




Promoting student well-being in MTSS with a Tier 2 positive psychology intervention.

**Association of Positive Behavioral Supports (APBS)
2023 International Conference: Jacksonville FL, 3/30/23: 2:30-3:30pm**

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School Psychology Programs

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Presentation Objectives

Prior familiarity with positive psychology?

Objectives

- Participants will be introduced to subjective well-being (SWB) as a critical indicator of positive mental health and be able to list benefits of increased SWB.
- Participants will learn to identify students with room for growth in SWB through self-report screening.
- Participants will be introduced to the Well-Being Promotion Program (WBPP) and identify its potential applications.
- Participants will practice “positive activities” used in the WBPP and will develop an understanding of how these activities can be used with students.
- Participants will be able to identify how the WBPP fits within existing PBIS and MTSS frameworks.

What do you most hope to learn by the end of this?



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Prevalence of Emotional Distress

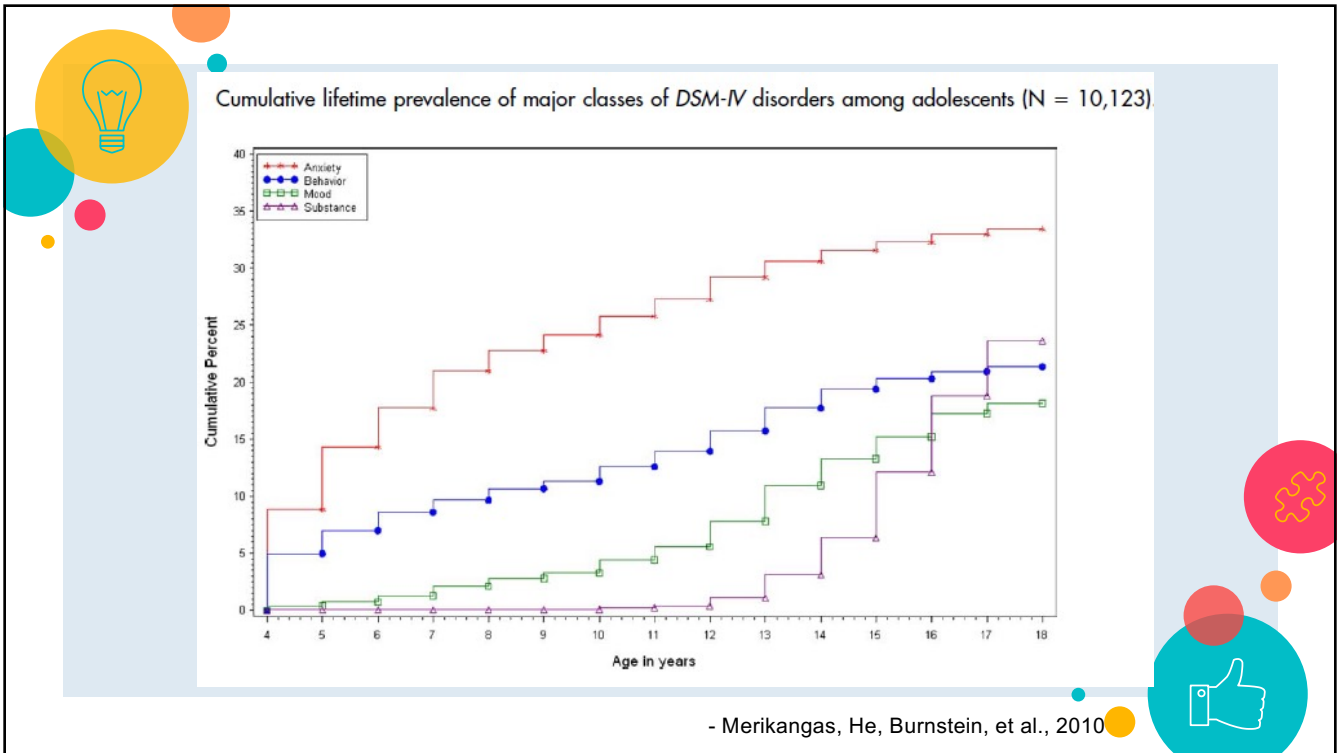
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Studies indicate that between 17% to 26% of youth have mental health problems (Brown, Riley, & Wissow, 2007; Costello et al. 2005; Roberts, Roberts, & Xing, 2007)

Surgeon General's Report (1999): **21%** of U.S. children ages 9 to 17 have a diagnosable mental or addictive disorder associated with at least minimum impairment

Merikangas, He, Burnstein, et al. (2010): Nationally representative study of 10,000 youth (ages 13 to 18) revealed prevalence rates for most common mental health disorders

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Is Happiness the Opposite of Emotional Distress?

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

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How Scientists Define Happy: Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

Subjective
Well-Being

Life
Satisfaction

Positive
Emotions

Negative
Emotions

Positive Psychology Approach to Mental Health Care



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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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Dual Factor Model of Mental Health

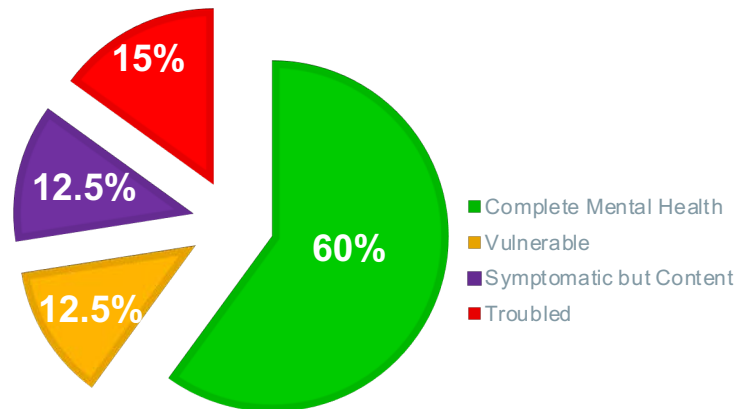
- Factor 1 (Traditional Psychology): Mental *illness* or mental health *problems* (symptoms of emotional distress)
- Factor 2 (Positive Psychology): Subjective well-being

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

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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

