

Coolbina. A Be You success story

I love songwriting and it's probably one of my strategies for mental health and wellbeing as well because that's quite often how I express myself.

Good morning everyone. Good morning Ms Smith. OK so thank you for all coming along.

When we started our Be You journey, I just had to, I couldn't pass up that opportunity of not writing a song to sort of go with the initiative.

My name is Cathy Smith and I'm the Music Specialist here at Coolbinia Primary School and I'm also the Mental Health and Wellbeing coordinator and generally what that role means is that I'm helping along the implementation of the Be You approach. We sort of started our journey towards the end of 2018 and this year, obviously we're planning even bigger and better things as well.

I tried to make sure that the lyrics included the message that I felt Be You was trying to give which is about being yourself and you know not trying to change yourself, being proud of who you are.

I wanted it to be an upbeat joyful song that children really enjoyed singing and it made sense to them.

Singing Be You, just Be You, you don't need to change into someone new. Just Be You.

Awesome. OK that was a really, really good. OK warm up version.

OK we're just going to talk a little bit about and remind ourselves what we're singing about. So who would like to share some ideas of how this all started and what we're singing about?

Asena did you want to say something?

Sometimes you just remember that you're a great person and you can do lots of things.

Absolutely you do.

Madeline?

So like compared to the song if you look at a magazine and you think 'oh this girl's prettier than me' you don't need to think that because you would already be prettier.

That's right because you've got that self-confidence, haven't you? Awesome answer.

There'd already been some good programs going around the school to address some of the children's needs. But we've had quite a big change in our leadership team so what we did was we did some surveys and the results of those led us to have a big focus on staff wellbeing, which is to say we thought probably was a need.

So, we decided that staff wellbeing was really important. You can't pour from an empty cup, but also it showed us with the children that there were some areas in resilience and like dealing with friendship skills that also needed addressing as well.

That's when I discovered that Be You was happening. Before we started it there wasn't a huge emphasis on wellbeing, we were sort of stuck. So, I started to do some background reading about it

and was very excited about the initiative and found out that you've got help and support from a Consultant. So that was my next step was, to actually get in touch and was very lucky to get Ariane.

I'm Ariane. I'm a Be You Consultant with the WA team. Be You is about making sure that not only the children are getting good attention but also the teachers. You can't teach others what you don't have yourself.

So welcome to Roots and Shoots. Today it's great to have you. What we're going to do today is work on the wheelbarrows that we've got. There's one over there, one there and one over there.

So we've got Elaine on our staff who is just such a dynamic personality. She started an initiative called Roots and Shoots.

My name's Elaine Lewis and my role at the school is as the Cross-Curriculum Leader and what that means is embedding the three cross curriculum priorities. Those priorities are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and sustainability.

So, it's very inclusive and we've deliberately done that for the wellbeing of the children so that the children feel at peace within themselves and they're in a feeling of wellbeing so they're able to learn and able to take on board new understandings. Because remember if you leave the roots exposed the plant may not survive, so we need to make it, I think, you need to go right down to the bottom of the wheelbarrow. Yeah you did a really great job there and you can watch that grow over time OK?

My next step was then to form an Action Team which is what you do as part of the Be You initiative so that you're not doing the whole journey by yourself. It shouldn't be about that it's a team effort. I've got a lovely bunch of people on my Action Team here.

Today's lesson is about how we put out friendship fires. So Rebekah was actually the person that brought Friendology to our attention.

Let the person have time, why is that important? My name is Rebekah Melville, I'm a year five classroom teacher. Basically, we've been working on rolling Friendology out through the school. Really Friendology is a program that gives them back that power over their relationships and teaches them the key skills of how to navigate those.

I want you to crumple the paper together, do it. OK pause so what has happened is essentially this is what happens to your heart when people say unkind things. This is what happens so have a look at the paper think of it as yourself they've apologised you've accepted it.

What I want you to do now, open the paper up and flatten it out on your desk. Can you get all of the wrinkles out? Can you smooth it so it looks exactly the same as before? No? It still leaves an imprint on our hearts doesn't it?

Then we've got Ros who's a Year One teacher.

Have a seat, find a spot, make sure you make a good choice.

She does a lot of meditation type activities and calm activities, and she also uses the zones of regulation.

What zone were you in before we came into class before we did our meditation? Who can tell me?

I was in the blue zone because I was kind of tired. I'm in the yellow zone because everyone was screaming in my ears. I'm in the green zone because I'm happy and calm.

So, we always want to be in the green zone so we can learn properly. So, we need some tools to help us get in the green zone don't we? Let's have a look at some and say.

With Lilies if you can get them that young starting to think about that sort of thing then it's only going to be better as they get older. It's actually a skirt but I made it like hair.

And lastly Lina. She's been running an initiative called PUPS which stands for Pop-up Place Spaces.

Girls, make sure that we're using kind words at PUPS okay we're always using kind words.

My background was childcare before I went into the education department. I loved watching children play. For me that was the most important thing of the day and I noticed how through play they learnt other things.

I think Be You is individual for everybody, it's not a one size fits all thing, but I think because I'm a parent at the school I've seen a change in my son particularly.

Come on in, hey Melksham. Hey, hello.

Be You has given us some stepping stones to help us get back to where we once were. Okay chocolate, so how was school today? It was good mummy. What did you get up? Not much. Not much, it's school, what'd you do? Work? Yeah?

Before Friendology and Be You Carlos wouldn't really share much of how he was feeling. I think he just felt like it was OK, it's fine it'll go away. He's opening up a little bit more and he's sharing and it's not about oh it's not important anymore or it doesn't matter. It's actually like it does matter and this is how I feel.

P, e, l, sorry, urgh. P, l, e, a, s, e.

Hi Carlos, hello, come on in. One of the things we decided to do with Friendology was to actually introduce some one-on-one Friendology coaching sessions.

So what do you think maybe some of the things you could do to overcome these feelings of nervousness? Ask for help? Yeah ask for help, that's always a big one isn't it if you're struggling.

I have seen him become a lot more confident a lot happier within himself you can actually see a physical change in him he feels better about himself and I think he feels more equipped to deal with those situations he found tricky before.

I get a bit teary but I'm really happy, really happy, sorry.

Director: It's really beautiful

Oh I did it, I did it, Yeah.

So, some of the things that I do to make sure that I look after my own mental health and wellbeing are spending time with my family, music as I've already said is a great outlet.

So, it's really just finding that you know you're not sort of getting too carried away with your work all the time, you're actually consciously making time to do things and actually making time for you.

Think of an adjective about your classmate that describes them. Kyla kind, Miles smiles, Carlos compassionate. We're just excited to acknowledge the part that Be You plays in prioritising the things that are really important. Well done give yourselves a pat on the back. One, two, three. Well done me, excellent.

I think that's the most significant thing is a culture of nurturing wellbeing and everybody's responsible for it. It's been amazing actually just to actually physically be able to see for myself the change in staff, also just making people more aware and more willing to talk about mental health and wellbeing.

Because it's always been a little bit one of those things that's tucked under the rug a little bit and I think it's nice to start being able to bring it out into the open.

My hope is it will just continue to grow and it actually will then become embedded as part of what we do as a school, so it just keeps going and going and we just carry on our Be You journey.