



Building a mentally healthy learning community at Discovery Early Learning Centres

The flexibility of Be You allows Discovery to tailor its professional growth and learning for the centre's educators.



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How to use this story

This story shows how Be You can be tailored to meet the needs of each learning community and provides examples on the different ways to implement strategies using Be You.

Who is this story for? Action Teams looking to implement Be You, but not knowing where to start.

When could we use this tool? When developing your Action Plan as a way to share learning and discuss change to practice as a learning community or Action Team.

How can our Be You Consultant support us to use this tool? Contact your Be You Consultant to provide your Action Team with advice and support every step of the way.

There are some great links at the end of this pdf:

- Be You resources
- Support articles
- Sessions and events



“I’m very passionate and my managers are very passionate about Be You.”

—Jo Walsh, CEO of Discovery Early Learning Centres.

Across the 23 locations that Discovery Early Learning Centres operates in Tasmania, you’ll find communities with different values, needs and challenges.

As a result, Discovery’s services are all unique with a powerful mantra that guides each one. Happy educators make happy children, and happy children mean happy families.

“Developing one-to-one relationships with children is the most vital part of the work that any educator does,” says Jo Walsh, the centres’ CEO.

“The same goes with the families. If you don’t have the trust of the family and a well-developed relationship with the family, you can’t develop it with the child.”

Jo says it’s this understanding that drives Discovery’s values about not only the importance of interactions with children, but the importance of educator wellbeing.

“When you are at your best, you can give your best to children,” Jo says.

“Educators have a very stressful job, and if we don’t have mentally healthy and happy educators, they’re not their very best when they’re working with children. So supporting them in that mental health and wellbeing space is our priority.

“That’s where Be You comes in.”

Having been engaged with Be You since it began, Jo describes it as a partnership.

“I’m very passionate and my managers are very passionate about Be You,” said Jo.

“As Be You has grown and developed into the wonderful resource and support network that it is now, Discovery has grown with it. The Be You resources as a whole have led us to rethink our approach to mental health and wellbeing.”



Discovery ELC have engaged with Be You since it began.

Jo and her team have been able to draw on the Be You Implementation Reflection Tool to inform and celebrate Discovery’s success and focus on strengths and priorities.

The [BETLS Observation Tool](#), [Disability Inclusion Guide](#) and [Transition Fact Sheets](#) have also been crucial resources for Discovery.

Most recently they have used [Be You’s Mental Health Continuum](#) to develop its strategic approach to mentally healthy workplaces.

Jo (right), and Lizzie working through the Be You resources.





Staff support one another at Discovery.

“We use the Mental Health Continuum to ensure that staff in our workplace are supporting each other and are part of a mentally healthy community when they’re at work,” said Jo.

“So they recognise and respond to people who are needing help and know what to do when someone reaches out. That’s an integral part of the work we’ve been doing in this space.”

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– Jo Walsh, CEO of Discovery Early Learning Centres.

Meeting specific needs among common challenges

At Discovery, Lizzie Melly is responsible for supporting the Be You Action Team Leaders – or, as Discovery calls them, Be You Champions.

As well as making the most of Be You’s Action Team Handbook for this task, Lizzie is also involved in the ongoing development of Discovery’s Be You Champion Guide, which outlines the role of Discovery’s Champions specific to each community’s ethos and culture and the development of Discovery’s

Statement of Commitment to Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Being engaged with all of Discovery's individual learning communities means Lizzie also appreciates the collective as well as the particular challenges Discovery's educators navigate daily.

"I think every educator in this sector faces very similar challenges," she said.

"Challenging behaviours from children, helping children navigate their own emotions, dealing with transitions, understanding self-regulation and co-regulation, and building resilience.



Lizzie Melly, Executive Assistant at Discovery.

Be You Professional Learning

Be You Professional Learning consists of 13 content modules grouped under five domains, with content centred around mentally healthy communities.



Mentally Healthy Communities is central to the content framework

"These are all topics that are dealt with really well in Be You, and in a very accessible and straightforward way."

How Discovery tailored Be You

And in a way that means educators can take what they need when they need it. In fact, Jo says that while every Be You Champion at Discovery has access to the same Be You resources, they tend to use them quite differently.

“Be You isn't a linear program that you tick and flick through. It's a platter of resources that you are able to access when you need them.”

— Lizzie Melly, Executive Assistant at Discovery.



Discovery aims for a mentally healthy community when they're at work.

"All of Discovery's services are very different," she said.

"They're all reflective of the community they operate in, and we operate in some very vulnerable communities, which adds an extra layer of challenge.

