



SEARCH_{ing}

for things to do to boost

FAMILY WELLBEING?

A COLLECTION OF IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES
TO SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY'S WELLBEING BASED
AROUND THE VISIBLE WELLBEING
SEARCH PATHWAYS

VISIBLE WELLBEING™
Professor Lea Waters AM PhD



STRENGTHS

Strengths are positive personal characteristics, including personality traits, psychological abilities, moral qualities and talents, that feel natural and enjoyable to use.

SOME WAYS TO WORK WITH STRENGTHS AT HOME...

Strength Games

Download the following games from the Strengths Exchange website to play with your kids:

- Strengths and ladders
- VIA-ingo

<http://www.the-strengths-exchange.com.au/resources.html>

Pick a Strength & Pick a Movie

- Pick a strength for the day and see if you can find a movie you think it might be used in.
- After watching the movie discuss with your kids when you noticed the strength in the movie, were there any other strengths that you noticed?
- How did the characters use their strengths – what happened as a consequence?

Strengths Card Activities

If you have a set of Strength Cards, try one of the following activities:

- **Card Pick:** have each family member randomly pick a card from the deck and chat about the strengths that were picked. Ask family members to commit themselves to practising the strengths that were picked during their day. This activity promotes strengths flexibility.
- **Strengths Growth:** have family members choose a strength they would like to grow and get better at. Use the natural opportunities that arise during the day to promote their chosen strength. This activity promotes strengths development.
- **Strengths Artwork:** Pick a card and then get creative! Draw, paint, or create a piece of art that represents that strength. This activity promotes strengths awareness.

There are many versions of strengths cards you could use, here's a link to Lea's shop to access her cards - and check out her online strength-based parenting course ...

<https://www.leawaters.com/shop/>

Not sure what your strengths are? If you haven't already done it, get the family to do the VIA strength survey to find out your top strengths. The survey is available free for adults and kids 13 and up. If you have younger kids, look at the list of strengths on the site and see if you can work out what their top strengths are...

<https://www.viacharacter.org>

EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Being present with one's emotions and being able to identify, understand and manage one's emotions (i.e., reduce negative emotions and increase positive emotions), is a key aspect of positive functioning.

SOME WAYS TO WORK WITH EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT AT HOME...

Feelings Chart

Print out a 'How are you feeling today' chart and use it for check-ins during the day – put it on your fridge and have a magnet for each person that they can move around.

E.g., <https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/520939881876384054/>

Mood Music

Create a mood boosting playlist for the family and pump it out when you notice you need a lift.

Emotion Charades

Get ready for games night and have a game of Emotion Charades. To prepare, print or write out a list of emotions on paper, chop them up and put them into a bucket. Have family members choose a random emotion from the bucket which they then have to act out. The family members in the audience have to guess the emotion based on body language and facial expressions.

Share the Good & Foster Gratitude

Amplify the good times, when you feel a positive emotion such as love/awe/joy/pride – name it and share it with your family – tell them what's making you feel this way and let the emotion become positively contagious. Put a blank piece of paper on your fridge and have family members write what they feel grateful for. Your goal is to fill the piece of paper by the end of the week.

For more about how positive emotions can become contagious watch Lea's Tedx Talk.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80U_KwX0iU&feature=emb_logo

The better we are at naming emotions, the better chance we have of being able to manage those emotions.

To find out more about emotions and how we can get better at recognising them visit...

<https://do2learn.com/organizationtools/EmotionsColorWheel/index.htm>

ATTENTION & AWARENESS

Attention is our ability to focus, whether on inner aspects of self, such as emotions and physical sensations, or on external stimuli (e.g., the teacher's lesson in a classroom). Awareness refers to the ability to pay attention to a stimulus as it occurs. Wellbeing is improved when individuals are aware of, and can consciously direct, their attention.

SOME WAYS TO WORK WITH ATTENTION & AWARENESS AT HOME...

Savouring

Savour the good, notice the simple pleasures in life and take a moment to really feel them. Maybe the warmth of the morning sun, the smell of your morning coffee, the connection in a twinkling smile. Be in the moment and then take a mental snapshot so you can savour it again later.

