

## **Student Wellbeing Interventions and Implementation: RISE - Coffs Harbour**

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### **How to use this policy**

Positive Psychology, which promotes feeling good, functioning well and doing good, is gaining traction in association settings. Wellbeing is recognised as being important in its own right and as a prerequisite for learning. With growing pressure on associations to embed wellbeing content in an already busy schedule, many associations draw from external interventions, talks and one-off student wellbeing experiences. Many of these practices do not have sufficient support from research to justify and support their expense or the time taken to invest in them.

The purpose of this policy is to discuss the importance of implementing and embedding interventions that are empirically robust. To ensure their sustained practice and benefits, programs also need to have sufficient scope and sequence within the association's existing program and relevance for the RISE community. Selecting quality wellbeing interventions for participants can be a daunting task for associations. This policy is intended to guide leaders and associations to develop a clear process for including participant wellbeing interventions at their institutions. It will elucidate some of the critical factors that are associated with the most successful wellbeing interventions. Hence, it serves as a useful compass for associations seeking to implement wellbeing interventions and to optimise the positive effects for participants of these interventions. This policy example is intentionally broad and association policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their institution.

RISE - Coffs Harbour participant wellbeing interventions and implementation

### **Rationale**

Wellbeing interventions seek to improve the mental health of individuals or groups using strengths-based strategies focused on building positive emotions, engagement, quality relationships, meaning and feelings of accomplishment as reflected in Seligman's (2011) **Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA) model**. The development and uptake of wellbeing interventions in association settings is escalating (Green et al., 2014; Slemp et al., 2017). This is in part due to the growing recognition that associations have an important role to play in helping to promote wellbeing. Wellbeing interventions have the potential to curb mental ill health and to impart useful wellbeing skills that can lead to enhanced wellbeing (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Association-based wellbeing interventions have also been found to be beneficial, particularly when they integrate positive psychology interventions (Cilar et al., 2020). A universal approach to wellbeing in an association context means that many young people will have access to the wellbeing intervention

irrespective of their mental health status. Widespread implementation will contribute to a common language and understanding of wellbeing, help promote equity and erode the social stigma often associated with seeking help from mental health professionals (Gray & Daraganova, 2017; Rickwood et al., 2005). While this is a positive step in helping to address the mental health crisis experienced by many young people (Carlisle et al., 2019; Vos et al., 2015) and to promote optimal states of functioning and flourishing, those who are responsible for selecting participant wellbeing interventions can feel overwhelmed with the vast number of choices available. Many questions arise and it can be difficult to select the “right” wellbeing initiative. For example, what content or program should be included and for what participant age levels? What is the ideal length of time to run the initiative? What evidence is there that this is a good program? How will we know if the program is working for our participants? It is imperative that any intervention associated with the mental health and wellbeing of young people has a strong evidence base of relevant benefits. Although positive interventions generally focus on promoting wellbeing and are considered to be engaging, we cannot underestimate the possibility of harm with any mental health intervention and thus responsible steps need to be taken in the selection, resourcing, monitoring and evaluation phases.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to help guide associations in selecting and delivering participant wellbeing interventions that are both effective for and relevant to achieving the desired wellbeing outcomes.

## **Scope**

The policy is relevant to associations who are involved in the selection of participant wellbeing initiatives. This can include staff wanting to integrate wellbeing education in some of their practices, Participant Leaders who would like to roll out an intervention for a cohort of participants or wellbeing, mentors who would like to adopt a whole-association approach to wellbeing education.

Incorporated association’s (governing bodies) may also have an interest in adopting wellbeing interventions for multiple associations. This policy would be equally relevant to these groups and takes on critical importance when project findings of intervention efficacy are intended to inform the practices adopted in other associations. There should be a dedicated team – with a clear leader who has relevant experience in participant wellbeing – that oversees the program selection and delivery, including the ethical requirements, monitoring and communication of program effects.

## **RISE - Coffs Harbour**

### **Roles**

Well-being Officer (Grant Lawler)

To oversee and monitor a participant’s...

Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA).

**Responsibilities** - Provide information, advice and guidance to participants and staff on participant-related issues e.g. general **welfare**, learning progress and self awareness, psychological **well being**, personal health, and family related matters.

In partnership with **Football Coaches Australia** (FCA) well being at RISE - Coffs Harbour is promoted, supported and monitored.

## **Policy statement**

### Foundational principles and governance

RISE - Coffs Harbour will adopt a strategic approach for implementing wellbeing interventions that is consistent with **implementation science**, ethics and best practice principles (Glasgow, Harden, Gaglio, Rabin, Smith, Porter, Ory & Estabrooks, 2019; King et al., 2020; Kwan, McGinnes, Estabrooks, Waxmonsky & Glasgow, 2019). A strategic approach provides a clear process for change and is useful for identifying anticipated outcomes (Stein & Valters, 2012). RISE - Coffs Harbour will adopt a comprehensive systems approach to wellbeing interventions. Wellbeing interventions sit within a complex system and hence, they are likely to work best using a whole-association approach that aligns with and supports the intervention (Hoare, Bott & Robinson, 2017; Waters, 2011).

