

Be You In Focus Webinar Transcript

Always Be You - Conversations and Connections for Mental Health

Presented by Susan Sharpe, Carmen Huser and Sara Richardson on 23 October 2019

Sara Richardson: Hello everybody and welcome to our In Focus Be You webinar: Always Be You – Conversations and connections for mental health. My name is Sara and I'm joined by Carmen and Susan, part of the Early Childhood Australia Be You Team. Be You is a national initiative led by Beyond Blue, in partnership with Early Childhood Australia and headspace and funded by the Australian Government. Be You aims to transform Australia's approach to supporting children and young people's mental health in early learning services and schools from birth to 18 years.

Our vision is that every early learning community is positive, inclusive and resilient and a place where every child, young person, educator and their families can achieve their best possible mental health. Part of that vision is that Be You is a collaborative learning community for educators who are supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children. Being part of this community means that your learning is really critical. This webinar is an opportunity for you to learn together with us and for us to learn together with you about how you can support mental health and wellbeing in your learning community.

Participating today in our online learning community so that you can learn and be inspired by the ongoing process of how you embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies or ways of knowing, doing and being with a focus on mental health is part of what we're going to explore a bit further today. I'm going to ask Susan if she'd like to do an Acknowledgement of Country.

Susan Sharpe: Thank you, Sara. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting on today across Australia. For me, the Mandandanji people of the Maranoa region here in Roma. I acknowledge the elders past, present and emerging and all the wisdom that they bring to what we do in this space of Be You and mental health and wellbeing.

Sara Richardson: Thanks, Susan. One of the things you'll notice today on the screen throughout the webinar is a number of symbols and resources that support our learning and our thinking. These have been inspired by our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and like Susan said, we really want to pay respects and acknowledge the work and the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to this work that we bring you.

The symbols come from a resource called Learning on Country which you can find on the Be You website. One of the other things that we really think is important in Be You is that we take care of ourselves so we'd really like you to focus on making sure that you are safe. Acknowledge the Make Safe symbol and that you can be safe to be who you are, that you can work with your strengths, explore and express your opinions, views and ideas safely and feel heard and respected, even when other people have different ideas.

While we are doing self-care, it is also important that we take care of each other. Our conversations will be focused around mental health today. Sometimes unexpected feelings can emerge, some things might pop up for you and sometimes they might be difficult. Be aware of those feelings and if they come up for you and you need to talk about them, please make sure that you do that in the most appropriate and relevant way for you.

The other thing I'd like to do is just to walk you through our online space. If you've been to one of our webinars before I'm sure you'll know how to manage this space. This is slightly different from our National Check-In online platforms.

The way that we would ask you to contribute and provide your questions and thoughts is via the question box. You can pop in your questions there. I'd like to also now acknowledge that Rita and Leanne will be responding to your questions and sharing some of your responses with us and with the rest of the group.

The other thing is that you are on listen-only mode – you aren't able to contribute verbally, so if you can contribute in the question space that would be really great. If you have any technical difficulties, there will be a customer care number available to you so please make use of that number if you have any technical difficulties, sound problems, all of those kinds of things. Just to also let you know that any links, resources or references will be shared with you in the chat so you'll see them coming through as we have our conversation. There is also a handout that you can access. You can click on the handout and download it now if you'd like, otherwise it will be available for you to look at later. There will be some reflective questions and all of the resources will be available to you at the end of the webinar, along with a recording of the webinar to view later or share with your team.

The other thing that you may be familiar with if you've joined us before is that we'll have some polls. We would really love to hear your ideas and thoughts via the polls so when they pop up, we encourage you to provide your responses that way. We are now going to make the attendee list public so you can see who else is here. See if you know anybody who's joining along with you in this online space. I think one of the exciting things about being online is that we can catch up with people that we distance-wise or location-wise can't connect with but in the online space we can make those really great connections. Lastly, because you're attending live you'll get a certificate of participation and a recording of the webinar at the completion. So let's get on with talking about what the content of this session is going to be.

Today we really wanted to have a yarn, a bit of a conversation, and explore how we can take a collective approach to celebrating, acknowledging and considering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in our learning communities and make connections to the work that we do –making some of the connections to the early childhood priorities that you might have but also really think about how this connects with your unique early learning experience. I'm going to hand over to Susan to explore the notion of conversation a little bit more.