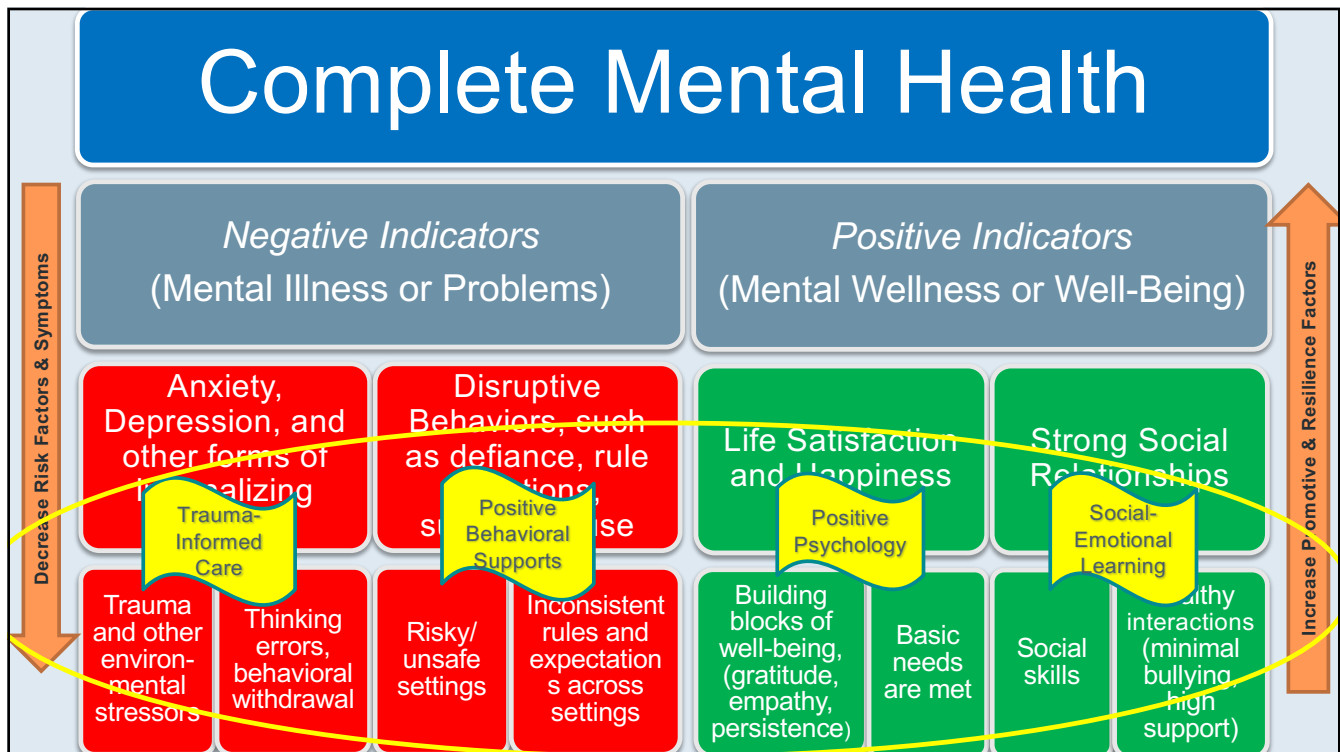
- Self-Concept Clarity
- Self-Esteem

Academic Outcomes

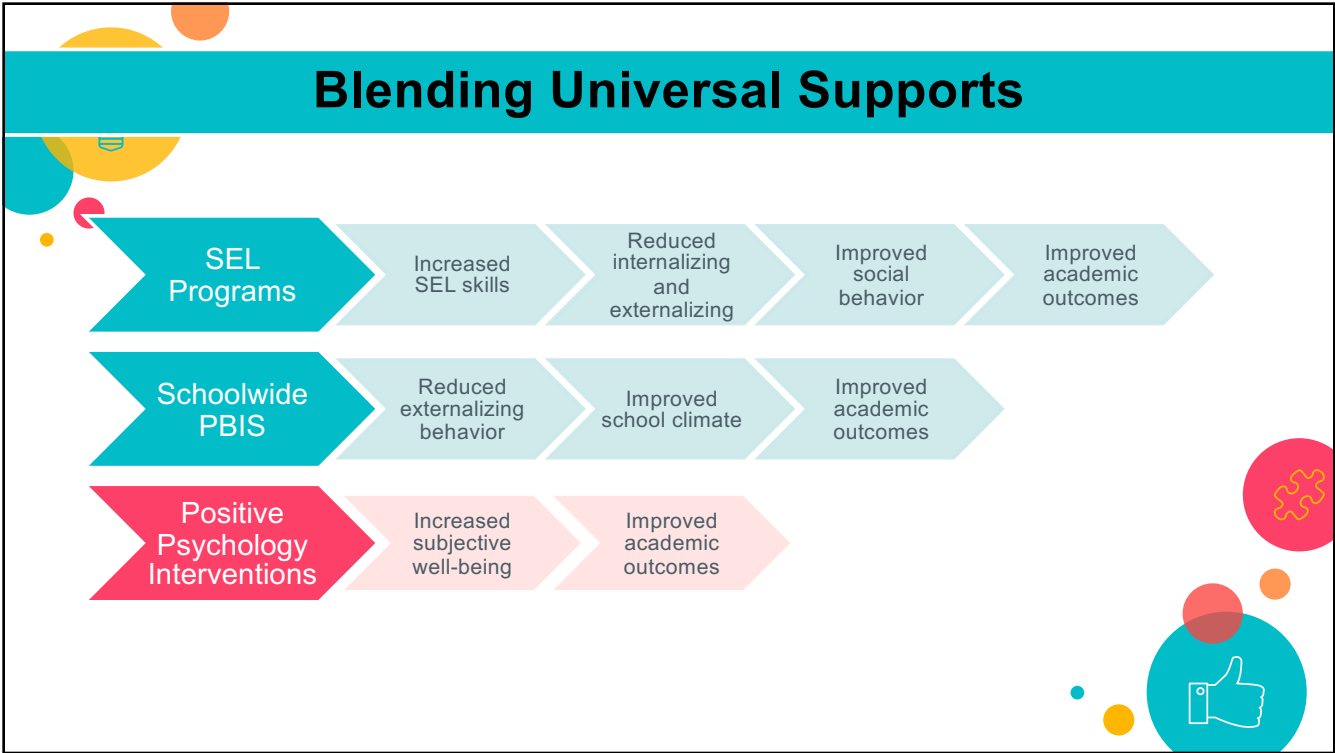
- Engagement (Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral)
- Academic Skills, as assessed by GPA, FCAT scores

-Suldo & Shaffer, 2008; Suldo, Thalji-Raitano, Kiefer, & Ferron, 2013; Antaramian, Huebner, Hills, & Valois, 2010

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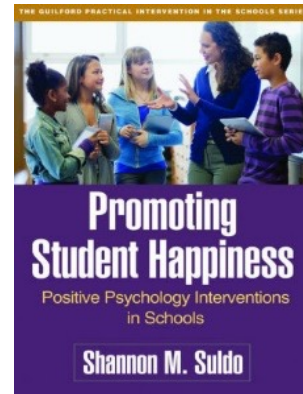


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Focus of this Paper presentation

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**



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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

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**Beginning
Implementation
of the WBPP**

**FIRST STEP:
Screening and
Recruiting Students**

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Screening for Subjective Well-Being in Youth

Life Satisfaction

- Global measures
 - *Students' Life Satisfaction Scale*
 - 7 items
- Multidimensional measures
 - *Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale*
 - 40 items (5 domains)
 - *Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale*
 - 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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Brief Assessment of Life Satisfaction: BMSLSS

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.

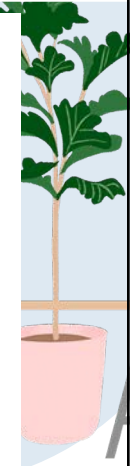
During the past several weeks...	Terrible	Unhappy	Mostly Dissatisfied	Mixed (about equally satisfied and dissatisfied)	Mostly Satisfied	Pleased	Delighted
1. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>family life</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>friendships</i> as: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



Brief Assessment of Mood/Affect: Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS-10)

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way in the past few weeks.

