

Be You In Focus Webinar Transcript

Mental Health Fundamentals

Presented by Geri Sumpter, Dr Grant Blashki and Professor Emeritus Ann Farrell

Geri Sumpter

Welcome everyone, my name is Geri Sumpter and I have the privilege of being the Head of Be You Delivery at Beyond Blue and I'm delighted to be hosting this webinar on mental health fundamentals today. If you haven't attended a session like this before you will notice that you won't be able to use your mic and your webcam, you are in webinar mode due to the large number of attendees online today. You will be able to ask questions via the Q and A function, and we have some lovely colleagues online to answer them.

As we get started, now I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and water throughout, Australia and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I'm joining us today from Mentone Victoria, so I would also like to acknowledge the Boon Wurrung people, the first people at the bays of Port Phillip, Western Port and southeast Victoria. As we gather online today from all across our beautiful country, I invite you all to think about which lands, you are joining from and reflect on what that connection means to you. Feel free to recognise the land you're on in the Q and A box if you'd like to. And, on behalf of the Be You team, we recognise the importance of continued connection to cultures, Country and community, to the health and social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families, and we continue to embed Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing to all of our Be You practices.

Before we get started, it is really important to take a moment to remember that when we're talking about mental health, in any context, it can affect us in different ways. You all come with your own unique experiences and if there's anything that we cover today that raises any uncomfortable feelings for you please tune into a support approach that's right for you. This may include referring to the Be You wellbeing tools for educators available on our Be You website. Or, if it's right for you, reach out to your own support network or your employee assistance program if available, or contact any of the services on this infographic. You'll also see popping up in our Q and A box the details of some other support numbers and links for you to access as well, and it is all about you remembering that your own wellbeing is a priority.

You may have seen some similar information to what's now on the screen, as you were waiting to join the webinar today. But a few reminders before we get into our mental health fundamentals content to make this as pleasurable as it can be for you all. We do recognise that you already come with a lot of expertise and knowledge today, and we really encourage you to get involved and share with others via our Q and A box. And I really love this part of webinars when all that information starts flooding through and that share and learn aspect of what we do.

Additionally, we hope to respond to as many of your questions as possible today, especially in our dedicated question and answer time towards the end of the session. Please feel free to pop your questions in the Q and A box, as you think of them, and thank you all for the questions submitted via our registration process, you'll already see some of these being addressed when Professor Farrell speaks to you later on. You will be provided with a certificate of participation for attending today so look out for that coming through your inbox. And please know that a video recording of this webinar will be available on our website within

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two weeks of the event, and that will include a document with helpful information and links, including information aimed at supporting your own wellbeing.

For those of you who don't know much about Be You to date or haven't been involved with one of our events before, Be You is a national mental health initiative for educators and is the organiser of this webinar. The initiative is led by Beyond Blue in partnership with Early Childhood Australia and headspace and it's completely free, it's available to every educator, every learning service and every school in Australia. And our vision is that every learning community is positive, inclusive and resilient, a place where every child, young person, educator and family can achieve their best possible mental health. Be You empowers educators to support children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing and their own mental health, offering professional learning, webinars, tools and resources. Uniquely at the heart of Be You is a framework, and this provides a structure for both professional learning and the action schools and services can take to implement a whole learning community approach to mental health and wellbeing. Be You supports early learning services and schools to identify strengths and opportunities for growth in the mental health space. And, with the support of our incredible team of Be You Consultants, we provide insights, guidance and connection to networks along the way to help you with your journey. Learning communities can adopt the Be You initiative wherever, whenever and however it suits the school or early learning service best.

The discussion through this webinar will highlight Be You resources, tools and professional learning to show you how you can support a whole school and whole service approach to mental wellbeing so we're really hoping to make this practical and making sure that you can learn lots today. And what I'd like to ask is there for any of you who are existing Be You users, if you can feel free to share in the Q and A box any Be You resource or tool that you find particularly helpful or any great reflections on how our consultants have supported you and might help others, that would be absolutely fantastic.

So let's move into the detail of today's session. In this webinar we will be discussing what mental health and wellbeing is and the importance of promoting mental wellbeing particularly during times of change and uncertainty and I think that will resonate well with all of us at this stage. We will introduce the Be You Mental Health Continuum, including the difference between mental health issues and mental health conditions. We will talk about risk and protective factors and influences that affect mental health and will learn how to support help-seeking. And in particular, what I enjoy most is hearing from our panel members on how to apply these concepts in your learning community. And, as I mentioned before, we will have a Q and A section, so please put your questions for the panel in the Q and A box.

