



FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING





Five Ways to Wellbeing

Wellbeing in COVID-19

In these days of COVID19 we are faced with many challenges. Challenges to our livelihood, our relationships, our health and wellbeing.

How we respond to those challenges is dependent on many factors.

Factors within us – some of which we may have some control over, and factors outside of us that we often don't have any control over.

Factors within us might include our previous experience, our personality, our thoughts and feelings about challenges, and our resources including economic, spiritual, physical and emotional resources.

Factors outside of us include our financial stability, expectations from our workplace and families, the environment we currently live in, the government and supporting structures provided within the community facing COVID19 and supporting our health and wellbeing.

These can be difficult to unpack and difficult to influence, let alone understand the impact they are having.

It's complex.

So how can we manage ourselves to maintain –or improve – our wellbeing; given that many of the factors that impact on it may be out of our control?



Five Ways to Wellbeing

The New Economic Foundation in the UK asked similar questions about improving wellbeing in research they conducted.

First – they asked – **what is wellbeing?**

“The concept of well-being comprises two main elements: feeling good and functioning well. Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of someone who has a positive experience of their life.

Equally important for well-being is our functioning in the world. Experiencing positive relationships, having some control over one’s life and having a sense of purpose are all important attributes of well-being.”

We can all agree that we want to feel good and function well. Unfortunately, some of the research has shown that ‘only 14 per cent of the population has a high level of well-being, referred to as flourishing.’ (And that research is based on more ‘business-as-usual’ times!)

A range of factors were looked at to see what can impact on that. The NEF found that the things we do and the way we think can have the greatest impact. Their results highlighted Five Ways to Wellbeing.

To manage our wellbeing, we can intentionally build these Five Ways into our everyday habits, where we are right now. Yes, even in lockdown, quarantine, isolation or back-to-work, there are things we can do to improve our wellbeing.



CONNECT



Five Ways to Wellbeing



CONNECT - What does this mean?

Having connections with

Family

Friends

Colleagues

Neighbours

Community around us – our place of worship, our local school, groups we belong to.

People we see regularly- the people we pass by as we exercise, or enter our workplaces or homes.

Why this is important

The most significant difference between those who are mentally ill and those who aren't is social participation.

Social networks act as a buffer against poor mental health. A primary social network of three or less is a key predictor of common mental health disorders.

People who feel happier report larger social networks.

In COVID19 one of the key impacts on our wellbeing has been 'Social Distancing'. From the beginning I felt these words created the wrong emphasis for our brains to focus on. Instead of social distancing we need to be Physical Distancing.

We need to work hard to maintain and strengthen social connections

Both deep, strong connections and broad, more superficial relationships (sometimes referred to as weak ties) are important for feelings of connectedness, familiarity and a sense of self-worth.

We need both time and space to strengthen and broaden our social networks.

How many people do you have in your deep strong circle? These are the people you would call if something happened to you or someone you love. How many connections do you have in your broader network?

How has your current situation impacted on your connections? What has been working well in the midst of challenges to support your connections?



