

OACAS Dress Purple Day: Lesson 3



Lesson 3: Well-being in the Village

Lesson Introduction

Along with raising a child and keeping them safe, the “village” is also responsible for ensuring their well-being. Well-being is that positive sense of self, spirit, and belonging that we feel when our physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs are being met.¹ Children who have a positive sense of well-being are more resilient, better equipped to navigate life’s challenges, and more successful as learners.² Children who have healthy connections to adults are also more likely to be able to seek out help when they need it.

Many cultures adopt a holistic view of well-being which includes body, mind, and spirit. Many African countries use the term Unbuntu³ to describe how our humanity and well-being are interconnected. The First Nation, Métis Nation, and Inuit cultures also present a holistic learning model which incorporates an understanding of well-being that integrates spirit, heart, mind, and body.³ From this perspective, well-being is supported through the creation of an environment that promotes and reflects cultural identity, and creates a sense of belonging and connection for all.

Providing for a child’s basic needs is a huge responsibility, and sometimes parents need help with that. The village, including Children’s Aid Societies, has a responsibility to provide support. Ontario research shows that the majority of child protection cases involve children whose basic needs have been negatively impacted by parents coping with chronic needs, such as extreme poverty, mental health problems, substance abuse, spousal violence, and social isolation.⁴ Research also shows that the impact of neglect on child development and well-being can often be more damaging than any other kind of abuse.⁴ Supporting children and families struggling with chronic needs includes connecting them to social service providers that can help them find solutions like adequate housing, employment, and mental health supports.

Children need help understanding that they have physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs and that it is the responsibility of adults in the community, starting with caregivers and teachers, but expanding outward to the broader community, to ensure these needs are met. Children need help in learning to identify the components of these basic needs, and to use these skills to ask for help if these needs are not being met.



Key Themes

1. Basic needs of living things
2. Children have a right to well-being
3. Various dimensions of well-being
4. How to access help and support to enhance well-being

Learning Outcomes

1. To help children understand the concept and various aspects of well-being (physical, emotional, social, cognitive, spiritual)
2. To help children identify what enhances and what hinders well-being
3. To help children identify adults in their village that they can go to for help

Grade-specific Learning Objectives

JK-SK:

- A basic concept of well-being for all living things
- A fundamental understanding of personal well-being
- Understanding the role of adults in supporting our well-being
- How to identify adults in our village who can help us

Grades 1-2:

- A basic concept of well-being for all living things
- An understanding of personal well-being
- A fundamental understanding of the various aspects of our well-being
- Understanding the role of adults in supporting our well-being
- How to identify adults in our village who can help us

Grades 3-5:

- The concept of well-being for all living things
- The various aspects of well-being
- How well-being helps us build a healthy sense of identity
- How to have our needs met
- Who to talk to if our needs aren't being met
- How to identify specific adults we can go to for help to ensure our well-being

Discussion Questions

Teacher brings in an indoor plant and introduces the plant to the class, describing it as a favourite plant, perhaps with a name. Allow students to gather round and look at the plant, perhaps touch it (if safe for the plant and students) with gentle hands. Initiate a discussion about the plant as a living thing.

JK-SK:

Living Things

1. What is a living thing? How do we know it is alive?
2. What kind of things do plants need to survive?
 - *Food, soil, air, water, sunlight*
 - What happens if they don't have sunlight?
 - What happens if they don't have water? Get too much water?
3. What kinds of things do animals need? How are these needs different from a plant's needs?
4. Who takes care of the animals when they're small?
 - *Discuss how all animals care for their young*

What Do I Need?

1. What kind of things do people need to survive? Are they different from what animals need?
 - *Food, clothing, education, shelter, love*
 - *These things are called basic needs: Food, shelter, clothing appropriate for the weather, education, medical care, safe surroundings, being taken care of (supervision).*
2. Who takes care of you when you're small?
 - *Parent or caregiver such as grandparent, step-parent, aunt or uncle, foster parent, etc.*
 - *Can also discuss how teachers are important*
3. What would you do if someone wasn't taking care of you? Who could you go to for help?
 - *Encourage children to provide more than one adult they can go to for help*
 - *Acknowledge that each individual's support network will look different*
 - *Give examples of professionals who can be helping adults in the "village": teachers, police, doctors, nurses, paramedics, firefighters, etc.*

Grades 1-2:

Living Things

1. What is a living thing? How do we know it is alive?
2. What kind of things do plants need to survive?
 - *Food, soil, air, water, sunlight*
 - What happens if they don't have sunlight?
 - What happens if they don't have water? Get too much water?
3. What kinds of things do animals need? How are they different from what plants need?
 - *Food, water, etc.*
4. Who takes care of the animals when they're small?
 - *Discuss how all animals care for their young*
5. Does anyone have a pet at home or live on a farm? Who cares for your pet or your farm animals? How do you care for your pet or farm animals?

