



Positive Emotions and Relationships: The Bridge to Engagement

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Gratitude and Recognition

USF Positive Psychology Research Group (Alum)

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Community Partners

- Hillsborough County Public Schools, Pasco County Schools, and numerous other FL districts
- Service Learning (EDG 3363 Positive Psychology in the Schools)
- Children's Home Society (CHS) of Florida

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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

- Snyder & Lopez, 2005

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PERMA Framework

Flourishing

Feeling good and doing good

↑

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

P Positive emotions

Experience of subjective well-being (e.g., joy, serenity, hope)

E Engagement

Interest, engagement, absorption

R Relationships

SEL skills to promote positive relationships

M Meaning

Contributing to others and the community (purpose)

A Achievement/Accomplishment

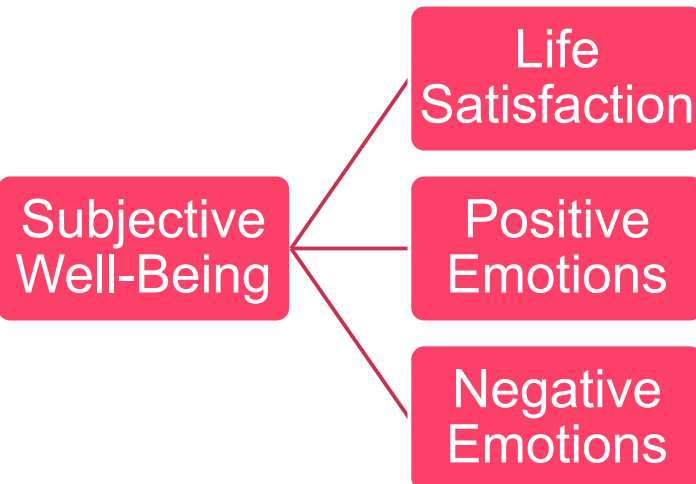
Striving for and achieving meaningful outcomes (involves grit)

- Seligman, 2011; Norrish, Williams, O'Connor, & Robinson, 2013

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



Positive Psychology Approach to Mental Health Care



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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)

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Defining Mental Health and Well-Being

Is Happiness/SWB the Opposite of Emotional Distress?






Photo by [MI PHAM](#) and [Chinh Le Duc](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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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

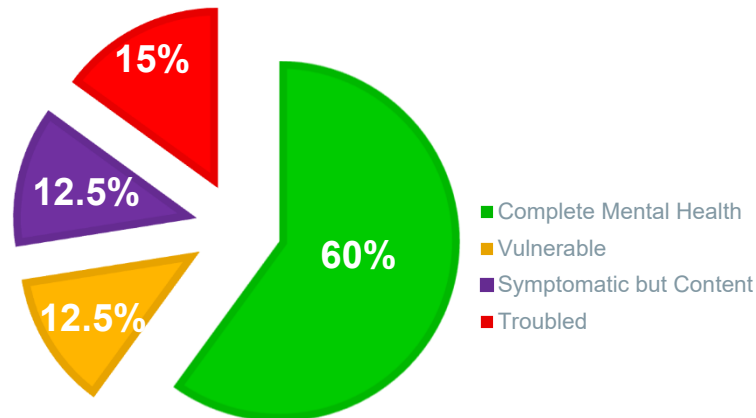
Mental Health Problems	Subjective Well-Being	
	Low	Average to High
Low	Vulnerable	Complete Mental Health
High	Troubled	Symptomatic but Content

- Suldo & Doll, 2021

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% of Students in Mental Health Groups

PERCENT OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



- Suldo & Shaffer, 2008; Suldo, Thalji-Raitano, Kiefer, & Ferron, 2016

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Benefits of Complete Mental Health (vs. Vulnerable)

Physical Health

- Illness Frequency and Overall Health
- Activity Limitations

Social Adjustment

- Social Support
- Less Victimization

Identity Development

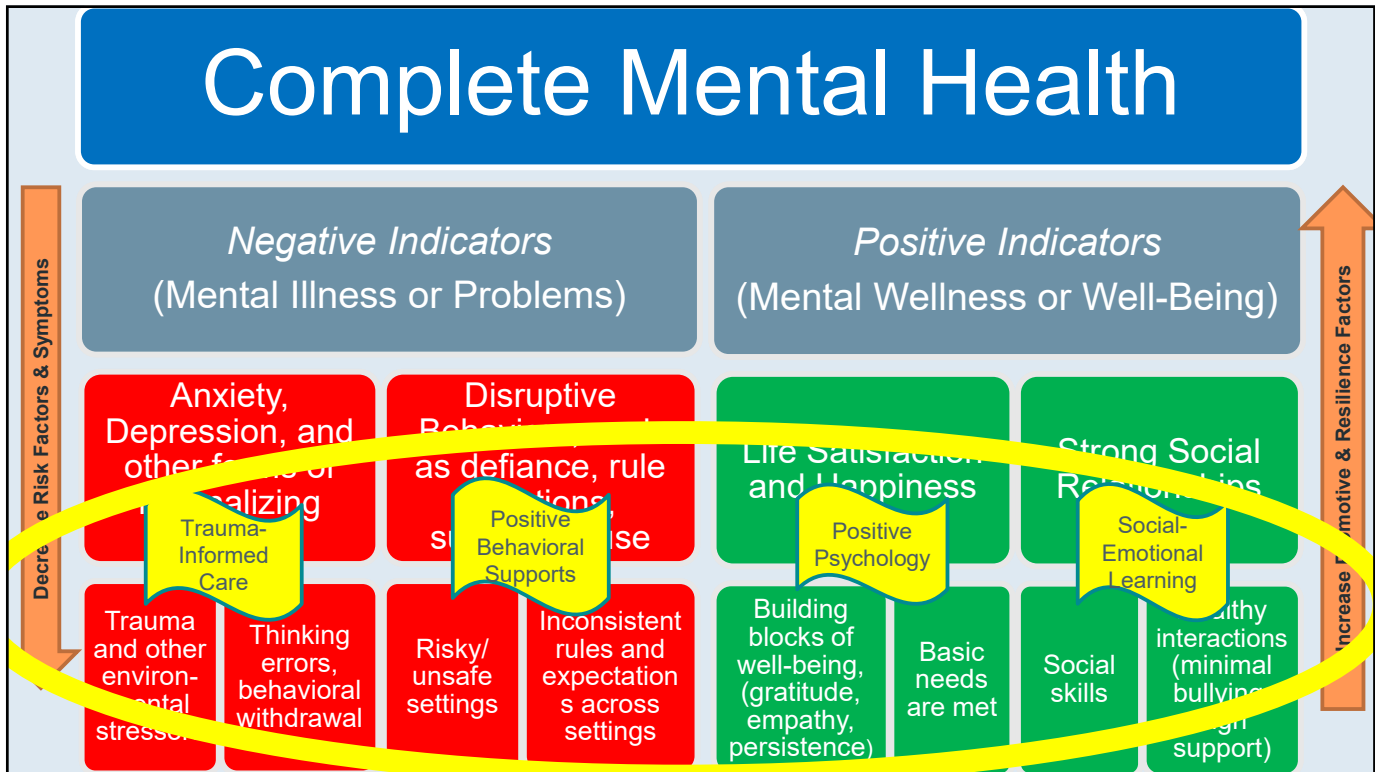
- Self-Concept Clarity
- Self-Esteem

Academic Outcomes- concurrent and later

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

- Antaramian et al. 2010; DiLeo, Suldo, Ferron, & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2022; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008; Suldo et al., 2013

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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

- Alcantara, Gonzalez-Carrasco, Montserrat et al., 2017; Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2016; Suldo, 2016

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How to Increase Happiness?

