

# Be You Virtual Conference Transcript

## Acknowledging and encouraging diversity in your learning community

**Presented by Yasmin Knight, Hannah Jamieson and Daniel Riley**

### Yasmin Knight

Every school community contains a diverse range of individual students, staff, and families. So by acknowledging and encouraging this diversity, we strengthen the community and improve the mental health well being, and productivity of all members. So in this session, we'll be laying a foundation of our core terminology and principles for the conversation about building a learning community that acknowledges and encourages diversity. We're gonna be exploring the role of partnerships in acknowledging and encouraging diversity.

We're also gonna be exploring the challenges to inclusion or diversity and hear how one school has turned some of these challenges into opportunities. Good afternoon to you all, I'm Yasmin Knight, I'm one of the Be You education consultants for the Victorian team. I have been with Headspace schools for the last three years. I'm a qualified social worker and I've worked within child protection, youth justice and restorative justice systems within the children's courts in Victoria, as well as working within the school settings. I'm gonna hand you over to one of my colleagues who's also going to be sharing this segment with us. Hannah. Thank you Hannah.

### Hannah Jamieson

Hi everybody. My name's Hannah Jamieson, and I'm one of the national education advisors in the Be You Headspace schools team. Thank you so much for coming along. I've previously been a secondary school teacher for 15 years, and I really appreciate the time that all teachers have taken out of their busy days and their busy weeks to be part of this. So thank you.

### Yasmin Knight

I'd like to do our acknowledgement of country. We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet here today. We pay our respects to the elders past and present. And as an initiative with the national reach, we extend our respect to all elders and Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. So today we have lots of new people like you joining us from all over the country, and it'd be wonderful if you could share your own acknowledgement by putting the name of the traditional custodians of the country that you're on in our chat box.

Also at Be You we endeavour to be embedded, incorporate, include and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective ways in all of our work. To always Be You symbols that you see on this slide here were developed to represent the ways of knowing, doing, and being that we consider to be important

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part in our work to support the mental health and well being of children. So again, the symbols that you're seeing on this slide, they are for our yarn and do different ways. They're to represent our conversations today about embracing diversity.

## Hannah Jamieson

On the screen at the moment, you will see the support numbers for a number of mental health services and supports. Today's topic isn't going to cover too many upsetting ideas or topics, but however, it's really good to give you just a bit of a heads up to remind you about self care. It's really important to look after yourself and we encourage you to be mindful of these support services if you do need to speak to somebody about how you're feeling. You'll also see on this slide here, the always Be You symbol for safe space. I really encourage you to see this as a safe space to feel free to put into the chat any ideas that you have, but just to be mindful around confidentiality and not to identify any students in particular. So, what are we going to cover today? We're going to discuss the principles for embracing diversity in learning communities, Yasmin and myself are really excited to have here Daniel Riley from Dandenong primary school to hear more about on the ground embrace diversity and inclusion, understand why partnerships are so vital in supporting diversity and really getting to unpack some of the challenges and also the opportunities around supporting inclusion and diversity.

## Yasmin Knight

So let's have a look at celebrating and diversity and inclusion. So diversity, what makes us unique? Those differences could include ethnicity, gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation. It can also include educational level abilities, mental health status, and physical attributes. So recognising the cultural diversity of school communities helps to meet the educational and welfare needs of students and their families. It also aids in planning of teaching and learning activities. So inclusion is also about removing barriers to ensure that everyone can fully participate and have equal access to opportunities.

So by making efforts to make more inclusiveness, we show that we value diversity of our community and that our community is a safe place to be in. Inclusion can also help personal development, improve social skills. It builds self-esteem self-confidence and it also develops teamwork and supports independence for all young people and children. So not only can inclusion activities help children and young people, but they also benefit families. A question that I really would like to leave with you in regards to celebrating diversity and inclusion is what does this mean for you in your teaching practices, in your classrooms? So you might be doing this already. And perhaps, you know, one of the most powerful activities that you could be using in your classrooms right now is, you know, getting the students to draw a visual representation of their families. And this just gives you a great insight into diversity of family structures.

## Hannah Jamieson

You'll see here the United Nations rights of the child, or some of them here, this was ratified in 1989. And I think it's a really good way to start with the why, why is diversity and inclusion so very important? The United Nations has said that childhood is a time that deserves special assistance and care because our young people have so much potential, but do need our support. The rights of the child include the need to challenge discrimination when we see it, that it's about including the diverse needs of children and that that's in their best interests. That a child's development must include a safe place for them to be themselves and with all of their experiences and their difference. And that also it is incredibly powerful when learning communities consider the voice of the child. And later on, we'll talk about some of the aspects of the Be You initiative and about where you can learn more about including the voice of the child.

