

 COREY KEYES (2002)

- Wellbeing is not simply an absence of mental illness but the presence of positive levels of feelings and psychosocial functioning. It is about FLOURISHING rather than languishing.

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 WE ARE FLOURISHING WHEN...

- we accept and like most parts of ourselves
- we see ourselves developing into better people
- we have warm and trusting relationships
- we have a degree of self-determination, can choose what happens to us and can shape our environment to meet our needs

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 PRILLELTENSKY'S DEFINITION (2006)

Well-being is a positive state of affairs, brought about by the simultaneous satisfaction of personal, organizational, and collective needs of individuals and communities



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 SELIGMAN (2011) IN "FLOURISH"

- PERMA : Pillars of Authentic Happiness
- Positive feelings and attitudes
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning and purpose
- Achievement / Attainment

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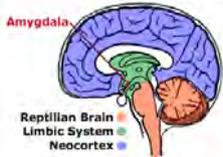
 LIFE TASKS OF A TEENAGER

- To develop their own identity, values and ways of being – including sexuality and beliefs
- To experiment and find out what works for them and who they want to be in the world
- To become independent from their family of origin
- To re-negotiate relationships
- To find a balance between taking responsibility for their future and what matters to them now

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 THE WORKINGS OF THE BRAIN

The Evolution-Designed Brain



Amygdala

Reptilian Brain
Limbic System
Neocortex

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 THE TEENAGE BRAIN

- As the brain matures, synapses (connections between brain cells) get pruned to become more efficient. Different parts of the brain mature at different rates.
- The first part of the brain to get attention is the limbic system. This is the part that deals with emotions and emotional memory
- The neo-cortex develops later – often not finished until the early 20s
- Thinking changes from the concrete and factual to the abstract and hypothetical

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 THIS MEANS...

- Adolescents are often driven more by emotion than reason. This can make them more impulsive – also idealistic
- Their planning ability is weaker so do not always think things through and consider consequences.
- Earlier experiences may be revisited with a different understanding – and often a whole new raft of feelings.
- They may be more fearful and less confident as they can hypothesize more readily.
- They may also think they are invincible!
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 OTHER ISSUES

- A teenager's circadian rhythm changes so they sleep and wake later
- They are often in a dilemma between wanting to be the centre of attention alongside a fear of this – look at me, don't look at me!
- Social issues are critical – teenagers need their friends for belonging, support, acceptance. This can at times lead to 'group think'.
- Mental health issues can take many forms – and go undetected
- Young people need opportunities to reflect on and discuss issues in a safe and structured way with peers

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 **SCHOOL AND STUDENT WELLBEING**

- WELLBEING
 - Universal
 - Pro-active
 - All teachers
- WELFARE
 - For students who need something extra
 - Re-active
 - Specialists or senior staff

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 **AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL STUDENT WELLBEING SCOPING STUDY**

- Physical and **emotional safety**
- Fostering a **sense of meaning** and purpose
- Developing **pro-social values**
- Building a **supportive, respectful and inclusive school community**
- Encouraging a healthy life-style
- Using **strengths based approaches**
- Enhancing **social and emotional learning**

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 **RESILIENCE**

- Resilience is the ability to return to a positive sense of self after adversity
- Resiliency is multi-dimensional
- You can be a resilient learner but not be confident socially – or vice versa
- So what promotes a positive sense of self in the first place?

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 **WHAT ARE YOU ALREADY DOING AND HOW MIGHT YOU BUILD ON THAT?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ COGNITIVE STRATEGIES○ Keeping things in perspective○ Accepting Imperfection○ Positive thinking○ Not catastrophising○ Fair blame○ Thankfulness○ Other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ PHYSICAL STRATEGIES○ Food○ Movement○ Sleep○ Hugs○ Body awareness – eg, hunger and mood, circadian rhythms.○ Other?
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 **WHAT ARE YOU ALREADY DOING AND HOW MIGHT YOU BUILD ON THAT?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ RELATIONAL STRATEGIES○ Having fun – laughing together○ Communication opportunities○ Team-work○ Not reading minds○ Random acts of kindness○ Inclusion○ Other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES○ BANJO – an answer to procrastination○ Working smarter, not harder○ Priority setting○ Determining 'good enough'○ Mental breaks – doing nothing○ Small steps○ Other?
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 **WHAT ARE YOU ALREADY DOING AND HOW MIGHT YOU BUILD ON THAT?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES○ Understanding change and loss and the impact on feelings - accepting sadness○ Opportunities to express feelings in a safe and supportive place○ Not sweating the small stuff○ Self-talk – awareness of inner voices○ Personal feedback file○ Other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ SPIRITUAL STRATEGIES○ Mindfulness – being in the moment○ Linking learning with meaning and purpose○ Keeping track of achievements○ Bigger picture thinking○ Being in nature○ Maintaining balance○ Other?
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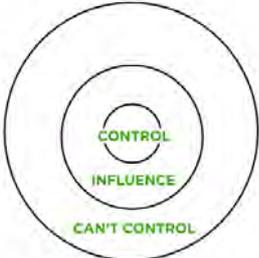
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 THE ECOLOGY OF WELLBEING

- School culture is not static – it is alive and ecological
- What happens in one part of the school impacts on what happens elsewhere in an interactive, nested and chronological model
- Conversations create culture
- How staff talk about students and families affects perspectives, beliefs and actions
- How school leaders operate is critical to the relational energy and motivation of staff
- The way teachers interact impacts on how peers relate
- It makes sense to promote the positive across the institution

