### **Be You In Focus Webinar**

### **Making change with impact: Turning ideas into action**

### **17 June 2025**

# Sara Richardson

Hello, and welcome everybody. I'm Sara Richardson, one of the Be You national managers. Thank you so much for joining us today for this webinar Making change with impact: Turning ideas into action.

So today in this webinar, we're going to talk about Stage 3 of the Be You implementation cycle which is about developing a plan to enhance wellbeing of your learning community. And we're going to consider the importance of spending time developing the plan before you're jumping into action, and I think that's something that perhaps all of us could take a bit from.

So I'd like to acknowledge that I'm coming to you from Kaurna country today, and invite you to add your own acknowledgement in the chat, and it's so wonderful to see where everybody's joining us from across the country. And if you're watching this as a recording from your own service, then perhaps you might like to do a bit of a deeper acknowledgement of where you're coming from as well.

The other thing to consider as you're having this conversation as we're having this conversation together is your emotional safety. We need to take care of that as well, when we have conversations about mental health, so plan for anything, what you'll do if anything we discuss raises perhaps some uncomfortable feelings, thoughts, or reminders, for you, remember there's always someone to talk to, including the mental health services and support lines that you can see on the screen now.

So, as I said, this webinar is the second in a series of 3 across the year that are really focusing on the Be You implementation cycle. In our first webinar, which you can access on the website, we unpacked our key actions of the first 2 stages. So the foundations for Success stage and also the second stage of identifying your learning community's needs. And both of those are really important precursors to this stage that we're looking at today. And we're going to spend time really thinking about how in this stage, we develop a plan. So the things we're going to particularly look at are the importance of planning. And so that's probably something that's familiar to most of us, anyway, because we do planning in a whole range of ways, particularly for children's learning. We're going to think about implementation strategies that are particularly and specifically designed to overcome barriers. And that's a really important and key element of this work. So that we're really developing plans that are going to work for each specific context of every situation that might be arising. And then how, and we're also going to talk about how that all might come together into an action plan. And that's different from some other kinds of plans. But a plan that's actually action based. And one of the key elements of planning is also thinking about how you're going to measure whether you're successful or not. What are those things that are going to give you an indication that you've done well. And all of these things go together to think about how you're going, you're really embedding your change, and your change is going to stick, and not just something you did that was really good and worked really well, but didn't stay there, because I think when you're trying to make really meaningful change, particularly around mental health, then we really want to think about that.

So as we go. If you've got any questions you'd like to ask the panel, pop them in the Q&A section, so you can see there's a chat function and a Q&A function, and if we've got time we'll try and respond to these in real time. Or if you've also got those questions, you could drop them down, and you can always make contact with your Be You consultant to follow up on the question, especially if it's really specific to your context. In addition, if you've got any IT questions, then please ask them in the chat section, and we've got some of our team in there. And they'll be able to respond to you directly to help you hopefully have the best experience you can.

So, as we often do in our webinars, we're going to do a poll just to really think about and understand how everybody, well, I guess their confidence level. So the question we're going to ask you today is, how confident do you feel in developing a plan? Now that first bit's probably fine. The next bit is the plan that will enhance wellbeing in your service, so you might feel a little bit confident you might not feel very confident at all, or you might already have a plan. And so we'd really like to hear from you about that, and we'll ask that question again at the end. And think about whether there's anything that's happened today, or you've learned today or heard today that will support your feeling of confidence. So we'll just leave that up there for a little bit oh the other thing, perhaps to consider if you are watching this the recording of this in your service. This might be an opportunity for you to pause and have a bit of a conversation with each other, and you can. You could ask that question either. How confident does each individual person feel? But also you might want to have a conversation about how confident we are as a team to develop a plan for making change for wellbeing.

So let's have a look. So overwhelmingly, people are moderately confident, so they've got a few of the basics, and I think that's true. Most of us are confident with the notion of planning, and maybe the element that's missing here. And that could be an interesting thing to think about, is it around, particularly around wellbeing or mental health that we're looking for more strategies or ideas. Or there might be other elements of planning that you're looking for ideas about. And there are a few people on the webinar today, who are very confident and already have a plan. So feel free to chat with each other in the, in the, in the chat as we go along as well, because that might you might learn a little bit, or contribute few things that way, too. So thank you for that. So let's get on with the session itself. I'm really excited to introduce the panellists for today, and we're going to operate.

We're going to respond to some elements of planning with 3 panellists. So the first person I'd like to introduce is Alicia. Alicia is one of our team of Be You consultants. She's got a background in early childhood education, psychology, adult education, and more recently, probably, Alicia, implementation, science in her role as a Be You consultant. So Alicia supports communities to embed meaningful change around mental health and wellbeing for children, families, and educators in her role as a Be You consultant. So we're really pleased to have Alicia here, and it'd be great to hear some examples from a consultant perspective as to around the planning. So welcome, Alicia. I'd also like to introduce Bella, who's the centre manager of Gymea Montessori Academy. Bella is passionate about Montessori learning, and also empowering children to guide their own learning, which is a really critical element of that. She's committed to creating a nurturing, collaborative environment where children, families, and educators thrive. And we're going to hear some stories about what that looks like and how she's been doing that recently, you know, exploring, using the Be You tools and resources as well. So welcome, Bella. And also I'd like to introduce Sue, who's the centre manager at Littlehampton Early Learning Centre. Sue's also passionate about creating a safe, inclusive, and joyful learning environment where every child thrives. Sue has a master of teaching in early childhood, and also a diploma in Montessori education. So a little bit of a theme here, and she's championing play-based learning, and she also celebrates cultural diversity. So Sue's approach nurtures the whole child, building confidence, encouraging curiosity, and laying the foundation for lifelong journey learning. So, Sue, if you could just turn your camera on so we can say Hi to you. That would be fantastic. I think. There you are. Hello! You weren't showing up on my screen, so I had to flick across. So welcome everybody, and thanks for joining us.

