

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

The Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) is an educational initiative that (a) provides schools with training, curriculum and strategies to engage ALL students (including their most challenging students), and (b) is designed to improve a school's capacity to engage vulnerable or disadvantaged young people and help them achieve their personal and social potential through educational achievement. It is currently being implemented at Collingwood College, a P-12 facility in inner Melbourne, as part of the Yarra Communities that Care (CTC) initiative.

Based on the results of a comprehensive Youth Survey conducted across the LGA in 2015, CTC has identified strengthening the well-being of Middle Years children (8-14 year olds) as a priority issue. The Collingwood College BSEM Pilot is one of two CTC strategies aimed at increasing young people's adaptive behaviour, capacity for coping and personal resilience. (The other CTC well-being strategy is support for the PATHS program in schools).

The current evaluation report, which has been commissioned and funded by the City of Yarra as part of Yarra CTC, examines the roll-out and initial 12 month delivery of the BSEM at Collingwood College with particular reference to its impacts on teaching and learning in the school's Middle Years classes (i.e. Years 4 to 8). It is anticipated that report findings will inform ongoing delivery of the BSEM at Collingwood College (including monitoring of the students as they progress through year levels) and possible expansion of the program to other Yarra schools, under the Yarra CTC umbrella.

### **Evaluation Context: Yarra CTC**

BSEM at Collingwood College has been implemented as part of Yarra CTC, an initiative seeking to promote the healthy development of children and young people through identification and prevention of social and health problems. Devised and developed at the University of Washington in the 1980s, the CTC model has

since been implemented across more than 500 communities in the United States and adopted and adapted in the UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, and (post-2000) in Australia. The licensed provider of the process in Australia is CTC Ltd, a joint initiative of the Royal Children's Hospital (Melbourne) and Melbourne Rotary which assists community coalitions to implement evidence-based prevention strategies according to Collective Impact principles. In 2017 10 registered CTC sites were located within Victorian LGAs. Yarra CTC was launched in February 2015.

The City of Yarra is a socio-economically and culturally diverse LGA; 38% of the population were born outside Australia. Inner-city gentrification and demographic shifts have created a residential mix of affluence and disadvantage: i.e. growing numbers of young professional families alongside a significant migrant "footprint" and the largest public housing population in Victoria. Yarra CTC involves over 24 partner agencies working together towards a shared vision for middle years children and young people (aged 8-14 years) in the City of Yarra: "To enhance the healthy development of children, young people, and their families in Yarra through evidence based collaborative planning, action and evaluation."

Informed by Yarra CTC survey findings, CTC partners have developed a shared Action Plan and a commitment to three outcome areas:

1. Reduce alcohol and other drug use
2. Improve personal resilience
3. Strengthen family relationships and management.

Six strategies or programs have been selected to address the three outcome areas. The Two programs being implemented in response to the aim of improving personal resilience are Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) and the BSEM. The first school to implement BSEM as part of Yarra CTC is Collingwood College, which has also been implementing elements of the PATHS syllabus for approximately three years within its Primary School. According to teachers and school

leadership, the BSEM is both a complement to PATHS, and an extension of it. Acknowledging that a proliferation of Well-being or Social Emotional Learning programs in recent years has provided them with multiple choices in this area, they cite the whole-school focus of the BSEM and the rigour of its PD components as fundamental to the decision to trial it.

### Methodology & Research Design

Evaluation of the 2017 Collingwood College delivery of the BSEM has drawn on a mix of qualitative and quantitative tools and techniques in addressing four key research questions:

1. **Has the BSEM been implemented with high fidelity (as intended) at Collingwood College?**
2. **Has BSEM impacted on teacher practice?**
3. **Has BSEM impacted on student's wellbeing, engagement and achievement?**
4. **Has BSEM impacted on school-wide practice?**

Table: Summary of data collection

Data source	Method	No.
School leadership (Primary and Secondary Principals)	Interview	2
Teachers (2 Primary, 2 Secondary)	Interview	4
Teachers participating in training	Survey	60
Students (Years 6 & 8)	Focus group	7
School Welfare Officer	Interview	1
Yarra CTC Program Leader	Interview	2
Berry Street trainers	Interview	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>79</b>

### Theoretical Context: The BSEM

The BSEM builds on, and extends, the two-tier 'healing' approach characteristic of traditional

or standard models of trauma-informed learning. The Model proposes three tiers of therapeutic learning and growth, that extend the focus of previous practice on *repairing the student's regulatory abilities (Domain 1)* and *repairing the student's disrupted attachments (Domain 2)*, by adding a third domain: *increasing the young person's psychological resources in order to promote post-traumatic growth (Domain 3)*. Both the professional development (PD) training and classroom application of the BSEM are developmental or sequential. Teachers and students work progressively through FIVE (sub) domains or Pedagogical lenses, starting with 'BODY' / aka Increasing regulatory abilities, and then progressing through the sub-domains of STAMINA, ENGAGEMENT and CHARACTER. All are anchored by the 'lens' of RELATIONSHIPS. In turn, each of the sub-domains/lenses comprises a cluster of focus areas/ sub-themes within which are located sets of teaching and intervention strategies, detailed lesson plans and 'Brainbreaks' (i.e. short-burst of 2-5 minute physical activities) that can be woven into class procedure, called upon when needed, or used to respond to an individual student's emotional state at any time.

### The BSEM Training Program

Berry Street promotes and disseminates its Model of Education through the combination of a comprehensive body of teaching resources and curriculum materials that are underpinned by intensive teacher-training and in-service activity. The PD program aims:

- (a) to educate participants in re-engaging young people in learning, and progressing them, through sustained cognitive and behavioural change;
- (b) to develop the capacity of each participant to take strategies back to their schools/classes and lead changes to school culture and teacher practice;
- (c) to assist teachers in achieving a range of short and long-term educational outcomes that include improved academic growth, school attendance and well-being and a