


Teacher Wellbeing

What does the research say?

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How well you are doing...?

- Mentally ill
- Barely coping
- Surviving
- Languishing -
- Resilient
- Flourishing


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Oxytocin

- Is the feel good neurotransmitter
- Laughing makes you are fractionally less stressed than you were
- The more you are able to see the funny side of things the less stressed you will be
- The more you laugh with others the more connected you will feel
- The more connected you are the more resilient

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Acknowledgement

Teachers turn lives around

- Teachers are often judged by student academic outcomes
- Few acknowledge just how much difference teachers often make in the lives of their students
- Its about time we did.

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Evidence

(US figures but likely to be replicated in most western societies:
<http://www.edudemic.com/how-teachers-make-a-difference/>)

- 83% of students say a teacher helped boost their self esteem
- 75% say a teacher has been a positive role model
- 79% reported a teacher encouraged them to follow their dreams
- 54% say a teacher helped to support them during difficult times
- A teacher's effectiveness is 20 times as likely to boost performance on tests than other factors
- An effective teacher has 14 times the effect on student success as shrinking class size by five students
- Being taught by an effective teacher for one year boosts a child's lifetime income by \$50,000!

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The centrality of teacher-student relationships

- Two major meta-analyses indicate that learner-centred teacher-student relationships are strongly implicated in effective education

(Hattie, 2009, Cornelius-White, 2007)

- Motivation
- Participation and engagement
- Creative and critical thinking
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Positive peer relationships

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Teachers and burnout



- Teachers under high levels of stress for significant periods of time can burnout.
- Characteristics include less sympathy towards students, reduced tolerance of students, failure to prepare lessons well and a lack of commitment to teaching.
- There are strong links between teacher burnout and perceived self-efficacy in the classroom.

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Teacher wellbeing matters

- For you: your own mental health and resilience
- For your students: being able to do a good job
- For your colleagues: how well you work together and support each other

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Wellbeing Australia Survey 2013

- 466 respondents
- 98% agreed that student wellbeing enhanced an effective learning environment (also supported by the Federal Scoping Study on Student Wellbeing, 2008)
- 96.4% agreed that a focus on teacher wellbeing enhances student wellbeing

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2007 Study (Briner & Dewberry) exploring links between staff wellbeing and student performance

- Data from 24,100 staff in 246 primary and 182 secondary schools in the UK
- Three dimensions of both positive and negative aspects of teacher wellbeing were measured
 - feeling valued and cared for
 - feeling overloaded
 - job stimulation and enjoyment.

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Findings

- Teacher wellbeing accounted for 8% difference in student outcomes
- Difference only relates to those directly involved with students
- Very similar findings in both primary and secondary schools

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How important you are

- To the children you teach – what you do and say makes all the difference to the wellbeing and learning of students
- To the communities within which you work – and the more rural, remote and isolated the more important you are.

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Extra demands in remote schools

- Long way away from a cinema, restaurant or concert hall
- Long way away from your family and friends
- Living in - but not really part of the community
- Limited access to a professional learning environment
- Harder to feel effective
- Harder to maintain your wellbeing

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Australian studies Teacher wellbeing related to:

Relationship with students (90.3% Vic; 94.4% NSW);
 Relationship with colleagues (84.2% Vic; 84.6% NSW).
 Student progress (82.9% Vic; 86.7% NSW);
 Student appreciation (75.0% Vic; 72.0% NSW);
 Student attitudes to learning (66.7% Vic; 60.8% NSW);
 Freedom to select methods (64.0% Vic; 69.9% NSW);
 Student behaviour (63.6% Victoria; 59.8% NSW).

(staffmatters website Curriculum corporation)

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The ecology of schools...

- *"The teachers here really feel supported, cared about, looked after and valued, and that translates over into the classroom ... I'm just blown away by how kind the teachers are to students here ... that's just a follow-on of the whole culture ... everyone on the same side - the staff are supportive of each other, and that carries across into the classroom ... I used to hate doing yard duty, because ... there would really be open antipathy ... So this year - when I'm out there I smile, well, usually, you never got a smile back, always now, I get a smile back"*

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What teachers say...

- *"We also need to look after our teachers - they are the critical and pivotal force in providing an environment where students can feel safe, happy, healthy and therefore learn!"*
- *"Developing the positive wellbeing of staff has made a huge difference. When teaching staff feel appreciated and empowered, they are much more likely to show patience and empathy for their students; to go the 'extra mile' for the students in their care. They are also more likely to share and work with others in order to support their students and promote wellbeing."*

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Seligman: What promotes wellbeing? (Flourish 2011)

- Predominantly positive emotions
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Achievement

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Not an extra...

- Relationships and emotions exist all day every day in schools
- There is a symbiotic interaction between how people feel in the learning environment and the quality of the relationships they experience
- Without both awareness and action negativity can influence the learning environment and its effectiveness
- It makes sense to promote the positive

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Different sorts of capital

- Physical capital – buildings, books, computers
- Human capital – knowledge and skills that exist within personnel
- Social capital – the quality of relationships across an organisation

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Social Capital is marked by...

