

The COVID Code

Unlocking Your Inner Wellbeing and Resilience

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3rd of September, 2020



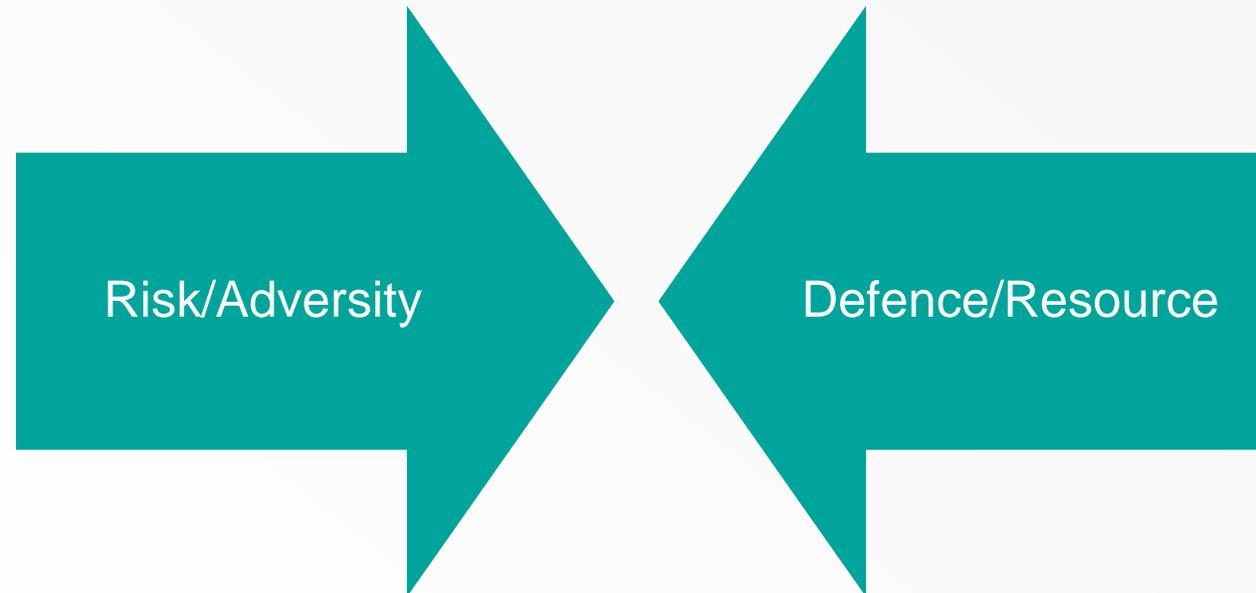
There has never been a more important time to consider the *importance* of wellbeing and the *burden* of mental illness.

- “Mental health problems were at least twice as prevalent as in non-pandemic circumstances” (Fisher et al., 2020);
- “Presentations to [St Vincent’s Hospital] related to family violence have more than doubled in the 1st quarter of 2020 compared to 2019” (Jeannie Knapp, NWMPHN 2020);
- “Australia will likely see increases in youth suicide and a surge in demand for specialist mental health services” (Tony Bartone, AMA President).

