

MODULE 1.2

# USING DATA FOR PLANNING AND SUCCESS

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# Using data for planning and success

## Objectives

- School action teams know how to collect and interpret MindMatters survey data.
- School action teams use data to inform implementation strategies and share findings with the school community.

## Outcomes

School leadership and action team:

- understand the importance of seeking school community voice about mental health and wellbeing and how opinions can be gathered through the MindMatters surveys
- understand how to use survey data to identify areas of strength and challenges in their school across the eight target areas of the MindMatters framework
- develop data-informed strategies for a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

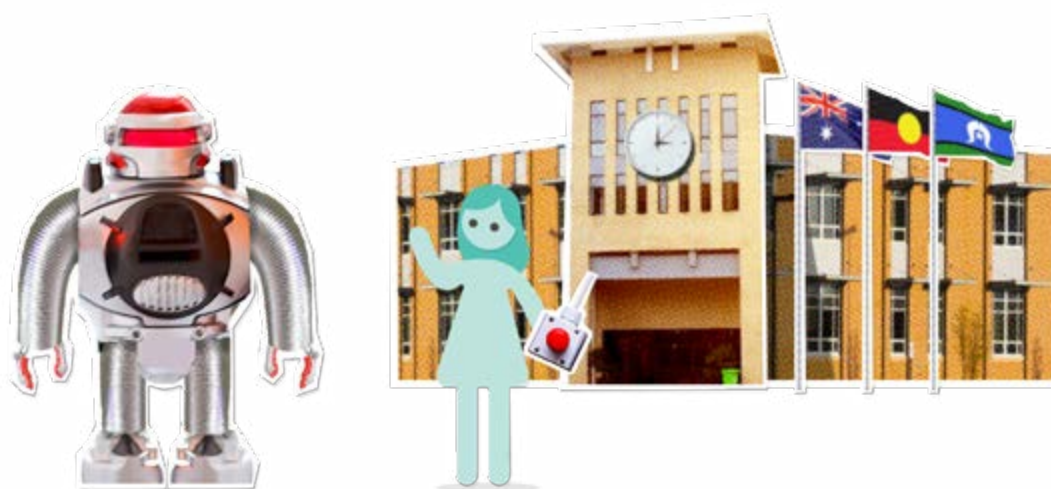
## Key messages

- Data helps you work out where your school is now and how to get where it needs to be.
- Seeking perspectives from your whole school community (staff, parents, and students) is important to achieve your outcomes.
- Sharing and reporting results with the wider school community encourages school and community engagement.

# Want information? Use surveys

**If you want the opinion or perceptions of just one or a few people you can simply ask them. But if you want to know the opinion of your entire school community, including students, staff, parents and carers – a survey may be a good way.**

MindMatters surveys are useful in helping schools find out what people think about a range of issues. Data collected through surveys informs school planning, helps schools measure achievement and identifies areas for improvement.

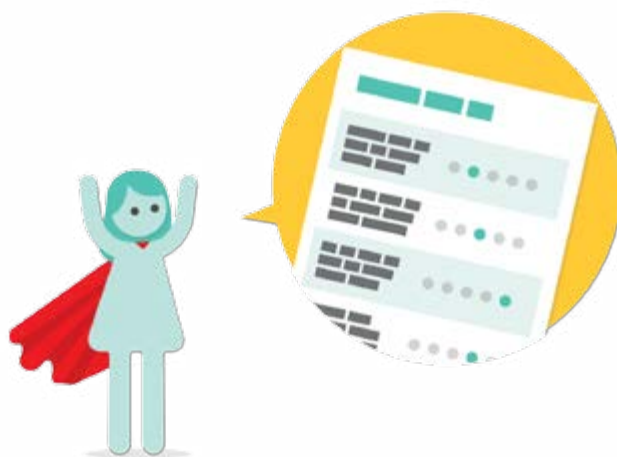


# Introducing the MindMatters survey tool

We've created the MindMatters survey tool to provide a free and efficient approach to whole school community data gathering. The surveys are designed to collect the opinions of school leadership, staff, students, parents and carers, and provide the action team with important information to guide its activities.

The survey tool specifically supports schools in implementing MindMatters and provides a number of benefits to your action team, including:

- easy to use, secure online administration
- attractive, easy to read reports
- data comparison over time to understand progress
- data comparison between your school and national averages
- data privacy assured
- print versions of surveys available for situations where these are more appropriate.



## Know your baseline

We recommend surveying your school community before implementing MindMatters to build a baseline. Use this data as evidence of how effective your strategies are over time as well as highlighting areas for improvement.

