

MINDMATTERS SPOTLIGHTS

USING TECHNOLOGY

Making it happen: tips and activities
for addressing this topic



Using technology

Introduction

The 'Making it Happen Guide' for the MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology 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.

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, refreshments and amenities).
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: Using technology and having staff conversations	30 minutes	MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology, online device.
2. Reflective questions for school leadership and action teams	30 minutes	Guiding questions, MindMatters Spotlight: Suicide prevention, online device, relevant school policies and procedures.
Activity - For staff	Time	Materials needed
1. Develop (or revisit) agreements for working together	5 minutes	Whiteboard or poster paper, markers.
2. View the video animation – MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology	10 minutes	MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology animation, poster paper, sticky notes, markers and pens.
3. Starting from where you are	30 minutes	MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology toolbox, online devices, space for people to move around.
4. Our school's approach to using technology for mental health promotion	30 minutes	Relevant school policies and procedures, MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology overview page 11.


ACTIVITY - FOR SCHOOL LEADERS



 **TIME:** 30 minutes

 **MATERIALS:**

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology](#)
- Online device

 **PURPOSE:** To plan for prevention-focused conversations when planning the use of the MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology with school staff. To consider the school context and potential sensitivities relating to discussions about using technology for mental health promotion.

1. Preparing for using the MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology and having staff conversations

Instructions:

1. Discussions about using technology for mental health promotion 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 the sharing of opinions and experiences is 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 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.
- **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.

▼ ACTIVITY CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ▼


ACTIVITY - FOR SCHOOL LEADERS



 **TIME:** 30 minutes

 **MATERIALS:**

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology](#)
- Online device

 **PURPOSE:** To plan for prevention-focused conversations when planning the use of the MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology with school staff. To consider the school context and potential sensitivities relating to discussions about using technology for mental health promotion.

- **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: Using technology](#).

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

ACTIVITY - FOR SCHOOL LEADERS



🕒 **TIME:** 30 minutes

📁 **MATERIALS:**

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology](#)
- [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology toolbox](#)
- Online device
- Relevant school policies and procedures

❓ **PURPOSE:** To ensure school leadership and action teams have a shared understanding of the school's relevant policies, approaches and processes to using technology for mental health promotion prior to whole staff professional learning.

2. Reflective questions for school leaders and action teams

Instructions:

1. Familiarise yourself with the [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology](#) content including animation, panel discussion and resources.
2. Examine your current policies and procedures relating to the use of technology for mental health promotion.
3. Review the [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology toolbox](#). Explore the example resources for students, schools and individuals.
4. Discuss where the school could make progress in the use of technology for mental health promotion.

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 and 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 amongst staff.'

ACTIVITY - FOR STAFF



TIME: 10 minutes

MATERIALS:

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology animation](#)
- Poster paper, sticky notes, markers and pens

PURPOSE: To explore the possibilities for using technology for mental health promotion in schools and to communicate the benefits of having a model to help classify the different tools and resources available. To share effective strategies for building student protective factors such as belonging, connection and help-seeking skills.

2. View animation – MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology

Instructions:

1. View the [Spotlight: Using technology animation](#).
2. Invite participants to share their thoughts on the animations in pairs and with the whole group if time permits.
3. Ask participants to jot down as many technology tools, apps, and resources they are aware of that promote wellbeing on sticky notes and place them on large poster paper matching the relevant category – Information, Practice or Communication. Read the following blurbs to provide more detail:
 - **Information**
Technology provides access to useful, evidence-based information that can help us understand our own mental health and take care of others. Information from websites, videos, podcasts, and other media can help to expand our knowledge and capacity.
 - **Practice**
Technology offers tools that can help us practice the thoughts, feelings and behaviours that contribute to good mental health. Whether it's sleep, exercise, meditation or nutrition – there are apps and devices that can provide guidance, structure and feedback.
 - **Communication**
Technology can help us communicate and get support when we need it from professionals and peers. Technology can support our mental health when it allows us to connect in positive ways, feel a sense of belonging and find others we can reach out to for support.
4. After a few minutes, read out a few of the technology tools listed under each category and invite participants to share any insights from the activity.

Debrief: Say to participants 'When we have a way of classifying and breaking down the complexities of different tools and resources it can be easier to see the possibilities for using technology for mental health promotion. MindMatters has a toolkit of resources for schools to explore ways of using technology to promote mental health among students and staff'.

ACTIVITY - FOR STAFF



🕒 **TIME:** 30 minutes

📁 **MATERIALS:**

- [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology toolbox](#)
- Online devices
- Space for people to move around

❓ **PURPOSE:** To acknowledge that all staff have different levels of experience and comfort with the use of technology. To connect more experienced and less experienced staff. To try out some of the example tools and resources and explore the benefits.

3. Starting from where you are

Instructions:

1. Invite participants to find a partner they believe has a different level of experience and comfort in the use of technology with students. You may like to ask participants to mingle to find a partner, or have participants to rate their level of experience or comfort with using technology with students. They could indicate their rating out of five by holding up the number of fingers and finding a partner with a higher rating.
2. Have pairs or small groups access the [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology toolbox](#). Allow participants 15 minutes to explore the toolbox and resources.
3. Invite participants to share any insights they had during this activity.
4. Ask participants to decide on one resource from the 'for myself' category of the toolbox that they are interested in trialling.
5. Ask participants to share their choice with a colleague and make a plan to check in with them about the experience.

Debrief: Say to the group 'With technology, everyone is always in 'catch-up' mode. By the time you think you are on top of it all there's a bunch of new things happening. So don't get hung up on keeping up – simply continue to build your knowledge and skills from where you are at in the present moment. There are more tips and resources to try on the MindMatters Spotlight.'

ACTIVITY - FOR STAFF



🕒 **TIME:** 30 minutes

📁 **MATERIALS:**

- Relevant school policies and procedures
- [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology overview](#) (page 11 – Bringing everyone along)

❓ **PURPOSE:** To have a shared understanding of the school's approach to using technology for mental health promotion and the relevant school policies and procedures for staff. For participants to be aware of their individual role, responsibilities, boundaries and supports. To create a shared plan to bring everyone along.

4. Our school's approach to using technology for mental health promotion

Instructions:

1. Discuss relevant school policies relating to the use of technology for mental health promotion. Outline the school's aspirations for using technology as part of the whole school approach to improving mental health.
2. Invite participants to identify the areas that they would like to 'keep', 'change' and 'try' relating to the use of technology for mental health promotion at a whole school level. Record responses on a whiteboard, shared online document or poster paper.
3. Discuss the responses and invite discussion on the following questions:
 - What is the school doing well?
 - Where can we see opportunities for the school to build protective factors for students through targeted use of evidence-based technology tools?
 - How might we work with students and families to build our school's approach to using technology?
 - How do we balance managing the potential risks with the possible benefits?
4. Provide groups with a copy of the [MindMatters Spotlight: Using technology overview](#) (page 11 – Bringing everyone along) and ask them to consider if there is anything else that could be added to the discussion.

Debrief: Invite people to share any insights they have had during this activity. Thank staff for their contributions and outline the process for their ideas to be reviewed and shared back with staff.

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