



The Vital Conditions

Skagit County Mayors and Commissioners

Well-Being and the Social Determinants of Health

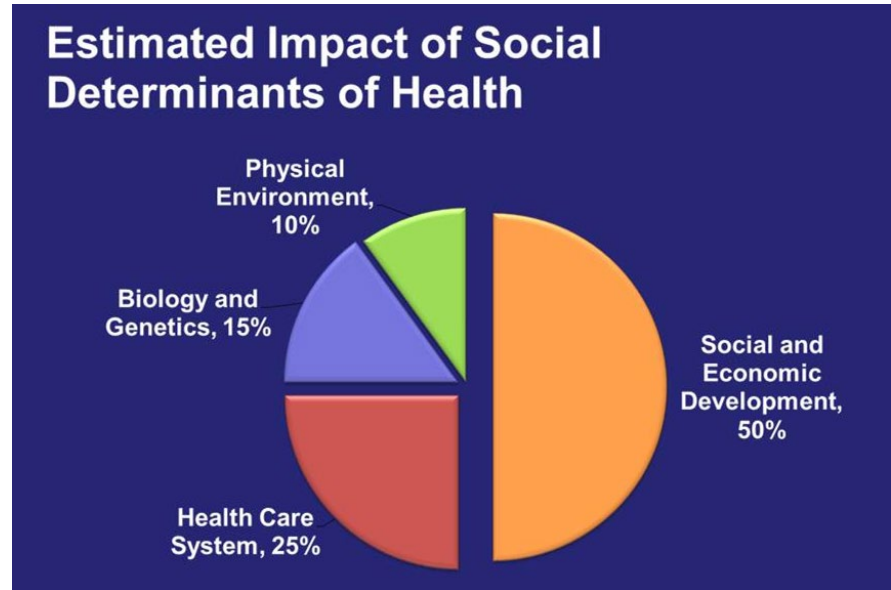
Health is about more than health care.

Health care – what happens in a clinic, hospital, or doctor’s office – accounts for between 10% and 25% of a person’s total health.

Biology and genetics account for another 15%.

What accounts for the rest?

The social determinants of health



Well-Being and the Social Determinants of Health

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social *well-being* and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" – World Health Organization

Because *health* is so often confused with *health care*, it can be better to talk about *well-being*.



Well-Being and the Social Determinants of Health

To improve well-being, we can't provide support only when people are sick and in crisis.

We need to pay attention to people's individual needs – and to the conditions that affect *everyone's* well-being.

We need to work upstream.





Well-Being and the Social Determinants of Health

Shortcomings of *Social Determinants of Health* as a framework

It is a “negative” concept

- It’s defined by what it’s *not* (everything that isn’t health care).
- The word “determinant” suggests something that can’t be resisted or changed.
- The result is to think in terms of opposing forces, rather than a unifying structure.

It doesn’t resonate with the broader population or with everyday experience

- Ordinary people almost never talk about SDOH.
- People in non-health fields don’t see themselves in it.
- It’s not inspirational and doesn’t help to generate ambitious ideas.

The Vital Conditions

Successor Framework to the Social Determinants of Health

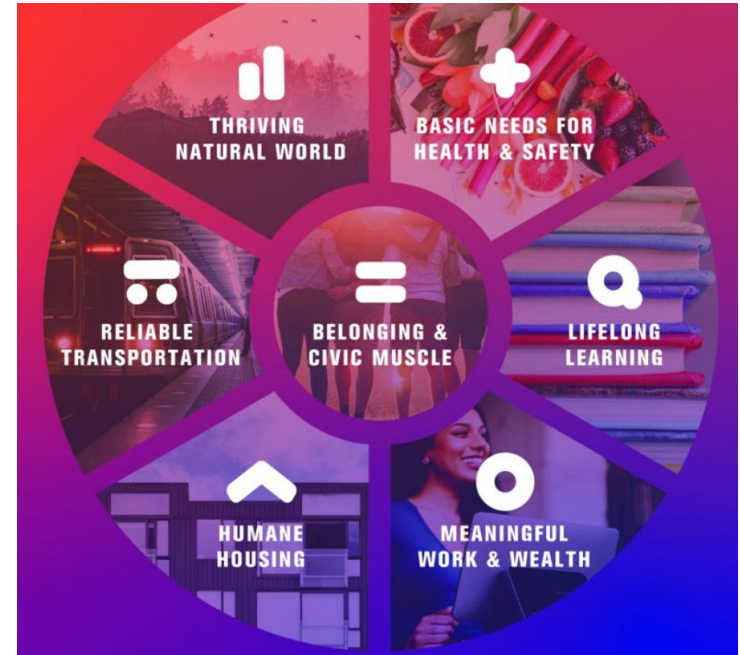
Developed by . . .

