Ensure your school is registered to commence the Staff Wellbeing Toolkit in 2017

Supporting staff health & wellbeing across Australian schools

A self-paced and highly accessible program designed to support the health and wellbeing of all staff. The Toolkit assists individuals to manage their own wellbeing and helps professional communities to foster a more supportive and inclusive professional climate.

The Wellbeing Toolkit has been developed by NESLI in consultation with a cross-section of Australian K-12 stakeholders.

The Wellbeing Toolkit is partially funded by the Australian School of Applied Management. ASAM will provide $750,000 of seed funding over the next 3 years.

The Wellbeing Toolkit responds to the insights and recommendations flowing from the Principal Health & Wellbeing Survey.
Dr Philip Riley  
**Chief Investigator, Principal Health & Wellbeing Survey**

Today’s children are tomorrow’s nation builders. As custodians of their futures, teachers are charged with giving them the best opportunities we can. Countless studies show the transformative nature of education. To do this well, we owe it to ourselves to be the best we can be. That means thriving as educators, not merely surviving. The Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing research shows that this depends on collaboration. The technical term is social capital. When social capital increases within an organisation everyone improves together. The Wellbeing Toolkit is designed around this maxim, and therefore has the best chance of positive, sustainable change for the education system.

Kelly Rothwell  
**Project Manager, Australian Teachers Wellbeing Toolkit**

Wellbeing and mental health is imperative in today’s ever changing education environment, systems and student and parent needs. This is particularly so for our teaching communities and is underscored by the Principals’ Health and Wellbeing Survey. These results are such that NESLI are driven and fully committed to both developing and delivering an accessible and practical program to influence enhancement in the focus on all of our teacher’s wellness at work and in life. The Australian Schools Staff Wellbeing Toolkit is underpinned by psychological principles and concepts that can be incorporated readily into everyday practices, proven to enable people to enhance their wellbeing and mental health, for the betterment of individuals, teams and networks, and larger communities.

Dr Stephen Brown  
**Executive Chair, National Excellence in School Leadership Initiative**

One of the key characteristics of any high performing school is the quality of its workforce. These schools have positive and productive workplace cultures typified by highly engaged staff who undertake their challenging and rewarding roles in settings that are nurturing. It is clear that supported and engaged teachers enable better student outcomes. It is therefore vitally important that we consistently monitor and proactively adopt strategies that will aid the work of one of the most vital resources for all schools - their workforce.
THE WELLBEING TOOLKIT AT A GLANCE...

**What is the Toolkit?**

The Toolkit is a group development platform designed to help schools create a professional climate which is conducive to the optimal health and wellbeing of all staff and help improve social capital across the organisation. The only program of its kind in Australia, the Toolkit assists individuals to proactively manage their own wellbeing and provides strategies for professional communities to better understand and support each other.

The success of our schools is intrinsically linked to the performance of their people. The Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey puts the spotlight on the increasing stress and duress Principals are experiencing on a daily basis. In parallel, numerous studies demonstrate that unacceptable stress levels are affecting teachers at all career stages. In addition to recognising the implications of this trend for the health and wellbeing of our educators, it also raises important concerns around the impact on our classrooms and learning environments.

The Toolkit is designed to be delivered as an all-of-staff program thereby raising awareness around wellbeing and improving social capital across organisations. The Toolkit comprises five modules and is delivered via multiple modalities including online tutorials, peer learning sessions and a range of interactive tools and resources. Importantly, the program is designed to ensure minimal disruption to staff workloads.

A fee of $85 (+GST) applies to each participant.

**Why should my school participate?**

Please respond via email to enrolments@nesli.org

Please specify the number of staff members who will participate (recommended for all staff).

**How is it delivered?**

**Is there a fee?**

**How do I register my school?**
The Wellbeing Toolkit is a self-paced development program designed to dovetail with existing school forums such as regular staff meetings. By integrating the Wellbeing Toolkit process into the school’s existing rhythms, very little additional time commitment is required from staff.

The program comprises five modules. Each module is introduced with an expert tutorial which is delivered online. These expert tutorials lay the foundation for five interactive peer learning/discussion sessions. The Toolkit is, in essence, a platform to support five group discussions around staff health and wellbeing. All that is required of staff is a commitment to attend five 1 hour sessions in order to contribute meaningfully to these discussions.

Additionally, all staff involved in the Toolkit will have access to an optional pack of tools and resources to support personal wellbeing. Staff are free to engage with these resources at a convenient time if they wish to.

Participating schools nominate one or more Toolkit Leaders to facilitate the peer learning sessions and provide a project management role throughout the program. Toolkit Leaders are provided with a comprehensive Facilitation Guide, including full transcripts of the video content, discussion prompts and frames, and practical activity options as well as application guidelines. By utilising internal resources to deliver the program, schools build internal appetite and capacity for teacher health and wellbeing.

