



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING TOOLKIT

SCLO Mental Health & Wellbeing Toolkit

Recognise • Respond • Refer

Notice change.

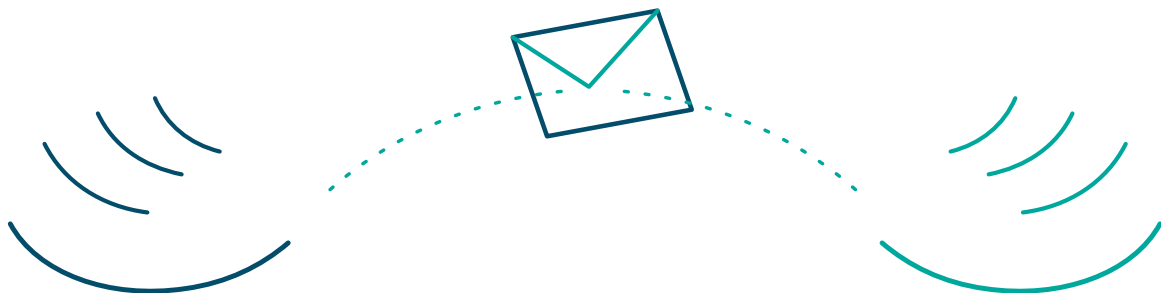
Open conversation.

Know what's next.

A practical toolkit for School Community Liaison
Officers supporting school students and families.



*You don't need to be a counsellor to
make a difference.*



RECOGNISE

What Has Changed?

Look for change, patterns and impact.



BEHAVIOUR

anger
withdrawal
conflict
risk-taking

EMOTIONS

sadness
fear
anxiety
overwhelm

RELATIONSHIPS

isolation
friendship changes
family conflict

FUNCTIONING

attendance
learning
sleep
self-care

SAFETY

self-harm
abuse or neglect
violence
feeling unsafe

ASK YOURSELF

What changed?
How long?
What else could
explain it?
Is safety involved?



Behaviour is information. Not a diagnosis.

Notice first. Interpret carefully.



RESPOND

Notice • Open • Listen

01

NOTICE

Say what you see.

"I've noticed you've been quieter lately."

02

OPEN

Create space.

USEFUL OPENINGS

"I wonder..."

"Perhaps..."

"It sounds like..."

"I might be wrong, but..."

EXAMPLE

"I wonder if things have been harder lately."

03

LISTEN

slow down

don't interrogate

allow silence

don't rush to fix

KEEP IN MIND

Most students will not open up the first time. A short conversation that ends well is still a good conversation, and you can come back to it tomorrow.

IF THE CONVERSATION STALLS

Name what you noticed, leave the door open and say when you will check in again. Silence is not failure.

INSTEAD OF

~~*"What's wrong?"*~~

TRY

"You don't seem quite yourself today."



An opening gives them somewhere to go.

Questions are not always the best way to get someone talking.



RESPOND

When They Push Back

"I'M FINE."



"Okay. I might be wrong.

*I just wanted you to know
I noticed."*

"NOTHING'S WRONG."



"That's okay.

You don't have to talk now."

"LEAVE ME ALONE."



*"Okay. I'll give you
some space.*

I'm here if you need me."

"DON'T TELL MY MUM."



"I'll respect your privacy.

*If I'm worried about your
safety, I'll try to talk with
you first.*

*If we need to tell someone, we'll
try to work out how together."*

AFTER THE CONVERSATION

Note what you saw and what was said

Check in again within a few days

Share with wellbeing team if the

concern grows

WHY PUSH BACK HAPPENS

Some students will say "no" about safety, loyalty or not having the words yet.

It usually means "not now" rather than "not ever".

REMEMBER Respect privacy. Don't promise secrecy.



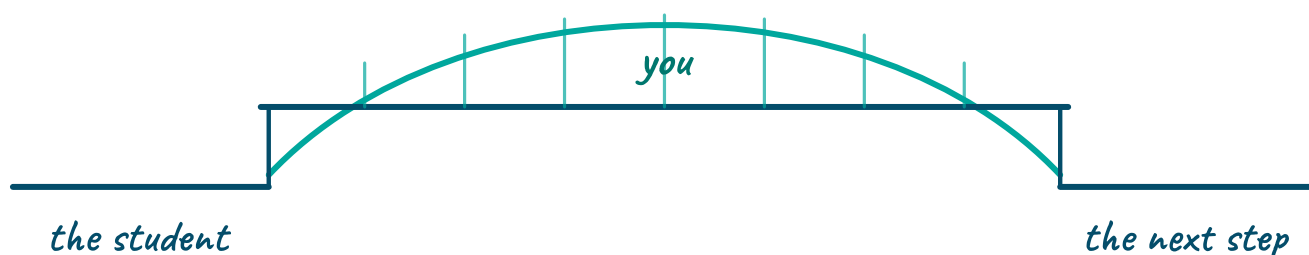
Checking in is not extracting information.

