

Increasing Middle School Students' Happiness: A Multi-Component Positive Psychology Intervention Involving Youth and Parents



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Presentation Overview



Importance of students' subjective well-being

- Assessment strategies

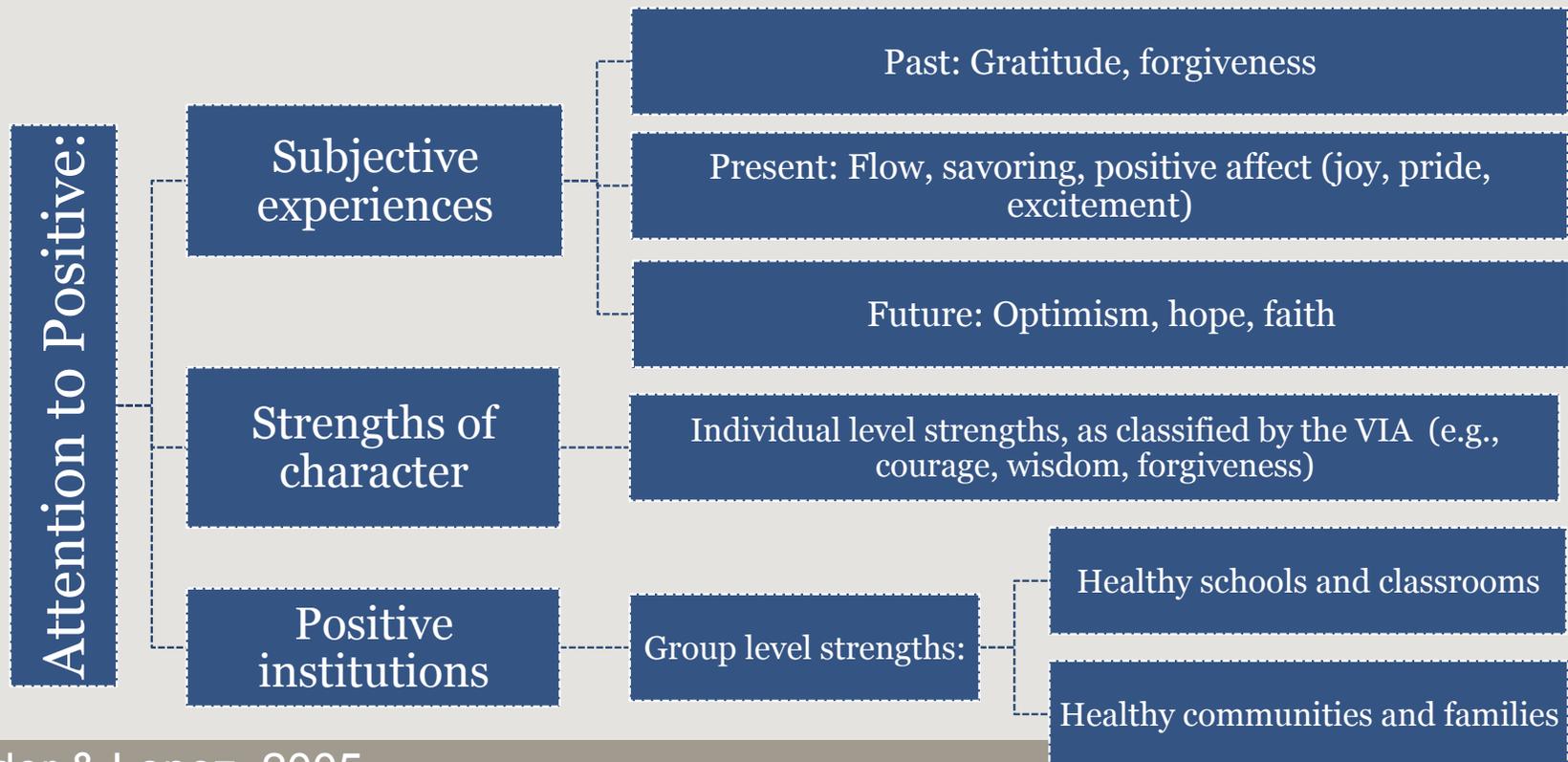
Promoting subjective well-being via a positive psychology intervention

- Small group student-focused intervention with a parent component

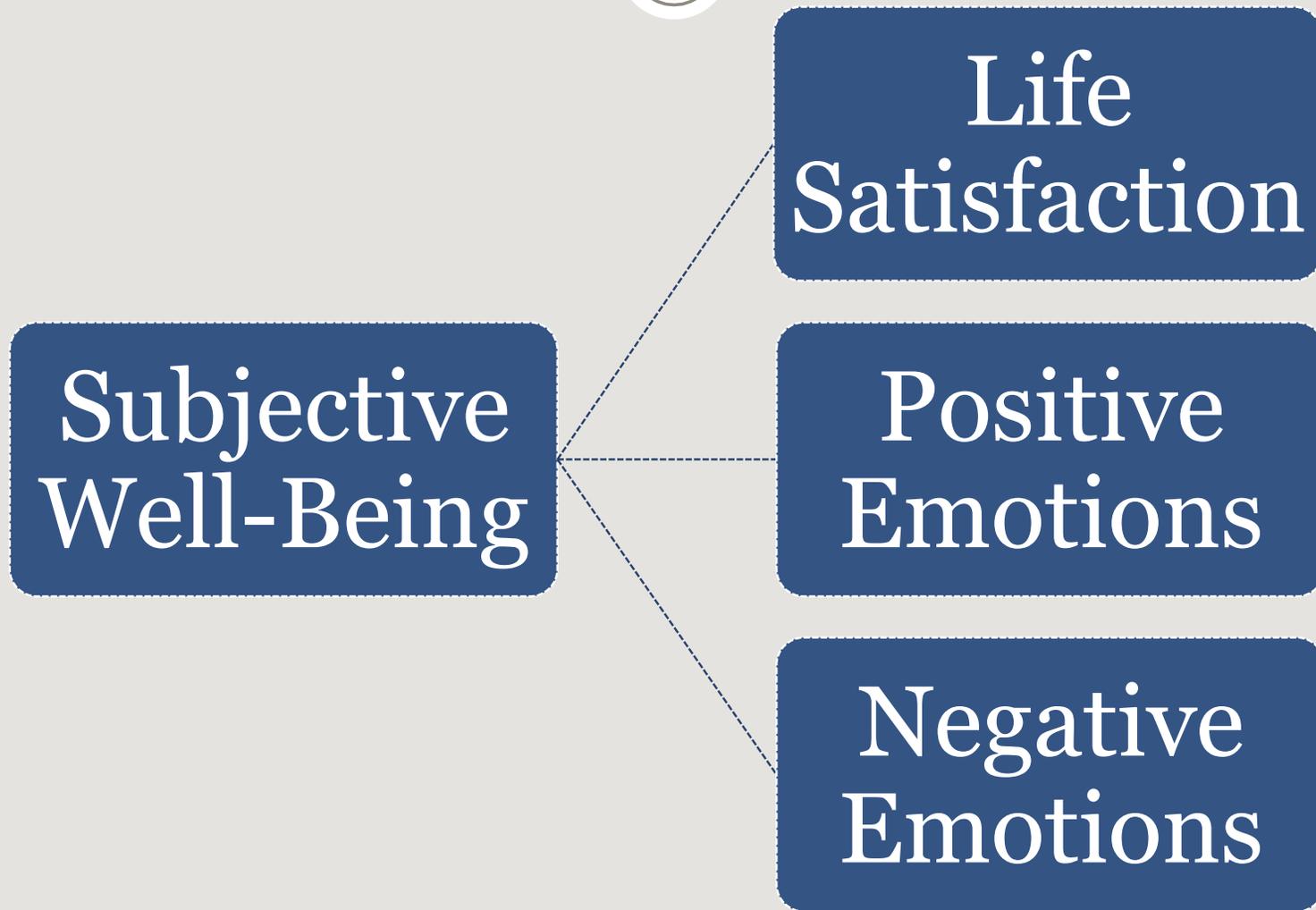
Positive Psychology Approach

Aim of Positive Psychology

- Traditional Psychology: devoted to healing- repairing damage using a disease model of human functioning
- Positive psychology: move from repairing the worst things in life to building the best things in life



How Scientists Define Happy: Subjective Well-Being (SWB)



Assessing Youth Life Satisfaction



Global measures

- Students' Life Satisfaction Scale
 - 7 items

Multidimensional measures

- Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale
 - 6 items

Students' Life Satisfaction Scale

(SLSS; http://www.psych.sc.edu/faculty/Scott_Huebner)



Instructions: We would like to know what thoughts about life you've had during the past several weeks. Think about how you spend each day and night and then think about how your life has been during most of this time. Here are some questions that ask you to indicate your satisfaction with life. In answering each statement, circle a number from (1) to (6) where (1) indicates you **strongly disagree** with the statement and (6) indicates you **strongly agree** with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My life is going well	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My life is just right	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I would like to change many things in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I wish I had a different kind of life	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I have a good life	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I have what I want in life	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My life is better than most kids'	1	2	3	4	5	6

Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS; Scott Huebner at Univ. of South Carolina)

We would like to know what thoughts about life you've had during the past several weeks. Think about how you spend each day and night, and then think about how your life has been during most of this time. For each statement, circle a number from (1) to (7), where (1) means you feel *terrible* about that area of life and (7) means you are *delighted* with that area of life.