So today, as I said, we're going to share and explore some examples of practice from service from these services in particular, who are Bella's and Sue service, who are prioritizing mental health and wellbeing. So, and as you listen, you might want to consider your own services, context your unique priorities and challenges, and then reflect on, think about which strategies might be most successful to you, or how you could tweak some of the things you're listening to. So let's get going. So, as I said in previous webinars, we've discussed the importance of developing a vision, considering who will lead the work gathering information about what your particular context might really need and what changes you want to see. And if you, as I said, if you haven't had a look, you really encourage you to go and have a look at that webinar as well. But to get us started, Alicia, so we can really start thinking about why it seems so important to invest time in planning could you get us going with that?

# Alicia Marshall

What a loaded question! I love it. Hello, everybody! I guess that's what we're talking about today is that planning concept which as Sara just beautifully recapped, involves 2 other stages before we get to this planning bit. And ultimately, what we're aiming to do with all of the knowledge gathering, data collecting, considering of your context, outlining that vision for change. What we're aiming to do with that information is, use it to develop a really considered contextual and representative plan that will hopefully enable us to get the best outcomes possible because we're truly considering something uniquely specific to us and our early learning service and community, our team, our families.

What we're aiming to really achieve within this plan is something that represents the voices of everyone that it's hopefully going to benefit. It's a plan that outlines the exact needs of our community and our context, and considers, as Sara put before some of those barriers and enablers that are gonna really guide and impact the way that we're going to engage in this change we're hoping to create. And so the plan outlines some of the things that we need to uniquely consider for our place to help us achieve those changes,

In that last webinar that we saw which talked about the first 2 stages of the process, some of the panellists shared there. How their journey towards gathering the voices of the team and collecting that data to truly inform their needs had ended up informing them about their own perspectives and even potential biases that were there. And so part of what we really want to ensure that we're considering in our plan is that it's reflective of what everybody sees is the need, the benefits that are going to hopefully come to every single stakeholder member of our community. And when we say stakeholder, we can think of a range of different people there. Ultimately, hopefully, our plans are with children and young people at the heart of everything that we're doing. But we also really need to make sure that we're considering our staffing team and not just educators. We need to think about our whole staffing team at our places and also our families and other wider community members. How are we ensuring that our plan is reflective of everybody within our spaces?

A really good plan is one that's going to have time invested in it. We love to use some phrases here in implementation science. And one of my most beloved phrases is pay now or pay later. Essentially, we are going to need to invest time and energy into any type of change that we're trying to create at our place. And in the early years we do call that our continuous improvement processes. When we take an implementation science based process to creating a plan for change management, we're identifying that we do want to invest a little bit of time and energy and effort in the front sections of change management. We're not just diving straight into the action piece, which I think can be really really tricky for us in the early years. Sometimes we're very much identifying that if we jump straight into that action. we have the big potential of doing something that doesn't necessarily target the key need or concern or context point for our community. Taking that time to truly consider our needs, unpack those strategies and actions related to that is us essentially saying, we're choosing to invest that time and energy now, so that when we get to the action it's exactly what our community needs. And it's going to help us to achieve the change that we're really trying to see.

The other thing that I often think about, there too Sara, is that it's supportive for the leader in these processes, and a leader doesn't necessarily just need to be your centre director or coordinator or area manager. A leader is anyone who's passionate and becoming a champion for achieving change related to wellbeing at your place. Someone who's trying to drive this change at your space. And so, having those plans offer that clarity and purpose to demonstrate everyone's role within that change management process, which means that we're hopefully encouraging buy-in from our whole team, because they can see what it means for them benefits and how they can actually contribute. We've reflected their voices, which means that we're thinking about adult learning principles, of ensuring that they have connection to the change that we're trying to achieve. And then, I think, for leaders, it helps us to really support that momentum when things get hard, when new challenges arise because they usually do. We've got a plan that hopefully has already considered some of those things. And so we've got some strategies in mind about how we can overcome those challenges, work towards sustained change, and really unpack how we embed change within the community. Not just a tick and flick of change that we've completed some professional learning and done. It's something that we're really, truly considering how we can embed it across the whole of team and ensure that it continues even in the changes of new team members, and other challenges that may arise.

# Sara Richardson

Lovely, Alicia. Lots of things there. And you know, one of the things I was thinking about is that notion of process, not end product. And we know that, we know that. And it's interesting how sometimes we don't jump in. And the other thing I was thinking about it'd be really good to get, and we'll start with you, Bella, in a sec. Talking about your service, and how you, and we're going to go slowly in this process to just really start with how you worked out what it was your priority or goal was going to be. So in a sec, if you could tell us a little bit about your service, and then and a little bit about how you used, you know, gathered information to tell you about how you would identify that area because there's always so many things we could do, so many possibilities, it could get bigger and bigger and bigger. And so coming to that decision making a point about, well, this is the thing we're going to do, I think would be really great to hear from you. So yeah, do you wanna tell us about how you got there?

