A photograph of a man and a woman standing outdoors, engaged in conversation. The man, on the left, has a beard and glasses, wearing a dark button-down shirt. The woman, on the right, has blonde curly hair and is wearing a dark top under a light-colored blazer and a patterned skirt. They are both gesturing with their hands. The background is a blurred building with blue and white panels.

Pre-Service Educators Handbook: *Primary and Secondary Schools*

Welcome

Educators are all about helping children and young people to flourish. **So are we.**

If you're currently studying education at a vocational institution or university, this Handbook is for you. As you move through your career and work closely with children and young people, you'll be in a great position to help drive positive change and promote mental health.

How to use this Handbook

This Handbook is designed to launch you on your Be You journey. You'll get an overview of Be You, the benefits to you as a pre-service educator, and information on how you can get involved. At the end of the Handbook you'll find tips on how to integrate Be You into your experiences on practical placement. This is when you'll see first-hand how learning communities can work together to help children and young people achieve their best possible mental health.

If you're studying early learning, take a look at the [Pre-Service Educators Handbook: Early Learning Services](#). We also have [handbooks specifically for educators](#) who are working in both early learning and primary and secondary schools.

What is Be You ?

Be You is a national initiative for educators, including pre-service educators like you, aimed at promoting and protecting positive mental health in children and young people. Our vision is for an education system in which every learning community is positive, inclusive and resilient, and where every child, young person, staff member and family can achieve their best possible mental health.

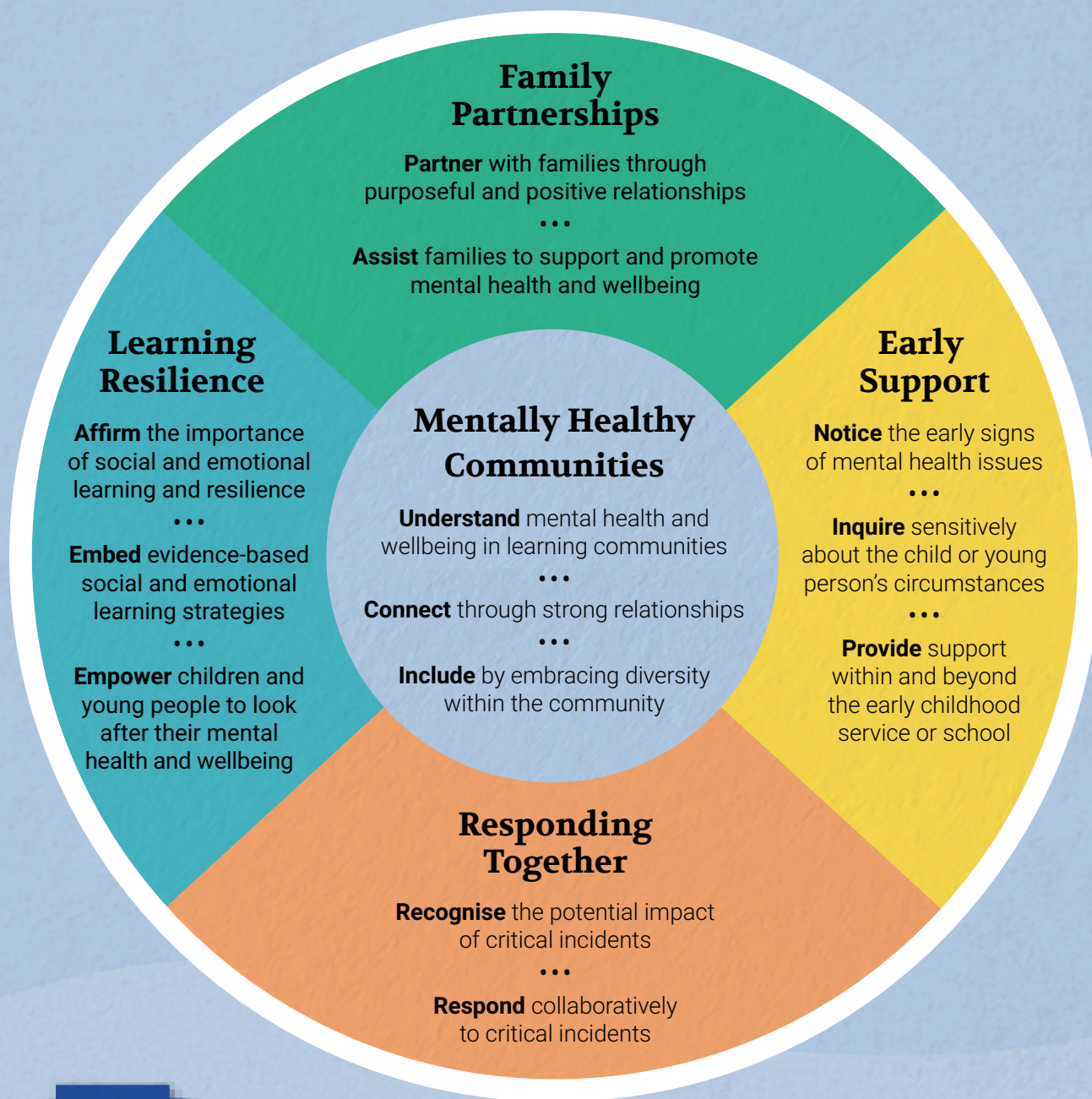
Be You empowers educators by supporting them to develop their mental health skills and knowledge, while also providing guidance on how to implement a whole learning community approach. It offers a range of online, evidence-based tools and resources aimed at improving the skills and knowledge of educators to foster and support mental health and wellbeing in children and young people. It's completely free, and available to every educator and pre-service educator, early learning service, and school in Australia.

