

Exploring Practices of Well-Being in Educational Settings

Michael Savage, Ph.D., C.Psych

Vera Woloshyn, Ph.D., RP

Well-Being

- A dynamic state that reflects the interplay between individuals' current psychological, social, cultural, and physical status, capacities, skills and resources and the specific challenges they face at any one time (Dodge et al., 2012; Manwell et al., 2015).
- “An interconnected, fluid and evolving approach for living life” (Anderson, 2019, p.3)

Four Critical Concepts Related to Well-Being (Anderson, 2019)

- Well-Being is multidimensional
 - Encompasses physical, psychological and emotional wellness
- Well-Being is reflective of the intersections between the interdependent dimensions
- Well-Being is positive-oriented
 - Is more than the absence of negative factors
- Well-Being is growth-oriented
 - Represents continuous advancement and improvement

Our Research In This Area

- We have examined the well-being of educators and students across multiple settings
 - Elementary/secondary level
 - Examined teachers' well-being and coping strategies in both Ontario and Newfoundland
 - Faculty members in universities
 - Examined university faculty members' experiences of well-being and their experiences supporting graduate student well-being
 - Looked at faculty members in both Canada and Croatia

Our Research In This Area

- We also have conducted research on the following:
 - Undergraduate/concurrent education students
 - Have examined the mental health and well-being literacy of undergraduate students after taking a course on mental health and wellness
 - Have analyzed narratives pertaining to experiences with mental health challenges of undergraduate students
 - Graduate and undergraduate international students
 - Have investigated the responses of both graduate and undergraduate international students to their participation in a well-being course
 - Graduate students
 - Have investigated the well-being of graduate students in Canadian and Croatian universities and their perceptions of being supported by faculty members

Educator Well-Being

- Growing recognition that institutions of learning are stressful places and being an educator or a student is stressful
- Educators report stressors related to increasing instructional workloads, administrative duties, student and administrator expectations, work-life imbalances and negative interactions with others
- Students report stressors related to often demanding and inconsistent workloads, work-life imbalances, sense of isolation, financial concerns and uncertain futures

Consequences of Stressors

- Feelings of intense worry, low mood, disturbed sleep, and diminished self-care practices are common (Evans et al., 2018)
- Stressors contribute to increased experiences of stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and an overall sense of poor well-being
 - This is true for educators and students and often leads to negative outcomes for both groups

Coping with Stress

- How educators and students cope with the stress in their lives is the primary factor in maintaining a sense of well-being
- Coping strategies are generally categorized into three broad categories (Eisenberg et al., 2012):
 - Problem-Focused Strategies – active coping, instrumental support, planning
 - Emotion-Focused Strategies – acceptance, emotional support, humour, positive reframing, religion/spirituality
 - Maladaptive or Avoidant Strategies – behavioural disengagement, denial, self-distraction, self-blaming, substance use, venting

Coping with Stress

- Educators and students use both emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies to at least some extent
- Preliminary evidence seems to indicate that well-being in educators is negatively impacted by the use of maladaptive coping strategies, regardless of whether or not problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies were also used frequently
 - Using Self-Distraction, Self-Blame and Substance Use to cope, even if it is not very frequently, correlates with higher levels of stress and poorer well-being

Implications

- Since coping strategies can be explicitly taught and practiced it may be beneficial to:
 - Have professional development opportunities for educators at all levels where they learn about coping strategies, are taught how to use more adaptive forms of coping strategies and are able to practice the use of those strategies experientially in a safe environment
 - Provide courses or workshops to students at all levels that accomplish the same thing as the professional development opportunities for educators

References

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Links to Some of Our Work

- [Woloshyn, V., Savage, M.J., Kaefer, T., Martinovic, D., & Ratkovic, S. \(2021\). Support, mentorship and well-being in Canadian and Croatian Faculties of Education: Professor and Student Perspectives. *Journal of Education and Development*, 5\(1\), 82-101.](#)
- [Woloshyn, V., Savage, M.J., Ratkovic, S., Hands, C., & Martinovic, D. \(2019\). Exploring professors' experiences supporting graduate student well-being in Ontario faculties of education. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*.](#)
- [Woloshyn, V., & Savage, M.J. \(2018\). Sharing narratives to foster mental health literacy in teacher candidates. *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 9\(2\).](#)

Thank You!

Do you have any questions?