

MODULE 2.4

# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

FACILITATOR GUIDE



# Module 2.4

## Empowering students

### Introduction

The 'Module 2.4 Empowering students' facilitator guide is designed to assist you to prepare and deliver group professional learning using the MindMatters modules, which can be found at [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://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 or post it notes
2. Energiser – Knots	5 minutes	Space to move
3. Brain dump – What is student empowerment?	5 minutes	Blank paper, pens, online device
4. Online wall task and reflection 'How are students empowered within your school?'	5 minutes	Online device, whiteboard or poster paper, markers, copy of 'Empowering students' module overview
5. Online video 'The MindMatters panel'	20 minutes	Online device
6. Online video animation 'Empowering students'	5 minutes	Online device, copies of 'Empowering students' module overview (optional)
7. Audit current practice	15 minutes	A3 poster copy of 'Student empowerment in mental health promotion audit', A4 copies for each pair, copies of 'Empowering students' module overview – one per person or use online device, packet of sticky dots
8. Online wall task 'How could your school improve student empowerment?'	5 minutes	Online device, whiteboard or poster paper, markers
9. Consider possible action	10 minutes	Copies of 'Possible action'
10. Online Next steps	5 minutes	Online device, pen and paper (optional)

## 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'.

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**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."



🕒 **TIME:** 5 minutes.

📄 **MATERIALS:**

- Space to move.

❓ **PURPOSE:** To help people connect with each other. To orient participants to the content of the session by focusing on leadership, communication, cooperation and problem solving. To role model an activity that could be facilitated with students.


## 2. Energiser – Knots

### Instructions:

1. Form small groups of six to twelve people.
2. Invite each group to huddle in a small bunch and close their eyes.
3. Participants reach across the group to hold other hands, ensuring that people are not holding both hands of the same person.
4. Ask participants to hold hands and open eyes.
5. Unravel the knot of arms and end with the group in a circle with hands linked.

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**Debrief:** Ask participants: What helped? What hindered? Who took the lead? How and why? What if there had been a mix of adults and students in the group? Who would have taken the lead? Why?



**TIME:** 5 minutes.

**MATERIALS:**

- Blank paper.
- Pens.
- Online device.

**PURPOSE:** To share current understandings of the term 'empowerment' prior to undertaking the module.

### 3. Brain dump – What is student empowerment?

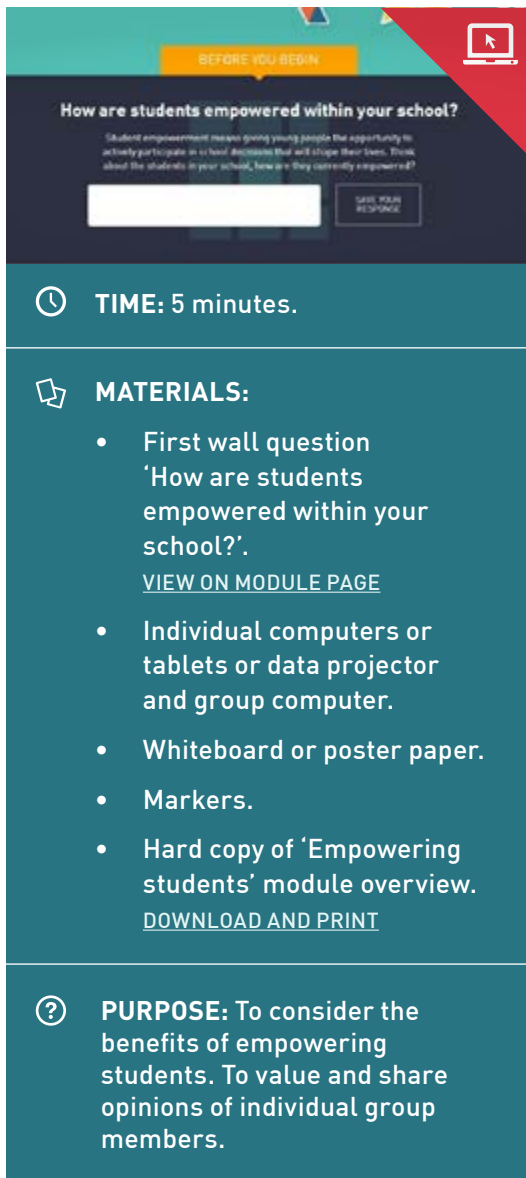
#### Instructions:

1. Form groups of three.
2. Say to participants “On a blank piece of paper, write words and phrases that come to mind when you think of student empowerment.”
3. Show participants the information on the module page under the heading ‘What is student empowerment?’.
4. Invite them to compare their words and phrases with the information provided. Especially the first sentence: Student empowerment means giving young people the opportunity to actively participate in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers.

