

Llewellyn Ellardus Van Zyl
Sebastian Rothmann Sr. *Editors*

Theoretical Approaches to Multi-Cultural Positive Psychological Interventions

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Editors

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Preface

Positive psychological interventions (PPIs) have emerged as popular mechanisms to facilitate the development of positive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors across functional discipline domains. In recent years, the applicability of PPIs has transposed the boundaries of clinical practice, into a wide array of complementary domains such as law, education, business, and even design sciences such as architecture. These interventions target the enhancement of positive psychological capacities (e.g., strength identification and use, high-performance learning, appreciative design, and job crafting) in order to not only improve individual functioning, well-being, and the treatment of various forms of psychopathology, but also enhance team functioning/performance, organizational growth, and community development. Albeit its importance, little research has been done on how the content of PPIs should be designed to be applicable to multi-cultural contexts. The purpose of this volume is to provide theoretical perspectives on and approaches to the development or enhancement of positive psychological capacities within multi-cultural contexts. Specifically, the aim is to present theoretical frameworks for the identification, development, and optimization of positive psychological capacities through a contemporary, multi-cultural, and multi-disciplinary lens.

This volume provides 24 seminal papers on approaches to the development of positive psychological capacities within multi-cultural contexts. The focus is on presenting cutting-edge theoretical advancements in the content of PPIs. However, it also addresses the unique focus which PPIs should have in order to be useful within multi-cultural contexts. The volume aims to provide a multi-disciplinary view of PPI frameworks, which is lacking in the current positive psychological lexicon.

Chapter “[Moving Forward in Fostering Humour: Towards Training Lighter Forms of Humour in Multicultural Contexts](#)” reviews forms of humor, how humor can serve virtues, humor and well-being, and humor interventions. It outlines important future directions of humor intervention research. Chapter “[Taking a Strengths-Based Approach to Address Discrimination Experiences in a Clinical Context](#)” investigates how positive psychological practices can enhance cultural competence in a clinical context. It highlights how positive psychological

assessments and interventions help clients offset the effects of discrimination in building a culturally informed sense of resilience and well-being. Chapter “[Self-determination and Positive Psychology Interventions: An Extension of the Positive Activity Model in the Context of Unemployment](#)” contends that PPIs should be developed for and implemented in the unemployment context because they may facilitate the well-being of unemployed people. The chapter focuses on how the effectiveness of PPIs can be enhanced by using theoretical frameworks, such as the self-determination theory. Chapter “[Creating and Disseminating Positive Psychology Interventions That Endure: Lessons from the Past, Gazing Toward the Future](#)” reviews the history of the development of several positive psychology interventions. It reports specifically on forgiveness interventions as a case study. Chapter “[The Potential of Job Demands-Resources Interventions in Organizations](#)” investigates the motivational potential of job demands-resources interventions from both an organizational (top-down) and an employee (bottom-up) perspective and their effectiveness.

Chapter “[The Effectiveness of Positive Psychology Interventions in the Workplace: A Theory-Driven Evaluation Approach](#)” synthesizes the empirical evidence demonstrating the efficacy of PPIs using a theory-driven evaluation (TDE) approach. TDE refers to the systematic use of substantive knowledge (i.e., social science theory, stakeholder theory, or some combination of both) about the intervention under consideration to improve, produce knowledge, or determine its merit, value, and worth. Chapter “[The Theory of Planned Behaviour as a Frame for Job Crafting: Explaining and Enhancing Proactive Adjustment at Work](#)” proposes the theory of planned behavior (TPB) as a framework to design positive psychology interventions aiming to enhance adaptive job crafting behaviors. Chapter “[Forgiveness Interventions from a Multicultural Perspective: Potential Applications and Concerns](#)” provides a systematic review of the literature on forgiveness in multi-cultural contexts with a focus on three dimensions of identity: race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender. Chapter “[Positive Leadership: Moving Towards an Integrated Definition and Interventions](#)” outlines the findings of a review of the literature on conceptualizations, definitions, descriptions, behaviors, characteristics, or principles of positive leadership. Chapter “[Virtue Interventions and Interracial Interactions](#)” examines how PPIs, and specifically virtue interventions, could increase emotion regulation capabilities in response to race-based stress, alleviate threat, and result in higher engagement in interracial contact. Chapter “[Exploring Positive Psychological Interventions as Race, Gender and Disability Intersect](#)” applies a positive psychology framework useful for counseling individuals toward healthy social identity development with the intersectionality of race and ethnicity with gender and disability.

Chapter “[Adventure Therapy and Positive Psychology: A Match Made in ... Nature](#)” introduces the deliberate and strategic combination of adventure therapy and positive psychology as one possible answer to the World Health Organization’s call for the development of novel, integrated interventions that develop with populations, strive to both prevent disease and facilitate mental health, and make optimal use of resources within the person and his/her environment.

Chapter “[High Performance Learning: Towards a Theory for Optimising Potential in Multi-cultural Education Contexts](#)” elaborates on the conceptualization of multi-cultural education as the holistic development of potential and critical abilities of all students regardless of their differences. It also scrutinizes high-performance learning (HPL) theory to identify beneficial, practical pathways for achieving higher levels of human potential and enabling all students to benefit from positive education interventions in multi-cultural contexts. Chapter “[Well-Being at Work: Applying Dynamics of Affect in Positive Psychological Interventions](#)” focuses on how dynamic properties of affect can be applied in PPIs with the aim of improving employee well-being at work. Chapter “[Gratitude in Sport: Positive Psychology for Athletes and Implications for Mental Health, Well-Being, and Performance](#)” investigates the potential benefits of gratitude cultivation and expression in the sports context, as it pertains to the positive mental health and well-being of individual athletes and teams. Chapter “[Is Coaching a Positive Psychology Intervention? Exploring the Relationships Between Positive Psychology, Applied Positive Psychology, Coaching Psychology, and Coaching](#)” explores the relationships between positive psychology, applied positive psychology, coaching, and coaching psychology. It draws lessons about how positive psychology interacts with kinship fields, and what it means to identify something as a positive psychology intervention.

Chapter “[Giving Positive Psychology Interventions Depth: A Jungian Approach](#)” shows how two seemingly different approaches, positive psychology and depth psychology with different theoretical foundations and different methodologies, have the potential to complement, enhance, and enrich each other, especially regarding interventions. Chapter “[The Origin, Development, Validation and Application of the Positivity Projective and Enactment Technique](#)” provides an overview of the current state of the positivity projection and enactment technique. It reflects on the experience of flourishing in the form of post-traumatic growth. Chapter “[Positive Arts Interventions: Creative Tools Helping Mental Health Students Flourish](#)” highlights the extent toward which positive arts interventions could be employed to form cultural identity, identify character strengths, gain insight into creative self-care interests, and examine career anchors. Chapter “[Positive Self-leadership: A Framework for Professional Leadership Development](#)” reports on the development of positive self-leadership and focuses on the optimization of character strengths, interests and aspirations, abilities and talents, as well as environmental strengths. Chapter “[Strengths Based Coaching—A Positive Psychology Intervention](#)” reviews three popular questionnaires for strengths assessment and in coaching and explores positive psychology coaching as an intervention using questionnaires and strengths cards, before reviewing the research evidence and opportunities for future research. Chapter “[Building Bridges Through Talk: Exploring the Role of Dialogue in Developing Bridging Social Capital](#)” examines the role of dialogue in building connections across sociocultural and ideological divides by exploring the crossroads of two related yet separated areas of scholarship, namely social capital and dialogue studies. Chapter “[SOAR: A Framework to Build Positive Psychological Capacity in Strategic Thinking, Planning, and Leading](#)”

introduces SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results), an evidence-based framework that is a profoundly positive approach to strategic thinking, planning, and leading used by hundreds of international organizations to build strategic capacity at the individual, team, and the organization level. Finally, Chapter “[Brief Positive Psychological Interventions Within Multi-cultural Organizational Contexts: A Systematic Literature Review](#)” provides a systematic literature review on multi-cultural BPPIs within organizational contexts and to present an overview of advances to date.

Through integrating the knowledge generated in the 24 chapters in this manuscript, it is clear that a profound amount of work has been done to professionalize the practical application of positive psychology during the last two decades. PPI research has evolved from its rudimentary beginnings in 2001, into a fully fledged subdiscipline of positive psychology. This subdiscipline merges the scientific curiosity of researchers, with real-world problems, in order to make a practical difference to the lives of individuals, teams, organizations, families, and societies. We hope that the 24 theoretical approaches in this book will provide consumers with practical guidelines on how to capitalize on the power of positive psychology.

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Moving Forward in Fostering Humour: Towards Training Lighter Forms of Humour in Multicultural Contexts



Jennifer Hofmann and Willibald Ruch

Abstract The following theoretical position paper has the aim to outline two important future directions of humour intervention research. Firstly, existing humour trainings have not differentiated explicitly between different uses of humour or humour that may be virtuous or not. Within the realm of Positive Psychology, all virtuous forms of humour need to be identified and interventions developed that aim at fostering these benevolent/lighter forms. Secondly, most humour trainings have been adapted and conducted in one cultural context. Future trainings should consider cross-cultural perspectives to allow for comparative research and practice. Thus, the current paper first gives an overview on the extant literature on the distinction between lighter and darker forms of humour, as well as showing how humour can serve the virtues proposed by Peterson and Seligman (2004). Then, we elaborate on the findings on humour and well-being, as well as findings on existing humour interventions. The second section starts with open questions and hypotheses on how a new generation of trainings targeting lighter forms of humour could look like. Then, we discuss (potential) cultural differences in humour and how this may affect the design of interventions. When aiming for cross-cultural adaptations of the same humour program, several challenges have to be overcome, such as the term “humour” not having the same meaning in every culture, and cultural rules on what can be laughed at.

Keywords Benevolent humour · Intervention · Laughter · Positive emotion · Sense of humour · Training · Well-being

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1 Introduction

It was shown that the cultivation of humour can lead to increases in well-being and to the fostering of one's sense of humour or humour as a character strength (e.g., Gander, Proyer, Ruch, & Wyss, 2013; Hofmann, Heintz, Pang, & Ruch, 2019; Mesmer-Magnus, Glew, & Viswesvaran, 2012; Proyer, Ruch, & Buschor, 2013; Ruch, Hofmann, Rusch, & Stolz, 2018; Ruch & Hofmann, 2017 for an overview). Moreover, humour has been coined a social lubricant (cf. Glenn, 2003), and may help to foster personal bonds and sustain friendships (for an overview, see Martin, 2007). Humour may help to deal with aversive situations and conditions, one's own weaknesses and the imperfection of the world, humans and oneself (see McGhee, 2010). Moreover, humour helps to cope with stress and even serves to correct and address problems and wrongdoings (see Ruch & Heintz, 2016).

Yet, not all humour or humour use is beneficial. More concretely, a person may habitually enjoy and engage in humour that has positive social functions, serves a virtuous purpose or serves to induce positive emotions in others, *or* a person may enjoy, utter and seek out for amusing things that may include aggressive elements (e.g., Ferguson & Ford, 2008), are derogatory, ostracize others, put them down or are a means of expressing *schadenfreude* (malicious pleasure; e.g., Hofmann, Platt, & Ruch, 2017).

As a consequence of this, a distinction between “laughing with” and “laughing at” exists. Related distinctions of “positive versus negative” humour styles, “adaptive versus maladaptive” styles or “lighter versus darker” came into use. These distinctions are typically supported by correlations with different outcomes (e.g., Martin, 2007; Ruch, Heintz, Wagner, Platt, & Proyer, 2018). Thus, differentiating “good/lighter” and “bad/darker humour” seems essential when investigating the consequences of humour for the individual and the interaction partners. Supportive of this, Papousek and colleagues (2017) reported that the use of “lighter” versus “darker” forms of humour may even be rooted in the brain (for individuals using lighter styles, areas linked to the “reward system” are more active when hearing others happy laughter as opposed to others crying; Papousek et al., 2017). Consequently, this knowledge should affect the designing of interventions to foster humour. While it has been pointed out before (see Hofmann et al., 2019) that such a binary classification into lighter versus darker makes a rather coarse distinction of a complex phenomenon (as most humour is neutral; Beermann & Ruch, 2009a) it is still useful for looking at forms of humour and humour uses that should feed into Positive Psychology Interventions (PPI) on humour.

We argue that lighter forms of humour that have a good intention and may even serve a virtuous purpose are the forms of humour that should be directly fostered in humour trainings, leading to the development of new PPIs. Thus far, no scientifically evaluated humour intervention directly makes this distinction between forms and uses of humour. This new generation of humour trainings should further be aware of cultural differences and also be sensitive to different perceptions and uses of humour in varying cultures. This second consideration is not targeted in current discourse,

as most available trainings and evaluations have been done in one cultural context only.

Thus, the current chapter first gives an overview on the state-of-the-art on the distinction between lighter and darker forms of humour¹ within current conceptualizations of sense of humour and comic styles, as well as showing how humour can serve the virtues. Then, we elaborate on the findings on humour and well-being, as well as findings on existing humour interventions. The second section starts with open questions and hypotheses on how a new generation of trainings targeting lighter forms of humour and increasing the sensitivity for darker forms of humour could look like. Then, we discuss (potential) cultural differences in humour and how this may affect the design of interventions. When aiming for cross-cultural adaptations of the same humour program, several challenges have to be overcome, such as the term “humour” not having the same meaning in every culture, cultural rules on what can be laughed at, etc.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Humour

While humour is nowadays often used as an umbrella term for “everything funny and laughable” (e.g., Roeckelein, 2002), the term humour has undergone a long development with different meanings being assigned to it in different time periods. This evolution of the term includes that the use of the term has not always had the same valence. For the current review, ideas on the notion that some forms or uses of humour are good and adaptive are of particular interest. These ideas date back to ideas of Aristotle and in more recent times in the “humour and health/resilience” movement in applied fields, as well as a growing interest in this connection in research.

For Aristotle, humour may be a virtue if certain conditions are met: *Eutrapelia*, the virtuous form of humour is to joke and amuse without hurting (or to joke in a tactful way). More precisely, “ready wit” is moderation in the desire to amuse others, and the

¹The distinction between lighter and darker forms of humour as used in this chapter focuses on the *intention* of the person producing or uttering the humour for the following reasons: Somebody who produces humour may have a good intention or not. Within PPIs, humour trainings should focus on good-intended humour that aims at fostering positive emotions, relationships and good character (i.e., lighter styles of humour). Yet, whether this well-intended humour is received as such depends on the context and the receiver. Thus, even the best intended benevolent humorous remark could potentially be taken negatively under certain conditions (e.g., when the person the humour is addressed to has a fear of being laughed at, cf. Ruch, Hofmann, Platt, & Proyer, 2014 for a review)—but this is not under the humourist’s control. Therefore, classifying humour by its outcome would make any kind of classification attempt impossible, as consequences may vary with every change of condition, social context and receiver. For this reason, we focus on distinguishing lighter and darker forms of humour based on the intentions of the individuals producing and communicating the humour.

excess desire is buffoonery (amuse others too often, striving for laughter at all costs, laughing excessively, relentless mockery), and the deficient desire is boorishness (e.g., not getting involved in joking at all, feeling negatively about it). Yet, Aristotle's view remained a "minority opinion" throughout the coming centuries, with scholars mostly viewing laughter and humour as a negative/derogatory phenomenon. For example, Hobbes (1651/2010) argued in his *Leviathan* that the experience of "sudden glory" when perceiving somebody else as *less smart, beautiful, skilful*, etc. is a source of laughter (note that Hobbes wrote about laughter, not humour, and the two terms have long been used interchangeably). This idea later fed into a group of humour theories labelled "superiority theories of humour". They all imply that amusement arises from a comparison of ourselves to others, which are less fortunate and therefore become a target of laughter.

This notion greatly changed with the emergence of humanism (cf. Ruch, 2004). In this period, humour acquired an explicitly positive connotation and the idea developed that while laughing at the weak and unfortunate should be avoided ("bad humour" or "false wit"), humour should be the ability to laugh at the imperfect world and human nature ("good humour" or "true wit"). The term "good humour" later shortened to humour alone (see Rugenstein, 2014; Schmidt-Hidding, 1963). In the 19th century, the terms humour and wit were explicitly distinguished, with wit denoting cognitive capacity (that could be hurtful as well) and humour denoting an attitude or view of life grounded in a "sympathetic heart". Humour also became a cardinal virtue in England, among common sense, tolerance and compromise. Yet, the use of the term did not develop in other cultures in the same way, explaining why the term humour nowadays has multiple meanings across cultural groups. For example, the Anglo-American literature of more recent times suggests that humour may be used as an umbrella term for everything funny and laughable, including mockery, sarcasm and put-down humour. In the next section, more recent approaches to differentiate lighter and darker forms of humour are presented in more detail in order of appearance.

2.2 *How to Tell Lighter from Darker Forms of Humour*

2.2.1 Humour as a Character Strength

Peterson and Seligman (2004) included humour as one of the 24 character strengths in their Values in Action [VIA] Classification. They defined a humorous individual as "one who is skilled at laughing and gentle teasing, at bringing smiles to the faces of others, at seeing the light side, and at making (not necessarily telling) jokes" and therefore focusing "on those forms of humour that serve some moral good—by making the human condition more bearable by drawing attention to its contradictions, by sustaining good cheer in the face of despair, by building social bonds" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 530). This conceptualization is explicitly restricted to lighter forms and uses of humour. Thus, focusing on the character strength definition of

humour may be one way to disentangle lighter versus darker forms and uses of humour for interventions.

2.2.2 Humour Styles/Comic Styles

More recently, several attempts to classify lighter and darker forms of humour were put forward. First, Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir (2003) differentiated between humour styles that are adaptive and such that are maladaptive. This classification has become very popular in humour research as it attempts differentiating between humour that is supposedly “good” for the individual versus humour which has “bad effects”. Consequently, self-enhancing and affiliative humour styles are denoted to be adaptive; aggressive and self-defeating humour styles are denoted to be maladaptive. This is supported by the fact that the former two typically correlate with positive outcomes and the latter correlates with variables of a more negative connotation (e.g., Martin, 2007). Unfortunately, the measurement instrument to assess these humour styles shows a lack of construct and criterion validity, in particular with respect to the self-defeating humour style which might be overcome with a revision (e.g., Ruch & Heintz, 2017).

Looking at comic styles coming from a tradition of the aesthetics (cf. Schmidt-Hidding, 1963), Ruch and colleagues have put forward a model of eight comic styles that cover individual differences in humour (Ruch, Heintz, et al., 2018).² These comic styles are best seen as narrow traits and describe the habitual use of humour in everyday lives. Yet, they also cover ability aspects of humour and the link of humour use to virtuousness (with the latter being of particular interest). The model distinguishes among more cognitive and sophisticated styles, such as nonsense (going beyond logical boundaries) and wit (clever and spontaneous word-plays), as well as clearly lighter forms of humour, such as fun (good-natured jesting) and benevolent humour (tolerant, gentle and forgiving view on weaknesses and mistakes). The darker or more mockery-related styles include irony (saying the opposite of what is meant that is only understood by insiders), sarcasm (critical, biting remarks and *schadenfreude*), and cynicism (comments that question morality and hypocrisy). Satire/corrective humour (criticizing inadequacies with the aim to improve them) entails the potential inductions of negative affect and consequences in the target. It may not be clearly assigned to the darker styles, as the motivation behind the criticism is of virtuous nature (i.e., changing a status quo *for the better*).

A joint investigation of the two approaches yielded considerable redundancy (three styles where roughly interchangeable) so that right now it is safe to conclude that at least nine humour/comic styles can be distinguished (Heintz & Ruch, 2019). When relating the comic styles to the character strengths classification proposed by Peterson and Seligman (2004), benevolent humour and wit showed mostly positive correlations with the 24 character strengths proposed by the classification by Peterson and Seligman (2004), while sarcasm and cynicism showed mostly negative correlations.

²The term “comic styles” is used to acknowledge the origin of these eight humour styles.

Fun, wit and benevolent humour were most strongly positively correlated to humour as a character strength, followed by nonsense, satire/corrective humour and irony. Sarcasm and cynicism showed small but still significant correlations as well.

When looking at the strengths factors derived from the VIA-Inventory of Strengths (emotional, interpersonal, restraint, intellectual and theological strengths) and correlating them to the comic styles, following relationships were found (cf. Ruch, Heintz, et al., 2018) :

- Fun was found to correlate positively with emotional strengths and negatively with strengths of restraint
- Benevolent humour was strongly positively correlated with emotional strengths and positively related to intellectual strengths
- Wit and nonsense were positively correlated with emotional strengths and positively related to intellectual strengths (just as benevolent humour), but also showed a negative correlation with the strengths of restraint (just as fun)
- Satire/corrective humour correlated positively with emotional and intellectual strengths, as well as negatively with strengths of restraint
- In line with the expectations, irony, sarcasm and cynicism correlated negatively with interpersonal strengths and positively with intellectual strengths
- Sarcasm and cynicism further related negatively to theological strengths and strengths of restraint.

