

### PARENT/GUARDIAN/CARER PULL-OUT

Please remove this centrefold carefully to avoid damaging the staples!



This short guide is designed to give parents/guardians/carers a brief introduction to the *Wired for Well-Being* programme and help them to support adolescents as they complete the programme.

**Research shows that having a high level of well-being is the greatest predictor of happiness and success in life for both adults and young people.**

However, our young people face ever-increasing challenges and demands as they grow into adulthood. There is a vital need to equip them with the skills and strategies that will help them to flourish and thrive despite these challenges. The *Wired for Well-Being* programme aims to introduce adolescents to these evidence-based skills, drawn from the fields of Positive Psychology and Neuroscience, in order to develop positive well-being habits for life. It is a multi-year programme with eight lessons per year level.

The programme has been created to equip young people with the skills they need to become resilient and to thrive in life.

## Background to the Programme Concepts

### Positive Psychology

Positive Psychology is the science of well-being. It was founded by Professor Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania in 1998. He called for more research to be conducted into the components of well-being and flourishing. Positive Psychology is therefore the study of well-being, resilience and optimal human functioning. It is founded on the concept of identifying and developing personal strengths and competencies, as opposed to correcting weaknesses. Positive Psychology uses evidence-based interventions that help individuals not only to cope, but to thrive and engage with life on an optimal level, whenever possible.

### Neuroscience and Neuroplasticity

Neuroscience is the study of the brain and nervous system. Neuroplasticity is the concept that the structure of the brain is continuously changing throughout life, through our habits, thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Adolescence is a critical period for neuroplasticity as there is still a lot of scope for the brain to develop and grow. By educating students about this process they can make the most of these opportunities and steer this process in a positive direction.

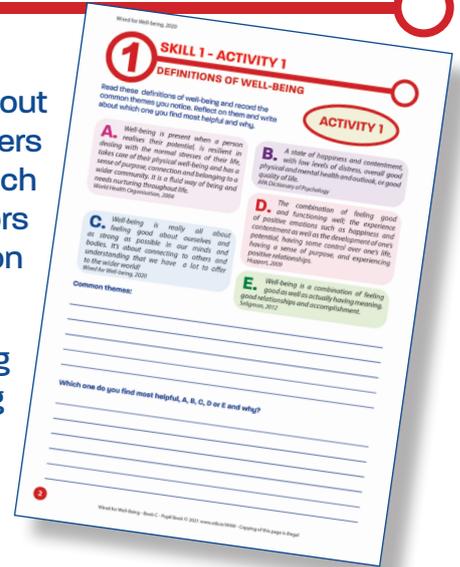
## Structure of the Programme

This programme is skills-based, so each lesson introduces your child to a new skill which they use for the week. For homework, they keep track of their use of the skill in their Pupil Book. Well-being programmes work best when there is parent/guardian/carer encouragement and involvement. It would be very beneficial for you to discuss each skill with your child and comment and sign the Parent/Guardian/Carer Comment Box at the end of each lesson. At the end of the programme, the pupils are encouraged to keep using the skills that they found useful. They are also encouraged to create and use their own Well-Being Journal during the programme.

### 1 SKILL 1 EXCEL AT WELL-BEING

The student learns different definitions of well-being and also about a variety of mood-boosting activities and the neurotransmitters (serotonin, endorphins, dopamine and oxytocin) released by each of them. For homework they reflect on various positive contributors and obstacles to their own well-being and make a plan based on these.

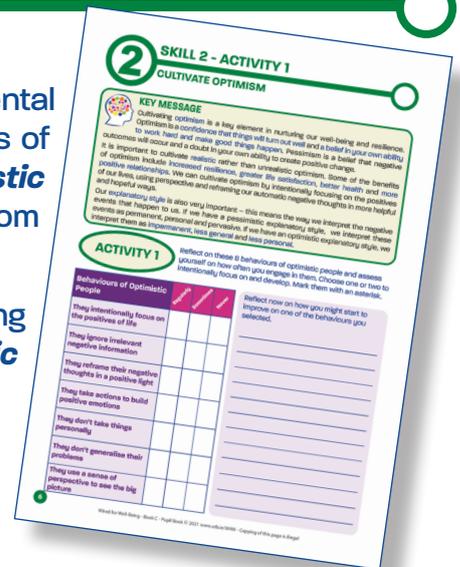
As a Parent/Guardian/Carer you can support them by talking to them about their mood-boosting activities and encouraging them daily. Discuss their obstacles to well-being and their positive contributors and share your own too.



### 2 SKILL 2 CULTIVATE OPTIMISM

The student learns about the benefits of optimism to mental health and well-being and also reflects on common behaviours of optimistic people. They learn about how to develop an **Optimistic Explanatory Style** and are encouraged to use it themselves from now on.

