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THE WELLNESS OF A SCOUT LEADER





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ADULTS IN SCOUTING
November 2020

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This is in reference to a webinar offered by the World Scout Academy on 18 July 2020 facilitated by Peter Blatch, Mori Chen and Máire Fitzgerald.

The wellness of all members in Scouting is critical. This is especially the case for our adults as sometimes our focus is strongly on the young people in our units, that we forget the importance of all those who are supporting them. The wellbeing of adults is critical in delivering authentic Scouting so that young people can receive the tailored assistance which they require. The Adults in Scouting (AiS) life cycle provides a great framework for supporting the wellbeing of all adult members. In this piece, we explore this framework and how it is complemented by recent developments in the field of positive psychology, namely the PERMA Model (Seligman, 2011). The PERMA Model can be used to frame plans to support the wellbeing of adult and youth members.

This paper uses the AIS lifecycle and considers elements of wellbeing, which can be modelled using PERMA:

- Positive Emotions: experiencing and reflecting on positive experiences and the emotions that accompany them.
- Engagement: deploying skills, strengths, and experiences to complete challenging tasks.
- Positive Relationships – sharing experiences and fun moments with others while working towards a common goal.
- Meaning: belonging to and serving something which is bigger than yourself.
- Accomplishment: experiencing or supporting others to achieve success.

The paper includes suggestions which were collated from the responses of Scouting participants as part of a webinar conducted by the World Scout Academy in July 2020.



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Introduction

On reviewing the programmes of the experimental camp at Brownsea Island in 1907, we can see the emphasis that our founder Baden-Powell placed on keeping well. This is evident through the physical fitness activities, games and instruction provided about growing strong in body, mind and deeds. This wellness theme is continued in many campfire yarns in *Scouting For Boys* (1908), about endurance and keeping personally fit, through to his final message in 1941 about keeping happy and sharing happiness. The area of wellness and looking after oneself and others in 'thought, word and deed' takes on increasing importance this year as we consider the impact of COVID-19.

It is not surprising that wellbeing and the ingredients of a 'good life' have been the focus of discussion and research for millennia (Diener & Suh, 1997). Through the decades, researchers have offered a multitude of alternative approaches to defining and evaluating the quality of human lives, including a focus on individual's reactions to their lives and societies (Diener & Suh, 1997). One current trend in wellbeing research is the focus on a more holistic vision of development (D'Acci, 2011). Although wellbeing is a well-researched and well-defined concept, existing definitions suggest that there is a conceptual overlap between happiness, quality of life, and subjective wellbeing with all three including affective, cognitive, and physical components (Medvedev & Landhuis, 2018). As Adults in Scouting, working with young people, we see these links regularly. We appreciate the impact one young person may have on others in a group and, equally, the impact that a leader can have on a group of young people. Baden-Powell called this 'happifying' and a young person who can 'happify' will make an enormous difference in his/her relationships with others: they will become a happy, healthy citizen which is the real aim of Scouting. Today, we need adults who can encourage 'happifying' and support the wellbeing and development of all young people and other adults.

Wellbeing and the Purpose of Scouting

Such is the extent of the interest in wellbeing, there is a plethora of published definitions. A commonly cited definition from the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines wellbeing as a state "in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (World Health Organisation, 2014). The WHO also notes that wellbeing is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life. This definition of wellbeing and the purpose of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) are intertwined. WOSM's constitution states that "the purpose of the Scout Movement is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities" (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2017).

WOSM Constitution 2017	World Health Organisation, 2014
<i>The purpose of the Scout Movement is to contribute to</i>	<i>Wellbeing is a state in which</i>
the development of young people as individuals,	every individual

<i>in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials</i> as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities	<i>realises his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully</i> and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'.
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Comparing the two alongside each other, we can see that both wellbeing and the purpose of Scouting focus on

- an individual's holistic development,
- the realisation of every individual's potential, and
- the preparing and equipping of every individual so that he/she can overcome challenges, cope with stresses, and work productively and fruitfully,
- in order to create responsible citizens who are capable of contributing to their communities.

The PERMA Model of Wellbeing

There is no one best model of wellbeing, but conceptualisations can help provide concrete domains to frame the abstract construct of wellbeing (Butler & Kern, 2016). One prominent positive psychology model of wellbeing is explained by the acronym PERMA. The theory outlines five measurable elements that lead to human flourishing: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, which are often referred to as PERMA (Seligman, 2011). Each of these elements is clearly important and visible as we perform our Scouting roles. We volunteer for many different reasons but know that we are making a difference to young people in our local communities.

One of the distinctions wellbeing theory makes is that wellbeing is different from life satisfaction in that wellbeing is "a theory of uncoerced choice, and its five elements comprise what free people will choose for their own sake" (Seligman, 2011, p. 22). Unlike our work duties, which most of us are required to do, we choose to volunteer and to work with others in Scouting. While we do this for many different reasons, underpinning this is our personal belief in the purpose of Scouting and our commitment to adding greater meaning to our lives, the lives of others and, on a larger scale, being a small part of a global team committed to working together to create a better world.



