

## **What does wellbeing look like to you in the pandemic?**

Wellbeing is often described as the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. It helps us overcome difficulties and achieve happiness in our life. During the pandemic, wellbeing to me is having some control over my life, feeling joy and having a sense of purpose.

To remain in control of my life is one of the most important parts of my wellbeing. It has become even more important because during the pandemic it felt like COVID-19 had control over me and the people around me. COVID-19 has restricted us from many things, such as the inability to go outside during lockdowns, and the prevention of physically interacting with others due to the need to social distance. The lockdown personally affected me because I was not able to go to school, talk to some of my best friends and sports, the last of which is an essential part of my everyday life. Although it felt like COVID-19 hindered me in many ways, there were some things that I still had control over. For example, I had control over how I could use my spare time. Most importantly, I still controlled how I can react to the pandemic and the methods I had at my disposal to manage the situation. For others in similar situations, I recommend to focus on areas of your life that you still have control over and take pride in that ownership. Having control over crucial aspects of one's life during these times is essential to keeping one's wellbeing and finding joy.

Happiness is quite ephemeral and fleeting. What is more important is the concept of joy. Even before the pandemic, things happened that made me unhappy. Of course, the pandemic exacerbated certain situations which made me even more unhappy. However, I have come to discover that being able to find joy in the mundane and routine is a lot more important than being happy for a few moments. While I couldn't go outside and play sports, I found alternative activities that are just as rewarding indoors, such as playing my ukulele. Although every day in the lockdown felt similar and repetitive, the surplus time allowed me to practise and perfect my skills in the ukulele which I didn't have enough time to do before. I became a lot more joyous and positive during the pandemic and it also really helped me with my wellbeing.

Aside from having a sense of control and finding joy in the simple things in life, another aspect of wellbeing is having a strong sense of purpose, which is linked to many positive health outcomes. Aside from the traditional physical health issues such as strokes, sleeplessness and heart attacks, having a strong sense of purpose also prevents the likelihood of depression and improves mental health. During the pandemic my sense of purpose was to help my family during these hard times. I could see that my father was quite stressed due to the financial impacts of COVID-19 and I volunteered my time to help with his business. This gave me a strong sense of purpose and forced me to become more focused. My wellbeing was improved significantly as having something to do really helped to overcome some negative feelings.

In conclusion, wellbeing is a fundamental part to our overall health. Having control over one's life, finding joy in family and friends, as well as discovering a renewed sense of purpose are what I see as wellbeing during the pandemic. My wellbeing helped me persist through the pandemic and gave me new and positive perspectives on life.