

CULTIVATING TEACHER WELLBEING

FACILITATOR RESOURCE GUIDE



Facilitator resources in this guide are made available from
'[The Care Factor](#)' – an on-demand teacher wellbeing course
available in full here: bestprograms4kids.com/shop/the-care-factor/

Nurturing a context of wellbeing

In recent years, the wellbeing of educators has increasingly come under the spotlight – and for very good reason. Globally, educator overwhelm, stress and eventual burnout robs schools of people with a deep calling to the most noble of professions.

The reasons that educators choose to leave education are cause for pause – and alarm. Schools are unique workplaces, where the focus on improving productivity and outcome is usually on the student – and that’s where most resources go to ensure that happens. Caught in the middle though, are educators charged with driving student outcomes as well as having to fulfil many other roles in a workday to meet the holistic needs of the child. The methodology and practice of motivating their productivity and outcomes is often leap-frogged over in the busy school context of managing children’s learning needs and behaviour, parents, budgets, curriculum, audits, reporting, assessment – and the list goes on.

The reality is, right at the very core of any school’s success is the wellbeing of the educators. An educator’s wellbeing radiates out through dedicated, motivated, energised and over-and-above practice that in turn drives student engagement and outcome.

Globally, the consistently reported reasons that educators leave the profession are these:

- Overwhelming and competing demands.
- Classroom behaviour management.
- Undervaluing and undermining of professionalism by administration / colleagues.
- Managing parents.
- Coping with ever-changing curriculum demands.
- Development of planning materials and resources out of work hours.
- Assessments and reporting.
- Relentless pace of a day.
- Multiple roles within the given role of ‘educator’.

Research into the wellbeing factors of educators also comes up with consistent factors that improve workplace wellbeing and retention. These include:

- Authentic and supportive leadership.
- Opportunities to be recognised for individual and collective contributions.
- Recognition of the impact of cumulative stress on the educator, with regular opportunities for mentoring, debriefing and fun.
- Supportive and enforced policies around child and parent behaviour and the role of leadership in sharing the burden of care.
- Opportunities to work on team building and personal development that contribute to staff cohesion, career satisfaction and enjoyment, and success.

The following materials are a selection of resources that can be used to promote staff wellbeing through targeting personal development, team-building and cohesion, a focus on fun and togetherness, and regular demonstrations of appreciation and recognition.

Using the resources in this guide

The resources included in this guide provide plentiful opportunities to engage staff in a range of meaningful reflections and activities that build intrapersonal and interpersonal competence, connectedness and wellbeing.

Resources can be used to facilitate group discussions, or as ideas to generate alternative, integrated and regular wellbeing practices at school. The resources included in this guide are grouped into wellbeing resource types, each supported by a reflection sheet or guided practice, presentation slide or ready-to-go activities.

A. Exploring and quantifying staff intrapersonal wellbeing factors

Using resources in this section, provides the basis for self-reflection on establishing balance, and managing relationship with self and others. Working of self-development is sometimes confronting and completing the reflection resource may feel less threatening if explained and discussed as a whole group and then completed privately.

1. PERMA Principles of Positive Psychology

- Reflection Sheet – The application of Positive Psychology
- Slides 4 & 5

2. Exploring and mapping Character Strengths

- Reflection Sheet – Character Strengths and working together
- Slide 6

3. Rating and ranking holistic wellbeing factors with the Wellbeing Wheel

- Reflection Sheet – The Wellbeing Wheel
- Slide 7 & 8

B. Developing staff self and other awareness

Tension and conflict in schools between staff is often the result of a mismatch in belief systems, expectations and thinking patterns. The resources in this section help staff to develop awareness into their own beliefs, patterns and processes that might be triggers for others and to develop their empathy and connection.

1. Belief systems

- Reflection Sheet – Belief Systems and You
- Slides 11 - 14

2. The power of thinking

- Reflection Sheet – Thinking styles – what are yours
- Slide 15 - 17

3. Thinking ruts that derail wellbeing

- Reflection Sheet – Thinking ruts – what are yours?
- Slide 18 -19

C. Assisted event planning to nurture your context of wellbeing

Busyness in schools often robs time to keep staff wellbeing alive purposefully, consciously, and explicitly, despite best intentions. Adding staff wellbeing events to each term's calendar ensures that it becomes a visible, repeated, and explicit celebration of wellbeing.

A summary of the resources listed below and their suggested use over the school year is available on Slides 20-22.

