



## *Flourishing over time*

A study into the sustainability of the strategies and learnings from The Flourish Movement™ program.

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“ Flourish was and remains life changing for me. I would not still be in this job if it were not for Flourish and I find it has provided me with a strong base for seeking further help in managing my capacity to stay in the role.

- Participant



## Executive Summary

“If school leaders are given evidence-based strategies, peer support and behaviour change methodologies, they can make substantial changes in their lives.” - Dr Adam Fraser

It has been five years since we started The Flourish Movement™ program (TFM). It all started with a call from a small group of rural NSW school principals, led by Bob Willetts and the support of our founding client, the NSW Primary Principals Association. We started with a very clear mission to improve the wellbeing, effectiveness, and mental health of school leaders. In that time our data (independently measured by Deakin University) has told us that the program has made a significant impact on a group of people who show up each day and do one of the most challenging jobs we have ever come across. During this time, we were also fuelled by the countless messages we got from school leaders about the significant shifts that have come from being part of the program.

However, to fulfil the true vision we had for TFM, a number of critical and potentially scary questions had to be asked. They are:

- Do the effects of the program last beyond the final data collection?
- Are the school leaders continuing to implement the tools and principles they have been taught?
- Do we see a fundamental shift in their mindset around how they live, in order to manage their wellbeing, effectiveness and mental health?

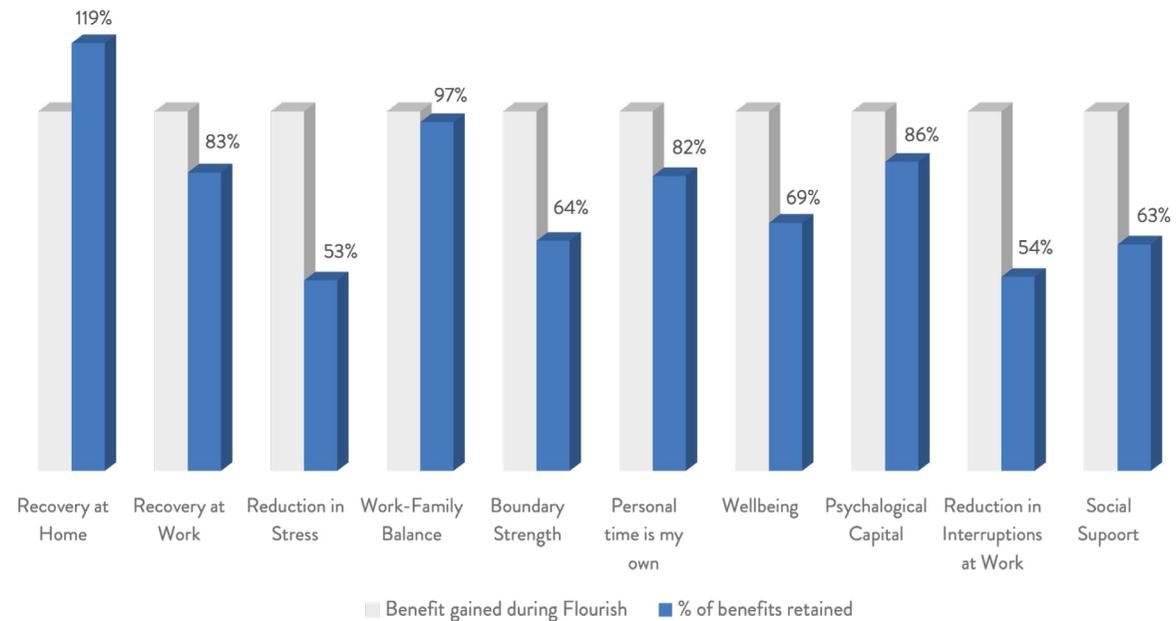
To find out the answer to these questions, Deakin University studied school leaders who had finished the program more than 12 months, and up to 48 months ago. We were delighted with the outcomes of the study which showed that the impact of The Flourish Movement™ is long lasting. This not only validates the program’s design and content, but also shows that if school leaders are given evidence-based strategies, peer support and behaviour change methodologies, they can make substantial changes in their lives. They are amazing at adapting their behaviour to work and live in a way that improves their wellbeing, increases their longevity in the role and improves how effective they are.

The Flourish Movement™ remains one of the few wellbeing programs for school leaders that has an independent university measure its outcomes, and the only one we have been made aware of to measure the sustainability of the changes seen. We hope to inspire other programs to bring this level of rigour to their practice, so we have greater clarity around what model and content brings positive and measurable outcomes for their participants.

# Key Findings

## 1. THE PROGRAM IMPACT LIVES ON

We were extremely pleased with the overall results of this study. When analysed as an entire group, participants retained more than 50% of the improvements they saw from the program. Here are the retention rates for the following constructs:



These results show that in all the constructs measured, the participants were far better off years after finishing the program than they were before starting the program. This is despite the fact that the sustainability remeasure survey was done in the middle of a pandemic with significant restrictions around the way people could work and live.



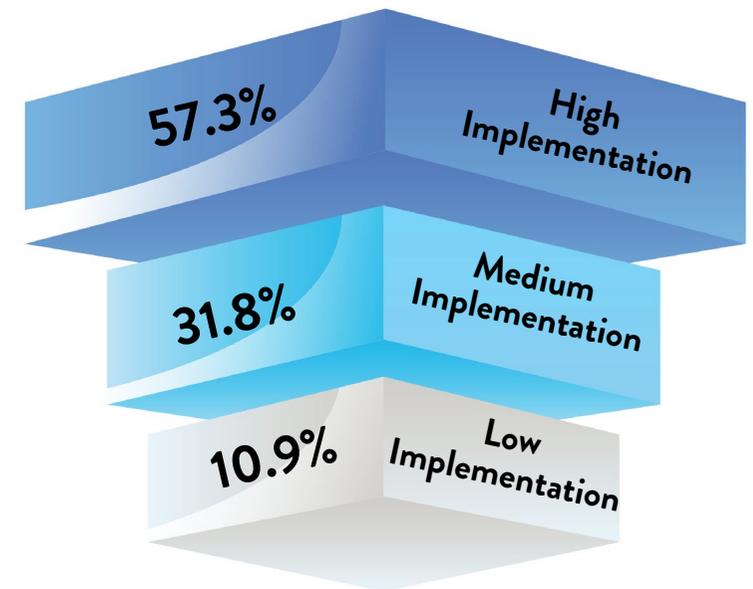
## 2. IMPLEMENTATION LEVELS ARE THE KEY

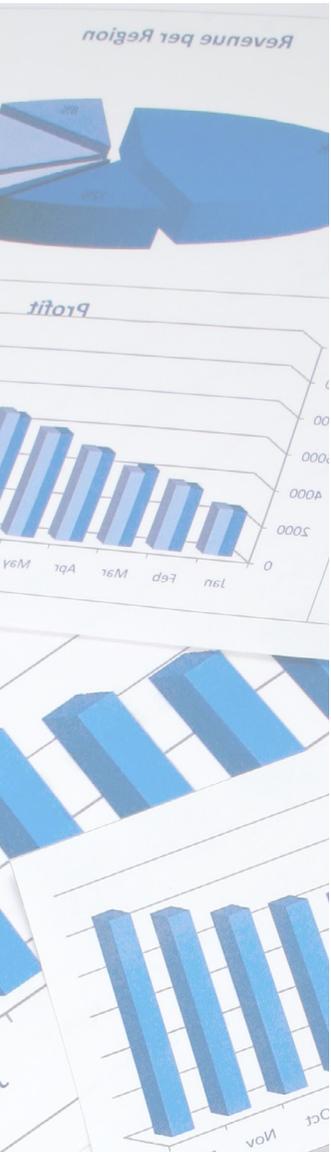
Incredibly, 57.3% of the respondents reported high levels of implementation, a further 31.8% have medium implementation levels and the remaining 10.9% are in low implementation. This shows that the overwhelming majority of school leaders are still performing or mostly performing the strategies taught in the program.

Implementation levels were by far the greatest predictor of sustainable outcomes, with a strong correlation between implementation levels and sustainability for each of the constructs we measured. So much so that the high implementation group saw improvements in Work Family Balance, Psychological Capital and Work Overload above the levels recorded at the completion of the program. The high implementation group also retained improvements in every construct we measured.

Similarly the medium implementation group were better off in every construct we measured, than before they started the program. This shows they still received huge benefit from the program.

What is interesting is that even the low implementation group were also still better off in the majority of constructs (with the exception of one) than they were before the program. This is evidence that the program has had some impact on their mindset and attitude towards how they approach their wellbeing, mental health and effectiveness.





It has long been a recommendation of *The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey*<sup>1</sup> that in addition to organisational changes and employers reducing job demands or increasing job resources, school leaders must play an active role in their own wellbeing by increasing their personal capital, enjoying their work but not letting it dominate their life, and taking responsibility for their personal work life balance. The findings demonstrate just how impactful it is when individuals are engaged in their own wellbeing and in ways that yield a return on investment for the time they have spent.

### 3. IMPACT OF TIME IS LESS THAN EXPECTED

Sustainability results were not as impacted by time since completion than we had anticipated. There was no clear linear correlation between time since program completion and retention in most of the constructs measured. However it did have a negative impact on stress levels, boundary strength, feeling that personal time is my own and wellbeing. This indicates that school leaders would benefit from ongoing support and further training in these areas to remind them of effective practice and help re-establish clear goals.

Time since program completion does however, appear to have an effect on implementation rates, with the majority of high and medium implementers being in the later groups. Those in the low implementation group did have a higher percentage of participants from the earlier groups, than the medium or high implementation groups. This adds further weight to the notion that school leaders should revisit the principles of the program periodically. We will be commencing a new optional masterclass in 2022 to enable participants to gain access to the updated program content and re-visit their actions plans.