Susan Sharpe: Thank you. What we are going to talk about today is conversation and the role conversations play in what we do. While we start to unpack that I'm going to invite you to think about the conversations that you have had throughout this week, or conversations you have had recently and who you had that conversation with. Was it with families? Was it with children? Was it with a colleague? Think about what was entailed in that conversation. The reason I'm inviting you to be in that space is because conversations are a form of pedagogy – the way we do things in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, their way of doing, their way of being, their way of actually living. As educators, we have to think about all those conversations we engage in and what conventions and values that we put towards the conversations that we do. Carmen, would you like to give your thoughts on that?

Carmen Huser: Thank you, Susan. I'm thinking, first of all, it's a way to connect to the people around me, if it's my friends or my colleagues at work. Through engaging in conversations, I can check in on them. It is also about exchanging information, but possibly the most important thing is really, it is a form of creating relationships and to feel a sense of belonging with each other. Those are the first thoughts that came across my mind, but Sara, maybe you have some other thoughts?

Sara Richardson: It's interesting isn't it, because Susan, you were talking about how it depends on who you're talking with what the conversation is like, so there's all those variations of conversation and some of them are non-verbal and so really knowing that we say the word 'conversation' often and we use it as a really important tool, how deeply do we really think about it? And how do we recognise it as pedagogy? I was thinking of a really lovely story from a director of one of the Be You services that one of the Consultants work with – I think this might be one of your stories, Susan or Carmen – where the director uses a conversational approach to staff wellbeing check ins. Every morning the staff checks in with themselves and then visually represents it on a board in their shared team room, or staff room. It's done

anonymously, but it gives the director the opportunity to check in with the staff throughout the day and have conversations with them to support their wellbeing.

They have not just the verbal but the non-verbal way of exploring and expressing that wellbeing, and everyone is involved in it. It is actually a way of bringing people together and connecting them as well. Susan, was that your service that you work with?

Susan Sharpe: Yes, that was one of my services and it actually prompts me to think about what entails an appropriate conversation and when we are thinking in that space we are invited to think further and say all right, who am I going to engage with? And what will be appropriate in this context with this person, in this atmosphere or setting. That's why conditions are very, very important to engage with and to think about. With this, I have a question. Do we have to be very intentional about conversations, Carmen?

Carmen Huser: Good question. I was also reflecting on being like a second language user how important it is to be aware of that when we have conversations. Maybe our conversational partner comes from a different linguistic background or cultural background, so there's a notion of making sure the other person understands what we're saying and that we tune in with them.

I guess that's one part of being intentional in our conversations and to really be aware of and tune in with the other person. Being a second language user myself, I also know it's not just about translating words, but translating meaning and while we are in this translation stage, it's so important to realise if the other person is receiving the same meaning and also consider if particular terms could potentially trigger something in that person. When you said Susan, to have appropriate conversation, it is about being aware of cultural differences and also being aware of different terminology that's used and what the meanings are behind words. I guess particularly when we are talking today about mental health, that can also trigger thoughts in people and can even have a negative connotation for some. It's really important to make that safe space and find a common language.

Susan Sharpe: Thank you. Did you have anything else to add Sara?

Sara Richardson: Maria has popped into the chat one of the Stop, Reflect, Act model, which is perhaps a really good model to help you.

To wrap up, I was thinking how important it is to be fully present and how that's really hard to do when we're busy working or when we are distracted by other things or even over thinking what we're supposed to be saying or trying to achieve in the conversation so, it is important to try to suspend which is where the Stop, Reflect, Act model can help you to stop, take a breath, be really mindful and present and not feel like we have to rush and answer something straight away.

Susan Sharpe: In your own space you can start thinking about how can I use Be You to help me build my capability around having appropriate conversations and what resources can I use or how can I further develop my practice to ensure that the conversations that I'm engaging in on a day-to-day basis are actually appropriate and handled in a professional manner using the yarning pedagogy. That leads us into the next part of our conversation, which is about yarning. Over to you, Carmen.

Carmen Huser: Thanks, Susan. I'm just thinking when we heard about the conversation that we started today and thinking about the ways particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have engaged with for thousands of years really using an oral tradition and oral mode of communicating and engaging with each other.