Overall, these correlations were in line with the expectations and show that lighter versus darker forms of humour indeed share specific correlation patterns to strengths factors. In particular, the correlations to strengths of restraint may be important to consider when looking at cross-cultural adaptations of humour trainings, as cultures may vary in norms of free expression of spontaneous thoughts and strictness of rules of normative/acceptable behaviour.

2.2.3 Humour Factors Derived from Everyday Humorous Conduct

How many dimensions does one need to represent all humour behaviours in a model? This would be good to know as it allows us to first study the correlations of these dimensions to determine whether it is desirable to train those dimension or attempt to reduce them. While the first instruments measuring the sense of humour were often uni-dimensional it is common place nowadays to distinguish several dimensions in humour. Based on earlier work by Craik, Lampert, and Nelson (1996), Ruch and Heintz (in press) recently suggested that six dimension might be sufficient to account for everyday humorous behaviour. Craik and colleagues (1996) generated a set of 100 non-redundant statements from a survey of the theoretical and empirical psychological research literature on humour and from observations of everyday social life. When presenting the statements in a Q-Sort, 10 styles located on five bipolar dimension were found, namely the *socially warm versus cold*, *reflective versus boorish*, *competent versus inept*, *earthy versus repressed*, and *benign versus mean-spirited* humorous styles. Using the same 100 statements in self- and peer ratings (but not in

a Q-Sort) Ruch and Heintz (in press) found six factors, with four of them of greater importance and two minor ones. The factors were labelled:

- Earthy and mean-spirited humour (factor 1)
- Entertaining (factor 2)
- Inept (factor 3)
- Reflective/benign humour (factor 4)
- Laughter (factor 5)
- Canned humour (factor 6).

Figure 1 shows the results of a hierarchical factor analysis; i.e., how the factors unfold from the first unrotated principal component that is loaded by all styles (general humorous conduct vs. repressed) to the preferred solution with six factors. In the first step the styles split by their valence into negative/dark styles and positive ones (sense of humour vs. cold/inept). Interestingly, the indicators of a sense of humour (see Craik et al., 1996) all load on this factor and demonstrate that it is a complex construct at a more general level. In a next step the sense of humour composite splits up into a socio-affective factor (entertaining) and a cognitive factor (sophisticated vs. inept/boorish) and from the next level onwards the four more potent factors (mean spirited/earthy, entertaining, inept, reflective/benign) remain stable. In the next steps there are minor adjustments and two additional minor factors of laughter and canned humour emerge. This six-factor solution was considered to be optimal and interpreted and a scale for the measurement of the six was designed.

The first factor merged the *earthy* (e.g., “Makes jokes about the macabre and the grotesque”) and *mean-spirited styles* (e.g., “Jokes about other’s imperfections”). The high scorer on this factor transgresses boundaries by disrespecting conventions and indulging in “bad taste” (e.g., bawdy, bathroom, vulgar, and macabre) humour and by mocking others (e.g., needling them, laughing at them, and being sarcastic). This factor clearly matches the definition of darker aspects of humour and should thus be avoided in training programs.

The second factor (*entertaining*) merges the *socially warm* (e.g., Uses good-natured jests to put others at ease), *competent* (e.g., Enhances humorous impact with a deft sense of timing), and *boorish* (e.g., Has a reputation as a practical joker) styles and depicts the high scorer as a skilled resourceful entertainer keen to be seen as funny. This factor can be assigned to the lighter forms of humour, as it entails good-natured teasing. Training of this factor will be close to the traditional trainings as it enables the individual to effectively and competently use humour with others.

The third factor tentatively labelled *inept* merges items from the *inept style* (e.g., “Spoils jokes by laughing before finishing them”) and the *socially cold* (e.g., “Only with difficulty can laugh at personal failings”) style. While this factor has potentially little negative impact on others, it has a negative impact for the individual itself, mostly due to “lacking humour”. Thus, this factor does not belong to the darker aspects of humour, but rather represents inability and a lack of humour.

The factor of *reflective/benign humour* is the new kid on the block. It merges the *benign* (e.g., “Enjoys witticisms which are intellectually challenging”) and *reflective*

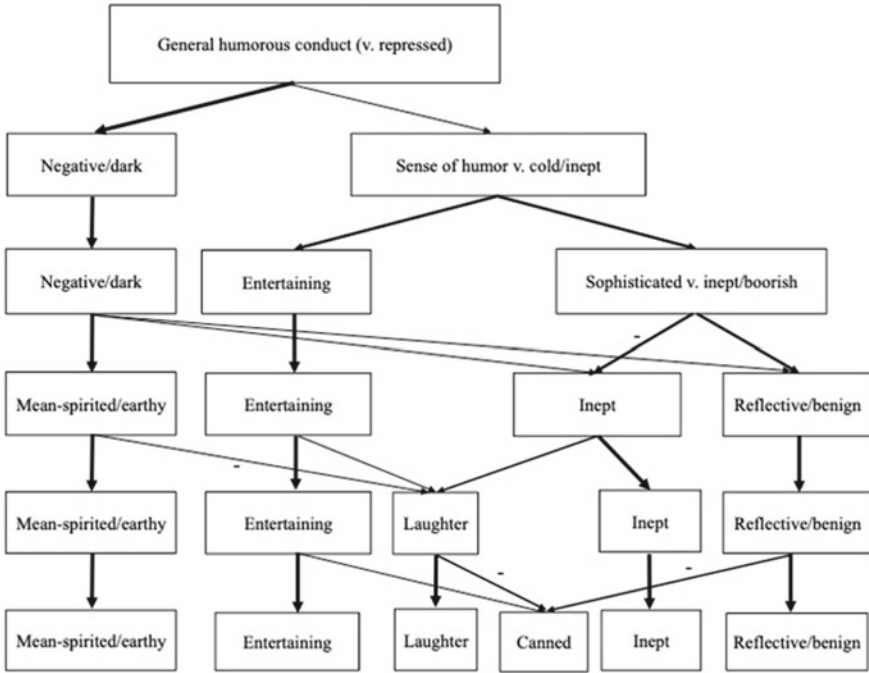


Fig. 1 Hierarchical development of the humor factors

styles (e.g., “Takes pleasure in bemused reflections on self and others”) and can clearly be assigned to the lighter forms of humour.

Factor five (*laughter*) describes people with a low threshold for laughter and who laughs intensely and heartily. The last factor 6 (*canned humour*) mostly captured contents related to jokes versus spontaneous humour. Thus, a broader perspective on everyday humour shows that three relate to stereotypical humour, inability to produce humour and evil intended humour, but three lighter forms involve laughter and positive emotion, social engagement in humour and cognitive-reflective elements. For several of these no training exists as yet.

2.3 Humour May Serve Six Virtues of the VIA Classification

When looking at how humour as a character strength maps to the six postulated virtues by Peterson and Seligman (2004), it was shown that although it is theoretically assigned to transcendence (after some discussion, as the authors state), it is empirically usually most strongly aligned to humanity and wisdom (Ruch & Proyer, 2015). Müller and Ruch (2011) investigated the relation between the five dimensions of humorous conduct (Craig et al., 1996), the sense of humour, and humour as

a strength in relation to virtues. Results again suggested that the different scales have a common basis in humanity. However, additionally, strengths related to the virtue of temperance were also related to not showing mean-spirited and earthy forms of humour. Thus, the morally good may be in *not* indulging in some forms of humour. The lack of relation to transcendence might be puzzling but this may be explained by the nature of items in the humour scale of the VIA-IS that do not emphasize an element of transcendence. Two studies by Beermann and Ruch (2009a, 2009b) basically showed that humour can be combined with all six virtues and empirically is most frequently related to humanity. In one of these studies, the items of 12 popular humour instruments were first rated for vice versus virtue and it turned out that most humour is neutral but it also may contain vice and virtue. In a second step experts identified the nature of the virtues and it was apparent that all virtues were covered with humanity and wisdom being most frequently covered.

In a further study (Beermann & Ruch, 2009a, 2009b) individuals recollected memory events where they acted in line with each of the six virtues and while doing so also used humour. Again, participants managed to report situations for each virtue but the combination of using humour when acting good was most frequent for humanity and wisdom. The nature of the humour was rated too and it turned out that benevolent comic styles were used more frequently to achieve virtue than the darker styles. When darker styles, like sarcasm or cynicism, were used, they were in stories seen to be typical for the virtue of justice. Thus, while humour in its core is a playful processing of incongruity (and its resolution) and morally neutral, uses of certain forms of humour is reflecting vice and others express virtue. Thus, while humour may be in itself not virtuous, it may be a vehicle for all six virtues proposed in the VIA classification (and other virtues that were not studied; see Morreall, 2010).

2.4 Humour and Well-Being of the Humourist

There is a growing body of evidence showing that the positive relationship between humour and well-being can only be found when lighter and darker forms of humour aspects are differentiated. For example, lighter humour (or comic) styles, cheerfulness, and humour as a character strength have been associated with life satisfaction and positive affect and with lower levels of negative affect (e.g., Martin, 2007; Martin et al., 2003; Mendiburo-Seguel, Paez, & Martinez-Sanchez, 2015; Ruch & Hofmann, 2012; Ruch, Wagner, & Heintz, 2018). Moreover, darker aspects of humour, such as sarcasm and cynicism, have been related to higher levels of negative affect (Ruch, Wagner et al., 2018). Similarly, Hofmann and colleagues (2019) could show that “lighter” comic styles positively relate to well-being in general and in the vocational domain and also relate positively to mindfulness, while “darker” comic styles related negatively to well-being and a mindful state of being. Furthermore, humour might play a role in work satisfaction of the individuals using humour. Although only few studies exist that investigated this issue, the findings support the idea that lighter aspects of humour relate to higher work satisfaction, while darker and

“laughing at” aspects of humour related to lower work satisfaction (e.g., Hofmann et al., 2017; Rawlings & Findlay, 2016). Also different humour interventions (e.g., humour-based positive psychology interventions, McGhee’s humour habit program) have been shown to be effective in enhancing happiness and life satisfaction and in decreasing anxiety, depressive symptoms and perceived stress (for a review, see Ruch & Hofmann, 2017). In summary, these findings show the potential of humour interventions in the mutual fostering of one’s sense of humour as well as increasing well-being. Moreover, these findings also suggest that it is useful to focus on training lighter forms of humour.

2.5 Humour Interventions

Humour interventions have a long tradition and started before the foundation of Positive Psychology (cf. Ruch & Hofmann, 2017). Following the categorization proposed by Ruch and Hofmann (2017), trainings of humour differ on three dimensions. They may be designed for *individuals* (and individual use) or focusing on *groups*, they may be administered *offline* (i.e., face-to-face or through manuals) or *online* (i.e., through websites or software), and they may be *standardized* (i.e., following guidelines or a strict plan) or *ad hoc* (i.e., tools and strategies are defined but the procedure of the session is open; e.g., clinic clowns working in groups and responding to the situation without an a priori schedule). In the following section, a brief overview on the intervention results will be given (a more detailed review is given in Ruch & Hofmann, 2017), leaving out all interventions in which the participants are mainly passive receivers of the intervention. Most ad hoc, offline group interventions, such as clinic clown visits, fall into this category. While the main function of these interventions is the elicitation of amusement, participants are subjected to these interventions, with the clowns being the main actors, and they usually do not attempt at changing the sense of humour of the participants. Thus, they are of limited interest for the current chapter and the idea of designing new interventions for individuals wanting to achieve more long-term changes in humour and well-being.

The humour training that has received most attention in the applied fields and research is the 7 humour habits program by McGhee (1996, 2010). McGhee (1996, 2010) developed a manualised humour training program that emphasizes on fostering key humour habits and skills. The training is based on the assumption that humour habits and skills differ in the easiness in which they can be trained and thus the training has a hierarchical order, with more easy humour habits being trained first and more difficult habits being trained later. The habits and skills entail (1) surrounding yourself with humour, (2) establishing a playful attitude, (3) laughing more often and heartily, (4) creating verbal humour, (5) looking for humour in everyday life, (6) laughing at yourself, (7) finding humour in the midst of stress. The 7 Humour Habits Program (7HHP) is a manualised standardized training, which can be completed by an individual him- or herself, or it can be completed in a group. Both forms are accompanied by “Home Play” and “Humour Log Exercises”, exercises tasks to aid

the transfer of newly learned skills into everyday life. The training attempts to first build or strengthen the core habits and skills on “good days” and then gradually apply these habits in stressful moments (when angry, anxious, depressed, etc.). Because individuals often lose their humour in the midst of stress, the habits should be repeated at least one week on “good days”. This is considered crucial to later sustain the habits on bad (stressful) days.

Evaluations of the 7HHP usually focus on group interventions and show that the program increases positive emotions and subjective well-being, playfulness, trait cheerfulness, optimism, perceived self-efficacy and sense of control over one’s internal states (Andress, Hoshino, & Rorke, 2010; Crawford & Caltabiano, 2011; Falkenberg, Buchkremer, Bartels, & Wild, 2011; Ruch, Hofmann, et al., 2018). Moreover, the training decreases seriousness and negative mood (Sassenrath, 2001), depression (in healthy adults, Beh-Pajooch, Jahangiri, & Zahrakar, 2010; Crawford & Caltabiano, 2011, but not in clinically depressed individuals: Falkenberg et al., 2011), perceived anxiety, and self-rated stress (Crawford & Caltabiano, 2011). Although McGhee (1996, 2010) stresses in various places of his manual that one should not laugh at others or at others people’s expense and only laugh at one’s own expense in a benevolent way (as opposed to a disparaging way which should be avoided)—the manual does not focus on fostering benevolent humour explicitly and the material that individuals collect is not further analysed (see Ruch, Hofmann, et al., 2018).

Following the tradition of online, self-administered PPIs, Gander et al. (2013) introduced a variant of the “three good things” intervention by instructing participants to think of three *funny* things each day for seven consecutive days. This intervention led to a decrease in depressive symptoms, but no effect on self-rated happiness was found. However, increases in self-reported happiness were found for the follow-up measures after one and three months, respectively. Developing this PPI further, Wellenzohn, Proyer, and Ruch (2015, 2016a, 2016b) conducted several placebo-controlled individual online humour interventions and replicated the findings of Gander et al. (2013).

Moreover, they extended the repertoire by creating five variants which all built on existing interventions (such as counting kindness or the gratitude visit): (1) collecting funny events and sharing them with the people involved, (2) counting funny things, (3) applying humour (like using one’s signature strength), (4) solving stressful situations in a humorous way, (5) and the “three funny things” exercise. All interventions enhanced happiness, three of them for up to six months (i.e., three funny things, applying humour, and counting funny things), whereas only short-term effects on decreases in self-rated depressive symptoms were found. When looking at the content of these short self-administered online PPIs, none of the instructions point to *which kind of humour* should be collected, counted or shared. “Humour” is always used in descriptions like “remember funny things” etc. Thus, these interventions do not differentiate at all whether participants try to focus on lighter forms of humour or whether they also contain sarcastic and cynic humour, as well as events of malicious pleasure. As a further limitation, the evaluations of those interventions typically do not take the contents of what the participants actually did into account. Thus, a clear

limitation of this approach is that it is unclear, whether this approach may also foster darker forms of humour.

Papousek and Schultze (2008) developed a “cheerfulness training” aimed at enhancing cheerfulness as a state and trait (for a conceptualisation of the state-trait model of cheerfulness, see Ruch & Hofmann, 2012), following an approach based on cognitive behavioural therapy. The core of the training program is to learn and practice techniques to efficiently self-induce cheerful moods (by imagination and voluntary production of nonverbal expressions of cheerfulness), which should improve the ability to cope with adversity and stress and thus positively influence well-being. This program was able to increase cheerfulness, reduce stress and tension, as well as increase well-being. A focus of this training lies in the active generation of cheerful moods by participants. Yet again, the instructions do not explicitly target what kind of humorous materials or imaginations should be used to self-induce cheerful moods. Therefore, this intervention is also unspecific with respect to the intention of the humourist (i.e., light vs. dark).

Hirsch, Junglas, Konradt, and Jonitz (2010) conducted a “humour group” in elderly with a depression. Each session had a special theme linked to humour, coupled with exercises and games, as well as home assignments that should aid the transfer of the newly learned skills into all-day life. The intervention increased the resilience and life satisfaction of the participants from pre to post. Especially patients with severe symptoms of depression profited from the intervention, as they further experienced an increase in state cheerfulness and a decrease in state seriousness (see also Konradt, Hirsch, Jonitz, & Junglas, 2013 for a replication). With respect to lighter versus darker forms of humour in the training contents, the first session entails “psycho-educational” elements: Humour is separated from wit and the distinction between laughing at each other and laughing with each other is drawn. Yet, most other elements focus on turning negative emotional events into “clownish” elements, not explicitly focusing on virtuous aspects.

3 Implications for Future Research and Application: Towards New Trainings Targeting Lighter Forms of Humour

A review of the extant literature on humour shows two things: Firstly, while most humour might be neutral, also lighter and darker forms of humour can clearly be distinguished in the models of humour currently used in research and practice suggests this variation needs to be considered. Secondly, existing humour trainings do not incorporate this knowledge, or do not do so in a strict manner. While existing trainings focus on neutral humour and sometimes even propose the use of benevolent humour (e.g., McGhee, 2010) new interventions and trainings are needed that explicitly foster lighter forms of humour to close the “virtue gap” in humour (cf. Ruch & Heintz, 2016). Moreover, another group of interventions may target increas-

ing the sensitivity for darker forms of humour or even the reduction of darker forms of humour. In the next section, we would like to develop some ideas on the following questions: How can we foster lighter forms of humour? How can we reduce darker forms of humour (or can darker forms even be turned into lighter forms)? While we cannot answer these questions thoroughly at this stage, we can give first proposals on how answering these questions could be achieved in future research and applications. Yet, it has to be noted that none of the following ideas were empirically tested yet.

Training humour as a character strength. When attempting to foster lighter forms of humour by means of training humour as a character strength, available trainings to foster strengths or signature strengths may be adapted. Using humour in different or new ways each day within signature strength trainings have been proven useful (e.g., Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Schutte & Malouff, 2018). Importantly, the instructions to these interventions would need to be specified to stress benevolent uses of humour, as, although the character strength definition of humour only entails lighter elements, the instructions found in manuals are not as specific as the definition. For example, to use humour in new ways, Niemiec (2017) suggests to “do something spontaneous and playful around another person e.g., saying something silly, contorting your body in a weird way, or telling a funny story or joke” (p. 42) or “Watch a classic comedy show you haven’t seen before and laugh as much as possible” (p. 42). Niemiec further suggests to exercise “little character use”, such as smiling to a stranger on a public transportation (Niemiec, 2017; p. 13). These instructions would need to be specified to explicitly target lighter forms of humour, to turn “telling jokes and being playful” in “telling benevolent jokes to lighten others up” and “being playful in a non-hurtful manner”. This would help to clarify what “optimal strength use” is: offering pleasure/laughter to others (Niemiec, 2013), *without doing so at somebody’s expense*, in line with Aristotle’s thoughts on *Eutrapelia*. With these specifications, the individuals receive guidance on the quality the humour should have that they engage with and helps them to channel the intentions into more virtuousness. Concretely, we would thus propose to add the definition of humour as a character strength to the exercise instructions and explain that in this concept, the focus is exclusively on benevolent forms of humour. Then, a short explanation should be provided which forms of humour do not meet the character strength criteria and should thus be avoided. By giving some examples, sensitivity for the quality of the humour and its importance can be raised.

Training lighter humour/comic styles. In the comic styles, the intentions of the humourist are explicitly summarized. Benevolent humour aims at arousing sympathy and an understanding for the incongruities of life, fun aims at spreading good mood and good camaraderie and wit aims at illuminating specifics like a flashlight (desire for being brilliant) and receiving appreciation from society (cf. Ruch, 2012). Therefore, benevolent humour, wit and fun may be targeted in interventions. The latter two styles may also be fostered with already established methods, as most evaluated humour trainings (Hirsch et al., 2010; McGhee, 1996, 2010; Papousek & Schuler, 2008) entail elements of fun and wit. McGhee also targets fostering benevolent humour to some extent within the habit “laughing at yourself” (cf. Hofmann, 2018). Yet, the biggest advancements will have to be made in developing trainings

of benevolent humour that have the intention “to arouse sympathy and an understanding for the incongruities of life” (Ruch, 2012; p. 72). Such trainings need to start with increasing the awareness that benevolent humour grounds in a specific *world view*. The view comprises of the notion that nothing and nobody is perfect, that we should look at the world and ourselves kindly and that we can find something light in every situation. Once this view is established, one can start to incorporate humour. Interestingly, this view is also the basis of a mindful attitude. Therefore, first hypotheses have been put forward how mindfulness could assist the training of benevolent humour as both share qualities, such as being based in a “sympathetic heart” (for an overview on first hypotheses and data on the Humour and Mindfulness Relationship Model, see Hofmann et al., 2019).

