

Be You Virtual Conference Transcript

Mental health and wellbeing: a whole community approach

Presented by Debbie Yates (ECA) and Judy Kynaston (ECA)

Debbie Yates

This virtual conference is an opportunity for educators to evolve their understanding about how to take a whole learning community approach to mental well-being, including in response to a critical incident. If you're currently studying education, this can also support you during placement and also your transition into working within a learning community. The virtual online conference will help you to grow your understanding of what mental health and well-being is and how it's influenced, determine your learning communities mental well-being needs, including risk and protective factors. Consider how to grow and nurture resilience through embedding protective factors across your learning community. Develop strong and healthy partnerships with families and the broader community. Create practical strategies for promoting and supporting mental well-being and understand the key principles involved in recognising, naming, and responding to a critical incident to minimise the impact of uncertainty. And then also to support recovery. We'd like to acknowledge the collective efforts of the team presenting today and tomorrow across our virtual conference from Beyond Blue, Headspace, and Early Childhood Australia.

I'd like to start today by acknowledging that I'm meeting on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. And pay my respects to Elders past and present and those who are emerging. I'd also like to share some Dharug language with you, which is the language, which was spoken in the Sydney basin area warami, which means, hello. Today, we have people joining us from all over the country. So, we really encourage you to share your own acknowledgement of the countries you're sitting and living on in the chat box. That way we can learn a bit from all of us and really understand a bit more about where we're all coming from today.

For those of you who don't know about Be You or haven't been in one of our virtual conferences or online events before. Be You is a national mental health initiative for educators, and also the organisers of this virtual conference. Be You is led by Beyond Blue in partnership with Early Childhood Australia and Headspace. It's completely free available to every educator, early learning service and school in Australia. Be You empowers educators to support children and young people's social and emotional well-being and their own mental health.

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It offers educators online, professional learning, fact sheets, online events, and a range of other resources. But it also offers learning communities, tools, and processes to implement a whole learning community approach to mental health and well-being. The discussions throughout this virtual conference, will highlight Be You resources, tools, professional learning, and show you how Be You can support a whole school and whole service approach.

Recent events have reinforced the need for mental well-being strategies and early learning services in schools. This conference will cover three key themes in 10 sessions over the two days. The first theme is mental health and well-being, a whole community approach. We know that the most effective approach to mental health prevention and promotion is one that involves the whole learning community leaders, educators, children and young people, families, and the broader, wider local community. The second theme is around prepare and take care, looking at critical incidents in uncertain times. And the third theme is the benefits of building strong family and community partnerships. Most of the sessions over the two-day conference aimed at a particular learning stage, either early learning, primary school or secondary school. Day two will also include a Q&A panel discussion, which will cover all three areas. This first session today is relevant to all learning stages as well.

This virtual conference experience will include references to and connection to various Be You resources, the domains and learning modules. These will feature in each of the sessions and will assist and guide participating Be You services in schools, in implementing their whole learning community approach. Participants will also create connections to their existing Be You learning and action. And we encourage you to share and learn from each other as well throughout the sessions. If you're not an existing Be You participating school or early learning service, that's totally fine. You will still be able to learn and grow over these two days. Through participating in this conference, we hope you will grow your commitment to creating and maintaining mentally healthy learning communities, build your knowledge and skills to support children and young people's mental health and well-being. And also share the benefits of being part of a Be You virtual learning community. Beyond Blue, Early Childhood Australia and Headspace highly value our opportunities to work with educators and their workplaces, as well as endeavour to grow mentally healthy generations together. Our virtual conference is designed to be an interactive space. We really encourage you to use the chat function, ask questions, share your thoughts with each other. Over these two days, we see ourselves as building an online learning community with the aim of sharing and learning from and with each other. Please remember while doing this to consider confidentiality and privacy in sharing in the online space. There are members of our Be You team also in the chat space, some of our Be You consultants, they're there to support with questions that come up, can provide links and connections to the Be You framework and to support the conversations as well. We also have a Twitter handle throughout our conference too, #BeYouVirtual, where you can also share what you're learning in this space. Being in a virtual space can also mean we sometimes have technical issues. There is a Redback support line number at the bottom of your screen. If you need technical support at any time. After our first keynote today, there will be a short break. We really want to consider your self-care, as you move through these sessions over the two days. And after the short break, there will be three concurrent sessions. There'll be prompts on your screen after the keynote, helping you to log into your preferred concurrent session. Each of these will focus on a different age group, early years, primary school and secondary school. So, you can choose the session most relevant to your needs at the moment.

