants at the front and have them share their student profile, asking:
  - How are you feeling and why do you think you ended up at the front?
  - What did it feel like to move ahead of the others?
  - Were you aware of the people behind you?
- Ask if anyone else had the same student profile and compare their positions. Comment along the lines of:
  - It’s interesting that people with the same student profile responded differently. We all bring our own values, beliefs and understandings of the world to the way we perceive others.
- Ask people at the back to reveal their student profile, and find out how they are feeling. See if they were aware of people moving forward.
- Ask if anyone else wishes to share their student profile. Find out how they are feeling and why they ended up where they are.
- Encourage those in the centre who did not move much to share their experience. Ask them:
  - How did you feel when asked to imagine waking up and preparing for the day?
  - How did you feel about seeing others move ahead of or behind you?
- As a general question, now ask:
  - Without naming individuals, did you notice the types of behaviour of people during the activity? For example, how did people up the front behave compared with those at the back?

Participants at the front commonly respond that they were unaware of the people behind them and were laughing and smiling and interacting OR that they felt guilty and bad for the people left at the back. At the back, people may stand apart or start calling out to the front, jostle each other, as they feel they are the ‘bad’ kids or the kids no one wants around – they may feel a sense of dismay at realising they are going to be moving back constantly.
Debrief

Once the Diversity Walk is completed, ask participants to step out of their role and debrief. Empathetic feelings build up and can stay with people, so encourage them to physically move out of character and ‘shake off’ the role. This is particularly important for participants who may have connected in an emotional way with the student in the scenario from their own experience or children they know. It is crucial to follow this initial discussion with the opportunity for participants to shift back into an adult role. As a school staff member they are in a position where they can make a difference to children’s day to day lives and experiences.

1 Ask participants to reflect on the activity, saying the following:

- Place yourselves back into your school staff member role and think about your student scenario and what you learnt from this activity (eg implications for planning around different student’s needs and contexts. Sometimes we may know very little about a child and need to ask further questions to get to know them better).
- What part did your own perspective and life experiences play in your decision to step forward, backward, or not move at all? What are the factors which may play a role in stereotyping (eg values, beliefs and ideals you hold, which are influenced by family, religion, life events, school and other formal education, peers, community and media will influence the way we see others)?
- Consider the significant relationships the student is likely to have (or not have) with those within the school community, for example, school staff members, peers, other students.
- What is one thing you could do, and other things your school could do, to enable students to take a step forward? Participants may like to jot these down in the workbook.

2 There may be some children in the scenario, just as at school, which school staff would be concerned about and would be referring for support.

Conclusion:

Highlight that this representation of students is a lot like their school environment – many children with a range of different factors impacting on their experience of school. Sometimes staff may have very little information about a child and may make assumptions about them. Emphasise the importance of acknowledging and testing our assumptions about students, and how participants can use their relationships with students to find out more about them, and promote their sense of belonging at school.
High levels of risk factors
(cut these into separate profiles):

An 11-year-old boy with on and off peer relationships. Low self-esteem and struggles with his school work. Lives with older, dominating brother and single parent father. Father recently retrenched.

12-year-old boy from large, poor, rural family. Has practical skills but doesn’t like school, finds it difficult to relate socially and is quite disengaged from school. Mum works nightshift to supplement family income.

Eight-year-old refugee. Arrived in Australia 14 months ago. Has lived whole life in refugee camps and is learning new social skills. Father was a professional, but is unable to find appropriate work.

Nine-year-old girl. New to the school. Often late for school and comes without lunch or homework. Is tired and distracted, gets upset easily and struggles with her schoolwork. Parents are separated and she seems to have a lot of responsibility for her younger siblings. Both parents have been unemployed for a long time.
## Moderate levels of risk and protective factors
*(cut these into separate profiles):*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Six-year-old girl, who loves school and does well academically. Struggles with friendships and follows the teachers around on yard duty. Parents separated last year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ten-year-old hard working and quiet student. Has a small but close circle of friends. Lives with her caring grandparents. Her Mum has quite serious mental health issues and has had some lengthy stays in hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12-year-old girl, academically and physically talented, brightest girl in the year group. One or two close friends. Is very sensitive and gets upset easily, especially if things aren't 'perfect'. Parents are very keen for her to do well at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nine-year-old girl, usually bright and happy, copes okay with school work. Was cared for a lot by her grandmother who died in the last year. Now has erratic mood swings and is missing many days from school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ten-year-old boy, very talented artist and athletic, popular with peers. Has some difficulty with reading and spelling. Mother struggled to learn at school, is anxious for her son to do better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nine-year-old loud, extroverted boy, who seeks attention constantly by ‘playing the class clown’. He is popular but often irritates other children by not knowing when to stop. Parents are considering a move interstate for work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nine-year-old student, who likes school, but has difficulty concentrating. Parents work long hours in small business. They want him to do well at school, but their own limited education makes it difficult for them to support him with his schoolwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>11-year-old girl. Very creative, artistic and musical. Struggles with reading and writing. Quiet girl with a few close friends. Has high expectations of herself. Parents migrated to Australia and work long hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Eight-year-old boy. Often in fights in the yard. Okay in class. Well-liked by other kids. Schoolwork is okay, but gets frustrated easily. Parents engaged with school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Seven-year-old girl, new to the school. Parents recently divorced after many years of domestic violence. Is missing her non-custodial parent. An easy going child struggling to adjust to a new home and school. Had lots of friends at her old school and has had some trouble making friends in her new class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High levels of protective factors
(cut these into separate profiles):

