






Utilizing Positive Psychology Strategies with At-Risk Populations




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I Like Quotes


-  "Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough."
 Oprah Winfrey

-  "It will never rain roses: when we want to have more roses, we must plant more roses."
 George Eliot

Goals of the Training

-  Define "At-Risk"

-  Introduce Positive Psychology concepts

-  Identify specific strategies that can be immediately implemented in your work to improve outcomes with clients.

You will not...

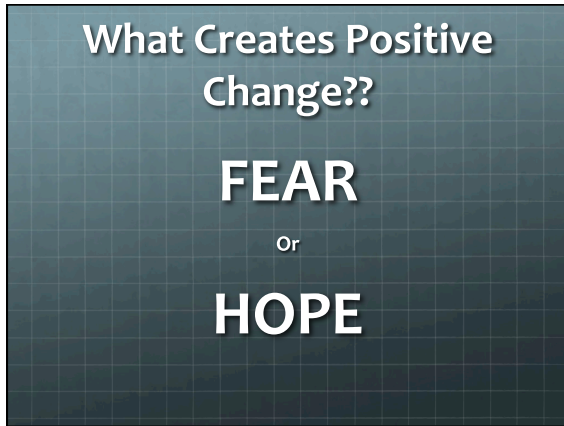
- Be forced to role play
- Be put on the spot
- Be asked to get up and move around

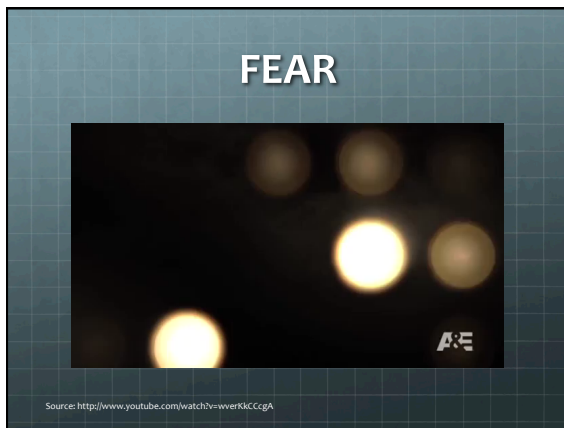
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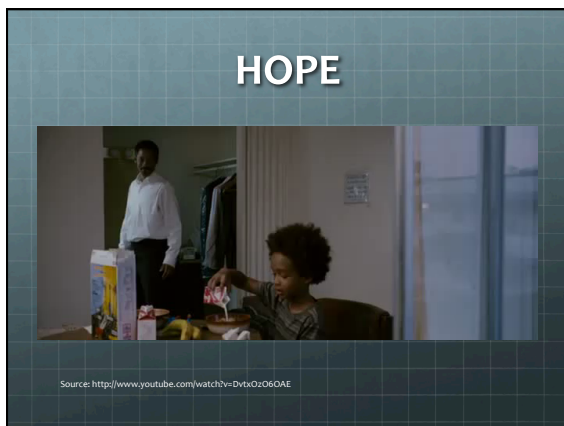
- Feel free to share and communicate
- Stop me and ask questions any time
- Go to the bathroom, or take whatever break you need.
- Be open-minded

Who Am I??









What Doesn't Work

🌐 Punishment alone does not reduce re-offending (Smith, Goggin, & Gendreau, 2002).

🌐 Inducing fear can cause denial and ignoring the threat.

🌐 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1945938>

Mental Gymnastics



The Pink Elephant

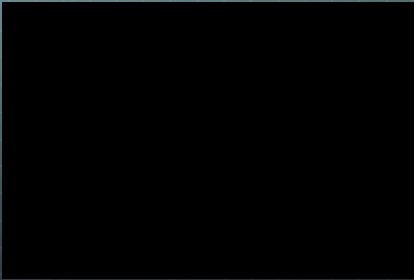


By Alias 0591 from the Netherlands (Pink elephant Uploaded by russavia) [CC-BY-2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

POP QUIZ

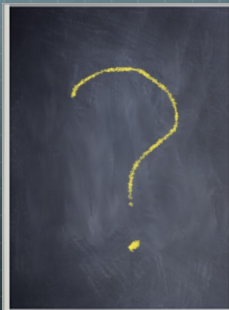


One more Mental Gymnastic Exercise



Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJC6g8Uz1Wo>

Why Is This Important??



Why FEAR doesn't create long term change

- Telling someone what not to do, does not tell them what TO DO.
- Fear tends to be externally motivated. True change comes from internal motivation such as a sense of purpose, or desire to change.
- Fear only works while the stimulus is present.

What Motivates You?

- Did you go to college out of fear, or due to the desire to be successful?
- Did you begin a relationship with a significant other because you were afraid of being alone, or because you had strong, positive feelings for that person?
- Do you go to your job out of fear of being broke, or because it provides financial stability? You might even do it because you believe what you do is important and valuable?



