

# MENTAL FLOURISHING

## OVERVIEW

Mental flourishing refers to how we feel (our emotions and life satisfaction) and how we function (relationships with others, personal control, purpose in life, and independence)<sup>1</sup>. Mental flourishing is described as a dynamic state of internal balance and an actively-constructed positive resource, which allows individuals to feel good and use their abilities in alignment with universal values of society and of their respective cultures.<sup>1,2</sup>

Figure 1 below identifies social, emotional and psychological signs of mental flourishing as well as characteristics of people high in mental flourishing.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Figure 2 below identifies internal and external factors that facilitate mental flourishing.<sup>5,6</sup>

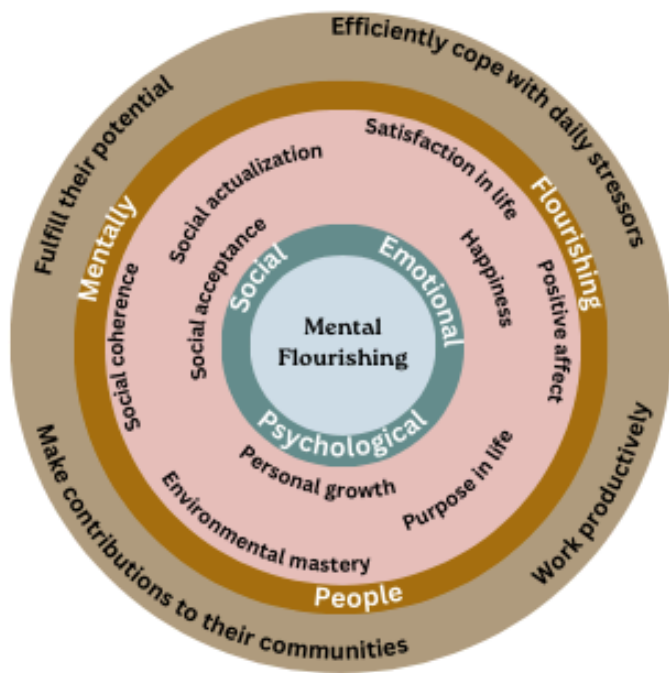


Figure 1

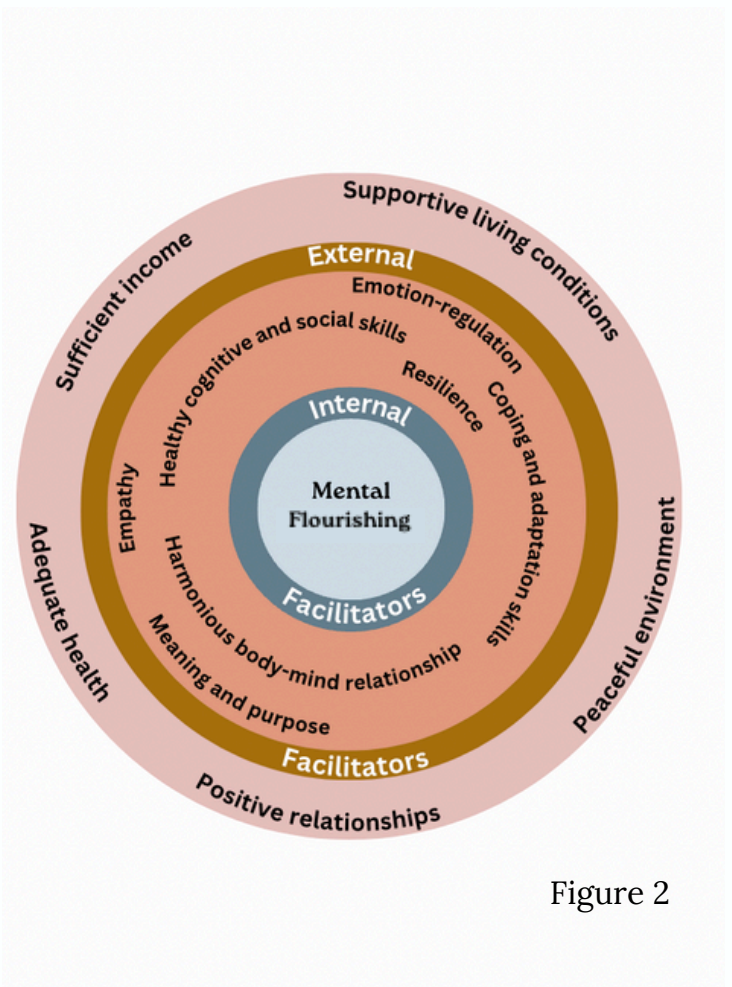


Figure 2

# BROADER SIGNIFICANCE & IMPACT

**Arts engagement helps children and adolescents to gain confidence, connect with peers, and engage in prosocial acts.**

Among adolescents, arts engagement develops self-efficacy by fostering peer communication, sharing of artistic accomplishments, and exchanging feedback on peer or professional artwork in China.<sup>7</sup> In adolescents with learning and mental health difficulties, creating visual art facilitates resilience by promoting peer connection, emotion-regulation, and prosocial behavior.<sup>8</sup>

**Arts engagement helps older adults feel and perform better.**

In older adults, arts group participation is associated with higher positive affect, life satisfaction, purpose in life, and mastery.<sup>14</sup> Interactive electronic art making promotes subjective health and well-being, social connectedness and intergenerational relationships, cognitive engagement, creativity, and self-expression.<sup>15</sup> Museum-based social prescribing sessions improve older adults' feelings of being 'absorbed' and 'enlightened', 'encouraged', 'cheerful', and 'active'.<sup>16</sup> Social prescribing also reduces doctor's visits and hospital admissions.<sup>13</sup>

**Arts engagement has a multitude of positive effects on adult well-being, ranging from mood regulation and stress reduction to personal empowerment.**

Among young adults, coloring reduces anxiety and negative mood, and also boosts perseverance, if there is freedom of artistic choice.<sup>9</sup> In adults, visual art making in an open studio improves positive affect and self-efficacy<sup>10</sup>. Art-making also improves connectedness, emotion-regulation, meaning-making, sense of identity, and personal empowerment. As for receptive participation, art museum visits reduce self-reported stress as well as enhance positive emotions and engagement.<sup>12,13</sup>

**Regular cultural engagement reduces symptoms of depression as well as decreases risk of depression for a decade.**

Engaging in art-viewing and art-making can lessen symptoms of depression, including apathy.<sup>13</sup> Cultural engagement through visiting museums, theater, and cinema decreases the risk of developing depression over the next 10 years in older adults by 32% if attended every few months and by 48% if attended at least once a month.<sup>17</sup>

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