Feeling or emotion:	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Sad	1	2	3	4	5
2. Happy	1	2	3	4	5
3. Scared	1	2	3	4	5
4. Miserable	1	2	3	4	5
5. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5
6. Proud	1	2	3	4	5
7. Afraid	1	2	3	4	5
8. Joyful	1	2	3	4	5
9. Mad	1	2	3	4	5
10. Lively	1	2	3	4	5



Parent Notification of Screening

Notification of Screening

August 17, 2022

Dear Parent or Guardian,

USF has an exciting partnership with the USF College of Education to support our students' social-emotional well-being. We are committed to providing the supports students need to flourish, both in the classroom and throughout their lives. Students with high emotional well-being earn better grades, express more positive attitudes towards school and learning, report better social relationships, are physically healthier, and have fewer symptoms of mental health problems like depression and anxiety.

To monitor students' well-being, in a few weeks all students attending classes at USF will complete a short survey of their feelings of satisfaction with life as well as the frequency of their positive and negative moods. This survey takes about 5 minutes to complete, and students' responses will be kept confidential. The support services team (your school counselors, psychologist, and social worker) will offer extra support—the Well-Being Promotion Program—to students who have room for growth in life satisfaction. In the Well-Being Promotion Program, students work in small groups to learn skills related to gratitude, kindness, using character strengths, hope, optimism, and many more!

The survey will be available at the school throughout August and September 2022 if you would like to review the survey content prior to, during, or after the survey window. If you would like to review the survey content, or have any questions, please contact school counselors.

If you are okay with your student completing the short survey, select "yes" below and return the signed form to your child's 1st period teacher. If you would prefer that your child not take part in this screening, select "no" below and return the signed form to your child's teacher by August 31st, 2022.

Yes, I give permission for my student () to take part in the screening of student emotional well-being.

No, I do not give permission for my student () to take part in the screening of student emotional well-being.

Parent's Name _____ Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Notificación de Evaluación

17 de agosto, 2022

Querido padre/madre/guardián:

USF tiene una asociación emocionante con la Facultad de Educación de USF para apoyar el bienestar socioemocional de nuestros estudiantes. Estamos comprometidos a brindar el apoyo que los estudiantes necesitan para prosperar, tanto en el salón de clases como a lo largo de sus vidas. Los estudiantes con alto bienestar emocional obtienen mejores calificaciones, expresan actitudes más positivas hacia la escuela y el aprendizaje, reportan mejores relaciones sociales, son más saludables físicamente y tienen menos síntomas de problemas de salud mental como la depresión y la ansiedad.

Para monitorear el bienestar de los estudiantes, en unas pocas semanas se les pedirá a todos los estudiantes que asisten a clases en USF que completen una breve encuesta sobre sus sentimientos de satisfacción con la vida, así como la frecuencia de sus estados de ánimo positivos y negativos. Esta encuesta tarda unos 5 minutos en completarse y las respuestas de los estudiantes se mantendrán confidenciales. El equipo de servicios de apoyo estudiantil de USF (sus consejeros escolares, el psicólogo y el trabajador social) ofrecerá apoyo adicional, el Programa de Promoción del Bienestar, a los estudiantes que tienen espacio para crecer en satisfacción con la vida. En el Programa de Promoción del Bienestar, los estudiantes trabajan en grupos pequeños para aprender habilidades relacionadas con la gratitud, la bondad, el uso de las fortalezas del carácter, la esperanza, el optimismo y muchas más!

La encuesta estará disponible en la escuela durante todo agosto y septiembre 2022 si desea revisar el contenido antes, durante o después de la ventana de la encuesta. Si desea revisar el contenido de la encuesta o tiene alguna pregunta, comuníquese con los consejeros escolares, la o el.

Si está de acuerdo con que su estudiante complete la breve encuesta, seleccione "sí" a continuación y devuelva el formulario firmado el maestro/a del primer periodo de su hijo/a. Si prefiere que su hijo/a no participe en esta evaluación, seleccione "no" a continuación y devuelva el formulario firmado al maestro/a de su hijo/a antes del día 31 de agosto de 2022.

Si doy permiso para que mi estudiante () participe en la evaluación del bienestar emocional del estudiante.

No, no doy permiso para que mi estudiante () participe en la evaluación del bienestar emocional del estudiante.

Nombre del Padre/Madre/Guardián _____ Firma del Padre/Madre/Guardián _____ Fecha _____

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935 students in one local middle school

↓

Parent permission for 485 to complete the well-being screening (active consent for screen: 51.9% yes, 11% no; 37.1% no reply)

↓

154 of 473 students screened met eligibility criteria (low SWB: BMSLSS < 5.0 (32.6%, similar percentages across grade levels)

↓

Parent and student permission for 98 of 151 to take part in study (65% participation rate... WOW!!!)

WBPP NOW:

- 6th grade: 20 students
- 7th grade: 18 students
- 8th grade: 11 students

WBPP LATER:

- 6th grade: 20 students
- 7th grade: 18 students
- 8th grade: 11 students

USF Happiness Screening

Name: _____ School: _____ Code # _____
 Teacher: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

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. Here are some questions that ask you to indicate your satisfaction with life. For each statement, circle a number from (1) to (6), where (1) indicates you strongly disagree with the statement and (6) indicates you strongly agree with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My life is going well	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My life is just right	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I would like to change many things in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I wish I had a different kind of life	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I have a good life	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I have what I want in life	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My life is better than most kids'	1	2	3	4	5	6


Continue to think about how your life has been during the past several weeks. Circle a number from (1) to (7), where (1) indicates you feel terrible about that area of life and (7) indicates you are delighted with that area of life.

	Terrible	Unhappy	Mostly Dissatisfied	Mixed about overall satisfaction	Mostly Satisfied	Pleased	Delighted
1. I would describe my satisfaction with my family life as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would describe my satisfaction with my friendships as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I would describe my satisfaction with my school experience as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would describe my satisfaction with myself as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I would describe my satisfaction with where I live as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I would describe my satisfaction with my whole life as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way during the past few weeks.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feeling or emotion:	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely		
1. Sad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Happy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Scared	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Miserable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Proud	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Afraid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Joyful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Mad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Lively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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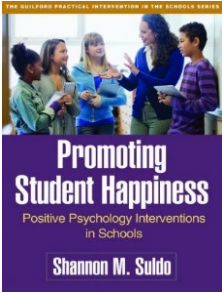
Introduction to the Well-Being Promotion Program

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

The slide features a teal background with a large white circle in the center containing the title. To the right is a book cover for 'Promoting Student Happiness' by Shannon M. Suldo. The background is decorated with various icons: a lightbulb in a yellow circle, a thumbs-up in a red circle, and puzzle pieces in a yellow circle. There are also several smaller colored circles in orange, pink, and blue.

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Well-Being Promotion Program: Small Group Positive Psychology Intervention



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

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

- Follow Up sessions
- Parent/caregiver psychoeducation and weekly handouts

- Roth, Suldo, & Ferron, 2017

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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 follow ups 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>



Trying out a Positive Activity

Me at My Best

Think about a time when you were at your best, such as doing something really well, going above and beyond for someone else, displaying a talent, or creating something. This time may have occurred recently or a long time ago. You were showing the qualities that made you feel authentic, energized, and perhaps proud and happy to be alive. Now, write about this time when you believe you were being your best version of yourself. It is possible that you might struggle to identify a “me at my best” moment. If that is the case, take a deep breath, journey down the memory lane, and give yourself enough grace to recognize a moment when you feel good about yourself.