Mindful Moments

Use moments of mindfulness in your everyday doings – like take the time to breathe slowly when washing your hands, or find a time when you can come together as a family and have focused attention on a sound, a thought, a prayer etc. Some mindfulness resources:

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app>

<https://www.headspace.com>

Game Flow

Play a board or card game – find a game that gives your family the opportunity to get into a state of flow and connection. Here are some indoor game ideas you could try:

<https://whatmomslove.com/kids/active-indoor-games-activities-for-kids-to-burn-energy/>

Spicks and Specks

Practice being able to focus attention and not get distracted by playing the Spicks and Specks game “What’s that Song”. This game helps to develop their ability to narrow their attention onto a specific target. This game requires you to sing lyrics from one source (can be another song, a book, or poem) to the tune of a different song. Family members then try to guess the song by the tune. An adaptation to this activity can be to use any piece of music and spend time focusing on the sound of each instrument.

Can't get your kids to sit still long enough?

Don't worry, research by Professor Lea Waters shows that even if we can practice mindfulness as parents, by default it helps out our kids too!

<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/easing-your-child-s-back-to-school-worries>

RELATIONSHIPS

A child/teen's social skills play an important role in allowing him/her to develop nourishing relationships with others. Understanding and managing our relationships with others is a key pathway to wellbeing.

SOME WAYS TO WORK WITH RELATIONSHIPS AT HOME...

Active Constructive Responding (ACR)

Notice the little moments of good in your family and amplify them with an active constructive response - your child may be excited because they just built a new Lego tower or your teen has been invited to go the movies with a friend - notice it, show authentic interest, ask questions and call out any of their strengths that came into play. Here's an [example of ACR in action](#) used to help out the US Army troops - can you relate?

Relationship Rituals

Capitalise on the rituals you already have or create new ones that you can enjoy together e.g. bathtime, book reading, Sunday morning bunch or watching a series together. Neuropsychology research shows that when you have a bonding moment with your child it increases oxytocin in both you and your child. These micromoments of positivity create brain coupling which is when the two brains become emotionally in sync.

Three Good Things

Remember to practice gratitude for what we have and the people around us. One short check in you can do before bedtime is the "Three Good Things and Who Contributed" exercise. Choose a time in the past to reflect on, and recall three good things that happened to you during that time. Then think about what other people contributed in order for those three good things to occur. This helps us remember and value the importance of those close connections.

RAK Attack

Random Acts of Kindness (RAKs) are almost always guaranteed to bring a smile to someone's dial. Brainstorm with your kids to come up with a spontaneous action that directs kindness at another person, such as giving them a drawing, motivational statement or helpful act <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/for-educators>

When we see someone being kind, it inspires us to do good deeds for others too. In the research this is known as 'moral elevation'. What kind acts have you noticed in the media recently - how did it make you feel when you saw it? More about the elevation effect here...

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2020/mar/20/moral-elevation-now-is-the-time-for-the-best-of-humanity-video>

COPING

Having the resilience to cope with adversity is an essential life skill. Coping can be thought of as being able to balance the demands of life with the resources we have to manage those demands, and being able to bounce back when we get thrown off balance.

SOME WAYS TO WORK WITH COPING AT HOME...

Silver Linings

Draw some clouds on paper and ask each member of your family to draw or write inside their cloud the up-side of going through a difficult experience. Go round and share what everyone has done and see if you can connect your silver linings together with a common (silver) thread.

Treasured Values Chest

Make a Treasured Values Chest - Having a sense of meaning helps to build resilience when times are tough. What are the things you value together as a family? Create a special treasure chest/box with bits of paper beside it where each family member can write/draw things that they value and add it to the box. After a few days open the box at dinnertime and see what your family values as a collective. Use this to start a conversation about things we can do to ensure our actions are consistent with our values, as the things we value often give us meaning.

SEE/HEAR/FEEL

Don't forget to use the SEE/HEAR/FEEL practice to check in with each other. What do you see, what do you hear, what do you feel...during the good times and the bad? This will help make your family's wellbeing visible so you can better see when members need a little extra support.