The comic style model is also suitable to address the question of how the sensitivity for darker styles can be increased and darker styles can be reduced or even turned into lighter styles. One might target sarcasm and cynicism to be reduced in use, unlearned, modified or undone in trainings. For example, individuals could be taught to replace their use of sarcasm and cynicism with the use of benevolent humour, wit and fun. The reduced use of these darker styles should have a positive impact on the well-being in the individual. Yet, there are some further thoughts to this idea. While sarcasm and cynicism may be seen as maladaptive coping mechanisms, they may still be better than “even worse” strategies (or no coping strategies at all). We propose that in some cases, being sarcastic or cynic is still better than utilizing coping strategies that are even more harmful (physically and psychologically) or the individual not coping at all. Thus, we do not propose that sarcasm and cynicism have to be reduced at any cost, but we suggest that in a first step, the sensitivity for the use of those darker styles should be increased. The heightened sensitivity and self-reflection may lead to changes in the individual’s use or communication of these styles (i.e., with who can I be sarcastic and with whom should I better avoid it?). This step may be the most important achievement. Then, in consequent steps, one may even attempt to reduce or unlearn the darker styles, if the individual has capacities to do so.

Looking more closely at what would need to be “undone” in these consequent steps, the first change would need to be made in the intentions and attitudes of the individual: To hurt the partner (sarcasm); to devalue generally accepted values, to emit venom (cynicism; Ruch, 2012). The negative attitude would need to be targeted as well as the pessimistic view of the world. Then, the hostile and galling behaviour towards others would need to be addressed and replaced by more favourable humour-related behaviours. More concretely, once the attitude is targeted, the “humorous potential” could be channelled into more lighter forms of humour that eventually replace the formerly used sarcasm and cynicism. The processes of undoing these styles could also receive help from character strengths: As the correlations show that the darker styles go along with a lack (or less) interpersonal strengths, as well as fewer strengths of restraint, fostering these strengths may aid the changing of sarcasm and cynicism into more light forms of humour (see Ruch et al., 2018).

Although satire/corrective humour also belongs to the darker styles, we would not suggest to systematically undo this style, as at societal level, satire can play an important role too. Although it might have negative consequences for the target, the

intention is to point to wrongdoings, deviations and change a situation *for the better* (cf. Ruch, 2004).

Training lighter forms of humour in the model of everyday humorous conduct. At the level of each of the six factors identified by Ruch and Heintz (in press) it is possible to say whether this aspect of humour should be trained or not. In part, some of the factors require a training that is already covered in the 7HHP (McGhee, 2010). With respect to the “earthy and mean-spirited” factor, future trainings should aim at reducing this form of humour, for example by alerting the humourist about the feelings of the potential target and the surrounding audience when he or she is funny at the expense of others. So this factor earthy/mean-spirited humour would be the object of a training aimed at unlearning or modifying its expression. The other five factors can mostly be trained by traditional trainings and are covered in the 7HHP by McGhee (1996, 2010). With regards to factor 2 (*entertaining*), this is covered in various aspects in McGhee’s training that incorporates in several places the notion that one should foster the ability to also perform humour for others. With regards to factor 3 *inept*, the high scorer will need training to be able to laugh at own shortcomings (which is addressed in McGhee’s step “learning to laugh at yourself”) and stop misreading the humour of others (an element that is not covered in current trainings yet). Also, the last two factors (4 and 5) could be addressed in trainings (although with less priority, as they are not explicitly virtuous). Training of laughter would encourage to laugh heartily—not only using the face, but engaging the whole body (as represented in McGhee’s humour habit “laughter”). Training of canned humour would provide access to consuming humour in the form of stand-up comedians, imitating others, engaging in humour reflecting cultural and regional origin, and general training of telling jokes (as represented in McGhee’s humour habit “verbal humour”). This training will not be needed for individuals that use humour spontaneously and tell comic episodes from real life.

Training humour guided by virtues. The research shows that while humour may be in itself not virtuous, it may be a vehicle for all six virtues (and others that were not studied; see Beermann & Ruch, 2009a, 2009b; Müller & Ruch, 2011). This opens up possibilities for trainings and a more comprehensive trainings with the aim to enable the trainee to generate humour in the service of different virtues, i.e., to be benevolent, wise, just, courageous, transcendent and with temperance (virtues of the VIA classification; for an alternative approach, see Morreall, 2010; who linked humour to the virtues of open-mindedness, patience, tolerance, graciousness, humility, perseverance, and courage). As mentioned before, humour may also contain critical views of others and may be more related to vice than virtue. A training module therefore is needed that helps participants to identify virtue (and vice) in humour and then enables them to generate humour in service of these virtues, i.e., expressing humanity or justice, rather than exposing shortcomings and follies in a skilled but mercilessly manner (see Ruch & Hofmann, 2017).

To conclude, we argue that using lighter forms of humour may complement the growing body of positive psychology interventions, which aim enhancing well-being by fostering positive emotions, thoughts and behaviours, rather than to reduce negative states (Parks & Biswas-Diener, 2013).

4 Implications for Future Research and Application: Humour Interventions in Multi-cultural Contexts

Folk wisdom suggests that there are cultural differences in the sense of humour and humour use, with extreme cases of some nations “lacking humour altogether” and other nations having their own humour (e.g., British humour, cf. Davies, 1990). Yet, there is little evidence from research that suggests that individuals across the world differ in their sense of humour or humour appreciation (for more details, see Eysenck, 1944; Martin & Sullivan, 2013; Ruch & Forabosco, 1996). In turn, there are surely things that clearly differ between the cultures and impact on humour training: Firstly, humour training programmes have been adapted and conducted in one cultural context (for an overview, see Ruch & Hofmann, 2017). When aiming for cross-cultural adaptations of the same program, several challenges have to be overcome, such as the term “humour” not having the same meaning in every culture, or might not be the prime term. Consequently, in a first step, a common denominator of “what humour is” would need to be defined and lighter aspects would need to be stressed. Secondly, the quality and quantity of cultural display rules and social norms in the expression of humour will differ between cultures, which is an important factor to be considered for the training of humour. Such cultural display rules, including who can be laughed at and when need to be identified and the training modules need to be checked for generalizability of various cultures. Whereas lighter forms of humour will be less prone to such problems, one still needs to consider that fun and wit correlate negatively with character strengths of restraint (Ruch et al., 2018), thus, if restraint is much valued in a culture, one may also be cautious when training fun or wit. Similarly, the link of humour to temperance may be most sensitive to cultural differences. To know when to utter which humour (i.e., in which situation, in which company, etc.) may be linked to temperance. Thirdly, when attempting to train mixed groups of male and female participants, one has to consider that roles and stereotypes on gender may vary across cultures.

All in all, we are only at the beginning of humour interventions that explicitly focus on the “virtue gap” in humour and may also be adapted to several cultural contexts. Yet, we believe such interventions would enrich the canon of PPIs and also give humour research and application a new direction.

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Taking a Strengths-Based Approach to Address Discrimination Experiences in a Clinical Context



Jeff Klibert and Brianna Allen

Abstract This chapter outlines how positive psychological practices can enhance cultural competence in a clinical context. Specifically, the chapter aims to highlight how positive psychological assessments and interventions help clients offset the effects of discrimination in building a culturally informed sense of resilience and well-being. Few traditional forms of treatment offer guidelines to help clinicians acknowledge and address discrimination experiences in a manner honoring a client's worldview, incorporating a client's healing traditions, and restoring a client's sense of cultural dignity. If left unaddressed or inadequately addressed, discrimination experiences may serve as a significant barrier to the therapeutic process. Given the importance of strength-building as a mechanism to encourage and maintain cultural competence, this chapter will offer a set of guidelines, informed by empirically supported positive psychological practices, to appropriately acknowledge and address discrimination experiences in treatment. Initially, we focus on defining multicultural competence with special attention to efforts aimed at reducing the effects of discrimination within a sociocultural framework. Next, we consider different positive psychological practices and how they promote strength and resilience in the face of cultural stressors. In particular, we will focus on positive psychological assessments and how they can be used early in the treatment process to set a foundation for culturally informed strength. We will supplement this discussion by highlighting how narrative and storytelling interventions empower clients to capitalize on their strengths to face cultural stress. Finally, the chapter concludes with a call to action; we encourage mental health professionals to approach challenging discrimination experiences with a mind toward sensitive, holistic, and transformative practices. Overall, the chapter offers a strength-based process whereby clinicians can demonstrate greater multicultural competence in working with the unique identities, needs, and values of their clients.

Keywords Multicultural competence · Discrimination · Positive psychological assessment and intervention

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1 Introduction

Practitioners are strongly encouraged to consider the lived experience and cultural identities of their clients before making ethical, diagnostic, and intervention-based decisions. To guide practitioners in these endeavors, organizations governing the mental health field (e.g., American Psychological Association [APA]) construct and re-evaluate guidelines to multicultural competence (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). Increasing culturally affirming and sensitive approaches to service yield greater treatment efficacy and psychological gains with clients who identify as ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, and other cultural minorities (Chu, Leino, Pflum, & Sue, 2016) and generates opportunities to establish mental health services in isolated and underserved communities.

Despite these benefits, advancing multicultural practices is still a critical area of need. To some, integrating sociopolitical, historical, and economic contexts underlying the development of cultural identities into the fabric of mental health service is counterproductive and outside the scope of professional work (Melton, 2018). However, failure to integrate multicultural elements into clinical work can lead to some severe consequences, including: (a) ruptures in the therapeutic relationship, (b) dissolution of service, and (c) reluctance to seek out help from mental health clinicians in the future (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Owen, Tao, Imel, Wampold, & Rodolfa, 2014; Sue et al., 2007). To minimize these consequences, it is important that practitioners, researchers, and training institutions work creatively to devise ways in which multicultural work can be introduced and implemented in all mental health service areas (Constantine, 1998; Laher & Cockcroft, 2017).

The over-arching aim of the present chapter is to bridge the gap between multicultural competencies and positive psychology practices to provide mental health providers with culturally informed, nuanced, and in-depth recommendations to address discrimination experiences. Our process relies heavily on adapting empirically supported practices, the process of tailoring assessment and intervention work to the specific cultural context of clients (Hall, 2001). Culturally adapting interventions is a recommended practice supported by meta-analytic studies (Griner & Smith, 2006). Within our proposed procedure, cultural values and identities are considered and strengthened to serve as effective guides in coping with discrimination. At the outset, we outline how positive psychological assessments can be modified and implemented to increase *cultural knowledge*. Specifically, we introduce the concept and measurement of character strengths and how providers can adapt character strengths measures, like the Virtues in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), to generate culturally meaningful insights about cultural identity development and coping. Moving forward, we identify and discuss how specific positive psychological interventions promote *cultural skills*. We discuss how re-authoring components underlying narrative strategies help clients find their voice, solidify a sense of cultural dignity and strength, and effectively confront discrimination experience. Finally, we conclude with a set of research and practical recommendations, emphasizing the

need to include positive psychological principles and practices to effectively address and reduce the negative effects of discrimination.

Although social-psychological research offers pathways to reduce discrimination in society, little systemic guidance exists to help clinicians comprehensively address discrimination using positive psychological assessment and intervention procedures (Malott & Schaeffe, 2015; Miller et al., 2018). Broadly, discrimination is defined as a set of socially constructed behaviors designed to minimize, denigrate, and disadvantage people who identify as ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, and other cultural minorities (Lewis, Cogburn, & Williams, 2015; Miller et al., 2018). Consequences associated with discrimination include a long list of health disparities and unjust social burdens for cultural minority¹ group members (Anderson, Green, & Payne, 2009; Berger & Sarnyai, 2015; Doyle & Molix, 2016). The nature of discrimination is insidious and ubiquitous ranging from subtle and persistent slights (i.e., microassaults [acts of intimidation and derogatory name calling], microinsults [verbal expressions of contempt and disrespect], and microinvalidations [rejection and exclusion of a person's thoughts, feelings, experiences, and identity]) to physical and psychological trauma, (i.e., threats of hate and violence) (Brondolo, Gallo, & Myers, 2009; Bryant-Davis, Adams, Alejandre, & Gray, 2017). Although research highlights shifting trends in how cultural minorities experience discrimination,² recent statistics indicate an upswing toward more explicit, blatant, and hostile manifestations of discrimination, particularly among industrialized countries located in North America (Potok, 2017).

Discrimination is a leading cause of mental health distress (Meyer, 2013) and serves as a significant barrier in the development and implementation of effective service (Owen et al., 2014). First, discrimination is a socially determined obstacle to help-seeking among individuals who identify as ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, and other cultural minorities. A lengthy history of discrimination often leads to a general sense of mistrust toward health care providers, which in turn reduces help-seeking behaviors (Cheatham, Barksdale, & Rodgers, 2008; Powell, Adams, Cole-Lewis, Agyemang, & Upton, 2016). Second, discrimination is directly linked with a weighty physical, emotional, and socioeconomic toll among individuals who identify as a cultural minority. Mood and anxiety-related disturbances, poor physical health outcomes, interpersonal difficulties, reduced career/academic aspirations, and delayed psychosocial development are direct costs of discrimination (Benner et al., 2018; Malott & Schaeffe, 2015; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014). In fact, symptom severity and persistence resulting from discrimination is consistent with the experience of a trauma and researchers are advocating for the inclusion of discrimination-based traumatic stress disorders in the next version of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM, Bryant-Davis &

¹The term cultural minority is used in this chapter to represent individuals whose values, norms, and identity statuses vary from the majority with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, age, ability, geographic location, etc.

²In the current chapter, we explore discrimination inclusively, occurring across different social contexts and associated with different facets of culture (e.g., racism, homophobia, ageism, sexism, xenophobia, classism).

Ocampo, 2005; Williams, Metzger, Leins, & DeLapp, 2018). Third, discrimination experiences maintain and exacerbate pre-existing mental health difficulties. Perceptions of shame, rejection, hopelessness, and inferiority stemming from discrimination events bolster or amplify unhealthy belief systems and affective states underlying substance use, mood, and anxiety-based difficulties (Zayas, 2001). Finally, the literature is replete with studies highlighting negligent practices in dismissing the effects of discrimination on mental health functioning and how these practices reinforce faulty and distorted diagnostic decision making (APA, 2017; Newhill, 1990; Sue, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2003). Importantly, responses to discrimination are often misinterpreted by providers as serious forms of psychopathology including paranoid personality disorder, schizophrenia, and borderline personality disorder. This pattern of cultural encapsulation, ignorance regarding how cultural experiences influence clinical decision-making (Heppner, Wang, Heppner, & Wang, 2012; Wrenn, 1962), is starkly noted in the literature. For example, among men who identify as Black or from African-descent, vigilance and mistrust developed in response to frequent encounters with discrimination is often mislabeled as pathological forms of paranoia (Mosley, Owen, Rostosky, & Reese, 2017; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). In turn, these culturally encapsulated difficulties explain disproportionate and inaccurate rates of diagnoses for schizophrenia, paranoid personality disorder, and other psychotic-based conditions, especially among Black men from lower socio-economic communities (Barnes, 2008; Neighbors, Trierweiler, Ford, & Muroff, 2003). Failure to accurately assess for the role and function of discrimination responses may directly stigmatize, reinforce unhealthy stereotypes and biases, and place extreme limitations on the effectiveness of mental health service.

Despite these trends, mental health services (i.e., assessment, counseling/psychotherapy, outreach, community prevention) remain well suited to effectively address discrimination and bolster well-being among cultural minority groups. However, multicultural guidelines underlying how providers use positive psychological frameworks to approach, consider, and help clients navigate through discrimination is only just emerging. Researchers are beginning to organize empirical and theoretical evidence widely dispersed across many disciplines to form inclusive and flexible procedures needed to effectively address varying levels and experiences with discrimination among cultural minority persons. Recently, Miller and colleagues (2018) systematically reviewed and summarized a diverse literature base to build a platform by which mental health providers could begin addressing discrimination in session. Results yielded eight content themes over a wide span of articles associated with reducing the effects of discrimination on cultural minority clients. These themes include: (1) psychoeducation, (2) validation, (3) self-awareness and critical consciousness, (4) critical examination of privilege and discriminatory attitudes, (5) culturally responsive social support, (6) developing positive identities, (7) externalize/minimize self-blame, and (8) outreach/advocacy. In their search, Miller and colleagues distinctly note that each identified content theme was clearly observed as a valuable resource in the reduction of discrimination experiences through service provision, yet “many practice recommendations were described in only one or two sentences” (pg. 7). This pattern calls for more nuanced and comprehensive proce-

dures by which each theme can be deconstructed, organized, and implemented as a viable strategy to minimize the negative effects of and reinforce positive coping efforts associated with discrimination.

2 State of Science: Using a Positive Psychological Framework to Address Discrimination

Addressing discrimination within the confines of psychotherapeutic services is a complex endeavor as methods of intervening may vary by the context in which discrimination was perpetuated, perceived as detrimental, and recalled or re-experienced (Brondolo et al., 2009). Identifying broad and inclusive coping processes, those that strengthen identity development and empower individuals toward culturally meaningful forms of resilience, is an urgent need within the multicultural literature. Multicultural guidelines acknowledge the importance of taking holistic, those that incorporate multiple psychological services, and strength-based approaches to address how individuals flourish in the face of discrimination (APA, 2017). A preliminary review of the empirical literature also supports the use of strength-based frameworks to address discrimination experiences. Importantly, qualitative inquires consistently highlight themes of character strength (i.e., love, honesty, spirituality) as important in how ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities build and extend their cultural identities (Brownfield, Brown, Jeevanba, & Van Mattson, 2018; Huang et al., 2010; Vaughan et al., 2014). In conjunction, positive psychological interventions with an associated focus on character strengths promote cultural identity growth and increase positive methods of coping with discrimination. For instance, positive psychological interventions increase functional coping efforts and humor in response to discrimination experienced by individuals who identify as Black sexual minority men (Bogart et al., 2018). Similarly, employing interventions that enhance and affirm strength-based features of sexual identities effectively reduce internalized binegativity among a diverse sample of individuals who identify as bisexual (Israel et al., 2018). Overall, helping cultural minority clients recognize culturally affirming character strengths appears to be an important initial step in building strong cultural identities and coping with the effects of discrimination.

However, coping with discrimination requires helping the client know how and when to use character strengths, information not easily obtained from assessment practices alone. In this way, the assessment of character strengths could be bolstered by narrative techniques. Specifically, narrative techniques could provide needed insights regarding how and when character strengths can inform positive coping efforts given a person's unique experience with discrimination. Scientific inquires pinpoint narrative techniques focused on promoting strengths as a promising means to unpack and reconstruct coping efforts to navigate discrimination experiences (Rosen et al., 2017). Narrative techniques designed to embed character strengths into a new, personally meaningful story about impinging and oppressive events leads to

lower levels distress and greater coping efforts. Qualitative evidence suggests clients who complete narrative forms of psychotherapy report experiencing greater levels of hope, positive coping, and emotional regulation (Roe, Hasson-Ohayon, Derhi, Yanos, & Lysaker, 2010). Moreover, randomized controlled studies highlight the positive impact for narrative techniques in reducing distress resulting from adverse events. Specifically, findings indicate that narrative techniques reduce general reports of distress over the course of treatment when compared to waiting list controls (e.g., Lopes et al., 2014). The effect size noted in these studies was large and consistent with other empirically validated forms of treatment (i.e., cognitive-behavioral therapy; Lopes, Gonçalves, Fassnacht, Machado, & Sous, 2014). Finally, when compared to controls, individuals participating in narrative interventions report greater coping resources (i.e., hope, awareness; Seo, Kang, Lee, & Chae, 2015). Taken in combination, identifying character strengths through positive psychological assessment practices and exploring how identified strengths can be used to cope with discrimination through narrative techniques are two important elements in setting up an inclusive and sensitive approach to concerns associated with discrimination.

The next few sections offer a platform by which positive psychological assessment and narrative-based techniques can be integrated to help cultural minority clients cope with discrimination. The proposed procedure is designed for clients who present with primary concerns related to discrimination distress. Consistent with the recommendations of Keyes (2002), this procedure is not recommended for clients with over-arching problems associated with different forms of psychopathology (e.g., mood, anxiety, psychotic, and/or substance-related disorders). The proposed procedure works at an individual level, where consideration for within group and between group expressions of character strength are emphasized over generalized and standardized patterns of functioning given an individual's intersection of identities (Brondolo et al., 2009). To this end, exploration of strengths and how strengths can be accessed before, during, and after discrimination experiences is informed by a client's unique cultural background.

