

Project: Staff Well-being

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WHY IS STAFF WELL-BEING IMPORTANT?

Working in schools can be stressful. Staff morale and well-being are important and have a huge impact on school effectiveness, especially in challenging times. Whilst workload is an issue in schools, it needs to be addressed at a policy level, through leadership within the school and through actions staff themselves take to improve their well-being.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

The program consists of four modules, designed to be undertaken over a 12 month period, one module per term. The staff well-being team meet for one hour, twice per term to watch the short videos and discuss the factors raised in that module and how it applies to their school. Proformas are provided where appropriate.

The module for each term also includes a 30 minute video designed to be used for a staff professional development activity.

WHO IS THIS PROGRAM FOR?

This program is a self-paced and self-facilitated development program designed for **school leaders** and **staff well-being teams**. As each school is different, the strategies needed to improve staff well-being will depend on the culture in that school. The framework takes the well-being team through a process for identifying and implementing strategies to improve staff well-being within their school.

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

The Framework contains four modules. Each module covers two topics to be considered by the staff well-being team and one staff professional development activity. Each topic is presented in a 5 to 10 minute video and the resources necessary to plan and implement strategies to improve staff well-being in the school.

PROGRAM OUTLINE



MODULE 1 **YOUR Well-Being Starts With YOU**

- 1.1** Helping staff to help themselves
- 1.2** Celebrations and Social Connection
- 1.3** Improving Your Work-Life Balance - STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



MODULE 3 **Three Cs-Communication, Communication, Communication**

- 3.1** Communication is vital - What is working, what isn't and what are we going to do?
- 3.2** Meetings, Bloody Meetings
- 3.3** Protocols for Meetings and Email Workshop - STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



MODULE 2 **Positive and Supportive School Cultures**

- 2.1** The Fastest way to Improve Staff Morale
- 2.2** School cultures that support staff well-being
- 2.3** Highly Effective Staff Teams - STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



MODULE 4 **The Number 1 Factor in Staff Morale**

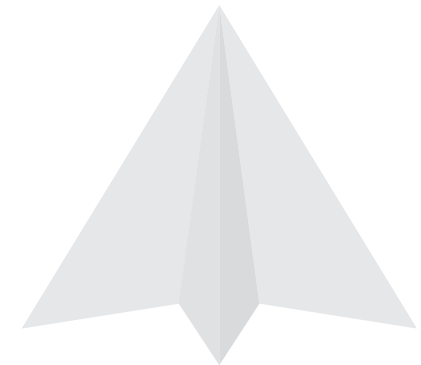
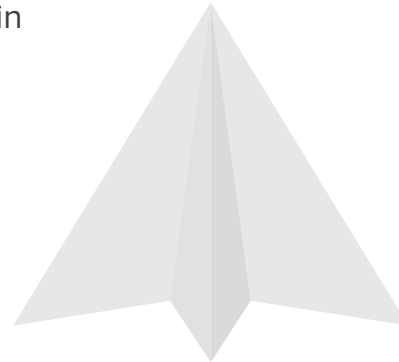
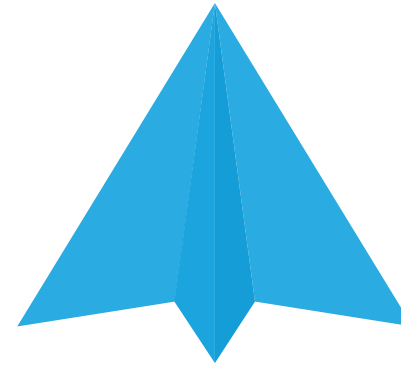
- 4.1** More Proactive and Less Reactive (80/20 Pareto)
- 4.2** Explain the Intent
- 4.3** Schools are People Places - STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK

This program is designed for **school leaders** and **staff well-being teams**.

The program consists of four modules, designed to be undertaken over a 12 month period, one module per term. Ideally, the staff well-being leader and/or team would meet for up to an hour, twice per term to watch the short videos and discuss the factors raised in that module and consider how it applies to their school. The staff well-being leader and/or team would then implement actions resulting from their discussions and reflection. This becomes your action plan.

The module for each term also includes a 30 minute video designed to be used for a staff professional development activity. This could be led by the staff well-being leader and/or team. The ready-to-use professional development session helps to build a supportive school culture through relevant learning activities and establishing common language.