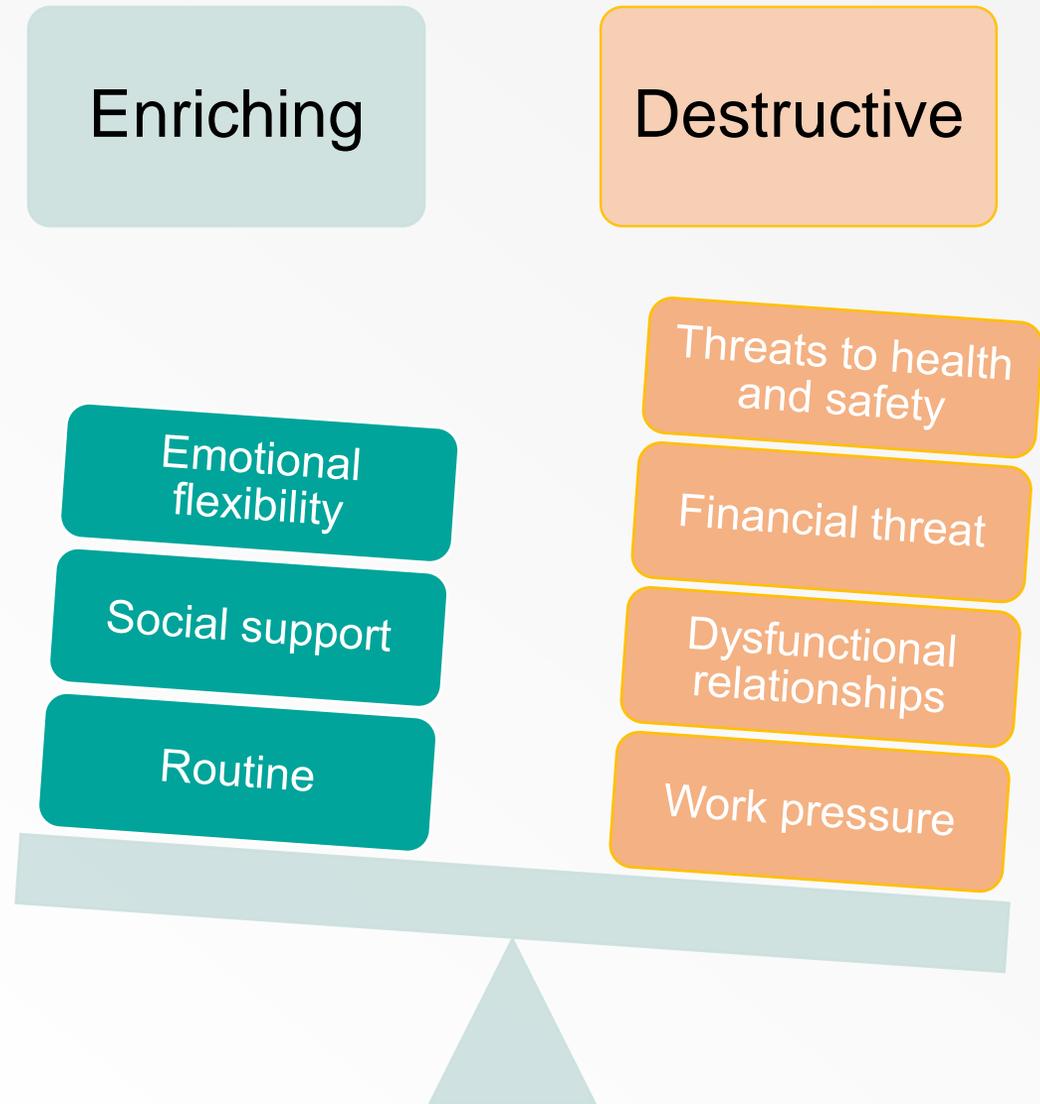


The mind and body crave stability. This is an essential element for survival.

- Our survival depends greatly on our ability to fend off threats and adversity;
- If we can't maintain **balance**, we begin to burn out.



Balance is essential in maintaining health, wellbeing and a sense of safety.



