



Promoting Well-Being: What is it? And how to promote it?

Positive Psychology Interventions

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Positive Psychology Approach

Aim of Positive Psychology

- Traditional Psychology: devoted to healing- repairing damage using a disease model of human functioning
- Positive psychology: move from repairing the worst things in life to building the best things in life

Positive Emotions

Past (Gratitude,
Forgiveness)

Present
(Positive affect,
Savoring, Flow)

Future (Hope,
Optimism)

Positive Character

Personal Strengths
(Courage,
Creativity,
Humor,
Bravery, etc.)

See:
viacharacter.org

Positive Institutions

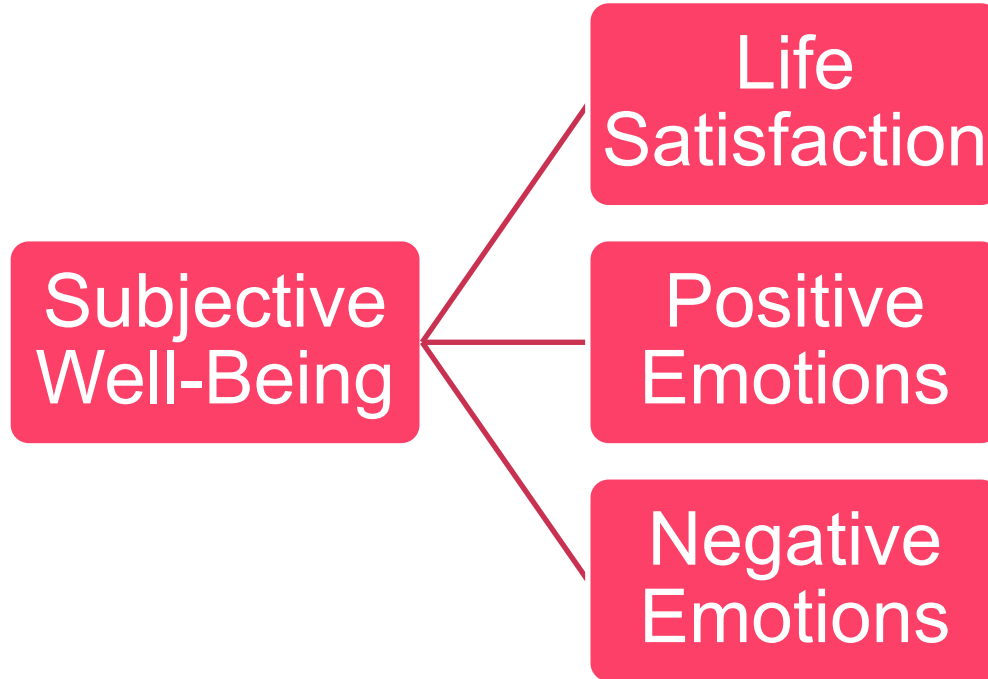
Communities

Schools

Families

Workplaces

Considering Mental Health as Indicated by Subjective Well-Being (SWB)



Positive Psychology Approach to Mental Health Care



Assessing Subjective Well-Being in Youth

Life Satisfaction

- Global measures
 - *Students' Life Satisfaction Scale* (Huebner, 1991), 7 items
- Multidimensional measures
 - *Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale* (MSLSS; Huebner et al., 1994)
 - 5 domains, 40 items
 - *Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale* (BMSLSS; Seligson, Huebner, & Valois, 2003), 6 items

Affect

- *Positive and Negative Affect Scale for Children* (PANAS-C; Laurent et al., 1999)
 - Positive affect (12 items)
 - Negative affect (15 items)

Defining Mental Health and Well-Being Is Happiness the Opposite of Emotional Distress?