MODULE 1

THIS MODULE FOCUSES ON :

Helping Staff to Help Themselves
Social connection and Celebrations

Staff Professional Development

Improving Your Work-Life Balance

YOUR Well-Being Starts With YOU



MODULE 1

Working in schools can be challenging and stressful for a number of reasons.

Schools are people places. We work with all sorts of people every day. Not only are we working with a wide range of people, people can also be unpredictable and we never quite know what is going on in someone else's life. They may be experiencing a range of stressors at home including their health and the health of loved ones, relationship issues, financial pressures and the day-to-day challenges of modern life.

A further contributor to our stress is that we are doing important work and work that matters. In response to the question, "What is the most important thing in your life?" 99% of parents would say, their children! Even if some of them have a funny way of showing it. Their children are more important and valuable to them than anything they own, including their house and their car. And yet they hand their children over to us, to look after, to educate and to prepare them for this crazy world we live in. We are placed in a high position of trust within the community.

The culture that exists in a school has a significant impact on the people who work there. Leaders in schools need to create and maintain work environments that support their staff and allow them to do their best work. In making decisions school leaders should consider the impact that decisions will have on staff work-loads and their well-being. It is important that the expectations of leaders are realistic.

However, ultimately staff also have to take responsibility to look after their own well-being. The focus of this first module is equipping staff with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about the lifestyle choices they make and the work habits that they establish. These have a significant impact on their own well-being. Our aim in this module is to empower staff to make sustainable choices that help them get a high level of job satisfaction.

1.1 HELPING STAFF TO HELP THEMSELVES

It is not up to the leaders in schools to “fix” each staff member’s well-being. However, schools can provide support that builds collegiality and makes it easier to access programs that may be beneficial.

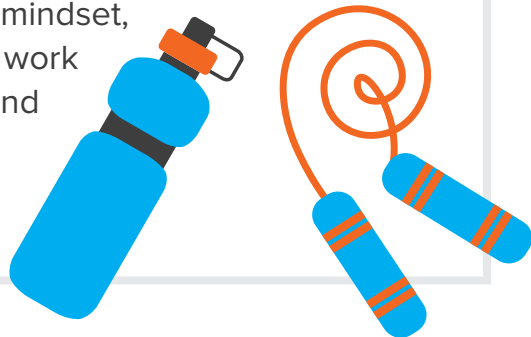
No matter what role the staff member has, everyone needs to look after their own physical well-being and mental health. That means everyone is responsible for doing what they can to manage their own stress and build their own sense of positive well-being. A school culture of good well-being for everyone starts with the individual.



MODULE 1

Ultimately, it is important that staff themselves take responsibility for their own well-being.

Most people are well aware of what they SHOULD be doing to look after their own well-being. We know that we should eat well, drink lots of water, exercise regularly, keep a positive mindset, try to disconnect from our work and take regular breaks and get a good night of sleep.



Well-being is personal. What works for one person, won't necessarily be what another person needs. There isn't a one-size-fits-all answer for everyone. However, schools can provide support to make it easier for staff to take action to improve their well-being.



