

“THE POWER OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: Practical Strategies for Maximizing Clients' Resilience and Strength”

OBJECTIVES

1. Describe differences between positive psychology and traditional approaches to mental health.
2. Summarize the key findings in the positive psychology research.
3. Describe the brain research that supports positive psychology interventions
4. Choose two specific techniques from the presented material to apply, immediately, to your current caseload or classroom.
5. Identify personal well-being “quality improvement” goals - care for the caregiver.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. Ten Years of Positive Psychology: What Have We Learned?
2. Two principles of psychological wealth
3. Can money buy happiness? How about marriage or health, or faith?
4. What makes positive psychology different?
5. Friendship, love, spirituality .no longer taboos in social science

What Our Clients Want Most?

- Identifying what really helps us and our clients thrive
- The *Good*, the *Pleasant*, and the *Meaningful*
- A body-based approach to clarifying goals and values
- Re-connecting with coping strengths and developing new ones
- Fostering moral motivation in children and adults
- “Laser questions” to ask your client

What's the Opposite of Depression?

- Tools for identifying strengths
- Broaden-and-build: positive emotions and mental health

What's self-esteem made of?

- Activity scheduling
- Finding “flow”
- Positive growth after disability
- The Happiness Set Point
- Focusing on “the 40 %”
- Trauma and resiliency

“Early intervention”: Positive psychology in the school

- Guiding intrinsic motivation and future-focus
- Cultivating emotional intelligence
- “Positive cognitive psychology”: optimism, creativity, and goal-setting

Positive Psychology and The Brain

- Biological impacts of behavioural interventions, and how they change the brain.
- The role of the prefrontal cortex (PFC) in human executive functioning, self-management, and goal attainment.
- The PFC as the “planning/choosing” centre of the brain and its working relationship with the “reward” centre of the brain.

- The role of the therapist or teacher in facilitating this effective working relationship.
- Our use of positive emotion to guide decision-making and getting ourselves motivated to pursue a goal.
- Self-soothing as a learnable skill.
- How psychotherapy can actually *change* the brain

The Positive Psychology Toolbox

- Gratitude
- Savoring
- Kindness
- Finding our Flow
- Physical Exercise
- Journaling
- Forgiveness
- What's the best thing I haven't noticed about this yet?

Beyond Coping: “Flourishing”

- Accentuating hope and optimism
- The neuropsychology of self-efficacy
- Clinical application of gratitude research
- Supporting resilience in at-risk clients

When the World Stops Around You: Practical “Flow”

- When are our clients at their most focused?
- Developing the capacity to “savor”

It's Not All About Me: Positive Social Skills

- The cautious clinical work of forgiveness
- Emotional intelligence at school and work
- Self-regulation

More than Pathology: Discovering our Clients' Assets and Abilities

- Using our character strengths
- Identifying key values

Why Happiness?

- The key benefits of happiness
- Is there a happiness “set point”
- What strategies can be used to increase happiness?

How Can We Make Use of These Strategies Now?

- Applying positive psychology findings to difficult client populations
- Becoming passionate about our clients' self-management, and use of time and energy