

HOW TO FACILITATE MINDMATTERS MODULES

FACILITATOR GUIDE



How to facilitate MindMatters modules

Introduction

The How to facilitate MindMatters modules guide is designed to provide general ideas about facilitating group learning in conjunction with MindMatters modules. It is designed to be used in conjunction with facilitator guides for each module. These module-specific facilitator guides will be made available four weeks after each module is released.

MindMatters online professional learning is designed to be used in flexible ways: as an individual, in small groups, as a faculty, as a whole staff, or as an action team. Some of the activities can be explored in more detail when there is an opportunity to work with others at the same time. Group learning is best facilitated by colleagues from the school action team who have an understanding of mental health and the direction that the school wishes to take.

Implementing MindMatters as a whole school approach requires the active participation of the whole school community – teaching and non-teaching staff. Each of the four components of the MindMatters framework has associated modules.

The module-specific facilitator guides consist of:

- a suggested order of group activities and discussion questions relating to content
- instructions on how to facilitate activities, debrief videos and lead discussions
- a checklist of any resources for activities
- suggestions for next steps after each session.

However, remember you can refer to the How to facilitate MindMatters modules guide at any time.

Group professional learning can help staff to:

- develop a shared understanding of mental health and wellbeing and recognise its relevance to schools
- understand different perspectives, including those of colleagues, parents, families and students
- share examples of good practice
- practice specific skills with peers
- contribute to the school's MindMatters implementation plan
- contribute to positive relationships across the school community.

During a typical professional learning session, the facilitator will need to:

- create a safe learning environment
- understand the relevant mental health and educational concepts
- encourage participants to 'give things a go' in the same way we expect of students
- understand the way activities and discussions have been designed.

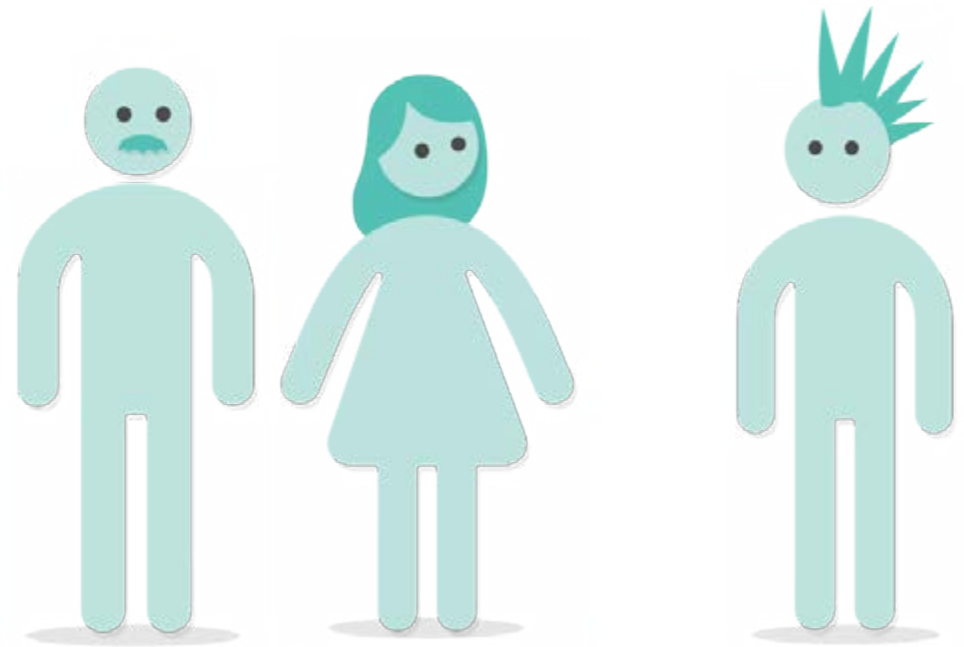
Understand your group

Consider your audience:

- How much time is available?
- Who will attend the session? How many people? What roles do they have in or with the school?
- What is their current attitude to mental health and wellbeing? To MindMatters? To professional learning?
- Where is the school up to in the implementation of MindMatters?
- Will the MindMatters action team incorporate any ideas or actions from the session?
- Are there any relevant staff wellbeing issues to be considered?