So it's now my absolute pleasure to introduce to you today's presenters. So first we've got Dr Grant Blashki Lead Clinical Advisor for Beyond Blue, as well as a practicing GP. And there's Grant.

Dr Grant Blashki

Thanks Geri.

Geri Sumpter

And I also love to introduce you to Professor Ann Farrell, Adjunct Professor at the School of Early Childhood and Inclusive Education in the Faculty of Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice at the Queensland University of Technology. Ann is also a member of our Be You National Advisory Council and given her incredible career experience that we can leverage from for the initiative's benefit.

Professor Ann Farrell

Thanks Geri, great to be here.

Geri Sumpter

So before we get into the content, I wanted to invite Grant and Ann to share with the audience what's captured their interest in today's topic so Grant what does mental health mean to you, is it the same as happiness?

Dr Grant Blashki

Well, I think, particularly at this time, you know, we've been in the pandemic and I've got sort of broad sense of mental health, so it includes comfort in your own skin, you know relationships with friends and family, some resilience and ability to sort of participate, a sense of purpose and to have, you know, a perspective where you feel compassionate to other people as well. So for me it's like quite a broad range of things that define mental wellbeing.

Geri Sumpter

Fantastic we're looking forward to hearing more today and Ann the last 18 months have seen a huge focus on mental health and wellbeing for both educators and children and young people alike so, within this context, why is the understanding of how to maintain good mental health so important?

Professor Ann Farrell

Well, good mental health, like good physical health, comes and goes. It's not static it's dynamic, and so we commit as Grant said we commit to wellbeing and pursuing opportunities for developing and nurturing good mental health, and it is, is a sense of wellbeing, a sense of happiness, a sense that I can contribute and that I'm of value and as educators, we are in a pivotal role for doing that.

Geri Sumpter

Yeah absolutely, thank you for that and now it's over to our audience what comes to your mind when you think about mental health. So what I'd like you to do to get you all connected and getting started with our topic today is to access this menti meter so what you need to do is to use your phone or your computer go to www.menti.com and once you get there, you will see a code upon the screen, that code is there 64952032. And what you need to do is when you get there is enter that code and then answer this question. So what comes to your mind when you think about mental health and I'm really looking forward to seeing what some of these answers are. I know it's a very it's a big question, but it will help us to really get into what you're thinking about in terms of this today. So we're going to see a word cloud appear on our screen, as your answer start to be populated so let's have a look at that screen now and see where this is heading. We are wanting to I guess really capture what your thoughts are, and I know when I think about mental health, I do start thinking about the positive so positive mental health, to me, is all about that flourishing side of things it's about thinking about what we can do to support ourselves, what makes us feel well and I know we've had plenty of conversations in our teams at the moment about what we can do to really support our mental health at this time and we've got things along the lines of you know I go out for a walk daily with my oldest daughter, and it really helps us set me up well for the day and get that transition between getting out of bed and getting to my few steps to my work desk. And, and I also do the same at the end of the day, so closing off from work so it's different coming and going to work, and I know that really helps me to make the separation and supports my mental wellbeing. And looking forward to this appearing on the screen, so we can see what some of your answers have said.

All right, I think we may have a little challenge here, so what we're going to do is we're going to just move on and we're going to come back to this once it's out what this technical challenge might look like. So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to have the pleasure of handing over to Grant who's going to start talking to us about mental health and wellbeing.

Dr Grant Blashki

So it's a real privilege to be speaking to you today, and I must say, you know when I think about the work that you as teachers and educators do every day, generally, but especially in the last 18 months it really is extraordinary. I'm lucky enough that my daughter-in-law is a teacher and I've been watching firsthand what the commitment's like and just what an important role that you play for all these young people, these children, young adults who you know coming and spending the day at school, whether that's been in some of the states on the screen all day or, you know, physically coming to school.

So why is it important that we're doing all this reflection about what's mental health? Because it's sort of common sense, most of us know what mental health looks like. But when you think about it in your job

you're often making some sort of judgment about the mental health of your students. You're not a psychologist, you're not trying to make a clinical diagnosis, but it's a pretty fundamental part of your work.

I mean, to my mind, mental health impacts on all aspects of our lives, so there's that sense of self, feeling good about yourself I think as Ann said, feeling you've got something to contribute, that you're of value, at ease with yourself. There's your relationships with friends, family for some of the older kids that might be romantic relationships as well. And then there's that participation at work, at school, engagement, a sense of purpose and meaning.

