

THE PERMAH WELLBEING SURVEY TOOL

FOR YOUTH

LEARN MORE GUIDE

THEWELLBEINGLAB

A MICHELLEMCQUAID PROGRAM

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HOW MIGHT THE PERMAH WELLBEING SURVEY TOOL HELP?

We once asked Professor Martin Seligman, one of the world's leading wellbeing experts, what would be the best way to care for wellbeing in workplaces. He said … "Measure it. Then people will take action into their own hands."

Drs. Michelle McQuaid and Peggy Kern took up the challenge and in 2016 – with Professor Seligman's blessing – The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Tool was born. Since its launch, more than 128,360 surveys have been completed across 145 different countries and 1,177 different workplaces, communities, and schools. They tell us that The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Tool meets seven important requirements they have for measuring wellbeing:

- ☐ RELIABILITY – We collaborate closely with many of the world's leading wellbeing researchers to shape and continuously test and report on the reliability of The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey. For example, studies show that wellbeing is not a one-dimensional concept that can be reduced to a single number which is why we have used the PERMAH framework to create a multi-dimensional wellbeing approach.
- ☐ PRIVACY – We take privacy very seriously and all data gathered is de-identified, securely held, and never sold.
- ☐ CUSTOMIZATION – You can add tailored demographic and general questions to the Survey to gather and analyze data that is unique to your school context.
- ☐ PERSONALIZATION – Each young person who completes The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey immediately receives their own results in an easy-to-read report packed with personal and actionable insights. These reports help to build a shared wellbeing language and suggest evidence-based actions, making them a powerful intervention. The immediate provision of personal results improves the quality of data people provide through the survey..
- ☐ DOES NO HARM – The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey normalizes struggle across your school. Rather than encouraging perfect scores, the results give students permission to talk openly and honestly about what's working well, where they're struggling, and what they're learning about caring for their wellbeing.
- ☐ A SYSTEMS APPROACH – Once your students' results are in, you will receive a School Results Report PDF assessing your school's wellbeing experiences and behaviors at the "Me" (student), "We" (year level) and "Us" (school) levels. You also receive a de-identified CSV file so you can perform additional analysis and retain your data.
- ☐ STRATEGIC & REALISTIC GOALS – Given it is healthy for your students' levels of wellbeing to ebb and flow, rather than chasing ever-higher scores The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey helps you measure and build wellbeing capabilities so you can more actively and mindfully care for wellbeing, even in the midst of challenge and struggle. In addition, our global wellbeing experts are on hand if you have questions or want an independent perspective around how your data insights can be incorporated into your school wellbeing strategy.

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THE PERMAH WELLBEING SURVEY ASK?

MANDATORY QUESTIONS

- **What is your gender?**
  Female; Male; Non-Binary; Prefer Not To Answer.
- **What is your age?**
  Twelve; Thirteen; Fourteen; Fifteen; Sixteen; Seventeen; Eighteen; Over Eighteen.
- **What country do you live in?**
  (Full list of countries)
- **How do you describe your ethnicity?**
  Indigenous; Asian; Black/African American; White/Caucasian; Hispanic/Latinx; Middle Eastern or North African; Pacific Islander; Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial; Other; Prefer Not To Answer.
- **What year level are you in at school?**
  Grade 6; Grade 7; Grade 8; Grade 9; Grade 10; Grade 11; Grade 12, University/College/Trade School
- **How long have you attended this school?**
  Less than one year; 1 – 2 years; 3 – 4 years; 5 – 6 years; 7 – 8 years; 9 – 10 years; 11 – 12 years; Prefer Not To Answer.

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

Please advise our team if you wish to switch on these optional questions in your survey.

- **What type of school do you attend?**
  Traditional publicly funded school; Traditional privately funded school; Language immersion school; Private special education school; Religious school; Waldorf school; Charter school; Virtual or online school; Boarding school; Montessori school; Parochial school; Reggio Emilia school; Other.
- **How many students attend your school?**
  Less than 100 students; 101 - 300 students; 301 - 500 students; 501 - 700 students; 701 - 1000 students; 1000 + students.
- **How do you describe your sexual orientation?**
  Heterosexual; Gay or Lesbian; Bisexual; Transgender; Queer; 2-Spirit; Asexual; Other; Prefer Not To Answer.