### 4. WHERE ARE THEY NOW

82.7% of participants are in the same role and school as they were at the conclusion of the program. The remaining 17.3% have changed roles or schools, with 31.6% of those who changed roles having been promoted to higher positions. This supports increased longevity in the role and prevention of burnout.



## 5. ENABLERS OF SUCCESS

When we asked the participants how they sustained their results, below is a list of the most common strategies used:

1. they remembered the negative consequences of not following their TFM plans (30% of participants)
2. embedding a consistent routine (23%),
3. planning the desired behaviours in their calendar (16%),
4. discussing their plans with others (14%)
5. making a commitment to others (10%)

Looking at this list, the two main strategies used are organisation and accountability – either with themselves or with others.

When asked what factors got in the way of them being able to sustain their TFM action plans. The two main blockers were:

1. work overload and demands of the role (34%)
2. and time constraints (23%).

## 6. THE ROLE OF THE BUDDY

In the program, each participant is assigned a buddy who they connect with on a weekly basis. The function is to keep each other accountable for their action plans. 52.7% of the participants are still connecting with their buddy (some have been doing this for 4 years, 9% have had to find a new buddy as their buddy moved or retired). The predominant way they connect is the phone or a face to face catch up.

# Introduction

This report documents the research conducted by Deakin University to establish if the substantial benefits consistently seen upon completion of TFM are sustained by the participants. The program has achieved many benefits for school leaders, which have been verified and independently measured by Deakin University. Below is a summary of those benefits seen in the last five years with over 750 school leaders, across four states of Australia:

- 57.5% increase in Boundary Strength (ability to separate work and home)
- 36.2% decrease in number of interruptions each day
- 33.6% increase in time spent on Strategy
- 32.8% increase in time spent on Coaching staff
- 29.3% increase in the feeling that 'my time is my own'
- 26.9% increase in Recovery activities at work
- 25.3% decrease in time spent on Crisis Management
- 22.6% increase in time spent on Leading Teaching and Learning
- 20.7% decrease in time spent on Administration
- 19.7% reduction in Stress levels
- 19.6% reduction in 'Work pressure and stress levels impact my ability to have an adequate level of sleep'
- 18.7% decrease in feeling overloaded by work
- 18.4% increase in Work-Family Balance
- 15.1% increase in Recovery activities at home
- 14% reduction in Stressful Issues
- 10.8% reduction in 'I am considering leaving my job due to high work pressure and/or stress'

TFM has also demonstrated a ROI of 1.7, meaning that for every dollar spent, 1.7 dollars are saved. This calculation did not include the physical and health impact of the improvements, it only considers the improvements in productivity. A full understanding of the benefits can be gained from reading our 2019 Report to the NSW Department of Education. We will also be releasing a new report early next year, which will include a more broad dataset, made of 24 groups from 3 different states (the 2019 report covers only the first 8 groups, which were all NSW based).

# Methodology used in *The Flourish Movement*™



At the start of The Flourish Movement™ program, the participants go through a thorough research process. This includes a survey, a 10-day diary study and a one-on-one interview to assess the individual's overall wellbeing, as well as give them a clearer snapshot of their work and personal lives, where their time goes and how this affects them in their role as a school leader. While there are a number of surveys out there showing how poor the wellbeing of school leaders is, the addition of the diary study and interview gives individuals greater clarity around the habits that are diminishing their wellbeing. It also increases their readiness for change. The research portion of the program is conducted by Deakin University, pre and post program.



The second part of the program is the intervention, which consists of four full day workshops where the participants learn a series of research based, behaviour change strategies to help them in their role as a school leader, together with their personal lives. Each workshop is one term apart, spread out over a 12-month period. This design ensures the program's attendees are given the time to gradually implement the strategies learned and embed those changes before taking on further strategies. Also, we are mindful and respectful of how precious school leaders' time is and we understand that having to be away from their schools, for a full day, multiple times in a term would add to their workload. All participants receive communications in between workshops that remind them of the key principles taught in the program. Finally, each participant is assigned a buddy who they connect with weekly to hold each other accountable for their action plans, as well as to provide overall support to one another in their roles and, in some cases, in their lives.

# Methodology for the Sustainability study

The sustainability research was conducted on school leaders who have been through The Flourish Movement™ program since its inception in 2016 until May 2020 (time since completion ranged from 12 to 48 months). This includes a total of 18 groups. The criteria for inclusion in the sustainability study were:

- TFM participants who concluded the program at least 12 months ago.
- Participants who completed both the baseline and final surveys at the time of the program (this allowed for data to be compared).
- School leaders who attended a minimum of 50% of the workshops.

The survey was released in April 2021 and closed in June 2021. Of the eligible participants, 110 responded, which represents a 44% response rate. The respondents come from three states, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania, with 80% being from New South Wales (15 out of the 18 eligible groups). This is to be expected as the program was initiated and grew organically in New South Wales. All data presented in this report comes from the sustainability survey and the pre and post program surveys. It does not include any data from the pre and post diary studies.



**44%**  
Response rate



## Why is it important to regularly measure wellbeing?



Wellbeing is a continuum and dynamic, rather than static. It fluctuates. Wellbeing can be ‘flourishing’ at the highest end and ‘suffering’ at its lowest. Due to this oscillating nature, wellbeing requires attention and pro-activity in order to be kept in an optimal state.

Wellbeing depends upon the challenges a person faces, as well as the resources that a person has available to them. If challenges and resources are in balance, then wellbeing can remain stable and there is a greater chance for wellbeing to be at the higher end of the continuum – flourishing. However, should either challenges rise, or resources become depleted, then wellbeing will decrease and more likely move towards the lower end of the continuum - suffering. Challenges can come from any aspect or area of life, either work or personal, and resources can be depleted and then replenished. TFM is structured around the individual’s own intentional activity, where they can make active choices to build their internal resources in order to improve their wellbeing. This gives the individual some element of control and choice, to build their skills and use them to maintain their wellbeing. There are times however, where they may not have all the skills or resources to meet a challenge they face, nor have control over the challenges

themselves. This is particularly true for school leaders, in the nature of their work, and never more so than in the last two years during the pandemic. Lastly, there are individual and organisational factors involved in wellbeing and these are interdependent in creating the conditions for flourishing wellbeing. The Flourish Movement™ assists with the factors relating to the individual and that are within the individual’s control.

## *Purpose of the Sustainability research study*

The Flourish Movement™ program has been beneficial in improving school leaders' wellbeing and effectiveness, however the questions we wanted to answer in this study were:

1. What wellbeing and effectiveness skills are school leaders able to sustain on their own?
2. How well do they maintain them?
3. And for how long?
4. Are there areas where school leaders need continual support? And, if so,
5. At what time point, post program completion, would support be ideal to maintain and/or improve their wellbeing?

With this in mind, the report reviews the participants' ability to sustain their wellbeing and effectiveness using the skills and resources taught in TFM through two lenses. The first is time since completion, as we know that time may have an impact on an individual's ability to sustain certain skills and resources. The second investigates the impact of their level of implementation. In other words, how much of the program have they embedded into their life.

One thing we must bear in mind is that the sustainability measures were conducted during a global pandemic (COVID-19), which had a significant impact on the way they were working and living.





“

*The Flourish program has been pivotal in helping me to recover from burnout and get back on track, enabling me to have the sense I am now better placed to achieve a double victory - feeling closer to achieving both at home and at work.*

*- Participant*

## Section 1

### SUSTAINABILITY RESULTS BY CONSTRUCT, IMPLEMENTATION RATE AND TIME

In any behaviour change program, the role of the individual cannot be understated. How engaged and committed they are to learn and take active steps in making change in their own lives, is a large part of whether or not an individual will be successful in adopting more constructive habits. This relates back to the individual's intentional activity, choices and control.

In this section, we review the sustainability results of each construct, and analyse the impact of time on the participants' ability to sustain the learnings and strategies from TFM, based on when they completed the program, and implementation levels (how much of the program participants were still implementing) on those same constructs. It's important to note that, for accuracy, all numbers presented are weighted averages.

In terms of the impact of time on sustainability, we have divided those who completed the sustainability survey into two groups:

- The earlier groups, which are the first eight groups to have completed TFM, who's data formed the basis for the NSW Report released in 2019. Group 1 started in 2016 and Group 8 finished in 2018, meaning for some participants we are reviewing their sustainability three to four years post program. This group made up 45% of the respondents.
- The other 55% of respondents came from the groups that completed the program in 2019 and 2020, which means they have concluded TFM between one to two years ago.

We also reviewed how implementation rates impact the respondents' ability to sustain and affect further change since completing the program. This is represented by percentage, where 100% indicates they have sustained all the benefits from the program in that construct or area, while over 100% indicates they have not only sustained, but have continued to improve post program independently, using their own resources. Under 100% means that their scores are still better than before they started the program, but not as high as when they completed the program. This does not mean a lack of success, as sustaining a change can require attention and assistance and depends on the challenges faced and the resources available to them at the time. This data provides information about the need for further evidence-based support for school leaders. In areas where the retention rate is very low, respondents were not able to sustain the benefits gained independently, while a negative retention rate indicates that respondents are recording values that are lower than their original baseline score at the start of the program. Some areas, where low or negative retention scores are recorded, are outside of their control e.g., Stressful issues which provides insights into the external stressors that are placed upon school leaders at the time; while other constructs, e.g., Recovery at home, are firmly within the individual's control.

We asked participants to rate their level of implementation, as to how well they feel they have implemented their action plans and the content and concepts provided in the program. Depending on their answers, they could fall under one of three categories:

- 1 - High implementers - scored between 50 and 60 on a 60-points scale, meaning they still regularly do all the strategies they learned in TFM.
  - 2 - Medium implementers, which have scored between 40 and 49 on a 60-points scale and, therefore, regularly implement most of the strategies taught in the program.
  - 3 - Low Implementers – scored below 40 on a 60-points scale, which means they no longer do, but have previously done, or never implemented the strategies taught in the program.
- Incredibly, 57.3% of the respondents have reported high levels of implementation, a further 31.8% have medium implementation and the remaining 10.9% are in low implementation.

