

# Wellbeing at the University

## Erasmus Staff Training Days

Janne Mertala & Tiina Pylkkönen  
4<sup>th</sup> June 2024



Aalto-yliopisto  
Aalto-universitetet  
Aalto University



# Programme for today

9.30 Welcome words, agenda and presentations

10.00 Holistic wellbeing

11.15 Wellbeing route

12.15 Lunch

13.15 Student wellbeing services at Aalto (from lunch we first go to Starting Point of Wellbeing -room)

14.00 Workshop

15.30 Sum up

# GUIDELINES FOR OUR INCLUSIVE INTERACTION



Meet people with an open mind and respect diversity.



Be open to new perspectives, listen and give space to everyone.



Consider what you share from this session: general concepts or your own thoughts and ideas, not details.



Speak with care and respect.



Be compassionate and learn from mistakes.

# Introductions

We have time until ca 10.00 😊

- Who are you?
- What is one good practice from your home university?
- What are your expectations for this day?

Hearing good practices already now opens doors for casual brainstorming during the day.

Think during the day: What do you take with you back home?

# Holistic wellbeing in academia

Iterations, variations, successes and .... collaboration



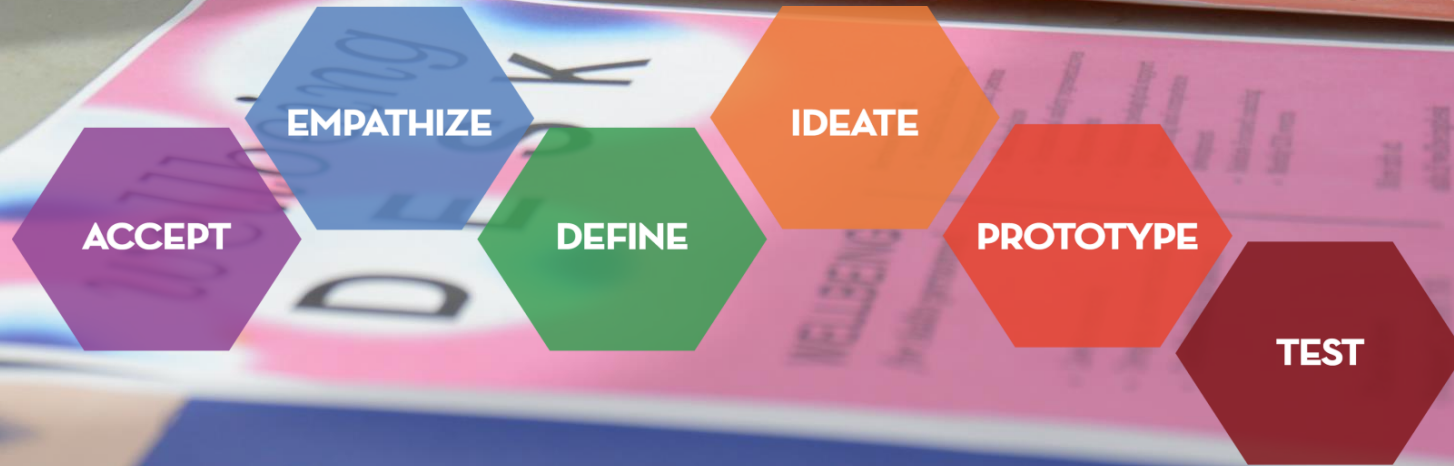
OASIS<sup>of</sup>  
*Radical Wellbeing*  
IG: aaltowellbeing

Tiina Pylkkönen  
Community developer  
4.6.2024



## The Oasis method

We use the design management model described by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans (Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life, 2017). This is a typical way of working at Aalto, where the need is defined through the acceptance of the current situation, solutions are devised, prototypes are created, and functionality is tested in practice with the help of an agile project model. Practices that produce real change are brought into permanent operating models.





