

## How can community connections improve wellbeing?

### Women's Health Atlas Education Resource

#### Learning intentions

Students will:

- explore the Victorian Women's Health Atlas, focusing on community connectedness
- debate the importance of community or wellbeing
- examine the roles of local government and organisations to improve wellbeing in their local area.

#### Key inquiry questions

How can community connections improve wellbeing?

What does community connection mean?

How can we measure connectedness?

How connected is my community?

#### Key vocabulary

Community connections

Wellbeing

#### Time required

Approximately 2 hours

## Materials

- Individual access to a computer
- Individual copies of Student Worksheet 2.1 - Community connectedness
- Individual copies of Student Worksheet 2.2 - What is my community doing to improve connectedness?

## Prior knowledge

It is assumed that students will have completed Inquiry 1 – Navigating the women's health atlas.

It is assumed that students will have an understanding of the concept of wellbeing.

It is also assumed that students will know how to complete a PQE (Pattern, Quantify, Exceptions) analysis of a graph or map. Here is a good explanation and practice if required:

<https://sites.google.com/a/ccw.vic.edu.au/geography-global-wellbeing/home/measuringwellbeing/mappingwellbeing>

## Readiness checklist

Refer to the Series overview – Teacher Notes

## Teacher feedback survey

Feedback is vital to ensure the resource meets teaching and learning requirements in Geography.

After using the resource with students, teachers are invited to complete this feedback survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WomensHealthAtlas\\_GeographyResource](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WomensHealthAtlas_GeographyResource)

The results will be shared with the resource project partners to inform ongoing updates:

- Women's Health Victoria (WHV)
- Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria (GTAV)

## TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

### Sensitive content

Before proceeding with this topic, please refer to the **Readiness checklist - sensitive content** (in the Series overview) to ensure you have the necessary support in place.

### Starter

1. Write 'community connections' on the whiteboard and have students provide examples of ways in which people in the community are connected. Write these on the board.
2. As a class come up with a definition of 'community connection'.

### Main activities

1. Log into the Victorian Women's Health Atlas: <https://victorianwomenshealthatlas.net.au/>
2. Have students navigate to the 'Community Connectedness' map.
  - scroll down to the priority 'Mental Health'
  - select the indicator 'Community Connectedness'
  - click on the measure 'Index'.

This should bring up the state map.

*The measure is determined by averaging the score given in the community connection domain of the Personal Wellbeing Index Indicator. This score is converted into a scale with a range of 0-100, with 0 being completely dissatisfied and 100 being completely satisfied*

#### Mental Health

Women's mental wellbeing is multi-faceted and diverse. Poor mental health is associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, sex and gender discrimination, social exclusion, physical ill health, unhealthy lifestyles, and violence and human rights violations. In addition many of these risk factors that impact on and maintain poor mental health disproportionately affect women. These include societal and cultural divisions of labour, maternity, depression or other psychological health issues and their causes, such as discrimination, violence and abuse.

Select an Indicator to view the Atlas

Anxiety Or Depression

Psychological Distress

Self-Harm

Sought Professional Help For Mental Health Problem

Personal Wellbeing

Life Satisfaction

Worthwhile Life Activities

Close Knit Community

Community Connectedness

Index



3. Have students complete the worksheet '*Community Connectedness*'.

This does include completing two PQEs, so you may need to pre-teach it if this is a new skill.

Discuss their findings and highlight these key points to students:

- men have a lower community connectedness than women, and
- people in metropolitan areas feel less connected than those in rural and regional areas.

4. Have students conduct a class debate on one of the following topics:

- Gender stereotypes mean that women are more connected to community than men.
- Local communities are becoming less important for social connection these days because of social media.
- Social media enables people to make and maintain connections outside their local area.

Divide the class into opposing sides and have them each brainstorm three points of view for their team.

5. Have students explore the local government and community initiatives in your school LGA to improve wellbeing.

Firstly, brainstorm with the class any community programs, events or services in the area. Suggestions include: community or senior citizens centre, street parties or festivals, local arts prizes or festivals, library story time, local markets, sports clubs etc. The council website is a great place to start, or the local newspaper.