Session 1: Me at My Best

Definition

- A positive introduction to directing attention to strengths and positive experiences
- Evokes positive feelings about one's past

Rationale

- This activity is followed by an immediate boost in happiness, and a reduction in symptoms of depression (relative to people in an active placebo condition)

Goal

- Identify a time when they were at their best
- Write or draw about that time
- Share and reflect on personal strengths displayed in the story
- Active savoring and strength spotting



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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 everyday.

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Session 2: Gratitude Journals

Definition

- Record things you are grateful for- small to large- on a regular basis
- Recognize benefits received, often at the cost of another
- Evokes positive feelings about aspects of one's past

Rationale

- Promotes prosocial behavior
- Enhances interpersonal relationships
- Gratitude exercises are associated with lasting gains in happiness

Goal

- Recall a good event, experience, person, or thing in your life, then enjoy the good feelings that come from deliberately focusing on those positive things
- Reflect on the events of your past day. Write down up to 5 things for which you are grateful
- Share written reflections and positive experiences with peers, educators, family
- Journaling continued for homework

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10/13/15

- me finishing my brochere so I can read.
- I finished my homework.
- Dimension U so we can play while learning.
- J.K. Rowling because harry potter is awesome!
- Joking around with my friends.

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30

Session 3: Gratitude Visit

Definition

- Write a letter of thanks to a person, and then deliver the letter.
- Evokes positive feelings about aspects of one's past and the importance of relationships.

Rationale

- Promotes prosocial behavior through recognition of benefits received
- Strengthens interpersonal relationships
- Gratitude visit associated with large, immediate boost in happiness

Goal

- Brainstorm a list of people who have been especially kind or helpful to them but have not yet been properly thanked.
- Choose someone from the list that they can feasibly meet with in coming week.
- Write a letter: describe the reason(s) why they are grateful to that person.
- Meet with the person to deliver the letter- read it aloud slowly and with expression.



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STUDENT HANDOUT

Gratitude Visit Planning Form

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People who have been especially kind or helpful to me:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

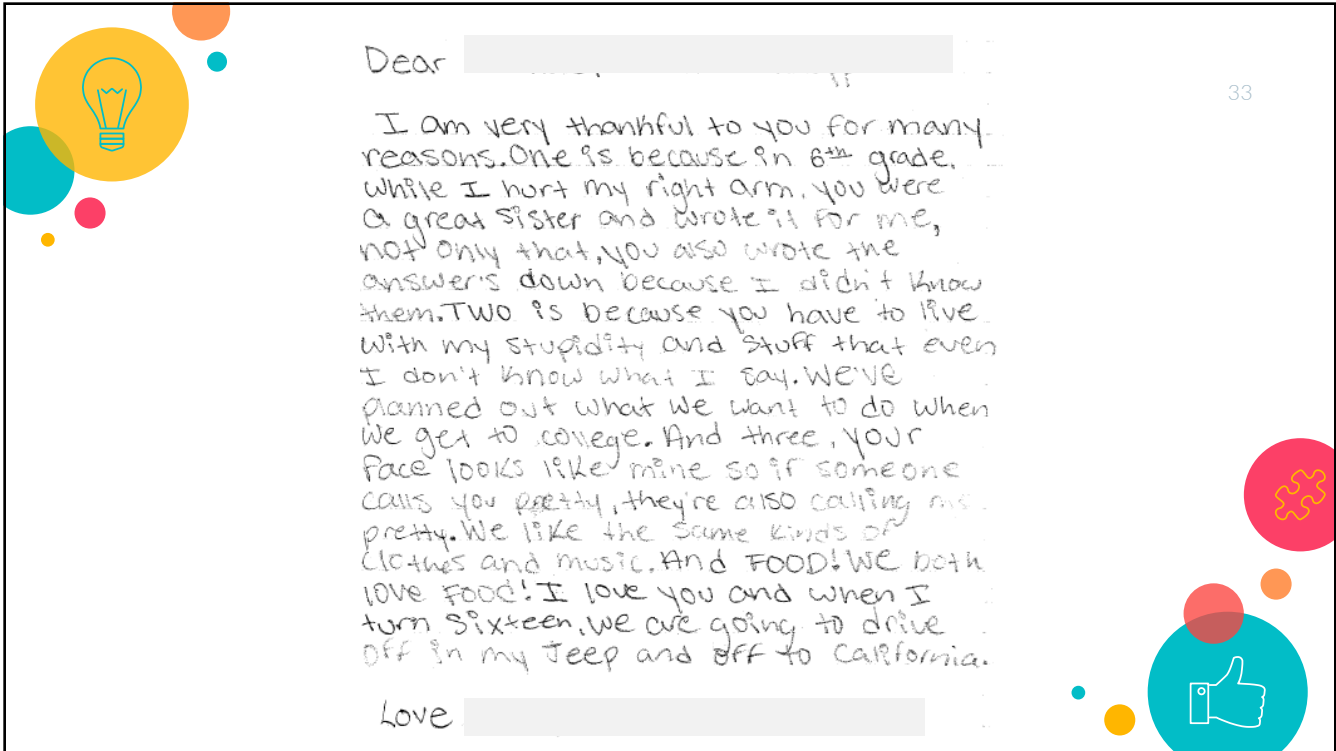
Person I will make a gratitude visit to: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

****Reminder:** Tell the person that you want to make plans to spend time with him or her. Don't tell him or her about your gratitude letter before the visit. To have the gratitude visit work really well, remember to read your letter out loud to the person. Read slowly with expression and make eye contact.



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Dear _____

I am very thankful to you for many reasons. One is because in 8th grade, while I hurt my right arm, you were a great sister and wrote it for me, not only that, you also wrote the answers down because I didn't know them. Two is because you have to live with my stupidity and stuff that even I don't know what I say. We've planned out what we want to do when we get to college. And three, your face looks like mine so if someone calls you pretty, they're also calling me pretty. We like the same kinds of clothes and music. And FOOD! WE BOTH LOVE FOOD! I love you and when I turn sixteen, we are going to drive off in my jeep and off to California.

Love _____

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Session 4: Performing Acts of Kindness

Definition

- Perform 5 acts of kindness (i.e., behaviors that benefit others or make others happy, usually at the cost of one's time and effort) during one day per week

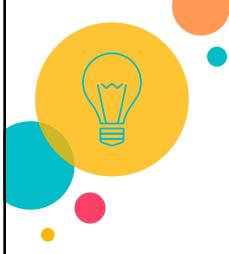
Rationale

- Evokes positive feelings about one's present, and strengthens relationships
- Deliberate kindness tied to gains in happiness among adults and youth, increases positive feelings in one's community (recipients of kind acts)

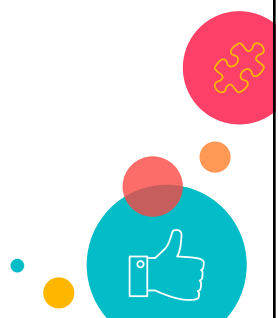
Goal

- Select a day within the upcoming week to be the kindness day
- Plan 5 acts of kindness to do that day
 - Acts can range from small (e.g., give complement) to large (e.g., unload dishwasher, help sibling with homework), at home or school.
- Record each of the kind acts performed on the selected day

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	Day of the Week: <u>Thursday</u> Date: <u>21</u>
Acts of Kindness	Apologized to a friend for something I did.
	helped mom by cleaning the whole house without her asking.
	Spent time with my sister
	Gave advice to a friend who was going through a hard time
	help set up a baby showers.



