

*The importance of
joy in enhancing
learning, wellbeing
and school
connectedness*

Be You In Focus webinar handout

The importance of joy in enhancing learning, wellbeing and school connectedness
Thursday 26th May 2022.

This resource contains:

- A quick summary of key concepts.
- How to connect with your Be You Consultant.
- Links to resources.
- Attendee Questions and panel answer responses.
- In Practice reflective questions.
- Guide to mental health services and supports.

Quick summary of key concepts and messages

- Experiences of joy are integral to optimising student learning, staff morale and overall school community wellbeing.
- Looking for opportunities to expand or build on joyful activities can increase engagement, enjoyment and a sense of connectedness for all.
- By understanding the science of what brings to an individual, and the learning community is linked and can have improved learning outcomes for students.
- Your Be You Consultant can assist in supporting your activities.

Connect with your Be You Consultant

Be You Consultants are available to provide free support to Australian learning communities and can guide you through the Be You Professional Learning framework and resources, connecting you with educator networks.

[Contact - Be You](#)

Links to resources

Please find below a selection of resources either shared during the webinar or used in preparation for the webinar.

Be You Resources

Professional Learning:

- Mentally Healthy Communities (Understand, Connect and Include)
<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/mentally-healthy-communities>
- Learning Resilience (Affirm, Embed, Empower)
<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/learning-resilience>

Factsheets:

- Be You [Self-regulation](#)
- Be You [Stress management](#)
- Be You [How to practise mindfulness](#)
- Be You [Physical activity and mental health](#)
- Be You [Why play is important](#)
- Be You [Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- Be You [Brain Development](#)

Tools:

- [Mental Health Continuum](#)
- [BETLS* Observation Tool](#)

*BETLS is an acronym for behaviour, emotions, thoughts, learning and social relationships.

For Be You Action Team Leaders

Available via your Be You Dashboard

- Be You [Planning and Implementation tools - Actions Catalogue](#)
- Be You [Planning and Implementation tools - Share and Extend Guide](#)

Sessions and events

- Be You Consultants host a range of interactive implementation sessions visit the Be You website beyou.edu.au/resources/sessions-and-events

Other References

- PERMA model (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement) [A Well-being Theory by Martin Seligman \(habitsforwellbeing.com\)](https://www.habitsforwellbeing.com/)
- D.O.S.E model (Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin, Endorphins) [The brain's happy chemicals, explained. - Khiron Clinics](#)

Attendee questions and panel answer responses

Question: Change is always difficult, particularly for those who have been teaching a long time and stuck in their ways. How do you get reluctant staff on board?

Answer: Managing change in the school context can be a difficult process to navigate, especially when the audience (staff) bring with them their own experiences and disposition to change. In this context, sharing the science of joy and the proven positive impact this can have on both staff and young people may provide greater clarity and rationale for change – whether it as individual educators or taking a whole school approach.

Some considerations:

- We would encourage you to share the recording of the session with staff, particularly highlighting the evidence and science Annette Bulling presented.
- Reluctance to change can stem from uncertainty and apprehension, especially when the notion of joy may result in educators having a sense of self-consciousness; particularly for the more introverted. Bringing joy doesn't always mean "public sliming" or putting on the clown costume, rather it is the little things each day that spark connection, enhance relationships and fill the "joy bucket".

Question: Why bring joy to your learning community when everyone is exhausted/experiencing trauma in pandemic times?

Answer: Fatigue is real and so too are the seen and unseen eye-rolls in the staff meeting when we try to impose joy into our learning communities. When it comes to change or reflecting on practice, timing is everything and the burden on school leaders to walk that tightrope is a tough one.

Whilst we know the link between joy and learning is proven, so too is the impact this can have on our own wellbeing as adults and educators.

Explicitly acknowledging the fatigue and trauma some people are experiencing and encouraging them to 'lean in' to the concept of bringing the joy may have a simultaneously positive impact on both the young people in your care, your colleagues and yourself.

Remember, a sustained commitment to joyful practices is the difference between making it feel authentic vs making it feel superficial.

Question: Creating joy in a secondary classroom can take a very different form compared to a primary setting. What strategies can we put in place to facilitate this without leading to a significant amount of eye rolling from our teenage cohort?

Answer: With secondary students it can be helpful to engage them in the process - to see what brings them joy. Giving them agency and some choice/control about activities. Young people have a broad range of interests and whilst there is often some

initial resistance to engaging in activities, if approached openly they can really embrace it.

Young people can smell disingenuous attempts to engage them a mile off, and forced 'fun' isn't fun for anyone, so handing over the controls can be the way to go – scary as that may seem.

Giving students the time, space and resources to inject some joy and laughter can really pay off in terms of school engagement and relationship development. It could be in home class giving a space for students to show staff what they are interested in. For example a student may be interested in the latest TikTok dance; their favourite music release or sporting moment over the weekend. Challenges can be a great leveller – staff versus students on the latest gaming devices or with creative tasks for example.

Opportunities for creative expression across the school grounds, murals, gardens, building new benches; are all activities that can create joy, as well as a sense of purpose and belonging within their spaces.

Tasks where students work and play alongside educators, provides students with opportunities to share what they enjoy and demonstrate their expertise which again, builds a sense of competence and belonging which is key to enhancing school engagement and achievement.

In secondary schools, opportunities for students to advocate and support causes that they are passionate about such as climate change, racism, LGBTQIA+ issues can also generate joy.

Feeling supported and being given opportunities to represent their views and being taken seriously is extremely important for adolescents.

Reflective questions to utilise in Action Team meetings and/or other relevant school meetings:

- What opportunities can students be given to express their voices and share their passions?
- What are the opportunities to bring in a sense of joy during the weekly staff meeting?
- How can we link experiences of joy to your teaching and learning program? What innovative steps can teachers take to spark a sense of fun in the classroom?
- How does your school's teaching and learning program provide agency for students in their learning?

Mental Health Services and Support

Beyond Blue

24/7 mental health support service

1300 22 4636
beyondblue.org.au

headspace

Online support and counselling to young people aged 12 to 25

1800 650 890
(9am-1am daily, AEDT.)
For webchat, visit:
headspace.org.au/eheadspace

Kids Helpline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services for children and young people aged 5 to 25

1800 55 1800
kidshelpline.com.au

1800 RESPECT

24/7 support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic violence and abuse

1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au

Lifeline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services

13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back

24/7 crisis support and counselling service for people affected by suicide

1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Mensline

24/7 counselling service for men

1300 78 99 78
mensline.org.au

QLife

LGBTI peer support and referral

1800 184 527
(6pm - 10pm daily)
qlife.org.au
(online chat 3pm - 12am local time, including over holidays.)

If you are concerned about someone at risk of immediate harm, call 000 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.



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