



## The Healthy Minds Program University Colleges Australia Forum

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### Take Away Messages

- Wellbeing is more important than trying to feel happy 24/7, which is not normal. Learning to regulate 'negative' emotions well is more important than trying to feel good all the time.
- There are 3 key processes in covering mental health:
  1. Removing a negative state (treatment)
  2. Adding a positive state (wellbeing enhancement)
  3. Preventing the onset of the negative state (preventive psychology)
- Preventive psychology is not sexy, but is important.
- True happiness is about resilience and wellbeing, in addition to regular positive mood states.
- Resilience is shaped, scaffolded and activated through learning and experience.
- Resilience:
  - Is about coming under stress and not getting stuck in a state of psychological disorder
  - Is having distress tolerance skills
  - Is about being able to cope effectively with 'negative' emotion
  - Is about building competence & confidence through an expanding comfort zone
  - Comes naturally when our personal wellbeing is high
- The #1 indicator of a resilient character is not about always being happy, or always appearing calm, but instead is a *willingness to engage with challenges*.
- There can be no resilience without the opportunity to be resilient.
  - Resilience-building is inhibited by the Great Mistake – prioritising short-term emotional states over longer-term learning and development.

- The phenomenon of ‘overparenting’ – Parents should only assist their kids to the degree that is appropriate to their developmental level.
- Use pre-emptive, graded exposure - Young people can expand their comfort zone and build confidence reliably if prompted and coached to consistently go just one step outside their comfort zone, and by not avoiding or escaping when they feel uncomfortable.

### The psychological concepts in the Healthy Minds Program

Challenge unhelpful perfectionism – look for the benefits in engaging with challenges, mistakes and failures.

Introduce cognitive skills – understand where feelings come from.

Learn about emotions – what’s their purpose? How can we manage feelings well?

The Helpful Thinking Process – the sophisticated skills of emotion management and making good decisions.

Understand Stress – stress is neither inherently good nor bad, it is about having the right amount at the right time.

Gratitude – what you focus on, you amplify in your awareness.

Self-Compassion – how do you treat yourself? Self-compassion is much more important than self-esteem.

Overall, we must:

1. Provide a framework for thinking about wellbeing.
2. Link wellbeing and performance.
3. Explicitly teach psychological skills.
4. Translate skills into wellbeing behaviours (such as through the 30-Day Wellbeing Challenge).