# Bella Bulfoni

Of course. Well, we initially, we actually started using the beyond self-care, the wellbeing guide to do the audit. We reached out to our consultant, and we essentially, we started off doing a few things from the guide, just to kind of get an idea of where educators felt that we were sitting. Obviously, it's a team effort. It's not necessarily something that I can identify as a leader myself. And then, essentially, when we collected the data, we kind of obviously other things took priorities. And obviously, it just kind of time definitely got away from us. So I think definitely, taking a moment to sort of realize that there definitely was a gap, especially with our mental health and our wellbeing. Once we identified that, I think that's when, you know, we definitely started to see the differences between what was definitely a barrier and what things definitely was sort of helping us sort of move forward. But I think the most important thing was, I think we definitely did the audit to really kick start our journey. I think that was a great way for us to assess where everybody was feeling that maybe they we did really well in something, or if maybe we need a little bit more guidance or a little bit more expertise in that area.

# Sara Richardson

Thanks, Bella. And actually, I'm just going to go backwards a little bit. Do you want to just tell us a little bit about your service like how big you are, maybe a little bit about where you're located, because I think all of those things help create a picture of where you got to. You know how you got to, to this point, too.

# Bella Bulfoni

Of course. So we're located in, so we're in Sydney, New South Wales, and we are a 72 place centre. So we're just that perfect size, I always like to say. And essentially, we are a Montessori service. So we do follow obviously the Montessori philosophy. But for the most part, obviously, we are just sort of doing our everyday, doing what we can every day.

# Sara Richardson

And your role there?

# Bella Bulfoni

I'm the nominated supervisor here. And I do also have someone who helps me like a Be You officer here that does a lot of work with me in terms of implementing different things, and some of the things from our action guide as well.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, that's really interesting and useful context. And that kind of relates to back to what Alicia said. You know the who drives this, and who leads this is really important. And I was asking that question because when you were saying we, I was thinking, Oh, I wonder who it was that decided this. So when you say we, that's who you're talking about, you and another person who's got an identified role in this process that you had already done before you started.

# Bella Bulfoni

That was kind of something. It was always there, but it wasn't something that was a priority. So I think that's kind of when we get into the next kind of stages, and we talk about really unpacking it. That was definitely something that we identified was definitely something that didn't have enough time. And it definitely wasn't a priority. And then, once we kind of made a bit of a shift in that, the way definitely did help a lot with myself as a supervisor. But then also. So for the team as well, having 2 people that they can go to, not just that one person. It definitely made a big difference.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, that's great. Excellent. Thank you so much. And now, Sue, would you be able to tell us a little bit about your service, and in particular, that question about how you identified what the priority or goal was for you in amongst all of the things that are happening every day.

# Sue Samaraweera

Yeah, I'll start with who we are. So Littlehampton ELC is a long day care centre, based in Adelaide Hills, providing quality care and education for children age 0 to 6 years. We are a small centre which we are so proud and happy about that, accommodating up to 53 children per day. And then the area. How we identify area. After critically reflecting on our current practices, we have observed that some children's transitions, particularly during the drop off time are not going smoothly. Many children appear unsettled, often become upset, crying and struggling to engage with their peers or independent play. So we have noticed that some children became distressed when they see other families arriving for late drop off. So this is another part of that, or during early pickup time. So these moments can trigger emotional responses, making it more difficult for them to regulate their feelings. So additionally, we also observed that when adults enter the learning environment, especially during structured time, like group time or story time, they are sometimes unaware or not respectfully, toward for the children's engagement in those activities. So these disruptions can affect the group dynamic, and in some cases children, like lost their focus or become upset or start looking for their own family. So it was a massive thing for us.

And the other thing, if I move to another area identified, was gaps in families' knowledge and awareness of mental wellbeing in early childhood settings. This insight emerged after we conducted the Be You family survey 3 years ago. So, following the discussion of survey results with Be You consultant, it became clear that many families place a strong emphasis on physical wellbeing, often seeing it as more important than mental wellbeing at that stage. And so, as a team. We critically reflect on this and recognize the needs to address the imbalance. So in response, we set a specific goal in our quality improvement plan aimed at reducing this gap by promoting great understanding and support for children's mental health and emotional development. So these are the 2 main areas we focused, last 2, last probably 3 years.

# Sara Richardson

That's great. Thank you so much. And it's interesting because both of you have talked about, because one of the questions I ask you is, how did you identify going, both of you talked about tools like Bella. You said you used an audit. So you referred to the Be You surveys you talked about your consultant, so you know, and both of you use the language of we, and I think, and I particularly ask you about that, Bella. But you know, I think that notion of doing it together is really kind of what you were talking about before, Alicia is getting the buy-in. If you can start doing the buy-in and having the conversations. And I think so you use the language of critical reflection.

There's a whole lot of information we've got, and you talked about observing, too. You just notice things. and I think your example is something that all you know, probably nearly everybody would have experienced at some point, you know, when there's that unsettled moment, and it's just not quite working for anybody. And so what do you do with that? And what are we going to do with that? And so I think that's really helpful, you know, just those observational things are really helpful, too.

So that's a great start. And we've done really well and not jumping straight to the strategies. And we've worked really hard not to do that, because this is what we do. And Alicia mentioned this before, too, we tend to jump to the solution really fast. And I think what the real strong message we want to get across here is that you need to spend a lot of time in this space. So you talked about 3 years, you know, really thinking carefully and trying some things and having another go and real. And that's part of your planning process, isn't it, Alicia?