**Expert Tutorials**
Each module involves an expert tutorial. The tutorial is provided in an online format allowing participants to view them independently prior to the peer learning session. Alternatively, the tutorial can be played to an entire cohort immediately prior to the peer learning session.

**Peer Learning Sessions**
The peer learning sessions provide a structured session for a cohort to collaboratively explore the themes presented in the expert tutorial. These sessions are facilitated by a member of staff who has been nominated as the Toolkit Leader.

**Tools and Resources**
A range of tools and resources are provided through a dedicated Learning Resource Centre (LRC). These resources tie back to the module themes and support cohorts to proactively embed learnings and recommendations.
MODULE OVERVIEW

Module 1. The critical importance of teacher health and wellbeing
This introductory module looks at current research and explores trends and implications for all teachers and school leaders. The focus is on the importance on prioritising wellbeing and incorporating practical strategies into life and work. The session also begins a conversation about the potential for teaching cohorts to evolve as valuable peer support networks.

Module 2. Know thyself: addressing and overcoming challenges
This module begins with an exploration of the psychological and physical effects of stress and anxiety. Participants are encouraged to identify their own stress and overload markers and consider practical brain tools (e.g. mindfulness, meditation, breathing exercises, visualisation, questions) and coping strategies to regulate and manage stress responses.

Module 3. Building and developing resilience
We can’t avoid challenges in the workplace, but we can build our resilience to assist us to identify, manage and bounce back from challenges more effectively. This module focuses on practical and effective ways to build both personal and team resilience. The focus is on practical skills to identify and maintain wellbeing across the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions.

Module 4. Mastering the art of influence and wellbeing
This module builds on the previous modules to present further practical and relevant psychological tools to master the art of influence, greater regulation of ourselves and greater influence of others, therefore enhanced role modelling of health and wellness, greater influence of others, particularly our team members with a focus on support around health and wellbeing.

Module 5. Career and professional wellbeing
This module attends to our career focus and the impact that this can have on our overall health and wellbeing. We explore ‘career transitioning and planning’ as part of this module, the imperative of networking from a strategic perspective, with an emphasis on aligning our passion, gifts and purpose with our work and career, for the ultimate benefit of enhanced health and wellbeing.

Purpose and scope
The Toolkit does not set out to provide clinical or remedial support. Importantly, the program will reference a range of support services where staff seek or require specific and in-depth interventions. Those who identify that they may require additional support, or want to engage in a deeper developmental process, will be provided details of appropriate services.
WHAT IS REQUIRED OF STAFF?

Why is it important to involve staff in wellbeing conversations?

Schools with strong social capital agree that it takes buy-in and commitment from all staff to improve overall wellbeing within the school. By opting to undertake the wellbeing toolkit your school is demonstrating its commitment to starting an open and productive dialogue around wellbeing and to do this effectively they need your involvement and input.

What will be required of you and how much time will it take?

The Toolkit is, in essence, a platform to support a series of group discussions around staff health and wellbeing. All that is required of staff is a commitment to attend five 1 hour sessions in order to contribute to these discussions. To further minimise impact on workloads, these sessions can and will be coordinated with existing staff meetings. Additionally, all staff involved in the Toolkit will have access to an optional pack of tools and resources to support personal wellbeing. Staff are free to engage with these resources at a convenient time if they wish to.

Will you have to complete any additional work or assessment?

The Toolkit includes a simple survey which is used to assess social capital within the school. Responding to this survey should not take more than 5 minutes and all responses are anonymous. Other than this there is no work or assessment required of Toolkit participants.

Does participating in the Toolkit make it look like you’re not coping?

No. The Toolkit is designed to focus on a proactive approach to wellbeing. Involvement in the program reflects a commitment to creating and maintaining a positive, healthy environment for yourself, your colleagues and your students.

What will you get out of it?

- Understand the science around wellbeing and the link to social capital
- Explore practical strategies to help you deal with workplace pressure
- Contribute to a meaningful discussion around wellbeing in your school
- Help increase social capital in your school
- Find new ways to lead wellbeing conversations with your students

How will the Toolkit benefit our students?

Today’s children are tomorrow’s nation builders. As custodians of their futures, teachers are charged with giving them the best opportunities to succeed. To do this well, we owe it to ourselves to be the best we can be. That means thriving as educators, not merely surviving. When social capital increases within an environment, everyone within that environment benefits. The Wellbeing Toolkit is designed around this maxim, and therefore represents an opportunity to create positive, sustainable change for the whole school community.
Principal Health & Wellbeing Survey

The Wellbeing Toolkit responds to increasing awareness of the professional health and wellbeing of Australian educators. An important research project in this area is The Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey which has run nationally every year since 2011 in response to growing concern about principals’ occupational health, safety and wellbeing.