WELLBEING QUESTIONS

Take a moment and consider how well you have felt and functioned at school over the past two weeks. Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, ranging from 0 (never, 0%) to 10 (always, 100%):

- I was deeply engaged and interested in what I was learning.
- My year level was a positive group to work with.
- I set and achieved clear goals.
- My year level valued learning and growth.
- My year level was a safe group to bring up problems and be honest about mistakes.
- I did not sleep well.
- I believed things would work out, even when they were difficult.
- My school was a positive place to be.
- I was encouraging and supportive of others.
- I knew my strengths and abilities - the things that I was good at and enjoyed doing.
- My year level did work that was valuable and worthwhile.
- I regularly sought feedback about my schoolwork.
- My school was encouraging and supportive of its students.
- My year level was interesting and engaging to work with.
- My teachers provided me with choices and options.
- I ate lots of vegetables and fruit.
- My school made a positive difference for others.
- My year level helped me feel physically healthy.
- My school set and achieved clear goals.
- My teachers provided me with the encouragement I needed to learn.
- I was able to change my behaviors in order to care for my wellbeing.
- My school performed well academically in my region.
- I played physically active games and sports.
- The schoolwork I did was valuable and worthwhile.
- I regularly used my strengths and abilities - the things that I was good at and enjoyed doing.
- I received help and support when I needed it.
- I prioritized daily habits that supported my wellbeing.
- I was clear on why I did the schoolwork I did.
- I felt my teachers didn't listen to me.
- My school was an interesting and engaging place to learn.
- My year level was encouraging and supportive of one another.

- The learning I did felt so important I found it hard to stop thinking about it.
- I performed well academically.
- I felt my teachers cared about me as a person.
- My school made efforts to support my physical health.
- My school created a comfortable learning environment.
- I was judgmental and critical of myself.
- I felt anxious at school.
- Physically, I felt strong and healthy.
- I felt strongly dedicated to my schoolwork.
- I felt like I was thriving.
- I felt energized by my schoolwork.
- I felt proud to be a part of my school.
- I felt able to manage my own wellbeing.
- I felt calm at school.
- I felt worn out by my schoolwork.
- I was satisfied with my school.
- I often felt alone and isolated at school.
- I felt excited about what I was learning at school.
- I was satisfied with my year level.
- I was satisfied with my learning at school.
- I felt like I was struggling.
- I felt it was best to keep my struggles to myself at school.
- I felt connected with others at school.
- I felt motivated to care for my wellbeing.
- I felt overwhelmed by the schoolwork I had to do.
- I felt safe at school to bring up problems and be honest about mistakes.
- I felt unable to ask my teachers for help with my schoolwork.
- I felt my teachers didn't understand me.
- Physically, I felt unsafe at school.
- I felt hopeful about my future.
- I was satisfied with my life.
- **Taking all things together, over the past two weeks I mostly I felt like I was:** Really struggling; Feeling on top of the world; Not feeling terrible, but just getting by; Living well despite some struggles.
- **When I'm struggling to care for my wellbeing at school the first person I reach out to is:** Someone in my class; Someone outside of my class; My teacher; My principal; School counsellor; Coach/mentor; Family; I would never tell anyone I was struggling.

- **The biggest cause of my struggles at school during the last two weeks has been:**
  Friends; Bullying; Boring school work; Difficult school work; Distractions; Bad behavior; Other.
- **The biggest barrier to improving my wellbeing over the last two weeks was:**
  Not enough time; Not enough money; Too much physical effort required; Too much mental energy required; Not sure how to start; Other.
- **When it comes to caring for my wellbeing, the three most valuable supports my school could provide are:**
  Wellbeing training and tools; Mental health programs; Wellbeing coaches; Mental health counsellors; Fitness trainers; Healthy food options; Nothing; Other.
- **Anything else you'd like to share?**
  (Free text)

WHAT IS THE PERMAH WELLBEING SURVEY TOOL'S RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY?

OUR THEORETICAL GROUNDING

The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey is grounded in the psychological theory originally proposed by Dr. Martin Seligman (2011) based on over twenty years of wellbeing studies. Dr. Seligman's theory outlines five essential factors that contribute to a person's sense of wellbeing: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment.

We (and many others, including the World Health Organization) believe that physical health is also a key part of wellbeing so we have added this measure to our study and with Dr Seligman's permission we refer to this model as "PERMAH" – adding the H for health.