On the screen, you can see our make safe symbol. This is from our always Be You resources, a suite of resources to assist learning communities, to consider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. And we'd like to recognise the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the development of this resource. With these always Be You symbols, we endeavour to embed and honour Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander perspectives, their ways of being, knowing, and doing in all of our work. Throughout the sessions, we will share other symbols with you, which you can support your planning,

learning, and action, as well as acknowledging, celebrating. And being guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in our work. We use the make safe symbol as a way to remind ourselves that we are aiming to provide a safe space, to discuss topics in our virtual conference. As part of making the virtual space safe as we said, we ask you to consider confidentiality, privacy and also self-care for yourself throughout these sessions. There are break times so that you can move away from the screen, have a stretch, move around between sessions. But we also understand that we're talking about mental health and ask you to consider ways that you can seek support, if you need to, at any point through the conference sessions. We will continue to share the importance of self-care as we move through the conference.

So, our first keynote today will grow our understanding of the ways learning communities support mental health and well-being. We begin by considering how we can play an active role in influencing the mental well-being of our learning communities. Early learning services in schools play a central role in supporting mental health by growing our understanding of what mental health and well-being is and the factors which influence it, we can support and foster positive mental health across whole learning communities. So, to start with today, I'd like to welcome Judy Kynaston, the general manager of Early Childhood Australia to present our keynote. Hi, welcome Judy.

Judy Kynaston

Thanks Deb, and it's really great to be here with you all this morning. It's so exciting to be part of such an expansive online community. Now more than ever. It's really important that we consider our mental health and well-being. It's been fairly significant time for all of us over the last few months. So, it's really important that we focus on mental health and our well-being. So, I'm going to just elaborate a little bit more on what Deb talked about. And tell you just a little bit more about what Be You offers before we get into some other aspects. So, Be You is a national initiative for educators aimed at promoting and predicting positive mental health in children and young people. 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. At the heart of Be You is the content framework that provides a structure for both professional learning. And the actions schools, and early learning services can take to implement across a whole learning community approach to mental health and well-being. Be You offers a range of online evidence-based tools, resources and professional learning aimed at improving the skills and knowledge of educators to support mental health and well-being in children and young people. The Be You framework and whole learning community approach is flexible, designed to complement existing continuous improvement plans, actions and cycles and support educators to meet their professional obligations and fit with your local context and existing priorities, requirements and practices. Engaging with Be You is much more than completing professional learning. The Be You approach is about bringing a mental health focus to every aspect of your community, relationships, experiences, policies. Ongoing consultant support is available for the whole school or early learning service continuous improvement. Be You supports what you already do. It's flexible, allows you to meet the expectation and requirements that impact and influence your work. Depending on the setting in which you work, Be You will support you in the early years with the National Quality Standard, the early years learning framework for school aged care, my time our place for schools, it works alongside and with and supports the Australian curriculum, your state or territory well-being frameworks, or if you participate in positive behaviour for learning. Be You is a framework, not a program. And it fits with your context from local to the national level.

We're going to explore a little bit now about what comes to mind when you think about mental health. We are going to do this through a poll. Once you've answered the poll, if you've got other thoughts, pop them into the chat as well. So, this is often an opportunity for us to open up a conversation about mental health and clarify and challenge concepts of stigma. Some early learning services and schools find posing this question can be a good starting point, when beginning to consider mental health in their learning community. It can provide an opportunity to open up a conversation about mental health and clarify and challenge various content and highlight stigma which may exist. So, Deb what comes to mind when you

think about mental health?