1. Whole-of-Staff Wellbeing

- 1 event per term ready-to-go activities that nurture interpersonal relationships, empathy, and cohesion.

2. Between-Staff Wellbeing

- 1 practice per term of ready-to-go reflections and practices that build connections and raise gratitude.

3. Staff Wellbeing Events

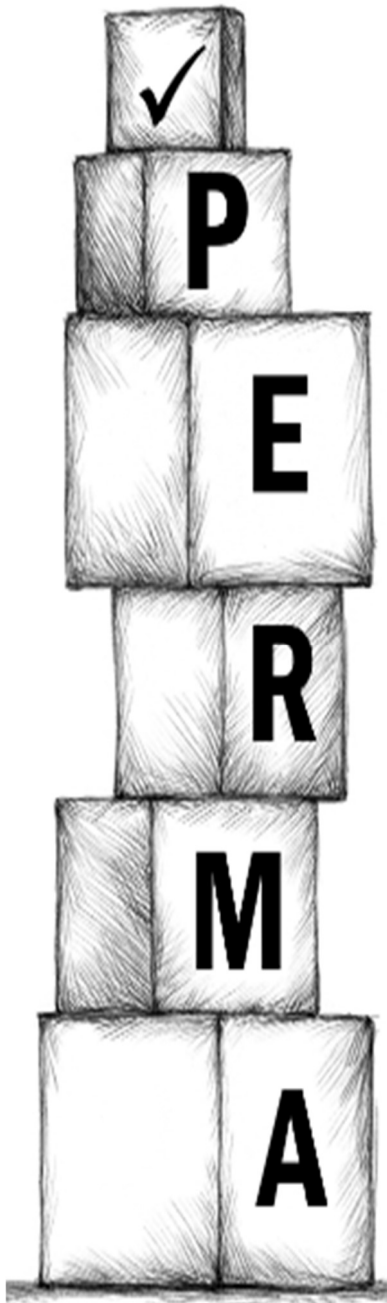
- 1 event suggestion per term based on bringing school staff together with a focus on fun and belonging.

DOWNLOAD your Facilitator's Guide and PowerPoint presentation by following this link:

<https://bestprograms4kids.com/wellbeing-facilitator-resources/>

The application of Positive Psychology

The PERMA model was designed by Martin Seligman and there are 5 core elements of wellbeing – and happiness. Your wellbeing is a combination of many factors, attributes and experiences in your life – and the very good news is that you can get more of it with effort, attention and focus. Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on these elements with 1 being a score reflecting poor practice or outcome in this area and 5 being the ultimate.



P - Positive Emotion. How would you rate yourself on this element? The link to your happiness is most evident in this element. Having a positive mindset helps you to be more resilient, persistent, to be creative and to take more chances.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

E – Engagement. Almost every campaign you see that focuses on mental health and wellbeing includes an element of belonging and of doing. When you do something that takes your entire attention and focus – it’s called flow – and it’s really great for human beings to experience flow rather than the usual fragmentation of attention.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

R – Relationships. We are social beings – and brains process the pain of social isolation in the same way as physical pain. Connection, love, intimacy – each different in relationships from home to work but

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

equally important to nourishing wellbeing.

M – Meaning. A life with purpose gives direction and fulfilment. It gives a sense of being connected to something bigger than yourself – which, when life is tough, can be spiritually sustaining.

A – Achievement. Goals, ambitions, plans – give life a momentum

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

and

opens the excitement and opportunity of growth experiences.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

Follow the link to the University of Pennsylvania website and take the PERMA survey – it’s free and a great insight into those elements in your life.

<https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/questionnaires/perma>

Character Strengths and Working Together

The VIA Institute on Character have identified 24 character strengths that describe the most dominant parts of personality. It stands to reason then, that the mix of personalities on a school staff that all come together brings a range of strengths – some of which complement each other, and others of which might bring frustration, irritation, or confusion.

Understanding your own strengths helps you to better understand yourself and your responses to some environments and experiences. It boosts confidence and gives a direction to goals, it helps to build meaning and purpose, and strengthens your relationships and understanding of others.

In 6 broad virtue categories, the 24 character strengths are all represented in different degrees within you, and these become your unique drivers for relationship-seeking and avoidance, career direction and progression, and workplace satisfaction.

Run your eye over the characteristics below and see if you can pick out those that might be your top strengths. Can you take a guess at your top strength?

