

# Road map to Wellbeing at Raroa



Enabling Raroa community to  
flourish.

Implementation of a Wellbeing  
Strategy

## World Health Organisation Definition of wellbeing:

*Mental health is defined as a state of well-being 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.*

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This case study is about staff wellbeing as we soon realised that we need to start with the adults. Without staff wellbeing student wellbeing won't be effective.

### 1 Acknowledgements:

I wish to acknowledge the following people:

- The Raroa Normal Intermediate School Board of Trustees for supporting and recognising the importance of quality professional development for the ultimate benefit of the students including a specific wellbeing budget to support our goal.
- The Raroa Normal Intermediate School Board of Trustees for supporting my sabbatical application
- All the staff of Raroa Normal Intermediate for being so honest and open to learning and reflection. (you are amazing)
- For the senior leadership team (past and present) who worked hard to develop the strategic planning towards the 'Road Map to Wellbeing'

- To Stephen Eames (Deputy Principal) for helping me put the initial road map together and for designing the questionnaire and Ms Wellington Raroa Wellbeing Model”
- To Marian Williams for stepping up as acting principal in my absence.

## 2. Decision Making - Why Wellbeing

What is important for our focusses for the next two years?

School wide feedback and focus area identification

- To explore ways to create a positive environment for all at Raroa Normal Intermediate. A place where people can flourish
- Making headline - [National Suicide Numbers Rise Three years in a row](#)
- Councillor Reports
- Teacher stress
- Anxiety and Depression - Student Enrolment information and teacher feedback trend increased lack resilience

Focus for the School 2017/2018:

**Wellbeing – research, understand and implement practices to foster school community wellbeing for all, which align with ASPIRE to achieve.**

## 3.How do we do this/Where do we start?

What we did to create a pathway:

- We found a conference in Christchurch called “Positive Education in New Zealand”and after reading the programme decided this could be a good starting point. The four members of the senior leadership team went to this conference and it provided what we needed. A strategic framework, further reading and professional learning and most importantly an expert we could work with to help guide us; Dr Denise Quinlan from Otago University.
- Further learning that we (the senior leadership team) undertook straight away was an online positive psychology course with Dr Barbara Fredrickson. (*This course discusses research findings in the field of positive psychology, conducted by Barbara Fredrickson and her colleagues. It also features practical applications of this science that you can put to use immediately to help you live a full and meaningful life*).
- Both attending the conference (with our debriefing and discussion alongside) and the online course were instrumental in forming a plan for our ‘Wellbeing strategy’. This, of course, modified as we learned more and worked more closely with Denise.
- In line with the school culture of implementing change or introducing something new, a longitudinal approach beginning with research was taken. The senior leadership team and then full leadership team began the process of research to ensure we were making research informed decisions based on our pedagogy first approach. It soon became apparent that we needed all staff members involved and they wanted to be involved.

- We decided that implementing a wellbeing strategy can not be done by taking a programme and introducing it in the school. It is reliant on much more.
- There is so much information around positive psychology and positive education that we could research and read for years but at some point a start had to be made.

## 4. Positive Psychology.

The science of psychology and happiness and wellbeing is huge and it is not my intent to discuss this fully here but to highlight some of what made a difference to us and we thought we could use in our goal to achieve a thriving community

Martin Seligman is the Initiator of positive psychology. He saw traditional psychology as being solely focussed on something being wrong (disease model) and trying to fix it and it forgot about improving normal lives or thinking about interventions to make people happier. His thinking led to Positive psychology and being as concerned with strengths as it is with weakness, interested in building the good things in life and with making lives of normal people fulfilling.

<http://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/history-of-happiness/martin-seligman-psychology/>

The distinction was between relieving misery and building happiness with the skills of happiness being different to the skills of relieving misery.

The clip below explains this very quickly and simply.

[Positive Psychology explained](#)

We are not psychologists so our goal was not to relieve depression or misery but to build a tool kit to work towards flow and happiness - to cope with ups and downs of life and a sometimes stressful but nevertheless rewarding job.