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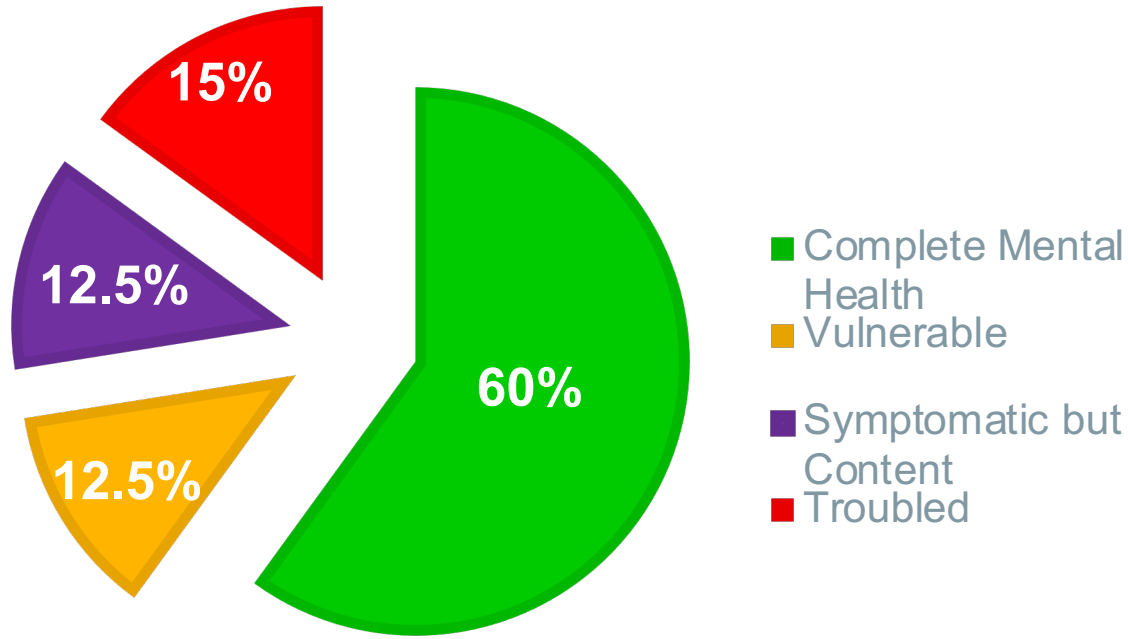
Dual Factor Model of Mental Health

- Factor 1 (Traditional Psychology): Mental *illness* or mental health *problems* (symptoms of emotional distress)
- Factor 2 (Positive Psychology): Subjective well-being

Mental Health Problems	Subjective Well-Being	
	Low	Average to High
Low	Vulnerable	Complete Mental Health
High	Troubled	Symptomatic but Content

% of Students in Mental Health Groups

PERCENT OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



Benefits of Complete Mental Health (High SWB + Low MH Problems) vs. Vulnerable (Low SWB + Low MH Problems)

Physical Health

- Illness Frequency and Overall Health
- Activity Limitations

Social Adjustment

- Social Support
- Less Victimization

Identity Development

- Self-Concept Clarity
- Self-Esteem

Academic Outcomes

- Engagement (Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral)
- Academic Skills, as assessed by GPA, high stakes test scores



Complete Mental Health

Negative Indicators
(Mental Illness or Problems)

Positive Indicators
(Mental Wellness or Well-Being)

Anxiety,
Depression, and
other forms of
mental illness or
traumatizing

Trauma-
Informed
Care

Disruptive
Behaviors such as
defiance, rule
breaking, and
substance use

Positive
Behavioral
Supports

Life Satisfaction
and Happiness

Positive
Psychology

Strong Social
Relationships

Social-
Emotional
Learning

Trauma
and other
environ-
mental
stressors

Thinking
errors,
behavioral
withdrawal

Risky/
unsafe
settings

Inconsistent
rules and
expectation
s across
settings

Building
blocks of
well-being,
(gratitude,
empathy,
persistence)

Basic
needs
are met

Social
skills

Healthy
interactions
(minimal
bullying,
strong
support)

Decrease Risk Factors & Symptoms

Increase Promotive & Resilience Factors

Subjective Well-Being Matters to Student Success

Happier children and adolescents...

