



THE
PERMAH
WELLBEING
SURVEY
FOR WORKPLACES

EMPLOYEE DEBRIEF GUIDELINES

THEWELLBEINGLAB

A MICHELLEMCQUAID PROGRAM

CONTENTS

DEBRIEF GOAL.....	1
DEBRIEF DURATION.....	1
DEBRIEF PREPARATION.....	1
SURVEY NOTES.....	2
REPORT SAMPLES.....	2
SUGGESTED DEBRIEF AGENDA.....	2
REPORT DATA.....	4
STATE OF WELLBEING.....	4
JOB SATISFACTION.....	6
WELLBEING AMPLIFIERS.....	6
PERMAH WELLBEING FACTORS.....	7
WELLBEING STRUGGLES.....	8
WELLBEING BARRIERS.....	9

DEBRIEF GOAL

The goal of your debrief is to help the debriefee to dig a little deeper into their results and add value to the data and insights provided in their PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Workplace Results. We want them to come away from the debrief:

- **Thinking** – I feel like I know more now about how to intelligently care for my wellbeing.
- **Feeling** – I feel more confident about the tiny actions I can take that might have a big impact to help me feel good and function more effectively, even when I'm struggling.
- **Doing** – I am ready to play and experiment with tiny actions I want to and am able to start immediately and keen to keep measuring my wellbeing.

DEBRIEF DURATION

The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Workplace Results Debriefs are typically 20 minutes in duration and are designed for an employee to gain a deeper understanding of their PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Results. They are designed to be quick, insightful, and actionable sessions.

DEBRIEF PREPARATION

It is recommended that in preparation for your debrief session:

- You email your debriefee an invite to the session with a Zoom or video link if online.
- You ask the debriefee to send you their PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Results Report so that you can review prior.
- Spend 5-10 mins reviewing their report prior to your meeting.
- Know the contact details for the debriefee's EAP provider/Key HR contact if possible, in case the individual needs more assistance and/or needs to be reconnected with "escalated" support.

SURVEY NOTES

REPORT SAMPLES

People are already given a lot of information and guidance in their **Result Report, Wellbeing Plan** and **FAQ guide**.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

All of the survey results are a response to the prompt: “Take a moment and consider how well you have felt and functioned over the past two weeks. Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, ranging from 0 (not at all, 0%) to 10 (completely, 100%).”

You can see the full set of The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey questions answered by participants, and which questions inform which PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Report measures, **by clicking here**.

REPORT COMPARISON DATA

The population comparison results, shaded in grey in the report, are based on the means gathered from our data with workplaces from more than 50 different countries around the world and our independently gathered general population surveys. This can be used as a general benchmark, but ideally over time with repeated surveys, a more reliable benchmark based on their own workplace would be established to guide insights.

SUGGESTED DEBRIEF AGENDA

To help guide your debrief, a suggested agenda for the debrief is given below. 20 minutes is not a long time and it will fly by, so be mindful of the time and try to help them get the most that they can out of the conversation. Remember, your goal is not to provide a comprehensive wellbeing coaching session. The focus of your session is around The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Results Report and their interpretation, adding value to the data presented in their report, and their possible next steps. If they want additional support to discuss and/or implement a wellbeing strategy, then that is a great next step after your conversation.

- **Welcome and connect:** Give them a warm welcome and introduce yourself and the purpose of the debrief. Let them know that their report findings and your discussion with them are completely confidential. Note: if you are online, ask if they would like the call recorded, and you can send them a link afterwards.
- **Agree on the focus:** Acknowledge that 20 minutes is not long, and so to make the most of your time together ask them if they have specific questions they'd like answered about their results or if they would just like you to guide them through the report findings. If they have a LOT of questions about their results that they want to cover, ask them to pick the three things they want

to prioritize and focus on these, as it is unlikely you will get through more than this in 20 minutes.

- **Explore report data:** See the Report Data Section below for more information on how to interpret data and convey this to the debriefee. We'd recommend you share your screen, or project the report on screen if you are in person, so that you can show the section of the report you are talking about as you are talking about it. Dive into their questions – staying mindful of time – as best you can. Never be afraid to say you want to check something with us and come back to them on email after the call if they are asking for data or insights you are unsure about.
- **Let them know the end is approaching:** Don't rush the ending! Let them know when they have about five minutes left. There may be time for one last question, or insight or you may just want to check they understand the wealth of resources in their report to help them take action.
- **Summarize and wrap up:** Give them a "highlight reel" of their key takeaways from the report. Remind them that where they're at in terms of wellbeing today doesn't predict what they are capable of – it's just a starting point – and to keep travelling the learning loop. There are lots of simple things that they can do to care for their wellbeing, and when it comes to wellbeing, tiny actions can make mighty change. Let them know that if they need any further support or guidance there are lots of places to get help – HR, GP, doctor, wellbeing coach, etc.

