



# Wellbeing

## WHAT DOES WELLBEING ACTUALLY MEAN?

Wellbeing is a widely used term and can therefore be misleading or misunderstood. It is not just the absence of illness or disease, but it refers to how you feel about yourself and your quality of life. Our wellbeing is a complex combination of our physical, mental, emotional and social health factors – including having good mental health, general life satisfaction and a sense of meaning or purpose.

## HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR WELLBEING?

A framework developed by Royal Melbourne Hospital and Northwestern Mental Health Service provides a useful overview of the key components of wellbeing. By understanding the factors that impact our wellbeing, we are able to consider where our attention and focus is best spent.

**Connect** – We are biologically wired to develop social connections, but it is important to consider the quality of our relationships, not just the quantity. Don't underestimate the importance of humour and shared laughter in strengthening these connections. Build relationships with your friends, colleagues and family that are supportive, encouraging and meaningful – share your frustrations, concerns and highlights! Our sense of belonging is so crucial to our wellbeing.

**Be Active** – Physical activity has been linked with many theories and models to build our wellbeing, resilience, positive outlook and lower our rates of anxiety and depression. Physical activity while surrounded by nature and the outdoors has an even bigger impact on our wellbeing, particularly if we can spend up to two hours over the course of the week outside.

**Keep Learning** – This is not about formal learning but more about challenging ourselves to do something in a different

way to what we've done before. To do this – we need to be curious, take on different responsibilities at work and look at situations in a different way. By saying 'yes' more often, we can break ourselves out of our usual routines. Look for ways to surprise ourselves, increase our confidence by tackling new tasks, set ourselves goals to achieve things that we have never done before.

**Help Others** – Behaving with a positive intent and acting with kindness and compassion has a significant impact on our wellbeing and mental health. Doing things for other people, being altruistic helps to provide us with a sense of meaning and purpose and takes our minds off our own issues. It doesn't have to be anything big but smiling, saying thank you and other forms of public appreciation are important.

**Be Aware** – Take the time to appreciate the small things and tune into changes in your mood and emotions. Practice techniques to help you keep calm, reduce stress, think clearly and cope better with difficult situations. Whilst some reflection is important, we tend to have better wellbeing if we focus on the future rather than the past. Be grateful for the positive things in your life – this will activate dopamine in your brain, which creates positive emotions and makes us feel good.

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

*These questions are designed to prompt team discussion and interaction following the podcast:*

- How would you describe your wellbeing at the moment?
- Have you noticed a difference in your wellbeing in the last 6-12 months?
- Of the elements mentioned in the podcast and in this document, what are some actions you could take that would have an impact on your wellbeing?