

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a state of feeling good about ourselves and the way our lives are going. We experience wellbeing when we are physically and mentally well, spiritually aware or connected, and feel that our life is worthwhile and has purpose. When we are experiencing good wellbeing, we may also experience positive relationships with others, a sense of control over our life and a sense of purpose.

Wellbeing is influenced by our culture, values, social context and our general state of health. Wellbeing can change over time, so we may experience periods of relatively good wellbeing and times when our wellbeing is challenged. Since no two individuals are the same, one person's experience of optimal wellbeing may look different to another's.

Why is wellbeing important?

Wellbeing is important because it helps us to function well in the world and provides us with feelings of happiness, enjoyment, curiosity, contentment and engagement. Wellbeing also contributes to our mental health, that is, our capacity to manage our thoughts, feelings and behaviours so that we can enjoy life, maintain positive relationships and work towards our goals.

Supporting wellbeing in a learning environment

Teachers, educators and carers can support the wellbeing of babies, children and young people by:

- Creating safe and supportive environments;
- Helping children to learn social and emotional skills and manage their own behaviour; and
- Developing broader organisational and community strategies that support wellbeing.

Some practical strategies that can promote wellbeing among children and young people are:

- Developing an awareness of children's interests and achievements;
- Setting high but achievable expectations tailored to a child's development and abilities and helping children to identify how they can work towards these;
- Acknowledging children's strengths and abilities and supporting their capacity to improve and achieve;
- Setting practical tasks and cooperative activities that promote problem-solving, social skills, negotiation and communication;
- Helping children to develop an understanding of their own emotions and empathy for the feelings of others;
- Helping children to identify, plan and work towards their goals, both individually and in group activities; and
- Working in partnerships with parents, families and the community to promote positive wellbeing for children.

Maintaining your wellbeing

Taking time to look after your own wellbeing can sometimes take a backseat to the other priorities and demands of life, especially during times of increased workload or stress. However, in supporting children and young people to have positive mental health and wellbeing, it is important to remember to look after yourself as well. People who are happy and healthy are better able to support children in their mental health and wellbeing.



What Works for You?

- Take some time to reflect on what helps you recharge and relax.
- Are there new activities you would like to try?
- Consider making specific times or days of the week for these activities so they become routine and are less likely to drop off at times of increased work demands or other competing priorities.

Tips to help maintain your wellbeing

Physically

- Look after yourself physically, through a healthy diet, regular exercise and adequate sleep;
- Learn how to monitor and manage your stress in positive ways, e.g. through exercise, relaxation, breathing, *etc.*;
- Make time for positive activities for yourself that will help you to relax and have fun; and
- Limit the use of alcohol and other substances; do not rely on these for relaxation.

Relationships

- Foster and maintain your personal relationships, such as your connections with friends and family;
- Develop interests and friendships outside of your work environment; and
- Strive for balance between your professional role and your personal life; try to leave work issues at work.

Work

- Find a mentor through your workplace or professional networks and use that person's support to help you grow professionally and personally;

- Provide support and encouragement for colleagues, give constructive feedback and be a role model;
- Being inclusive of diversity. A sense of belonging for all staff members is essential for health and happiness; and
- Take time to engage in reflective practices about your work and professional development.

Spirituality

- If you have spiritual beliefs, make time for regular spiritual practice, or relationships with others who share your philosophy.

Asking for help

- Reach out for support when you need it – from colleagues, friends, family, your GP, a psychologist, or an employee assistance program through your workplace or Lifeline, a 24-hour telephone counselling service (13 11 14).

Sources and Links

The Wellbeing Australia Network:
wellbeingaustralia.com.au

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