The Positive Psychology Center Under the Leadership of Dr. Martin Seligman

The Center focuses on the development, validation, and dissemination of interventions that prevent depression and anxiety, enhance well-being, and enable resilience and thriving.
Positive Psychology Center

Primary, Secondary, & Higher Education

Public Safety & First Responders

United States Army & Department of Defense

Professional Corporations

symptoms of depression and anxiety

mental health and substance abuse diagnoses

conduct problems

hopelessness

mental health and life satisfaction

health promotion behaviors

trust and social support

optimism and hope

problem-focused coping

social skills

classroom engagement
How Do You Define Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity and to grow and thrive in the face of challenges.
A Story of Resilience

Video

• Turn to the person next to you and identify key factors that enable resilience.
Summary of Protective Factors

- Biology
- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Mental Agility
- Optimism
- Self-efficacy/Mastery
- Connection
- Positive Institutions
Learned Optimism

Notice and expect the positive, focus on what you can control, and take action
Optimism Predicts Important Outcomes

- Success
- Relationships
- Resilience
- Mental & Emotional Well-being
- Physical Health
- Mortality
The Science of Optimism

Resilience

- Optimistic swimmers swam 1.6% faster after failure; pessimistic swimmers swam 0.5% slower

- Students scoring high on pessimism at time 1 predicted symptoms of depression at time 2 (one month later) following a low mid-term grade; students scoring high on optimism did not

(Seligman, Nolen-Hoeksema, Thornton, & Thornton, 1990; Metalsky, Abramson, Seligman, Semmel, & Peterson, 1982)
The Science of Optimism

Success

- Optimistic salespeople sold 37% more insurance than pessimistic salespeople
- In 1st year of employment, pessimists are 2x as likely to quit as compared to optimists

(Seligman & Schulman, 1986)
The Science of Optimism

Well-being

↑ Quality of life
Well-being
↓ Depression

- Teens who learned skills of optimism were 50% less likely to experience severe depression across two years compared to teens who didn’t learn the skills

(Gillham, Reivich, Jaycox, & Seligman, 1995)
The Science of Optimism

Physical Health & Mortality

- Pessimistic men are 2 to 3x more likely to develop serious heart problems compared to optimistic men
- Over an 8 year period, optimistic women are 14% less likely to die from any cause and 30% less likely to die from heart disease compared to pessimistic women

(Helgeson & Fritz, 1999; Everson, Kaplan, Goldberg, & Salonen, 1999; Tindle, Chang, Kuller, Manson, Robinson, et al., 2009)
Spotting Optimism

Video

• What optimistic behaviors did you see in the video?
## Attributes of Optimism and Pessimism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognition</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Optimism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pessimism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Optimism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Positive emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Productive action</td>
<td>High energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solve</td>
<td>Persist</td>
<td>Humor to cope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fighter mentality</td>
<td>Reach out</td>
<td>Complain to cope</td>
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## Mindset of an Optimist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>What is exciting about this? How will I grow from this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>What resources do I have to meet this challenge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solve</td>
<td>What are potential solutions to this problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive Action</td>
<td>What can I control? What purposeful action can I take?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach Out</td>
<td>Who can help me? Whose support do I need?</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Energy</td>
<td>How will I take care of my energy? What will sustain me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Emotion</td>
<td>What in this situation am I grateful for? What about this situation am I curious about?</td>
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What’s your mantra?

- Develop personal mantras or mental cues that will help you be at your best. Say one to yourself at the start of each day to get yourself in a positive mindset.
Thank You

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