

Wellbeing Workout

From surviving to thriving

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The Workshop

- Who are we?
- What is the Wellbeing Workout?
 - A program to help you enhance and manage your own wellbeing
- The workshop
 - Evidence based
 - Experiential
 - Interactive



What is wellbeing?

- Subjective WB, psychological WB, emotional WB, social WB, flourishing, happiness, thriving, mental fitness....
- Key component = subjective!
- **ACTIVITY:** How do you personally define wellbeing?
 - Paper, pen, blue tack & a wall



What the research suggests

- WB is a complex subjective experience with emotional, psychological, & social components.
- High levels of wellbeing have positive outcomes in multiple life domains.
 - e.g., relationships, health, longevity, creativity, performance or functioning at work, school & home, and helps create flourishing communities.
- What % of population are flourishing (high WB, no illness) in life?
 - Ref: Keyes, C. (2005) Mental Illness and / or Mental Health?

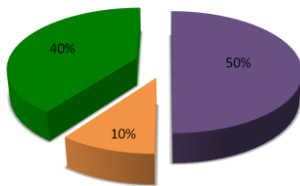
20%



What determines happiness?

Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade (2005)

■ Set Range ■ Circumstances ■ Intentional Activity



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Circumstances (10%)

- Age
- Gender
- Income
- Education
- Social class
- Having children
- Ethnicity
- Intelligence
- Physical attractiveness

Q. How big is the correlation with happiness or WB?

- A. None or small
- B. Moderate
- C. Large

Ref: Peterson, C (2006). A primer in Positive Psychology.

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But surely I'd be happier if my circumstances were better?

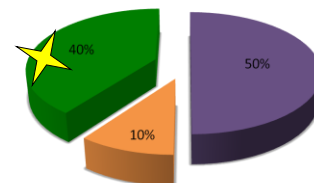
- Unemployment, poverty, lack of personal freedom, chronic pain and mental illness do challenge happiness.
- Once basic needs are met, more clothes, cars, holidays, cosmetic surgery, education and even better health don't necessarily increase happiness.
- After a change in circumstances **adaptation** and **social comparison** usually alter our aspirations which reduces the expected impact on happiness.

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Intentional activity (40%)

- WB can be enhanced through intentional cognitive and behavioural activities (what you think, feel and do).

"Action may not always bring happiness but there is no happiness without action."

Benjamin Disraeli



Nurturing wellbeing



Everything in life that is valuable requires nurturing and taking care of.
Mental health and wellbeing is no different.



Wellbeing workout

- Draws on evidence based intentional activities
- Person-activity fit is important
- Aim of today is to give you a taste of WW activities
- Take a mindful approach to the experience
 - Open awareness, curiosity, non-judgment
 - Time for critical reflection after



Approaches to building wellbeing



Pleasure

Building positive emotions; things that excite the senses.



Engagement

Being absorbed and engaged in motivating challenges; being true to oneself.



Meaning

Being part of something larger than oneself; contributing to the greater community good.

Ref: Seligman et al. 2005



Surviving vs thriving

- We know a lot about survival and alleviation of illness.
 - The human mind and body is built for survival.
 - E.g. Fight or flight response (SNS), negativity bias, adaptation, social comparisons.
- What do we know about thriving or living well?
 - E.g., Rest & digest (PNS), positive emotions, personal growth and meaning, social connectedness.
- Positive psychology is building our understanding and YOU can be the ones who share the knowledge.
- One of the significant bodies of work around thriving and flourishing comes from the work of Barbara Fredrickson.



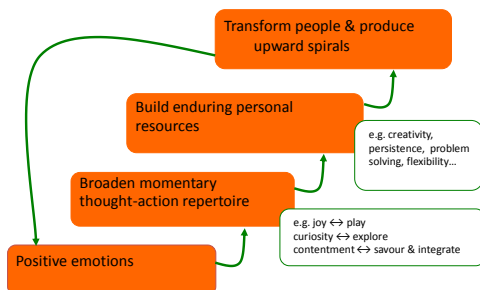
The role of positive emotions

- **Activity:** Tuning in to pleasant (e.g., contentment, joy, pride) and unpleasant (e.g., anger, sadness, envy) emotions.
 - What are the consequences of unpleasant emotions for you? e.g., What type of behaviour do they trigger?
 - What about pleasant emotions?