What gets measured gets managed, so don't set and forget the PERMAH Wellbeing Survey – take it at regular intervals. Suggest they take the survey again in 1–3 months depending on how carefully they want to track their changes.

If you've recorded the call, let them know that you will also send a link with these details.

REPORT DATA

Note: Apart from the scores covered in the State of Wellbeing section, it can be helpful to draw participant attention to the following overarching score ranges, which can assist them with interpretation.

The population scores are calculated as global norms that have been gathered from people completing The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey and from representative population samples we continuously gather and update from around the world.

Studies have found that:

SCORE RANGE	INTERPRETATION
59 or below	Generally, an indicator that your workers' wellbeing is struggling and requires attention, action and assistance.
60-69	Lower than is ideal and may require attention, action, and assistance if sustained over time.
70-75	The healthy average. Many workers consistently score in this range.
76-100	Exceptionally healthy. However, it is healthy for your workers' levels of wellbeing to ebb and flow. So if your workers scored close to 100 on all factors in repeated surveys, this may suggest a lack of psychological safety to honestly tell you how they are feeling.

STATE OF WELLBEING

Which state of wellbeing quadrant did they sit in and what might this score tell them about their overall level of wellbeing?

Levels of thriving help us to assess people's ability to feel good and function effectively as they navigate life. As you might expect, the higher people's levels of thriving, generally, the better their levels of wellbeing. People's levels of struggle help us to assess what is happening around them that may impact their wellbeing and how they are navigating these challenges. We don't define what constitutes struggle. It may be a one-off event or a life-long challenge. Generally, we find that even if people's levels of struggle are quite high, provided that they also have high levels of thriving, they're just as likely to be engaged and satisfied in life, and perform just as well as someone who is high in thriving but lower in struggle.

This is because feelings of struggle or stress are not signs that people are breaking. They are signs

that something important for them is unfolding that needs their attention. When they have the knowledge, tools, and support that enable them to be high in thriving, they can respond to these signs in ways that enable healthy learning and growth, and build their levels of resilience.

- **Consistently Thriving:** Generally, we find that 10–20% of people in a workplace are consistently thriving. This is a healthy outcome, and if it is being met, the question then becomes “What’s working well for these people and how can they sustain what is working well for them when it comes to caring for their wellbeing?” based on the rest of the data insights, and “How can the workplace learn from these people to help others thrive?”
- **Living Well Despite Struggles:** Generally, we find that 30–35% of people are *living well despite struggles* in most workplaces. This is a healthy outcome, as these people are often the most resilient in the workplace. If this outcome is being met, the question then becomes, “What’s working well for these people and how can they sustain what is working for them and enabling their resilience?” based on the rest of the data insights, and “How can the workplace learn from these people to help others navigate struggle?”
- **Not Feeling Bad, Just Getting By:** Generally, we find that 30–40% of people in a workplace are not feeling bad, just getting by. This outcome in itself is not alarming, given that these people are either identifying that there is no reason they couldn’t be thriving other than they lack the knowledge, tools, and support to do so, or they are struggling but don’t feel comfortable owning this even to themselves. Understanding how to help this group access the knowledge, tools, and support they need to move up the thriving continuum is key in order to minimize the risk that when struggle strikes – as it does for all of us at some time – they may slip back towards *really struggling*.
- The Wellbeing Lab’s most recent research reports suggest that there may be an increased number of people sitting in this category while they “tool up” in order to proactively manage their wellbeing in a significantly different environment (post-COVID). These people may be experiencing more anxiety than pre-COVID. However, many are “utilizing” this anxiety proactively to take corrective action, so in this way the anxiety is actually moving them in a positive direction as they pivot their approach to their wellbeing management.
- **Really Struggling:** Generally, we find that that 5–10% of people in a workplace are *really struggling*. While this outcome is not ideal, and those supporting workplace wellbeing should be mindful of what resources they are providing to support people who are *really struggling*, it is also unrealistic to expect that there would never be anyone in this group, unless it is a very small sample size. Sometimes this state is temporary and caused by a family, life, or work event – like losing someone they love – and if that is the case, helping them learn to care for their wellbeing and give themselves space and support to heal can allow them to increase their levels of thriving over time. However, if this state is more permanent – for example, due to physical or mental ill-health, financial struggle, or caring for others – their ability to move from this state will be much more challenging.