# Specific constructs we measured

## Recovery

Recovery plays a vital role in wellbeing as it is the replenishing of resources at the individual's disposal. Before developing The Flourish Movement™ program, we would often hear that school leaders needed more resilience. After studying the role in-depth, we learned that school leaders' levels of resilience are already incredibly high. What they are lacking is self-recovery. One of the biggest barriers to school leaders improving their wellbeing is that they do not spend enough time in recovery activities (activities that help them deal with stress and pressure). Introducing effective recovery techniques makes a big difference in energy levels at work and at home, and in reducing the impact of work stress.

### Recovery at Home

Since the completion of the program, participants' levels of Recovery at home have actually increased to a retention rate of 119.1%, which means they have not only maintained the lifestyle changes they implemented throughout TFM but have continued to build on it post program.

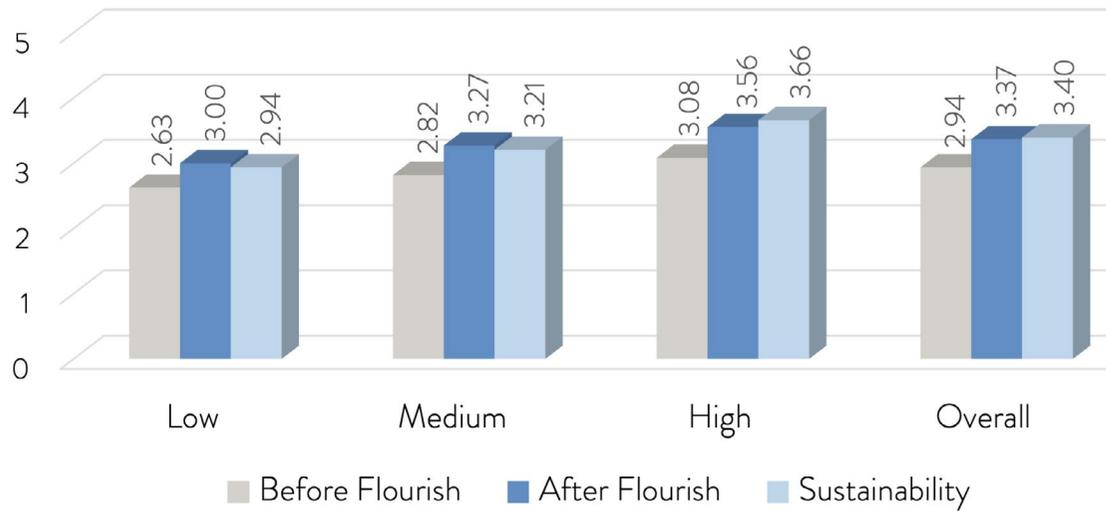
For the high implementation group, their retention rate for Recovery at home was 122.4%. The medium implementation group had a retention rate of 85.5% and the low implementation group retained 83.3% of the improvements they made in TFM.

These results show that, not only have high implementers seen further improvements since program completion, but medium and low implementers are also still far better off than before the program. This construct is very much within the individual's control and therefore it is pleasing to see such results.

Time since completion did not seem to have a significant impact on retention rates.



## Recovery at home by implementation level



Graph 2. Recovery at home by implementation level.



<b>Recovery At home</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	2.94	3.37	3.40
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	2.93	3.44	3.51
Later Groups	2.95	3.35	3.46
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	2.63	3.00	2.94
Medium	2.82	3.27	3.21
High	3.08	3.56	3.66

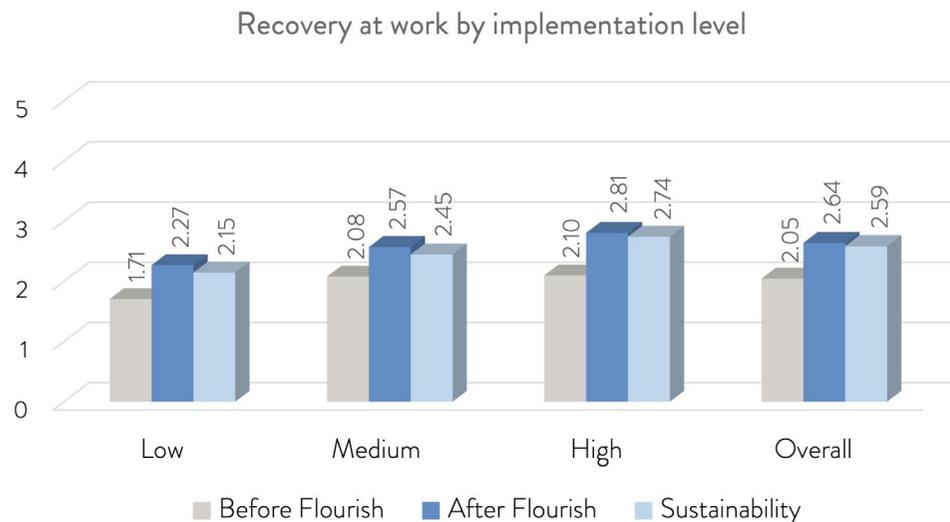
Table 1. Recovery at home comparison.

## Recovery at work

Recovery activities at work are strategies that help school leaders effectively manage stress and fatigue during the working day. At the time of the sustainability measure, respondents had retained 83.1% of the gains from the program. With challenging work circumstances such as COVID-19, being able to recover while at work is a great advantage and will aid their work performance and longevity in the role.

Earlier groups have scored higher than the later groups, with a retention rate of 87.9% compared to 78.5%. This might be explained by the fact that earlier groups have had more time to embed the learnings from the program and they are now a part of their routine and the way they work. Therefore, when the pandemic hit they were able to better sustain them than the later groups, which at the time were still working on embedding these techniques into their routines. Earlier groups had a greater percentage of regional areas, which were less impacted by the initial wave of the pandemic than their metro counterparts. The later groups had a greater percentage of metro-based groups.

In terms of implementation levels, the high implementation group had a retention rate for Recovery at work of 91.0%. Medium implementers had a 75.1% retention rate and the low implementation group retained 77.8% of the program's benefits. These results show that all three implementation groups have been able to retain the majority of the progress made in the program.



Graph 3. Recovery at work by implementation level.

<b>Recovery At work</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	2.05	2.64	2.59
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	2.02	2.71	2.63
Later Groups	2.07	2.65	2.53
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	1.71	2.27	2.15
Medium	2.08	2.57	2.45
High	2.10	2.81	2.74

Table 2. Recovery at work comparison.

## Work Overload, Stress and Stressful Issues

*The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey (2020)*<sup>1</sup> states that the average principal has significantly more stress than the average Australian. The detrimental impact of high stress levels over long periods of time on a person's wellbeing is well known. One of the key focus areas in Workshop 3 is how to manage your response to stressful situations.

### Stress levels

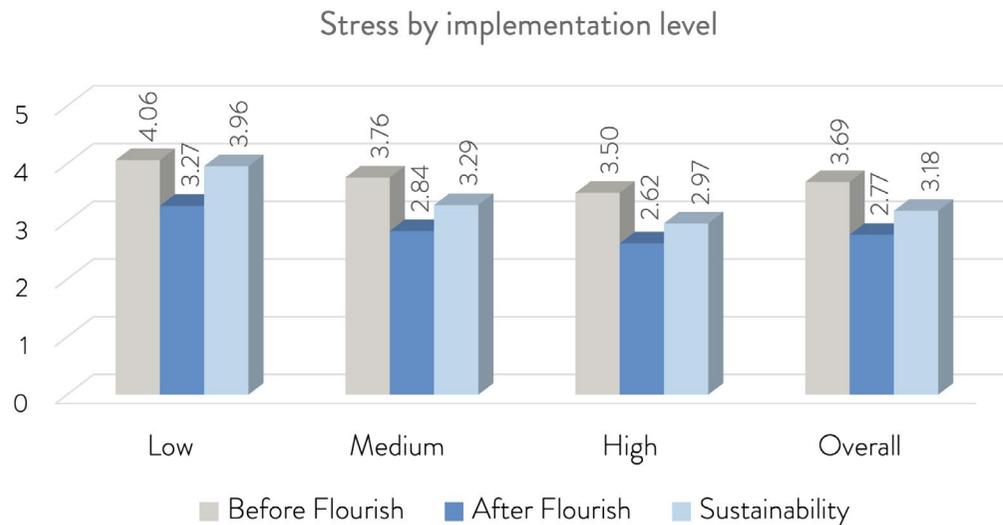
The overall group had a retention rate of 52.7% in reduction in Stress. Even during a pandemic they are less stressed than when they started the program. Changes in roles and in circumstances within the same school, as well as the impact of the pandemic all combined here to increase external stress, making retention more difficult. This is a great indicator of the long-term effectiveness of the stress reducing and wellbeing strategies taught in TFM. The use of recovery methods, as well as the improvement in Boundary strength, Work-family balance and Personal time as their own, are likely to have assisted in keeping these Stress levels lower than at baseline.

However, it does appear that the effect fades out over time with earlier groups showing 30.8% retention of benefits, while later groups retained 76.9%. This indicates that refreshing people's strategies to cope with stress would be of great benefit post program.

There is a linear correlation between implementation level and retention, with the retention rate of reduced stress being 60.4% for high implementers, 51.4% for the medium implementation group and 13.2% for the low implementers.



Reduction in  
Stress **52.7%**



Graph 4. Stress by implementation level.

<b>Stress</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	3.69	2.77	3.18
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	3.68	2.8	3.41
Later Groups	2.8	2.15	2.3
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	4.06	3.27	3.96
Medium	3.76	2.84	3.29
High	3.50	2.62	2.97

Table 3. Stress comparison.

## Stressful Issues

This construct was created by the first TFM group. It consists of the major stressful areas that were experienced by these principals. The principals then rate them by the extent of their stressfulness. They are:

- Dealing with conflict;
- Time constraints;
- Work overload;
- Work crises;
- Government and organisational demands;
- Balancing work and home.