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 CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE



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 SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Is what happens in the myriad of interactions that occur every day that facilitate participation, engender relational trust and promote reciprocal support.
- The micro-moments of high quality connections

“There are big things and little things, acts of love, acts of tea, acts of laughter”

Mma Ramotswa in Alexander McCall Smith’s The Good Husband of Zebra Drive

 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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 A TOXIC ENVIRONMENT

- Ignoring the culture of a school is like letting the water in your aquarium get dirty!
- Creatures might thrash about but nothing really thrives

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 WHAT HAPPENS IN A TOXIC ENVIRONMENT

- Dominant negative voices
- Both subtle and overt bullying behaviours – intimidation
- Silence and silent collusion
- Bad mouthing
- Labelling, blaming and scapegoating
- Cliques – in-crowds and losers
- Battles for power - competition rather than collaboration
- Focus on rules rather than relationships

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 **HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS...**

- Are respectful
- Promote equality rather than dominance
- Are willing to take account of the needs and perspectives of others
- Are warm and friendly
- Focus on strengths
- Combine honesty with kindness
- Demonstrate interest, acknowledgement and value
- Are reliable and trustworthy - people do what they say.
- Are mutually supportive
- Are where positive communication is more frequent than negative / critical communication
- Have genuine two way communication

 **THE MICRO MOMENTS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL**

- High social capital exists in high quality connections – relational micro-moments (Jane Dutton)
- These promote trust and respect and enable people to reach mutually agreed goals
- These have a strange dual impact of allowing people to be both more vulnerable and more resilient, more relaxed and more energised.
- They enable resolution of difference and are more flexible and responsive

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 **BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL
THE ASPIRE PRINCIPLES**

- **A**GENCY
- **S**AFETY
- **P**OSITIVITY
- **I**NCLUSION
- **R**ESPECT
- **E**QUALITY

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 AGENCY

- Ryan and Deci talk about the importance of self-determination to wellbeing
- This means having a say in what happens to you
- Not feeling that you are a victim of fate
- You do not blame others but feel empowered to act
- Not feeling controlled but active in decision making
- When you have agency you take responsibility for your own behaviour and its outcomes

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 IN CHARGE, NOT IN CONTROL

- Teachers need to be in charge of proceedings in their classroom – this does not mean being in control of students
- Using authority to empower others
- Giving responsibilities with high expectations and support
- Never trying to 'make' anyone do anything – giving them options and consequences
- Keeping responsibility where it belongs
- Changing behaviour from the inside out
- Asking questions rather than make statements

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 SAFETY

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional

- Safety includes not being scared or intimidated - knowing you have support from others
- Being accepted for who you are
- Being able to trust others

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 **THE STRENGTHS IN CIRCLES CARDS FOR SAFETY**

- We are kind in what we say and do
- We build trust with each other
- We look out for each other
- We can get help
- We forgive each other
- We are reliable and honest
- We learn from our mistakes
- In groups of three
- What happens already?
- What is one action you can suggest to increase safety

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 **POSITIVITY IS DEMONSTRATED BY...**

- Actively promoting positive emotions
- Laughter and playfulness
- Strengths based language
- Being solution – not problem – focused. What do we want rather than what do we want to get rid of
- Promoting an optimistic outlook that underpins resilience
- gratitude, kindness and acknowledgement
- No put-down zones

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 **BELONGING**

- Feeling you belong, you are accepted and you matter is one of the strongest factors for wellbeing
- Resilience research
- Behaviour research
- Prevention of violence research

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 **EXCLUSIVE BELONGING**

- **EXCLUSIVE**
- bonding social capital (Superglue – David Puttnam)
- Only those like me
- May be intolerant of difference
- Can promote racism, homophobia etc
- An 'I-it' orientation

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 **INCLUSIVE BELONGING**

- **INCLUSIVE**
- Bridging social capital (WD40 David Puttnam)
- Open to all
- Accepting of difference
- Promotes equality
- An 'I-you' orientation
- Shared humanity

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 **INCLUSION IS DEMONSTRATED BY...**

- Giving everyone the opportunity to participate
- Regularly mixing people up so they interact outside of their usual social circles
- Activities that enhance a sense of belonging – doing things together

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 **EQUALITY**

- The worldwide evidence (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010, Huppert and So,) is that the more equality there is in a society the more wellbeing there is for everyone.
- Over four decades Denmark has been rated as one of the happiest countries in the world – and has the least difference between the haves and have-nots.
- But equality does NOT mean treating everyone exactly the same = it means thinking through how everyone can have an equal voice and an equal chance.

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 **WHAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET UP ON A MONDAY MORNING?**

- From feeling unacknowledged to feeling valued
- From feeling rejected to feeling included
- From feeling ignored to being heard
- From feeling alone to feeling supported
- From feeling disempowered to having some control
- From feeling intimidated to feeling confident / safe
- From feeling anxious/fearful to being comfortable
- From feeling a failure to feeling successful
- From feeling miserable to feeling positive and optimistic

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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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 **TICKET OUT THE DOOR**

- What was the most interesting thing you learnt?
- What was the best feeling you had?
- What is one thing you might do more of - or differently

- If you would like the occasional newsletter about wellbeing initiatives, (eg Positive Schools conference), research, PD or papers write your email.

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 **MORE INFORMATION**

Circle Solutions and the ASPIRE principles
www.circlesolutionsnetwork.com

Publications (some downloadable), blogs, PD and other events
www.sueroffey.com

Wellbeing Australia
www.wellbeingaustralia.com.au/wba

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