In addition to directly exploring the health and wellbeing of school leaders, the survey also has important implications for all staff and broader school communities.

Since the project began, approximately 40% of Australia’s 10,000 principals have taken part. The aim of this research project is to conduct a longitudinal study monitoring school principals and deputy/assistant principals’ health and wellbeing annually.

Wellbeing in differing school types, levels and size is monitored along with lifestyle choices such as exercise and diet and the professional and personal social support networks available to individuals.

The research acknowledges that principals, deputy/assistant principals and teachers are Australia’s nation builders. They need to be well resourced, not just logistically, but also emotionally and intellectually. The Finnish experience suggests that if we too can make courageous decisions about our national future we will then make it happen.

It is time we began the conversation in earnest. The reports for this survey are available at www.principalhealth.org/ie/reports.php.
The Wellbeing Toolkit uses adaptations of two highly regarded tools in an anonymous pre-/post-application designed to provide schools with broad measures of both wellbeing and social capital before and after the toolkit application.

The first measure is the WEMWBS (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale), a well-established 14-item scale across 5 response categories covering feeling and functional aspects of wellbeing, applied extensively in the United Kingdom and several other countries worldwide.

The second measure is an 8-item survey developed and applied extensively in the Finnish public sector to measure workplace social capital, including designations for cognitive and structural social capital; vertical and horizontal social capital; bonding (‘to get by’), bridging (‘to get ahead’) and linking (trust across authority gradients) social capital. Applied to a base of 150,000 public sector employees in Finland over a period of 15 years, the tool is robust with longitudinal data and well-documented health end points.

EVALUATION & IMPACT

The inclusion of robust and effective impact evaluation throughout the Toolkit ensures that schools have clear visibility of both wellbeing and social capital across their staff. This data, in conjunction with other complementary impact measures around school performance and accountability, will assist school leadership teams in the implementation of initiatives geared towards elevated staff engagement and ultimately enhanced learning environments and outcomes for students.
PROJECT TEAM

In line with ASAM’s (Australian School of Applied Management) commitment to underwriting and ensuring the success of the Wellbeing Toolkit, NESLI has assembled a range of expert personnel to oversee key aspects of the project. The project team will be supported by an Efficacy & Impact Committee which will provide critical evaluations and advice to assist the long term evolution of the program.

Dr Stephen Brown
Dr Brown has more than 30 years of education experience in Australia and internationally. He was the Regional Director of Hume Region in Victoria for four years and acted in the position of Deputy Secretary, Office of Government School Education (OGSE). Dr Brown was Executive Director of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat in the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and a member of the departmental leadership team. Currently, Dr Brown is the Executive Chair of NESLI.

Dr Philip Riley
Phil Riley, a former school principal, spent 16 years in schools before moving to the tertiary sector. He researches the overlapping space of psychology, education and leadership. He has been awarded ~$8 million in research funding including 3 prestigious Australian Research Council (ARC) Grants. In 2010 Phil’s research was recognised with an inaugural Monash Researcher Accelerator award. This award funded the first two years of The New Zealand Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey. This seminal research project heavily informs the Wellbeing Toolkit.

Jenny Pesina
Jenny is an experienced eLearning and blended learning professional, online course developer, educator and project manager, focused on delivering pedagogically sound and innovative teaching and learning solutions. Jenny has extensive experience in higher education including key roles at the University of Melbourne and Open Universities Australia and is a frequent guest speaker at national and international conferences. Jenny is currently Head of Education Design and Delivery.

Dr Amy Nisselle
Dr Amy Nisselle is an external evaluator for various science education institutions, including Howard Hughes Medical Institute, University of Western Michigan, The New York Academy of Sciences, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory’s DNA Learning Center and La Trobe University. She has over 15 years’ experience evaluating programs in the science education and medical research sectors, conducting national and international studies that helped to improve programs and resources, gauge student and teacher impact, and secure over $4.0M funding.

Dr David Fanklin
Dr David Franklin has vast experience in both primary and secondary schools as a teacher and administrator. He holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from California State University, Easy Bay and a Master’s Degree in Educational Technology from National University. Dr. Franklin was a finalist for the California League of School’s Educator of the Year Award in 2011. In 2014, Dr. Franklin helped establish one of California’s newest Distinquished Schools.

Dr Anna Dabrowski
Dr Anna Dabrowski is a researcher and lecturer in the area of educational reform and teacher effectiveness. She is currently involved in the longitudinal evaluation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, commissioned by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), in addition to developing performance and development frameworks to improve teacher quality in Australia and the United States.
NEXT STEPS

- To register your school for the program please respond via email to enrolments@nesli.org
- Please specify the number of staff members who will participate (recommended for all staff).

National Excellence in School Leadership Initiative

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