## Yasmin Knight

So what does inclusion look like in a learning community? So it's about knowing who our young people are, who their parents/carers are and what their stories are. It's about showing young people that they matter and their self image is valued. It's about encouraging young people to share their voice, to speak up. It's about challenging prejudice, assumptions, generalisations, and discriminatory comments. It's about looking at the physical environment of the learning community. How does it cater to different abilities of disabilities and needs? As we all know, connection is key. So forming that genuine equal and respectful connection with young people in their families is vital.

It's about making sure that learning communities, your policies are up to date and that inclusive policies are also core to this. It's about recognising and removing barriers to participation by young people and families. And I've really just want to finish off in a couple of quotes that I love Brené Brown. She states in some of her diversity research that she's done. She states that, "we must be guardians of spaces that allow students to breathe, to be curious, and to explore." And the other quote that I really love also, she talks about, she says, "we should never underestimate the benefits to a child of having a place to belong even one where they can take off their armour and it can often change the path of their life."

I want to move on to the next part of our segment, and I'm absolutely thrilled and excited to introduce you to Daniel Riley. Now Daniel Riley has worked in schools in Hampton Park, Frankston North and Scotland before his current principal role at Dandenong Primary School. He holds a bachelor and master's degree in education and is passionate about equity, excellence, and achievement outcomes and serves Australia's number one most cultural diverse community in Dandenong. Now hold your horses before we get to this next best part we're going to show you a fantastic video from Dandenong Primary School. And it's, this really does show us diversity in action.

(GUITAR MUSIC PLAYS – VIDEO PLAYS)

DANIEL RILEY:

The more we celebrate diversity, the more we learn and then therefore other opportunities sort of come from that.

ALI:

It's wonderful 'cause everyone gets to join in and everyone is counted and everyone is equal and there's no one really left out.

CHIAMAKA:

I like that everyone's from different cultures, but I've never heard anyone say anything mean about someone else's culture.

EVA SUKMAR:

When there are opportunities given for children to actually share through food or through conversations or through dress when we have those special days, it actually makes them have a better self esteem. And to say that I am different, but I'm proud of who I represent or the country that I represent and that really uplifts them. And they really feel that they are recognised and they actually have a place in our school.

DANIEL RILEY:

From a mental health and mental well being perspective. I think it's really important to feel like you belong.

ROD MARTINEZ:

A lot of the cultures, you know, mental health isn't, isn't really talked about, it's kind of like hidden under the rug or it's frowned upon in a way. And I feel like us just being open to them and, you know, being very welcoming to them and giving them a platform for them to come and express themselves any worries or any difficulties they're experiencing. You know, I think that that in itself speaks enough.

AHALYA:

When we reach a place where there's a lot of diversity in culture. We definitely feel happier in ourselves, you know.

DANIEL RILEY:

We have parents from a whole range of cultures who come in and make use of things like English language classes we run, we have different sort of activity type groups, whether it be sort of sewing or we have a really, quite a big play group that takes place. And I guess these are sort of really structured programs, but the incidental sort of things that take place within those programs are really important for the parents here as far as building community and building friendships.

MARZIA:

We discuss our ideas. We share our ideas with each other, and you don't hesitate to say something if you have any issue, it's like home to us.

YASEMIN YESIL:

One of my favourite things that we do here is definitely harmony day. Harmony day is a colourful sea of costumes from every culture and just kids with these bright smiles on their faces, walking around, so proud to show off their cultures. And also we've looked a lot into Indigenous art as well, which is really important. So the kids know that, you know, living here, these are the roots that they're connecting to now.

HINA:

The good thing is on the open day I saw my son's teacher that they see hello to the students in their own language.

DANIEL RILEY:

I like to think that the children who are coming through this school will then accept that there's a whole range of cultures, a whole range of beliefs, and we can live together and function together and learn from each other and make life so much richer for that experience.

(END VIDEO)

## Yasmin Knight

Welcome back everybody. I hope you thoroughly enjoyed that video. I know I've seen it several times and I just can't help myself just going back and looking at it over and over again. So as promised, we've got Daniel Riley here for you, from Dandenong Primary School and Daniel, thank you so much for being here with us today. Hannah and I are super excited that you're here. So first of all, let's kick off, let's please tell us a bit about Dandenong Primary School.