To learn more about the background to Be You, visit beyou.edu.au/about/about-be-you.

At the heart of Be You is a content framework that provides a structure for both [Professional Learning](#), and the actions schools and services can take to implement a whole learning community approach to mental health and wellbeing.

There are five domains in the framework, and each domain contains two or three modules. These modules delve deeper into the domain topics, helping educators and whole learning communities to increase their understanding of mental health and wellbeing and enact meaningful change in the ways they support and nurture children and young people.

The Be You framework is non-linear and allows educators and schools to start at the point that suits them best. Usually this depends on the educator's level of experience and their learning community's unique circumstances.



Why should I get involved?

Enhance and reinforce your current studies

Taking the opportunity to reinforce what you're learning means you'll be even better prepared for future roles.

Be You is designed to enhance what you're already learning in your course, and to give you meaningful knowledge and practical advice on how educators can support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

With Be You, there's no such thing as one size fits all.

Be You offers a suite of Professional Learning aimed at building your skills and knowledge around mental health and wellbeing for children, young people and families.

One of the biggest advantages of Be You is that your Professional Learning journey can be fully customised. You set the pace. You decide where to start and which domains and modules are most relevant to you and your needs. The flexible structure allows you to dip in and out according to your interests and schedule. Each learning module includes reflective questions to enrich and extend what you're learning in your course.

Shared understanding

It helps when we're all on the same page.

By providing a single, integrated initiative across early learning services and primary and secondary schools, we're helping to create a shared understanding among educators of mental health and about how to build mentally healthy learning communities. Here, you have a common language to use when speaking with colleagues about mental health and the best strategies to improve wellbeing.

Transferable across settings and locations

Be You goes with you, wherever your career may take you.

Be You is a national initiative spanning early learning services and schools. So what you learn in each module is transferrable across settings and locations. This consistent approach better supports children and young people as they move from early learning to primary school, and on to secondary school. It can also help you professionally, if you decide to transition into other areas of education — the knowledge and skills you learn can go with you. Be You Professional Learning is a valuable element to add to your resume.

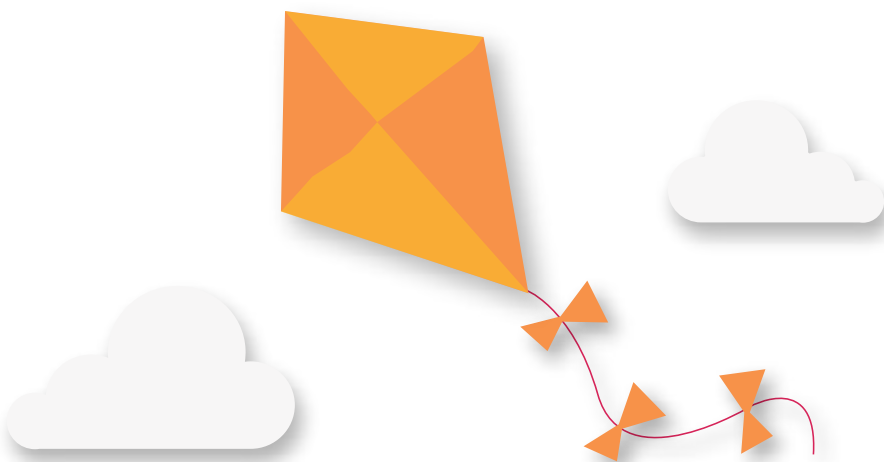
What are the ways I can get involved?