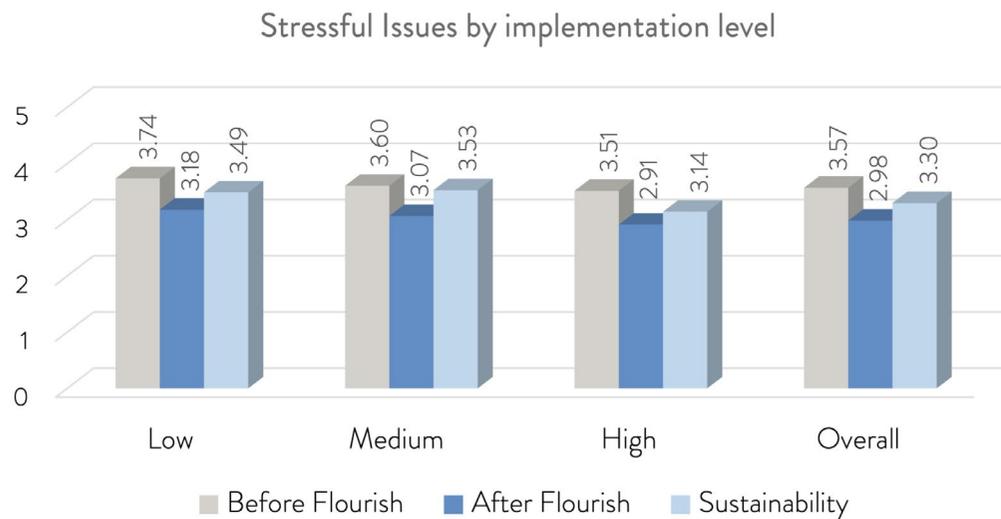
We expected to see an increase in Stressful issues in part from the pandemic, which has obviously brought ongoing challenges and stressful issues not only for school leaders, but across society in general. This construct is therefore, not heavily within the respondent's control, but it does help to understand the overall work circumstances at the time of the survey.

Pleasingly the results are that Stressful issues remain lower than at their baseline with a 44.7% retention in the benefits that they gained from the program.

There is an apparent effect of time on Stressful issues as the earlier group's retention is lower than later groups, at 23.6% compared to 63.1%. We are unable to comment as to what caused this and further review and research would be required to understand the contributing factors.

In relation to implementation, there is a non-linear relationship between implementation level and outcome, with the medium implementers having the lowest retention rate at 14.6%, while high implementers retained 61.8% of the benefits and the low implementation group retained 44.9%. However, the low implementers had a 4% worse starting point prior to TFM, whereas their sustainability scores are quite similar (only 1% different).

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Graph 5. Stressful issues by implementation level.

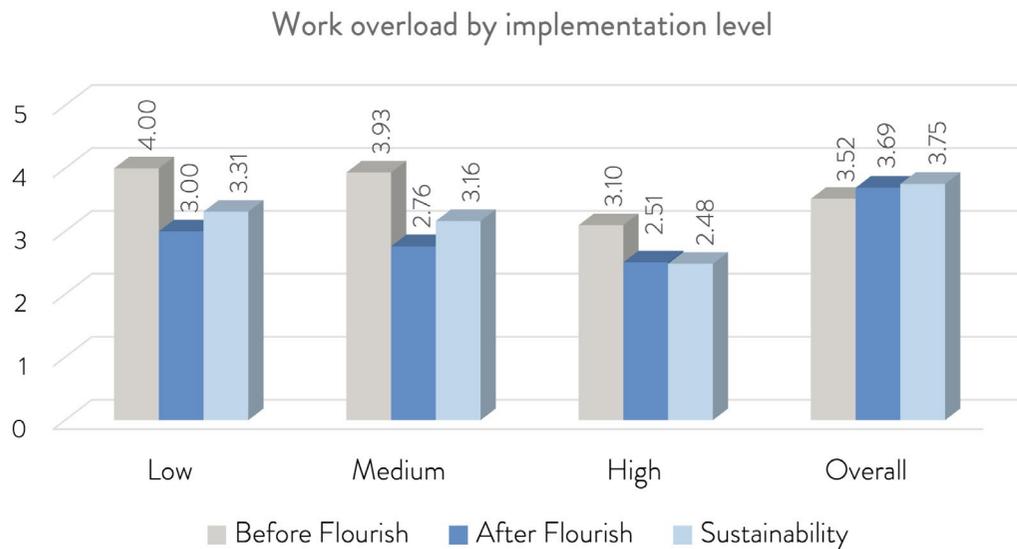
<b>Stressful Issues</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	3.57	2.98	3.30
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	3.67	3.06	3.53
Later Groups	3.47	2.92	3.13
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	3.74	3.18	3.49
Medium	3.60	3.07	3.53
High	3.51	2.91	3.14

Table 4. Stressful issues comparison.

## Work overload/pressure

Work pressure was the initial measure used with earlier groups, which measured how much pressure they feel from the job. However, this was changed to Work overload for the later groups and measured how overwhelmed they feel by the role. For this survey, we have measured the construct Work overload, so we are unable to calculate and make comments on the Work overload retention rate for the earlier groups as the constructs are not interchangeable. Work overload in the later groups, at the time of the sustainability survey, had a retention rate of 79.9%, which is an incredibly positive result.

The retention rate on Work overload for the high implementation group was 104%, which means they have not only retained all benefits from the program but have continued to improve since the completion of the program. The medium implementation group had a retention rate of 65.7%, while the low implementers retained 68.8%. Note that the medium implementers had a better average sustainable score than the low implementers, so were overall better off.



Graph 6. Work overload by implementation level.

<b>Work overload</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	3.52	3.69	3.75
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	3.9	3.48	3.69
Later Groups	3.04	2.39	2.52
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	4.00	3.00	3.31
Medium	3.93	2.76	3.16
High	3.10	2.51	2.48

Table 5. Work Overload comparison.

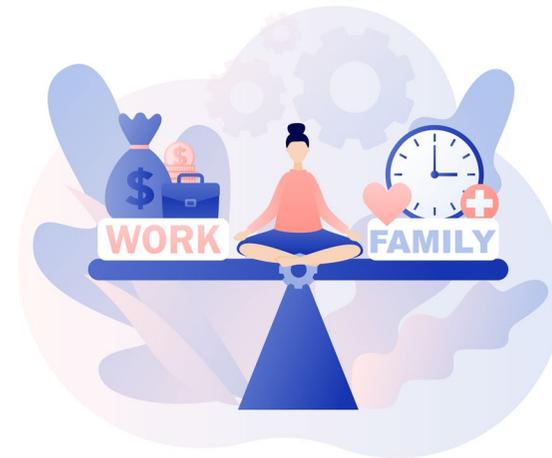
## Work-family balance and Boundary strength

The focus in Workshop 1 is self-care, recovery and restoration of Work-family balance. The results from the sustainability research are outstanding and they show how school leaders have been able to improve the quality of the interactions they have with people in their personal lives. The significant change in Boundary strength reflects a much clearer delineation between 'what is work and what is home'. This leads to better focus, reduces work-life conflict, and builds more quality time in each of the work and home roles. This is directly related to *The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey (2020)*<sup>1</sup> data recommendation 13 'Take responsibility for your personal work-life balance'.

### Work-family balance

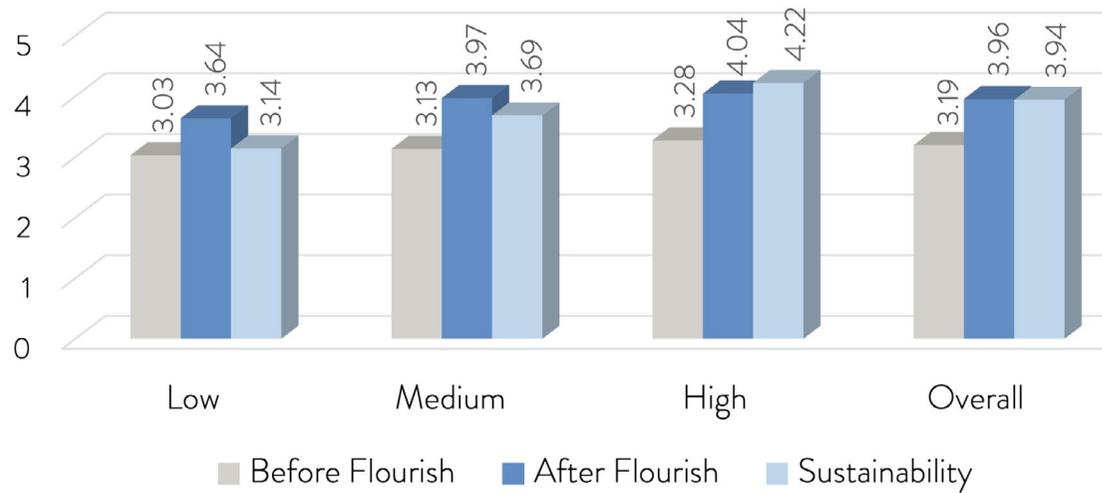
Impressively, Work-family balance has been very well sustained by the participants with a retention of 97.3% of the benefits gained. There is also negligible difference between the earlier and later groups, so time since completion does not appear to impact this construct. This is particularly impressive given all that has happened during the pandemic, which demonstrates though that this construct is incredibly robust post program, as respondents are able to self-sustain.

In Work-family balance, as in most of the constructs, there is a linear relationship between implementation and outcome, with the high implementation group having the highest retention rate at 123.1%, so they had made more improvements in this construct since participating in the program. Medium implementers had a 65.9% retention rate and the low implementation group retained 18.3% of the improvement they saw in this construct.



Work-family  
balance  
**97.3%**

### Work-family balance by implementation level



Graph 7. Work-family balance by implementation level.



