

The wellbeing and coaching nexus: An interactive workshop

14th March 2025, Sydney

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What will success look like today?

What will success look like today?

Thoughts?

Thinking / Confusion



Value...



Outline

- Warmup thinking...
- What is wellbeing?
- The systemic nature of wellbeing.
- Why is wellbeing important?
- How should we assess wellbeing?
- What wellbeing looks like as a coach, and a coachee.
- Skills and strategies that assess and promote wellbeing, but also performance...
 - Decision making and wellbeing
 - Wellbeing planning
- **Abstract:** This interactive workshop investigates the sweet spots between coaching and wellbeing, including what **both what wellbeing looks like as a coach, and a coachee**. Various topics include, for example, why wellbeing is important (including the limits of this importance), how wellbeing fits with a broader life, and the systemic nature of wellbeing. Various skills and strategies that assess and promote wellbeing are discussed and trailed, focusing on approaches that are less well known and potentially novel (e.g., the relationship between decision making and wellbeing). The overall aim is to expose participants to a new way of thinking about and actioning 'wellbeing' in their practice and personal lives.

Aim

- The overall aim is to expose participants to a new way of thinking about and actioning 'wellbeing' in their practice and personal lives, and to think about how this relates to coaching.



What does a great day at work look like?

What does a great day at work look like?

Discuss...

*How was your great day at work different from
the other persons?*

*How was your great day at work different from
the other persons?*

What does this mean?

*How was your great day at work different from
the other persons?*

What does this mean?

*What does this mean between a coach and
coachee?*

What does a great life look like?

What does a great life look like?

Discuss...

Is there a difference between 'wellbeing' in general (in life), and 'work wellbeing' more specifically?

Is there a difference between 'wellbeing' in general (in life), and 'work wellbeing' more specifically?

Thoughts?



*So language (in this case context – life vs work)
is important, right?*



What does a great coaching session look like?

What does a great coaching session look like?

Thoughts?

What does a great coaching session look like?

*What role, if any, does wellbeing play in this
great coaching session – intentionally or
otherwise?*

Discuss...

What does wellbeing mean to you?

If you were to explain 'wellbeing' to a 12-year-old, what would you say?

Tell the person next to you what you would say to the 12-year-old (role play,
take turns)...

Between the two of you, can you write down a definition of wellbeing?



“Wellbeing can be understood as how people feel and how they function both on a personal and social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole.” - Michaelson, J., Mahony, S., & Schifferes, J. (2012).

“How well someone’s life is going for them.” - Crisp, R. (2014).

“the experience of personally valued fulfillment within one’s life” - Kashdan et al., (2025)

n. “a state of happiness and contentment, with low levels of distress, overall good physical and mental health and outlook, or good quality of life” – APA Dictionary.

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Thoughts on these?

“Wellbeing can be understood as how people feel and how they function both on a personal and social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole.” -

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“Wellbeing can be understood as how people **feel** and how they **function** both on a **personal and social** level, and how they **evaluate** their lives as a whole.” -

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Keyes

Flourishing

- **Emotional Wellbeing**
 - Positive affect (happy)
 - Positive affect (interested)
 - Life satisfaction
- **Social Wellbeing**
 - Social contribution
 - Social integration
 - Social actualisation
 - Social acceptance
- **Psychological Wellbeing**
 - Self-acceptance
 - Environmental mastery
 - Positive relationships
 - Personal growth
 - Autonomy
 - Purpose in life

Huppert & So

Flourishing

- **Positive Appraisal**
 - Positive emotion
- **Positive Functioning**
 - Engagement
 - Competence
 - Meaning
 - Positive relationships
- **Positive Characteristics**
 - Emotional stability
 - Vitality
 - Optimism
 - Resilience
 - Self-esteem

Diener et al.

Flourishing

- Purpose and meaning
- Positive relationships
- Engagement
- Social contribution
- Competence
- Self-acceptance
- Optimism
- Self-esteem

Seligman et al.

Flourishing

- Positive emotion
- Engagement
- Positive relationships
- Meaning and purpose
- Accomplishment/competence

As the philosopher Wittgenstein said:

“the meaning of a word is its use in the language”

(Wittgenstein, 1958, S43).



Sooooooooo, how are people using the word 'wellbeing' in their communication?

Sooooooooo, how are people using the word 'wellbeing' in their communication?

Thoughts?

Wellness

Flourishing

Thriving

Life satisfaction

Happiness

Quality of life

Mental health

Subjective wellbeing

The list goes on...



State of play according to Aaron

1. Different disciplines define wellbeing differently.
2. Wellbeing is not well defined within disciplines (or at all) or in public discourse (e.g., media).
3. Wellbeing is a multi-dimensional concept (only aspect agreed upon).
4. Wellbeing is an increasingly popular term and topic.

This all leads to lack of clear definition and conceptualisation of wellbeing being hugely problematic because:

1. Almost our complete literature base in positive psychology rests on what we mean by “wellbeing.”
2. It makes talking to, and working with, different disciplines and different professionals challenging.
3. It’s a conundrum for practitioners (i.e., model selection, test selection).

State of play according to Aaron

I think accurately conceptualising wellbeing is an essential first step in the successful development or implementation of any:

- Wellbeing theory.
 - Policy.
 - Intervention.
 - Assessment.
 - Debate.
- Or any activity really...

Why aren't more people worried about this?





How do we assess wellbeing?

Assessment of wellbeing

Positive assessment.

- In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel? →

- 10 - Extremely happy
- 9 - Very happy
- 8 - Pretty happy
- 7 - Mildly happy
- 6 - Slightly happy
- 5 - Neutral
- 4 - Slightly unhappy
- 3 - Mildly unhappy
- 2 - Pretty unhappy
- 1 - Very unhappy
- 0 - Extremely unhappy

The Happiness Measures

DATE _____
NAME _____
AGE _____ SEX _____

EMOTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I DIRECTIONS: Use the list below to answer the following question: **IN GENERAL, HOW HAPPY OR UNHAPPY DO YOU USUALLY FEEL?** Check the one statement below that best describes your *average* happiness.

Check just one of these boxes!

- 10. Extremely happy (feeling ecstatic, joyous, fantastic!)
- 9. Very happy (feeling really good, elated!)
- 8. Pretty happy (spirits high, feeling good.)
- 7. Mildly happy (feeling fairly good and somewhat cheerful.)
- 6. Slightly happy (just a bit above neutral.)
- 5. Neutral (not particularly happy or unhappy.)
- 4. Slightly unhappy (just a bit below neutral.)
- 3. Mildly unhappy (just a little low.)
- 2. Pretty unhappy (somewhat "blue," spirits down.)
- 1. Very unhappy (depressed, spirits very low.)
- 0. Extremely unhappy (utterly depressed, completely down.)

Assessment of wellbeing

Positive assessment.

- In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel? →
- What would you pay / give / do / sacrifice / commit to in order to be, on average, one point happier? Discuss...

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Assessment of wellbeing

Positive assessment.

- In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel? →
- What would you pay / give / do / sacrifice / commit to in order to be, on average, one point happier? Discuss...
- There is knowing how happy, knowing why happy, and knowing what happiness is (what makes up happiness). Knowing how needs an understanding of both what and why...

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Assessment of wellbeing

Terms matter.

What is the difference between:

“evaluation”, “testing”, “assessment”, and “measurement”?