## Daniel Riley

Yeah. So by the way, it's an absolute pleasure to be here, so thank you for the invitation. So yeah, I'm the principal of Dandenong Primary School, which is located in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. And at the last national census Dandenong became known as Australia's number one most culturally diverse community. So that was a time for us to celebrate because you know, we are a very diverse community and to hold that title as Australia's number one, that's something that we cherish and absolutely celebrate. But yeah, we have students and families from right across the world, incredibly diverse. And our staff too, just as almost equally diverse as the students and families that we serve.

So a lot of our teachers speak a whole range of languages from Dari to Senegalese, Hindi, Sudanese, Arabic, Greek, Italian, etc, etc. There are a whole host of languages. So it really is a really exciting place in which to learn and teach. And I've been there now for coming up to five years and prior to there, I was working in a, I guess, still a reasonably diverse community down in Frankston, but stepping into Dandenong it's been a whole 'nother world and it's been absolutely amazing and still been there for five years, but still learning each and every day in how we can best serve our culturally diverse community. So it really is a special place and an exciting place to learn and teach.

## Yasmin Knight

Wonderful. Thank you. How did you gather information about culture and cultural resources in your community?

## Daniel Riley

Yeah, I think the one of the really important basic daily things I do is get out at the school gate and greet people in different languages. So sort of say Salam to our a lot of our Afghan families as they come through the gate and then Namaste for lots of our Hindu families. And I think that's a starting point just reaching out and saying, hello, learning to greet people in their home language, I think, or I like to think it makes them feel welcomed into our school community and often they'll get, you know, greet me with a big smile, if I, when I greet them in the morning in their home language.

So I think, you know, that first port of call it, just making that initial connection through greeting people in their home language and which shows that you value you know, their community and their culture. So getting out to the school gate every morning is something I do and also in the afternoons waving people goodbye. I learned how to say goodbye, and I hope I get this right, in Dari just recently, which is

khodahafez. So I say that to the families as they leave as well. And sometimes if they've, if they've not familiar with me and I sort of come out and say that I often get quite a big smile from the families, which is great.

But I think any opportunity to gather information about the community we sort of seize, and I guess we do a lot of listening and that's probably the short answer to how we gather information. We listen a lot to our families and we provide opportunities for the families to come into the school and to let us know what's important to them, some of the challenges that they face, you know, and just their experiences from where they've come from and to where they are now in the Dandenong community. We have a whole range of community service providers as well. Places like the City of Greater Dandenong Council, has been quite amazing. We have the Southern Migrant Resource Centre for our refugees as well. And we also work pretty closely, we have a, what's called a community hub in our school, which is in partnership with Community Hubs Australia. And that's a real gathering place for our families.

And, you know, we like to think that they feel quite welcome and safe in that space. And so we do a lot of information gathering through there and some of it's, you know, formalised sort of information gathering like surveys and things like that. But a lot of it is just the incidental sort of listening along the way and learning. We have a lot of guest speakers that come through the community hub. And I guess when there's certain things happening around the larger community, like when it comes election time, we might invite someone from the Victorian or Australian Electoral Commission into the school with an interpreter and or interpreters, and they'll talk and give information to our families through that. And that's another information gathering exercise as well, because then we sort of start to hear well what information do families need in order to participate fully in our community.

So getting in those guest speakers and having translators available to help build the bridge between the school and the families we serve is really important. We have lots of community events across the school as well, and we've just had Harmony Day in the recent last week. And to us given how diverse our community is, Harmony Day's sort of is our biggest celebration through the year. That's the big event for us. So we have a whole lot of children and families come in and we all celebrate together and that's another opportunity to hear from the families and listen, and hopefully gather the information we need in order to serve them to the best of our abilities.

### Yasmin Knight

Some beautiful examples there. Thank you, Daniel. What have been some of the key challenges that you faced in promoting cultural inclusion?

### Daniel Riley

Yeah, so I guess some of the key challenges, or one of the big ones is, I guess, ensuring or making sure we're hearing as many voices as possible or hearing all voices. You know, some families can be disconnected or isolated within the community and we don't know what we don't know. So trying to figure out how to reach out to those families becomes a key challenge. A big key challenge is language barriers, but of course we make use of interpreters, and we're often on the telephone to the interpreter service for a sort of on the fly interpreting. But you know, we've got staff in the school as well, who we're calling on all the time to help us sort of get around any language barriers. So that's really quite important.