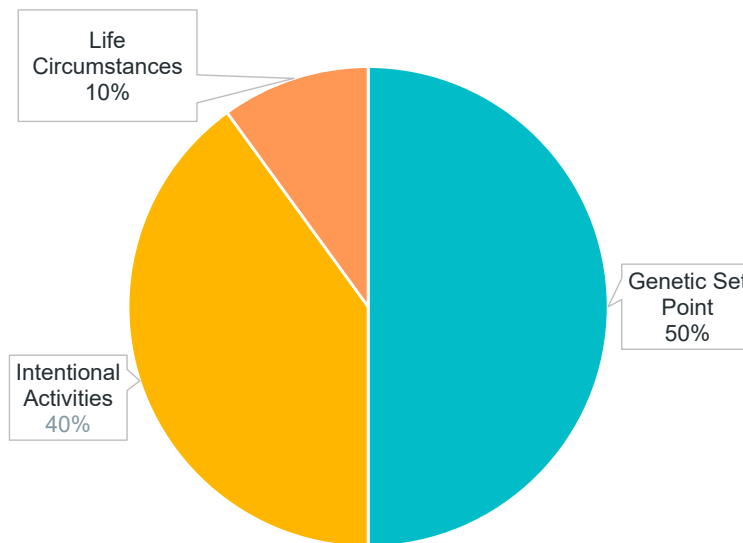
Principles of Positive Psychology Interventions



Photo by [Austin Schmid](#) on [Unsplash](#)

In 2005, Lyubomirsky et al. suggested...

Determinants of Happiness



2019 Updates to Determinants of Happiness

Genetics, life circumstances, and intentional activities do NOT exhaustively describe all possible influences on happiness.

Variances were found between subjects, not within individuals.

The numbers were merely suggestions, based on what was known from the limited literature back in 2005. Advances in research indicate:

- Genetic factors account for closer to 40% of the variability in SWB
- The effects of intentional activities on happiness is smaller than 40%, partly due to difficulty in motivating change in behavior and sustaining the change.
- National, geographical, and cultural factors need to be taken into account.

Buy in is crucial! It takes both intentionality and effort to become happier and maintain the higher level of happiness.

Having a proper way to increase happiness matters too, which is why a program that includes activities that has been shown to increase happiness matters.

- Brown & Rohrer, 2019; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2019

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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.

Build and strengthen relationships in and out of sessions.

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

- Suldo & Fefer, 2021

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Positive Emotions Serve Adaptive Functions: Broaden-and-Build

Goal: Increase positive emotions through... celebratory events and recognition, pleasant event scheduling, meditation, visualization, acts of kindness, etc.

Hear more from Dr. Fredrickson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7dFDHzV36g>

Resilience

- Recover from negative thoughts; Laugh, forgive, and move on vs. ruminate and spiral down

Build cognitive resources

- Broaden our attentional capacity and problem-solving; We think more flexibly, efficiently, and creatively

Build social resources

- Promotes more prosocial behavior; Become more generous, helpful, and less defensive; better at conflict resolution; more attractive to others

- Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009; Fredrickson, 1998, 2001, 2004; Jennings, 2016

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Increased Happiness

Person-Activity Fit

Activity Features

- Across dosage, variety, social support, trigger
- Between present vs. past vs. future; other vs. self-oriented; social vs. reflective

Person Features

- Motivation & effort
- Efficacy beliefs
- Baseline affective state
- Personality
- Social support
- Demographics

Positive Activities lead to

- Positive Emotions
- Positive Thoughts
- Positive Behaviors
- Need Satisfaction

The positive activity model (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013); Photo by Pedro Kümmel on Unsplash

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Promoting Happiness through School-Based Positive Psychology Interventions

Evoke Positive Emotions about the

Past

Present

Future

- You at Your Best
- Gratitude journals
- Gratitude visits

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

- Best possible self in the future
- Optimistic thinking

Strengthen Classroom Relationships

- Suldo, 2016

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School-Based Applications of Positive Psychology Interventions

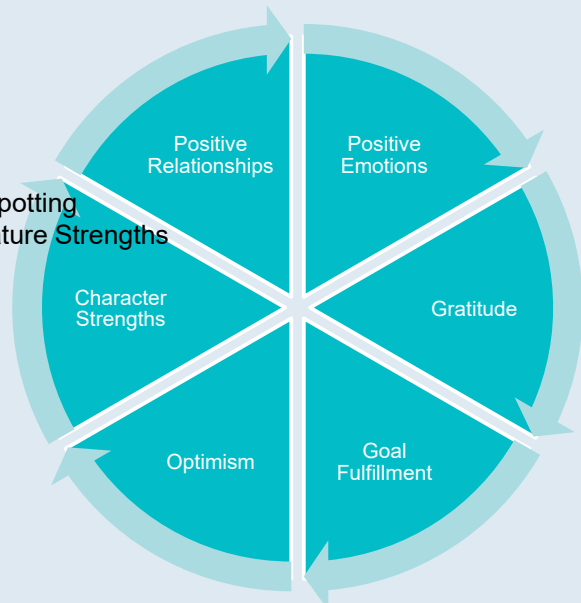
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Schoolwide Approach to Happiness Promotion

VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

Virtue of Wisdom				
Creativity Original, adaptive, ingenious, seeing and doing things in different ways	Curiosity Interest, novelty-seeking, exploration, openness to experience	Judgment Critical thinking, making through all sides, not jumping to conclusions	Love of Learning Mastering new skills is topics, systematically adding to knowledge	Perspective Wisdom, providing wise counsel, taking the big picture view
Virtue of Courage				
Bravery Valor, not shrinking from threat or challenge, facing fear, speaking up for what's right	Persistence Perseverance, industry, finishing what one starts, welcoming obstacles	Honesty Authenticity, being true to oneself, sleeping without pretense, integrity	Zest Vitality, enthusiasm for life, vigor, energy, not going through the motions	
Virtue of Humanity		Virtue of Justice		
Love Both being and being loved, valuing close relations with others, genuine warmth	Kindness Generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruism, doing for others	Social Intelligence Aware of the motives and feelings of oneself and others, know what makes others tick	Teamwork Cooperation, social responsibility, loyalty, contributing to a group effort	Fairness Adhering to principles, justice, not allowing feelings to bias decisions about others
		Leadership Organizing group activities to get things done, positively influencing others		
Virtue of Temperance				
Forgiveness Mercy, accepting others' shortcomings, giving people a second chance, seeing good in him	Humility Modesty, seeing one's accomplishments, speak for themselves	Prudence Careful about one's choices, cautious, not taking undue risks	Self-Regulation Self-control, disciplined, managing impulses, emotions, and stress	
Virtue of Transcendence				
Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence Awe and wonder for beauty, admiration for skill and moral greatness	Gratitude Thankful for the good, expressing thanks, feeling blessed	Hope Optimism, positive future-mindedness, expecting the best & working to achieve it	Humor Playfulness, bringing smiles to others, lighthearted - seeing the lighter side	Spirituality Connecting with the sacred, purpose, meaning, faith, religiousness