You can start your Be You journey any time as an **individual** with the [Professional Learning](#) modules, enhancing your knowledge and understanding of how to promote mental health and support children and young people. If you're looking for ideas on where to start with Professional Learning, see some suggested pathways below.

Change starts with individuals, but it doesn't end there.

Be You is for individual educators, but it's also for whole learning communities. Lots of things influence mental health and wellbeing, and often they're interrelated. So the most effective approaches to mental health promotion are those that involve everyone in the community — staff, children and young people, and families. When an entire school decides to work on mental health and wellbeing collectively we call this a **whole learning community approach**. The implementation of a whole learning community approach is driven by an Action Team, who are supported by Be You Consultants from [headspace](#) and [Early Childhood Australia](#).

You may hear about whole learning community approaches or Action Teams if you do a professional placement at a Be You school.



Where do I begin?

Signing up online

Signing up with Be You is quick, easy — and free! We just need some basic information about who you are and where you're studying. Go to beyou.edu.au/register to get started.



Once you've signed up, your dashboard gives you full access to the Professional Learning modules, and allows you to track your progress.

Getting started with Professional Learning



Every educator is different. So is every Professional Learning experience.

There's no right or wrong place to start with Be You Professional Learning. Read through the module overviews at beyou.edu.au/learn and see which resonate.

Remember, this is your learning journey; you can start with whatever modules are most meaningful and relevant for you. **If you're still not sure where to start, or you need more inspiration, take a look over the page at some possible pathways through the Professional Learning you could consider.**

Pathways through the Professional Learning

Situation	Suggested modules
<p>I would like to build a strong understanding of mental health and wellbeing, and feel confident to use this in my practice.</p> <p><i>Perhaps you'd like to build your understanding of suicide and self-harm so you're prepared to have conversations about these topics with parents and caregivers. Or you'd like some insight on how educators can start broader conversations with school communities about mental health and wellbeing.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understand will support you to better understand mental health and wellbeing in children and young people across a range of developmental stages. ✓ Connect will develop your skills in building strong relationships with children, young people, families, the community and other educators. ✓ Include will help you to embrace the diversity of the children, young people, families and cultures you will encounter in your education career.
<p>I want to develop my skills in identifying children and young people who may be experiencing mental health issues, as early as possible.</p> <p><i>Educators are well placed to notice issues that children and young people are experiencing. Maybe you've noticed a student who seems to have low mood and is withdrawn in class. Once educators notice an issue, what should they do next?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Notice will help you to identify early signs of mental health issues. ✓ Inquire will enhance your learning on how educators inquire about children and young people, and their family circumstances, in a sensitive way. ✓ Provide will give advice on how learning communities support children and young people at school, and the role of external services in responding to risk, harm or critical incidents.
<p>I want to know how communities are supported after a critical incident.</p> <p><i>Perhaps there has been a recent critical incident – for example, the death of a child, young person or current or former staff member, an accident or serious injury, or a natural disaster.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recognise will help you to recognise what critical incidents are and their impact on the whole learning community, including children, young people, families and educators. ✓ Respond will help you to understand how educators can respond to critical incidents, and how they work together to create mentally healthy communities.
<p>I would like a better understanding of how to work together with families to support positive mental health.</p> <p><i>Maybe you'd like to know how to raise concerns about a child or young person with their family, and to work collaboratively with them to get the best possible outcome for everyone.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Partner will build your confidence in working and communicating with families more purposefully, respectfully and collaboratively. ✓ Assist will show you how educators can assist families to foster mental health and wellbeing, and to access timely help when required. ✓ Connect will develop your skills in building strong relationships with children and young people, families, the community and your peers.
<p>I'd like to explore what I can do to build the resilience of children and young people, and to help them deal with situations that arise within the school environment that affect their learning.</p> <p><i>Maybe you'd like a deeper understanding of resilience, or are curious about the evidence base for strategies that empower children and young people to better manage situations that affect their wellbeing and learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Affirm will help you to understand key concepts related to resilience including respectful relationships, and social and emotional learning. ✓ Embed will show you how to use evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies. ✓ Empower will give you strategies to enable children and young people to exercise resilience and awareness in their everyday learning and activities.