Assessment of wellbeing

- Assessment = in education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, test, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.
- Assessment = the act of judging or deciding the amount, value, quality, or importance of something, or the judgment or decision that is made.
- Assessment = the process of considering all the information about a situation or a person and making a judgement.
- Assessment = the process of testing, and making a judgement about , someone's knowledge, ability, skills.
- Evaluation = the making of a judgement about the amount, number, or value of something; assessment.
- Measurement = the size, length, or amount of something, as established by measuring.

Assessment of wellbeing

Difference Between Assessment And Evaluation

Dimension of Difference	Assessment	Evaluation
Content: timing, primary purpose	Formative: ongoing, to improve learning	Summative: final, to gauge quality
Orientation: focus of measurement	Process-oriented: how learning is going	Product-oriented: what's been learned
Findings: uses thereof	Diagnostic: identify areas for improvement	Judgmental: arrive at an overall grade/score

Assessment, Measurement, and Evaluation

- **ASSESSMENT**-is gathering all data and organizing them together to an interpretable form.
- **MEASUREMENT**-is the process of determining the quantitative achievement of a learner in the subject he studied.
- **EVALUATION**-is the process of determining the worth or value of the result of measurement.



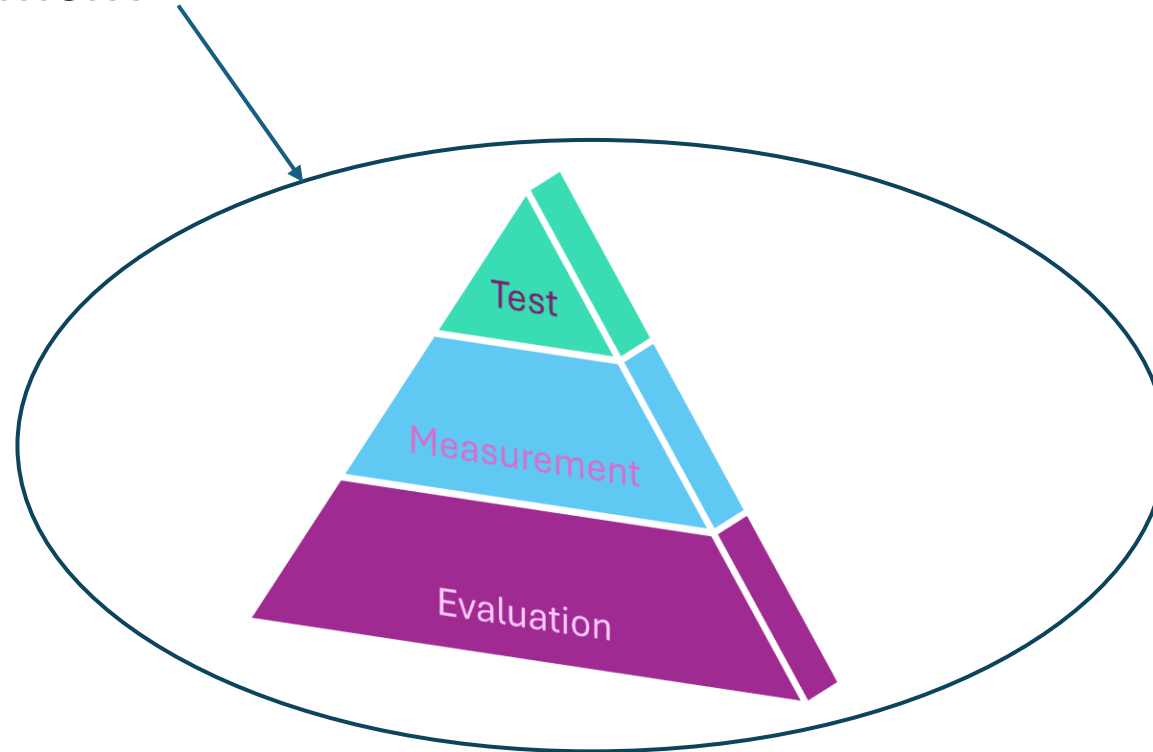
Assessment of wellbeing

There is also 'testing'...

- A test is an instrument or technique that measures someone's knowledge of something to determine what they know.
- A measurement takes place when a 'test' is given and a 'score' is obtained...
- A measurement allows an evaluation to take place, which is the process of interpreting the collected measurement information to make a professional judgment of value or worth...

Assessment of wellbeing

- Wellbeing assessment



Assessment of wellbeing

Again, terminology is very important.

“When we ask people if they are happy, the answers tell us nothing if we don’t know what our respondents mean by ‘happy’. One person might mean, ‘I’m not currently feeling any serious pain’; another, ‘My life is pretty horrible but I’m reconciled to it’; another, ‘I’m feeling a lot better than I did yesterday.’”