WISDOM	Creativity	Love of learning	Curiosity	Perspective	Judgement
HUMANITY	Kindness	Social intelligence	Love		
JUSTICE	Leadership	Fairness	Teamwork		
COURAGE	Bravery	Perseverance	Zest	Honesty	
TEMPERANCE	Humility	Self-regulation	Forgiveness	Prudence	
TRANSCENDENCE	Hope	Appreciation of beauty & excellence	Humour	Gratitude	Spirituality

Head to this link and take the free online Character Strengths Assessment to see if you're right, and what your top strengths are <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>

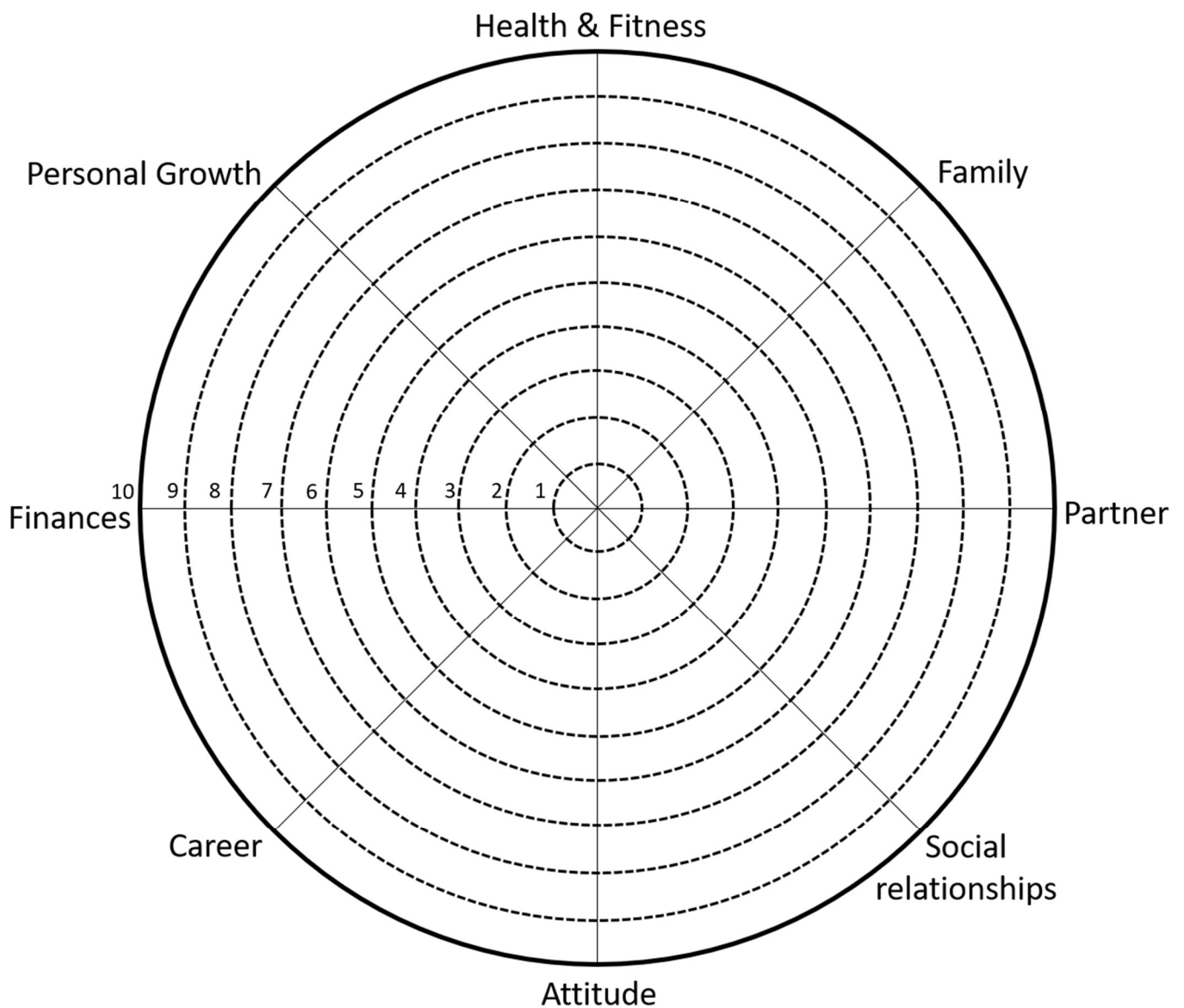
Reflect on these questions...

- What is your top strength and does the description sit easily with your understanding and appraisal of yourself?
- Are your strengths evenly spread across the 6 virtue categories or do they tend to cluster?
- How do others perceive your strengths?
- How have your character strengths helped you to navigate life's challenges?