Sessions 5-7: Character Strengths Use

Definition

- Positive traits, based on virtues that can be cultivated over time

Rationale

- Good character permits access to positive emotions
- Good character defines individuals within positive institutions

Goal

- Identify personal signature strengths
- Use them in new ways across life domains



Ryan M. Niemiec

Character Strengths Interventions

A Field Guide for Practitioners

"The GO-TO book for building character"
Martin E. P. Seligman, "The founder of positive psychology"



Identifying Strengths with the VIA Framework of 24 Character Strengths

VIA Survey– For Adults

- www.authentichappiness.org: 240 questions “VIA Survey of Character Strengths”
 - e.g., I have taken frequent stands in the face of strong opposition. (“very much like me” to “very much unlike me”)
- viacharacter.org: 96 items “VIA Adult Survey”
 - e.g., I experience deep emotions when I see beautiful things.

VIA Strength Survey for Children– For Students

- www.authentichappiness.org
- Ages 8 to 17
- 198 questions
 - e.g., I stick up for other kids who are being treated unfairly (“very much like me” to “not like me at all”)
- Create a screen name for student through your log-in

VIA Youth Survey- For Students

- www.viacharacter.org
- brief version of the original VIA Strength Survey for Children
- 96 items (4 items that load most strongly on each strength)
- Fewer reverse-scored items



-Peterson & Park, 2009

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Student Sample of Character Strengths Survey Results

Your Character Strengths Profile

1 Gratitude

Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.

2 Love

Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing & caring are reciprocated; being close to people.

3 Spirituality

Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort.

4 Zest

Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated.

5 Bravery

Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what's right even if there's opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it.

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STUDENT HANDOUT

New Uses of My First Signature Strength

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Signature Strength:		
Day of the Week	New Use	Feelings

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New Uses of My First Signature Strength

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Signature Strength: <i>Curiosity & interest in the world.</i>		
Day of the Week	New Use	Feelings
4/20	Find more information about the Big Crunch.	inquisitive
4/20	Find out more about chromosomes	surprise
4/20	Why is Sarah not at school?	relieved
4/20	What exactly is a PRISM scholar? (find out)	understanding
4/19	Listen to my brother's views	interested, entertained
4/20	Find out about a batmitzvah.	less confused
4/17	Figure out why I'm not making any progress in dance.	annoyed

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New Uses of My Second Signature Strength

Signature Strength:			
Day of the Week	Life Domain	New Use	Feelings
			Savor:
			Savor:
			Savor:
			Savor:
			Savor:
			Savor:
			Savor:

****Remember to savor: Make your good feelings last by telling someone about using your strength or taking a minute to close your eyes and think about the experience.**

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Teamwork

New Uses of My Second Signature Strength

Signature Strength:			
Day of the Week	Life Domain	New Use	Feelings
4/22	School	Cheer for fellow softball team members.	I felt more supportive Savor: Shared with mom. Agreed it showed sportsmanship.
4/22	Friends	Stretch with Morgan and help her become more flexible.	I felt helpful and proud Savor: Shared with myself. I really did help Morgan.
4/1	Family	Help family with bringing groceries in	Happy Savor: Rethought it. Took less time. I play a big role in family
4/21	Family	Put Brian to bed	I felt good, laughed a lot Savor: Rethought it. I enjoyed myself and so did he.
			Savor:
			Savor:
			Savor:

****Remember to Savor: Make your good feelings last by telling someone about using your strength or taking a minute to close your eyes and think about the experience.**

Trying out a Positive Activity

Strength Spotting

Reflecting on your “Me at My Best” story, identify which of the 24 Character Strengths you personally demonstrated in your story. Then, think about what strengths you see in yourself now.

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The VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths

Wisdom	CREATIVITY • Clever • Original & Adaptive • Problem Solver	LEARNED OPTIMISM • Mindfulness • Open-minded • Open to new ideas	JUDGMENT • Critical Review • Thinking things through • Open-minded	PERSEVERANCE • Hardworking • Takes the long term view
Courage	BRavery • Shows no fear • Confronts fears • Speaks up for what's right	PERSEVERANCE • Persistent • Industrious • Finishes what one starts	HONESTY • Authentic • Trustworthy • Sincere	ZEST • Enthusiastic • Energetic • Doesn't do things half-heartedly
Humanity	LOVE • Warm and genuine • Warm close relationships	HUMILITY • Demotion • Not putting oneself first • Compassionate • Altruistic	SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE • Aware of the emotions and intentions of others • Shows what makes others tick	
Justice	TEAMWORK • Team player • Socially responsible • Loyal	FAITHFULNESS • Loyal • Doesn't let feelings get between others	LEADERSHIP • Organizes a group • Encourages a group to get things done	
Temperance	FORGIVENESS • Merciful • Forgives others • Gets people a second chance	MODERATION • Balanced • Self-control • Doesn't overindulge	REGULATED EMOTIONS • Calm • Doesn't let emotions take over	SELF-REGULATION • Self-controlled • Emotionally stable • Doesn't get carried away
Transcendence	APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE • Finds awe and wonder in beauty • Inspired by goodness of others	GRATITUDE • Thanks for the good • Expresses thanks • Feels blessed	HOPE • Optimistic • Future-minded • Future-oriented • Charitable	SPRITUALITY • Searches for meaning • Feels a sense of awe • Sees a relationship with the sacred

Session 8: Optimistic Thinking

Definition

Rationale

Goal

- Positive and hopeful expectations in a given condition or in general
- Predicts better physical and mental health, better coping
- Can be taught (learned optimism)
- Attribute good events to factors that are permanent, widespread, and internal
- Attribute bad events to factors that are temporary, specific, and external

Examples of Optimistic Thoughts

Examples		Practice	
Good Events	Bad Events	Event	Optimistic Thought
Permanent	Temporary		
I made the goal because I'm talented in sports.	Even Beckham would have missed that one- I'll probably make the next goal I try for.	I was invited to the biggest party of the year.	
Widespread	Specific	My good friend hasn't called me back in days.	
I do well in my classes because I check my agenda and do my homework after school.	I made a poor grade on my math test because I did not understand the ideas that were taught when I was out sick.	My parents increased my allowance.	
Take Credit	Blame Other Sources	My teacher said my science group did the best in the class.	
I won the contest because of my effort and talent in creative writing.	I lost the contest because I needed better materials to prepare myself.	I had to finish a giant assignment in three days and I got a D on it.	

