

MODULE 1.4

RELATIONSHIPS AND BELONGING

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Module 1.4

Relationships and belonging

Introduction

The 'Module 1.4 Relationships and belonging' facilitator guide is designed to assist you to prepare and deliver group professional learning using the online MindMatters modules, which can be found at www.mindmatters.edu.au.

It consists of a possible sequence of professional learning activities to use with a group of staff as you move through the module.

MindMatters modules are 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.



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 refreshment).
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.

Overview

MindMatters modules are designed to take approximately one hour to complete. You may prefer your group to view the online video 'The MindMatters panel' at a different time, due to the video length.

Activity	Time	Materials needed
1. Develop (or revisit) agreements for working together	5 minutes	Whiteboard or poster paper, markers
2. Online wall task 'What might be some barriers to people connecting with your school?'	10 minutes	Online device, whiteboard or poster paper, markers
3. Energiser – Diversity walk	15 minutes	Role cards, large open space
4. Online video 'The MindMatters panel'	20 minutes	Online device
5. Online video animation 'Relationships and belonging'	10 minutes	Online device
6. Online video 'Importance of building relationships'	5 minutes	Online device, hardcopy of 'Relationships and belonging' module overview
7. Online wall task 'What could you do to help others (students, parents, other staff) feel connected to your school?'	5 minutes	Online device
8. Online Next steps	5 minutes	Online device, hardcopy of 'Simple steps to improving school connectedness'

Before starting the activities

Explain that MindMatters modules contribute to the ongoing MindMatters journey of improving the mental health of students by building a whole school approach.


Detail any 'housekeeping' issues. Clarify the duration of the professional learning session.



 **TIME:** 5 minutes.

 **MATERIALS:**

- 'How to Facilitate MindMatters modules' guide
[DOWNLOAD AND PRINT](#)
- Whiteboard or poster paper
- Markers or post it notes.

 **PURPOSE:** To create a safe learning environment so that all staff can contribute to the session in a respectful way. To make expectations clear to ensure all participants contribute their views and ideas. To encourage people to take responsibility for their own learning and be accountable to colleagues.

1. Develop (or revisit) agreements for working together

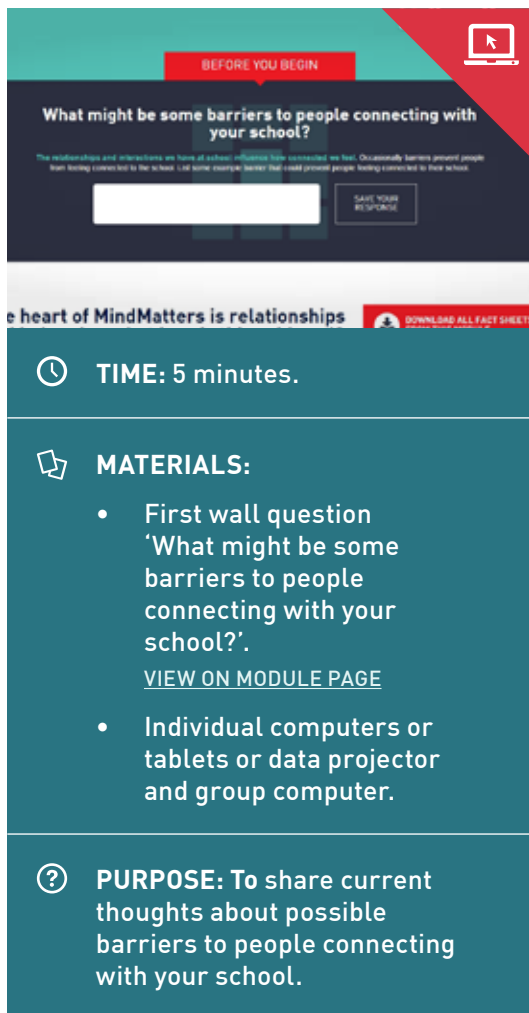
Instructions:

1. Ask participants to brainstorm and 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 the whiteboard or poster paper.

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.
3. For more examples, download the 'How to facilitate MindMatters modules' guide and follow the instructions on 'How to: Develop an agreement for working together'.

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."



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What might be some barriers to people connecting with your school?

The relationships and interactions we have at school influence how connected we feel. Occasionally barriers prevent people from feeling connected to the school. List some example barriers that could prevent people feeling connected to their school.

SAVE YOUR RESPONSE

the heart of MindMatters is relationships [DOWNLOAD ALL FACE SHEETS](#)

⌚ TIME: 5 minutes.

📄 MATERIALS:

- First wall question 'What might be some barriers to people connecting with your school?'.
[VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Individual computers or tablets or data projector and group computer.