*Strengths Spotting
*Using Signature Strengths



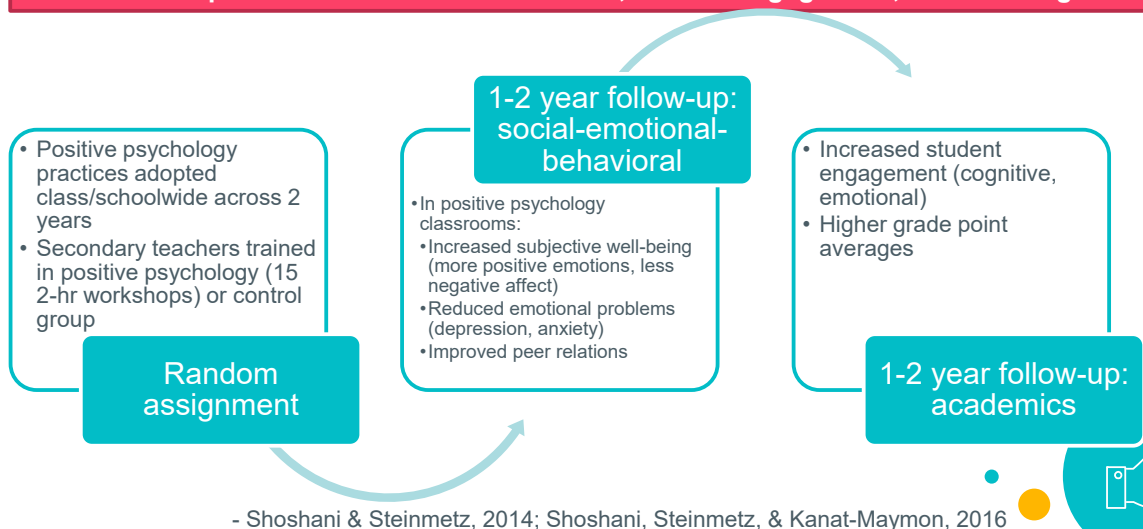
- Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014

www.viacharacter.org

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Class/Schoolwide 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



- Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014; Shoshani, Steinmetz, & Kanat-Maymon, 2016

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Teacher-Focused Positive Psychology Interventions

Teachers Mental Health in the U.S.

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Surv Quit

By Kate Raddat

COVID-19 IN SCHOOLS

Teachers Union Demands Transparency in School COVID-19 Cases

BY LAURIE DAVISON | FLORIDA
PUBLISHED 3:49 PM ET SEP. 21, 2020

Schools are back in session in Florida, but what's not clear yet is the number of COVID-19 cases at schools across the state.

So, the Florida Education Association (FEA) is running a commercial asking for the state to be more transparent.

What You Need To Know

- Florida Education Association wants state to release numbers for COVID-19 cases in schools
- Florida Department of Health says it's working on an online dashboard
- In the meantime, the FEA has created its own

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"As a parent of two daughters in our public schools, I want to know what's happening in their schools," FEA president Andrew Spar said. "You literally could have a situation where a child is in a classroom and there could be one, there could be two, there could be three COVID cases, and I have no idea."

The FEA wants to see the state release the number of COVID-19 cases in every school along

Waiting for secureubads.a.doubleclick.net...

Impact of Teacher Well-Being



Tschannen-Moran & Barr (2010)
 von der Embse, Schoemann, Kilgus, Wicoff, & Bowler (2017); von der Embse et al. (2019)

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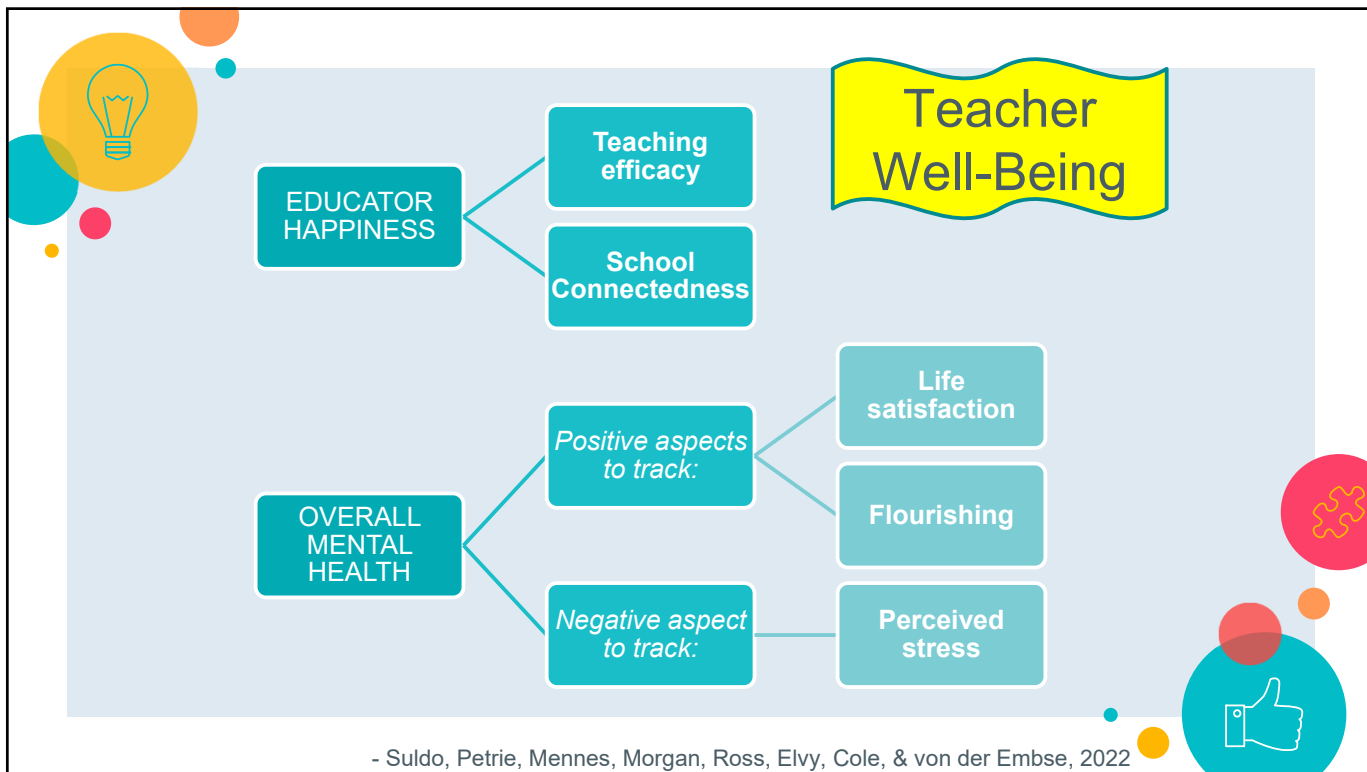
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The aim of Positive Psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life.

Martin Seligman

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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)
- WISE (Bostic, 2019);
 - Free download: www.medstarwise.org/resources/
- USF pilot work with elementary school teachers, targeting PERMA-H (Suldo, Petrie, Mennes, Morgan, Ross, Elvy, Cole, & von der Embse, 2022)

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Series of Five 3-Week Professional Learning Cycles (Example from Fourth Cycle)

Week 1– LEARN AND DO! Try out the positive activities. *Workshop 4:*

- Includes well-being assessment, introduction of new positive activities (gratitude visits; acts of kindness), personal Wellness Workbook, videos and discussions

Week 2– IMPROVE! *with team support*

- In your grade-level team meetings, take 15 minutes to:
 - Share out, reflect, plan for further use of the positive activities