I think, and it kind of helps to shift into this next conversation. Maybe Alicia, too, about what implementation science tells us about considering the barriers which are the things that get in the way of us helping get to where we want to go. But also, then what are the enablers? What are the things we've already got in place that help us get there, too. So do you want to tell us why it's important to match the strategy to the barrier to address a barrier or you know, leverage, or make use of the enablers to help us get to some specific actions.

# Alicia Marshall

Yeah. And I think, do you know, I was sitting here, reflecting, obviously, we have a lot of implementation science conversations here amongst the Be You team, and I know that recently we've had quite a reflection on the jargon. The amount of jargon that can come up in these conversations around implementation science. But I love how you just explained the concept of a barrier and enabler. And sometimes I do wonder that when we sit down and think about the underlying concepts rather than the jargony language that we're using, hopefully, especially in the early use sector, it will feel quite common and comfortable and familiar. Because when I look at this, I see barriers and enablers as the type of things we consider when we're engaging in a continuous improvement process, or even when we're curriculum planning for children, it's almost like that concept of understanding what our strengths and interests and skill sets and opportunities and developmental area is as a collective educating team to know how we can then scaffold what that next contextual step might be to help us to achieve that next step of change. And so when we think of barriers and enablers, hopefully, instead of them feeling a little bit confronting because of the use of the language, it can feel like us, just assessing what's going on for us and where we are currently in our scaffolded levels, to know how we compare specific actions and strategies to match exactly where we are now.

And I think what we know from implementation science is that the more you invest time and energy in unpacking those things for your context, because there are always going to be things that get in the way of change, that slow change down, that make change more challenging. That's your barrier. And then there are absolutely going to be things that are going to help you get there that are going to be something that you can leverage to support achievement in the change. Those are those enablers. And so the more we understand those. the better we can plan and utilize them to help us move towards that next scaffolded step. And both Sue and Bella beautifully mentioned the idea of an action team, a pair, or a group of people who are contributing towards the conversation, of the planning, collecting the voices of our community, understanding our exact needs and context. That's a huge enabler to promote change. and I think what we know is that when we best use our enablers as tools and strategies to overcome some of the barriers that we might have greater chances of change. Success we have at the end of the day.

I have a brilliant example of a range of communities I've been working with of late, who are all focused around our family partnerships concept. They all want to build better partnerships with families. So that was their identified need. But the interesting part of it is, each specific and unique context have ended up doing that very, very differently based off their identified barriers and enablers. So, for example, I've got one family daycare community who unpacked and collected some information and could see that one of the barriers was actually a skill set around being able to have conversations with families and knowing how to collaborate with families. The skill wasn't quite there. There was definitely some knowledge base, but being able to connect in with the educators, to know how to do that on a day to day basis. And so they had specific strategies around peer to peer learning identified champions who are really great at doing that and helping one another learn.

I had a school aged care setting that was more around opportunity. They didn't really get that chance to connect with families. And so they ended up connecting with their local school and pairing with their schools' communication strategies to figure out ways to better enable to do that. And so I think it just helps highlight that when we know our barriers and enablers, we're going to pair, change management strategies or actions to really help identify those exact needs.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, that's really helpful, Alicia, to kind of try and demystify those that language. And you're right, it's easy to jump into those. But when we understand them a little bit more, we probably actually really know what they are. So let's move on to those strategies. And so you've talked about how the barriers enablers are really important to understand them. because they're unique to each space. So how can you then choose the strategy that's going to be specific and achievable?

# Alicia Marshall

My first answer is, gonna be, your Be You consultant is your biggest asset that you've got in this space, and I'm sure that Bella and Sue could probably help elaborate on that a little bit, too. but I think what we're doing is we're considering how a strategy will leverage an enabler and help us to overcome a barrier. So in that example that I shared before that school aged care community, it was an opportunity thing, because at the end of the day. Families are often just really keen to get home and cook dinner, and not necessarily spend a huge invested amount of time in connecting with educators. Plus school aged care educators have that contextual difference around needing information from school as well as the school aged care community. And so there's some unique considerations there. If they were going to do like what the family daycare community did, peer to peer learning to learn skill management, and practice skill management that wasn't actually targeting the need that the school aged care community had. And so what we often will find in change management or continuous improvement processes, if we haven't thought about the exact need, and then why the need exists where the barriers and the enablers are coming from, then usually we're throwing an action at it that isn't really targeting the exact need or concern. and so finding the strategies is about understanding the need and the barrier, and then trying to use an enabler to help us leverage.

The other thing that we can think about here is. how low can we go another one of those awesome little phrases. The idea is that we don't necessarily want to have a large amount of things that we need to do. Let's face it in the early sector in any education sector. Time can be a barrier, and we don't necessarily have capacity to do lots of different things, especially because we do have a lot of different priorities we have to target. And so the idea is when we use our contextual knowledge, we're specifically choosing one strategy, or maybe a couple that are really going to target and focus on our exact need rather than having to throw a lot of different things at it.

# Sara Richardson

Thanks, Alicia. Now I guess what would be really great to hear from you. Perhaps, Sue, and maybe picking up that idea that you were talking about before that, you know, you were talking about how families' understanding of mental health was perhaps lacking, and probably a barrier to what you were trying to achieve. So would you be able to talk a little bit about what you know a little bit more about that? And if there was any others.

