

Final Message: Communication From an Interdisciplinary Point of View – Or Communication in the Service of Individual and Social Well-Being

Erika VÁRADI-CSEMA

ABSTRACT

Professionals working with children face numerous challenges in their daily work, which significantly affect their well-being, mental state, and psychological well-being. However, the impact of these factors is even more significant, as they directly and indirectly influence the enforcement of children's rights and the effectiveness of cooperation with children. These professionals often represent adult society to children. In most cases, this is when the child is vulnerable, emotionally wounded, or in need of support for some other reason. The nature of their cooperation with professionals and the experiences they gain in this way are not only important in terms of the successful handling of the specific case. A single positive experience can make a particular professional a role model for children. Their behaviour and reactions can thus become exemplary, serving as a model in the socialization process of young people.

Whether we examine it on an individual or societal level, the fact remains that communication is the means to finding emotional balance or social peace. Impaired communication skills, a poorly chosen communication style, or the inability to decode and interpret the other party's communication messages can lead to feelings of failure, frustration, and even burnout in the long run.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the two main types of well-being: subjective and social well-being. The latter has a significant impact on the sensitivity of the environment surrounding younger age groups, for example in relation to the enforcement of children's rights and the detection of violations.

KEYWORDS

definition of well-being, subjective well-being, social well-being

1. Introduction

Although we all aspire for a peaceful, harmonious and balanced life, there is no denying that our daily lives are fraught with tensions, conflicts and struggles of all

Erika Váradi-Csema (2025) 'Final Message: Communication From an Interdisciplinary Point of View – Or Communication in the Service of Individual and Social Well-Being' in Erika Váradi-Csema (ed.) *Interdisciplinary and Child-Friendly Communication*. Miskolc-Budapest: Central European Academic Publishing. pp. 265–270. https://doi.org/10.71009/2025.evcs.iacfc_20



kinds. Although our attention to problems varies greatly, in the modern, fast-paced, self-centred consumer society of the 21st century, looking after ourselves is primarily about our material well-being, comfort and quality of life. Few people take the time to process the difficulties they face every day, to find peace of mind. Yet, the loss of individual well-being has a serious direct and indirect negative impact not only on the individual in fact on all aspects of his/her life but also on the environment. Ultimately, it also affects social well-being. The latter is also a serious problem because its deterioration affects everyone along the social-psychological continuum - even those who are not in contact with the individual. The deterioration in the social well-being of a country or community, and the general malaise affects – through the citizens who experience it – the generations who, because of their vulnerability (e.g. young children, very old), would not perceive the deteriorating psychological environment.

Individual well-being and social well-being interact in a spiral, through a system of direct and indirect relationships. Preventing negative changes and reducing their impact is an important goal for all individuals and communities. Mediation is, I believe, one of the most effective tools in this regard.

Finding and maintaining inner peace and successfully dealing with potential conflicts and challenges depends significantly on our communication skills. These skills can be both a tool and an obstacle to creating well-being, whether on an individual or societal level.

As professionals working with children, this is an even more important challenge, as it directly and indirectly influences the quality of our work with children and, ultimately, the effectiveness of children's rights enforcement.

The quality of our direct interaction with minors and the effectiveness of our cooperation with children or other professional organisations depend significantly on our current state of mind. However, the degree of our commitment to our work, our ability to process any failures, and the onset of burnout also indirectly influence the level of soft skills that support successful professional work.

Communication is the most important tool for asserting our interests and professional position and performing our other tasks. Our communication skills and chosen communication style significantly influence the achievement of our goals. Ineffective communication behaviour or poor communication skills, on the other hand, can be a serious obstacle in this process.

Our general well-being and current state of mind have a significant impact on our successes or failures as professionals. The positive or negative experiences we have at work have a significant effect on our mental state and emotional balance.

However, these issues are even more important for professionals who work with children. The experiences that children have when they encounter professionals representing adult society do not only have a direct impact on them. They can influence their image of the adult world, their trust in the functioning of the authorities, as well as their role as role models in the socialisation process.

In everyday practice, it can be noted as a generally negative experience that neither the authorities, nor institutions and professionals dealing with children place

sufficient emphasis on these issues. However, their impact indirectly influences the level of enforcement of children's rights.

2. Individual (Subjective) Well-Being

A balanced, harmonious life is the basis of our individual well-being. The World Health Organisation published a definition of mental health as early as 1948, suggesting that mental health is the basis of spiritual well-being. "Health is not the absence of disease: health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being."¹ Avoiding or preventing illness is only the first stage in the process of ensuring mental well-being. The second or third stage is to treat any problems that may have already developed and then to rehabilitate them by appropriate means. This is equally important, as it is necessary to ensure that any possible secondary effects can be dealt with appropriately.

Subjective well-being is a broader concept than life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is an important but not the only element of subjective well-being. While life satisfaction is exclusively cognitive in nature, subjective well-being in its broader sense includes, in addition to the motive of satisfaction, positive and negative emotional components, which are, by definition, affective in nature.

The level of subjective well-being is determined by a number of factors and is influenced, for example, by the individual's resilience, coping strategies or typical conflict management techniques. A particularly important element of mental well-being is the ability to accept oneself, to take stock of one's strengths and weaknesses, and to develop a realistic self-image. If you come out of your disputes as a "loser", if you are unable to assert your interests adequately, if you suffer a lot of hurt and psychological pain in the process, you will be reluctant to face up to the role of "loser". The individual will find it difficult to accept himself/herself, because everyone wants to be successful and to win. But without acceptance, one cannot move on.

