

The effects of poverty on children's learning

Movelle Primary School

5 June 2015



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Goals for the morning

By the end of the session, we will have:

- Increased understanding of and empathy for children experiencing poverty
- Identified best practices at Movelle Primary School
- Created a list of strategies to improve support
- Discussed self-care and mutual care
- Left with a list of accessible, helpful resources



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Case studies

Barriers to completing homework



1. Very brief summary of case study.
2. What are the primary issues?
3. How could the teacher successfully respond?
4. How could the school successfully respond?
5. Other insights?

No shoes for school



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What is poverty?

Limits choice, limits access



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Effects of poverty on children

Children living in poverty are at higher risk of experiencing...

- Reduced social and emotional competence
- More behaviour problems
- Academic underperformance
- Lower wage earnings and reduced home ownership rates
- Reduced overall health and increased risk of morbidity



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Reality check: Australia

- Almost 24% of Australian children developmentally vulnerable; almost 12% experiencing multiple vulnerabilities (preschool, AEDI)

Australian children from low-Socio-economic backgrounds are:

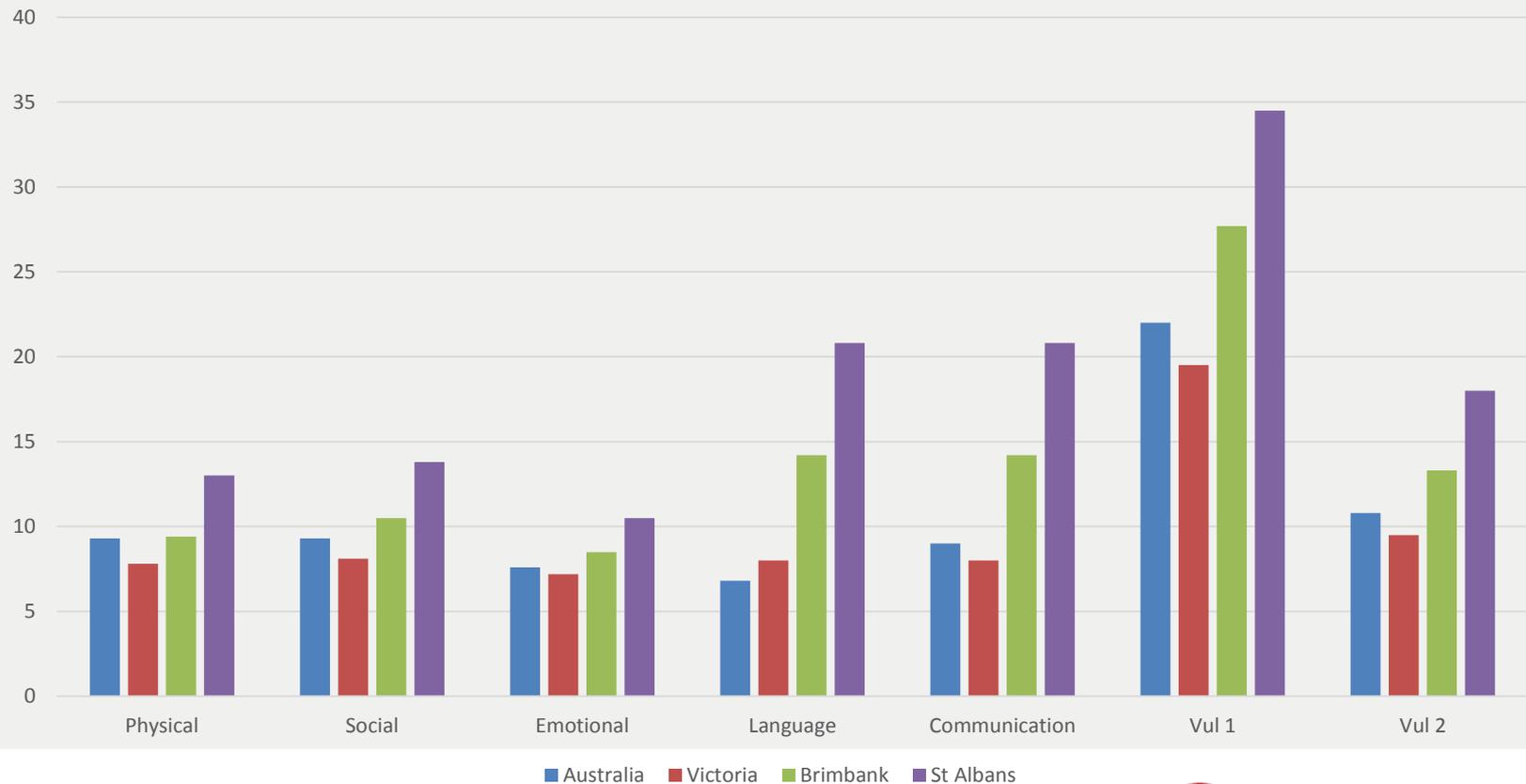
- 11 - 16% behind peers in reading (NAPLAN)
- 2.5 years behind academically at age 15 (PISA)
- 20% 15-year-olds report low sense of belonging (PISA)
- 20% 15 year-olds identified as having low participation (PISA)
- 20% less likely to finish year 12 (COAG)
- Largest decline in employment, education or training post-school(COAG) – 59.4% in 2011 (COAG)



St Albans & child vulnerability

*Australian Early Development Census

AEDC* Table: Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in 2012



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What can be done?