Much like we attempt to describe the construct of weather by elements such as temperature, humidity, wind speed, and barometric pressure, the PERMAH elements attempt to explain wellbeing in a similar way (Seligman, 2018). The factors were included in the model by Dr. Seligman because each factor independently leads to wellbeing, can be pursued for its own intrinsic value and not as a means to an end, and can be defined and measured independently of all others (Seligman 2011).

Dr. Peggy Kern, one of The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Tool co-creators, and her colleagues (Butler & Kern, 2016) developed The PERMA Profiler to measure each of the five factors of PERMA (three items per factors, 15 items total) in addition to physical health, negative emotions, loneliness, and happiness. The Profiler has been translated into Turkish (Ayşe, 2018), Japanese (Watanabe et al., 2018), Greek (Pezirkianidis et al., 2019), Mandarin (Kern et al., 2018; Lai et al., 2018), and German (Wammerl et al., 2019) and been used in a range of research applications, including comparing population levels of wellbeing across countries (Iasiello et al., 2017; Khaw & Kern, 2015) and measuring the wellbeing of staff (Kern et al., 2014; Lovett & Lovett, 2016).

Much empirical research has been conducted to date on Dr. Seligman's wellbeing building blocks (Donaldson, 2019; Donaldson, Lee & Donaldson, 2019; Heshmati et al., 2020; Kern, Waters, Adler, & White, 2014; Watanabe et al., 2018), often using the PERMA Profiler. Some studies have found that rather than comprising five or six distinct building blocks of wellbeing, the PERMA Profiler surfaces a three-factor structure comprised of Positive emotion, Relationships-Meaning, and Accomplishment-Engagement (Khaw & Kern, 2015) or only two factors (Umucu et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2019). And Goodman et al. (2018) found that the PERMA building blocks were strongly associated with subjective wellbeing (SWB), and may even be synonymous and thus redundant as a wellbeing measure.

We have not chosen the PERMA wellbeing theory because we believe it has been conclusively proven as the roadmap to wellbeing; after all, good science is never proven but is an evolving process of ongoing learning and refinement. Rather, we have chosen it because we've found that Dr. Seligman's

assertion that the PERMA framework provides a useful, easy way for people to understand, measure, and take action about their wellbeing using evidence-based research and tools holds true. This finding was recently supported in a meta-analysis of positive psychology interventions in workplaces (Donaldson, Lee & Donaldson, 2019) that revealed PERMA-focused wellbeing interventions, because of their multidimensional approach to wellbeing, had a positive effect on work outcomes and wellbeing.

PSYCHOMETRIC VALIDITY

The measurement of psychological states can be challenging, especially as you seek to find a tool that is right for what you want to measure, while considering both your population and context. Questions such as "Does this measurement tool measure what it is designed to measure?" are common questions when exploring the measurement of psychological states. In our experience, sound and reliable research of our psychological states adopts ongoing, reflective practices to measure validity and reliability to address such questions, giving confidence to their user – and this is our commitment.

The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey was originally based on the PERMA Profiler survey items. However, as organizations asked us to gather measures at a team and organizational level, we worked with Dr Kern to create additional items to gauge these factors. In addition, we have partnered with other leading researchers including Dr. Richard Ryan to add validated measures on self-determination theory.

We test the psychometric validity of The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey on a regular basis. The latest results from July 2021 show that scale reliability and internal consistency of individual factors are good (alpha >0.8 for all six factors, with over 3,000 respondents across different surveys). The survey shows great consistency with an alpha of 0.97.

PERMAH FACTOR	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	N
PERMAH (COMBINED)	0.97	3051
POSITIVE EMOTIONS	0.87	3051
ENGAGEMENT	0.88	3051
RELATIONSHIPS	0.83	3051
MEANING	0.83	5641
ACCOMPLISHMENT	0.85	5641
HEALTH	0.82	4568

CONSISTENCY OVER TIME

Wellbeing is an ongoing journey, not a one-time destination, and as such, we look to the consistency of responses and relationships within the data over time. Therefore, the reliability of The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey is amplified when it is used to map wellbeing over time, rather than a single time point.

External events such as the COVID-19 pandemic or large institutional issues may cause data to look different, and we are able to take these events into consideration when assessing the data. This is why many of our clients have welcomed mapping states of wellbeing over time, as valuable insights and recommendations can be made that would otherwise remain unsurfaced. This includes the surprising truth about wellbeing whereby we see wellbeing comprising both thriving and struggle, and insights into the amplifiers of wellbeing (ability, motivation, and psychological safety).

