

Response

ABILITY

Students' Resources for Teacher Education

Student Material: Case Study One: Vince

- Aim** To challenge student teachers to broadly consider possible responses to mental health issues in the school community.
- Contents** This material is structured around Five [Questions](#) relating to a scenario about Vince, a school student who appears to be in need of additional support. Under each question there are several suggested activities to aid you in exploring the issue, which you might do alone or in a group. Your lecturer may ask you to complete certain activities as part of your assessment, or in preparation for a tutorial discussion. A list of suggested [Resources](#) is provided, and you should also refer to *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*, which is part of this package and is available on CD-ROM or the Internet.
- Scenario:** You are an English teacher at a large secondary school. It is finally Friday, the end of a hectic week in Term 3. Before lunch, you have the chance to mark some of the work that was submitted by one of your classes last Monday. You had asked your school students to write in any form they choose about the concept of strength or weakness.
- Note:** This scenario is available on video and CD-ROM
- Vince, one of your students who transferred here from another school a few months ago, has submitted a poem. You've noticed that Vince has trouble making friends and spends a lot of time on his own. He was also very close to his older brother, who did not accompany his family when they moved. As you read his poem, you become worried and increasingly uncomfortable. What begins as a fairly 'dark' piece of writing ends with the statement 'so I choose to die instead.' Later, in the staff room, you notice the art teacher showing other staff members a particular piece of artwork which is very creative, but rather gloomy. As you look at the work over another teacher's shoulder, you ask whose painting it is. The response brings back your earlier concerns when the other teacher tells you that the piece was submitted by Vince.

This case study can be explored using the following five questions.

Your lecturer or tutor may ask you to complete selected questions or activities, or to read some of this material in preparation for a tutorial discussion. You may also like to explore these materials yourself, in the interests of becoming a caring and effective teacher. You can go straight to a particular question by clicking on the hyperlink on the left.

The activities suggested are not in any particular order; they are designed to stand alone, so you can move in and out of each question as you wish. Because of this flexibility you may notice some overlap and similarities between activities and themes. However, care has been taken to include a variety of activities, with reflective tasks, written exercises and role-plays.

Case Study Questions:

- Question 1:** Vince has had a number of recent changes in his life. What social and cultural factors in a young person's background may impact upon their mental health or their resilience?
- Question 2:** You have heard that there may be some problems within Vince's family. How might parental or family issues affect the mental health of a young person?
- Question 3:** How can you best respond to a school student like Vince who may have some sort of mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression?
- Question 4:** Perhaps there are particular skills, knowledge or attitudes which might help school students like Vince. Can the school curriculum or classroom strategies be used to promote mental health?
- Question 5:** Both Vince and his school are also part of a broader community. How can partnerships with the wider community help schools to promote mental health?

Suggested Resources for Case Study One

The main resource you will need is:

Hunter Institute of Mental Health (2001). *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*, on the Response Ability CD-ROM resources, and reference materials on the Internet at www.responseability.org

Other resources:

AusEinet: Australian Network for Promotion, prevention and Early intervention for Mental Health (2001). *Mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention: What's it all about?* [Summary sheets]. Internet: <http://auseinet.flinders.edu.au>

Benard, B. (1995) *Fostering Resilience in Children*. Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED386327. Internet: www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests

Benard, B. (1997) *Turning it around for all Youth: From risk to resilience*. Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED412309. Internet: www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests

Child and Youth Health, South Australia. [Fact Sheets]. Internet: www.cyh.sa.gov.au and go to Youth Health, then Healthy Mind.

Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (1995). *Ways Forward - National Consultancy Report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health*. Internet: www.mentalhealth.gov.au and go to Publications & Resources

Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (2000). *Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health: A monograph*. Internet: Go to publications and Resources at www.mentalhealth.gov.au

Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. (2000). *MindMatters: A Mental Health Promotion Resource for Secondary Schools* [kit]. Internet: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters

Commonwealth Government of Australia. *Health Insite* [web site]. Note - presents facts and web links about a range of health topics. Internet: www.healthinsite.gov.au

Your lecturer may ask you to do certain activities in this case study, or you might like to work through them yourself or with others.