**Radical wellbeing is a necessity.** By Merita Petäjä

Oasis of Radical Wellbeing is a new project from Aalto University researching, collecting



**Oasis blog: The meaning of encounters**

As a teacher, researcher and developer of leadership, I have had hundreds of opportunities over the years to support Oasis of Radical Wellbeing



**Oasis blog: Mental Distress is Not Your Fault**

"When the source of mental distress is structural, there is nothing even an army of Oasis of Radical Wellbeing

## Wellbeing Desk for Aalto personnel

Wellbeing Desk is a low-threshold ...



**Aalto University launches new MOOC "Art of Living" by Frank Martela**

This new massive open online course on how to live a good life is lectured by Ph.D., 29.5.2023 | News

## WELLBEING *in* teaching

### Wellbeing in Teaching

Pedagogical wellbeing entails both teacher and student perspectives. These Services



**Agreeing guidelines for inclusive interaction in course**

Inclusive teaching practices Services



**Future-led Learning podcast**

The Future-led Learning podcast offers a platform for university educators to reflect their ideas about teaching and learning.

Podcasts



**The Best Thing Today podcast series**

The Best Thing Today is a podcast series by Aalto study, career and advanced study psychologists.

Podcasts



**Teaching community and pedagogical reflection, support and training are vital for teachers' wellbeing**

HowUTeach, teachers' wellbeing questionnaire 25.1.2024 | News



**Keys to Your Wellbeing I: Dealing With Feelings**

We can try to accept and explore difficult feelings. How? A wellbeing package for your Oasis of Radical Wellbeing



**Keys to Your Wellbeing II: Self-Compassion With a Fierce Twist**

Self-compassion helps, and you can learn and practice it. A wellbeing package for your use, Oasis of Radical Wellbeing



**Keys to Your Wellbeing III: Group Flow - What?**

Flow can also be achieved together with others! A wellbeing package for your use, Oasis of Radical Wellbeing



**Keys to Your Wellbeing IV: In It Together**

What kind of quality you bring to interaction with people? Connecting with others can be Oasis of Radical Wellbeing



**Keys to Your Wellbeing V: Movement for a Better Brain**

Even a small amount of movement can refresh the brain and enrich thinking. Oasis of Radical Wellbeing



**Keys to Your Wellbeing VI: The Surprising Impact of Psychological Safety**

Psychological safety refers to feelings of trust Oasis of Radical Wellbeing



**Compassion I: Prison of the Mind**

What happens when we notice that one of us is missing? A short film by Merita Petäjä and Eero Tiilikainen (Aalto University, 2018)



**Compassion II: Have a Good Day**

Groundhog Day -type story about self-compassion. Short film by Merita Petäjä and Eero Tiilikainen, produced by Aalto AINWell /



**Compassion III: Sonja**

A student receives an interesting internship offer but is faced with a difficult decision after learning that greenwashing is practiced at the

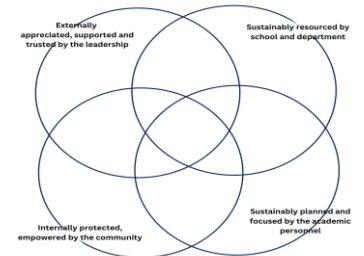
**Benefits of Calmness: mindfulness and other calming practices for You**

Mindfulness and other soothing practices can be useful tools for you!

Oasis of Radical Wellbeing



## Under construction: Flourishing programmes



# Data based development needs shared in the Aalto community

## **NEED FOR CULTURE OF RESPECT: SENSE OF BELONGING AND PEER-SUPPORT**

- Communication culture
- Trust and psychological safety
- Participatory methods and co-creation

## **WORKLOAD BALANCE**

- Risk of burnout
- Distribution of workload
- Feeling of inadequacy

## **CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY**

- Transparency of expectations
- Uncertainty and changes
- Feedback cycles





Since 2017 the AllWell? questionnaire  
has provided Aalto university research-based  
data on students' study ability and wellbeing  
to support pedagogical development.



