



PERFORMANCE WELLBEING: SOME INITIAL IDEAS AND THOUGHTS

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Please note the following is based on discussions between myself, Neil Craig, Bill Davoren, Professor Allan Hahn, Professor David Pyne, Professor Richard Keegan and some of the Summit coaches and is by no way a definitive definition. Rather, it should be considered a work in progress and something that requires ongoing discussions, additional input, and further refinement.

- > Performance wellbeing is an overarching term and an emerging concept.
- > It is based on the principles of positive psychology which emphasises the need to understand the psychological requirements for humans to flourish and reach their full potential, as opposed to a focus only on mental health issues.
- > It is primarily concerned with understanding and creating the conditions, processes and self-regulation strategies that enable the optimal functioning and flourishing of high performance personnel and requires long-term commitment, awareness of potential blind spots, constant adjustment and situational solutions, rather than just the activation of pre-ordained plans.
- > It aims to normalise mental-skills training and promote, strengthen and reinforce physical and mental health-promoting behaviours so that the effects of known and unknown stressors can better managed within high-pressure situations.
- > It involves, considers and encompasses every element of a high performance sporting environment, including:
 - Coaches and athletes.
 - Wellbeing managers and performance support staff.
 - Performance directors, managers and administrators.
 - Board members and CEOs.
 - Family, kin and critical friends.
 - The culture and social norms of the sport.
 - The "doxa" of an organisation [i.e., the unwritten, never questioned and taken for granted operating rules that promote, encourage and continuously reproduce certain ways of thinking and behaviour].
 - Coach developers and external contractors.
 - Researchers and university personnel.
 - Existing developmental, commercial, succession, and selection policies, systems and pathways.

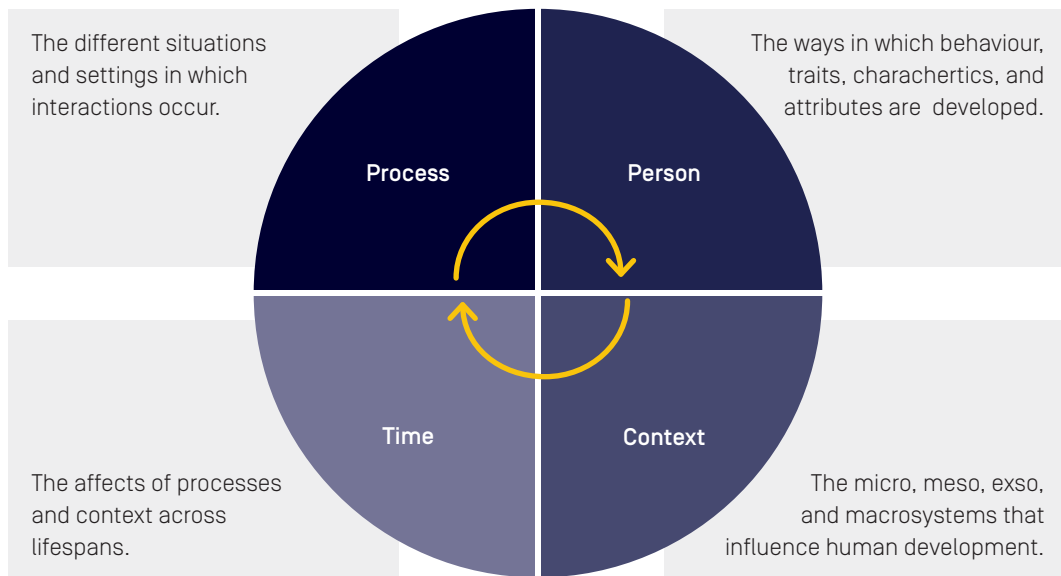


Paul Perkins is an associate Professor at the University of Canberra and a member of the Australian Institute of Sport High Performance Coach Development Team. He is a dedicated, passionate and experienced coach, educator and researcher with an extensive background in the Australian sport sector and a passion for helping others and seeing people succeed. Paul is skilled at, and highly experienced in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating multi-layered sport-based development initiatives and has a thorough understanding of deductive, inductive and abductive reasoning and how these different processes can be used to draw conclusions, make predictions, and/or construct explanations. Whilst Paul's research has been multi-disciplinary and positioned within the broader societal context, he is currently exploring the benefits of more social and collaborative approaches to coach learning and is interested in contributing to long-term positive outcomes through the use of Australian First Nations methodologies.

Potential framework

A possible framework for understanding, studying and analysing the process of performance wellbeing is the bioecological theory of human development conceived and progressively refined by Bronfenbrenner and colleagues from the late 1970s until 2005 and subsequently summarised by Tudge et al. This theory holds that human development and behaviours are shaped by person - environment interactions that are influenced by four factors - process, person, context and time (often referred to as the PPCT model).