And I think also mental health is linked as well to physical health so that you're in a good routine with your sleep, you're eating well, getting exercise. And more broadly, I think it's an attitude and particularly at the moment, keeping perspective, a sense of hope about the future. Dare I say a sense of humor sometimes and quite a lot of flexibility that has been needed by everyone during this pandemic.

I also think getting out of your own skin and being able to walk a mile in someone else's shoes, compassion and empathy, these are all sort of part of mental health but there's not one definition and let's go to the next slide and have a bit of a look at what some people say about how they perceive mental health, and I think we might have a little video here.

VIDEO 1

Professional Learning Module: Understand mental health and wellbeing in learning communities

P1: Mental health, for me, feels or looks like a happy healthy self. When you're comfortable within one's self. You feel confident, you feel happy, you feel successful in life.

P2: The things that make me happy are dancing, singing, and acting and being with my friends and family.

P3: Being educated in regards to – it's okay to take a step back and have a look at yourself from outside yourself if that makes sense. And one big thing for me – and I've tried it with the family – is actually the use of mindfulness and meditation.

P4: Good mental health for me means a positive outlook, you have resilience. I find that's really important to be able to rebound back after the negatives.

P4: You like to hang out with friends a lot, you get a lot of energy so you want to go for a run or a walk or, you know, go do something outside.

P5: To deal with emotions that are both tough emotions and positive emotions. And for that continuum, to realise that it goes up and down just like physical health.

P6: Doing the things that I love. So like, playing AFL or dancing, singing, reading books and being with my friends and family.

P7: The measures that help us – myself and my family – keep mentally engaged and mentally fit, is to keep active and keep engaged with the school, with the community, with sporting clubs, with family and with friends.

Dr Grant Blashki

Right so. I think we have now come to the end of our video if I'm correct and you will have heard different definitions about mental health from parents from children, and I think one of the things you notice is people have different personalities. They are extroverted people, introverted people I mean, dare I say, many people at the moment in the states that are coming out of lockdown - there's quite a lot of my patients in my work as a GP where they're quite introverted and they're quite nervous about reengaging with people and coming out of lockdown. I think, also some people are very self-contained and other people need a lot of validation and approval from other people as well.

I think the other thing when we're thinking about mental health is think about different cultures. There's such different conceptions of mental health and even stigma. You know in many cultures, if you were to mention the word mental that's associated with shame and weakness and conjures up ideas of people being raced off to hospital. So, I think that, you know, the one way we might look at mental health quite comfortable with in a lot of parts of Australia, but a lot of other cultures, in particular, might feel pretty uncomfortable with that as well.

I think also that we look at the individual versus collectivist sort of approaches and even when we think about First Nation people and they might have a completely different notion of mental health often very linked into family and the health of the land and all sorts of broader things.

The other thing to think about with mental health is the stage of life. So, you know, for an adolescent their idea of mental health might involve a lot of stimulation and excitement, whereas an older person might just want a bit of peace so a very broad definition.

So let's have a look now at some of the more formal definitions of mental health, and you can see here the World Health Organization is a very commonly cited definition and one of the things I really like it's sort of a key point it's not merely the absence of disease, it is a lot of those factors that we've heard about from you about realising your potential, ability to deal with normal stresses of life, contributing and varying during life going ups and downs as well, so let's have a look at the next slide.

As I've said I think educators and teachers play such a prominent role in kids' lives. And there's the obvious education role of literacy and numeracy but even more important is the modelling that goes on, the social and emotional wellbeing, the skills that actually help you succeed in life and the kids are watching how you interact, how you communicate. And depending on their home life, it might be very different to what they've seen at home, and I think that educators and teachers set a culture.

So, as we said earlier they don't have to be psychologist but they have such a potent impact on young people's mental health, and I believe we've got a little video here where we hear some views about how mental health literacy can support educators in practice.

VIDEO 2

How does mental health literacy support educators' practice

We don't question educators developing skills in language development and literacy and maths and numeracy. But of course for children's long-term success in education and in life more generally they need good mental health, they need good social and emotional wellbeing and educators and teachers are critical to that and there are so many ways that educators and teachers can impact on children's mental health, not only through the environments that they create but also through the routines they set up in the early childhood service or the early years of school. Also, in terms of how they interact individually with children and encourage children to interact with each other. These are all ways that educators and teachers impact children on a day-to-day basis.

Dr Grant Blashki

Let's talk a bit more about some principles that hopefully will be really helpful for you and yeah I work as a GP as well, and I know as teachers you're very much at the coalface you want some practical tools that you can use.

