Staff Resilience and Wellbeing

Dr Steve Dexter
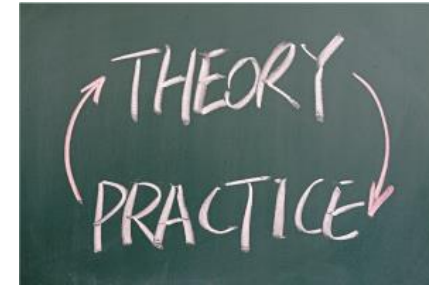
(Educational Psychologist, Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service)

Wellbeing for Education Return

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Introduction

1) Psychology, schools and the pandemic

2) Practical ideas for enhancing wellbeing

3) Questions to aid planning and reflections

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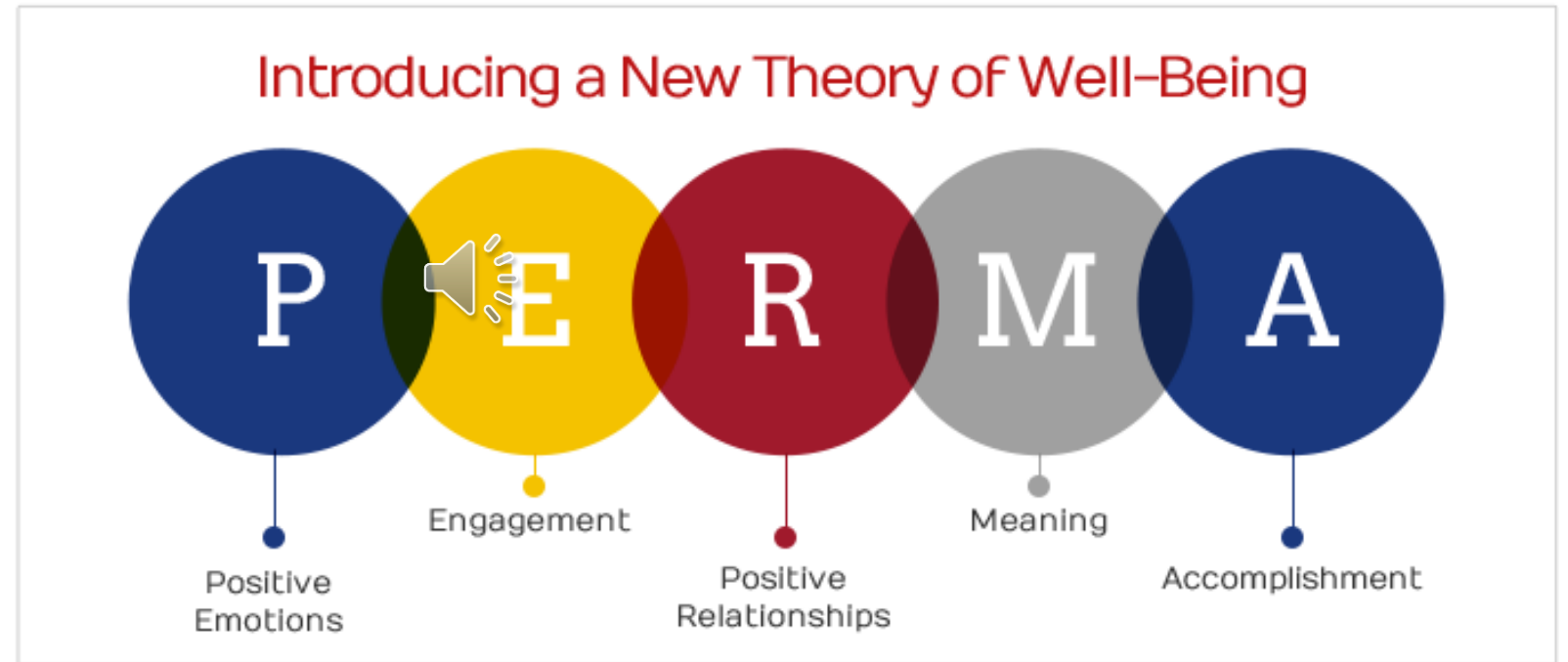
Psychology and the Pandemic

- Adaptation
- Uncertainty and our thoughts
- Monotony and opportunity
- Low mood, motivation and celebrating the small wins

Smith and Barrett (2020)

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Positive Psychology and Wellbeing

Seligman's (2011) PERMA Model

Introducing a New Theory of Well-Being

PERMA

P — Positive Emotions
E — Engagement
R — Positive Relationships
M — Meaning
A — Accomplishment

