

Using the Science of Positive Psychology to Enhance Psychological Flexibility, Clinical Practice, and Therapist Self-Care

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Outline

- Defining positive psychology
- Positive psychology interventions
- How positive psychology can enrich therapy and self-care

What is Positive Psychology?

- Theoretical vs. experiential
 - 2005
 - 2010
- Hedonic and Eudaimonic well-being





What is Positive Psychology?

- An “umbrella term” for the study of positive subjective states, positive individual traits, and positive enabling institutions
 - Valued subjective experiences
 - Factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish and thrive
 - Strengths-based

Why is this important?

- Positive affect increases creativity, broadens the scope of behavioral responses, widens scope of attention
- Positive affect alters bodily systems
- Protective for physical and mental health
- Clear link between frequent positive affect and longevity
- Effects of positive emotions are cumulative

Fredrickson, B., L., & Losada, M. F. (2005).

Happiness and Well-Being

- Authentic Happiness Theory (Seligman, 2002)
 - Positive emotion and pleasure
 - Engagement
 - Meaning
- Well-Being Theory (Seligman, 2011)
 - Positive emotion
 - Engagement
 - Relationships
 - Meaning
 - Achievement

Positive Affect and Biology

- Activity in the left prefrontal cortex associated with positive emotions and traits
- 2 weeks of compassion training increased altruistic responses to suffering (Weng et al., 2013)
- 6 weeks of LKM led to increase in vagal nerve and perceived social connection (Kok et al., 2013)
- Lyubomirsky et al. (2007) suggest 40% of subjective experience can be influenced by intentional activity for well-being

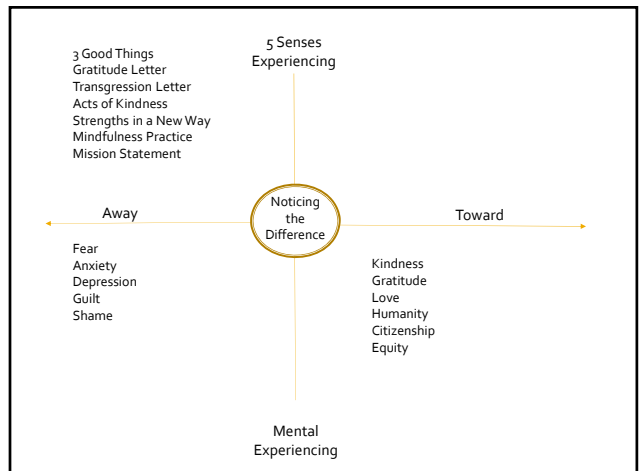
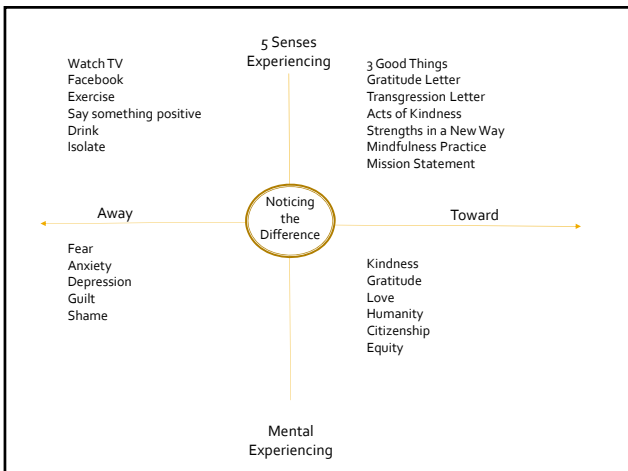
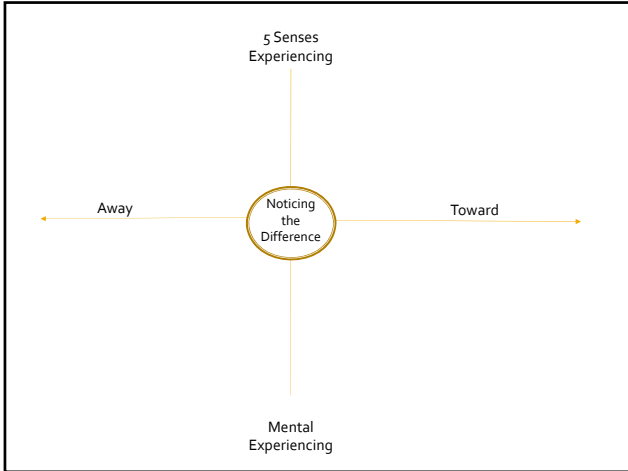