- ReThink Health, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Wellbeing Trust, and Wellbeing In the Nation (WIN)

Designed to . . .

- Align with lived experience and be rooted in widely-held norms
- Pertain to all domains of life, including health (i.e. more broadly applicable than SDoH)
- Emphasize interdependence
- Line up with most existing sources of data, research, and funding

Seven Vital Conditions



The Vital Conditions



Belonging & Civic Muscle is at the center because it is both a vital condition and a practical capacity that is necessary for success in every other kind of work.

	THRIVING NATURAL WORLD	<i>Sustainable resources, contact with nature, freedom from hazards</i> Clean air, water, soil; healthy ecosystems able to sustainably provide necessary resources; accessible natural spaces; freedom from the extreme heat, flooding, wind, radiation, earthquakes, pathogens
	BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH + SAFETY	<i>Basic requirements for health and safety</i> Nutritious food, safe drinking water; fresh air; sufficient sleep; routine physical activity; safe, satisfying sexuality and reproduction; freedom from trauma, violence, addiction and crime; routine care for physical and behavioral health
	HUMANE HOUSING	<i>Humane, consistent housing</i> Adequate space per person; safe structures; affordable costs; diverse neighborhoods (without gentrification, segregation, concentrated poverty); close to work, school, food, recreation, and nature
	MEANINGFUL WORK + WEALTH	<i>Rewarding work, careers, and standards of living</i> Job training/retraining; good-paying and fulfilling jobs; family and community wealth; savings and limited debt
	LIFELONG LEARNING	<i>Continuous learning, education, and literacy</i> Continuous development of cognitive, social, emotional abilities; early childhood experiences; elementary, high school, and higher education; career and adult education
	RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION	<i>Reliable, safe, and accessible transportation</i> Close to work, school, food, leisure; safe transport; active transport; efficient energy use; few environmental hazards
	BELONGING + CIVIC MUSCLE	<i>Sense of belonging and power to shape a common world</i> Social support; civic association; freedom from stigma, discrimination, oppression; support for civil rights, human rights; civic agency; collective efficacy; vibrant arts, culture, and spiritual life; equitable access to information; many opportunities for civic engagement (voting, volunteering, public work)

The Vital Conditions

There are Two Dimensions to Well-Being

The First Dimension: Personal Factors

Individual perspectives and experiences that affect how we think, feel, and function – and how we evaluate our lives as a whole.

The Second Dimension: A Person's Environment

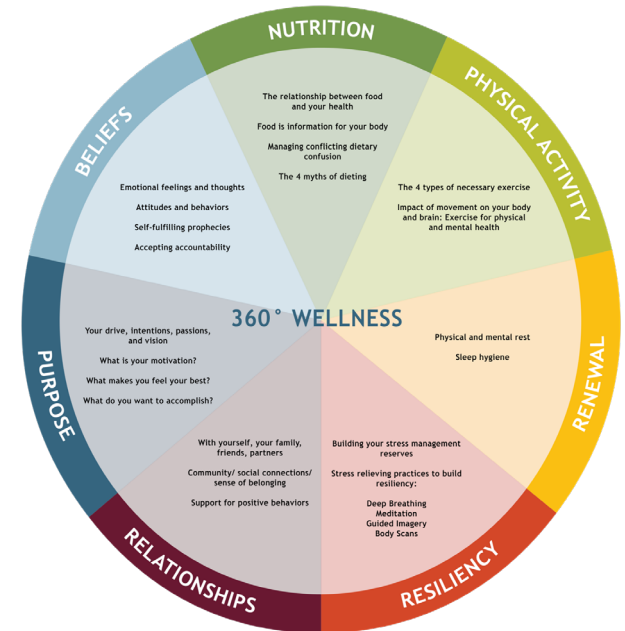
Vital Conditions

The properties of places and institutions that everyone needs all the time to reach their full potential.