3 Increasing Cultural Identity Development Through Positive Psychological Assessment

Acquiring and capitalizing on cultural knowledge is a hallmark feature of culturally responsive care (Constantine, Miville, & Kindaichi, 2008). Mental health providers are charged with actively exploring the formation and expression of cultural identities before developing plans for treatment. Exploration should extend typical clinical procedures by discussing ways in which clients (a) identify with different socio-cultural statuses (b) experience cultural barriers to identity development (c) define and relate to social forms of distress and (d) utilize culturally/community salient resources (Ponterotto, Gretchen, & Chauhan, 2001; Roysircar, 2005; Suzuki, Onoue, & Hill, 2013). Psychological assessment provides unique in-roads to cultural knowledge, if

used ethically and holistically. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of multicultural assessment (MCA) models are heavily geared toward examining culture in the context of resolving clinical, school-based, vocational, and other psychological concerns. For instance, a substantial amount of articles highlight how one of the most popular MCA models, the Multicultural Mapping Procedure (Ridely, Li, & Hill, 1998), helps clinicians evaluate cultural phenomena in the context of diagnostic decision-making (e.g., Roysircar, 2005). Moreover, one of the most cited culturally-derived assessment tools, the Cultural Formation Interview, measures the impact of culture on an individual's clinical presentation and is located in the back of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, 5th Edition (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Although these tools can be incredibly useful in minimizing the effects of cultural bias and artifacts that permeate standard assessment practices, they offer little information regarding how clients successfully cope with, navigate through, and flourish in the face of discrimination. Assessments that generate insights regarding how clients flourish in the face of social-based stressors (i.e., discrimination) offer unique and culturally informed pathways to empower clients toward successful coping outcomes (Miller et al., 2018). Overall, it is important for clinicians to implement balanced and sensitive assessment procedures, those that evaluate distress and strength in the context each client's cultural identities, as a means to develop culturally meaningful and efficacious treatment plans geared toward symptom resolution *and* flourishing outcomes.

To address this gap, theorists are calling for the development of dynamic and inclusive MCA guidelines in measuring and initiating dialogues concerning cultural strengths, adaptability, and protective factors that may operate within different cultural minority groups (Solomon, Heck, Reed, & Smith, 2017). More directly, theorists and researchers are asking questions about the utility of positive psychological assessment in work with underserved, marginalized, and socially exploited groups of people (Owens, Magyar-Moe, & Lopez, 2015). Specifically, can positive psychological assessments generate data regarding how clients flourish in the face of discrimination? If so, such data may inform different therapeutic practices designed to open coping capacities, engender a sense of efficacy, increase positive decision making skills, and bolster community relationships (Hopper, Bassuk, & Olivet, 2010)?

The assessment and subsequent discussion of *character strength* is an understudied yet potentially fruitful pathway by which mental health providers can help clients cope with discrimination (Miller et al., 2018; Owens et al., 2015). Character strengths are sets of discernible routes to display one or more virtues consistent with an individual's identity (Seligman, Park, & Peterson, 2004). Some pertinent features of character strengths include (a) a direct contribution to a good life, (b) accessibility across contexts, (c) a developmental trajectory strengthened by guided learning (e.g., models, stories, parables), and (d) enhanced opportunities to connect with others/communities (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). From a multicultural perspective, characters strengths are important resources. Character strengths serve to minimize the debilitating effects of discrimination and promote greater levels of well-being in cultural minority clients (Lytle, Vaughan, Rodriguez, & Shmerler, 2014). In addition,

increasing awareness of and access to character strengths bolsters coping resources, particularly greater access to social support and positive cultural identity development (Meyer, 2013; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014). Ultimately, 24 sets of character strengths falling within 6 domains were identified and organized into a trait-based VIA classification system. For a detailed description of each character strength see Table 1.

Character strengths possess depth and dimensionality, with people holding different volumes and innumerable combinations of them (Niemiec, 2013). Highly endorsed strengths (the top 1–5) are referred to as *signature strengths*; they are central to an individual's identity, easy to access across settings, and intrinsically enjoyably to express. All other strengths (the bottom 6–24) are termed *phasic strengths*. Most individuals can access and capitalize on phasic strengths, though engaging with these strengths may require more time and effort (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Character strengths are similar in that they involve the acquisition and use of knowledge; however, they are expressed uniquely based on an individual's context. For instance, the character strength of gratitude can be expressed through multiple behaviors (i.e., gift giving, engaging in acts of goodwill, appreciation of others) based on shared community messages (e.g., “Thankfulness is a stepping stone to happiness.”), storytelling, and mannerisms (e.g., sending a “thank you” card after receiving a gift). Because character strengths are rooted in sociocultural underpinnings (e.g., storytelling, role models), they capture culturally sanctioned and meaningful efforts to (a) pursue wisdom and success, (b) integrate multiple elements of identity, (c) overcome social barriers and adversity, and (d) seek reassurance and acceptance with members of their community (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005; Fowers & Davidov, 2006).

Some people are able to use character strengths to bounce back and grow from adversity (e.g., discrimination; Martínez-Martí & Ruch, 2017; Peterson, Park, Pole, D'Andrea, & Seligman, 2008). Awareness of and access to character strengths enables individuals to build diverse and extensive coping repertoires. Specifically, character strengths help individuals marshal social support, think reflexively about coping options and when to best use them, and re-appraise challenging and threatening circumstances as positive opportunities for growth (e.g., Ai et al., 2013; Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2011; Park & Peterson, 2009). Examples of coping strategies associated with each character strength are illustrated in Table 1. However, it is not uncommon for individuals to have difficulty acknowledging, marshalling, and expressing character strengths because of the deleterious effects of discrimination and other forms of social stress (Hopper et al., 2010). For the latter set of individuals, it seems appropriate and therapeutically important to help them identify their signature strengths through the use of positive psychological assessments early in the treatment process.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed the VIA-IS, a questionnaire that measures the degree to which an individual endorses various character strengths included in the aforementioned VIA classification system. The VIA-IS uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very much unlike me; 5 = very much like me) on each item to measure the degree to which respondents endorse values that reflect the 24 character strengths in

Table 1 This table presents the 24 domains of character strength. General descriptions of each character strength and how character strengths support coping efforts are provided. Information was obtained from Niemiec’s (2018) *Character Strength Interventions: A Field Guide for Practitioners* and Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*

Domain	Strength	Description	Use in coping
Wisdom	Creativity	Ease in generating new ideas and finding unique solutions	Generating new ideas to overcome obstacles
	Curiosity	Taking interest in unique and challenging opportunities	Finding and taking advantage of new resources
	Judgment	Balancing evidence before making decisions	Weigh evidence for one coping strategy over others
	Love of learning	A strong desire to learn and master new skills	Rely on confidence and skills to overcome adversity
	Perspective	Providing knowledge and wisdom to others	Look at stress from a holistic point of view
Courage	Bravery	Standing up to challenge or threat; raising one’s voice	Take appropriate risks to stand up to challenge
	Perseverance	Pushing through obstacles to reach goals	Persist through complex and demanding circumstances
	Honesty	Being true to oneself in actions and commitments	Understand one’s strengths and limitations
	Zest	Generating and maintaining high energy and positivity	Maintain upbeat and positive approach to challenge
Humanity	Love	Valuing the expression of affection to others	Marshall intimacy and security to manage stressors
	Kindness	Engaging in altruistic and affirmative acts	Increase self-compassion to bolster mental vitality
	Social intelligence	Recognizing and adapting to the feelings of others	Use knowledge of situations and others to find solutions
Justice	Fairness	Respecting others; giving others equal opportunities	Place oneself in others shoes to find equitable solutions
	Leadership	Shaping team efforts to maximize chance for success	Use of organizational tactics to reframe obstacles

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Domain	Strength	Description	Use in coping
	Teamwork	A sense of obligation to common good and shared goals	Harness the unique attributes of teammates to overcome
Temperance	Forgiveness	The ability to forgive those who transgressed against them	Focus on solutions not how one has been wronged
	Humility	Not over-evaluating one's worth or accomplishments	Accurately estimate one's strengths to overcome
	Prudence	Careful consideration of each step to accomplishing tasks	Deliberation regarding appropriate and ethical solutions
	Self-Regulation	Exacting control over one's feelings and behaviors	Managing difficult and challenge emotions
Transcendence	Appreciation of beauty	Valuing the unique and unexpected aspects of life	Finding benefits in unique challenge and adversity
	Gratitude	Being aware and expressing thankfulness to others	Show appreciation for skills to overcome challenge
	Hope	Being optimistic and working to achieve the best from life	Belief that positive outcomes will result from challenge
	Humor	Eliciting joy and laughter from others	Increase positive emotions to manage adversity
	Spirituality	Living life in a manner consistent with morals and beliefs	Use faith in morals and beliefs to resolve conflict

the VIA classification. The VIA-IS is accessible and cost-efficient, making it a suitable assessment tool for clients with little financial resources. Clients take the VIA-IS online at <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey>. Clients can receive a ranked order of their character strengths and identification of their signature strengths for free. Additional interpretative documents outlining a comprehensive description of signature strengths, over/under use of strengths, tips for boosting phasic strengths, and the benefits of employing different character strength combinations are available for relatively inexpensive costs, especially when compared against costs associated with other personality assessments.

The VIA-IS is the gold standard for assessing character strengths across cultures, nations, and identity statuses (Niemi, 2013). Based on a cursory review of the literature, the VIA-IS is back-translated to a wide range of languages across North

America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Moreover, factor analytic studies are available for review in African (Khumalo, Wissing, & Temane, 2008), American (Ng, Cao, Marsh, Tay, & Seligman, 2017), Croatian (Brdar & Kashdan, 2010), Indian (Singh & Choubisa, 2010), Israeli (Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2012), German (Ruch et al., 2010), and Spanish (Azañedo, Fernández-Abascal, & Barraca, 2014) versions of the VIA-IS. Similarly, the VIA-IS demonstrates psychometrically sound characteristics with people from different developmental time periods (children, adolescents, adults; Park & Peterson, 2006). Finally, evaluation of VIA-IS data are integral in assessing variation in health statuses among individuals with different mental health diagnoses (Sims, Barker, Price, & Fornells-Ambrojo, 2015) and ethnic identity statuses (Ma et al., 2008).

Although the administration and interpretation of the VIA-IS holds great value in helping minority clients build and extend their cultural identities, alone the VIA-IS is not sufficient to meet the field recommendations of MCA models. Standardized assessments, especially those developed from westernized values, may have difficulty capturing cultural nuances and promote ethnocentric interpretations based on a specific set of norms and languages (Redmond, Rooney, & Bishop, 2006).

To avoid these pitfalls, theorists call for the formation of qualitative approaches to complement more traditional, standardized assessment procedures (Laher & Cockcroft, 2017). The addition of qualitative assessments helps cross-validate standardized assessment results and elicits richer and more comprehensive pictures of clients' strengths in a manner consistent with the unique experience and expression of their cultural identities. For instance, the character strength *Spirituality* is defined by the VIA Classification system as a conviction regarding the presence of a transcendent dimension of life guiding the development of specific belief patterns, morals, attitudes, and attributions associated with a sense of goodness (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). High *Spirituality* scores on the VIA-IS reflect a general sense of purpose in life and acceptance of prescribed morals and belief systems associated with a transcendent dimension. However, the VIA-IS cannot provide much depth regarding the nature of how one finds purpose in life as well as how one behaviorally responds to a set of morals because the function and expression of spirituality is culturally-bound. To capture rich experiences and expressions of spirituality as a character strength, mental health providers need to engage clients in a qualitative dialogue. Insights gleaned from qualitative procedures will reduce miscommunication regarding the nature and expression of character strengths and facilitate culturally meaningful pathways by which clinicians can integrate character strengths into the fabric of treatment, especially when addressing discrimination experiences.

Mixed-methodological approaches within assessment, diagnostic, and intervention practices are under-represented in clinical work and academic research (Jackson, 2015; Laher & Cockcroft, 2017; Roysircar, 2005). Research indicates a preference for quantitative over qualitative assessment practices to describe the personality, behaviors, coping methods, and/or strengths of individuals (Bryman, 2017; Buboltz, Deemer, & Hoffmann, 2010; Coetzee & Van Zyl, 2014). Over-emphasizing quantitative approaches contributes to limited opportunities to assess nuanced cultural expressions associated with strengths and coping processes (Bryman, 2017; Laher

& Cockcroft, 2017). A lack of consideration for mix-method approaches in clinical practice may be related to widespread misunderstanding regarding the nature of qualitative approaches and a lack of guidelines to appropriately frame behavior from these perspectives (Bryman, 2016). This is especially evident in positive psychology, where the main classification methods of strengths and virtue are quantitative in nature (VIA-IS, Strengths Finder 2.0). Albeit widely used in international contexts, these instruments were framed from western values and could therefore introduce bias when employed in other cultural settings. Given these issues, we argue for an integrated approach; employing standardized assessments in conjunction with qualitative inquires is needed to appropriately capture cultural nuances and provide a more holistic assessment of character strength and related strength-based processes.

In reviewing the literature, there are a few prevailing themes underlying the use of qualitative assessments for multicultural purposes. Consistent with multicultural competencies (APA, 2017), assessment procedures need to be open-ended, broad in scope, and unassuming in nature. It is important that the assessment procedure supports the position that the client is the expert on his or her experience. Therefore, procedures developed within a qualitative assessment need to be broad enough to allow the client to frame his/her responses in a manner that is meaningful given his/her cultural identities. In concert, mental health practitioners need to adopt the “learner” role and ask questions to bolster their understanding and appreciation for clients’ backgrounds, traditions, culturally-situated behaviors, and how the combination of these elements contributes to the expression of character strength (Smith, 2016). Discussions highlighting the process of how clients express and capitalize on culturally meaningful strengths is important as discrimination often hides or disrupts access to these strengths (Hopper et al., 2010). Overall, at every-stage of the assessment process, the client needs to be empowered as an active partner (Avilés, 2003).

In terms of content, constructed assessment procedures need to generate insights about how clients define, describe, and modify character strengths in accordance with their cultural identities. For instance, mental health providers may initially ask clients to define a specific character strength and how they express this character strength in day-to-day life. Foundational questions such as these highlight preferential language, cultural adaptations, and unique roles associated with the expression of signature and phasic strengths. Using insights gained from initial descriptions, mental health providers can then extend discussion to how clients express character strengths in different multicultural contexts. Sample questions to extend discussions in this manner, include: “How might *Hope* help you connect with your family/community?”; “How does engaging in *Humility* respect your cultural heritage?”; “How does expressing *Bravery* help you grow as an African American woman?” The purpose in asking these questions is twofold: (a) to help clients construct a rich picture of how character strengths are fundamental to their cultural identities and (b) to provide guidelines about how providers can highlight culturally salient strengths as valuable sources of empowerment.

There are an infinite amount of ways in which mental health providers can frame qualitative assessments. Storytelling, discourse analysis, journal work, repertory

grids, and semi-structured interviews are just a few examples (Laher & Cockcroft, 2017; Lonner & Ibrahim, 1996). However, in our lab and training program, we find card sorting activities to be a highly collaborative, flexible, and effective means to provide in-depth assessment of character strengths from a multicultural perspective. We adapted our card sorting procedure from the field of vocational assessment (Slaney, Moran, & Wade, 1994; Storlie & Byrd, 2017). Specifically, we created a deck of 72, 3 × 5 in. (76.2 × 127 mm) index cards to be sorted into piles (Fig. 1).

On the top of each card is a character strength label. We chose to include each of the 24 character strength labels outlined in the VIA classification system as well as 2 additional trait-based synonyms for each character strength. For instance, in our card sorting procedures, we have 3 cards to reflect the character strength of *Kindness* (i.e., kindness, generosity, compassion). Synonyms for each character strength were derived from supplemental documents (i.e., VIA PRO: Character Strengths Profiles, VIA Me!) provided by VIA Institute on Character and a review of Niemiec’s (2018) deconstructed guide of each character strength in *Character Strengths Interventions: A Field Guide for Practitioners*. The decision to include synonyms was made as a means to cast a wider net in terms of capturing how people may perceive, describe, and express a subcategory (e.g., kindness) of character strength. Each card in the deck is sorted into 1 of 4 piles labeled “somewhat difficult to access,” “somewhat easy to access,” “easy to access,” and “very easy to access” (See Fig. 1). Instead of using a frequency or an agreement-based anchor system, we chose an anchor scale to help us identify the ease in which people access and use different characters strengths. We believe this position is consistent with the overarching model of the VIA classification system and important in terms of minimizing the perception that phasic strengths

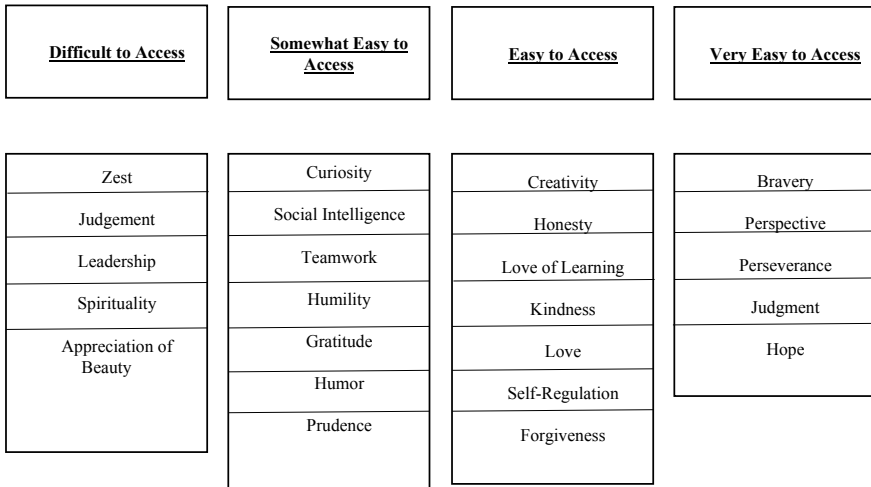


Fig. 1 This figure illustrates a character strength card sorting procedure. Clients are given a stack of cards and asked to pile them underneath the categories (based on how easy it is for the client to access and activate each strength)

are trivial. On the back of each card, we constructed a list of questions to deepen the connection between character strengths and a client’s cultural identities (Fig. 2).

Clients are invited to engage in a strength-based exercise. Specifically, we give clients the deck of cards and ask them to sort each into the most appropriate pile given their life experiences. Once the cards are sorted, we ask clients to further evaluate the cards listed under the “very easy to access” pile, though in reality providers can ask clients to evaluate cards underneath any of the 4 piles. We suggest this choice be made in concert with the purpose behind sorting the cards. Given we are interested in building a foundation of strength to help clients grow within their cultural identities, we are likely to focus on signature strengths, the cards placed underneath the “very easy to access” pile. As clients evaluate cards underneath the “very easy to access” pile, we ask them to choose 1–3 cards that are most meaningful to them and how they think about their cultural identities. One at a time, we flip over each chosen card and begin to engage the client in a semi-structured interview. The interview elicits significant storytelling aspects about how clients define, describe, and express elements of their chosen character strength. Clients are then invited to explore how their chosen character strengths support growth within their cultural identities. During the interview process, providers should be flexible and explore topics in-depth; clients should be provided the freedom and space to explore how character strengths present themselves in different cultural contexts (e.g., interpersonal relationships, community events, parenting practices, work responsibilities). At the end of the assessment process, we generally engage clients in a check-in procedure. These procedures include asking clients about (a) what they learned from the experience, (b) how they feel about their character strengths, (c) how they may be able to use their character strengths to extend cultural identity development efforts and (d) how they may want to integrate specific character strengths into treatment.

The combined results from administering the VIA-IS and a corresponding qualitative assessment generate a rich and culturally meaningful picture of how a client perceives and expresses strength in day-to-day life. These data also build a foun-

<p>Bravery</p>	
	1) How do you define Bravery?
	2) How do you express Bravery in life?
	3) When you act Brave, how do others view you?
	4) How does Bravery connect you to your community?
	5) How does Bravery respect your heritage?
6) What about Bravery brings you a sense of dignity?	

Fig. 2 This figure presents an example of a character strength card. The label of the card is presented on the front. A series of semi-structured interview questions are presented on the back. These questions were developed to help clients define and extend their understanding of signature strengths and how such strengths relate to important cultural supports and resources

dation of strength from which mental health providers can pull when addressing concerns associated with discrimination. However, providers should avoid hastily using these data to construct and implement brief, solution-focused *fixes* to social forms of distress. Such strategies would be unwise because they minimize opportunities to validate the effects and consequences associated with discrimination and fail to consider how or when character strengths can be employed to help individuals cope with unique discrimination experiences. To this end, it is important for providers to use strength-based data in conjunction with culturally affirming and responsive approaches to service as a means to effectively increase cultural identity development. In turn, strengthened cultural identities can be used to mitigate or buffer against the negative effects of discrimination (Romero, Edwards, Fryberg, & Orduña, 2014).

4 Addressing Discrimination Through Narrative Therapy

Culturally skilled providers seek to promote culturally adaptive practices aimed at helping individuals cope with discrimination (APA, 2017; Miller et al., 2018). At the outset, providers select a guiding theory which engages clients in appropriate, relevant, and sensitive strategies to address the debilitating effects of discrimination and capitalizes on clients' culturally ingrained character strengths and support resources (Hopper et al., 2010; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Narrative Therapy (NT; White & Epston, 1990), a constructionist and multistoried approach employed to help clients make meaning from their experiences consistent with their identity, is one such theory. Few theoretical and empirical articles outline how NT can be adapted to effectively address discrimination, yet there is an emerging amount of literature that indicates NT is an effective and preferred method of working with clients who present with difficulties coping with social barriers to well-being, like discrimination (Combs & Freedman, 2012). The purpose of this section is to outline specific practices by which NT can (a) validate clients' experience with discrimination and discrimination-related stress, (b) integrate culturally sanctioned character strengths, and (c) increase positive identity development as a means to effectively cope with discrimination in a manner consistent with multicultural competencies.