Defining "At-Risk"

At-Risk

Origins of the term:

- 1983 report "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" was released by the United States Department of Education. (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983)

At-Risk

The 2001 report, entitled "At-Risk Conditions of US Schoolchildren"

- Having at least one disability
- Being retained in a grade at least once
- Speaking English at any level lower than "very well"
- Living in a household when one or both parents are absent
- Low family income (below \$10,000)
- Having foreign-born parents who emigrated to the U.S. within the past 5 years
- Living in a family where neither of the parents/guardians are employed

At-Risk

Texas State Board of Education

- Held back a year
- Failing two or more subjects (grades 7-12)
- Unsatisfactory on State assessment
- Pre-K through 3rd unsatisfactory on readiness test or other assessment
- Pregnant or parent
- Placed in alternative education
- Expelled- preceding or current year
- Currently on parole, probation, or other type of community supervision
- Previously dropped out
- Limited English proficiency
- In the care of, or referred to CPS in current school year
- Homeless
- Resides in a residential placement facility

Texas Education Code -Section 29.081, Compensatory, Intensive, And Accelerated Instruction

At-Risk

- Other Factors:
 - Geographic location
 - Nationality and citizenship status
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Level of Education/literacy
 - Sexual orientation
 - Socio-economic status
 - Disabilities (physical, mental, cognitive, or sensory)
 - Language
 - Religious affiliations or spiritual beliefs
 - Cultural values
 - Health practices

At-Risk

- What does all that mean??
- Lots of kids are **LABELED** At-Risk
- Next question, what are they "At Risk" of doing?

Current Initiatives and Programs

- Safe Schools/Healthy Students
- Children at Risk
- 40 Developmental Assets (The Search Institute)
 - <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/40>

Positive Psychology

Origins

- Built on theories by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow




Positive Psychology


- Complete mental health involves high levels of social, emotional and psychological **well-being**, in addition to being free from mental illness.
- (Seligman & Peterson, Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification)


The Three Pillars

- Instead of focusing on pathology, dysfunction and deficits, Positive Psychology teaches that there are essentially three different means of creating happiness in our lives: **pleasures, gratifications, and meaningful activities**.
- (Seligman, Steen, & Peterson, Positive Psychology: Progress, Empirical Validation of Interventions)


Means of Happiness

 **Pleasures**- simple, short-lived moments of happiness (i.e. a good meal)


 **Gratifications**- deeper, long-lasting feelings (i.e. graduating from college)

 **Meaningful Activities**- serving the greater good (i.e. counseling and education)


Three Pillars of “The Full Life”

 *The pleasant life*- (joy and affect)

 *The good life*- (amplify unique skills and strengths)

 *The meaningful life*- (doing things that benefit the greater good)

Excellence vs. Dysfunction

 Human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disease, disorder, and distress and that psychologists and human service providers do well to devote as much attention to the positive potential in life as they do to its deficits.



Virtue: Character Strength:	
Knowledge & Wisdom: Cognitive strengths that help a person gain knowledge and put it into action	Creativity: thinking of new and productive ways to do things Open-mindedness: considering things from different perspectives, thinking things through Curiosity & Love of Learning: the desire to learn new skills and study new topics
Courage: Emotional resiliency & strength: determination to reach goals in spite of obstacles	Honesty/Authenticity: speaking the truth and acting in a genuine way Bravery: not backing down from threats or challenges Perseverance: Seeing a task through to completion Zest: approaching life with energy and vitality
Humanity: Strengths that touch the lives of others	Kindness: good deeds and actions toward others Love: valuing close relationships, intimacy Social intelligence: perceiving the motives and feelings of people
Justice: Civic values that contribute to strong community life	Fairness: treating everyone with the same standards of justice and equality Leadership: organizing group activities Teamwork: contributing to a group effort
Temperance: Strengths that control impulses to protect against excess and other dangers	Forgiveness: letting go of residual feelings against those who have done wrong Modesty: accepting one's limitations, letting personal accomplishments speak for themselves Prudence: Making careful choices; thinking before speaking or acting Self-Regulation & Caution: displaying self-control in what one says, feels or does
Transcendence: Building connections to the greater universe to provide depth and meaning	Appreciation of beauty: noticing beauty, excellence or skill Gratitude: being aware of and grateful for the good things that happen in life Hope: expecting the best and working to achieve it Humor: Being to laugh and joke or bring smiles to others Spirituality: having strong and coherent beliefs about the higher purpose of life

Derived from: American School Counselor Association 2008

Current Research

- 🌱 People who make an effort to show gratitude report improvements in overall contentment, life satisfaction, physical health, energy, and relationships with others.
🌱 (Ozge, 2008)
- 🌱 Positive emotion reduces at least some racial biases. For example, although people generally are better at recognizing faces of their own race than faces of other races, putting people in a joyful mood reduces this discrepancy by improving memory for faces of people from other races.
🌱 (Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005).

Reprinted from the New Zealand Association of Positive Psychology

Current Research

- 🌍 Happy teenagers go on to earn substantially more income fifteen years later than less happy teenagers, equating for income, grades, and other obvious factors (Diener et al., 2002).
- 🌍 How you celebrate good events that happen to your spouse is a better predictor of future love and commitment than how you respond to bad events. (Gable et al., 2004).