<b>Work-family balance</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	3.19	3.96	3.94
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	3.25	3.97	3.95
Later Groups	3.17	3.95	3.92
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	3.03	3.64	3.14
Medium	3.13	3.97	3.69
High	3.28	4.04	4.22

Table 6. Work-Family Balance comparison.

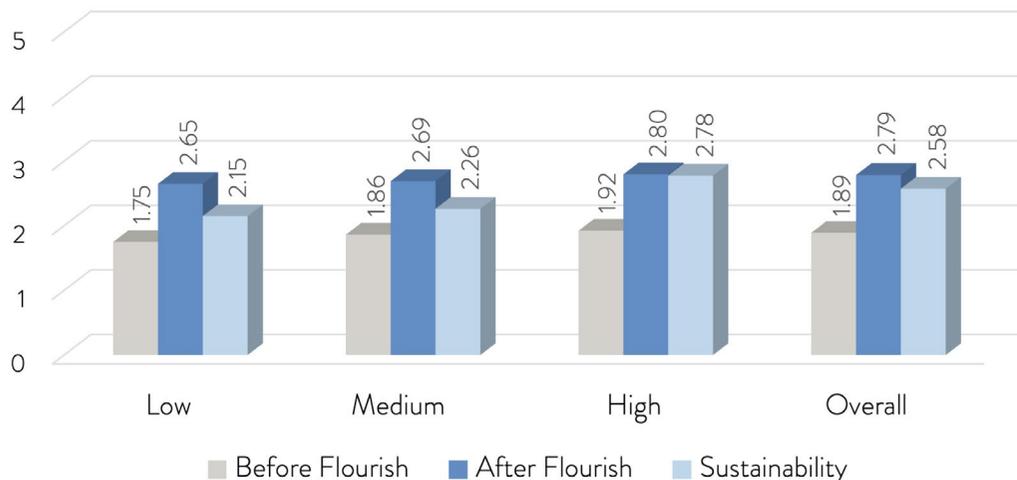
## Boundary strength

Boundary strength is the ability to separate work from home. Overall, respondents have retained 76.4% of the gains in this construct. Despite this being a very positive outcome considering the current circumstances, on a scale of 1 to 5 they scored 2.58, meaning that Boundary strength needs some attention.

There is an impact of time on Boundary strength with earlier groups retaining 52.8%, while later groups saw a slight improvement post program with a retention rate of 101.7%. This indicates that somewhere in the two-to-four-year range post program, a refresher or an updated action plan is needed to manage changing circumstances, especially during times of major crisis such as a pandemic.

Once again, the impact of implementation on retention levels can clearly be seen here. For the high implementation group their retention rate for Boundary strength was 97.8%. For the medium implementation group, it was 48.3% and for the low implementers it was 44.4%.

Boundary strength by implementation level



Graph 8. Boundary strength by implementation level.

<b>Boundary strength</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	1.89	2.79	2.58
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	1.87	2.93	2.43
Later Groups	1.91	2.68	2.7
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	1.75	2.65	2.15
Medium	1.86	2.69	2.26
High	1.92	2.80	2.78

Table 7. Boundary Strength comparison.

## Personal time is my own

Similar to Work-family balance, the participants have reported that their personal time is still very much their own, managing to retain 81.6% of the benefits they gained. This means that when school leaders are having personal time, they are not ruminating about work and are more present with the people they are with or tasks they are doing. This would also influence and contribute to their Work-family balance. There does appear to be a loss over time, with earlier groups retaining 66.7% of the benefits gained from the program, while later groups have maintained 100% of the benefits. Again, somewhere between two and four years post program some assistance in maintaining this is required.

There is a non-linear relationship with implementation for this construct, as the low implementers retained 80.0% of their program gains, while the medium implementation group had a retention rate of 51.2%. However, the sustainability score of the medium implementers is higher than the low implementer group, though the high implementation group continues to score the highest out of all the groups, with a retention rate of 103.3% which shows a further improvement since program completion in the feeling that their Personal time is their own.

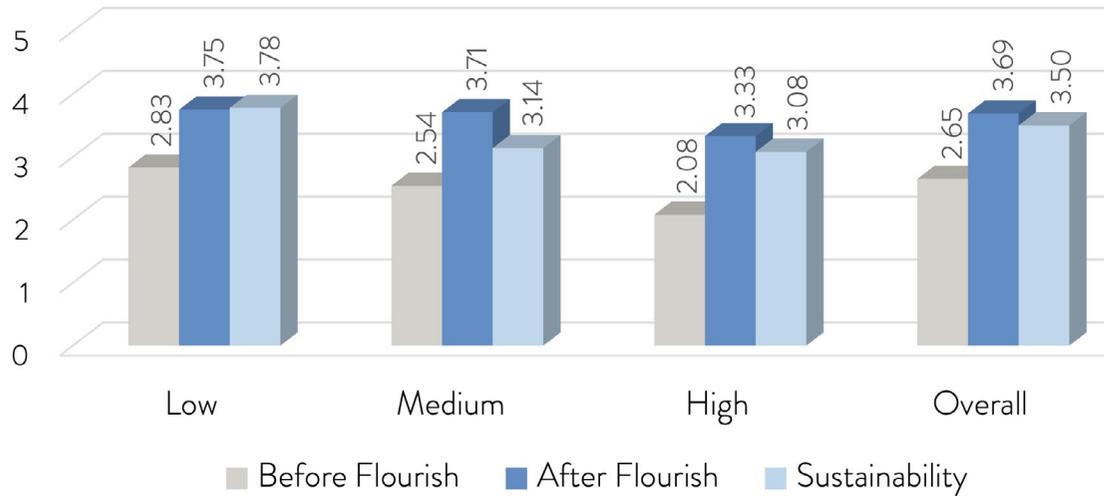
More interesting here is the medium implementers who have an almost identical score to the high implementers post program, then decrease to a very similar score to the low implementers. This shows the importance of continuing to follow and implement the strategies taught in TFM in sustaining the benefit gained. It also indicates that these respondents could benefit from further support in this area.

This was one of the few non-linear relationships. The relationship becomes clearer when we review the engagement scores. The high implementation group scored 4.01 out of 5 (considered high and positive), the medium group 3.51 out of 5 (considered on the positive side) and the low implementation group only 3.05 out of 5 (which is considered mixed) as sustainable scores. So engagement of the high implementers was 31% more than the low group, and the medium group was 15% higher than the low group.



Personal time  
is my own **81.6%**

### My personal time is my own implementation level



Graph 9. Personal time is my own by implementation level.



<b>My personal time is my own</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	2.65	3.69	3.50
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	2.39	3.67	3.24
Later Groups	2.87	3.7	3.7
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	2.83	3.75	3.78
Medium	2.54	3.71	3.14
High	2.08	3.33	3.08

Table 8. My personal time is my own comparison.

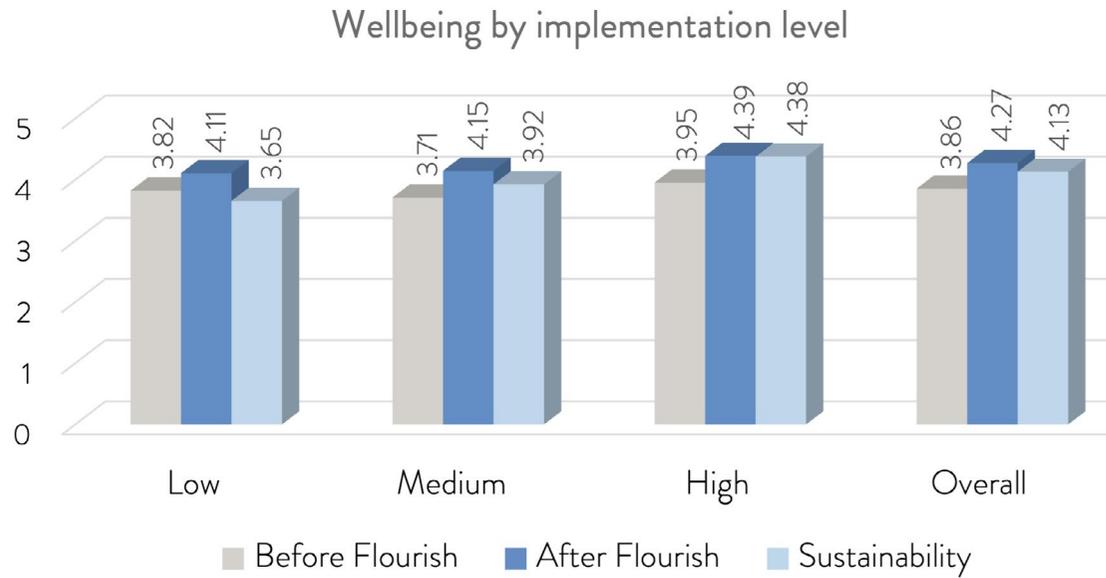
## Wellbeing

For this construct, we use the United Nations definition of Wellbeing which includes factors such as Loving relationships, Community relationships, and Living standard, which the program has no influence over, but it adds to the overall understanding of the school leaders' Wellbeing. This broad measure is different to what most people think of when they envisage wellbeing, which is a state of health. As it is such a broad measure, we typically find that school leaders already have a strong sense of Wellbeing as seen at baseline. Therefore, any improvement in Wellbeing is a significant one. Overall, participants retained 69.1% of the improvements in Wellbeing at the sustainability measure. This is impressive during the challenges of the pandemic.

Even though there is a difference in retention scores between the earlier and the later groups (56.9% vs 77.6%), there is little difference in the actual Wellbeing score at sustainability between the two groups (4.18/5 and 4.13/5, respectively). However, in the factors where TFM is able to assist, there is a very obvious effect of time. For example, earlier groups have lower retention levels in 'I am in good health' (61.2% compared to 97.2% of later groups) and 'I am happy at work' (retention of 34.2% compared to 64.5% in later groups), while the later groups have lower retention in Meaning in work (32.8% compared to 65.2% in earlier groups). This indicates that further support somewhere between the two and four year mark would be of value to participants.

