



# **TAKING CARE OF YOUR WELL-BEING**

## **For FET Teachers and Tutors**

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## TAKING CARE OF YOUR WELL-BEING

To retain zest and enthusiasm for the demanding work of teaching, it is important to take care of your own well-being. This will benefit both you and your learners.

Although some of our well-being is due to our circumstances in life, a surprising proportion is under our own control. This booklet will explore how you can use the findings and strategies of positive psychology and maximise your own individual potential for happiness and well-being.

## POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ELEMENTS OF WELL-BEING

### What is well-being?

**Well-being** has been the object of much study and research in recent years, and we have developed much better understanding of what it comprises and of how we can take care of

- *Positive emotion – feeling good. The pleasant life. This element includes happiness, but happiness is not the only element in well-being.*
- *Engagement – when your strengths match your challenges. In its best manifestation this can become a state of ‘flow’ when, using your highest strengths and talents, you become completely absorbed in a task and lose track of time.*
- *Relationships – human beings are social animals. ‘Other people are the best antidote to the downs of life and the most reliable up.’ Doing a kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any activity Seligman and colleagues have tested.*
- *Meaning – time given to something greater than ourselves. Human beings need meaning and purpose in life.*
- *Accomplishment - working towards and achieving goals.*

our own well-being. Up to a few decades ago, psychology had focused on people’s problems and difficulties and how they could be remedied, but not on how people could flourish and be happy.

Martin Seligman, when elected president of the American Psychological Association in 1999, launched what is known as the positive psychology movement – the science of human strengths, virtues and happiness and what makes life worth living. Since then there has been a huge amount of research on topics such as hope, gratitude, forgiveness, curiosity, humour, wisdom, joy, love, courage and creativity. Thousands of books have been written on the subject of well-being, some of which you can see on the shelves of most bookshops.

Well-being is not merely about pleasure, cheerfulness, happiness or positive emotions. It's not a 'happyology'. Happiness can come and go in a moment, whereas well-being is a more stable state of being well and feeling satisfied and contented.

### Elements of well-being

Seligman considers that there are five elements to well-being, with the acronym **PERMA**, and that people can learn to increase each one in their lives:

No single one of these elements defines well-being, but each contributes to it. Well-being is a combination of feeling good as well as actually having meaning, engagement, good relationships and a sense of accomplishment.

### What determines our well-being? – The 40% solution

American psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky has, along with colleagues, done a lot of research on happiness and well-being. They concluded that:

- 50% is determined by our **genetic inheritance** (temperament, personality)
- 10% by our **life circumstances** (partner, family, job, income, health)
- 40% by our **'intentional activity'** (the things we choose to pursue in life, including the way we think and behave)

As Maureen Gaffney writes in her book *Flourishing*: 'You cannot change your genetic inheritance, although you can make some changes to the way you manage your temperament and personality. Trying to change your life circumstances will contribute only modestly to your happiness. **A full 40% of your potential for well-being lies in your own hands - what you choose to attend to in your life, the activities you choose to engage in and the goals you set for yourself**'.

## INDIVIDUAL WAYS OF MAINTAINING WELL-BEING / WELLNESS TOOLKIT

None of us have lives that run smoothly all the time. We all have to deal with adversity of one kind or another (or perhaps many kinds). To maintain balance and well-being, you need a stock of inner resources to help you to cope when things go wrong and to be resilient to changes beyond your immediate control.

### Wellness Toolkit

We all have things, people and activities in our lives that support our well-being and help us to stay well. It's good to be aware of what these are, particularly the activities of which we are in control. They can be a resource when things are not going so well in our lives. This is sometimes referred to as our **wellness toolkit**. The tools in this kit vary among individuals – what makes one person feel good might be hated by another. Lists made by FE teachers / tutors and coordinators at workshops include:

Working out in the gym	Nature	Running
Walking my dog	Solitude	Time with my partner
Praying	Chatting to friends	Playing with my children
Meditation	Cooking	Gardening
Keeping a gratitude journal	Reading	Listening to music
Playing a musical instrument	Keeping hens	Singing
Relaxing in a hot bath	Having a massage	Yoga
Getting my hair/nails done	Swimming	Sitting cosily by the fire
Going for a cycle		

If you make a list of your own **Wellness Tools** while you are in good form, it can be a useful resource for you to turn to in periods of stress.