Another key challenge I guess, is recognising that we, we may sort of bring unconscious biases to the work that we do. So being open to feedback and hearing what it is that we might be missing or the biases that we might be taking the situations, that's a challenge as well. And then of course, there's the competing forces of, you know, money and time and if we had all the time in the world, we'd like to think we could do some amazing things with our community, but they are some of the key challenges.

### Yasmin Knight

Lovely. Thank you. By the sounds of it, you've done an absolute wonderful job in getting through those key challenges, which can be quite daunting at times for community, I'm sure .

## Daniel Riley

Yeah, it can be, but I think, you know, we're very open to learning and we're always learning together and it's quite a dynamic community. It's pretty transient, so we've often got different groups coming in and out of the school, so yeah, we're always learning together it never stops. Yeah. And that's part of the fun.

## Yasmin Knight

Wonderful.

## Hannah Jamieson

One of the challenges, Daniel, I'm wondering how 2020 was for you, obviously we're based in Victoria, where there was quite a lot of disruption, I suppose, to normal schooling, how was last year for you and the diverse community in Dandenong?

## Daniel Riley

Yeah, well, it was incredibly challenging, as it was I think right across Victoria, especially, but of course, across the world. So you know, we have a lot of, we had to support a lot of families through the provision of devices so that when we remove, when we moved into that period of remote and flexible learning, which for us was most of term two and then all of term three. So we're talking nearly half the year. We had to supply around a third of our families with devices. So iPads and computers and internet dongles, so that they could access the learning and teaching that we were providing. You know, there was a whole lot of material aid that we supplied to families through that period too. So emergency food packages, we have sort of ongoing support from some agencies like One Box and Foodbank and The Smith Family and that became really critical as far as, you know, meeting the basic needs of our community as well. So yeah, it was a challenging time, but again, we learned so much together through that and I think it's brought us all closer together, which holds us in really good stead for the future, I think.

## Hannah Jamieson

There was a lovely story Daniel, if you don't mind me sharing when I was speaking to you the other day around the toy library and that one of the things you came back to your point around, we don't know what we don't know, was around, how you can distribute toys from the toy library, and also then help your parent and carer community around like safely sanitising and returning them. And that lovely story about a staff member, was it, or a parent who helped translate the cleaning instructions? I thought that was a wonderful example.

## Daniel Riley

Yeah. So that was one of our parents. And again, that's another resource that we sort of tap into, of course, is our parents. Who do have the language skills to then help us make, build bridges with other families. But yeah, that was, you know, the toy library work through COVID, was yeah, quite interesting. So we, you know, we made sure we got as many resources from within the school, out into the community because they were no good sitting locked up in the school for half the year.

## Hannah Jamieson

And I think that really speaks to the relationships, you know, and earlier Yasmin you mentioned partnerships that you know, that parents know they can contribute to the safety and the learning of the whole community. I think that's so powerful. So thank you for sharing that.

## Daniel Riley

Yeah, pleasure.

## Yasmin Knight

I think perhaps you might've kind of answered my next question, Daniel, but the question was, how do you leverage some of these challenges into opportunities?

## Daniel Riley

Yeah, well, again, I think it's, doing whatever possible to engage with the community and find out what their needs and wants are and receiving feedback around the, you know, the work that we do do and always striving to be improving on that. So yeah, just engaging with the community and trying to work together, work out and learn together how to leverage some of those challenges into opportunities. Of course, there's lots of practical things like translation of materials, as well, but yeah, I think, you know, when we meet challenges and when things come up, it's, we're often learning together about the best way forward and that comes through in just engaging with the families.

## Yasmin Knight

Yeah. Beautiful. Thank you. And just to finish off on one more final question is, what's a piece of advice for schools that are starting their diversity journey, what kind of advice would you give them?

## Daniel Riley

Yeah, so a couple of, I guess, really practical, easy things that you could do tomorrow, if you're not already, of course, but you know, we do make a point of getting out to the gate every morning and greeting people face to face. Farewelling them at the end of the day, that's just been really powerful in building that sense of welcome in the community and hopefully a sense of the community being a safe place for people to be. I think finding any opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity as well is really important. And I guess a little while ago now I sort of started, I started like a standing calendar in our newsletter of important community events and celebrations that are important to the whole cross section of our community.