Urgent Services

Emergency supports that anyone under adversity might need temporarily to regain their health and well-being.

Aspects of Personal Well-Being



The Vital Conditions

There are Two Dimensions to Well-Being

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The Second Dimension: A Person's Environment

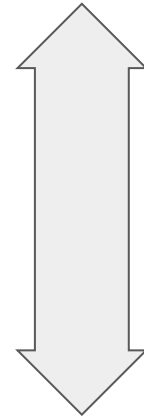
Vital Conditions

The properties of places and institutions that everyone needs all the time to reach their full potential.

Urgent Services

Emergency supports that anyone under adversity might need temporarily to regain their health and well-being.

Anyone's personal well-being
rises and falls,
from birth through death



Surroundings are often driven
by legacies that persist over
generations

The Vital Conditions

Vital Conditions

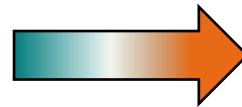
Properties of places and institutions that we all need all the time to reach our full potential

1. Basic needs for health & safety
2. Lifelong learning
3. Meaningful work & wealth
4. Humane housing
5. Thriving natural world
6. Reliable transportation
7. Belonging & civic muscle

Urgent Services

Services that anyone under adversity might need temporarily to regain their best possible well-being

1. Acute care for illness or injury
2. Addiction treatment
3. Crime response
4. Unemployment and food assistance
5. Addressing damage to the environment
6. Child protective services
7. Supports for the homeless



A failure to ensure the vital conditions drives demand for urgent services and creates a destructive spiral for people and government.

The Vital Conditions

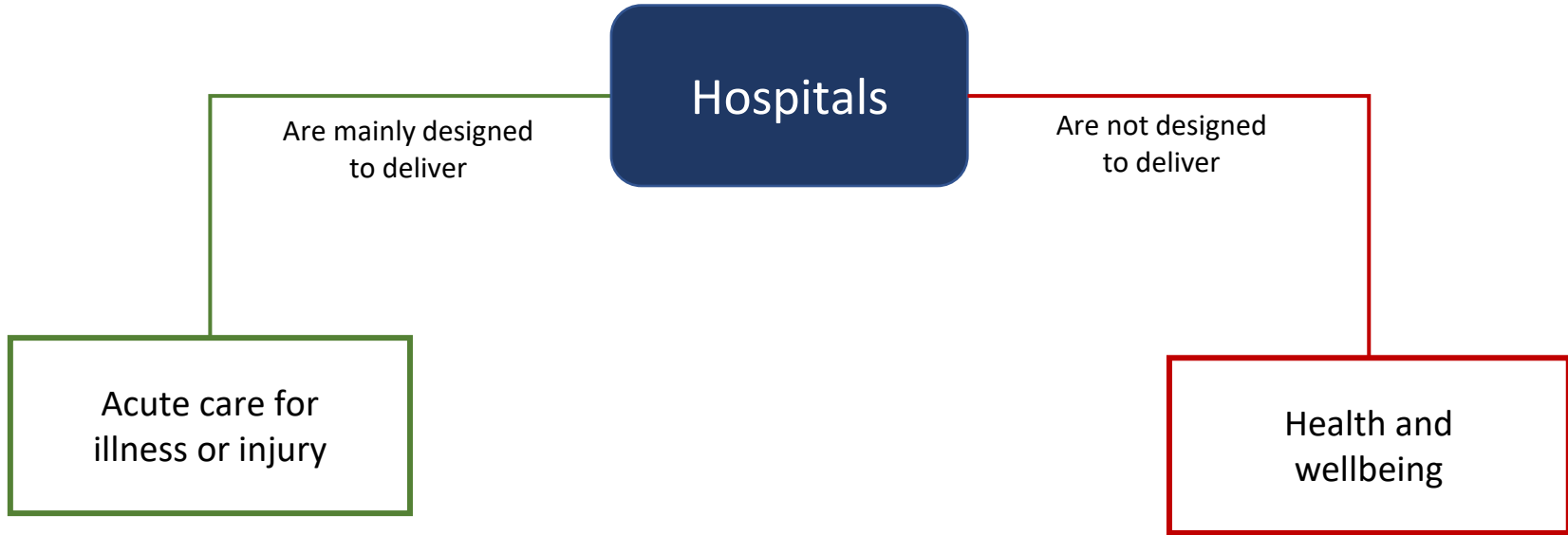
Urgent Services	
 <p>Acute Care for Illness or Injury</p>	 <p>Homeless Services</p>
 <p>Addiction and Recovery Services</p>	 <p>Environmental Clean-Up</p>
 <p>Criminal Justice, Violence, and Emergencies</p>	 <p>Unemployment and Food Assistance</p>