When we talk about conversations I think of the particular way of having conversations through yarning. When I came to Australia six years ago, I hadn't heard about yarning and I had to actually look up the word – again what I said before, it's a so much about translating a word but sometimes the dictionary might not give me the most important meaning. It was a bit of an exploration to see what yarning is about. I don't know about the audience - what your experiences are, what your understandings of yarning are, so I think we're ready for our first poll while we're having a conversation. What do you know about yarning? Is yarning a common practice at your service? Maybe you don't call it yarning, maybe you call it something different.

So, how do you yarn? Which of the statements that you can see in our poll best describe your concept and practice of yarning?

Sara Richardson: It's interesting Carmen, isn't it, because we have been using our yarn and pedagogy in our national meetings when we come together. Each time it's slightly different and each time we learn new things but we're committed to doing it. I think that's one of the most important things is having a go at doing it.

If you've got some other ideas, please pop them in the in the chat box because we'd love to hear your stories as well. Susan, have you had any other experience of yarnning?

Susan Sharpe: Well, that's a really lovely question. For me, what comes to mind is that yarnning is a conversation where there are no wrong or right answers. The core to that conversation is always deep listening and connecting and embracing everyone's views. That can be quite challenging. In our day-to-day lives we may have different opinions. I think that's what yarnning practice and yarnning pedagogy looks and feels like to me, we really have to embrace each other's views and listen deeply and connect with everyone.

Sara Richardson: We might close the poll now, thanks Maria, and discuss the results. So some people have actually participated in yarnning and picking up on your point Susan, that they consider everyone's voice and learn in collaboration. I think that's really important. It's a great way of doing that, not just with children, but with with us as educators and adults as well and we can use that in a professional way as well. We can see some people are still learning how to yarn and finding out more about it.

Carmen Huser: I think that's a really important stage to be at, that we are aware and conscious that we are on a learning journey and that we can ask. Like you said, just have a go – not to be afraid or anxious about it – but also consider who you can ask in your local community and see who are the elders or maybe see if you have a connection to someone who can then introduce you to an elder, so you can learn more about the yarnning protocols that are particular for that local area. We also acknowledge here that, when you said Susan there are no right or wrong answers, there are also many different ways of yarnning and that can really differ from one community to the other.

I guess that's where it comes back to that notion of deep listening and really being there so we can actually learn from each other what the protocols are. Often protocols are maybe not something that are written down but actually emerge through being and doing together. We can actually observe and learn what the most appropriate way is and also be sure that everybody's voice is heard. It's a very transactional activity and I am so appreciative that I am engaged in many yarnning circles at Be You.

Sara Richardson: We have a response from Jennifer in the audience, that said they are really thinking about how they make their first contact with children in the mornings and how greetings, as part of that first interaction, is about how the children are feeling so maybe picking up from what we were talking about before about how that director does the staff well-being checks, Jennifer is talking about how they do that with their children in the morning.

They talk to the children about how they are looking forward to seeing them and being with them during the day rather than making a comment on their shoes or their pretty dress that they've got on or those kind of things. I think that goes back to that notion of being intentional, isn't it? What is it that we really want to make our first contact with children all about as their first greeting? What's our focus going to be? That's a lovely thing to do. There are some really great clips I've seen around social media, of teachers having a really cool greeting with each individual child as they walk through the door.

Susan Sharpe: It is also important to remember that the yarnning doesn't have to be verbal, it can be silent. Maybe for you as an educator, you can adopt that pedagogy to how you do things, how you engage with children, and knowing that not every child is going to be verbal or loud. Some kids are quiet learners. You can use the yarnning pedagogy to tap into their learning styles or conversational styles of your colleagues. Not all of your colleagues are going to be very audible when you are meeting and that is okay because it is platform, a space where everyone belongs and that actually aligns very well with our Be You vision – being the best that they can be.

Sara Richardson: Someone's asked the question about how you would start or introduce a yarnning circle and it's interesting because we haven't actually talked about the notion of circle.

'Does it have to be in a circle?' is something that is really important to think about and explore. I think it is there is a sense of perhaps turn-taking or everyone participating; we sit in a circle so that that can happen. Carmen, have you got any thoughts about how you might introduce a yarning circle?