The role of positive emotions

Fredrickson & Joiner (2002)



Tuning in to positive emotions

- **ACTIVITY:** Get frequent, regular hits of positive emotions each day
 - Gratitude e.g., three good things.
 - Savouring – past, present, future.
 - Smile or laugh.
- How do you cultivate positive emotions in your life?
 - **CAVEAT:** Negative emotions are a normal part of the human experience and are crucial for survival. Accepting and learning to manage negative or unpleasant emotions is an equally important life skill.



Values: Knowing what you stand for

- The decisions we make everyday are driven by our personal values – like an internal compass that tells us which direction to head.
- Living a life that is in congruence with your values (i.e., behaviour or actions that match your core values) leads to greater happiness and wellbeing.
- **ACTIVITY:** In small groups, list what you think the following people stand for in life.



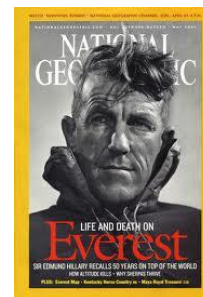
Queen Elizabeth II



Homer Simpson



Sir Edmund Hillary



Values: Knowing what you stand for

- **ACTIVITY:** Take a moment to think about your own values. What is it that you want to be remembered for in life?
 - E.g., Leadership, influence, fun, creativity, adventure, moderation, wisdom, kindness, self-discipline, humility, sense of belonging, broadmindedness, courageous, curiosity....
- **ACTIVITY:** 80th Birthday
- What things do you do currently that embody these values?
- How satisfied are you that you are living your life in congruence with your values?
 - **Remember:** People who act in accordance with their values experience greater levels of wellbeing.



Personal strengths

"A natural capacity for behaving, thinking or feeling in a way that allows optimal functioning & performance in the pursuit of valued outcomes."
 Ref: Linley & Harrington, 2006.

Knowing and using your strengths on a regular basis increases wellbeing (and reduces depression symptoms).



Strengths spotting bingo

ACTIVITY: Strengths spotting bingo

1. You need a strength spotting bingo sheet and pen
2. Move around the room and ask people one of these questions...
 - What activities give you a buzz?
 - What activities come naturally to you?
 - When do you feel most relaxed, like you are 'being yourself'?
 - What activities do you simply love to do?
3. Based on their response, identify a strength from the bingo sheet
4. One strength per person (write their name below the strength)
5. Call BINGO if you complete a line



Using your strengths

- Create opportunities to use your strengths on a regular basis
 - e.g. Appreciation of beauty
 - Visit a new gallery / museum / exhibition
 - Take 5 minutes to be mindful of natural beauty that surrounds you
 - e.g. Gratitude
 - Keep a gratitude journal
 - e.g. <http://happytapper.com/gratitude-journal/>
- To prevent hedonic adaptation, vary the way you use your strengths (activity, timing, frequency).



Use your strengths

ACTIVITY: Using your strengths

1. Pick a personal strength
2. Discuss a simple new way to use that strength
3. Write your own action plan i.e., "I will use my strength of [strength] by [activity]. I will take action on this [When and where]."



Ikigai

- The Japanese word *Ikigai* (pronounced *ee-ki-guy*) is used to describe 'why I wake up in the morning'.
- According to Japanese culture, everyone has a hidden Ikigai.
- Finding it requires a deep and sometimes lengthy search of self.
- This search is regarded as essential as the discovery of one's Ikigai and brings satisfaction and meaning to life.
- Sone, T., et al. (2008). Sense of life worth living (Ikigai) and mortality in Japan: Ohsaki Study. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 70, 709-715.



Ikigai flash fiction

- Hemingway once wrote a story in just six words and is said to have called it his best work.

For sale: baby shoes, never worn.

- **ACTIVITY:** Write a six-word Ikigai – your reason for getting up each day.

Inspire & influence
excellence
& beauty

Securely provide
for my kids

To appreciate
my inch of
world.



Bringing it all together

- Flourishing life plan
- Person-activity fit
- Intentional, consistent effort
- What we didn't cover today:
 - Growth mindset
 - Mindfulness
 - Connectedness & relationships
 - Active-constructive responding
 - Random acts of kindness
 - Altruism
 - Self compassion



Questions & Postcard to Self



Our vision

- Empower people with the knowledge and skills to live flourishing lives.
- Foster community recognition and acceptance that wellbeing or happiness requires consistent & intentional care and effort, just like physical fitness.
- To work to our strengths and live life in accordance with our core values of courage, adventure, learning, kindness, and connectedness.



Questions & feedback

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*To live is the rarest thing in the world,
most people exist, that is all.*

Oscar Wilde