Consider prior learning and the current knowledge of staff about mental health and/or MindMatters. Has anyone:

- attended a MindMatters Leadership Briefing or MindMatters Getting Started? See www.mindmatters.edu.au/get-involved/events
- viewed or completed any other modules?
- attended any other professional learning about wellbeing?



Prepare

Before you begin facilitating a group session, you might like to undertake the following steps:

1. View and undertake the module(s) yourself.
2. Familiarise yourself with any background reading and references.
3. Decide which activities you will include and how much time you will aim to spend on them.
4. Check that your school allows access to YouTube, as each module contains YouTube videos. If not, speak to your IT team to get access.
5. Select a physical environment conducive to active learning (people sitting in discussion groups, room to move, access to water and refreshments).
6. Decide whether each person will access the module or whether the group will use large screen projection.
7. Organise any materials needed for activities.
8. Organise copies of any pre-reading.
9. Enlist support of MindMatters action team members (if relevant).

You might also like to:

1. Speak with your local MindMatters project officer about extra hints or support for facilitating groups using online professional learning.
2. Ask the school librarian or resource centre person to gather together existing and relevant social and emotional learning resources for display or use during the session.
3. Consider the range of beliefs that may be relevant to the module(s) you are facilitating – issues, participants, students, the school, the local community etc.



Allow enough time

MindMatters modules are designed to take approximately one hour to complete.

Create a safe and positive learning environment

Facilitating sessions for peers can be challenging – especially when the content is about mental health. Agreements for learning together support respectful and inclusive discussions. The benefits of creating these agreements outweigh the time it takes to do so initially. The process also models what effective teachers do to create similar environments in their classrooms when sensitive issues are going to be discussed. (See How to sheet and example at the end of this document.)

Remind participants at the start of each session that although sharing thoughts and ideas is important, disclosure of deeply personal stories is not advised. Participants should also avoid using names of students and other staff or families during group discussions.

Talking about mental health can sometimes trigger memories or emotions – even for facilitators. Remind people about the employee assistance program used by your school and provide contact details of school based or community based supports in case personal feelings arise during a session that individuals would like to address further. This helps to encourage and normalise help seeking. See How to sheet at the end of this document.

In Modules 4.1 – 4.8 you might like to consider asking a mental health professional, school counsellor or allied health professional to co-facilitate related sessions at your school. One of the foundations of MindMatters is partnership. We believe involving mental health or allied health services in your journey through MindMatters will greatly enhance your outcomes, but of course this is up to you.



Make the learning active

Good facilitation incorporates elements of all learning styles to ensure that everyone is engaged in the process. Movement increases oxygen to the brain and increases the ability to think. People learn when they are actively involved physically, mentally, interpersonally and emotionally to create their own meaning. Activities and discussions foster practical learning. They provide opportunities for adult learners to share their knowledge and learn from each other. For some people, activities are a chance to move about, build a sense of connectedness and have some fun.

Using energisers and mixing activities allow staff to move around, re-energise, re-connect, and clear their minds for the learning to follow. Energisers have been suggested based on objectives of the module and chosen to fit with the learning of the session. A well designed activity can energise a group at the beginning of a session and build their confidence to work together as a group. If everyone speaks within the first five to ten minutes, people's anxiety levels diminish and they are more ready to learn. Energisers may also be useful after an intense group discussion, or a long period of sitting down and viewing or listening, in order to restore energy.



Begin the session

Introductions

- Welcome staff.
- Introduce members of the action team; and any guests and/or parents.