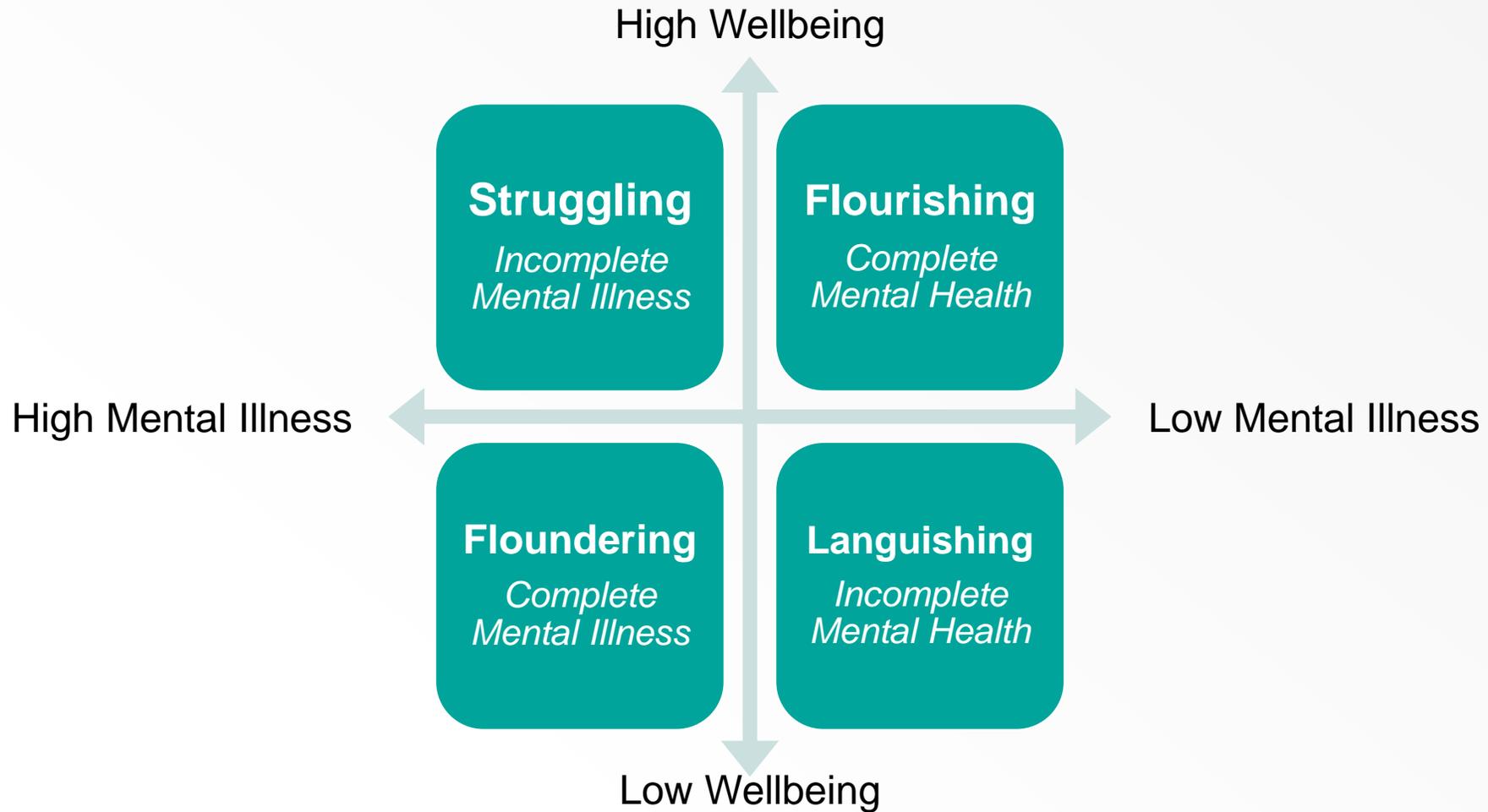
**“We need to reconceptualize how
we *think* about mental health”**



Binary ways of thinking about mental health are inadequate



Degrees of wellbeing



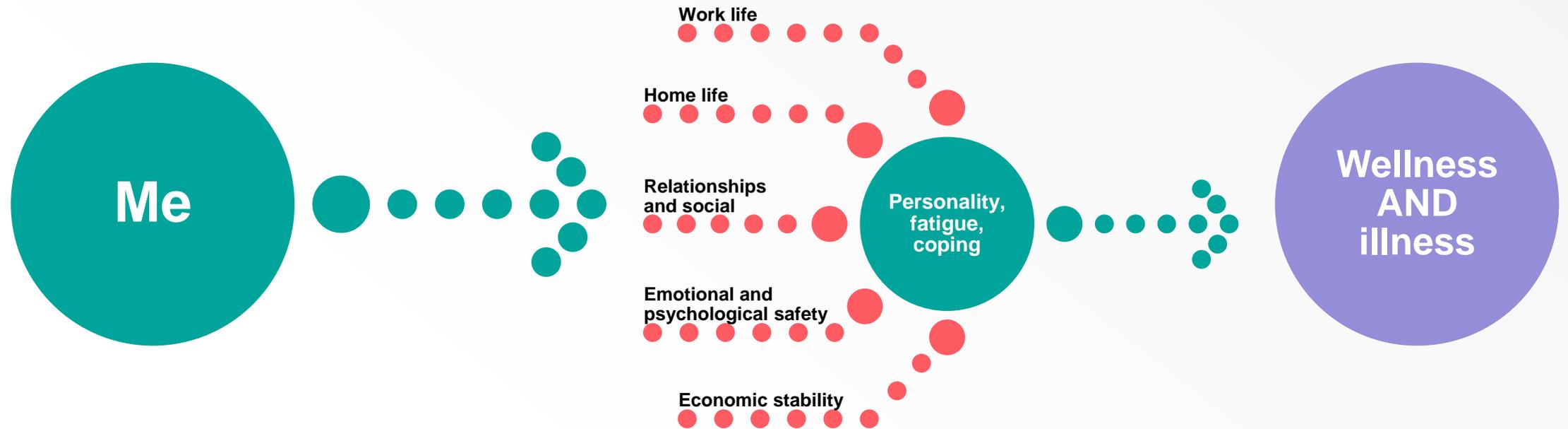
Resilience is...

