

This is a transcript for the recording of the Be You webinar 'Transitions – learning opportunities for everyone' (30 April 2019). The recording is available at <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/events/transitions-learning-opportunities-for-everyone>

Be You In Focus Webinar: Transitions – learning opportunities for everyone

- Viki Rozsas:** Hello, everyone, and welcome to our In Focus Be You webinar, Transitions: Learning opportunities for everyone. My name is Viki Rozsas, and I'm here with you today with my lovely colleague, Nikki Edwards. We are Be You Consultants with Early Childhood Australia. I also like to acknowledge our wonderful team in the background, who are enabling and supporting us in this process.
- Viki Rozsas:** As some of you know, Be You is a national initiative led by Beyond Blue in partnership with Early Childhood Australia and Headspace and funded by the Australian government. Our aim is to transform Australia's approach to supporting children and young people's mental health in early learning services and schools. Our vision is that every learning community is positive, is resilient, is inclusive, and is a place where every child, young person, educator and family can achieve their best possible mental health.
- Viki Rozsas:** We are a collaborative learning community, and as you know if you're already registered, if you're part of our community that means that your early learning service or schools has access to all our resources and a Be You consultant. If you're not registered yet, feel free to register today. We're going to put the registration link in our chat.
- Viki Rozsas:** Now, before we start, I would like to hand over to you, Nikki, for the acknowledgement of country.
- Nikki Edwards:** Thank you for that welcome Viki. I'd like to make an acknowledgement of the country that we're meeting on today. So, I'm Wurundjeri born, and I actually live and play on Kaurna land, which is in Adelaide, but currently I'm meeting with you today from Wurundjeri Country, the land of the Kulin people ... Sorry, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. There you go, me making a small error there, because this country is new to me.
- Nikki Edwards:** It's really important that we do not just make acknowledgement of country, but we make direct links to wellbeing for people around the country to do with the fact that there's a lot of healing necessary and Be You can actually support us to make acts of reconciliation to work towards creating that healing space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, which will create a healing space for all of us. So, it's really important that we have an ability to create a sacred space to actually look at non-traditional pedagogies alongside traditional longstanding cultural pedagogies that we have available to us in this country.
- Nikki Edwards:** To link to the topic of today our country has gone through repeated historical transitions that have been quite damaging and that damage is continuing today. So, if we step up and take responsibility for that, we can make use of Be You to actually make acts of reconciliation on a daily basis. That's what I'd like to acknowledge and pay my respects to today.

- Viki Rozsas:** Thank you, Nikki. When I listen to you, I really think about reconciliation as not just a professional practice, but also a personal practice. I think our framework promoting mental health and wellbeing really is based on both personal and professional practices, and how these interconnect and are integrated. A really foundational aspect of that is self-care.
- Viki Rozsas:** On our next slide, when we think about self-care, there are obviously complexities around that. Keywords to do with self-care, we need to consider and reflect on is cultural safety, as you mentioned Nikki, supports a strength-based approach, because ultimately we all learn in so many ways but without the sense of safety and without self-care it is very difficult to engage a meaningful learning.
- Viki Rozsas:** When we think about self-care, that means that we are safe to be who we are, and we also encourage others to be safe who they are. We're able to work with our strengths and encourage others to promote their strength as well. We're able to express our opinions and beliefs and very importantly, we feel respected and we feel valued and heard.
- Viki Rozsas:** When you think about self-care, I would like you to think about the intentional teaching of modelling and how children will experience you engaging in self-care and what children will learn through watching you in self-care experiences. We will be asking you to interact today and contribute during our webinar. There will be plenty of opportunities for you to reflect on your own practices through polls and reflective questions as well.
- Viki Rozsas:** So, feel free to contribute, and please contribute only if you feel comfortable and if you feel okay about it. We're going to talk about mental health and self-care, and I'd like to acknowledge that at times difficult emotions might come up. So, I'd like you to really look after yourself and make sure that you support others around you to engage in self-care practices as well.
- Viki Rozsas:** If something feels uncomfortable to you, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14, and if you experience difficulties, please phone 1800-136-402, our customer care. Now, before we launch into this topic, I'd like to just highlight a couple of technical tips to maximize your online learning today, to navigate the online space.
- Viki Rozsas:** For those of you who are unfamiliar with the webinar platform, this is what your screen will typically look like. Slides on the left, and the control panel on the right. Throughout the webinar, you can ask questions using the webinar function, and we'll have technical support available. The responses in green are public responses, one in red are private responses. The control panel with the question box is highlighted in blue. You can use your control panel to manage your phone or computer audio. Feel free to change the audio settings if you're experiencing audio challenges.
- Viki Rozsas:** Today, everybody is placed on listen only mode. Your microphones have been muted as we have a large number of attendees. If you're experiencing any other difficulties, please note that the customer care detail is on the screen and feel free to contact our team directly.
- Viki Rozsas:** As I mentioned, you can ask questions via the question box. We will be inviting you to participate in polls and we really are curious to find out your views and perspectives on different things, so I really encourage you all to actively participate in polls that we will be launching throughout the session. We're also making public the attendee list for you and we'll be posting links to resources and handouts for you to copy if you're interested.
- Viki Rozsas:** All event participants will be able to access a certificate of participation and a recording of this webinar. Now, let's think about what you would like to get out of this session. I'd like to encourage you to take a mental note about what you hope to find out, setting an intention for this session. Nikki, let's have a look at today's focus.

