



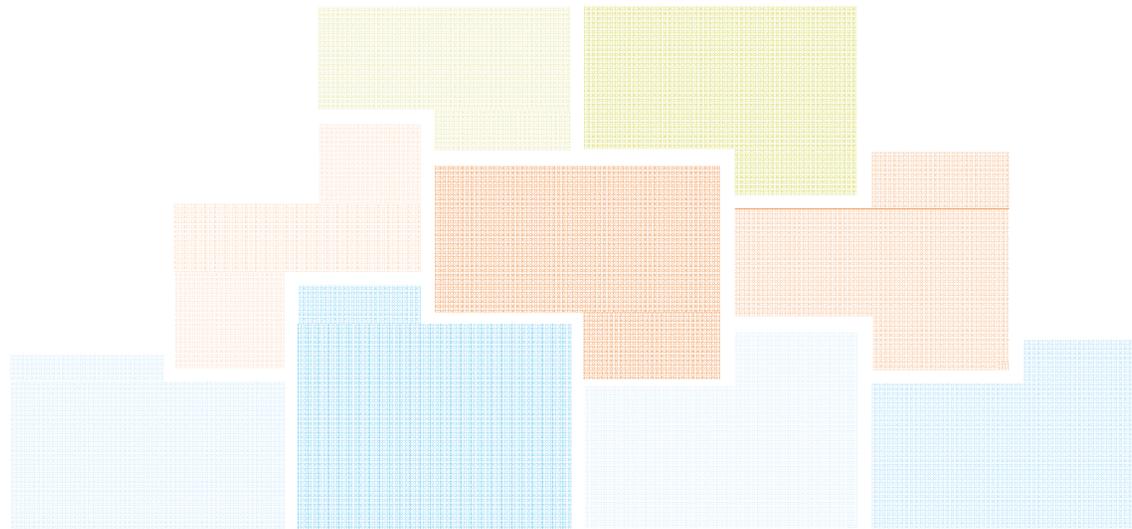
Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK



