

MODULE 4.1

# HOW SCHOOLS HELP STUDENTS

FACILITATOR GUIDE



# Module 4.1

## How schools help students

### Introduction

The 'Module 4.1 How schools help 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. Energiser – Four things in common	5 minutes	Blank paper and pens
2. Develop (or revisit) agreements for working together	5 minutes	Whiteboard or poster paper, markers or post it notes
3. Online wall task 'How do you currently support students experiencing mental health difficulties within your everyday role at school?'	5 minutes	Online device
4. Online video 'The MindMatters panel'	20 minutes	Online device
5. Online video animation 'How schools help students' and processes activity	10 minutes	Online device, hard copy of 'How schools help students' module overview, grouping strategy
6. Case study – Jigsaw activity	20 minutes	Online device or hard copy of 'Case studies', grouping strategy
7. Online wall task 'What else could you do to support student experiencing mental health difficulties?'	5 minutes	Online device
8. Summarise key messages	5 minutes	Online device (or hard copy)
9. 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:**

- Blank paper and pen for each person.
- Space for people to move around.

**❓ PURPOSE:** To help people connect with each other and find things they have in common. To discuss the importance of developing connections and relationships in classrooms, which can become key protective factors for students' mental health. To role model an activity that could be facilitated with students.

## 1. Energiser – Four things in common

### Instructions:

1. Ensure everyone has a pen and a piece of paper.
2. Ask everyone to walk around the room and find a partner. Say to participants "Write down four things you have in common with your partner. Answers could include liking the same foods or having the same interests."
3. Ask the group to mingle again and repeat this process with a new partner.
4. Repeat this process to create as many pairings as you have time for.

**Debrief:** Ask the group: What are some of the things that you have in common with others? How did it feel to connect with people you work with? What is the benefit of using activities like this with our students?


Explain that finding common ground with others creates connections. Individual staff can make substantial differences in their everyday work to the lives of individual students at risk of experiencing mental health difficulties. They can do this by demonstrating an interest in students as people, being approachable and empathetic and developing and using good listening skills.



 **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.
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."



**BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

How do you currently support students experiencing mental health difficulties within your everyday role at school?

Staff are able to make significant contributions to student mental health through their 'everyday' role and actions. List some of the ways in which you help with student mental health.

SAVE YOUR RESPONSE

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**⌚ TIME: 5 minutes.**

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**📄 MATERIALS:**

- First wall question 'How do you currently support students experiencing mental health difficulties within your everyday role at school?'. [VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Individual computers or tablets or data projector and group computer.

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**❓ PURPOSE:** To share thoughts about how students experiencing mental health difficulties are currently supported at your school.

### 3. Online wall task


#### Instructions:

1. Connect to the internet.
2. Log in to your MindMatters account.
3. Select component 4 'Support for students experiencing mental health difficulties'.
4. Select Module 4.1 'How schools help students'.
5. Invite participants to complete the first wall question individually 'How do you currently support students experiencing mental health difficulties within your everyday role at school?'
6. Share ideas as a whole group.
7. Ask "How do ideas vary across the group?"

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**Debrief:** Say to participants "At the end of this session, you will have furthered your understanding of how you can support students experiencing mental health difficulties as part of your everyday role at school as well as be able to compare your answers with what participants from other schools have said."





