

An Introduction to Wellbeing

Part A

Joanne Smithson

Local Government & Health Sector Lead





The UK's National Body for Wellbeing
Evidence, Policy & Practice

An independent collaborative
organisation set up to develop and
share robust, accessible and useful
evidence about wellbeing



This session will cover:

1. What do we mean by wellbeing?
2. What matters for wellbeing?
3. Measuring wellbeing impact

The purpose of all areas of policy and of actions in civil society is to improve lives. The question to ask is: does it improve people's lives and how do we know?

Wellbeing
evidence at
the heart
of policy

Deborah Hardoon with
Nancy Hey & Silvia Brunetti
February 2020



1. Introducing wellbeing

What images do you get
when you Google
wellbeing?



Wellbeing has an image problem, people think its fluffy – it's not



Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.



5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

CONNECT

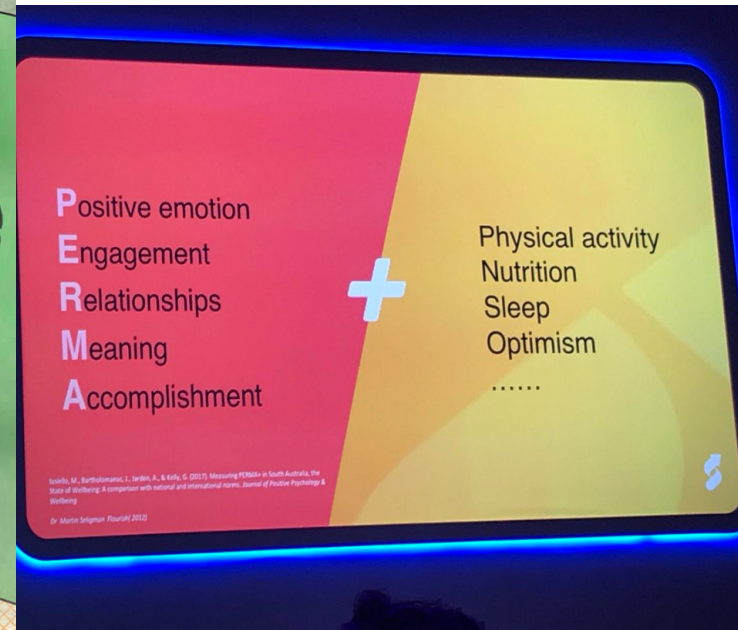
BE ACTIVE

TAKE
NOTICE

KEEP
LEARNING

GIVE

sketchplanations



GREAT DREAM

Ten keys to happier living

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| GIVING | Do things for others |
| RELATING | Connect with people |
| EXERCISING | Take care of your body |
| APPRECIATING | Notice the world around |
| TRYING OUT | Keep learning new things |
| DIRECTION | Have goals to look forward to |
| RESILIENCE | Find ways to bounce back |
| EMOTION | Take a positive approach |
| ACCEPTANCE | Be comfortable with who you are |
| MEANING | Be part of something bigger |

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

www.actionforhappiness.org

people
Ways to well-being:
Connect

The Children's Society

Talk with family.
See friends.
Share.

Ways to well-being:
Be active

The Children's Society

Walk. Cycle.
Run around.
Keep well.

Ways to well-being:
Take notice

The Children's Society

Look around you.
Listen. Rest.
Be.

Ways to well-being:
Be creative
and play

The Children's Society

Draw, paint, act.
Play more.
Dream.

Ways to well-being:
Keep
learning

The Children's Society

Read for fun.
Teach yourself.
Grow.

Wellbeing is personal and subjective

- It's about how we feel ourselves and how we experience life as a whole.
- It's quality of life, good physical and mental health, relationships, and being part of our communities.
- It's about how external/ environmental conditions affect our lives and how we function in society.

It's different for different people.



Wellbeing is...