Are you 'living the dream'?

Our adult lives are full of complexities – both wonderful, and at times, trying. **Balance** is achieved by knowing your strengths, vulnerabilities - and also deficits. The next step is to make a plan that maximises the strengths, strengthen the vulnerabilities and diminishes – or even eradicates - the deficits.

Take a moment to rate yourself in the eight domains of the **Wellbeing Wheel** below, between (1) indicating a deficit area, and (10) one of strength.



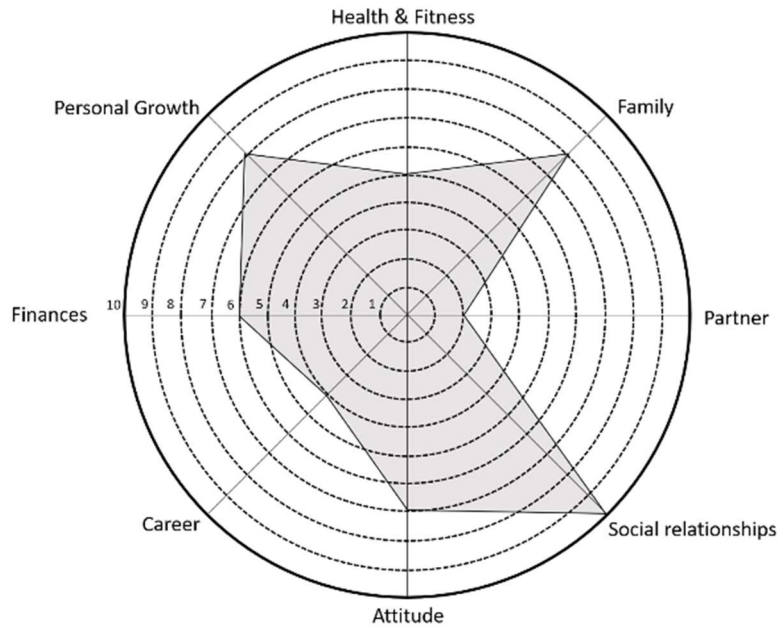
Draw a line between each of the highest scores in each domain as to have a look at how balanced your life looks and feels. What sort of shape is your Wellbeing Wheel in?

Your wellbeing is reflected in the balance you're achieving across all areas of your life.

Difficulties and stressors in one domain can bleed into, and influence, others.

Reflect on a time when one life domain was bearing a lot of the strain.

- Did it impact other domains, or could you contain it?
- How much energy did that take – and at what cost?



So, is your **Wellbeing Wheel** balanced or out of kilter? If it was a wheel on your bike, how would you be travelling?

Write your thoughts on how your Wellbeing Wheel is travelling.

What is your strongest domain? _____

What contributes to that strength? List at least 5 factors.

