

5 KEY WELLBEING STRATEGIES



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DARE  
TO  
DREAM

CHALLENGE  
YOUR  
THINKING

VALUE  
YOURSELF

CONNECT

BE KIND &  
BE GRATEFUL



**Research repeatedly tells us that a 'sense of belonging' is a compelling predictor of wellbeing, mental health and even how long you live!**

Invest the time and energy to develop and maintain good relationships and take opportunities to be in the company of others you can connect with. This might be regular catch ups with friends or joining a club with common interests.

Youth Opportunities promotes adaptive social interaction through regular star sending (positive communication), identifying healthy comparisons (rather than self-esteem shrinking negative ones) and finding your own *personal leadership* supporters to develop your self-image, define your goals and keep you on track.



## BE KIND AND BE GRATEFUL

**One way to ensure you maintain those healthy relationships is to make sure you are kind to others. But did you know that just helping someone else will make you happier even if you don't know that person? And did you also know that the simple act of counting the number of times you have been kind can instantly improve your feelings of positivity, which can increase wellbeing?**

Practising appreciation for what is meaningful and valuable to you promotes gratitude which heightens your sense of fortune, your connectedness with others and can clinically reduce depression.

Our program challenges young people to deliver *acts of kindness* and while random acts are good, we know that targeting your acts to those that need it most is even better for everyone involved. We also encourage reflection in counting your blessings through *gratitude lists*, *gratitude letters* and *bullet journals*.



## DARE TO DREAM

Simple exercises to boost optimism (after all, it's only 25% inherited as a personality trait) will improve your overall health and resilience.

Several studies in the last 5 years show that doing a simple visualisation exercise can boost anyone's optimism. Psychologists call it the "best possible self" visualisation.



Envisioning yourself in a future that has turned out to be the rosiest that is possible (and feasible) where you have reached all the goals you have set, are at the top of your dream career, have found love and purpose in your life, and so on, will measurably improve your sense of well-being.

Program tools like *Dream Sheet*, *Visualisation* and *Road Blocks* help Youth Opportunities students see their future selves thriving and ready to face any obstacles.



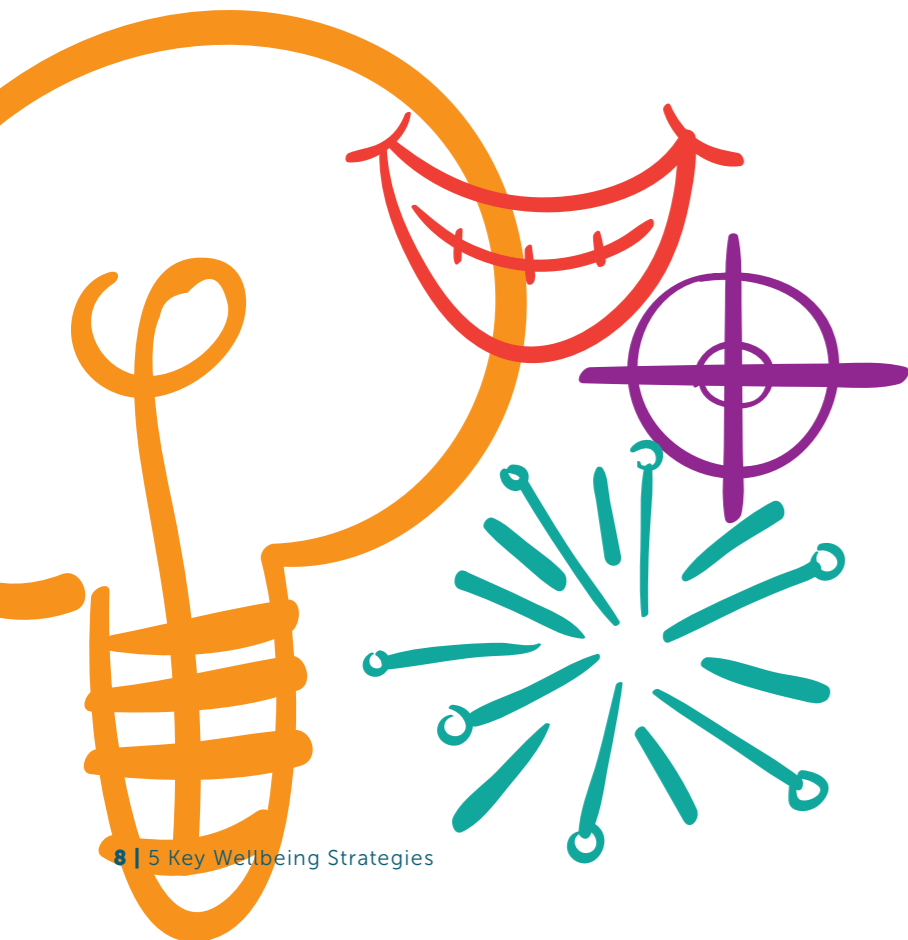
# CHALLENGE YOUR THINKING

**Negative automatic thoughts are common but can have a profound effect on mental health if left unchallenged.**

**Cognitive-Behaviour approaches are powerful because they capitalise on the concept of Neuroplasticity.**

Did you know that neuroplasticity is what enables an amputee to completely operate a robotic arm with their mind? What does that mean in terms of your personal possibilities to change negative thoughts and feelings into more adaptive long-term habits?

**Our program translates a very complex concept into a simple and practical one through the Change Loop tool.**



## STAGE 1.

### SELF-TALK IDENTIFIER

Monitor your thoughts and identify the negative thinking and how it is making you feel - I am going to fail this test and I am feeling anxious and unhappy

## STAGE 2.

### CHALLENGE THE NEGATIVE THOUGHT

Actively challenge the negative thought by assessing its validity and likelihood - How likely is it that I will fail? How many times in the past have I succeeded? What helped me succeed in the past?

## STAGE 3.

### ADAPTING

Identify a more adaptive thought and try it on for size. If I focus on my breathing techniques that have reduced my anxiety in the past, I will succeed!

## STAGE 4.

### REFLECT

Reflect on how the new thought is making you feel - I can do this and that makes me feel optimistic and less frightened.



## VALUE YOURSELF

**Exercises like *Change Loop* can really help you identify your strengths to feed a positive self-image and to develop a sense of personal control over your destiny.**

This helps to navigate life and 'write your own success' by knowing which areas you can control and which you can't. For example, you can't be responsible for the behaviour of others, but you can control how you manage your own responses, both practically and emotionally.

You can also try writing a personal Strengths List and verbally reinforcing it to yourself. Research supports that "saying is believing" and just by reading your *strengths list* aloud in front of a mirror can have a powerful impact on self-image and wellbeing.



Sometimes you might find you need to seek professional help. **One in five Australians will experience a mental health disorder at some time in their life with the most common being depression, anxiety and substance misuse.** Value yourself enough to know you are worthy of receiving professional help and talk to yourself the same way you would counsel a good friend. Would you ever tell your best friend that there are people worse off than them? Take it one step at a time and start by simply making a long appointment with your GP to find the right help for you.



## **CONTACT US**

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