

Using Encouragement & Positive Psychology to Promote Resilience

Reade Dowda, PhD, LPC
Fort Hays State University
rldowda@fhsu.edu

Brian Weber, MS, NCC
Fort Hays State University
bwweber2@fhsu.edu



Interest in Research

- Positivity fights depression
- Proactive in handling stressful situations
- Influence of theory on professional development



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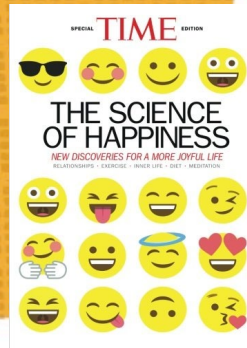
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Thich Nhat Hanh

you
are
here

Discovering the Magic
of the Present Moment



Today's Agenda

- Resilience
- Positive Psychology
- Adlerian Encouragement
- Questions



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We have positive and negative seeds. Only water the positive seeds – Thich Nhat Hanh

Positive Psychology

- Positive Psychology: Shift from pathology to wellness (Carlson, Watts, & Maniacci, 2006; Watts, 2012).
- Adler embraced a focus on strengths and a growth mindset long before contemporary positive psychology (Watts, 2015).
- Optimistic vs. Pessimistic Outlooks
- Optimism is a protective factor against depression (Seligman, 1998).



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Positive Reframe

- **Bouncing forward** (Walsh, 2002)
- Bouncing back vs. bouncing forward
- **Resilience** is often the strength gained from challenging events.



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Positive Reframe

- **PTG vs. PTSD (Martin Seligman)**
 - Reframing events such as bullying at school or bad interactions at work
- “Healing past wounds can become strength” (Haddock & Falkner, 2017, p. 105).
- Challenging times often help people take a fresh look at priorities.



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If Bad is Stronger than Good, Why are People Happy?

- Negativity bias – awareness.
- We have more positive than negative events – they add up.
- We reminisce about the good times.
- Selective perception and memory (Baumeister, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001).
- Happier people focus on the positive.



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Seligman's Model for Happiness and Well-Being

- Positive Emotions (enjoyment)
- Engagement (flow – losing track of time)
- Relationships (authentic connection)
 - “Resilience is nurtured by supportive relationships” (Walsh, 2002, p. 35).
- Meaning (purposeful life)
- Achievement (success)
- Freedom & Health



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Active Constructive Responding

	<i>Active</i>	<i>Passive</i>
<i>Constructive</i>	<p>Enthusiastic support Eye Contact Authentic</p> <p>Great news! I knew you'd do it. How do you feel?</p> 	<p>Low Energy Delayed Response Quiet</p> <p>Oh cool, that's nice...good for you.</p> 
<i>Destructive</i>	<p>Quashing the event! Dismissive Demeaning</p> <p>I don't believe you! It sounds stressful.</p> 	<p>Turns focus inward Avoiding Ignore Speaker</p> <p>Huh. Well, I just got a new video game.</p> 



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Illustrated by GoStrengths.com

Positive Psychotherapy (PPT) Interventions

- **Three good things/blessings**
- **Closed door / Open door**
- **Your life as a garden**
- **Satisficing vs. maximizing**
- **Savoring (mindfulness & small victories)**
 - (Rashid, 2015; Rashid & Seligman, 2014; Seligman, Rashid, & Parks, 2006)
- **Yes & No: Boundaries**



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Gratitude

- Expression
- Experience
- Gratitude interventions have been used to ameliorate depression and anxiety
 - (Kini, Wong, McInnis, Gabana, & Brown, 2016)
- Gratitude journal
- Gratitude mapping
- Complement journal
- G.L.A.D. technique
 - Grateful, learned, accomplished, delight



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Processing Character Strengths

- Values in Action Inventory of Strengths
www.viacharacter.org
- Top five strengths are Signature Strengths.
- How are you using these strengths in your personal/professional life?
- How can you use your **signature strengths** to aid with a **challenging situation**?



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Reade Dowda

1: Hope 🕊️

Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about.

2: Perseverance 🏊‍♂️

Finishing what one starts; persevering in a course of action in spite of obstacles; "getting it out the door"; taking pleasure in completing tasks.

3: Love 💙

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

4: Judgment 🧠

Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly.

5: Prudence 🍀

Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.

6: Honesty 🗣️

Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.

7: Humor 🤖

Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes.

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Brian Weber

1: Creativity

Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it.

2: Judgment

Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly.

3: Perspective

Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself/others.

4: Prudence

Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.

5: Fairness

Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.

6: Forgiveness

Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting others' shortcomings; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful.

7: Honesty

Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.

