

MODULE 3.2

# COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

FACILITATOR GUIDE

# Module 3.2

## Communicating with parents

### Introduction

The 'Module 3.2 Communicating with parents' 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](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. Energiser – Hmm...what do I think?	5 minutes	Two signs – Agree/Disagree, space to move
2. Develop (or revisit) agreements for working together	5 minutes	Whiteboard or poster paper, markers or post it notes
3. Online wall task 'Think about a recent successful interaction at school where a parent sought your advice. What did you do that helped the interaction go well?'	10 minutes	Online device
4. Online video 'The MindMatters panel'	20 minutes	Online device
5. Online video animation 'Communicating with parents' and discussion	10 minutes	Online device, hard copy of 'Communicating with parents' module overview
6. Walk in my shoes	15 minutes	Hard copies of 'Communicating with parents' module overview (one per participant), two blank A3 pages, markers
7. Online wall task 'What three tips would you give a colleague to guide them in having a conversation with a parent?'	10 minutes	Online device
8. Online Next steps	5 minutes	Online device (or hard copy)

## 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:**

- One sign that reads 'agree'.
- One sign that reads 'disagree'.

**PURPOSE:** To help people connect with each other and share opinions. To orient participants to the content of the session by discussing parents and families. To role model an activity that could be facilitated with students.

## 1. Energiser – Hmm...what do I think?

### Instructions:

1. Place signs at either end of the room.
2. Read out a statement. Explain that there is no right or wrong answer; it is an opinion.
3. Ask people to move to the end of the room that best matches their opinion.
4. Invite people to discuss their view with others near them.

### Statements:

- Young people should be seen and not heard
- Parents and carers are important to student learning
- Parents and carers are important to student mental health
- Parents and carers struggle with parenting adolescents
- Extended family members are important in an adolescent's development
- Parents and carers know best what their children need
- Talking to parents and carers can be scary.


**Debrief:** Say to participants "Our beliefs influence our behaviour. Our beliefs will affect how comfortable we are in communicating with parents and carers."



 **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.

## 2. 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.

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:** 10 minutes.

**MATERIALS:**

- First wall question 'Think about a recent successful interaction at school where a parent sought your advice. What did you do that helped the interaction go well?'.  
[VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Individual computers or tablets or data projector and group computer.

**PURPOSE:** To share experiences about communicating with parents and carers.


### 3. Online wall task

#### Instructions:

1. Connect to the internet.
2. Log in to your MindMatters account.
3. Select component 3 'Parents and families'.
4. Select Module 3.2 'Communicating with parents'.
5. Invite participants to complete the first wall question individually 'Think about a recent successful interaction at school where a parent sought your advice. What did you do that helped the interaction go well?'.
6. Invite people to share their examples with the group.

**Debrief:** Say to participants "Many staff are already skilled at having conversations with parents. At the end of this session, you will have further tools and ideas to assist you in communicating with parents and carers about mental health."





**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'

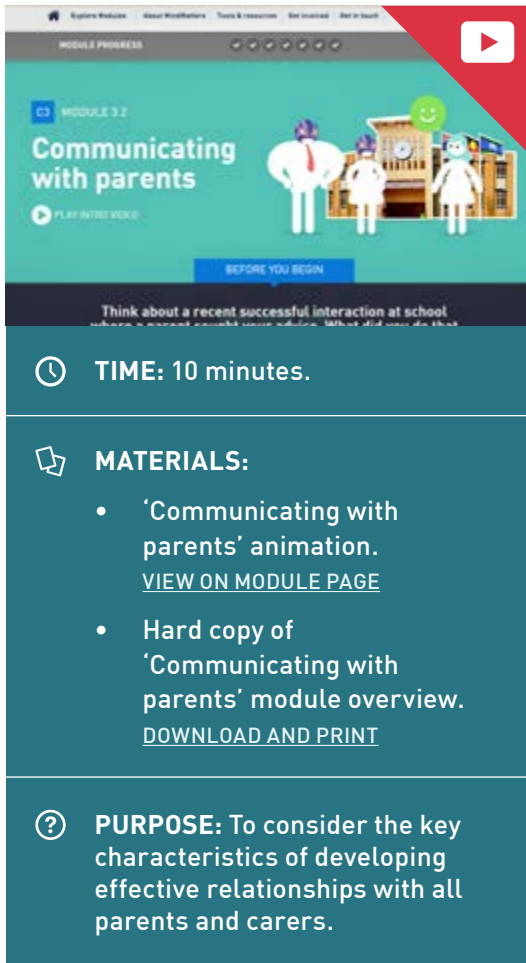
### Instructions:

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

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses in the way Eagleton High is approaching staff communication with parents?
2. How could your school improve the way staff members communicate with parents?

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



The screenshot shows a digital interface for a module titled 'Communicating with parents'. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'MODULE PROGRESS' and a play button icon. Below that, the title 'C3 MODULE 3.2 Communicating with parents' is displayed. A 'PLAY INTRO VIDEO' button is visible. The main content area features an illustration of three stylized figures (two adults and one child) standing in front of a school building. A 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN' button is located below the illustration. A dark banner contains the text: 'Think about a recent successful interaction at school where a parent caught your eye. What did you do that...'. Below this, there are three sections: 'TIME: 10 minutes.' with a clock icon, 'MATERIALS:' with a document icon, and 'PURPOSE:' with a question mark icon.