Have students choose one and use the worksheet 'What is my community doing to improve connectedness in my community?' to guide them.

Students could create short presentations to share with the class.

## Plenary

Have students make suggestions about programs, events or services that could be included to improve wellbeing in their community.

## Differentiation

### For less able students:

Select appropriate services or programs for these students to investigate as choice can often be overwhelming. Have these students do their local LGA for Task B of the *Community Connectedness* worksheet.

### For more able students:

Get a copy of the local health and wellbeing plan from your local council - does it have any actions around this? Encourage these students to debate for the opposing side to challenge their thinking. Have students choose two similar services and compare them. These students could also choose another LGA to investigate and compare their services.

## Suggested adaptations

1. The debate could be structured as a line debate or Philosophical Chairs discussion to encourage participation.
2. Have students explore the role of social media on community connectedness. Are there specific programs or pages that facilitate connectedness? (Think Meetup or a local 'Buy Swap Sell' group).
3. Students could conduct community surveys on the services and programs available in their area. They could make recommendations to the local council on any gaps they find.

## Further reading

Kelly J (2013) 30 ways to build community connections. *Vancouver Sun* (Apr 30). Available at: <https://vancouversun.com/news/community-blogs/aprils-results-30-ways-to-build-community-connections>

VicHealth (2016) Improving mental wellbeing: Local government action guide. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Carlton South. p. 3. Available at: <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/VHIndicators/MWB--LGA-Action-Guide.pdf>

Australia. Department of Health (2019) Connecting with community. Australia. Department of Health. Canberra. – (*Head to Health*). Available at: <https://headtohealth.gov.au/meaningful-life/connectedness/community>

VicHealth (2018) Loneliness: a new public health challenge emerges. *VicHealth Letter* (Mar). Available at: <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/letter/articles/vh-letter-47-loneliness>

Swinburne University. Centre for Regional Development and McCaughey Centre (2007) Community Indicators Victoria: a resource guide: using CIV as a tool for Council planning. McCaughey Centre. Melbourne. Available at: <https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/civresourceguide.pdf>

Relationships Australia (2017) Strong relationships, strong health. Victoria. Department of Health and Human Services. Melbourne – (*Better Health Channel Factsheet*). Available at: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/Strong-relationships-strong-health>

## Philosophical Chairs discussion

Sledge N (2020) Lesson plan: Philosophical chairs discussion. Scholastic.com. Available at: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/philosophical-chairs-discussion/>

Fletcher J (2019) A framework for whole-class discussions. *Edutopia* (May 7). Available at: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/framework-whole-class-discussions>

(2020) Philosophical chairs discussion. BetterLesson.com. Available at: <https://betterlesson.com/strategy/6>

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 2.1

## Community connectedness

Go to the Victorian Women’s Health Atlas website: <https://victorianwomenshealthatlas.net.au>

### TASK A

Scroll down to the priority ‘Mental Health’  
Select the indicator ‘Community Connectedness’  
Click on the measure ‘Index’.

**Mental Health**

Women’s mental wellbeing is multi-faceted and diverse. Poor mental health is associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, sex and gender discrimination, social exclusion, physical ill health, unhealthy lifestyles, and violence and human rights violations. In addition many of these risk factors that impact on and maintain poor mental health disproportionately affect women. These include societal and cultural divisions of labour, maternity, depression or other psychological health issues and their causes, such as discrimination, violence and abuse.

Select an Indicator to view the Atlas

- Anxiety Or Depression
- Psychological Distress
- Self-Harm
- Sought Professional Help For Mental Health Problem
- Personal Wellbeing
- Life Satisfaction
- Worthwhile Life Activities
- Close Knit Community
- Community Connectedness
- Index

This should bring up the state map. Explore the map – toggle between male and female

**Mental Health** > **Community Connectedness** > **Index** > 2011

Compare measure Change measure

Community Connectedness

Community strength is found in the human relations that people draw upon for identity, interaction and support. A strong community is one where people understand and work towards sustainability and is inclusive of their most disadvantaged groups. To do this people need to be involved, feel capable of working through issues and feel supported by their fellow citizens.