Breathing Helps us Cope

Before doing a breathing activity, ask your kids to rate their stress levels out of 10 before the exercise and after.

- Activity 1: Pay attention to your in-breath and out-breath and try to keep your focus on this for 1 minute. Notice how your body releases tension.
- Activity 2: Ask your kids to take a deep in-breath for 3 seconds and then release the out-breath slowly for 4 seconds. Keep this pattern of 3:4 going for 1 minute.

Sometimes coping means practising a little 'self-care' and not feeling like you're being selfish doing it. When we take the time out to nurture ourselves and refill our bucket, we are better able to respond to, and care for, the needs of others. More on self-compassion here...

<https://www.mindful.org/the-transformative-effects-of-mindful-self-compassion/>

HABITS & GOALS

Habits are those automatic processes that we do without even thinking about them – they can be both beneficial and detrimental to our wellbeing. Knowing how to break bad, and create good, habits can help us progress towards our goals. When we set goals it can provide us with a sense of purpose, mastery and direction in life.

SOME WAYS TO WORK WITH HABITS & GOALS AT HOME...

Family BHAGs (pronounced “bee-hag”)

Do you have a goal you'd like to achieve as a family? Goals tend to work well when they are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), but if you make it a BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal), it could drive you to even greater heights! What's your family's BHAG this year? Brainstorm this with your kids.

If-Then

Think about what habits you might need to form to bring your BHAG to fruition. To make a habit stick, be specific about when and how you are going to do it and make an implementation intention with an 'if-then' plan.

E.g., If ...(so and so happens)...then I will ...(decide on how you will overcome it).

Habit CARs

Another way to make a habit stick is to use a CAR (Cue/Action/Reward) to get you there! Consider the Cue/Action/Reward (CAR) for your family's new habits and try to tack the cue onto something related in your usual routine.

Cue: What could be a trigger to help you remember to do your habit? See if you can attach it to a related habit that you already have e.g., if you want to start flossing, use brushing your teeth as a good related cue.

Action: This is the habit you that you want to create e.g., flossing.

Reward: A reward doesn't have to be big, just something to trigger a little dopamine to make you feel good. In the flossing example it could be as simple as savouring the feeling of your super clean teeth.

When it comes to goals, it turns out that it is the journey and not the destination that has the greater impact on our wellbeing. Research shows that 'goal striving', especially when centred around our values, gives our happiness levels a great boost. So don't be too hard on yourself if things don't go exactly to plan...
<https://www.forbes.com>

FAQs

What is Visible Wellbeing (VWB)?

Visible Wellbeing is an approach developed by Prof. Lea Waters, used by schools around the globe to help teachers and students see and manage their wellbeing more clearly. The approach combines three areas of Prof. Waters' expertise: Positive psychology, education and organisational psychology, to provide schools with a range of strategies to support the wellbeing of both staff/teachers and students.

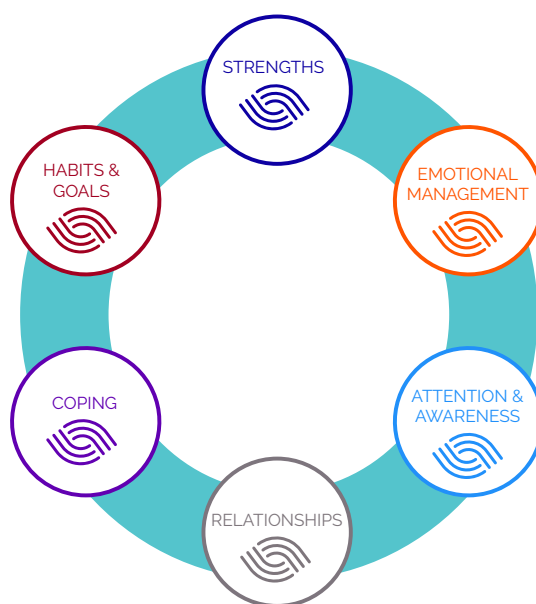
Through using the approach, students are taught to use simple techniques and activities to shift wellbeing from a subjective, internal experience to a more tangible, observable phenomenon that is visible for others to see. When wellbeing becomes visible it becomes a resource for learning. By teaching in a way that makes wellbeing visible, students learn how their emotions influence their learning, see patterns in their wellbeing and can draw from a tool-kit of strategies to support their wellbeing during times of need. VWB is an evidence based approach underpinned by the SEARCH framework's six pathways to wellbeing.

