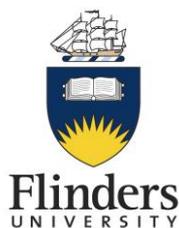


**FLINDERS UNIVERSITY**  
ADELAIDE • AUSTRALIA



*Flinders Human Behaviour & Health Research Unit*

## ***Releasing Children's Shining Potential***

**Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of  
primary school children through Journeywork**

***Journey into Schools Report***  
**August 2010**

### **Recommendations**

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## Chapter 13

### Recommendations

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The recommendations arising from this research are presented under five strategic areas:

1. Teacher education
2. Community education
3. Accessibility of wellbeing programs
4. Conduct of wellbeing programs
5. Further research

#### 13.1 Teacher education

A brief review of teacher education curricula shows that health and wellbeing units form part of undergraduate teacher education degrees. However, evidence from this study suggests that teachers are looking for innovative ways to manage the often challenging behaviours of some of their primary school children.

##### **Recommendation 1:**

**That undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and continuing professional education programs for teachers include wellbeing programs such as Journeywork.**

As a social and emotional wellbeing program, Journeywork includes easy to use strategies and tools that can be taught to student teachers and then integrated into their daily teaching practices both in the classroom, schoolyard and in communication and engagement with parents.

#### 13.2 Community education

From the commencement of recruitment through to the completion of this study, it was difficult to engage parents, teachers and other school staff.

##### **Recommendation 2:**

**That prior to commencement of wellbeing programs teachers and school staff learn and engage with the strategies and tools being taught to children, and where at all possible, a wide range of strategies for engaging parents be pursued.**

This recommendation is in line with the *KidsMatter* framework which encourages whole of community engagement.

### 13.3 Accessibility of wellbeing programs

As highlighted by the school Principal and Wellbeing Coordinator, their school had already commenced implementing wellbeing strategies through involvement of some of their teachers. However, they were looking for additional ideas and more formal programs. In doing so, they welcomed the opportunity to participate in this study and the Journey Program. The issue that remained however was funding for ongoing assistance and implementation of wellbeing programs. Reports from other Journey practitioners around Australia who are also conducting Journeywork in schools reveals that while schools welcomed them, the majority do so on a voluntary basis.

**Recommendation 3:**

**That specific funding is made available and easily accessible to schools to conduct wellbeing programs such as Journeywork programs.**

It is acknowledged that the *KidsMatter* web site provides a *Programs Guide* and that the *KidsMatter* strategy provides some funding to schools for implementation of wellbeing programs.

### 13.4 Conduct of wellbeing programs

Evidence from this study suggests that children's attendance in wellbeing programs is an 'add-on' subject rather than being part of the core school curriculum, to be attended by all students.

**Recommendation 4:**

**That wellbeing programs be included as core curriculum subjects to be attended by all children.**

Wellbeing programs such as Journeywork teach children skills such as self and social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management and relationship skills and as such need to be part of the core school curriculum. By learning skills of resilience, children will be better placed to learn other subjects such a mathematics, English and art.

### 13.5 Further research

There are a number of ways of implementing and conducting Journeywork, therefore further research is required with larger samples of children, preferably with a control group for comparison.

**Recommendation 5:**

**That the Department of Health and Ageing, in collaboration with *beyondblue* continue to fund research into new and innovative wellbeing programs such as Journeywork programs.**

It is acknowledged that the Australian government in collaboration with *beyondblue* and the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund have already committed much needed

funding to the development of a wellbeing framework and development of programs; it is important that this commitment continues.