- Nikki Edwards:** Thanks, Viki. I love that concept setting an intention. It's beautiful. It's like we always want to be purposefully, don't we? But sometimes purposeful sounds dull, whereas intentional sounds like it's something that's going to engage our whole self, so I really love that statement.
- Nikki Edwards:** Today's focus, the things that we want to discuss with you today are around these three key points that are on the slide. We recognize that transitions play a part in everybody's lives, so they're in fact inevitable. But we want to think about them very much from a positive and protective lens, so we're reminded that often we use different terms to talk about transitions. You might be thinking about transitions and that thinking could be limited, but what we want to do is open up our thinking to remind ourselves that transition is a change, movement, growth.
- Nikki Edwards:** They can be around ritual and routine, but there are lots of transitions that occur every day for us as human beings, both big and little. Therefore, we need to actually recognise the importance of them and make the link to our mental health and our wellbeing, because as we've said, they're inevitable. They're happening to us all the time.
- Nikki Edwards:** As our perspective on them, how do we approach them, and as Viki said before, how do we role model, approaching them in a positive sense? Not just for children that we work with, but also for ourselves, for our families, for the community. How can we do that bigger picture thinking around transitions? Which leads on to the final point, which is about the empowering nature of transitions, transformations, so thinking about them as a tool that we can actually make use of to make our lives better, to make our lives have that mental health balance through thinking about it in that way.
- Nikki Edwards:** So, let's hope that that's actually the focus that we create for you today and that we can get through the content of thinking about those things. Viki is going to give us a deeper overview of what transitions are.
- Viki Rozsas:** I really love, Nikki, that you mentioned transformation, because I think transitions change and transformation are so intertwined and so connected. As you know, we see transitions everywhere around us. If you think about nature, for example, being outdoors, you might see the autumn leaves transitioning into different colours, change in the movement of the clouds, or the colour of the sky. Transitions are absolutely everywhere and they're very integral to our lives.
- Viki Rozsas:** So, it really is inevitable in everyone's lives. Also, I think and I propose that transitions are necessary building blocks for our growth. It really enables us to engage in new learning, to embrace new identities. Transitions are all about change and represent a movement and the change. Sometimes they also are referred to as the space between an ending and a new beginning. I know, Nikki, we had a conversation about that space between, and we're going to expand on that later today.
- Viki Rozsas:** But clearly, they play a significant part in our lives and in children's lives, and in families' lives all throughout our lives. So, we know that changes can be sometimes really easy, and at times they can be really stressful, and some changes are indeed tough, depending on the degree of change. We always need to adapt to new circumstances, and of course, the greater degree of change, the more difficulties we can face at times.
- Viki Rozsas:** So, changes and transitions influence us and the way we think, and the way we act in our lives. The more we are able to develop health dispositions to engage in transitions in early life, the better equipped we are when we are older to embrace change, and indeed engage with changes effectively. We use our previous experiences and knowledge and are able to sometimes make predictions about change.
- Viki Rozsas:** Having said that, I'm sure we all understand and recognise that some changes are predictable and some are unpredictable. So, it is really important when we think about transitions to acknowledge that everyone has different experiences of

transitions. How we deal with transitions relates to our prior experiences, and transitions indeed influence our mental health, and our wellbeing.