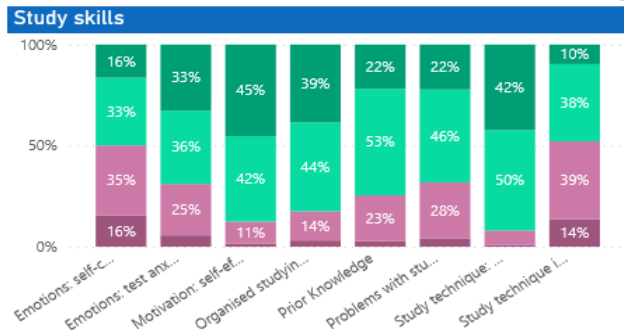
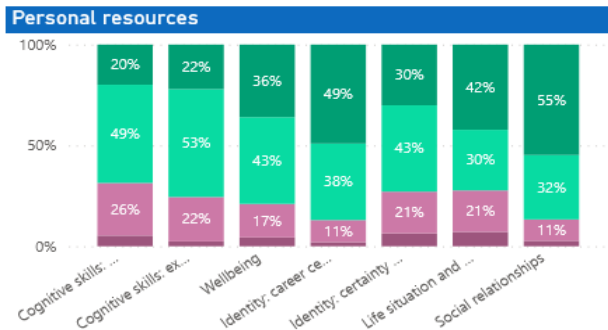
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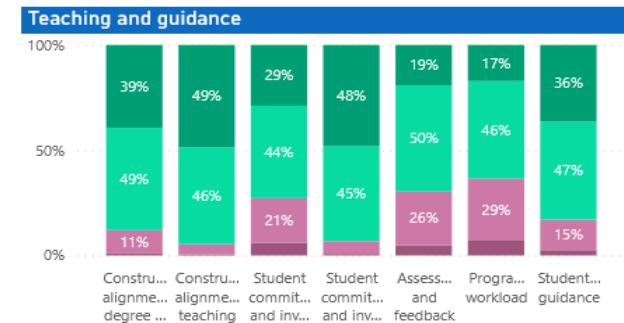
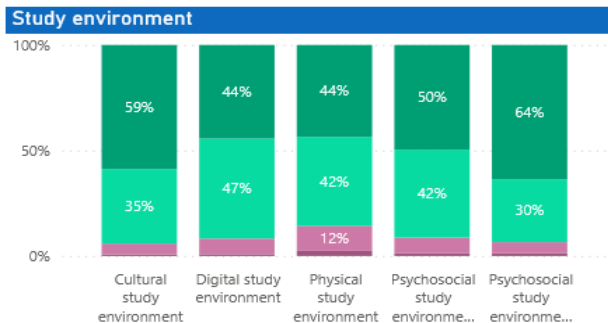
# Overview of the results, Aalto level

Students have a lot of personal resources, life situations and difficulties in concentration are making studying harder.



There is willingness to deep learning, but many experience problems with studying.

Overall experience of study environment very positive. Around 30% feel that there are too few self-study spaces available.



The quality of teaching, programmes and guidance overall quite good. Programme workload is too high, and more feedback would be needed.

# Wellbeing at work survey 2023

Personnel in Aalto University is satisfied with

- the work of supervisors
- the resources of their own work,
- especially with the meaningfulness and challenge of their own work the adequacy of one's own competence
- the possibilities to both utilize and develop one's own competence.

Personnel is the least satisfied with their

- opportunities to influence the university's decision-making
- the mental strain of their own work
- possibilities of career advancement
- changes which effect on coping at work.

The common development area for the university was selected this time based on the development areas identified by the schools, departments and units.

# HowUTeach –survey at Aalto

Teachers with organized approach to teaching have better self-efficacy beliefs and less burn out symptoms.

- Reflection of their pedagogical choices and ability justify them made the more confident and it impacted positively on their wellbeing

The more participants reported adopting the unreflective approach to teaching, the lower perceived community support, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-compassion they experienced. Unreflective approach to teaching also correlated positively with self-criticism, stress, and burnout symptoms.

- pedagogical support, and pedagogical reflection can support pedagogical reflection and through that teachers' wellbeing.

Community was positively associated with participants' wellbeing.

- Perceived support from one's work community was positively related to self-efficacy beliefs and negatively related to self-criticism and burnout symptoms.