Debbie Yates

I think it's been interesting as I've grown in being in this role and involved with Be You for the last two years, I guess my understanding of mental health has changed and grown over time. I think one of the important things that I've come to really discover and explore is that we all have mental health, just like we all have physical health. So, it is really something that impacts and it's part of our considerations for all of us.

Judy Kynaston

That's right Deb, and I think that's something that often, certainly, since I've been working with Be You exactly the same thing, but now I'm really encouraged because when I talk to educators, I really get a sense that they actually do understand that a little bit better now and that we do know that when we talk about mental health, yes, we do all have it. And we're not just it's not just talking about mental ill health. So that's really important. That language is really important also around-

Debbie Yates

It is.

Judy Kynaston

How we do speak about that, and we know how important that can be about how our message is received if we start to use the right language.

Debbie Yates

Absolutely. And I think where opening up that conversation is so important because the more we talk about mental health; it does reduce the stigma which might come from people seeking support or having conversations around mental health. And it also helps us to clarify what's the best language to use within our local context or our local community. For some people, depending on cultural relationships within your community, or perhaps even just current understanding of mental health, people may choose to actually use other language and that's totally OK. One particular early learning service we heard a story from recently, they were actually using the language of well-being initially, they understood that there wasn't a common understanding around mental health and what that meant. So, they chose to use well-being as a more familiar term and perhaps one that wasn't seen as a bit of a challenging word. But they actually had a bit of an action plan in place to start exploring what mental health was to grow the understanding of that language, so that over a period of time, they would be able to use that language in context and people could really use it comfortably and it reduced that stigma. So that's where Be You is really important in that it can be flexible and meet the context of your current service or school.

Judy Kynaston

And that's a really good example. Thanks Deb.

Debbie Yates

So I'll just have a look at our poll results to see what we're looking at here. So, the most popular response so far has been when you're looking at what does mental health mean to you, it's about your state of well-being. A few people have also talked about mental health conditions or illness, and some also talking about emotional problems or issues, but certainly considering our state of well-being is the most popular response in the poll today.

Judy Kynaston

Great, thanks, Deb. So, when we talk about mental health, we think about it as existing on a continuum, with positive mental health at one end, mild and moderate symptoms in the middle, and severe symptoms at the other end. It's important to remember when thinking of the continuum, that where we see it can fluctuate and be influenced positively and negatively by our context and our environment. Even when mental health conditions exist, we can experience good mental health. The resource to look at is the Be You mental health continuum, which outlines the developmentally specific signs and symptoms that can be indicators

of mental health across the ages, the link's in the chat if you'd like to learn more, and one of the good things about Be You is everything that we talk about today is available online. So, you will, besides getting the recordings, you will be able to go back and explore our website and find things and do a little bit more of a deeper look into the areas that interest you. So, I'm going to now just explore a little bit about some of those terms that came up when we just did the toll but if we talk about mental health issues, this encompasses various cognitive, emotional, and behavioural issues that may cause concern or distress. They affect how a person thinks, feels, behaves and includes issues which children and young people experience in relation to normal life stressors. It covers the area of the continuum from the yellow zone, right through to the red zone. And we've probably all got some examples over the last few months of how we're living and working that would have impacted on that, if we couldn't see our friends or we couldn't see family, had to stay at home, worried about what happens if we did have to go out for exercise or walk the dog. So, we all would have experienced some of those things that impact and would have taken us perhaps into a different place on the continuum than we would have normally done. And then we talk about mental health conditions, and this is when an individual has seen a health professional for their mental health issue. They might be diagnosed with a mental health condition. This is a clinical diagnosis, such as depression or anxiety, related to a condition that significantly interferes with a person's cognitive, emotional or social abilities. Mental health conditions can cause distress, impact on day-to-day functioning and relationships. Mental health conditions can occur at any age or stage, and many commence during childhood and adolescence. But remember what we said before that we can be in a good place and experience good mental health even though we do have a diagnosed mental health condition.