What Do I Need?

1. What kind of things do people need to survive? Are they different from what animals need?
 - *Clothing, education, shelter, love*
 - *These things are called basic needs: Food, shelter, clothing appropriate for the weather, education, medical care, safe surroundings, being taken care of (supervision).*
2. Food, water, shelter, and clothing could be described as physical needs. We need them to keep our bodies alive and healthy. What other kinds of needs do we have? What else do we need to ensure our well-being?
 - *Friends, love, security, culture, and community*
3. Who takes care of you and your basic needs when you're small?
 - *Parent or caregiver such as grandparent, step-parent, aunt or uncle, foster parent, etc. –*
 - *Can also discuss how teachers are important*
4. What would you do if someone wasn't taking care of you? Who could you go to for help?
 - *Encourage children to provide more than one adult they can go to for help*
 - *Acknowledge that each individual's support network will look different*
 - *Give examples of professionals who can be helping adults in the "village": teachers, police, doctors, nurses, paramedics, firefighters, Children's Aid etc.*

Grades 3-5:

Living Things

1. What kind of things do plants need to survive?
 - *Food, soil, air, water, sunlight*
 - What happens if they don't have sunlight?
 - What happens if they don't have water? Get too much water?
2. What kind of needs do animals have? How are they different from the needs of plants?
 - *More complex beings have more complex needs*
3. Does anyone have a pet at home or live on a farm? Who cares for your pet or your farm animals? How do you care for your pet or farm animals?
4. Is there a difference between wild animals and domesticated ones?
 - *Discuss how all animals care for their young*

What Do I Need?

1. In what way are people's needs different or the same as those of animals?
 - *More complex needs: clothing, education, shelter, love*
2. Food, water, shelter and clothing could be described as physical needs. We need them to keep our bodies alive and healthy. What other kinds of needs do we have to ensure our well-being?
 - *Friends, love, security, culture, identity, and community*
 - *List on white board: Physical Needs, Emotional Needs, Social Needs, and Thinking and Learning or Cognitive Needs*
3. What would be an emotional need?
 - *Things we need to feel safe, secure, loved and cared for, understanding our feelings and emotions, how to deal with different feelings*
4. What would be a social need?
 - *Our need for relationships and connections to others. Having friends you care about, people that care about you, finding people with similar interests, feeling a sense of connection and belonging.*
5. What are thinking and learning needs?
 - *Our need to feed our brains, to learn new things, to be flexible and creative, and to solve problems.*
6. Whose job is it to provide for your basic needs?
 - *Parent or caregiver such as grandparent, step-parent, aunt or uncle, foster parent, etc.*
 - *Can also discuss how teachers are important*
7. What would you do if your basic needs were not being met?
 - *Encourage children to provide more than one adult they can go to for help*
8. Who could you go to for help?
 - *Acknowledge that each individual's support network will look different*

- Give examples of professionals who can be helping adults in the "village": teachers, police, doctors, nurses, paramedics, firefighters, Children's Aid etc.

9. Why is it important to go to an adult when our needs are serious?

- Children are still growing and learning, and still need help with many things
- Adults are there to help kids learn and grow, to meet their basic needs and to ensure their safety and well-being
- It is adults' responsibility to keep children safe (not children's)
- Sometimes children can help adults do their job of keeping kids safe by telling adults when they need help

Activity

- Well-being Circles

Relevant Ontario Curriculum Expectations

JK-SK:

- See 'Healthy Relationships and Kindergarten' on p. 102-103 of The Kindergarten Program curricular document (2016 version)

Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum:

Overall Living Skills Expectations:

Grades 1-5: 1.3, 1.4

Overall Expectations:

Grades 1-5: C2

Specific Expectations:

Grade 1: C1.2

Grade 2: C2.3

Grade 3: C2.2

Grade 4: C2.2

Grade 5: C1.1

Comments and/or Additional Resources:

- Reminder: Facilitator has a legal duty to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Please refer to the "Teacher's Guide for in-depth information on identifying signs of abuse and neglect, and Duty to Report.

References

1. Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education Discussion Document, May 2016.
2. "Brief Meaning of African Word 'UBUNTU'". Ubuntu Women Institute USA. January 24, 2012.
3. Native Learning Styles, Revised Edition. Michael Johnny. Ningwakwe Learning Press, Canada 2002.
4. A 25 Year Perspective on Child Welfare Services in Ontario and Canada, Nico Trocmé, McGill University.