## TEACHING – SOURCES OF SATISFACTION AND STRESS

Work can be a great source of satisfaction but can also cause stress. This is particularly true of teaching. FE teachers / tutors at workshops have listed many sources of **satisfaction** in their work, including:

- Seeing individual students progress
- Contact with young people/a variety of people
- Combating disadvantage
- Helping people
- Social interaction with students and colleagues

However, teachers / tutors also experience a lot of **stress**. Challenges mentioned included;

- Increased paperwork and record-keeping
- Having to take work home
- Emphasis on assessment
- Increased accountability
- Neediness of some learners
- Unmotivated learners
- Feeling without control in a climate of change

While teaching is not unique in involving stress, it is particular in that it involves a large number of personal interactions in conditions that are crowded, and with students who are energetic, spontaneous, perhaps immature and often preoccupied with their own concerns. According to Gleeson (2004): “overload is one of the most recurring problems” for teachers in Irish classrooms and other studies have reported that “at best, the teacher ends the day with sensory overload”. One study found that teachers engage in over 1,000 interpersonal interactions per day. Thus, sources of teacher stress can differ from those in other professions.

A US study of teacher stress (Richards 2012) found that the main sources of teacher stress were “teaching needy students without enough support”, feeling over-committed at work and taking work home. Other sources of stress mentioned included teaching unmotivated students, not having time to relax, the constant pressure of being “accountable” and a lack of control over school decisions. Other studies have found that 20% to 25% of teachers frequently experience stress. Teacher stress appears to be universal and appears across cultures.

The constantly changing environment of the classroom means that teachers must continually make quick decisions and it is only teachers themselves who appreciate the number and importance of these decisions. These decisions are often viewed by those outside the profession as unimportant, even though it has been recorded that adult individuals suffer lasting hurt and trauma due to actions taken by teachers. It follows that the effects of teacher stress can reach far beyond the teacher themselves, potentially having a lasting impact on learners.

## SIGNS OF STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES

Research reports the main manifestations of teacher stress as feeling physically exhausted much of the time and no longer being as idealistic or enthusiastic as before. Other signs of stress include having doubts about one's ability due to feeling overwhelmed, negative impact on personal relationships and frequent headaches, stomach pains, and/or high blood pressure. Interestingly and perhaps unsurprisingly these manifestations of teacher stress were significantly higher amongst teachers in schools of low socioeconomic status.

Below is a more general list of **symptoms of stress**:

### Symptoms of Stress

Cognitive	Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Concentration affected</li> <li>➤ Seeing things negatively</li> <li>➤ Anxious or racing thoughts</li> <li>➤ Constant worrying</li> <li>➤ Making mistakes, forgetting things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Moodiness</li> <li>➤ Irritability or short temper</li> <li>➤ Agitation, inability to relax</li> <li>➤ Feeling overwhelmed</li> <li>➤ Sense of loneliness and isolation</li> <li>➤ Depression or general unhappiness</li> <li>➤ Feelings of worthlessness</li> </ul>
Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Aches and pains, headaches</li> <li>➤ Diarrhoea or constipation</li> <li>➤ Frequent colds, infections, cold sores</li> <li>➤ Frequent urination</li> <li>➤ Dry mouth</li> <li>➤ Tiredness, low energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Eating more or less</li> <li>➤ Sleeping too much or too little</li> <li>➤ Isolating yourself from others</li> <li>➤ Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities</li> <li>➤ Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax</li> </ul>

### Coping with Stress

Individuals have different ways of coping with stress, some healthier and more effective than others. If you have listed the elements in your **Wellness Toolkit** (page 5) it can be helpful to look at them when under stress and try to use some of them to take care of yourself. When you are stressed, it's all too easy to forget them!