- Viki Rozsas:** So, when we further unpack the role of transitions play in everyone's lives, on our next slide, we can really think about finding times where we can really build a feeling of being welcomed, being wanted, being needed, being loved. I think in early childhood when we engage with young children, it is about finding those moments that will support and enable and facilitate children's transitions. So, a sense of intention, once again, is really important.
- Viki Rozsas:** The role transitions play in everyone's lives, obviously can be transformative, a very significant and powerful transitions in all human being's life, the moment of birth when someone is suddenly from being one with the mother, now pushed into the world and engaging in the world in a very different way. So, it's a physical adjustment. It's a psychological adjustment, an emotional adjustment.
- Viki Rozsas:** So, we have established transitions are a period where we need to adopt to new circumstances, need to adapt to different expectations, to different people, being with the same people in different ways, change in environment, for example. When we break it down further, I'd like to just quickly mention a couple of points about young children's transitions, and thinking about young children's transitions, we know that in young children's daily engagement in an early learning service, there are numerous transitions, there are the arrival time, there is moving from an experience to a different experience, moving up to a different room into a new group of children, moving to lunch or rest time, or indeed arrive at home after departing from the early learning service.
- Viki Rozsas:** So, I think it's really important, Nikki, just to think about how transitions influence very young children, and the way they feel about themselves. I'd like to invite you through our first poll to really think about your experience as a young child. Think about transitions you experienced when you were young, and think about where there are positive experiences. Let's have a look at this poll. It's really interesting, Nikki, when we reflect on our own childhood, what kind of experiences seem to come up.
- Nikki Edwards:** Yeah, this is really interesting. As we're being really clear about obviously those experience over time, they culminate in us having a state of mind in regard to transitions, in regard to how we feel about them and how they make us feel. We could all be different, and obviously we can all be different in our response to different types of transitions, but we do tend to come up with a way of being around those things, so yeah, it will be interesting to see what the poll results are.
- Viki Rozsas:** Yes, indeed. Some of you think that transitions were positive experiences, 29% of you, so one-third believe that they were positive experiences, and some of you about 10%, no. Sometimes, we are unsure when we reflect on early experiences. It's very natural to just not being sure of the context and what the experience was. Thank you so much for that. It's wonderful to see your reflections and your willingness to engage. That's great.
- Viki Rozsas:** Now, when I think about my transition, I think I really like to create those spaces, Nikki, between the things. For example, when I transition home from work, I really enjoy spending a little bit of time outdoors with my dog and just create that space in between that will enable me to process whatever has been happening and transitioning to the new space.
- Nikki Edwards:** This is true.
- Viki Rozsas:** Yeah. How about you?
- Nikki Edwards:** Yeah, I'm the same. I think I was speaking with you about this before if we think about it as our state of mind. I'm actually somebody who really thrives in transition. I really like to be in that state of flux. I like change, so I really respond in a certain way to that, but I know that that's not the experience for everybody, but I definitely feel

that sense of needing to create different spaces. So in fact how I transition is actually by building more of it in, creating more of the space between. So, I don't have as much of that feeling of needing to move through.

Viki Rozsas: Let's have a look at our next poll. So, I'm going to ask everyone, what do you think is the most important during transitions, for yourself and also for children? Let's think about multiple perspectives. Some of you might think that a calm environment is really, really important, or interactions and relationships.

Nikki Edwards: Yeah.

Viki Rozsas: Certainly earlier today, we talked about the importance of feeling connected to each other and creating the context where a warm relationship and responsiveness can emerge.

Nikki Edwards: It's interesting, isn't it? Because the response will be different. You'll see there on the poll it asks for yourself as an adult, and then it asks also for yourself in regard to how you feel about children's experience. So, they could be two different things really, in essence.

Viki Rozsas: Ultimately, I like the way you talked about the space in between, because I think that really points to the fact that we obviously all have transitions, but we have so many transitions that sometimes when we really slow down and shine awareness to whatever is happening around us, we're really able to see those transitions more clearly.

Nikki Edwards: Absolutely. There you go.

Viki Rozsas: The feeling of safe and secure, absolutely, that's safety that we started our webinar with, I agree is really fundamentally important, and then interactions and relationships. Interesting, no one thought that getting it over and done with and moving on is really important, which is great.

Nikki Edwards: It is. It's a startling and obviously quite distinct response that we literally have zero participants giving that answer. But I'll have to fess up to certainly being somebody who's been in transition times and very much felt like I was surviving them, as opposed to experiencing them and that's when you want that reflective practice to kick in and say why is this happening and why am I experiencing in this way? How are the children also? But we will bring that up as we move into the next part of the session today.

Viki Rozsas: Indeed, Nikki, transitions are always opportunities for us to learn through reflections. So, some of our transitions are negative, and some of the transitions are very positive, but ultimately, it comes down to how we approach them and how open we are to learn from them and engage in new transitions in different ways.

Nikki Edwards: Absolutely. You'll see popped into the chat is the reflective questions that we're really encouraging you to take up today, and take back to your place, whether that's your professional place or your personal place, to have a deeper conversation or just to think about the implications for life through that. The next slide is where we'll talk about the impacts of transition on mental health and wellbeing. That's more certainly connected and related. The link is really clear.

Nikki Edwards: Even just the fact of the volume of them, if nothing else, the fact that so much of our life is spent in that space. But they're also really important because they're about community. They are about the fact that the way that a child is experiencing will impact other children and adults in the way that an adult is experiencing or modelling will impact children. So, those beliefs and patterns that come into play is that we then become people who respond in certain ways.