During the past several weeks...	Terrible	Unhappy	Mostly Dissatisfied	Mixed (about equally satisfied and dissatisfied)	Mostly Satisfied	Pleased	Delighted
1. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>family life</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>friendships</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>school experience</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would describe my satisfaction with <i>myself</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I would describe my satisfaction with <i>where I live</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>whole life</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Positive and Negative Affect Scale for Children (PANAS-C)

Positive and Negative Affect Scale for Children (PANAS-C)

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then circle the appropriate answer next to that word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way during the past few weeks.

<i>Feeling or emotion:</i>	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Interested	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sad	1	2	3	4	5
3. Frightened	1	2	3	4	5
4. Excited	1	2	3	4	5
5. Ashamed	1	2	3	4	5
6. Upset	1	2	3	4	5
7. Happy	1	2	3	4	5
8. Strong	1	2	3	4	5
9. Nervous	1	2	3	4	5
10. Guilty	1	2	3	4	5
11. Energetic	1	2	3	4	5
12. Scared	1	2	3	4	5
13. Calm	1	2	3	4	5
14. Miserable	1	2	3	4	5
15. Jittery	1	2	3	4	5
16. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5
17. Active	1	2	3	4	5
18. Proud	1	2	3	4	5
19. Afraid	1	2	3	4	5
20. Joyful	1	2	3	4	5
21. Lonely	1	2	3	4	5
22. Mad	1	2	3	4	5
23. Disgusted	1	2	3	4	5
24. Delighted	1	2	3	4	5
25. Blue	1	2	3	4	5
26. Gloomy	1	2	3	4	5
27. Lively	1	2	3	4	5

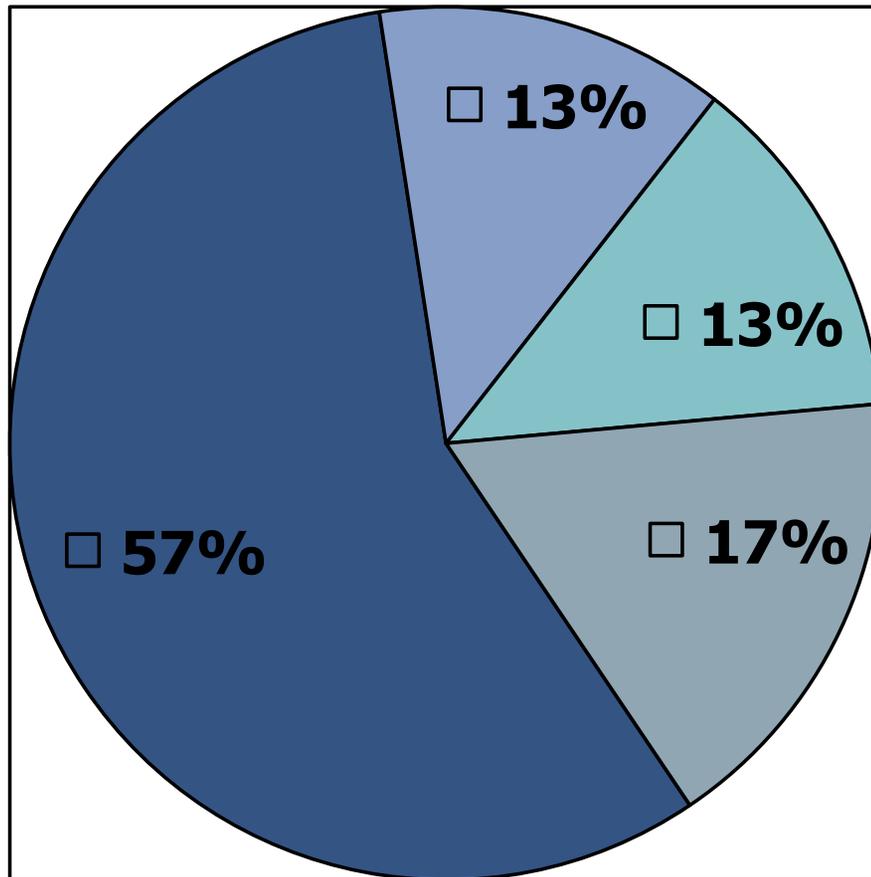
Dual Factor Model of Mental Health



- Factor 1 (Traditional Psychology): Psychopathology
- Factor 2 (Positive Psychology): Subjective well-being

	Subjective Well-Being	
	Low	Average to High
Psychopathology		
Low	Vulnerable	Complete Mental Health
High	Troubled	Symptomatic but Content

Middle School Students in Mental Health Groups



- Complete Mental Health
- Vulnerable
- Symtomatic but Content
- Troubled

Implications of Mental Health Status



Complete Mental Health

- Superior outcomes across domains– academic, social, physical health, identity development

Vulnerable

- Diminished social relationships
- Intact grades (in older youth), but ..
- More negative attitudes about school and, in middle school students: less academic engagement, worse attendance, lower reading skills

Symptomatic but Content

- Intact social relationships, okay physical health, good self-concept, high gratitude and hope
- Poor current academic functioning

Troubled

- Worst outcomes across domains- current and later school failure (GPA), social problems, poor health

Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs)

PPIs used with adults

Gratitude

- Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006

Character strengths

- Seligman et al., 2005; Senf & Liao, 2013)

Savoring

- Hurley & Kwon, 2012; Kurtz, 2008

Acts of kindness

- Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Otake, Shimai, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui, & Fredrickson, 2006

Hope

- Cheavens, Feldman, Gum, Michael, & Snyder, 2006; King, 2001; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006

Loving kindness meditation

- Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008

Positive psychotherapy

- Seligman et al., 2006

PPIs used with youth

Singular constructs:

- Gratitude
 - Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski, & Miller, 2009; Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008)
- Character strengths
 - Proctor et al., 2011
- Hope
 - Marques, Lopez, & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011
- Acts of Kindness
 - Layous et al. 2012

Multi-target:

- Positive psychotherapy
 - Rashid & Anjum, 2008
- Three wellness-promotion interventions for general samples
 - Notter, 2013
 - Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014
 - Suldo, Savage, & Mercer, 2014

PPI for Adolescents



Pilot Study: Suldo, Savage, & Mercer, 2014

Conceptual underpinnings

- Seligman's (2002) framework for increasing happiness
- Age-appropriate extensions of empirically-supported interventions with adults

Method

- Compared outcomes among control and intervention groups with a sample of 67 6th grade students

Results

- Post-intervention: intervention group exhibited significant increases in life satisfaction
- 6-month follow-up: the control group caught up to the intervention group
- No differences from pre- to post-intervention in affect or psychopathology

Manualized Small Group PPI for Adolescents... Version 2.0

Original PPI developed by Positive Psychology Research Team at USF (Suldo, Savage, & Mercer, 2014)

Intervention activities divided into 3 phases focused on the past, present, and future aspects of emotional well-being

Past

- Gratitude journals
- Gratitude visits

Present

- Acts of kindness
- Character strengths
- Savoring

Future

- Optimistic thinking
- Hopeful and goal-directed thinking

Additions to PPI

Parent psychoeducation and weekly handouts

Booster sessions

Intervention Overview



Session	Target	Strategies
Parents	Psychoeducation	Introduction to Key Positive Psychology Constructs and Focus of Intervention
1	Positive Emotions	Me at My Best
2	Gratitude	Gratitude Journals
3	Gratitude	Gratitude Visit
4	Positive Emotions	Acts of Kindness
5	Character Strengths	Introduction to Character Strengths
6	Character Strengths	Character Strengths Assessment; Application of Signature Strength 1 in New Way
7	Character Strengths	Application of Signature Strength 2 in New Ways; Savoring
8	Optimistic Thinking	Examples of Optimistic Thinking; My Optimistic Thoughts
9	Hope	My Best Possible Self in the Future
10	All	Termination; Review of Strategies and Plan for Future Use
Booster 1	All; Gratitude	Review & Spotlight on Gratitude (Gratitude Journals)
Booster 2	All: Strengths, Optimism	Review & Spotlight on Signature Strengths (Application of Signature Strengths in New Way) and Optimistic Thinking (My Optimistic Thoughts)

Parent Component

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Parent psychoeducation

Parent handouts

Session 1: Parent Psychoeducation



Session Goals

- Establish rapport with parents
- Introduce parents to key concepts within positive psychology
 - Define key terms
 - How to conceptualize youth well-being
 - Benefits of high SWB for youth and parents
 - Specific constructs targeted in the program (e.g., gratitude, acts of kindness, hope, optimism, character strengths)
- Demonstrate an example of a positive psychology intervention (e.g., Savoring; Me at My Best)
- Introduce and provide parents an overview of the focus of sessions in the core program

Quick Write: You at Your Best



- Think of a specific time, recently or a while back, when you were at your best. You were expressing the qualities that make you feel the most authentic and energized. The experience made you feel proud and happy to be alive.
- Develop a story for that experience or moment in time. Give the story a beginning, middle, and end. You might take the approach of replaying and reliving the positive experience in your mind, just as you were watching a movie of it.
- Write about your story.

