

Making Wellbeing Work

If wellbeing is to be prioritised and 'work' in schools it needs to be part of a culture of care. Every member of the school (setting) community has a part to play.

Head and SLT	School Staff	Students & Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate that wellbeing is central to values of the school community • Ensure all policies and 'systems' reflect this value • A culture of care may endorse appropriate taking of responsibility but it is not a blame culture. • Ensure wellbeing agenda is part of every communication, letters, statements, posters, letters, email postscripts as well as through meetings and in as many 'interactions' as possible. • Lead by example take care of yourself as 	<p>Teaching staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing is a matter of personal responsibility - there's a few tips here https://attunededucation.com/2020/07/15/10-tips-to-maintain-your-mental-wellbeing/ • Work out what you need to do to stay well - plan in those activities that keep you well • Some supportive accountability might help - share your wellbeing plans with a colleague or friend • Being aware of your own 'state' and emotions helps you to tune into the emotions of others. • Notice colleagues and students - ask how they are • Anticipate those who may need support (for example those with other stresses going on such as family illness) • Ask what you can do to help • Be prepared to share what you do to stay well • Doing something if you notice someone is beginning to struggle is almost always better than doing nothing 	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat the message that wellbeing of all is a priority • Teach explicitly about stress regulation, how brains respond to perceived 'threat' • A few ideas here- http://attunededucation.com/2020/07/30/reflections-on-regulation/ • Make sure students have a chance to say what causes stress/worry etc for them and what will help them - it's about collaboration • Encourage students to look out for each other by having champions or ambassadors, how this works will be different for each setting. • Make sure each student knows who to go to if they need help and what to do if they think someone else needs help • Prevent stress/anxiety from causing problems by checking in with student as they arrive and at appropriate points in the day • Create situations that reduce stress - ensure each student experiences some success rather than anxiety over work they haven't done.

Head/SLT - be honest about how you care for your own wellbeing

- Develop ways to take temperature (emotional) of staff and students.
- Offer a range of supportive strategies that staff can use to support own wellbeing
- Ensure everyone know what they can do if they are struggling or think a colleague needs support
- Try to have an open door - staff wellbeing is a priority (yours included) if you can't then another leader could
- Find out what stresses staff and reduce the stress

"A physician once said 'The best medicine for humans is love', someone asked 'what if it doesn't work?' he smiled and said 'increase the dose'."
Kandace McCra

- Be particularly aware of support staff - they can often feel very isolated

"Children learn how to regulate their emotions through 'co-regulation'. The better we can soothe them when agitated, or support them when they are low, the better they 'absorb' how to do this for themselves."

Dr Stuart Shanker

Non-teaching & support staff

- Prioritise your own wellbeing activities
- Discuss wellbeing with students
- Teach students you work with or support about regulation, stress, anxiety.
- Make sure they know how (and who) to ask for help
- Ask what helps them feel safe (or what causes them stress) and what you can do to help

"It's important to reframe children's behaviour in terms of the stress that may be driving it"

Dr Stuart Shanker

"Everyone just wants to be heard. Validate them. I hear you. What you say matters to me." - Oprah Winfrey

Parents

- Many may be isolated, may not have had a good experience of school themselves, may feel worried that they haven't been a good parent, got through enough work etc
- School could be the sum total of their support
- Many schools have reported increased positive contact with parents - capitalise on this
- Use every communication opportunity to promote message that wellbeing (their wellbeing as apparent is central to the values of the setting)
- Avoid confrontations by ensuring staff understand signs of anxiety/stress and even ACEs, trauma and attachment needs in parents.
- Value and reassure them - they may not be doing a great job but criticism is rarely a motivator for change.

"The wellbeing of parents is inseparable from the wellbeing of children."

Dr Stuart Shanker