- Earn better grades
- Perform better on standardized tests
- Have more positive attitudes towards school and learning
- Are physically healthier
- Have better social relationships
- Experience less peer victimization (bullying perpetrator or victim)
- Have fewer symptoms of mental health problems like depression and anxiety

How to Increase Happiness?

Principles of Positive Psychology Interventions



Big Picture Rationale for Intervention Goals and Targets

Principles of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs)



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Evoke positive emotions about the past, present, and future in and out of sessions/meetings.

Build and strengthen relationships in and out of interventionist-student meetings.

Harness motivation to engage in learning and using PPIs in ways that fit with personal values and lived experiences.

Promoting Happiness through School-Based Positive Psychology Interventions

Evoke Positive Emotions about the

Past

- You at Your Best
- Gratitude journals
- Gratitude visits

Present

- Acts of kindness
- Identify and use signature character strengths
- Savoring

Future

- Best possible self in the future
- Optimistic thinking

Strengthen Classroom Relationships

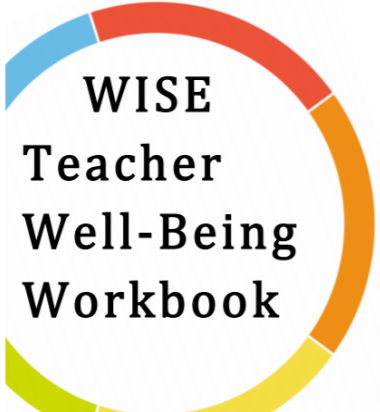


Tier 1 School-Based Positive Psychology Interventions Improve Student Outcomes

Takeaway: Positive psychology practices taught in schools to teachers and students lead to robust positive effects on mental health, student engagement, and course grades



Resources for Promoting Happiness in Teachers, Students, and Classrooms



WISE Teacher Well-Being Workbook

www.medstarwise.org/resources/

WORD PRACTICAL INTERVENTION IN THE SCHOOL



Mindfulness for Teachers

SIMPLE SKILLS for
PEACE and PRODUCTIVITY
in the CLASSROOM



Patricia A. Jennings

Foreword by Daniel J. Siegel

WORD PRACTICAL INTERVENTION IN THE SCHOOL



THE HOW OF HAPPINESS

A New Approach to
Getting the Life You Want



*This much
happiness
—up to 40%—
is within
your power
to change*

Sonja Lyubomirsky

"A guide to sustaining your newfound contentment." —PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

Promoting Student Happiness

Positive Psychology Interventions
in Schools

Shannon M. Suldo

Resilient Classrooms

Creating Healthy Environments for Learning

SECOND EDITION

Beth Doll, Katherine Brehm,
and Steven Zucker



Positive Psychology Interventions for Teachers

Strengthening relationships

Character strengths (McCullough, 2015)

Mindfulness (Flook, Golberg et al., 2013; Jennings et al., 2017)

Gratitude (Critchley & Gibbs, 2012)

Multitarget: ACHIEVER (Cook et al., 2017) and WISE (Bostic, 2019)

- WISE, free download: www.medstarwise.org/resources/

Classwide Curricula that Increase Positive Emotions

MindUp SEL Program
<https://mindup.org/>



Well-Being Promotion Program (WBPP) developed by Positive Psychology Research Team at USF, Classwide Version (Suldo, 2016)

Activities divided into 3 phases: past, present, and future aspects of SWB

Past

- Gratitude journals
- Gratitude visits

Present

- Acts of kindness
- Character strengths

Future

- Hopeful and goal-directed thinking

Additions to WBPP (Classwide version)

Teacher information and weekly co-facilitation (Teacher-Student Relationships)

Team-building (Classmate Relationships)