Nikki Edwards: We have that pattern of how we approach it and what we want to help this generation of children to create is a positive pattern. It happened before and I came through it and I learned so much and I've grown, and so I can do that again next time, or I can

draw on that again next time, or actually, I thought it was really I was nervous about it in the beginning, but then I embraced it. I got some help that I needed and then I stepped into the next new learning or the new space.

- Nikki Edwards:** So, thinking about that sort of thing is really important. We want that growth mindset. We want people to be optimistic and hopeful about what the future through transition brings, which relates to what you said in the beginning, Viki, about the fact that it is a place for growth and for transformation, and being able to do something new you couldn't do before.
- Nikki Edwards:** I always talk to my own children about the concepts around growth mindset and that's also that idea of I can do it, I can do hard things, if it is a hard thing, if the transition is a hard thing, and I know I'll come out of that stronger and more resilient. That is the biggest impact, that if we have a positive experience of transition, we then are able to take that into all those other places that we go to.
- Nikki Edwards:** We're able to teach other people about it too. Children are such powerful teachers for us as adults, but also for their peers to say, "It's going to be okay. We can do this. We can do something new or different in a different way." I think this is really important. We'd like to get your feedback through a poll now in regard to what you think the characteristics of positive transitions actually are. The question is asking you, what do you actually think is true of what happens at your place?
- Viki Rozsas:** I think this is a really, really interesting question. Which things are true of the transitions at your place? Thinking about the importance of interactions and relationships and collaboration, really lifting children's agency and seeing transitions as a joint experience, as something that we do together. We're going to work with children. We're not going to do it for them. Organized, some of you might think that it needs to be organized and facilitated by educators. Some of you might think that it could be a barrier at times to children's uninterrupted play.
- Viki Rozsas:** Some of you might think that transitions are times for children to learn about expectations and group expectations, and some of you might think that these are opportunities to actively involve children. I really like where Nikki talked about engaging in transitions and I just wanted to mention the importance of promoting social emotional competencies when we engage in transition. Once again, just thinking about our intention, intentional teaching to foster teamwork, for example, during transitions, to foster empathy, to help someone, to appreciate someone else's perspective during transitions.
- Nikki Edwards:** That's lovely. So that transparency, isn't it, around our intentional teaching. Here's our summary, our results.
- Viki Rozsas:** Lots of you think that collaboration is important and we value that. This is great. The last point, opportunities to actively involving children is very much in line with that. So that's beautiful.
- Nikki Edwards:** It is.
- Viki Rozsas:** Thank you.
- Nikki Edwards:** We've got our content that's coming up into the webinar today, so it's great that we're all sitting in a similar head space in regard to this.
- Viki Rozsas:** Yes. So, when we think about why transitions are so important, I'd like to share a couple of points, and Nikki we've talked about this, and this is the inner and the outer transitions. Very often, and of course these are intertwined, the inner shift that occurs in us contribute to changes and lead to outer changes, and these are very, very closely connected.
- Viki Rozsas:** For example, if you think about an example in nature, when the fruit is ripe, it's going to fall from the tree. So that inner transition, our readiness to see things, to learn from things is really fundamental in us growing new competencies and growing new skills

as educators, and also recognizing that in children. There's always a time that when the time is ripe, when the student is ready, the master will appear. It really is important to understand the importance of inner transitions and creating the context that which can be facilitated.

Viki Rozsas: For children, little transitions, there are so many transitions as we mentioned earlier. Little transitions can be really significant. We need to think about multiple perspectives and the perspective of the child in this case. If I'm a very young child, maybe two years old, I might experience transition, transitioning into an early learning service very differently to what an adult would experience. So, understanding that these little things are very, very important.

Viki Rozsas: Ultimately, when we think about mental health promotion and wellbeing promotion, we need to be thinking about these little practical examples and practices that we can promote in our daily practice, integrate them into our daily practice. So, it's very important for children to have positive experiences and change in the early years, and we know that has implications on neural development. We know that neurons that fire together wire together, so the more we are able to promote positive experiences during children's transitions, the more they are able to learn and develop a positive disposition towards transitions later in life.

Viki Rozsas: Thinking about transitions in environment, transitions in terms of experiences and activities, transitions during play, if someone joins a play experience, or someone leaves a play experience, all those little things can be very, very significant for young children. I also like to acknowledge the multisensory nature of children's experience, especially very young children, Nikki.

Viki Rozsas: I know you really are passionate about the birth to three age group and promoting really meaningful and respectful practices for very young children. I think it's important for us to think about those multisensory experiences that can occur during transitions for very young children.

Nikki Edwards: Yeah, you're right, because it's such a message of respect and trust, isn't it, that we can give young children. Obviously that poll result showed that we've got a really big group of people here today who see that children need that sense of choice and agency. They need to be actively involved in decisions that are made for them. We understand that through our early learning lens that actually, but for some of us as adults, that can be a difficult thing to pass over, which sort of leads us into the next slide that we have around thinking about educators and transitions, because obviously we're very integral to what's occurring in a service.