11-year-old girl, house captain, talented musician, gets along well with peers and teachers. Parents actively engaged in the school and broader community.

11-year-old boy, house captain, academically bright but often gets distracted in class and doesn't fulfil his potential. Popular with peers and staff. Both parents working full time in professional capacity.

Confident, bright, six-year-old girl. Parents are actively involved with school parents and friends, canteen and parent help in the classroom.

Eight-year-old boy, loves school and is gifted at maths. Father is a mining engineer, who works interstate and is often away for long periods of time. Mother is involved at the school.
Activity
Checking out our school environment – facilitator instructions

Instructions

1. Explain to participants that they are going to take a virtual tour of the school, but will do so from the perspective of someone new. Allocate participants to one of four groups:
   - **Group 1:** A new student who has experienced bullying at their previous school.
   - **Group 2:** A new parent who doesn’t read English very well (or has low literacy levels).
   - **Group 3:** A new staff member coming to their first job in a school.
   - **Group 4:** A community agency worker who hasn’t worked at a school before.

   Adapt the profile of each group to best suit the school's context.

2. Encourage participants to write their observations on their worksheets as they imagine entering the school grounds as that person. Use these questions to guide participants around the school:
   - **Think about the physical environment** – artwork, signage, displays, murals, posters. What images are you seeing?
   - **What sounds do you hear as you walk around the school?** Greetings? Languages? Music?
   - **Think about the people and interactions** you are likely to come across while walking around the school. How are you welcomed? Will you have anyone to talk to? What expressions do you notice on people’s faces?
   - **Look at the notice boards and printed material sent home.** How easily do you understand them?
   - **Think about the regular events on the school calendar.** What would they be like for you? How appealing are they?
   - **How are the core values and vision of the school displayed?** How are they made explicit around the school? What do they mean to you?
   - **What texts are children reading in class? What diversity is being seen?** Can you see yourself in the materials?
   - **What else might you notice as you move around the school?**
3. Ask the group to take a moment to gather their thoughts. Note down anything that stands out from the reflection on their worksheets.

4. Ask participants to step out of the role, and invite general feedback from each group about what they noticed about their school from a new perspective. Elicit the different priorities of various groups (eg students versus staff members) using the following questions:
   - What did you notice about your school from a new perspective?
   - What mattered most to you as someone new to the school?

After some discussion, ask the following:
   - Were some aspects of the school more important from some perspectives than others?
   - You were just pretending to take on a role, in reality, how can you know what’s important to other people?
   - What are some ways you can test your assumptions about what’s important to them?

The Action Team may like to write down the comments made by the group to reflect on after the professional learning.

**Conclusion**

This activity highlights that even subtle aspects can make a change to how a new person to the school may feel included in the school environment. This session is about examining and reviewing the messages the school community sends about diversity and inclusion.

Facilitating this process with school staff can result in new awareness and in questions that can’t be answered in the session, which is okay (eg understanding the perceptions of students, families, and community members requires discussions with them). The Action Team uses the answers to start its work to implement Component 1 of KidsMatter Primary.

Be sure to gather any ideas and hand over to the Action Team for their component planning.
References


This disc can be played using both Windows and Macintosh computers.

Insert the disc into your computer’s CD drive – if you are on a Windows machine the disc will play automatically unless you have adjusted your settings to specify otherwise. Windows 7 users may be prompted to ‘Run KMP_C1_WIN.exe’ and will experience this dialogue box every time the disc is inserted until the ‘Always do this for software and games’ option is checked.

To open the application manually, follow these instructions:

**WINDOWS:** Go to My Computer, right-click on CD Drive and select open. Double-click KMP_C1_WIN.exe file to open.

**MAC:** Double-click KMP_C1 icon on the desktop to bring up a new Finder window. Double-click KMP_C1_MAC.app to open.