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**Debrief:** Ask participants: “Has your understanding of student empowerment changed or been confirmed?” Remind participants about issues for students from diverse backgrounds. There can be a risk of setting students up with empowerment when settings are not ready. For the student from other cultures this requires additional consideration as certain cultural values may clash with mainstream values held by staff.





**BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

**How are students empowered within your school?**

Student empowerment means giving young people the opportunity to actively participate in school decisions that will shape their lives. Think about the students in your school, how are they currently empowered?

GIVE YOUR RESPONSE

**⌚ TIME: 5 minutes.**

**📄 MATERIALS:**

- First wall question 'How are students empowered within your school?'.  
[VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Individual computers or tablets or data projector and group computer.
- Whiteboard or poster paper.
- Markers.
- Hard copy of 'Empowering students' module overview.  
[DOWNLOAD AND PRINT](#)


**❓ PURPOSE:** To consider the benefits of empowering students. To value and share opinions of individual group members.

## 4. Online wall task and reflection

### Instructions:

1. Connect to the internet.
2. Log in to your MindMatters account.
3. Select component 2 'Student skills for resilience'.
4. Select Module 2.4 'Empowering students'.
5. Read the wall information provided: Student empowerment means giving young people the opportunity to actively participate in school decisions that will shape their lives. Think about the students in your school, how are they currently empowered?
6. Invite participants to complete the first wall question individually 'How are students empowered within your school?'
7. Invite participants to share their ideas with the whole group by creating a shared list on a whiteboard or poster paper.
8. Ask "Which of these provides the greatest opportunity for the greatest number of young people to actively participate in school decisions that will shape their lives?"

**Debrief:** By reflecting on the school's current practice in empowering students, good practice can be celebrated and the process can identify possible areas for action. Taking time to contemplate the benefits of improving or expanding practices can help justify the time and effort it takes to empower students. See pages 6 to 9 of the module overview to read about the benefits of empowerment for individuals, the school and society.



**TIME:** 20 minutes.

**MATERIALS:**

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

**PURPOSE:** To consider questions raised by the online video.

## 5. Online video 'The MindMatters panel'

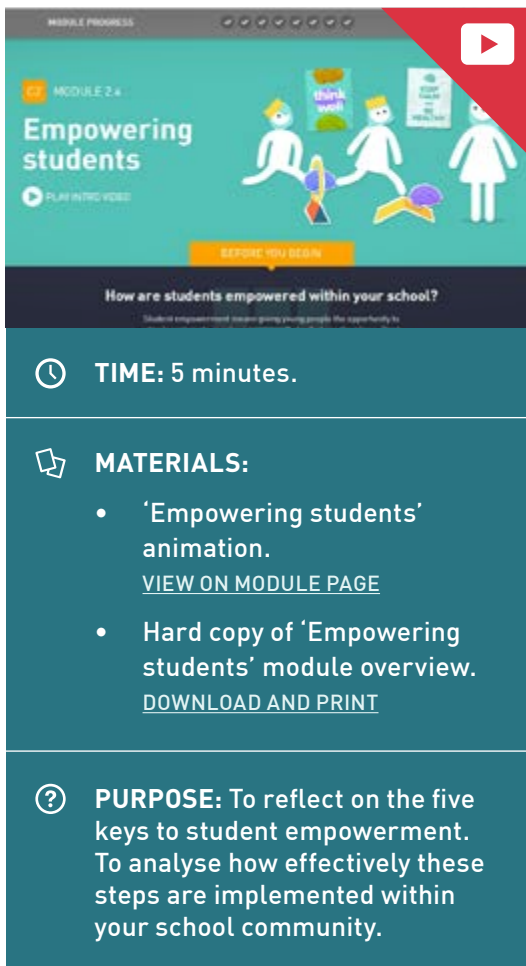
### Instructions:

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

1. Eagleton High deputy principal Phil is trying to implement youth-led student empowerment. What happens, and how could he do this more successfully?
2. How can allowing students to fail ultimately make them more capable human beings?

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



**MODULE 2.4**  
**Empowering students**  
PLAY INTRO VIDEO

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How are students empowered within your school?  
Student empowerment means giving young people the opportunity to

**⌚ TIME: 5 minutes.**

**📄 MATERIALS:**

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

**❓ PURPOSE:** To reflect on the five keys to student empowerment. To analyse how effectively these steps are implemented within your school community.

## 6. View the video animation 'Empowering students'

### Instructions:

1. View the video animation 'Empowering students'.
2. Invite participants to read pages 5 and 16 in the module overview.
3. Optional activity: The final question posed in the animation is 'Are you ready to share the power?'. Ask for a show of hands "Who is ready to share the power?"