- what happens in the myriad of interactions that occur every day that facilitate participation, engender relational trust and promote reciprocal support.
- *There are big things and little things, acts of love, tea and laughter* Mma Ramotswe in the Good Husband of Zebra Drive by Alexander McCall Smith

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Positive emotions build social capital

- A feeling of being valued enhances cooperation
- A feeling of being cared for enhances understanding and compassion
- A feeling of being respected promotes respect for others and willingness to listen to them
- A feeling of being included enhances commitment and motivation
- A feeling of fun relieves stress and fosters belonging
- A feeling of belonging enhances resilience
- Feeling good improves creative problem-solving abilities

All of this promotes well being and caring communities

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Teachers who have high levels of wellbeing and resiliency...

- Have positive relationships within and outside the school environment
- Are responsive, flexible, empathetic
- Are proactive in engaging in new initiatives
- Have well developed solution-finding skills
- Have a sense of independence & self worth
- Have purpose & future goals
- Have a sense of humour
- Will seek help if required
- Have good communication skills



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Teacher Wellbeing What can we do?

How can we support each other?
What does this take?

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In-school Relationships

- Teacher – student
- Teacher – teacher
- Teacher – executive
- School – community
- Individuals – group
- Group – group

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The quality of relationships

- is rarely about doing more... It is about doing differently
- It is a way of thinking and a way of being
- Relationships can be high quality if people have the knowledge of what works and the skills to put this into practice - but they also need the belief that this matters and the commitment to take action

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Collegiality promotes energy

- “When teachers had strong emotional connections with colleagues their teaching energy was high” (Graves, 2001)
- “Your work and your private life are so close together. It’s important for everyone to get on...” (Jarzabkowski, 2003)

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In remote schools

- Your choice of friends is limited
- Your colleagues are likely to be your friends
- You don’t have to like everyone – but you do have to get on
- This may require high levels of emotional literacy

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What can positive peer relationships provide?

- Social – someone to spend time with and have fun with
- Emotional – someone to show care, warmth and support
- Psychological – someone to boost a positive sense of self – give feedback
- Professional – mentoring, resource sharing, enhancing learning

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Toxic environments

- Cliques – and therefore exclusion
- Back-stabbing – talking negatively about people behind their back
- Lack of trust –
 - breaking confidences
 - people not doing what they say they will do
- Verbal and non verbal power games

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Are conversations

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Negative ■ Problem focused ■ Full of blame ■ Embedding helplessness ■ marked by deficit language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Positive ■ Solutions focused ■ Prepared to take responsibility ■ Embedding optimism ■ marked by strengths based language |
|---|---|

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Circle Solutions

- Is a philosophy and framework for positive relationships, resilience and responsibility
- It is a pedagogy for teaching them
- The six principles are based on research evidence

■ (see Roffey (ed) Positive Relationships: Evidence based practice across the world. Springer)

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Circle principles for building social capital

- Respect – listening and no put downs
- Agency – the right to make decisions
- Positivity – strengths and solution focused
- Inclusion – everyone matters, working with each other
- Democracy – having an equal voice
- Safety – making choices, having chances

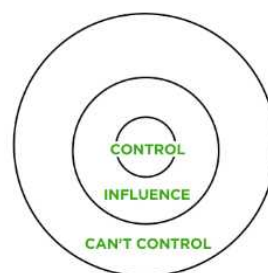
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Words matter

- What we say TO people
- What we say ABOUT people
- Words construct culture – the way we do things around here, the way we perceive people and situations, what we believe is 'real'
- Silence can collude with negativity

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Circles of influence



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Where to put your energy?

- Only do things you can change or influence otherwise you are using up your resources to no good effect

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Emotional literacy

- Knowing yourself – values, beliefs, triggers
- Knowing about the biology of emotion – especially the role of the amygdala
- Knowing how to relate well to others
- Having positive communication skills
- Keeping the bigger picture in mind – timing.
- Self management
- Skills in problem-solving and conflict resolutions
- Working systemically

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Emotional/social literacy

Some ideas

- Active constructive responding (the value of a strong positive response when someone else has good news)
- Admitting mistakes
- Being in charge of situations but not trying to control others
- Not aiming to have the last word
- Having congruence and integrity
- A positive outlook – being thankful for what you do have rather than bemoaning what you don't

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When one person has good news...

(Shelley Gable)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Passive constructive response (oh good) | ■ Passive destructive response (complete disinterest) |
| ■ Active destructive response (pointing out all the problems) | ■ Active constructive response (hey, wow, you deserve this, champagne) |

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An apology...

- | | |
|--|--|
| ■ Doesn't mean you were wrong and the other person was right | ■ I didn't fully understand |
| ■ It means you value the relationship more than your ego | ■ I could have said that better |
| ■ It demonstrates self-respect | ■ I over-reacted |
| | ■ Self-deprecation can inject a light touch – <i>"I am such a flawed human being!"</i> |

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