You will find these resources useful for the case study, or to help you prepare for tutorials or research assignments.

Suggested Resources for Case Study One (continued)

Your lecturer may ask you to do certain activities in this case study, or you might like to work through them yourself or with others.

You will find these resources useful for the case study, or to help you prepare for tutorials or research assignments.

Davis, et al (2000). *Early Intervention in the Mental Health of Young People: A literature review*. South Australia: Australian Early Intervention Network for Mental Health in Young People. Internet: Go to Publications, Auseinet at <http://auseinet.flinders.edu.au>

Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth and Dobbins (1988). *Teaching Challenges and Dilemmas*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace. Pages 196-210

Kelly, JB. (2000). Children's adjustment in conflicted marriage and divorce: A decade review of research. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, Vol 39, Number 8, Pages 963-973.

Mullen, PE and Fleming, J. (1998). Long-term Effects of Child Sexual Abuse. *Issues in Child Abuse Prevention, Number 9, 1998*. Internet: go to Publications/Articles at <http://aifs32.aifs.org.au/nch>

ReachOut! [website]. *Presents information for young people on a range of topics relating to health and mental health*. Sydney: The Inspire Foundation. Internet: <http://www.reachout.asn.au>

Sawyer, et al (2000). *Mental Health of Young People in Australia: The child and adolescent component of the National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing*. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, mental Health and Special programs Branch. Internet: Go to Publications & Resources at www.mentalhealth.gov.au

Steingart, S.K. *School Psychology Online* [web site]. *Presents information for teachers, parents and others about psychology issues relevant in schools*. Baltimore, U.S. Internet: www.schoolpsychology.net

Tomison, A. and Tucci, J (1997). Emotional abuse: The hidden form of maltreatment. *Issues in Child Abuse Prevention Number 8 Spring 1997*. Internet: go to Publications/Articles at <http://aifs32.aifs.org.au/nch>

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Question 1:

Vince has had a number of recent changes in his life. What social and cultural factors in a young person's background may impact upon their mental health or their resilience?

Learning Goals

By completing this question, you will gain an understanding of:

- definitions of mental health and mental illness ([Activity One](#))
- the concept of Resilience in mental health ([Activity Two](#))
- the influence of adolescence on Resilience and Mental Health ([Activity Three](#))
- how a school student's cultural background may impact on Resilience ([Activity Four](#))
- how a school student's personal and social background may impact on Resilience ([Activity Five](#))

Question One

Write down ten to twenty words that come to mind when you hear the term 'mental health.' Then, by consulting some of the recommended resources, define the following terms:

Activity One

Understanding Mental Health

1. mental health
2. mental health problem
3. mental illness

There are a number of myths and stereotypes associated with mental health or illness, and this misunderstanding often leads to stigma against people with these problems. Now that you have explored some definitions, how many of the words from your first list reflect these stereotypes or misconceptions? How many of your words really related more to mental *illness* than to mental *health*? You might find the *Risk and Resilience* resource helpful (www.responseability.org), or you might look at Chapter One of the report *Promotion, prevention and early intervention for mental health: A Monograph*. (www.mentalhealth.gov.au).

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Question One

A term known as Resilience is often used in discussions of young people's mental health. What do you think this concept might mean?

Activity Two

Consult some of the suggested resources and construct a more formal definition of Resilience. You may wish to refer to the *Enhancing Resilience* modules of the MindMatters kit (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters), or to *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*, or other resources and links on the Response Ability website (www.responseability.org). The two articles listed by Benard will also be helpful. These are available at http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests - see [ED386327](#) and [ED412309](#).