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**Debrief:** Say to participants "Commitment from across the school is an essential step if empowering students is to become an integral part of our MindMatters implementation plan. Let's look at how well we are doing now".

### Student empowerment in mental health promotion audit

Do you want to be part of a school that empowers its students to be able to lead activities that support their own and other people's mental health and grow their resilience? Maybe you already are?

This audit will help you consider where your school is on your student empowerment journey for mental health.


Commitment	No	Somewhat	Yes
Staff, students and parents are aware of student empowerment and the important role it plays in promoting positive mental health.			
My school provides students with resources (time, budget and staff) to promote positive mental health.			
Staff and students have regular planning discussions about how students can promote positive mental health in a way that is meaningful for them.			
My school has included student empowerment as part of its strategic plan.			
My school collects data about the effectiveness of student mental health promotion and uses it to guide next steps.			
Knowledge and skills	No	Somewhat	Yes
All interested students at my school have the opportunity to learn about student empowerment and develop the required skills.			
My school provides students with the opportunity to debrief and reflect on positive mental health promotion activities.			

 **TIME:** 15 minutes.

### **MATERIALS:**

- A3 poster copy of 'Student empowerment' in mental health promotion audit (See end of this document).
- A4 copies of the audit for each pair.
- 13 sticky dots per pair.
- Hard copy of 'Empowering students' module overview (optional).

[DOWNLOAD AND PRINT](#)

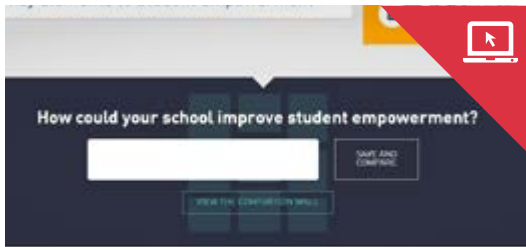
 **PURPOSE:** To audit current practice and provide ideas about future action to empower students.

## 7. Audit current practice

### Instructions:

1. Invite participants to form pairs. Provide each pair with an A4 copy of the audit.
2. Invite pairs to indicate with a tick where they believe the school is at, in terms of empowering students.
3. Attach the A3 poster of the audit to the wall or whiteboard.
4. Give each pair 13 sticky dots – one for each item in the audit.
5. Collate answers by asking each pair to place their sticky dots on the A3 poster according to how they decided the school was doing in each aspect. This will provide a collated visual representation of the group's opinions.
6. As a large group, invite participants to reflect on the A3 poster results and discuss:
  - What is the school doing well?
  - What are the gaps?
  - What should or could we do about the gaps?

**Debrief:** Say to participants "Reflecting on how effectively student empowerment processes have already been set up at our school is an important step to consider when planning what to do next".



**TIME:** 5 minutes.

**MATERIALS:**

- Second wall question 'How could your school improve student empowerment?'. [VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Individual computers or tablets or data projector and group computer.
- Whiteboard or poster paper.

**PURPOSE:** To explore how the school could improve the support for students to lead their own wellbeing initiatives.

## 8. Repeat online wall task

### Instructions:

1. Invite participants to complete the second wall question individually 'How could your school improve student empowerment?'
2. Invite participants to share their ideas with the whole group. Create a shared list of ideas on a whiteboard or poster paper.
3. Ask "Which of these will be most realistic, achievable and powerful?"

**Debrief:** Remind participants that all five of the key elements to student empowerment ideally need to be in place to make positive and sustainable outcomes more likely. Empowerment doesn't happen without commitment, knowledge and skills, confidence, opportunities and responsibilities and active support. It is important that everyone in the school community has a shared understanding of this across the school.

**Possible action**

**Step 1: Gain school commitment**

In order to gain commitment, create and articulate a vision about why you want to empower students. You might like to see MindMatters Getting Started to consider change management strategies.

Allocate resources to student empowerment. E.g. time, staff, budget and policies.

Write student empowerment into the school strategic plan.

**Step 2: Talk to school staff**

As a staff, discuss what student empowerment means and why it is important that students are supported to lead the positive mental health promotion at your school. Inviting more staff to undertake Module 2.4 'Empowering Students' can support this process. See [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au).

Complete the *Student empowerment in mental health promotion audit*. Invite other staff to complete the audit.


**Step 3: Ask young people**


Talk to students about what empowerment and wellbeing means to them and the enablers and blockers at their school. This is a great way to increase staff understanding of young people's views and demonstrate that staff are interested in these views.

**Step 4: Form a student empowerment team**

Write expressions of interest from students who want to help promote mental health.


Allocate appropriate staff to support the student empowerment team.

 **TIME: 10 minutes.**

 **MATERIALS:**

- Copies of 'Possible action' handout (See end of this document).