In terms of the effect of implementation levels on this construct, high implementers had a retention rate of 97.1%, while the retention rates for the medium and low implementation groups were 49.3% and -58.2%, respectively. Unfortunately, low implementers have reported worse levels of Wellbeing at sustainability than pre-program.





Graph 10. Wellbeing by implementation level.



<b>Wellbeing</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	3.86	4.27	4.13
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	3.96	4.35	4.18
Later Groups	3.79	4.23	4.13
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	3.82	4.11	3.65
Medium	3.71	4.15	3.92
High	3.95	4.39	4.38

Table 9. Wellbeing comparison.

## Psychological capital

Psychological capital is measured to determine the existing level of psychological resources that school leaders have at their disposal to cope with the challenges of their work environment. Psychological capital is made up of Confidence, Hope, Resilience, and Optimism. Overall, Psychological capital has remained reasonably steady with a retention of 85.8%. Interestingly, Optimism had the lowest retention at 62.9%, but Confidence had a retention rate of 118.7%, meaning that confidence has continued to build by a further 18.7% since program completion. Yet Confidence also increases as part of a natural progression and development within a person's role and career.

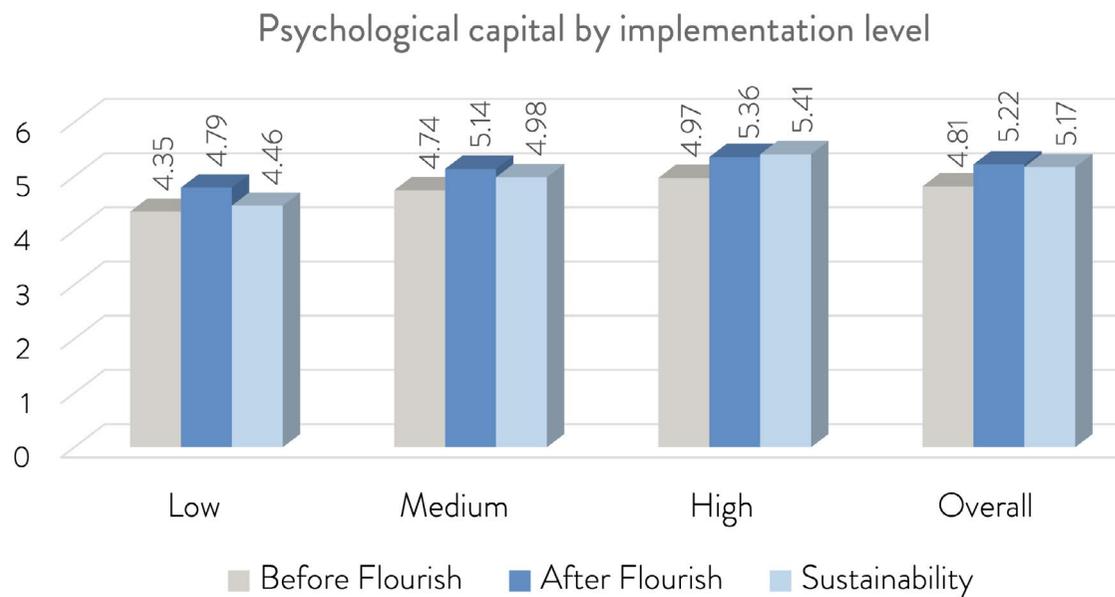
Given all that has happened with COVID-19, a loss in Optimism is likely to simply be a reasonable response to the nature of a global pandemic and something we might find reflected in the general public.

There appears to be an inverse relationship with time and Psychological capital, with the earlier groups having better results than the later. The earlier groups' overall Psychological capital increases post program with a retention rate of 113.8%. They demonstrated increases in almost all sub-constructs, with the exception of Optimism. Retention rates for earlier groups were 204.9% in Confidence, 120.9% in Hope, 110.3% in Resilience and just under 70% in Optimism. In contrast, the later groups demonstrate a 70.1% retention rate for Psychological capital and slight decreases in all sub-constructs with retention rates of 77% in Confidence, 72.4% in Hope, 71.9% in Resilience and 54.5% in Optimism. It's possible that the later groups' results are a reflection of having had less time to embed the learnings while dealing with the impacts of COVID-19. That being said, the later groups' Psychological capital is 5.08 on a 6-point scale, which is still very high.

The high implementation group's retention rate for Psychological capital was 113.3%, showing that they had continue to build on it post-program, whereas the medium implementation group had a retention rate of 60.8% and for the low implementers it was 25.1%.



Psychological  
capital  
**85.8%**



Graph 11. Psychological capital by implementation level.

<b>Psychological capital</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	4.81	5.22	5.17
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	4.9	5.23	5.27
Later Groups	4.76	5.22	5.08
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	4.35	4.79	4.46
Medium	4.74	5.14	4.98
High	4.97	5.36	5.41

Table 10. Psychological capital comparison.

## Interruptions

Interruptions are reviewed and included in the report as they give us an indication of the participants workflow. Participants retained 54% of the reduction in interruptions gained from TFM. Interestingly, there is a small inverse relationship with time as earlier groups were slightly more successful at maintaining their reduction in interruptions, which is impressive given some participants finished over 4 years ago. It is also possible that later groups have not been able to embed their reduction in interruptions with the increased challenges of the pandemic. Further analysis reveals that all areas of Interruptions (Task, Email, Phone and People) are better at the sustainability measure than the pre-program measure. In particular, Email interruptions benefits have been most retained, and have been much closer to the post program results with 73% of their original gains being retained.

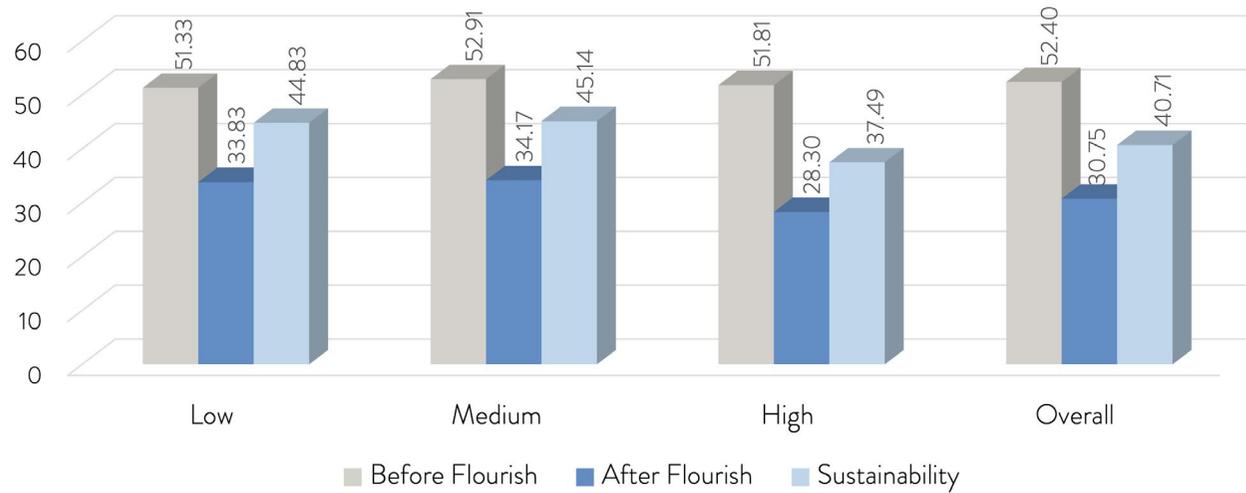
Of great interest here is that the earlier groups have maintained 94.1% of their original gains in email management. In relation to being interrupted by People, respondents have maintained over 51% of their original gains and, in switching Tasks, over 43%. This means they are succeeding in keeping themselves from being interrupted. Phone interruptions have been less retained as they have held 27.9% of their original gains. The pandemic is likely to have impacted their ability to control being interrupted with breaking news and changes being made with short notice. It is likely that these interruptions, being urgent, would come by phone. We are unable to comment on the need for further support as the interruptions from the pandemic are unavoidable and outside of the respondents' control.

Implementation level continues to have a direct relationship with retention. The low implementation group retained 37.1% of the improvements made throughout the program, medium implementers retained 41.5% and high implementers retained 60.9%.

Reduction in  
Interruptions  
**54%**



Interruptions by implementation level



Graph 12. Interruptions by implementation level.



<b>Interruptions</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	52.40	30.75	40.71
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	51.35	28.98	38.98
Later Groups	53.25	32.16	42.1
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	51.33	33.83	44.83
Medium	52.91	34.17	45.14
High	51.81	28.30	37.49

Table 11. Interruptions comparison.

## Social support

Support from colleagues is listed by *The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey (2020)*<sup>1</sup> data report as one of the ways Wellbeing is to be improved (recommendation 9). The Flourish Movement™ builds collegiate support throughout the program through the use of the buddy system, the shared vulnerable space created at each workshop, as well as through the focus on leadership aspects of the role in workshop 4.

