

MINDMATTERS SPOTLIGHTS

BULLYING

Making it happen: tips and activities
for addressing this topic



Bullying

Introduction

The 'Making it Happen Guide' for the MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying is designed to assist you to prepare and deliver group professional learning using the MindMatters Spotlights, which can be found at www.mindmatters.edu.au. It consists of a possible sequence of professional learning activities to use with the school leadership team and a group of staff as you move through the Spotlight.

Bullying is an important but sensitive topic. Ensuring that you are well prepared with these activities can support staff to embrace a challenging topic with confidence and safety.

MindMatters Spotlights can be used in flexible ways: as an individual, in small groups, as a faculty, as a whole staff, or as an action team. MindMatters Spotlights are not intended to be used with students and/or their families.

As each school context is unique, it is important to carefully plan the best approach to meet staff learning needs. Trained healthcare professionals and the school action team who have an understanding of mental health and the direction that the school wishes to take can be well placed to facilitate group learning on the MindMatters Spotlight topics.

Taking the time to consider and plan for the particular sensitivities that may arise from using the MindMatters Spotlights is an essential step for school leaders. It is important to be prepared for people who may want to seek support after sensitive discussions.

For more information and ideas use this guide in conjunction with the [How to Facilitate MindMatters Modules Facilitator Guide](#) and the key resources linked to this document. Principals Australia Institute Project Officers can also provide you with further advice and support.

Prepare

Before you begin facilitating a group session, you might like to undertake the following steps

1. View and undertake the Spotlight(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 Spotlight 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 Spotlight or whether the group will use large screen projection.
7. Organise copies of any pre-reading and any materials needed for activities.
8. Enlist support of the school leadership team and MindMatters action team members (if relevant).
9. Plan for particular discussion sensitivities. This guide provides information on some sensitivities to be mindful of, however it is useful to consult with relevant staff at your school and consider your school's context.
10. Enlist the support of a relevant healthcare professional to co-facilitate, lead the discussions, or provide you with support in delivering the MindMatters Spotlight.



Overview

Activity - For school leaders	Time	Materials needed
1. Preparing for using the MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying and having staff prevention focused conversations	30 minutes	Guiding questions, note paper and pens.
2. Reflective questions for school leadership and action teams	30 minutes	MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying, online device, note paper and pens, MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying – School checklist.
Activity - For staff	Time	Materials needed
1. Develop (or revisit) agreements for working together	5 minutes	Whiteboard or poster paper, markers.
2. Group discussion – shared definition of bullying	10 minutes	Discussion questions, blank paper and pen for each person.
3. View the video animation – MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying	10 minutes	MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying -animation, MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying - Six helpful approaches to address bullying tip sheet.
4. Our school's approach to addressing bullying	30 minutes	Relevant school policies and procedures, MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying – Six helpful approaches to address bullying tip sheet, MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying panel video, online devices or whiteboard or poster paper, markers.
5. Energiser – focus your attention and act quickly	5 minutes	Space for people to stand as a whole group or smaller group circles.

ACTIVITY - FOR SCHOOL LEADERS



🕒 **TIME:** 30 minutes

📄 **MATERIALS:**

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying](#)
- Online device

❓ **PURPOSE:** To plan for prevention focused conversations when planning the use of the MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying with school staff. To consider the school context and potential sensitivities relating to discussions about bullying.

1. Preparing for using the MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying and having prevention focused conversations

Instructions:

1. Discussions about bullying may bring up some significant areas of discussion and debate. Consider the following as you plan for your session with staff:
 - **Acknowledge we all bring our own values and beliefs.** Discussions may result in participants examining their own and others' values and views, which may be different from other staff, students, and their families. It is important that these discussions are facilitated in a positive and respectful way and people's personal experiences are appreciated.
 - **Consider cultural elements within the school.** Discussions may focus on the common or influential cultures in the classroom. The group may want to discuss how to identify these influences and what they may mean for diverse young people.
 - **Minimise assumptions and generalisations.** Assumptions and generalisations about diverse staff and students' beliefs and behaviours may come up. It can be important to reflect on the accuracy and impact of these assumptions or stereotypes.
 - **Explore the school context through data and discussions.** The extent to which existing data collection includes all school community members may be discussed, and can be an opportunity to identify practical strategies to include different students and families that may not be reflected in the usual data collection methods.
 - **Involve others in your planning decisions.** The sensitive and complex nature of these topics means that involving others, including staff and seeking specialist support where required will assist schools to achieve the best possible outcomes.

▼ ACTIVITY CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ▼

ACTIVITY - FOR SCHOOL LEADERS



🕒 **TIME:** 30 minutes

📄 **MATERIALS:**

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying](#)
- Online device

❓ **PURPOSE:** To plan for prevention focused conversations when planning the use of the MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying with school staff. To consider the school context and potential sensitivities relating to discussions about bullying.

- **Consider your participants.** Consider how the discussions may impact staff who may be affected by, or have a personal experience of the topic being discussed. Group facilitators may not be aware of participants' past experiences, so consider how to create a safe, respectful and supportive discussion environment for everyone. Confidentiality and avoiding stigma is particularly important for sensitive discussions.
- **Consider your school community.** Discussions may focus on groups who are not visible but that school staff can assume are present in the school (such as LGBTI young people). Consider how staff can be sensitive and alert to the needs of all students, not just those that are visible.
- **Focus on practical strategies.** Discussions may become complex as a range of sensitive issues and considerations are explored. It will be important for discussions to end with a focus on the practical strategies that the school and individuals can implement to create positive outcomes for the school community.

1. Define clear roles and responsibilities for the planning and delivery of the [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying](#) for your school staff.

Debrief: Planning for important conversations assists schools to create safe learning environments for staff.