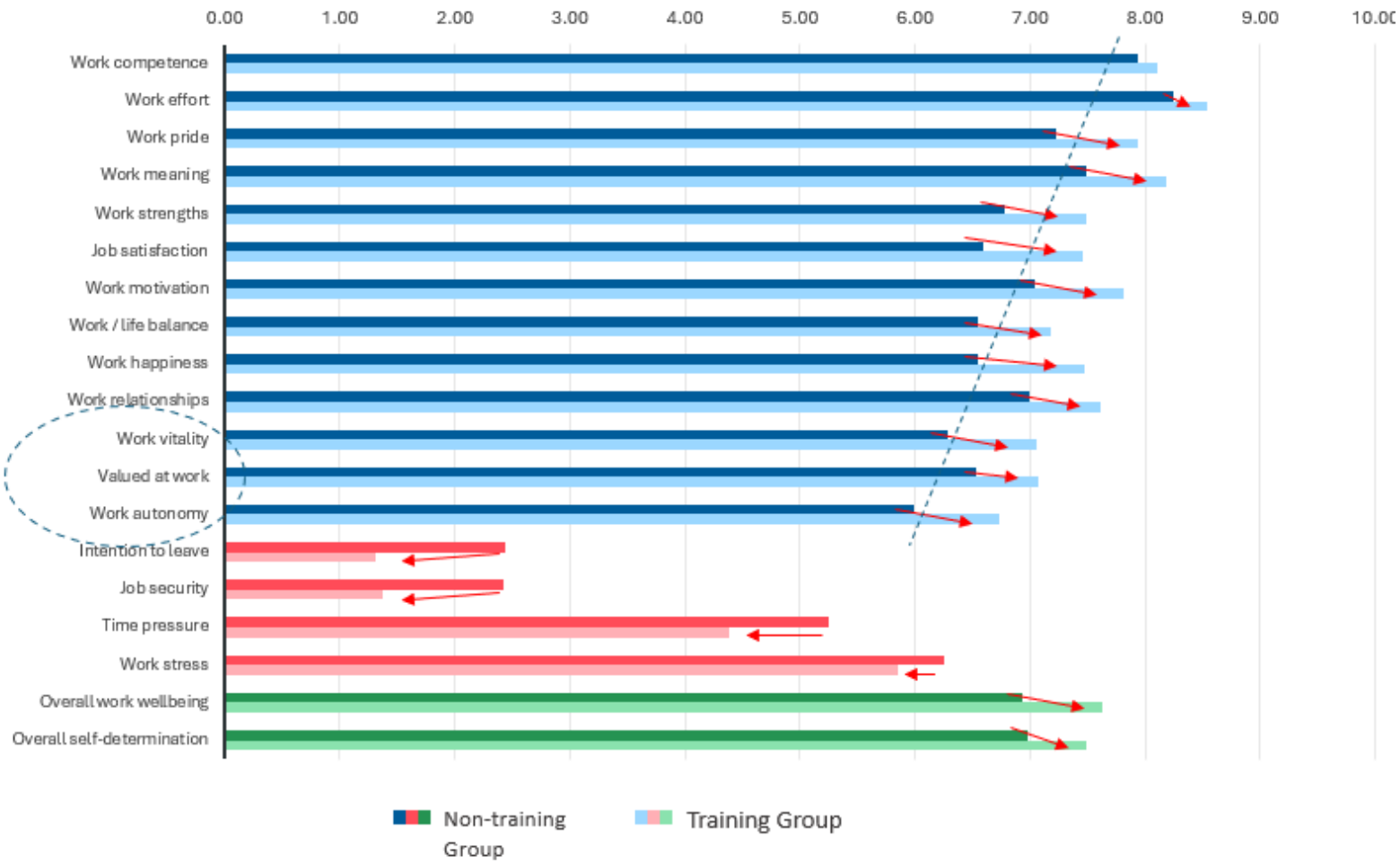


Assessment of wellbeing

The importance of measurement.

- “*You can only manage what you measure*” – better measurement data allows better management.
Assessments allow data-driven decision making.
- Many ways of assessment; more are better.
 - Tests / Surveys (Paper based and online - no real difference between paper and online).
 - Observation.
 - Physiological measures (heart rate, skin conductivity, etc).
 - Interviews.
 - Existing records.
 - Experience Sampling Method (ESM) & Day Reconstruction Method (DRM).
- Tracking change over time is important and where the action is.
- Assessments create opportunities for conversations, conversations improve wellbeing (also use existing events, and create new wellbeing events to do so).

Assessment of wellbeing



It's not just the change in wellbeing outcome, it's understanding the drivers of wellbeing change!

Assessment of wellbeing

Understand the psychological assessment process.

1. Planning the assessment.

- Why is the person/people being assessed? Answer points to the goal of assessment. Goals could include aspects such as diagnosis / classification, description, prediction, planning.

2. Data collection.

- Methods include various ways of assessment.

3. Data processing.

- Data analysis involves judgement vs statistical precision. Qualitative vs. quantitative methods.

4. Communicating findings.

- Written report, verbally to person, conference presentation, academic paper.

Assessment of wellbeing

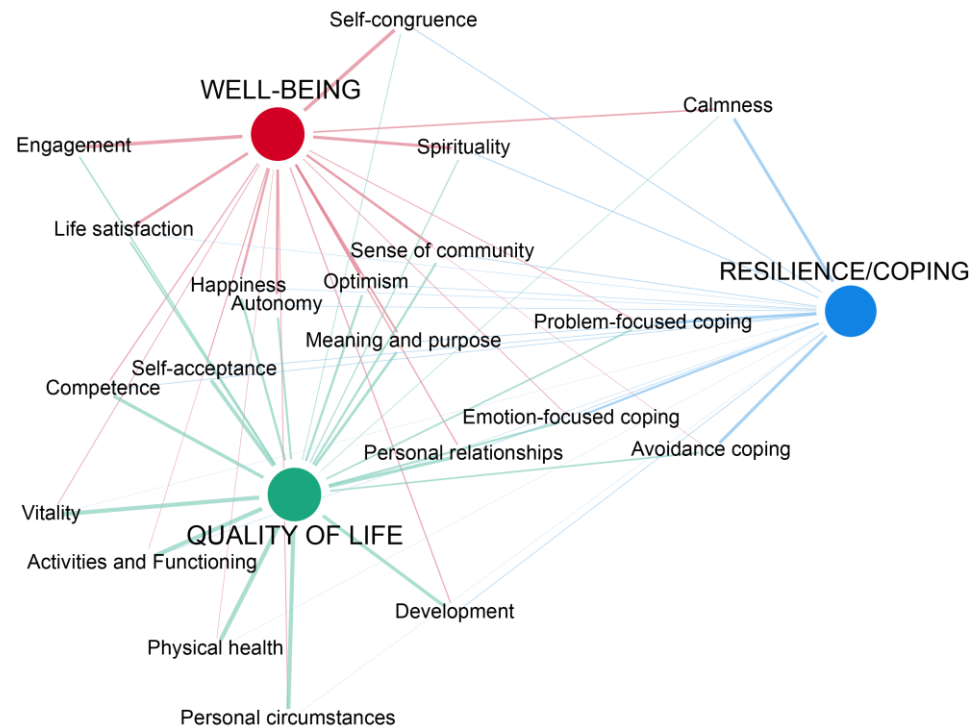
More key points:

- Always check copyright.
- Consider ethics (e.g., dangers in testing feedback).
- Best practice = evidence-based test selection + ethical approach.
- Note: Positive assessment is a relatively new area.
- There are various theories of wellbeing, and of most components which are measured. Aim for alignment between theory, definition, and measure!
- Assessment time frames matter: Past week, past month, in general...
- Suitability for: One time, pre-post, over time...
- Should you also assess illbeing?

Assessment of wellbeing

More key points:

- Which aspects of wellbeing should be measured?



Assessment of wellbeing

Notes on evaluation

- *“Evaluation is a process that critically examines a program. It involves collecting and analyzing information about a program's activities, characteristics, and outcomes”.*
- *“Its purpose is to make judgments about a program, to improve its effectiveness, and/or to inform programming decisions” (Patton, 1987).*
 - Why evaluate?
 - Who is evaluation for?
 - What should they do with an evaluation?
 - What do “they” actually do with an evaluation?

Assessment of wellbeing

Program Stage	Before Program Begins	New Program	Established Program	Mature Program
Question Asked	To what extent is the need being met? What can be done to address this need?	Is the Program operating as planned?	Is the program achieving its objectives?	What predicted and unpredicted impacts has the program had?
Evaluation Type	Needs Assessment	Process / Implementation Evaluation	Outcome Evaluation	Impact Evaluation

FORMATIVE (covering Before Program Begins and New Program stages)

SUMMATIVE (covering Established Program and Mature Program stages)

These summative evaluations build on data collected in the earlier stages.



Why is wellbeing important?

Some selected examples of research:

Oswald, Proto, and Sgroi (2009) reported a 12% **increase in performance** and productivity when an intervention to increase subjective wellbeing was used.

Difference in **productivity** between high and low wellbeing employees can be as much as 30% (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009; Right Management., 2009).

Increasing employee wellbeing can **reduce the cost of sick leave** by 19% (Bertera, 1990).

Increasing happiness at work **reduces the cost of employee turnover** by 46% (Judge, 1993).

Better performance

Longevity (on average, around 8 years)

Greater goal obtainment

Increased compassion, empathy, helpfulness, ethical decision making

Better jobs and pay

Better health (get sick less, recover faster: super wound healing)

Greater resilience

Better relationships

Increased psychological flexibility

Longevity



Unhappy Nuns



Age 85

90%

34%

Age 94

54%

11%

*(The Nun Study: Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001
Positive emotional content, 180 nuns, mean age = 22 years)*

Better performance

Longevity (on average, around 8 years)

Greater goal obtainment

Increased compassion, empathy, helpfulness, ethical decision making

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Better health (get sick less, recover faster: super wound healing)

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Better relationships

Increased psychological flexibility

Wellbeing → Engagement → Performance / Productivity → Success

Wellbeing → Engagement → Performance / Productivity → Success

Wellbeing → Engagement → Performance / Productivity → Success

Wellness →

What is more important than wellbeing?

