

 RELATIONSHIPS AND RESILIENCE:
WHAT WORKS FOR WELLBEING?



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 THIS MORNING WE WILL BE COVERING
THE FOLLOWING:


- What children and young people in the UK are dealing with
- The mental health crisis
- The difference between welfare and wellbeing
- What wellbeing means in school
- The four pillars of learning
- The importance of relational quality for wellbeing
- Social capital in school
- Social and emotional learning
- Circle Solutions and the ASPIRE principles

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 WHAT DO WE WANT FOR OUR
CHILDREN?

- To have healthy relationships
- To enjoy learning and see themselves making progress
- To feel safe
- To be resourceful
- To be responsible
- To make good choices for themselves and others
- To have self-respect
- To be happy and fulfilled
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 THE MYTH OF HAPPINESS

- Sustainable happiness and wellbeing does not lie in the following:
- High scores and gold medals: Although achievement opens doors and gives choices this does not guarantee sustainable wellbeing
- Stuff and status: Poverty undermines wellbeing but after a certain point more tangible goods do not increase happiness
- Good looks: It helps to be healthy and looking good can be part of this – but to trying to conform to a stereotype can be harmful
- A moment of fame: Some strive for this. But it is usually short-lived and often shallow. Biographies of the rich and famous tell us that there is more to being happy.

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 FAME, WEALTH, STATUS AND HIGH
ACHIEVEMENT IS NOT EVERYTHING




- Without other things being in place none of this leads to authentic wellbeing
- Story of the international pianist Lang Lang and his relationship with his father which at one point pushed him to the brink of suicide.

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 SCOTT NEESON
[HTTPS://WWW.CAMBODIANCHILDRENSFUND.ORG/SCOTTS-STORY/](https://www.cambodianchildrensfund.org/scotts-story/)



MANY KIDS ARE NOT DOING SO WELL

WHAT ARE THEY DEALING WITH?

- **Social Issues:**
 - Poverty, poor housing, unemployment, racism, media, technology. Inequality and reduced social mobility, negative role models, an education system that does address their needs.
- **Family Issues**
 - Living with conflict, family breakdown, mental and physical health difficulties, addictions, permissive or helicopter parenting styles, neglect and abuse.
- **Personal Issues**
 - Pressure to perform, negative self-worth, poor self-image, bullying or exclusion

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STATISTICS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUNG PEOPLE (MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION)

- 10% of children 5-16 have clinically diagnosable MH problems
- 50% of future problems evident by age 14
- 20% of adolescents experience a MH problem in any given year
- Anxiety and depression are the most common concerns – often found together.
- **Most children and young people are doing OK but many, although not mentally ill, are just not doing so well – they are languishing**
- We need to get in early and actively promote wellbeing for ALL our children.

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THE GREEN PAPER ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Shows that the Government are concerned
- But still has a within-child model rather than an interactive model
- Still concerned with identifying and treating deficits rather than promoting strengths
- Says it wants a whole school approach to mental health but still picking up the pieces and not addressing wellbeing pro-actively.

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THE CANARY IN THE COALMINE

- Miners used to take a canary into the coalmine as a check for toxic gases. If the canary chirped all was well. If the canary was sick this was a warning sign. They did not take the bird out, put a gas mask on it and put it back in the coalmine, they checked what was wrong and fixed it.
- There are multiple signs that all is not well in schools but little attempt to change the school environment so that all pupils- and their teachers - thrive.

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WELLBEING AND WELFARE A DIFFERENT FOCUS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WELFARE ○ Individual students ○ Reactive ○ Specific, add-on ○ Picking up pieces ○ Finding the time ○ Experts and professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WELLBEING ○ All students – universal ○ Pro-active ○ Part of school life ○ Relationships and resilience ○ Planning time ○ Everyone is a teacher for wellbeing ○ Teacher wellbeing matters
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 THE UK IS BEHIND OTHER COUNTRIES
AWARE OF 'WHY WELLBEING?'

- o Student wellbeing is strongly linked to learning. A student's level of wellbeing at school is indicated by their satisfaction with life at school, their engagement with learning and their social-emotional behaviour. (New Zealand 2016)
- o Student resilience and wellbeing are essential for both academic and social development, and are optimised by safe, supportive and respectful learning environments. (Australia 2017)
- o One western country whose education is highly regarded across the globe is Finland. Students sit no mandatory exams until the age of 17-19. Great emphasis is put on pupil and teacher trust and well-being (2012)

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 RELEVANT RESEARCH

- o In cross-sectional, longitudinal and experimental studies, high levels of well-being have been shown to be associated with a range of positive outcomes, including effective learning, productivity and creativity, good relationships, pro-social behaviour, good health and life expectancy
- o Huppert & So (2013) Flourishing Across Europe, Social Indices Research 110:837-861

 WHAT GIVES US SUSTAINABLE WELLBEING

- o Healthy, constructive and supportive relationships – at every level
- o A sense of meaning and purpose
- o Self-determination
- o Predominantly positive emotions
- o A sense of achievement
- o Feeling connected – that you belong

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 THESE OVERLAP WITH THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN RESILIENCE


- o Someone who believes in you
- o A sense of belonging
- o High expectations
- o Problem-solving skills
- o Being able to talk about issues
- o Confidence
- o A positive outlook
- o Many of these factors are also present in the most effective parenting style – high warmth, high expectations.

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 IMAGINE ...


