

Promoting wellbeing and self esteem through positive psychology

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Agenda

- Exploration of well-being
- To introduce the field of Positive Psychology
- How is this relevant to young people?
- Tools and techniques

What is mental health?



“...a state of **wellbeing** in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community”

Benefits of wellbeing

Meta-analysis by Lyubomirsky, King & Diener (2005)

Social

- More social support and richer social interactions
- More satisfying and longer marriages
- More prosocial behaviour

Work

- Greater productivity
- Lower absenteeism

Benefits of wellbeing cont...

Health

- Better physical health (e.g., strengthened immune system, less pain, and greater longevity)
- Better mental health (e.g., lowered stress, depression & anxiety)

Personal

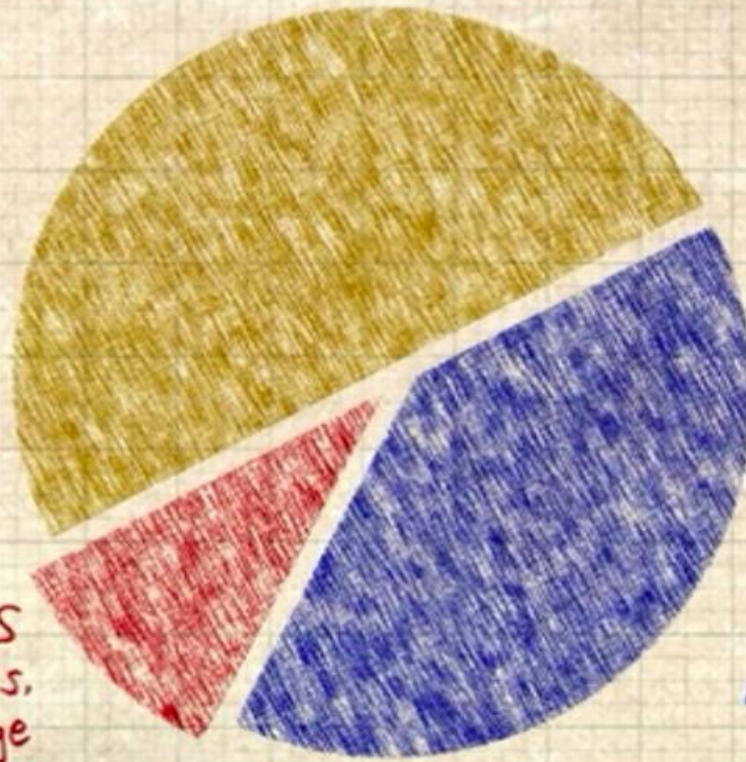
- More activity, energy and flow
- Increased creativity and self-confidence
- Better self-regulation and ability to cope

What determines wellbeing?

Happiness

SET POINT / RANGE
Genetic
50%

CIRCUMSTANCES
Income, social status,
where you live, age
10%



INTENTIONAL
ACTIVITY
Actions you choose to do
40%

Self esteem and wellbeing

- Correlations between self-esteem and happiness, well-being, and optimal functioning (Diener & Diener, 1995)
- Self esteem a key contributor to wellbeing