And that that calendar is, you know, has become bigger from just a couple of small events here and there through, there's, you know, something almost every day that we're celebrating in our community. And we've got a little thing at the bottom of the calendar to say if there's something important that your family or your community celebrates that's not reflected in this calendar, let us know. So that's always being built on and, you know, it just helps us to understand just how diverse the population is and what, you know, different events and celebrations, what they mean to various sections of the community. And that way we can celebrate together as well, and really acknowledge the diverse community that we do serve.

## Yasmin Knight

And I just love that quote, you just said that, you know, that open door policy, like, you know, coming in your learning as well as a community and people to come in and to say, hey, look, we'd love you to have this put in as regards to, you know, for our diversity culture kind of celebrating. I love that. That's absolutely fantastic. Thank you, Daniel. Thank you so much.

## Daniel Riley

Absolute pleasure.

## Yasmin Knight

Hope everyone enjoyed that as well, as much as Hannah and I did. Thank you, Daniel.

## Daniel Riley

Thank you. Can I just say if anyone's out there and wants to get in touch or you know, see anything else that we're doing at Dandenong Primary School feel free, we're very open to, we love hearing from other people and hearing what they're up to as well. Yeah, so thank you.

## Yasmin Knight

Lovely. Thank you.

## Hannah Jamieson

Thank you so much, Daniel, and for being so accommodating and so open as well, and also for all of the wonderful work that you do for Dandenong's community. From this I'm really encouraging educators out

there now to think about some of the current practises that we're implementing in our classroom or in our learning community, generally. The first thing, and I thought it was really interesting that we finished off talking to Daniel around pieces of advice and small pieces of advice. And I think the really powerful thing to take away from what Daniel said is just to start, is to get started somewhere if you're not already.

I think one of the things though that I'd like to encourage educators to think about is that when we think about this huge topic of diversity, it can feel quite overwhelming. And so I want you to start out by thinking about the things that you already do. We know that there are things in your school that you may not be aware that you're doing, which are so inclusive of other communities or cultures or practices.

So the first thing I'd really encourage you to do, is to think about the things that you already do. Next thing is to think about some of the future practices that you might consider. And I'm thinking from today, and from speaking to Daniel, to think about whether there's anything there that you'd like to pinch any ideas that you think work really well. I know that all of the communities across Australia will have different, their own different versions around what diversity looks like in their own communities. And so to think about what fits best for your community. We heard from Daniel as well about the importance of relationships, not just when we're going through something like COVID-19, but then just in the every day, in that power for people to know, the principal knows me, he's able to speak to me in my language, in whatever small part it may be.

But to actually know that that the principal is someone who's approachable and to break down, I suppose, some of those ideas around principal as an authority figure as well, I think is really, really powerful. So when we think about deepening our practice, that can be around connecting with families. And I love that idea Yasmin earlier, where you said to talk about drawing your understanding or sharing your family. And I think that that's really important that we don't come in with those biases that Daniel spoke about, that we don't make assumptions about what our family, community groups look like. I think something that's really important as well is to think about how the voices of young people are heard. I really encourage you to start having a look through some of the Be You resources. The Be You website is a wonderful sort of goldmine, I suppose, so to speak, of resources that you can have a look at.

And don't forget that there's also Be You consultants across Australia who are able to work with your school or your early learning setting around what implementing Be You in your own school or early learning centre. And finally Daniel mentioned around Harmony Day, and I know that that's not the only celebration, but really celebrating difference, modelling to our young people that difference is something to be respected, to be curious about and to be really inclusive of. So really encourage you, first of all, when you think about your current practice and your future practice, celebrate the things you're doing now, and be really excited about the possibilities. And don't forget that, that your Be You journey, and your journey on increasing inclusion in your community isn't something that you have to do by yourself.

So when we talk about inclusive and welcoming steps in your community, something that I heard from another school that I work with in Victoria was this idea around a learning walk. It may seem small, but I love this idea about going and walking around your school community, might be yourself, you might like to bring a parent or a carer, or some young people, or maybe just you and some other staff members, and just be really curious. Walk around your school as if it's something that you haven't seen before. Where are those visual cues in your community that people are welcome? That they are included. Where are there things for example, signposting around where to go to?