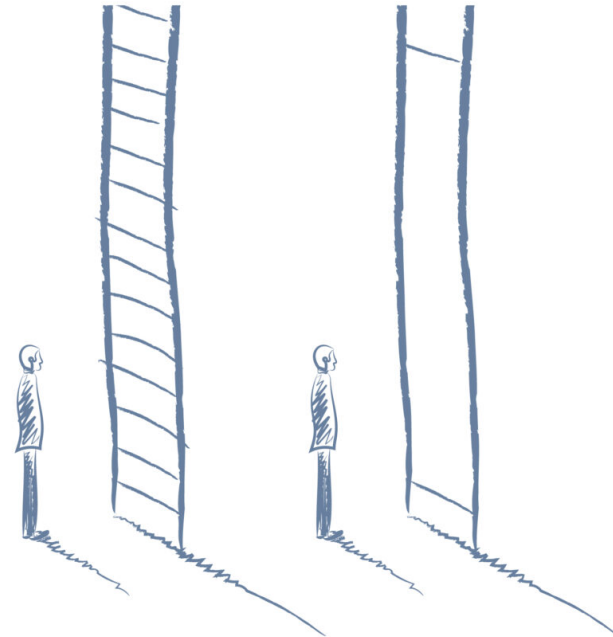
Simply put, it's about 'how we're doing' as individuals, communities and as a nation, and how sustainable that is for the future. It is sometimes referred to as social welfare or social value.



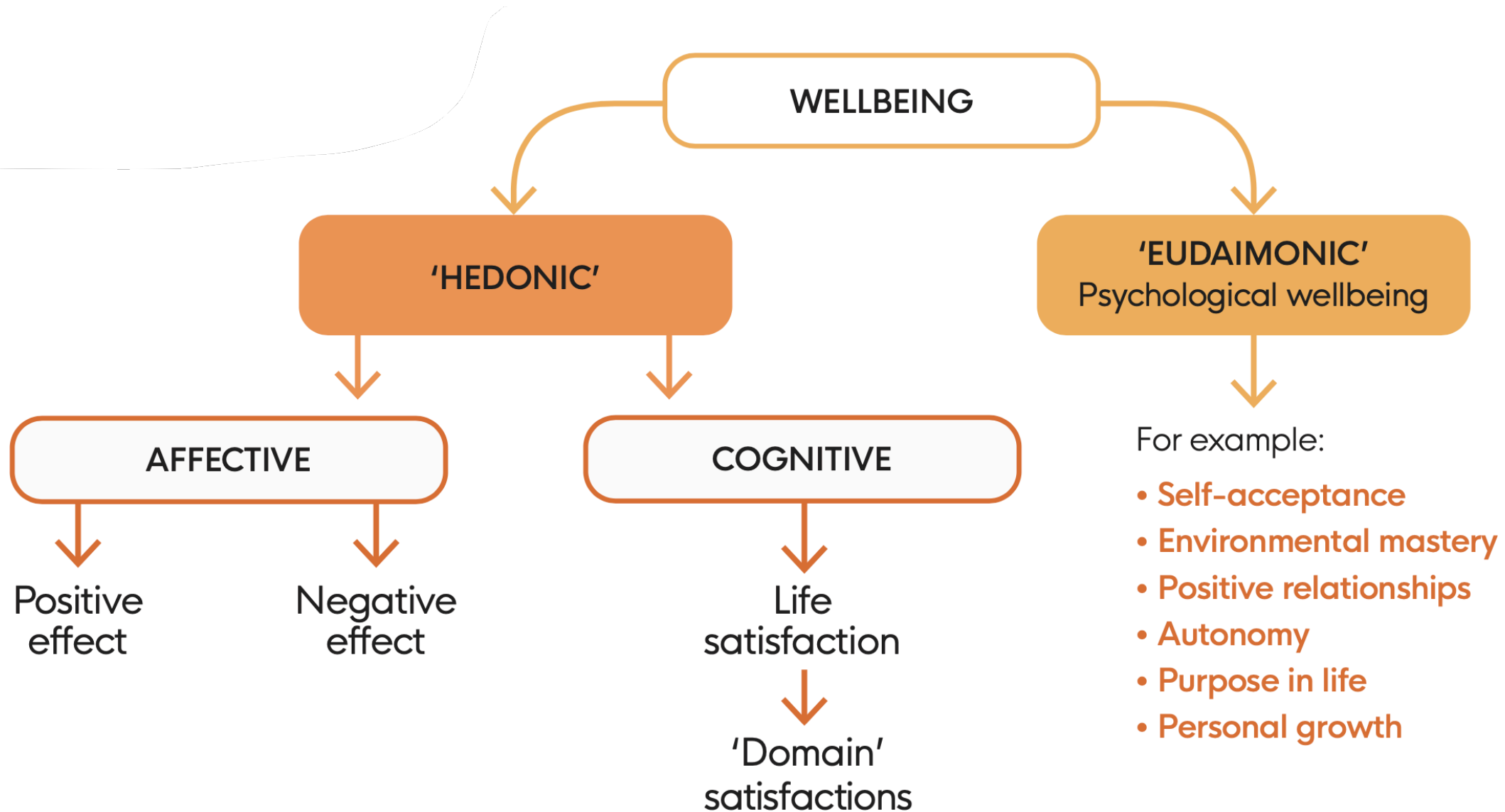
**Wellbeing inequality
can be understood as
the extent to which
peoples' experiences
of life vary within a
population, or between
different groups.**