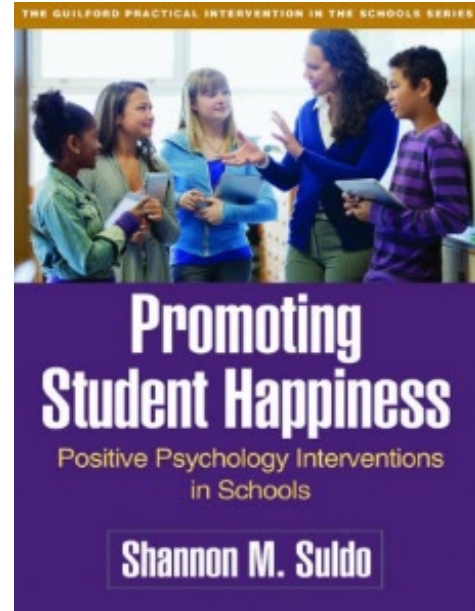
Tier 2 for Students with < Complete Mental Health

Universal screening to identify students in need of additional mental health services, students who may be:

- Vulnerable
- Symptomatic but Content
- Troubled

Evidence-based interventions for:

- **Mental Health Problems**
 - Internalizing
 - Externalizing
- **Low Subjective Well-Being**



- Suldo, 2016



Well-Being Promotion Program (WBPP)

Session	Target	Strategies
Parents	Psychoeducation	Introduction to Key Positive Psychology Constructs and Focus of Intervention
1	Positive Emotions	Rationale for Positive Activities; Me at My Best
2	Gratitude	Gratitude Journals
3	Gratitude	Gratitude Visit
4	Positive Emotions	Acts of Kindness
5	Character Strengths	Introduction to Character Strengths
6	Character Strengths	Character Strengths Assessment (VIA Youth Survey); Application of Signature Strength 1 in New Ways
7	Character Strengths	Application of Signature Strength 2 in New Ways; Savoring
8	Optimistic Thinking	Examples of Optimistic Thinking; My Optimistic Thoughts
9	Hope	My Best Possible Self in the Future
10	All	Termination; Review of Strategies and Plan for Future Use
Booster 1	All; Gratitude	Review & Spotlight on Gratitude (Gratitude Journals)
Booster 2	All: Strengths	Review & Spotlight on Signature Strengths (Use in New Ways)
Booster 3	All: Optimism	Review & Spotlight on Optimistic Thinking (My Optimistic Thoughts)

-Suldo, Savage, & Mercer, 2014; Friedrich, Thalji, Suldo et al., 2010; Roth, Suldo, & Ferron, 2017; Suldo & Fefer, in progress: <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=4451>

Tier 3 for Troubled Youth: Positive Psychotherapy

Developed to help those experiencing moderate to severe symptoms of depression.

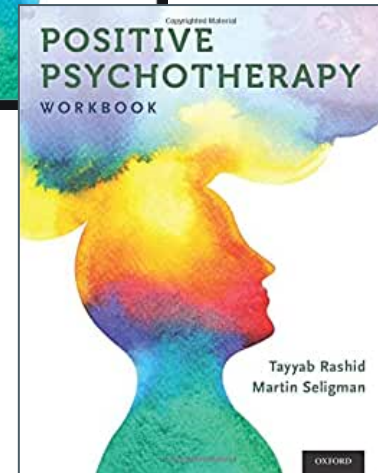
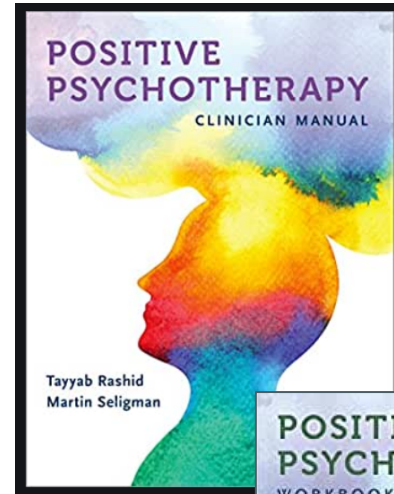
Utilizes the PERMA model and character strengths

3 Phases; 15 sessions

Promising empirical support for positive psychotherapy with clinical populations of both youth and adults.

- Reductions in negative symptoms of mental illness
- Increases in subjective well-being
- Compared to wait-list control groups and those receiving traditional mental health treatment methods (i.e., CBT; Mahmoudi & Khoshakhlagh, 2018).

- Rashid & Seligman (2018)





Reactions and Question?

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