Well-being: “Optimal psychological functioning and experience.”

(Ryan & Deci, 2001, p. 142)

Not merely the absence of pathology, but also the presence of positive, healthy psychological function allowing an individual to flourish and thrive.



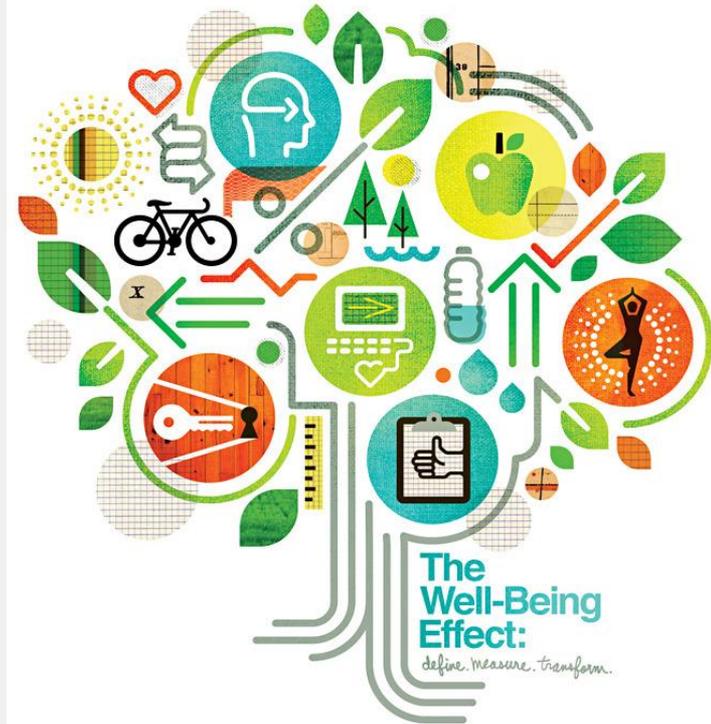
Positive emotions



Social connection



**Planning &
goal-setting**



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Well-being & positive emotions (1)

Eudaimonic well-being

- Sense of meaning and purpose
- External focus

Hedonic well-being

- Avoiding pain and seeking pleasure
- Internal focus

Improved health

(Pressman & Cohen 2005)

Increased social connection

(Helliwell & Putnam, 2004)

Increased resilience

(Almeida, 2005)

Increased persistence

(Wrosch et al, 2003)

Increased life satisfaction

(Keyes, et al 2002)

Higher career status

(Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008)



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Well-being & positive emotions (2)

Positive emotions



Persistent positive emotions...

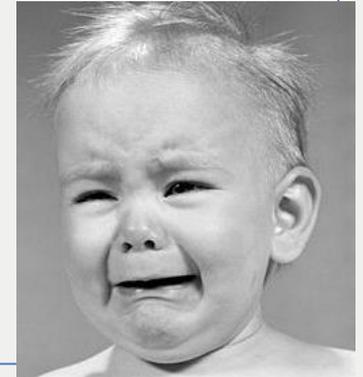
- increases expansive thinking
- Promotes healthy reward system
- Increases resilience
- increases thriving in all domains

➤ Happy people are more successful, not the other way around

Negative emotions

Chronic negative emotions...

- Reduces holistic thinking
- Reduces creative problem-solving
- Reduces ability to make realistic long-term plans
- Reduces resilience
- Compromises healthy reward system



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Social connection & well-being

Positive social relationships (both quantity and quality)...

- Increase resilience
- Increase well-being and positive emotion states
- Improve cognitive processing

→ Children from disadvantaged or socially excluded households may need to actively learn social skills and the signs of a positive, healthy relationship.



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Planning, goal setting & well-being

Individuals experiencing chronic stress or anxiety...