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Beyond Blue
2018



S T E P S

Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

**D E C I S I O N - M A K I N G
F R A M E W O R K**

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2018

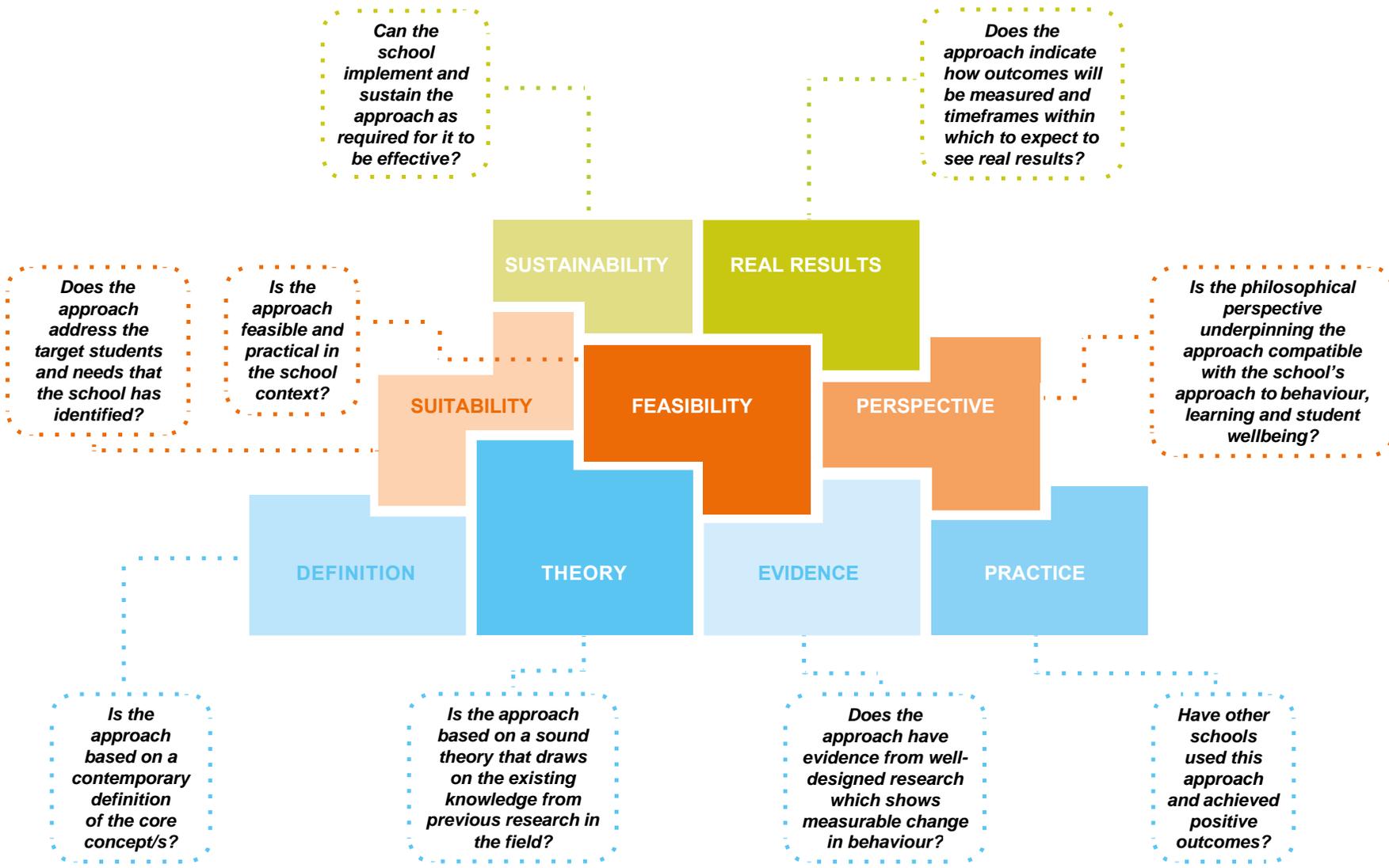
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STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

Does it work? What is the evidence?



Definition

Key Question

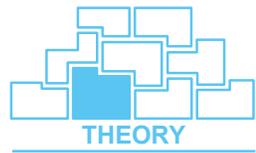
Is the approach based on a contemporary definition of the core concept/s?

To ask about the program

- How does the program define mental wellbeing?
- How does the program identify the factors involved in mental wellbeing?

To ask about your school

- Is the definition in the program consistent with the school's understanding of mental wellbeing?
- Do all members of our school community share this definition of mental wellbeing? Is it included in our school policies?



Theory

Is the approach based on a sound theory that draws on the existing knowledge from previous research in the field?

- What is the specific aim of the program, i.e. focus on skills, behaviours, knowledge etc?
- What theory underpins the program and how has this been incorporated into the content, design and strategies of the program?
- What previous research on mental health and wellbeing does the program draw on?
- How does the program aim to improve mental health and wellbeing?

- Is the theoretical basis of this program consistent with our school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?
- Should we undertake some professional development to learn more about the existing knowledge on fostering mental wellbeing?



Evidence

Does the approach have evidence from well-designed research which shows measurable change in behaviour?

- What is the evidence for the program and how has it been gathered?
- Does the evidence consist of real change involving measurement of specific behaviours and outcomes?
- If the research evidence is limited, what plans exist for well-designed research into the program?
- How did the researchers ensure confidence that the research supports valid claims of effectiveness?

- Will the school be able to implement the program in a way similar to the way it was conducted in research studies?
- Are we alert to the use of persuasion- or emotion-driven arguments rather than evidence to support this approach?
- If there is limited research evidence for the program, have we carefully considered the questions under Definition and Theory?



Practice

Have other schools used this approach and achieved positive outcomes?

- Is the research evidence complemented by information from schools that have implemented the program in real-world situations?
- If the research evidence is limited, what information (particularly student data) is available from other schools to suggest it is a 'promising practice'?
- If there is no research evidence, are the definition and theory which underpin the program well explained and robust?

