

What's the connection between wellbeing and health?

Wellbeing is a set of **NEEDS** and **EXPERIENCES** that are essential in order to have **HEALTH** and **HOPE**.

So what are these needs and experiences?

Social Connectedness

We seek to be in relationships where we get and give value, and feel a sense of belonging to things bigger than us.

Loneliness leads to inflammation, tied to everything from higher cancer and virus rates to dementia.

Stability

We need to know there are rhythms in our days that we can count on, and things that are familiar as we navigate the new.

Chronic unpredictability triggers a stress response, linked to higher cortisol levels and disease.

Meaningful Access to Relevant Resources

We need to be able to meet our needs for food, clothing, shelter, school, health care and more, without shame, danger, or great difficulty.

Teens who want mental health care often won't access it because of stigma from peers.



We need all "Five Domains of Wellbeing" in **COMBINATION** and **BALANCE**.

What gets in the way of wellbeing? >>>

Inequity gets in the way of wellbeing.

How we meet our needs for wellbeing, and what **OPTIONS** are available to us in each of the domains of wellbeing, are shaped by our **SOCIETY**, our **EXPERIENCES**, and our personal **CHOICES**.

Society

Our society is set up for some people to have more access to wellbeing than others.

Bias because of race, gender, geography, identity, class, and sexual orientation gets in the way of wellbeing.



How society is set up creates the biggest barriers to wellbeing.

Experiences

Our individual experiences of oppression, trauma, and adverse childhood experiences—like growing up with violence or addiction—can get in the way of wellbeing.



Choices

Our choices. The choices we make for our wellbeing matter, but are limited by society and our experiences a lot more than people think.



Health disparities are the result of people not having access to wellbeing.

We don't all have **EQUITABLE** access to wellbeing. Disparities in **ACCESS** to wellbeing lead to **DISPARITIES** in health outcomes.

What does this mean for real people?>>>

The more that stands in the way of wellbeing, the harder it is to be healthy.

Wellbeing is ESSENTIAL for health. We're all driven to meet our needs for wellbeing.

Sometimes we make CHOICES for our wellbeing that get in the way of health.

Why?

Sometimes we meet our need for wellbeing in ways that aren't healthy but are the only options that feel available to us.



Dominic has bad asthma and a stressful job. Every Friday night, for years, he and his buddies get together to play cards, smoke, and hang out.

Dominic pays the price by feeling sick later, but this Friday night ritual with friends is the most grounding thing in his life.

Getting healthy sometimes requires giving up how we meet our wellbeing needs, and the tradeoffs may not feel worth it.

Lucille lost 25 pounds and her pre-diabetes was in check. She was really motivated to continue her healthy diet, but her family didn't understand why she was "too good" for their food.

Lucille felt she didn't really belong in her family anymore. Lucille's diet fell apart—it wasn't worth giving up her social connectedness.



What looks like unhealthy behavior can be a person's drive for wellbeing expressing itself when options are limited or tradeoffs are too great.

So what can we do?>>>

We can improve health by increasing access to wellbeing.

Here's what it will take.

Changing Structures

Changing how systems and services like housing, schools, and courts operate, with a shared understanding of and commitment to wellbeing, so they don't force "trading off" wellbeing for short-term progress.



Activating Community

Engaging community around the universal need for wellbeing, helping people and communities analyze their assets and barriers to wellbeing, and using these to advocate for change.

Equipping Practitioners

Equipping practitioners (like Lucille's doctor) with knowledge and skills to:

- Understand how society and individual experiences shape access to wellbeing and what tradeoffs are worth it.
- Partner with patients, clients, and communities to come up with new solutions.



Changing the context changes options so people can access wellbeing in ways that lead to health.