Who can I get help from? What is there that's implicit in your school website that might have maybe some Harmony Day activities or the contact for somebody like our parent resource centre that Daniel was talking about? So really having a look, not a critical look, but just a curious look at your school and how it might be, what areas of inclusion you might look to include? And I love that idea from Daniel around listen, that it can be as simple and yet as powerful around, just listen. We don't know what we don't know. I love that idea.

So let's go to the polls. I'd love to hear from the audience at this stage. And also while you're on there, if anybody has any questions that you might like to throw to Daniel as well, feel free also, there's a chat function, if you'd like to put any questions in there around diversity and inclusion. But at the moment, you'll see a poll up on your screen, and our poll question, oops, I went, is I'd like you to have a bit of a think now after this session or during this session, our poll statement is, I feel that I'm able to take some small steps to enhance inclusion in my learning community. And so you'll see there, you can put down how you're feeling at the moment around enhancing inclusion.



Is this something that you're raring to go? Is this something that you are keen to get started on, or is it something you are still feeling a bit unsure about at the moment? And I'm very pleased to say early, very early, incredibly over half of the people are voting that they feel very strongly that they are able to start enhancing inclusion in the learning community as well. Absolutely. So while we're having a look at this and I'll just check if we have any questions as well. There's a question here, Daniel, about refugee communities in your school. How do you work specifically with your refugee communities?

Daniel Riley

Yeah, so I guess it depends on the needs of the particular communities, but often we will have refugee families who come into the school who may have experienced trauma so one important thing that we sort of need to look at is what mental health supports we can put in place for children and families and we're lucky enough to have foundation house just down the road from us in Dandenong and that becomes a really powerful resource as far as meeting those mental health needs of those families and I guess just often you know, our refugee families might even be sort of struggling to put food on the table sometimes so tapping into those different agencies in the local area who can provide food and material aid to those families is really important and even things like working through you know, the bureaucracy I guess as far as enrolling in a school or working out how to get a healthcare card or any of those sorts of things we almost sort of case manage families as well and you know, to provide them with as much support as we can. So yeah and that's where the... the translators too are really critical at that point because often the new arrivals have very limited English so yeah they're some other ways that we work to support the refugee families

Hannah Jamieson

Excellent. Another question. I'll throw a few questions at you. Do you have any strategies for engaging with families who are not already involved in the school? So families that might've been a bit removed from the school?

Daniel Riley

Yeah, that's a really great question. It's one of the more challenging things I think is tapping into those families who are really isolated or choose to be isolated or the you know, for whatever reason. So sometimes we might approach other members of the community and sort of... and you know, who we know might be friends of those families as well just to find out if there's different ways that we can support them to feel welcome into the school. A lot of it too is through the... I think through if we can engage the children and get them excited about coming to the school for different events that's often a way to you know, get the families in for the first time and then we sort of lavish them with our welcoming arms and let them know that we're here for them and then we can start to find out what we can do to support them and to get them as engaged as possible. But yeah it is...it is challenging with the families who are you know, quite isolated.

Hannah Jamieson

Yeah, absolutely. And I suppose it's try, try, try again, isn't it? You know, it may not be the first time but they know that that door is open, don't they? That they're welcome when they're ready. Absolutely. What are some practical respectful ways to include minorities within diverse communities?

Daniel Riley

Practical sorry?

Hannah Jamieson

Sorry, practical respectful ways.

Daniel Riley

Yeah, I think you know learning say to hello in their language is you know, is quite a practical way and because it just demonstrates that you value their language and culture. So I think that's a bit of a first step and I guess you know, finding ways where you can build connections between that particular family and maybe other families as well and if it is a small minority that can be challenging because there might only be a couple of families from a particular cultural part of the world but just finding whatever way that you can

to sort of show them that you're gonna celebrate their culture is really important and you know, could be as simple as we use social media quite a lot so Facebook and Instagram and if there's particular events that are coming up that might be important for one particular culture even though it might be quite a small culture within the school we still make sure we celebrate that as much as we would with the more mainstream sort of families or cultures in the school as well.

### Hannah Jamieson

And I think every time that you show you know, that you're flexible and willing to be adaptable as well. I was thinking about when I was teaching and we had a big Harmony Day celebration and we had, in secondary school sometimes some of you may know, parents might be or parents and carers maybe a bit more removed from being involved in the day-to-day activities at a school when you're dealing with teenagers but we had a parent from the Sikh community who was very, very keen to be part of our food stalls and it was just around negotiating or making sure that he felt comfortable that he wanted to be on the food stalls that were vegetarian because that was aligning with his cultural values. And so even just something... A very small step around being flexible and responsive and respectful to their needs I think that's something just small and very powerful that you can do as well. Just a question about ways to be inclusive of families and children with disabilities. Would you do something similar as you've described previously around listening, being inclusive. Anything particularly to add?