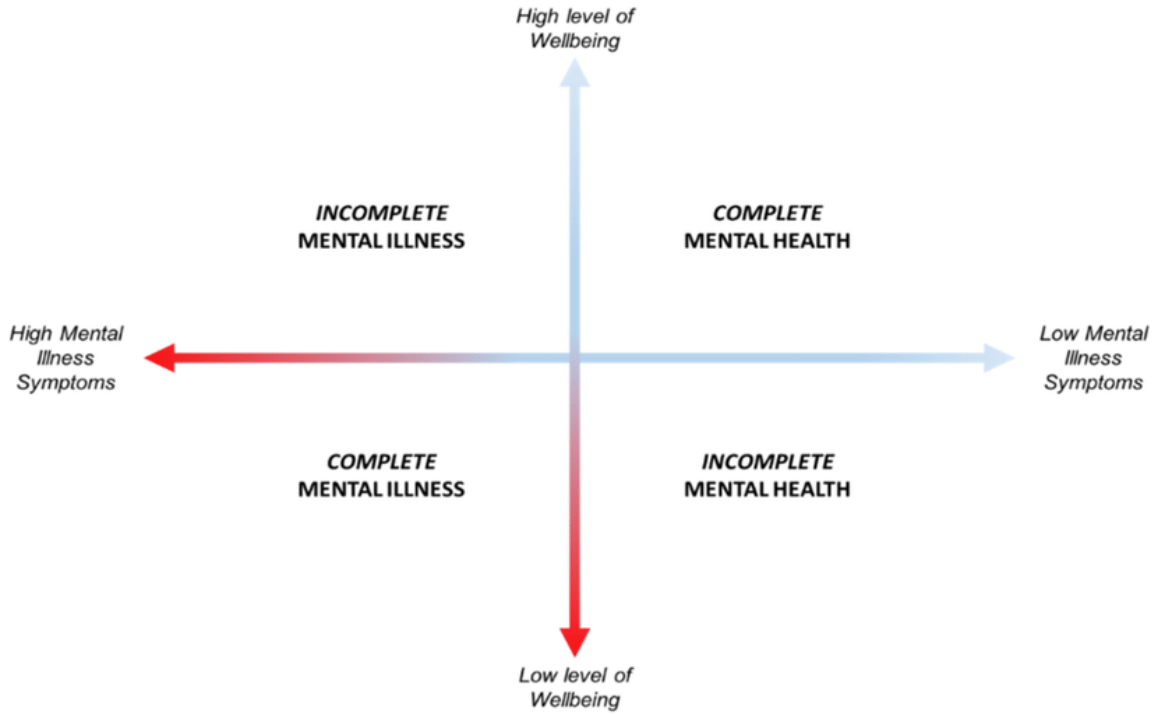
What about illbeing and discomfort?

What about illbeing and discomfort?

Should you worry about these?

Discuss...

Wellbeing and resilience correlated $r = 0.5$



Think about one of the best days of your life...

How did that happen?

What components did it involve?



Think about one of the best days of your life...

How did that happen?

What components did it involve?

Embrace discomfort – chances are the best days of your life to date included an element of discomfort

Embrace negative emotions – they are functional

Discomfort → Wellbeing

If discomfort is good for wellbeing, is it good for coaching?



If discomfort is good for wellbeing, is it good for coaching?

Discuss...