There are several points of convergence between affirmative multicultural practices and NT. First, NT is guided by the narrative metaphor, which suggests people experience life through the stories they build. This metaphor also gives rise to the position that people are their own experts and inherently possess the naming rights and directorship over how they experience, express, and modify their stories (Madigan, 2011). In application, clients are invited to explore the effects of culture and how their experiences draw upon their cultural uniqueness, rather than how they may fit into stereotypes and generalized groups of people (Combs & Freedman, 2012). Second, NT takes a poststructuralist view of problems; problems are separate from people. Stuck points and barriers to well-being are illustrated through stories dominated by oppressive social, political, and cultural discourses inconsistent with a person's iden-

tity (White, 2007). Therefore, providers are charged with helping clients define their difficulties by examining external (social, political, cultural) contexts that disqualify, limit, and/or disempower them (Russell & Carey, 2003), a practice consistent with the feminist and multicultural principle of consciousness raising (Goodman et al., 2004). Third, the position and responsibilities of providers employing narrative practices run parallel to multiculturally affirmative guidelines. In NT, providers adopt a listening role, which privileges clients' voice, pace, and language in telling their stories (Carr, 1998). Providers are asked to be aware of personal biases and worldviews that restrict their ability to validate and attune to the cultural characteristics underlying a client's story. In this way, providers are viewed as consultants and advocates who work alongside clients to help them construct alternative and culturally meaningful narratives from oppressive and problem-saturated stories. Overall, these points illustrate the suitability of NT as a preferred mechanism to promote positive coping efforts in the face of discrimination.

5 Adapted Narrative Therapy to Address Discrimination

People strive to grow in harmony with their preferred identities. Yet, they must accomplish this goal while attending to the dominant social discourses, mannerisms, expectations, and values of society. People holding identities in stark contrast to dominant social mores face significant challenges acculturating; expressing beliefs and engaging in cultural traditions falling outside the cultural norm often results in unjust treatment ranging from derogatory messages of rejection, shame, and deviance to extreme acts of physical violence. Imagine how a person may feel or react if every time she expressed an idea or engaged in a behavior consistent with her preferred identity, she encountered rejection, resentment, scorn, and disgust. It is quite likely the story she would tell about herself would be saturated with themes of self-criticism, self-hatred, shame, fear, and defectiveness. NT provides opportunities for culturally diverse individuals to alter their relationships with problem-saturated stories derived from social, political, and financial oppression as a means to find architectural freedom and explore alternative stories buttressed by strength, empowerment, and resilience.

NT therapists place a high value in naming problems at the outset of service. Specifically, NT providers invite clients to use a single word or short phrase to represent their experience with a problem (i.e., discrimination). The process of naming heightens focus and reinforces greater feelings of control over the problem (Countryman-Roswurm & DiLollo, 2018), which is important because the nature of discrimination is intractable and unpredictable. Once a name is established, the service provider begins the process of externalizing the problem, helping a client see her problem as separate from her person. Importantly, the process of externalizing generates opportunities for providers to help clients appreciate the extent to which their difficulties are directly tied to systemic and generational socio-political and cultural forces (Ivey, D'Andrea, Bradford-Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 2002) and not

intrinsic or personal flaws. Moreover, the process of externalization runs counter to the position that the client is to blame for his problems or the client is psychopathological because he is experiencing a problem, which in turn minimizes the presence of stereotypes and stigma in the working relationship.

There are countless methods by which providers can initiate the naming and externalization process. Below is one case example.

PROVIDER	Eric, what is the one thing holding you back from living as your best self?
ERIC	I think it is the way people look at me, especially people in my family. Ever since I came out as gay, they look at me like I am a stain against society. They make snide remarks behind my back about how being gay is just an excuse to ‘get attention’ and how God will one day ‘judge my sins.’ When they are upset, they drop any pretense about hiding their anger and sometimes they just yell at me for my ‘poor life decisions’
PROVIDER	If you could, I would like to invite you to capture your experiences with your family under a name or short phrase. What do you think would be a good name to reflect what you experience with your family?
ERIC	Well, I often feel strangled and choked up when I am around them, kind of like I ingested a poison. So if I had to give you one name it would be the <i>Poison</i>
PROVIDER	With the <i>Poison</i> in mind, I would like to invite you to engage in a small exercise with me. If you could, please close your eyes and imagine what the <i>Poison</i> looks like in great detail. Once you have a good picture of it in your head, I would like for you to take that image and metaphorically place it in this empty chair next to me
ERIC	So, you just want me to put an image of the <i>Poison</i> in the chair?
PROVIDER	Yes, so we can look at it objectively and holistically. So we are able to get a 360 degree view of it and how it affects you in your day-to-day life
ERIC	Okay, I think it is in the chair
PROVIDER	Excellent, now if you could evaluate the <i>Poison</i> and think about how it might be result of some concerning things happening in society?

Of note, this excerpt highlights a process by which providers can navigate the naming and externalization practice of NT. The process opens by inviting clients to talk about their biggest barrier or challenge. The language in forming this initial question is important as providers are encouraged to help clients see problems as barriers or challenges stemming from external sources. The initial question should also be developed as a means to create freedom and space for the client to identify his most salient concern. Language is also important when inviting clients to label their barrier. Specifically, providers want to avoid interjecting their own language based on their conceptualizations of the presenting challenge or barrier. As much as possible, form questions using language already established by the client; a process consistent with the multicultural construct joining (Kim, 2005). Once a discrimination-based label is identified, providers need to use some creativity to help clients separate it from their personhood. In this instance, an adapted form of the empty chair technique was used because it provides a unique outlet for clients to isolate the discrimination

entity and relate to it in a more objectifiable manner. Finally, the vignette ended with the provider initiating a course of questioning to help the client uncover how social, cultural, and political forces may contribute to the strength and persistence of the discrimination he faces. This action is in accordance with the function of consciousness raising, attempts to help clients see discrimination as rooted in a larger socio-political landscape and not directly attributable to perceived flaws and failings. Moreover, this course of questioning provides ample opportunities to validate and normalize clients' experience with diverse forms of discrimination (e.g., racism, homophobia, harassment, imperialism, exploitation). Validation and normalizing are essential pathways by which providers can increase their ascribed and achieved credibility statuses with cultural minority clients. High levels of credibility come with significant benefits including increased perceptions of trustworthiness, efficacy, and responsiveness needed to bolster a strong therapeutic alliance and overcome social and cultural barriers to effective service provision (Sue & Zane, 2009).

As the client becomes more aware of the socio-political underpinnings of discrimination, providers begin to map the effects of discrimination onto different aspects of a client's identity. Mapping generally occurs through a series of open ended questions. Most commonly these questions inquire about the effects of discrimination on clients' interpersonal relationships, work performance, community involvement, cultural identity formation, etc. Common mapping questions include: "What is the effect of discrimination on your personal relationships?", "How does discrimination hinder movement toward your goals?", "How have you tried to cope with discrimination?", "In what settings do the effects of discrimination appear to get stronger?", "What do your experiences with discrimination tell you about the person you are becoming?" Overall, questions like these should deepen clients' awareness of discrimination and highlight previous attempts to modify, alter, or re-appraise discrimination experiences.

In our lab, we like to use a semi-structured process in mapping. Specifically, we invite clients to recall their first experience with discrimination. Then, we ask a number of mapping questions to broaden insights in any number of social and cultural contexts. We generally choose mapping questions that appear most salient given the story we elicit from each client. For instance, if a discrimination story appears to possess clear and detrimental effects on a person's identity development and/or connection to others in their cultural groups, we will ask more questions pertaining to these contexts. After clients develop a complete story regarding how their first experience with discrimination affected their well-being, we invite them to recall their most recent experience with discrimination and repeat the mapping process. Armed with two or more accounts of discrimination across time, we then ask clients about how the effects of discrimination have changed. We believe a longitudinal analysis provides unique insights regarding the trajectory or life course of discrimination, which in turn may yield important opportunities to identify unique outcomes. During the mapping process, we also attempt to graphically represent each discrimination story on a chart or graph. Again, we believe possessing a graphical representation of salient discrimination experiences serves as an additional tool to

help clients draw unique meaning from their stories. An example of a mapping graph is provided in Fig. 3.

Establishing a comprehensive map of how a discrimination-saturated storyline governs a client's life course and identity is the perfect *reauthoring* launching point. Reauthoring is a process by which clients and NT providers collaboratively highlight and explore neglected aspects of the predominant story as a means to develop an alternative storyline about how clients perceive and relate to the problem (White, 1995). Within the re-telling of the problem-saturated story, providers are on the lookout for pockets of spaces where the client resisted or avoided being disempowered by discrimination. These pockets of spaces are categorized as unique outcomes and formally represent exceptions to the routine pattern by which a problematic storyline is cultivated and maintained (Madigan, 2011). Evidence for unique outcomes is commonly highlighted by spontaneous and out of sync mentions of a plan, message, feeling, thought, insight, or action that conflicts with the predictable course of the discrimination trajectory. Exploration of these unique outcomes offers a window of opportunity to alter how clients make meaning from and relate to discrimination in a manner consistent with their cultural identities.

Unfortunately, detecting unique outcomes within a problem-saturated storyline is a complex endeavor, especially when working alongside clients with a stark history of being discriminated against. Specifically, problem-saturated stories focused on discrimination can be quite entrenched, highlighting themes of hopelessness, helplessness, defectiveness, among other obstinate self-attributions (e.g., Countryman-Roswurm & DiLollo, 2018). To decrease the inflexibility by which clients discuss problem-saturated storylines and develop alternative storylines, providers are advised to lean heavily on their cultural knowledge, particularly knowledge associated with character strengths. Character strengths, especially signature strengths, are well suited to serve as unique outcomes; they empower clients toward action, change, and resilience in a way that subverts the oppressive effects of a discrimination storyline (Sahin & McVicker, 2011). Being attuned to small mentions of behaviors, thoughts, and feelings associated with character strengths can be an avenue by which providers help clients move away from a problem-saturated storyline to an empowering, alternative storyline. Providers can initiate a new storyline by pausing and asking questions to determine whether these small mentions belie the power and pervasiveness of the identified problem. Common questions include: "How does this thought help you resist?", "Can this behavior help re-connect you with important cultural resources?", "How might this message help you take back control over the problem?" However, if clients give little to no indication of these subtle mentions, providers can act more directly by posing questions regarding the absence of character strength. This type of inquiry is consistent with White's (2003) philosophical position of "absent but implicit." If a client appears disempowered by certain discrimination experiences, she must have a unique voice that is being constrained or circumscribed at some level. Moreover, her unique voice is likely to be expressed through her natural and culturally salient expressions of strength. Below is a case example of how providers can broach the topic of character strengths as a means to help clients find and develop a new and preferred storyline.

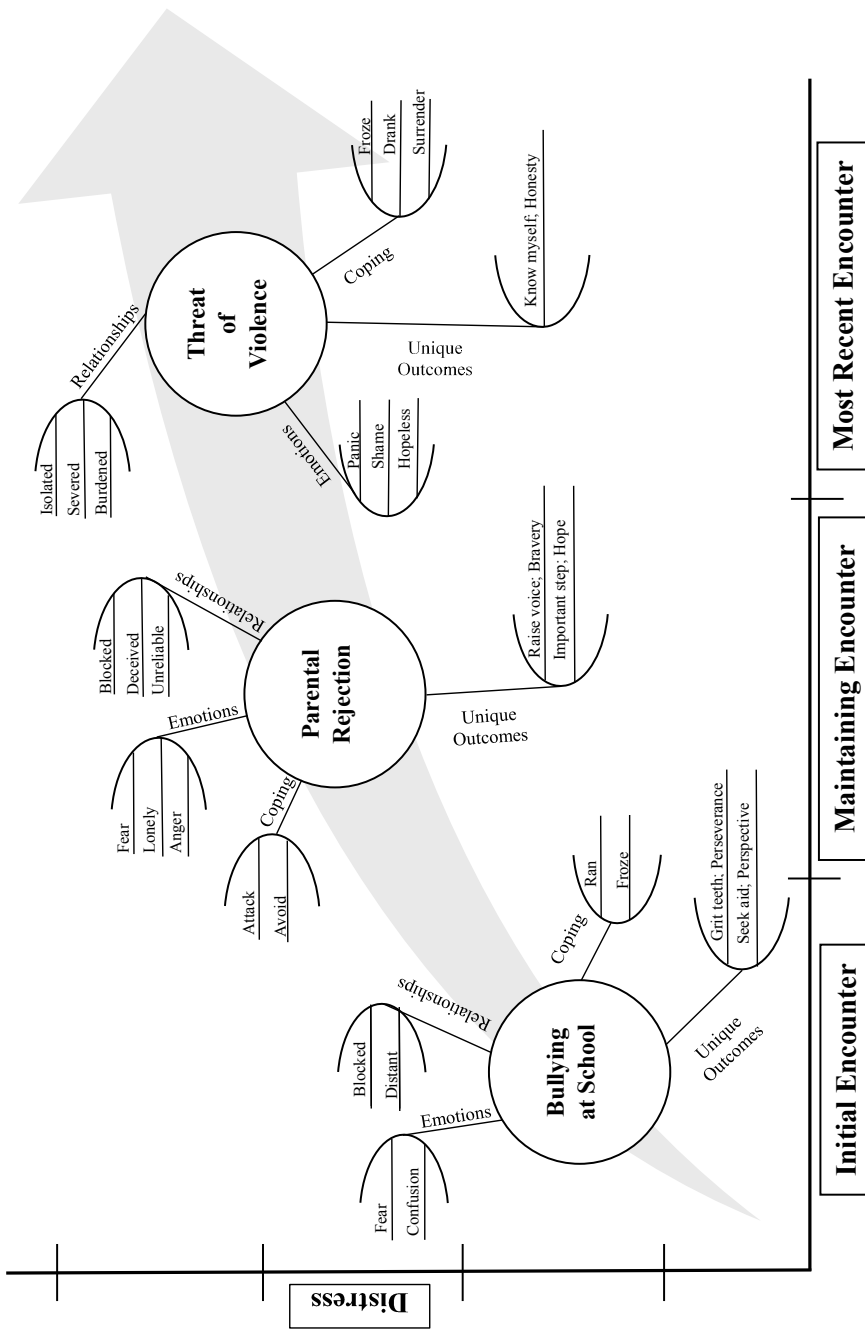


Fig. 3 This figure represents a narrative map of a saturated problem, discrimination. Three discrimination events were unpacked via mapping questions. During the re-telling of the events the client indicated how each event impacted his ability to cope, relationships with others, and emotional states. Through the re-telling of the story, the client and provider team were able to identify some exceptions to the routine pattern of discrimination, unique outcomes

PROVIDER:	Eric, as I get to know more about your experiences with the <i>Poison</i> , I am left wondering about the different parts of yourself we talked about previously. Remember, we engaged in that card sorting exercise and you talked at length about how you enjoyed expressing <i>Perspective</i> . What happens to your <i>Perspective</i> when the <i>Poison</i> starts to take effect?
ERIC:	Well, it does not really appear at all. It's like it died out and I don't have enough energy to bring it back to life because I'm thinking about what is going to happen next or how I need to escape from oncoming pain
PROVIDER:	I wonder if there was ever a point in your life where you used <i>Perspective</i> to help you resist the effects of the <i>Poison</i> ?
ERIC:	Hmmm.....I am not sure if this counts but I remember seeking out the advice of my family of choice to help figure out how to deal with a family reunion I was forced to go to. I remember feeling really anxious about attending the event because everyone knows I am out as gay and it seems like everyone thinks I am the devil because of it. I was extremely worried that someone was going to get drunk and let lose their inhibitions about directly confronting me. I figured that my family of choice likely had similar experiences so I wanted to seek their advice about how to approach this event
PROVIDER:	How did the event play out?
ERIC:	Better than I thought. There were no blatant forms of persecution and I was even able to re-connect with some of my more liberal family members
PROVIDER:	In your opinion, what role did your <i>Perspective</i> play in bringing about this outcome?
ERIC:	I think it helped me figure out that I need to seek aid from those who were more experienced than me in dealing with these types of situations. I think it helped me realize that I was not in a good head space to confront this event head on. I needed my family of choice to help me reframe how I would approach family members if they were beginning to get unbearable
PROVIDER:	Given that you were able to lean on your <i>Perspective</i> in the face of an anxiety-producing event, what does this tell you about yourself?

The vignette represents an abbreviated attempt to pinpoint and extend a previously identified signature strength as a unique outcome within the context of a problem-saturated storyline. It is important providers take time and create space in extending a unique outcome once it has been identified, a process White (1995) termed thickening. There are two types of questions to aid NT providers in this endeavor, *landscape of action* and *landscape of identity* questions (Madigan, 2011). Landscape of action questions inquire about the plot timeline, how events are organized and sequenced as a result of a unique outcome. In the previous vignette, the provider was able to ask about how the unique outcome, *Perspective*, shaped the sequence of events during the family reunion. The provider could easily ask other landscape of action questions (e.g., “At what point did you know to seek out aid from your family of choice?”, “Where in the series of events did you know *Perspective* was making a positive impact on your experience?”, “After the event, how did *Perspective* help you celebrate the positive outcomes you experienced at the event?”) to increase the

client's relationship with and appreciation for the utility of *Perspective* in the face of a threatening event. The vignette also highlights one landscape of identity question, which is defined as attempts to highlight how clients take meaning from the presence and sequential effects of a unique outcome. Specifically, the provider was able to ask about how the use of *Perspective* in the current storyline affected the client's perception of himself. This is one of the most common landscape of action questions. Other relevant landscape of identity questions: "How did *Perspective* provide you with the motivation to connect with important cultural resources?", "How did your use of *Perspective* influence your identity as a gay man?", and "What does the use of *Perspective* tell you about your ability to cope with discrimination?" Overall, the combined use of landscape of action and identity questions increases the imageability (Rasmussen & Berntsen, 2014) by which clients recall, relate, and re-remember neglected aspects of a character strength.

As clients begin to develop a full account and invest in alternative storylines centered on character strengths, NT providers aim to link these new storylines to the past and extend them into the future. To link new storylines to the past, providers may want to re-examine the mapping document with the client. Specifically, providers may ask clients to re-reflect on their initial encounter with discrimination with a character strength in a central role. Questions that might facilitate re-reflection include: "As you think back on your first experience with discrimination, where are some opportunities to activate *Teamwork*?", "What are some significant barriers in activating *Teamwork* and how might you overcome them?", "What are some readily available supports you could have used to activate *Teamwork*?", and "How might activating *Teamwork* in this spot alter how you think about this first encounter?" Essentially, through questioning, providers help clients situate an empowered storyline within established and entrenched problem-saturated stories to alter the assigned meaning behind an event and its corresponding effect on well-being. As clients start to integrate empowered storylines more consistently, providers slowly begin to shift the purview of the client toward establishing a plan to integrate empowered storylines in the future. Collaboratively, clients and providers work toward minimizing barriers and maximizing promotional factors to activating a diverse range of character strengths in the face of future discrimination events. When plans are agreed upon, clients are invited to implement small steps through behavioral experiments. Activating character strengths to tolerate, re-appraise, and sooth distress resulting from microaggressions and microinsults are a few examples of behavioral experiments. The perceived effectiveness of these experiments can be evaluated in subsequent meetings with the provider. As behavioral experiments are altered to increase effectiveness, clients can begin integrating larger sections of their empowered storyline to flourish in the face of discrimination.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Discrimination is an insidious and ubiquitous force, leading to heightened levels of distress and reductions in help-seeking behavior among those who could benefit from mental health services. Given the nature of discrimination, mental health providers need guidance in approaching challenging discrimination experiences with a mind toward sensitive, holistic, and transformative practices. In the current chapter, we, the authors, offered an avenue by which positive psychological and narrative practices could be integrated to help cultural minority clients build an empowered platform of strength to mitigate the negative effects of discrimination. We firmly believe integrating cultural knowledge obtained from positive psychological assessment with cultural skills developed from NT approaches is a positive step forward in establishing inclusive and socially just guidelines regarding how to effectively address discrimination.

However, the proposed procedure should be perceived as a preliminary means of integrating different elements of mental health service to address discrimination from a culturally adapted frame of reference. Currently, there is no evidence that the proposed procedure is effective in terms of promoting positive coping efforts in the face of discrimination. Therefore, research is needed to validate the effectiveness of our approach before it can be implemented with confidence across different socio-cultural settings and with individuals who identify with unique cultural identities. Importantly, research is needed to determine how positive psychological assessment increases cultural identity development and generates opportunities to build a platform of psychological strength. Second, it is important to evaluate how NT approaches help cultural minority clients activate character strengths in developing empowered storylines. Understanding these processes will help refine the approaches clinicians adopt when working alongside cultural minority clients to build strength and resilience. Overall, we believe the integration of positive psychological assessment and NT approaches offers a personally rewarding and empowering pathway by which ethnic, religious, gender, sexual, and other cultural minority clients can manage and overcome discrimination.