CONSISTENCY ACROSS POPULATIONS

In addition to the data collected via The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Tool, we also invest periodically in gathering randomized nationally representative survey data in Australia, Canada, the United States, and a growing list of other countries to understand population-level patterns. This data is published in freely available reports and has been added as population norms in the survey for comparisons. This wealth of data allows us to further validate our measures and provide representative population norms within the survey.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CONTINUED RESEARCH

Whilst the landscape of research is dynamic and ever-changing, with new insights constantly emerging, our tool continues to carefully and thoughtfully consider the fundamental building blocks upon which it is evidenced-based – including the generation of questions, theoretical connections, validity, and reliability – and is co-created with experts in the field.

HOW DOES THE PERMAH WELLBEING SURVEY TOOL WORK?

STUDENTS	SCHOOL



SURVEY SET-UP

- Provide the PERMAH Client Services team with additional survey questions and data collection dates.
- Introduce your school to The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey.

SURVEY INVITATION

- Email your school's unique URL to students or use the unique URL in classes for students to take the survey.

SURVEY COMPLETION

- Login using your school's unique URL and complete the survey in less than five minutes.
- Immediately receive a personal Wellbeing Results report.
- Creating a personal Wellbeing Plan.
- NOTE: Students can only complete the survey once during a collection period. Outside of these periods they will be able to take the survey as many times as they wish

SURVEY FOLLOW-UP

- Email a reminder to take the survey.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

- Two business days after the survey collection period is closed your School Wellbeing Results PDF report and CSV file will be provided.
- Share your school results.

RE-TAKE SURVEY

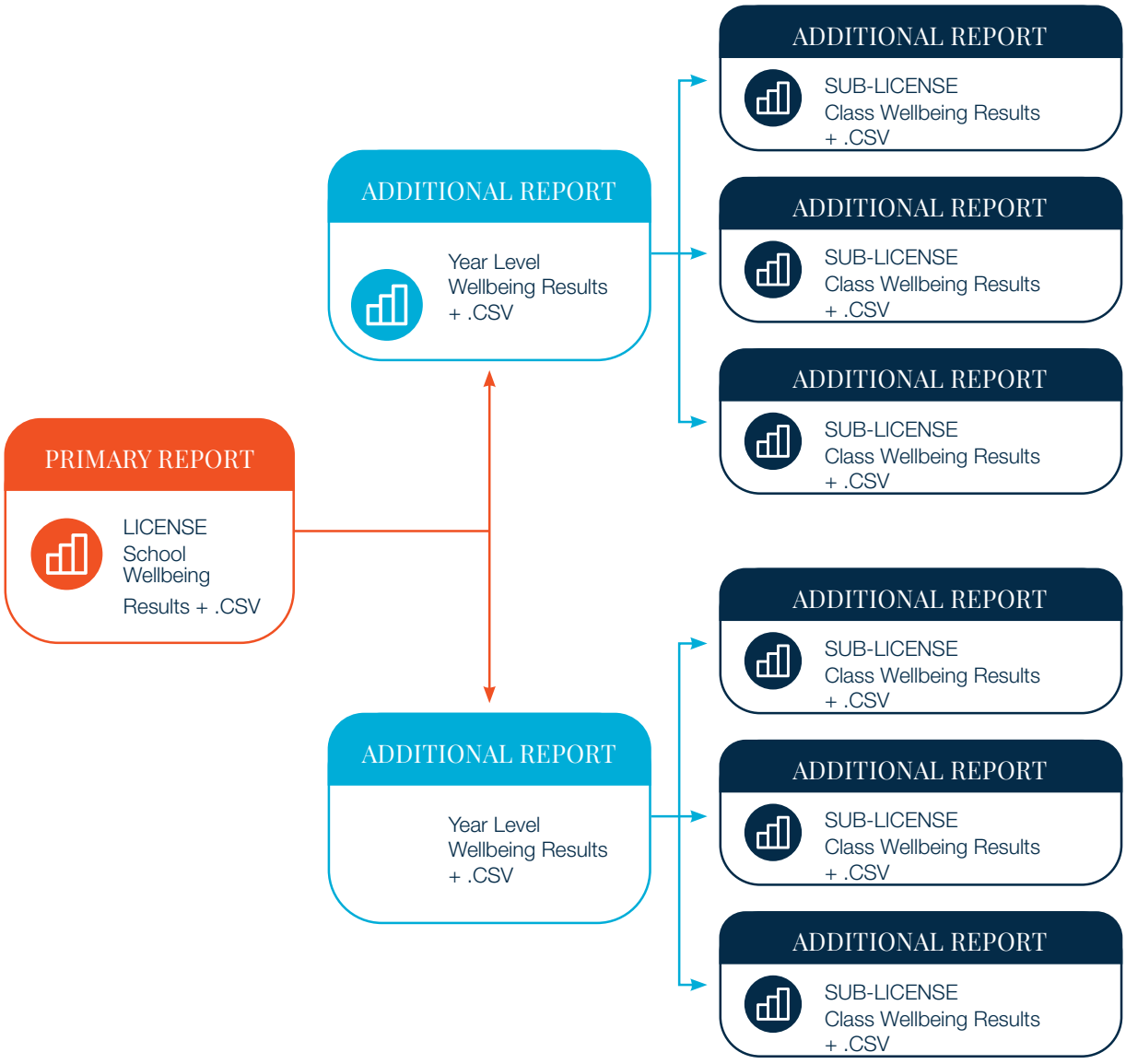
- Students can re-take the survey as they desire.