Student Sessions 2 – 11: Parent Components



Parents receive weekly updates on group activities through a handout

Parents encouraged to follow suggestions to reinforce strategies at home

Handout should be sent home the same day the student participates in that session

Deliver as a hard copy or directly to parent through email

Student Sessions 2 – 11: Parent Components



Parent handout includes:

- Overview of the lesson covered that week
- Description of the student homework task(s) assigned
- Suggestions for parents to apply the intervention strategies in their own lives and as a family unit

Parent Handout – Gratitude Journaling

Well-Being Promotion Program

Notes for Parents: Gratitude Journaling

What Did My Child Learn This Week?

During this meeting, we introduced the concept of gratitude to your child. We discussed what gratitude is and why it is important for happiness.

What is gratitude? You feel gratitude (thanks, appreciation, grateful) when you recognize that you received an intentional act of kindness from another person.

More specifically, you feel gratitude after gaining a benefit that you view as valuable, that was provided intentionally and altruistically (not for ulterior motives), and occurred at some cost to the person who provided the benefit.

Example: A child earned an “A” on a homework assignment that his sister helped him complete the night prior. The child may feel gratitude towards his sister because she helped him on purpose (intent), gave up her time to help him (cost), and he got a good grade (benefit) due to her help.

Why is gratitude important? It helps us focus our thoughts and emotions on the positive parts of our pasts related to school, friendships, and family life. Grateful thinking leads to more happiness with life.

The students rated their current levels of gratitude, and created a gratitude journal to record things in their life for which they are grateful.

Homework Activities

- Each night before bed, your child was asked to spend five minutes writing down at least five things in life that they are grateful for. Your child will be asked to share 2-3 of the responses they recorded in their journals during our next meeting.

What Can I Do?

You can make gratitude journaling a part of your entire family’s routine. You might choose to sit with your child and their siblings (if you have more than one child) each night before bedtime and journal together. You can also share the things you are grateful for with each other. Discuss what similarities and differences you notice!

Parent Handout – Optimistic Thinking

Well-Being Promotion Program

Notes for Parents: Optimistic Thinking

What Did My Child Learn This Week?

During this meeting, we introduced the concept of optimism to your child. We discussed how optimistic thinking leads to happiness, and practiced thinking like an optimist.

What is optimism? It is a way of thinking about the good or bad things that happen in our lives, which in turn affects how positive or negative we feel about the future. In optimistic thinking, we view positive life events as permanent and negative life events as temporary. Optimists see the positive as universal and the negative as specific. Last, optimists take credit for positive events, but when a bad thing happens they do not take it personally. In sum, positive events are viewed as permanent, widespread, and due to personal factors, whereas negative events are viewed as temporary, specific to the situation, and due to external sources.

Examples	
Good Events	Bad Events
<i>Permanent</i> I got the promotion at work because I'm talented in my profession.	<i>Temporary</i> They had decided to promote the boss's daughter to that position years ago, no one else had a chance-but, I'll probably get the next promotion I apply for.
<i>Widespread</i> My spouse stopped by the store for milk and eggs because he is always thoughtful and notices when we run out of things at breakfast.	<i>Specific</i> My spouse didn't pick up the groceries because her boss made her stay late at work.
<i>Take Credit</i> I got the new job because of my resume- I've worked hard to acquire all of those skills.	<i>Blame Other Sources</i> I didn't get the job because I wasn't told enough about the position to best prepare for the interview.

Why is optimism important? Optimism leads to resilience—feeling like you can face any bad situation and come out okay, leading you to be more likely to try when things are difficult.

Homework Activities

- Your child was asked to use optimistic thinking one time each day until the next meeting, and record the situation and their thoughts on their “My Optimistic Thoughts” record form.
- Additionally, your child was asked to choose a new signature strength to use in a new way each day and complete the “Uses of My Third Signature Strength” record form.

What Can I Do?

Ask your child to explain optimistic thinking to you in his or her own words. Model optimistic thinking for your child and reflect together on how thinking optimistically makes you feel in comparison to the way you normally think. Give an example of a time that optimistic thinking helped you deal with a hard situation. Praise your child when you notice them being optimistic!

Student Component



Intervention sessions

Booster sessions

Positive Introduction (Meeting 1)

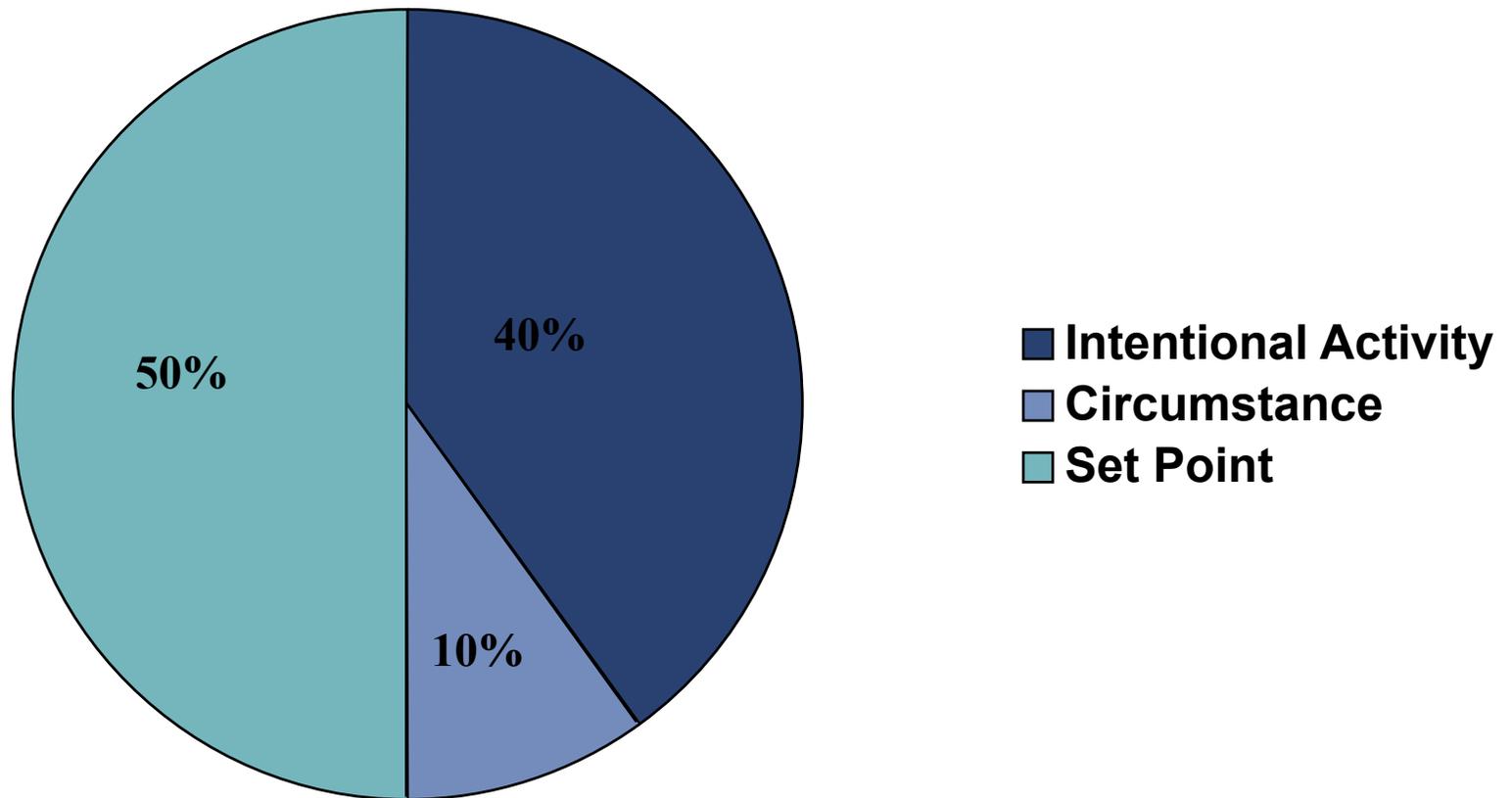
Goal:

- *Understand determinants of happiness and program goals*
- *Generate positive feelings towards oneself*
- *Create a supportive group atmosphere*

Activities:

- Me at My Best
 - *Activity you just completed*

What Determines Happiness?