Mental health and well-being is related to enjoyment of life an ability to cope with stress and sadness, fulfilment of goals and potential and a sense of connection to others. It includes physical health, cognitive, social and emotional development. Mental health and well-being is essential for optimum development, learning and growth. So, let's look at what the World Health Organisation says. Mental health is defined as the state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to the community.

Let's unpack this a little bit further. So, what does that actually mean, particularly if we look at the different ages of child development? The foundations of this development begin at birth and continues through to adolescence, and in fact, through to adulthood. If we look at early childhood, in early childhood, mental health and well-being is seen in the capacity of a young child, within the context of their development, family, environment, and culture, to participate in the physical and social environment, form healthy and secure relationships, experience, regulate, understand and express emotions, understand and regulate their behaviour, interact appropriately with others, including peers, and develop a secure sense of self. These factors remain constant as the child matures and develops. How a child appropriately interacts with others and their peers will be very different for a toddler and, perhaps, a 16-year-old. But we do know sometimes, some 15 and 16-year-olds (LAUGHS) and some adults can very much act like toddlers at times. But normally we would expect that maturation to come and how they'll interact will change. You will have the opportunity to explore further what this looks like, for the age group that you're interested in or work with, in the sessions that follow. So, just to recap. From birth, children experience relationships and learn skills and support their mental health for life. Well-being relates to all aspects of a person's health and can change over time, depending on what's happening in a child or young person's life. When working in collaboration with parents, carers, families and the community, early childhood settings and schools are well placed to support children and young people's development. When educators do this, they're providing protective factors that support their mental health.

So, what are your thoughts about what makes a mentally healthy community? So, if you're feeling comfortable about sharing, please put your answers in the chat and we can explore some of those with you. Mentally healthy communities can use a risk and protective factor model. Sorry, I'll just do that again.

We use a risk and protective factors model, and promotion, prevention and early intervention strategies, to guide what they do to assist every child and young person, staff member or family achieve their best possible mental health. So, what do mentally healthy learning communities see, feel, think, do? Consider all of your senses. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? Consider from multiple perspectives. Think about what you feel as an educator. Think about how you might feel as a parent or as the child or young person in that community. Consider all the things and pieces that influence. So, Deb, what do you think?

Debbie Yates

I think it's a really important question that sometimes we don't actually think to ask. And I really like the way you're talking about looking at it from multiple perspectives. So, sometimes we're so focused on the adult perspective we might be bringing to our early learning community or school, that we forget what might it actually look like from a child or young person's perspective. It's interesting, in the chat I can see lots of people talking about having a sense of belonging is a really strong sense or feeling for a mentally healthy community. Also, it being a space for connection. And I think we can recognise that these are really important protective factors and really strong elements within a mentally healthy community. But, actually getting there takes lots of little moments, little strategies, big strategies on a daily, weekly, yearly basis. So, I think those elements of connection, sense of belonging, ensuring that you feel visible and seen in your space, they're all really strong elements for a mentally healthy community, but it takes work to get there.

Judy Kynaston

And I think we've all had that experience where we've walked into a room or a place and we immediately felt a bit uneasy or a bit uncomfortable, perhaps not welcome. So, I think it is really important to consider those aspects of how, particularly families and children. And now, of course in current times, we've got to think about new ways to do that, because, well, we spent a lot of time encouraging families to be part of our learning communities and come into our school where there are early learning services. And now of course we'll saying, no, stop at the gate, drop you off. So, we have to really rethink what some of those things that we've been working so hard to do and build that sense of community to take place and make people feel welcome. Now, it's going to look different again.

Debbie Yates

And we will have to think outside the box a bit, perhaps, and be a bit innovative about what would make - what would build a sense of community, what builds that sense of connection and belonging, if we are interacting differently or having to put, you know, health and safety protocols in place, as part of that entering into a space and then leaving a space. But that doesn't mean they aren't still really important factors that we have to consider and work towards, on a daily basis.