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My Optimistic Thoughts

Date	Situation	Good or Bad Event	Optimistic Thought*	
4/17	I got 100% on my science test.	Good	I studied and worked for my grade	take credit
4/17	My book was overdue.	Bad	I've been busy, it won't happen again	temp.
4/18	Enjoyed myself at friend's house	Good	I was outgoing and got to know people	take credit
4/20	People I saw said I look nice.	Good	I clean up well.	perm.
4/20	Didn't get to go to friend's house	Bad	Mom made previous plans	specific, blame others
4/21	My group finished project	Good	We worked long and hard	take credit
4/21	I got placed in middle row on risers	Bad	My dad is short	blame others
4/22	My team won softball game	Good	My team really is trying	take credit

*Optimistic thoughts for good events are widespread, permanent, and take credit. Optimistic thoughts for bad events are temporary,

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Session 9: Best Possible Self in the Future

Definition

- Enact goal-directed thinking through visualization of a positive version of oneself in the future that reflects attainment of personal goals
- Evokes positive feelings about one's future

Rationale

- Activity fosters hope (goal generation, pathways, motivation to pursue those paths), resulting in greater optimism, self-esteem, and happiness
- Visualizing academic best possible selves in the future => greater behavioral engagement and GPA for up to 2 years

Goal

- Write about desired life at some point in the future
- Describe ways one can/will reach the specified goals
- For homework, revisit best possible future self and add new ideas each night for one week; think about specific ways to accomplish goals
- Share expanded Best Possible Future Self with others



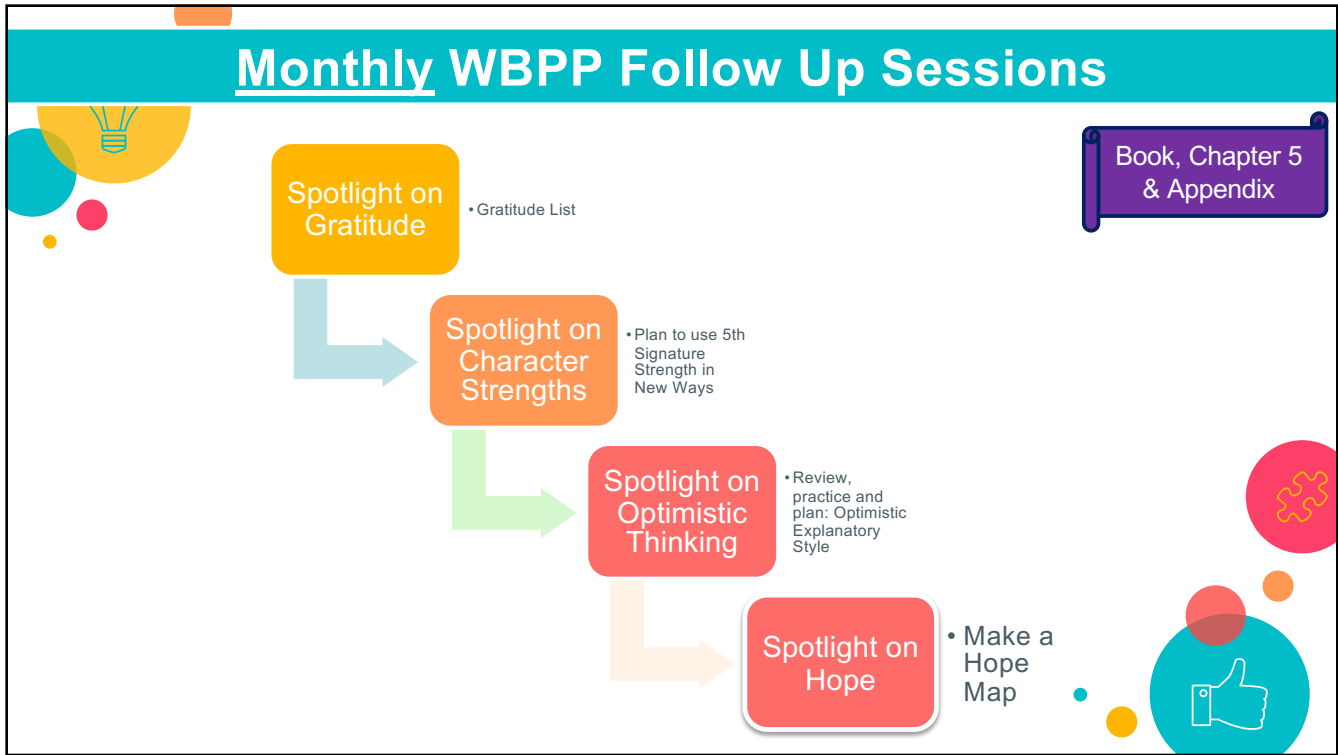
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What my life is in the future one word Awsome!
 Im a wild life Photographer
 I travel the world taking
 Photo's of amazing creatures
 I sell my Photo's to
 the highest bidder like
 a Nat geo Magazine or
 Newspaper factory I make
 alot of money with
 my Photo's up to 5000
 a Year I use the
 money to buy supplies
 and Airline tickets
 when I travel and it's
 not just animals but also
 Volcanoes, Mountains, Rivers
 or lakes I have a great
 life.

How will I meet this
 goal well ill go to
 coledge and take photography
 classes then when I graduate
 I will use the money I have to
 buy supplies and then take pictures in the Gerglades.]

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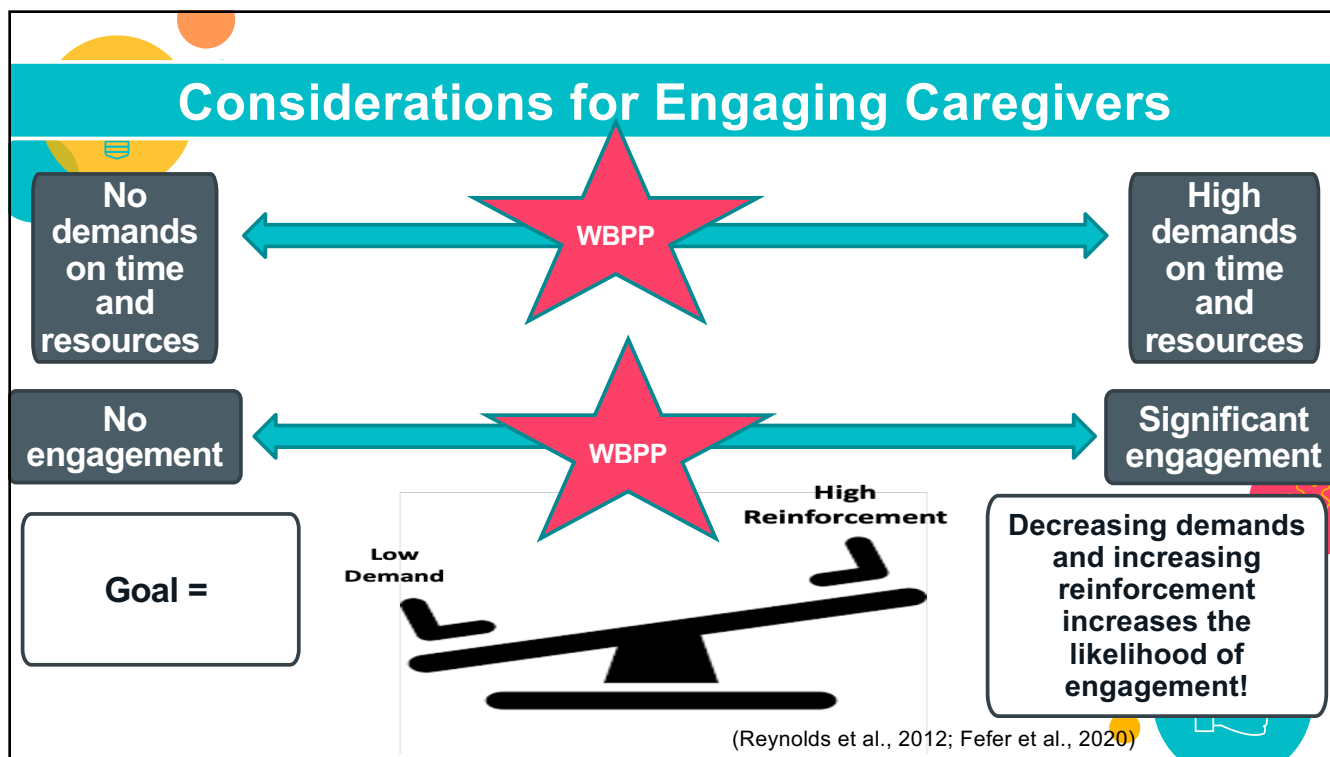
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Caregiver Engagement in WBPP

