The challenge of defining wellbeing

Psychological well-being can also be affected negatively, as is the case with a degrading and unrewarding work environment, unfulfilling obligations and unsatisfying relationships. Social interaction has a strong effect on well-being as negative social outcomes are more strongly related to well-being than are positive social outcomes.[8] Childhood traumatic experiences diminish psychological well-being throughout adult life, and can damage psychological resilience in children, adolescents, and adults.[9] Perceived stigma also diminished psychological well-being, particularly stigma in relation to “The challenge of defining wellbeing”. International Journal of Wellbeing. 2 (3): 222–235.

THE CHALLENGE OF DEFINING WELLBEING
Rachel Dodge, Annette P. Daly, Jan Huyton, Lalage D. Sanders

ABSTRACT

Wellbeing is a growing area of research, yet the question of how it should be defined remains unanswered. This multi-disciplinary review explores past attempts to define wellbeing and provides an overview of the main theoretical perspectives, from the work of Aristotle to the present day. The article argues that many attempts at expressing its nature have focused purely on dimensions of wellbeing, rather than on definition. Among these theoretical perspectives, we highlight the pertinence of dynamic equilibrium theory of wellbeing (Headey & Wearing, 1989), the effect of life challenges on homeostasis (Cummins, 2010) and the lifespan model of development (Hendry & Kloep, 2002). Consequently, we conclude that it would be appropriate for a new definition of wellbeing to centre on a state of equilibrium or balance that can be affected by life events or challenges. The article closes by proposing this new definition, which we believe to be simple, universal in application, optimistic and a basis for measurement. This definition conveys the multi-faceted nature of wellbeing and can help individuals and policy makers move forward in their understanding of this popular term.

KEYWORDS
Definition, equilibrium, challenges, resources

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• There are currently no refbacks.
which the wider environments impede or facilitate such actions. Happiness, Wellbeing and Social Justice (the other conference theme). • Bentham’s utilitarianism: the greatest happiness principle • Some implications for justice, but consequentialist • A stronger foundation for social justice requires some notion of primary. goods (Rawls), capabilities (Sen), basic needs (THN) • Thus concept of objective wellbeing or ‘welfare’ also remains central to the. search for just social pol