

## CommunityMatters: Stories in Diversity

### National

## Overview

### History

MindMatters is a mental health promotion program for secondary schools. The CommunityMatters DVD “Stories in Diversity” is a MindMatters initiative supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing. These resources were launched in 2005 as training tools for teachers, Indigenous education workers, school principals and other school-based staff.

### Aims and objectives

The focus of the DVD is on cultural inclusion and “demonstrating good school and classroom practice in terms of valuing diversity, working within a Health Promoting Schools Framework and showing family and community involvement in contributing to student health and wellbeing. The key messages in the DVD focus on optimism, resilience, connectedness, trust, safety, empathy, respect and help seeking” (extract from MindMatters website).

### Focus

This is a mental health promotion project, helping young people to develop an understanding of their own mental health and that of their community.

### Target group

The primary target group is secondary school communities.

## Project structure

### Lead agencies/partnerships

MindMatters is conducted by Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) and Curriculum Corporation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work is guided by a Community Matters Project Officer, a MindMatters Indigenous Project Support Officer and the MindMatters Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.

### Funding

Funding is provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

## Project description

CommunityMatters contains multimedia materials which will encourage school communities to explore issues around

- Identity, culture and community;
- Managing the wellbeing of diverse groups of students (particularly those who feel marginalised); and
- The importance of resilience and connectedness.

The initiative is introduced with a ‘school audit’ of protective factors and continues with a series of discussions, research and exercises.

The main sections of the DVD are:

- ‘The Big Picture’ which provides an overview of cultural diversity with opportunities for brainstorming and discussion;

- Four stories (based on real experiences from schools with Indigenous students) which explore the themes of: connectedness, school & community partnerships, optimism and resilience; and
- 'Perspectives' explores loss and grief, trust and safety, and student empowerment.

## **Additional readings and resources**

Mindmatters Website: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander page:  
<http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/atsi/index.htm>

CommunityMatters DVD/Handbook webpage:  
<http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/community/index.htm>

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