Understanding Resilience

Reflect for a moment on your own schooling: what made you feel good about yourself, or more resilient? Now, from your reading, list at least three factors which have been shown to improve young people's Resilience. Think about how each of these could be used or promoted in the school setting. What is the relationship between Resilience and Mental Health?

Question One

You have spoken to another teacher about your concerns for Vince's wellbeing. He says 'all teenagers are like that' and that adolescence is a time of change and emotional turmoil for most kids. His opinion is that you shouldn't worry about Vince as he is just 'being a teenager'.

Activity Three

List some of the major developmental changes which occur in adolescence, in terms of physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural changes. How might you differentiate between 'normal' adolescence and a young person having serious mental health problems?

The impact of Adolescence

Based on what you know about Vince and his situation, do you agree with your colleague that you shouldn't worry about Vince? Why or why not? Is there any other information that might help you make a decision? If so, how might you find out more?

You may find the resource *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health* helpful (www.responseability.org). You could also review some of the information on websites about health and mental health, which sometimes include information about adolescence.

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Question One

In your reading and discussion with peers and community groups you have come to recognise the importance of resilience in preventing mental health problems. If Vince belonged to each of the following groups, list things which might make him more vulnerable to mental health or emotional problems, and things which might make him more resilient.

Activity Four

Culturally inclusive mental health activities

- living in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- living in a remote community
- living in poverty

You may find the *Ways Forward* document about Aboriginal mental health helpful and you may also wish to look at Chapter Six of the resource *Promotion, prevention and early intervention for mental health: A monograph* (both available at www.mentalhealth.gov.au).

By drawing on some of the ideas in the *Enhancing Resilience* modules from the MindMatters kit (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters), develop (or adapt) an activity which would promote resilience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students.

Question One

One of the factors which has been shown to enhance Resilience in young people is a sense of personal connection.

Activity Five

Personal factors affecting Resilience

You can read more about this in the articles by Benard (see [ED386327](#) and [ED412309](#) at http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests) or in the *Enhancing Resilience* and *School Matters* materials from the MindMatters kit (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters).

Make a list of all the connections which might be important in a young person's life, including connections to people, schools, clubs or other groups. It may help to reflect on your own adolescence.

Now consider what you know about Vince's personal situation. What connections might be significant in his life? In what ways might Vince's sense of connection have been challenged or compromised? Is there anything a teacher or school could do to address some of these issues of connection with Vince?

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Question 2:

You have heard that there may be some problems within Vince's family. How might parental or family issues affect the mental health of a young person?

Learning Goals

By completing this question, you will gain an understanding of:

- the possible impact of family breakdown on the mental health of a young person ([Activity One](#))
- the possible links between parental mental illness and the mental health of school students ([Activity Two](#))
- working with parents in promoting mental health in school students ([Activity Three](#))
- the impact of abuse on the mental health of young people (Activities [Four](#) and [Five](#))

Question Two

You have become aware that Vince's parents have been having marital problems, and you wonder if this is part of the reason for Vince's distance from others and his possible emotional problems.

Activity One

Family Breakdown and Mental Health

Make a list of the feelings young people face when their family is affected by parental conflict, separation or divorce. You could look at the *Family Breakdown* fact sheet on the Youth Health website from South Australia (www.cyh.sa.gov.au), or the *Family Break-up* fact sheet from the Reach Out website ([www.http://www.reachout.asn.au](http://www.reachout.asn.au)), for a perspective on young people's issues in these situations.

For a more academic treatment of the subject, including a review of recent research, consider the article by Kelly, from the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

What can you do, as Vince's classroom teacher, to help him find appropriate support if he needs it?

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Question Two

In a discussion with Vince's mother you find out that Vince's father has a history of mental illness, specifically bipolar mood disorder. With tablets and professional support, he has been well for a while now, but in the past the illness was very disruptive for Vince's family. This causes Vince's mother some concern, since she wonders about the effects on Vince and the possibility that he might inherit the illness.