How to Increase Happiness?



Improve Intentional Thoughts (about Past and Future) and Activities (in Present)

Promoting Happiness through School-Based Positive Psychology Interventions



Past

- Gratitude journals
- Gratitude visits

Present

- Acts of kindness
- Identify and use signature character strengths

Future

- Best possible self in the future
- Learned optimism

When I was at my best is when im at youth group. I think because im one of the leaders in my youth group a lot of people like to here what I say. Also people who are younger than me look up to me. Also they like to here what I say. Like when im leading my small group. They are always asking questions. And we be come really good friends. And we help each other out throu things.

Positive Feelings about the Past (Meetings 2 & 3)

Goal:

- *Focus thoughts on positive interpretations of past events*

Activities:

- Gratitude Journal
 - *Write down five things in life for which you are grateful each day for at least one week*
- Gratitude Visit
 - *Express gratitude to someone who has been especially kind but never properly thanked via writing a one-page letter then delivering/reading the letter in person*

Journaling (Counting Blessings)



- Prompt: Reflect on the events of your past day and write down up to 5 things for which you are grateful
 - Share written reflections and positive experiences with classmates, educators
 - Journaling continued for homework
- Sample student responses:
 1. Our swimming pool
 2. Spaghetti and meatballs for dinner
 3. Cheerleading practice
 4. Made it to the bus stop on time
 5. Classmate helped me with the homework

Gratitude Visit Planning Form

People who have been especially kind or helpful to me:

1. MEM
2. Grandfather
3. Brother
4.
5. Mrs. K

Person I will make a gratitude visit to:

Date: 2-11-

Time: 3:00 - 4:15

Dear



Your my best friend, sister (symbolically),
My mentor, and the good cop to my bad cop.
I know that sometimes I feel like we
hate each other. But nothing
can ever break that bond we have one
another. You will forever be my best
friend. I've always loved are late
night talks we're we talk about
are problems and can reveal are
problems. Even though I've got on your
nerves (and you've gotten on mine) we
will never part ways. are you are truly
the most intelligent, mature GIN I've ever met.
I am truly proud to call you my
best friend!!

Love

Dear Mrs.

I would like to thank you for all of the things that you have helped me through and all of the fun times we have shared with each other. I also want to say you are like my second mom (God, I just noticed that sounded creepy) whenever my real one isn't around. Now that you have helped me with my fear of dogs, my mother

Positive Feelings about the Present (Meetings 4, 5, 6, & 7)

Goal:

- *Engagement in activities that are enjoyed through identifying, interpreting, and tapping into strengths*

Activities:

- Acts of Kindness
 - *Perform 5 acts of kindness (i.e., behaviors that benefit others at the cost of one's time and effort) during one designated day per week over at least two weeks*
- Character Strengths
 - *Identify signature character strengths (i.e., moral virtues) and use one in a new way each day for a week (and repeat process for at least one more week)*

Acts of Kindness

- Make dinner for family
Dinner: Pasta Salad with dressing on the side
- Thank eye doctor for new glasses
- Helped mother with groceries
- Put away groceries
- Gardened with mother

	Day of the Week: <u>Thursday</u> Date: <u>21</u>
Acts of Kindness	APologized to a friend for an something I did.
	helped mom by cleaning the whole house without her asking.
	Spent time with my sister
	Gave advice to a friend who was going through a hard time
	help set up a baby showers.

Character Strengths



Definition

- Positive traits, based on virtues that can be cultivated over time

Rationale

- Good character permits access to positive emotions
- Good character defines individuals within positive institutions

Goal

- Identify signature strengths
- Use them in new ways across domains

VIA Classification of Strengths

Wisdom and Knowledge

Creativity

Curiosity

Open-mindedness

Love of learning

Perspective

Courage

Authenticity

Bravery

Perseverance

Zest

Humanity

Kindness

Love

Social Intelligence

Justice

Fairness

Leadership

Teamwork

Temperance

Forgiveness

Modesty

Prudence

Self-Regulation

Transcendence

Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence

Gratitude

Hope

Humor

Religiosity

Identifying Strengths with the VIA Framework of 24 Character Strengths

VIA Survey of Character Strengths

- www.authentic happiness.org
- For adults
- 240 questions
 - e.g., I have taken frequent stands in the face of strong opposition. (“very much like me” to “very much unlike me”)

VIA Strength Survey for Children

- www.authentic happiness.org
- Ages 8 to 17
- 198 questions
 - e.g., I stick up for other kids who are being treated unfairly (“very much like me” to “not like me at all”)
- Create a screen name for student through your log-in

VIA Youth Survey

- www.viacharacter.org
- brief version of the original VIA Strength Survey for Children
- 96 items (4 items that load most strongly on each strength)
 - Fewer reverse-scored items

Classification of 24 Character Strengths

1. **Wisdom and knowledge**—cognitive strengths in the acquisition and use of knowledge

- Creativity*: Thinking of novel and productive ways to do things
- 5 *Curiosity*: Taking an interest in all of ongoing experience
- Love of learning*: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge
- Open-mindedness*: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides
- Perspective*: Being able to provide wise counsel to others

2. **Courage**—emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal

- 4 *Authenticity*: Speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way
- Bravery*: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain
- Persistence*: Finishing what one starts
- 2 *Zest*: Approaching life with excitement and energy

3. **Humanity**—interpersonal strengths that involve “tending and befriending” others

- 3 *Kindness*: Doing favors and good deeds for others
- Love*: Valuing close relations with others
- Social intelligence*: Being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others

4. **Justice**—civic strengths that underlie healthy community life

- Fairness*: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice
- Leadership*: Organizing group activities and seeing that they happen
- Teamwork*: Working well as member of a group or team

5. **Temperance**—strengths that protect against excess

- Forgiveness*: Forgiving those who have done wrong
- Modesty*: Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves
- Prudence*: Being careful about one’s choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
- Self-regulation*: Regulating what one feels and does

6. **Transcendence**—strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

- Appreciation of beauty & excellence*: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life
- Gratitude*: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen
- Hope*: Expecting the best and working to achieve it
- 1 *Humor*: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people
- Religiousness*: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life

[Log out](#)

Authentic Happiness

VIA Survey of Character Strengths

Here are your scores on the VIA Survey of Character Strengths. For how to interpret and use your scores, see the book [Authentic Happiness](http://www.amazon.com/Authentic-Happiness-Psychology-Potential-Fulfillment/dp/0743222989/) (<http://www.amazon.com/Authentic-Happiness-Psychology-Potential-Fulfillment/dp/0743222989/>).

The ranking of the strengths reflects your overall ratings of yourself on the 24 strengths in the survey, how much of each strength you possess. Your top five are the ones to pay attention to and find ways to use more often.

Your Top Strength

Honesty, authenticity, and genuineness -

You are an honest person, not only by speaking the truth but by living your life in a genuine and authentic way. You are down to earth and without pretense; you are a "real" person.

Your Second Strength

Bravery and valor -

You are a courageous person who does not shrink from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain. You speak up for what is right even if there is opposition. You act on your convictions.

Strength #3

Fairness, equity, and justice -

Treating all people fairly is one of your abiding principles. You do not let your personal feelings bias your decisions about other people. You give everyone a chance.

Strength #4

Industry, diligence, and perseverance -

You work hard to finish what you start. No matter the project, you "get it out the door" in timely fashion. You do not get distracted when you work, and you take satisfaction in completing tasks.

Strength #5

Judgment, critical thinking, and open-mindedness -

Thinking things through and examining them from all sides are important aspects of who you are. You do not jump to conclusions, and you rely only on solid evidence to make your decisions. You are able to change your mind.

[Show More](#)

Student Sample of Character Strengths Survey Results



TEST CENTER | QUESTIONNAIRES | INITIATIVES | RESOURCES

VIA Strength Survey for Children

Your Top Strength

Spirituality, sense of purpose, and faith
✓ You have strong and coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe. You know where you fit in the larger scheme. Your beliefs shape your actions and are a source of comfort to you.

Your Second Strength

Appreciation of beauty and excellence
✓ You notice and appreciate beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.

Your Third Strength

Creativity, ingenuity, and originality
Thinking of new ways to do things is a crucial part of who you are. You are never content with doing something the conventional way if a better way is possible.

Your Fourth Strength

Hope, optimism, and future-mindedness
You expect the best in the future, and you work to achieve it. You believe that the future is something that you can control.

Your Fifth Strength

Zest, enthusiasm, and energy
Regardless of what you do, you approach it with excitement and energy. You never do anything halfway or halfheartedly. For you, life is an adventure.