Using Be You tools and resources

[Professional Learning](#) is central to Be You, but there's a lot more to explore — tools, resources and events that you can use to put what you've learnt into practice.

Always Be You

Bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and ways of doing to Be You.

Important mental health and wellbeing messages should be accessible to everyone. [Always Be You](#) include resources that can assist schools and services to begin an ongoing process of embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing.

These resources are for everyone in every context in Australia, and can assist all schools and services to reflect on how culture is acknowledged, considered and celebrated in their learning community, and how and when we all learn.

Fact Sheets

Learn more about topics that are especially important to learning communities.

[Be You Fact Sheets](#) provide information about a range of topics and issues connected to the professional learning. Think of them as quick reference resources, with factual information about a particular issue. Many people come to Be You with a particular question or issue in mind, and the fact sheets are a great starting point to get answers.

Programs Directory

See how programs can enhance what learning communities are doing with Be You.

The [directory](#) provides a searchable database of external mental health programs, available across Australia, and you can feel confident that every one of them has been thoroughly reviewed and evaluated. This allows you to make informed decisions about the inclusion of any program within your curriculum.

Most programs are for children and young people, but there are others designed for families and educators.

Organising Speakers Guide

Inviting speakers to share personal stories can be a great way to give children and young people real-life insights into mental health.

Hearing about the challenges a speaker has experienced and their pathway to recovery can increase awareness and reduce stigma. It also encourages children and young people to talk about how they're feeling and to seek help.

The [Organising Speakers Guide](#) provides a detailed run-down on what you need to consider when engaging an external speaker, including how to create a safe and meaningful environment for everyone involved.

Wellbeing Tools for you

Taking care of yourself helps you take care of others.

Paying attention to your own mental health ensures you're better able to support children and young people. [Wellbeing Tools for You](#) outlines a range of online tools and resources designed to support educators' mental health and that of other members of your learning community.

You'll also find a range of helpful information on self-care in the [Your Wellbeing Fact Sheets](#).

Wellbeing Tools for Students

As 'digital natives', children and young people will often look online for help with the problems they're facing, and educators play a vital role in directing them to the best resources.

There are lots of great mental health and wellbeing tools available. The trick is to find the best tool for the job. [Wellbeing Tools for Students](#) is your essential guide to the online tools and other resources that will best support children and young people in taking care of their own mental health.