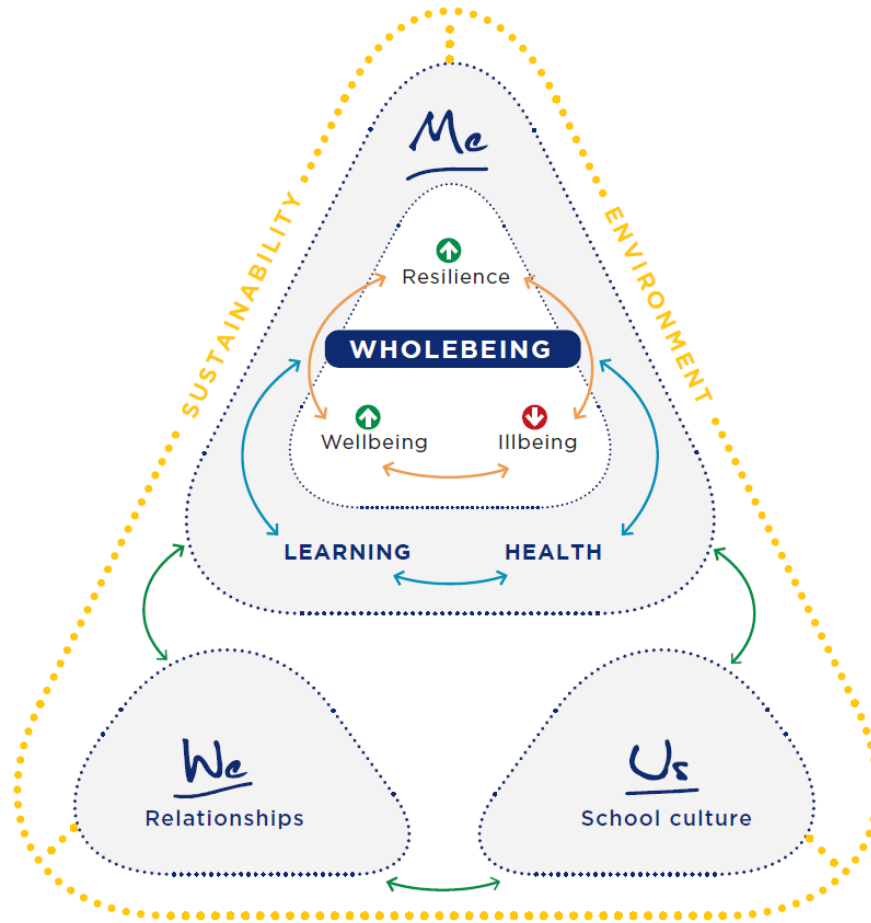
Wellbeing flows through systems

Wellbeing flows through systems

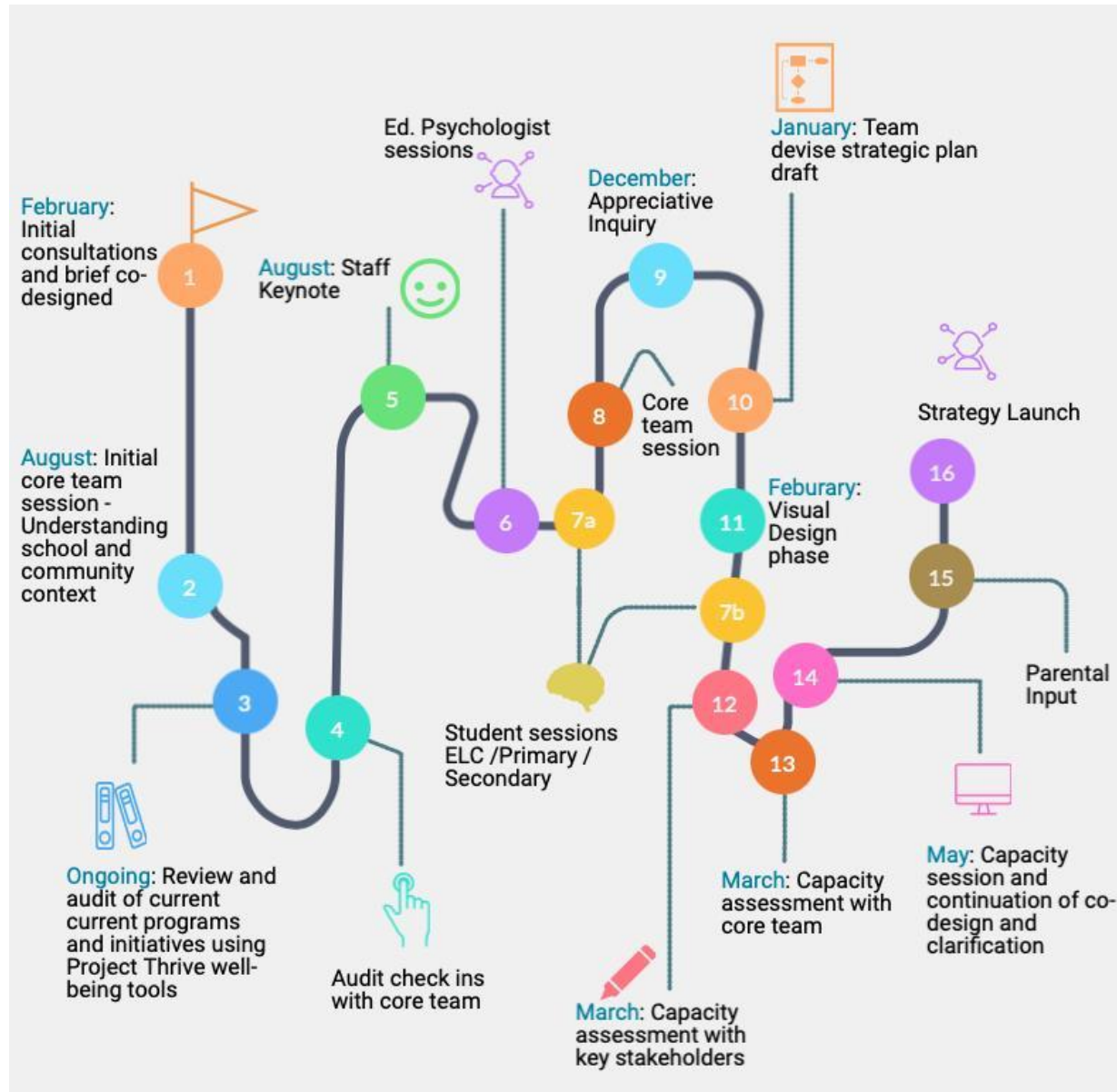
- *Positive systems science*
- *Systems informed positive psychology*

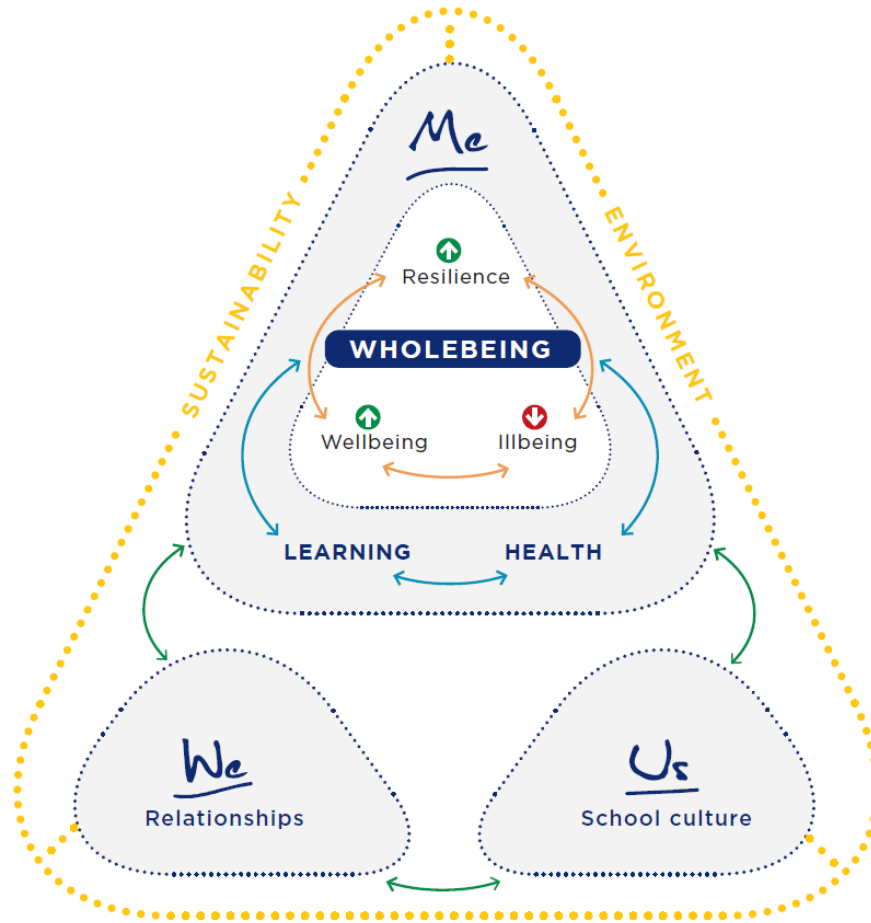
Kern, M. L., Williams, P., Spong, C., Colla, R., Sharma, K., Downie, A., ... Oades, L. G. (2019). Systems informed positive psychology. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 15(6), 705–715. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2019.1639799>