- The WBPP incorporates one initial parent/caregiver information session & weekly parent/caregiver handouts

Efficient use of clinician & family time/resources

- Lower levels of parent/caregiver involvement (i.e., one psychoeducation session) still support positive PPI effects (Marques et al., 2011)

Improve caregiver buy-in, student generalization of skills, and family engagement with positive psychology activities

- Having caregivers practice SWB activities is likely to increase their own SWB, likely contributing to youth gains in SWB (Hoy et al., 2013).

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Session 1: Caregiver Information

Session Goals

Book, Appendix
(p. 247-250)

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



Sample Parent/Caregiver 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 lives?



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Timeline of Activities (WBPP Delivery)

August 2nd and 8th 2022 (9am to 3pm)

- Professional Development Workshops 1-3
- Professional Development Workshops 4-6

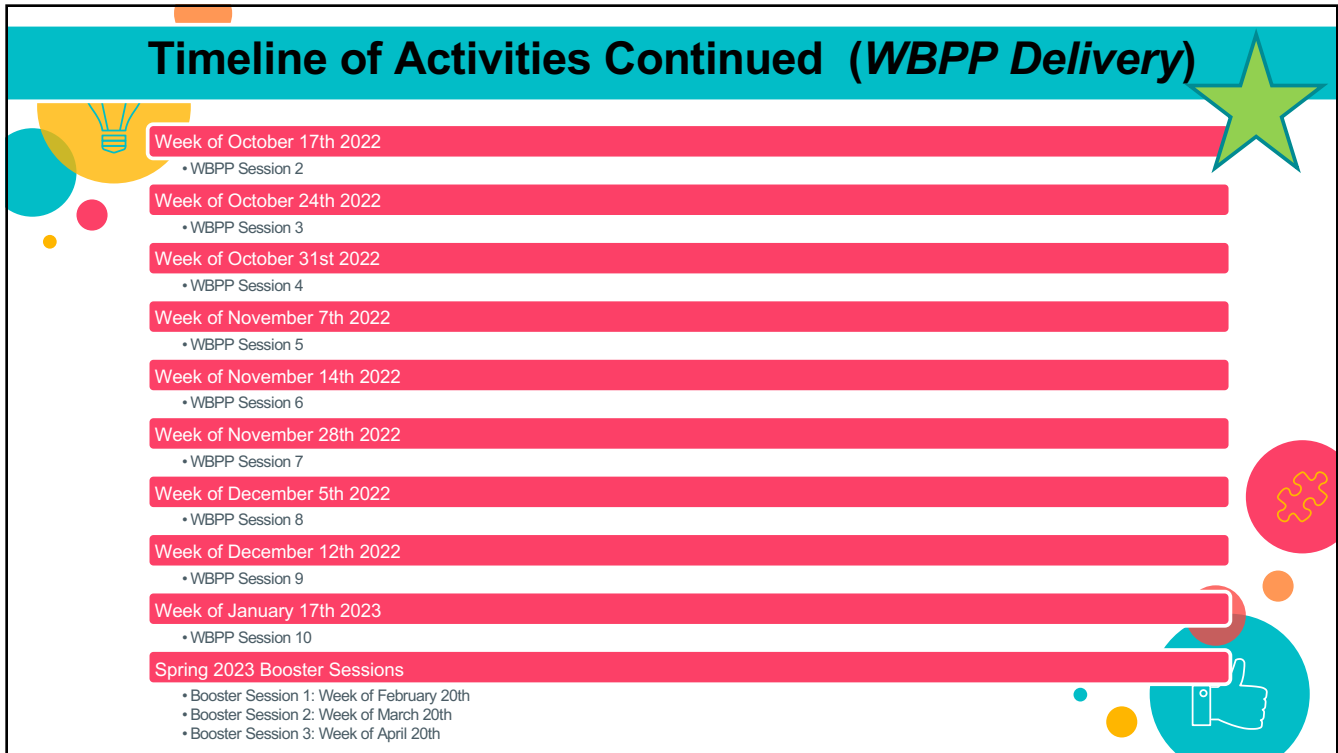
Screening (August 9 – September 12 2022) and Recruiting Students (September 12 – September 16)

- 8/9 to 8/17/22 Distributing Screening Forms
- 8/18 to 8/23/22 Collecting Forms
- 8/29 to 8/3/22 Lunch room roundup of screening forms
- 9/1 to 9/2/22 Mass text sent out for screening
- 9/8/ to 9/12/22 Screening Students
- Recruitment**
- Student (computer lab)
- Parent (email)
- Teacher (email)
- Random assignment to condition (now, later)
- Prepare for groups for "now" condition

Beginning Intervention Implementation (October 5 – 10 2022)

- WBPP Session 1
- Parent Information Session
- 1st coaching session

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Sample Professional Development Series

	Session	Target	Strategies	
Caregivers (Workshop 2)	Caregivers	Psychoeducation	Introduction to Key Positive Psychology Constructs and Focus of Intervention	
	Phase 1 (Workshop 3)	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
	Phase 2 (Workshop 4)	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
	Phase 3 (Workshop 5)	8	Optimistic Thinking	Examples of Optimistic Thinking; My Optimistic Thoughts
		9	Hope	My Best Possible Self in the Future
Follow-Up (Workshop 5)	10	All	Termination; Review of Strategies and Plan for Future Use	
	Follow-up 1	All; Gratitude	Review & Spotlight on Gratitude (Gratitude Journals)	
	Follow-up 2	All: Character Strengths	Review & Spotlight on Signature Strengths (Application of Signature Strengths in New Way)	
	Follow-up 3	All: Optimistic Thinking	Review & Spotlight on Optimistic Thinking (My Optimistic Thoughts)	
	Follow-up 4	All: Hope	Review & Spotlight on Hope (Make a Hope Map)	

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Recruitment to Intervention (WBPP)

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
Study ID: STU1901056 Date Effective: 7/6/2020

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
Assent of Children to Participate in Research

Study # 818166

Why are you being asked to take part in this research?