The outcome of our efforts in the face of stress, adversity and the potential for collapse.

- Resilience is the outcome of our efforts...
- Think of it as the product of our **responses** rather than an innate ability or something we have in us (or don't!).
 - Responding to a stressful life event → use of **protective factors** (e.g. social support, locus of control).
 - → Protective mechanisms facilitate ***resilient outcomes***.
- “A dynamic outcome wherein individuals display **positive adaptation** despite experiences of **significant adversity** or **trauma**.” (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; p.858).



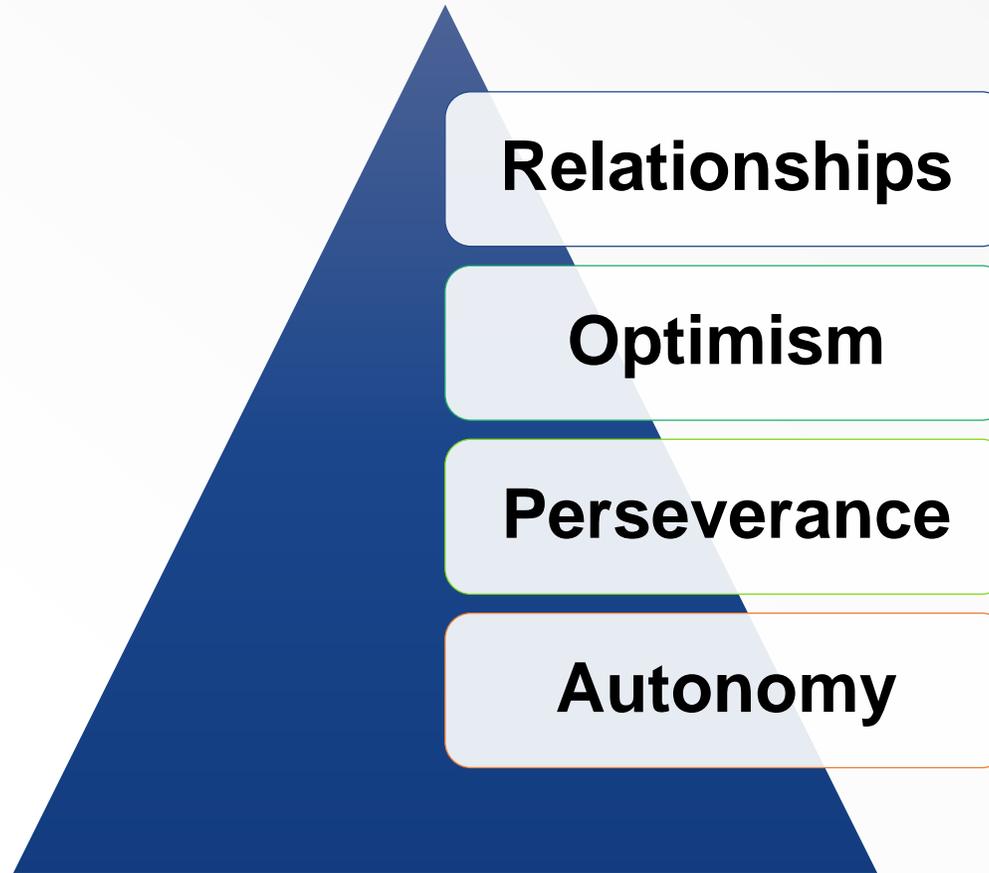
Internal and external threats



“Resilience is not a trait or an innate attribute; it represents the outcome of the things that we do.”