Peter Senge – any book



Jarden & Downie, 2023

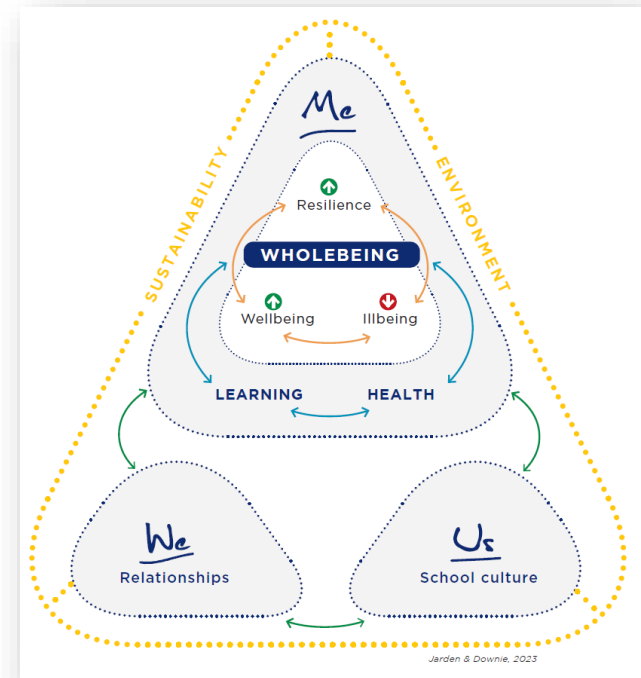
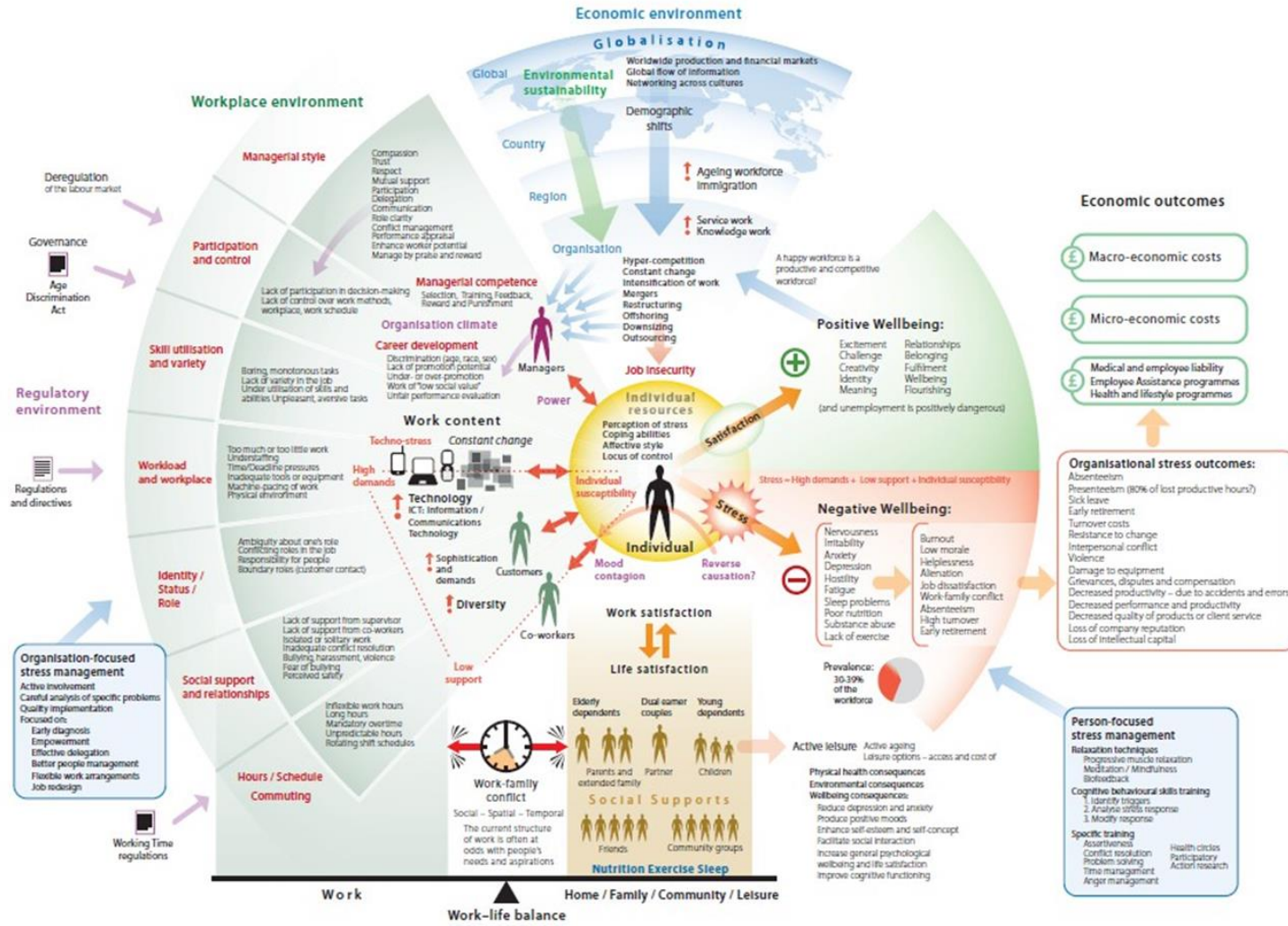




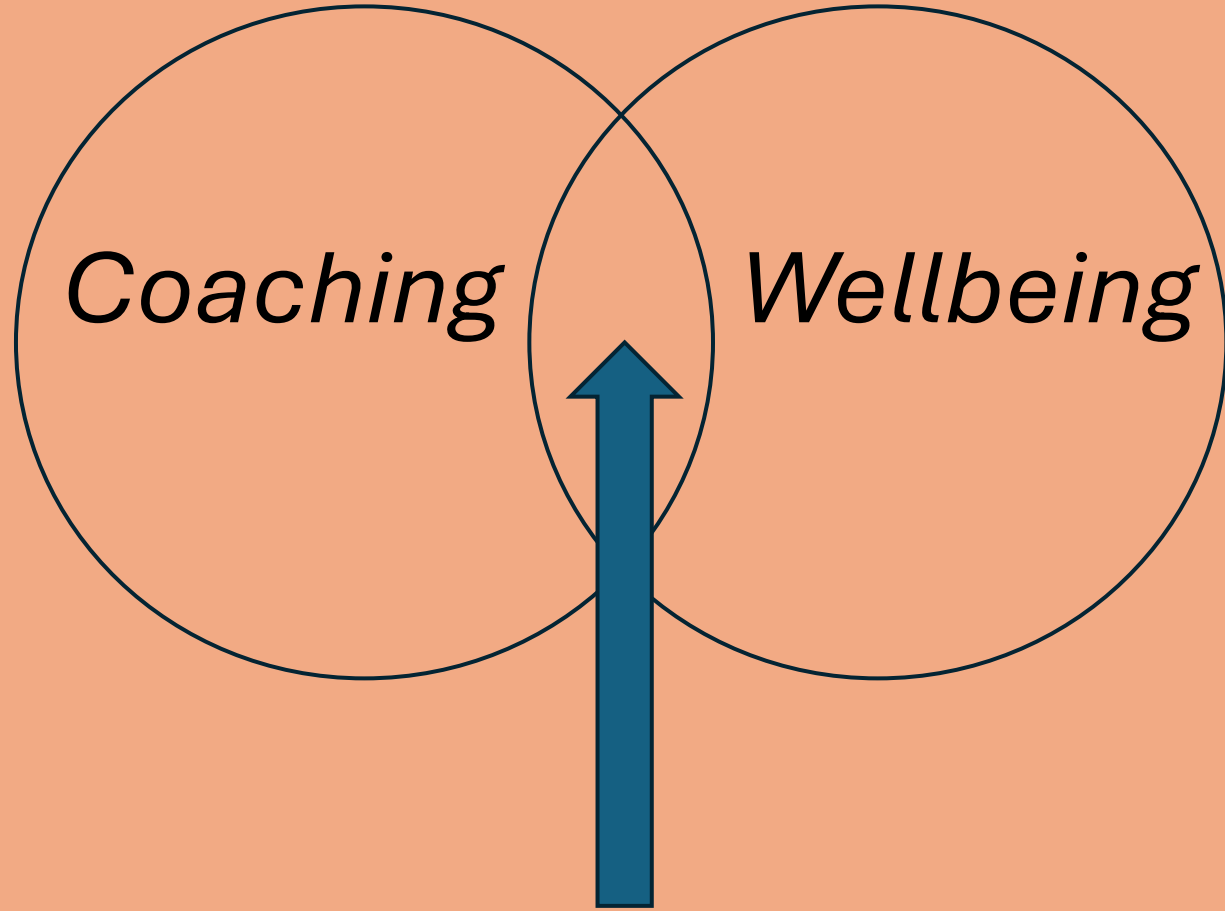
Jarden & Downie, 2023

Wellbeing at work – conceptual overview

Systems maps





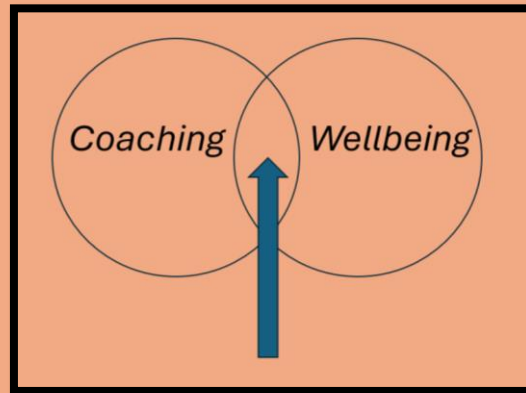


Coaching

Wellbeing

What's in the sweet spot?