New Uses of My Second Signature Strength

Signature Strength: Curiosity			
Day of the Week	Life Domain	New Use	Feelings
Tuesday	Friends	Take interest in Friends	wasn't awkward <u>Savor:</u>
Wednesday	Friends	Have adventures with Friends	was fun <u>Savor:</u>
Thursday	Friends	ask about interests to friends	was interesting <u>Savor:</u>
Friday	school	ASK Serious questions	Helped out alot <u>Savor:</u>
Saturday	Home	ASK to help out around house.	felt good <u>Savor:</u>
Sunday	Home	ASK Parents about there day	made them happy <u>Savor:</u>
Monday	School	ASK questions if ^{having trouble} needed	got help. <u>Savor:</u>

Curiosity

Home

~~ASK~~ ASK to help out

ASK STUFF

Friendship

ASK how Here doing

Fake intrest in them

School

ASK more questions

ASK serious question

Positive Feelings about the Future (Meetings 8 & 9)



Goal:

- *Creating a positive framework for explanation of current life events and expectation of future events*

Activities:

- Hope
 - *Write about future goals and ways to achieve them each night for a week*
- Optimistic Thinking
 - *Make attributions of permanency to positive life events while viewing negative life event as temporary*
 - *See positive situations as universal and negative ones as specific*
 - *Personalize responsibility for positive events*

Hope and Goal Fulfillment



Definition

- Purposeful steps taken to turn beliefs into reality

Rationale

- Increase self-efficacy beliefs (via mastery experiences) and purpose in life

Goal

- Create list of large-scale goals to achieve
- Break goals into smaller targets
- Identify multiple strategies to use that week
- Monitor progress toward a goal with goal-attainment scaling

Me at my best in the Future

My best possible self is when I'm about 30 and I am a pediatrician with a fiancé or newly wed husband. I will live in a two story house with a big backyard. I will get to be a pediatrician by doing good in school and getting my Bachelor pre med degree, finish medical school and do 3 years of residency. I'm not sure where I would live because I have family all around the world but I would like to be near atleast one of them. I will also travel to a new place every 3 months, so I can see the world. I will start planning to have kids in about a year or two. I will have gone to either Brown, Clarkson, or USF and I will go to highschool at Robinson ib and get good grades in the ib program. I will only do 1 sport so that I have more time to study. I will also take the SAT twice in junior year and senior year.

My best possible self in the future is when im 27. I m living with my 2 best friends in an apartment in New York. I have a job working on SNL. Everyone knows who I am when I walk down the street. For years I have been working with an improv group and I m one of the best actors ever. I started in high school doing live theater then I just fell in love with live acting. When I was out of high school (just for fun) I tryed out for SNL. And whe

Activity: Best Possible Self in the Future



- I would like you to think about your life in the future. Take a few minutes to imagine that everything has gone as well as it possibly could. You have worked hard and succeeded at accomplishing all of your life goals.
- Now write about what you imagined.

Optimism



Definition

- Positive and hopeful expectations in a given condition or in general

Rationale

- Predicts better physical and mental health, better coping
- Can be taught (learned optimism)

Goal

- Attribute good events to factors that are permanent, widespread, and internal
- Attribute bad events to factors that are temporary, specific, and external

Examples		Practice	
<i>Good Events</i>	<i>Bad Events</i>	Event	Optimistic Thought
Permanent	Temporary		
I made the goal because I'm talented in sports.	Even Beckham would have missed that one- I'll probably make the next goal I try for.	I was invited to the biggest party of the year. Good	I must be a nice person to everyone. I helped set-up the party
Widespread	Specific		
I do well in my classes because I check my agenda and do my homework after school.	I made a poor grade on my math test because I did not understand the ideas that were taught when I was out sick.	My good friend hasn't called me back in days. Bad	She doesn't know my phone number and probably hasn't had time (parents' fault!)
I do well in my classes because I check my agenda and do my homework after school.	I made a poor grade on my math test because I did not understand the ideas that were taught when I was out sick.	My parents increased my allowance. Good	I help out in the house, am kind to my sister, and am trustworthy... good child!
Take Credit	Blame Other Sources		
I won the contest because of my effort and talent in creative writing.	I lost the contest because I needed better materials to prepare myself.	My teacher said my science group did the best in the class. Good	I am smart in science and put much effort into class.
I won the contest because of my effort and talent in creative writing.	I lost the contest because I needed better materials to prepare myself.	I had to finish a giant assignment in three days and I got a D on it. Bad	I didn't have enough time to do my best, I'll get an A or B next time with more planning.

My Optimistic Thoughts

Date	Situation	Good or Bad Event	Optimistic Thought*	
4/17	I got 100% on my science test.	Good	I studied and worked for my grade	take credit
4/17	My book was overdue.	Bad	I've been busy, it won't happen again	temp.
4/18	Enjoyed myself at friend's house	Good	I was outgoing and got to know people	take credit
4/20	People I saw said I look nice.	Good	I clean up well.	perm.
4/20	Didn't get to go to friend's house	Bad	Mom made previous plans	specific, blame others
4/21	My group finished project	Good	We worked long and hard	take credit
4/21	I got placed in middle row on risers	Bad	My dad is short	blame others
4/22	My team won softball game	Good	My team really is trying	take credit

*Optimistic thoughts for good events are widespread, permanent, and take credit. Optimistic thoughts for bad events are temporary,

Evaluation Process: Participants

Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample (N = 42)

Characteristic	Whole School (N = 928) %	Total (N = 42) %	Intervention Group (n = 21) %	Wait-List Group (n = 21) %
Gender				
Male	49.50	50.00	42.86	57.14
Female	50.50	50.00	57.14	42.86
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch				
Not Eligible	73.30	78.57	76.19	80.95
Eligible	26.70	21.43	23.81	19.05
Ethnicity				
Hispanic, Latino, or other Spanish origin	12.00	21.43	23.81	19.05
Not Hispanic	88.00	78.57	76.19	80.95
Race				
White	74.40	83.33	80.95	85.71
African-American	4.80	9.52	4.76	14.29
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.40	2.38	4.76	0.00
Other race	5.40	4.76	9.52	0.00
Family Composition				
Married Parents	n/a	43.90	42.86	45.00
Parents not Married	n/a	56.10	57.14	55.00

Note. n/a = not applicable. Data are reflective of the 2013-2014 school year.

Outcome Research: Procedures

Screening

(December 2013)

- All students at partnering school completed BMSLSS
- Accessed 7th grade students' (N = 298) BMSLSS data
 - 111 students identified for recruitment
- Parent consent forms distributed
- Incentives provided to facilitate return of consent forms

Random Assignment

(January 2014)

- Recruitment process completed
- 42 students received parental consent and provided assent to participate
- Students completed baseline measures
- Students randomly assigned to intervention or wait-list control group stratified on life satisfaction scores

Intervention

(February to May 2014)

- 10-Week PPI and 2 booster sessions implemented
- Students completed self-report measures 3 more times
 - Immediate post-intervention (April)
 - Five-week follow-up (May)
 - Seven-week Follow-up (May)

Data Analyses

- Five piecewise models:
 - Life Satisfaction
 - Positive Affect
 - Negative Affect
 - Internalizing Problems
 - Externalizing Problems

Method: Measures



Screening Phase

**All Four Time Points
(Baseline, Post-Intervention,
Follow-up 1, Follow-up 2)**

Brief Multidimensional
Students' Life Satisfaction
Scale (BMSLSS; Seligson
et al., 2003)

Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS;
Huebner, 1991)

Positive and Negative Affect Scale for
Children (PANAS-C; Laurent et al., 1999)

