

Useful Wellbeing Models for Coaching

Domain	Theory	Description
Individual	Tripartite model (Diener)	Focused on life satisfaction, positive and negative affect. Typically characterised as tapping into hedonic wellbeing. Diener argued that subjective wellbeing does not involve making value judgments by 'experts' on what a good life entails, such as proponents of 'eudaimonic wellbeing'.
	Psychological flow (Csikszentmihalyi)	Refers to the experience of being completely absorbed in an activity, with the ideal challenge – skill balance. Flow is a highly enjoyable experience linked to creativity, productivity and happiness.
	Six-factor model (Ryff)	Encompasses positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, and personal growth and development. This model is characterised as tapping into 'eudaimonic wellbeing', as distinct from 'hedonic' wellbeing.
	PERMA model (Seligman)	An integration of hedonic (affect) and eudaimonic (psychological wellbeing) theory. Encompasses positive emotion, engagement, social relationships, meaning and achievement all contribute to wellbeing.
	Self-determination (macro) theory (Deci & Ryan)	Autonomy, competence and relatedness as psychological needs essential for self-motivation, health and wellbeing, regardless of culture or stage of development. Emphasises importance of intrinsic motivation for psychological growth and development.
	'Sustainable' happiness	Focused on sustained positive change and improvements in wellbeing. This definition is distinct from other proposals linking to concepts of 'environmental sustainability', which focus on happiness and wellbeing within an environmental context. See below.
	Salutogenic theory (Antonovsky)	'Salutogenesis' is based on the Latin term 'salus' (health, well-being) and the Greek word 'genesis' meaning emergence or creation. The salutogenic concept emphasises a role for a 'sense of coherence' in managing and overcoming stress.
	Relational frame theory (RFT) (Hayes)	Relations between concepts as the foundations for human language. While not usually thought of as a theory of wellbeing, RFT underpins acceptance and commitment therapy, which researchers are increasingly drawing on – often in combination with principles from positive psychology – to promote values-based behavioural activation and exploration despite suffering.

Community	Social identity theory (Haslam)	Groups provide individuals with a sense of meaning and purpose with positive psychological consequences. This theory has led to 'The New Psychology of Health', which emphasises the importance of positive social ties and social relationships for health and wellbeing.
	Social wellbeing (Keyes)	The sense that society is meaningful and understandable (social coherence), provides an opportunity for growth (social actualisation), is something that one belongs to and is accepted by (social acceptance and integration) and that one can meaningfully contribute to it (social contribution).
	Social determinants of health (Marmot)	Social determinants include disability, poverty and loneliness, which are major determinants of health (and wellbeing). Role of health equity and social gradients are major concepts.
Environmental	Biophilia hypothesis (Wilson)	Core assumption is that human beings have a strong, innate affiliation with the biological world.
	Psycho-evolutionary theory (Ulrich)	Restorative influences of nature involve a shift toward more positive emotions, parasympathetic dominated responses (heart rate deceleration) and sustained – yet non-taxing – attention.
	'Sustainable' happiness and wellbeing (O'Brien)	Here 'sustainable happiness' is defined as individual, community, and/or global well-being that does not involve exploitation of other people, the environment, or future generations. Complementary proposals have been made by Kjell and Corral-Verdugo, to highlight interdependencies between the individual, others and nature, and explicit links between concepts like character strengths and pro-environmental behaviours.

Table from: Fisher, Z., Wilkie, L., Hamill, A. & Kemp A.H. (in press). *Theories of wellbeing, practical applications and implications for coaching*. In J. Passmore & B. Bajaj (Eds.) *The Wellbeing Coaches Handbook*. Routledge.