**People's states of wellbeing are a reflection of a single question they answered at the end of the survey. Asked to take everything into account over the last month, they chose which of these states best describes the way they have been feeling.*

JOB SATISFACTION

What were their levels of job satisfaction? What might this suggest about how their levels of wellbeing are impacting these outcomes? Are these scores where they would like them to be?

People's job satisfaction provides an overall indicator of how people feel about their job. It doesn't tell why people might be engaged or satisfied but rather offers an easy way to check in on how your people feel about working in their organization. This data can also be an interesting way to further analyze the relationship between the different states of wellbeing and how people feel about their workplace.

**Their job engagement, performance and satisfaction scores are single item measures.*

Job satisfaction is the extent to which they feel positive and content about their job. It provides an overall snapshot of how they are doing.

WELLBEING AMPLIFIERS

What were their levels of wellbeing ability, motivation, and psychological safety? What impact might this be having on their state of wellbeing?

While studies have found some demographic differences in people's states of wellbeing – for example, men tend to be more likely to be *consistently thriving* than women – statistically, it is more likely that people who have higher levels of thriving also have higher levels of wellbeing ability, motivation, and psychological safety to help them navigate life's challenges.

- **Wellbeing Ability** is someone's capacity – the knowledge, tools, and opportunities – to take actions that care for their wellbeing. Studies suggest (Fogg, 2019) that the most reliable way to improve our abilities is to start with small wellbeing behaviors that we can do consistently and be successful at immediately. This gives us the opportunity to build on our wellbeing strengths and as our abilities and confidence grow, we can experiment with more challenging wellbeing behaviors over time.
- **Wellbeing Motivation** is someone's commitment to consistently prioritize caring for their wellbeing. Too often we focus on abstract desires and outcomes (we want to be happier, healthier, wealthier) and the things we feel we "should do." As a result, our motivation fluctuates

(one moment we have it and the next it's gone). Sustaining our motivation requires clear future aspirations or measurable outcomes (our “why,” e.g., I want to be fitter) that are matched to small, specific, high impact behaviors that we want to do and can succeed at (our “how,” e.g., run for 10 minutes each morning).

- **Psychological Safety.** Thriving in the face of ongoing struggle not only requires skills and ongoing commitment, but also the support of others around us. Psychological safety exists when we have safe spaces to talk openly and honestly about how we're trying to care for our wellbeing, what's working well, where we're struggling, and what we're learning without the fear of being judged.

Our studies suggest that because it is healthy for people's levels of wellbeing to ebb and flow based on the choices they are making and what is happening in the world around them, the real goal for wellbeing efforts is not to achieve perfect wellbeing scores but to steadily amplify people's capabilities to care for their wellbeing over time.

Again, scores of 70 to 75 are healthy averages for these measures, and any upward trend is a good indication that the investments they are making are having a positive impact. It is worth noting, however, that motivation is harder to shift than ability, and is more easily positively and negatively influenced by moment-to-moment circumstances for people, so this can be more erratic. Focusing on skill and confidence building, safe spaces to share and experiment, shrinking the difficulty of change efforts (think tiny habits, for example), and ramping up experiences of success help people increase their motivation.

* *Wellbeing ability, motivation, and psychological safety scores are multi-item measures.*

PERMAH WELLBEING FACTORS

What were their PERMAH scores? Which PERMAH elements were driving their wellbeing? Which PERMAH elements were they lagging in? Which PERMAH elements did they choose to focus on for their personal wellbeing plan?

People's goal should not be to get perfect wellbeing scores – this would not be healthy. Help them understand that their wellbeing is meant to ebb and flow so we can adjust to the world around us and learn and grow.

Researchers have found that most people are wired with fairly healthy levels of wellbeing and typically score around 70 out of 100. It is important to note that our wellbeing tends to ebb and flow in a normal range of 60 to 80 out of a score of 100 for most people. However, if someone's score is below 60 and stays that way over time, it is a signal that they are at risk of depression.