- Tend to have an external locus of control - passive recipient
- Tend to experience neutral events as negative
- Are easily overwhelmed by long-term timeframes

What helps:

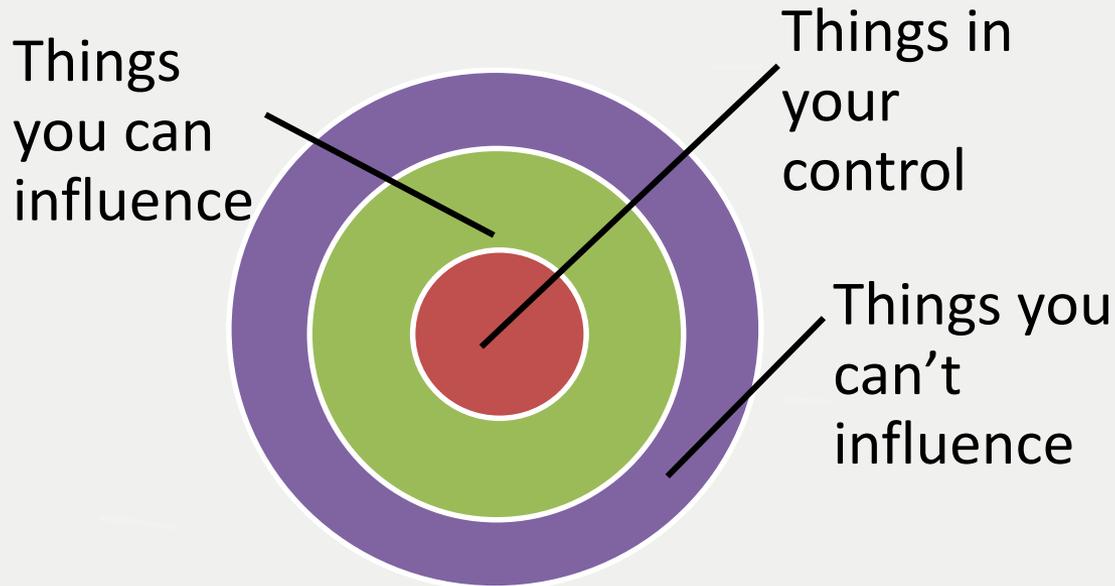
- Maintain an internal locus of control - self-determination
- Reframe issues to reduce anxiety
- 'Chunk' plans into manageable sub-components
- Have a contingency plan



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Where can we effect change?



What does the school do well to support students' well-being – emotionally, socially, and planning/goal-setting skills?

Universal response:

Skills, abilities, attitudes that are applied to all children

Individual response:

School systems, policies, norms for responding to specific issues



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What specific actions can we take to improve the well-being of our students?

What specific actions can we take to...

- decrease students' experience of stress/anxiety & increase their experience of positive emotions?
- increase students' ability to make and sustain positive social connections?
- increase students' planning and goal-setting skills?

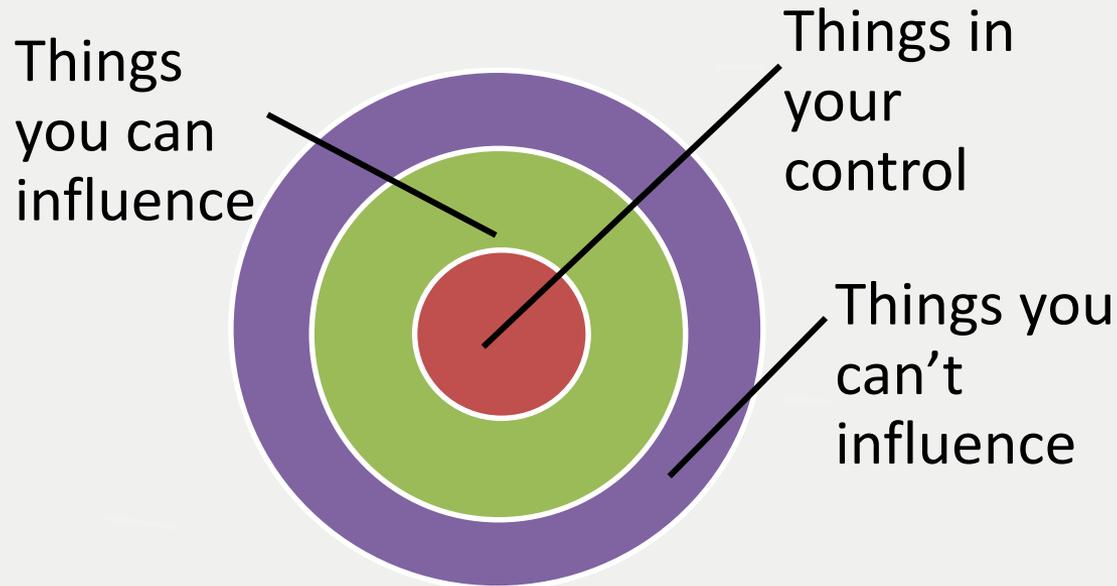
→ *Other actions outside of this scope - write down & we will add it to plan.*



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Let's not forget self-care



What can we do to ensure our teachers and staff maintain their well-being?

Universal response:

Skills, abilities, attitudes that are helpful to all teachers

Individual response:

School systems, policies, norms for supporting teachers' well-being & best practice



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