Judy Kynaston

And we did see some quite creative things online, where - teachers singing or driving around communities, just letting their school community know that they were missing them, looking forward to them coming back. And in some our early learning services, where we think of online learning wasn't such a thing. But we do know that educators were putting together little story-telling sessions and things that parents and children could connect with, while staying at home. So, yes, we can, and we do need to think about things differently. And I was really encouraged to see how people did remain connected. So, that was really good. So, just a little takeaway. Ask your learning community, after the session, to think about how you will have this conversation in your early learning service and school, if you haven't already. And if you have already, then think about how you might extend that. Think about what you talked about when you had the session last time or had that conversation before. And how is it different? What might you need to change? So, again we'll explore a little bit more now. I mentioned previously about risk and protective factors. So, I'm just going to talk a little bit more about those. So, the Be You Framework is grounded in risk and protective factor model. Throughout anybody's life course, there are a range of influences and events, both positive and negative, that impact on the individual's mental health. These influences and events are known as risk and protective factors. Risk factors for children's mental health and well-being increase the likelihood of

mental health issues developing during childhood and beyond. These include internal, so, the biological and the psychological - family or environmental characteristics, and experiences and events that challenge social and emotional well-being. Protective factors decrease the likelihood of mental health issues and build and maintain resilience, even when risk factors are present. Enhancing individual, family and environmental protective factors means children are less likely to be vulnerable, because they receive the acceptance, warmth and support required for learning, social emotional development and resilience. It's important to remember that we're not always in a position to influence or change risk factors. But we can mitigate against them, by improving and in strengthening protective factors. As educators, we need to think about protective factors in the context of the individual child or young person and consider a range of protective factors to support our diverse learning communities. So, Deb, some of the things that we just mentioned there - that we all have risk factors, so there's not one of us who's going to sail through life without ever having them. And as we just said, we've certainly all experienced those in a different way to what we might've seen.

Debbie Yates

Absolutely.

Judy Kynaston

So what are some of the things that might be risk factors for... Yep. So I think that as you were saying, some of them are things that we actually can't influence from an educator's perspective, but being aware of them and that they might be happening within your children and family's situation can help us then consider what protective factors we can put in place. So, there might be things around a family situation, perhaps that are a current risk factor for a child in a family. There might be things within that particular child, perhaps they've had a recent injury or incident, perhaps there's a separation happening within the family environment. So those are the sorts of things that we might consider or look at from a risk factor perspective and how they might be influencing the mental health and well-being of that particular individual and their family and taking those into account. Then we consider what protective factors that we can put in place as educators within our settings to actually support them. But I think one of the important things to remember is that by looking at risk and protective factors and building those protective factors all the time and seeing it as part of our ongoing everyday activities, then that means that they're there, it's building up the child's resilience and their support strategies. So, if there is an incident that impacts on them and like we said, we know they're going to happen, they're already have some basis, some protective factors to fall back on. So, I think that's something to consider is that it's about building that into part of our daily work, rather than considering it, if there's just been a particular incident happening for a family or for a child.

Judy Kynaston

And Be You has some good resources online to help you identify risk factors. 'Cause sometimes they, they're really obvious and sometimes they're not, we just know there's something quite not right. Or we've noticed a change in behaviour, temperament. So yeah, it's really good to go online and have a look at some of our observation tools that will help you with that. And it is important not just to think about is that, as you said, Deb, that it not just after a critical incident, that we need to be looking at those things, because we don't always know what's happening in children and families lives. So, it's important that we are thinking about that all the time. We're going to explore a little bit more about the protective factors that you would have in your early learning community or school. It's important to think about what's the things there that you do without actually even thinking. So if you're feeling comfortable, put them in the chat because we'd like to share with others and not don't want it to be all just Deb and I here talking and I'm sure you've got some really positive examples of the strengths that you already build on in your learning community that support the build predictive factors and support those things. So, some of the things that we're going to actually explore a little bit further, and I don't know whether anybody's popping anything into the chat Deb 'cause I don't want to actually I'd rather talk about somebody else's examples and read off some of the things here. But as I said, it's the relationships that really build that foundation. And I think that's what works most with what people are actually doing. If you've got a good relationship, then it usually means that you get to know you don't have to...

