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SKIPS increases teachers' understanding of mental illness and their confidence in supporting children who live with a parent with mental illness.

SKIPS gives grade 5/6 students appropriate language for talking about mental illness and increases their understanding of people who live with mental illness.

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# SKIPS

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*A program that educates primary schools about mental illness and the children of parents with mental illness*

## Overview

- One in five adults will suffer mental illness at some time in their life. Many have children at primary school.
- SKIPS helps primary schools understand and support children and their families when a parent has a mental illness.
- SKIPS is direct and honest about mental illness in families and includes speakers for both teachers and students who talk about their lived experiences.
- SKIPS offers teachers and schools practical strategies for working with children and families when a parent has a mental illness.
- SKIPS has been presented in more than twenty schools in Melbourne's eastern suburbs since 2000.
- SKIPS can be funded through SFYS brokerage. (Ask us how.)
- SKIPS is an award-winning program (Australia and NZ Mental Health Service Achievement Award—Silver 2005).

## Teacher workshops

**Workshop 1** gives information about the range, nature and treatability of mental illness and looks at its potential impact on families. (75 minutes)

**Workshop 2** looks at how teachers can support children and how schools can support families when a parent is mentally ill. A feature of this workshop is a guest speaker who grew up with a parent suffering mental illness telling their story and answering questions. (75 minutes)

Information for grade 5/6 teachers in whose classes the program will be conducted is provided at the end of the second workshop.



## Grade 5/6 classes

### Session 1

- physical health: from wellness to illness
- mental health as a similar continuum from good mental health to mental health problems
- similarities and differences between physical and mental health and illness
- brief introduction to mental illness.

### Session 2

- the language we use for mental illness
- the possible causes of mental illness
- the nature of some mental illnesses
- the impact of mental illness on families and the children in those families.

### Session 3: the person behind the illness

A person with a mental illness tells students their story and answers their questions.

Each session lasts one hour and includes interactive activities, games, worksheets and lots of discussion.

## Parent information

We offer a parent information evening about SKIPS or about mental illness if requested or required by the school or parents.