

Health, wellbeing and the mental aspect

Health and wellbeing is a very broad term related to every different aspect of your life that leads you to be more healthy or unhealthy. A definition I have found that resonates totally with me and my idea of what health and wellbeing is, and that is the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO states, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Their definition is based on Aaron Antonovsky's definition and his salutogenic river model. I believe his model puts it into perspective how many things can influence your health and wellbeing, and also shows everyone is on a completely different path through life. You have upstream, downstream, obstacles, calm, murky, and vicious waters. All these examples from the river translate over into all our lives and health like age, environment, gender, genetics and so much more. My definition of health and wellbeing branching off WHO and Antonovsky is health and wellbeing is a term describing how all your factors working together are affecting your physical, mental, social, and beyond in your day-to-day life and long term. Health and wellbeing should have a high priority throughout society, especially in younger generations because how else will they learn the importance? I believe schools do a good enough job at practicing health and wellbeing through a whole school approach. I will be speaking about some of these themes in my blog today. I will discuss organizations, interpersonal, and intrapersonal with some ideas from each that add to the overall whole school approach on health and wellbeing. It is all a chain if the schools administration takes health and wellbeing seriously then it will reflect positively on the staff working for them then down positively on to the students.

Wellbeing of teachers and staff in schools

I will first be discussing the wellbeing of the staff and teachers in our schools. I believe their wellbeing needs to be a priority because the staff and teachers have a huge impact on the students and their health and wellbeing. Teaching can be especially stressed and tiresome at times; it is important they have a support system and are being looked out for.

I read a paper by Joanne Dixon and in her article "Teacher Mental Health and Wellbeing: What, Why and How" Dixon observes the mental health and wellbeing of teachers in a primary school in Australia, and she describes her findings as being concerning as teachers stress levels rose and teacher shortages were increasing. Throughout this article, she gave her definitions of wellbeing and mental health. She also gave lots of examples of how to measure mental health so then the school as a whole could do something to help those teachers. She then found some solutions to this burnout which included "an awareness and effective management of emotions; social, relationships with students, colleagues and the community" Dixon, pg.180 looking over these ideas I came up with some specific examples such as having workshops or sessions where teachers get to express frustration and talk about their feelings with either coworkers or a counselors. Another example that could help with teachers' mental wellness is as an administration make time for teachers and staff to incorporate mindful exercises such as a walk,

yoga, small workout into their school day to let them decompress mid-day. There should be stronger policies around teachers' mental wellbeing as they are essential roles of each community and should be kept happy and healthy as they teach our future generations.

Positives of having counselors in our schools

Counselors in schools play a necessary role in fighting against bullying, handling negative situations between students as well as being the therapist for any student or staff member. The role of the school counselor is a very important one that holds the school together and benefits everyone mentally. I read the case study “The School Counselors Role in Supporting Teachers Working with Children who Have Experienced Trauma: Lessons Learned” by Kristi L Perryman, Timothy TJ , Hailey Thomas Frost. In this study, it was based around children with adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and how the counselors will work with the teachers to provide the best teaching practice and styles for these students. By reading this article, it has given yet another example of roles the school counselor may have to take on as the mental health professional in the school.

The other article I read was “Summary of what counselors do in high achieving schools” by Trey Fitch, and Jennifer Marshall. They went in to examine how counselors contribute to the schools' overall successes. Fitch and Marshall found that their role was balanced between whole student development and academics, which both positively affects these students' mental health.

There are many policies set in place for school counselors including confidentiality, crisis intervention, and many more. Dealing with therapy and students speaking about their emotions can be very confidential but at a point you may have to report it.

School counselors play a major role in the whole school's approach to mental health because of the roles they fill.