This is where the majority of spending and attention goes.

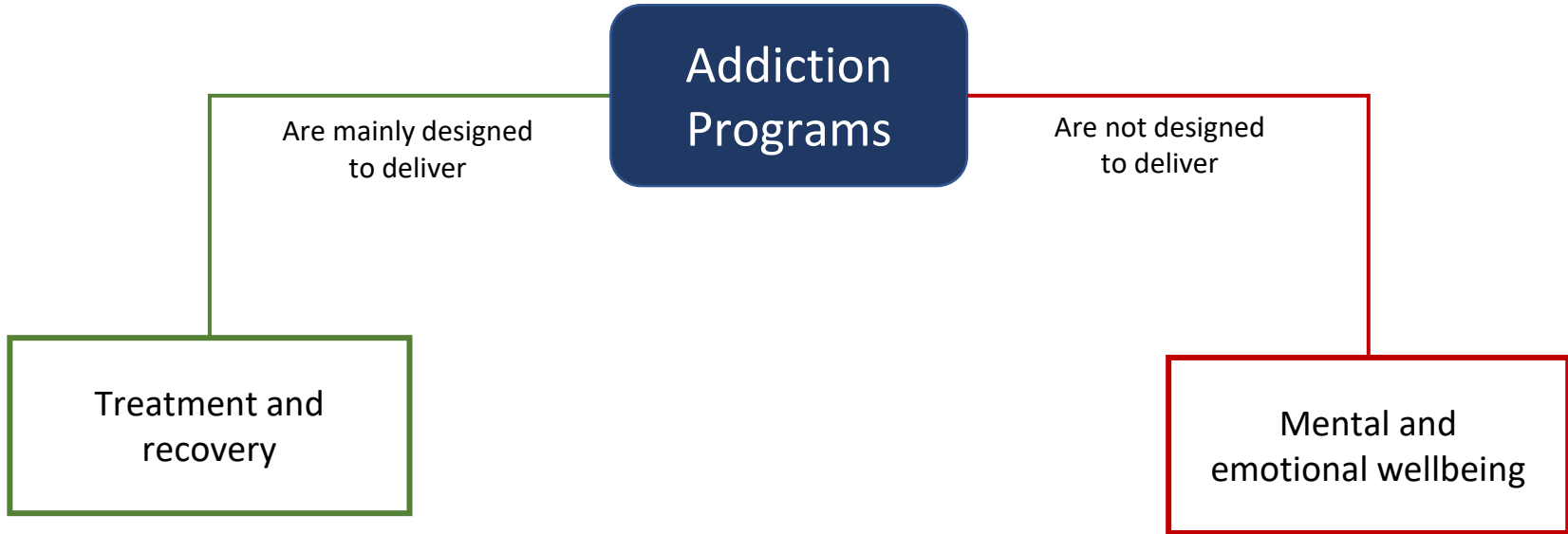
But urgent services are only good for addressing crises.

They aren't designed to help people build thriving lives.