Teachers listed several actions or practices (in your programme, school or university) supporting their teaching-related well being.

- Pedagogical events, encouragement to develop ones teaching and possibility to participate to pedagogical training at Aalto supported ones skills in teaching and wellbeing.
- On school or programme/major level possibility to participate in organized events and to hear others' examples and to ask for help supported wellbeing.

Read more: [link](#)

# Exercise: Partner analysis

List and draw:

- Partners inside and outside your institution
- Partner analysis: previous/current collaboration and wished collaboration
- Motivation and added value of collaboration

You have 15 minutes.





**Action: We develop our working culture to increase Aaltonians' engagement and wellbeing**

**Aalto has selected community spirit as a common development area for the university**

- sense of belonging and working together
- team leader's own role in creating community
- the concept of inclusiveness
- an environment where everyone can be themselves and feel part of the community

# Wellbeing route

The themes of the five-point welfare route are observation of emotions, fostering the relationship with nature, bodyliness, calming down, and reflection on moderation. The route opened on 19.4.2023

## Wellbeing route on Otaniemi campus | Aalto University

After lunch: We continue at **Starting Point of Wellbeing -room: Undergraduate Center Y199c**. We go together from lunch.

# Starting Point of Wellbeing



Counselling on **wellbeing, studying** and life for all Aalto students.

- Drop-in counselling: 20-30 min without appointment
- Facilitated peer groups (e.g. Beat the Blues, Pomodoro)
- Online materials (e.g. podcasts, Concentration Training, Career Planning MyCo)
- Courses (e.g. Mind and Study, Back to studies - Tauolta tutkinton)
- Individual counselling with time reservation

# Support to students e.g. in...



- Time management, procrastination, motivational challenges, study techniques, study related stress and anxiety (study and career counselling psychologists)
- Decision making, goal setting, life- and career planning, recognizing study related possibilities, prioritizing and future options (Aalto guidance counsellors)
- Studying with learning difficulties, illness or a handicap (special education teacher)
- Career planning, finding job opportunities, career design (career coaches)
- Confidential discussions on all life topics, e.g. (challenging) life situations, relationships, crisis (Aalto chaplains – regardless of world view)

# Drop-in counselling

Counselling without appointment 8.1.-10.5.2024.



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
<b>10-11.30 GROUP: <u>Thesis and Tomatoes</u></b>  Facilitated co-writing sessions for thesis writing	<b>10-11 ONLINE DROP-IN: Study and career counselling psychologists</b> ( <a href="#">chat/video</a> )	<b>10-12 WALK-IN: Study and career counselling psychologists</b> (SPW-room, Y199c)	<b>10-12 WALK-IN: Special education teacher</b> (SPW-room, Y199c)  <b>10-11 ONLINE DROP-IN: Study and career counselling psychologists</b> ( <a href="#">chat/video</a> )
	<b>12-13 Open Doors</b> (SPW-room, Y199c)		
<b>13-15 WALK-IN: Study and career counselling psychologists</b> (SPW-room, Y199c)	<b>13-15 WALK-IN: Aalto-chaplains</b> (SPW-room, Y199c)	<b>13-15 WALK-IN: <u>Career Design Lab</u></b> (SPW-room, Y199c)	<b>13-15 WALK-IN: Guidance counsellors</b> (SPW-room, Y199c)
	<b>15-16 WALK-IN: <u>Career Design Lab</u></b> (SPW-room, Y199c)  Board game on integration to Finnish working life 30 Jan – 27 Feb	<b>GROUP: <u>Beat the Blues</u></b>  Event for international students Wed 31.1. & Wed 6.3. & Wed 10.4.	

More info on  
website!



# Starting Point of Wellbeing

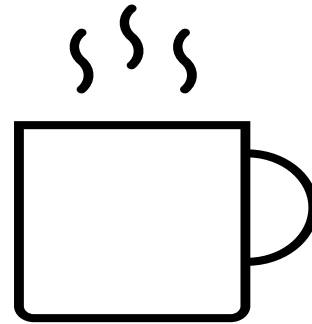
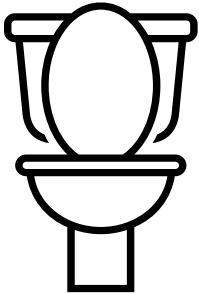


Does your student have questions about wellbeing, studying or life? Welcome! We are here for Aalto students.