Positive psychology

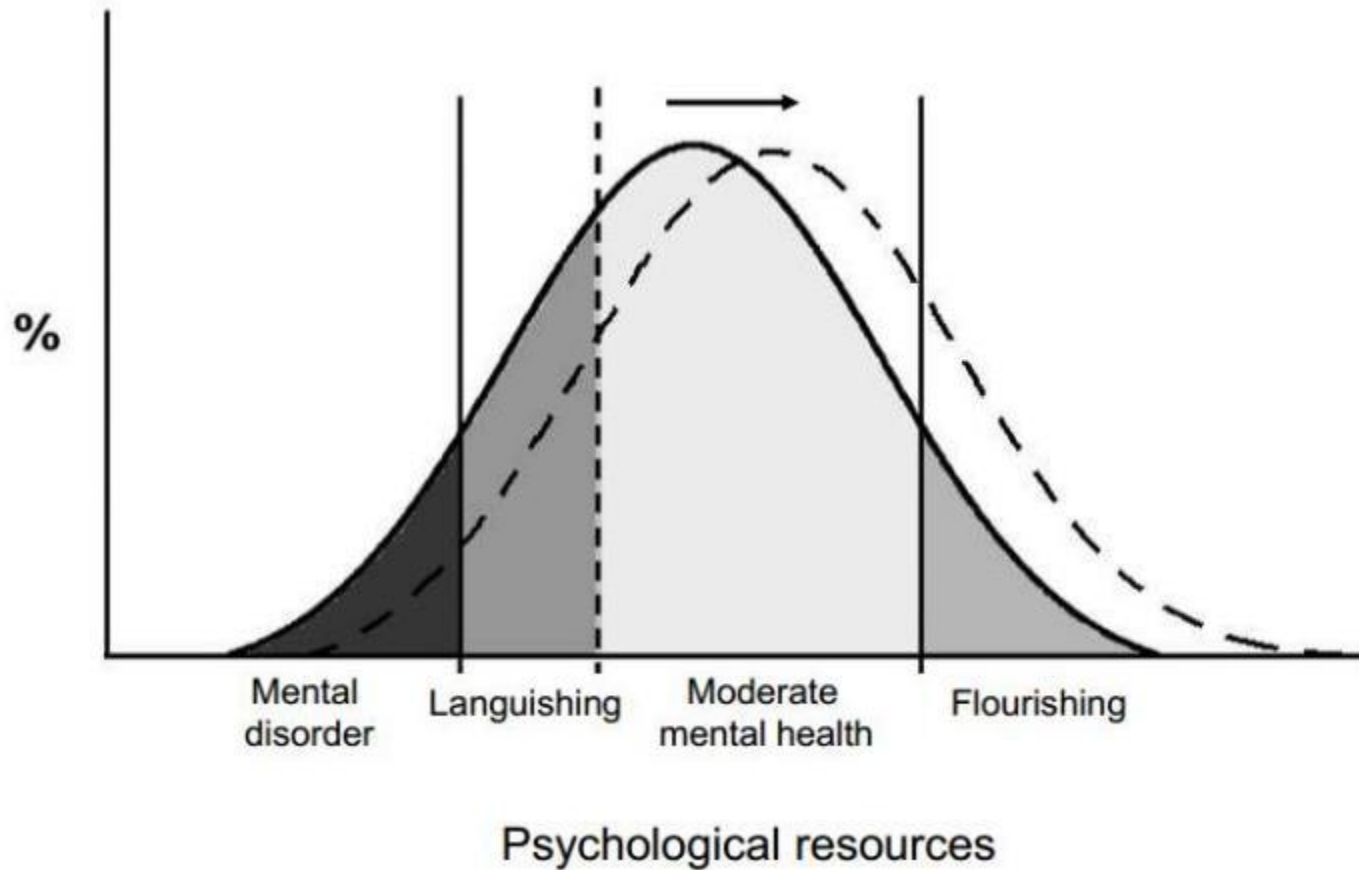
- Positive psychology is a young branch of psychology that studies and builds the factors that lead to meaningful and joyful lives

” A joyful life is an individual creation that cannot be copied from a recipe.”

– Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Shifting the Prevalence of Mental Health towards Flourishing

(Huppert & So, 2013)



- Positive psychology has begun to identify key factors to subjective well-being.

(Seligman et al. 2009)

Positive emotions

Gratitude

Hope

Goal setting

Character strengths

- Increasing evidence for interventions based on these factors advancing subjective well being and decreasing psychiatric symptoms

(Duckworth et al. 2005; Sin and Lyubomirsky 2009)

Models for young people

- There are a number of models which address positive psychology for young people
 - Strength based approach
 - Developmental assets, READY
 - PERMA
 - 5 ways to well being

Strength based approach

‘Don’t tell me what I can’t do – tell me what I can do’

<https://www.viacharacter.org>

- Adult and youth online survey of character strengths

40 developmental assets

- Building blocks for healthy development – increased healthy behaviours and less risky behaviours
- **External assets** – support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time
- **Internal assets** – commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity
- <http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18>

READY

To prepare for life skills: (Duncan, 2006)