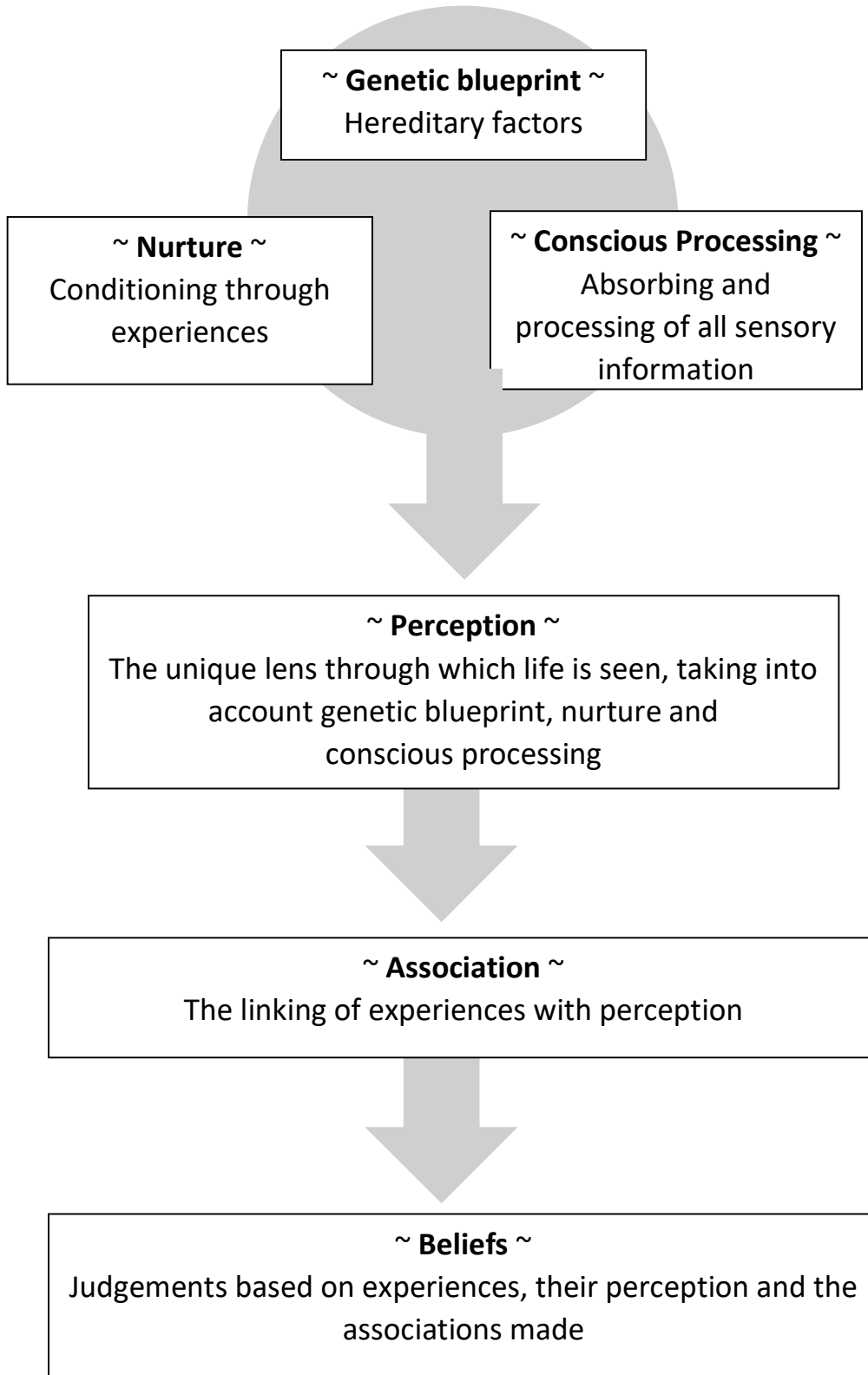
What is your weakest domain? _____

What is contributing to that deficit? Reflect on the skills, attitudes and resources present in your domain of strength, but absent in the weakest.

What's one action you could take today to increase - by one point - the weakest domain?

Belief Systems and you

You are an expression of your genetic blueprint, together with the many experiences you've had and the unique ways in which you have perceived them. There is no one in the world quite like you. Here's why:



It is our unique set of genetic factors, life experiences and ways of experiencing those that gives us our perception of life – from moment to moment.

Reflect on these factors and how they contribute to how you see and experience the world around you:

- Who were you raised by? One or two parents? How have they contributed to your physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health belief systems? Are their beliefs that you had as a child that no longer sit well, or that you have disproven through life’s experiences?
- Which ‘significant others’ have contributed to your thinking about yourself, about your potential, your value?
- How have they contributed – in mostly positive ways or mostly negative ways? Everyone has significant people in life who build them up, give them wings or who pull them down and disassemble their sense of self. Who are yours?
- What is your attention drawn to repeatedly in your interactions? How people look, sound, present? Their trustworthiness, their integrity, their colour, shape or gender? A combination of everything you have experienced and how you’ve made meaning of that is part of how you see life – and an important part of your wellbeing.

Square watermelons – grown in square containers right from the start, that form their shape at maturity. Like square watermelon’s you’ve taken on some – or maybe all – of the ‘shape of the container’ in which you were raised.

It’s an interesting concept. Take a moment to reflect on areas of your life where you feel that you have been ‘contained.’ Feelings are usually very good indicators – like frustration, resentment, discontent, yearning – of not feeling like you and your purpose have been successfully united. It has a significant impact on wellbeing to ignore or to squash down these emotional indicators.

