Current Statistics

Most prevalent mental health disorders
- Anxiety Disorder – 14.4% young adults/year
- Depressive Disorder – 6.2%
- Affective Disorder – 5.1%
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

At any given point in time
- 3% of 4-11 year olds
- 4.8% of 12-16 year olds in Australia experience anxiety or depression

Definitions

- Positive Psychology is the study of wellbeing – it is the study of what goes right
- It is the scientific study of Optimism, happiness, people-strengths and Life Satisfaction
The Positive Psychology movement is a network of research-based scientists with over 50 research pods in 50 Universities across the world, including Harvard, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Sydney, Monash & Cambridge [Seligman, 2004]

A Strengths-based approach to teaching and building communities means that our students, teachers and parents understand the significance of strategies designed to counter the role of negativity bias and how it plays in the development of character

Dr. Richard Davidson 2011: Psychologist and Neuro-Scientist. Neurally inspired behavioural interventions are more effective than pharmacological interventions

In schools: PP approach does not ignore bad behaviour, it just does not energise it - refuse to feed the negative

Positive Psychology Framework

Theory of Wellbeing

P
The Pleasant Life
Positive Emotion
Feeling Well

E
The Engaged Life
Positive Character
Strengths

R
The Relational Life
Other People
Building Social Capacity

M
The Meaningful Life
Core Motivations
Purpose, Meaning

A
The Accomplished Life
Strive to Achieve
Goal Achievement

FLOURISHING
Optimal Mental Health

Wellbeing Facts:

Effective Tools

- Listen non-judgementally
- Have a close relationship with your children
- Set appropriate rules
- Give freedom when it makes sense

Love from Dad

- Raises kids wellbeing, happiness & life satisfaction
- Tend to take significantly less negative risks

Nurturing from Mum

- Kids with nurturing mothers bigger brains
- Hippocampus is 10% larger in this population
Your Happiness Matters

YOUR Satisfaction with Life is MORE IMPORTANT to your child’s social/emotional skills than:

- Your education
- Your income
- Whether you have a job
- The amount of time your child spends has spent in childcare

YOUR Satisfaction with Life is MORE IMPORTANT to your child’s social/emotional skills than:

- Positive Attention
- Negative Attention
- Time

Opportunity for Wellbeing

Negative Attention

Positive Attention

Cultivating Positive Emotion

Waiting for Positive Emotions
Optimism is Critical

Kids who learn to be optimistic by 10-12 years of age are half as likely to be depressed by puberty

- Your optimism helps children “feel” better
- Language and tone is critical
- Smiling affects your children neurologically & relationally
- Role modelling has the greatest impact

Check Self-Talk Language

**Absolute**

- Have to
- Must
- All the time
- Every time
- Should
- Can’t stand it
- Forever
- Infinitely
- Everything
- Everywhere
- Always

**Approximation**

- Sometimes
- Often
- At this time
- Frequently
- Might/May
- Most times
- Occasionally
- At times
- For now

24 Character Strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appreciation of Beauty &amp; Excellence</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bravery</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Love of Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Modesty &amp; Humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Open Mindedness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgiveness &amp; Mercy</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Prudence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>Social Intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honesty/integrity</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Zest &amp; Vitality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Signature & Sequel

When you are at your best Signature Strengths are ignited.

Character Strengths are influenced by your environment.

The Sequel Strengths are the next 3 strengths that you can “call up” when you may need extra coping or resources.

Sequel Strengths are the “freelance” strengths that tend to come in and out of your Signature Space.

TAKE WHAT YOU NEED.
Using Signature Strengths

2002 Research

136 Young Adults experiencing depressive

Resilience

“When you are aware of and activate your Signature Strengths you can have bad things happen to you, and three months on, find that you have moved forward and developed resilience without formal intervention”

Seligman, 2011

Strength Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leverage Strengths</th>
<th>Life Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Zest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Academic Success

**Predictive Strengths**
- Perseverance
- Self-Regulation
- Prudence
- Love of Learning
- Creativity
- Open-Mindedness
- Curiosity
- Perspective

Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004

### SMART Strengths

- **Spotting**
  - When you know your own strengths, you are better at observing them in yourself and then in others. You begin to pay attention to the strengths of others, you will look for what is good rather than finding fault.

- **Managing**
  - Your strengths can be tapped into, promoted, combined within a reflective, practical model.

- **Advocating**
  - Learn to advocate with your strengths. This builds a strength bridge between yourself and others to engage in effective communication.

- **Relating**
  - Good relationships are about using strengths while connecting with and appealing to others. Sometimes strengths buttons can get pushed when other people's strengths are in conflict with your own.

- **Training**
  - The activation of strengths builds the skill. You cannot build your strengths skill set by just thinking about it. Once activated and embedded in your routine, you then train others to develop their strengths skills.

### Seligman Resources

- Learned Helplessness [1975]
- Abnormal Psychology [1992]
- What You Can Change & What You Can't [1993]
- The Optimistic Child [1995]
- Learned Optimism [2001]
- Authentic Happiness [2002]
- Character Strengths and Virtues [2004]
- Flourish [2011]