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Self-determination and Positive Psychology Interventions: An Extension of the Positive Activity Model in the Context of Unemployment



Leoni van der Vaart and Anja Van den Broeck

Abstract Positive psychological interventions (PPIs) are approaches, methods, and intentional activities that cultivate positive behaviours, cognitions, and emotions. PPI's are proven to be effective and valuable, also to complement traditional interventions. Nevertheless, they are largely ignored in the context of unemployment. This chapter first contends that PPIs should be developed for and implemented in the unemployment context. PPIs are warranted in this context because they may facilitate the well-being—and therefore also indirectly alleviate the suffering—of a vulnerable population. Second, we argue that the effectiveness of PPIs can be enhanced by using theoretical frameworks, such as the self-determination theory (SDT). As an influential motivational theory, SDT provides a comprehensive framework for the mechanisms (i.e. basic psychological need satisfaction) through which well-being can be enabled. Satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness could therefore serve as key foci of PPIs, but they may also provide guidance on how PPIs can be implemented to facilitate client adherence, engagement, and intervention outcomes. This chapter aims to theorise on the use of SDT and basic psychological need satisfaction to inform the content and delivery of PPIs. In doing so, the chapter contributes to the limited literature incorporating SDT principles into PPI interventions, in general, but also more specifically in the unemployment context.

Keywords Self-determination theory · Basic psychological needs · Need satisfaction · Positive psychology · Unemployment · Mechanisms

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1 Introduction

Some things in life are bad
 They can really make you mad
 Other things just make you swear and curse
 When you're chewing on life's gristle
 Don't grumble, give a whistle
 And this'll help things turn out for the best
Always Look on the Bright Side of Life
Eric Idle

Positive psychological interventions (PPIs) are intentional and simple initiatives, that could be practised regularly to mimic the myriad healthy thoughts and behaviours associated with naturally happy people (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). These initiatives foster positive emotions, thoughts and behaviour (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), enhance well-being and could therefore—indirectly—alleviate suffering (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005). PPIs are also preventative, non-stigmatising, easily accessible (Bolier et al., 2013) and their well-being message highly resonates with people (Bolier & Abello, 2014).

We see PPIs as well-suited interventions to enhance people's well-being, also for vulnerable populations such as the unemployed. Unemployment is a problematic issue around the globe: it not only has important economic and societal costs (e.g., criminality, poverty and substance abuse), it is also a burden for unemployed individuals themselves as they suffer from various physical (e.g. stomach aches and headaches) and psychological ailments (e.g. depression and anxiety) (Paul & Moser, 2009; Wanberg, 2012). Unemployed individuals could therefore use some assistance in maintaining their well-being. Interventions for the unemployed, however, typically focus more on re-employment (Koopman, Pieterse, Bohlmeijer, & Drossaert, 2017) or employ cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), that traditionally aims to address mental disorders by identifying and countering negative thoughts (see Koopman et al., 2017). Hence, these interventions aim to directly alleviate suffering by fostering reemployment or removing a barrier (i.e., negative thoughts) to well-being (Duckworth et al., 2005). Although problem-based interventions are effective (Koopman et al., 2017), individuals want more than just the absence of suffering (Duckworth et al., 2005) and PPIs may assist the unemployed in maintaining mental health. This in turn is also likely to support them in (keeping on) engaging in job search behaviour. Despite the proven effectiveness of PPIs (see Bolier et al., 2013; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), only one study previously used and showed the validity of the positive approach in the context of unemployment (Dambrun & Dubuy, 2014). So, more PPIs are needed in psychologically vulnerable populations, such as the unemployed.

However, such an approach warrants a sound theoretical framework as a basis. As a second contribution, this chapter argues that self-determination theory (SDT) is valuable in providing such basis. This is because SDT takes a positive meta-

theoretical approach by theorising that human beings will move towards thriving and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017), which is much in line with the premises of positive psychology. SDT furthermore explains the mechanisms through which well-being is achieved (Vansteenkiste & Mouratidis, 2016) and also supports calls from positive psychology to investigate change mechanisms (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013; Shin & Steger, 2014). More specifically, SDT holds that the basic psychological needs are the nutrients required for healthy functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2017) which is supported by recent meta-analyses (Ng et al., 2012; Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang, & Rosen, 2016). Although the positive activity model acknowledges that the basic needs explain the effect of PPIs on outcomes (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013), a more detailed analysis of how SDT provides a theoretical background to explain both the effect of and the context in which PPIs succeed is needed.

In the current chapter, the strategic integration of the positive activity model of PPIs and SDT provides a nuanced understanding of the psychological processes through which PPIs may influence people's well-being, specifically here: the unemployed. The theoretical framework of SDT is described as the theoretical backbone of positive interventions to provide suggestions for positive activities aimed at enhancing basic psychological need satisfaction among unemployed. Specifically, the chapter extends the mediating role of need satisfaction in the positive activity model, by positioning it as a contextual pre-requisite for effective PPIs (i.e. a moderating role). In doing so, it allows shifting the focus away from problem-based psychological interventions which mar the current body of knowledge in the unemployment context to a more positive point of view.

2 Positive Psychology Interventions and the Positive Activity Model

Positive psychology is seen as the “science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Hence, any approach, method, or intentional activity that cultivate positive behaviours, cognitions, and emotions can be referred to as a PPI (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). PPI's come in different kinds. Using card sorting procedures, Gorlin, Lee, and Otto (2018) broadly categorised PPIs into six domains (with several sub-domains) according to the conceptual overlap of the intervention content: (1) positive processing of past and present events, (2) positive processing of future events, (3) gratitude, (4) acts of kindness, (5) strength identification, and (6) goal pursuit domain. The first two sets of strategies centre around positive processing of past, present and future events. In these strategies, clients are tasked with talking, thinking and/or writing about positive events that happened, is currently happening, or that they could imagine happening in the future. The third and fourth sets centre around expressing gratitude and performing acts of kindness (Gorlin et al., 2018). These two domains are combined in the current chapter because of its joint ability to satisfy the need for

relatedness. While the fifth set of strategies centres around identifying and utilising personal strengths, the final set centres around pursuing goals (Gorlin et al., 2018).

Two meta-analyses of randomised controlled studies demonstrated the capability of PPIs in promoting well-being and alleviating depressive symptoms (Bolier et al., 2013; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009) among various groups (i.e., clinical patients, employees, elderly, teachers, students) in a variety of settings (i.e., campus, community, clinic, lab, home, online, work) (Hone, Jardim, & Schofield, 2015).

Despite the proven efficacy and effectiveness of PPIs, limited studies are available on PPIs for the unemployment setting. This is unfortunate given the need for effective psychological interventions for this vulnerable group. One published intervention study ventured into this domain using a positive psychology approach. Specifically, Dambrun and Dubuy (2014) tasked participants with five exercises: performing altruistic tasks, writing down three good things and their causes, writing and delivering (if they wished to) a gratitude letter, identifying their strengths and using it in a new way, and reflecting on new opportunities that transpired from others that ended. Results showed that PPI significantly increased well-being (e.g., life satisfaction, self-esteem) and significantly decreased psychological distress (e.g., depression, anxiety) (Dambrun & Dubuy, 2014). The positive psychology approach of Dambrun and Dubuy (2014) stands in contrast to the more traditional focus of interventions trying to improve chances of re-employment and/or the well-being of the unemployed (Koopman et al., 2017). Such traditional interventions improving the skill levels of the unemployed or the way the unemployed communicate or sell their skills may increase the self-efficacy or employability, while interventions based on cognitive therapy (i.e., cognitive restructuring negative thoughts into rational thoughts, avoiding thinking errors, reframing active problem-solving or relaxation skills) may help to alleviate negative thoughts. A positive approach to improving people's well-being may thus be complementary to a focus on avoiding suffering, particularly among unemployed.

Although studies show that PPIs may increase well-being and decrease psychological distress, little or no information is provided about the processes through (i.e., how) or the conditions under which (i.e., when) these positive activities work. Several researchers in the domain of positive psychology stressed the importance of understanding change mechanisms as they enable the design of even more effective interventions (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013; Shin & Steger, 2014; Smith, Harrison, Kurtz, & Bryant, 2014). Given that current PPIs have only small to moderate effects immediately after cessation of the intervention and small (for well-being) and non-significant (for ill-being) over the longer term (see Bolier et al., 2013), increasing the effectiveness of PPIs would be helpful.¹

¹“A composite moderate and statistically significant effect size (Cohen's *d*) was observed for subjective well-being $d = 0.34$ (95% CI [0.22, 0.45], $p < .01$). For psychological well-being, Cohen's *d* was 0.20 (95% CI [0.09, 0.30], $p < .01$) and for depression $d = 0.23$ (95% CI [0.09, 0.38], $p < .01$), which can be considered as small. For those studies examining effects from three to six months (short-term follow-up), the random-effects model demonstrated small but significant effects in comparison with the control groups for subjective well-being (Cohen's *d* 0.22, 95% CI [0.05, 0.38], p

In an attempt to address the concern about mechanisms, Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) developed the positive activity model. This model postulates that “positive activities are positive for an individual only to the extent that they stimulate increases in positive emotions, positive thoughts, positive behaviours, and need satisfaction, which in turn increase happiness” (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013, p. 60). The role of need satisfaction as an explanatory mechanism for the effects of PPI was echoed by Van Zyl and Rothmann (2014) in the development of a conceptual model for happiness interventions. Furthermore, Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) argue that features of the positive activity (e.g., dosage, variety), features of the person (e.g., personality, effort) and the person-activity fit impact on the degree to which the engagement in PPIs increase people’s well-being. This chapter wants to go one step further and suggest that the basic psychological needs as defined in SDT, may not only be the crucial mechanism in explaining *why* PPIs have a positive impact on people’s well-being (i.e., mediation effect) but also *when* this is the case (i.e., moderation effect). In doing so, a deeper and more elaborate understanding of the effectiveness of PPIs is provided through elaborating on the role of need satisfaction—as defined in self-determination theory—in the positive activity model.

3 Need Satisfaction in Self-determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000), is a motivation theory that builds on a positive organismic dialectic meta-theory. Specifically, SDT starts from the assumption that people have the propensity to be active (rather than re-active) organisms who want to grow and develop and interact with their environment (rather than being mere controlled by it) (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). However, despite this positive propensity, according to SDT, people may also become passive and/or counterproductive (Ryan & Deci, 2000). People’s natural growth-orientation may thus not be taken for granted; it requires fundamental nutrients. Just like plants need water, sunshine and minerals to flourish, SDT advances that people need to be satisfied with their basic psychological needs to thrive (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Based on the accumulation of empirical research (Deci & Ryan, 2000), three needs are considered to be essential: the needs for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for relatedness.² The need for autonomy is defined as individuals’ inherent desire to act with a sense of choice and volition, that is, to be the author of one’s actions and to feel psychologically free (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For example, when feeling satisfied in the need for autonomy, the unemployed would experience

< .01) and for psychological well-being (0.16, 95% CI [0.02, 0.30], $p = .03$). The effect was not significant for depression (0.17, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.39], $p = .15$)” (Bolier et al., 2013, p. 11).

²In order to be classified as a *psychological* need, a need must consistently promote psychological growth, internalisation, and well-being across different cultures—beyond the variance explained by other proposed needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus far, empirical research provided evidence for the essential role of the three needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001; Van den Broeck et al. 2016).

a sense of control over decisions to apply for a job such that their decisions reflect their wishes. However, on average, the unemployed may be more prone to low need satisfaction. Their daily activities may feel more like a chain of ‘musts’ and ‘shoulds’, undermining their need for autonomy (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018). The need for competence is the desire to feel capable of mastering the environment and to bring about desired outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Actively seeking out challenges helps people to develop their skills and adapt to complex and changing environments. For example, when they would feel competent, the unemployed experience a sense of confidence and feel capable and energised to pursue an activity (e.g., going for an interview). However, constantly facing rejections, the unemployed may experience rather low levels of competence satisfaction (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018). Finally, the need for relatedness is the inherent propensity to feel connected to others, that is, to be a member of a group, to love and care and be loved and cared for (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The need for relatedness is satisfied if people experience a sense of communion and maintain close and intimate relationships. For example, unemployed who would experience a sense of closeness and being connected to those who support them in coping with the frustrations accompanying unemployment, would feel related. However, after a while, most unemployed feel isolated from external networks and may experience little satisfaction of their need for relatedness (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018).

According to SDT, the basic needs are universal propensities (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As all individuals are endowed with these needs, rather than focusing on differences in need strength, SDT pays particular attention to the degree in which one can satisfy the basic needs and argues that satisfaction of the basic needs is beneficial for all individuals. Further, although some individuals may report desiring far less of a particular need than other individuals, all individuals will suffer when any of the needs are thwarted. Two recent meta-analyses already provided robust evidence of the positive relationship between basic need satisfaction and well-being (e.g., less anxiety, more engagement) and behavioural (e.g., exercising, performance) outcomes among health-care patients and employees (Ng et al., 2012; Van den Broeck et al., 2016). Cross-cultural research supported that basic need satisfaction associates positively with well-being outcomes such as subjective well-being and lower symptoms of psychopathology across diverse cultures (e.g. Chen et al., 2015; Church et al., 2013; Sheldon, Abad & Omoile, 2009; Sheldon et al., 2004).

Some studies already provide the first evidence that satisfaction of the basic needs also supports unemployed individuals’ well-being, job search and the quality of the jobs they find. A qualitative study among people with mental health problems, participating in green work on care farms to become re-employed, showed that people benefitted from having choices and from pursuing personal interests when picking daily tasks (i.e. satisfying the need for autonomy), being challenged and finding solutions to the problems they encounter (i.e. satisfying the need for competence) and being understood and acknowledged by the farmer and the inclusion of a group of workers (i.e. satisfying the need for relatedness). In short, feeling supported in their needs and experiencing need satisfaction resulted in improved well-being and new found motivation and aspirations for the future (Ellingsen-Dalskau, Morken,

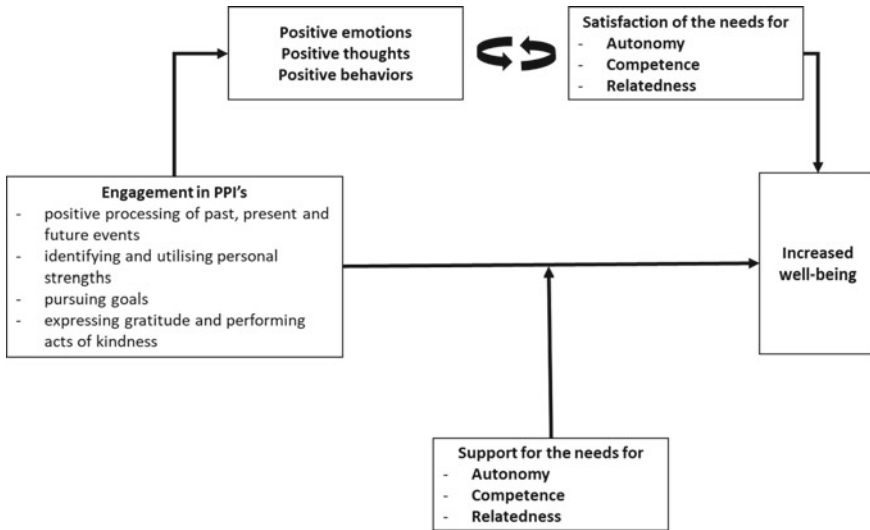


Fig. 1 Theoretical model of positive psychology interventions and basic needs satisfaction

Berget, & Pedersen, 2016). Quantitatively it was also shown that unemployed people who experience autonomy, become more autonomously motivated, which in turn increases their job search intensity, self-regulation and exploration (Koen, Klehe, Van Vianen, Zikic, & Nauta, 2010). Although more research is warranted, to further establish the importance of basic needs for the unemployed, initial research thus shows the value of need satisfaction in improving their functioning.

4 The Role of Positive Psychology Interventions to Satisfy Basic Psychological Needs

In this chapter, as outlined in Fig. 1, we advance that SDT’s basic needs serve as an underlying mechanism (i.e., ‘why’) of the different sets of strategies of PPIs, but that SDT’s notion of need support also sheds light on the conditions under which (i.e., ‘when’) this is the case.

First, building on previous suggestions (e.g., Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013), it is agreed that PPIs have a need supportive function such that the engagement in PPIs helps individuals to satisfy the basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. While the positive activity model depicts the satisfaction of the basic needs (as one mechanism) next to the experience of positive emotions, thoughts and behaviours (as alternative mechanisms), based on SDT, it is argued that positive emotions, thoughts and behaviours both leads to (and transpire from) experiences of need satisfaction rather than need satisfaction being parallel to them in the psychological process. For

example, developing optimistic thoughts (i.e. positive thoughts about your competence) leads to the satisfaction of the need for competence, which in turn leads to more mastering thoughts. In short, engaging in the different types of PPIs provides individuals, such as the unemployed, not only with the opportunity to enhance positive emotions, thoughts and behaviours but also with opportunities to satisfy their needs for autonomy and—perhaps most importantly—the need for competence and the need for relatedness.

Second, although all PPIs are designed to bring about positive changes, it is contended that they may have no or even unintended effects when they are delivered in a wrong way: the (interpersonal) context in which people engage in PPIs plays a big role. People can engage in PPIs themselves, but often they are also guided by a counsellor. In the latter case, it is important for counsellors to be need supportive and should deliver the PPIs in a need supporting way. In the following section, how the different types of PPIs have the potential to satisfy people's basic psychological needs are described and continue to argue how the (interpersonal) contexts in which PPIs are implemented may further help or hinder the need supporting nature of PPIs.

5 Need Satisfaction in Explaining the Impact of Different PPI Strategies

5.1 Need Satisfaction in Positive Processing of Past, Present, and Future Events PPIs

A popular PPI in the set of strategies around the positive processing of past, present, and future events participants is to list positive events and attribute causes to it (“three good things”) (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Unemployed clients, for example, are asked to write down three positive things that happened to them on a particular day and to link each of these events with one or more causes. Instructions could include that they specifically indicate how they influenced these positive outcomes. Keeney (2009) refers to this as “basking in achievement” (i.e. attributing personal achievement to internal causes). So, if the unemployed submitted job applications, they could indicate how they chose the job and how their CV-writing or IT-skills enabled them to submit the application or how their competencies fit the vacancy which means that they possess sought-after characteristics. By noticing and appreciating (i.e., savouring) these positive mastery experiences the need for autonomy and competence is satisfied. Clients could also link the events with external relational causes. In this way they acknowledge the role of others in enabling them to experience positive events (Keeney, 2009) and satisfy the need for relatedness.

Whereas in the previous activities, participants practised savouring strategies in which they noticed and appreciated past positive experiences, they could equally be encouraged to savour present or (imagined) future positive experiences (Smith et al., 2014). For example, clients are asked to savour these experiences as and when

they happen (Hurley & Kwon, 2012) as well as to actively ‘look for’ these moments to savour during the day (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). One future-focused savouring activity is the best possible self (Seligman et al., 2005) activity. In the context of unemployment, clients are asked to write about a time when they are at their best (e.g., being a good student or being employed) and then to reflect on the strengths they display during that time (e.g., curiosity or learning-orientation). They are encouraged to frequently review this written narrative and the strengths displayed, which provides them with a sense of competence.

Similarly, unemployed clients may be asked to imagine their best-possible life in the future: a moment where everything turned out as planned and things are going as well as it possibly could because the individual has worked hard to, and achieved, their goals. They can write about this best-possible future self (King, 2001) and may write down goals to help them achieve this outcome (Shin & Steger, 2014). Such challenges are key to satisfying the need for competence. Imagining a future, they would like to achieve, also satisfies the need for autonomy and depending on with whom a future is imagined, it could also satisfy the need for relatedness.

Different other interventions exist to help people positive process past, present, and future events. For example, in slightly different versions of acknowledging positive events (Lyubomirsky, Sousa, & Dickerhoof, 2006), unemployed clients are asked to re-experience one or more positive events that occurred (e.g., being invited to an interview or making a new friend at job seeker events) as vividly as possible in their minds (i.e. mental imagery). Alternatively, positive thinking with hope-based cognitive restructuring (Rashid, 2008) clients are asked to reflect on a situation in which a negative event (e.g., an unsuccessful job interview) led to unanticipated positive outcomes (i.e., being more confident in interviews or creating a new network for future job leads), with subsequent rehearsal of this memory. Depending on the content of the instructions or the counselling conversations, these activities have the potential to satisfy the needs for competence and relatedness or both. Another strategy is to be fully ‘present’ in the moment, while developing some positive statements about themselves. Once again, one could be encouraged to develop statements reflecting mastery of their environment (e.g., “I can develop the skills required by a prospective employer”) or (e.g., “I am a valued member of my community”) to satisfy the needs for competence and relatedness or both.

