

Staff wellbeing as a shared responsibility

Leaders and wellbeing teams play an important role in creating a workplace where everyone can thrive.

Factors that can influence wellbeing

The wellbeing of staff in your service or school may be influenced by several work factors. These include, but are not limited to:

- workload
- emotional responses to their work
- whether they feel valued and have a sense of belonging within your learning community
- whether they feel they have agency, for example, about their role or decision-making in your service or school
- career progression or access to professional development
- changes to educational policies and systems.

When educators feel supported, they are better equipped to help children, young people and fellow educators thrive.

Going beyond self-care

While self-care strategies play an important role, educator wellbeing is most effectively supported at a whole learning community level.

Leaders in early learning, school age care and school settings can do this by:

- integrating wellbeing in systems and structures
- practising clear communication and meaningful consultation
- valuing diversity and fostering inclusion

- normalising help-seeking
- creating an Action Team and partnering with Be You to embed wellbeing in everyday practice.

This Fact Sheet is for leaders and Action Teams. It suggests actions for a whole-setting approach to wellbeing. But it's just the beginning.

For more in-depth information about embedding wellbeing practices, check out [Beyond Self-care: An Educator Wellbeing Guide](#), [Wellbeing tools for leaders](#) and [Be You Stories](#).

Integrate wellbeing in systems and structures

Focusing on wellbeing isn't a one-off exercise. It's ongoing, involves everyone in your learning community, and should be embedded in your policies and processes.

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Establish clear policies: Create and regularly review policies around staff wellbeing, anti-discrimination, anti-racism and anti-bullying. Read more about [Creating a staff wellbeing policy](#).

Review schedules and structures: Excessive workloads are one of the biggest challenges for educators. Review meeting schedules and policies to protect staff members' time outside of work.

When planning meetings and rosters, consider events happening in your learning community and the workload of educators and leaders.

Create a mentoring system: Working with staff members, set up a system in which staff mentor new or less experienced educators. This can help foster connection and support professional development. Make sure you consider mentors' capacity and work with them to plan around their workload.

Recognise achievements and contributions: Celebrate people in your learning community. Receiving recognition from leadership and peers can help motivate staff members and boost their confidence.

Build connection and wellbeing into work: This could include having wellbeing days that foster connection and setting time aside in meetings to talk about wellbeing and supports available.

Create a relaxing space for staff: Turn the staffroom into a relaxing space, rather than an extension of the workplace. You could co-design this with staff so that they have a say in how the space looks and feels.

Host social events: Organise social gatherings to build connection between staff members. Ensure these are optional to attend and are inclusive. Invite early career educators, casual staff members and specialist staff. Consider having shared rituals to mark birthdays and milestones.

Have clear debriefing processes and access to support: Behaviours from children, young people, and families may reflect emotional expression and relational needs. Responding to these moments with empathy may have an impact on educators. Ensure they have access to clear debriefing processes and supports.

Responding to critical incidents can also have an impact. Set up clear policies and protocols to follow in the event of a critical incident. This will outline clear roles and responsibilities, help minimise stress and provide clarity for educators.

Ensure there are follow-ups with staff and check-ins in the weeks and months after a critical incident.

Learn more in the [Responding Together](#) domain.

Provide time during work hours for wellbeing initiatives and professional development:

Government grants or professional development provisions may be available to provide funding to cover this time.

If you're part of a Be You Learning Community, ensure that Action Team members are given sufficient time, resources and support to implement wellbeing initiatives.

Practise clear communication and meaningful consultation

By providing clear information and engaging with staff members you can show that you value their expertise and input.

Have check-in conversations: Check in with leaders or managers about their wellbeing and ensure they are aware of supports available to them.

Plan for leaders and managers to check in with staff members regularly about their wellbeing, workload, role clarity, professional boundaries and career development.

Provide clear advice about flexible working options (such as part-time work). Ensure people have a say in choosing wellbeing supports and professional development that suit them.

These kinds of conversations may be confronting for staff members. Try to create a safe space for them and ensure that they are aware of supports available.

Gather anonymous feedback: Provide opportunities for staff to share confidential feedback, concerns and expertise for decision-making in your learning community. This could be through a suggestion box or anonymous online surveys.

Value diversity and foster inclusion

Educators thrive when leaders and colleagues recognise and value their identity.

Take intentional steps to foster a working environment where people feel comfortable to be their authentic selves.

This may include:

- implementing inclusive and culturally responsive practices. Learn more in Be You resources about [Cultural responsiveness](#) and [Disability inclusion](#)
- ensuring that you include diverse perspectives when reviewing anti-discrimination and anti-racism policies
- calling out racism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of discrimination
- observing cultural protocols, such as Acknowledgements of Country, and celebrating dates of significance, such as Lunar New Year or IDAHOBIT Day. Value people's knowledge when organising celebrations but ensure that events are organised with allies and not the responsibility of one person
- reviewing the accessibility of physical environments in your learning community and creating calming or sensory spaces for educators
- encouraging professional learning about inclusive practice, cultural responsiveness and trauma-informed practice
- valuing people's lived and living experience and knowledge about their culture, identity or community
- displaying visual support. For example, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and pride flags, pronouns and contact details for interpreters.

Inclusive practice can be complex – you may not always get it right. The important thing is to make a genuine effort and show respect.

Ultimately, it is about creating a safe, welcoming space for all staff members.

Normalise help-seeking

As a leader, you will have your own challenges and factors that affect your wellbeing.

By visibly seeking support when you need it, and promoting services available, you can promote a help-seeking culture.

One way you can role-model self-care is by ensuring that you take breaks and leave work on time.

Through setting and modelling boundaries as a leader, you may help empower staff to have discussions about their own boundaries. Learn more in Be You event recording [Empowered boundaries for educators](#).

Consider displaying Be You's [Mental health services and support helplines](#) posters around your learning community.

You can also include links to these posters when promoting your learning community's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), if applicable.

Some staff members may feel hesitant to access the EAP or seek support from leadership, due to concerns about confidentiality and anonymity.

Creating a safe space for educators to discuss and raise their concerns is important in setting the environment up for success when fostering educator wellbeing.

Partner with Be You to embed wellbeing in your everyday practice

If you're part of a Be You Learning Community, you can use the [Be You Implementation Cycle and tools](#) to guide a shared approach to educator wellbeing. You can also talk to your [Be You Consultant](#) for advice tailored to your setting.

If you're not part of a Be You Learning Community, [register](#) for free to access Professional Learning, tools and tailored Consultant support.

Further Be You resources

Explore more tips, tools and advice for a whole learning community approach to educator wellbeing at [Wellbeing tools for leaders](#).

Bibliography

Visit [Staff wellbeing as a shared responsibility](#) for a list of references for this Fact Sheet.