So an important distinction to understand is the difference between categorical and dimensional conceptions of mental health. So categorical as it sounds, it involves you know criteria checklist sort of cut-off levels, and these are sort of the mental health diagnoses that we often make using the psychiatric bible the DSM 5, which you know defines anxiety conditions and obsessive compulsive disorder and anorexia and all these sorts of things so it's very valuable for clinical diagnosis, it's great for researchers and even as a society having some clear definitions about mental health categories is really useful when you think about, you know, I'm filling out the NDIS form or social security. And sometimes it's really helpful for a person or a young person to have a name, a label for what's been going on with them.

However, I want to talk about dimensional approaches, because I think very often in an educational setting this is going to be very useful to you. So it recognises that kids don't fit into simple boxes - life's messy. It recognises that there are day-to-day fluctuations and it doesn't try and make a diagnosis. Let's go to the next slide and I'll tell you a bit more about the Mental Health Continuum.

So up one end we've got flourishing and we go across from going OK, struggling to severely impacting everyday activities, and I think as Ann said right at the start mental health is not static. Now most of the kids thankfully are sitting around that sort of going OK, flourishing area and they bounce around between there. But you'll easily be able to bring to mind some kids who live more in that orange yellow area, they're struggling, some days things are really tough and it's severely impacting on their day-to-day activities.

And you can see in this conception there are risk factors things going on in their lives that can make things harder and protective factors as well, so I think that that's a very useful non-diagnostic way to just have a think about some of the kids and little ones that you're looking after, let's have a look at the next slide.

I was very excited to present to you this BETLS Observation Tool. It's a template, it's free, you can download it from the Be You website. It's very practical and BETLS is actually an acronym - it stands for behaviours, emotions, thoughts, learning and social relationship. And there are these worksheets that you can download, and I think it's very useful because it helps you get straight in your mind what's going on with one of the children that you're looking after. It helps you communicate either with other teachers and educators, or the school psychologist or even one of the many Be You Consultants, so there's some 70 Be You Consultants that you can actually talk with if you're worried about a child who you were looking after.

And the other value of this is that you can compare over time how things are progressing so let's go the next slide and I'll tell you a bit more about this tool, because I really recommend it. And what I want you to do is to think of a child in your mind who you've been pretty concerned about and no doubt it won't take you very long to think of one. And consider some of these questions which are in the template, you know what is that child or young person's strengths, what concerns do you have, how are pervasive the events that are going on with them, is it across their whole lifestyle across all their different classes, how long the things last for and how are they impacting on the child, but also on other young people too? How does the situation you're managing make you feel? And I think Ann's going to talk a little bit about this but you know part of the trick, I think, is being able to recognise your own feelings where you're really having some difficulties understanding what's going on with one of the children. What additional support might you need and what's been tried already? Often a number of strategies have been tried already. Could there be other factors that could be affecting the situation that you haven't thought of? So you can fill out this BETLS tool and it can really give you a chance to get a sort of measured view on what's going on, and I think that can be very useful, so next slide.

I have to mention that the pandemic, which has really been such a dominating part of all our lives for the last 18 months, one thing that's worth thinking about is we're all in the same storm but there are different boats. What do I mean by different boats? Well, some people are on a luxury liner you know they might have economic security in a supportive family, and you know a well-resourced school and they seem to have all the bells and whistles. And there'll be other kids who are on a sinking little kayak you know where dad's lost his job and mum's just going day-to-day, so I think it is also worth thinking about even though we're all in the pandemic the supports and structures are quite different for different people, next slide.

So just to systematise this a little bit more I know the writings a little bit little here but it's all on your Be You website. But, in essence, there are risk factors and protective factors that affect children, as we saw on that continuum. Some of them relate to the child, their temperament. Some of them relate to the family, might be a very supportive family or a family that's in trouble, the school situation what's the school environment like, the kid's being bullied or have they got problems going on at school, are there any big life events, you know, perhaps they've just moved maybe they've moved from primary to secondary school, or you know quite a lot of families have been moving around Australia during the pandemic, maybe they've landed in a new city.

And, as I said, the social factors can be very important, cultural issues, so all of these are worth thinking about when you're doing your BETLS assessment, how these risk factors and protective factors coming into play and it gives you the whole picture. So let's go to the next slide.

And so we're going to talk a bit now about supporting mental health in the community and let's go to the next slide.

So one of the things I found as a GP and I know speaking to teachers is navigating quite a complex mental health system. So you know it's wonderful in a lot of ways we're the envy of the world we've got some fantastic mental health services, but often as a teacher or educator you might be able to help direct children and families to support that is out there. Now it might just be your in-house psychologists or in-house social worker or someone who can provide support.