HOW CAN YOU CUSTOMIZE THE PERMAH WELLBEING SURVEY TOOL?

LICENSES

The quickest and most affordable way to ensure teachers and leaders in your school receive a Wellbeing Results PDF report is to add additional licenses.

How many licenses might you need? The easiest way to figure this out is to identify the teachers or leaders who you might want to receive an immediate Wellbeing Results PDF report. For example, you may want:



HOW DO WE MANAGE DATA SECURITY?

Our shared success depends on people feeling comfortable to provide open and honest answers about caring for their wellbeing. Thus, we highly value the trust you and your school place in us by allowing us to gather your data, and we take our privacy and security obligations extremely seriously.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Our reporting functions seek to protect individual confidentiality while still giving your school the power to thoroughly analyze the results gathered. We do this by:

- DE-IDENTIFIED DATA – Each individual survey is tied to a survey ID number. This ensures people can only complete the survey once during a data collection period. It also allows us to track student responses across multiple time periods. At no time can you or our analysts connect student names or email addresses with their data.
- AGGREGATED RESULTS – The School Wellbeing Results Report provides only aggregated data results. If you have fewer than 30 survey respondents, the PDF report does not provide a demographic summary of participants to protect the privacy of individuals in smaller samples.
- DEMOGRAPHICS UPON REQUEST – The school CSV data file does not include demographic data (except any demographic questions you choose to add). This data can be made available upon request and a conversation with our privacy team to ensure you understand your obligations to protect the confidentiality of people's responses and do not unintentionally breach privacy through your analysis.

For our complete Privacy Policy please **click here**.

This policy is also published on the PERMAH Wellbeing Survey website as part of the Terms of Use that all users consent to when they create a Survey login.

SECURITY

We store personal information (names and emails), demographic information, survey responses, and survey results and have implemented technical, organizational, and administrative systems, policies, and procedures to ensure the security, integrity, and privacy of your data in accordance with government requirements. For example:

- DATA ENCRYPTION - All data is stored on secure website servers using the latest best practice methods for security. All data is passed using SSL encryption.
- MULTIPLE SERVERS – All personal data is stored in two different databases which are split across two different servers. In addition, Survey response data is stored on a third server so that personal data and survey response data are always kept separate.

- SERVER LOCATION – Our servers are located in Australia in buildings protected by 24x7 human security, biometrics, access control man traps, bullet proof lobbies, and video surveillance.

Gathered data is stored indefinitely unless we are asked by individuals or organizations to remove it.

We are currently completing ethics research approval through the University of Melbourne to use the de-identified data we gather from survey participants for research purposes to continue improving the survey reliability, providing benchmarks, and sharing what we are learning about wellbeing in research reports and journals. At no time are individuals or organizations identified through this research. If you do not wish for your data to be used for research purposes, please let us know.

We only use people's personal data to provide them with the information they have requested from the Survey (i.e., results reports, wellbeing plans), and additional resources directly related to the Survey that may support their wellbeing (i.e., free podcasts, cheat sheets, books, e-books, posters, toolkits, or invitations to educational events). We never provide or sell personal data to third parties.

To learn more about how we keep your data safe and secure, please contact us at **concierge@permahsurvey.com**.

NEED MORE HELP?

If you would like to discuss how The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Tool could work for your school, you can **book a meeting with us**.