A good conversation does not always end in disclosure.



RESPOND

Be the Bridge. Don't Become the Road.



BE THE BRIDGE

explain
connect
prepare
support the next step
follow up appropriately

EXAMPLES

- help a parent understand a referral
- prepare a student to speak with wellbeing staff
- explain what a GP or psychologist does
- help make the first connection if needed

DON'T BECOME THE ROAD

every problem comes through you
constant after-hours contact
ongoing counselling
solving everything
feeling unable to step back

ASK YOURSELF

Am I connecting or carrying?
Who else should be involved?
Is this still my role?

 *The bridge makes the next connection possible.
The road becomes the permanent route.*

You can care deeply without carrying everything.

WORKSHEET

Whose Role Is It?

Think about the situations you commonly face. What belongs with you, what should be shared, and what sits outside your role?

SITUATIONS TO SORT

listening to a student

contacting family

liaising with wellbeing

therapy

investigating disclosures

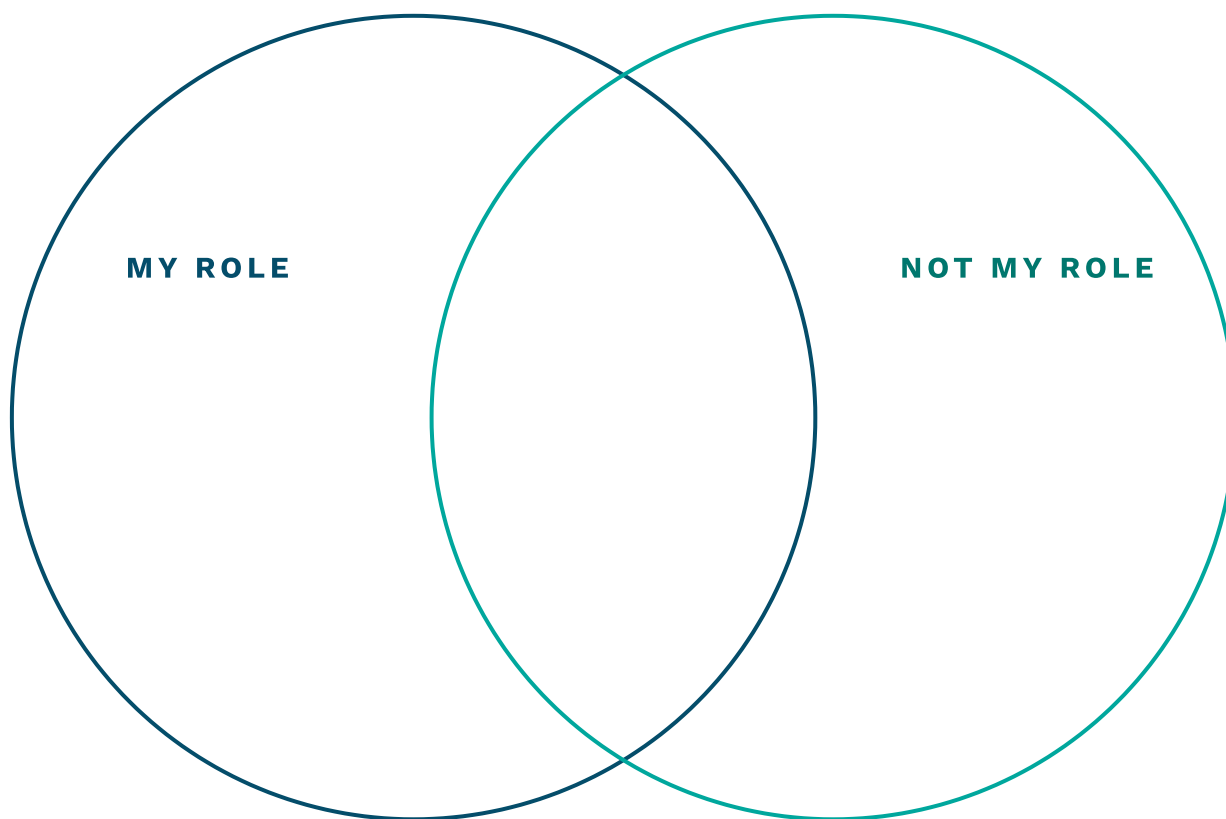
referrals

child safety process

Where does it sit?

Sort each situation into My Role, Shared Role or Not My Role. Some answers may depend on your school and role.