The Vital Conditions



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The Vital Conditions



The Vital Conditions

The vital conditions as questions

- Do you have freedom from regular exposure to hazards?
- Do you have adequate healthcare / nutritious food / freedom from violence, addiction, and crime?
- Do you have humane, secure housing?
- Do you have rewarding work / financial security?
- Do you have adequate education, training, and lifelong learning?
- Do you have reliable, safe, and accessible transportation?
- Do you have a healthy attachment to community and civic life / do you have a support network?



Likely to be Thriving



Likely to be Struggling or Suffering

Only 40% to 60% of Americans can answer yes to all of these questions

The rest are struggling – or actively suffering

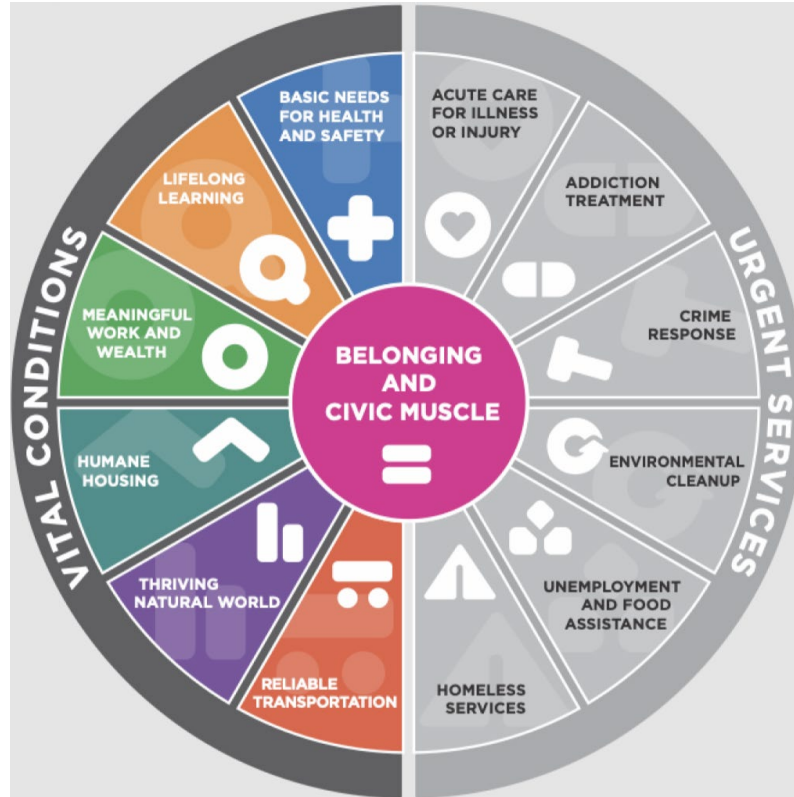


High Demand for Urgent Services



The Vital Conditions

The challenge is to build a regional portfolio that finds the right balance between investments in vital conditions and urgent services.





The Vital Conditions

The federal government has adopted the vital conditions as an internal organizing framework (CDC, CMS, FEMA, Dept of Transportation, HUD, USDA, Dept of Education, etc.).

High-Level Overview: Vital Conditions Mapping Data Gathering and Analysis

	Thriving Natural World	Basic Needs for Health & Safety	Humane Housing	Meaningful Work & Wealth	Lifelong Learning	Reliable Transportation	Belonging & Civic Muscle
<i>Included in Draft Version of Vital Conditions Mapping Tool; Refinement May Be In Process</i>							
ACF	█	█	█	█	█		█
ACL		█		█		█	
ASPR	█	█		█	█	█	█
CDC	█	█	█		█	█	█
CMS		█	█		█	█	
Dept of Ed							
FEMA	█	█	█		█	█	█
HRSA		█					
NIST	█	█	█	█		█	█
OMH		█			█		
SAMHSA		█			█	█	█
USDA	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
<i>In Progress; Data Forthcoming</i>							
DOT							
HUD							



The Vital Conditions

Humane Housing

- The homeless (by definition) don't have humane housing.
- Neither do people who live in unsafe or overcrowded conditions.
- “Humane” also entails affordability – paying for housing shouldn't impoverish you.
- Stability matters too. How many people in Skagit County are one run of bad luck away from losing their housing?
- An inability to secure humane housing tends to drive a severe decline in the other vital conditions.