Week 3– MAINTAIN! *with individualized support*

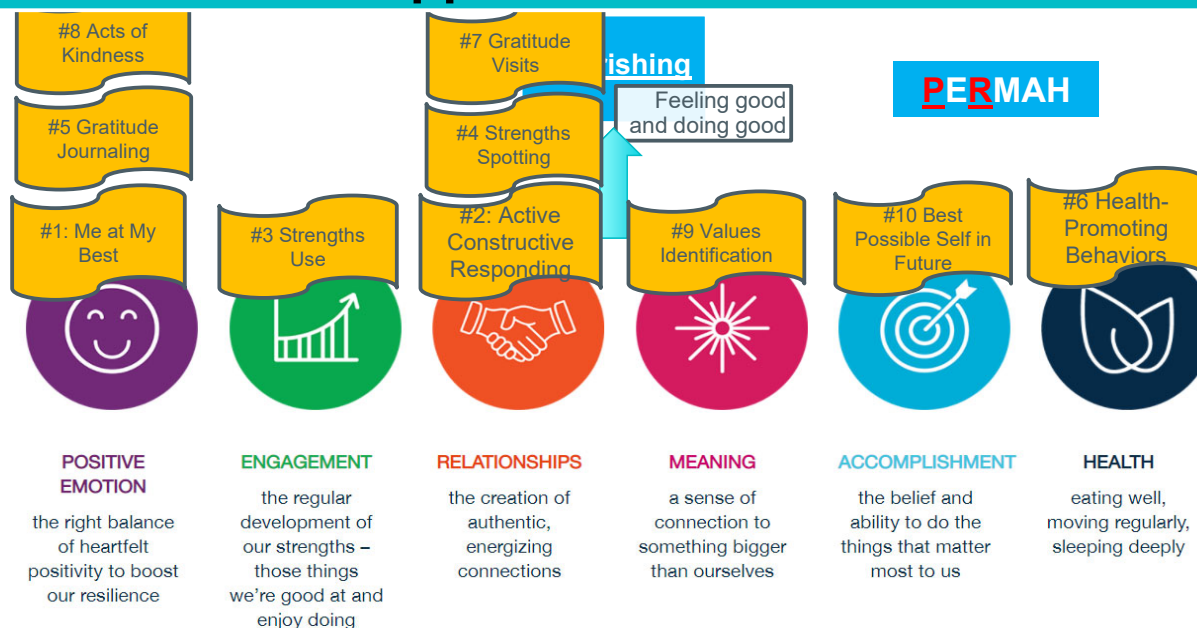
- Individual coaching meeting with USF team member for further reflection, planning, problem-solving, and celebrating

Looking ahead to Workshop 5: (*date, preview of positive activities*)

- Suldo, Petrie, Mennes, Morgan, Ross, Elvy, Cole, & von der Embse, 2022

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USF Application of PERMA-H



- Seligman, 2011; Moorish et al., 2017; Kern & McQuaid: <https://permahsurvey.com/the-science/>; Suldo et al., 2022

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Results: Teacher Acceptability (scale of 1-5)

Virtual Workshops → 4.0

- The highest teacher ratings (3.9 to 4.0) were in response to statements, *"The material in the workshops was easy to understand"* and *"I am confident that I could use the positive psychology activities discussed in these workshops"*

Wellness Workbooks → 3.7

- The highest ratings (3.6 to of 3.7) were in response to statements, *"The material in the Wellness Workbooks was easy to understand"* and *"I am confident that I could use the positive psychology interventions described in the Wellness Workbook."*

Team-Level Discussions → 3.6

- The highest rating of 3.6 was in response to the statement, *"My co-workers benefitted from the discussions of positive activity use."*

Individual Coaching → 3.4

- The highest rating of 3.4 was in response to the statement, *"The coaching meeting(s) helped me solve barriers I had to completing the positive activities."*

- Suldo et al., 2022

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Results: Changes in Teachers' Life Satisfaction

Average scores for all participants:

- Increased significantly ($t = 3.68, p < .001$)
- Moved from "Slightly Satisfied" to "Satisfied"

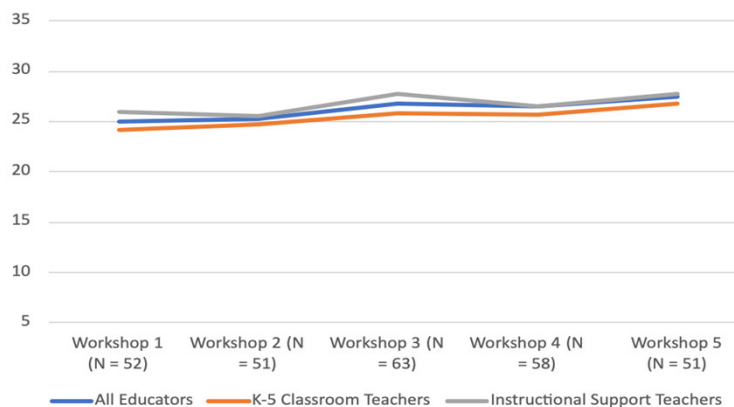
K-5 Classroom Teachers:

- Increased from 24.17 (baseline) to 26.79 (Workshop 5)

Student Services Staff:

- Reported "Extremely Satisfied" at baseline (32.00) and at Workshop 5 (34.50)

Life Satisfaction for Educators 2020-21 Average Scores Across Time

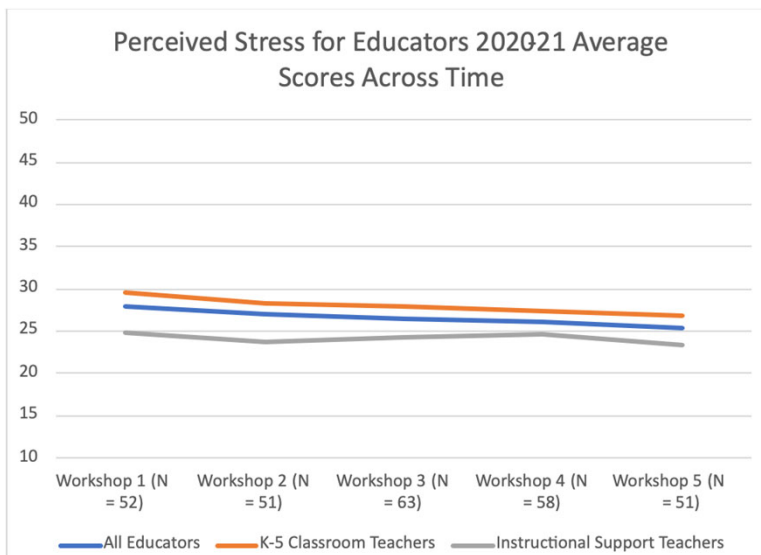


Score Interpretation: Possible scores range from 5-35. Scores of 5-9 indicate Extremely Dissatisfied, 10-14 – Dissatisfied, 20 – Neutral, 21-25 – Slightly Satisfied, 26-30 – Satisfied, 31-35 – Extremely Satisfied

- Suldo et al., 2022

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Results: Changes in Teachers' Stress



Average scores for all participants:

- Decreased significantly ($t = -2.86, p < .01$)

K-5 Classroom Teachers

- Reported the highest levels of perceived stress
- Decreased 2.68 points from baseline (29.56) to Workshop 5 (26.88)

Student Services Staff:

- Reported lowest levels of perceived stress at baseline (19.50) and Workshop 5 (17.50)

Score Interpretation: Scores range from 10-50. Higher scores indicate higher feelings of stress and lower scores indicate lower feelings of stress. Average score on this scale is 18.4 for women.

- Suldo et al., 2022

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Results: Changes in Teachers' Progress Toward Goals

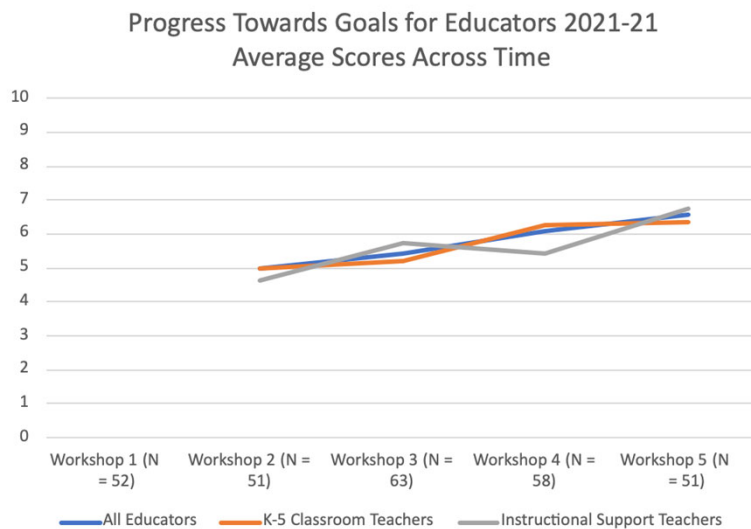
Average scores for all participants:

- Progress increased over time

K-5 Classroom Teachers:

- Reported increasing, steady progress towards personal goals over time

Administrators and Student Services Staff showed the largest increase over time.