## Ready-to-go surveys

To send a survey your action team leader just needs to choose the audience, log in to the dashboard and follow the simple steps – and we've provided four surveys that are ready to go:



### School check-up survey

The school check-up survey is based on the MindMatters target areas and helps you identify areas of strength and areas that need further development. This information assists your action team to monitor the priorities and outcomes of your school's MindMatters implementation plan. The school check-up survey can be completed by the action team, as well as other leaders within the school. See **Module 1.1 Getting started** to learn about the implementation plan.



### Staff survey

School staff can include everyone from teachers to administration to welfare personnel. What do they think about their school and its capacity to support student mental health and wellbeing? Use the staff survey to find out.

### Parent-family survey

Parents, carers and families play a significant role in the lives of young people and are likely to have a range of worries about the young person's development, mental health and wellbeing. The parent-family survey collects their opinions about the school and its capacity to support them and their children.



### Student survey

When students are empowered to have a say and take action about issues affecting them, they experience better mental health outcomes. The student survey can be one of the first important steps in giving young people the opportunity to actively participate in school activities and decisions that will shape their lives.



## Confidentiality and privacy

MindMatters, managed by *beyondblue*, provides a secure environment for your survey data and reports, and the privacy of respondents is protected to ensure their complete anonymity. Information on how MindMatters survey data is protected and used is included with each survey.

MindMatters survey data:

- is aggregated and anonymous so individuals cannot be identified
- is stored securely
- is managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles contained in that Act. Please refer to *beyondblue*'s privacy policy at [www.beyondblue.org.au/general/privacy-policy](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/general/privacy-policy).

If you would like to learn more about MindMatters data security and the information provided to survey respondents, talk to your action team leader.



### Accessing MindMatters surveys

The survey tool can be accessed by action team leaders by logging in to their **mindmatters.edu.au** dashboard. Talk to your state or territory project officer at Principals Australia Institute today to set up an action team leader account. If your school already has an action team leader, track them down to learn more about the survey tool being used in your school.

# Before you start

Before you begin surveying, you need a clear understanding of why you are collecting the data. This will help focus your analysis of the results. Some other questions you may consider include:

- Will the survey provide current information that the school wants?
- Have you informed the school on why you're using MindMatters surveys?
- How will you support students if they have questions, or if completing the survey brings up issues for them? E.g. who is the best staff member for students to talk to?
- What proportion of respondents is likely to complete the survey and how representative might they be? Plan for it and be creative.
- How could you encourage greater participation rates?
- How will the information gathered from the survey be used?
- How will you report results back to school community?

## Language barriers

Do all of your respondents speak English well? Will they understand the nuances of your questions? Are there other people who might be disadvantaged by the survey format? The people who may be excluded from your survey results may be the very group with significant input into your implementation plan. Consider your options:

- Translate print versions of the surveys for parents.
- Conduct interviews to complete surveys (with a translator if required).
- Get students involved to support their parents in completing surveys.



# Getting ready

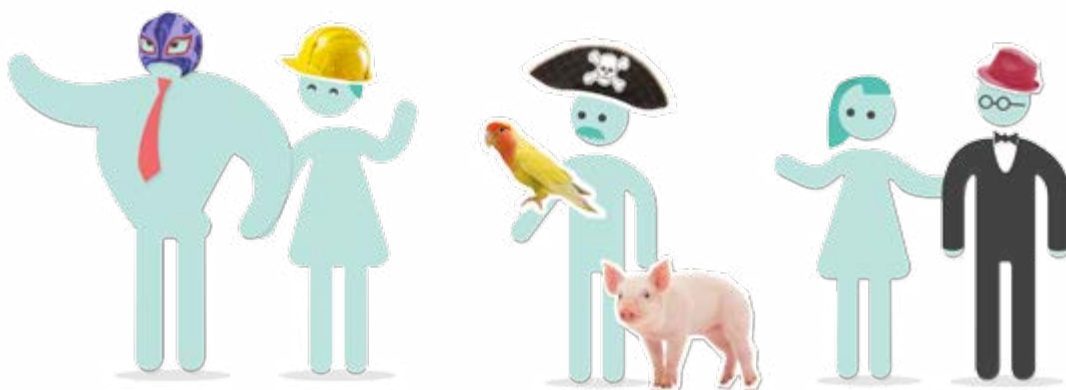
When you are clear about your information collection needs, your action team is well-placed to start working out *who* you need to survey, *when* you need to survey them and *how* you plan to send out your surveys.

## Who should you survey?

The more people who complete your survey, the more valid the results will be. Be creative in ways to get the greatest response rate. Be mindful of who may not respond to the survey (e.g. parents from a non-English speaking background) and think about how this might bias or skew your results.