**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'

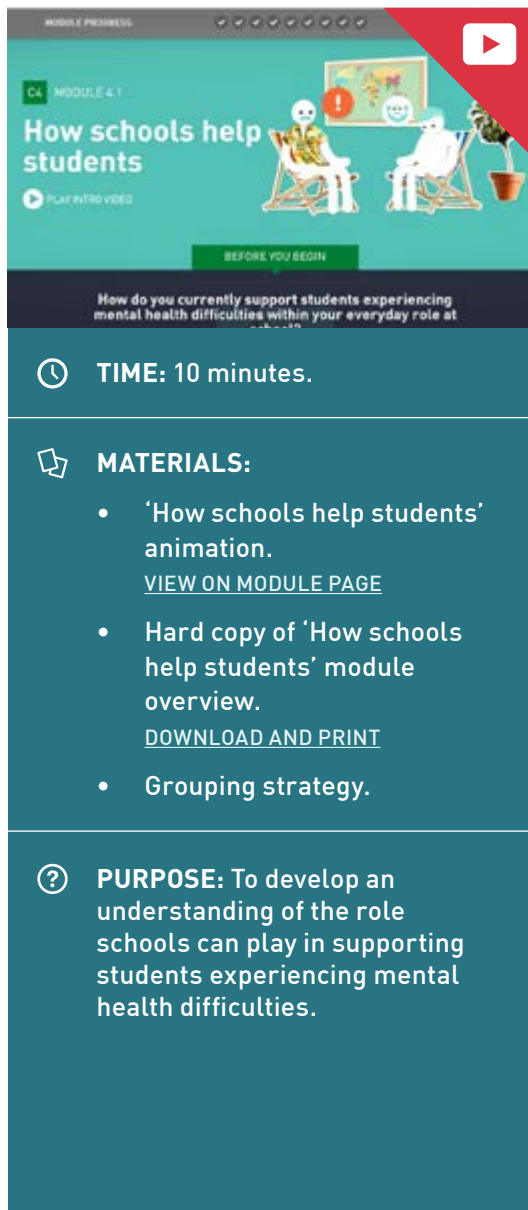
### Instructions:

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

1. Eagleton High deputy principal Phil is trying to support students in an informal way. How could the school formalise this strategy to assist other students?
2. Are there logistical changes (such as changing start and finish times) that could be implemented at your school to help students stay engaged in their schooling?

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



**MODULE 4.1**  
**How schools help students**

PLAY INTRO VIDEO

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How do you currently support students experiencing mental health difficulties within your everyday role at school?

**⌚ TIME: 10 minutes.**

**📄 MATERIALS:**

- 'How schools help students' animation.  
[VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Hard copy of 'How schools help students' module overview.  
[DOWNLOAD AND PRINT](#)
- Grouping strategy.

**❓ PURPOSE:** To develop an understanding of the role schools can play in supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties.

## 5. Online video animation 'How schools help students' and processes activity

### Instructions:

1. View the video animation 'How schools help students'.
2. Refer to pages 8 to 11 in the module overview.
3. In the context of your school, ask participants to consider explicit, practical ways they support students experiencing mental health difficulties by:
  - paying attention
  - encouraging open-ended conversations,
  - talking to colleagues or referring to outside support.
4. Invite participants to share their ideas with others in the large group.
5. Refer to pages 13 to 17 in the module overview.
6. Divide the group into pairs using a grouping strategy and discuss:
  - What coordinated processes and policies currently exist in your school to support students experiencing mental health difficulties?
  - Where are the gaps?
  - How can we ensure that processes and policies are communicated and understood across the whole school community?
7. Bring participants back into the large group and invite people to share any insights they have had during this activity.

**Debrief:** Schools and individual staff can make substantial differences to the lives of individual students at risk of or experiencing mental health difficulties. For staff this may be through their everyday contact with students and for schools through having clear policies and procedures that are communicated, understood and used across the whole school community.



🕒 **TIME: 20 minutes.**

📄 **MATERIALS:**

- Online module.
- Hard copy of 'Case studies'.  
[DOWNLOAD AND PRINT](#)
- Grouping strategy.

❓ **PURPOSE:** To examine practical strategies schools have used to support students experiencing mental health difficulties.