PERMA and Adults in Scouting

Given the intricate relationship between wellbeing and the purpose of Scouting, it is worth considering the PERMA model in the context of Scouting. In this case, Adults in Scouting. In order to best understand PERMA, it is important to examine each element separately:

Positive emotion is rooted in the work on 'the pleasant life' and includes subjective measures like happiness and life satisfaction (Seligman, 2011). The lifecycle of adults in Scouting clearly outlines a path to assist each person's experience and reflect on their positive emotions. The training provided and social experiences which naturally occur, enable the adults in Scouting to reflect and share positive Scouting experiences including memorable campfires, the achievement of the young team who learned a skill they've been practicing, or the joy at an opening ceremony of a World Scout Jamboree. From this, adults are motivated to handle present and future challenges and drive them to strive for greater accomplishments, as they share pleasant memories.

Engagement is the second element of the PERMA model, which, like positive emotion, can only be measured subjectively (Seligman, 2011). Engagement occurs when a person fully deploys their skills, strengths, and attention towards a challenging task. For most adults in Scouting, after being trained about Scouting fundamentals, including our Scout Method, the ability to work with young people in a safe, challenging environment and contribute to their development, is a remarkable achievement. Great satisfaction is experienced when one's skills are sufficient for the activity chosen, the activity has a clear goal, and immediate feedback is received. The Adults in Scouting model promotes engagement by ensuring that everyone is properly equipped to succeed in tasks that interest them and ensuring that they are assigned challenges roles. It also ensures that everyone receives continuous feedback to contribute to their own learning journey while helping others.



Positive relationships is considered to be the third element, and is based on the idea and critical role that others are believed to play in positive psychology (Seligman, 2011). Of course, interacting and working with other people is central to Scouting and from an Adults in Scouting perspective, relationships are fundamental to Scout operations and wellbeing. The experiences that contribute to wellbeing are often amplified through our relationships with others. Scouting provides great purpose, highs, laughs, a sense of belonging, and opportunities to be part of an successful team which takes pride in its work. These connections to others are important. Working together on common goals with a shared purpose fosters strong relational blends and are often the basis of lasting friendships. Psychologically we know that supporting others when feeling down can be a reliable way to start feeling good yourself. Doing acts of kindness for others produces an increase in wellbeing and this certainly occurs through the Scout programme.

The fourth element of wellbeing is meaning, the sense of belonging to and serving something which you believe to be bigger than yourself (Seligman, 2011). This is at the core of Scouting in that the sense of purpose is derived from belonging to and serving something bigger than one's self. As an Adult in Scouting, we are part of a Movement of 54 million people in 171 National Scout Organizations all working with a common purpose, to an agreed mission, using a common set of values. That would surely give a sense of meaning to anyone and we are reminded of our shared purpose each time we get our Scout scarf. It is reinforced at large gatherings such as JOTA-JOTI and Scout Jamborees.

The fifth element of wellbeing is Accomplishment, which is based on the assertion that success, winning, and achievement are often pursued for their own sakes (Seligman, 2011). This is possibly the most overlooked component of PERMA from an Adults in Scouting perspective. Most people want to do well at their task. This is certainly the case in Scouting where we make a promise to do our best. The Adults in Scouting lifecycle considers personal accomplishment an important aspect that is considered in annual reflections with peers or leaders. As an Adult in Scouting, part of the Mutual Agreement indicates the importance of having the skills required to perform a certain duty, with training and support available as required. Often when we think of the accomplishments of Adults in Scouting, we focus on the