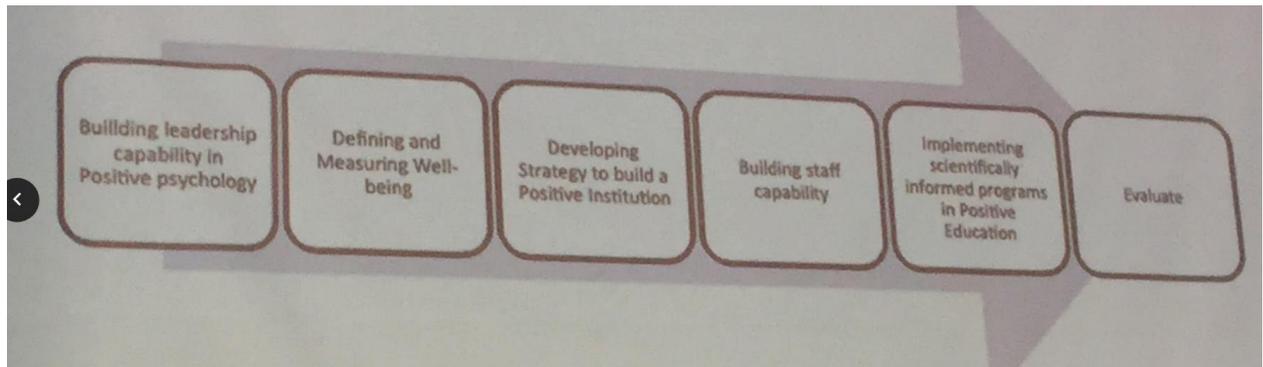
Martin Seligman's PERMA model depicting five elements of wellbeing is here modified by Lucy Hone to include vitality. This is one of the researched models of wellbeing that we studied as a school. Other models included: "Five Ways to Wellbeing" (Mental health foundation); Te Whare tapa wha (developed by Mason Durie); Wheel of Wellbeing (Maudsley International).

We also looked closely at the ten positive emotions and Fredrickson's broaden and build theory through the online course with Dr Barbara Fredrickson.

Negative emotions tend to 'hit you in the face' so you take notice whilst positive emotions can occur throughout your day without noticing. The importance is in noticing and finding ways of bringing them to the surface and experiencing them more often.

Taking a strengths based approach and being conscious of gratitude was also important.

## 5.Strategic pathway - Guide to implementation - Strategic planning Model



### **1. Ponderings and Connections**

- a. Early in the journey - wonderings and ponderings were brainstormed. This gave us a starting point and a brain dump from the conference.

### **2. Building Leadership capability in Positive Psychology**

- a. This was done through attending the conference, taking the online course, brainstorming together definitions of Wellbeing, bringing Dr Denise Quinlan to take a workshop which all leadership team and Board chair attended. Putting together a reading list to share. Members of the leadership team then took a series of professional learning sessions with the rest of the staff to disseminate the learning to others and consolidate for themselves.

### **3. Defining and Measuring Wellbeing**

- a. Several definitions were looked at at both a leadership professional learning meeting and a full staff professional learning meeting.
- b. Measuring wellbeing has been a difficult process - many tools are either too complex or encourage the takers to look outwards for their wellbeing. We developed our own survey and are still looking at other ways of measuring.

### **4. Defining strategy to build a positive school**

- a. Using this tool to help develop a strategy.

### **5. Building Staff Capability**

- a. Stages two and three of this plan are part of building staff capability. Further to this many professional learning sessions were had to develop staff understanding of wellbeing, take personal responsibility and to build a toolkit to help wellbeing on the positive side of the ledger (or get quickly back to the positive side). Please refer to section 6. Timeline of professional learning. Sharing reading list.

### **6. Implementing Scientifically informed Programs in Positive Education**

- a. All the work we have done within the wellbeing strategy has been scientifically informed.

### **7. Evaluate**

- a. Anecdotal evidence is our main source of evaluation at this point in time.

## [6. Timeline of professional learning. Timeline](#)

The pathway of learning builds from gaining understanding of what wellbeing and positive education are, to building toolkits to aide in creating a school that flourishes. It is inclusive of all staff and the parent community.

### **2017**

1. Senior Leadership team to Positive Education conference - March
2. Leadership team professional learning through Coursera - online positive psychology course with Dr Barbara Fredrickson.
3. Defining Wellbeing: Full leadership team meeting - reading several definitions of wellbeing and working towards an understanding of what it is and how to recognise it.

#### [Link](#)

4. Full day workshop with Denise Quinlan - full leadership team and invitation to Board members (Board chair attended). Schools from local and intermediate cluster were invited also (over 50 attended) [Becoming a wellbeing school - Overview](#)
5. Teacher professional learning - recapping the 'Why' of this focus. Pre-readings discussed. Wellbeing models aligned to gain understanding and develop a model for Raroa. [Why Wellbeing? Initial readings & models.](#) Displayed in staffroom after session.
6. Raroa Wellbeing audit (see section 7)
7. Full staff professional Learning - A strengths based approach to learning - Lead by learning leaders using learning from Denise Quinlan workshop. [Strength based approach to learning](#)
8. Ongoing discussions and reflections in team meetings and leadership meetings
9. AMLE conference: Our focus was on neuroscience and wellbeing: Below is an example of one of the speakers who connected strongly with our wellbeing strategy.