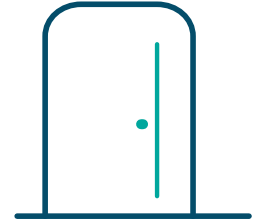
SHARED ROLE



You can care deeply without carrying everything.

CHILD SAFETY

Your Relationship Matters Too



Child safety is not only about recognising when a child may be harmed by someone else. It also includes how adults use their role, access, attention and relationships with children. Because SCLOs can become trusted adults quickly, clear professional boundaries matter.

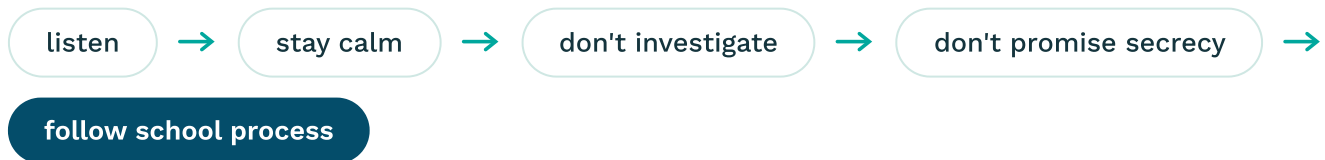
PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES — WATCH FOR

private messaging	after-hours contact
gifts / buying things	transport
unnecessary one-to-one time	secrecy
dependency	

ASK YOURSELF

Is this necessary?
Is this transparent?
Is this appropriate to my role?
Where does the power sit?
Is the child becoming dependent on me?

IF A CHILD DISCLOSES



Your job is to receive a disclosure safely and pass it on. Working out what happened belongs to child safety and investigative processes, not to you.

 *Good intentions do not remove power.*

Professional boundaries are part of child safety, not separate from it.

REFER

What Do I Do Next?

"I've noticed something is different. What happens now?"

01

SUPPORT

I can respond within my role right now.



02

CONSULT

I'm unsure or need guidance.



03

REFER

The student needs more support than I can provide.



04

ESCALATE

There is a serious wellbeing or child safety concern.

Move up a step when the concern is beyond what you can hold, and follow school child-safety, escalation or emergency procedures whenever safety is involved.



Recognise and connect. Don't diagnose or investigate.



FAMILY CONVERSATIONS

Help Families Take the Next Step

START WITH CHANGE

INSTEAD OF

~~"Your child has a mental health problem."~~

TRY

"We've noticed some changes and they seem to be finding things harder."

IF THEY SAY

"There's nothing mentally wrong with my child."

TRY

"We don't have to agree on a label. We can start with what has changed."

YOUR ROLE

explain
reduce fear
clarify the next step
help connect

NOT YOUR ROLE

diagnose
convince
provide therapy
carry the whole process

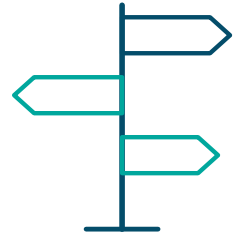
CONSIDER

language access
family trust
stigma
unfamiliarity with services
cultural understandings of mental health

 *Start with shared concern, not the label.*

REFER

Who Do I Connect With?



WITHIN SCHOOL

wellbeing
leadership
child safety contact

HEALTH

GP
psychologist
mental health service

COMMUNITY

family support
culturally specific service
youth support
AOD support

URGENT

child safety
crisis mental health
emergency services

BEFORE YOU REFER

Does the family
understand why?

What barrier might
stop them?

What can I do to make the
first step easier?

 *Make the next step possible.*

Referral pathways vary by school. Follow local school policies and procedures.

PSYCHOLOGY. CULTURE. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Evidence informed education and professional development for people working with young people, families and culturally diverse communities.



Toltu Tufa

Psychologist | Educator | Facilitator

Languages: English, Turkish, Oromo

Toltu is a registered psychologist with extensive experience working across clinical, forensic and community settings. For almost two decades, her work has centred on helping individuals, families, communities and workforces understand complex psychological issues in ways that are practical, culturally responsive and useful in real-world settings.

Culturally responsive practice that translates psychology into useable action.

Particularly experienced across African, CALD, migrant and Muslim community contexts.

AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL FOCUS

01	02	03	04
Mental Health & Wellbeing	Culturally Responsive Practice	Family & Community Engagement	Training & Professional Development
Recognising concerns, help-seeking, early support and practical responses with young people and families.	Culture, identity, migration, belonging, racism, family expectations and engagement across diverse communities.	Building trust, navigating stigma, having difficult conversations and strengthening pathways to support.	Interactive workshops, workforce capability, applied psychology, realistic case examples and practical resources.

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