But it's good to know and Be You's just produced some beautiful new fact sheets which walk you through all the different support services that are out there, so primary, secondary and tertiary services, how you can go along to a GP and undertake a GP mental health plan. Tele health is a big part of the mix now. There's a lot of online support services as well the Kids Helpline and I saw as recently as this week there's just been a huge commitment to some new funding for more mental health support for children, I think under 12s in

particular, support for families, more support for psychologists these sort of things. So we know that navigating the mental health system can be pretty tricky and I think that is a great set of resources that can really be of great assistance, next slide.

So we're going to talk a bit further now how to apply these concepts in your learning community and I'm very much looking forward to scrolling through some of your Q and As as well.

Geri Sumpter

Fantastic thanks Grant and we've had lots of wonderful questions that I've come across in the registration for this event. And the really strong themes that were coming through were around educator wellbeing and around supporting the mental health of children and young people in times of uncertainty and post these times as well, so sort of really applying that COVID context.

So I'm really excited in relation to educator wellbeing to tell you that in Be You educator wellbeing is a key action under a strategic priority of building capability in the educator workforce. We've been working really hard with Monash University and we've been consulting with educators, early learning services and schools to understand what you need to support educator wellbeing. Using this information that we've gathered through this consultation Be You will develop new resources, including an educator wellbeing framework to help fill in the gaps in the limited resources that are currently available and using the systems theory approach will be hoping to address wellbeing at an individual, leadership and whole learning community level so plenty of exciting information to come.

And if you want to learn more about educator wellbeing right now check out our Wellbeing Tools for You from Be You and also watch the recording from a previous In Focus webinar on educator wellbeing which featured the amazing Dr Steven Carbone.

So Ann you took on the responsibility for collating and responding to some of the questions that came through from our audience through registration so I'm delighted to pass to you to discuss the questions that we have to date.

Professor Ann Farrell

Well thanks Geri and thanks Grant I'm absolutely delighted to respond to four key questions and then there'll be opportunity at the end of the session for us to explore more in the Q and A.

Well, importantly, how can I actually support a holistic approach to mental health within my team? We're all members of teams be those small or large teams. I think the critical elements of this support strategy are the three Cs, I actually like alliteration, as you will see: collaboration, communication and connection.

You know collaboration what we know from research and around practice don't we, that collaboration is the bedrock of good teamwork and it's a bedrock of healthy teams. Collaboration requires us to consider the perspectives of the other and to draw in those perspectives in a way that's productive for our team. It requires us to show humility and courage to be able to consider the other's perspective, and I think a genius of Be You is this collaborative approach, it's a multi-disciplinary approach, and today we're trying to model that. So do take the plunge even more in this COVID time to remind yourself that collaboration is essential, it's something that must be a focus.

Communication, of course, and these are not new things for you, but I think they are important reminders and of course there's a verbal communication and then the non-verbal communication, but I just want to point you to our email behaviour as a form of communication, because we're seeing our email behaviour is really front and centre during COVID. And of course there's engagement with social media and other platforms. But think your email behaviour, the frequency of your emails to your team, the form and substance of your emails, what are you actually seeking to communicate and what is the tone that you're using. Also, the timing of your email communications and the expectations you have in you're wanting to inculcate within your team as to when people can respond, what is a reasonable response time. Email communication is really an opportunity to show respect and to show due respect to your colleagues within your team.

So, are you allowing them to breathe in and to breathe out? Are you using the powerful tool of silence? It is a powerful tool and it's very hard to do, that was barely three seconds of silence. So reflect on your communication strategy.

And then, thirdly, your connection. Opportunities for connection within your team to build collectively the mental health of the team and to really promote individuals within your team connecting with others. But I'd like to suggest in the hurly-burly of COVID that you might consider having fewer connection events, rather than more. So, having a more disciplined approach rather than a helter-skelter approach, I'm not suggesting you are doing that but I would encourage you to be courageous to be selective in the number and the nature of connection events that you have, next slide.

Well, we know that our work with young learners is central to the calling in the vocation of educators and teachers. Well, this is our life's work, and we are in such a privileged position to be working with children and young people. But our support of their mental health is located within institutional practices. Now they vary from early learning services to primary school and secondary schools. But the same questions can be asked of whatever context we are in - who holds power, who has access to power and influence, how do we conceptualise learners, how do we conceptualise teachers and I think in education context, we need to really look carefully and reflect on how children and young people are conceptualised. Is there a culture that acknowledges their competence or is it a culture of retribution or undue competition, shame and guilt, isolation, hopefully these aren't characteristics of your institutional context, but I know that they can be of some so I would encourage you particularly in this current climate to challenge some of these institutional practices, and I think we have permission to do because of the flux in which we find ourselves.