Score Interpretation: Possible scores range from 1-10. Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived progress towards goal completion.

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Summary of Changes in Teacher Outcomes

Educators' ratings of their well-being and goal attainment throughout the 2020-21 professional learning series indicated that as participants learned and used positive psychology activities, they also experienced significant reductions in stress and increases in subjective well-being (life satisfaction) while also making steady progress towards accomplishment of goals that were personally meaningful to them.

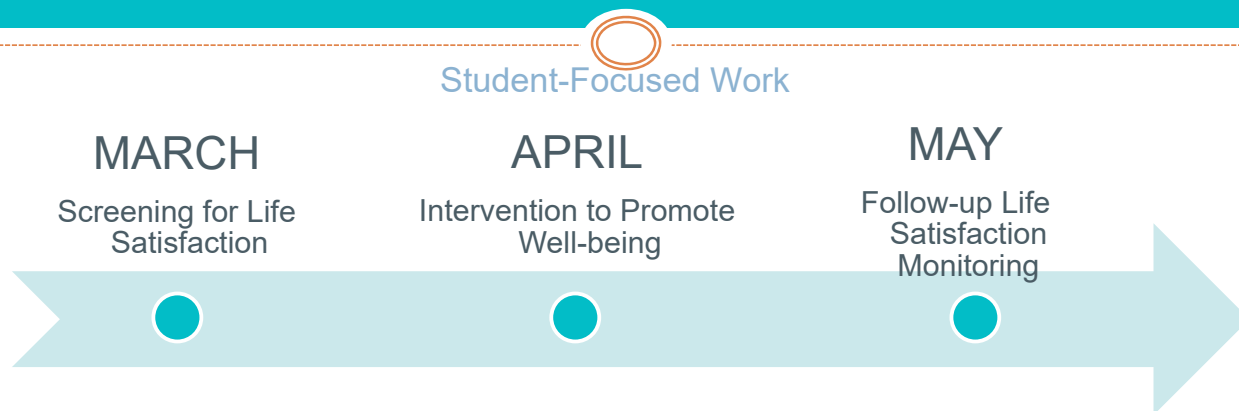
Educators also saw value in each component of the program.

- Establishing acceptability and feasibility of any educational intervention is critical for sustained use; an infeasible intervention component is unlikely to translate to positive outcomes.

- Suldo et al., 2022

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Was Teacher Well-being Related to their Students Well-Being?



- Suldo et al., 2022

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Spring Screening of Student Life Satisfaction

590 students screened using the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS; Seligman, Huebner, et al. 2003)

- 6 domains: family, friends, school, living environment, self; global life
- Each rated on a scale of 1 (*terrible*) to 5 (*delighted*)

75.4% Low Risk (n = 445)

- BMSLSS score of 4.0 or greater

12.9% Medium Risk (n = 76)

- BMSLSS score between 3.5 and 4.0

11.7% High Risk (n = 69)

- BMSLSS score less than 3.5

- Suldo et al., 2022

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Relationships between Teacher Well-Being and their Students' Life Satisfaction

Students' School Satisfaction in March 2021

- Inversely related to teacher stress early in the school year (Workshop 1; $r = -.38$, $p = .03$)
- Positively related to end-of-year educator happiness (average across Workshops 3, 4, 5; $r = .35$, $p = .04$)

Students' Average General Life Satisfaction in March 2021

- Positively related to growth in teacher flourishing throughout the school year ($r = .32$, $p = .05$)
- Positively related to growth in educator happiness throughout the school year ($r = .34$, $p = .03$)

- Suldo et al., 2022

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Student-Focused Positive Psychology Interventions

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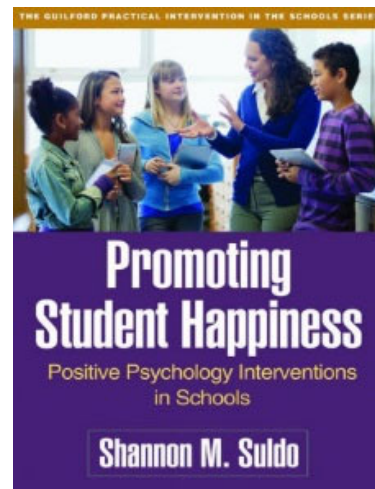
Tier 2 for Students with < Complete Mental Health

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

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BMSLSS

(developed by Scott Huebner, Univ. of South Carolina)

We would like to know what thoughts about life you've had during the past several weeks. Think about how you spend each day and night, and then think about how your life has been during most of this time. For each statement, circle a number from (1) to (7), where (1) means you feel *terrible* about that area of life and (7) means you are *delighted* with that area of life.

During the past several weeks...	Terrible	Unhappy	Mostly Dissatisfied	Mixed (about equally satisfied and dissatisfied)	Mostly Satisfied	Pleased	Delighted
1. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>family life</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>friendships</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>school experience</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would describe my satisfaction with <i>myself</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I would describe my satisfaction with <i>where I live</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>whole life</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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Well-Being Promotion Program (WBPP): Small Group Positive Psychology Intervention

Original Positive Psychology Intervention developed by Positive Psychology Research Team at USF (Suldo, Savage, & Mercer, 2014)

Intervention activities divided into 3 phases focused on the past, present, and future aspects of emotional well-being

- Past**
 - Gratitude journals
 - Gratitude visits
- Present**
 - Acts of kindness
 - Character strengths
 - Savoring
- Future**
 - Optimistic thinking
 - Hopeful and goal-directed thinking

Newer Features

Parent psychoeducation and weekly handouts

Booster sessions

- Roth, Suldo, & Ferron, 2017

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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 (Application of Signature Strengths in New Way)
Booster 3	All; Optimism	Review & Spotlight on Optimistic Thinking (My Optimistic Thoughts)

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Session 1: Parent Information

Session Goals

- Establish rapport with parents
- Introduce parents to key positive psychology concepts
 - Define key terms
 - How to conceptualize youth well-being
 - Benefits of high SWB for youth and parents
 - Specific constructs targeted in the program (e.g., gratitude, acts of kindness, hope, optimism, character strengths)
- Demonstrate an example of a positive psychology intervention (e.g., Savoring; Me at My Best)
- Introduce and provide parents an overview of the focus of sessions in the core program

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Student Meetings 1 - 10 Parent Information Handouts

Parents receive weekly updates on group activities through a handout

Parents encouraged to follow suggestions to reinforce strategies at home

Handout should be sent home the same day the student participates in that session

Deliver as a hard copy or directly to parent through email (*solicit input from parent*)

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Sample Parent Handouts: Sessions 2 & 4

Online Supplement to
PROMOTING STUDENT HAPPINESS
Positive Psychology Interventions in Schools

NOTES FOR PARENTS

Gratitude Journaling

What Did My Child Learn This Meeting?

During this meeting, we introduced the concept of *gratitude* to your child. We discussed what gratitude is and why it is important for happiness.