The **school check-up** can be administered to your action team and/or other school leaders responsible for implementing MindMatters. Your team might choose to complete the survey individually or as a group.

The **staff, parent-family and student surveys** can be administered either to a targeted group (e.g. just Year 9s) or to the whole cohort. Label surveys clearly so you know what you're looking at later on.



## Strategies for increased response rates, particularly from parents

- Hold an information night in the computer lab and provide assistance to encourage parents to complete the survey online
- Provide a translated version of the parent-family survey for those from non-English speaking backgrounds
- At parent-teacher interviews, have an iPad for parents to complete the survey while they're waiting
- Street-side survey – staff or students, armed with an iPad, catch parents during school pick-up
- Make surveys part of the MindMatters launch in your school
- Coincide the launch of your surveys with important days such as Harmony Day
- Ask your students about the best way to encourage parents to participate
- Set the parent-family and student surveys for homework
- At sports-day or a similar community gathering, put questions from the parent-family survey on poster paper and encourage parents to respond using sticky dots
- Where access to the web is limited, consider using the print version.

Note that if the print version of a survey is being used, the action team leader will need to manually transfer responses into the survey tool before the survey close date or before the completion target is met.

See **Module 3.1 Meeting parents' information needs** for more tips on engaging with parents and families.



## When should you send the surveys?

**In order to establish a baseline to measure growth over time, it's best to administer surveys early in the MindMatters implementation process.**

The surveys have year and quarter settings that you can set before you send to invitees (e.g. 2015, Jan-Mar). These settings allow you to compare your surveys over time. We recommend administering surveys at the beginning of a chosen quarter to allow for ample time to collect data within that quarter. You may also choose to administer surveys at the beginning of the year – early in Term 1 – and again at the end of Term 4 to measure changes in attitude over the course of the year.

The school check-up can be conducted annually to monitor how your action team and other school leaders perceive the implementation of MindMatters over time.

Surveys can also be a great way to engage the whole community at any stage of your MindMatters implementation – even if you are well underway with your whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

## How do you send the surveys?

The surveys are available online to be sent to respondents, either via a link sent in an email to a targeted selection of respondents or via a link included in any of a variety of media (e.g. newsletter, facebook, school website etc.) to gather a random sample of respondents. Print versions of the surveys are also available – talk to your action team leader about these.

All survey respondents will be given information about the purpose of the survey and a description of the data collection process, including information about their privacy. Your action team leader can include additional information such as the survey close date and any further instructions.

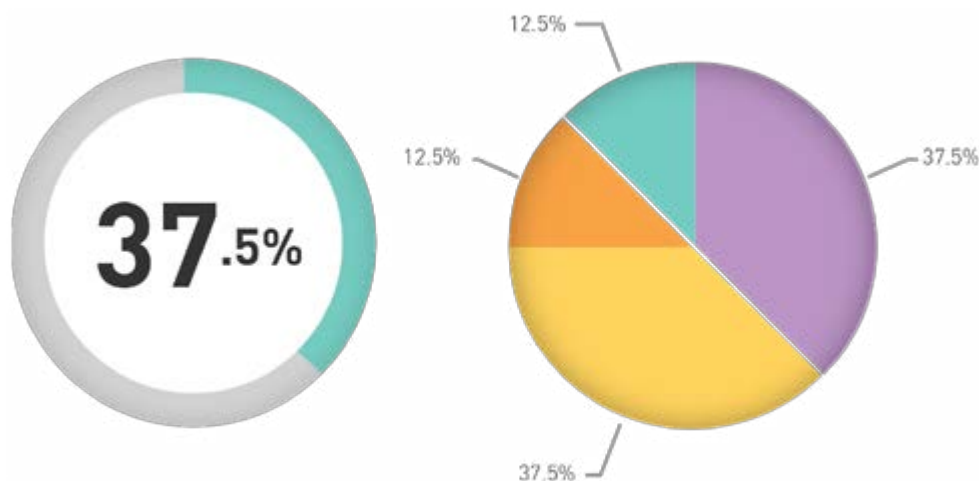
### Inviting participation

There are many ways you can invite members of your school community to participate in a survey. Some options include:

- Email invitees using the survey tool's inbuilt messaging
- Provide an anonymous link to the survey in:
  - newsletters
  - school Facebook page
  - school website
  - school twitter account
  - email
  - SMS
- Provide online access to surveys at special school events.

# Interpreting results

The survey tool automatically collates data into a report for each survey you administer. The reports are very easy to interpret and provide you with grouped information based on the MindMatters target areas (e.g. Developing a whole school approach). For a more detailed analysis you can drill down further to see results for individual questions.



Once you've done a number of surveys you can compare data collected by your school over time (e.g. Jan-Mar 2015 versus Jan-Mar 2016). You can also compare your school's results with the national averages.