[Morale without chocolate - Dr Monte Selby](#)

***More lasting than the morale "event", is the morale "process".***

*Selby talks about finding ways to accentuate the positive to boost morale.*

*'Pay attention'. The more people look for successes, the more they see. Suddenly, school looks a little brighter. Plus, it's nice coming to school knowing others are looking for opportunities to report on your successes.*

*He discussed strategies such as using music and starting meetings with noticing.*

*This linked nicely to our work with Dr Denise Quinlan.*

*For example - the gratitude board:*



## 2018

1. Teacher Only Days - Full day workshop with all staff led by Dr Denise Quinlan “Mindset Learned Optimism and Harmony” [Mindset Learned Optimism and Harmony - overview](#)



2. Repeat of above workshop for staff who missed, board members and cluster.
3. Evening workshop for parents with Denise Quinlan - “Kicking for the Surface ©NZIWR Parent evening March 2018”
4. Wellbeing questionnaire was written by Stephen and I and given to staff members to complete. For more detail please refer to section 7.
5. [PD 10 April 2018](#) From the questionnaire a wellbeing toolkit with a breakdown of possible actions was developed. *Raroa Wellbeing Toolkit - Breakdown of possible actions to support personal wellbeing Toolkit*
6. Following from the questionnaire and toolkit a facilitator, (Mark Sweeney, was employed to lead the staff in providing strategies where teachers can support each other to achieve their wellbeing goals.
7. Currently a ‘Raroa Wellbeing Model’ aligning the research and our learning with our school vision (ASPIRE to Achieve) , is being developed.

## 2019

Finalising of the ‘Raroa Wellbeing Picture Book’

An Example of how the book evolves. Picture on page six has been replaced by the picture below to be more inclusive.



Presenting at the Positive Education Conference in Christchurch April 9th: [Raroa Wellbeing picture book and research notes.](#)

## 7. Measuring.

### Raroa wellbeing audit.

Very early in the strategy an audit was done with the whole staff to establish and focus on and celebrate what is already happening, During a professional Learning session teams filled out the audit which was then collated, printed out and put on the staffroom wall for everyone to read and add to if they wanted. This was an affirming exercise.

## **RAROA WELLBEING AUDIT**

	Staff	Team /students	Parent community	BoT	Co curricular
Belonging and connectedness					
Achievement and success					
Be Active					
Embrace New experiences					
Take notice. Appreciate the little things					
Give time, presence and words.					
Relationship building					
Other					

### **Wellbeing Questionnaire: (starting point for [creating questions for Wellbeing Questionnaire](#))**

In searching for a questionnaire or survey to use we found that a large percentage of the questions asked recipients to look outwards for their well being. We believed that in order to achieve ongoing wellbeing adults must take responsibility for their own well being and develop a toolkit to help with this.

We developed the questionnaire from the teacher only day workshop and the things all teachers said were important for wellbeing at work. We then matched these to the scientifically researched models of wellbeing. The questionnaire was developed so it can be used to reflect on our own wellbeing for the purpose of creating a **Personal Wellbeing Plan (IWP)**.

*“Wow to the staff survey - this is survey at its best. It acts as an intervention as well as getting responses. That’s evident from the number of people who’ve commented that it was good to do this reflection. Well done - it’s a great way to take the temperature and quietly make staff assess their own wellbeing and think of ways to improve it. [And as you said Christine, only a few people are looking to blame outside. Most take responsibility]*

*This is such great work - I particularly like that you went through the responses and then created the toolkit together”. Denise Quinlan May 2018*

## **Reflective Evaluation**

While we agree that the process, the reflection and personal responsibility, and building the right culture is most important the one-offs, treats and events can add to the process, setting the right environment and mood for learning and depositing in the emotional bank account.

Things in this category we have found have been particularly well appreciated:

1. NUMBER ONE - by far. Investing in the staffroom - planning for this as part of the wider engagement plan. More a staffroom experience which includes the fun staff photo (smiles on entry with a sense of belonging and fun), lack of clutter and most work related business (including the notice board) separated. To have natural light, nice furniture (without extravagant), herbal teas and nice coffee as well as plants and a massage chair (that plays music). The staffroom needs social space, quiet space and work space (we are nearly there). The Board saw the importance of this and were very supportive in providing resourcing.
2. Music and singing
3. Gratitude whenever possible
4. FOOD
  - a. Hey SLT,  
Thank you so much for morning tea. The general sense I got from the conversations had around me was that people felt cared for and valued for their efforts last night.  
Our emotional bank accounts are full to the brim.  
Arohanui, a full and happy (teacher name removed).  
(an impromptu and unannounced morning tea was provided after a late working night)
5. Staff functions
6. Teacher only days (beginning of year) away from school - nice environment, reconnecting, feeling valued.
7. End of term celebration - creating a 'DONE' list and success charts, with breakfast supplied with no other agenda than to acknowledge a successful term and feel proud of all that goes to make Raroa a great place.
8. Chair Massages for staff from external person