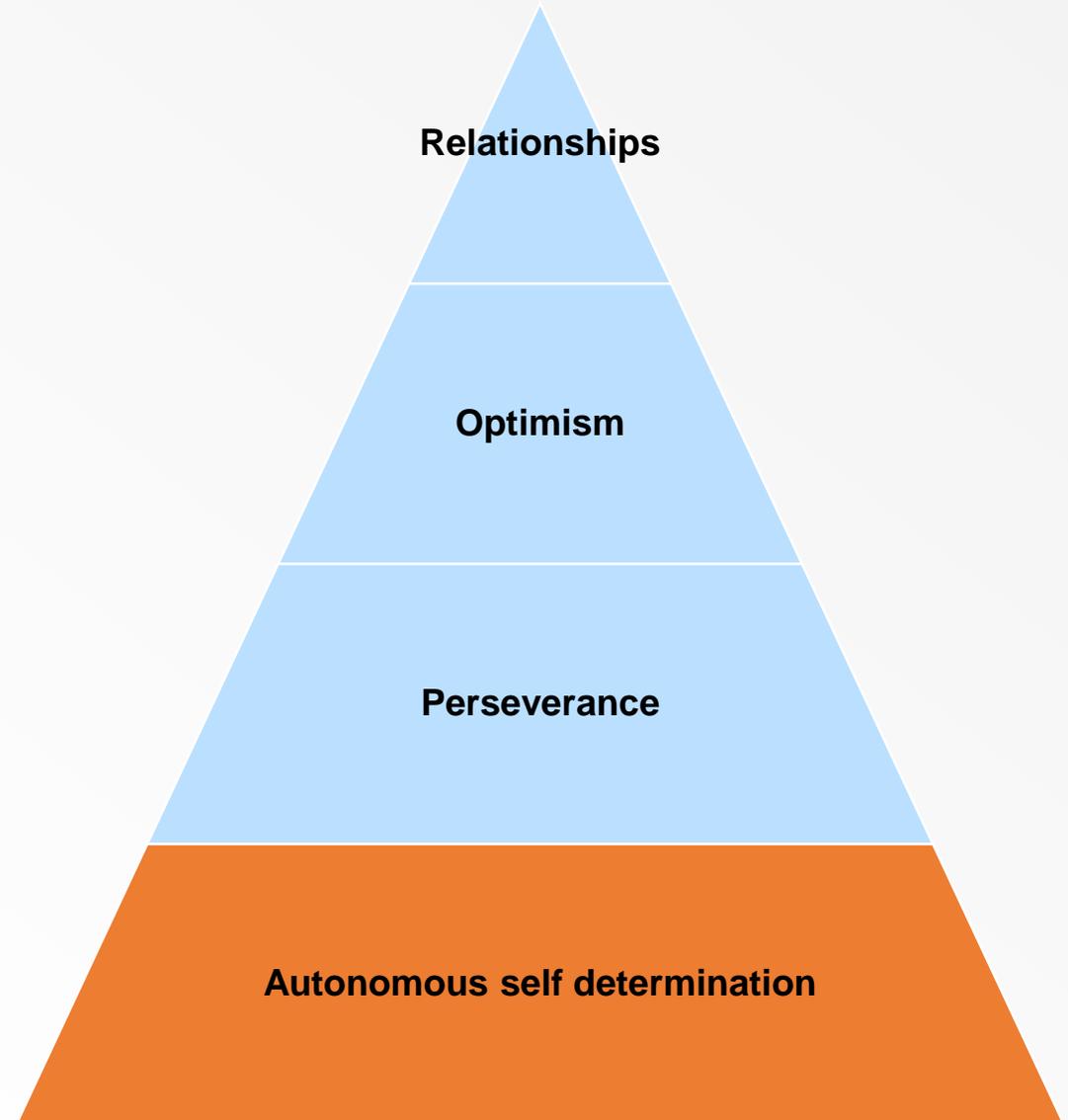


The key to resilience



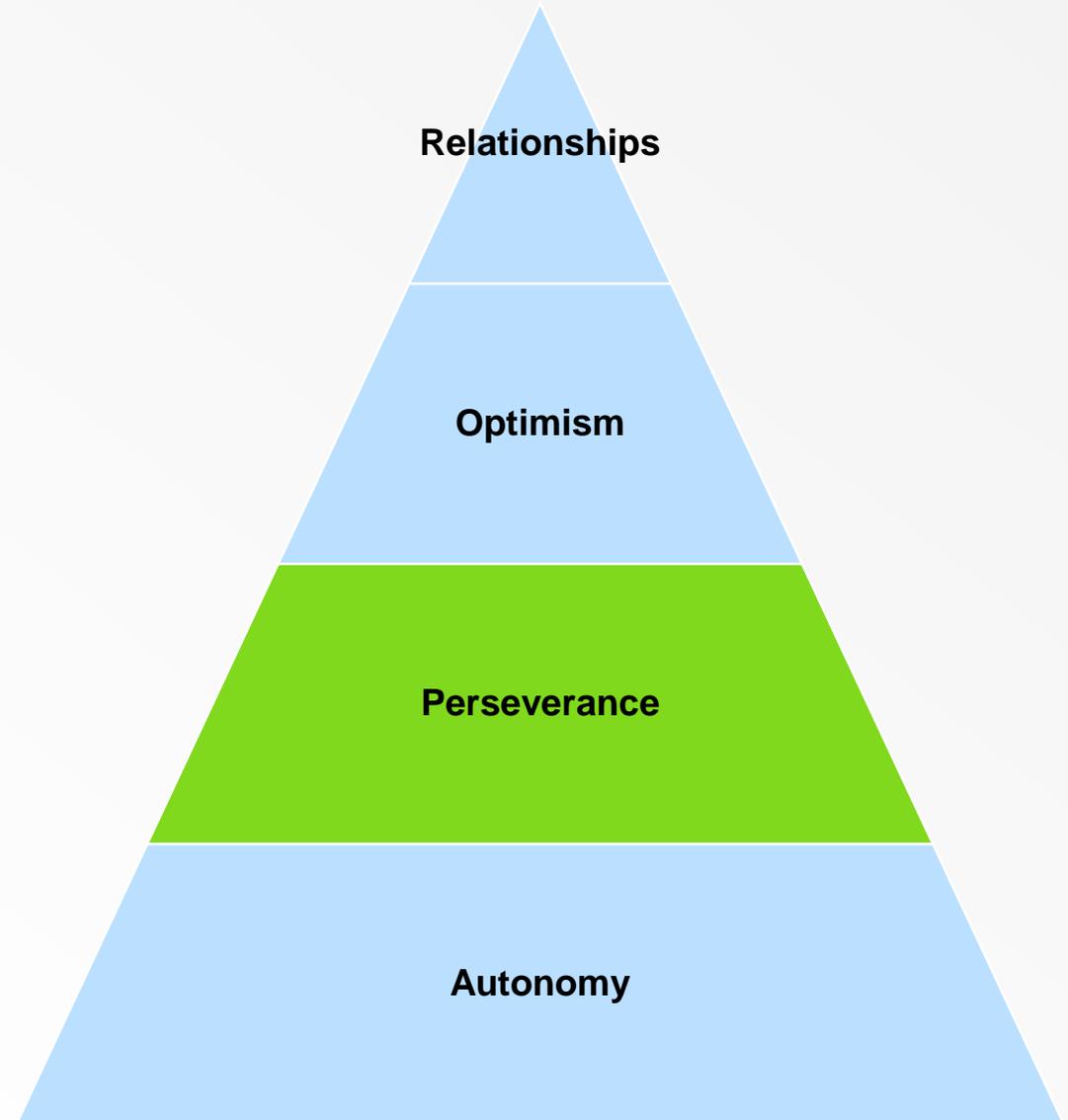
Self determination

- To be self determined means to act with a full sense of volition and choice (Deci & Ryan, 2002).
- The need for growth drives behaviour;
- Sense that action will result in real change.
 1. Acknowledge what you find challenging;
 2. Take action to correct your mistakes and address your needs;
 3. Believe that you have the power to create change in your life;
 4. Gain mastery over existing or new skills;
 5. Focus on your choices in life, not limitations.