Gender Analysis

Some gender stereotypes may contribute to more positive outcomes for women. Traditional women’s roles, including caring responsibilities, emotional closeness and feelings of being understood and supported by peers can contribute to women having better community connectedness than men.

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Tap an LGA to see its name and value

Female Male

State Region Metro

**Complete the following tasks:**

A1. Complete a PQE table for female *Community Connectedness* in 2011.

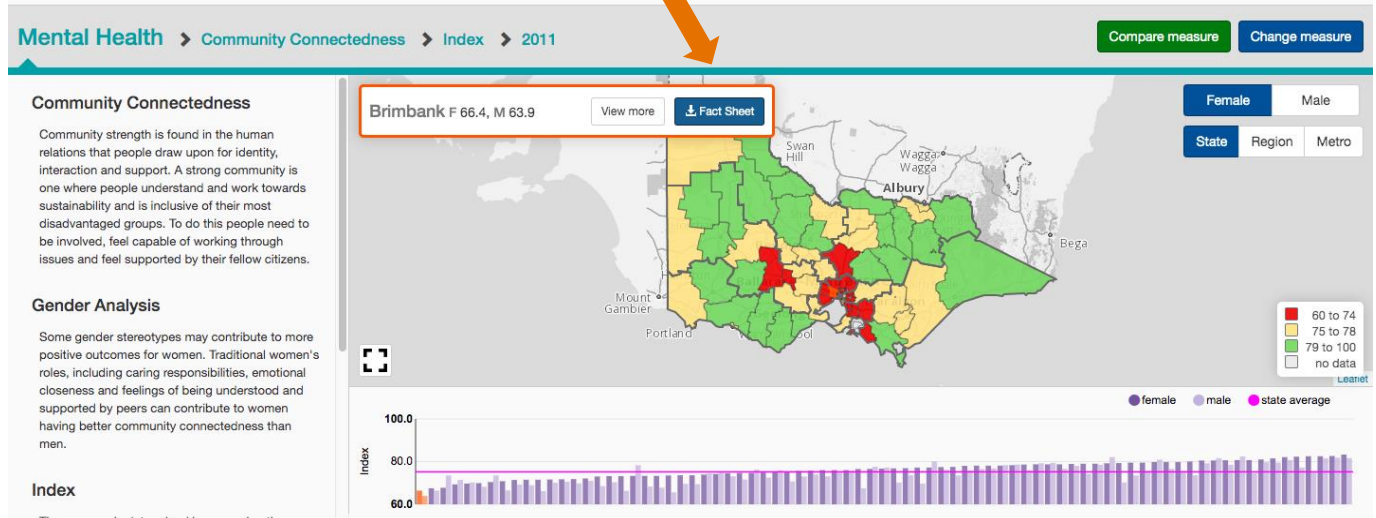
<p>Pattern (e.g. radial, clustered, random)</p>	
<p>Quantify (provide examples of facts and figures, names of regions etc.)</p>	
<p>Exceptions (outline any exceptions to the above pattern)</p>	

- A2. Using the same table as above, write a PQE paragraph for male community connectedness in 2011.
- A3. What differences do you notice between the levels of *Community Connectedness* of males and females in Victoria?
- A4. What reasons can you provide for any differences observed?
- A5. What do you notice about the difference between *Community Connectedness* in metropolitan areas as compared with regional and rural areas? Why do you think this is?

## TASK B

Choose an LGA and click on it. (*Brimbank used here as an example*)

Click 'Fact Sheet' to download more information.



The fact sheet contains data for every indicator within the Mental Health group.

Using the fact sheet, answer the following questions for your chosen LGA.