**TIME:** 10 minutes.

**MATERIALS:**

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

**PURPOSE:** To consider the key characteristics of developing effective relationships with all parents and carers.


## 5. Online video animation 'Communicating with parents' and discussion

### Instructions:

1. View the video animation 'Communicating with parents'.
2. Refer to pages 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the module overview.
3. Invite participants to break into pairs and discuss:
  - How they form relationships with their students.
  - How they identify the strengths of their students.
4. Invite pairs to join another pair and share their ideas.

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**Debrief:** Say to participants "You're invited to share any insights you have had during this activity."



**TIME:** 15 minutes.

**MATERIALS:**

- Hard copies of 'Communicating with parents' module overview (one per participant).  
[DOWNLOAD AND PRINT](#)
- A3 paper and markers.

**PURPOSE:** To consider what a diverse range of parents and carers might need from the school in order to feel comfortable and confident to seek support.

## 6. Activity – Walk in my shoes

### Instructions:

1. Invite participants to spend five minutes briefly reading through pages 8 to 14 of the module overview.
2. Say to the group "Imagine you are the parent or carer or aunt or uncle of an adolescent attending this school. What would you need from the school and teacher in order for you to feel comfortable and confident to seek mental health support for this young person you care about?"
3. Invite each pair to go for a short three minute walk (e.g. outside, along the corridor, around the building) to discuss the question.
4. Have a poster or whiteboard with the heading 'teacher' and a poster with the heading 'school'.
5. As people arrive back, invite them to add one or two of their ideas under each and/or both headings.
6. Invite everyone to read the list.
7. Ask "Are there any new and realistic ideas on this list that could be provided by the school?"

**Debrief:** Say to participants "Parents will have different needs. For parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, they often have a range of additional worries and it can be harder to find information that makes sense. We don't need to have the answers; we can simply be empathetic, open and supportive of these parents."




 **TIME:** 10 minutes.

 **MATERIALS:**

- Second wall question 'What three tips would you give a colleague to guide them in having a conversation with a parent?'.  
[VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)

- Individual computers or tablets or data projector and group computer.

 **PURPOSE:** To provide participants with ideas and guidance to assist them in communicating with parents and carers.

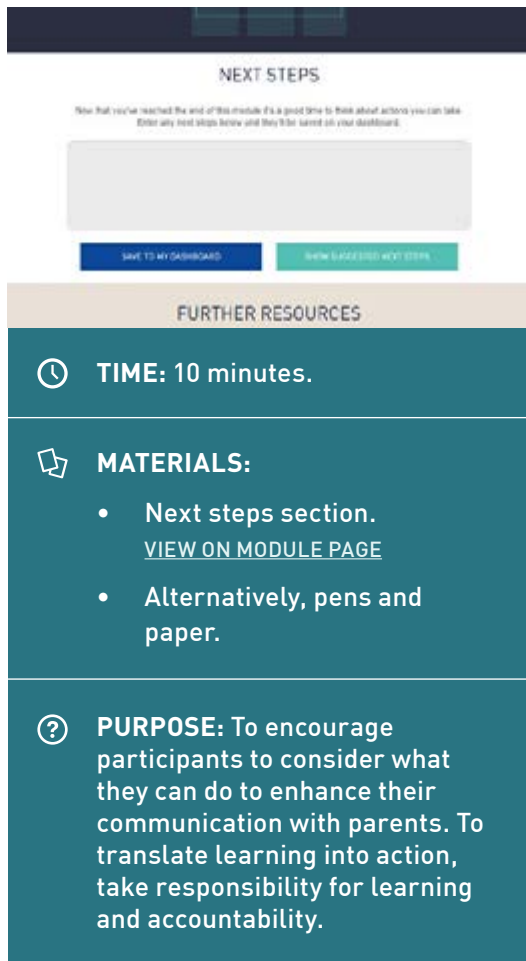
## 7. Repeat online wall task

### Instructions:

1. Invite participants to complete the second wall question 'What three tips would you give a colleague to guide them in having a conversation with a parent?'.  
2. Ask participants to think about a time when someone held a conversation with them. What considerations assisted in holding the conversation? E.g. a quiet place, a cup of tea, a respectful tone, a set allocated time.

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**Debrief:** Say to participants "Being aware of what we can put in place to assist us in holding conversations with parents and carers can greatly set the scene for a positive outcome."



**NEXT STEPS**

Now that you've reached the end of this module it's a good time to think about actions you can take. Enter any next steps below and they'll be saved on your dashboard.

SAVE TO MY DASHBOARD    SHOW SUCCESSFUL NEXT STEPS

**FURTHER RESOURCES**

**⌚ TIME: 10 minutes.**

**📄 MATERIALS:**

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

**❓ PURPOSE:** To encourage participants to consider what they can do to enhance their communication with parents. To translate learning into action, take responsibility for learning and 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.
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 dashboard for future reference.
3. Invite participants to select and explore a website from the 'Further resources' section of the online module. Share a summary of the website resource with a partner.

**Debrief:** Say to participants "If we are interested in improving mental health across the school, we need to commit as an individual to strengthening our communication parents, carers and families."

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)