This includes:

- 1 Creating opportunities within all association life to practice and discuss the usefulness of the wellbeing intervention.
- 2 Modelling key components of the wellbeing intervention by association staff.
- 3 Ensuring the application of the wellbeing intervention is visible to participants and the RISE - Coffs Harbour community through policy, day-to-day communications and behaviour.
- 4 Fostering collaborations between wellbeing staff as well as with community health services.

RISE - Coffs Harbour will develop a plan that is endorsed and fully supported by its governing committee and parent members (Hoare, Bott & Robinson, 2017; Waters, 2011).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will consult with experts in the field (such as other associations with extensive wellbeing experience, child and youth service groups, and university scholars well versed in the application of wellbeing (Vella-Brodrick & Chin science) to receive advice on the wellbeing intervention plan. This supports the importance of the science-practitioner relationship and ecological validity (Soutter, O'Steen & Gilmore, 2014).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will demonstrate a high level of "readiness" prior to implementing the intervention, such that association staff will be sufficiently motivated and prepared to implement the participant wellbeing program (Hoare, Bott & Robinson, 2017; Waters, 2011).

## **Student contribution, engagement and access**

RISE - Coffs Harbour recognises that wellbeing support needs to be meaningful and relevant to students' needs (Vella-Brodrick, Chin, & Rickard, 2019; Vella-Brodrick, Rickard, & Chin, 2017).

Hence, we will consult with participants to better understand what their wellbeing needs are. RISE - Coffs Harbour will provide participants with a safe and confidential forum to voice their experiences, challenges and concerns (Powell, Graham, Fitzgerald, Thomas & White, 2018). Participants will be given the opportunity to contribute to the planning, design and implementation of wellbeing initiatives at RISE - Coffs Harbour. The association can facilitate the co-design by using a range of age-appropriate methods, such as focus groups, interviews and self-report surveys to incorporate participant's perspectives and expectations (Blomkamp, 2018). This transforms the participant's participation from receiving education and information, to being involved through active engagement and consultation, and ideally being part of the decision-making process by co-designing and co-producing the activities to share and balance the power and participation between staff, consultants, volunteers and participants (Slay & Stephens, 2013). RISE - Coffs Harbour will involve young people in the decision-making process associated with wellbeing programs that concern them. Their views should be considered particularly as age and maturity increases (Lansdown, Jimerson & Shahroozi 2014). RISE - Coffs Harbour will provide equitable opportunities for all participants to contribute to and participate in participant wellbeing interventions. This will help to make programs relevant to diverse groups (Lansdown et al., 2014).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will provide wellbeing interventions that are accessible, relevant and responsive to the contextual and cultural needs of our participants. The social-ecological model suggests that optimal change and outcomes are facilitated by interventions that consider and address the interrelatedness of individual, familial, inter/intrapersonal and community contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will implement evidence-based wellbeing interventions but will adapt these where necessary to suit its specific institutional context (Street, 2017).

## **Student wellbeing**

Adequate support and training for staff, consultants, volunteers and participants

RISE - Coffs Harbour will provide staff with professional development opportunities and adequate time release to acquire knowledge and build capacity to achieve optimal outcomes for all members of the RISE community (Chin, Stevenson, Jacques-Hamilton, & Vella-Brodrick, 2019; Soutter, O'Steen & Gilmore, 2014).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will ascertain the level of resources needed and available to support the intervention. We will also source additional resources needed to successfully deliver the program. Building internal capacity supports a whole association approach and enables sustained practice (Desimone, 2002).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will ensure professional support services are available to participants to protect them and to enable their rights (Lansdown et al., 2014).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will routinely conduct a wellbeing needs analysis to guide the selection of relevant interventions. The intervention needs to meet current needs and valued outcomes. This will promote participant buy-in, which can contribute to participant engagement. (Cavanagh et al., 2016).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will measure and monitor the wellbeing of participants using reliable quantitative and qualitative methods on a regular basis (e.g., annually), including at baseline, to examine if there are shifts in wellbeing in response to the intervention. Measurement needs to be built into any wellbeing strategy as this will help to determine how well the program is working to achieve the intended outcomes (Glasgow et al., 2019; Seligman, 2013).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will acquire relevant expertise to accurately analyse and interpret data collected via standardised measures or specialised tools. This is consistent with the recommendation to optimise both internal and external resources (Zhang, 2016).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will monitor and document the implementation process to ensure the program is being delivered as intended (Glasgow et al., 2019).

RISE - Coffs Harbour will collect feedback about the intervention experience, from those delivering the program, program recipients and significant others such as parents. This will enable the intervention to be improved for future delivery and increase the likelihood the intervention will be maintained (Noell & Gansle, 2009). 22 Vella-Brodrick & Chin Rating of evidence base

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### **Related policy and documents**

RISE Coffs Harbour's Child Protection Statement and Response to Intervention guidelines

**Date of ratification** This policy was ratified on the ????.

**Date of review** January 5th 2022

**This policy will be reviewed by** Grant Lawler & Glenn Warry.

### **Further reading**

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