Discuss...

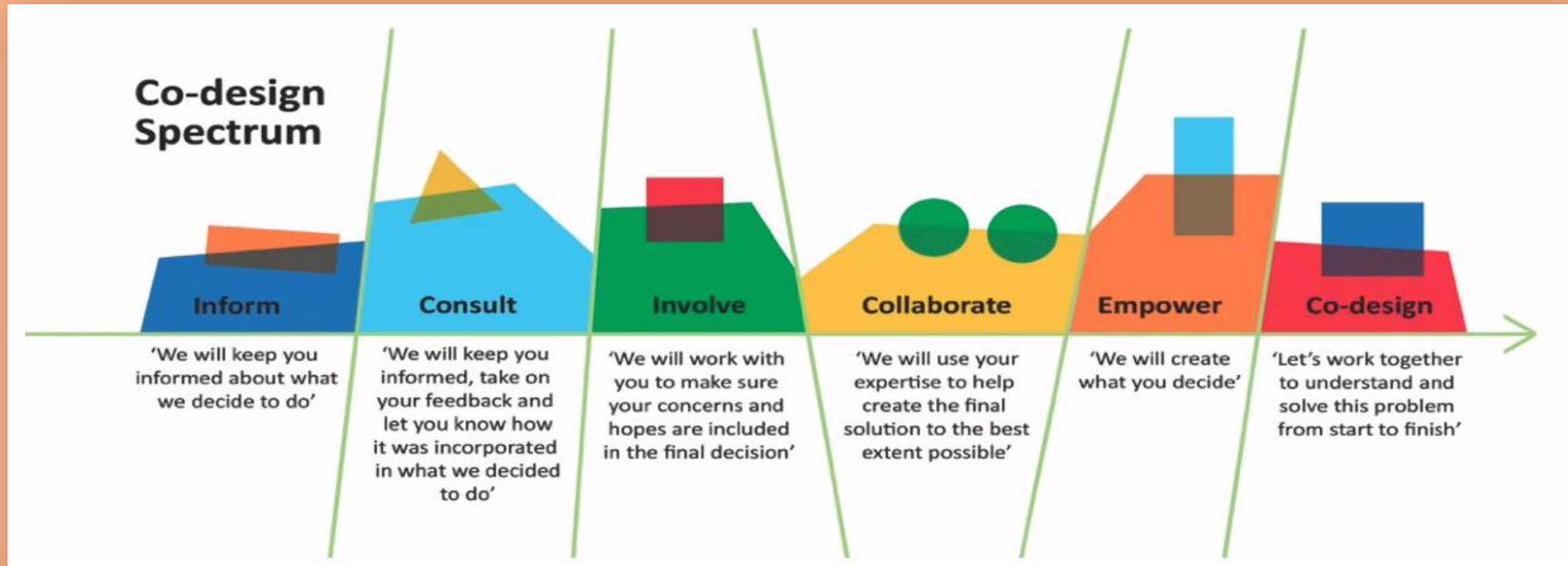


*What does wellbeing look like for the coach?
What does wellbeing look like for the coachee?*

Thoughts?



Is it co-designed?



Is it personalised?



What skills and strategies would be helpful?

What skills and strategies would be helpful?

By this I mean, which might supercharge the coach and the coaching process...

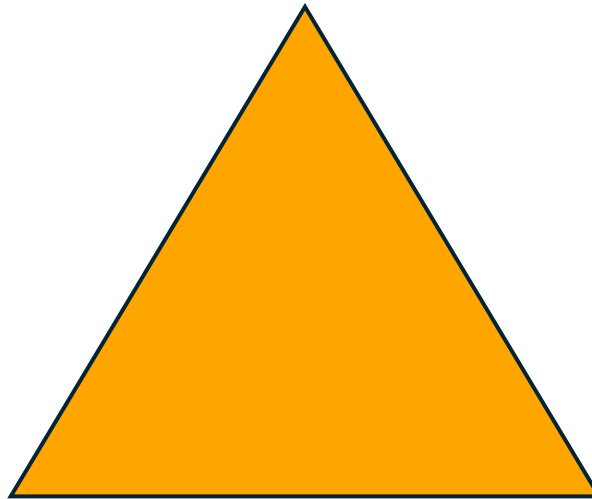


Values

<p>PERSONAL VALUES Card Sort W.R. Miller, J. C'de Baca, D.B. Matthews, P.L. Wilbourne University of New Mexico, 2001</p>	<p>IMPORTANT TO ME</p>
<p>VERY IMPORTANT TO ME</p>	<p>NOT IMPORTANT TO ME</p>
<p>ACCEPTANCE to be accepted as I am 1 9/01</p>	<p>ACCURACY to be accurate in my opinions and beliefs 2 9/01</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENT to have important accomplishments</p>	<p>ADVENTURE to have new and exciting experiences</p>

Values

Values, meaning, purpose...