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o School A: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchical structure. • High levels of control. • Limited opportunities for participation. • Emphasis on academic success / winning • Low tolerance of difficult behaviours. • Focus on getting rid of problems • Promotes itself as a 'good school' with excellent results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o School B: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the quality of relationships throughout • Emphasis on the value of the 'whole child' • High expectations for all • Values diversity and inclusion. • Many opportunities for participation – together with responsibility • Focus on the positive • Promotes itself as a 'caring school.'
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 ASK YOURSELF?

- o Which school would you rather work in?
- o Which school would you prefer your own children to attend?
- o Which is most likely to have better behaviour?
- o Which is most likely to promote mental health and wellbeing?
- o Which school is most likely to achieve better academic outcomes for everyone?

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 WHEN WELLBEING IS CORE
SCHOOL BUSINESS THERE IS...

- o ...greater student engagement and academic outcomes for all
- o ...better mental health and resilience
- o ...more pro-social behaviour
- o ...more teacher satisfaction and retention

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 SUGGESTED PATHWAYS

- o Physical and emotional safety
- o Pro-social values
- o A supportive and caring school community
- o A strengths based approach
- o Social and emotional learning
- o A sense of meaning and purpose
- o A healthy life-style

 FOUR PILLARS OF LEARNING

- o Jacques Delor (1996) in his report for UNESCO identified four pillars of learning – learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together.
- o UK schools are leaving out the last two and this is becoming an increasingly acknowledged deficit. Eg OECD PISA report 2015 published 19th April 2017

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 WHY DO THIS?


- o Everyone has their own story – when we hear fragments of someone’s life narrative we perceive them slightly differently
- o This inhibits pre-judging them – perhaps on the basis of what they are wearing, their tats, their accent, their race or colour. It reduces bullying and opens the doors for future connection and collaboration.
- o We cannot have a partnership without a relationship, we cannot have a relationship without some good conversations.
- o Healthy, constructive relationships are central to our wellbeing
- o They are also critical to the health of our society
- o So why are they not a priority for education?

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 RELATIONSHIPS AND FEELINGS

- o Exist everywhere all the time
- o Make all the difference to our quality of our lives
- o But we often only give them attention when they go wrong
- o We need to focus on raising awareness of the positive
- o We need to be pro-active
- o This is not about doing more but doing differently
- o See Every Opportunity:
- o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxyxywShewI>

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 SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING
(SEL) BRIEF DEFINITION

- o Learning how to manage our feelings and relationships in a way that maximises our own authentic wellbeing and that of others.
- o Becoming socially and emotionally competent
- o Developing emotional intelligence
- o Addresses the Delors Report pillars of:
 - o Learning to Be and Learning to Live Together

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HOW CAN SEL HELP ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE WELLBEING?

- It connects us to others in positive ways
- It fosters resilience in the face of adversity
- It promotes critical thinking and ethical decision-making
- It promotes authentic pro-social behaviours
- It enables us to achieve individual and community goals by developing social capital
- It promotes good citizenship and civil societies
- It intervenes in negative spirals
- It promotes listening, empathy and shared humanity

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CASEL META-ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSAL PROGRAMS (2011)

- 213 studies of universal SEL programs involving 270,034 students aged 5-18
- Improvements in student skills, attitudes, motivation, behaviour and academic performance (11% compared to controls)
- Less emotional distress
- Implementation factors were critical.

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CIRCLE SOLUTIONS AND ASPIRE: AN APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGY FOR SEL

- AGENCY: Reflective teaching, not didactic. Generating understanding and responsibility
- SAFETY: Paired, small group & whole group activities that address issues – never incidents. Third person and the right to pass
- POSITIVITY: Solution focus and strengths identification. Playing and laughing together
- INCLUSION: Everyone works with everyone else, no one is left out. Fostering a sense of connection
- RESPECT: Listening to each other and no put-downs
- EQUITY: The teacher does everything the pupils do. In charge but not in control – being flexible where necessary.

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SUMMARY

- Raising self awareness and skills increases emotional and social competence - which increases the chance of healthy relationships
- Focusing on strengths and the positive makes people feel better about themselves and others: this increases emotional resources and enhances resilience
- Seeking what is shared increases tolerance and provides a threshold for friendship
- Having fun together increases belonging and reduces stress
- Constructing solutions together raises responsibility for making them happen
- Building on strengths supports positive change
- Everyone gets a turn to contribute which promotes cooperation
- A happier and more connected class promotes an effective environment for learning


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IDEALISM AND REALISM

- It is the idealists who have a positive vision for where they are going who end up more realistic than those who stay with the current picture and say 'what can you do?'
- Change is inevitable - you either let it happen to you or you can be active in determining the direction it's going in.

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WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?



- We can **each** feed our children what matters to make their lives more meaningful, joyful, responsible and connected
- We can **all** push for an education that does this.

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An old man told his grandson,
"My son, there is a battle between
two wolves inside us all."

"One is Evil. It is anger, jealousy, greed,
resentment, inferiority, lies and ego.
The other is Good. It is joy, peace,
love, hope, humility, kindness,
empathy and truth."



The boy thought about it,
and asked,
"Grandfather, which wolf wins?"

The old man quietly replied,
"The one you feed."



FURTHER INFORMATION

- o www.sueroffey.com Email sue@sueroffey.com
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- o www.academia.com or www.researchgate.com for many relevant academic articles
- o www.growinggreatschoolsworldwide.com/csn/

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Also just published by Routledge: *The Primary Behaviour Cookbook* – addressing behaviour in school with relational, respectful approaches.

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