Measuring Wellbeing Inequality in Britain (2017),
What Works Centre for Wellbeing

whatworkswellbeing.org
@WhatWorksWB



Components of self-reported wellbeing



Wellbeing, data and evidence

- Very easy to get caught up in philosophical debates about what wellbeing means and the varying views on how best it should be measured.....
- ...but ultimately wellbeing is about people
- Fundamental to this is asking people how they feel and taking that into account



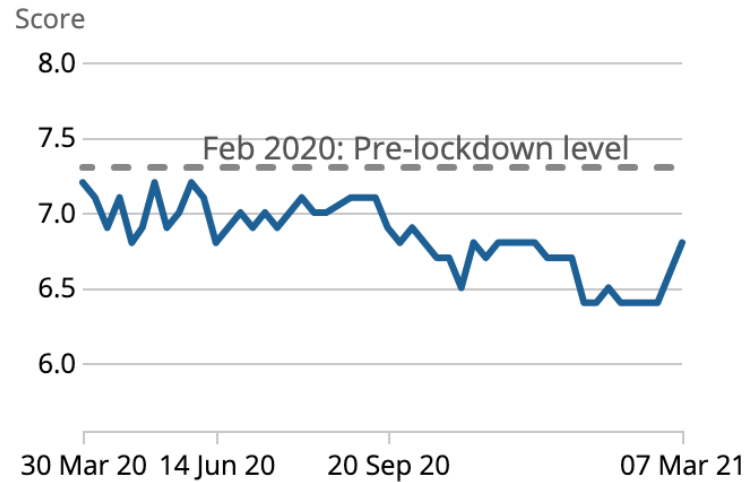
So, how are we doing?

Our latest data from 7th March 21 shows all four personal wellbeing measures continue to improve, slightly...

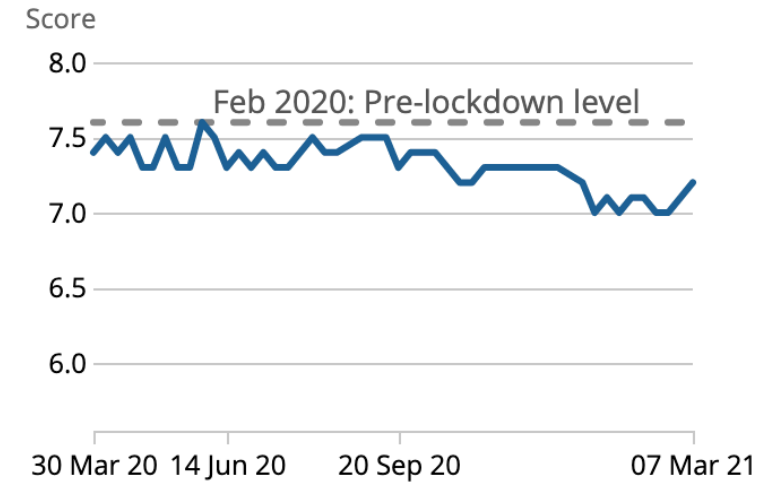
... having been at some of the lowest levels recorded at the beginning of February 21...