Debbie Yates

Absolutely.

Judy Kynaston

..Wait to be asked on what, you know, families will tell and share with you, what might be happening or influencing some aspects in their life. Not everyone will do that, but if you've also got a good positive relationship and a welcoming one, then it's easy to ask a question as well...

Debbie Yates

That's right...

Judy Kynaston

..rather than do that. So, so yeah.

Debbie Yates

So absolutely having that sense of belonging that we talked about that is a really strong, protective factor within an early learning service in school. Cause hopefully then the children and families in that space will feel comfortable to ask questions and seek support if they feel they need it. Probably one of the other things that often comes up when we're looking at protective factors that an educator does have capacity to support and change, is really around teaching social and emotional skills. Certainly, for young children. One of the things we really focus on is actually supporting children to identify and acknowledge feelings as they come up and also to be able to name them. And so, some of those early skills around that they can actually then support them through later childhood and often through all the way through to adolescence. So actually, being able to really clearly articulate, name, understand emotions, can help them to then support regulation and to support them, to discuss those feelings and emotions with other adults. So that's a really great protective factor that as educators we can support and be quite intentional about within our settings.

Judy Kynaston

And it is something that is ongoing. So obviously there's a big emphasis in the early years around social emotional development as children learn to navigate their world, but it is an ongoing thing and in a busy curriculum often I know some educators struggle to find, you know, how do I find that place? You know, when I'm teaching maths or I'm teaching something else it's like, but it's really important to keep that going. Cause it is an ongoing. And as we said before, we continue to learn even as adults.

Debbie Yates

Absolutely.

Judy Kynaston

As our world changes we continue to learn and change the way we adjust and interact with things.

Debbie Yates

And certainly that's some of the comments that are coming through is around it being an ongoing process. So many people are commenting about building strong relationships with families and having those regular conversations with young people around social and emotional learning and what that looks like and feels like for them, but also being quite explicit about teaching those strategies. So not backing back away that, sometimes it needs to be quite explicit in that there's strong element around good communication on an ongoing basis. Also considering one of the things that's coming through is around supporting educators to also feel comfortable in these spaces and these conversations too. And we could certainly see that as a bit of a risk factor within an early learning service or school. If the educator stress levels are quite high and that's certainly something we've seen and experienced for a lot of our schools and early learning services over the last few months. So, considering that and that what impact that might have and how we can really support our educators to be able to manage and feel confident and comfortable in these spaces is really important too. So, they can then support the children and young people as well.

Judy Kynaston

So here's a few strategies but remember you need to put these into your own context and consider your own learning community, your broader community and the families that you were there. But just quickly just some takeaway strategies for you to do. You need to build and maintain partnerships with families by being open to support developmental and mental health needs. You can listen to the concerns of young people and their families without judgement. Show empathy and help them think through what's worrying them. Respond in ways that are constantly respectful and caring, help children and young people feel connected with your school or early learning service by maintaining an interest in their well-being, take steps to address bullying, sexism and racism. Provide a positive and supportive learning environment to promote the development of skills. For example, managing emotions, problem solving, and managing conflict. Observe and note young people's behaviour to identify any concerns about their mental health and well-being. Ensure support is available outside the immediate family and that individuals and families know how to access it. That can sometimes be a hard thing, just knowing where to go and where to get help. So, it's really important that there's easy access to that.

And as children move into adolescent young people's sense of self and their relationships to peers continues to change the cognitive, social and emotional development intertwine with changing social and learning contexts.