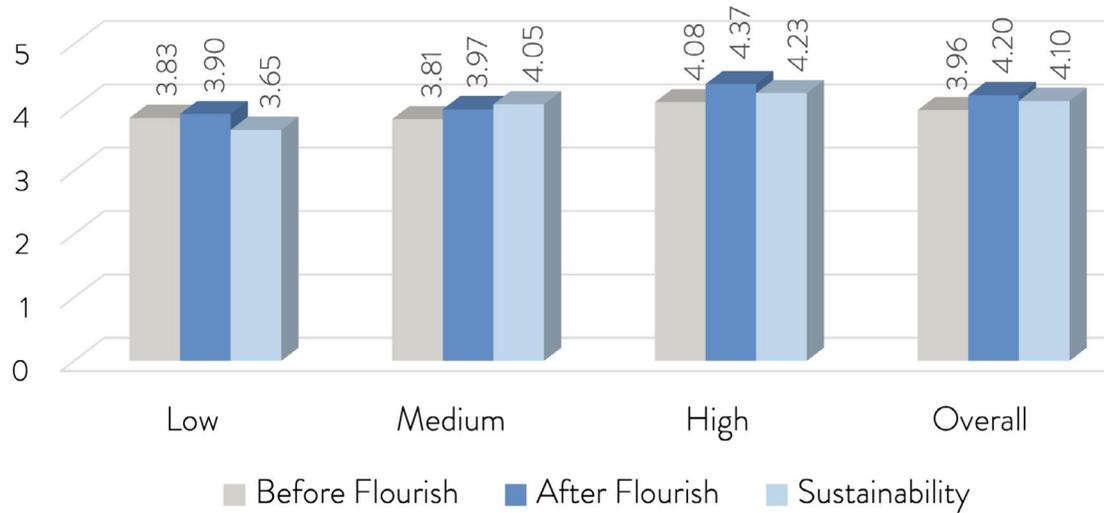
Overall, Social support has a retention rate of 62.5%. The slight dip in Social support is understandable for a few reasons. Many participants have changed roles or have had changes in staffing. During the pandemic, school leaders were not able to meet with other school leaders for an extended period of time and indeed for some there was difficulty in seeing their own staff. For those that changed roles, having to re-establish Social Support within those new communities or organisations may also explain this reduction. There is minimal difference in loss of Social Support over time, with earlier and later groups having very similar levels of retention (61% and 63.6% respectively).

For the high implementation group their retention rate for Social support was 50%, for the medium implementation group it was 150% and for the low implementers it was -300%. This latter figure is considerably inflated by the fact that the low implementers only improved by 1.8% so the reduction involved in sustainability is three times that. Also note that the final sustainable score for this construct of the high implementers was still 4% higher than the medium implementers. The problem of the low implementers may be related to their lower engagement levels in the role, which can impact relationships with others in the school.



Social  
support  
**62.5%**

Social support by implementation level



Graph 13. Social support by implementation level.



<b>Social support</b>			
	Before Flourish	After Flourish	Sustainability
Overall	3.96	4.20	4.10
<b>Year Comparison</b>			
Earlier Groups	3.46	3.65	3.88
Later Groups	3.61	3.73	3.59
<b>Implementation levels comparison</b>			
Low	3.83	3.90	3.65
Medium	3.81	3.97	4.05
High	4.08	4.37	4.23

Table 12. Social Support comparison.



## Section 2

### BEYOND THE DATA

We've looked at the data in its individual pieces. But what does that mean for the people we are working with? In this section, we put together the data and the people, so we can have a better understanding of the program's outcomes in a more day to day sense. This section covers what the life of the different implementers looks like, which factors enabled or blocked their success, the importance of collegiate support and where they are right now in their careers.



# What do Flourishers look like now?

## High Implementers

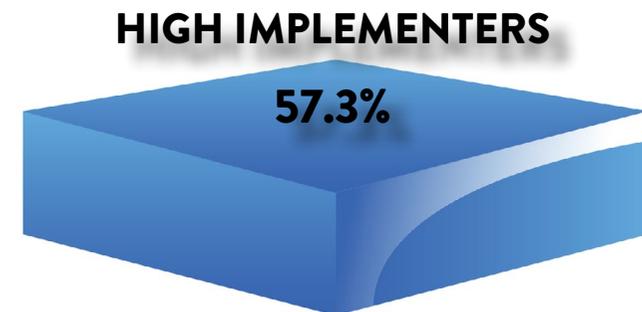
Overall, the high implementers have very positive results, and more pleasingly this makes up almost 60% of the respondents. High implementers demonstrate continued improvements post program in the following constructs:

- Work-family balance increase retained by 123.1%
- Psychological capital increase retained by 113.3%
- Work overload reduction retained by 104%
- Recovery at home retained by 122.4%

In other areas, they have sustained most of the benefits gained from the program, such as Boundary strength with a 97% retention score and Recovery at work with 91%.

Other constructs, for high implementers, were below the scores post-program, but all of them were still better than pre-program and indicated a high to moderate amount of retention, including Stressful issues at 61.8%, Interruptions by 60.9%, Stress by 60.4%, and Wellbeing at 97.1%. Stressful issues and Interruptions are likely to have had some impact from COVID-19.

NB: From the high implementers, 57.1% are in the later groups and 42.9% are in the earlier groups.



## Medium Implementers

For the 31.8% of respondents in the medium implementation group, they too were able to demonstrate continued improvement post program in Social Support by 150%. Areas that are very close to sustained are Recovery at work with a 75.1% retention score and Recovery at home with 85.5%.

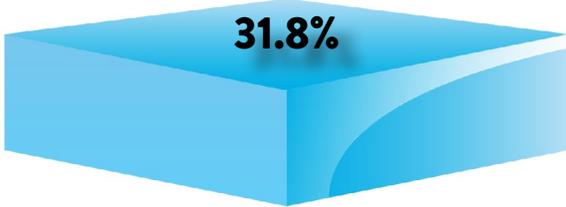
The remaining measures were not as high as post-program scores, but were still better than pre-program, including Work-family balance by 65.9%, Psychological Capital by 60.8%, Stress by 51.4%, Wellbeing at 49.3%, Supervisor Support by 48.1% and Interruptions by 41.5%.

Stressful issues' retention rate is 14.6%, which is very close to baseline results. This area does sit mostly outside of the individual's control.

NB: Medium Implementers, 85.5% are in the later groups and 14.5% are in the early groups.

### MEDIUM IMPLEMENTERS

31.8%



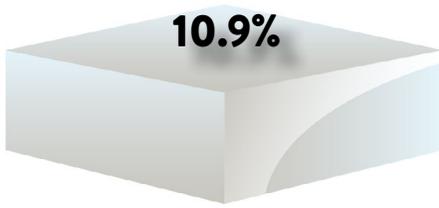
## Low Implementers

For the low implementation group, their results were surprisingly good considering their low pro-activity around their action plans. They were able to do well and come close to sustaining benefits in Recovery at work with a retention of 77.8%, Recovery at home with 83.3% and My personal time is my own with 80%. They also maintained most of the benefits in Work overload with a retention of 68.8%. However, they had lower sustainability scores for Stressful issues with 44.9%, Boundary strength with 44.4%, Interruptions with 37.1%, Psychological capital with 25.1% and Stress with 13.2%. There are also some areas in which the low implementers were worse off than pre-program, namely Wellbeing with a retention rate of -58.2%.

NB: For low implementers 40.7% are in the later groups and 59.3% are in the early groups.

### LOW IMPLEMENTERS

10.9%



## *Impact of Implementation*

Looking at the impact of implementation, it is clear that those who have higher implementation have better results. Interestingly, there seems to be a direct relationship between implementation levels and scores pre-program, with high implementers having higher baseline scores in many constructs, namely:

- Psychological capital
- Recovery at work
- Recovery at home
- Wellbeing
- Work-family balance
- Boundary strength
- Social support
- My personal time is my own

These are the constructs more within the individual's sphere of control, where they can use intentional activity to create better outcomes for themselves.

Following a similar pattern, the constructs of Stress and Work overload are all lower in the high implementation group at baseline, medium in the medium implementation and highest in the low implementation group. These constructs are less within their individual control.

The exceptions to the implementation pattern was found in Wellbeing where medium implementers were at lower levels than low implementers, at baseline.

Of interest, in the construct of Interruptions, we can see at baseline there is very little difference between the groups. This is more of a reflection of the current nature of the role of school leaders, as well as their mindset. Anecdotally, their mindsets are that of being of service and continual availability, meaning they do not allocate time for uninterrupted work. The current nature of the role relates to both organizational factors such as administrative burden and the sheer number of functions and tasks required of the one role. The skills taught within TFM are essential for maximizing productivity for current school leaders, as well as the preparation provided for the transition into the role.

There is also a positive direct relationship between implementation levels and the post program results, meaning they start better, they improve more and they sustain better for most of the constructs:

- Stress
- Stressful issues
- Work overload
- Social support
- Impact of Stress
- Interruptions
- Wellbeing
- Recovery at home

The high implementers commenced the program with good measures in these areas and demonstrated excellent continued improvements post program and at sustainability survey.

The low implementers did very well during the program having the highest levels of improvement in constructs such as Psychological capital, Boundary strength, and very similar levels to medium implementers on Interruptions and Stressful issues, even though they started from a lower base.

The findings here do indicate that medium and low implementers could do with more ongoing support as they have demonstrated good improvements during the program.

# Strategies used to sustain the learnings and changes from TFM\*

Below are the reported methods used by respondents to sustain their TFM learnings. Connecting to the reason for doing it and its importance, is a strategy used by almost 30% of the respondents, followed by the making it a habit and agenda / planning.



Remember importance /  
consequences of not doing  
it **29%**



Agenda / Planning /  
Diary Study **25%**



Became routine /  
Embedded behaviours  
**24%**



Discuss it with others  
(buddy, family, staff,  
friends, etc) **19%**



Keep it front of mind /  
Visual and /or Physical  
reminders **12%**



Commitment /  
Discipline / Conscious  
choice to do it **10%**



Self-awareness /  
Reflection / Notice  
when slipping **9%**



Revisit materials /  
Research **7%**



Positive attitude **5%**



Flourish for Schools  
**4%**



Accountability **3%**



Implementation in  
waves **2%**

\* Please note this was a multiple-choice question

# Blockers to being able to sustain the learnings and changes from TFM\*

Work pressure or overload and demands of the role are the main reasons respondents cite as to why they are unable to sustain their changes. This relates more to the organisational factors and job design of the school leader's role, rather than being something that falls within the individual's control. This combined with Time constraints represent over 58% of the factors listed by respondents. COVID-19 itself is only listed by 12.5% which is an interesting finding. Without doubt the increases in workload and time constraints were specifically influenced by COVID-19, even if a school did not have a positive case. While TFM can provide individual strategies, maintaining these in light of increasing workloads and broadening scope of the role of school leaders is always a challenge.