Studies of teachers under stress have found that the main coping strategies that teachers reported were having good friends and family, having a sense of humour, times of solitude, exercising, getting enough sleep and having a healthy diet, seeing stress as a problem that can be solved, having a positive attitude and letting things go.

## Stress-busting Tips for Teachers

Below is a summary of stress-busting tips for teachers, assembled from a wide range of sources

### Focus on what is in your control

Make a list of the things which are causing you stress. Now divide them into two lists: those which are within your control and those which are not in your control. Decide to focus on the things which are in your control. Put the others aside.

Remember the *Serenity Prayer*:

Grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.

For each of the stressors over which you have some control, brainstorm a list of possible solutions or at least ways of making the situation better than it is. Decide which one or two you are going to tackle first.

### Talk to someone positive

Sometimes we just need to talk through issues we're dealing with at school. This can be very helpful when trying to understand difficult situations or when trying to figure out solutions to problems. However, you must be careful who you speak with. There is nothing that can drag someone down faster than a group of disgruntled individuals. If every day you go to the staffroom and join a couple of teachers complaining about their jobs, it won't add to your well-being. Instead, find someone who has a positive outlook on life and talk about teaching with them. Often you don't need advice, just someone to listen to you.

### Write down three highlights of the day

Our minds tend to dwell on the negatives of the day -- the classes we had problems with, things that didn't go well. Decide to train yourself to see the positives. At the end of each day, write down three good things that happened or that you did well. A highlight can be quite a small thing. Get into the habit of noticing what is working and do more of that.

### Learn to say no

Teachers are often very bad at saying 'no' to jobs and tasks. It is of course very important to be co-operative and helpful, but if you are always overloaded, think about how this is contributing to your stress. If you are taking on too much, learn to say 'no' – politely of course.

### Be your own best friend

Positive self-talk is vital. What would you say to your best friend if they were having a bad day? Would you tell them they were a useless, outdated teacher who couldn't cope? Probably not. And yet we often say these things to ourselves. Make a decision to talk to yourself as you would talk to your best friend.

### Exercise!

Physical exercise produces endorphins—chemicals in the brain that act as natural painkillers— improves the ability to sleep, reduces stress and improves mood. It's good for mental as well as physical health. Regular exercise can be more effective than anti-depressants for mild to moderate depression and is a natural and effective anti-anxiety treatment. Of course when we feel overstretched and under pressure we tend to exercise less. The more stress you feel, the more you need to exercise!

### Get plenty of sleep

Learn more about the importance of sleep at <https://sleep.org>

### Take care of your nutrition

Eat healthily. You need your strength.

### Beware of using alcohol as a de-stressor

Drinking more than a moderate amount will only increase anxiety and in many ways has the potential to make things worse.

### Learn Relaxation Techniques / Mindfulness

You can practise relaxation exercises just about anywhere. Learn from mindfulness, yoga, breathing exercises and other methods that help your physical and mental facilities connect. Switching to calmer modes of dealing with stress will help you respond to situations more effectively.

Sharon Salzberg, an American teacher of mindfulness and meditation, published a book called *Real Happiness at Work: Meditations for Accomplishment, Achievement and Peace* (2015). She suggests many '*Stealth Meditations*', which take only a minute and can help you to centre or ground yourself during the day at work, e.g.,

- ★ As you sit down at your desk or workspace, spend a few moments just listening to the sounds around you and notice your reaction to them.
- ★ If you start to feel overwhelmed, take a quick, centring moment – as short as following three breaths – to connect with a deeper sense of yourself.
- ★ At the beginning of a meeting (or a class), silently offer the phrases of loving-kindness ('May you be well. May you be happy. May you live with ease.') to all in the group.

- ★ Set an intention for the day before beginning work, such as ‘May I treat everyone today with respect, remembering each person wants to be happy as much as I do’.
- ★ If you are nervous about speaking before a group, spend a few moments doing a loving-kindness meditation before you get up to speak. This can allay feelings you may have of feeling judged or measured by the group. They are no different from you.

### Leave Your Teaching at School

Be mindful of how much work you bring home. While it’s not always possible, try not to bring home work every night. You might want to consider going into school early so that you can complete your paperwork. Then you will be able to leave as soon as your workday is done. Every person needs that mental break from their work, so use the time in the evening for you and your family.