### Daniel Riley

No, I think the key thing there is listening and finding out well what outcomes would they like from their participation in the school and community? You know, we've had children with disabilities in the school that we've sort of had to work out different ways to meet their needs whether it's sort of physical disabilities or otherwise. So yeah I think the main thing is listening and finding out well what's gonna be key to them being engaged as much as possible in the community.

### Hannah Jamieson

Yeah, absolutely. I think another one definitely is around pre-preparation I suppose if you will. So, for myself transition to high school can be very... You know, it can be a bit tricky for some families whether or not they have a young person with a disability or not and so for myself one of the things that was really helpful was around inviting young people in prior to the start of the school year and that might be around negotiating with the families about a classroom that might be best placed for the young person whether that's desk placement, equipment, changes to lockers all those sorts of things that might be needed.

I'll share with you both one of the really powerful things for me was when I was teaching was I was teaching a young blind girl who was making her transition into secondary school and one of the first things that... And this has always stayed with me was I spoke to her mum and I said what is it that you would like this young person to get out of her high school experience? And the thing that she wanted was for her young person to be independent because she knew that in a few years this young person would be out in the job market. She would be an independent young person who would be going to the movies or would be going shopping with her friends and so for her it was about independence. And so my preconceived ideas around what she might've wanted were very different and it was really important to listen as well.

OK, so thank you so much. I will do a final check of our polling results. I am so pleased to say that the overwhelming majority feel that they can do something now, a small step to enhance inclusion in their learning community. I think that that is something that we need to congratulate ourselves on as educators that we feel there's something that we can do that we're empowered because I think it's really important that we feel we can take a step from here. So Be You what is there that we can look at to help increase our knowledge of diversity? I really encourage you first of all to be really curious about the Be You website. There's a lot on there and I encourage you to have a bit of a play, have a look around.

There's a wonderful search function on it as well. So there's some, in the middle we have mentally healthy communities domain and you can see that there's an include module and that's really about embracing diversity in your community and Daniel, I think your video might even feature there. So some of the things you can see in there are the principles around inclusion. So the core principles. There's also some really great things there around attitudes and barriers to diversity and that might include things such as discrimination, racism and how we can do things to combat those.

There's also discussion around diversity of experience and I think some of the questions we've had today talking about a wider range of inclusion around disability is part of that and it's really awesome. And then like Daniel's example there's some other really wonderful examples of inclusive schools across Australia. So, wrapping up, there's a lot to look at on the Be You domain. I beg your pardon on the Be You website. I really encourage you to register for Be You at [beyou.edu.au](http://beyou.edu.au) I also encourage you if you're a social media person to get onto Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook and follow Be You there. It is a really good chance on the social media channels to have a look and see what other schools are doing.

There's some really wonderful up-to-date stories and resources and I also encourage you, on the Be You website there is an events page where like our session today there are a number of professional learning sessions as well on a range of different topics for both schools and early learning services. And don't forget as well that you have a Be You consultant who is there to stay alongside you to walk that journey with you and also because the consultants work with a wide range of schools they work with schools where they might be able to share ideas and really help guide you on that journey. So a couple of things to finish off.

Please take time to reflect on the quick wins in your community. Those things that you're already doing. I encourage you to talk among your team of other teachers or educators around your goals for the future for what you would like to achieve. Think big picture but then also start with taking one small step. I know it's the end of a very long term so you might like to spend some time now thinking about what term two might look like for you and don't forget the website and the consultants are there for you and help support you. I wanted to say a massive thank you to Daniel Riley from Dandenong Primary School and really I know this is the end of a really long-term and a very busy past year and a bit I think so thank you so much for being here.

### Daniel Riley

Absolute pleasure. Thank you very much.

### Hannah Jamieson

Thanks and on behalf of Yasmin and myself thank you very much for being part and Daniel to take inspiration from you I'm conscious that over the coming holidays, there are people in the community who are celebrating not only Easter, but also Passover and Holi. So I wish all those people very wonderful festivals. Thank you very much and have a wonderful afternoon.

### Yasmin Knight

Thank you.