Nikki Edwards: We also want you today, as we said before, to open up your eyes and your mind to think about your life, who you are as an individual as well, so what your experience of transition is like. That's why we're going that way. But really the point I wanted to make today was to think about how we think about transitions, how we transition ourselves, so that might be from our professional space into our personal space, but also how we model that as well, which we've talked about.

Nikki Edwards: As an example, mindfulness is a big popular concept to be thinking and talking about, and Viki and I both have a really strong connection to that, also personally, I'm thinking about being present and everyday practice of mindfulness. Certainly, I'm supportive of that coming into the early learning space, but sometimes what you want to do as an educator is to understand it yourself. Make use of it yourself and not pour from an empty cup if you could use that analogy around understanding how it feels.

Nikki Edwards: We can't really teach what we don't understand. If we can think about what it means to be present in a transition and being mindful in a transition and how that actually looks in our day to day, being mindful of ourselves as well, like how do I transition well and what are the tools that I can bring to the children that I work with around how I do it for myself, what connects to what I'm doing myself?

- Viki Rozsas:** I'm really glad, Nikki, you mentioned the word practice, because I think when I think about transitions, it is exactly that. It is a practice. We can't aim for perfect transitions. It's always the learning. Process over the product. Making sure that we're able to embrace transitions, whether they are labelled as positive or negative, we look for the learning opportunity in them, in line with the growth mindset.
- Viki Rozsas:** In that process, Nikki and I, we had a conversation about the importance of kindness. When we engage in reflective practice, it's really important that we're kind to ourselves and we look at effective practices and how to promote them instead of beating ourselves up for making a mistake. It's really important to bring that sense of kindness into the picture as well.
- Nikki Edwards:** Absolutely. That relates to the next slide that we've got. Thank you, team. If we think about the idea of finding the joy in change and the opportunity in change, so exactly as you said, sometimes we think transition means an ending, and sometimes it does mean an ending. A great example is packing up, the bane of so many children's existence is the, "We must pack up," but actually we all know that it's a really important practice. It's actually a respectful practice. It means that we're taking care of what we have. It means we know where it is when we want it tomorrow.
- Nikki Edwards:** In some spaces, it means that the cleaners can do their job so that they can actually clean up the space well or whoever is in charge of doing the cleaning, which sounds so practical but is actually the sorts of things that we can be really transparent with for children. We can actually share that with them, not feel like we're tricking them into a transition that they don't have choice and that they can't be involved.
- Nikki Edwards:** That's because as we said before, we respond differently. Some of us are really keen on change. We're ready for the next thing, some of us want to stay steady and have something really familiar and that makes us comfortable. It's thinking about how we can enact those things in our work absolutely. But because, actually, transitions can often be experienced as grief and loss and that's just actually a reality and that's why it's linked so closely with our mental health experience.
- Nikki Edwards:** What we want to do is create that protective factor where the words that are related to transition are not grief and loss, or if we are acknowledging the grief and loss, we're taking that seriously, especially for young children, but we're thinking of transitions as being opportunities, being about optimism and hope, possibility, challenge and that stretching our soul's idea, doing something differently from how we did it yesterday, if we have the capacity.
- Nikki Edwards:** Or even testing our capacity and it not quite working out – that actually that's not an unsuccessful transition necessarily.
- Viki Rozsas:** I was just going to very quickly share an example about responding to transitions. I spoke with a service and had a little kindergarten age child who had a single mother. The child and the mother were quite reluctant and anxious about moving off to school. What they did is that the mother and the educator got together, and they created a joint vision and included the child in the decision making and identified strategies together to support child to move to a school.
- Viki Rozsas:** I think that's really important point to make, the power of collaboration and the power of fears being seen in decision making process for young children, for families, and for educators to acknowledge the power of that is really, really important.
- Nikki Edwards:** Absolutely, I agree. It doesn't avoid the transition, it just makes the transition as good as it can possibly be.
- Viki Rozsas:** Absolutely. It certainly has huge influence on social-emotional competencies and learning when we think about our Be You professional learning modules, for our module in particular, we talk a lot about caring for others, making responsible decisions, and really focusing on positive relationships that will support children's agency and children's social-emotional competencies.

Viki Rozsas: When we think about very young children, the birth to three, and all children indeed, transition need to be positive, as you said Nikki, so children can learn about themselves and can see themselves as capable beings, feel good about themselves and can learn about engaging and interacting with others, learn about how to manage their feelings, et cetera.