The Vital Conditions

Basic Needs for Health and Safety

- Includes routine care for physical and behavioral health (including preventative care).
- It also includes freedom from trauma, violence, addiction, and crime.
- Reliable access to nutritious food and safe water is also included.
- The homeless struggle with all of these things, which increases distress and suffering, which makes it harder to escape homelessness.
- An inability to access preventative care makes behavioral health and substance use disorders worse.



The Vital Conditions

Lifelong Learning

- Continuous development of cognitive, social, and emotional abilities.
- Includes job training, adult education, and skills development – the ability to adapt and grow to meet life’s challenges.
- Also includes early childhood experiences and healthy brain development.
- Children dealing with housing stability and/or behavioral health difficulties (their own or a parents’) very often struggle in school.



The Vital Conditions

Reliable Transportation

- Includes the ability to get to work, visit friends, visit a grocery store, travel to the doctor, etc.
- The homeless often struggle to access transportation. And sometimes the vehicle that was their means of transportation becomes their shelter.
- The unavailability of reliable transportation can lead to the loss of a job, which can start a cascade that leads to homelessness.
- Sometimes available housing is too far from reliable transportation.
- If they lack reliable transportation, people who are homeless may resist entering a shelter if it is far from their support network.



The Vital Conditions

Meaningful Work and Wealth

- Includes fair pay for work that is safe and satisfying.
- Also includes the ability to save for the future and have a financial cushion.
- Very important for practical reasons – and also for feelings of control and self-worth.
- The loss of work and/or savings can start a cascade that leads to homelessness and/or exacerbates behavioral health disorders.
- And the opposite is true: People suffering from behavioral health disorders and/or homelessness can struggle to find decent work or save money.



The Vital Conditions

Belonging and Civic Muscle

- Lies at the center of all the other vital conditions.
- Includes spiritual life, social engagement, and the presence of a support network.
- Also includes freedom from stigma, discrimination, and social isolation.
- When people lose a sense of belonging, everything else in their life suffers.
- When a community lacks civic muscle, it can't come together to solve problems.
- *What we're doing here today is exercising Skagit County's civic muscle.*

The Vital Conditions

Example | Maria's Negative Spiral

- Growing up with domestic violence and police visits, Julie drops out of school
 - *Failed Vital Conditions* > Basic Needs for Health and Safety / Lifelong Learning → Urgent Services
- She develops an alcohol problem and gets into an accident, spending a month in the hospital
 - *Failed Vital Condition* > Reliable Transportation / Basic Needs for Health and Safety → Urgent Services
- Lacking a car and dealing with chronic pain, she loses her job and can't find another
 - *Failed Vital Condition* > Reliable Transportation / Meaningful Work and Wealth
- She finds a couch to crash on but is socially isolated and reliant on food assistance
 - *Failed Vital Conditions* > Basic Needs for Health and Safety / Belonging and Civic Muscle → Urgent Services
- She finds herself on the street, frequently visiting the ER and emergency shelters
 - *Failed Vital Condition* > Humane Housing → Urgent Services

Thriving, Struggling, and Suffering

Cantril's Ladder

- An overall measure of how someone feels about his/her life using two simple questions.
- The first question asks people to rate their lives on a ladder.
 - Where the bottom is their worst possible life (0)
 - And the top is their best possible life (10)
- The second question asks them to rate where they think they will be on the ladder in 5 years.