### Counselling support funded by DES

There is an Employee Assistance Programme funded by the Department of Education and Skills. Any DES employee can self-refer and s/he and/or family members will be entitled to four hour-long confidential counselling sessions. Phone Carecall on 1800 411 057 to arrange an appointment, which they try to provide within twenty miles from where you live, or contact the service by email [support@carecallwell-being.ie](mailto:support@carecallwell-being.ie). The service also runs a 24-hour helpline (1800 411 057).

## TIME MANAGEMENT

Teachers frequently experience time pressure as a source of stress – the pressure to cover a large curriculum and the related pressure to “deliver good results”. This is compounded in the current climate of change in FET, where teachers also experience greater demands for record-keeping and paperwork. One teacher referred to the “endless cycle – there is always something else to do!” It seems that many teachers feel that they are expected to do more than they have time to do.

The school day is externally structured for teachers and the timetabled periods delineated by the bell. However, when it comes to preparation and corrections, time management is down to the teacher and it seems that this work takes up a lot of personal time. In view of the fact that maintaining personal time and keeping work within boundaries are important factors in well-being and the prevention of burnout, managing time well is important in taking care of yourself. Daniel Kahneman, a well-known psychologist and Nobel prize-winner for economics, writes that, of all the things we can do, *‘time use may be the determinant of well-being that is most susceptible to improvement’*.

One helpful approach to time management is that of Stephen Covey, described in his book *First Things First* (1994). Covey divides work activity into four quadrants, organised by urgency and importance.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
I M P O R T A N T	<b>I</b>  <b>Fire fighting</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Crises</li> <li>➤ Pressing problems</li> <li>➤ Deadline-driven projects</li> </ul>	<b>II</b>  <b>Quality Time</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Prevention</li> <li>➤ Capability improvement</li> <li>➤ Relationship building</li> <li>➤ Recognising new opportunities</li> <li>➤ Planning</li> </ul>
U N I M P O R T A N T	<b>III</b>  <b>Distraction</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interruptions, some callers</li> <li>➤ Some mail, some reports</li> <li>➤ Some meetings</li> </ul>	<b>IV</b>  <b>Timewasting</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Trivia</li> <li>➤ Busywork</li> <li>➤ Some mail</li> <li>➤ Some phone calls</li> </ul>

Covey advises using the following process, which is holistic, including both your work and your personal life.

1. Consider what your priorities in life are. What is most important? What gives your life meaning?
2. Identify your roles (e.g. parent, partner, teacher, co-ordinator,...) with one important role being your own personal development (physical, social / emotional, mental, spiritual) which Covey calls 'sharpen the saw' and which is foundational for success in every other role. The list of roles should not be more than seven.
3. For weekly planning, select a Quadrant 2 goal for each role.
4. Create a decision-making framework for the week, scheduling your Quadrant 2 goals first. Covey uses the analogy of fitting small stones and large stones in a jar. If you put the 'big rocks' in first, the smaller stones will fit in around them. If you start with the small stones (less important activities) you won't be able to fit all the bigger stones into the jar.
5. After your most important goals (the big rocks) are scheduled into the week, you can make daily plans keeping your priorities in mind.

Alternatively, you can use the grid to look specifically at how effectively you are using your working time:

Many people find that most of their activities fall into quadrants I and III (Firefighting and Distraction). Quadrant II (Quality Time) is often under-used. Yet, Quality Time is exceptionally important in order to stay on top of your job. You need to carve out some time in Quadrant II (Quality Time – Important but not Urgent) rather than spending all your time in Quadrant I (Firefighting – Urgent and Important). Spending too much time in crisis management and responding to immediate demands will cause stress and burnout.

One way of trying this approach is a one – week assessment strategy. Make six copies of the grid (blank copy below) and use one grid for each day of the week, listing all activities and time spent. At the end of the week, combine the five individual days' data onto one summary grid (the 6<sup>th</sup> copy of the grid) and calculate the percentage of time spent in each quadrant. Then evaluate how well your time is being used and whether you need to re-organise.