Relationships

Energy

Awareness

Decision-maker

Yes



positive emotions

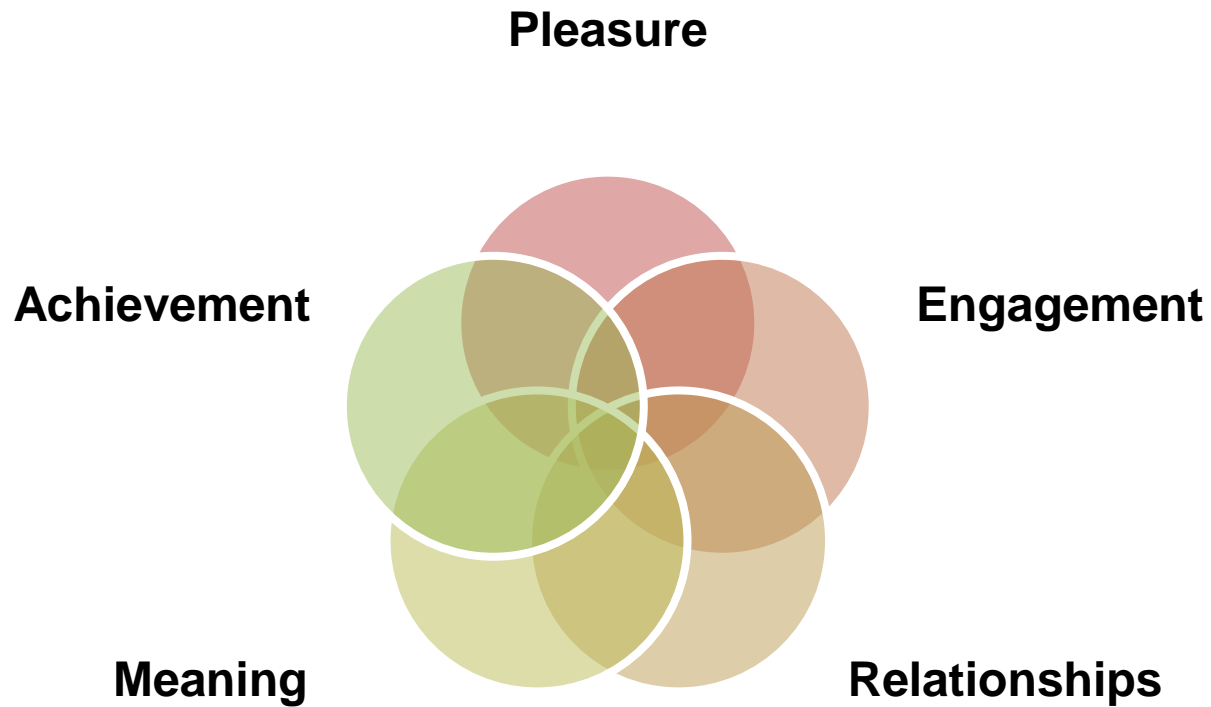
engagement

relationships

meaning

accomplishment

Well-being is...



PERMA (Seligman, 2011)

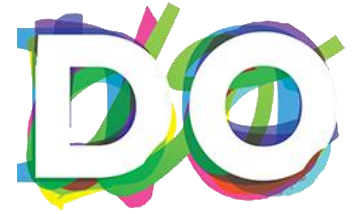
GIVE

**KEEP
LEARNING**

CONNECT

**BE
ACTIVE**

**TAKE
NOTICE**



- What do you currently do?
- What would you like to do?
- What gets in your way?
- What helps?

Positive Psychology Strategies for Teens

- 1. Focus on the Positive**
- 2. Find gratitude and meaning**
- 3. Connect and forgive**
- 4. Reframing**
- 5. Futuristic Thinking**
 - Draw a lifeline that goes from present moment to the end of their story
 - To discuss short-term and long-term goals and strategies for achieving those goals.

Since its early days in 1998, the amount of research into positive psychology has rapidly grown, as well as its practical applications.