❓ PURPOSE: To share current thoughts about possible barriers to people connecting with your school.

2. Online wall task

Instructions:

1. Connect to the internet.
2. Log in to your MindMatters account.
3. Select component 1 'Positive school community'.
4. Select Module 1.4 'Relationships and belonging'.
5. Invite participants to complete the first wall question individually – 'What might be some barriers to people connecting with your school?'
6. Break the large group into groups of three and ask participants to share their ideas.
7. Each small group then shares their ideas with the whole group.
8. Ask: How do ideas vary across the group? What are common concerns that the group can document to assist in future discussions?

Debrief: At the end of this session, you will be able to check whether your understanding has changed as well as compare it to what other participants have said.



🕒 **TIME:** 15 minutes.

📄 **MATERIALS:**

- Role cards (see end of this document).
[JUMP TO THIS PAGE](#)
- Large, open space.

❓ **PURPOSE:** To demonstrate the different experiences that adolescents 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 adolescents.

3. Energiser – Diversity walk

Background information: Participants are provided with a range of student scenarios that include different combinations of risk and protective factors and are asked to step into the shoes of the student in their scenario. 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, inviting participants not to share their scenario with others.
2. If possible, ask one person to be an observer of body language as the activity unfolds. They can report back at the end of the activity.
3. Ask participants to form a line across the middle of the room, facing you.
4. Invite individuals to read their role card. If anyone has a role card that they wish to change, please come and take another card.
5. Read out the following:
 - “If you are comfortable, close your eyes and imagine you are the student in the scenario on the role card. There is only a small amount of information on the cards, so use your imagination about what things might be like for this student. Take some deep breaths and imagine you are getting up in the morning to go to school as this 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? How will you get to 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. Taking small steps, move forward if your answer is yes and backwards for no. Don’t move if you are uncertain.”


▼ **ACTIVITY CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** ▼



 **TIME:** 15 minutes.

 **MATERIALS:**

- Role cards (see end of this document).
[JUMP TO THIS PAGE](#)
- Large, open space.

 **PURPOSE:** To demonstrate the different experiences that adolescents 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 adolescents.

6. Read out the following questions:
 - Do you believe you are a successful and worthy person?
 - Do you 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 put down, harassed or bullied?
 - Are you likely to be chosen for a leadership position?
 - When the class breaks into groups of choice are you chosen to be in a group?
 - Are you comfortable talking to a teacher if you have a problem?
 - Will you be keen to attend the next sports day, 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?
7. While they are spread out and in their final positions, ask people who were moving forward if they were aware of people behind them. What were you thinking and feeling as you were stepping forward?
8. Ask people who were stepping backwards, whether they were aware of people moving in front of them. What were you thinking and feeling as you were stepping backwards?
9. People who were in the middle, were there any thoughts/feelings that you would like to share? What was it like seeing people move in front and behind you?
10. Invite a few people at the front, then the back, then the middle to read out their card.
11. 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."
12. Invite the observer to comment on what they noticed e.g. how did people up the front behave compared with those at the back?

▼ **ACTIVITY CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** ▼



⌚ TIME: 15 minutes.

📄 MATERIALS:

- Role cards (see end of this document).
[JUMP TO THIS PAGE](#)
- Large, open space.

❓ PURPOSE: To demonstrate the different experiences that adolescents 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 adolescents.

Debrief: Once the Diversity walk is completed, ask participants to step out of their role and debrief. Explain to participants that empathetic feelings build up and can stay with people, so they are encouraged 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 young people they know.

Ask participants to reflect on the activity. Place yourselves back into your school role and think about what you learnt from this activity.

Additional points that can be shared with the group if they are not raised in the discussions above.

Be aware that students who we perceive as ‘flourishing’ or who appear to have many protective factors (like the ones who ended up at the front of the room) can suddenly struggle when a risk factor appears (e.g. a close relative being terminally ill). We can support students if we are aware of what may be happening in their lives. Building a relationship with them and/or their families can assist this.


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

Highlight that this representation of students is a lot like their school environment – many students with a range of different factors impacting on their experience of school. Sometimes staff may have very little information about a young person 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.

Additional questions to ask the group (if time permits)

What is one thing you could do, and other things your school could do, to enable students to take a step forward?

How can we ensure that this school, in reality, is a safe and supportive place for ALL students? What are the implications of the diversity walk for classroom practice? How can we ensure that the social and emotional needs of all students are addressed in every class?



TIME: 20 minutes.

MATERIALS:

- 'The MindMatters panel' video.
[VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)

PURPOSE: To consider questions raised by the online video.