# Sue Samaraweera

Yes, Sara, yeah, actually, it was one of our main barriers, limited family understanding of mental wellbeing. So, as I mentioned previously 3 years ago we conducted the Be You family survey and discovered that many families prioritize physical wellbeing over mental wellbeing. So, and then this like, you know it, this highlighted a significant gap in awareness and understanding around the importance of emotional and mental development, that area. So we thought, like, we need to focus with this first. And as the first customers, families, yeah, so we use a couple of strategies. So one thing is, one key action was using the cultural iceberg model. So which we like, you know, introduced one of our Be You consultants. So it was really exciting. And, that model, it was exploring and understanding what is truly important to our families. So this model helped us recognize that cultural, culture goes beyond food and flag. So previously, it was like just touching base. Or if we thought like, culture is just talking about the flag and the food. But it includes like, you know, we notice, and we learn actually, facial expression, body language, tone of voice, and deeper beliefs and values. So this opened another avenue for us. Oh my God, we need to do more than that about the culture. So this deeper cultural understanding helped us for strong connection with families. That was our foundation, creating a welcoming environment and valuing all cultures and diversity. So that gave like a strong connection with family. So that was the first step we did.

So we also began, to improve that share, Be You factsheet and other resources for families. So they start to read. Oh, what is this? Oh, actually, we need to think about this more like, highly importance of mental like, you know, wellbeing in early childhood. So it's not just like adulthood. So we need to think about early childhood mental wellbeing. So that forced like actually that all these facts and resources helped us to make a massive difference. So it enables also the strong, trust-based relationship made it easier to communicate with families about our curriculum, and, more importantly, the reason behind what we do with the children. That was the challenge. So every time. whatever we're doing like for reason or purpose, yes, so we need to pass the correct messages to families. So after sharing that knowledge and, all the factsheets and resources it make them, oh, actually, they're doing that, you know. As a result, we receive more positive responses from families than ever before. So and then, like, you know, and after 3 years we like, we annually send in that survey so, and we're noticing how much it's improving now, it's like, you know, after 3 years like it's more like a equal, important physical and mental. That is a big tick for us. Now, you know, families know it is an equally important mental wellbeing and a physical wellbeing here. So the option is.

# Sara Richardson

Sorry, Sue. I was going to say that's really interesting, because what you've done there is, you know, the steps were so probably not, but doesn't appear related. But those steps along the way are really powerful. If you didn't have that relationship, then you, the information about the mental health and wellbeing wouldn't have landed so much, could. I'm just wondering if I could wait, wait, and move on to Bella for a sec. Is that okay? And get Bella to talk about what the barriers and enablers were and what strategies you developed. And then we'll come back to your. Is that ok?

# Sue Samaraweera

Yeah.

# Bella Bulfoni

So I know here, a lot of it, was obviously one of the biggest barriers was our momentum. And I think that that's definitely something that we all resonate, because I think there was a time that we were pushing it, and we I was consistently reaching out with my consultant and then, you know. things happened. Life happened. Work happened. And yeah, it just became really busy. And it definitely became one of my last priorities. And I know that that's definitely something that I think was a big part of the reflection process of us actually getting the momentum back and obviously reprioritizing it, I think, as well. A lot of it is also, when we did the audit initially, I think we kind of struggled to interpret the data in a way that actually was meaningful, and that was actually valuable. So I think that was a really big way for us to. We kind of lost track because we collected all this data. But it didn't really mean anything. And I think that you know, a lot of people can sort relate to that as well in the sense that you know it's great that there's resources there.

But you know, we talk about context quite a lot. And I think that that's very relevant, because sometimes the questions that work for one centre is not going to work for another. And I think that that definitely wasn't what I experienced and what we kind of went through on our little journey. And I think, as well, you know, when we talk about barriers, and we always talk about how every person plays a role, and we all talk about how we all foster different. You know different barriers that we kind of have, but I know for myself as a supervisor. I think sometimes I wasn't there 100%. And I wasn't focused on, you know, working towards that action plan. And I think that I became a barrier in a way as well. So I think, recognizing that in myself, I think, was a really big part of the step and part of the action plan that definitely made a big difference. Because if I'm not there, then I know you know. How can everyone else follow suit. So I think those sort of were the main barriers that contributed to our journey. And in then kind of knowing, okay, there's definitely a gap there. Okay, what do we need to do to move forward there.

# Sara Richardson

It's so interesting, and thank you for being so honest, too. I think you know. And what I'm hearing from both of you is, there's not just one solution. And sometimes people, you know, often we'll come up with really great ideas, and people have great ideas. But it's if you, if you take it really slowly, and you really go down to what are the key things getting in the way here? The barriers? What are the things that are really stopping us. And you talked a lot about momentum. And I'm sure that's a thing that people. you know, experience. You're right experience all the time, because there's so much else going on. So how do you? And you can't make any more time? There's no more time to make. So how do you prioritize. And how do you find a way to? You know. to keep momentum going? And what does that even look like? And that kind of thing? And yeah.