Relationships tend to lead the way for most of us, followed closely by Meaning, Accomplishment and

Engagement, and then Positive Emotions and Health. This is not unique to our research, with the most consistent finding across wellbeing studies over the last decade being that other people matter for our wellbeing.

However, how much someone needs of each of the PERMAH elements will vary depending on the type of person they are, the situations they're in, and the outcomes they want to achieve. And studies suggest that all the PERMAH factors matter.

It can also be helpful to note that people who are *consistently thriving* tend to have higher levels of Positive Emotion and Health than others, while people who are *living well despite struggles* tend to draw heavily on their Relationships and sense of Meaning in their work.

Generally, we find that if someone's PERMAH scores are dramatically changing it is a reflection of either what they have been choosing to prioritize over the last month or a sudden change in their circumstances. If people are worried about these kinds of shifts, simply ask: "What's changed over the last month in the choices you're making or your circumstances that might be causing this shift?"

Remember, your goal is not to provide a wellbeing coaching session, just a results debrief. If they want to book a longer coaching session on how to create tiny wellbeing habits, then that is a great next step after your conversation. However, it's worth noting in your preparation which PERMAH elements they want to prioritize as they move forward.

**Their PERMAH scores are a reflection of their individual results and comprise a number of elements combined to create a score for each factor.*

WELLBEING STRUGGLES

What are they struggling with the most? What support might they need to navigate their biggest wellbeing struggles?

Provided people know how to respond to signs of struggle as opportunities for individual and collective learning and growth, challenges can provide opportunities to build even in the midst of uncertainty and difficulty. People who feel safe to ask for help when they are struggling to care for their wellbeing are statistically more likely to report higher levels of wellbeing ability, wellbeing motivation, and psychological safety. This is why having the knowledge, tools, support, and psychological safe spaces people need to navigate struggle can be one of the most effective paths to caring for wellbeing.

It's always worth reminding people that there is no shame in struggling when it comes to caring for our wellbeing and that it is simply our body's way of letting us know that something needs our attention. It's also important to gauge just how big this struggle is right now and what impact it is having on their wellbeing and their satisfaction with life.

If the impact is quite significant, then it's worth helping them to explore which AMPlifiers and/or PERMAH factors might help them to navigate this struggle. If the impact is not that significant right now, then encourage them to remain mindful of any shifts over time, and remind them that their AMPlifiers and PERMAH factors can hold practical solutions to navigating their wellbeing struggles.

** These are single item, multiple-choices questions. Their biggest wellbeing struggle is selected from a multiple-choice list that includes: my physical health, my mental health, dealing with people, managing money, navigating changes, caring for others, or other.*

WELLBEING BARRIERS

What are the barriers their workers are encountering when it comes to caring for wellbeing? How can they help their workers overcome the barriers to caring for their wellbeing?

Identifying what makes it hard for your people to care for their wellbeing can help to identify the types of wellbeing support that are most likely to make it easier. The more diverse the forms of wellbeing support provided, the higher people's levels of wellbeing are likely to be. The good news is that when it comes to caring for our wellbeing, tiny, consistent actions can have a mighty impact over time.

Studies have found that the most common reason most people fail to achieve their goals is that they fail to plan for the inevitable barriers and obstacles we nearly always encounter. However, by identifying their biggest barrier at the outset and thinking about how they can navigate it, people are far more likely to achieve their desired outcomes.

When it comes to caring for our wellbeing the most common barrier most people cite is "not enough time." But other barriers people encounter include not enough money, too much physical effort required, too much mental energy required, and not being sure how to start.

The good news is that when it comes to caring for our wellbeing, researchers have found that tiny is mighty. 30 seconds of caring for your wellbeing each day is better than no seconds at all. The PERMAH Wellbeing Survey Wellbeing Plan, is packed with tiny wellbeing habits that don't cost a cent for people to experiment with.

It's also worth reminding people that caring for our wellbeing requires us to playfully experiment with what works well, where we're struggling, what we're learning, and how we can continue adjusting as our abilities improve, our motivation ebbs and flows, and the world around us changes. This is why their report features the learning loop to help them find ways to navigate the barriers they might encounter when it comes to caring for their wellbeing.

**Their biggest wellbeing barrier is selected from a multiple-choice list that includes: not enough time, not enough money, too much physical effort required, too much mental energy required, not sure how to start, or other.*