



# Background Information



**There is no question as educators we confront many challenges others in other careers don't. The physical, cognitive and emotional toll teaching can have can sometimes feel extreme and leave us questioning it's impact on our well-being.**

But do you have a sound understanding of well-being?

When our 4-year old son came home one day using a 4-lettered word he had no understanding of we reinforced with him the importance of finding out the meaning of words before using them.

Although 9-lettered, the same might be said of well-being. It can come as a shock to many to discover well-being has many flavours and in simple terms means being well.

There are at least 10 recognised flavours - social *well-being* & spiritual *well-being* sit alongside your economic *well-being*, intellectual *well-being*, emotional *well-being*, psychological *well-being* & physical *well-being*. Environmental *well-being* and societal *well-being* are also important.

The uncomfortable truth is that we are each personally responsible for taking steps to be well in all of these areas. They are primarily not the responsibility of leaders or employers.

So whilst *well-being* is in vogue generally it is not fully understood. If we use well-being as a reason for not producing high quality work, and if we feel guilty asking colleagues to do those things for which they are being paid, well-being as a concept is misunderstood and likely it is being abused.

So how has responsibility for *being-well* bled over into the workplace?

Partly it's because our world is rapidly becoming more complex. As environmental volatility, ambiguity and uncertainty increase, at faster rates than many can cognitively handle, it leaves us exposed and vulnerable, and because we are working longer hours and technology contributes to an *always on* 24/7 work culture, we associate many of our complexities to our jobs. It becomes harder to be well and we associate this with our work.

Another reason comes down to an inability to distinguish what type of *well-being* it is we are referring to. A little like a child without the language, when we are unaware *well-being* comes in many flavours we can simply keep it simple and use the word well-being without specifically communicating what flavour of *well-being* it is we are referring to.

In workplaces rather than talking about well-being we need to become better at prefacing it with the word **occupational**.

**Occupational well-being**, or *being well at work*, is also primarily the personal responsibility of each individual. However, we need help doing it.

Two very effective ways of doing this is to invest in peoples' psychological capital (Emma please [hyperlink to the section on psychological capital](#)) and to minimise the impact on people of workplace micro-stressors (Emma please [hyperlink to the section on Minimising the Impact of Micro-stressors](#)) in your workplace.



## CONTACT DETAILS

**Tony Burkin**

Accredited PLD Provider

[t.burkin@interlead.co.nz](mailto:t.burkin@interlead.co.nz)

021 729 008

[www.interlead.co.nz](http://www.interlead.co.nz)