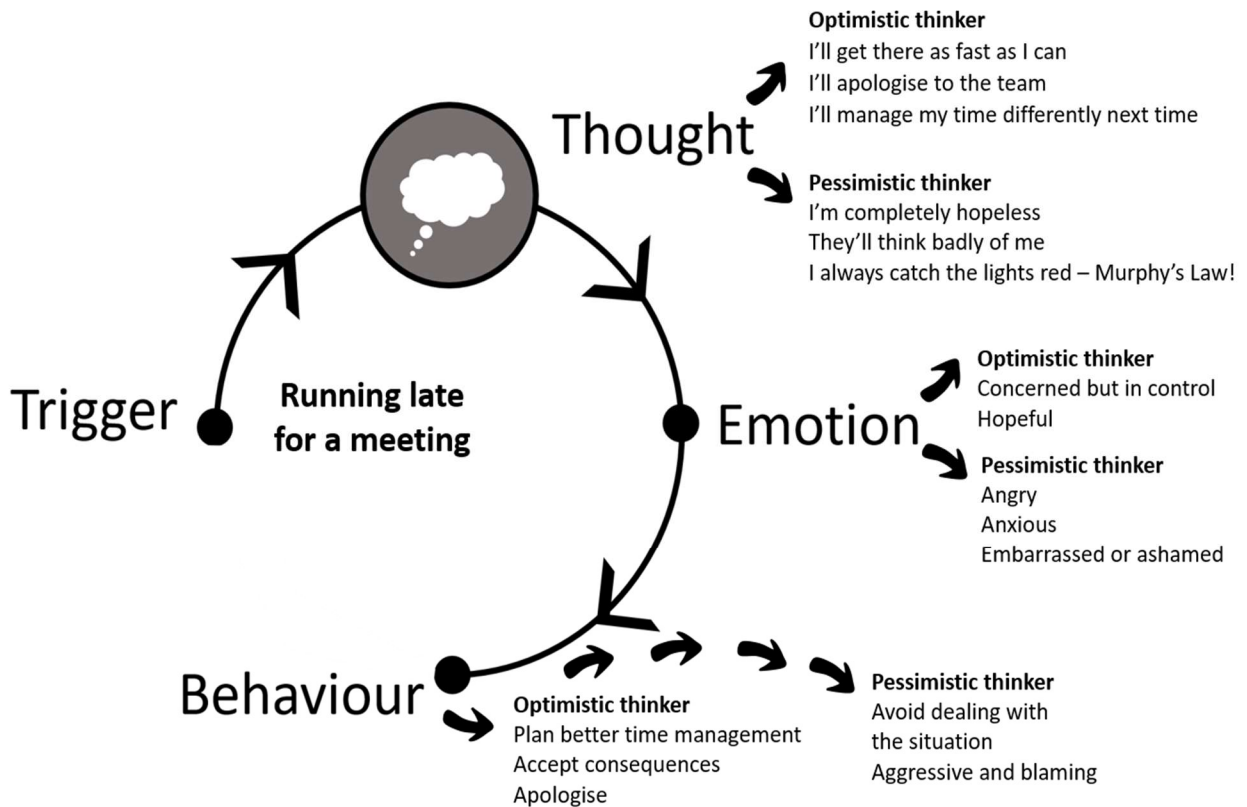
Thinking Styles; Optimism and Pessimism

Let's broadly classify thinking patterns into: '**Optimistic**': those that are positive and helpful, and '**Pessimistic**': negative and unhelpful. Which represents your predominant thinking style?

Mostly optimistic

Mostly pessimistic

Here's an example of both styles illustrating the differences:



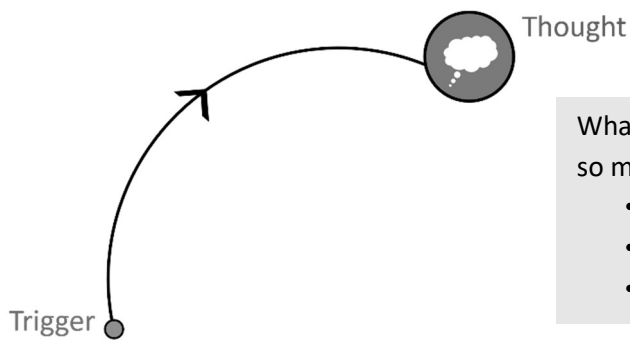
Thinking is not either/or, that is, positive or negative, because **different triggers stimulate various thinking patterns - all with varying emotional responses**. Record below the triggers that stimulate your positive (eg. exercise) and negative (eg. time stress) thinking patterns:

POSITIVE THINKING TRIGGERS:

NEGATIVE THINKING TRIGGERS:

1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Thinking ruts – what are yours?



What are the thinking ruts that you have run down so many times that they're etched into your brain?