but we are still a long way from pre-pandemic levels

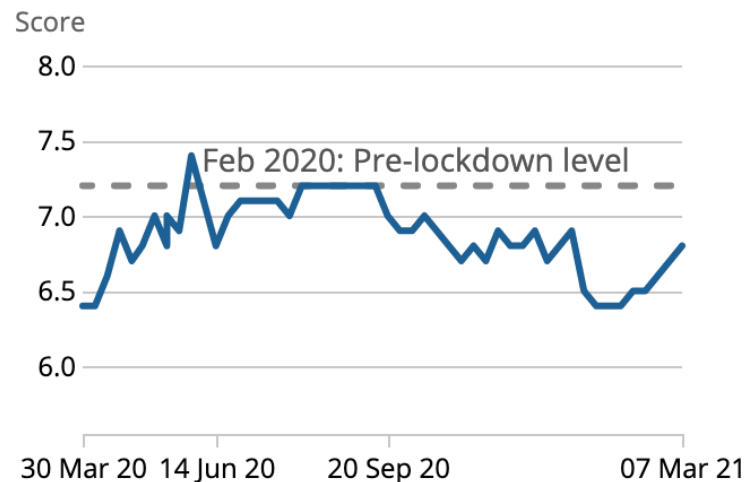
Overall, how **satisfied** are you with your life nowadays?



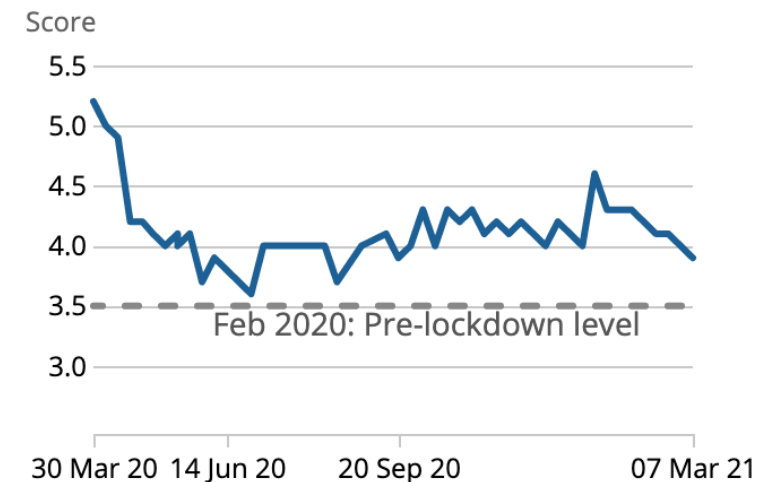
Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are **worthwhile**?



Overall, how **happy** did you feel yesterday?



Overall, how **anxious** did you feel yesterday?



Public Health Profiles

“Self-reported wellbeing”