Values

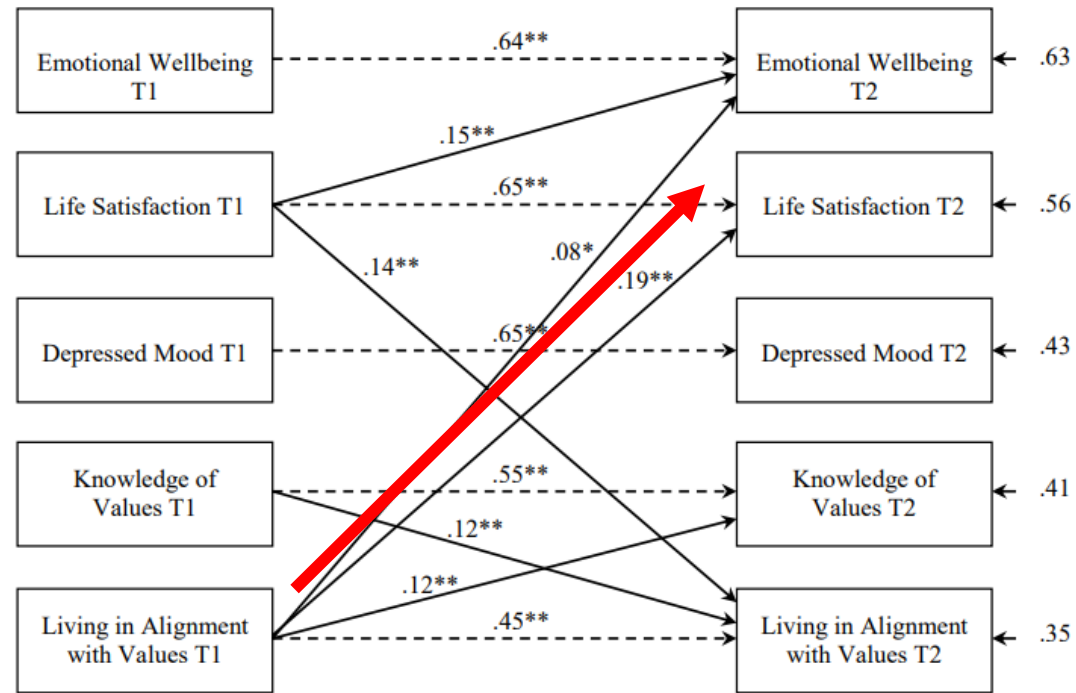


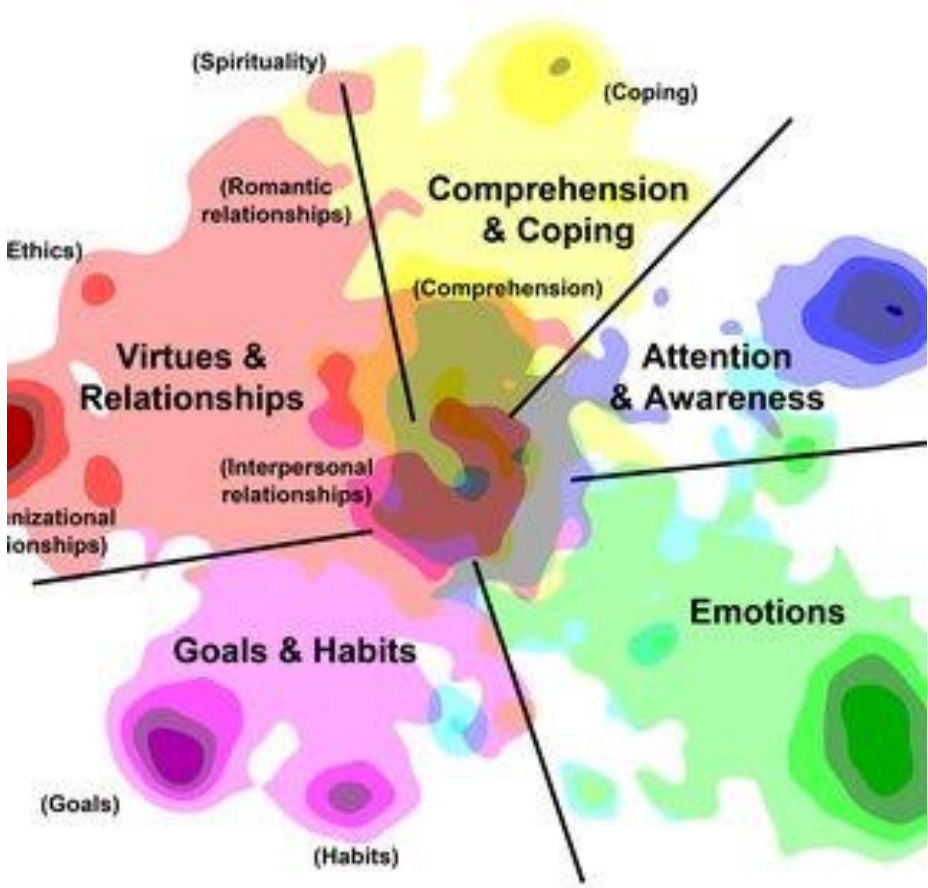
Figure 19. Pruned direction of effect model across six months. Standardised stability coefficients are indicated by dashed lines, remaining lines are standardised regression coefficients (betas).
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Focus / Composure / Attention

The Geelong three breaths exercise:

1. Breath One. Take a deep breath. Notice your physical body and any points of pain or tension. Breath out slowly and release any tension away.
2. Breath Two. Take a deep breath. As you breathe out think about what you are grateful for right at this very moment. Say to yourself “Right now I am grateful for...”.
3. Breath Three. Take a deep breath. As you breathe out think what intentional state you want to be in right now. Say to yourself “My intention right now is to be (kind, open minded, relaxed, critical, curious etc)...”.

Focus / Composure / Attention

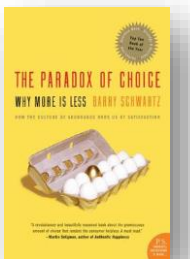


Decision making

Maximising and satisficing.

The goal of the exercise is to increase your decision-making skills which in turn impact your wellbeing.

- Individuals who maximise consider all possibilities comprehensively and strive to select the best option. These individuals search out information to ensure they are exposed to the best alternative.
- Individuals who satisfice seek an alternative that exceeds some criterion of acceptability. Once they identify an acceptable option, they discontinue their search and choose that option. These individuals do not pursue the goal to optimise every decision.



Decision making

So which are you? Do you think you are a maximiser or satisficer?

Maximising all the time is stressful and not good for wellbeing. It cognitively overloads us...

To enhance wellbeing, individuals should, on some occasions, decide not to consider all of the options and alternatives and instead take a satisficing approach. What regular decisions can you satisfice?

Wellbeing planning

Design a great day, including a standard workday, from when you wake up to go to sleep in 60-minute intervals. Focus on building in psychological and physical wellbeing, strengths use, and values alignment.

Build off “what does wellbeing mean to you?” and “what does a great day at work look like for you?”.

Wellbeing planning

Instructions

Design a great day in one-hour intervals from when you wake up in the morning until you go to sleep. Below is an example of Paul's plan for a great day at work.

Time		Activity	Strength Use	How Important?	Expected Enjoyment
7:00 -	8:00	Breakfast	Curiosity	Good fuel to power me	3/10
8:00 -	9:00	Bus to work	Appreciation of beauty	Little importance	2/10
9:00 -	10:00	Emails and calls	Kindness	Social relationship are important to my wellbeing	3/10
10:00 -	11:00	Work on report on Gunway project	Perseverance	My professional standing is important to me	3/10
11:00 -	12:00	Team meeting	Teamwork	Social relationship are important to my wellbeing	7/10
12:00 -	1:00	Lunch with Tom	Social Intelligence	Having a good friend at work is important to me	9/10
1:00 -	2:00	Site visit to Gunway instillation and appraisal	Honesty	This is an important project for our firm, and my boss wants a great performance from me	8/10
2:00 -	3:00	Work on pitch for Great Halls project	Bravery	Chance to be creative	4/10
3:00 -	4:00	Go to Mega site to help apprentice Peter with instillation	Leadership	I like teaching others	9/10
4:00 -	5:00	Write up todays work notes and visits, emails and calls	Kindness	My professional standing is important to me	3/10
5:00 -	6:00	Bus home	Appreciation of beauty	Little importance	1/10
6:00 -	7:00	Prepare and eat dinner with Julie, fix hinge on front gate	Love	I love my wife and time with her	10/10
7:00 -	8:00	TV (Space Road TV series)	-	Little importance but entertaining	7/10
8:00 -	9:00	Note sure, maybe Halo Xbox game	Zest	?	?
10:00 -	11:00	Three Good Things activity, read novel till 10:30	Gratitude	Three things makes me feel good	8/10

What will success look like today?

Thinking / Confusion



Other outcomes?



Thank you



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