And then there are the interactional opportunities with young learners. I want you to consider the entry and exit practices, the welcome and the farewell. These are really important daily rituals. They're not just bookends for the legitimate bona fide teaching and learning that happens in between. These everyday incidental interactions are gold and they can set the climate and the context for promoting the mental health of children and young people. And they allow us to ask incisive questions. Now there's been a lot of research on the questions that teachers ask and it's very exciting research, in my view, particularly in terms of conversation analysis. And I would encourage us to look at the questions that the way in which you would go about asking questions, particularly as we inquire of the mental health and wellbeing of young learners.

I remember full well teaching a bright six-year-old, and I must have asked a battery of questions to this child, he took a deep breath then he exhaled and he rolled his eyes and said 'too many questions too many questions'. Well I was a little taken aback. But I was duly rebuked by his retort to me and I will never forget it, and it was a timely lesson for me to be reminded about being selective in the incisive questions we ask. Next slide.

Well, this one's dear to my heart and thank you for the for the folk who raise this topic and it's around pre-service educators and early career educators. I'm delighted that in Australia as a nation we have prioritised this particular standard for with which you all would be familiar of the Australian professional standards for teachers to create and maintain a supportive and safe learning environment. Those of you who are pre-service teachers here today will be in the thick of it. You will be completing your quality teaching assessment and teaching performance assessment which aligns to the seven standards. This one is central, and so I do encourage you to go into the link to the AITSL standards and the website which is in the Q and A area today and so many valuable resources that relate to how to promote student participation, to manage activities, challenging behavior, to maintain safety, and I think importantly nowadays to use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically so take a deep dive into that if you haven't done so most recently. I know the pre-service teachers and educators will be knee deep into it.

I also want to take this opportunity to very much thank experienced and accomplished teachers for supervising pre-service, educators and new graduates. We do deeply appreciate your work. And particularly those candid conversations and sometimes those difficult conversations that you have with pre-service teachers and new graduates, so we really thank you for your professional commitment to quality education. Next slide.

Well, now it comes down to me and my own mental health. I remember my mother used to say to me, 'Ann there are three people who are important in your world'. I thought, oh three? She said, 'Yes, me, myself and I'. Well she thought that was funny, I didn't think it was particularly funny but how do I promote my own mental

health? Well I think today's session gives us permission to challenge our current practice. The fact that we're enrolled in today's session and we're engaged in the learning this afternoon really shows a commitment to challenging our current practice to consider new possibilities for promoting my own mental health. I think an important strategy is to review our time management.

Now we're called a time-poor society, and I can imagine that there are nods out there in the ether about being time-poor. But in reality, we each have 24 hours a day, seven days a week. But of course the competing demands on our time does really give us a sort of a sliding scale of time poverty. Very rarely do we say we're time-rich. I was very taken by a press conference of a chief medical officer in a particular jurisdiction, and it was a COVID update and this chief medical officer urged, in fact instructed us as listeners, to review the time that we spend listening to updates and she urged us to only listen to one COVID update per day. Now I'm sure it was hers that she wanted us to listen to, but nonetheless I reflect on that. And it was very helpful to me, and I decided to take that advice and to restrict my own engagement with updates to once a day and at basically roughly the same time per day.

Prior to that I has been feeling quite overwhelmed. I was immersed in you know the data, the trends, the updates right around the country and then indeed internationally with lots of friends and networks in other parts of the world. And it was really starting to wear me down, and it was starting to really unravel me. So I'm very thankful for that piece of advice from that chief medical officer and it might be something that you would consider, perhaps you've already done that, to consider how you're using your time in terms of engaging with COVID updates and then other updates that might relate to you know return to work or home education etc. Now I realise in COVID you have to be agile to updates and sometimes they go out at odd hours but that's just a bit of a challenge to us all to review the way we use our time.

And finally, in a nutshell, it's committing to self-care. Self-care is not about selfishness or self-centeredness as you know my mom's little aphorism might have indicated. But it is to do with caring for oneself, so that we can do our work, care for others, live well and have a sense of health and wellbeing.

So they are four areas that you have identified as important and, as I wrap up and as we head into the Q & A I do want to sincerely thank you for your work as educators and teachers in challenging times, but in my view we're going to pursue quality education for such a time as this. Thanks everyone.