Search for indicators



Data view

Overview



Geography

Regions in England



Indicator search

Results for: self reported wellbeing

Show me the profiles these indicators are from

Compared with England

Better 95%

Similar

Worse 95%

Not compared

* a note is attached to the value, hover over to see more details

Display

Values

Trends

Values & Trends



Export table as image

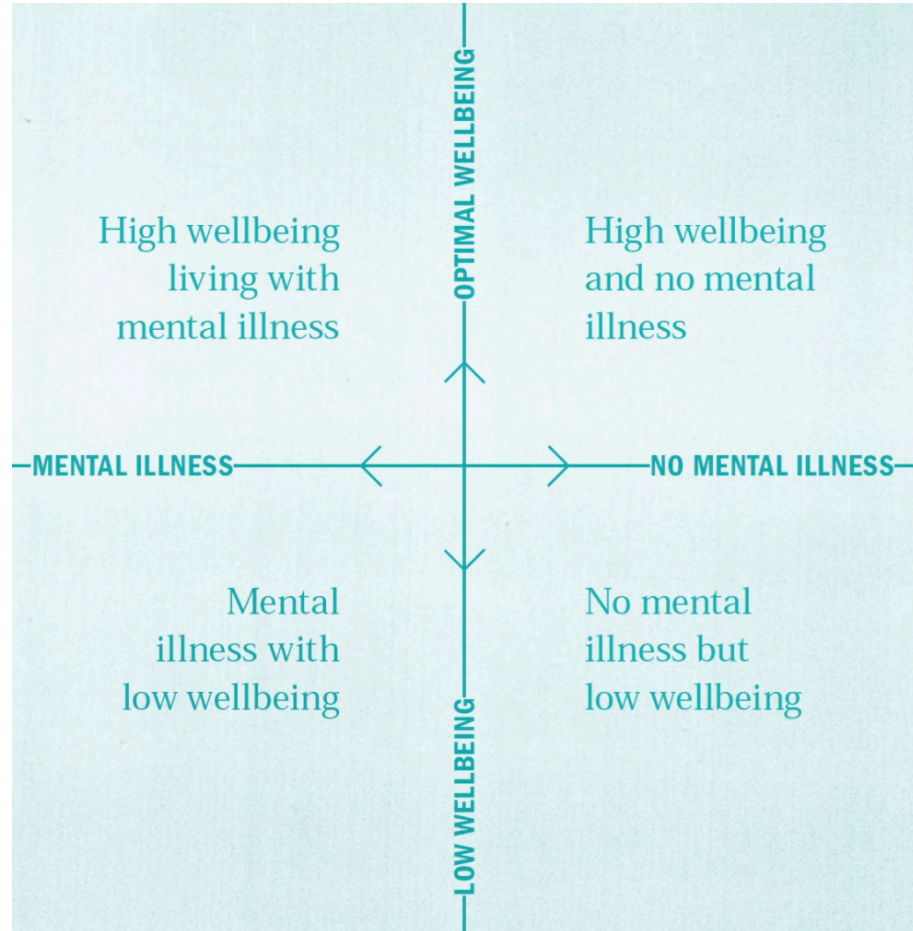


Export table as CSV file

Indicator	Period	England	East Midlands region	East of England region	London region	North East region	North West region	South East region	South West region	West Midlands region	Yorkshire and the Humber region
Self-reported wellbeing - people with a low satisfaction score	2019/20	4.7	4.3	4.1	4.8	6.2	5.3	4.3	4.4	4.8	4.9
Self-reported wellbeing - people with a low worthwhile score	2019/20	3.8	3.6	3.3	3.7	5.5	4.1	3.2	3.8	4.2	4.3
Self-reported wellbeing - people with a low happiness score	2019/20	8.7	9.0	8.0	8.5	10.6	9.4	7.9	8.1	8.8	9.8
Self-reported wellbeing - people with a high anxiety score	2019/20	21.9	22.2	22.4	22.4	23.6	21.8	22.0	21.1	20.6	22.1



Mental Health and Wellbeing



Mental health and wellbeing: dual continuum

Mental health refers to a spectrum of experience, from good mental health to mental illness and distress.

Wellbeing includes wider physical, social and economic experience.