Positive Psychology and Wellbeing

"The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times…The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile."
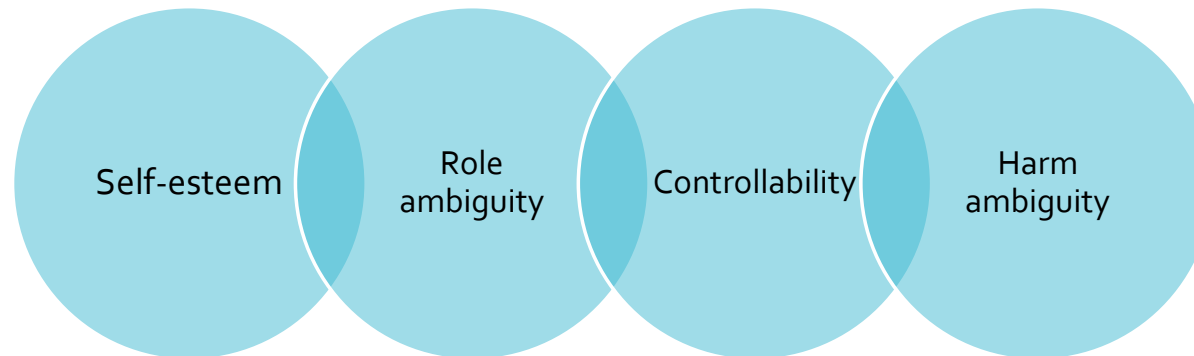
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990)

FLOW

Psychology and Stress

Primary and Secondary Appraisals (Lazarus, 1999; 1991)

Self-esteem

Role ambiguity

Controllability

Harm ambiguity

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Psychology and Stress

Optimistic and Pessimistic Explanatory Styles

	Optimist	**Pessimist**
Positive Experiences	Stable Global Internal Control	Unstable Specific External Control
Negative Experiences	Unstable Specific External Control	Stable Global Internal Control

Weiner (1972); Kelley (1972); Heider (1958)

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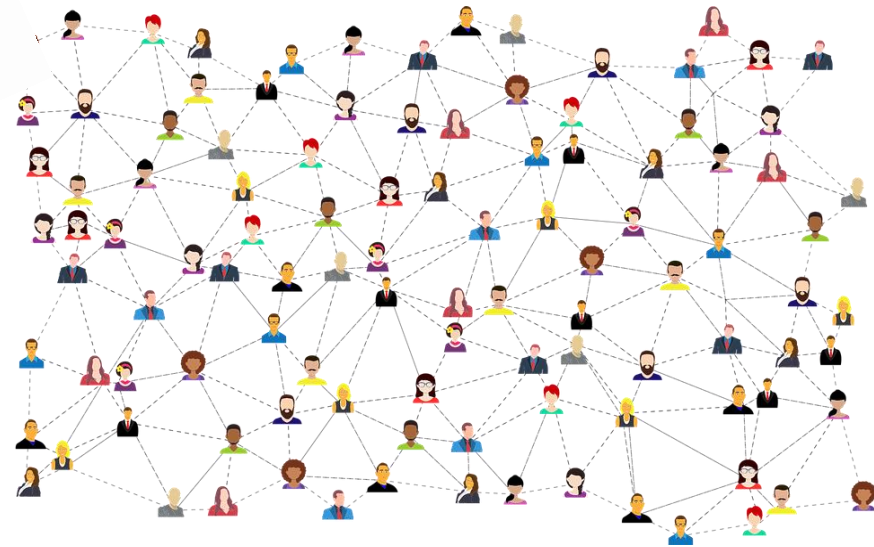
Raising Resilience and Wellbeing

Resilience is not simply an individual trait but something that arises through interactions between people within a particular context.

Day et al. (2011)

Mental Health

TABOO

Duffield (2019) found that resilience and well-being can be positively impacted by individuals seeking *and* providing help to colleagues

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Raising Resilience and Wellbeing

Prioritising tasks

Distinction between work and leisure time

Exercise

Hobbies

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Questions to Aid Planning and Reflections

Adaptation and celebrating the small wins

- What has worked well during lockdown? Can this be applied to the school's long-term approach to teaching, collaboration, fostering wellbeing or relationship building?

Clarity and accomplishment

- Have the school's goals and values been discussed with staff during the lockdown and recovery periods?
- How will the effectiveness of the school, the staff and progress of pupils be measured? (progress beyond attainment)
- What are the school's achievements which can be sensitively communicated to staff?

Stress management

- Do staff have the opportunity to discuss and find solutions to address work-related stressors?
- Are there mechanisms in place to request support or alert school leaders when there are concerns regarding a colleague's wellbeing?
- What opportunities are in place for staff to share their concerns? In meetings? With peers? At the individual level? Is the *virtual* door open to key staff?

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Questions to Aid Planning and Reflections

Social support and connecting

- How can staff continue to connect and support one another? (time, space)
- How is well-being defined within school? Is the well-being of staff reviewed within school?
- Are staff aware that they can discuss their own well-being? Consider the historical school culture for long-term staff.
- Have school staff been asked how they can be supported further?
- What opportunities are in place for teaching staff to foster relationships with pupils?

Self-care

- Is there a designated space within school, to recover and recuperate?
- Are self-care strategies openly discussed within school?
- Are there opportunities for staff to discuss how to achieve greater work-life balance?

Control, autonomy and empowerment

- How can staff's sense of control be enhanced?
- Do staff have an opportunity to share their our own ideas? and then take these agreed ideas forward?

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