5.2 Expressing Gratitude and Performing Acts of Kindness

Gratitude is an emotion that transpires from one person acknowledging that (s)he received something valuable from another person. Gratitude serves to build, regulate and strengthen relationships (Algoe & Stanton, 2011) and plays a valuable role in the satisfaction of the need for relatedness (i.e., being loved and cared for). So, strategies encouraging the expression of gratitude to others (Lomas, Froh, Emmons, Mishra, & Bono, 2014) contributes to need satisfaction. In the context of unemployment, clients may be asked to write a letter to someone whom they feel gratitude is due, but

never expressed this gratitude to. The counsellor can then afford them the opportunity to deliver this letter, if (s)he wanted to, to the intended recipient. Relatedness also reflects a need to love and care for others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). So, strategies encouraging acts of kindness or altruistic activities (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005; Magyar-Moe, 2009) also contribute to perceived need satisfaction. Unemployed clients may, for example, be encouraged to perform acts of kindness (e.g., volunteering) frequently and to record these acts as a means of savouring.

5.3 Need Satisfaction in Identifying and Utilising Personal Strengths PPIs

Strength-based interventions are commonly used by positive psychology practitioners (Louis & Lopez, 2014, Seligman et al., 2005). In such interventions, clients identify perceived strengths and are encouraged to either use their top strengths more (or instead more effectively), or in new or different ways (Louis & Lopez, 2014). In the case of unemployment, counsellors can for example encourage unemployed clients to use their strength of perseverance in job applications to also persevere in improving their qualifications. In this way, a difficult task is approached using what people are good at which enhances perceived mastery and provides them with the opportunity to build new skills, which again satisfies the need for competence. Similarly, the counsellor can encourage clients to use, for example, their kindness strength to demonstrate love and care for others more often satisfying the need for relatedness.

5.4 Need Satisfaction in Pursuing Goals PPIs

The last set of PPIs centre around goals, which may satisfy the need for competence. This involves setting clear expectations, creating a detailed step-by-step plan and providing desired assistance, guidance, information and feedback as a way to guide the goal-setting and goal-achievement process (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018). Competence is herein also nurtured by the provision of structure and using action coaching. This is a positive approach to coaching in which clients create realistic goals and action plans, monitor and evaluate progress towards goals achievement, and make adjustments as necessary with the support of the coach (Gorlin et al., 2018). Some of these coaching initiatives include the identification and utilisation of strengths (e.g., Madden, Green, & Grant, 2011; Van Zyl & Stander, 2013) in a way that strengths supported the achievement of goals (Linley & Harrington, 2006) and satisfied the need for competence. Working together with the coach could also contribute to relatedness satisfaction (Table 1).

Table 1 Overview of needs supportive PPI strategies

Positive psychology intervention	Application in unemployment and need satisfaction
Positive processing of past, present, and future events PPIs	<p>Write down good things: submitted a job application for a job one wants (i.e. autonomy) and how one’s skills enabled one to apply and matches the sought-after skills (i.e. competence). Acknowledge support of significant other/s in the process (i.e. relatedness)</p> <p>Write about a time when one was a good student or employed and reflect on the strengths one displayed during that time (e.g., curiosity or learning-orientation) (i.e. competence)</p> <p>Imagine one’s best-possible life in the future: for example, a moment where one achieved the desired goal of being employed (i.e. autonomy) because one worked hard to this challenging goal (i.e. competence)</p> <p>Re-experience positive events as vividly as possible in their minds: for example, being invited to an interview (i.e. competence) or making a new friend at job seeker events (i.e. relatedness)</p>
Expressing gratitude and performing acts of kindness	<p>Write a letter to someone to whom gratitude is due, but never expressed. Deliver this letter to the intended recipient if one wishes to do so (i.e. relatedness)</p> <p>Frequently perform acts of kindness (e.g. volunteering in the community) and record these acts (i.e. relatedness)</p>
Identifying and utilising personal strengths PPIs	<p>Use one’s strength of perseverance in job applications to also persevere in improving one’s qualifications (i.e. competence)</p> <p>Use kindness strength to demonstrate love and care for others more often (i.e. relatedness)</p>
Pursuing goals PPIs	Set clear expectations, create a detailed step-by-step plan (i.e. competence) and accept assistance, guidance, information and feedback from a career coach (if desired) (i.e. relatedness)

However, as outlined in Fig. 1, not only the engagement in the PPIs in and of itself, but also the context in which PPIs are provided may matter for need satisfaction to occur. The authors argue that a need supporting context is essential for PPIs to be able to satisfy the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

5.5 Need Satisfaction in the Context in Which PPIs Take Place

In their positive-activity model, Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) argued that the degree to which PPIs increase people’s well-being, depends on several features of the activity, of the person engaging in PPIs and on the fit between the person and the activity. For example, PPIs are said to be more effective when people not only engage in one, but a variety of PPIs (i.e. features of the activity), when they put effort into it (i.e. features of the person) and when people enjoy the PPIs (i.e. an indication

of fit). Many of these influencing features can be understood from the perspective of autonomy support or—termed more broadly—need support.

Narrowly defined, autonomy support includes (a) the acknowledgement of people's feelings, (b) the provision of a rationale for rules and demands, and (c) the offering of choice and opportunities for initiative taking (Mageau et al., 2015). Autonomy-supportive counsellors, for example, would give the unemployed as much choice as possible (e.g. on which types of jobs they would apply), provide a rationale when necessary (e.g. explain that the unemployed individual needs to look for at least some type of job in order not to lose unemployment benefits) and engage in the interaction in a warm, empathic and compassionate way such that the unemployed can be themselves as much as possible. Autonomy support is not only suggested to satisfy the need for autonomy, but also the needs for relatedness and competence. Therefore it is also termed more broadly as need support (e.g., Rocchi, Pelletier, Cheung, Baxter, & Beaudry, 2017; Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2005). Counsellors can for example also support the need for relatedness when they respect and have an interest in the unemployed and build a warm relationship. They may also support the need for competence among unemployed by guiding them through activities of increasing difficulty that the unemployed can do, but also allow them to grow and improve.

The perspective of need support fits very well with the features of the activity and person that may moderate the well-being effects of PPI as outlined in the positive activity model (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). Moreover, a need-supportive perspective may also extend the number of potentially moderating features. First, when discussing the effects of dosage, Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013, p. 59) argue that “perhaps when people are free to choose their happiness-increasing activities, they do not view the activities as cumbersome and gladly perform them for longer and more often”. Moreover, they also note that when people deliberately chose particular PPIs (i.e. an aspect of the personal characteristic of motivation), they experience high levels of well-being. Both these aspects tap into the provision of *choice*, which is a key aspect of autonomy support. Providing choice in the offering of PPIs may be particularly beneficial in interventions among unemployed as they may experience few opportunities to choose what they want to do, for example because they have to comply with different rules and regulations to keep their employment benefits or fit in their social environment. The inclusion of PPIs may therefore maximise the opportunities to make choices in interventions among unemployed (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; Wehmeyer, 2014). Specifically, autonomy-supportive counsellors may provide information about different PPIs and encourage clients to make a choice and to initiate actions (Su & Reeve, 2011). Clients could for example choose between the type of activity (i.e., savouring or using strengths), the mode (i.e., thinking/talking/writing), frequency (i.e., daily/weekly) and duration (i.e., weeks/months) of engaging in PPIs.

It is important to balance choice within the larger framework of the intervention goals. For example, the client may prefer shorter interventions but studies have shown that PPIs are more effective when longer in duration (i.e. eight weeks or longer) (Bolier et al., 2013; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009; Chakhssi, Kraiss, Sommers-Spijkerman, & Bohlmeijer, 2018). Achieving a balance may be possible when counsellors provide *meaningful rationales* for requests during the interventions. For exam-

ple, counsellors may explain why longer interventions could be better. Similarly, as some clients may perceive interventions as uninteresting or unappealing, providing rationales why these activities can be useful or valuable likely enhances their success (Hadré & Reeve, 2009).

Autonomy-supportive counsellors may also take *people's perspective* and nurture inner motivational resources. They become aware of the interests and preferences of clients and take these into account as much as possible. Positive psychology literature also emphasises the importance of person-activity fit and personalising PPIs to enhance effectiveness (Scheuller, 2014; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009; Sin, Della Porta, & Lyubomirsky, 2011). In a similar vein, counsellors also need to listen to, rather than ignore, negative feelings (e.g., complaints or disagreement), about the activities and acknowledge that these are valid reactions to doing something that is difficult or less enjoyable (Hadré & Reeve, 2009; Su & Reeve, 2011).

Apart from supporting the need for autonomy, the PPIs may also be presented in a way or context supporting the need for relatedness. According to Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) social support is an essential aspect of the positive-activity model, both as a feature of the activity and the person. Peers and broader social environment are imperative to bring about the positive effects of PPIs: people surrounding the unemployed may support the unemployed in seeking their strengths and celebrate with them when they perform the gratitude exercise, or support them in engaging in PPIs (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). As such, peers, friends and family may provide a relatedness supporting context for the unemployed. Counsellors too may encourage unemployed to seek social support in engaging in PPIs and may support the need for relatedness themselves too. This may stand in sharp contrast to the conditional regard unemployment counsellors may use towards the unemployed in threatening with sanctions or induce guilt when they don't search (hard enough) for a job (Van Parys, 2016).

Finally, counsellors may implement PPIs in a way that maximises the satisfaction of the need for competence. Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) argue that people benefit most if they practice of multiple activities, potentially because this provides them with different challenges and a myriad of experiences of being effective in different ways, which add to competence satisfaction. Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) furthermore noticed that some activities serve as better starter activities than others. For example, based on the research of Layous, Lee, Choi, and Lyubomirsky (2013), they concluded that starting with bigger exercises such as writing a gratitude letter may be more beneficial than starting with doing acts of kindness, because expressing gratitude to someone may show a bigger impact and therefore provide people with more competence at the start of PPIs than several smaller acts of kindness. Hence, including PPIs in interventions may be highly beneficial for the unemployed, who often lack feelings of self-efficacy and effectance. Being able to engage in small activities as planned and seeing the immediate results of these activities that are challenging at first may particularly nurture their needs, which then allows them to thrive.

6 Conclusion

The current chapter aimed to argue for the introduction of PPIs in the interventions among unemployed, using SDT as a theoretical framework. First, it was argued that PPIs might be particularly welcome in complementing the interventions focused on re-employment or the few interventions that aim to improve unemployed people's well-being by minimising their suffering. PPIs such as the gratitude exercise, thinking about one's strength, adopting goals, and performing acts of kindness may directly satisfy the need for competence, the need for relatedness and—perhaps also to a lesser degree—the need for autonomy. Moreover, the (social) context in which PPIs are enacted may further stimulate the well-being effects of PPIs by being need supportive. Although several scholars have touched theoretically on the role of need satisfaction and need support (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013) and initial empirical studies have provided first evidence for their role in PPIs (Nelson et al., 2014), it is hoped that this chapter may further stimulate researchers and practitioners alike to adopt SDT in studying and implementing PPIs among unemployed.

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Creating and Disseminating Positive Psychology Interventions That Endure: Lessons from the Past, Gazing Toward the Future



Everett L. Worthington Jr.

Abstract This chapter reviews the history of development of several positive psychology interventions. I use forgiveness interventions, and specifically the REACH Forgiveness intervention, as a case study. REACH Forgiveness is described in two main formats—a psychoeducational group intervention not targeted at specific events and a general do-it-yourself workbook—and also the ways it is embedded within four other interventions. These include the Hope-focused Approach (HFA) to couple enrichment and therapy; Forgiveness and Reconciliation through Experiencing Empathy (FREE) for couples; the Dual Process model of self-forgiveness; and community-based forgiveness awareness-raising campaigns, especially within close, Christian communities. I draw on personal experience at developing positive-psychology-related interventions. Lessons are extracted regarding the creation of positive psychology interventions. Speculations are offered regarding the future of positive psychology-related interventions. These modifications in intervention practice will likely involve changes in the way interventions have been developed and marketed. Online interventions and do-it-yourself workbook interventions are specifically considered regarding forgiveness. Electronic interventions have high promise, but designing them to minimize attrition can be vexing. Speculation is offered on the reasons for attrition and ways to minimize attrition in future web-based interventions. Online interventions are available to attract people of all cultures and ethnic identities, but on the other hand, they can be tailored to only a limited number of cultures at any time. This multicultural mismatch between users and interventions must be addressed. Suggestions about how to do this are offered. General guidelines for the development of interventions in positive psychology are presented.

Keywords Forgiveness · Interventions · REACH forgiveness · Multicultural · Website intervention · Workbooks

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List of Abbreviations

REACH Forgiveness	An acrostic where R = Recall the hurt, E = Empathize with the one who inflicted the hurt, A = Altruistic gift of forgiveness, C = Commit to the forgiveness experienced, and H = Hold onto forgiveness when you doubt
HFA	Hope-focused Approach to couple enrichment and therapy
FREE	Forgiveness and Reconciliation through Experiencing Empathy
RCT	Randomized controlled trial
SD	Standard deviation

1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss mostly forgiveness interventions, specifically the REACH Forgiveness intervention, as a case study. REACH Forgiveness is built around an acrostic to help people remember five steps to forgiving. R stands for Recall the hurt. E stands for empathize to permit emotional replacement of negative unforgiving emotions with positive other-oriented emotions. A is for Altruistic gift of forgiveness—a gift that an offender does not deserve, but that is given freely by the forgiver. C reminds people to Commit to the forgiveness they experience. The commitment helps them H, hold onto forgiveness when they doubt its reality. My research team has developed interventions to promote humility, patience, self-control, and positivity (Lavelock et al., 2017) in addition to hope in couple relationships and self-forgiveness (Griffin et al., 2015). Each of those will be touched upon briefly in this chapter. Having developed a variety of interventions, let me make a few brief comments about differences and similarities among the interventions.

I tend to see positive psychology more from the side of developing character strengths and virtues than pursuing happiness and subjective well-being. From that vantage point, it has seemed to me that virtues can ebb and flow from public consciousness. Often it is what is occurring in world events that determines people's receptivity to specific interventions. For example, forgiveness research arose in the mid-1980s, but it flourished after the 1989–1998 period. In 1989, the Berlin Wall came down. Leading up to 1994s provisional cease fire in Northern Ireland, people had been working to broker peace, which was formally approved in 1998. South African Apartheid ended in the early 1990s, and in 1994, Nelson Mandela was elected President in free elections, and he became a symbol of reconciliation to the world. Of course, world conflict did not end as was seen in the Rwandan massacre of 1994. However, with the Cold War ending, former enemies had to learn to get along, and forgiveness was coincidentally developing a research presence to describe one way to do that.

In recent years, we might note a lack of political (and personal) humility, so we might think that the time is ripe for developing more interventions to promote humility, and some have recently been put forth (see Cuthbert et al., 2019; Lavelock et al., 2014, 2017).

One obvious consideration regarding interventions is that people only want them when they feel that they *need* them. Some virtues arise to conscious perception of need frequently—like forgiveness. People often seem to offend us, and often we are aware that we’ve offended others. Similarly, our need for patience seems to intrude often. We often have to wait, deal with exasperating people, or meet frustration. All too often, we meet those challenges, but not with grace and peace. At those times, we know we might need more patience. Other virtues show up in times of troubles—like hope for troubled marriages, or reconciliation in times of interpersonal conflict. Still others seem to rise to conscious attention in times when national or international events bring them to mind—like my earlier illustrations of forgiveness after the Cold War subsided or humility in these times of troubled political toxicity. Thus, there is an element of almost chaotic ebb and flow that can govern the relevance of some interventions in positive psychology. Some, however—perhaps like love, altruism, and forgiveness—have the potential to be staples in the pantheon of positive psychological interventions.

However, the REACH Forgiveness intervention has been a core positive psychology intervention that has been incorporated in psychoeducational groups, do-it-yourself workbooks, couple enrichment and counselling, and community transformation. After describing the scientific development of interventions and accumulation of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to provide evidence for validity, we turn to principles of dispersion, which I will draw from the literature on marketing to provide strategies for effectiveness and dissemination.

2 Literature/Discussion

The history of research on forgiveness began about the same time as the positive psychology movement. Positive psychology is thought of as both a study of subjective well-being and happiness and of virtue or character strength. Seligman (2004) (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) has described psychology as deriving from a post-World War II history of studying psychopathology. In response, he emphasized the positive side of psychology. However, psychologists had studied positive psychological experiences for many years. These were encapsulated in humanistic psychology, third-force psychology, and counselling psychology. However, Seligman drew attention to the disparate literatures and gave them a name.

2.1 *History of Forgiveness Studies*

In 1998, McCullough, Exline, and Baumeister (1998) developed an annotated bibliography of the major psychological articles ever written on forgiveness. There were only 58. Some of the (at that time) most recent involved Robert Enright's programmatic studies on how children developed their capabilities of reasoning about moral justice-forgiveness. Enright's group paralleled the stages of development of reasoning about forgiveness to Kohlberg's stages of reasoning about justice (for a review, see Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991). About the same time, Enright began to develop a process model that led people to forgive. Later Enright and colleagues developed an instrument (i.e., the Enright Forgiveness Inventory; Subkoviak et al., 1995) to assess forgiveness. They refined the process model (Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995; Hebl & Enright, 1993) to intervene in many clinical problems in forgiveness therapy (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015).

From its humble roots (58 high-quality empirical studies in 1998), forgiveness research has grown to over 3000 empirical articles by 2018. Griffin, Cowden, and Shawkey (in press) have identified 22 narrative reviews and 17 meta-analyses between 2004 and 2018, on different aspects of forgiveness. What led to this explosion of research on forgiveness? First, money. The John Templeton Foundation (JTF) earmarked two million US dollars (\$2M) to fund empirical work in forgiveness in a 1998 Request for Proposals. Over 125 complete applications, were invited from well over 225 preliminary proposals (October, 1997). Because the applications were of such high quality, the JTF made an extra million dollars available. About 29 research teams were funded with the \$3M in March, 1998. In mid-1998, *A Campaign for Forgiveness Research* was established as a non-profit corporation—essentially a non-governmental organization—whose purpose was to raise additional money to support research into forgiveness. By the end of the *Campaign* (June 30, 2005), over \$6.4M additional funds from 14 funding partners had been disbursed to research team, and two national conferences had been run (one for basic research, one for applied research) to report findings.

Second, timing was essential. The timing of the JTF initiatives and the *Campaign* coincided with Martin Seligman's run for president of the American Psychological Association and his initiative to start a field of positive psychology. The Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) article kicking off the field of positive psychology came out about the time that forgiveness research was accelerating, so forgiveness research, as a virtue, nestled comfortably in a new home—positive psychology. As positive psychologists know, there have been two major strains by which positive psychology has been characterized. About half of its adherents see the field as a psychology of happiness and subjective well-being. The other half of its adherents see it as a psychology of virtue and character strength. Clearly, positive psychology is about both well-being and virtue, and the relative emphasis is what is under some debate. I have always favoured the emphasis on virtue and character strength, but I have written about forgiveness and well-being (for a review, see Worthington, Griffin, &

Provencher, 2018) and other virtues and well-being as well (for a review of humility, see Worthington, Davis, Hook, & Provencher, 2018).

2.2 *Creation of REACH Forgiveness*

Based on my clinical experience with couple therapy, I created a brief, decision-based forgiveness intervention, wrote about it in a couple-counselling text (Worthington, 1989), taught it to fellow couple therapist Fred DiBlasio, with whom I published a description of it in a refereed journal (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990). McCullough and Worthington (1995) investigated the decision-based intervention in a one-hour group setting for individuals. People recalled old hurts that still bothered them and then made a decision to forgive them. Our thinking evolved away from a mere will-based decision toward emotional and motivational equanimity. McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1997) built on Batson's (Toi & Batson, 1982) empathy-altruism model to conceptualize forgiveness as an altruistic gift that an offender does not deserve, but, if empathy can be developed, the victim can give that altruistic gift of forgiveness, changing his or her motivation to be less grudge-driven and more benevolent. Sandage and Worthington (2010) completed research on a model involving recall, empathy, humility, and an altruistic gift of forgiveness in 1997, but it was not published until over ten years later. Thus, by 1997, we had REA (Recall, Empathy, and Altruistic gift) in place with studies supporting the components as the method developed. By 1997, though, I saw that we needed to attend to maintenance of therapeutic gains, so I added two steps—commitment (C) to the model so that the person could hold onto (H) gains (Worthington, 1998a). In a chapter, I articulated the REACH Forgiveness model with its five steps making up the REACH acronym (Worthington, 1998b). At each step of development of the model, we sought empirical support for the efficacy of the intervention as a (developing) whole or—because it became more complex over time—what turned out to be the components of it. We consider it important to provide empirical support for all interventions. In fact, I mentioned earlier creating interventions for forgiveness, self-forgiveness, humility, patience, positivity, and hope. All were not publicly disseminated until they were scientifically supported.

Since 1998, we have conducted RCTs with numerous populations attempting to support the validity of the use of REACH Forgiveness with those populations. In addition, others have also conducted RCTs on REACH Forgiveness (e.g., Goldman & Wade, 2012; Shechtman, Wade, & Khoury, 2009). In addition, some of our early thinking has investigated other virtue-promoting interventions (see Lavelock et al., 2014, 2017). These have also included interventions to promote patience and positivity (Lavelock et al., 2017).

