



MindMatters Evaluation Report

Submitted to

Principals Australia

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KEY FINDINGS

- Of those responding:
 - 98% of secondary schools are aware of the *MindMatters* mental health promotion program.
 - 66% of secondary schools are currently using at least some aspects of the *MindMatters* mental health promotion program.
 - 77% of schools have used at least some aspect of *MindMatters* in the last three years.
- In 68% of those schools using *MindMatters* the program of was the responsibility of an implementation team, compared to 18% in 2006.
- Schools that have a commitment to mental health promotion are highly likely to include *MindMatters* in their mental health promotion tool kit.
- Staff from 64% of schools surveyed had attended *MindMatters* professional development.

INTRODUCTION

The purposes of the evaluation

The evaluation was undertaken to answer the following questions:

- How many secondary schools are aware of *MindMatters*?
- How many secondary schools are using *MindMatters*?
- How many secondary schools continue to use *MindMatters* as a secondary curriculum resource?
- How many schools use *MindMatters* as their key organiser for mental health promotion?

METHOD

Sampling

In order to obtain a valid and reliable estimate of the use of *MindMatters* Australia-wide a random sample of 400 schools with a secondary (high school) enrolment was drawn, stratified by state/territory and sector (Government, Catholic, Independent). Given the increasing difficulty of engaging schools in research, two more samples of 400 secondary schools each were drawn, to act as first and second reserves. In total, 1200 schools were contacted via email and telephone, resulting in participation by 166 schools.

Instruments

Data were collected using a brief questionnaire. All questions, with the exception of 3.4 and 4.2, which were open response items, had the response options 'yes', 'no' and 'don't know'.

1. Awareness and Involvement

- 1.1 Are you aware of *MindMatters*?
- 1.2 Is your school currently using *MindMatters*?
[if yes, go to 1.3; if no go to 1.4]
- 1.3 Do you and/or a team lead *MindMatters* implementation at your school?
- 1.4 Has your school used *MindMatters* in the past three years?

2. Curriculum Resource

- 2.1 Does your school use *MindMatters* as a curriculum resource? (if yes, go to 3.1)
- 2.2 Has your school used *MindMatters* as a curriculum resource in the past three years?

3. *MindMatters* as Key Organiser

- 3.1 Does your school use *MindMatters* as its key organiser for mental health promotion?
(if yes, please go to 3.3)
- 3.2 Has your school used *MindMatters* as its key organiser for mental health promotion in the past three years?
- 3.3 Has your school used any other mental health promotion program?
- 3.4 If yes, which program?

4. *MindMatters* Professional Development

4.1 In the past three years, have members of your school staff attended *MindMatters* professional development? [if yes go to 4.2]

4.2 Would you be able to estimate how many staff members have attended?

Methods of data collection

An invitation email was prepared and sent to all schools in the original sample of 400. The email informed schools of the purpose of the evaluation and the nature of their involvement in it, should they choose to be involved. Schools were also informed that they did not have to be currently using *MindMatters* to be eligible to participate.

Where this was available, the email was addressed ‘attention of [school principal’s name]’. The email invited schools to reply with the name and contact details of a person able to complete the survey on the school’s behalf. Very few schools replied and ACER commenced telephoning schools in an attempt to set up interview times. The response rate remained low and invitation emails were sent out to the first and second reserve schools and telephone contacts with them begun, resulting in contact with 1200 schools. A second round of email requests were also sent out to schools in all three samples.

A third round of emails and telephone contacts was undertaken to increase the response rate from Victorian schools, which was initially very low.

Given the difficulty of finding a time for an interview that suited key personnel, most schools elected to complete the survey and return it by email, although in a small number cases the survey was administered via telephone.

Analysis

All data were entered into statistical software package PASW (formerly SPSS) and frequencies and crosstabs analyses performed.

Respondents

A total of 166 usable responses were obtained from schools¹. Table 1 presents the composition of the sample, by state/territory and sector. This compares favourably with the 197 responses obtained in the previous, 2006, evaluation for which considerably more resources were available.

Table 1: Sample Composition, by State/territory and Sector

	SYSTEM			TOTAL
	CATH	GOVT	INDEP	
STAT ACT	1	5	2	8 (5%)
E NSW	14	48	7	69 (42%)
NT	2	2	3	7(4%)
QLD	4	14	6	24 (14%)
SA	4	5	3	12 (7%)
TAS	2	1	1	4 (3%)
VIC	10	13	3	26 (15%)
WA	5	7	4	16 (10%)
TOTAL	42 (26%)	95 (57%)	29 (17%)	166

NSW is comparatively over-represented, as are Catholic schools. These departures from the population do not, however, affect the conclusion that can be drawn from the data, and where results between states and system vary these are highlighted and discussed below.

FINDINGS

Awareness of MindMatters

The large majority of schools reported that they were aware of *MindMatters*, with only four schools (2.4%) replying that they were not aware of the program. All were government schools, and were distributed across four states.

Using MindMatters

Sixty six percent of schools surveyed reported they were currently using at least some aspects of the *MindMatters* program. Percentages using the program were similar across sectors and state/territories with the exception of Western Australian where a smaller percentage of schools reported using *MindMatters* (40%).

¹ Two schools sent individual responses from two personnel but only one response from each school was selected and entered.