It is also important to know whether the individual has a savouring technique and what the specific level of savouring is. This complex notion refers to the extent to which we are able to enjoy life, to notice (!) and take in the (often small) positive events of everyday life (e.g. beautiful clouds, crossing the zebra crossing, etc.) or to turn otherwise neutral or even negative events into positive ones. In doing so, it is important to "rewrite history" that is, the ability to reframe events as they are experienced. The technique, which is named after Monthly Lefko, is one of the most important methods of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). It involves questioning and reinterpreting the automatic thoughts that shape our emotional and behavioural responses to situations. By reframing thoughts, individuals learn to recognise different biases and replace them with more realistic, positive thoughts. (For example, when we make mistakes, we usually conclude that "I'm not good enough". However,

1 Polacsek, 2008, p. 1.

this thought can cause anxiety or self-esteem problems. If we are able to reframe our thoughts, the main message of what happened will be “everyone makes mistakes sometimes, and I can learn from that.”)

3. Social Well-Being and Its Aspects

Keyes is credited with the concept of social well-being².

Social well-being is the ability to participate in, feel valued as a member of, and relate to a wider social environment; for example, the local community, society as a whole and the environment we live in. The feeling that we can make a meaningful impact on the people around us and the world improves our personal well-being. It can also tangibly improve the quality of the community we live in, creating greater social well-being.

Participation in community development activities almost always requires cooperation with nearby residents. For example, when a neighbourhood is organising the renovation of a city park, people of different ages may find themselves side by side at an information booth or shovelling dirt side by side over many weekends. Parents can meet each other’s parents while cleaning up a playground. Sharing these considerable, infrequent activities with others can form strong bonds and open up relationships that would not develop in our normal professional or personal lives.

It is included albeit under a different name as a question to be examined in EU well-being research³, alongside “evaluative wellbeing” (which is an individual’s general value judgement about how well their life is going, including their overall satisfaction with their life and their overall sense of happiness); “emotional wellbeing” (includes everyday positive feelings, such as happiness and enjoyment of life, and the absence of negative feelings, such as anxiety and depression); “functioning” (which includes a sense of autonomy, competence, the ability to commit, the existence of a life purpose and purposefulness, self-confidence, optimism and flexibility); “vitality” (which includes rest, good sleep, a feeling of recharge, and the ability to face life’s challenges) and “supportive relationships” (which are related to the individual’s feeling that there are people in his/her life who provide him/her with support, friendships, appreciation, and with whom he/she can discuss intimate issues).

Community wellbeing in this interpretation (community wellbeing) encompasses an individual’s feelings about their own community, including the level of trust in others, a sense of being supported by the community, and experiencing good neighbourliness.

2 Nagy and Oláh, 2012, p. 51.

3 Jeffrey, Abdallah and Quick, 2018, p. 5.

4. Individual and Social Well-Being in the 21st Century

Both individual and societal well-being are significantly affected by the presence of conflicts and the issue of whether they are dealt with appropriately.

Conflict is a feature of both human existence and social existence. However, in the 21st century, there are a number of circumstances digitalisation, interculturality, internationalisation (e.g. blended families) that can generate new conflict situations. In addition, the fast-paced world does not encourage us to take time for ourselves, to work through our problems with others and to nurture our relationships⁴.

Ultimately, we are left with legal solutions even in situations where we are highly emotionally sensitive. For example, in the field of civil law, family law, children may come into contact with the procedure either directly (e.g. child custody) or indirectly (e.g. as victims of divorce) and may have a negative experience, even a life-long one. Mediation can help to enforce the rights to information and expression, and to ensure the best interests of the child.⁵

4 Based on the conference presentation in Istanbul, 13-14 May 2025; Váradi-Csema, 2025.

5 Csemáné Váradi and Németh, 2020, pp. 8-18.

Bibliography

- Csemáné Váradi, E., Németh, Z. (2020) 'A gyermek részvétele a (közvetítői) mediációs eljárásban, különös tekintettel a polgári és büntető eljárásra', *Fontes Iuris*, 6(1), pp. 8–18.
- Jeffrey, K., Abdallah, S., Quick, A. (2018) *Európaiak egyéni és társadalmi jólléte: Az European Social Survey hatodik hullámának eredményei – ESS Topline Results 5*. London: European Social Survey ERIC.
- Nagy, H., Oláh, A. (2012) 'A pozitív pszichológia hozzájárulása a megküzdés értelmezéséhez: A személyiség protektív faktorai' in Demetrovics, Zs., et al. (eds.) *Az egészségpszichológia elmélete és alkalmazása I.: Személyiség, egészség, egészségfejlesztés*. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, pp. 45–68.
- Polacsek, L. (2008) *Mentálhigiéné, a lélek egészségvédelme*. Budapest: Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet.
- Váradi-Csema, E. (2025) 'Macaristan'da Arabuluculuk (Mediation as a means of achieving individual and social well-being)' in Ünver, J. (ed.) *Türk Devletleri 1. Uluslararası Hukuk Kongresi*. Istanbul: Aristotle, pp. 713–734 (Conference presentation at the 1st International Law Congress of the Turkic States in Istanbul (Yeditepe Üniversitesi, Hukuk Fakültesi) 13-14 May 2025)).