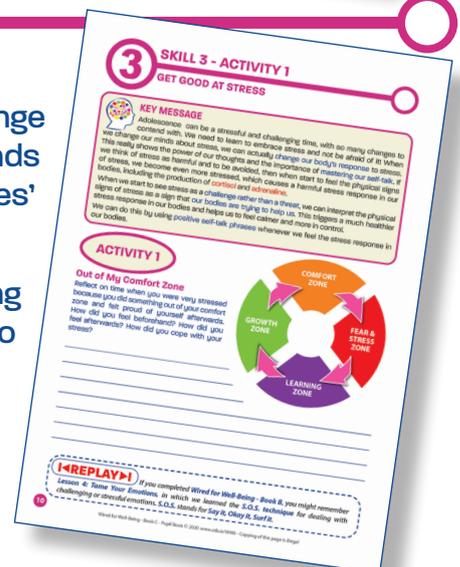
As a Parent/Guardian/Carer you can support them by encouraging them to use the self-talk phrases associated with an **Optimistic Explanatory Style** and by trying them yourself too.



### 3 SKILL 3 GET GOOD AT STRESS

The student learns the importance of viewing stress as a challenge rather than a threat. They learn that when we change our minds about the stress response, we can actually change our bodies' response to it also.

As a Parent/Guardian/Carer you can support them by discussing this topic with them and helping them to use helpful self-talk to reframe stress as a challenge.

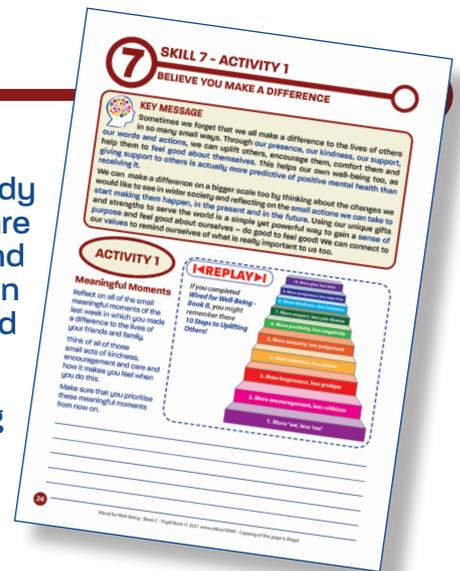




**7 SKILL 7**  
**BELIEVE YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

The student is reminded of all of the small ways that they already make a difference every day to the lives of others. They are encouraged to reflect on their recent meaningful moments and to prioritise them from now on. They also reflect on ways in which they can use their gifts and strengths to make the world a better place.

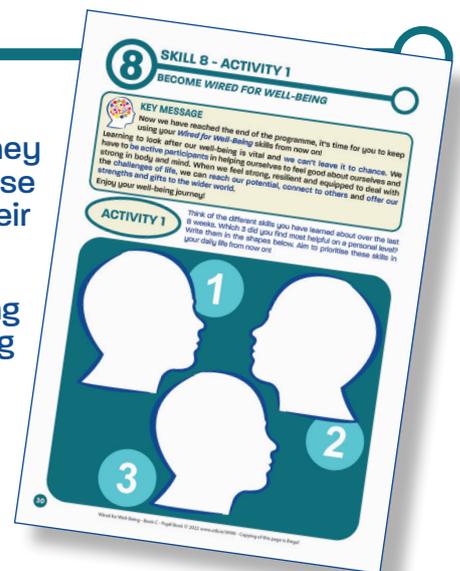
As a Parent/Guardian/Carer you can support them by reminding them of all of the small ways that they make a positive difference to your life and the lives of others and by encouraging them to use their strengths.



**8 SKILL 8**  
**BECOME WIRED FOR WELL-BEING!**

The student reviews all of the skills and reflects on the ones they found most useful. For homework they are encouraged to use their skills and keep track of the effect these are having on their mood and well-being.

As a Parent/Guardian/Carer you can support them by discussing the skills they have learned and encourage them to keep using the ones they find particularly effective.



**SELF-CARE for Parent/Guardian/Carer**

*'Self-care is not selfish, you cannot serve from an empty vessel'*

- Eleanor Brownn

Raising adolescents is a challenging and demanding task. One of the best ways you can support your child's well-being is to prioritise your own well-being and self-care, so that you have the energy and inner resources to cope with the challenges. It's also a great way to show that you value well-being and you become a positive role model for your child. Consider using the skills of the programme yourself and try to carve out time for your own self-care. Treating yourself with self-compassion is vital – aim to be a 'good-enough' parent rather than striving for perfection!