- Negative affect
- Positive affect

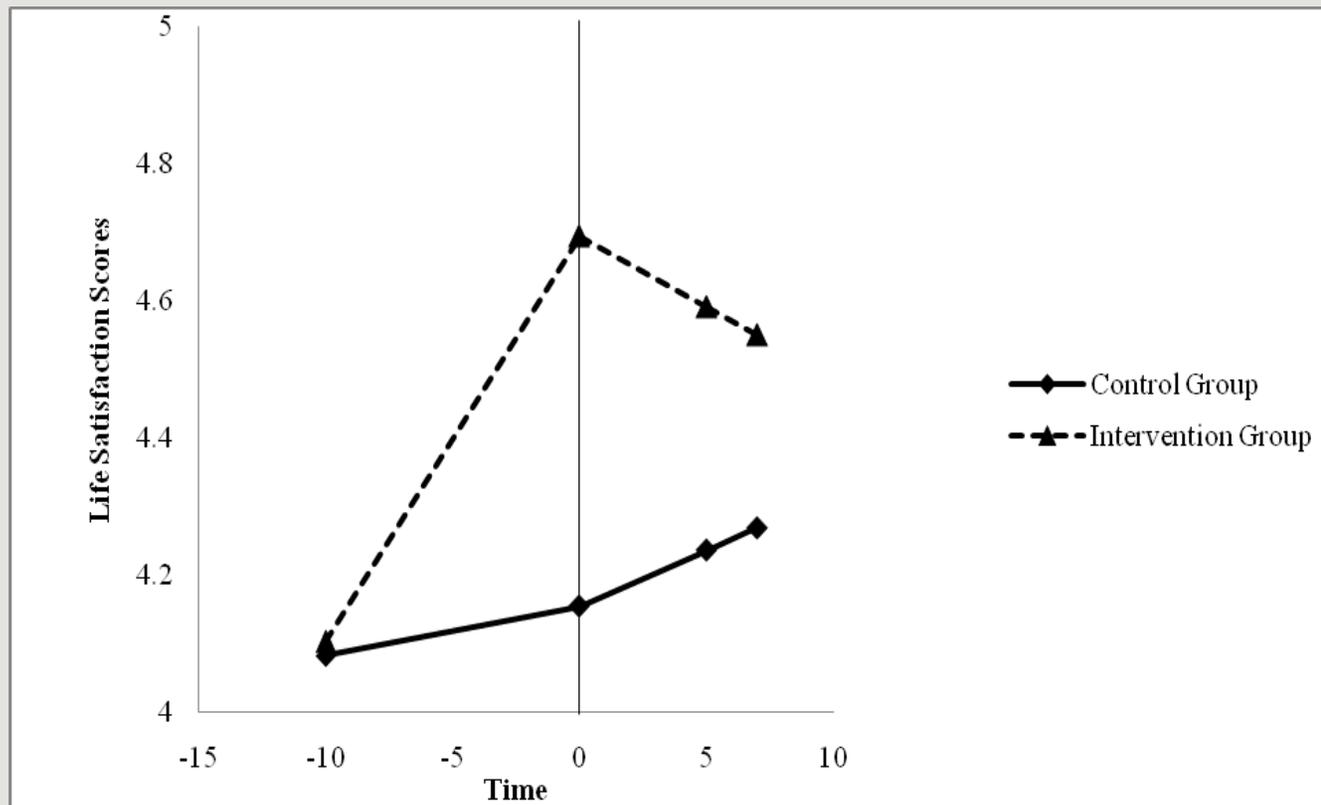
Brief Problem Monitor-Youth (BPM-Y;
Achenbach, McConaughy et al., 2011)