- Automatic
- Immediate
- Self-fulfilling

Negative thinking universally occurs for everyone, because our brain is wired up to protect us from danger, meaning we have an on-standby, ready- to-go, danger-detector'. Rate your thinking style on this scale:

Black and white thinking: characterised by words such as, 'should', 'must', 'have to', 'can't,' 'always' and 'never', e.g., 'I'm always the one to stay after school to pack away.'



Catastrophising: predicting that an event or circumstance will be the worst possible – and therefore, that the outcome will be catastrophic. 'Presenting to the team will be a nightmare. I'll look nervous, stumble on my words, forget what to say and they'll think I'm an idiot'.



Low frustration-tolerance thinking: characterised by unhelpful thoughts such as, 'It's never fair!'; 'I can't deal with this!' or, 'Nobody in the world could deal with this!'



Self-condemning thinking – characterised by thoughts such as, 'I'm useless' or, 'I'm hopeless at this' or, 'I'm such a failure'. This can also be used in referencing others.



Term 1 – Whole-of-Staff Wellbeing

GETTING TO KNOW YOU FUN FACTS

Using the template below, copy enough for each staff member to complete one fun fact. Display in the staffroom – unseen by parents and students probably works better - especially if the Fun Facts are... fun 😊

Activity overview: Encourage all staff members to think of a fun, humorous, unusual or outrageous fact, quality or experience they've had that nobody knows. Once displayed the 'Who is it?' guessing begins, individuals writing their guess underneath each one, a progressive tally recorded if required.

Name a date when the game will finish with members identifying theirs at a meeting or when staff are together. A prize can be awarded to 'Best Guesser'.

Here's a fun fact about me...



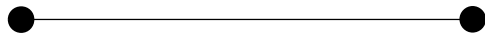
Who am I?

Here's a fun fact about me...



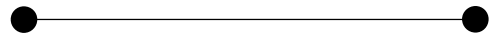
Who am I?

Here's a fun fact about me...



Who am I?

Here's a fun fact about me...



Who am I?

Here's a fun fact about me...



Who am I?

Here's a fun fact about me...



Who am I?

Here's a fun fact about me...



Who am I?

Here's a fun fact about me...



Who am I?

Term 2 – Whole-of-Staff Wellbeing

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS TO LIFT YOU UP

An affirmation is a positive statement about ourselves or our circumstances. They're powerful prompts to look for the good, tolerate the frustrations and to be grateful. The more frequently we say them the easier they are to think – and that's how we can shape – and change - our minds.

Even on the most difficult of days, with the most challenging of students, a positive and helpful thought can change feelings and behaviours.

Activity overview: create an area of the staffroom that's inviting and allows browsing through the cards. Provide a bundle of blank 'Inspiring words to lift you up' templates and pens to encourage personal favourite examples to be completed and left for others.

*I am changing the world –
one little life at a time.*

*Today I get to make a
difference that will last
forever.*

*Today I focus on my 'why'
in teaching.*

*Every day I share the
greatest gift – the gift of
learning.*

The work I do matters.

*I motivate, inspire and
empower the children in my
care.*

*I am open to guidance,
insights and inspiration
from others.*

*What I give today is shaping
an adult of tomorrow.*

*I treat myself and my
students with compassion
and respect.*

*I am strong. I can do this.
I believe in myself.*

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Inspiring words to lift you up

Term 3 – Whole-of-Staff Wellbeing

MAGNIFICENT MINDFUL MOMENTS

Being mindful is about being present in that moment – with curiosity, wonder, quiet observation, joy or gratitude. Tuning into your senses is a powerful way to be fully present.

Activity overview: you'll need a BIG bowl of Smarties or M&M's (money in your wellbeing budget for that?) and a copy of the following sign. Ask each staff member to take five Smarties / M&M's when leaving the staffroom and whilst eating each one, to tune into a different sense. For anyone who avoids sweets, a bowl of sultanas is an alternative.

1. What can I feel?
2. What can I hear?
3. What can I smell?
4. What can I taste?
5. What can I see?

Suggest that everyone has a Magnificent Mindful Moment at least once a day for a week or two – and notice how repeated practise impacts their thoughts and feelings.

Enjoy a
**MAGNIFICENT
MINDFUL MOMENT**

with 5 (no more!)

**MAGICAL MIND
SMARTIES**

and with each one focus on
what you can...

hear

feel

see

taste

smell

Term 4 – Whole-of-Staff Wellbeing

GRATITUDE CHALLENGE

Actively practising gratitude has been proven to bring significant physical and mental health benefits. Have a look around Google, where you'll find a tonne of research on this. In this challenge, helping your colleagues to tune into what they're grateful for creates mindful moments that can impact their overall happiness and wellbeing.