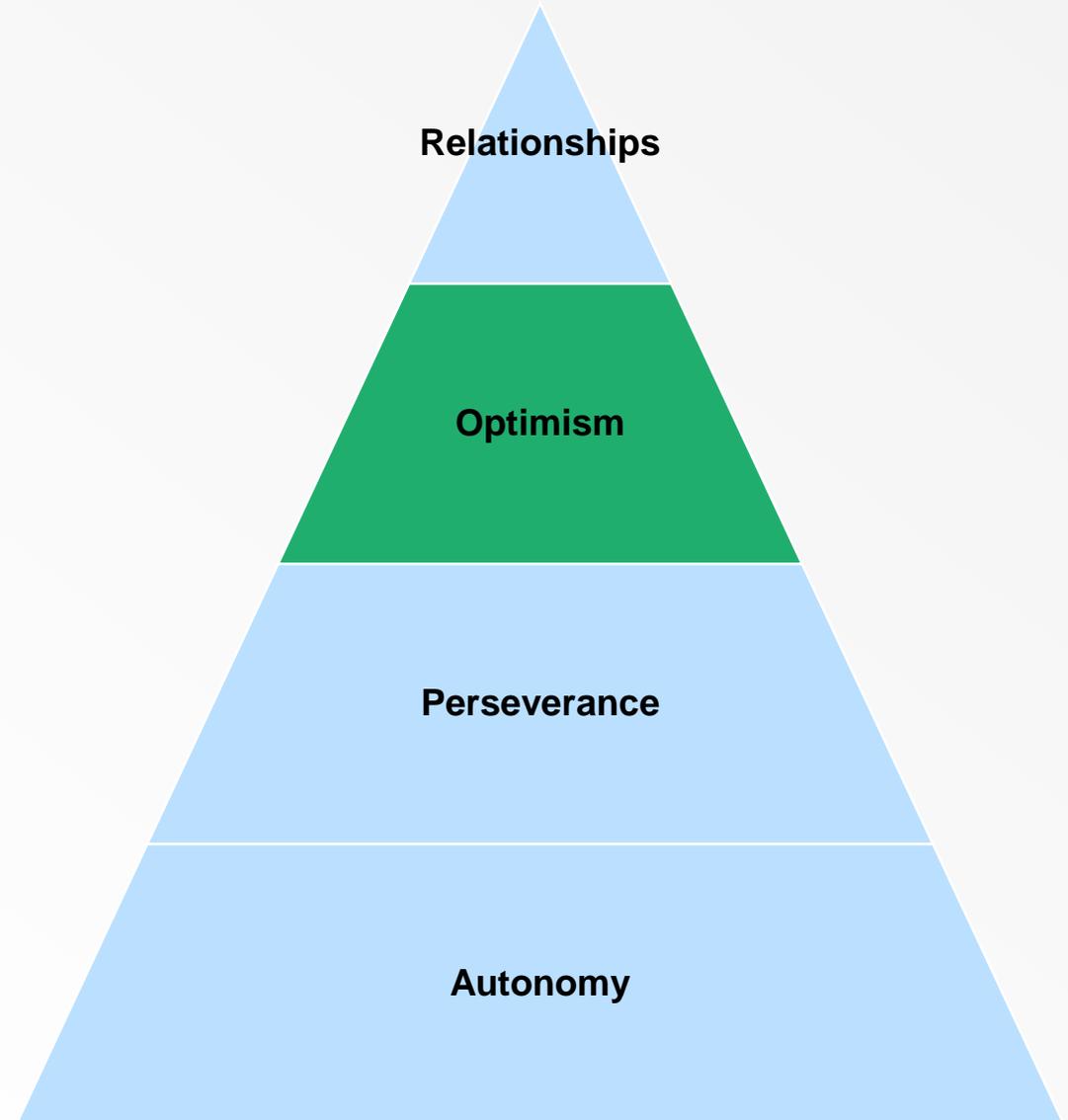
Perseverance

- Believe that you have the control over your life by focusing on the things that you *can* control;
- Set meaningful goals and work towards these;
- Take responsibility for your actions;
- When under stress, ask for help, and seek support. But don't stop there. Keep trying to achieve your goals, with the knowledge that you will get there;
- Set realistic goals for yourself and maintain focus on these;
- Learn to advocate for yourself and your needs;
- Provide sincere positive feedback to those that support you. This should focus on gratitude;
- Develop a passion and take play seriously.