Parent-child relationships

I am now going to dive into the interpersonal relationships students have with their parents and how that may affect their mental and social development. I read a piece of academic literature “Associations Between Parent–Teacher Cocaring Relationships, Parent–Child Relationships, and Young Children’s Social Emotional Development” by Sarah N. Lang, Leny Jeon, Sarah J. Schoppe-Sullivan. In this piece they looked at 90 families who all used the same daycare, they had the parents fill out questionnaires about the relationship with said child and their personal lives. Some key things I learned from this study about how the relationship between parent and child affects the students social and mental development were that cocaring relationships between parents and children especially toddlers lead to positive social and emotional

development. Which further down the line will lead to better mental health by having a supporting parent by your side.

Another article I read regarding parent-child relationships regarding mental health was “A study of the relationship between parents’ educational behavior and children’s psychological development based on linear regression models” by Xuan Yao, Jing Li the results from their linear relationship back me up with this quote “The results show that good and bad parenting behavior affects children’s mental health” pg.1 Yao, Li.

Parent-child relationships can be very complicated, but the better they are hopefully the better both parties' mental stability will be.

Teacher- student relationships

I spoke about parent-child relationships. I am now going to look at student-teacher relationships. I read the article “Effects of the teacher-student relationship on the learning and achievement motivation of high-tracking school students in adolescence” by Fabian Schimmelpfennig. Throughout his article, he explains that positive teacher student relationships (TSR) were linked to higher levels of effort and drive. Teachers had no significant effect on motivation, though. It seems motivation is up to each child, not the teacher, to instill in them. Especially during the stage of adolescence when school environments might not align with students' developmental needs.

Next, I will be speaking about homeroom teachers and the importance of them and their relationships with their homeroom students. In my high school, each homeroom became very close to their teacher and the other students in their class. It was a very tight knit group, and everyone felt involved and included in this space in the morning and mid-day break. I read the article “Middle School Homeroom Teachers: Role Perception, Challenges, and Professional Training” which mostly spoke about what the middle school homeroom teacher and what they their roles were which gives us a nice background into roles of the teach and how that could affect their students. Ovid and Rachiel explain that homeroom teachers’ role involved balancing teaching with supporting and mentoring their students. Three things many children need an extra hand with that can all be covered by one teacher seems to be a very good solution.

Pupil voice and involvement

Students' autonomy is very important in schools because it gives these children a sense of control and empowerment that they might not have anywhere else. It is necessary to give students options and choices throughout school. I read through a scholarly article called “Summary of

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing at a Whole School Level: Listening to and Acting upon Children's Views (Hall, 2010)" by Sarah Hall. Throughout this piece, they spoke about how the school listened to the pupils' voices, then made positive changes based on what the pupils were telling them. This idea sounds like it would help every side being the pupils, the staff and the administration.

Bullying

Bullying is a horrible problem throughout schools all over the world. Bullying takes a toll on these students mentally, socially, and emotionally. On the topic of bullying I read "Effects of bullying on the mental health of adolescents" by Uswah Bokhari¹, Uswah Shoaib², Farhat Ijaz³, Rana Khurram Aftab⁴, Musarrat Ijaz⁵. Through this article they looked at the relation between bullying and wellbeing, and it is completely interlinked they found traditional bullying is linked to depression, low self-esteem and reduced happiness. Anti-bullying campaigns are popping up all over the world and are very needed. Along with these campaigns, having positive school environments and support systems can mitigate the negative mental effects on these victims.

In conclusion, health and wellbeing are affected by many different factors and are not just about being free from illness. Using the WHO definition and Antonovsky's river model, it shows that our experiences, relationships, and environments are all factors in shaping our wellbeing. In schools, a whole-school approach shows how everyone is connected, from administration to teachers down to the students. When teachers and staff are supported, this has a positive impact on students. School counsellors also play a very important role in supporting mental health, managing problems, and difficult situations. Strong relationships with parents and teachers, giving students a voice, and creating safe environments all help students feel supported and valued. Addressing bullying is especially important in protecting students' mental health. Overall, schools play a key role in shaping how young people understand and look after their mental health and wellbeing.

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