Workload, pressure, demands and expectations of the role / Time restrains **58%**



COVID-19 / DoE not supportive through these times **18%**



Family / work / staff are priority **15%**



Falling into old habits / Not being organised **11%**



Lack of motivation / Tiredness / Not ready for change **11%**



Changes in circumstances / systems / processes **10%**



Lost buddy / support from group / No one to keep them on track **10%**



Medical issues **8%**



Challenging situations / events with students / staff / parents / school **8%**



Stress **7%**



Internal voice **3%**



Decline in personal relationships / happiness **1%**

\* Please note this was a multiple-choice question

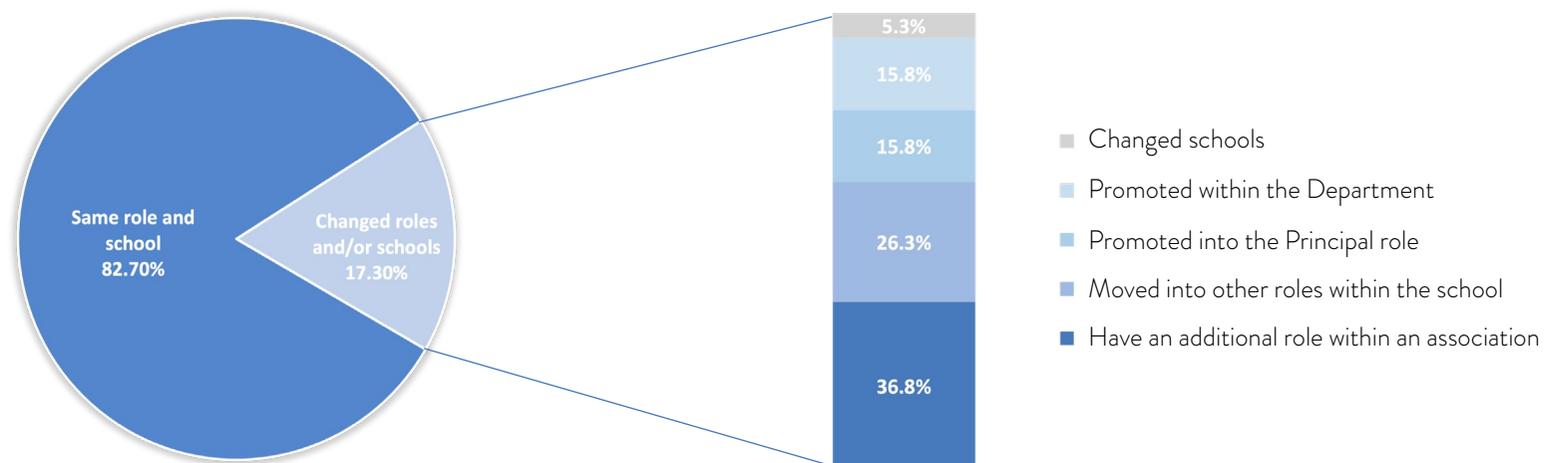
## Additional Information

### Changes in Roles - Where are they now?

We were keen to see what role the participants were now working in. Of the survey respondents, 82.7% are in the same role and school as at the end of the program. The remaining 17.3% have changed roles or schools. Of this 17.3%:

- 36.8% are still principals but have changed school
- 26.3% have been promoted into roles within the Department
- 15.8% have moved into the Principal role, from assistant, deputy or relieving positions
- 15.8% have moved into other roles such as assistant, deputy or teaching
- 5.3% have an additional role within their Association, as well as being a Principal

This means approximately 57.9% of those who have changed roles are still working as principals. Interestingly, 26.3% have been promoted out of principal roles and into roles with the Department of Education. There is 15.8% that have changed their role to deputy or assistant principal or teacher.

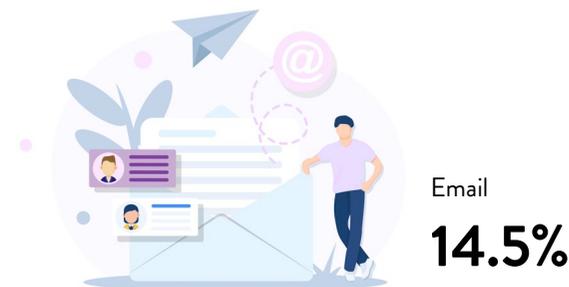


## Collegiate Support - Do they still talk to their buddy?

52.7% are still talking to the same buddy up to 4 years later. This is incredibly encouraging and demonstrates the importance of having structured collegiate support. Another 9.1% have a new buddy, due to their buddy retiring or moving. Predominantly, they catch up on the phone or meet for a meal or coffee. Others meet their buddy for a walk or exercise or use email or text. 25.5% however are not talking to their buddy. We also asked what they valued from their buddy the most. The Collegiate support is highly valued by almost 53% and valued by 21%. 44.5% highly valued and a further 23.6% valued being able to discuss or bounce ideas with their buddy. Just under 50% highly valued and a further 20% valued having someone to talk to.

Interestingly, there is a linear relationship between implementation levels and whether participants still have a buddy. Out of the high implementers, 76.2% are still in contact with their original buddies or have since found a new one. It is very pleasing to see that some school leaders, even though they lost contact with their TFM buddies, recognise the immense value of having a buddy and have since then found someone else to fill that position in their lives. 62.9% of medium implementers are also still in contact with their buddies or have found new ones. For low implementers, 58.3% have a buddy still. It is fantastic that, despite not being able to sustain most of the strategies taught in the program, the majority of low implementers continue to see the value of the buddy system and the importance of collegiate support.

In terms of how they stay in contact with their buddies, the top 3 answers were (please note that participants could give multiple answers):



# Recommendations

## 1. What they can do for themselves

One of the more valuable findings is how vitally important the individual's implementation levels are to their wellbeing. *The Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Report*<sup>1</sup> states that there is a role for the school leader themselves to take responsibility for their wellbeing (this does not mean the department shouldn't continually strive to support their wellbeing). Our report data supports this. School leaders must make their wellbeing and effectiveness a priority and part of their professional practice.

Some direct actions for individuals who have completed TFM are:

- Reconnect with their buddy or get a new one
- Revisit their action plans and workbooks
- Remind themselves of the key principles taught in TFM



## 2. What services can they access through their Department and Associations?

For more information on the wellbeing resources being offered by the NSW Department of Education, visit their Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub (<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/wellbeing>).

For more information on the wellbeing resources being offered by the QLD Department of Education, visit their Employee Assistance Program page (<https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/eap>).

For more information on the wellbeing resources being offered by the TAS Department of Education, visit <https://tasedu.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/SitePages/wellbeing.aspx>

Alternatively, you can contact your association and discuss with them the options available to you.

If you are really struggling and would like to speak to a professional about it, you can reach out to the following:

Lifeline - Phone: 13 11 14 (Available 24 hours a day)

- Chat online at [lifeline.org.au](https://lifeline.org.au) (7pm - 12am AEST)

Beyond Blue - Phone: 1300 22 4636 (24 hours a day)

- Chat online at [BeyondBlue.org.au](https://BeyondBlue.org.au) (3pm - 12am)



### 3. How can TFM help keep the sustainability high?

Sustaining changes in our behaviour is not as easy as simply learning what to do. Knowing something is good for you doesn't mean there will be a corresponding change in behaviour. It takes conscious effort to embed new behaviours, as well as reviewing action plans when circumstances render them obsolete and new behaviours and plans are required. We can all easily fall into old habits, but what's important is how quickly we recognise this has occurred and to make efforts to return to our new constructive behaviours. TFM began as an evidence-based program and we wish for all subsequent programs to have a similar evidence basis. From this sustainability report we are able to see which areas school leaders have been able to retain and which require more assistance in action plan renewal.

The data collected shows that school leaders who have done The Flourish Movement™ would benefit from a Masterclass to help them revisit and adjust their action plans and review or revisit the program learnings. For those in the earlier groups, this may also include updates in content as TFM and research continue to evolve. The data shows that more participants in the medium and low implementer groups come from the earlier participating groups, supporting the suggestion of a refresher Masterclass. We will be planning to introduce these in 2022 for any participant who has completed The Flourish Movement™ program.



An additional resource for school leaders is the Flourish for Schools program. It is an online program, designed for the entire school staff, that takes all the learnings from The Flourish Movement™ and customises it to suit teaching and administration staff. Features of the program include:

- Everything is online, so the content can be accessed at any time, from anywhere, giving you the freedom to choose how and when you will run it with your staff.
- Research component – Pre and post program, your staff will complete a survey (designed and analysed by a researcher from Deakin University). We will then produce a report with the overall results from your school as well as benchmark indicators compared to other schools undertaking the program. The report will allow you to identify the areas where your school is exceeding and which areas of improvement you should focus on.
- Staff wellbeing - Because the program was designed to be done as a whole school, it will increase social connection between staff, while also increase their feeling of wellbeing.
- Refresher for the school leader – Flourish for Schools also offers an opportunity for the school leader to revisit the content and strategies from TFM and continue to focus on their own progress.
- A complete package - this program is a turnkey solution for schools' Professional Development.

Despite all the resources school leaders have access to from training providers, the Department and Associations, a key part of having good wellbeing still falls under the responsibility of the individual and their commitment to actively make positive changes.





# Thank you!

We would like to thank the school leaders who participated in this study and allowing us to have a greater understanding of the sustainability of The Flourish Movement™ program.

Also, we would like to thank our sponsors and, in particular, Sam Wallace from Junior Adventures Group and Garrick Dostine from The School Photographer Alliance. Even when they're businesses were deeply affected by the pandemic, they never stopped supporting the work being done by The Flourish Movement™. This is a true testament of their dedication towards supporting the wellbeing of school leaders across the country.

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