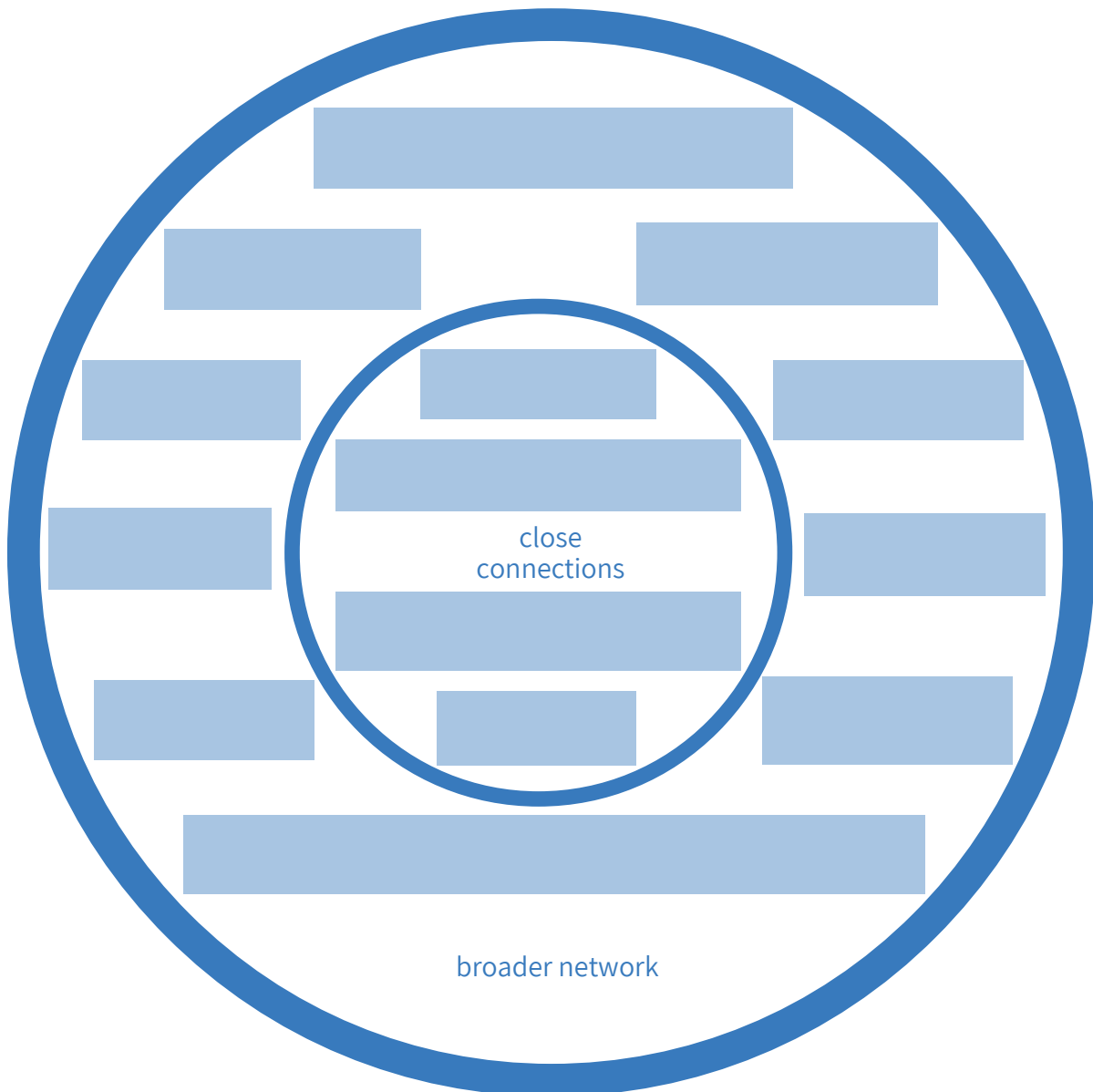
CONNECT



Five Ways to Wellbeing

What possible ways can you plan to connect with people as situations continue to change?

Fill out your connection circles





BE ACTIVE



Five Ways to Wellbeing



BE ACTIVE - What does this mean?

Walk or run
Get outside if you can, and be active
Cycle
Play sport
Garden
Gym or class (yoga, pilates, spin etc)
Dance
Something new - kayaking, bush walking, rock climbing

Why is this important?

Regular physical activity is associated with a greater sense of wellbeing, and lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Brain chemistry studies suggest that exercise involves the release of positive hormones (serotonin, dopamine, and BDNF –Brain Derived Neurotropic Factor which enhances neural growth)

Our mood and our positive feelings are improved by single bouts of exercise of less than ten minutes.

How are you being active in your everyday life now?

What might you need to adapt to stay safe at this time?



KEEP LEARNING



Five Ways to Wellbeing



KEEP LEARNING-What does this mean?

- Try something new
- Rediscover an old interest
- Sign up for a course
- Learn a language
- Cook a new recipe
- Learn to play an instrument
- Set yourself a challenge
- Explore a new area

Why is this important?

Continued learning enhances our self-esteem, so we feel good about ourselves. Even when the learning is virtual it can encourage social interaction and a more broadly active life.

Adult learning is correlated with positive effects on well-being, on how satisfied we are with our lives. It is associated with increased optimism and confidence.

We know from brain science that learning extends dendrite development – the tiny but important parts of our brain that connect the neurons together. Learning limits shrinkage of our cerebral cortex – one of the symptoms of dementia.

What are you learning in your everyday life now?

What new things have you already learnt in these times and what do you want to continue to explore?



GIVE



Five Ways to Wellbeing



GIVE-What does this mean?

Giving means looking outward as well as inward
We can give our time, energy, or even a smile
Do something nice for a friend or a stranger
Thank someone or show appreciation for them
Volunteer out time and skills
Join a group and contribute

Why is this important?

Those who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Doing an act of kindness each week has been associated with an increase in wellbeing.

Neuroscience shows us that cooperation is associated with the reward areas of the brain giving us positive feelings when we mutually cooperate and work well with others.

Helping, sharing and giving are associated with an increased sense of self-worth and positive feelings.

Practicing gratitude has been shown to lift our moods and is even associated with people coming out of a period of depression.

When and what do you give, in your everyday life now?

How will the current situation impact on your opportunities to give?



TAKE NOTICE



Five Ways to Wellbeing



TAKE NOTICE- What does this mean?

- We can be more aware of the world around us
- Catch sight of the beautiful
- Be curious about sights, sounds, tastes, smells and sensations
- Pay attention to the unusual things - people, place, architecture, nature, weather, food
- Notice our own feelings
- Savour the moment
- Be mindful

Why is this important?

Research shows people who were trained to be aware of sensations, thoughts and feelings reported enhanced wellbeing for several years after the training.

Taking notice is a way of practicing mindfulness and being in a mindful state has been shown to predict positive mental states, increased self-regulation, and heightened self-knowledge.

When our brain is focused on taking notice of something it isn't worrying about the future or ruminating about the past.

Savouring an experience can reinstate life's priorities helping us to refocus on what is important to us.

When and what do you take notice of, in your everyday life now?

How will the transition you are facing impact on your taking notice?



Five Ways to Wellbeing

What can I consciously do differently to enhance my wellbeing?

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What new things can I try as my situation changes?

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Five Ways to Wellbeing

Resources

<https://neweconomics.org/2011/07/five-ways-well-new-applications-new-ways-thinking>

<https://www.transculturalcareers.com>

<https://www.cicollective.com>

Trisha Carter:

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Trisha Carter is an Organisational Psychologist whose work builds bridges of skilful understanding between cultures. She develops global skill-sets, such as cultural intelligence and psychological flexibility, in leaders and team members globally. Her business Trans Cultural Careers has consulted, trained and coached within organisations, for employees and their families moving to or from over 60 countries. The on-line business provides resources to enhance the wellbeing and effectiveness of expats and their families. Trisha believes that our global connectedness is our strength enabling us to innovate and to develop solutions to complex problems in, what can be, an increasingly volatile and uncertain world.

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