[JUMP TO THIS PAGE](#)

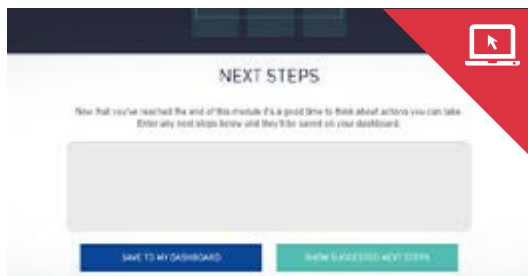
 **PURPOSE:** To consider and discuss possible strategic action.

## 9. Consider possible action

### Instructions:

1. Create groups of three.
2. Provide each group with the handout 'Possible action'.
3. Invite participants to read the sheet and determine where they believe the school should start.
4. Share and compare the starting points selected.


**Debrief:** The resulting ideas can inform the school's MindMatters implementation plan, which is discussed in Module 1.1 'Getting started'.



 **TIME:** 5 minutes.

 **MATERIALS:**

- Next steps section.  
[VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Alternatively, pens and paper.

 **PURPOSE:** To consider what individuals could do to help empower students. To provide an avenue of accountability.

## 10. Next steps

### Instructions:

1. Invite each person to decide on three next steps they will undertake as a result of learning in the session.
2. 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.

**Debrief:** Say to participants “If we are interested in empowering students to be part of 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](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)

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Staff and students have regular planning discussions about how students can promote positive mental health in a way that is meaningful for them.			
My school has included student empowerment as part of its strategic plan.			
My school collects data about the effectiveness of student mental health promotion and uses it to guide next steps.			
Knowledge and skills	No	Somewhat	Yes
All interested students at my school have the opportunity to learn about student empowerment and develop the required skills.			
My school provides students with the opportunity to debrief and reflect on positive mental health promotion activities.			



<b>Confidence</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Staff support students to promote positive mental health in ways that are meaningful for them.			
Students feel comfortable and supported to lead positive mental health promotion activities at school.			
<b>Opportunities and responsibilities</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Yes</b>
All interested students at my school have the opportunity to have input into mental health promotion.			
Students are given the opportunity to promote positive mental health to other students and the community outside of the school.			
<b>Active support</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Staff are present in the room and listen actively when students are promoting positive mental health.			
Students who promote positive mental health at school receive formal recognition for their work (i.e. at assembly, awards etc.).			

## Possible action

### Step 1: Gain school commitment

In order to gain commitment, create and articulate a vision about why you want to empower students. You might like to attend a MindMatters Getting Started to consider change management strategies.

Allocate resources to student empowerment. E.g. time, staff, budget and policies.

Write student empowerment into the school strategic plan.

### Step 2: Talk to school staff

As a staff, discuss what student empowerment means and why it is important that students are supported to lead the positive mental health promotion at your school. Inviting more staff to undertake Module 2.4 'Empowering Students' can support this process. See [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au).

Complete the 'Student empowerment in mental health promotion audit'. Invite other staff to complete the audit.

### Step 3: Ask young people

Talk to students about what empowerment and wellbeing means to them and the enablers and blockers at their school. This is a great way to increase staff understanding of young people's views and demonstrate that staff are interested in these views.

### Step 4: Form a student empowerment team

Invite expressions of interest from students who want to help promote mental health.

Allocate appropriate staff to support the student empowerment team.

### Step 5: Student-led data analysis

Complete the 'Student empowerment in mental health promotion audit' with the student empowerment team. Compare the student audit results with the staff audit.

Involve students in collecting and analysing data around mental health. Free surveys can be found on the MindMatters website.

### Step 6: Student-led goal-setting

Encourage students to use findings from mental health data collection and their own knowledge to identify key areas of school culture to work on and develop SMART goals to promote mental health. Note: SMART goals are goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related.

### Step 7: Student-led strategy development

Support students to develop strategies to achieve their mental health SMART goals and that are meaningful for them. E.g. being involved in key mental health days, such as World Mental Health Day in October each year, or designing and delivering cross-age or peer mental health lessons.

Read about ideas for empowering young people at <http://challenge.fya.org.au/>

### Step 8: Provide students with skills and knowledge

Support the development of young people's skills and knowledge required to successfully develop and lead mental health strategies.

Provide opportunities for students to debrief and reflect on health promotion activities they are already involved in.

### Step 9: Provide opportunities for young people

Provide opportunities for students to enact their positive mental health promotion strategies.

**Step 10: Evaluate progress**

Measure the effectiveness of initiatives by re-collecting data.

Celebrate all success. It is helpful to involve the whole school community in this.

**Step 11: Ensure sustainability**

Implement sustainability measures to ensure students currently involved lead any training of new students getting involved.