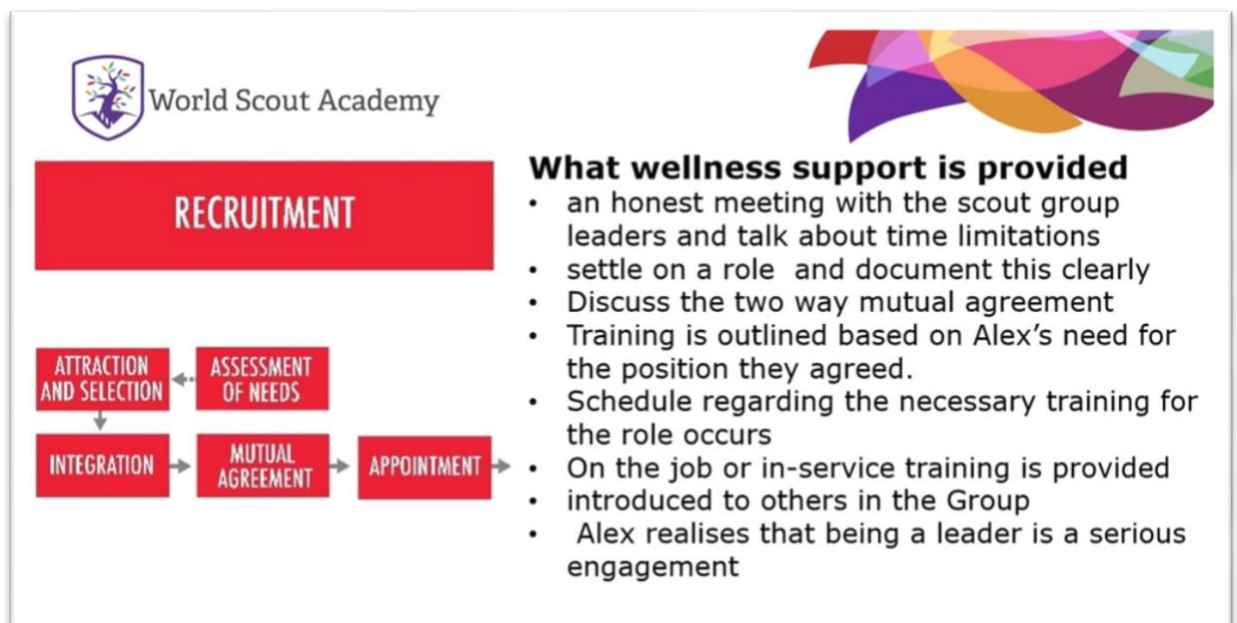
recognition of them. While many tend to focus on formal recognition via awards, there are actually many different ways to recognise and celebrate accomplishments. It may be as simple as a 'thank you' from another person, youth or parent for assisting learn a new skill, or a presentation of a certificate. Sometimes, it could be a Scout qualification, a badge, or a vocational qualification gained from a Scout training. However, during this process it is important to remember that, at the core of this work, we are recognising and celebrating an individual who had the opportunity to thrive and experience success in Scouting. A key to volunteer wellbeing and retention is that, in our planning, we ensure that we are creating exciting opportunities and supportive environments, through our structures and the supports which we provide, to ensure that every Adult in Scouting has the opportunity to thrive, to experience success, and to accomplish their goals.

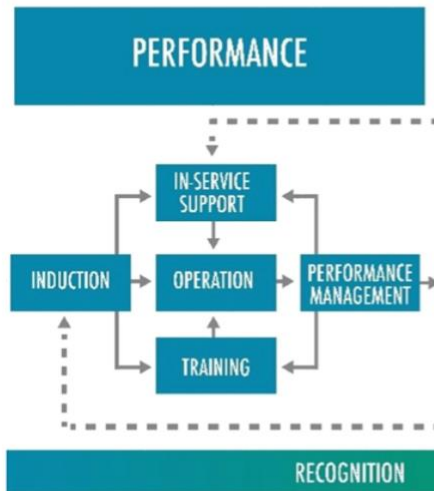
Planning for Wellbeing in Supporting Adults in Scouting

Professor Martin Seligman, the father of the wellbeing theory and PERMA, outlined that he proposed PERMA and its elements as the building blocks of wellbeing (Seligman, 2018). The five building blocks outlined in PERMA provide an excellent framework against which we can evaluate our approaches to supporting Adults in Scouting. We encourage you as you undertake your Scouting duties regardless of your role, to reflect on these five aspects as you consider your wellbeing and what you can do to assist the wellness of others in Scouting. Like the three parts of the Adults in Scouting Lifecycle, each of these building blocks can be pursued for its own purpose. They can stand alone and can be defined and measured independently of each other. However, these aspects are also cyclical impacting on the collectiveness of wellbeing.

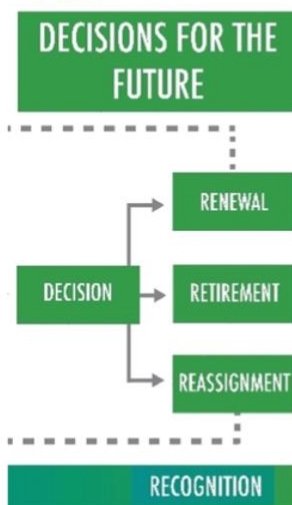
The importance of building on positive emotions through engagement with others and maintaining positive relationships will assist greatly in providing meaning and purpose for you and your work in Scouting. Positive experiences and your accomplishments along your Scouting journey will provide greater joy and wellness for you and those your encounter. Remember we are all in this together. Great Scouting!

Wellbeing aspects within the Life Cycle of Adults in Scouting





- Alex is given the support of the Group and its activities.
- Explains and wears the scout uniform and importance of scarf and badges
- A Personal Training adviser is likely to be appointed to assist Alex
- Alex meets others at Training meetings
- Alex mixes others at Group meetings
- Training includes Safe From Harm
- Training includes fun exciting activities where meets others in the same position
- Talk of shared values.
- Recognition of training provided with certificate or badge, woggle.
- Alex works in a team/s with clear charters
- Alex service is acknowledged
- Outstanding performance is acknowledged
- Opportunities to mentor others



- Serious discussions about future role in Scouting
- Performance discussions provided in safe environments aimed at personal satisfaction and achievements
- Options to renew, reassign or retire
- Recognition of what has been done and what needs to be done still for the person to achieve their sense of purpose.

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NOTES:

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