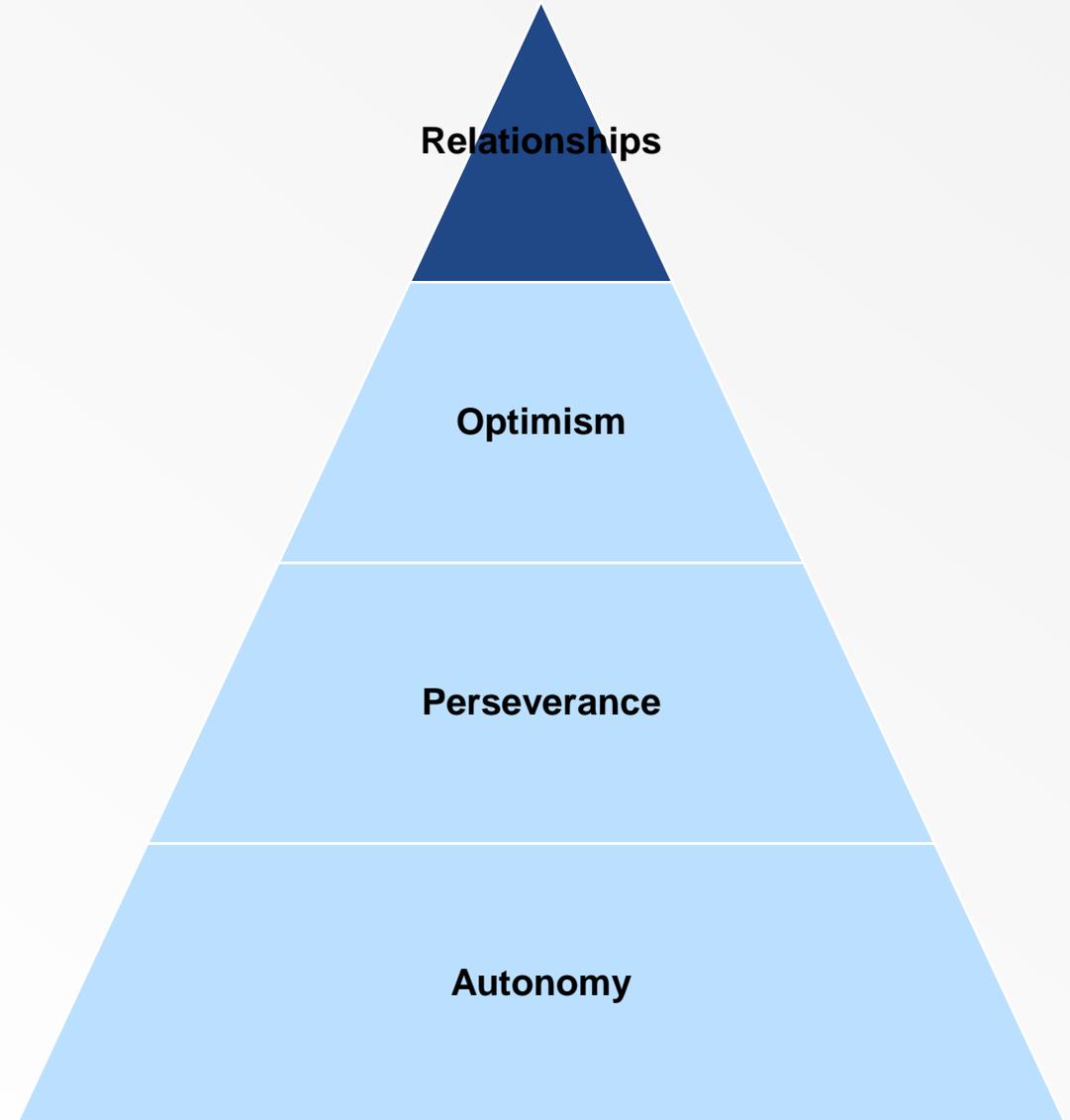
Optimism

- Optimism can be taught!
- Minimise comparisons with others;
- Share your knowledge about your experiences and skills with others. This builds competence and optimism in them;
- Avoid short-term rewards;
- Find new activities that you enjoy and value for their own sake;
- Reflect and ask yourself:
 - 1. What were some of the things that made you feel happy, excited, or joyful?
 - 2. What is one thing that made you feel proud of yourself or others?
 - 3. What difficulties did you face and how can you overcome them next time?



Relationships

- People need to experience a sense of belonging and attachment to other people. It's human nature!
- Focus on relationships that are high quality – *honest and open* are most beneficial;
- Seek positive relationships with people who will support and understand your goals;
- Reciprocate support and care with your friends and family;
- Find activities that minimize competition and encourage cooperation – e.g. group work, a mutual project or experience;
- Seek support for challenging relationships.



Key points

- Consider yourself within the wider context of life and your existence – not just as an individual experiencing something stressful or difficult.
- Talk openly with key people about your problems, needs and preferences;
- Preference honesty and openness in relationships;
- Acknowledge your challenges and setbacks;
- Acknowledge your feelings and respond appropriately to them;
- Avoid black and white thinking;
- Balance is essential.
- **Resilience and wellbeing can be achieved. The power is yours, so take control.**



Support Services

Contact our free and confidential service available for all employees provided by Monash Health psychologists. Employee Assistance program is also a free and confidential resource.



Call 0418 905 414

9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday

EAP 1300 687 327

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