The interaction process of the theory can be classified as either proximal or distal. Proximal processes are the personal, complex and reciprocal interactions that occur between a person and the people, objects and symbols in their immediate surroundings on a regular basis over extended periods of time. They are believed to be the primary mechanism for development of competencies, values, beliefs and wellbeing. By exclusion, distal processes can be defined as bi-directional interactions more removed from the immediate environment of the person, less regular and/or sustained for a relatively short time period. Occasional exposure to people of different cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, religious beliefs and/or social status may be considered examples of these types of interactions and are therefore thought to have only an indirect and relatively small influence on personal development.



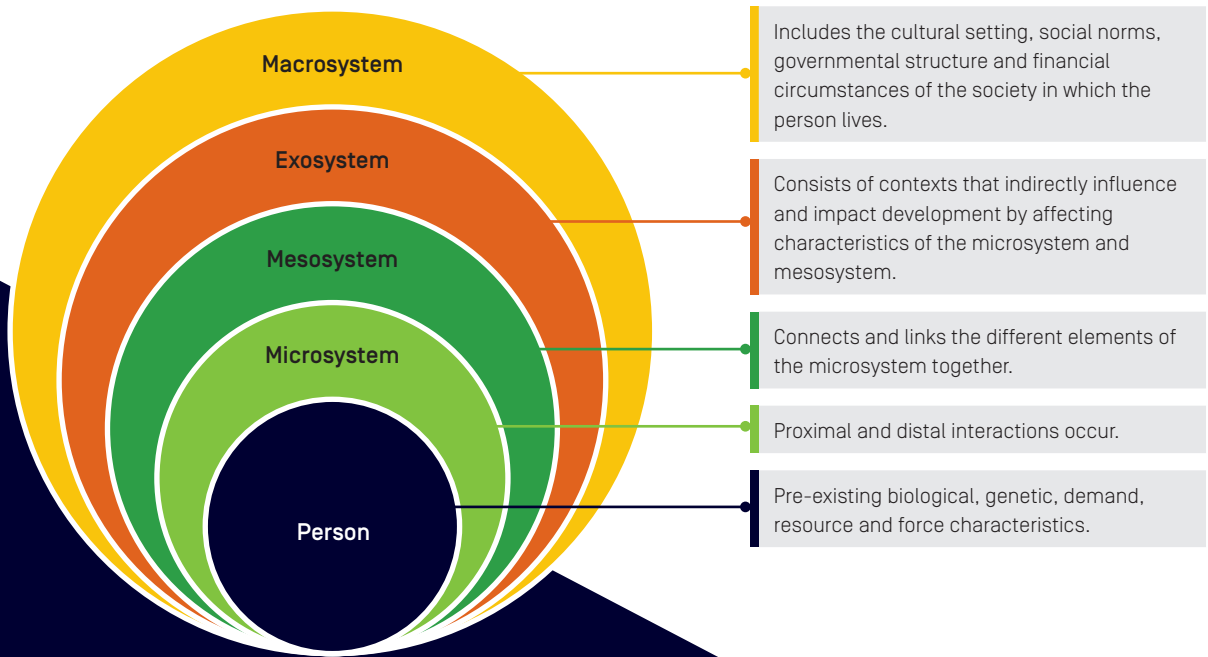
The bioecological theory recognises that the outcomes of interactions between people and the environments they inhabit are also influenced by the characteristics of the person. Biological and genetic characteristics are seen as important, along with demand, resource and force characteristics. Demand characteristics include, age, gender and physical appearance. Resource characteristics include intelligence, past experiences, skills, educational background, socio-economic status and level of parental care. Force characteristics relate to temperament, motivation and willingness to persevere.

Biological and genetic characteristics	Demand characteristics	Resource characteristics	Force characteristics
Traits passed on by parents that are mostly stored inside special sacs within cells called the nucleus and become the blueprints for day-to-actions.	Include important biological factors such as the age, gender, physical appearance and dispositions (the inherent qualities of mind and character) of a person.	Qualities such as intelligence, skills, past experiences, educational background, socio-economic status and level of parental care are all examples of resource characteristics.	Refer to the following personal qualities: Temperament. Motivation. Willingness to persevere.

The context of person-environment interactions is identified as another major determinant of outcomes. Context can be divided into four categories. The first of these is known as the microsystem and incorporates the situations in which people are most directly and continually engaged, such as home, school, work, neighbourhood, religious institutions, friendship groups and sporting and social clubs. It is where proximal interactive processes are most likely to occur. The second context is termed the mesosystem and consists of linkages between elements of the microsystem. A further step removed from the person is the exosystem, which is comprised of contexts in which people have no direct involvement, but which may nevertheless impact on development by affecting characteristics of the microsystem and/or mesosystem.

An example would be a stressful parental work situation that affects the quality of the relationship between the parent and the developing young person. The final dimension of context is the macrosystem, which encompasses cultural setting, social norms, governmental structure and financial circumstances of the society in which people live.

According to the bioecological theory, the human developmental outcomes of person-environment interactions are also influenced by time. The theory differentiates between micro-time, meso-time and macro-time, but the underlying principle is that time can change circumstances in the short, medium and long terms, through effects on processes, individuals and contexts.



Schematic illustration of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model showing how human development and behaviours are shaped by person - environment interactions and influenced by process, person, context and time.