Viki Rozsas: In the transitions, of course, we talk a lot about co-regulating and educators being co-regulators for very young children. Once again, the importance of understanding our own emotional landscape, and understanding how we can best be present with young children and remain calm, to support children's emotions and emotional regulation during transitions.

Viki Rozsas: Let's have a look at our next poll. What positive qualities do transitions have in your day? What positive qualities do transitions in your day have? Sometimes, transitions can be viewed as providing calmness, responsiveness, flexibility, choice.

Nikki Edwards: We spoke about this, this morning, didn't we Viki? I was saying obviously these are optimum words that are here on this slide, that you're choosing in your poll today. As you see, it says, "Select all that apply," so you can choose them all. But obviously not all the transitions have these qualities or characteristics every time, and these are not necessarily ... It doesn't make your transition as unsuccessful one.

Nikki Edwards: My example is, I have plenty of transitions in my daily life, in my personal life that are not always calm. Sometimes they can be really exuberant and quite loud, and that is not an indicator of a transition not being successful. So, once again, like so many things, it's about intention and responsiveness to the experience of those involved in the transition. So it'll be interesting to see what the results are.

Viki Rozsas: Indeed, transitions can be experienced differently by different people. So, if a transition is successful for someone, it doesn't mean it's successful for someone else.

Nikki Edwards: I know. There's so much for us to think about it, isn't there?

Viki Rozsas: Love the complexities of all these.

Nikki Edwards: Yes.

Viki Rozsas: So preparedness.

Nikki Edwards: Interesting, yeah, preparedness, yeah, which we have spoken about too, Viki, haven't we? The knowing what's happening and being able to predict somebody helping you name, to tame what's occurring or to be able to predict the future or what might happen next is obviously a really important quality, and obviously is actually happening out there. It's happening out there in the early learning space. That's exciting.

Viki Rozsas: The naming to tame, the naming initiative is certainly a very effective practice in supporting transitions.

Nikki Edwards: Absolutely.

Viki Rozsas: Let's have a look at our next slide.

Nikki Edwards: I think we've talked about this in the previous slide, so we might move on actually to the slide following this one. We probably have discussed this as well, Viki, but this is your forum.

Viki Rozsas: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So, I think this slide really is about engaging with the experience instead of clinging to a predetermined outcome. I think, Nikki, we mentioned the importance of intention and setting intention, but also flexibility and responsiveness, which is really fundamental to social-emotional competency, to understanding the complexities and the many factors that influence transitions and being ready to go along with whatever change or need occurs. We can definitely adjust our strategy.

- Viki Rozsas:** Ultimately, when you think about the change process, change at the individual level is a process, whereby individuals can alter their ways of thinking and doing, educators and families, we can certainly intentionally work on that and we can certainly engage children and model that to children.
- Nikki Edwards:** Absolutely.
- Viki Rozsas:** We have talked a great deal about what transitions should be. Thinking about social and emotional learning at the heart of transitions is really, really important, promoting a sense of belonging and connectedness. I think when you think about the Early Years Learning Framework, the Belonging, Being and Becoming, sometimes we can be focused on the becoming. I think I would like to really position belonging and being as absolutely fundamental in this process as well, that enables connection. We can only connect in the present moment. We can't connect in five minutes' time.
- Viki Rozsas:** So really knowing the child, knowing the family, utilizing connections with the child and the family to support transitions, being inclusive and that means that we need to be really aware of our bias at times. So thinking about different learning styles, thinking about different temperaments, thinking about the impact on environments and definitely making it flexible and fun and engaging and supportive for everyone.
- Nikki Edwards:** I agree.
- Viki Rozsas:** When we think about positive transitions, what do they look like? What do they feel like? What do they sound like for children, for families, and for educators? Really thinking about relationships rather than focusing on a procedure. I really like Nikki your thinking about focusing on the learning. It doesn't matter if a transition is not perfect. We certainly can use it and learn from it.
- Viki Rozsas:** Different frameworks can support us in our reflections. For example, the Australian Early Development Census, AEDC, many of you know that the 2018 findings are now available, and I would just like to encourage you if you haven't done it, to really engage with this document and look at the social competence and emotional maturity domain and how you can support your practices in the service using this information.
- Viki Rozsas:** I guess when we think about transitions, we talked a little bit about behaviour and feelings of children, but I think organizing children's feelings is a really important part, and as you know, on our Be You website, we have numerous resources, including the Circle of Security that will support you in your further engagement in these opportunities for connection and developing and maintaining respectful, responsive relationships, providing routines that will support social-emotional development.
- Viki Rozsas:** It's almost like a rhythm to the day that enables children to predict what's coming up next and communicating the routines of course to children that is easily accessible to them, for example, through visual picture books. We talked about the importance of safety and being sensitive and responsive to children.
- Viki Rozsas:** Transitions and educators, personally and professionally, and to lead into our next slide, I'd just like to quickly mention a quick example that I shared with Nikki. During my travels and holiday experience overseas, we were catching a train from Tokyo to Nagoya, and we bought the tickets in the last minute and we were really flustered and didn't know, quite stressed actually, didn't know which platform to go to. The very kind interpreter and guide came up to us, and she walked us to the platform, and we boarded a train and the train left within 30 seconds of boarding.
- Viki Rozsas:** That experience really highlighted for me the importance of creating a responsive context. That person very clearly picked up our emotional situation, tuned in and understood that the best way to promote these people's transition to the bullet train in this case was to remain calm, to give clear instructions, to smile, and indeed to engage us in a conversation on our way and it was a very calming experience after all. I just thought I'd share that with you all.