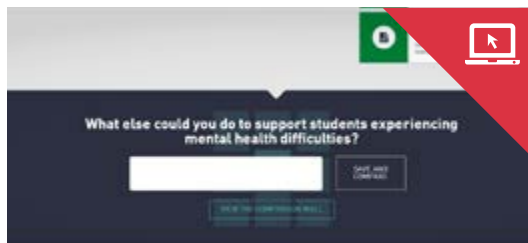
## 6. Case study – Jigsaw activity

### Instructions:

1. Use a grouping strategy to divide participants into four different groups. For example if you have a group of 24 participants hand out six red cards, six yellow cards, six blue cards and six green cards.
2. Participants form groups using the jigsaw technique: seat all the participants with red cards together, yellow cards together, blue cards together and green cards together.
3. Assign one case study per group, e.g. give Case study 1: 'School of distance education' to the red group.
4. Allow 5 to 10 minutes to read and answer the following questions as a group:
  - What strategy has been used in this case study?
  - How does this strategy support students experiencing mental health difficulties?
  - Could you see this strategy working successfully in your school? Why? Why not?
5. Form groups of four so there is one red card participant, one yellow card participant, one green card participant and one blue card participant in each group.
6. Each group assigns a time keeper.
7. Allow a maximum of two minutes for each person to share their information with their group.

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**Debrief:** Schools are able to implement policies and processes that can support staff to recognise and support students experiencing mental health difficulties.



 **TIME:** 5 minutes.

 **MATERIALS:**

- Second wall question 'What else could you do to support students experiencing mental health difficulties?'. [VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Individual computers or tablets or data projector and group computer.

 **PURPOSE:** To share further ideas about how to support students experiencing mental health difficulties.

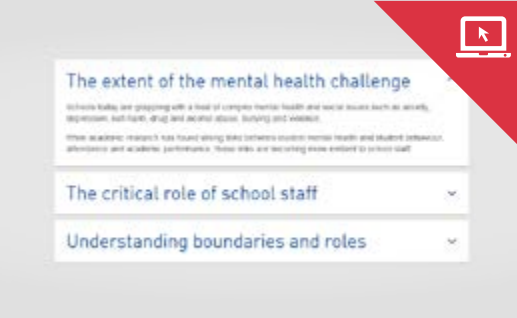
## 7. Repeat online wall task

### Instructions:

1. Invite participants to complete the second wall question 'What else could you do to support students experiencing mental health difficulties?'

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**Debrief:** Ask the question "How have understandings or strategies changed across the group?" Say to the group "It is important that everyone in the school community has a shared understanding of practical policies and strategies for helping students who are experiencing difficulties."



**TIME:** 5 minutes.

**MATERIALS:**

- Key messages section. [VIEW ON MODULE PAGE](#)
- Alternatively, hard copies of the information.

**PURPOSE:** To summarise the session and encourage people to consider the influence of this module on their beliefs and perceptions around supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties.

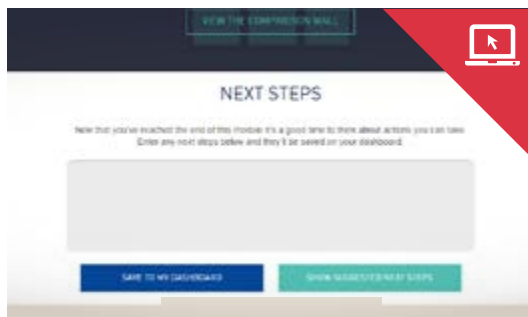
## 8. Summarise key messages

### Instructions:

1. Allow staff to read each of the pieces of information on the module page under the following headings:
  - a. The extent of the mental health challenge.
  - b. The critical role of school staff.
  - c. Understanding boundaries and roles.
2. Invite participants to share as a whole group how their beliefs and perceptions about the role they play in supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties has changed or been supported as a result of completing this module.

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**Debrief:** It is important to acknowledge the important role that staff can play and that they feel supported in undertaking that role.



 **TIME:** 5 minutes.

 **MATERIALS:**

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

 **PURPOSE:** To translate learning into action, take responsibility for learning and accountability.

## 9. 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:** 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](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)