Activity Two

Parental Mental Illness

What is Bipolar Mood Disorder, and what are the main symptoms?
In what ways might this illness have affected Vince's family?
In what ways might this situation affect Vince?
Is Bipolar Mood Disorder hereditary?
Do you think this information would change your feelings or behaviour toward Vince? If so, how?

You may find the module *Understanding Mental Illnesses* from the MindMatters kit helpful (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters), or you could also look at some of the health information websites suggested in the resource section.

Question Two

After your discovery of Vince's poem and artwork, you tried to talk with Vince to see if he needs support. However he has been fairly uncommunicative. While he says he's 'okay' you are still concerned about him.

Activity Three

Working with Parents

Shortly after your talk, Vince's mother comes to see you at a parent-teacher meeting. She feels that Vince has had trouble adapting and making friends since the family moved, and is worried that he seems upset and withdrawn. She asks whether you have noticed any problems, and whether anything can be done to help Vince.

Prepare and act out a role play between the teacher and Vince's mother, in which you talk about these issues. You may find the resource by Groundwater-Smith helpful in choosing a sensitive and appropriate communication style. In preparing your role play, consider the following issues:

- should you tell Vince's mother about the poem and artwork?
- should you tell her about your efforts to talk with Vince?
- what might you want to ask Vince's mother?
- what could you and/or Vince's mother do to help him?

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Question Two

Some time later, you and Vince have established trust and he has been getting some help for his problems. He has made a number of friends at school, and by pursuing his poetry and art at a local youth centre.

Activity Four

Sexual Abuse and Mental Health

One day, Vince approaches you after school to say that he is worried about a friend, who has disclosed some troubling news to him. A girl at your school has told him she was being sexually abused but Vince is reluctant to tell you her name. She says the abuse has stopped and that she is okay physically, but she's having trouble dealing with the emotional effects of her experiences. The abuse was apparently being perpetrated by someone in her own family.

What are your obligations as a teacher? How would you respond to Vince? Should Vince have told you about this, or is he breaking a confidence? What counselling and support services are available? Does this girl's experience of sexual abuse place her at greater risk for mental health problems? For the last question, you might consider the article by Mullen and Fleming in the Resource list (at <http://aifs32.aifs.org.au/nch/pubs.html#issues>).

Question Two

Vince has now made a number of friends at school, and by pursuing his poetry and art at a local youth centre. He is now going out with Clare, a quiet girl from your class, but Vince is concerned about her.

Activity Five

Non-sexual forms of Abuse

Clare's father died a few years ago and her brothers and sisters live interstate. She lives alone with her mother but they have a very troubled relationship. Clare describes her as distant and moody, and says they have never been close. Clare's mother is very controlling and doesn't approve of her going out at all. Clare feels that her mother actually discourages her from developing friendships or relationships with her peers, and her mother has been rude and hostile to Clare's friends. Clare also reports that her mother is highly critical and 'puts her down' all the time, even in the presence of others. She is rarely able to go out, make her own choices, or even express an opinion. Clare's self-esteem is poor and she is finding the situation increasingly difficult - but she is too afraid of her mother's moods and reaction to 'stand up to' her.

Some people might characterise this situation as emotional abuse, described in the article entitled *Emotional abuse: The hidden form of maltreatment* by Tomison and Tucci (at <http://aifs32.aifs.org.au/nch/pubs.html#issues>). Read this article, or other material about emotional abuse. Do you agree that this is a form of abuse? Is emotional abuse less serious than other forms of abuse? How might you respond to Vince? Is there anything you can do to help Clare?

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Question 3:

How can you best respond to a school student like Vince who may have some sort of mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression?

Learning Goals

By completing this question, you will gain an understanding of:

- concepts of stress, anxiety and depression ([Activity One](#))
- how to overcome barriers which might prevent a troubled school student from seeking help ([Activity Two](#))
- what information you might need to gather about a school student you are concerned about ([Activity Three](#))
- the most appropriate teacher response to a troubled school student ([Activity Four](#))
- involving others in assisting a school student with a mental health problem ([Activity Five](#))

Question Three

The words 'stress', 'anxiety' and 'depression' are part of our everyday language. Write down all the words you associate with each of these. Prepare a brief everyday definition of each term, and compare with another student teacher or group. In what ways are these terms related?

