



What is Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB)

An introduction to Social and Emotional Wellbeing for children and young people

Social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) is a process that builds the strength and capacity in children and young people to lead a full and productive life, with the resilience to deal with change and unpredictability.

SEWB and Mental Health

The term social and emotional wellbeing is sometimes used instead of mental health to avoid the stigma that can be associated with mental illness. However, the two terms are closely connected. SEWB is a big part of good mental health - it lays the foundation for young people to enjoy good health and happiness throughout life.

A helpful way to think about SEWB is like levelness of a table – it's what makes the table usable and able to function. In the same light, SEWB helps people to function well in society and reach their potential.

A Holistic View of Wellbeing

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples prefer the term social and emotional wellbeing because it reflects a broader view of health. It includes strong connections to land, sea, culture, spirituality, family, and community, and acknowledges the impact of history and government policies. This broader understanding of SEWB is also helpful for people from different cultural backgrounds, who may think about mental health in different ways.



SEWB Key Perspectives

The following perspectives are important when considering SEWB:



Social wellbeing + Emotional wellbeing

- Social wellbeing is about building healthy relationships with peers and adults
- Emotional wellbeing is about understanding and managing your feelings, and recognising the feelings of others.
- These two areas are connected: how we feel affects how we act with others, and our relationships impact how we feel.

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) helps children and young people build the skills they need for SEWB - like managing emotions, making good choices, and getting along with others.

Two well-known approaches to SEL include:

- The CASEL Framework: focuses on five key areas of learning. These are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.
- SEE Learning: developed by Emory University, this approach focuses on:
 - Awareness – noticing what's happening inside and around us.
 - Compassion – caring about others and ourselves.
 - Engagement – taking positive action.

These are explored across three levels: personal, social, and systemic.

Models That Help Us Understand SEWB

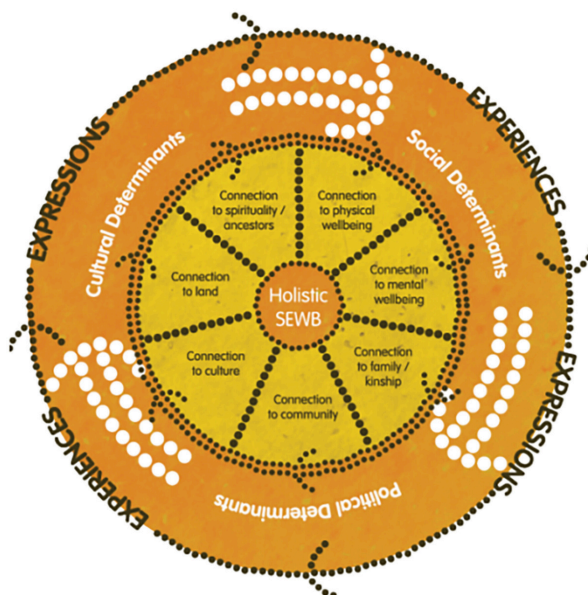
• The Social Ecological Model

SEWB is influenced by many layers - from the individual, to their family and community, and even wider society.



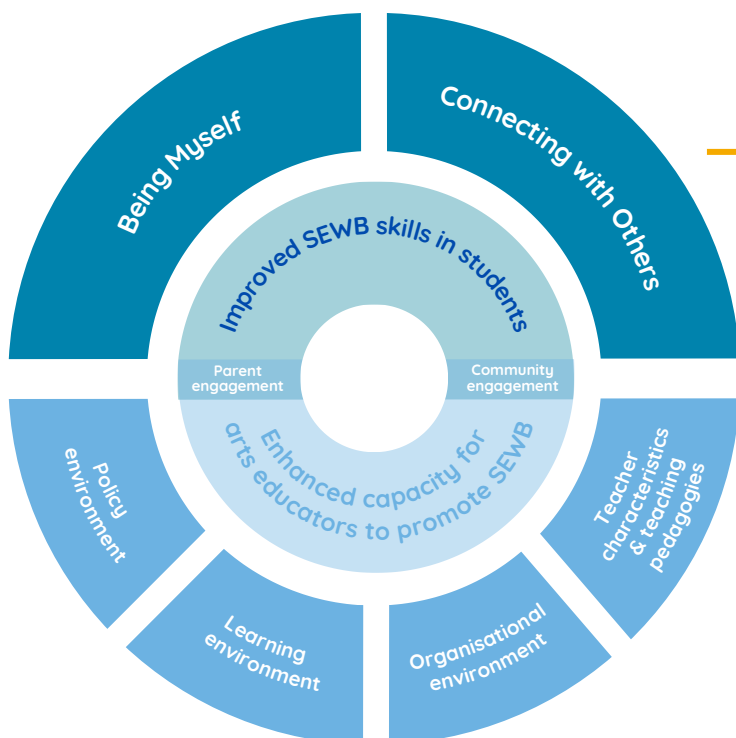
• Indigenous SEWB Model

“The spirituality of individuals, families and communities are shaped by connections to body, mind and emotions, family and kinship, community, culture, land and spirituality.” pg. 58



• Self-Determination Theory (SDT) & Circle of Courage

SDT suggests wellbeing is linked to three psychological needs: competence, connection, and autonomy. The Circle of Courage stems from SDT, integrated with Native American philosophies of child-rearing and contemporary resilience research. It includes a further dimension of Generosity.



SEW-Arts Model of SEWB

This model was shaped by listening to children and young people involved in arts programs. It combines their voices with what educators say works best to promote SEWB in creative environments.