Carmen Huser: Good question. With the notion of the circle, I was just thinking, it is a beautiful symbol in so many cultures to bring people together in a safe space. It's also being able to see everyone, which probably has benefits to be able to listen to everybody at the same time. You have to consider that in different cultures it might not be as important to see everyone because that differs dramatically. In some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities that might not be the case, but where I'm from, it's showing a lot of respect to look into someone else's eyes. I still think that the circle is a symbol that is universal to cultures so I think using a circle can be a great way of being with the children so they can see everybody.

Being in a circle is probably also something familiar so slowly introducing the yarn by explaining that it is something special where we want to listen to everybody's stories,. Children often know talking circles where maybe someone has a 'talking stick', so they learn to take turns. From there, you could then slowly transition into a yarning circle where those props are not needed because the children take on those respectful ways of being together and learn how much listening to each other's stories can be a beautiful way to start the day, as one person is posted in the chat box.

Susan Sharpe: I think this leads us really well into our next slide about making connections. We did talk about yarning as pedagogy, a way of doing things and how you can adapt it to your practice and what you are already doing. For me the most important thing is to understand what is going to entail appropriateness in that context.

For example, if you're welcoming children in the sign-in area, you don't have the opportunity to sit down and have a have a yarn, but that does not stop you from adopting some of that pedagogy and embedding it within what you're doing by being respectful and listening to the children and parents during your conversations. When you are engaging with a colleague in the staff room, you might not be seated in a circle, but you can adopt that pedagogy of the yarn which is based on deep respect, listening to each other, connecting and making sure that you are appropriate depending on who you are engaging with. It goes back to where we started with the pedagogy of a conversation, a professional yarn. I'm going to invite Carmen to lead us into our next conversation about making connections.

Carmen Huser: Thanks, Susan. When we think about yarning and our pedagogies, it is important to think about how it is a space to trust each other and take time and give time to careful listen, tune in and learn with and from each other. Like you said Susan, it's not about if we are in a circle, it's about the way of being together and to think about the connections that we can make.

I'd like to invite you to think about why making connections is actually so important when we talk about mental health and wellbeing in our learning communities. It actually takes connectedness not just to make connections but to develop and nurture relationships in our community. We've already started sharing our Always Be You symbols. The one you see at the moment is about making connections and is called 'Connect'. You can use all of our Always Be You resources and these symbols when you're bringing culture connections together to gain and further your confidence when talking about mental health. It's about bringing a mental health lens to everything that you do and also from different perspectives to all the work we do together. Think about what connections actually inform our pedagogy.

Feel free to use our question box to engage in the conversation. Don't forget conversations can be verbal, they can be written and maybe you're doing non verbal conversations in the space you are in at the moment. Sara and Susan, I'd like to engage with you. What connections do you think inform our pedagogy? Susan, do you have some thoughts on that?

Susan Sharpe: Well, that question just takes me back upstream on Always Be You resources and how they provide a really good avenue to bring together culture. Maybe in this space as an educator you can think about how you can connect what we have discussed so far with your practices or how can you connect what we have discussed so far with a principles that underpin what we do on a day-to-day basis and where do you start from. If you're already embracing a bit of this pedagogy, how can you develop it further?

Sara, is that along the lines of which you are thinking?

Sara Richardson: Yeah. I've been thinking about connections at another level too. One of the things about Be You that I think is really important and actually one of the best bits about the initiative is to acknowledge what you are already doing, which is also one of the Always Be You symbols. It's really critical to acknowledge what you're already doing. I think that's what you're saying Susan. There are already a whole lot of things that people are doing that they can build on, they just need to stop sometimes and see what they are doing and acknowledge their strengths. We are so busy that we forget to stop and acknowledge the things that we're doing really well.

I think that's part of what this work is. It's about how we use resources to help us find the space and to make some decisions about where we go next. All of this work would fit closely with the National Quality Framework and the work you're doing around your Quality Improvement Plan. Any of these things, I would see as being integral to that work as well. Both the work you would be doing around mental health for children and Always Be You tools and resources to bring in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and how you might bring those things together.

This is where making connections comes in. It's really hard to sometimes see those things fitting together. You do your QIP over here, your Early Learning Framework over here, then you're going to do the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bit over here and then there's all these other bits that I have to do. But how you bring them together is perhaps the more complicated bit and one of the other things that we've got in Be You is that if you're a registered early learning service, so not just as an individual where you can sign up and do the PL, but you do it in your whole early learning service: you have a group of consultants you can work with and you can network with other people in this online space.