Nikki Edwards: I think the point you made when we were sharing that story before was also the fact that following that when you'd actually made your way to your destination, you actually had a completely different experience of your day and of the time. It actually changed you in how you had been feeling, because prior to that, and sorry correct me if I'm wrong with this story, but you had sort of been oh, this is not good, which makes this not good, which makes this whole experience of this day as negative. Then you met this one person who changed your whole perspective, so you came away going, "This is the best place on earth. We'll come back here all the time."

Viki Rozsas: Absolutely.

Nikki Edwards: Yeah.

Viki Rozsas: Absolutely, yes. Yes, Nikki.

Nikki Edwards: So, it had this on flowing effects, didn't it? Which is I think that story is ... I think it's beautiful that you had that experience of that story and that person that you met probably has no idea the impact that they had, but it is a beautiful analogy story to what we're seeking to create, isn't it? That experience.

Viki Rozsas: Power of interactions, power of relationships indeed.

Nikki Edwards: Yeah, absolutely. I think that's the thing is we do keep talking about the adults in the equation, but that's because we're really clear on the fact that the adults experience, and the impact that the adults have on interactions and on the environment is paramount. We know it is actually the most important thing that's occurring. That's why we want to think about the fact that personally we could have a different response than we do professionally and that that would be appropriate and a fine thing, but we want to be able to be reflective, that know thyself, know how you are and why so that you can actually bring that into your work.

Nikki Edwards: We have some really strong wellbeing resources for educators that exist in Be You. Because we're very much focused on the fact that we need to keep the mental health of people who work with children and families well, we want to be able to create tools and strategies to seek help and to get the help that you need, and once again, to model that, to model for children that you can seek help, that not all transitions are positive and that mistakes are made and that we can work through that.

Nikki Edwards: My example of this is in my previous work, I worked as an early childhood consultant, and I would go into early learning services to talk with them about pedagogy and practice, and I went to a service one day and they were telling me about sleep time and they were saying it's just a disaster. From about 10:00, all of the educators get a pit of dread in their stomach about the 11:00 sleep time.

Nikki Edwards: I said, "Well, why are you persisting with it and why haven't you applied a reflective practice activity to working out what you could do differently and what you could change?" They said, "The thing that we can't change is the fact that at 11:00, sleep time starts and by 11:15 to 11:30, all the children must be asleep." I said, "Who decided this? Where is this written?" They said, "It's on our schedule on the wall. So we must adhere to the schedule even though it's a disaster and we feel like we're just constantly surviving sleep time every day."

Nikki Edwards: Which sleep time is a perfect example of rest and relaxation time, whatever it looks like, this is an example of that. So, applying the reflective practice around how would we like this transition to be? What's getting in the way of us being able to have the transition that we're planning for, and how can we undo the shackles of we must adhere to this schedule, even though it doesn't work for us or for the children?

Viki Rozsas: This is such a great example, Nikki. I think when we think about intentionally promoting protective factors to reduce the impact of risk factors and promoting really positive engaging relationship with children, yet we find times during our day, in our work with young children where we completely forget about the relationships and we

focus on a paper on the wall and adhering to different rules that not necessarily support our way of working and our philosophy and our engagement.