## Questions

- B1. What other challenges do people with poor mental health face?
- B2. Scroll to *Personal Wellbeing Indicator*. The *Personal Wellbeing Indicator* uses seven different domains to determine the measure. What are they?
- B3. What is the *Personal Wellbeing Indicator* for your LGA? Is this above or below the state average? By how much?
- B4. Scroll to *Community Connectedness Indicator*. What is measured by this indicator?
- B5. What is the *Community Connectedness* 2011 Index for your LGA?
- B6. Compare this to the state average – is it higher or lower? By how much?
- B7. Why do you think it is different to the state average?

**Women's Health West**  
http://whwest.org.au/

**Mental Health**  
Women's mental wellbeing is multi-faceted and diverse. Poor mental health is associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, sex and gender discrimination, social exclusion, physical ill health, unhealthy lifestyles, and violence and human rights violations. In addition many of these risk factors that impact on and maintain poor mental health disproportionately affect women. These include societal and cultural divisions of labour, maternity, depression or other psychological health issues and their causes, such as discrimination, violence and abuse.

**Anxiety Or Depression Indicator**  
Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health disorders. On average, 1 in 3 Australian women and 1 in 5 men will experience an anxiety disorder at some stage in their life. The Victorian Population Health Survey includes a measure of the lifetime prevalence of anxiety or depression. In 2017, 29% of Victorian adults reported ever being diagnosed with anxiety or depression by a doctor (average of all local government areas). By sex, an average of 33.6% of women and 21.0% of men reported having ever been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. It should be noted that depression and anxiety are two separate conditions; however, this data is a combination of both disorders. Lifetime prevalence does not necessarily mean that the respondent was experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression at the time of interview.

**Gender Analysis**  
Anxiety disorders in women are twice as common as in men from puberty to around the age of 50 (a woman's reproductive years). Women are also more likely to have multiple psychiatric disorders during their lifetime than men. The most common to co-occur with anxiety is depression. Depression is associated with poor health, many chronic conditions, and is a leading cause of disability in both women and men. Contributing factors to sex differences in rates and experience of anxiety and depression include: biological differences (brain chemistry and hormone activity), cultural expectations, gender roles, and help-seeking behaviour. While depression and anxiety are, for the most part, highly treatable disorders, continuing social stigma about mental illness may act as a barrier to obtaining support and services. Helpline in Australia for depression or anxiety: BeyondBlue (Phone: 1300 224 636 / Website: beyondblue.org.au).

Anxiety Or Depression 2017 % Ever diagnosed		Brimbank		Metro West Average		State Average	
F	39.1%	F	32.8%	F	36.9%	M	22.6%
M	16.4%	M	20.9%	M	22.6%	All	29.8%

Source: Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (2019) Victorian Population Health Survey 2017. Currency: 2017. Link: https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/population-health-systems/health-status-of-victorians/survey-data-and-reports/victorian-population-health-survey/victorian-population-health-survey-2017

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## TASK C

Go to the Department of Health website 'Head to Health':

<https://headtohealth.gov.au/meaningful-life/connectedness/community>

### Questions

- C1. What are the benefits of community involvement?
- C2. What percentage of Australian people are not involved in any social or community group?
- C3. What are some suggested activities to improve your sense of belonging to community?

## STUDENT WORKSHEET 2.2

### What is my community doing to improve connectedness?

In your home area, investigate one local community initiative, event, program or service.

Consider and complete the following:

**Title of initiative, program, event or service:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe the initiative, program, event or service: What does it provide? Who does it cater to? Who is included and who might be excluded (age groups, gender, etc.)? What is it intending to do?

2. Apart from services – what else contributes to a sense of connection?  
e.g. murals (public art – validation from seeing your demographic represented);  
built environment (safety such as lighting, security);  
access (ramps, baby friendly, public transport).

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3. How could it help with community connectedness? (Consider accessibility, language, cost, timing?)

4. How could it help improve wellbeing?

5. Do **you** think this is a good initiative, program, event or service? Why/why not?

6. How would **you** change or alter the initiative, program, event or service to improve it?