

The Five Domains of Wellbeing Definitions and Key Aspects

Each of us experiences the Five Domains of Wellbeing in different and deeply personal ways, influenced by many factors, including our personal history, race, gender, age, community, family, values and context.



Social connectedness: The degree to which we have and perceive a sufficient number and diversity of relationships that allow us to give and receive information, emotional support and material aid; create a sense of belonging and value; and foster growth.

<p>KEY ASPECTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity and diversity of relationships Reciprocity—give and receive information, material help, emotional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sense of belonging A sense of being valuable and needed Foster growth
<p>MISCONCEPTIONS</p> <p>It's only about emotional support.</p> <p>It's only about what we get from other people.</p> <p>It's just nice to have but not essential.</p>	<p>TRUTHS</p> <p>Social connections are also about information and material support.</p> <p>It's just as important to have opportunities to give.</p> <p>Research shows that social connections are critical for our physical and mental health. Social isolation is linked to serious health issues and addiction.</p>

Stability: The degree to which we can expect our situation and status to be fundamentally the same from one day to the next, where there is adequate predictability for us to concentrate on the here-and-now and on the future, growth and change; and where small obstacles don't set off big cascades.

<p>KEY ASPECTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchors, that create a sense of predictability in days or weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buffer to small problems snowballing to big problems Familiarity
<p>MISCONCEPTIONS</p> <p>Stability is something we either have or don't have.</p> <p>It's about really big things over long periods of time, such as housing stability.</p> <p>Stability comes after all our other needs are met—for example, once we get a place to live, we'll be stable.</p>	<p>TRUTHS</p> <p>We can have stability in some parts of our life and feel very unstable in others.</p> <p>Stability is often created through small routines (anchors) that ground us day-to-day or week-to-week. We can have a house and a job and still feel unstable overall.</p> <p>We all experience stability through our anchors, and feelings of stability ebb and flow all the time.</p>

Safety: The degree to which we can be our authentic selves and not be at heightened risk of physical or emotional harm.

<p>KEY ASPECTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and emotional From people, places and systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to be true to core identity without harm or humiliation
<p>MISCONCEPTIONS</p> <p>Safety is "objective" and there is only one way to experience it.</p> <p>Being our "authentic self" is about being able to feel completely comfortable all the time and not judged in any way.</p> <p>Safety can only be threatened by violence or physical danger and by people.</p>	<p>TRUTHS</p> <p>What we consider safe or safer may or may not be very different from what others consider safe.</p> <p>Safety is about really core parts of ourselves (race, body size, religion, political views, gender). The experience of safety is being able to express our core identities in different settings without fear or danger.</p> <p>We can be physically safe but emotionally unsafe. Systems and programs—not just people—can make someone feel unsafe. For example, some people fear the police and not because of a specific person or police officer.</p>

Mastery: The degree to which we feel in control of our fate and the decisions we make, and where we experience some correlation between efforts and outcomes.

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| KEY ASPECTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goal is attainable but not guaranteed• Correlation between efforts and outcomes• Sense of control and choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Important to self, and recognition and valued by others• Experience of self-efficacy and sense of empowerment |
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MISCONCEPTIONS

Mastery is only about what we've accomplished—we have to master something to feel mastery.

It's about being in complete control.

It's the same thing as self-esteem.

TRUTHS

It's really about our sense of accomplishment, which can come from making progress or getting better at something even if we're not 'the best.'

It's really about feeling that we have an ability to influence people or situations around us, or our own future.

Self-esteem is important, but it's not the same as mastery. We can have high self-esteem and still not have a sense that we can influence other people or our world, or that we have the ability to accomplish something or overcome challenges.

Meaningful access to relevant resources: The degree to which we can meet needs particularly important for our situation in ways that are not extremely difficult, and are not degrading or dangerous.

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| KEY ASPECTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-determination of what basic needs are relevant and important• Resources exist | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resources are accessible without shame, danger or significant hardship |
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MISCONCEPTIONS

"Resources" are social services.

If resources are available, they are accessible.

TRUTHS

While social services often can help us get resources, the Five Domains of Wellbeing are what everyone needs. We all need relevant resources, but we don't all need services to get those resources. A food bank (service) can provide access to food (relevant resource), but we don't all need a food bank to get food.

Resources can exist, but still not be meaningfully accessible. A free health clinic next door isn't meaningfully accessible if the staff speak a language we don't understand.

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