- Internalizing Problems composite
- Externalizing Problems composite

Group Differences and Growth in Life Satisfaction



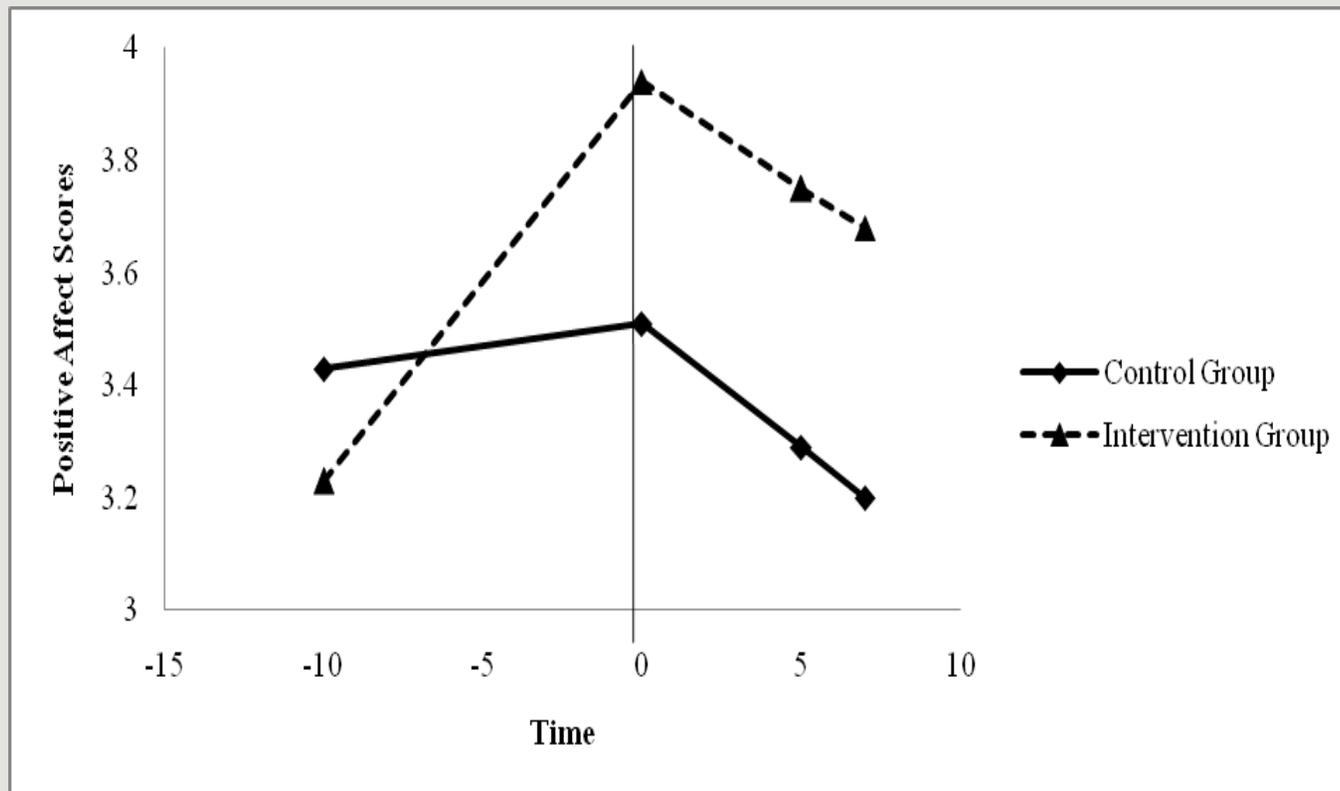
Piecewise Model of Life Satisfaction



Group Differences and Growth in Positive Affect



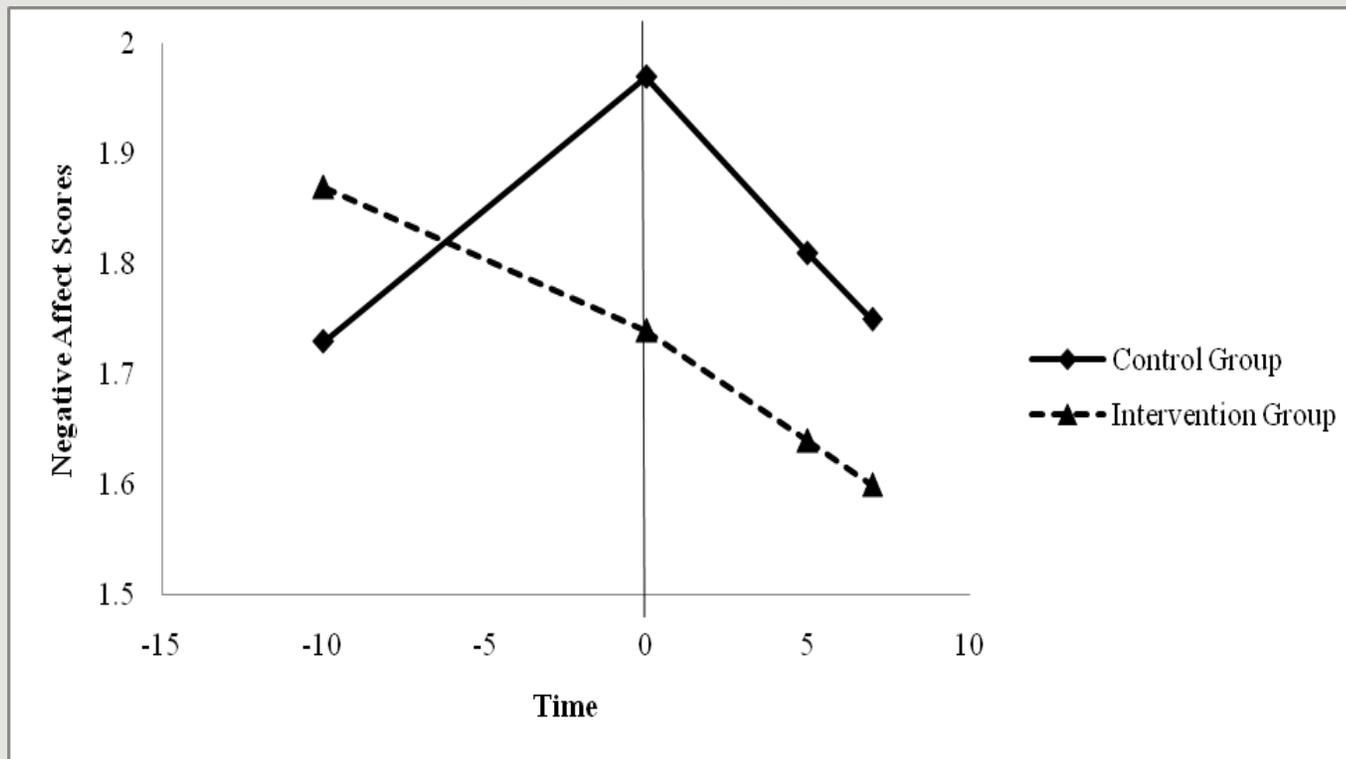
Piecewise Model of Positive Affect



Group Differences and Growth in Negative Affect



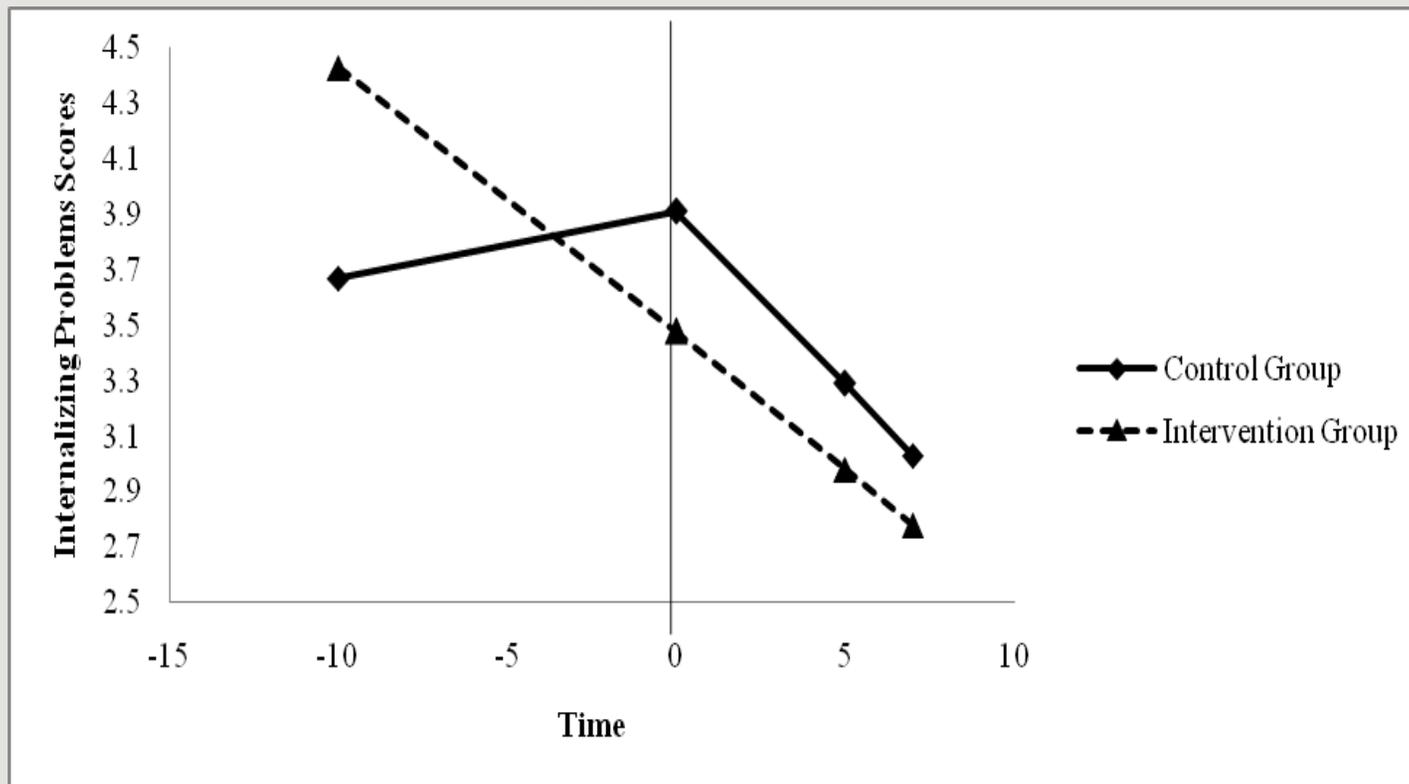
Piecewise Model of Negative Affect



Group Differences and Growth in Internalizing Problems



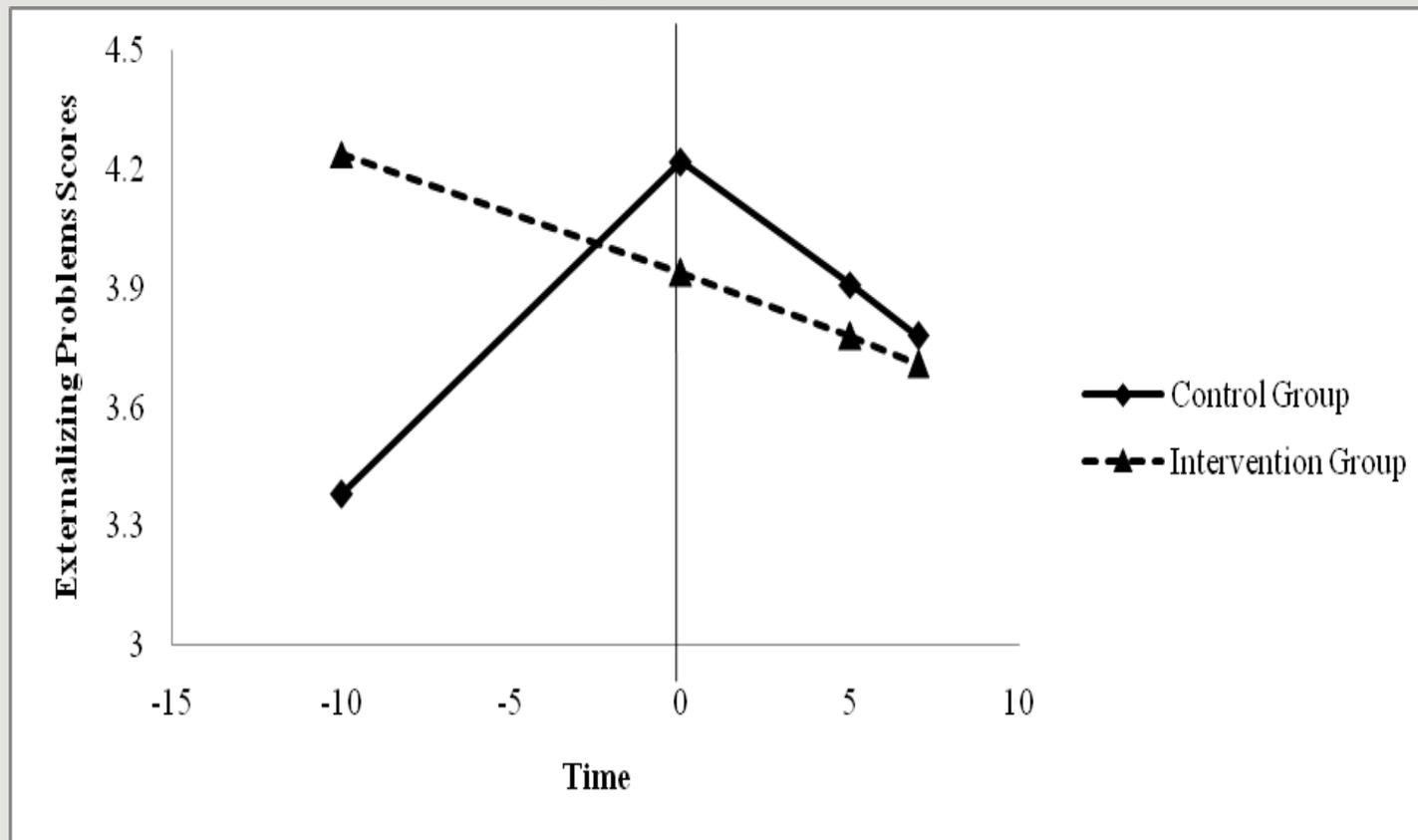
Piecewise Model of Internalizing Problems



Group Differences and Growth in Externalizing Problems



Piecewise Model of Externalizing Problems



Effect Sizes

(.20 = small; .50 = medium; .80 = large)

