

MindMatters



e-Newsletter

Welcome to the Term 4 edition of the MindMatters ACT newsletter for 2008. Would you like to contribute a story from your school's wellbeing journey to the next newsletter? Email Libby Porter: libby.porter@act.gov.au

The aim of the publication is to keep everyone informed on the latest *MindMatters* developments at both a state and a national level; to provide a place to share the mental health and wellbeing work that is being carried out in schools across the ACT and the nation; to share ideas that promote and protect the social and emotional wellbeing of members of school communities; and to provide information about MindMatters-related resources.



2008 ACT MindMatters Drama Festival Roundly Applauded

Over 100 students from all sectors took part in the MindMatters Drama Festival in Term 3. It was opened by Genevieve Jacobs, a local ABC Radio journalist. This year's festival was attended by several school principals, as well as families and friends of the performers. MindMatters interstate and national coordinators were present, in addition to health workers from Wagga in NSW who were interested in developing a similar Mental Health drama event.

Melrose High Yr 10 Students Brandon Rushby and Laura Nolan in "Tortured Minds"



Check out our website www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters for the latest training information

Territory News



Free Professional Development

MindMatters now offers more professional development to schools.

To **register** online, please go to the link below or go to the ACT homepage and follow the links to the ACT training schedule.

http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/act/training/act_train.htm

MindMatters workshops in the ACT in Term 4

- October 27&28 – Level Two Planning workshop. For contents, see over page. **CTL Stirling**
- November 12&13 – Level One Introductory Workshop. **Southern Cross Club, Woden**
- November 26 – Level Two Module: Measuring our Progress. **CTL Stirling**

What can I expect from the MindMatters Level One Introductory Workshop?

MindMatters Level One Introductory Workshops provide an introduction to the MindMatters resource kit and the concept of a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. This practical hands-on workshop provides classroom ideas around the following topics: Bullying & Harassment, Resilience, Understanding Mental Illness, Community Matters, Loss & grief, Data & evaluation and Staff mental health and wellbeing.
Individuals and teams are encouraged to attend

What can I expect from the MindMatters Focus Module: measuring our progress?

This module considers the sources, types and levels of data and information that exist for mental health and wellbeing within the school and community. This is considered in relation to the MindMatters Implementation Model and all groups of the school community. Key areas addressed include the importance of data, what to collect, how to use and analyse data for school improvement, and effective communication and reporting of data results.

School staff managing data are encouraged to attend.

**Like to book a free whole
school MindMatters
workshop for stand down
2009? Ring Libby on 0408
683 012**

Territory News



MindMatters Level Two Planning Workshop

MindMatters Level Two Planning Workshops are directed at school core teams with experience of MindMatters. The core team develops a school action plan with a view to measuring the progress made by the school.

Level Two Planning Workshops are available to school community core teams of four or more – including a member of the executive leadership team. It is preferable that some of the team have attended Level One professional development and it is expected that schools taking part are familiar with MindMatters.

The Level Two process is based on a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Schools that use the process and can demonstrate positive change for the mental health and wellbeing of students will be offered recognition as a MindMatters school. The Level Two Planning workshop is followed up by undertaking additional focus modules.

MindMatters National Evaluations pointed out the important role of senior executive in ensuring success of the whole school approach to wellbeing. We encourage executive staff to be part of the core team that attend the two-day Level Two Planning Workshop. What do they say about it?

Comments from participants at the last ACT Level Two Planning Workshop (June 2008)

'Excellent discussions at school level. Very valuable having a team present.'
Deputy Principal, DET High School

'Really well prepared, helpful ... allowed the practical support for moving forward.'
Principal, Catholic College

'The workbook is fantastic – I've never had something like this at a PD – IT'S GREAT!'
Year Advisor, DET High School

'Fantastic being able to work in a school group. Interesting hearing about others' ideas.'
Deputy Principal, DET High School

Book your team for the Level 2 Planning Workshop October 27 & 28

Participating schools are offered one day of free in-school follow-up support from the MindMatters Coordinator.



Wellbeing News



Students Looking After Peers' Wellbeing in an ACT College

Peer Education is being used at Narrabundah College as a new model for the delivery of health education to upper-secondary-aged students. Because of the success of the Pilot Program trialled in 2006, it was decided to expand both the number of Year 12 students involved in the program and the range of training courses the students were being put through.

Each year since the beginning of the program, there have been about 35 Year 12 students who have completed training courses in health related issues. These have included: mental health and suicide prevention, communication skills, accessing reliable health information and advice, alcohol, drugs, sexual health, formal first aid training and work with police and ambulance staff dealing with the law and young people.

Working under the slogan, 'Ask Me', Peer Education leaders have successfully participated in Orientation activities for new Year 11s and have acted as 'first stop' agents for the student body if they were approached with problems. They have been able to effectively deliver some key health messages to the student body through our N-Group program and have been trained to refer students and inform the school's welfare section if they hear of problems. They have felt sufficiently confident about health issues to be able to debunk popularly held myths in social situations outside school and have been trained to know how to seek reliable, up-to-date advice and information on any health issue.

Every year, teachers involved in the program have been given anecdotal evidence of significant successes in reaching young people at timely moments with sound health advice or intervention. Several instances were reported of Peer Ed students being at a party or in a social gathering and calling an ambulance because they recognised signs of alcohol poisoning. The Peer Ed leaders were able to put the person in the recovery position and talk to ambulance staff about the situation. On another occasion, a student was concerned that she could be pregnant but wasn't willing to talk to student welfare staff. A Peer Ed leader was able to act as an intermediary to seek information and advice about the student's health options and the community agencies available to support her. There were instances of Peer Ed Students seeking support for friends suffering depression and eating disorders. The students at risk were able to be fully supported through the intervention of the trained Peer Ed leaders.

Leadership aspects of the program have developed over the course of the year. On a school level, Peer Ed has played a significant role in all major school social events. Peer Ed has successfully run charity fundraising film nights, trivia nights, barbeques and the 40 hour famine. Peer Ed students have been selected to represent the school at youth leadership events and community forums. These have all provided students with fantastic opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership skills and to speak of these at interviews and in applications leading them into the next stage of their career pathways.

Claire Byrne Narrabundah College



National Update



Dare to Lead ACT Consultant Dennis Flannery with Ginibi Robinson, Assistant Manager Indigenous Policy and Organisational Practice and Kanat Wano, MindMatters Coordinator, Community Partnerships at an ACT MindMatters event in Term 3

Dare to Lead

Dare To Lead is a national project funded by the Commonwealth and led by Principals Australia (formerly APAPDC). The initiative aims to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in all parts of Australia. The Dare to Lead Coalition also aims to contribute to the process of reconciliation through improved interaction, communication and understanding across cultures. The project is a core commitment of Principals Australia's constituent associations, representing Australia's primary and secondary principals across the Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors. The project currently has over 5100 members schools across Australia.

The current phase of Dare to Lead, 'Making The Difference', focuses on strategic action at the local level through networks of peers, clustered in Action Areas. All member schools have been allocated an Action Area, which is usually defined by the schools' geographical location.

More information about the project can be found on its website or contact your local Action Area Coordinator.

ACT Dare to Lead Team details:

- Trish Keller (North Canberra Action Area) 6205 5866
- Vivien Palmer (South Canberra Action Area) 6205 8200
- Anne Staines (Central Canberra Action Area) 6295 8027
- Dennis Flannery DTL (ACT) Consultant 0408 065 288