- Are the schools which have successfully implemented this program similar to our school?
- Will our school be able to implement the program in a way similar to the way it was conducted in other schools that have achieved positive outcomes?
- If there is limited research evidence for the program, have we carefully considered the questions under Definition and Theory?

STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

Will it work to achieve our school's goals?



Suitability

Key Question

Does the approach address the target students and needs that the school has identified?

To ask about the program

- What is the main purpose of the program: prevention or response?
- Is the program whole-school, multifaceted or single issue focused?
- What does the program focus on and who does it target?
 - participants
 - student age (range)
 - skill/knowledge areas addressed
 - personal and social skills (if relevant)?
 - social understandings/social diversity issues (if relevant)

To ask about your school

- Do we need to further clarify our school's needs and aims so we can select a program to match?
- Does the program target who we want to target and aim to achieve what we have identified as our goals?
- Which of the school's identified goals and target areas does the program NOT address?
- Can we integrate this program with existing programs in the school?



Feasibility

Is the approach feasible and practical in the school context?

- Are all the requirements to implement the program detailed in the guidelines?
- Is the program 'ready to go' or do schools have to do significant work to implement the program?
- What are the initial and ongoing costs?
- What training and support is provided?
- What time and human resources are required from the school?
- Does the program align with existing policies of the school?
- Has this approach been successfully used in schools with similar resources and constraints as our school?

- Do we have the time, human resources and funding for initial and ongoing costs?
- Can we provide staff with the skills, knowledge and support to implement the program?
- Is the program compatible with other activities and requirements with which we need to comply?
- If the program is delivered through extra classes (i.e. not embedded into curriculum) what impact will that have on the curriculum, and on people and other activities?
- Is the program a good fit with our school resources and constraints?
- Can the school's existing resources and activities be harnessed or redirected for the program?



Perspective

Is the philosophical perspective underpinning the approach compatible with the school's approach to behaviour, learning and student wellbeing?

- What philosophical perspective underpins the program?
- What learning theory/pedagogical approach is the program based on?

- What is our school's perspective on mental and student wellbeing (and where do we articulate this)?
- Is the program's perspective compatible with our school's approach to promoting positive school climate and good mental wellbeing?
- Is the pedagogical approach compatible with our school's approach to teaching and learning?
- Before we implement a mental wellbeing program, do we need to invest in professional development on our philosophical perspective on mental wellbeing?

STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools

How will we know it has worked?



	Key Question	To ask about the program	To ask about your school
Sustainability	<i>Can the school implement and sustain the approach as required for it to be effective?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long does the program take to fully implement and when should the school expect to see changes/outcomes? • Does the program provide specific guidelines on implementation (e.g. time frames, milestones, step-by-step procedures)? • Does the program provide information about possible adaptations that do not compromise fidelity (i.e. the way the program is intended to be used)? • Is staff training available initially and on an ongoing basis as needed, (e.g. for new staff) to ensure sustainable implementation? • What other support is available for implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the school sustain energy and momentum throughout implementation given the anticipation time before outcomes will be observable? • Will the school be able to implement the approach as recommended in order to be effective (fidelity of implementation)? • Are adaptations needed to implement the program in our school context, and would these possibly compromise fidelity (and thus effectiveness)? • Have other schools made adaptations and has the program been successful? • How might we support ongoing implementation with fidelity, reduce any gaps, and ensure sustainability for long-term change?
Real results	<i>Does the approach indicate how outcomes will be measured and timeframes within which to expect to see real results?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are outcomes measured and how do they link to the stated aim of the program? • Are the resources or guidance provided for measuring progress and effectiveness of the program and informing a cycle of continuous change? • Does the program encourage student involvement in measuring outcomes? • What is the anticipated time frame before the school should be able to see measurable change? • How will the school be able to demonstrate to the wider community that the program has been successful? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What existing school measures and data can we use to monitor progress and measure outcomes? • If additional measurement tools and methods are required, what impact could they have? • Can our school commit to this program for the anticipated timeframes before we will see measurable and real results? • How and where will the school report and celebrate successful progress and outcomes?