Activity One

Definitions

When you have reached agreement on an everyday definition, use some of the resources to explore some more formal definitions. See how the dictionary defines these terms. Read the sections on Anxiety Disorders and Depression in the MindMatters booklet *Understanding Mental Illnesses* (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters), or consider some of the material on the health information websites listed in the resource section (such as <http://www.reachout.asn.au> or perhaps www.healthinsite.gov.au or www.cyh.sa.gov.au).

How does our 'everyday' use of terms like anxiety and depression differ from having an actual disorder? Do you think there is any relationship between stress and anxiety disorders or clinical depression? Do you think Vince could be at risk of developing anxiety or depression?

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Question Three

Sometimes troubled young people - and older people - find it hard to reach out for help, for many reasons. It is important to promote help-seeking behaviour in young people, to help prevent mental health problems. As Vince's teacher, you are still concerned about him, and so you make a time to talk to the school counsellor about what you should do. You feel a little lost and you ask the school counsellor why, if a young person has problems, they don't just come forward and tell someone about them.

Activity Two

Barriers to help seeking

Prepare and conduct a role play, between the teacher and school counsellor, in which you explore why a young person like Vince might find it hard to come forward and talk about his problems. In preparing your role play, think back to your own adolescence, and also consider what you know of Vince's situation. Why would he be anxious about talking to someone? Is there anything schools and teachers can do to encourage help-seeking behaviour in young people?

You may wish to refer to Chapter Six from the *Mental Health of Young People in Australia* report by Sawyer *et al*, (available at www.mentalhealth.gov.au) and to read some of the material from *Enhancing Resilience 2* in the MindMatters kit (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters).

Question Three

As Vince's teacher, you have some concerns about what his poem and artwork might mean. Is he anxious or depressed? Could he even be having thoughts about taking his own life? You're thinking about how you might ask him if he is okay, but you decide you need some more information first.

Activity Three

Gathering Information

Consider how you might go about gathering some more information about Vince's situation. Who might you speak to? In particular, how would you find out whether there have been any other warning signs or risk factors, which might indicate the possibility of a mental health problem? What warning signs or risk factors might be most noticeable to a teacher? What others might be more noticeable to a friend or family member? You may find it helpful to refer to the resource *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*, available on the Internet at www.responseability.org.

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Question Three

Prepare and act out two short role-plays, to explore how you might respond to a school student who may be experiencing excessive stress and anxiety. In preparing the role plays, think about people you have known at school and university - did you ever know anyone like Vince?

Activity Four

Responding to a troubled student

1. Imagine a friend of Vince had come to tell you that Vince was so stressed out that they were worried what he would do. Develop a role-play in which you approach Vince to encourage him to seek help.
2. Imagine that Vince himself had come to you and said he just couldn't cope any longer, he was worried about so many things. Develop a role-play showing how you would respond to Vince when he comes to you for help.

In a group discussion, talk about how the situation made you feel (whether you were playing the teacher or Vince) and how you chose the teacher's response. How did your response to Vince differ between the two role plays, depending on whether he approached you or you approached him?

You might like to refer to the document *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health* (www.responseability.org) and to the resource by Groundwater-Smith.

Question Three

Activity Five

Involving Others

You have gathered some information and had an initial talk with Vince, and you and he have agreed that he is in need of some extra support. Consider how you might involve the following people in helping Vince: school students, teachers, the school executive, Vince's family, a school counsellor, a counsellor from an external agency such as a health or youth service. What would you want to say to each of these people?

Prepare and conduct a role play between yourself and another teacher in which you briefly discuss how you can each help Vince. Consider what you might be able to do in the classroom, how academic support or flexibility might help, and how you could contribute to a whole-school approach to supporting troubled students.

