

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS TO SUPPORT AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

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A new online resource for teachers to help students develop their understanding of the factors that influence their mental health and wellbeing and that of others has been developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), working with experts from Beyond Blue and Headspace.

The new 'Curriculum Connection' resource means teachers will now be better equipped to teach about mental health and wellbeing through the Australian Curriculum learning areas including Health and Physical Education, Digital Technologies, English, Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) and the Arts.

"The past few years have been challenging for everyone and particularly for young people, with fires, floods and the pandemic," said ACARA's CEO David de Carvalho.

"In addition, the widespread of use of so-called 'smartphones' among young people has its downsides, contributing to cyber-bullying and social-media-induced anxiety about self-image, particularly among teenage girls.

"So, it's important now more than ever before that we equip our teachers with the resources they need to teach mental health and wellbeing using the new Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0. It will mean our young people can develop the skills they need to look after themselves and each other."

Developed in partnership with mental health organisations Beyond Blue and Headspace, as well as the National Mental Health Commission, the resource allows educators to filter information and develop educational programs around key issues. This includes learnings around understanding the factors that influence mental health and wellbeing, how to access support and ways young people can promote positive wellbeing for themselves and others.

The resource was developed in response to an increase of mental health concerns. Last year, education ministers called for a review of the Australian Curriculum content on this issue, which led to ACARA hosting a Mental Health Forum in July 2022 with key stakeholders. At this conference, a number of recommendations were made, including the creation of this new Curriculum Connection resource.

The mental health and wellbeing resource has been developed with the aim of equipping young Australians with an understanding of the importance of:

- connectedness and belonging
- the ability to manage themselves and their interactions with others
- accessing reliable and timely information and services to manage health and safety
- engaging in health-enhancing behaviours such as healthy eating, physical activity and sleep.

In addition to the creation of the new Curriculum Connection, ACARA has provided further guidance to teachers with changes to the mental health and wellbeing focus area description and curriculum content, which includes explicit references to grief and loss.

“Be You welcomes the release of ACARA’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Curriculum Connection,” said Geri Sumpter, Head of the Be You, the national mental health and wellbeing initiative for schools and educators led by Beyond Blue.

“The Curriculum Connection provides clear guidance for teachers and school leaders on how to integrate mental health and wellbeing into all aspects of teaching and learning.

“Be You is proud to have worked closely with ACARA on the development of this resource. Including wellbeing across all aspects of teaching and learning is such a positive step towards building a mentally healthy education system where students, teachers and communities are supported to achieve their best possible mental health. We hope that teachers and school leaders across Australia find this resource helpful.”

Part of ACARA’s new Curriculum Connections project, the online resource enables educators to filter information on conceptual themes from within the Australian Curriculum by year level, learning area, general capability or cross-curriculum priority. Other topics released in this phase are online safety and respect matters, bringing content in line with the new Australian Curriculum, Version 9.0.

The mental health and wellbeing Curriculum Connection, along with the other updated resources, is available on the resources section of the Australian Curriculum website at <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources>.

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