- **What is gratitude?** You feel gratitude (thanks, appreciation, grateful) when you recognize that you received an intentional act of kindness from another person.
 - More specifically, you feel gratitude after gaining a benefit that you view as valuable, that was provided intentionally and altruistically (not for ulterior motives), and occurred at some cost to the person who provided the benefit.
 - Example: A child earned an A on a homework assignment that his sister helped him complete the night prior. The child may feel gratitude toward his sister because she helped him on purpose (intent), gave up her time to help him (cost), and he got a good grade (benefit) due to her help.
- **Why is gratitude important?** It helps us focus our thoughts and emotions on the positive parts of our pasts related to school, friendships, and family life. Grateful thinking leads to more happiness with life.

Your child rated his or her current level of gratitude, and created a *gratitude journal* to record things in his or her life for which he or she is grateful.

Homework Activities

- Each night before bed, your child was asked to spend 5 minutes writing down at least five things in life that he or she is grateful for. Your child will be asked to share two to three of the responses he or she recorded in his or her journal during our next meeting.

What Can I Do?

You can make gratitude journaling a part of your entire family's routine. You might choose to sit with your child and his or her siblings (if you have more than one child) each night before bedtime and journal together. You can also share the things you are grateful for with each other. Discuss what similarities and differences you notice!

NOTES FOR PARENTS

Acts of Kindness

What Did My Child Learn This Meeting?

During this meeting, we introduced the character strength of *kindness* to your child.

- **What is an act of kindness?** An action that benefits another person or makes other people happy, typically at the cost of your time and effort. When a person often performs these behaviors, we say that he or she is *kind*, or he or she possesses the strength of *kindness*.
- **Why is kindness important?** Performing acts of kindness helps us to focus our emotions on the positive parts of our present lives. For example, doing kind acts helps to increase cooperation, increase awareness of your own good fortune, let you see yourself as helpful, increase your confidence about being able to help others, get others to know and like you, and make it more likely that others will reciprocate kindness and friendship.

We discussed kindness as a virtue and how kindness relates to happiness. We estimated the frequency that your child currently engages in acts of kindness.

Homework Activities

- Your child was asked to perform five acts of kindness during 1 day prior to the next meeting, and record these behaviors on his or her *Acts of Kindness Record Form*. Your child will be asked to share two to three of the kind acts he or she performed and related feelings with the group at the beginning of the next meeting.

What Can I Do?

Discuss the importance of acting kindly toward others with your child and how being kind influences how you feel. Engage in acts of kindness alongside your child and reflect on the experiences together. How does *engaging in acts of kindness* make you feel? What other ways can you incorporate kindness into your daily

www.guilford.com/suldo-materials

- Suldo, 2016

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Roles of Group Leaders and Co-Leaders

Both Leader and Co-Leader

- Prepare for each session (i.e., read and rehearse manual protocol)
- Limit redundancy (e.g., only 1 person gets supplies [copies handouts, secures computer lab, reinforcers])

Leader

- Create a session agenda, with time estimates for each activity (procedure section in the WBPP manual)
- Facilitate session activities from the front of room

Co-Leader

- Strategic physical placement (proximity control)
- Provide individual assistance and connection, particular for students who need it
- Ensure leader's fidelity of adherence to session protocol (*follow along with 1-page session integrity checklists*)
- If element skipped on accident, discreetly redirect leader to that activity during natural transition point. Record no for element omitted completely (e.g., due to lack of time)

Choice points (responsibilities, communication methods)

- Alternate leader/co-leader role (e.g., Counselor A lead groups odd weeks; Counselor B lead during even weeks); Constant roles for a given group; Gradual take over of co-leader trainee
- Weekly: meet to plan (verify responsibilities for upcoming session; review session agenda developed by leader, ensure you have session materials)
- Between sessions: how communicate ideas for next session and logistical issues (e.g., supporting absent students)

- Suldo, 2016

Session 1 Materials: Leader and Co-Leader

Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers (page 2 of 4)

INTRODUCTION TO THE WELL-BEING PROMOTION PROGRAM	Core Session 2: Student Group
Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a supportive group environment. • Increase awareness of subjective well-being. • Introduce students to the broad determinants of happiness. 	
Overview of Procedures <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Get to Know 'You Activity: You at Your Best' Group Discussion: Initial Definition and the Importance of Happiness Clarify Purpose of the Group Establish Group Norms Homework: You at Your Best 	
Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binder to hold documents provided and created throughout the program, to stay in the practitioner's possession for ready access at the beginning of each group session • Folder in which students can transport group homework assignments, to stay in the student's possession for ready access between group meetings • White board or easel • What Determines Happiness? figure • What Determines Happiness? handout • Overview of Program Activities handout • Confidentiality handout 	
Procedures Defined	
A. Get to Know You Activity: You at Your Best This activity provides an initial bond of happiness (Seligman et al., 2005). It is included here as an introductory exercise in part to enhance engagement and to amplify effects of later activities.	
Set the Stage Before we talk about why we're all here in this group, I'd like to do an activity to help us get to know one another, in particular what we are each good at.	
Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with a plain sheet of lined paper. • Ask them to write about a time when they were at their best. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Doing something really well. o Going above and beyond for someone else. o Displaying a talent. o Challenging something. 	
Personal Reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once completed, ask them to take a few minutes to reflect on the story. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Remember the feelings of that day. o Identify the personal strengths they displayed in the story. o Think about the time, effort, accomplishment. 	

Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers (page 3 of 4)

Shared Reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to share their story with the group and one or two had reflections. • Initiate reflections in each group member's story with identifications or reaffirmations of strengths displayed within the story. • Encourage group members to reflect on the positive in each other's stories. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Something they admired or liked in the story. o Strengths the presenter demonstrated in the story. o A quality they share with the presenter.
Retain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a photocopy of the "You at Your Best" stories. • File the copy of the story in a binder you will keep for future reference by you or the student, such as in the event the student forgets to bring his or her homework, folder back to group the next session. • Place the original story in a folder the student will use to keep his or her homework assignments for, and rules from, the Well-Being Promotion Program group.
B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and the Importance of Happiness
Set the Stage What do you think this group is all about?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once answers are received, state that the group is about happiness.
Introduction to Pose these questions to the group and facilitate a brief discussion.
Happiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When someone says he or she is "happy," what does he or she mean? What does "happiness" mean to you? • Why is being happy important? Why is happiness important to you? • What do you do to increase your own happiness?
No specific answers are necessary. Simply facilitate students' thoughts and discussions on these topics. Participate in the discussion as well with examples from your own life in order to develop a relationship with the group.
C. Clarify Purpose of the Group
The discussion will introduce students to the purpose of the group to use our power to change our personal happiness to the upper bounds of our set point through building purposeful thoughts and activities that move us toward the upper part of our emotional range.
Introduce the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the What Determines Happiness? figure.
Determinants of Happiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that happiness is determined by three things: our genetics, our life circumstances, and our purposeful activities. Example script: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Love at the What Determines Happiness? figure. Scientists find happiness is made up of three things: a genetic or biological set point, purposeful activity, and the circumstances. Set point is the biggest cause of happiness and it is controlled by our genetics. We all have a range of ability to be happy based on what we were born with. Let's use the scale and pretend that people can be happy on a scale of 1-5. Some people range are naturally high, so even when they are at their lowest happy level, they may score a 4 or higher than other people. In that case, their range could be 4-5. However, some people's ranges are lower, so they don't even go up to 5. They may have a range of 0-2. A person's set point is usually between their range. For example, if a person's set point is 1, and they are at the top of their range, they are at a 2.5. A 3.0 is usually at a 4 level of happiness. If it is the only thing that makes you happy, or if you are happy, changes in the circumstances and adding tasks to increase our level of happiness are a factor of life, such as the state you live in, etc.

Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers (page 3 of 4)

how much money you have, and the school you go to. These are things that we usually can't change or can't do so very easily. The key to increasing happiness within our range is purposeful activity—do new work, what you choose to do or think. Purposeful activity includes the things you do, the way you think, your attitudes, and your goals. Everyone has the opportunity to increase his or her level of happiness through purposeful activities and track what we're talking about in the group. The purpose of this group is to increase your happiness by talking about good activities, feelings, thoughts, and activities from your past, present, and future. During our meetings, we'll learn how to make our purposeful activities those things we choose to do and think about more in line with activities seen in people who feel pretty happy with their lives. What questions do you have?
Check for Comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute the Overview of Program Activities handout. • Ask students to complete the key for the figure (three determinants of happiness) and the final question regarding the focus of group meetings (lower purposeful activities). • Reinforce effort; guide students to correct answers as needed.
D. Establish Group Norms
Provide clear expectations for appropriate behavior during meetings. Behavior should convey respect for classmates and maximize opportunities to engage with the activities and thereby increase personal happiness.
Set the Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the logistics of group meetings. When, how often, and where students will meet with the group leader. How the group leader will coordinate this schedule with classroom teachers, use of hall passes, and so on. Example script: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o We'll meet once each week, for the next 10 weeks, in this room, at this time—third period. No need to check in with your third-period teacher first, I'll e-mail her to confirm you were here today. When your second-period class is dismissed, stop by your locker to get your folder for our group. Then come straight here. o Review the Overview of Program Activities handout, complete questions 2-4. o File completed worksheet in students' folders for their future reference.
Confidentiality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pose these questions to the group and facilitate a brief discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have you heard the word "confidentiality" before? o How would you define confidentiality for this group? (e.g., confidential = private or secret) o Compile students' ideas into a confidentiality definition on the board. Make sure that it includes the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Respect for others' privacy outside of group. o Times when the group leader will have to break confidentiality (e.g., danger to self, danger to others, student is in danger).

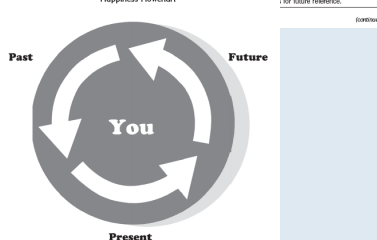
Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers (page 4 of 4)

Develop Additional Group Rules for Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a short list of group rules. These rules are intended to facilitate an atmosphere of trust and engagement. Rules for appropriate behavior in the group should also be consistent with existing school rules and behavioral expectations, such as those rules that are established in the school's PBIS program. • Record and post group rules for future reference.
E. Homework: You at Your Best
Set the Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss specific incentives that will be provided weekly for completion of group homework, such as school supplies, stickers, candy, tickets toward rewards used in the school's PBIS program, and so on.
Assign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each night this week, students should read their story and think about the strengths they demonstrated in the story. • Encourage students to add more details and length to the story. • They can share the story with family members or someone else if they like.
Looking Ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief discussion in the next session will focus on student follow-through with homework and resulting feelings of happiness.

FIGURES FOR PRACTITIONERS: What Determines Happiness?



FIGURES FOR PRACTITIONERS: Happiness Flowchart



Session 1 Materials: Student

NOTES FOR PARENTS

Happiness Introduction

What Did My Child Learn This Meeting?

During this meeting, we introduced the Well-Being Promotion Program to your child by explaining the purpose of the group and confidentiality, and discussing what it means to be happy and why it is important. During this first meeting, we also completed the "You at your Best" activity, which asked your child to write about a time when he or she was at his or her best (e.g., did something very well, displayed a talent, created something), reflect on his or her story (e.g., remember feelings that day, identify the strengths declared in his or her story), and share his or her story and reflections with the group.

Homework Activities

Your child was asked to further expand on his or her you at your best story by rereading the story and reflecting on his or her identified strengths each night, then adding more details and length to the story.

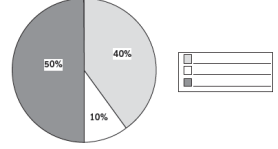
What Can I Do?

Encourage your child to share his or her you at your best story with you and reflect with your child on his or her story. If you would like, take the time to write your own you at your best story and share it with your child as well.

STUDENT HANDOUT

Overview of Program Activities

What Determines Happiness?



What is the Purpose of This Well-Being Promotion Group?

1. During our weekly group meetings, which of the three areas that determine happiness are we going to focus on in order to improve our happiness?
2. How many times each week are we going to meet?
3. How many weeks will we meet?
4. What do I need to bring with me to the meetings?

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STUDENT HANDOUT

Confidentiality

What is Confidentiality?

Blank lines for writing.

How Will I Keep What Students Say in This Group Confidential?

Blank lines for writing.

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STUDENT ACTIVITY section with a large writing area and a small text box at the top.



Me at my Best

Usually, everyday after I get home and eat dinner, I play the piano and cello. Everyday I try to do my best to make beautiful music for my parents and for myself. It takes a lot of hard work and concentration, but for me it has gotten easier since I play almost every day. I try to outdo myself and do better than what I did yesterday and achieve my goals. This is me at my very best every day.

Summary of Initial Outcome Studies

Study 1 (2010; 2014)

- Students (grade 6) in the 10-week group program (1X/wk) experienced **increases in global life satisfaction** (compared to peers randomly assigned to wait-list control).
- Additional or long-term "benefits" were not identified.
- Students (grade 7) in a 5-week group program (2X/wk) experienced **increases in global life satisfaction** (somewhat greater magnitude than their 6th grade peers).

Study 2 (2017)

- At post-intervention, students (grade 7) in the 10-week group program (1x/wk) plus boosters showed **growth in life satisfaction and positive affect** (compared to peers randomly assigned to wait-list control). Students also showed **decrease in negative affect, internalizing, and externalizing problems**.
- At follow up, students in WBPP **sustained growth in positive affect** and **decrease in negative affect and internalizing problems**.

We are here!

Study 3 (2020 -2025)

- Which students benefit the most from the WBPP?
- How to train existing **school mental health providers** to use the WBPP as part of their MTSS for student mental health?
- How **long do student gains in mental health sustain...** 6 months? 1 year?
- To what extent are **academic outcomes** (student engagement, grades, test scores) impacted?
- What much does it **cost** a school to train its staff and provide the WBPP?
- How **cost effective** is this early intervention?

-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>

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Can the Well-Being Promotion Program be Provided Effectively Remotely? (data from 2020-2021)

129 counselor trainees:

117 undergraduates learning school-based PPIs through a service learning in positive psychology course
12 graduate students in school psychology

Youth demographics:

Ages 6 to 19 (M = 12.95; SD = 3.35)
50% were females
Many from Tampa, but also other states and other countries

10-week positive psychology curriculum (WBPP) delivered to 142 youth served individually, via telehealth (Zoom)

-Scarimbolo, Bauermeister, Cole, Gray, Ross, DiLeo, Pinnock, Elvy, & Suldo, 2022

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Adapting the WBPP for Telehealth

01

Communication

- Google Voice
- Communicating directly with parents
- Reminders to log on for zoom meetings (via e-mail or text)
- Parent check-ins at the end of session

02

Technology

- Ability to print or write virtually on handouts
- Access to zoom platform
- Email access
- Virtual rewards for homework completion

03

Assessment Administration

- Either read items and ask students to respond with their answer
- Screen-sharing
- Give screen control to the student

04

Modifications to activities

- Some sessions omitted based on student developmental level (i.e., character strengths)
- Secret signal for confidentiality (in the event the room is no longer empty)
- Use of items within the child's reach for demonstrating concepts

