

What is wellbeing?

THE DEFINITION

Wellbeing is a delicate balancing act between all of the demands and challenges we experience in our lives and work, and all of the protective and energising resources we have available to draw upon to help us thrive at any given time.

Audrey McGibbon, 2025
THE GLWS DEFINITION OF WELLBEING

DEMANDS V RESOURCES MODEL

WELLBEING IS A DELICATE BALANCING ACT BETWEEN
DEMANDS AND RESOURCES.



Source: Adapted from Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders 2012

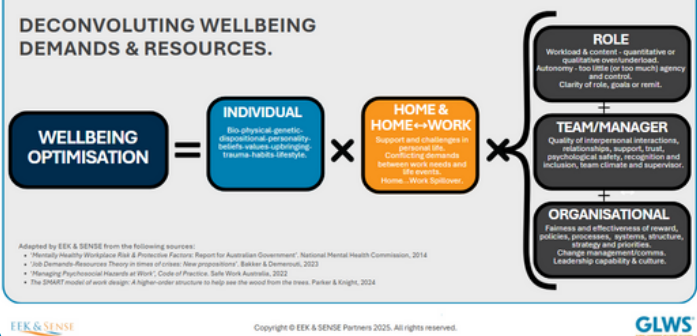
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Balancing the demands of work and life with our resources is key to thriving; imbalance harms wellbeing. Demands like high workload, difficult stakeholders, and health issues can dip wellbeing. However, resources such as supportive teams, flexible work arrangements, and healthy eating habits can protect and sustain wellbeing

THE FORCES AT PLAY

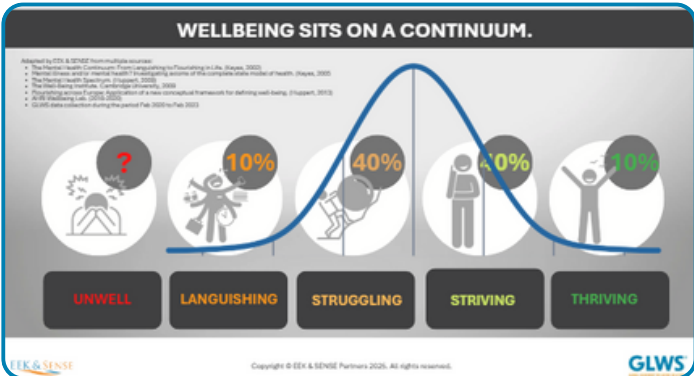
**DECONVOLUTING WELLBEING
DEMANDS & RESOURCES.**



Many organisations struggle to improve wellbeing due to its complex and nuanced nature. This graphic clarifies the multifaceted concept by breaking it down into key elements driving the demands and resources impacting a professional's wellbeing.

THE WELLBEING CONTINUUM

WELLBEING SITS ON A CONTINUUM.



The Wellbeing Continuum illustrates the dynamic and inclusive nature of wellbeing. Everyone has wellbeing needs and will find themselves somewhere on this spectrum influenced by the changing demands and resources of work and personal life. Recognising that some degree of struggle is normal, helps set realistic expectations to protect and support wellbeing.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

EXTERNAL MACRO INFLUENCES ON WELLBEING.



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MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

THE COMPLETE STATE MODEL.

'Mental Health' and 'Wellbeing' are related yet separate concepts



The Complete State Model shows that wellbeing and mental illness are distinct but related. Individuals can achieve high levels of wellbeing even while managing a mental illness, and low wellbeing does not necessarily indicate the presence of mental illness.

WELLBEING LEADERSHIP

WELLBEING IS A COMPLEX, ADAPTIVE AND EMERGENT LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE.



Adapted from Cynefin Strategy Framework, Snowden, D. 2020

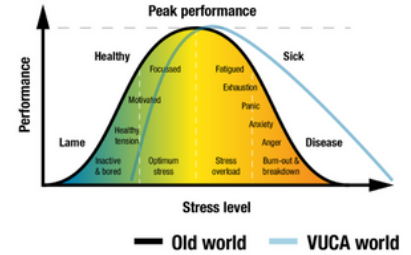
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ROLE OF STRESS

STRESS & PERFORMANCE.

Adapted by EEK & SENSE from Yerkes-Dodson Arousal Law



Not all stress is bad; moderate positive stress can drive performance. However, in today's VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) world, rising stress levels over a prolonged period make it harder to maintain both performance and wellbeing.

WELLBEING & PERFORMANCE

HOW WELLBEING INFLUENCES PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES.



Sources: Supplied in notes

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THE GLWS FRAMEWORK

THE GLWS[®] WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

WORKING WELL

Aspects of Wellbeing affected by our professional lives

LIVING WELL

Aspects of Wellbeing affected by our home, social and personal lives

	AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS	The human side of living and leading – investing in your relational energy to sustain genuine, respectful, inclusive, kind and reciprocally rewarding connections with others.
	MEANING, PURPOSE & DIRECTION	Leading a purpose-driven life – finding and unleashing the forces to move and inspire your overall sense of leading a good and full life.
	RESILIENCE & EQUANIMITY	Navigating your emotional life with outer composure and inner calm – facing internal and external challenges with adaptability, acceptance and evenness.
	VITALITY & ENERGY	Being fit to lead your best life – exercising due care over the key pillars of your health and lifestyle that enhance body-gut-brain performance.
	BALANCE & BOUNDARIES	Sustainably outsmarting the work-life balance paradox – responding productively and purposefully to competing demands for your attention and energy.
	INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT & FLOW	Feeling intrinsically interested and cerebrally active – enjoying a variety of mentally absorbing and creative pursuits with intense focus and deep concentration.

