About the Author

David Yamada is a law professor at Suffolk University Law School in Boston. He is the current board chair of the International Society for Therapeutic Jurisprudence. His blog, Minding the Workplace, examines the interactions between workplace law, economics, and human dignity. Yamada has written extensively about the interconnections between ethics, law, and psychology. He writes:

“...fear, anxiety, and trauma are often the by-products of systems in which individuals do not feel they are valued. The same systems that produce fear, anxiety, and trauma can also act to promote or undermine psychological health, well-being, and dignity of policy stakeholders. I propose that the field of therapeutic jurisprudence can play a role in promoting psychological health, well-being, and dignity...”

Economists Focus Too Little on What People Really Care About

Economists have long focused too little on what people really care about, not just in the United States but also globally. As noted by the Economist, "[The] economic measurements like gross domestic product are the best gauge of a country's success. But, Dr. Layard said, there has been "no other major country that has as much inequality as we do."

David Yamada noted:

"...if you look at happiness and vitality, as measured by the World Happiness Report, the United States is ranked 18th out of 156 countries. In other words, we're not even in the top half of the planet in terms of how happy our people are."

As if this weren't bad enough, the current president's horrific insensitivity toward the vulnerable has set the stage for unfathomable suffering. The Trump Administration has infused another dimension into this ideological war, with its xenophobic attacks against some of the most vulnerable people in this country. A new study suggests that lower suicide rates are associated with higher minimum wages. In a recent National Public Radio (NPR) article, Dr. Thomas Layard, a professor at the London School of Economics, even posited that "...it is way past time to say goodbye to the neoliberal obsessions that have governed public policy for decades." Layard noted, "The survival of our society depends on a new narrative." Our society's well-being requires tackling the long-term challenges we face as a country, like the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and economic inequality. "...fear, anxiety, and trauma are often the by-products of systems in which individuals do not feel they are valued. The same systems that produce fear, anxiety, and trauma can also act to promote or undermine psychological health, well-being, and dignity of policy stakeholders. I propose that the field of therapeutic jurisprudence can play a role in promoting psychological health, well-being, and dignity..."

The Wellbeing Budget

The new Zealand government asserted that the wellbeing budget is aiming to "...behave in different ways, through a different lens, one sharpened on our society's well-being. Among other things, it is way past time to say goodbye to the neoliberal obsessions that have governed public policy for decades." Layard noted, "The survival of our society depends on a new narrative."

The New Zealand government's wellbeing strategy is aimed at "...build[ing] a productive nation and Māori and Pasifika Aspirations."

The Wellbeing Budget endeavours to achieve the following:

- "Building a Productive Nation"
- "Protecting Our Environment and Natural Heritage"
- "Promoting Public Health and Wellbeing"
- "Maintaining Economic Career")
- "Ensuring Shared Prosperity")
- "Maximising Productivity, with little to no regard as to how wealth and resources are distributed"
- "...fear, anxiety, and trauma are often the by-products of systems in which individuals do not feel they are valued. The same systems that produce fear, anxiety, and trauma can also act to promote or undermine psychological health, well-being, and dignity of policy stakeholders. I propose that the field of therapeutic jurisprudence can play a role in promoting psychological health, well-being, and dignity..."

The Wellbeing Budget is being called the next big move by a New Zealand government seen by many people as a "game-changing event." Among the changes set forth by the New Zealand government is the Wellbeing Budget. The Wellbeing Budget endeavours to achieve the following:

- "Building a Productive Nation"
- "Protecting Our Environment and Natural Heritage"
- "Promoting Public Health and Wellbeing"
- "Maintaining Economic Career"
- "Ensuring Shared Prosperity"

Of course, 2020 has witnessed this Administration going to even lower levels, with the administration's refusal to protect Americans from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Trump Administration has infused another dimension into this ideological war, with its xenophobic attacks against some of the most vulnerable people in this country.

In short, Dr. Layard posited that "...fear, anxiety, and trauma are often the by-products of systems in which individuals do not feel they are valued. The same systems that produce fear, anxiety, and trauma can also act to promote or undermine psychological health, well-being, and dignity of policy stakeholders. I propose that the field of therapeutic jurisprudence can play a role in promoting psychological health, well-being, and dignity..."