



nebosh

Working with Wellbeing

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Contents

Introduction		04
Element 1	Foundations of wellbeing	05
	- What is 'wellbeing'?	05
	- Why does wellbeing matter?	08
Element 2	The branches of wellbeing	14
	- Interaction	16
	- Exercise	18
	- Mindfulness	20
	- Nutrition	22
	- Kindness	24
	- Learning	26
Element 3	Interventions in the workplace	32
	- Planning interventions	32
	- Measuring the effectiveness of interventions	42



Introduction

Wellbeing is important to us all; our everyday work and private lives place demands upon us that can impact on our levels of wellbeing. Investing in good wellbeing at work not only helps us as individuals but can also provide many benefits for the organisations we work for, such as increased productivity, reduced staff turnover and less absenteeism.

This workbook looks at what ‘wellbeing’ is in practice and the different factors which can influence this in both positive and negative ways. The benefits of good worker wellbeing are discussed, along with the many practical ways in which this can be improved.

You can be confident that this workbook will help you make a difference. The content is based on recognised research and includes activities and case studies to help you apply tried and tested interventions to transform wellbeing at work.

The content follows the syllabus for NEBOSH’s *Working with Wellbeing* qualification and can be used as part of your studies. Even if you are not studying *Working with Wellbeing*, this book is an invaluable reference source and practical guide for those looking to improve levels of wellbeing in the workplace.

Element 1

Foundations of wellbeing

What is 'wellbeing'?

There is no one agreed definition of wellbeing; there are in fact many definitions. Some terms are used interchangeably, for example 'mental wellbeing' and wellness. Some definitions refer to wellbeing as relating

to mental and physical health whereas others describe wellbeing in a much broader sense to include life satisfaction or quality of life.

Activity | In one sentence, what do you think 'wellbeing' means in practice?

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

New Economics Foundation (British think-tank that promotes social, economic and environmental justice).¹

Wellbeing is "the state of being healthy, happy, or prosperous; physical, psychological, or moral welfare"

Oxford English Dictionary
(published by Oxford University).²

"Well-being is a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life"

ESRC Research Group
(Economic and Social Research Council).³



"Mental wellbeing describes your mental state – how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life"

MIND (United Kingdom mental health charity).⁴

"Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well and comprises an individual's experience of their life; and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values"

Department of Health and Social Care, UK Government.⁵



The overview on the previous page shows that wellbeing can be difficult to define, as it is affected by diverse interconnected factors. A good working definition is *“the balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenges faced”*.⁶ This means that a person’s

wellbeing is affected by the resources available to them when dealing with life’s challenges. Resources and challenges may be physical, psychological, or social.⁶

The following diagram illustrates this concept:

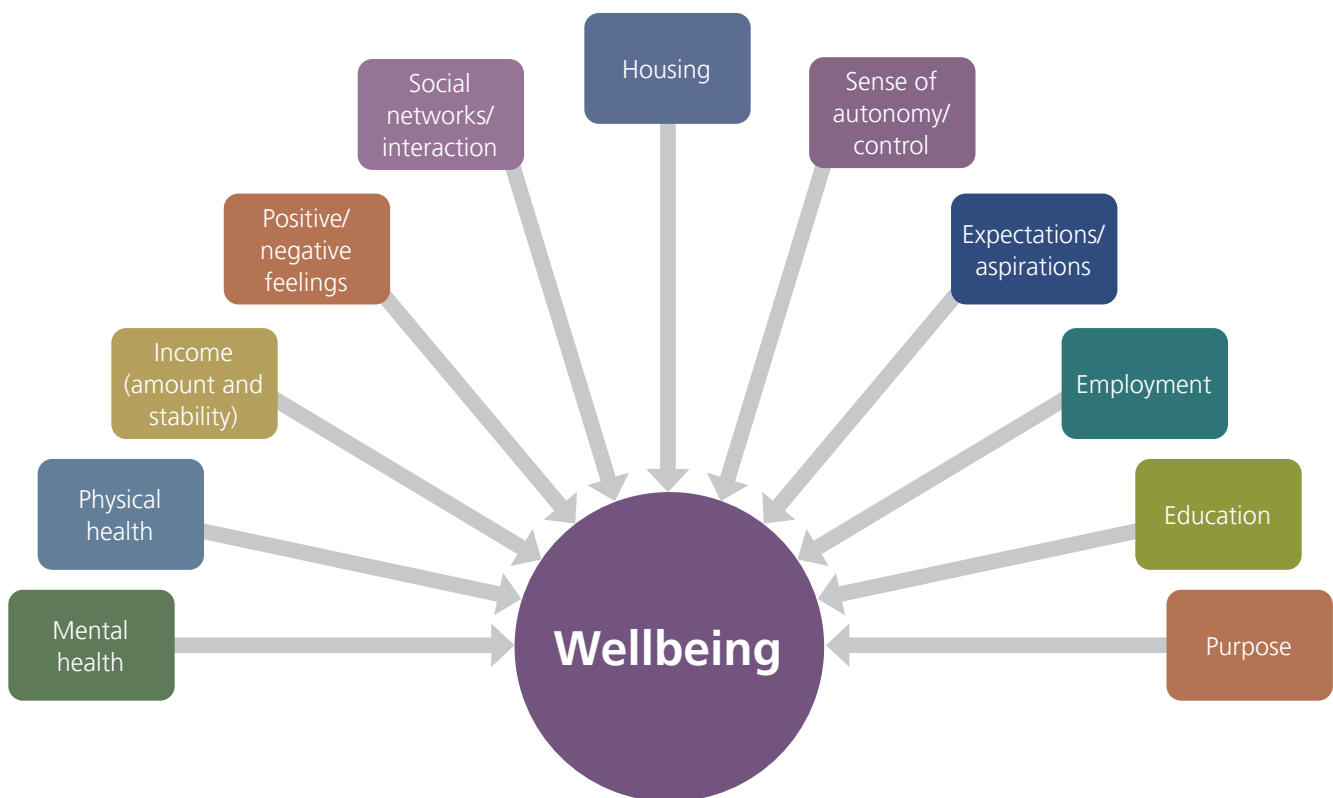


This means when a person does not have sufficient resources available to meet the challenges in their life, their wellbeing suffers (the scales become unbalanced).

Our physical and mental health, social relationships, work, education, housing, financial position, expectations, and aspirations all impact on our wellbeing (see the following 'Factors that affect wellbeing' diagram).^{1,3} These factors, or drivers, could all be considered challenges or resources depending on our

individual situation, for example, lack of/poor housing would be a challenge whereas comfortable housing could be considered a resource.

Personal wellbeing is affected by the complex interaction of many different factors, some of which we can change ourselves and others which we cannot; but **the way we think and the actions we take** can have the biggest effect on our wellbeing.⁷



Factors that affect wellbeing

Why does wellbeing matter?

Activity | What do you think would be the effects of good worker wellbeing, and poor worker wellbeing on both individual workers and the organisation?

	Good worker wellbeing	Poor worker wellbeing
Effects on the individual:		
Effects on the organisation:		

Social expectations and organisational reputation

Managing and promoting workers’ wellbeing should be important to organisations as there is an expectation from society to look after and support their workforce. This is a core part of the social commitments that have become known as ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ (CSR).

Supporting worker wellbeing can greatly improve the reputation of an organisation in the following ways:

- It may give them a competitive edge over others who do not have the same level of commitment to CSR.
- It could make the organisation more attractive when recruiting workers.
- It could encourage the existing workforce to stay with the organisation; people are less likely to remain with an organisation that is seen to have no regard for their wellbeing.

“Growing international pressure from leading edge employers to drive wellness as part of corporate social responsibility strategies may encourage businesses to start treating wellness as an integral component of their business model”

PricewaterhouseCoopers⁸



We hope you have enjoyed reading this extract of Working with Wellbeing, which follows the syllabus and is the recommended course book for the NEBOSH Working with Wellbeing qualification. If you complete this course, our Learning Partner may therefore provide a copy of this book to support your learning.

More information about the qualification, is available at www.nebosh.org.uk/workingwithwellbeing

To purchase the course book directly, please visit <https://portal.nebosh.org.uk/Shop/>

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