Activity overview: Set aside a visible space in the staffroom to create a display with the following Gratitude Alphabet. The challenge is for staff to add to the display, writing what they're grateful for that starts with one of the alphabet letters. Three different examples are required for each letter and all need completion before the challenge is finished. Creative thinking is needed!

A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	

H	
I	
J	
K	
L	
M	
N	

O	
P	
Q	
R	
S	
T	
U	

V	
W	
X	
Y	
Z	

Term 1 - Between Staff Wellbeing

I APPRECIATE THE WAY YOU...

Let's make an effort to notice, with gratitude and appreciation, the hard work, cheerful attitudes, helpfulness, integrity, mentoring, skills and abilities of our colleagues.

Beside the pigeonholes you will find some warm fuzzy notes. Please take a moment and write a brief note of gratitude for someone on our staff and post it in their pigeonhole anonymously. It's nice to be - and to feel -appreciated. The good news is that you can send more than one note, so go crazy and write a bunch!

Remember all staff and their valuable contribution when you take the time to send a warm fuzzy, full of your appreciation and gratitude.

<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>
<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>
<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>
<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>
<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>	<i>I appreciate the way you...</i>

Term 2 - Between Staff Wellbeing

LET ME MAKE YOU A CUPPA...

Go on, put your feet up and tell me just how you like your cuppa. Tea, coffee – it doesn't matter the brew – it only matters that I get to make it for you while you sit a moment and rest.

Choose someone to make a cuppa for, taking the time to present it in their cup and at a time that they can be still and enjoy your kindness.

And when they're done, it's their turn to take up the 'Cuppa baton' and pass the kindness on to someone of their choice. Let's make sure that we pay it forward until everyone has had a cuppa made for them.



Term 3 - Between Staff Wellbeing

DESK NINJAS

The challenge is on. Every member of our awesome staff is charged with the difficult challenge of being a Desk Ninja. It's as exciting as it sounds! Desk Ninjas stealthily place a flower from our school grounds on the desk of a colleague. Your students can be involved in the dastardly desk deception. They can distract while you make the move or even sneak in without being seen to do the deposit for you.

Or, you can Ninja your own way towards your colleague's desk or work space and leave it yourself. If you're spotted, you must start again. The challenge is to slip in and away without being seen while making your colleague's day.

Who is the master-Ninja in our ranks? Let's find out.

Term 4 – Between Staff Wellbeing

SECRET SANTA FROM THE OP-SHOP

They say that one man's trash is another man's treasure, and this is the year we put that theory to the test. You'll find the name of one of your colleagues in your pigeonhole – and they're the focus of your festive season attentions.

The challenge is to find your allocated colleague a precious gift to the value of no more than \$5 in your local charity shop. Perhaps a sparkly treasure, a lonely teacup, a dusty tome, or a jaunty cap will catch your eye and make its way into the treasured possessions of your colleague.

We will have a collective unveiling of the chosen gifts at a time to be notified as no one will want to miss the collective sighs of deep appreciation, the howls of delight and the tears of joy these treasures will bring.

Take your time. Look around and choose just the right gift for your grateful (or horrified) recipient.

Term 1-4 – Staff Wellbeing Events

WORKING ON OUR WELLBEING – TERM 1

Join us in the staffroom for morning tea – it's a healthy one this time. What's your favourite, go-to, healthy snack? We'd like you to bring along a little plate of healthy wellbeing to share. And yes, if it's carrot cake with sprinkles on top – we still consider it healthy – one serve of vegetables in every piece.

When: _____

WORKING ON OUR WELLBEING – TERM 2

It's Wellbeing Morning Tea and we'd like you to bring along a plate of something delicious that starts with 'P': pikelets, pineapple, prosecco... maybe not for morning tea but we can dream!

What will you bring to positively pamper our people?

When: _____

WORKING ON OUR WELLBEING – TERM 3

This is the Wellbeing Morning Tea where most of us can sit back and be tempted to break our (usual) strict diet with a magnificent feast provided by our leadership team.

A not to be missed event – just on the 'Principal' of it!

When: _____

WORKING ON OUR WELLBEING – TERM 4

Join us for our last Wellbeing Morning Tea of the year. The challenge is on! As we move into the festive season, let's all bring a plate to share - red items only. You can leave the tinsel at home - but please come with something festively scrumptious and we will see a sea of red.

When: _____