## **Other comments and feedback which feeds in to anecdotal evaluation:**

### **From Teachers After PD Sessions**

*Hi*

*Note of thanks for this morning - loved that we were in the staffroom environment, music on, hot cross buns - great way to finish the term.*

*Thanks too for sharing some of your own vulnerabilities and observations/thoughts - showed us all as one as we deal with well-being.*

*I arrived at work this morning feeling a bit so-so about work but left at 8.40am feeling 'blessed'.*

*Cxxx reading to my class so taking sneaky moment to email and thank you for the work put into PD this morning.*

*Love your work and keen to help / be involved in any way I can be of use moving forward.*

### Comments from visitors from NZAIMS specialist conference

- LOVE the staff culture, vibe and evidence of value on hauora .... Staff, student
- WELLBEING AND PEOPLE.
- LOVE THE STAFFROOM CULTURE!

Visiting Principal and teachers (Wellington) interested in our journey - joined professional group after discussion.

Thank you Christine and Stephen for hosting me yesterday morning. I really enjoyed hearing you talk about your journey to date and your plans for the future. I have come away rethinking what might be my next steps.

Thank you so much for giving up your time and sharing with us all the amazing work you guys have been doing. You certainly gave us some great ideas to think about.

Facilitators:

Bullet point 3. Chapter 7.

*"Wow to the staff survey - this is survey at its best. It acts as an intervention as well as getting responses. That's evident from the number of people who've commented that it was good to do this reflection. Well done - it's a great way to take the temperature and quietly make staff assess their own wellbeing and think of ways to improve it.*

*This is such great work - I particularly like that you went through the responses and then created the toolkit together". Denise Quinlan May 2018*

*"That's something you don't see (teacher hugging principal)*

*That's such a Raroa thing to do have a staff party to celebrate.*

*"I love working at Raroa. It has such a warm and welcoming culture whereby people I work with I consider friends. I feel comfortable approaching anyone with problems where I feel they can offer guidance or advice and they are always willing to offer time to do this. As a beginning teacher at this school this is something I really value and appreciate. The staffroom culture, in particular, is so warm and positive. It is so easy to approach new groups of people or individuals to have a chat. On a challenging day, this can make all the difference before heading back to class after morning tea/lunch."*

## 8. Informal Cluster.

I am not sure if cluster is the correct word here. After inviting both our local principals' group and the intermediate principals' group to attend the first workshop with Dr Denise Quinlan and small group of schools wanted to continue to meet. Two primary schools, the Intermediate and College from the local cluster along with two RTLB and an Intermediate school make up this group with another primary school outside the cluster joining this year.

We decided as a group that meeting once a term to discuss where we are at, share resources and ideas would be of great benefit without adding extra workload to already busy lives. Many ideas and resources have been shared and invigorating conversations had. The group continues to meet.

## 8. CONCLUSION

- Wellbeing and culture does not happen by coincidence. It is deliberate, over time and collaborative.
- It is the PROCESS; the researching together, discussing together, developing understanding together and developing a wellbeing at Raroa model together that makes the biggest difference. This takes time but is well worth it.
- Professional development, as always, is crucial. The learning and understanding of the 'why' and 'how' cannot be underestimated. Professional learning occurs at many levels - leadership, whole staff, parent community and should always include an outside expert.
- We decided that, for us, implementing a wellbeing strategy can not be done by taking a programme and introducing it in the school and heh presto wellbeing happens. It is reliant on much more, none less than the understanding of individual needs. However there are many great resources that can be used as part of our wellbeing plan such which have been developed by experts such as the wellbeing models. We have then developed our own resources where we felt the needs eg the questionnaire and Raroa Wellbeing Model (aligned with school vision).
- It is important that the leadership team work to build a culture where people can thrive but that is only part of the picture. It is more about taking personal responsibility for one's own well being than it is about others making it happen for you.
- Developing a practical toolkit for wellbeing is important.
- While external factors such as workload and lack of resourcing for students requiring special care and attention continues to cause stress on schools and teachers we need to keep trying to keep morale high and positive - This does not mean that there is never a time when teachers need to just offload or 'have a moan' or feel the stress of the job. However being in a supportive environment and having a wellbeing toolkit to cope and recover from these times more easily and positively helps keep morale and wellbeing high.

*However - "Small changes ripple Outwards"*