Wellbeing is not the opposite of mental illness

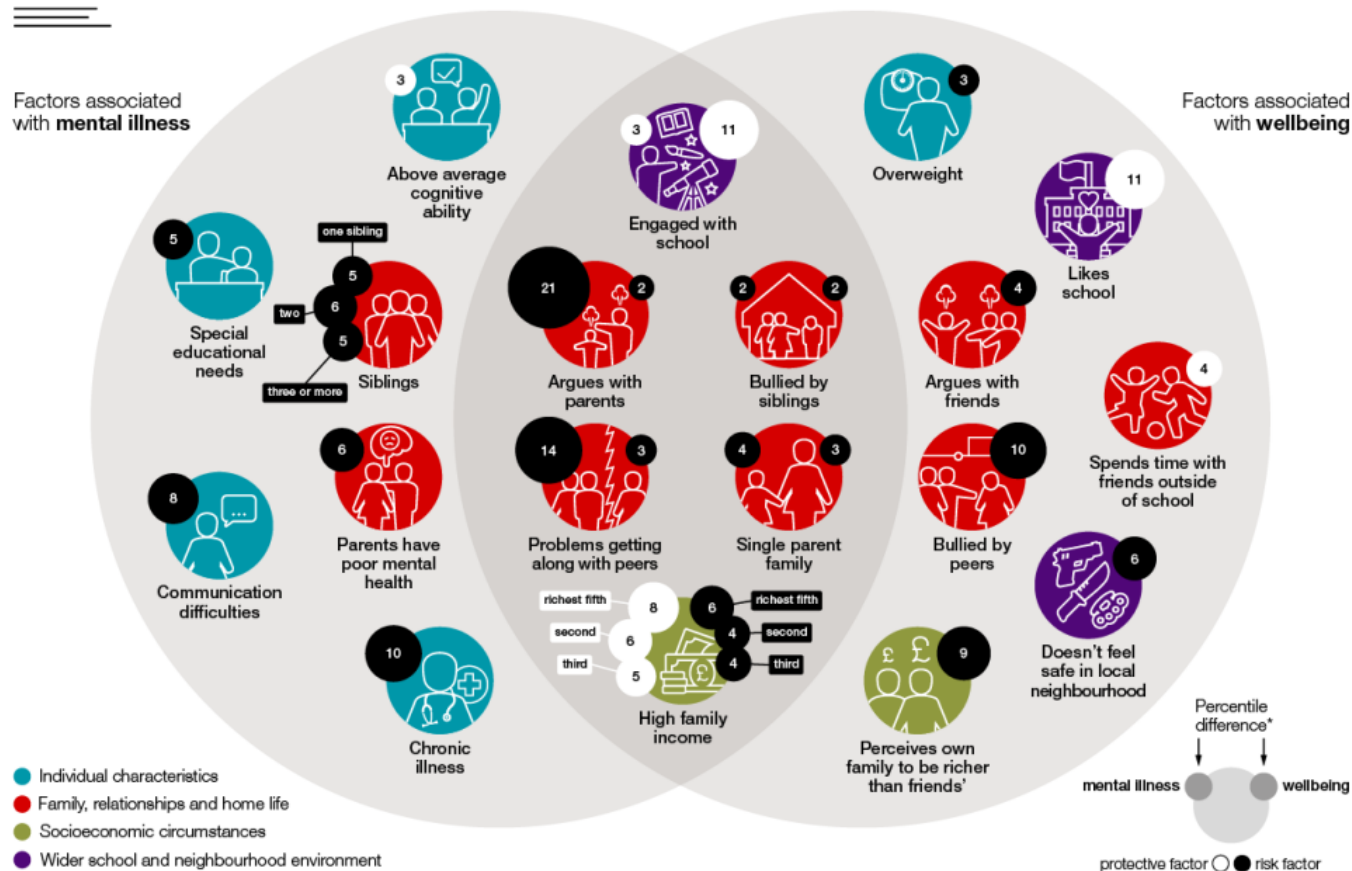
CENTRE FOR
LONGITUDINAL
STUDIES

Children's mental illness and wellbeing at age 11

Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study

Factors associated
with **mental illness**

Factors associated
with **wellbeing**



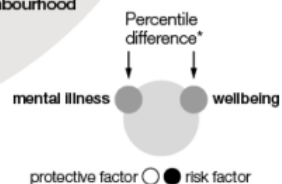
Hosted by



Funded by



All factors included in the infographic are statistically significant at (at least) the 5% level. • Findings from Patalay, P. and Fitzsimons, E. (2016) Correlates of mental illness and wellbeing in children: are they the same? *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 55(9), pp. 771-783.