Professional conversations that you can have in this online world to find out what other people are doing and share stories is another form of connection.

Susan Sharpe: Another layer of connections could be with your pedagogy of space. Thinking about the resources, how are you connecting your theory and how are you going to set up your learning environment and use what you know now to engage with Be You and think about additional things you can put in place to support children's mental health and wellbeing in a better way.

Think about the spaces you're going to create for them. Connections can actually have so many layers to them and they can weave in and out of so many different areas of your practice on a day-to-day basis.

Carmen Huser: I love that notion you just mentioned Susan with weaving all these things together. Rather than thinking "oh, another thing on top", seeing how your Quality Improvement Plan and your requirements and priorities coming from the National Quality Framework and from the Early Years Learning Framework are all coming together and how the resources you gain from Be You can support you in that work you're already doing along with bringing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to the work that you do, particularly around mental health and wellbeing.

It's not just honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It's actually making it a part of all the things that you're doing - and supporting everybody's mental health: every child, every educator, every family, and every community member. While we're respecting what we can learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is about supporting everybody's mental health and wellbeing.

Susan Sharpe: Before I talk about reconciliation, I would like to just briefly mention that connections can also be with the National Quality Standard. I'm very well aware that all of you are working within the Quality Standard. There are quite a number of Quality Areas that you can link to Be You and the yarning pedagogy and conversations too, but most importantly it also links to Exceeding Theme number two which is about practice being informed by critical reflections. Yarning itself gives you the platform to engage in those conversations in a critical way, whether you're self-reflecting or you're critically reflecting with your colleagues, it's a really good platform.

On that note, I would like us to talk about reconciliation and how that fits in.

Carmen Huser: I was just wondering before how we really make the transition to speaking about reconciliation, before you mentioned the exceeding themes of the Quality Improvement Plan and critical reflections. The Always Be You symbols, found in the e-book Learning on Country on our website, can be used for your critical reflections. They help you put a particular focus on reflecting when you think about

what the aspects in your overall quality improvement that you want to look into and when you consider your strengths and learning opportunities and think deeply about which of the quality standards you are already meeting really well and what are the ones that you're still working on.

I really believe that Be You can support you so much in that space because it really aligns with each other and creates an inclusive learning environment where everybody feels respected and heard. Have a go and use the Always Be You symbols for your critical reflections.

Sara Richardson: The other thing I was thinking about is that there are very strong links to the Australian Curriculum as well. If we're thinking about curriculum links, it's not just to the Early Years Learning Framework, but with the Australian Curriculum as well, so cutting across those early years into those early years of school. One of the fundamental aspects of Be You is that it is a framework that applies to your context so you can make it work in your context and make curriculum decisions based on what's right for your context, which is really important as well.

Just to acknowledge, if you have a Reconciliation Action Plan, we would encourage you to use the Reconciliation Australia website and the Narragunnawali website to support you to do that work and again, make those connections and fit it in. Don't make it feel like it's just another thing to do because I think working through that process along side of the other things you do can all dovetail together.

We will now move onto this conversation about cultural competence.

Susan Sharpe: Thank you, Sara. The words cultural competence bring a lot to thought and I'm sure you are starting to think "What does this mean? Yes, it's in our Quality Area six, but what about Be You? How is Be You linked to cultural competence?" I have a few questions that I want to throw out to you now. What does it mean to be culturally competent?

How do you support your cultural competence? What does that look like at your service? For some of you who may have families of quite culturally diverse backgrounds, I think this is going to be a very exciting space for you to start thinking about what happens in your space. What underpins your cultural competence there at the service in everything that you do?

A few examples of indicators of cultural competence include being aware of your own views, developing positive attitudes towards others and whatever cultures that they represent and being knowledgeable about different cultures.

There are many practice indicators of what cultural competence entails or what it looks like. These are only a few examples. It also involves skills of communicating across different cultures. In the space of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and our theme of yarning for today's webinar, it also involves understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and being able to draw on their ways of doing and being and using this to inform what you do on a day-to-day basis.

Carmen, did you have any additional views of what cultural competence entails?