# Bella Bulfoni

I know that one of the biggest things in terms of our biggest enabler was. I actually changed the way that we collected data. And I think that that was something that you know we use that as a tool. Definitely. You know, everyone doesn't necessarily want to be put on the spot with a you know, a little audit. So what we did in our team meetings was we actually did like a little whiteboard trivia game. So everyone had their own whiteboard and then we pretty much, very similar to the actual questions that were on the audit. I kind of use it as a guide. But we kind of did different questions, and everyone pretty much wrote their answer at the same time. You know, it was like a game. 3, 2 1. Okay, turn your answers around. It took the pressure off everybody, I think, and a lot more honest answers came out of it which was really refreshing to be quite honest. And you know there wasn't really a okay. Here's the microphone or a talking stick, and, you know, go around the circle kind of thing.

So I think, taking the pressure off, it was a really big way that we picked up that momentum because everyone was having fun with it, and they kind of, I think, weren't. It was our focus wasn't necessarily, you know, mental health and wellbeing. It just turned into. Okay. We want to know what we can improve on. And I think that they saw that we kept, you know. Sometimes we might fail. But okay, let's try again, and let's keep doing the same thing. And let's keep wanting to collect that data to know where we need to improve on. So you know the willingness from the team, and obviously myself, you know, reflecting on what I can do better and where my priorities need to be. But I think that in terms of the strategy that definitely made a big difference was just changing the way that we do things. Because I think that's you know, that was really where things actually was a huge turning point for us, because it was kind of like. That's where everyone really started being honest. So I think that's definitely one of our biggest enablers here was just changing the switch up a little bit.

# Sara Richardson

That's really exciting, and I think it probably moves, and maybe we'll shift now to you, Alicia. But you know that really speaks to that continuous improvement piece. This is not just a do a thing and it's done. It's that whole, you know, iterating and having a go, or that's a big, that's a jargon word, too, isn't it? Iterating means having a try and then testing it, and then having another try. We do that with our work with children. We're not 100% sure if that's going to work, but we give it a go, and then we try again. But I think what that does bring us to. You know Alicia would be really good if you could talk about this, because this is a critical element to planning that often gets missed is, how are we going to decide whether we're successful or not? How do we know if we've done a good job and you started to talk on this, and that's why I kind of said, Oh, I got a second. Let's talk, because it's really helpful to have this worked, and like we could see that because of this. And so, Lucy, do you wanted to talk a little bit about how you know how. It's really important to think about how you're gonna measure that success.

# Alicia Marshall

Yeah. And I think there are times where that's a conversation that's reserved until the end of the process, whereas actually, this is something that we should really be doing right at the beginning, when we're defining the changes that we want to see. What would that look like? What would that sound like? And how would we feel if we've achieved that change that we're saying we want to achieve? I think sometimes, having those very definitive measures. It helps set you up for that ongoing buy-in and motivation, because it's something that's tangible. It's something that people can hold on to. It's offering you that strong clarity and role definition too, around what it is that you're trying to achieve. I'm sure I'm not alone here, but I love ticking off something on my to do list. That's like a huge little boost in my motivational momentum as Bella was talking about, and so having those really defined measures of what our version of success means. because that's the other part. What success looks like at Bella's place is not necessarily what success is. Gonna look like at Sue's place. And that's part of that understanding your context. And so when we really clearly define what our version of success means, that's increasing, everyone's buy-in, because we're clearly defining the voice of who we are as a community.

Part of that is also thinking about how you're going to sustain it like, if you're defining what your measures of success are, you're also inadvertently thinking about. Well, what's that going to look like as we continue to maintain and sustain this change that we've tried to achieve. The other thing that I often think about there. And, Bella, you articulated it brilliantly. Was that idea that new barriers are gonna get in the way when you're taking action and thinking that you know, starting to enact your plan, which I know we're gonna talk about in the next webinar, so I won't go too far into that stage of the process. But new barriers are going to pop up. And so, having clear definitions, are going to help us to better adapt our strategies and move with the changes that we need to create. Like, Bella said, changing the way that we gather data, rethinking about what that looks like here. And sometimes I think, too, especially if we can. We love a survey. I know the survey is a really popular one. But if we've defined a success measure, and the survey doesn't actually give us any information about those success measures. and that survey strategy of gathering information and the voice of the community. And data isn't the one that's gonna work for us in this implementation process.

Success measures really help us to make sure that we are truly capturing the correct, meaningful, and informative data that we need to make sure that we're engaging with the change that we truly want to see. And I think the thing is the other bit of success measures of success that I love to talk about quite a lot is that we're not necessarily just measuring the change or the what. Sometimes we also need to think about how we're measuring the how? How are we measuring the effectiveness of the strategies and the actions that we chose? Is that the bit that's actually really meaningful for us? Not necessarily the change that we created, or are both of them meaningful. So success measures need to measure both the what and also the how.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, so interesting, isn't it? Alicia. Cause it's it's much easier just to go. Oh, tick, tick, tick done done. And we completely understand why you would want to do that.

Alicia Marshall

Dead guilty of that in the past too, so.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, because it feels like you're successful. If you've ticked off your to do list thing is, it's a never ending list. And in the how we've been going, what? I'm going to move us back again before we go forward, because it would be really good. And maybe, Bella, if you want to start picking up on some of those things you talked about. Be really good to hear some of those very specific, perhaps tangible things you did the action. So you obviously develop some strategies. But I guess what we really what would be really helpful for people to understand is what you know the decision that led to that. So you know. how did you decide to do whatever it is, you and maybe the idea about the whiteboards and the flicking thing was just an idea you had, and there wasn't a whole lot of, you know, decision making. But it was still a decision you decided to go with. and the reason for that was that it was a bit more, you know, perhaps a bit more fun, and it even things out, and that it wasn't working the other way. So I had to try something different and just had an idea. But if there's a couple of other things you could share about the actions.