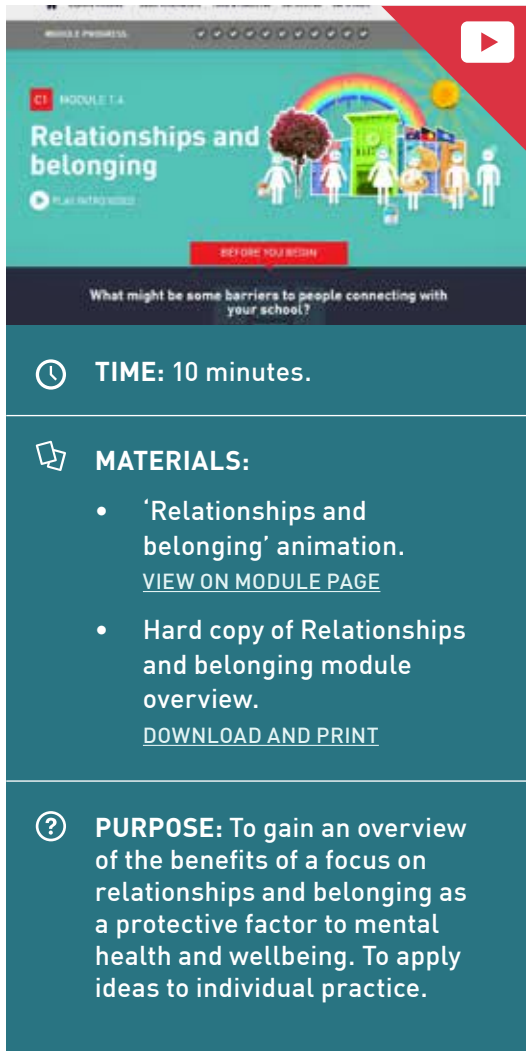
4. Online video 'The MindMatters panel'

Instructions:

Consider the following questions as you view the video 'The MindMatters panel':

1. Eagleton High deputy principal Phil really wants to demonstrate that his school values relationships, belonging and inclusion. How does your school demonstrate these values?
2. How can schools provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and build on their strengths?

Debrief: Discuss your answers to these questions with the person next to you.



TIME: 10 minutes.

MATERIALS:

- 'Relationships and belonging' animation.
[VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Hard copy of Relationships and belonging module overview.
[DOWNLOAD AND PRINT](#)

PURPOSE: To gain an overview of the benefits of a focus on relationships and belonging as a protective factor to mental health and wellbeing. To apply ideas to individual practice.

5. View the video animation 'Relationships and belonging'

Instructions:

1. View the video animation 'Relationships and belonging'.
2. Refer to page 7 in the module overview (four elements of connectedness).
3. In the context of your school, ask participants to break into pairs and discuss:
 - How would you describe the sense of connectedness?
 - Do you think all your students feel like they belong?
 - What do you do to build relationships with students, even the ones that aren't your favourites?
 - Does your school have a strategic approach to developing a positive community? What does it look like?
4. Invite pairs to share their ideas with others in the large group.
5. As a large group brainstorm and document:
 - What is the school doing well?
 - Where are the gaps?

Debrief: Invite people to share any insights they have had during this activity.



TIME: 10 minutes.

MATERIALS:

- 'Importance of building relationships' video. [VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- List of questions on whiteboard.

PURPOSE: To develop an understanding of the benefits of focusing on relationships and belonging in your school community.


6. View the video 'Importance of building relationships'

Instructions:

1. Play the video and ask participants to individually consider the debrief questions below.
2. Invite participants to break into groups of three to discuss the following questions:
 - What do you think contributes to a successful class?
 - What do you currently do to build relationships with your students?
 - How well do you know the current strengths of each student you teach?
 - What key factors can contribute to the improved relationships between the students and staff in the school?
3. Record key points on whiteboard or poster paper and display in the staffroom so that people can think about them in the coming weeks.

Debrief: Key messages to reiterate with the group:

- The features of a positive school community promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all community members.
- Respectful relationships are the glue that holds a positive school community together.
- Relationships promote a sense of belonging for students, staff and families, which in turn supports positive mental health and wellbeing.
- When students feel included and connected to school, they will be more likely to participate in the school community and achieve academic success.
- Schools, through their policies and practices, can create a positive environment where all community members feel included, valued and supported.



TIME: 5 minutes.

MATERIALS:

- Second wall question 'What could you do to help others (students, parents, other staff) feel connected to your school?'. [VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Individual computers/ tablets or data projector and group computer.