Why are you being asked to take part in a research study about a school-based program that may increase middle school students' emotional well-being? This is important because students with high well-being often get higher grades, get along better with people, and have positive attitudes about school. You are being asked to take part in this research study because your responses to the well-being screening you did earlier at the school you attend may have some need for growth in life satisfaction. This is not unusual; most students are not fully satisfied with their lives across multiple areas. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about 100 students at this school. We expect about 170 students at middle schools from two states (Florida and Massachusetts) to take part.

Who is doing this study?

The people in charge of this study are Dr. Shannon Subbs (University of South Florida) and Dr. Sarah Fifer (University of Massachusetts). However, other research staff will be involved and can act on behalf of the people to change.

What is the purpose of this study?

By doing this study, we hope to learn how well a program called the "Well-Being Promotion Program" works to increase middle school students' emotional well-being and success in school.

Where is the study going to take place and how long will it last?

The study will take place at your middle school. The Well-Being Promotion Program is a 10-week program, in which we will meet with small groups of students once a week during the school day. These meetings will take about 40 minutes. We will do activities that teach you ways to think and act that come from the science of happiness. We will practice grateful thinking. We will do nice things for others. And we will find out our personal strengths. After the program is done, small groups will meet about once per month to review activities. We will randomly pick half of the students to meet the Well-Being Promotion Program over during this school year. The other half of the students will be offered the program later, during the second half of the next school year. If you are in the program now, you will spend about 10 hours of time in program activities (17 meetings, each about 45 minutes long). At 2 more visits this school year, you will be asked to fill in your thoughts about the program. Each of these visits will take about 30 minutes.

All students in the program now or program later group will be asked to participate in 4 visits to complete surveys about your thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Each visit will take about 40 minutes (3 visits this school year, 1 visit next school year). Your answers on surveys will be kept private unless you are in danger. If you are in danger, we will have to help you to make sure you are safe. During the same time as these visits, we will ask one parent/caregiver and one teacher to complete surveys about your behavior at home or school.

The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is 4 hours over the next year and a half if you are in the program later group, and 1.5 hours over the next year and a half if you are in the program now group. For all students, we will ask at your grade, test scores, attendance, and referrals to the office. Along with this information from the surveys, this helps us know how students change over time.

What things might happen if you participate?

In the best of our knowledge, your participation in this study will not harm you. Although we have made every effort to try and make sure this doesn't happen, it is possible that some questions on the surveys may upset you. If so, we will let the school counselor or psychologist, or that person may be able to help you. In addition to the things that we have already talked about, you may experience something unpleasant that we do not know about at this time. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the person interactions with any other people may increase your risk of getting the novel coronavirus. The researchers from USF-USM are using health and safety measures required by your district and USF/USM. However, we cannot guarantee that you will not be exposed to the virus.

Is there benefit to me for participating?

We cannot promise that you will receive benefits from taking part in this research study. However, some people have experienced increases in life satisfaction and better relationships when they take part in the Well-Being Promotion Program.

Social Behavioral Assent Version #3 Version Date: August 23, 2022

Version 1: June 26, 2020; Page 1 of 3

Students, you're invited to Project SOAR!

What is Project SOAR?

- Project SOAR is a research project taking place at your school in partnership with researchers from the University of South Florida and UMass Amherst. SOAR stands for strengths, optimism, achievement, and relationships.
- Students who join Project SOAR will get either one school year or meet us.

Parents/Caregivers, You and Your Child are Invited to Project SOAR!

What is Project SOAR?

Project SOAR (Strengths, Optimism, Achievement, Relationships) is a research study funded by the Institute of Educational Sciences taking place at your child's school this year. It is in partnership with a team led by Dr. Shannon Subbs from the University of South Florida and Dr. Sarah Fifer from UMass Amherst. The study evaluates the Well-Being Promotion Program (WBPP), a program offered at school to increase well-being. Greater well-being, in turn, enhances students' readiness to learn and academic success. This flyer tells a bit more about the WBPP, with quotes from families who recently completed the program. The page on your permission form describes the study in greater detail.

Why might participating in this project matter for my child?

The WBPP is intended to help students develop skills to build a personal well-being, as well as social and academic success. Prior studies with middle school students found participation in the WBPP led to gains in life satisfaction and positive feelings, and reductions in negative feelings.

What would my child's participation entail?

- Students in the program now group will begin the WBPP in the next few weeks.
- Students in the program later group will be offered the WBPP or other positive activities that promote life satisfaction the next school year, after this study ends.
- Participation in this project will not change your child's access to any academic, behavioral, or social-emotional supports in school. All students in the program now and program later group will complete several surveys on their occasions over two years. Students receive a \$20 gift card on each occasion.

What would be my role in the study?

- For all students, one caregiver per child participant will be asked to complete brief surveys of your child's behavior on four occasions over two years. You will receive a \$20 gift card on each occasion as a thank you.
- If your child is randomly assigned to the program now group:
 - In the next few weeks, you will be invited to attend a 30-minute information meeting about the WBPP.
 - Throughout the program, we ask that you support your child's decision whether or not you and your child will be participating in the study. If you would prefer to complete a digital form, please email wellbeing@usf.edu (U) or wellbeing@umass.edu (MA) to request a DVD-style form.
 - Please note: You and your child's participation are voluntary, and you are free to allow your child to participate in this research study or to withdraw them at any time. Your child has the right to withdraw their consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty, and our team will inform you if this occurs.

What should I do next?

- Talk with your child about Project SOAR to decide whether you and they want to participate.
- Review and complete the green permission form brought home by your child to indicate whether or not you and your child will be participating in the study. If you would prefer to complete a digital form, please email wellbeing@usf.edu (U) or wellbeing@umass.edu (MA) to request a DVD-style form.
- If you have any questions or would like to discuss this invitation further, please reach out to Dr. Subbs at USF (subbs@usf.edu) or Dr. Fifer at UMass Amherst (fifer@umass.edu) for more information.

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Group Formation Considerations

Make groups as homogenous as possible (grade, language, etc.)

Larger group size preferable (8-10 students)

Students' personality and history

Who has insight into student features to consider when forming groups?

Logistics of groups-space, leader availability (e.g., day of week), preferred times of day?

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Session Materials from WBPP Curriculum

Leader Materials

Session Protocol (2-4 pages)

Session Handouts

Integrity Checklist of Key Elements

Caregiver Materials

Caregiver Handout to go home with student

Student Materials

Student Handouts

Integrity Checklist of Key Elements

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Lessons Learned

Potential Barriers

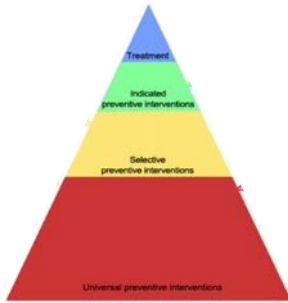
- Limited time (25-45 minutes)
- Getting students to show up to group on time
- School absences
- Lack of caregiver engagement (i.e., students forget to share at home)
- Students comfort level to share in groups

Facilitators

- Student passes to help remember when to attend groups
- Make-up groups before following session
- Consistent communication with parents through text, email, and calls in English and Spanish
- Individual check-ups during, before, or after groups

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Review: Principles of Positive Psychology Interventions



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.

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Questions?

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Kmahony@usf.edu

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