Carmen Huser: I think it's an interesting and really important aspect when we work in early childhood education to bring in cultural competence – I don't know if I want to call it competence, but to be really culturally aware and respectful towards cultures and to embrace all the cultures that come together. This then supports making children feel like they belong to the group and feel respected in the space. It really has so much to do with embracing diversity as well and showing fairness to everybody who is part of the community and to provide strong values to the children.

Sara Richardson: We finished the poll and we'll have a look at the poll results in a minute. I'm with you too. I'm not sure about the language of cultural competence. I think that's a contested language, but the concept of it is really critical. We've used another term here – cultural safety. There is a whole range of different words, but cultural competence sits within some of the language of some of our documentation, so that is what we go with.

As reflected in the poll results, it is about who I am and recognising and understanding my own culture and cultural background. I think it's really easy for someone like me who's white Anglo, with an Anglo cultural background to say I don't have a culture and other people have culture. That is the bit I have to reflect on

and have to know and understand. This is where it's really important to have those conversations about history and knowing history that isn't just reflected from my cultural perspective.

It is important to explore this in your space and in each of your own contexts and to have that conversation about what does that actually mean for us? What does that look like for us? How do we do this? Again, it goes back to conversation, it goes back to connections and understanding all of those things and how they all fit together.

Susan Sharpe: What you said Sara, is true and correct. I think it's very important for us to remember that the words cultural competence can have so many interpretations and to be mindful of the jargon and the wording. It could be cultural responsiveness and also knowing that it's not going to be the same in each context. I think that's the core of it there. When you are responsive, you're going to be ready to embrace whatever it is and whatever makes sense to those people using our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in a very respectful manner and in a way that makes everyone safe.

It's important to think about what that means for your service; based on the families that are using your services, based on your Be You practices and what you believe in. What does that entail? How do we unpack that? Cultural competence can sit differently. One example of this is when having conversations with children whose family provides their meals on a day-to-day basis.

It's a really very exciting space to start being culturally responsive to the different families and what they really value in an ethical way and to have unpack a conversation. Again, having that conversation in a very professional manner without making anyone feel unsafe is very important. I think what Sara said is correct. It starts with our views and the way we see the world and then once we are really competent in who we are, we can go out and embrace other views.

Moving on now to pedagogy. Pedagogy, of course we've already looked at as everything that informs what we do on a day-to-day basis; with the children, with ourselves, with families, with the choices we make. I think the question here is how do you make your decisions about the pedagogies you choose? How do you inform the pedagogy of yarning, of space, of communication and connection?

Or better to say, how are you going to use your knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to inform all of those different pedagogies that inform what you do on a day-to-day basis? Carmen, did you want to add to that?

Carmen Huser: It's also about thinking about those underlying principles of our work and thinking about how we believe that everybody is unique and grounding our work in knowledge that we gain together and also embracing the different perspectives that come together. I think sometimes you can be challenged when different theories and perspectives don't align with what we thought is the one way to do things. Western ideas can be quite a bit different to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

It's also having ongoing conversations and reflections and not saying "but this is how we always have done things and it worked well the last time" because it might not suit the new context and the people that are in the learning community that you engage in right now. It's really important to always reflect and continue the conversations and sharing with each other. We now have another poll coming up here.

Sara Richardson: We would really like to hear those things about your pedagogy and I think what we saw on the slide before this was, it's around the decision-making or decisions you make. The comment we had on the slide was 'in ways that embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives', and that's the critical element of this. While you were talking Carmen, I was thinking that – and this is one of the elements I think is really powerful and I love about yarning – is that it is cyclic.

We've already talked about conversations and how important it is to talk with each other about these things. Again we go back more deeply and, as someone asked the question "can we really be value free?" I don't know, can we? It's about how we talk about that together and have those conversations. The other conversation we have had is about connections. How can we connect things together?

As we've gone along today, we keep going back to what we've talked about but deepen the idea each time. I wonder if we do that with our pedagogy.

Susan Sharpe: Good question. I'm thinking now about the curriculum decisions we make on a day-to-day basis as educators and the questions we have for the children, for families and those curriculum decisions that are going to involve the community. An example that comes to mind is collaboration. How do I collaborate with parents?