**The Bottom Line: Do Important Things First!**

## TIME MANAGEMENT

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
I M P O R T A N T	I  Fire fighting	II  Quality Time
N O T  I M P O R T A N T	III  Distraction	IV  Timewasting

## RESILIENCE

Resilience, an important component of well-being, comes from the Latin word *resilio* – to jump back. It is used to describe the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. Resilience is more than just survival; it includes letting go, learning and growing as well as finding healthy ways to cope. It means developing a stock of inner resources to help you cope when things go wrong and with changes beyond your immediate control.

Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary. People commonly demonstrate resilience. Being resilient does not mean that a person doesn't experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have suffered major adversity or trauma in their lives. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress.

Teachers need resilience. A class may go badly but you have to start the next one straight away. Learners may be unappreciative of your efforts. You may have to deal with challenging behaviour. You may work in an environment that is unsupportive.

Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. Maureen Gaffney in her book *Flourish*, writes 'Remember that while some people may find it easier to bounce back from stress because of their temperament, *everybody* can increase their resilience. It just takes discipline and practice'.

### Ways to build resilience

- ★ **Make connections.** Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.
- ★ **Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.** You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events. Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better.
- ★ **Accept that change is a part of living.** Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you *can* alter.
- ★ **Look for opportunities for self-discovery.** People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and heightened appreciation for life.

- ★ **Nurture a positive view of yourself.** Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.
- ★ **Keep things in perspective.** Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.
- ★ **Appreciate** the positive things in your life.
- ★ **Maintain a hopeful outlook.** An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in life. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.
- ★ **Take care of yourself.** Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.
- ★ **Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful.** For example, some people write about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to trauma or other stressful events in their life. Meditation and spiritual practices help some people build connections and restore hope.

The key is to identify ways that are likely to work well for you as part of your own personal strategy for fostering resilience.

*(Adapted from American Psychological Association)*

## GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a sense of appreciation, ‘an interior attitude of thankfulness, regardless of life circumstances’. When things are going well in your life, it’s easy to be grateful, but gratitude is more important when things are going wrong. Happy people seem to have the knack, or have developed the habit, of appreciating the good things in their lives. Many studies have traced a range of impressive benefits to keeping a **gratitude journal** - writing down the things for which we’re grateful. Benefits include better sleep, fewer symptoms of illness, and more happiness.

The basic practice is straightforward. Usually people are simply instructed to record five things they experienced in the past week for which they’re grateful. The entries are supposed to be brief—just a single sentence—and they range from the mundane (“waking up this morning”) to the sublime (“the generosity of friends”). Some people like to write in their journal every day and find that beneficial, but for most people that might be overdoing it and in general it is found that writing once or twice per week is more beneficial than daily journaling.

## BOUNDARIES

Many people are drawn to teaching because they want to help people. When faced with needy and demanding learners it is not surprising that some teachers find themselves drawn into trying to help learners with problems and difficulties. This can have a draining effect on the teacher. Awareness of the importance of boundaries is essential. Boundaries shape teacher relationships with students and set limits on how much support might reasonably be expected. Boundaries protect teacher emotional well-being, defining the limits of their role and responsibility.

Many people will not have experienced appropriate boundaries in relationships earlier in their lives. This will also be the case for many of our learners, regardless of whether they have any particular mental health difficulties. As a result, these learners may have difficulties in maintaining appropriate boundaries with others. In these circumstances it is important for the teacher to manage the relationship within appropriate boundaries. Furthermore, boundaries need to be maintained consistently by each individual member of staff. There are many boundary areas – emotional, power, time and expertise, among others – which need to be managed.

T.S. Eliot, in his poem, *Ash Wednesday*, wrote “Teach us to care and not to care”. The idea that we should care to the extent that we can help and not to the point that we do harm to ourselves is one that is very challenging, but one that many of us could benefit from adopting. This concept is particularly pertinent to teaching, a profession in which education and care are central but time and resources are limited and the troubles and difficulties of learners are often beyond teachers’ control.

