

Wellbeing for educators

As an educator, you're often looking out for the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Remember, your wellbeing is just as important.

Work factors that can affect your wellbeing

Wellbeing relates to all aspects of a person's health. It's about how a person feels, functions, and evaluates their life.

Your mental health and wellbeing exist on a continuum and can be influenced by several factors. Work factors can include:

- workload
- emotional responses you may have to your work
- whether you feel valued and have a sense of belonging and connection with colleagues
- whether you feel as though you have a voice, for example about your role or decision-making in your service or school
- career progression and access to professional development.

It's important to acknowledge that stress you may experience in your role is not due to a personal failing or lack of ability to cope.

Supporting educator wellbeing at different levels

Self-care

Prioritising your self-care is important.

It can be helpful to cultivate self-care practices that work for you.

This Fact Sheet is for educators. It focuses on steps you can take to consider your needs and connect with your learning community.

A whole-setting approach

Some work factors that affect your wellbeing are best addressed at a whole-setting level.

Be You has a range of resources to support leaders and Action Teams to create work environments where everyone can thrive.

Consider your needs

Set boundaries

Clinical psychologist Dr Rebecca Ray says the act of setting boundaries may at times make you feel selfish. However, this is a powerful form of self-care.

Setting boundaries may include:

- checking in with yourself and assessing your capacity at any given time before saying an automatic 'yes' to a request
- remembering that saying 'no' now doesn't mean saying 'no' permanently
- practising having conversations about boundaries to build this habit
- talking about your workload with your manager or cultural mentor and clarifying your role and responsibilities
- setting times when you will read and respond to emails.

Setting boundaries isn't always easy.

Learn more about having these kinds of conversations in the Be You event recording Empowered boundaries for educators and Fact Sheet Communication skills for educators.

Reflect on your professional development

Reconnecting with your sense of purpose and career goals may help to energise you.

You may like to reflect on why you became an educator and recent 'wins,' such as a breakthrough with a child or young person or positive feedback you've received.

You could also consider:

- talking to your manager about your career goals, areas of interest and available learning opportunities
- finding a mentor through your workplace or professional networks.

Find self-care strategies that work for you

We all have different needs and ways to support our wellbeing. You may like to:

Monitor your stress

Think about your own signs of stress and situations you find difficult. This can help you be proactive about managing your stress during these times.

The [Be You Wellbeing Plan for Educators](#) can help you identify your stressors and strengths, along with strategies that can work for you.

Schedule 'time out' for yourself

Make time for your hobbies and interests.

Nurture personal relationships

A sense of belonging and connection, in your personal and professional lives, is important for your wellbeing.

Try relaxation techniques

Consider breathing techniques, progressive relaxation or meditation to consciously relax your body and mind. Learn about [mindfulness](#) and [how to practise mindfulness](#).

Embrace your spirituality

If you have spiritual beliefs, make time for spiritual practice.

Reach out for support

Support networks and mental health organisations can play a valuable role in your wellbeing journey.

Reaching out can open pathways to healing, connection and renewed strength.

Think about people you can talk to – trusted colleagues and friends, family members, your general practitioner (GP) or psychologist.

You can also connect with your workplace's Employee Assistance Program, [Beyond Blue](#), [13 YARN](#) or [another mental health service](#).

If you require urgent mental health support, contact [Lifeline's](#) 24-hour counselling service on 13 11 14. If you're in an emergency, ring 000.

Connect with your learning community

Build relationships with colleagues

Monash University [research](#) shows that strengthening relationships with your colleagues can support your wellbeing – and theirs as well. This may include:

- attending, or organising, connection activities
- celebrating each other's successes and, if possible, sharing workload and responsibilities
- asking about each other's wellbeing and ensuring people take breaks
- reaching out to early career educators, casual staff and specialist educators, who may not have well-established connections with other staff
- normalising conversations about mental health and help-seeking.

Respect and value diversity

Being intentionally inclusive and supportive of each other is an essential part of creating a thriving work environment.

This can support everyone to be our authentic selves at work and take pride in who we are.

This may include:

- learning about and implementing inclusive and culturally responsive practices. Learn more in Be You resources on [Cultural responsiveness](#) and [Disability inclusion](#)
- calling out racism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of discrimination. Take opportunities to reflect and learn about what discrimination looks like
- having discussions with colleagues, children and young people about stereotypes and the harm they can cause
- valuing people's lived and living experiences and knowledge about their culture, identity or community
- displaying visual support. For example, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and pride flags and pronouns. You could also perform and encourage Acknowledgements of Country, which may help create a sense of belonging and safety.

Develop strong family partnerships

Like you, families want what is best for their child. Building mutually respectful relationships with families can help you navigate sensitive or challenging conversations.

Learn practical strategies in the [Family Partnerships](#) domain.

Your wellbeing is important

We know that educator wellbeing is complex. It can be influenced by several factors and needs to be addressed by a mix of self-care and whole learning community strategies.

Wellbeing and positive mental health also involve the ability to regain balance, restore equilibrium, and continue to function well after stressful or challenging situations.

Ultimately, it's important to be kind to yourself and prioritise your mental health and wellbeing.

Be You resources

Explore more about self-care tools and helpful strategies in [Wellbeing tools for educators](#).

Bibliography

Visit [Wellbeing for educators](#) for a list of references for this Fact Sheet.