ACTIVITY - FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

YES
 MAYBE
 NO



TIME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS:

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying](#)
- Online device
- Note paper and pens
- [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying – School checklist](#)

PURPOSE: To ensure school leadership and action teams have a shared understanding of the relevant policies, approaches and processes to addressing bullying they will share with staff at the whole staff professional learning using the MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying.

2. Reflective questions for school leadership and action teams

Instructions:

1. Examine your current bullying prevention strategies by working through the [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying – School checklist](#).
2. Use the results to discuss your school's current strengths in addressing bullying and possible areas for improvement.
3. Develop a plan to build your comprehensive and cohesive whole school approach to reducing the likelihood of bullying and to responding effectively to bullying incidents in your school.

Debrief: What action do we need to take? Who might we need to consult with and inform? How will we continue this conversation with the school staff, gain their input and build shared ownership?

ACTIVITY - FOR STAFF



 **TIME:** 5 minutes

 **MATERIALS:**

- Whiteboard or poster paper
- Markers

 **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. Explain that MindMatters Spotlights contribute to the school's ongoing whole school approach to improving the mental health of students.
2. Detail any 'housekeeping' issues.
3. Acknowledge the sensitive nature of the topic/s, provide information on the supports available to staff and develop (or revisit) group agreements to keep the conversation safe.
4. Clarify the intended learning outcomes and duration of the professional learning session.

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.'

ACTIVITY - FOR STAFF



 **TIME:** 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Discussion questions
- Blank paper and pen for each person

 **PURPOSE:** To develop (or revisit) a clear, comprehensive and shared definition of bullying. To discuss the best language and messaging to communicate the school's approach to bullying with staff, students and families.

2. Group discussion – Shared definition of bullying

Instructions:

1. Ask participants 'How would you define bullying?' Invite participants to record their notes individually.
2. Ask all participants to discuss their responses with a partner.
3. Invite pairs to share their ideas with others in the whole group.
4. As a whole group brainstorm and document responses to the following questions:
 - How do we define bullying at our school?
 - Does this definition connect with our students and families and what ways might we find out?
 - What would be the benefit of having a shared definition of our anti-bullying approach with our whole school community - staff, students and families?

Debrief: Ask the group: 'Knowing that everyone has their own beliefs, values and attitudes towards bullying, what might be one way that we could work together to get on the same page about our school's approach to bullying?'

ACTIVITY - FOR STAFF



TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying - animation](#)

PURPOSE: To gain an overview of the challenges and approaches to addressing bullying. To share effective strategies for reducing and responding to bullying incidents and explore the benefits of a focusing on relationships and belonging. To apply ideas to individual practice.

3. View the animation – MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying

Instructions:

1. View the [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying](#) animation.
2. In the context of your school, ask participants to discuss the following questions with a partner:
 - What's your strategy for responding to bullying?
 - How do you recognise the signs of bullying?
 - What strategies have been useful or not so useful to intervene?
3. Invite pairs to share their ideas with others in the whole group.
4. As a whole 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. Record ideas and suggestions.

ACTIVITY - FOR STAFF



 **TIME:** 30 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Relevant school policies and procedures
- [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying – Six helpful approaches to address bullying tip sheet](#)
- [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying panel video](#)
- Online devices or whiteboard or poster paper, markers

 **PURPOSE:** To have a shared understanding of the school's approach to addressing bullying and the relevant school policies and procedures for staff. To reflect on six helpful methods to address bullying that have been extensively researched and practised.

4. Our school's approach to addressing bullying

Instructions:

1. Watch the [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying](#) panel video.
2. Explain that participants will have an opportunity to share their reflections on the panel video in pairs or small groups. If time permits, read the following statements and ask participants to reflect:
 - The actions of school staff are an integral part of a whole school response to bullying, with the modelling of positive relationships and assistance with their students' social and emotional development being core elements of their role.
 - Staff are well placed to observe student behaviour and to act to reduce the risk of long-term harm from bullying experiences.
 - When an incident of bullying occurs, school staff can intervene and prevent further bullying. Staff can support the student being targeted and others involved, including bystanders, and ensure that there is ongoing monitoring and intervention to reduce the likelihood of further bullying incidents .
3. Invite pairs to share their reflections with others in the whole group.
4. Provide groups with copies of relevant school policies and procedures and the [MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying – Six helpful approaches to addressing bullying tip sheet](#).
5. In groups, review and document:
 - What aspects of our school policies and procedures are working well?
 - What might need updating?
 - Which approaches does our school take and how do we communicate these with the school community?

Debrief: Thank participants for their input and collect any notes from the discussions. Invite people to share any insights they have had during this activity. Provide an overview of any actions to be taken from this activity.

ACTIVITY - FOR STAFF



🕒 **TIME:** 5 minutes

📄 **MATERIALS:**

- Space for people to form one large group circle or smaller group circles

❓ **PURPOSE:** To help people connect with each other and finish the session with a positive activity. To provide an example activity that may be used with students.

5. Energiser – Focus your attention and act quickly

Instructions:

1. Invite participants to stand side-by-side in one large group circle (or if space doesn't permit, smaller group circles).
2. Ask participants to hold their left hand palm up, right index finger pointing down and touching on their neighbour's outstretched palm.
3. Say 'When I say the word go, do two things...try to grab the finger resting on your left hand, and try to prevent your right finger from being grabbed by your neighbour ... 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... Go!'
4. Repeat the activity if time permits.

Debrief: Say 'As staff in school there are many things that compete for our attention and focus. This is why it is important to work together to look out for the warning signs of bullying and address issues early.'

As you close the MindMatters Spotlight: Bullying activity session, thank staff for attending and embracing this topic. Ask them to enact at least one of their own self-care strategies this afternoon/evening and to seek support if issues from today's activity arise for them.

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