We're just going to reflect a little bit and extend on our conversations before. And again, if you feel comfortable, please share your thoughts in the chat. So, spend some time to consider what you've heard today and what might be an action that you will take away.

What might be the next steps? Be for you in your learning community? What steps can you put in place to achieve them? And sometimes we need to think about, depending on your role in your early learning service or school, you might go, I can't do much on my own. I need support of other people, but I think there are things that we can actually do individually. So when you're thinking about those things, think about them in the context of what you might do as a single educator or as part of a team and some of you will have, you know, teams within teams and a broader community depending on how big your learning community is. But think about, yeah, your room, your classroom, the people you interact with and then think more broadly around the school. We know a lot of Early Learning Services and on school grounds or part of the school, and so even think about how do you connect those early learning spaces with the broader communities? We know we've seen excellent examples where it's done well and sometimes not so well in terms of being lost. We know this, a lot of school aged care services are on school, are they really part of your school community or are they just there as people who use your facilities after school finishes? So have a think about what's there and please share some of your thoughts so that we can have a look and share with you what other people are doing.

Debbie Yates

There's certainly lots of sharing and happening in chat is going through so fast. It's a bit challenging for me to actually look at it. But I think it's really great to see that lots of people have already taken some steps towards this and some people are sharing things that they're already doing in their learning community. And I think that's really great and one of the things we talk about with Be You is that it actually is so flexible, it starts with where you're at. So, I think acknowledging and celebrating the wonderful things you're already doing is really important but also considering where might there be some gaps. So perhaps it might be around educator capacity in a particular area, perhaps you might think, we really want to focus at this point in time after having such a disrupted start to the year about really connecting with families and what that's going to look like for the rest of our year. So that might be an area you really want to focus on. So sometimes it can be challenging to think there's so many things that we could do. But even just to consider, like Judy said, one step and what that one step might be for you as an individual educator or perhaps for

your broader community. And it's great to see so much sharing happening in the chat box, really, thank you for that. And hopefully, that's actually meaning you can maybe take away from what some other learning communities are doing. We recognise for some people that it can be quite challenging, sort of considering things such as family day-care educators where they might be quite isolated in their space. So, I think having opportunities like this to share with others is really good. But also considering how you might connect in online spaces such as this to share and learn from each other too can be a really great support if you're feeling a bit isolated for yourself as an individual in, what steps I might take. So, using online spaces has grown considerably over the last couple of months and I think continuing to use spaces like that to learn and grow with each other is really valuable.

Judy Kynaston

And just working out yet, trying not too often we come in with an idea about or there's something that particularly has made us think that we need to focus in this area, whether it be in our quality improvement plan or in our well-being plan that the school has and you choose that area to focus on. And sometimes it feels just a little bit overwhelming if we're trying to do too much. So it is important that we break some of that down and go, and to look at your strengths before you start because that is a really good springboard to go, well, these are the things and these are the areas that we know that we do pretty well in.

Debbie Yates

Yeah.

Judy Kynaston

And so let's think about some of the other areas that we struggle a bit. But don't, let's celebrate some of those strengths before we actually start...

Debbie Yates

Absolutely, correct.

Judy Kynaston

..our implementation tools, probably a good place to start if you haven't been online and have a bit of a look because that can help you give a bit of a snapshot of where you are and point you in the right direction about where you might actually start.

Debbie Yates

Yeah, thank you. So, we're going to take a little moment now for some self-care coming up. So, like we said, we'd like to, you know, walk the talk here and we really encourage everybody to consider their own mental health and well-being while they're taking on new learnings and spending some time in front of the computer today. So, we will be taking a moment for a ten-minute break in between our keynote today and the next breakout sessions. We really encourage you to use that opportunity for self-care and some reflection as well. If you're actually watching as part of a team, you might even think of community care and perhaps consider ways you can take a bit of a break together. So, we're going to do a quick poll, like to have a poll to keep us interactive and engaged. So, we're making sure we're all still awake out there although the chat's very busy. So, we're assuming that you all are, but we'd really like you to consider what sort of self-care strategies you might use on a day to day basis and consider what you might use today while you're in our virtual conference. Have a couple of different options out there for people to look at. We know as educators working in Early Learning Services and schools, breaks can be short so using them the best way we can and finding those brief moments during the day to take some self-care can be a really great way of managing our own health and well-being. Do you have a favourite self-care break you use Judy?