Of those schools not currently using *MindMatters*, 13 reported that they had used the program in the last three years and 37 that they had not.

Table 2: Percentages of Schools responding Positively to All Major Questions

Question	Yes %age
Aware of <i>MindMatters</i> ?	98%
Using <i>MindMatters</i> ?	66%
Used <i>MindMatters</i> in the last three years?	25%*
Implementation team (if using <i>MindMatters</i>)?	68%
<i>MindMatters</i> as a curriculum resources?	65%
<i>MindMatters</i> as a curriculum resources in last three years?	9%*
<i>MindMatters</i> as a key organiser?	38%
<i>MindMatters</i> as a key organiser in the last three years?	8%*
Using another program?	51%
Used professional development?	64%
*This is the percentage of those schools who had responded that they were not currently using the relevant aspect of <i>MindMatters</i>	

Implementation Team

Of those schools using *MindMatters* 68% indicated that this was the responsibility of an implementation team. Schools in Victoria (75%) Tasmania (100%) and Queensland (75%) were particularly likely to have an implementation team.

MindMatters as a Curriculum Resource

Sixty five percent of schools reported that they used *MindMatters* as a curriculum resource, at least to some extent. Schools from South Australia (83%) and the ACT (88%) were particularly likely to be using the program as a curriculum resource and Western Australian schools reported a usage rate similar to the sample as a whole (67%).

Of those schools not currently using *MindMatters* as a curriculum resource, four (2%) reported that they had done so in the last three years, and 38 that they had not.

MindMatters as a Key Organiser for Mental Health Promotion

Thirty eight percent of schools surveyed reported using *MindMatters* as their key organiser for mental health promotion. Schools in the ACT (63%), South Australia (58%) and Queensland (54%) were particularly likely to report they were using *MindMatters* for this purpose.

Government schools (44%) were more likely than Catholic (31%) or Independent (31%) schools to report using *MindMatters* as their key organiser.

Of those schools who reported that they were not currently using *MindMatters* as their key organiser, 8% reported that they had done so in the past three years.

Using Other Programs

Of those schools surveyed 83 (51%) reported using programs other than *MindMatters* for mental health promotion. Of these, however 65 were also using *MindMatters*, whereas 31 schools (19%) reported using neither *MindMatters* nor any other mental health promotion program. This would suggest that if a school has a commitment to mental health promotion it is highly likely to at least include *MindMatters* in its tool kit, if not use the program exclusively.

States where schools made more use of *MindMatters* for mental health promotion tended to have higher proportions of schools also using other programs, with, for example, 75% of South Australian and 52% of Queensland schools using other programs.

Catholic (57%) and Independent (61%) schools were more likely to be using other programs than Government schools (46%).

Schools made use of a wide range of other programs, too many to list, and appeared to have a tendency to 'mix and match' aspects of programs based on their assessment of their school's particular needs and what the various programs had to offer. As one participant observed:

Nothing specific, more bits and pieces from different places. Use good resources when they are available.

Beyond Blue, however, was one of the most popular programs.

Professional Development

Sixty four percent of schools reported that staff members had recently attended *MindMatters* professional development sessions. More Independent (69%) than Catholic (62%) or Government (64%) reported staff attendance.

Comparisons between states revealed that Victorian (50%) and Western Australian (25%) schools reported considerably lower utilisation of *MindMatters* professional development.

Number of staff who had attended professional development varied widely, between one and in excess of 200. The median number of staff per school attending was five and the modal number was two.

Comparison of Results with Previous Evaluations

The results presented in this report are consistent with those from the evaluation conducted by ACER in 2006. As in the previous evaluation a very small percentage of schools (<5%) reported no awareness of *MindMatters* and around two thirds of schools reported using at least some aspect of *MindMatters*. Similarly, the usage rate was higher in Government than Non-government schools. Schools in South Australia were more likely to be using *MindMatters* than those in other states, however in contrast to the results of the current evaluation Victorian schools reported a comparatively high rate of usage in 2006. As the 2006 report noted:

... in two thirds of secondary schools *MindMatters* is used in some way. *MindMatters* is more extensively used in government schools than in independent schools and is a key resource in one quarter of the government secondary schools in Australia. ... *MindMatters* is more extensively used in South Australia and Victoria than in other States.

A comparatively larger number of schools reported using *MindMatters* as their key organiser for mental health promotion: 38% in this evaluation, compared to around 20% in the previous evaluation.

Table 3: Comparisons Between Results of the 2006 and 2010 Evaluations

Question	2006 Result	2010 Result
Awareness of <i>MindMatters</i>	95%	98%
Using <i>MindMatters</i>	66%	66% (77% in last three years)
Implementation Team	18%	68%

CONCLUSIONS

Comparison between findings from the 2006 and the current evaluation suggest that the relatively low response rates have yielded a reasonable assessment of secondary schools' awareness and use of *MindMatters*. Both suggest that about two thirds of schools make at least some use of aspects of the *MindMatters* program and about 50% use other programs or aspects of these, usually in combination with *MindMatters*. In addition, Government schools remain more likely than non-government schools to use *MindMatters*.

Variations between states in utilisation rates should be interpreted with caution, given that numbers of responses from some states were quite small and respondent schools may not be representative of their states as a whole. It would seem, likely, however, that the strong support in South Australia is not an artefact but may be due to the location of *MindMatters*' head office in that state.