How do I collaborate with children? How do I collaborate with my colleagues? How do I plan? Sara did mention planning, reflecting and evaluating. How do I embed all of those into what I do? Another practice example that comes to me is the richness of the learning environments that you are offering. Do they offer exciting possibilities for children? Are they going to fill them with wonder and curiosity? Do they involve spaces for mental health and wellbeing for chilling and relaxing?

Do you plan for children to have deep extended play or conversations with their peers and conversations with educators? When it comes to curriculum decisions, we invite you to think about these reflective questions. I'm going to invite Carmen to talk to us more about how Be You can be related to this.

Carmen Huser: Thanks Susan, I would love to highlight again that you can use all the Always Be You resources and also the other resources found on the Be You website to inform your decision making for your daily practices, for curriculum decisions and also your pedagogies that are in place and reflect and reconsider how they are inclusive for everyone.

Susan, I loved when you mentioned filling the children with wonder and curiosity. One thing that came to my mind throughout the webinar is that yarning with children is such a powerful way of engaging with them in really big conversations and to have their voices heard in terms of the curriculum decisions that we make while providing a space for them to have a say about what makes them feel safe, what are the spaces and environments within our early childhood education settings and school settings where they feel good about themselves and where they can seek help. I think yarning can be a really strong way to do that.

With only six minutes left of our webinar, we should come to an end of our conversations. Keep in mind when you have those conversations in your teams, it is important to think about what makes a conversation professional. Think about how to make connections between your professional conversations and the yarning pedagogy and involve the children in the big conversations you have.

Sara Richardson: I was just going to comment on the poll responses. It wasn't surprising that a lot of people had responded with partnerships with families and also supporting children's learning. It was interesting that cultural competence was quite low. For me pedagogy, curriculum decisions and professional conversations are around what is it that we want to know or do and how's the best way to do that.

I think if you wanted to have cultural competence as something that was given higher priority than those other things, which is hard because you want to try and do everything, maybe that's something to go away and reflect on. What would happen if we were more culturally competent – that is more aware of our own cultural values and biases? What would that do to our pedagogical decision-making?

I really want to finish up by thanking everybody for their participation. Coming back to this symbol, again that's the cyclic effect of coming back to the Always Be You resources, hopefully you'll feel like you have access to them and know a little bit more about them. One of the things we would really encourage you to do is developed their own symbols – because remember symbols are a way of communicating and sharing and doing this work as well. Think about what your symbols might be if you were using the Always Be You resources and think about how that then embeds into everything you do.

As we finish up I'd really like to hear from you Susan, about what your highlights have been. What is one thing you are going to take away, think differently about or know differently after doing this webinar?

Susan Sharpe: Thank you, Sara. I think my main highlight was talking about conversations and seeing how we have taken that conversational approach throughout this webinar. I would love to really ground that practice within what I do at both a personal and professional level and approach things with that conversational approach while actively listening, deeply respecting and knowing that there will always be alternative views that might not be my view, but it's okay for me to embrace an alternative view. The other take away I have is that Be You is so flexible. I can actually place it in so many things that I do on a day-to-day basis as a practitioner so that was my take. What about you, Carmen?

Carmen Huser: I thought again about weaving together all of the priorities, requirements and the resources that we have and really explore the Always Be You resources to have that reviewing cycle of thinking and planning, which includes taking a look back at your requirements and priorities and reflect and critically engage with each other continuously, using conversations. We actually haven't really mentioned that there are also Be You Action Charts, so have a look at those as well.

Sara Richardson: Thank you. I feel like there are so many things we could have talked about more and would really want to have talked about more, but meandered off track a little bit and had to come back on track. I think that it is important to give yourself time to do that during conversations.

Remember that this webinar is one opportunity to have that conversation that we've been fortunate enough to have and so I'd really like to thank Carmen and Susan for their contributions and also the people who have been part of our team in the background. You would have been chatting with Maria, Rita and Leanne who have been responding to some of your questions. I'm sorry we haven't been able to get to them all, but as I said at the beginning, all of these resources are going to be available for you at the end of the webinar. You will receive the webinar recording so you can listen back again and there will be handouts as well so you can use that to have another look or share it with other people as well. The other thing you might want to do is connect in with us online at a National Check-In to ask some more questions, or if you need help finding the resources.

Thank you so much for joining us and for participating with us. Thanks to all the team for pulling it together. We'd love to see you online again for another conversation, maybe in a different space. Thank you everybody and I'll see you next time.

End.