The following activities can be useful in helping you interpret survey data and build a solid evidence base for your ongoing MindMatters implementation:

## Compare survey results with the perception wheel

You may have already used the MindMatters perception wheel. It's an activity introduced in our face-to-face workshops and in **Module 1.1 Getting started**, where individual action team members record their current perceptions of school progress in each of the MindMatters target areas. The wheel is then used as a discussion topic with others.

Match the target area top results from the survey reports to the corresponding spokes of the perception wheel. This can give you an idea of how opinions from across your school compare to the action team's perceptions of where the school is at. See **Module 1.1 Getting started** for more information on the perception wheel activity.

## Consider individual questions

Survey tool reports allow you to analyse results of individual questions. This can be useful to zero in on specific issues (e.g. '30 percent of staff do not believe good student mental health and wellbeing contributes to improved learning for students'). How might your school address this example? Is there other data or information that could inform a plan to address this issue? For example, perhaps the school has a large cohort of new teachers who could benefit from more professional learning.

## Look for similarities and differences

Many questions across the staff, parent-family and student surveys are similar, so you might like to compare responses. For example each of the surveys asks about 'feeling safe' – do staff, parents and students hold similar or different views?

If most of your survey respondents agree with a specific statement while some don't agree at all, then you may need to include the strong views of a minority in your implementation plan's data summary statement. For example: 'The majority of staff understand their school community *quite a bit* or *completely*, however one quarter of staff don't understand their community *at all*'.

## Transfer survey results to the implementation plan

It's a good idea to set aside time to transfer your survey data to the implementation plan. Consider the following:

- Select the most important information from the school check-up and the other survey reports in relation to each of the target areas
- Identify the general trends in each target area and summarise these in the space provided in your implementation plan. For example, 'staff understand their school community *quite a bit*'
- Copy each target area's top results from the respective survey reports to the implementation plan
- It may be useful to colour code levels of urgency or importance.

The action team is best-placed to carry out or delegate the task of updating the implementation plan. See **Module 1.1 Getting started** for more information on the implementation plan.

## Develop goals and strategies

The results of your surveys can help you develop goals and strategies for each component of your implementation plan. We recommend you aim for SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely). See **Module 1.1 Getting started** for more information on developing SMART goals.

Be careful to include the views of parents and students in goals and strategies for each component. The combined views of staff, parents and students are essential in developing a whole school approach to addressing student mental health and wellbeing.

Promoting success motivates people. Think of goals and strategies to bring about significant gains in a relatively short time.



## Reporting back to survey respondents

If people take the time to respond to your survey then it's courteous to report results back to them. This will also help the school community feel connected with your MindMatters implementation and motivated to continue their support. Opportunities for sharing information may include:

- staff development sessions
- leadership meetings
- parent meetings
- student leadership meetings

Discuss the findings, goals and strategies provided by the action team and invite feedback to help refine these goals and strategies.

# Other data you could use

Schools use a variety of data sources to inform planning. Think about ways you could also use this data to help monitor your school's MindMatters implementation. Your action team will need to decide which other data will be most useful for your purposes.

## Primary data in schools

Primary data is collected by your school for your school and may be useful when establishing your implementation plan. As primary data is collected for a specific purpose, be careful to keep that purpose in mind when interpreting the data.

### Some sources of primary data used in schools:

- school audits
- departmental surveys
- achievement data
- attendance records
- incident reports or behavioural management records
- parent-teacher interviews
- staff meetings
- community or parent focus groups.



## Secondary data in schools

Secondary data is collected outside of your school but is still useful for your implementation plan. Secondary data sources could include published research, journal articles, newspapers or census results. The MindMatters survey tool provides national average scores for comparison against your school's results. This is a form of secondary data.

### Some sources of secondary data used in schools:

- MindMatters survey tool national averages
- official statistics, such as Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data or MySchool data
- government documents or technical reports
- publicly reported survey results, such as findings from the National Student Wellbeing Survey
- scholarly or trade journals
- published reports by research institutions or universities.

### Using secondary data

Secondary data is best used in conjunction with primary data as background research or for comparisons. Be careful not to replace the need for primary data collection with secondary data only.

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](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)



# References and key readings

Hattie, J.A.C. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of 800+ meta-analyses on achievement*. Oxford UK: Routledge.

Hattie, J.A.C. & Clinton, J.M. (2011). School leaders as evaluators. *Activate: A leader's guide to people, practices and processes*. (93-118). Englewood, CO: The Leadership and Learning Center.

Matters, G., (2006). Using data to support learning in schools: Students, teachers, systems. *Australian Education Review*.