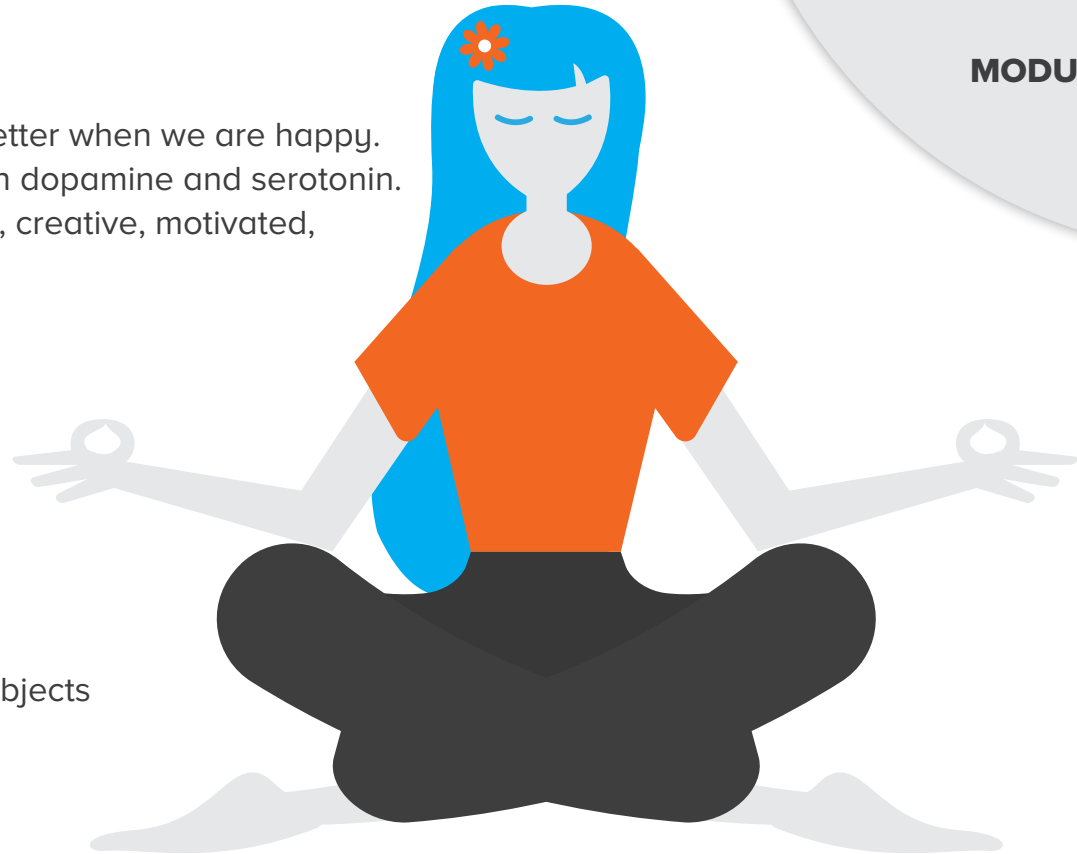
MODULE 1

Staff in some schools set up exercise clubs or programs (eg walking, running, yoga, personal trainer, meditation, mindfulness etc) before or after school. Some of these programs operate on a cost share basis and some are subsidized or funded by the school. Other schools have negotiated a discount on membership at their local gym.

Our brain is biologically hard-wired to perform better when we are happy. When we are positive, our brains are flooded with dopamine and serotonin. These chemicals help us become more engaged, creative, motivated, energetic, resilient and productive.

Ways to feel more positive:

- Finding something to look forward to
- Committing conscious acts of kindness
- Infusing positivity into your surroundings
- Exercising
- Spending money on experiences rather than objects



It is beneficial to empower staff by providing timely information through various formats to remind the staff of the various aspects that contribute to their well-being. This can include information and articles about exercise, diet, sleep, attitude and how to cope with challenges such as difficult parents, report writing and work-life balance. This information should be short, easy to read and displayed on staff noticeboards, in staff newsletters and discussed in staff meetings.



MODULE 1

The **Happy School** articles have been specifically designed for this purpose. Schools that become members of the Happy School program receive a one-page, ready to use article every week. The articles are designed to be easily shared with staff and provide regular, on-going professional development in bite-sized pieces. The articles provide strategies especially designed to support staff in schools to improve their well-being, reduce stress, better use their time, have a positive attitude, work well with others and improve their work-life balance. The articles can be printed as part of your staff news, displayed on noticeboards, emailed to staff, included in electronic staff notices, discussed at staff meetings or for professional development. We have also seen them pinned up behind the doors in staff toilets.

Mention the Happy School Well-being Framework for an additional
3 MONTHS MEMBERSHIP FOR FREE.



KEY QUESTIONS

- BRAINSTORM - What support, programs or initiatives would be most beneficial for our staff?
- How could we provide that support?
- How can we fill the physical environment with positive messages?
- What communication strategies can we use to keep staff well-being on the agenda and remind staff to take responsibility?



MODULE 1



ACTION PLAN

- For each ACTION it is important to identify WHAT action is going to take place as a result of this discussion, WHO is going to make sure that happens and by WHEN.

- The action plan commitments should be revisited at the start of the next module.



MODULE 1

1.2 SOCIAL CONNECTION AND CELEBRATIONS

Best-selling author and Harvard lecturer, Shawn Achor in “The Happiness Advantage” argues that social support is your single greatest asset and the biggest investment you can make in your happiness. Human beings have evolved an innate need for social relationships; our brain needs interaction to release oxytocin, necessary for counteracting the stress-inducing hormone of cortisol.