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Question 4:

Perhaps there are particular skills, knowledge or attitudes which might help school students like Vince. Can the school curriculum or classroom strategies be used to promote mental health?

Learning Goals

By analysing this question, you will gain an understanding of:

- what knowledge, skills or attitudes might foster resilience in young people (Activity [One](#))
- how subjects in the school curriculum can be used to help promote mental health (Activities [Two](#) and [Three](#))
- how to support a school student who becomes upset in the classroom (Activity [Four](#))
- a teaching style which will promote mental health (Activity [Five](#))

Question Four

Divide a page into three columns, headed Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes. Make a list of various aspects of each, which you think would help young people to become more resilient and to promote good mental health in their peers. For example, knowledge might include specific information, such as where to get help for a problem, while skills might include various aspects of communication. An attitude or value might include respect for others.

Activity One

Tools for Young People

There are several resources which might be helpful, including the MindMatters materials (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters), your own experience of adolescence, or information from some of the websites aimed at young people, such as Reach Out! at <http://www.reachout.asn.au>.

Now reflect on your observations of Vince. Choose three elements from your lists above which you would rate as being important for him to develop. Briefly describe a classroom activity which would promote at least one of these three things.

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Question Four

You and some colleagues have been asked by your school Principal to form a curriculum working party, to consider the inclusion of mental health promotion in the school curriculum. Your group will be invited to suggest changes to the curriculum, to increase the coverage of issues like mental health, and also to ensure the inclusion of related life skills and values, such as problem-solving, tolerance, stress management or communication.

Activity Two

The Place of Mental Health

In your initial meeting of this group one of the members states 'the only place for mental health issues is in the personal development and health syllabus, so our job should be really easy'.

In a group, prepare and conduct a role play or a debate, which explores both sides of this argument. If possible, draw on the example of Vince presented at the beginning of this case study. At least one person should support the statement above, and at least one person should oppose it.

You may find various elements of the MindMatters kit helpful during this activity, particularly *School Matters* and the *Enhancing Resilience* modules (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters). Present your role play or debate to the class for broader discussion.

Question Four

Choose two secondary school syllabus areas (preferably, one of these should be your own syllabus area) and consider how mental health and life skills material could be integrated into the syllabus. You may find the MindMatters kit helpful (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters).

Activity Three

Mental Health in the Curriculum

For each syllabus area, develop an activity you could use with young people which will allow you to both stimulate their knowledge of the syllabus area *and* improve their understanding of mental health or their resilience. For example, choose a book or film via which you could explore several issues, including something related to mental health and wellbeing.

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Question Four

Your school has adopted a number of mental health promotion initiatives, including teaching about mental health problems in various elements of the syllabus. In a class discussion which you are facilitating one day, you notice that Vince's girlfriend Clare, who is sitting near the back of the room, appears upset. You think that the discussion might have been touching on some personal areas which are difficult for her.

Activity Four

Upset students in the Classroom

Describe how you can best respond to this situation. You might also reflect on your own school years: did you ever witness a situation like this? If so, what was good about the way it was handled? What could have been improved? You may find the resource *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health* helpful (www.responseability.org), and you might also read from the *School Matters* module of the MindMatters kit (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters).

Question Four

Apart from teaching *about* mental health you can also choose to teach *for* mental health, regardless of your syllabus area. This means looking at your teaching style and practices to ensure that the *way* you teach - and how you engage in the school community - will promote the mental health of the young people you work with. Discuss how the following aspects of someone's teaching style may affect the mental health of school students, either positively or negatively:

Activity Five

Teaching FOR Mental Health

- the language used by the teacher
- the discipline style used by the teacher
- the implied or explicit expectations the teacher has of a student
- whether a teacher involves students in decision making and class participation
- how the teacher chooses to engage in school life and interact with others

You might find it helpful to think about your own experiences of school, or your observation of other schools you have known. For example, did you have a favourite teacher during your own school years? What was that teacher like? You might also like to read the *School Matters* module from the MindMatters kit (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters), or the articles by Benard (These are available at http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests - see [ED386327](#) and [ED412309](#)).