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Interventions - Humor

- Humor can be used to connect with others (Rashid, 2015).
- Helping clients see the humor in their concerns (Carlson, Watts, & Maniacci, 2006).
- Don't believe everything you think - Thich Nhat Hanh



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Encouragement

- Think of some one of more persons who was encouraging to you.
- What were some characteristics of your encouragers?
- “We draw courage through encouragement” (Walsh, 2002, p. 35).



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Adlerian Encouragement

- Adlerian counseling is a growth/wellness model. It is an optimistic perspective that views people as unique, creative, capable, and responsible.
- Adlerian counseling emphasizes prevention, optimism and hope, resilience and growth, competence, creativity and resourcefulness, social consciousness, and finding meaning and a sense of community in relationships.
- Because Adlerians believe the growth/wellness model of makes more sense than a *sickness* model, they see clients as discouraged rather than sick.
- ***Thus, Adlerians are not about “curing” anything; counseling is a process of encouragement*** (Carlson, Watts, & Maniacci, 2006).



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Adlerian Encouragement

Encouragement, for Adlerians, is the interpersonal conveyance and therapeutic modeling of ***gemeinschaftsgefühl***: *community feeling/social interest*

Community Feeling: affective and motivational aspects – sense of belonging, empathy, caring, compassion, acceptance of others, etc.)

Social Interest: cognitive and behavioral aspects – thoughts and behaviors that contribute the common good; the good of the all at both micro- and macro-systemic levels.

Both are required for a holistic understanding of Adler's *gemeinschaftsgefühl* (Watts, 2012).



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Adlerian Encouragement

- Clients present for counseling because they are discouraged and lack the confidence and "courage" to engage successfully in the tasks or problems of living.
- **Encouragement is not a technique, but rather it is an attitude and a *way of being* with clients**
- Dreikurs (1967) noted the essential necessity of encouragement in psychotherapy. He stated that presenting problems are "based on discouragement" and without "encouragement, without having faith in her/himself restored, [the client] cannot see the possibility of doing or functioning better" (p. 62).



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Adlerian Encouragement

- Adler (1956) once asked a client what he thought made the difference in his successful experience in therapy. The client replied: “That’s quite simple. I had lost all courage to live. In our consultations I found it again” (p. 342).
- Adlerians consider encouragement a crucial aspect of human growth and development. This is especially true in regard to psychotherapy. Stressing the importance of encouragement in therapy, Adler (1956) stated: “Altogether, in every step of the treatment, we must not deviate from the path of encouragement” (p. 342). Dreikurs (1967) agreed: “What is most important in every treatment is encouragement” (p. 35).
- In addition, Dreikurs stated that therapeutic success was largely dependent upon “[the therapist’s] ability to provide encouragement” and failure generally occurred “due to the inability of the therapist to encourage” (pp. 12-13).



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Resilience from an Adlerian Perspective

- Resilience is the capacity to overcome adversity
- One needs courage to face this adversity
 - Self encouragement
 - Encouragement from others
 - Courage to fail / be wrong



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How to build resilience

- Community support
 - Support from family
 - Support from therapist/teachers, modeling of courage
 - Support from other positive and nurturing community groups (school clubs, churches, fitness groups)



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Acting ‘as if’

- Professional counselors ask clients to begin acting as if they were already the person they would like to be. For example, a confident person
- Ask clients to pretend and the clients are only acting
- The purpose of the procedure is to bypass potential resistance to change by neutralizing some of the perceived risk.
- The professional counselor suggests a limited task, such as acting as if an individual had the courage to speak up for himself or herself.
 - Expectation is that the client will successfully complete the task
 - If the task is not completed successfully, then the counselor explores with the client what prevented a successful experience



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11/22/2014 Richard E. Watts

Reflecting As If

- Reflecting As If (RAI) (Watts, 2003; 2013)
 - If you were the person you wanted to be, what would you have done differently?
 - If I were watching a video of you, what would be different? What would you want to do more of? Less of?
 - What would be some initial indicators that demonstrate you are headed in the direction you want?
- Audience participation: Volunteer to describe a challenging situation.



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Success Oriented Recollections

- Describe a success you had in the past related to your current challenge.



- Ask others to describe a recent success you had in a related topic.



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What can I do Today?

- What's the best “medicine” for depression?
- Physical Activity
- Do something for someone else.

Being able to
recognize what
makes you
happy is a hell
of a start –
Lucille Ball



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Conclusion & Questions

- What have you heard today that you could see yourself using?
 - (“nothing” is not a correct answer!)

Never underestimate the power you give someone by believing in them! - DDP



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