- **Gratitude diaries** (Emmons and McCullough, 2003)
- **Writing about intensely positive experiences** (Burton and King, 2004)
- **Strength inventories and use of signature strengths** (Seligman et al. 2005)
- **School based interventions** (Morris, 2009, Noble and McGrath, 2008)



Gratitude Journal

- Write about 2-3 things that you are grateful for
- Make them recent (e.g., last 24hrs)
- Make them specific

(e.g., morning coffee, walked the dog, chat with my sister)

- How to keep a gratitude diary
- Online gratitude diary and challenge
www.thnx4.org
- App 'The gratitude garden'
- Action pack
http://www.actionforhappiness.org/media/80216/happiness_action_pack.pdf

Random Acts of Kindness



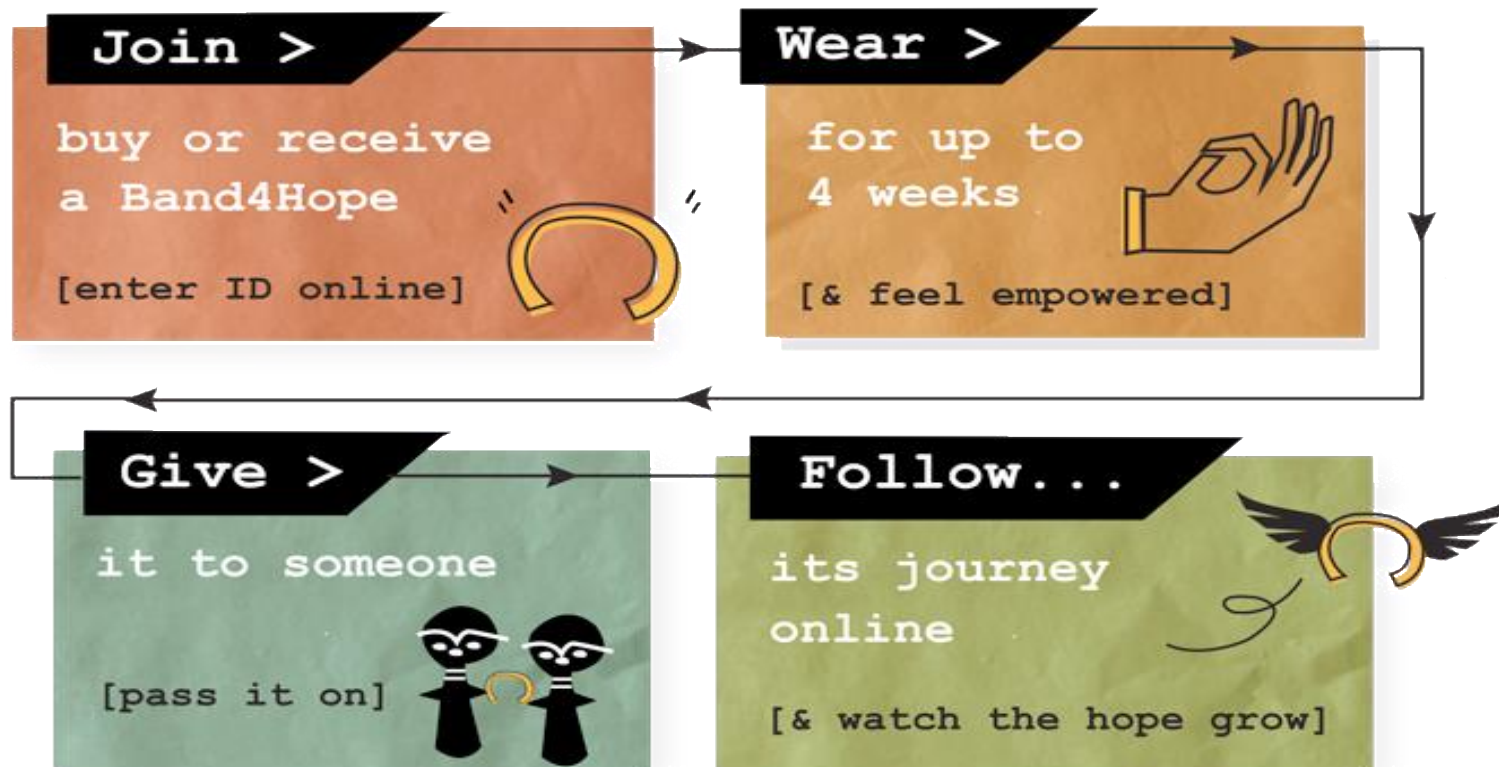
- Such as, a smile, offer your seat on a bus, thank someone, help a neighbour
- Studies found significant increases in well-being after 6 weeks of 5 random acts of kindness a week (Lyubomirsky et al., 2004)
- World Kindness Day November 13th 2017



Hope is contagious...

[pass it on]







Thank You!

References available on request

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“Happiness is always here, it is always now.” Osho