-Scarimbolo, Bauermeister, Cole, Gray, Ross, DiLeo, Pinnock, Elvy, & Suldo, 2022

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Changes in Student Life Satisfaction from Pre to Post for Students Assessed with the BMSLSS (mostly < age 10)

N = 31 children served and evaluated with the BMSLSS

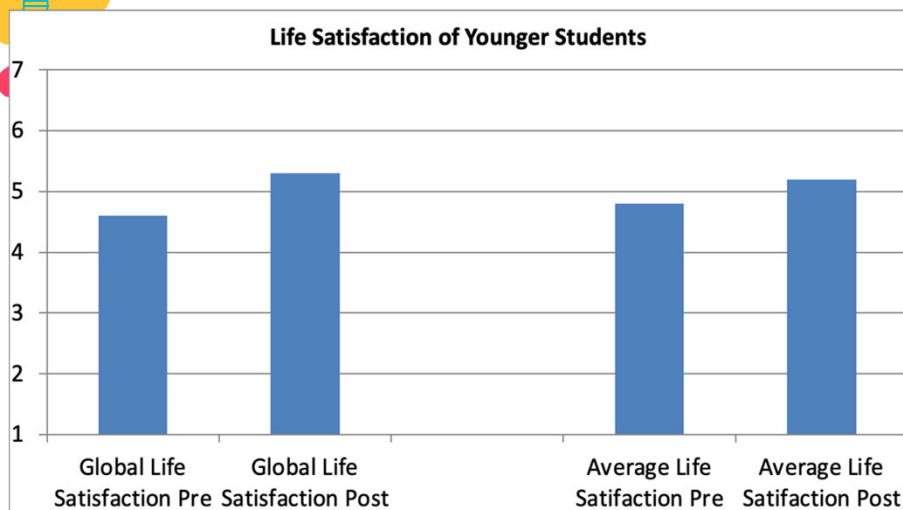
- 6-item measure of satisfaction in 5 domains of life (global, self, living environment, family, school) and global life (context-free)
- 7 point response metric, from 1 (*terrible*) to 7 (*delighted*)

Paired sample t-test used to examine differences between pre- and post-intervention mean domain-specific life satisfaction and mean global life satisfaction

-Scarimbolo et al., 2022

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Student Outcomes with the BMSLSS



M life satisfaction score (BMSLSS) at baseline: $M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.4$.

M life satisfaction score after WBPP: $M = 5.2$, $SD = 1.3$, $t(30) = 2.6$, $p = .015$.

M global life satisfaction score at baseline: ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 1.7$)

M global life satisfaction after completion: $M = 5.3$, $SD = 1.5$, $t(30) = 2.4$, $p = .021$.

Range: 1 (*Terrible*) to 7 (*Delighted*)

Positive growth in life satisfaction is a small to medium effect, $d=0.44$ (global) to $.46$ (domain-specific)

-Scarimbolo et al., 2022

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Changes in Student Life Satisfaction from Pre to Post for Students Assessed with the MSLSS (mostly age 10 and older)

N = 110 children served and evaluated with the MSLSS

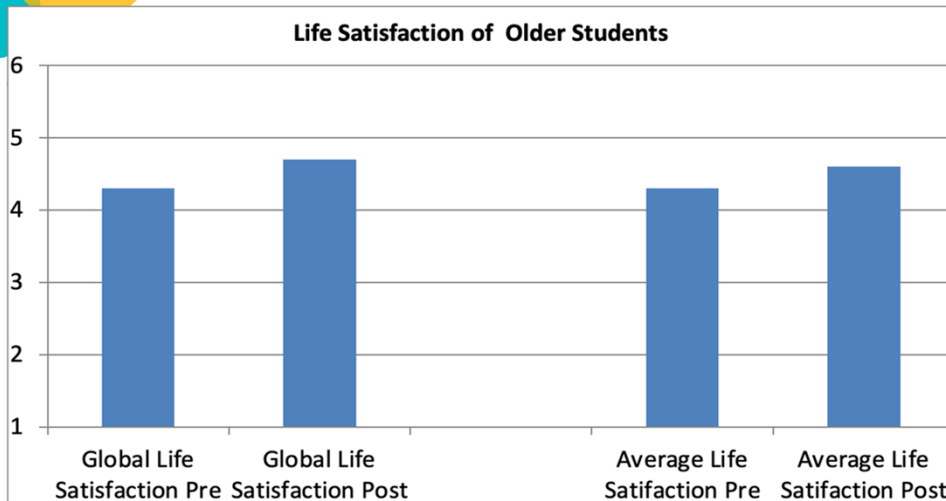
- 40-item measure of satisfaction in 5 domains of life (global, self, living environment, family, school) and 7 items global life (context-free)
- 6 point response metric, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*)

Paired sample t-test used to examine differences between pre- and post-intervention mean domain-specific life satisfaction and mean global life satisfaction

-Scarimbolo et al., 2022

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Student Outcomes with the MSLSS



M life satisfaction score (MSLSS) at baseline: $M = 4.3, SD = 0.7$
M life satisfaction score after WBPP: $M = 4.6, SD = 0.7, t(109) = 6.2, p < .001$.

M global life satisfaction score at baseline: ($M = 4.3, SD = 1$) and
M global life satisfaction after completion: ($M = 4.7, SD = 0.9$), $t(109) = 6.4, p < .001$.

Range: 1 (*Strongly Disagree life is going well*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree life is well*)

Positive growth in life satisfaction reflected a medium effect, $d=0.59$ (domain-specific) and $.61$ (global)

-Scarimbolo et al., 2022

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Feedback from Youth and Families Served

"I wanted to take a minute to let you know how much my son enjoyed the time with you during the well-being program. He looked forward to it each week and he talked about it again very recently when he was writing an end of year message about the things he enjoyed in 2020."

• Parent of 3rd grade student

"I learned that happiness is not only what you can do for yourself, but also others."

• 13 year-old program participant

"I'm so thankful to have this program, it can help everyone, and I wish it was in high schools everywhere, it is so important. You don't have to have depression or a mental health problem to learn how to be happy, this can help everyone."

• 17 year-old program participant

-Scarimbolo et al., 2022

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Summary of Key Ideas

Complete Mental Health =

- High subjective well-being AND
- Few to no symptoms of mental illness/emotional distress

Positive Outcomes in Students with Complete Mental Health

- Compared to peers with low subjective well-being (but also without clinical symptoms of mental illness), students with complete mental health have:
 - Superior engagement (attendance, attitudes about learning) and achievement (grades, test scores)
 - Better social relationships (with teachers, classmates, parents)
 - Better physical health
 - Strongest personal identities and high self-esteem

Promote complete mental health, through:

- Teaching social, emotional, behavioral competencies (SEL + PBIS)
- Evoking teachers and students' positive emotions about past, present, future
- Strengthening relationships in the classroom, school, home, and community

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Resources for Promoting Happiness in Students, Families, Teachers, and Classrooms

For school leaders and mental health practitioners

Promoting Student Happiness
Positive Psychology Interventions in Schools
Shannon M. Suldo

Fostering the Emotional Well-Being of Our Youth
A School-Based Approach
Edited by Philip J. Lazarus | Shannon M. Suldo | Beth Doll
OXFORD

For any adult, including teachers

THE HOW OF HAPPINESS
A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want
Sonja Lyubomirsky

Resilient Classrooms
Creating Healthy Environments for Learning
SECOND EDITION
Beth Doll, Katherine Brehm, and Steven Zucker

For parents

THE NEW SCIENCE OF STRENGTH-BASED PARENTING
Can Help Your Child and Your Teen to Flourish
LEA WATERS, PhD

For teachers

For psychologists, counselors, social workers, and other mental health practitioners

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