

What have young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds said about "wellbeing"?



Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds ranked family as the most important domain. Unique to this group was a focus on global concerns, such as a considerable awareness wars overseas. For many, family included immediate family and extended to family both in Australia and abroad. The family was seen as a place of safety and support; where they enjoyed the ‘small things’ like cooking dinner or washing the car together. Issues of fairness and respect figured heavily, particularly respect for parents and in reciprocal respect: “I see love and respect [as] the same, so we have to respect each other and show love”. The group had a positive view of guidance and rules yet this was not unproblematic—particularly with intergenerational cultural dissonance.

“... you don’t really understand what your parents mean and they don’t understand who you are...They don’t really understand what we did because you haven’t been through that experience yet, and haven’t seen what you’ve seen”.

Many from this group held a global conception of community, and related community also to their neighbourhood and shared leisure and religious activities. Community could include ‘a group of people that works together’, and consisted of people from the ‘same culture’ or ‘same country’, such as those ‘back home’. Many demonstrated an awareness of issues related to war and peace or cultural conflict; some talking about the civil war in Syria or war near Burma. These global concerns often appeared to have a real and immediate (rather than abstract) meaning for these young people. Several respondents counterpoised local neighbourhoods as hostile places and communities as safe—where ‘Neighbourhoods’ referred to their local street, facilities, or services such as the police. Learning for this group was recognised as occurring across a number of domains including family, and good communication between parents and the teachers at school was an important part of these

young people's evaluation of their schooling (an issue not mentioned so much by other groups). Education was often mentioned in connection with future adult employment (securing a 'good job'), and school was a place that helped with cultural acclimatisation and language skills. Though not as strong as other groups, the social element of school was also valued, where school was a place for 'having fun with your friends' and 'meeting new people'. The group stressed the importance of good teachers, and bullying was a key concern to many. Similarly to those with disability and to some extent the young Aboriginal group, bullying was perceived as having its genesis in a perception of these people being 'different' from others. This group regularly reported that they were bullied due to difficulties with language acquisition, their names and their cultural and dietary differences. This was highly distressing and something that got in the way of a good life.

"You pronounce something not correct or when you think that you look weird when you wear something. It's like you don't know what they say and you really want to know why they're laughing at you".

Like other groups, friends were people who supported you and whom you could 'have fun' with; who could be trusted and confided in. There was a marked distinction between 'true' friends and 'bad' friends; the latter characterised by untrustworthiness. Health was discussed with reference to physical health as well as depression and mental illness—where bullying was intrinsically linked to mental health: 'bullying and that one [mental health] would be together'. Though money was not deemed as important as family or other domains, it was viewed as an important facilitator of basic needs including clothes, food, and shelter. In general, money was not rated as crucial contributor to wellbeing: 'you don't need to have money; you can have a happy life without money.'