

Social And Mental Wellbeing

How are they measured in NSHD?

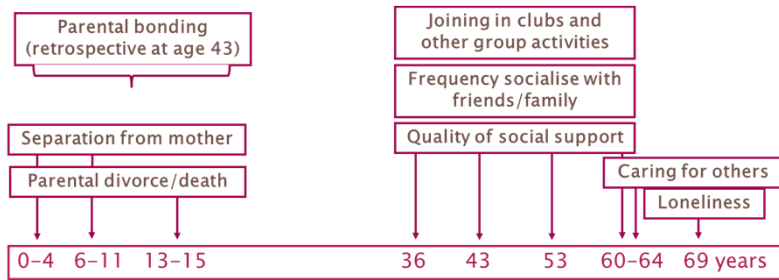
Social wellbeing

- Refers to high quality social relationships and having adequate levels of social contact
- Is a key part of quality of life
- Is linked to increased survival (Holstad 2010)

Mental wellbeing

- Refers to how people think and feel about their lives
- Includes feeling satisfied with life, experiencing positive emotions and realising one's potential
- Is valued as more important than money and as important as physical health, according to polls (Diener 2000; von Faber 2001)

Figure 1. Social relationships measures in NSHD



Unlike physical measures, such as blood pressure, wellbeing can only be measured by asking questions about how you feel.

We are looking at factors from childhood and adulthood that help us understand social and mental wellbeing in later life.

- Nowadays wellbeing is established as an important part of health, with many researchers investigating how people feel.
- NSHD was at the forefront of this, with measurements of wellbeing first taken when study members were just 13.

Measuring wellbeing

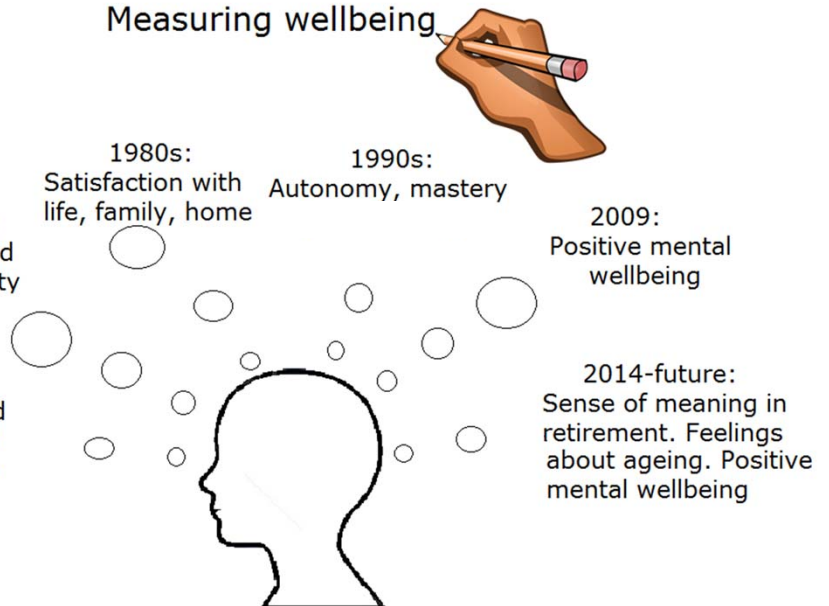


Figure 2. Mental wellbeing measures in NSHD

Wellbeing research in the news

Children whose parents are less controlling lead happier lives says study

Study tracked 5,000 people since birth in 1946 and highlights how parenting can have long-term impact on wellbeing through to old age

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Extroverts Live Happier Lives

HELLO MY NAME IS Extrovert

Can you really prosper the happiness of someone's life based on his or her personality? A new study says yes, which brings to mind the engraving "I try to live of my own accord, being a winged man in that proverbial moulding."

"Personality dispositions by the time of early adulthood have an enduring influence on wellbeing decades later," concludes the research team, led by Catherine Cole at the University of Southampton.

Specifically, researchers who followed a large group of people over 60 years report strong links between the key personality traits, the researchers' group definition and the participant level of involvement as they approach senior citizens' care.

Researchers found "strong, positive effects on wellbeing" they report in the journal of research on personality. Extroverts, in contrast, had a negative impact, due to its association with "more mental and physical health."

Cole and her colleagues measured data on 4,500 people collected by the National Survey for Health and Development, conducted by the U.K.'s Medical Research Council. All were born in 1946, they completed a survey personality inventory at age 15, and again at age 56.

Extroversion was assessed by determining their sociability, energy and "activity measures." Neuroticism was assessed by such measures as emotional stability, mood, and anxiety.

Overall, when the participants were in the 60s, 52% of them entered a state of "depression" meaning well-being level of "substantial" levels. They also reported on their mental and physical health. Their answers point to a distinct pattern: "Those who are extroverts, especially those who are extroverts, tend to be a better predictor of wellbeing."

Neuroticism, in contrast, predicted poorer levels of wellbeing, but it did so indirectly. Being neurotic was more susceptible to psychological distress than the "well-being" in later years, poorer physical health," the researchers note.

As the researchers point out, a feeling of wellbeing that continues throughout life has been associated with better mental and physical health. Lower neuroticism, and a higher level of extroversion, were also associated with better mental and physical health. The researchers note that, in the future, researchers should study the link between personality and health, and how it may be related to other factors.

So, to increase your wellbeing, there are good reasons to be an extrovert. The researchers note that, in the future, researchers should study the link between personality and health, and how it may be related to other factors.

What factors across life are associated with mental ill health or wellbeing

In childhood

- Emotional & behavioural problems
- Low cognitive ability
- Crowded housing
- Parental divorce
- Separation from mother
- Neglect and low parental care
- Slower neurodevelopment

In adulthood

- Socioeconomic disadvantage
- Marital dissolution
- Other stressful life events
- Low physical capability

In childhood

- Happiness, sociability, fewer emotional problems
- High cognitive ability
- High extraversion
- Low neuroticism
- Fewer childhood illnesses
- High parental care & low parental psychological control

In adulthood

- Socioeconomic advantage
- Employment, job satisfaction
- Married, low marital stress