### How to maintain supportive boundaries

Below is some sensible advice adapted from the University of Sheffield Learning and Teaching Services (2015):

- ★ Start as you mean to go on. Explain your role, how you can be contacted, and the limits of your availability at the first meeting.
- ★ Stay within your own role and area of expertise. If a learner presents with a problem that would benefit from more expert/dedicated support, encourage the learner to access this.
- ★ There may be occasions when you might realise that you have been too rigid, other times that you have let your boundaries be too loose. This shouldn't be an occasion for blame. The important thing is to recognise what is happening and take some steps to reinstate appropriate boundaries.
- ★ If you are concerned about a learner, seek advice from colleagues/guidance counsellor. You do not need to identify the learner when seeking advice.

## FIVE WAYS TO WELL-BEING

Based on an extensive review of the evidence, five simple steps improve mental well-being:

### 1. Connect...

With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, where you learn or work, or in your local community. Think of these relationships as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in them. Building these connections will support and enrich everyday life.

### 2. Be active...

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising actually makes you feel good once you do it – sometimes it's just the thought of it that we struggle with. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

### 3. Take notice...

Of things around you. Be curious. Catch sight of beautiful or unusual things and stop for just a moment to take it in. Really notice the changes going on every day. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Don't do too many things at once. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

### 4. Keep learning...

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest or hobby – or take up a new one. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

### 5. Give...

Do something nice for someone – a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Laugh. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, your happiness and well-being, as linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you so you are much less likely to feel isolated, lonely or depressed.

Reproduced from Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C., Thompson, S. *'Five Ways to Well-being'* A report presented to the Foresight Project on communicating the evidence base for improving people's well-being. New Economics Foundation

### Useful References / Resources

Covey, S. (1994). **First Things First: to live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy.** Simon & Schuster.  
*Very good on time management and on setting priorities*

Gaffney, M. (2011). **Flourishing: How to Achieve a Deeper Sense of Well-being, Meaning and Purpose – even when Facing Adversity.** Penguin, Ireland.  
*Quite a lengthy book, but gives a good summary of positive psychology and strategies for well-being*

Gaynor, K. (2015). **Protecting Mental Health.** Veritas Publications.  
*An Irish publication, written by a clinical psychologist. Good background information and practical strategies, with an emphasis on cognitive behavioural approaches*

Germer, C. K. (2009). **The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions.** Guildford Press.  
*A good introduction to mindfulness, with an emphasis on practising loving kindness and self-compassion*

O'Connor, C. (2010). **The Courage to be Happy: A New Approach to Well-being in Everyday Life.** Gill Books.  
*An Irish publication, written by a psychologist. Looks at the 'who', 'why', 'what' and 'how' of happiness, with an individual approach.*

Salzberg, S. (2015). **Real Happiness at Work: Meditations for Accomplishment, Achievement and Peace.** Workman Publishing Co.  
*Gives many practical tips for dealing with stress and achieving personal fulfilment at work.*

Seligman, M. (2011) **Flourish: A New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being and How to Achieve Them.** Simon and Schuster.  
*Chapters 1, 2, 6 and 9 give a very good overview of current thinking and research in positive psychology.*  
1040

## Online Resources

### [www.alustforlife.com](http://www.alustforlife.com)

*founded by Niall Breslin (Bressie). Aimed at enabling people to improve their holistic wellness and also to educate on how the mind and body can be made more resilient. A well-designed website and a great resource. Includes some articles on teacher stress and well-being.*

### [www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu)

*Martin Seligman/University of Pennsylvania website. Information on Positive Psychology, with readings, videos, research reports, references and questionnaires.*

### [www.happyandwell.com.au](http://www.happyandwell.com.au)

*Australian website with a wide range of short and snappy articles on physical and mental well-being.*

### [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

**PERMA** (2012) Martin Seligman. *A 25-minute talk in which Seligman explains his PERMA theory of well-being and describes research findings on well-being and happiness.*

**Flourish** a new understanding of well-being (2012) Martin Seligman. *A 30-minute talk by Seligman on PERMA and on flourishing as opposed to mere alleviation of misery.*