Energiser

- Feel free to adapt the suggested energiser according to your confidence level, topic, setting, audience, skill level, and understanding of the group.

Purpose of the session

- Explain that MindMatters professional learning contributes to the ongoing MindMatters journey of improving the mental health of students across the school.
- Clarify the duration of the professional learning session i.e. approximately one hour.

Establish or review agreements for learning together

If this is not the first session with this particular group, remind participants of agreements developed in a previous session. Display and refer to these agreements at every subsequent session.

Connect to the internet

- Log in to your MindMatters account.
- Select the relevant component.
- Select the relevant module.

End the session

It is important for learners to translate their learning into action. Invite participants to consider, share and record next steps e.g. what is one thing you will do differently as a result of this session?

Remind people about self-care. You may also like to invite feedback from participants as this will help you plan future sessions. For example, provide each person with a sticky note and invite them to write one piece of useful feedback about the session

For further support or debriefing after a session, contact your local MindMatters project officer.

How to: Develop an agreement for working together

Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: Whiteboard or butchers paper, markers and/or post it notes.

Purpose:

1. Create a safe learning environment so that all staff can contribute to the session in a respectful way.
2. Make expectations clear to ensure all participants to contribute their views and ideas.
3. Encourage people to take responsibility for their own learning and be accountable to colleagues.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to brainstorm/share ideas about how they wish to work during this session.
2. Individuals can write suggestions on post-it notes or the facilitator can record suggestions on whiteboard or poster.
3. Invite agreement from all participants about adhering to suggested ways of behaving.
4. Discuss how the group will respond when agreements are not upheld eg a gentle reminder from a peer.

Here are some examples for agreements for a successful session:

- listen to each other
- respect different perspectives
- share only what you are comfortable sharing
- engage in one conversation at a time
- share airspace.

Debrief: Say to the group “Negotiating group agreements takes time and is an important part of a professional learning session. It helps to create safe and supportive environments which is a key protective factor for our mental health and wellbeing. A safe learning environment also enables open, robust discussion in both staff and student settings.” Ask participants to reflect on the process just used and talk to the person next to them about what they see are the benefits. Ask for a show of hands. How many people use a similar process with students in classes?

What	What does it look like? Sound like?
Solution-focused	I offer a solution if I state that I am unhappy with something.
Constructive	If I provide feedback it is clear and relevant to the topic and helpful to the discussion.
Equality	I am mindful of ensuring all people are provided with an opportunity and encouragement to speak.
Right to pass and participate	In my professional role, I am open to take risks, and do my best to participate in activities and discussions. I will respect others’ right to pass as I cannot know what is going on in their lives that may make it difficult to participate and/or contribute.
Appreciative of diversity	I am open to different points of view, as we all have different experiences, values and beliefs.
Conscious of time	I take responsibility for arriving on time before each session. I need to make sure I keep to time if presenting.
Respect	I am professional in my manner and have empathy and positive regard for others.
Confidentiality – no names	I am aware of keeping conversations within groups, contained in that context and not discussing the names of students and families.
Non-judgemental	I make sure I gather all the relevant information before making assumptions.
Minimise side conversations	I am mindful that if I have a side conversation it may stop others hearing what is being said.

How to: Explore support organisations for adults

Time: 5 minutes.

Materials: None.

Purpose: To reflect on the mental health support available to staff and how readily this is accessed.
Services may vary according to your educational sector as well as geographic location.

Instructions:

1. Brainstorm individually the mental health support and services that are available to look after your own mental health. E.g. employee assistance program, *beyondblue* website (i.e. encourage them to think about face to face, phone and online).
 2. Use a whole group discussion to share ideas and knowledge about what is available.
-

Debrief:

Say to participants "It's just as important for you to know where to get support for your own mental health, as it is for students to know where to get support for their mental health".

MindMatters is a national mental health initiative for secondary schools developed by *beyondblue* with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.

See more MindMatters resources at www.mindmatters.edu.au