# Bella Bulfoni

Of course I know that one of the biggest things I think especially when it comes to implementation. And I think you know kind of similar what we're talking about the science behind it. I think, having a strategy that's really clear. And I think that outlines the actions. And I think sometimes I think we get twisted, and I know that's something that me and my consultants spoke with, and I think it was a big thing. It was kind of something that I was like. Oh, they don't really like intertwine. And it was just kind of like they definitely do. But I think if you don't have actions that you can like. You said, measure the success and know that you've definitely implemented and sort of do that checklist tick thing. You know. I think that strategy is just kind of it kind of falls apart a little bit, and I think that's kind of what I experienced last year, where I felt I was heading in a direction. But then, obviously, I didn't really have an exact, clear plan. So I know this year one of my main sort of focuses for this year, and the main strategy that I did was making sure it was aligned with my planning. So I think we came up with a motto, and that was just kind of something that we ran with. So this year's strategy was kind of keep the conversation going. So that was kind of the main theme that we followed this year.

So you know, I actually created a wellbeing calendar. So you know, there's so many events that we do with children, and, you know, have so much fun doing all those different events, you know, Red Nose Disco, and things like that. But there's so much more important things that, especially for mental health and wellbeing, that you know we can't necessarily talk at an age appropriate level with the children with. And you know, whilst we can, you know, maybe introduce it especially for staff and educators and families as well. It's really important that we do a lot on the behind the scenes a little bit more. So what we did was I actually created a wellbeing calendar with a lot of important dates in there and then I've actually connected with my Be You consultant. And I actually created essentially a Year plan of be modules that align with the events that happen throughout the year, so that really helped me. At least, if I'm really busy one month, I don't have to think 2 things about it. I can just look at my calendar, and I kind of have it all planned out ready to go. So even if time does get away from me, I have that at a minimum that I can still talk about it. Keep the conversation going, making sure that even if I feel like I don't have anything to talk about, I know that I've got that plan there and that that's really made a really big difference for me. And that's definitely something that's tangible, because it's something that I know is keeping that conversation and keeping that momentum, using that word as much as I can, keeping that momentum going. And honestly, that's been. That's been the biggest strategy that I've used, and it's helped in a drastic way.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, that's so powerful. And it was. It's so clear here that your vision was about momentum. And you had, because you had barriers around that right. And that's a change you wanted to see, and also picking up on what you were talking about. Alicia, you know what's how low can we go? And you're like, I make a plan. And I know I've got something, because I know those things are going to come up. And I know I'm gonna get busy. And I know that stuff's gonna get in the way. So but how can I make keep going? And so it was, that's a fantastic example of that so have you got anything from your any specific actions? And then we'll come back to you, Bella, to talk about your measures of success. How do you know it's how did you? How did you know.

# Sue Samaraweera

Sara, I'm just wondering. When I go through that didn't mention my second barrier. Is that time enough to? If I mentioned quickly the second barrier was, I'm going to.

# Sara Richardson

Sure. Yeah, yes, yes, I cut you off before. So please do. Yeah.

# Sue Samaraweera

No, that's okay. So the second barrier was inconsistent staff understanding of mental wellbeing. Initially, not all the staff had a strong understanding of or confident in discussing mental wellbeing with families or integrating it meaningfully into practice. So that was our second barrier. So strategies was focused with strengthening staff knowledge through ongoing professional development. Especially, Be You training sessions.

During monthly staff meeting we allocate a specific time because time was our main, other barrier was time. So where can we find the time to do the training? So we divided staff meeting one whole hour to do Be You professional development every month. So which make massive difference here. And then again we conduct the staff and staff survey to identify gaps. and then we allocate different training for individual needs, so which make the increase their confidence. Staff confidence. Yeah. So as a part of our staff induction. Now, it's all mental wellbeing is now embedded into our culture centre culture. So as a part of our staff induction, new educators are introduced to Be You and complete the key trainings, modules at the start of their employment, which is, then they know the expectation. When we join to the team, or they are looking about this, they're talking about Be You. What is this? You know, most of Staff didn't hear before. But now whoever comes like joining the new, so they're starting with Be You training, and then there's no gap, you know, it's really easy to move together. This was a massive again strength for us here.

As a result, our team members now have a great confidence to share their knowledge with families when they're talking they're not like previously. It was like, Oh, my God! Do I need to talk about this? How I'm going to put into these words. Now, they got the confident, like, you know, using the terminology, how to interpret this. Yeah, so this is. They are really confident now. So it's a big success for us as a team. Yeah.

# Sara Richardson

Thank you, I'm glad you did that. And that actually fitted perfectly there, because it's a you know there were. There's a whole lot of really clear actions in that whole process. I mean, you talked about it like it was, you know, just a few things you did. But actually, there's lots of lots in that, you know, making sure that, Be You or this set, you set this expectation. You talked about culture, you talked about induction all of those things, you know, often take a while to you know that things often. Also, we're going to get to. We can. You know, we're going to do that one day. But You know, I think that all of those things are really important actions that you've taken, and I think it speaks to what you were talking about before Alicia, you know, to embed those things, because if it's part of induction, it's always going to be there. It's always going to be part of what you do and how you do it. And so, you know, it's kind of, will be sustainable, won't it? Won't stop if you know, because it's just part of what you it becomes part of what who you are and what you do.

