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### Conforming to Group Opinion

Solomon Asch  
1907 – 1966  
The power of social pressure and conformity



1950s The Asch Line Experiment

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Dr Helen Street

### Contextual Wellbeing

"A state of health, happiness and positive engagement in life that arises from membership of a healthy social context"

Helen Street, 2017

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### The Importance of Contextual Wellbeing

- Nurturing resilience in young people (e.g. Andrew Fuller)
- Learning to read (e.g. Dr Elka Poskiparta, 2003)
- Staying Alive... (e.g. Marmot & Smith, 1990; Andrew V. Wister & Deanna Wanless, 2010)




### Youth mental health crisis


- nearly **25%** of our adolescents,
- and **one in six** of primary school children
- seriously, clinically distressed**
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015
- Mission Australia, 2018

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### The Importance of Context

- We are social beings and schools are SOCIAL SYSTEMS
- "Show" is more powerful than "tell"
- An organic approach to wellbeing is a real world approach to wellbeing




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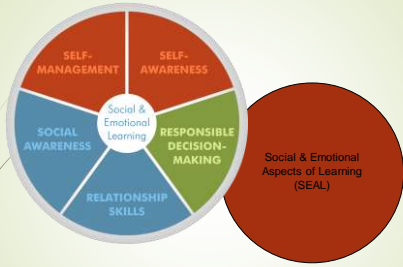
### The support of wellbeing in schools is **NOT** working well

- Measures of success: Exploring the importance of context in the delivery of wellbeing and social and emotional learning programs
  - by Helen Street, 2017
  - in Australian primary and secondary schools in Frydenberg, E., Martin, A.J. and Collie R.J. (Eds) *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*, Springer Science and Business, Singapore
- Motivation outside in, inside out
  - by Helen Street, 2017
  - in Stemp, G., Murray, S. & White, M., (Eds) *Future Directions in Well-being: Education, Organisations, and Policy*, SpringerContext is vitally important
- PROGRAMS ARE NOT WORKING AS EXPECTED
  - Weare, K. & Nind, M. (2011)
- Meaningful group membership
  - Baker, J. A., Dilly, L. J., Apperfee, J. L., & Patti, S. A. (2003).



Drug Abuse Resistance Education

West, S.L., & O'Neal, K. K. (2004) Project D.A.R.E. Outcome Effectiveness Revisited *Am J Public Health, 94(6), 1027-1029*



Wiggleworth, M., Humphrey, N., & Lendrum, A. (2012) A national evaluation of the impact of the secondary social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme. *Educational Psychology, 32* (2) 213-238.

### The Dangers of Fashion

- Cynicism versus Fanaticism
- Belief in a magic single answer
- Imperfect imitations of an original idea
- Lack of consideration of other parts of the picture



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### How can we support the development of a **context that supports** wellbeing in young people in our schools?

## Contextual Wellbeing [in schools]

“A state of health, happiness and positive engagement [in learning] that arises from membership of an equitable, inclusive and cohesive [school] environment”  
 Helen Street, 2017

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## Creating Contextual Wellbeing in Schools

*TEACHER WELLBEING*

*VALUES (e.g. TOLERANCE, ENGAGEMENT, KINDNESS & COMPASSION) COHESION*

*NATURE IMPLICIT MESSAGES OWNERSHIP*

*NO REWARDS, NO HOMEWORK, NO AWARDS, PLAY POLICY, COLLABORATION*

Ownership, Creativity, Play, Engagement, Autonomy, Intrinsic Motivation, Growth Mindset, Collaboration, Attachment, Belonging, Purpose, Social Norms, Inclusion, Flourishing, Opportunity, Self-Determination

Choice and Control, Focus on Process, Cohesion, Equity

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How can we create contextual wellbeing within our school communities?

## Policy & Practice

Choice & control, process, cohesion, collaboration, equity

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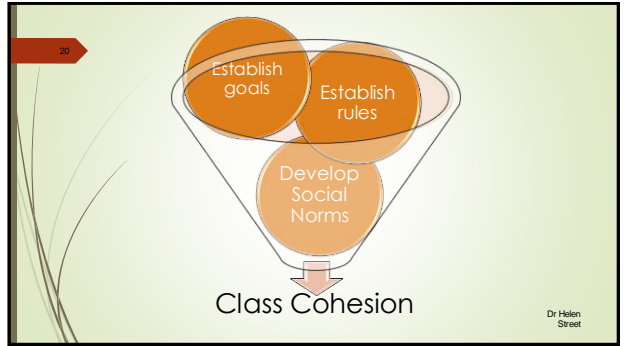
## Policy and Practice

1. From Differentiation to Equity
2. From Extrinsic Rewards to Intrinsic Motivation
3. From Structured Time to Creative Time
4. From Forced Competition to Appropriate Risk

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**Social Norms**  
 ....values, trust, cohesion, inclusion

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**The Behavioural Insights Team**

Peter John, Michael Sanders, Jennifer Wang. (2014) The Use of Descriptive Norms in Public Administration: A Panacea for Improving Citizen Behaviour?  
 Michael Hellmuth, John List, Robert Metcalfe, Ivo Vlaev. (2014) The Behaviouralist As Tax Collector: Using Natural Field Experiments to Enhance Tax Compliance

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What happens if class cohesion increases?

- Performance (Beal et al, 2003; Park & Shin, 2009)
- Wellbeing (eg Myers, 1962)
- Motivation\*
- Sense of belonging\*
- Participation\*
- class culture and
- Positive behaviour\*
- Satisfaction with learning is higher\*

\*Dyaram, & Kamalanabhan, 2005; Hogg, 1992.

**PHYSICAL SPACE**  
 Nature, implicit messages, reflections, ownership

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### Creating contextual wellbeing in the physical spaces of your school

- Nature matters
- Comfort and design matter – but luxury is no better than acceptable
- Implicit messages have power
- Ownership matters

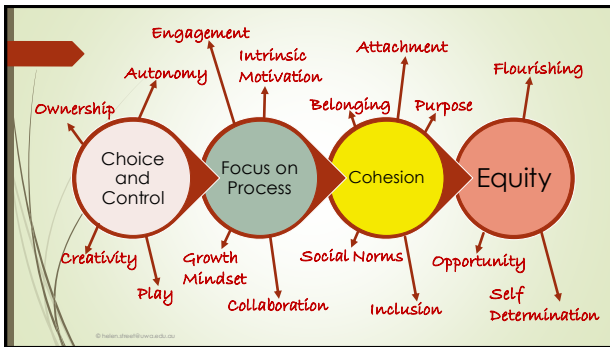


Freesoul International Kindergarten (Shanghai, China)

# People

STAFF WELLBEING, STRESS MANAGEMENT, SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING, ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

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1. Learn to breathe
2. Develop your ideal self
3. Pay attention
4. Find some extraordinary time
5. Simplify to survive
6. Do one thing at a time
7. Be kind to yourself



WE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE SPACES BETWEEN US. THE SPACES BETWEEN US INFLUENCE OUR THOUGHTS, BELIEFS, BEHAVIOURS AND OUR WELLBEING.

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### Contextual Wellbeing in Your School



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