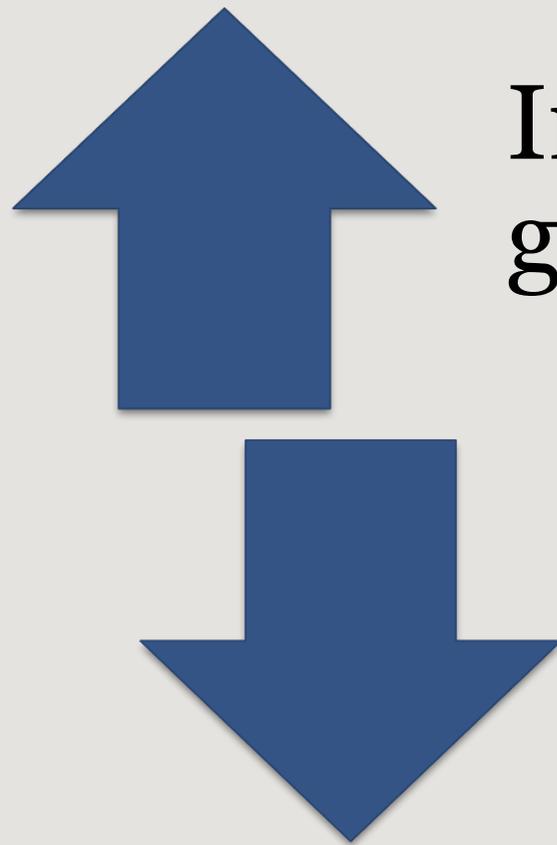


	Effect Size (<i>d</i>)	
	Post-Intervention	Follow-Up
Global Life Satisfaction	0.53**	0.27
Positive Affect	0.76**	0.81**
Negative Affect	0.48**	0.37*
Internalizing Psychopathology	0.37*	0.32*
Externalizing Psychopathology	0.37*	0.30

* $p < .10$, two-tailed. ** $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Group Differences in Potential Mediators of Change: Gratitude

- 7-Week Follow-Up:



Intervention
group

Control
group

- for the life I have
- the friends I have
- people to trust and I can rely too
- caring family
- people that care

Dear

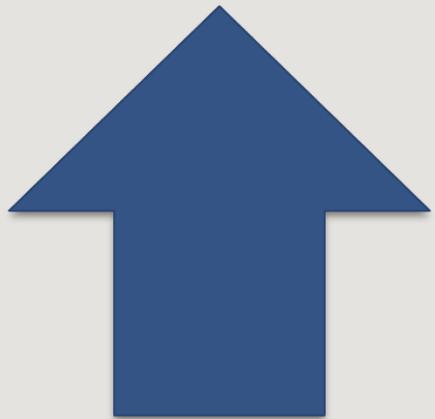
I just wanted to write this because to prove to you or show you what I'm grateful for about you. First of all you have helped me most of the time when I asked and I know it looks like I don't thank you for it but I will do and without that help I probably wouldn't be able to do a lot of the things I do now you and you all also inspired me to join band it's hard but I just really like it. So thank you for everything you have done for me.

Love,

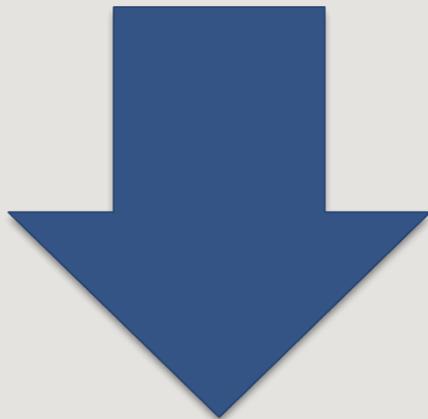
Group Differences in Potential Mediators of Change: Hope



- Post-Intervention and 7-Week Follow-Up:



Intervention
group



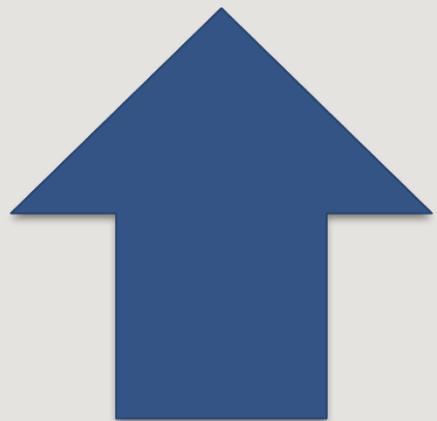
Control
group

I look like the best Nba player in the whole Nba I was 18 and I was meeting a lot of my goals like making my first shot and making the all star team. Also I thought of me playing along side with lebron and Kevin Durant and we were the big three and no one could beat us. Also I thought of me signing a shoe endorsement with Jordan and me being the face of Jordan. I got to the Nba because I was the best Freshman in college and all the scouts love to see me play so they thought I was ready for the nba so they asked me questions about the team I would love play for and they asked me if I would like to be drafted. I also had an agent wich was my friend that I knew since 6 grade. I got to college by playing really well in high school and I got a lot of Schorships from a lot of good colleges and I decider to go to USF with my friends.

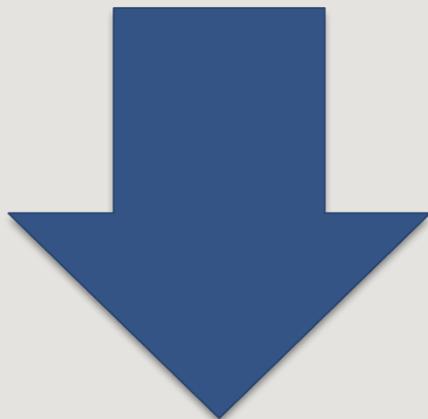
Group Differences in Potential Mediators of Change: Parent Support



- 5-Week Follow-Up:



Intervention
group



Control
group

Parental Involvement



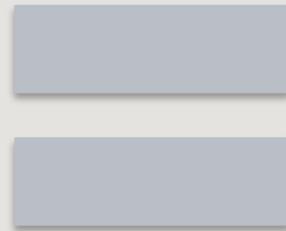
- 67% of parents attended psychoeducational session at beginning of intervention
- Regarding extent of weekly parental involvement in program-related topics and activities, parents received a mean score of 22.90 on a scale from 10 to 30 (actual range = 15 to 30).

Parent Sentiments



- “I appreciate being kept apprised of all activities, and feel it has made [my child] think about her own responsibility for happiness. She actually does seem happier! But more than that seems to realize that she has the power to effect change for herself.”
- Another parent shared, “I feel my daughter...is benefitting from this "positive" experience. Thank you for including her.”

Group Differences in Potential Mediators of Change: Classmate Support



Mean Scores in Potential Mediators of Change Over Time



Variable	<i>n</i>	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
Control Group					
Gratitude	21	5.19	5.17	4.87	4.97
Hope	21	3.73	3.75	4.07	3.91
Parental Support	21	4.35	4.13	3.92	4.31
Classmate Support	21	3.38	3.79	3.45	3.81
Intervention Group					
Gratitude	21	5.21	5.63	5.34	5.62
Hope	21	3.93	4.64	4.40	4.65
Parental Support	21	4.37	4.64	4.64	4.70
Classmate Support	21	3.71	3.96	3.83	3.88

Treatment Acceptability



Students expressed interest in and enjoyment of intervention sessions

Students enjoyed working closely with the co-facilitators and were grateful for the opportunity to be part of the program

Variability in the most and least preferred activities

Several parents commented positively about the intervention

Summary of Key Findings

Short-Term

- The addition of the parent component may have more benefit than a solely youth-focused PPI by significantly and positively impacting all components of SWB
- The impact of the PPI on internalizing and externalizing psychopathology symptoms is promising

Long-Term

- PPI associated with sustained high levels of positive affect almost 2 months post-intervention, but positive impacts on other indicators of SWB as well as psychopathology were not maintained
- Impact of booster sessions is unclear

Implications for Practice



This study provides school psychologists with an additional data-based intervention for improving students' subjective well-being

- Significantly and positively impacted life satisfaction and mood in the short-term
- Promising trends supporting maintenance of gains (particularly in positive affect), even with the impending end of the school year (possible complicating factor given intensive testing, etc.)

School psychologists should strive to include parents when implementing PPIs in the future

Interventions with PPIs targeting youth alone may not suffice to significantly impact youth psychopathology

Booster sessions may not be as beneficial as intended, but implementing them may still be an efficient use of time and resources

Recommendations for Future Applications of Intervention with Adolescents



Begin earlier in the school year to avoid conflicts with class demands and testing at the end of the school year

Ongoing and collaborative consultation between the mental health staff and teachers

Hold booster, or follow-up, meetings to review happiness-increasing strategies and maintain boosts in SWB as needed

Continue to regularly correspond and involve parents in the PPI

Additional Resources



- authentichappiness.org
- Furlong, M. J., Gilman, R., & Huebner, E. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology in Schools* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic Happiness*. New York: Simon & Shuster
- Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness: A new approach to getting the life you want*. Penguin Books.
- Suldo, S. M. (2016). *Promoting students' happiness: Positive psychology prevention and intervention strategies in school-based practice*. New York: Guilford (Practical Intervention in the Schools Series).

Questions and Comments?



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