Gerri Sumpter

Thank you Ann that was fabulous and there's so many good nuggets of information within there and I think everybody's going to really appreciate reflecting on those things as they carry on with the afternoon.

So we do have plenty of questions coming through from you, but please don't hesitate to add in more as you are listening to the panel conversation. But what I want to do before we head into the panel is address one of our technical challenges earlier today, which was around sharing the outcomes from our menti meter. So it was great to see all of your commentary sort of coming into the menti meter. And I really liked the fact that you know, your question to remind you again was what comes to mind when you think about mental health, and we can see some words that have really resonated with all of you in here and we have some very positive ones coming through there so around that happiness around balance. I love the balance idea in the context of Ann's current conversation. As well, it is a role finding that right balance for you all in moderation. And again around resilience in these in these times, and this is resilience as not only individuals but as learning communities, so the learning community is facing challenges. And understanding how to how to move forward from those. So Grant what was your reflections with some of the words that are on there.

Dr Grant Blashki

I very much like that balance is right at the heart of things and I think also it's very congruent with what am I was just talking about - balancing the work we're doing but also making sure that we're looking after ourselves as well and there's self-care, resilience, connection to community, empathy. So a pretty impressive list I think we're all on the same page, obviously a pretty remarkable bunch of people on the line.

Gerri Sumpter

Yeah absolutely and I've just spotted another little on there as well of 'feeling great' and I think that's a really nice comment whoever did that one in there about feeling great, that's what we all want to achieve. So we do have some questions that have come through. One of them I'm going to put to you Ann so it's relating to a comment that you made in your presentation. And it was around being selective on those helpful questions for children. Is there any other particular question, any particular things that are helpful to ask, and is there any way you could direct people to think about finding those helpful questions.

Professor Ann Farrell

I don't think it's formulaic and I think we would want to avoid a formula, however, because we know that language is more than the words that we use, yeah. We know it's to do with intent, we know it's to do with context, we know that it's to do with reciprocity so giving you a whole stack of questions I would avoid doing that and I'm not just hedging but OK, but we could say you know 'How are things today?' 'How were things yesterday?' 'How did you get on yesterday?' and then 'How do you think tomorrow is going to be?' So open ended questions that really, really probe and I'm not talking about the didactic questions we might use in pedagogical teaching like teaching content about you know maths or history or geography because that's a different type of question. The incisive questions I'm talking about are to do with one's health and wellbeing.

Gerri Sumpter

Yeah fantastic and I think that answered another question that's come through but you may want to expand on this one a little bit that's around what are some examples of good questions to ask during the morning and farewell ritual that you mentioned, and I think those ones sum it up, for me, but open to any further comments.

Professor Ann Farrell

I think we need to be mindful of the cultural and linguistic context in which we're operating. In some communities, eye contact is inappropriate at the welcome. Other times eye contact is very important and the farewell. But it's the entry and exit points I think that are often overlooked, because they're seen as ordinary everyday things they are golden pedagogical opportunities as well as opportunity for promoting good mental health.

Gerri Sumpter

Yeah thanks Ann and that does lend itself and segues really nicely into a question that I was going to give to Grant in his in his work as a GP. So we do have a question that asks around I work with a lot of culturally and linguistically diverse families and they're 0 to 5 aged children, and how can we support these families which have many taboos around their mental health and I thought you might be able to give us some insight into that Grant from your GP work.

Dr Grant Blashki

Yeah what a great question and look similarly to Ann I think these things are so contextual. The way I like to think of it, it is almost like music. It's almost like a song. You're picking up what's going on with the families, you said Ann sometimes eye contact is not good, sometimes it is good. It's quite a lot of mirroring going on. So just some general things, the other Ann I've picked up lovely points from you, silence is great also. Sometimes just sit back, you don't have to jump in straight away.

But, more broadly, I think with when you're dealing with people from another culture to your own and you're really not sure with where they're at, listen a lot, ask questions, what do you think's wrong what do you think's going to help this, because people may come up with answers that you've never imagined.

For instance, many countries in the world the GPs the last person you'd go to with a mental health problem. I do a lot of work in China, for instance, and you know the GPs see all the same sorts of depression, anxiety problems in kids that we see, but you know there's no way they're going to say to a

patient oh look I think you've got depression. That would be very, you know a lot of shame and so there's a lot of euphemisms. You know I think things are a bit out of balance, or you seem a bit overtired, a bit worn down or you know, so I think you've really got to use your communication skills very, very carefully and listen a lot to understand their explanatory models of what's going on.