"Every program is different because of the different needs of each child. Be You resources being as flexible as they are means we can pick and choose the bits that we use and implement."

Lizzie says that Be You's strength also lies in the fact that it's not a rigid framework.

"Be You isn't a linear program that you tick and flick through. It's a platter of resources that you are able to access when you need them," said Lizzie.

"And the modules are structured in such a way that you can revisit, or research, or find

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the evidence behind some of the research when it's meaningful for you."

For example, when one of Discovery's services experienced a community trauma recently, educators were able to lean on the modules in the Responding Together Professional Learning domain, even though they'd been working on other goals and parts of the Be You content framework at the time.

Because of the situation that had arisen, they were able to rework a lot of their programming and planning to implement some strategies that they knew were going to be beneficial.

Jo and Lizzie say that there's no right or wrong place to start with Be You. That flexibility has allowed Discovery to tailor Be You for their specific needs.

"One of the really great things about Be You is that it's not a set framework," said Jo.



– Lizzie catches up with the Be You Champions at Discovery.

"You get to pick and choose the way that you use Be You and adapt the resources to be beneficial for each community or each service that you work in. You use them to develop understanding, professional development tools for educators and use them in the way your service needs them."

Discovery educators plan out their day.





Jo's advice for implementing Be You

- 1 Build foundations for success and create your own Statement of Commitment to mental health that reflects children's voices.
- 2 Use the Be You Implementation Reflection Tool (IRT) to identify your learning community's needs. Start with knowing children and seeing the whole picture.
- 3 Use Be You tools and resources such as the Mental Health Continuum to develop a plan and guide the work you do
- 4 Take action. Set up regular meetings between your Be You Champions and Organisational Leaders and share feedback on what is working.
- 5 Be You Champions help to monitor, review and improve your Be You actions keeping your whole learning community motivated and on track.
- 6 At every stage keep connected to your Be You Consultant to continue building a mentally healthy community for everyone.

Be You: designed for educators

As Be You has become more embedded at Discovery, Lizzie has noticed some important and beneficial developments.

"I've found our conversations have become more critical, more reflective and definitely more empowering for educators," continued Lizzie.

"Because we're able to access evidence-based research in a way that's so accessible and specific to our sector, we're able to discuss – in very meaningful and professional ways – what we can do to support our own mental health and wellbeing, and that of the children in our care."

This has had a positive flow-on effect with the service's families as they look to create a whole learning community approach to mental health and wellbeing.

"I think our educators feel more empowered because they have these resources," added Lizzie.



Discovery educators at Sacred Heart.



“You get to pick and choose the way that you use Be You and adapt the resources to be beneficial for each community or each service that you work in.”

— Jo Walsh, CEO of Discovery Early Learning Centres.

“I’ve seen their confidence and their language, and how they articulate and plan, change over time. And that helps them make real change to the families that they’re working with every day.”

Discovery’s mantra says, happy families mean happy children. It’s what Jo believes early learning services should be all about.

“At Discovery we have always put children at the centre of what we do,” said Jo.

“We have to create a culture where they are valued and respected, and their health and wellbeing is supported so that they become strong, well-developed, well-rounded individuals.”

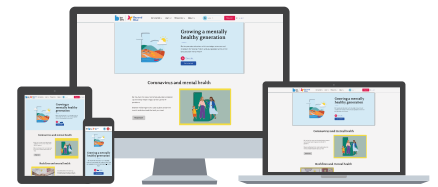
If you’d like to connect with a Be You Consultant and begin your Be You journey, register as a Be You Learning Community and join a Be You Essentials event to discover what [Be You](#) has to offer.

Reflective questions

How can the Be You Mental Health Continuum help you build a mentally healthy community?

How can we make Be You tools and resources work for us?

Here are some links to additional Be You resources that might also be of interest.



Be You resources

- 1 [Be You Mental Health Continuum](#)
- 2 [Be You Implementation and Reflection toolkit](#)
- 3 [BETLS Observation Tool](#)
- 4 [Disability Inclusion Guide](#)
- 5 [Development Fact Sheets](#)
- 6 [What are Action Teams?](#)
- 7 [Educator wellbeing resources](#)



Implementation Support articles

- 1 [BETLS – an observation tool](#)
- 2 [Why join a Be You Implementation Session?](#)
- 3 [Planning for wellbeing: mine, yours, ours](#)
- 4 [Seven ways to build professional resilience:](#)



Sessions and Events

- 1 [Mental health fundamentals](#)
- 2 [Resilience in School Age Care](#)
- 3 [Notice and observe children's mental health](#)



Looking for more inspiration? Why not watch the [video](#) associated with this story or share in your meetings.

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