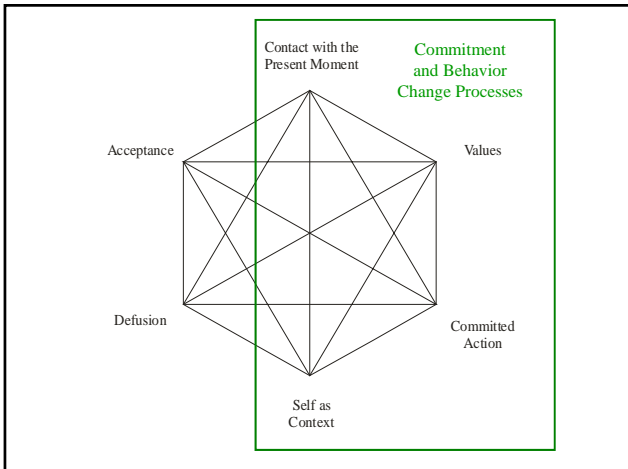
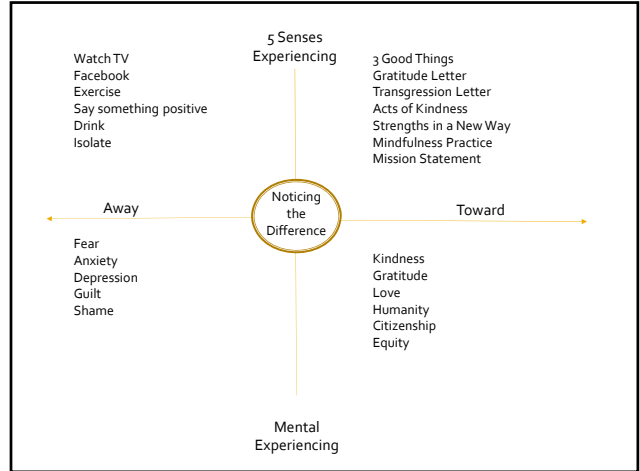
“and”

Psychological Flexibility

- Psychological Flexibility is defined as
- contacting the present moment as a conscious human being,
- fully and without needless defense,
- as it is and not as it says it is, AND
- persisting with or changing a behavior
- in the service of chosen values

(Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2013)





- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| Honor | Learning | Curiosity | Flow |
| Wisdom | Loyalty | Openness | Structure |
| Integrity | Reliability | Perseverance | Rhythm |
| Peace | Order | Calm | Excitement |
| Beauty | Respect | Magic | Wit |
| Necting | Thoughtfulness | Wonder | Sustainability |
| Nurturance | Patience | Humor | Self-sufficiency |
| Balance | Tolerance | Organization | Independence |
| Faith | Serenity | Stability | Interdependence |
| Spirituality | Attentiveness | Security | Leadership |
| Love | Equality | Meaning | Transcendence |
| Strength | Caring | Understanding | Kindness |
| Communication | Intimacy | Intelligence | Expansiveness |
| Sensuality | Adventure | Risk | Simplicity |
| Self-expression | Play | Courage | Conservation |
| Imagination | Fun | Power | Spontaneity |
| Creativity | Effort | Strength | Comfort |
| Forgiveness | Productivity | Reverence | Warmth |
| Intuition | Stewardship | Connectedness | Discipline |
| Compassion | Health | Fitness | Justice |
| Diversity | Freedom | Belonging | Detachment |

Positive Emotions and Crisis

- Study by Fredrickson et al. (2003) post 9/11
 - Positive emotions co-occur alongside negative emotions during stressful experiences
 - Resilient people appeared to “bounce back” stronger than before
 - Experiences of resilient individuals not exclusively positive
 - But negative emotions intermixed to a greater degree with a range of positive emotions

Interventions

Empirically Supported Exercises

- Three good things
- Gratitude letter
- Strengths in a new way

Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson (2005)

KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM

1. Creativity
2. Curiosity
3. Love of learning
4. Wisdom / perspective
5. Open-mindedness

COURAGE

6. Bravery
7. Persistence
8. Integrity
9. Vitality

HUMANITY

10. Give & receive love
11. Kindness
12. Social intelligence

JUSTICE

13. Citizenship
14. Fairness
15. Leadership

TEMPERANCE

16. Forgiveness / mercy
17. Modesty / humility
18. Prudence
19. Self-regulation

TRANSCENDENCE

20. Appreciation of excellence and beauty
21. Gratitude
22. Hope
23. Humor
24. Spirituality

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A classification and handbook*. New York: Oxford University Press/Washington DC: APA.

VIA Strengths Finder

<http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu>

| 2010 | 2015 |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Love of Learning | 1. Gratitude |
| 2. Capacity to love and be loved | 2. Capacity to love and be loved |
| 3. Social intelligence | 3. Love of learning |
| 4. Honesty, authenticity, genuineness | 4. Honesty, authenticity, and genuineness |
| 5. Gratitude | 5. Kindness |

Positive Psychology Interventions

- Three Good Things
- VIA Strengths Finder
- Strengths in a New Way
- [Secret Good Deed/Random Acts of Kindness](#)
- You at Your Best
- Gratitude Letter
- Gratitude Drill
- [Effective Apologies](#)
- [Laughter](#)
- Mission Statement
- Mindfulness/Savoring
- Contemplative Practice