- Viki Rozsas:** I think questioning is a wonderful practice in reflective practice, continuing to question, is this in line with what I deeply care about? Is this in line what I'm really passionate about, to promote children's learning, development, and wellbeing in an early learning service? Absolutely. I guess, the risk and protective factors is a very significant part and resource in our Be You framework, so I really encourage you all if you haven't had a chance to look at this, have a look. There are numerous related resources that are extremely helpful in promoting children's mental health and wellbeing.
- Nikki Edwards:** Beautiful.
- Viki Rozsas:** So, ultimately, when we think about strategies, what can we do to support transitions, in terms of planning, in terms of communication, flexibility?
- Nikki Edwards:** This is, I guess, a summation of all the things that we've talked about in this webinar is that you can plan. You can absolutely plan for transitions. They can become part of your children's programs. They can become part of your life and your rituals around how you transition yourself. You can be thinking optimistically and have that sense of optimism, communication and being transparent about what transitions are and the purpose of them and the intention and the fact that they're everywhere.
- Nikki Edwards:** Being inclusive of everybody's experience around those transitions, responsive and flexible, as we've talked about, and having that critical reflection, constant critical reflection on how things are traveling and how things are going. So, my point is always check your intention. If you're not sure, check your intention.
- Nikki Edwards:** If you've got a transition that's occurring, and you're not sure if it fits with your philosophy or if it's actually a benefit and a protective factor and positive, check your intention. The words that I use for myself and I use these as a mother actually more than anything is that idea of honouring that space between, am I honouring the fact that we're spending so much time in that space? How do I honour it?
- Viki Rozsas:** That's lovely. That space between is the birthplace for growth, Nikki, so it is really lovely to acknowledge that as adults, as educators, we can do a lot to support other people's transitions, children's transitions, by tuning in, by being responsive, by being flexible. We can have a huge influence on our colleagues and to promote positive cultures as you mentioned Nikki, communication, respect. Those non-verbals are so important in the process, the body language, et cetera.
- Viki Rozsas:** But most importantly, understanding the importance of continuously building our own awareness of ourselves, engage in self-care practices, and if we need help, reach out and call out and contact someone we trust, and have a conversation because we know conversations have healing effects and they're very, very important in our learning as well.
- Nikki Edwards:** Which does relate to the Always Be You symbol on the next slide. So you'd be familiar at the beginning of this session, there was a link placed in the chat around the resources that we have in Be You that are called Always Be You. This is an example of one of the symbols that we use and it is drawing on Aboriginal pedagogy and Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, and doing, so it is for the very fact of using it in our work, we are being part of that idea of creating that healing, of honouring and respecting the fact that there is a long, long line of pedagogy that exists in this country and it's deep within the land.
- Nikki Edwards:** It's thinking about, you see this symbol, it will resonate with you and line with different people, but the keywords for this are that idea of planning, exploring problem solving. So, as Viki so beautifully said, conversation is learning, whatever that looks like, it doesn't always have to be verbal, but that interaction around discussing these concepts that you've thought and heard about today and the polls that you've

responded to, and reflecting on whether you consider this transition to be a precious space, a blessed space that actually is worthy of actually our planning time, our time to create something that builds that positive and protective space for wellbeing that we're really considerate of it.

Nikki Edwards: So, as I said Always Be You is there in the Be You initiative and they're a really strong part of how we're working now, mentoring and consulting with services to support them to develop different ways of thinking. So, it's about opening up our mind to be able to see it from a different perspective, to consider something we haven't before, so it very much sits with that transition transformation connection that Viki so beautifully made today.

Viki Rozsas: Another resource that you might find very helpful in the Be You resource portal is seven ways to build educator resilience, most of the services I work with really appreciate this. It gives you just further reflective points to explore with your team. As Nikki you mentioned, I'd like you to return to our initial point of setting an intention and reflecting on what will you take away from today?

Viki Rozsas: That was a very quick hour, but I'd like to encourage you to make a note, what have you thought about today during this webinar? What made you wonder? What are the kinds of things that you are planning to change or tweak or indeed implement in your daily practice with young children, families, and colleagues? Ultimately, how will you engage others, your colleagues in your team to think further about transitions and how to make transitions meaningful, responsive, and flexible for children? Thank you very much.

Nikki Edwards: We've a host of avenues as well for you to be able to share this with someone, so if you're a registered service, you can absolutely have a conversation with your consultant or come along to one of our national check in events where you can have a conversation with another service around their experience with transitions, or their experience with the Always Be You symbols, that idea of transformation, stepping out and stretching your capacities and seeing what the opportunities are when you do actually step into this space of transition as that beautiful space between.

Viki Rozsas: We would like to thank you so much for participating today. I really enjoyed the conversation and very much appreciate the opportunity to think and learn with you. When you exit, you will be prompted to complete the exit survey. We would really appreciate if you could complete this. We always like to learn and further develop our webinars, and this is very important for us to reflect on.

Viki Rozsas: As many of you know, these webinars are really wonderful ways, not only to learn and reflect, but put learning into action and they also assist in demonstrating our individual commitment to continue professional development with Be You. If your service isn't registered or school isn't registered yet, I really would like to encourage you to register this afternoon. If you'd like to know more about what is involved, check out how to start our experience and join today.

Viki Rozsas: There are numerous other online events that we really encourage you to join. These are the national check ins on various very interesting topics or our essential session as well. Once again, thank you so much for joining with us today, and we look forward to seeing you online again. Thanks, Nikki.

Nikki Edwards: Thank you, everybody. Thanks, behind the scene team.

Viki Rozsas: Thank you so much, Nikki.

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