

PBS Helpline Resources

The PERMA model

PERMA is a model to help us to understand wellbeing. It focuses on five key areas to help us to build a life which is rich in happiness. It was created by Martin Seligman, known for his work on positive psychology.

These five building blocks are applicable to everyone, although the detail will be different.

Positive emotions – this is not just about being happy but includes a sense of optimism about the past, present and future.

Engagement – finding activities that help us achieve flow state, where we are really absorbed and time flies. These activities will be different for each of us.

Relationships – we are social creatures and we thrive on attachments and interactions. Isolation activates pain receptors which is a real risk during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is not just about having people who are paid to be there but also relationships with family and friends.

Meaning – having purpose, a sense of why we're here. For some people this may be religion, spirituality. It could equally be a volunteer or work role, creativity or family. We are not just interested in material gain, we need the opportunity to contribute.

Achievement – goals and ambitions. A sense of accomplishment makes us feel good, and small daily or weekly goals can be really motivating.

So, adopt things that give you a positive perspective, find activities that engage you, focus on relationships and connections, lead your life with purpose, celebrate accomplishments, and support others to do the same.