Thriving, Struggling, and Suffering

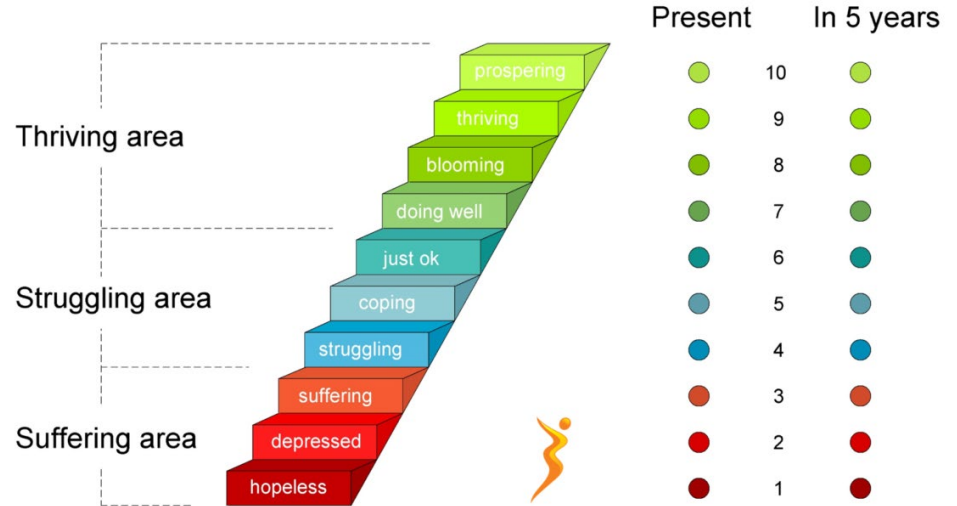
Cantril's Ladder

A score of 7+ means that a person is **thriving**.

A score of 4-7 means that a person is **struggling**.

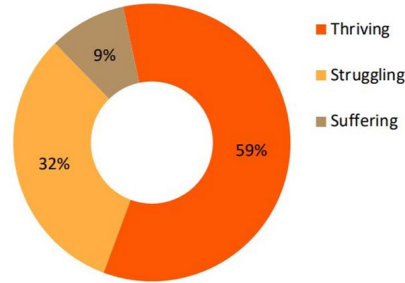
A score of under 4 means that a person is **suffering**.

Shown in research to correlate strongly with health outcomes.

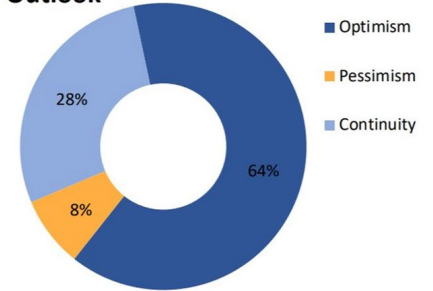


Thriving, Struggling, and Suffering

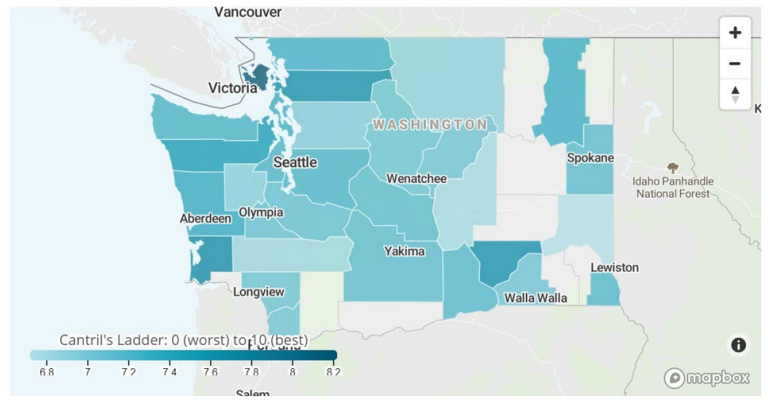
Well-Being



Outlook



Cantril's Ladder at Present: Mean Response (2017)



PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THEIR WELL-BEING

How many Washington residents are thriving? How many are struggling or suffering?

Thriving (2017)



Struggling (2017)



Suffering (2017)





Balancing Vital Conditions and Urgent Services

Urgent Services

- The things you do to alleviate crises.

Vital Conditions

- The things you do to help people thrive – and prevent crises from happening in the first place.

Key Questions . . .

- How can we strike the right balance between building up the vital conditions and supporting urgent services?
- How can we strengthen coordination in ways that support *both* the vital conditions and urgent services?
- What investments will have the biggest impact by solving multiple problems at once?