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Question 5:

Both Vince and his school are also part of a broader community. How can partnerships with the wider community help schools to promote mental health?

Learning Goals

By analysing this question, you will gain an understanding of:

- health and youth services external to the school ([Activity One](#))
- partnerships with parents ([Activity Two](#))
- school student participation in the community ([Activity Three](#))
- involving cultural groups in your school community ([Activity Four](#))
- mapping partnerships which operate in a school ([Activity Five](#))

Question Five

Imagine you have talked to Vince about seeking professional help for some personal problems, but he would prefer to speak with someone outside the school. How will you know where to refer him?

Activity One

Health and Youth Services

Compile a portfolio of local services which might be helpful for young people, including youth services, counselling services, adolescent mental health services, and others. Collect brochures from each service, if possible. Conduct a telephone interview with a counsellor or youth worker from one service, explaining that you are a student teacher and that you would like to know more about their service. Include the following questions:

- what services do they provide for young people?
- what age group do they work with?
- what hours do they operate?
- do they take referrals from schools or teachers?
- do young people come to them directly, eg is it a drop in centre? If so, how do young people find out about the service?
- do they prefer to work with the young person alone or do they involve others such as the person's family?
- what are the most common issues young people ask them about?

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Question Five

Apart from teachers working with the parents of a particular school student, what can schools and teachers do more broadly to promote the involvement of parents and other community members in the school?

Activity Two

Parents and Community

Consider your own school years for a moment. In what ways were parents or community members involved in your school? You might also find the *Community Matters* module of MindMatters helpful (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters).

After thinking about the issues above, conduct an interview with **one** of the following people:

1. A person you know who is a parent of someone who is currently a high school student **OR**
2. A representative from the Parents' Association or a similar organisation, from a school in your local area **OR**
3. A high school teacher

Explain that you're a student teacher and you're interested in finding out how schools and teachers can work more closely with parents. Find out what their school does to encourage parent involvement in the school. Does the school have a newsletter? How do parents participate - for example, fundraising, decision making, offering support? Is there anything else the school could do to encourage parent participation?

Question Five

Factors which promote resilience for young people include authentic participation and a sense of connection with the wider community. Discuss the following questions, in a group or as a piece of written work:

Activity Three

Student participation in the Community

What advantages might young people gain from becoming involved in a youth group, sporting club or other community organisation? You might like to think about your own adolescence: were you part of any groups in the community? If so, what was good about that?

What can schools and teachers do to encourage students to be active in community settings other than the school?

What sort of organisations might you suggest for Vince, given what you know of his situation and interests?

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Students' Resources for Teacher Education

Question Five

In Vince's school, there are a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Activity Four

How can the school ensure that it consults appropriately with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community? Where would you begin to develop a partnership with this community? Who might you talk to?

Working with Cultural groups

You may find the *Community Matters* section of the MindMatters kit helpful for this activity (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters).

Question Five

During a school practical placement, talk with several teachers and other staff members to find out whether your school has any formal or informal partnerships with other agencies.

Activity Five

Mapping School Partnerships

If you are on a placement with another student teacher, you should work together on this task. Does the school have formal or informal links with any of the following agencies?

- parents / community members
- members of particular cultural groups
- local business or community organisations
- local health services
- counselling or mental health services
- youth services or centres
- drug or alcohol services
- other schools
- local universities

Select one partnership and analyse it in more detail. Is contact maintained between the two members on a regular basis, or only when needed? How often do they meet, and what type of service is offered? What advantages exist for the school in liaising with this agency or group? What information or support does the school need to give the other agency, and how is this provided? Could the partnership be improved in any way?

Provide a short presentation to your class when your placement is finished.

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