Ways to develop one-to-one relationships and increase your happiness at work:

- Taking time to get to know people
- Initiating non-work related conversations
- Making eye contact
- Active listening
- Having face-to-face meetings instead of emails
- Not multi-tasking during communication
- Celebrations and events that bring people together

The workload in schools can result in staff withdrawing, burying themselves in work and choosing to be alone when times are hard but this is the opposite of what they actually need.

The staffroom in schools should be a collegial meeting place, where friendships are built and support networks are developed. In many schools, the staffroom is quiet and many staff are too busy or choose not to go there.

Social events provide a further opportunity to get to know colleagues, increase our understanding of what is important to them, develop friendships and build support networks. Events and celebrations can be during the school day (eg birthday celebrations at morning tea) or outside school hours (eg staff social events or a movie night). However, in some schools the attendance at such events is small and the same faces are the only ones attending. Not everyone loves a staff social event and some people choose not to mix their work and social lives. It is important that we respect their choice. The old saying goes, *“You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink.”*



MODULE 1

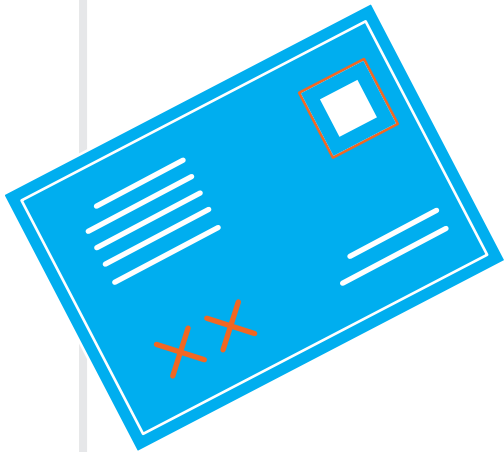
In showing appreciation to staff, lots of small events throughout the year are better than ONE big event – eg putting on a surprise morning tea, end of term BBQ, Friday drinks, footy tipping, acknowledging birthdays, surprise coffee cart, handwritten notes, a postcard sent through the post at the end of the term.

What are some of the things that already happen at our school?

What could we add to the mix?



MODULE 1



HANDWRITTEN POSTCARDS FOR WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Sending a handwritten card, snail mail (through the post) to the teacher's home address is a VERY powerful token of appreciation. Whilst it takes some effort to do, you will be surprised by the positive impact. People usually only get bills through the post!

QUICK TIP - Asking someone in the school office to print the staff addresses onto sticky labels makes it much faster! Schools who are members of the Happy School program can access 96 postcards FREE of charge each year.



KEY QUESTIONS

- What social events, activities and celebrations can we offer to encourage social connection.... at school? After hours?
- Do we have any staff traditions that bring people together?
- Are there new ones we could establish?
- Is the staffroom a collegial, supportive and happy place to be?
- Could the environment be enhanced to be more inviting?
- How can we encourage more people to come to the staffroom?



MODULE 1



ACTION PLAN

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MODULE 1

1.3 IMPROVING YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This session is designed to be used for staff professional development. The session can be adapted to be 40 to 60 minutes, depending on how much time is provided for reflection and group discussion. Ideally, the session should be scheduled in as part of the staff professional development program. The session can be either for the teaching staff OR for all staff in the school, including support staff.

Achieving work-life balance can be elusive, especially with increasing demands and workloads. In the video, staff are challenged to take a new view and instead focus on work-life satisfaction. They are lead through a process to reflect on the satisfaction they are achieving from their work, as well as the other aspects of their life.



MODULE 1

INSTRUCTIONS

- Schedule the staff professional development within the existing calendar.
- The video runs for a total of 40 minutes and includes time for individual reflection time to complete the worksheet. If you have more time available, you may choose to pause the video when prompted and allow discussion time.
- Download, print and copy the handout for each participant.
- Set up the room to view the video. If possible, configure the space to facilitate small group discussion (maximum of 6) of the concepts presented in the video.
- Provide a copy of Improving Work-Life Balance handout for each participant.



ACTION PLAN

- For each ACTION it is important to identify WHAT action is going to take place, WHO is going to make sure that happens and by WHEN.

IMPROVING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Having good intentions isn't enough! What are you going to do differently?



MODULE 1

WORK - LIFE BALANCE

OVERALL

Report Card

		So what?
Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Life Experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Effort	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

My Golden Rules

Four Goals to be achieved by _____ (date)

New place to go _____

New activity to do _____

Learn to... _____

Better person by _____