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Decades of research has led to this - a holistic, scientific, research driven and independently validated model of wellbeing, designed for use with senior professionals - the GLWS Wellbeing Framework. These dimensions, across the contexts of Working Well and Living Well, provide a valid and reliable assessment of wellbeing, highly correlated with positive mental health and lower burnout.

INDIVIDUAL & SYSTEMIC

ORGANISATIONAL NEEDS & OBJECTIVES

The business wants to address these health-related issues...

- Reduce:
 - Costs and impact of absenteeism, presenteeism, sickness & stress leave
 - Levels of actual burnout and risks of burnout
 - Risk of VUCA complaints in harassment, bullying & other psychosocial hazards
- Increase:
 - Engagement, effectiveness and reporting
 - Health, awareness & understanding of psychosocially and mentally healthy, thriving work practices
 - Availability of cost effective, timely, accessible and personal support for 5 in 5 employees

HEALTH OUTCOMES

I'd like to...

- Improve my Overall Life satisfaction
- Improve my Overall Quality of life
- Increase my Overall Happiness
- Have better job satisfaction
- Improve and protect a better Work-life balance
- Improve the odds of my longevity
- Break habits that are not serving me well and create healthier ones
- Improve specific aspects of my physical, social or mental health

The business wants to address these performance-related issues...

- Attract, retain, protect, develop, reskill and upskill the organisation's key leaders, managers and critical talent cohorts to optimise growth, agility, innovation, resilience and sustainability of high performance
- Protect against overload, overwork, loss of efficiency/reflectiveness
- Develop leaders as better wellbeing advocates and role models
- Develop a psychosocially safe, healthy and inclusive culture for 5 in 5
- Identify, control and mitigate risks better
- Protect and promote more positive work practices
- Build resilience engagement and productivity
- Ensure wellbeing and mental health are addressed as drivers of inclusivity, diversity, learning and equality of opportunity.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

I'd like to develop my...

- Leadership skills
- Emotional intelligence, interpersonal and communication skills
- Human-centric professionalism
- Capacity for trust, authenticity and vulnerability
- Social influencing and networking, stakeholder relationship skills
- Cultural competencies
- Mentory, autonomy, control over my work
- Change management skills

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS & OBJECTIVES

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Want to learn more about how to apply these concepts? Book a time with [Carly Arkinstall](#) or [Marisa Bosotti](#). To become a knowledge expert in this space, check out [GLWS Accreditation](#) for a fast, comprehensive learning program.

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GLOBAL LEADERSHIP WELLBEING SOLUTIONS

About the authors.

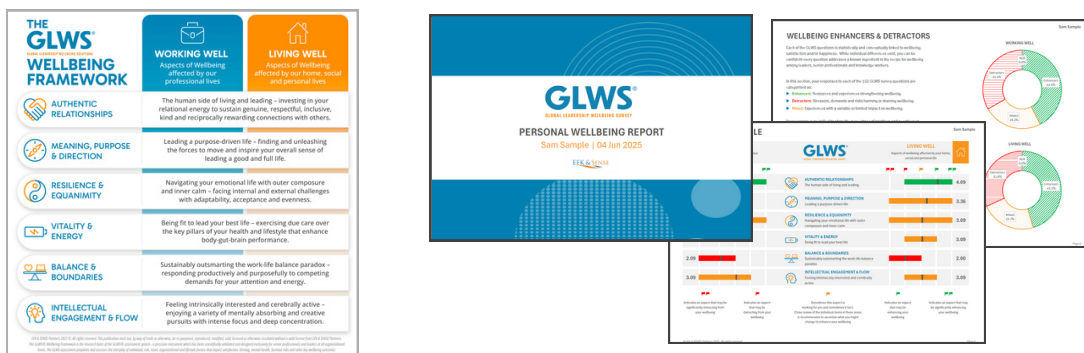
As organisational psychologists with decades of expertise in leadership, organisational psychology and leader wellbeing assessment and research, we channel this expertise into helping organisations measurably support the mental health and wellbeing of their people. The GLWS team, led by Audrey McGibbon is best known as the developer of the GLWS wellbeing system, which today has been used by over 10,000 senior leaders and is trusted by organisations and a network of 500+ GLWS accredited practitioners around the world to help their teams and leaders thrive. You can learn more about us [here](#).

How we help.

We equip organisations to **Learn, Live, Lead & Embed** better wellbeing for all through our consulting services and GLWS Wellbeing System:

- **Wellbeing Advisory** thought leadership and wellbeing strategy.
- **Leader-led Wellbeing Programs** custom-designed for individuals or groups and delivered in partnership with coaching partners.
- **Employee Wellbeing Solutions** deploying personalised, practical wellbeing tools and capabilities at scale via the GLWS Wellbeing System.
- **GLWS Accreditation and Wellbeing Practitioner Support** for in-house teams to develop expert wellbeing capabilities via transferring knowledge, tools and approaches grounded in rigorous best practice, and co-created in areas of emerging know-how.

Learn more about the GLWS Wellbeing System [here](#).



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