Reprinted from the New Zealand Association of Positive Psychology

Pos Psych Strategies

- 🌍 *If we wish to prevent drug abuse in teenagers who grow up in a neighborhood that puts them at risk... the effective prevention is not remedial. Rather it consists of identifying and amplifying the strengths that these teens already have. A teenager who is future-minded, who is interpersonally skilled, who derives flow from sports, is not at risk for substance abuse.*
- 🌍 (Snyder & Wright, 2001)

Pos Psych Strategies with At-Risk Populations

- 🌍 Restorative justice (Hendry, 2009)
- 🌍 Learning Empathy

Pos Psych Strategies with At-Risk Populations

Restorative justice emphasizes the value of emotional strength (O'Grady) by:

- Giving priority to the healing of hurt feelings;
- Stressing the importance of restitution for transgressions and repairing damage done;
- Providing an improved understanding of healthy relationships;
- Transforming negative self-defeating experiences to learning experiences that are positive ones.

Pos Psych Strategies with At-Risk Populations (Offender Populations)

The Good Lives Model (GLM) by Tony Ward, et al

Eleven primary "goods" (Ward T. &, 2006)

- (1) life (including healthy living and functioning),
- (2) knowledge,
- (3) excellence in play,
- (4) excellence in work (including mastery experiences),
- (5) excellence in agency (i.e., autonomy and self-directedness),

Primary Goods (cont.)

- (6) inner peace (i.e., freedom from emotional turmoil and stress),
- (7) friendship (including romantic and family relationships),
- (8) community,
- (9) spirituality (in the broad sense of finding meaning and purpose in life),
- (10) happiness
- (11) creativity

Pos Psych in Schools

- Positive Psychology for Youth (PPY)
- Funded by the US Department of Education
- 25 lessons geared towards high school students
 - savoring and mindfulness, gratitude, optimism and resilience
 - character strengths, citizenship, and way of finding meaning or purpose in life

Pos Psych Exercises

- Strengths-Based: have your clients/students complete an online survey
 - Examples
 - <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/>
 - <http://www.authenticityhappiness.sas.upenn.edu/default.aspx>
 - Note: both websites require you to login to complete the survey
- There are also many books to read on building strengths...
 - "Your Child's Strengths: Discover Them, Develop Them, Use Them" by Jennifer Fox, M.Ed
 - "StrengthsFinder 2.0" by Tom Rath
 - (just two of many books out there)

Pos Psych Exercises

- Three Good Things
- Obituary/Biography
- Gratitude Letter
- Active/Constructive Responding: react in a visibly positive and enthusiastic way to good news from someone else
- Savoring: take the time to enjoy something that you usually hurry through

Derived from: <http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/positivepsychotherapyarticle.pdf>

Pos Psych Exercises

- Present and Future focused
- Advancement Goals
- Lifestyle Paragon
- Positivity ratios

Current Trends

PERMA

- Five critical elements of well-being
 - Positive emotion
 - Engagement (the feeling of being completely consumed by a task)
 - Relationships
 - Meaning
 - Accomplishment
- (Tierney, 2011)


Pos Psych Neuroscience

A team of notable researchers are studying human flourishing in areas that include:

- University of Toronto: The Neurogenetics of Positivity and Resilience
- Harvard Medical School: Could Meditation Modulate the Neurobiology of Learning Not to Fear?
- Princeton University: The Neural Basis of Selfish and Selfless Social Goals

For more information, visit: <http://www.posneuroscience.org/news.html>






School Counseling

 Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.

 — Plato


School Counseling


Children and youth receiving high quality instruction in positive psychology benefit significantly across a number of variables:


-  1. **Better academic performance**, earning achievement test scores an average of 11 percentile points higher than students who did not receive such instruction.
 -  2. **Improved attitudes** with greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, more positive behavior, and better attendance.
 -  3. **Fewer negative behaviors** such as disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, delinquent acts, aggression, and disciplinary referrals.
 -  4. **Less emotional distress**, depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal.
-  Positive psychology teaches social and emotional learning skills that change how much – and how well – students learn by **changing how they feel**.

(From the article: Teaching students to be self-aware, self-assured, and self-sufficient, by Patty O'Grady 2012)

School Counseling

 Even back in 1986...

 Studies showed the effectiveness of activities aimed at increasing achievement and creating a more positive school climate reduced delinquent behavior

 GOTTFREDSO, D. C. (1986)

School Counseling

🌐 Encourage prevention instead of remediation

🌐 Identify resources in your community

"Positive psychology argues that the goal of counseling should be more than moving students from -5 to 0 – the absence of a problem... The ultimate goal of interventions informed by positive psychology is helping people with or without problems to lead a fulfilling life, **moving them to +2 or +5 or beyond**, regardless of where they start."

🌐 (Park & Peterson, 2008)

Final Quote

🌐 "Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words. Keep your words positive because your words become your behavior. Keep your behavior positive because your behavior becomes your habits. Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny."

🌐 Mahatma Gandhi

Thank You!

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