Judy Kynaston

I'm fortunate enough to live by the water. So, and I only have to go out to my backyard to see the ocean roll by and that's my go out there little mindful minute or two just watching the waves roll over and break on the rocks. But and so yeah, getting outside been times I've lived away from the ocean and I know I really do miss it. So that's, that's one of my thing. And one of the good things I guess about the last few months is

I've had that opportunity to be able to do that. Yeah, normally my office spaces, no windows, don't see the daylight. So being able to just step out their back door for a minute or two helps me refocus.

Debbie Yates

And I think recognising the importance of fresh air and sunshine is such a strong element whether it is being able to look outside a window or just take that quick break outside is really valuable for us. And we recognise that for children and young people as well how that outside time, connection to nature is such a strong element for our considering our well-being and the well-being for those we are working with. So, we've got our poll coming up now and we can see a lot of people are asking... Are picking the last option which is all of the above if I'm lucky. We know often in our workdays getting to do all of those options in a break would be probably pretty rare. But if we can fit them all in good for you, and we hope that you take some time to do that over your break time today as well. So just before we let you go, though, just to consider what's happening next in our conference, so setting the scene to continue our learning in this virtual environment. There will be an opportunity to choose the next session. So, there's three breakout sessions happening concurrently. One will have a focus on early years, one primary school and one secondary school. So, after this session break, you will be redirected back to the conference page and there you'll be able to select and log into one of the breakout sessions for the next part of the conference. At the end of the breakout session, you will automatically be redirected to the login page for the keynote and wrap up of day one of the Be You's virtual conference. You do need to make a choice unfortunately to attend a session. I know they might all look interesting, but we can only attend the one at a time of the three breakouts. But the good news is that recording of all the sessions will be available post our virtual conference. And I have seen that coming up in the chat quite a bit people asking will they be able to access this information after the conference? So, you won't actually be able to access the slides as such, but the recordings of all of the sessions will be available after the conference, no matter which one you've attended, you'll be able to see all of them. So, you can go back and watch again later if you'd like to.

Judy Kynaston

But of course it's all available on the Be You website...

Debbie Yates

Absolutely.

Judy Kynaston

..in much more detail than we've been able to cover in this very short period of times.

Debbie Yates

Yes.

Judy Kynaston

Register as an individual.

Debbie Yates

Yeah, and as we go through, you'll notice in the chat box, our Be You team are actually putting lots of links into the chat box as well. So, we encourage you to explore those links as you go through the sessions or to just explore the website in your own time after the sessions as well. So, you can engage with Be You through a range of ways. If your learning community isn't yet implementing the Be You whole learning community approach, you can register online. And that entitles you to get started with support from a Be You consultant. And you can also keep up to date with Be You resources, events tools and tips through a number of different channels through Facebook, through LinkedIn and through Twitter. And we also have a Be You YouTube channel you can subscribe to as well. We have over this conference also a hashtag on Twitter that we're using to share, #BeYouVirtual. So, if you've got any key points or things you'd like to share, please feel free to do so and to tag in that #BeYouVirtual for your Twitter feed as well. So, thanks very much for joining us for our first keynote today. Here's the time for your ten-minute break and we'll be back at 12:00 Australian Eastern Standard Time. So slightly different if you're in different states and

territories. Come back, choose your breakout session and we really look forward to continuing learning with you today. Thanks very much for your time today, Judy.

Judy Kynaston

Thank you, Deb I've really enjoyed chatting with you and I look forward to enjoying the rest of the conference.

Debbie Yates

Yes, now we get to actually watch too. So, thanks so much, and we'll see you back online soon.

End of webinar.