What is the SEARCH Framework?

SEARCH is a data-driven, wellbeing framework developed from a multi-year, multi-study project led by Professor Lea Waters AM, PhD, based on science from positive psychology and positive education. The SEARCH framework has been developed and published in academic journals and has been adopted by schools in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Brussels and India.

SEARCH covers six over-arching pathways to wellbeing: strengths, emotional management, attention & awareness, relationships, coping, habits & goals.

The SEARCH framework is the result of three key stages of science conducted by Professor Waters: 1) a large scale published bibliometric review of the field of positive psychology that analysed 18 years of psychological research from 18,400 studies to see what the science tells us about higher-order pathways to wellbeing (Rusk & Waters, 2015), 2) an action research project involving ten schools to road test the data-driven, meta-framework (Waters, 2017) and 3) a systematic review of school intervention studies involving 35,888 students from Australia, NZ, Europe, the UK, Asia and North America demonstrating the effectiveness of the framework and each individual pathway on student wellbeing and student learning (Waters and Loton, 2019).



FAQs

Is Visible Wellbeing only for schools?

No, Visible Wellbeing can be used for families and organisations as well. It is an approach that is relevant to anyone hoping to support wellbeing, and reap the benefits of having good wellbeing.

Who is Professor Lea Waters?

Professor [Lea Waters](#) AM, PhD, is an Australian academic, psychologist, author and speaker who holds a PhD in Organizational Psychology and is a world expert in School Psychology and Parenting. She is the Director of the teacher training program [Visible Wellbeing](#) and has developed [student e-wellbeing resources](#) for teachers to deliver to students via online and virtual classrooms.

Professor Waters was the Founding Director of the [Centre for Positive Psychology](#), University of Melbourne where she has held an academic position for over 20 years. She currently also holds a position on the Science Board of The University of California, [Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center](#). Lea has published over 110 scientific publications and has been awarded academic prizes for research excellence by the American Academy of Management and the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management.

In 2015, Professor Waters was listed as one of Australia's Top 100 Women of Influence by the Financial Review. In 2020, Lea was honoured by the Governor-General of Australia and made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) which is one of the highest civilian honours in Australia. She was made a member based on her leadership in psychology, education and the mental health sector in Australia.

Lea served as a Past President of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) (2017-2019) and is a Board member of IPPA as well as being the Patron for Flourishing Education Japan and the Ambassador for Positive Education Schools Association.

Lea's parenting book, '[The Strength Switch](#)' was the top release on Amazon in the parenting category and was listed in Top Reads for 2017 by Berkeley University's Greater Good Science Centre. It has been translated into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Hungarian, Arabic, Spanish, French and Russian. Lea's work is featured in the Wall Street Journal, [TIME.com](#) Magazine, The Washington Post, The Atlantic, the Toronto Globe, the Guardian (UK and Australia) and more. Her TEDx talk, [Warning: Being positive is not for the faint hearted!](#), explores how we can use social media to have a positive impact on others' wellbeing and has been viewed more than 130,000 times.

For more information about Professor Lea Waters' research and her services to families, schools and organisations visit www.leawaters.com

FAQs

Is there anything else we can do as a family?

Looking for other activities to do with your kids? Lea's online course is packed with activities to help your family work with and amplify their strengths

Her book is a best seller with families all across the world!



STRENGTH SWITCH

Learn how to become a strength-based parent with practical activities and tutorials in this 5 week online course based on Prof Lea Waters' (PhD) game changing book, *The Strength Switch*.



The Book



The Online Course

Find out how to throw the "Strength Switch" and help your children build resilience, optimism and achievement.

www.strengthswitch.com

10% Course discount with code: 10OFF
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