Perhaps, Sue, do you want to keep going and talk about your for both of those 2 things that you've talked about and that and they're very intertwined, aren't they? So staff confidence around talking about mental health, and the other one the other one you talked about right at the beginning was about children's being unsettled, and those kind of things. because we were going. We were starting to have this conversation about measures of success, and so be really interested to hear whether you built those measures of success in? Did you know what you were looking for when you started, or have those measures, you know? Has your success been become apparent at the you know after afterwards? That's not quite the question I know they were supposed to ask you, but I'm interested to find out that question. What the answer to that.

# Sue Samaraweera

So you want me to start.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, go for it.

# Sue Samaraweera

Yeah, yeah. So with the actions. Yes. So one step back again. Yeah. So we did a lot of things to like, bring families and children's like, you know, confidence. So we basically, we did sharing resources. That was our biggest thing. And then we inform families through family information night, and then most importantly, we changed like drop off and pickup procedure, which was significantly impact all the children's mental wellbeing. So we made significant like changes to drop off and pick up nearly 2 years. Now, these new procedures allow educators to be better support each children's individual needs ensuring smooth transition. So, most importantly, we have created a child-only learning environment, like, still, like families, are like more than welcome to come in. But it's like, you know. No drop off and pick up. We're doing as the 4 year, and there everybody knows why we're doing that, because we pass the messages like they know by now. Families know why we're doing that to support their children's mental wellbeing. It's not just one person like as a team, as a group of children. That's why they're doing so. It was very easy to communicate with them with the prior knowledge. so that that makes fostering, calm, peaceful, and predictable space for them. Yeah, this had led for fewer emotional drop off like improved routine and greater independence among children, so that one big thing we achieved.

And the other action, emotional check in. So children like we introduce a new emotional check-in process during drop off and pick up time. Children can now vote how they're feeling when they arrive and staff arrive. These responses around 10:30 and adjust the day practices according to better support the emotional wellbeing of the group. So basically, everyone know when Mum and Dad like sign in. So they want to do their emotion like check in. So yeah, it is really interesting. Now, they're used to that. And they even if like, if something happened, they're asking, where's my happy face? Where can we put it? You know it's really nice. Yeah. And then if we, after checking like the result. We're changing our daily practices, or it can be a dancing you know, or it talked about like feelings, feeling books, or how you know. So it make the day more smooth and easy to make the like mental wellbeing here. And then the other thing we did for the staff revised programming cycle. So we transform our programming cycle with a strong focus on mental wellbeing. These changes give educators more time to connect, observe, engage, and simply be present with the children. That was one of our biggest barriers actually, like previously. We were focusing with more paperwork. But like, you know, then we're missing the wow moments, or with be present with the children. So then that's why we thought, oh, we need to change that slowly down and daily rhythm and remove of this sense of rushing. So this has helped foster deeper relationship and more meaningful learning experience for children.

# Sara Richardson

Thank you so much, Sue. And Bella, we're running out of time, can you do yours in 30 seconds?

# Bella Bulfoni

Everything is just great. That's the best way to describe. No look, I think the main thing is more just like everybody. Despite the pauses. I think everybody here they feel more confident talking about their you know, their mental health and their wellbeing, and I think you just as a supervisor and as an educator and as a leader, I think you can just tell when there's that team culture that's there. And I think it's just very evident.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, that's great. Thank you. And Alicia, we're wrapping up. And I know these are the key message. These are the key messages that we've been talking about. But in 2 words, can you? 3 words? I don't know a short sentence. Can you say? What do you think? What would your key message be. After this conversation.

# Alicia Marshall

That. You're probably already doing a lot of these at your services already, and please take confidence and comfort in the planning piece. Is the doing piece. It may not feel like it sometimes, but it really is. And it's actually critical in what you end up achieving.

# Sara Richardson

Yeah, that's great. Thank you so much. And thank you. Thank you. Thank you. To the 3 of you, Alicia, Bella, and Sue for your insight, your thoughts, your ideas, and for being brave enough to share them, and we really appreciate them.

So let's pop into the poll. Remember, I said at the beginning we were going to ask you this question again. So how confident now, do you feel about developing a plan to enhance your wellbeing in your service. We had most people were moderately confident before, so it would be interesting to see. And again, if you're watching this in your service, then you might want to pause and have a conversation with each other, and I asked that question at the beginning. How confident do I feel! But how confident are we, and both of both Bella and Sue talked about doing things together. So be really interesting to see, and we probably won't give you very much time, because we haven't got much time left. But let's have a look.

So we've had. We've had a shift. So it's good that people are ready to develop a plan, and hopefully, we've done some inspiring as well. So it's not just the confidence. But you feel kind of a bit energized and got some ideas to really think about. the things that you're doing. And if you're already doing some of these things, you know that I think that's Alicia's point, too, that you probably are. This is about being very intentional, and we talk about that with our work with children as well. So thank you so much for attending everybody. We hope you think a bit more, and if you've got some more questions, as we said, please contact your consultant to continue the conversation. I just wanted to let you know that our next webinar you'll find out soon is about stages 4 and 5. So really getting to the action, and then also the monitoring and reviewing that continuous improvement piece that Alicia was talking about as well. So thank you so much. Keep an eye out for that, and we really appreciate you filling in the feedback form so we can keep improving our offering to you as well. So thanks for joining us. Look forward to seeing you at the next webinar. Thank you.