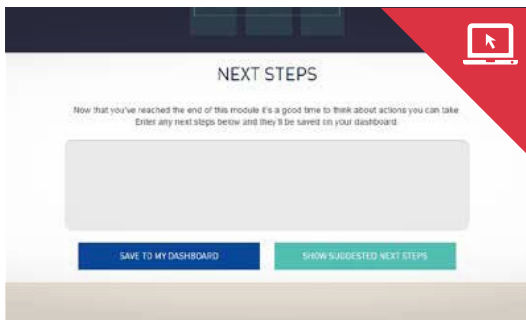
PURPOSE: To share understanding of connectedness.

7. Repeat online wall task

Instructions:

1. Invite participants to complete the second wall question: 'What could you do to help others (students, parents, other staff) feel connected to your school?'

Debrief: It is important that everyone in the school community has a shared understanding of the importance of relationships and belonging if a whole school approach is to be embraced and effective.



TIME: 10 minutes.

MATERIALS:

- Next steps section. [VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Alternatively, pens and paper.
- Copies of Simple steps to improving school connectedness (or display content on screen). [DOWNLOAD AND PRINT](#)

PURPOSE: To raise awareness that relationships and belonging are significant protective factors for mental health and wellbeing. For participants to consider what they can do to enhance relationships and belonging. Accountability.

8. Next steps

Instructions:

1. Invite each person to decide on three next steps they will undertake as a result of learning in the session. Share these intended actions with at least one other person. Note: if people are using their own device, these will be recorded on their individual dashboard for future reference.
2. Show (or hand out) the Simple steps to improving school connectedness PDF. Provide time for participants to read each of the pieces of information on the module page under the following headings:
 - Show empathy and kindness
 - Model prosocial behaviour
 - Make a concerted effort on difficult relationships
 - Maintain high standards
 - Use classroom management and teaching methods that can improve relationships
 - Provide students with academic, emotional and social skills
 - Enable active participation.
3. Invite participants to share one of the steps that they could commit to doing in the near future.

Debrief: Remind participants that if we are interested in improving mental health across the school, we need to commit to making a change in our behaviour and practice – even if it is a small change.

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

Diversity walk role cards

Print these out and cut into individual cards. Select a number of cards to match your number of participants. Ensure a mix of role cards.

**15 year old Sudanese girl, eldest of three children.
Has been in Australia for one year from Khartoum.
Father still in Sudan. Lives with mother and siblings.**

**14 year old boy experiencing voice changes and
acne. Academically bright. Good circle of friends.
Supportive family environment.**

**16 year old boy, same-sex attracted, having a hard
time at school, starting to get into drugs.**

**13 year old girl, both parents are professionals,
experiencing hearing problems, having tests,
likely to need a hearing aid very soon.**

**13 year old girl, large friendship group,
average achiever.**

**15 year old girl with 18 year old brother still at home.
Brother has intellectual disability and unable to find
appropriate work so is at home all the time.
Brother takes up much of parents' time and energy.**

**16 year old male living in small rural township, oldest
in family of three sons, father a bricklayer and would
prefer working with him than attend school.**

**16 year old male with autism living in city townhouse,
parents both teachers, oldest in family of three sons,
realising he is probably gay.**

14 year old girl with cystic fibrosis, requires hospitalisation (for two to three weeks at a time) every three to six months. Has strong circle of friends.

Year 11 student, supportive parents, loves teachers & school life in general. Strong friendship group.

17 year old male, liked by everyone, has supportive network of friends in Christian youth group, attends classes but struggles to achieve success.

16 year old girl who experiences anxiety attacks; has managed to hide this, so far, from everyone, is well liked, seemingly sociable, outgoing person.

A 15 year old boy with intellectual disability has a poor attitude to girls, nasty to his friends, single parent father unemployed, home violence is common.

A 13 year old girl, brightest girl in the group, arrived as a six year old refugee from Iraq.

Popular boy among peers. Gets along well with teachers and parents. Aboriginal.

Well-presented girl, athletic, loveable, knows how far to go before she steps over the line.

A 13 year old overweight girl, uninterested in school life in general. Tends to spend a lot of time on her own.

A 17 year old, academically bright student. Popular with peers. Supportive parents.

A 14 year old girl, got drunk on Saturday night, had sex with someone, unsure if protection used. Academically successful. Few friends.

Year 11 student, supportive parents, loves teachers and school life in general.

Friendly, girl, gets along well with staff and peers, active, interested, shows initiative, reliable, has to have things 'just right' (perfectionist) mother is on 'Parents and friends committee'.

17 year old girl with moderate intellectual disabilities, poor attendance. Very supportive parents.

14 year old boy with high intelligence has Asperger's syndrome (high functioning autism). Has teacher's aide for three hours a day to assist with classroom and playground issues.

13 year old boy who often comes late to school and appears withdrawn. Father has a mental illness.

13 year old girl, shy and withdrawn. Studious and does well in all her subjects. Quiet in class, sometimes bullied by other girls.