Percentile difference is the change in rank position between 1 and 100 away from the median or reference category.



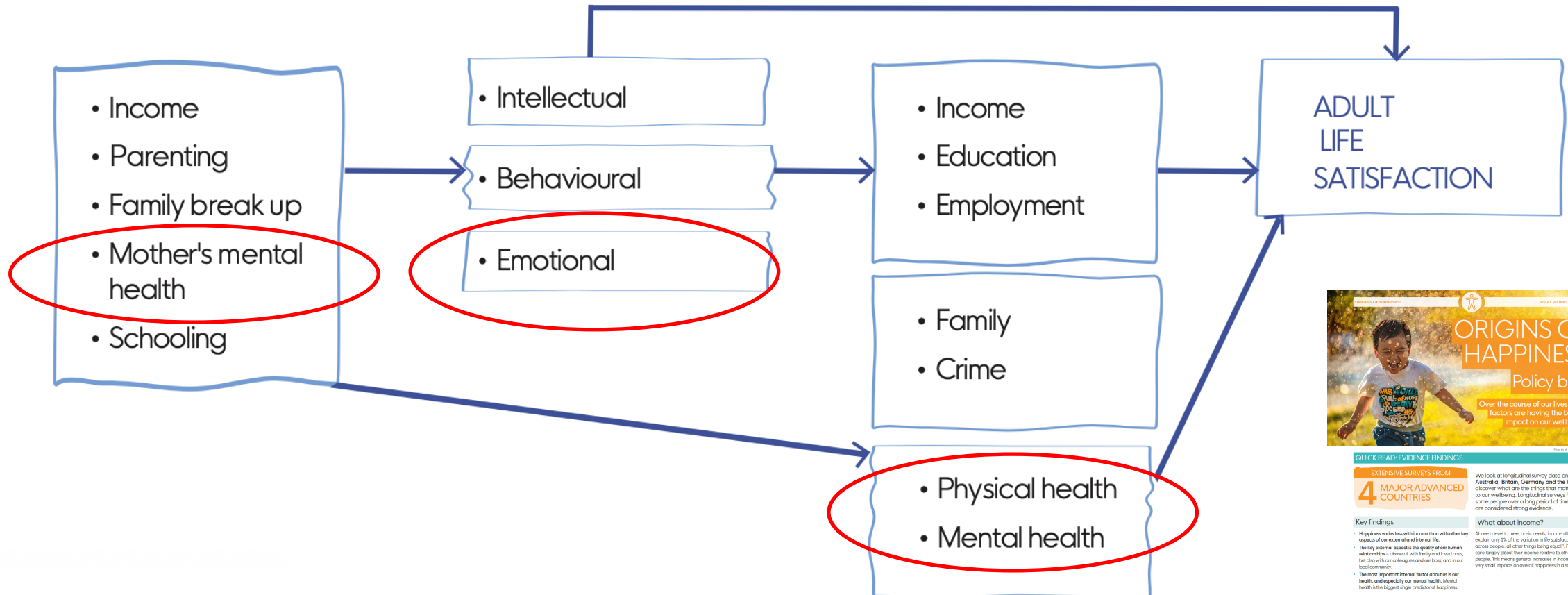
Origins of Happiness – importance of emotional health

Family and schooling

Child outcomes

Adult outcomes

Adult life satisfaction



QUICK READ: EVIDENCE FINDINGS

EXTENSIVE SURVEYS FROM
4 MAJOR ADVANCED COUNTRIES

Key findings

- Happiness varies less with income than with other key aspects of our external and internal life.
- The key external aspect is the quality of our human relationships – above all with family and loved ones, but also with our colleagues and our boss, and in our local community.
- The most important internal factor about us is our health, and especially our mental health. Mental health is the biggest single predictor of happiness.

What about income?

Above a level to meet basic needs, income differences explain only 1% of the variation in life satisfaction across people, at other things being equal. People care largely about their income relative to other people. This means general increases in income have very small impacts on overall happiness in a society.

Figure 1: Determinants of adult life satisfaction