Geri Sumpter

Yeah fantastic and Ann it looked like you were going to say something else prior to Grant just jumping in there, so was there something else you were going to add.

Professor Ann Farrell

I think what we're saying today is that take permission to pursue these everyday ordinary things that you probably already know. These might not be brand new ideas for you. But take permission to actually experiment even more with these ordinary, everyday things. Rediscover old lessons I mean that's what good teaching and learning is, it's discovering new things but rediscovering old things.

Geri Sumpter

Fantastic and Grant it's a question around it can take time to access professionals. And so, if people are coming to you know being recommended to access professionals in relation to mental health, and what are some of the ways that you, you talk about that with your with your patients when suggesting, you know next steps.

Dr Grant Blashki

Well that's a brilliant question, and it is the 64 I was going say 64,000 it's probably the \$64 million question at moment but, you know, so often even someone like myself, fairly knowledgeable about psychiatry you know I've got some young patients at the moment trying to get them in to a psychologist even in urban Melbourne when we've got you know an extraordinarily large mental health workforce not so easy. You know a lot of appointments are filled up, a lot of our mental health professionals are actually very busy, and so you know double or triple that problem once you get into rural or regional areas.

So this is an ongoing challenge as sort of a complex policy challenge around the world but for Australia at the moment. A couple of things I'd say. I like to get I think that the GPs, a good GP who you trust can be a really good anchor point just while you're trying to navigate the mental health system, and they can do a mental health plan.

Increasingly we're seeing the value of tele health, and I think that's going to become more and more online where you'll be able to access specialists mental health professionals whether you're regional wherever you might be.

The other thing I would say is there's quite a lot of things you can do on your own as well. There's lots of information on the Beyond Blue website on Be You. For adolescents in particularly there's some tremendous online programs, things like mood gym and you know which are shown to be highly effective. Smiling Mind helping people with meditation, so in some ways I would say, you know if the family's talking to you and very frustrated because they can't see a mental health professional remember there's a whole of common-sense things you can do while you're waiting. And use your GP to help be your advocate to try and get you into the right care, but no magic wand at this moment, and I know people listening will be going that sounds great how am I going to get this child into a psychologist, so not easy.

Geri Sumpter

Fantastic, but good to have those sort of tips and tricks behind us. Now we are running out of time, these things always go so quickly, but I would like to just comment that there's also been a whole stack of questions around the BETLS tool. I would highly recommend that you do go and explore that tool and as a whole learning community reach out to your Be You consultants as well to explore that a little bit further.

And this ties in well with this, it's Be You's got so much in there for you as educators across early learning services, primary and secondary schools. So reach out and connect with those registered and complete your professional learning through Be You and check out our Be You tools and resources because as we've seen today and has been posted in the chat we do have a lot of them there that are really practical and helpful for you.

And we do have information around how Be You can support you and, as I mentioned earlier on in relation to things like educator wellbeing we're making new developments, all of the time.

So register as a whole learning community and visit our website to find information, resources on critical incidents and more and then follow us on our social media to keep up to date with what we're doing.

And I've also got one more ask from you - we do really use our learning communities to support the way forward for Be You and we really want to make sure we've got the educator's voice at the centre of everything that we're doing you know, with the future of the initiative. So our team of Education Voices is a network of people just like you who are there to help us to inform and innovate Be You tools, resources and our services. So, with the community as a fundamental driver to our work, we really do intend to continue and strengthen and grow Be You with Education Voices really front and centre. We're about to launch a dedicated landing page for our Education Voices network, and we're really looking for more people to participate in our Education Voices. So if you are a motivated educator who'd like to participate with us to inform some of our future direction, it might be through webinars, it might be through surveys, it might be focus groups, it might be providing opinions on our professional learning etc. We'd love to have you on board joining us and so once our campaign's up and running we'd really like you to jump on board to register and become a part of our Education Voices community, so please check out the link that's at the bottom of that slide there. And come and join us and have that opportunity to talk about what you need being front and centre in Be You.

Sorry I've noticed it is right on 4.30 so we better wrap this up, I would like to say a massive thank you to Grant and to Ann for joining us here today it's been absolutely insightful in the way that you've spoken to us and great information and for everybody that's joined us on the session today.

And I do encourage you to jump on Be You and keep on with the journey with us so thanks again everybody for participating, thanks to our team behind the scenes who've made this all possible for us and we'll look forward to seeing you at our next In Focus webinar, thanks everybody.