Kindness

- Steve Hayes "Do something new every day, and do something nice every day."
– Portland, September 6th 2014
- Micro-moments of positive emotional connections (Fredrickson)
- Random acts of kindness





Effective Apologies

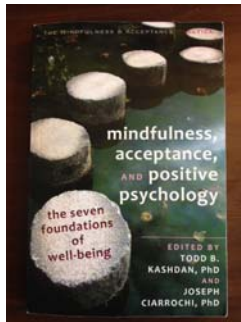
1. Acknowledge the transgression
2. Acknowledge the impact of the transgression
3. Describe steps one will take to prevent a repeat of the transgression

Laughter

- Health benefits
 - Cardiac Rehabilitation
 - Pain perception and discomfort threshold
 - Coping and stress
 - Increases immune response/Reduce stress hormones
 - Reduce blood pressure
 - Provides an aerobic exercise
 - Respiration is enhanced
 - Alertness and then relaxation
- Different types of humor

Positive Psychology in Third-Wave Approaches

Seven Foundations of Well-Being



Seven Foundations of Well-Being

1. Functional beliefs

When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."

-Fred Rogers

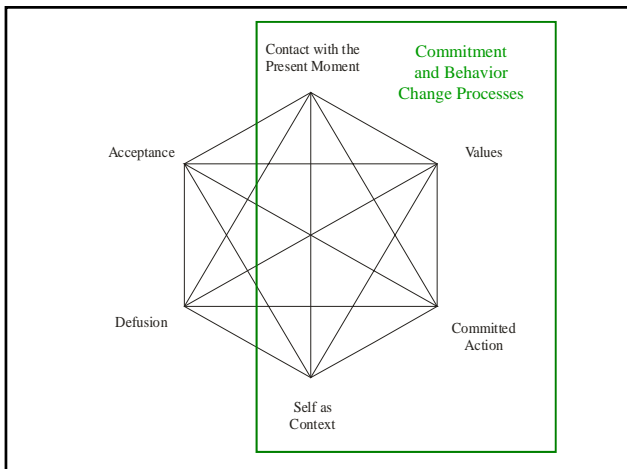


Seven Foundations of Well-Being

1. Functional beliefs
2. Mindfulness and awareness
3. Perspective-taking
4. Values
5. Experiential acceptance
6. Behavioral control
7. Cognitive skill

Positive Psychology in...

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
 - Valued Living
 - Present Moment Processes
 - Committed Action
 - Self-as-context/Perspective-taking



Positive Psychology in...

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
 - Valued Living
 - Present Moment Processes
 - Committed Action
 - Self-as-context/Perspective-taking
- Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP)
 - The capacity to love and be loved
 - Mission Statement
 - Behavioral Reinforcing (CRB₂)

Positive Psychology in...

- Mindfulness-Based Therapies
 - Savoring
 - Compassion
 - Loving Kindness Meditation
- Couple's Counseling
 - Gottman's "Magic Ratio" (5:1) and Fredrickson's "Positivity Ratio" (3:1)
 - Effective apologies
 - Gratitude/acknowledgement

Integrating Concepts into Clinical Work

- Theory of Authentic Happiness
 - Positive Emotion
 - Meaning
 - Engagement
- Noticing the function of "positive" and "negative" behaviors
- Make contact with gratitude
- Effective apologies
- Assessing for strengths
- *And...*

KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM

1. Creativity
2. **Curiosity*** **
3. Love of learning
4. Wisdom / perspective
5. Open-mindedness

COURAGE & FIRMNESS

6. Bravery
7. **Persistence****
8. Integrity
9. **Vitality/Zest***

HUMANITY & LOVE

10. **Give & receive love***
11. Kindness
12. Social intelligence

JUSTICE & FAIRNESS

13. Citizenship
14. Fairness
15. Leadership

TEMPERANCE

16. Forgiveness / mercy
17. Modesty / humility
18. Prudence
19. Self-regulation

TRANSCENDENCE / SPIRITUAL

20. Appreciation of excellence and beauty
21. **Gratitude***
22. **Hope***
23. Humor
24. Spirituality

The top strengths connected to well-being

Park, Peterson, & Seligman (2004)* and Sheldon, Jose, Kashdan, & Jarden (2015)**

Therapist Self-Care

Therapist Self-Care

- Three Good Things
- VIA Strengths Inventory
- Gratitude
- Humanity (Give & Receive Love, Kindness)

Therapist Self-Care

- Watch Kelly Wilson's "7 Practices for Recovery and a Life Well-Lived" on YouTube
 - Minimize exposure to toxins
 - Eat real food
 - Move your body
 - More sleep/rest opportunity
 - Engage in meaningful activity
 - Mindfulness as a modern world antidote
 - Cultivate your social network

Therapist Self-Care

- Savoring
- Mission Statement
- Perspective-taking
- ...and

Humor!

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CzFNSj7Sd8>

“and”

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Discussion and Questions