

# Building family relationships with Be You

## Video transcript

Children are blank slates.

The people who have attitudes and preconceived ideas are the adults, and we teach that to children as we educate them.

Their understanding of mental health might be that you've got a problem, there's something wrong with you.

We talk about it as a kind of broader idea of like the continuum, you can have really good days of mental health and bad days, you can be having a good time or a tough time, and actually children have the same.

It's not that long ago in the sector that we just told children to, calm down, stop crying, you're okay.

Now it's, 'oh, I see you're upset. Let's talk about registering your emotions so that we can give you tools to deal with it in the future.'

Be You has been really great for that. At the moment, we are really trying to get a great understanding of the Be You framework across all the staff, and really embed that holistically.

Giving educators a window into understanding health and wellbeing, and giving us tools about how to talk about it with children and families in a way that's non-judgmental, and supportive, and based on evidence.

Whoa! I found the biggest one. Shall that be all? Oh, that's a pretty big weed!

At Sacred Heart, we really embody that idea of agency. So children have lots of flexibility, children go outside and inside when they like.

They have a lot of voice in terms of what's going on in the day, and we all know the children really well, so we use that knowledge to underpin the creation of our curriculum.

Maybe next time. Okay.

Mia has some challenges around self-regulation.

She finds it hard when things are not going according to her plan.

She can feel really strongly about things that perhaps she wouldn't expect, and things can knock her off-kilter and she finds it really hard to get back to a regulated calm state.

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She was feeling a bit anxious and at times was saying to her family that she didn't feel safe.

Because we've got really strong relationships built with that family, they were really comfortable initiating some pretty tough conversations early on.

Alright Mia. You ready to help me do some work in the office?

When she wasn't feeling safe, she would come and knock on my door and say, 'hey Ben, I'm not feeling safe. I need to have a talk.'

How are you feeling about today? Good, yeah? Yes, yes, yes, and yes, and yes.

So you're feeling good today? Yeah. That's good.

Mia has some very complex issues.

She struggles to transition, she struggles with interactions with other children.

When she becomes dysregulated, she likes to be alone.

Mia has a tent in her own space, and in that tent is a bag of sensory items and toys of her interests.

The tent is her safe place. As soon as that got implemented, we saw a massive change in her behaviour.

She, now, is much more able to regulate than she's ever been before. She's much happier, she's better able to play, she's better able to regain her regulation as well.

So all of the love and care that I see the staff putting into the children is sort of bearing the fruit of a happy child who can work positively with people and enjoys going to the spaces that she's going to.

We're all kind of learning about Mia together, and we're all kind of, you know improving how we support her together and it's been really successful.

In a few years I don't think you would've known that she's had a tough time. I think it's just gonna be, she'll be a thriving girl.

How do we say hello in palawa kani? Ya, or ya pulingina? How do we say, see you later? lawapinga? lawapa... lakapawa, lakapawa nina!

Yes! How do we say mouth in palawa kani? mukwi, mukwi!

Payton and I have a very important relationship.

We're both palawa, so we're both Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and I think that I have been an important influence in her life.

I like playing with Joey. Sometimes if we don't feel well and we're crying, some educators just make us feel better and if we don't, and if we feel sick, the educators just tell our parents.

Those emergent relationships are really amazing because they just appear out of thin air. It's not necessarily intentional, but a child will choose their safe space, their safe person.

It's a pretty surreal experience, in all honesty. Seeing a child growing up with all of the generational trauma that has been experienced by our people, be so proud, and open, and confident in expressing who she is.

I think she's always been an incredibly bubbly, and happy, and enthusiastic person. And I think with my support and through our relationship she's become an advocate for those around her.

All of a sudden, you'll notice a four-year-old go up to a three-year-old who's crying, and sit down, and put their arm around them maybe, and say, 'are you feeling okay? You look a bit sad. Do you need a cuddle?'

That is literally like magic, because that child has learnt empathy and learnt to teach others about wellbeing, and health, and how they're feeling and that it's okay to feel.

And that it's important to talk about it, and it's important to help someone who needs it.

Like, that is what you're aiming for. The personal relationships with the staff are really essential. It's a collaborative support between the school, the after-school service, and home.

We are the three networks really that provide our children with safe spaces.

And for Mia, feeling safe in those spaces is really essential. It's really crucial to have great relationship with families because we're in this kind of group effort to do the best thing for their child.

Be You has really supported me in having difficult conversations with families. It's provided me with the language as well as the knowledge to ensure that when I am having these conversations with families they recognise that I am coming from a good place, and that it's a place of support, and that I'm there along with them on that journey.

I feel incredibly privileged to be able to be a part of these children's lives and have that trust from the families to ensure their safety and their happiness.

**ENDS**