Website: **Starting Point of Wellbeing | Aalto-yliopisto**

Instagram: **aaltowellbeing**

# Break



# Workshop

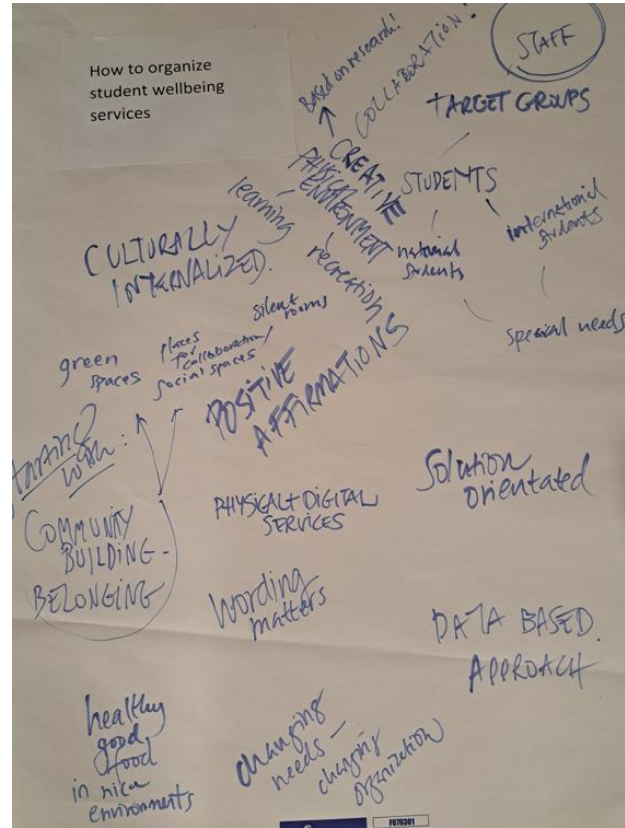


Go to a poster with your chosen topic.

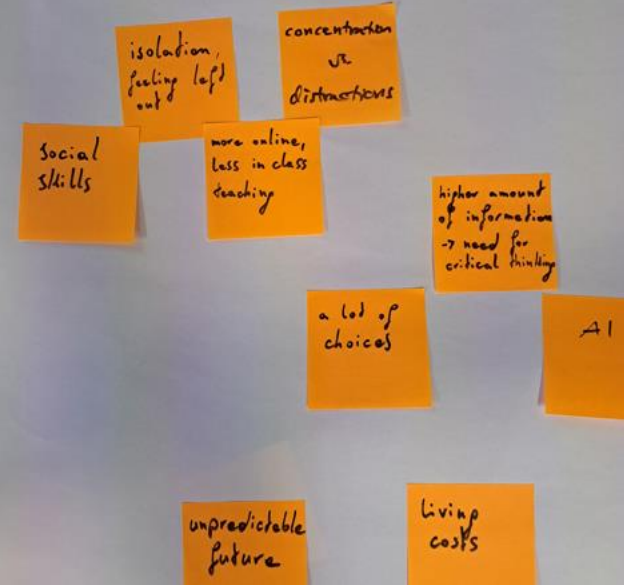
You have around 30 minutes for discussion on the topic. Bring to joint conversation best practices, insights, dreams, things that you know based on research. Emphasis is on discussion with your peers. Remember to document. We will send you the results after the workshop.

Remember guidelines for inclusive interaction.

# Groupwork



Needs of our students  
- what challenges  
them now?



# Sum up: What do you take home?

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10.00 Holistic wellbeing

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13.15 Student wellbeing services at Aalto

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# Wellbeing at the University

Thank you!

Janne Mertala & Tiina Pylkkönen  
4<sup>th</sup> June 2024



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