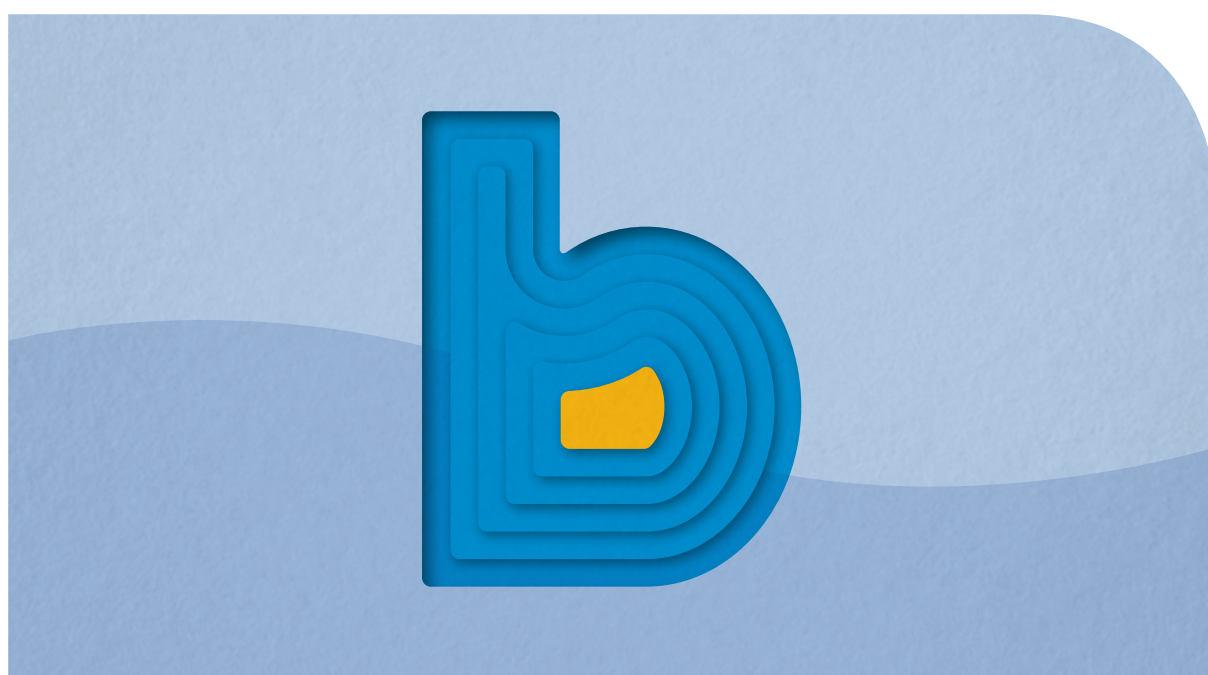
Suicide Prevention and Response

We're here to help if a learning community is affected by suicide.

Be You [Suicide Prevention and Response resources](#) provide clear, practical and reliable guidance and support to assist schools in suicide prevention and response. Schools can use the resources to:

- prepare their community to be ready should a death by suicide occur
- guide their response to a death by suicide and the subsequent recovery for the school community
- guide the school after a suicide attempt by a student.

The impact of suicide is immediate and traumatic – for the friends or family of the individual especially, but also the broader community. People bereaved by suicide frequently experience slower recovery than those bereaved by other types of death. When people are affected by suicide, the extent to which they cope and recover is strongly influenced by the immediate and ongoing response to the death, including the support available.



Be You while on placement

Being in a school brings valuable new perspectives and opportunities to learn from experienced educators.

At some stage, you may be placed at a registered Be You school. You might hear from their [Action Team](#), and observe some of the ways they go about implementing Be You. This is a fantastic opportunity to be involved in Be You at a whole-school level, and to see the difference it can make within a learning community.

If your placement school hasn't signed up to Be You, don't worry; you can still see first-hand the many ways that learning communities work together to help children and young people achieve their best possible mental health. All schools are working towards nurturing and supporting their students in a myriad of ways.

Completing Be You [Professional Learning](#) before your placement will help you get the most out of your experience. Not only will the leadership team and other educators appreciate the effort you've made, but you'll also be better able to identify effective approaches to mental health promotion within your placement school, equipping you with proven strategies to use throughout your career.

As a pre-service educator, you're not expected to implement these strategies immediately – and certainly not when you're on placement.

But having an early awareness of these topics can only benefit you and the children and young people you'll work with during your career.

Here are some questions you might want to think about while on placement:

- What is the school doing to support the mental health and wellbeing of their students?
- How do staff support each other and work together to address mental health issues?
- What is the school doing to create an inclusive learning community, and to build collaborative relationships with families?
- If a critical incident occurs, what processes and plans are in place to help students, staff and families?
- What processes have you identified for supporting a child or young person once potential mental health concerns have been identified?
- What programs are included within the curriculum that focus on mental health promotion?
- What level of engagement do you notice between families and the school?
- What internal processes, pathways and people exist within the school to respond to the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people?
- What visible displays or other tangible demonstrations of mental health promotion can you identify?

When you're on placement, the [Wellbeing Tools for You](#) and the [Fact Sheets on Your Wellbeing](#) will be fantastic resources. It's always important to take care of your own wellbeing, especially when dealing with the challenges that placements can present. The guide gives you practical advice on how to look after yourself so that you are able to make the most of your placement.

Time to get started

Be You is for educators, but its impact goes far beyond the individual.

By getting involved you're making a powerful commitment to supporting and enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people throughout your career.



Ready to get started? [Sign up](#) online now.



Still have questions? No problem. Get in touch with us at beyou.edu.au/contact