2.3 Delivery of REACH Forgiveness

REACH Forgiveness is delivered in two main formats aimed at general forgiveness rather than targeting it at specific problems. Some forgiveness interventions are targeted at a specific problem, like incest (Freedman & Enright, 1996) or men forgiving women who had abortions without their partner's involvement (Coyle & Enright, 1997). We have tended to create untargeted interventions (see McCullough et al., 1997; Sandage & Worthington, 2010). However, we have targeted specific populations such as Christians (see Greer, Worthington, Lin, Lavelock, & Griffin, 2014; Lampton, Oliver, Worthington, & Berry, 2005; Stratton, Dean, Nooneman, Bode, & Worthington, 2008) or Filipinos (Worthington, Hunter et al., 2010). We have delivered most interventions as either a psychoeducational group intervention or a (parallel in structure to the group intervention) do-it-yourself workbook.

3 Size of Effects for REACH Forgiveness Psychoeducational Groups

3.1 Investigating the Early Forms of REACH Forgiveness—Decision-Based Forgiveness and REA

As I described above, our first brief randomized clinical trial (RCT; McCullough & Worthington, 1995) compared a one-hour psychoeducational intervention to promote a forgiveness decision in a group setting with a one-hour self-enhancement control psychoeducational group (in which we extolled the physical health, mental health, relationship, and spiritual virtues of deciding to forgive). The decision-based group actually produced less than .1 standard deviations (SDs) of change in forgiveness score, but the self-enhancement control condition produced twice as much change—to which we will return in the section on “c. Practical implications or implications for multicultural contexts,” on “Non-focal findings can turn out to demand their own focus.”

McCullough et al. (1997), used the empathy-altruism model (REA) in an eight-hour RCT to promote emotional forgiveness—not just a decision to forgive. They found changes of over 1 full SD of change in forgiveness. The self-enhancement control psychoeducational group (again extolling the benefits of forgiving) was no more effective in the eight-hour version than it was in the previous one-hour version. The lasting change was .2 SDs.

Sandage and Worthington (2010) used a six-hour psychoeducational group RCT comparing the REA treatment to promote emotional forgiveness to a six-hour self-enhancement psychoeducational group as a control. It was completed in 1998, though not published until 2010. The treatment produced a lasting change of .5 SDs and the

effect size for the self-enhancement control was .4, with a lasting change of .2 at follow-up.

3.2 An Unexpected Beneficial Finding

One unexpected finding, then, was that discussing the benefits one receives from forgiving (and costs of holding grudges) produces genuine emotional forgiveness. The time of discussion seems not important, because whether it was one hour or eight hours, the lasting change was about .2 SDs of change in forgiveness. In fact, later, Worthington et al. (2000) obtained the same amount of change in a ten-minute videotape describing the benefits of forgiving. One practical implication of this is that promoting forgiveness should include a brief discussion of the benefits of forgiving, but (importantly) there is no need to spend more than ten minutes on this with an out-of-proportion-to-the-time amount of forgiveness produced.

3.3 Investigating the Full REACH Forgiveness Model

By 1998, the REACH Forgiveness model was fully formulated, and most subsequent studies used it. For example, Lampton et al. (2005) adapted the REACH Forgiveness model to Christians and administered it during a two-week campus awareness-raising blitz. The blitz alone produced effect sizes of .33, .13, and .75 ($M = .40$) on three measures of forgiveness, to which we will return later as well (see the subsection on “Forgiveness awareness-raising campaigns,” which is under the section entitled, “REACH Forgiveness Is Embedded within Three Other Interventions.”). The six-hour REACH Forgiveness groups produced effect sizes of .25, .78, and 1.02 ($M = .68$ —about .1 per hour of intervention)—adding benefit to the mere raising of awareness.

In a similar study, Stratton et al. (2008) used a Christian-accommodated psychoeducational REACH Forgiveness workshop lasting between 5 and 6 h, depending on condition. They used four measures of forgiveness and had effect sizes of .70, .97, .36, and .42 ($M = .61$ —about .1 per hour of intervention). The control condition—another campus-wide awareness-raising intervention—produced effect sizes of .08, .23, .09, and .24 ($M = .16$)—which was only about half the size of the awareness-raising campaign in Lampton et al. (which was .4), but not trivial. In a subsequent discussion (see Griffin, Toussaint et al., in press), we will talk about intentionally trying to raise awareness as *the* community-wide intervention serving as a public health intervention.

Lin et al. (2014) used a secular six-hour psychoeducational REACH Forgiveness group intervention with half of the participants from Virginia and the other half as foreign students. There were no differences between United States citizens and people from other countries. Lin et al. used a waiting-list design. They used measures

of decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness. On decisional forgiveness, collapsing across immediate treatment and the period when the wait-list participants completed the groups, people improved with effect sizes of .29 and .04, respectively. On emotional forgiveness, the people receiving immediate treatment improved with an effect size of .48 and the people receiving delayed treatment after the waiting period had an effect size of .72 from just before treatment to just after it. A mean effect size of .6 (for the 6-h intervention) is in line with a dose-effect relationship of .1 SD per hour of intervention.

From these studies of psychoeducational treatment using REACH Forgiveness (and early versions of it), the mean effect size was consistently about .1 per hour of treatment, which is consistent with a meta-analysis of all forgiveness interventions, regardless of whose the intervention was (see Wade, Hoyt, Kidwell, & Worthington, 2014).

4 REACH Forgiveness Do-It-Yourself Workbooks

We became convinced that the future of interventions needed to provide ways that people could access interventions online and work with them on their own (Kazdin & Rabbitt, 2013). Thus, in 2014, we adapted the REACH Forgiveness psychoeducational groups to a do-it-yourself workbook format. Worthington made the adaptation, and several RCT studies were subsequently performed on its efficacy. For example, Lavelock et al. (2017) compared people who were recruited for a study in increasing their virtue in general. They had no knowledge of what virtue they would be assigned to. They were randomly assigned to complete seven-hour workbooks on forgiveness, humility, patience, self-control, and positivity. Only trait or dispositional measures were used. In none of the studies, was attrition larger for workbook studies than for studies of the psychoeducational group treatment. The seven-hour forgiveness workbook produced an effect size in *trait forgivingness* of .59 (slightly less than .1 per hour—but on *trait* measures). The humility workbook produced an effect size in humility of .46 and in *trait forgivingness* of .56; patience produced an effect size in patience of .48 and in *trait forgivingness* of .64; self-control, produced an effect size in self-control of .11, and thus was not considered an effective manipulation of self-control; and positivity produced an effect size in reducing negativity of .85 and in *trait forgivingness* of .48. The test-retest control condition had an effect size of .01. From several studies, it seemed that promoting general virtues would also promote changes in *trait* forgiveness.

Other studies recruited people specifically to participate using forgiveness workbooks aimed at building the virtue of forgiveness. Harper et al. (2014) used the same workbook as did Lavelock et al. (2014), but they assessed state forgiveness on a target transgression, which has been the conventional way of assessing efficacy of forgiveness treatments, not *trait* forgivingness as did Lavelock et al. (2014). State forgiveness for a target transgression illustrates that participants can apply forgiveness to subsequent transgressions. Harper et al. used a waiting-list design. They used decisional forgiveness and the two treatment conditions (immediate treatment and

delayed treatment, during the period of treatment) had effect sizes of .98 and .74, respectively. They also used three emotional forgiveness measures: for immediate treatment 1.27, 1.34, and .94 ($M = 1.14$) and for delayed treatment 1.49, 1.53, and 1.68 ($M = 1.57$). The workbook took only seven hours to complete, and some of the effect sizes were about .15 SDs per hour—substantially larger than the hourly gain in psychoeducational groups on similar state forgiveness measures. But, could such an effect size be replicated?

Greer et al. (2014) adapted the REACH Forgiveness workbooks for Christians. She also used a waiting-list design, and assessed state measures of forgiveness on a target transgression. They used a trait forgiveness measure, decisional forgiveness measure, and two emotional forgiveness measures. On trait forgiveness, the effect sizes were .81 and .60 ($M = .70$) for immediate and delayed conditions (about .1 per hour on a trait measure). On decisional forgiveness, the effect sizes were 1.23 and 1.18 ($M = 1.20$) for immediate and delayed conditions. On motivation to forgive, the effect sizes were 1.69 and 1.43 ($M = 1.56$) for immediate and delayed conditions. On emotional forgiveness, the effect sizes were 1.82 and 1.23 ($M = 1.52$) for immediate and delayed conditions. The hourly rate of forgiving for these workbooks was about .2 per hour.

At this point, with only three workbook efficacy studies, it appears that effect sizes are even higher for workbooks than for psychoeducational groups, across a variety of measures—about .2 SDs per hour of work. Furthermore, the few psychoeducational group studies to assess trait forgiveness produced very modest long-term gains, but both investigations of workbooks that assessed trait forgiveness produced substantial changes in trait forgiveness. As a licensed Clinical Psychologist, I have been frankly sceptical that such superiority of workbooks over the psychoeducational groups will maintain, and in speaking and writing about this, I generally warn listeners or readers that substantial replication is needed before making a firm claim. However, at this point, I am confronted with three studies with reasonably consistent findings, and I need at least to address the possibility that the efficacy of workbooks—which are, in fact, individually administered interventions—is as great as, or greater than, with psychoeducational groups of approximately equal duration (about 6–8 h).

The workbooks have been at least as effective as psychoeducational groups. In the meta-analysis by Wade et al. (2014), the modality of delivery made a difference in how efficacious a treatment was. Individual therapy was significantly more effective than group treatments. Such a finding cannot be attributed to the psychoeducational nature rather than psychotherapeutic nature of the treatments. In two head-to-head comparisons of group process therapy against REACH Forgiveness psychoeducational groups (Wade et al., 2018; Wade & Meyer, 2009). Couple therapy was in the middle between the two and not differentially efficacious from either (Wade et al., 2014). The workbooks might share more in common with an individualized approach than with other group treatments. For instance, with workbooks, little time is spent in the group involved with sharing from each member or demonstrating instructions so that all group members can follow instructions. That might suggest that virtually all of the time spent on a workbook is spent working on the participant's own problem,

so the time is used more efficiently. In addition, much of the writing in the workbook is expressive writing, and the Pennebaker (2004) paradigm has shown that there is a therapeutic benefit to expressive writing. (On the other hand, group treatments do engage the Yalom (1985) non-specific group factors, and workbooks do not engage those. So, we might suspect that workbooks might be approximately equal in efficacy to group treatment). In the three studies to date, the effects might be just barely stronger for workbook individualized treatment and expressive writing than for the non-specific Yalom group factors.

5 REACH Forgiveness Is Embedded Within Three Other Interventions

Besides direct studies of the efficacy of REACH Forgiveness using psychoeducational groups or workbooks, research studies have investigated REACH Forgiveness as part of three more complex interventions. REACH Forgiveness is embedded within the hope-focused approach for couple enrichment or couple therapy. We also have begun to investigate self-forgiveness, which uses the REACH Forgiveness model within a larger intervention to promote responsible self-forgiveness. Finally, we have incorporated REACH Forgiveness groups and workbooks within an intervention intended for wider system impact, attempting to promote forgiveness within an entire university or broad social group (like a large church).

5.1 Hope-Focused Approach (HFA)

REACH Forgiveness has been included within the Hope-focused Approach to couple enrichment and therapy (Ripley & Worthington, 2014; Worthington, 2005a). It also has been a part of Forgiveness and Reconciliation through Experiencing Empathy (FREE), which coaches couples in forgiveness and reconciliation (see Worthington et al., 2015). In Worthington et al. (2015), the FREE component was evaluated separately from the HOPE component (i.e., communication and conflict-resolution training). Immediately after the 9 hours of treatment, the effect size was .27. In a two-year follow-up effect size for self-reported forgiveness for FREE was still .22. FREE has also been used with parents (Kiefer et al., 2010). In 9 hours of treatment, using a waiting-list design, the immediate treatment condition had effect sizes (per hour) of .04, .14, and .09, and the waiting list (when treated) had effect sizes (per hour) of .10, .03, and .02. The experiment-wise average was .07 SDs per hour.

5.2 Dual-Process Model of Self-forgiveness

REACH Forgiveness has been incorporated within the Dual Process model of self-forgiveness (Griffin et al., 2015; Worthington, 2013). Worthington (2013) described a self-forgiveness process as involving six steps. In the first three, responsibility is the focus. The person attempts to bring the moral failure or failure to meet one's expectations before whatever one takes to be sacred, then to repair social damage from one's failures, and finally to repair psychological damage from one's failures. Then the person makes a decision to forgive the self and REACH emotional self-forgiveness. In the fifth step, the person seeks to repair damage to one's self-acceptance, and in the final step, one attempts to ensure that one does not repeat the failure. Griffin et al. (2015) developed a do-it-yourself workbook to promote self-forgiveness, and they investigated it with over 200 students who were dealing with self-condemnation over their own wrongdoing. Research on the dual-process model of forgiving oneself is in its formative steps. As of yet, the components have not been broken out and evaluated separately in systematic dismantling research studies.

5.3 System-Wide Awareness-Raising Campaigns

Based on the studies by Lampton et al. (2005) and Stratton et al. (2008) that I described earlier, we saw that awareness-raising within a college campus might effectively help an entire community experience more forgiveness. Recall that Lampton et al. had a mean effect size of .4 and Stratton et al. had a mean effect size of .16. In those two studies, the control condition was an awareness-raising campaign, and because it was an active control, we specifically excluded from the control data anyone who participated in the psychoeducational groups. We reasoned, though, that we could embed REACH Forgiveness within community-based forgiveness awareness-raising campaigns, especially within close, Christian communities. If we offered as one part of the awareness-raising participation in psychoeducational groups (or, now that do-it-yourself workbooks are available, those, too), then we believed we might be able to transform entire communities. Such community-based interventions employ the REACH Forgiveness groups, workbooks, and many other ways to promote forgiveness.

Recently, we completed our first clinical study of an entire Christian college campus, Luther College. We offered two types of psychoeducational groups—based on the REACH Forgiveness intervention and Luskin's (2001) Forgive for Good intervention. Griffin, Toussaint et al. (in press) surveyed almost one-third of the census of the campus. People who volunteered for a psychoeducational group were randomly assigned to the REACH Forgiveness or FFG groups. The amount of exposure, on the average, that students reported to any intervention to promote forgiveness (from seeing banners, attending chapel talks, seeing advertisements in the cafeteria, writing essays, participating in groups within the dormitories, or many others) was 2.5 h.

Effect sizes for statistically significant effects showed that about 10% of cases typically improved from pre-test to post-test. In particular, 12.0% of cases reported positive change on trait forgiveness ($d_{rm} = 0.120$). We assessed forgiveness toward teachers ($d_{rm} = 0.110$), parents ($d_{rm} = 0.076$), and friends ($d_{rm} = 0.098$). Finally, conflict toward teachers ($d_{rm} = -0.089$) and conflict toward parents ($d_{rm} = -0.131$) decreased.

6 Practical Implications or Implications for Multi-cultural Contexts

Several practical implications exist. I discuss them, and then discuss implications for multicultural contexts.

6.1 *Basic Research on Core Propositions—Stress-and-Coping Theory, Injustice Gap, Coping Options for Reducing Injustice, and Definitional Hygiene*

First, in developing a positive psychology intervention, it is necessary to provide a psychological base through basic research on core propositions. For much of forgiveness research, a stress-and-coping framework has been fleshed out through research (for a review, see Strelan, in press).

This has also included the study of appraisals, such as appraisal of the injustice gap. Davis et al. (2016) have developed a scale to assess the injustice gap.

We were interested in whether forgiveness was the only way people responded to injustices. Actually, people have a multitude of ways they respond to injustice (see Wade & Worthington, 2003). For example, these include seeking or observing justice in the justice system. Also restorative justice procedures might be used to work out fair responses to injustice. Seeing a person experience the natural consequences of his or her injustice might level the injustice gap. Turning the matter over to God for divine justice or simply relinquishing the matter to God might reduce one's sense of injustice. Forbearance is popular in collectivistic cultures. Forbearance is not responding to injustice for the sake of group harmony. Collectivistic cultures have a variety of ways to respond to injustices. Some collectivistic cultures are also honour cultures (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996).

Definitional hygiene has been of continual concern to researchers. For REACH Forgiveness, definitional issues have remained important. From the outset of the scientific study of forgiveness, definitional diversity has been a concern. By 2005, however, Worthington (2005b) concluded that the field had agreed on the major tenets of forgiveness. He based that conclusion on the editing of *Handbook of For-*

givenness. All but one of the research teams that reviewed research in their particular area of expertise provided an initial definition of forgiveness. Those were largely in concordance.

However, in the 15 years since that *Handbook*, other variants of forgiveness have arisen. This has occurred for a variety of reasons. (a) New thinking and research have shown refinements. For example, Exline, Worthington, Hill, and McCullough (2003) proposed two types of forgiveness—decisional and emotional forgiveness, and numerous investigators have adopted those refined definitions. (b) Measures based on new definitions proliferate, and with new measures, additional studies are done, and those test new concepts. (c) As scientific fields mature, additional researchers enter the field and have different definitions that they work with. (d) Inevitably researchers begin to look closely at the dark sides of a construct. McNulty and Fincham (2012) and the research program of McNulty (see McNulty & Russell, 2016) have pursued that line, casting doubt in the minds of some readers on the 2005 consensual definitions. (e) Much of the definitional work came about from top-down definitions proposed by experts. However, people who complete the questionnaires and who serve as participants in research do not use expert definitions, even when questionnaires ask participants to use a particular definition when completing measures. Therefore bottom-up definitions have been derived (see Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Kearns & Fincham, 2004). The result is that, at a general level, McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen's (2000) definition still holds: “[Forgiveness is] *intraindividual, prosocial change toward a perceived transgressor that is situated within a specific interpersonal context*” (p. 9; italics theirs). However, numerous other definitions exist that fine-tune the general definition of McCullough et al.

A wider context beyond REACH Forgiveness is important. Second, it is possible to develop the theory and engage in efficacy research of the entire clinical protocol to establish its clinical validity. This has been done by numerous researchers. However, Wade et al. (2014) meta-analyzed the intervention research that used randomized controlled trials, and they found that, while about six approaches had been studied in at least two RCTs, only two approaches had received the bulk of the research. That does not mean that those are necessarily the most efficacious, but rather simply that they have been most investigated.

Lessons about dissemination can be learned from other fields. Third, we can learn lessons from classic marketing research. Classic marketing research (Reis & Trout, 1993) has shown that the first product in the market tends to get a lion's share of the market. In forgiveness interventions, that would be Enright and Fitzgibbons' (2015) process model, which was the first model that was published in forgiveness research. Classic marketing research also suggests that the second product in a market can earn substantial market share if it defines itself as complementary to the initial product (Reis & Trout, 1993). In forgiveness research, the REACH Forgiveness process model was targeted at psychoeducation rather than forgiveness therapy (which is Enright's primary market). Classic market research also suggests that eventually markets settle to two main competitors (Reis & Trout, 1993). This is the status of forgiveness intervention research.

There is much more that an interventionist who is interested in creating a viral intervention that not only goes viral but stays vital can learn from marketing research. Some of the best resources include Sinek's (2009) *Start with Why*, Holiday's (2017) *Perennial Seller*, Miller's (2017) *Building a StoryBrand*, Coker's (2016) *Going Viral*, and Heath's (2007) *Made to Stick*—among a host of other informative books for the interventionist at disseminating interventions.

Non-focal findings can turn out to demand their own focus. Fourth, stay alert to non-focal findings. We did early research in the 1990s and early 2000s to show the efficacy of portions of the REACH Forgiveness intervention, but as a control condition, we used groups that recounted the benefits of forgiving (McCullough & Worthington, 1995; McCullough et al., 1997; Sandage & Worthington, 2010; Worthington et al., 2000). We found that regardless of how long we spent on this (10 min, one hour, five hours, six hours, or eight hours) the result was about the same. People made a decision to forgive and they experienced an increase in emotional forgiveness of about .2 SDs of lasting change. After attending to the findings in the control conditions, we made a summary of the benefits of forgiving an essential part of the method. In fact, judging by the early research on making people aware of the benefits of forgiving, that might be the largest single effect on increasing forgiveness of any component within the REACH Forgiveness method.

Another peripheral finding has greatly affected intervention research. The meta-analysis of Wade et al. (2014), which found that a linear dose-response exists between time spent forgiving and outcomes—about .1 SDs per hour of intervention, as I have shown with REACH Forgiveness—regardless of whose program was investigated, has enormous implications for research and practice. That finding can help readers evaluate optimistic claims of new interventionists. For example, if a new intervention has a strong outcome in relationship to a control condition, readers can ask whether the dose per hour of intervention is really greater than .1 SDs per hour of treatment. If so, multiple replications should be demanded before proclaiming a new treatment more effective than existing treatments. The dose-response relationship can help lay people keep their expectations realistic. For example, pastors might hold grand expectations that they might give an impactful 10-min or 30-min sermon promoting forgiveness and transforming the lives of many of their parishioners. While some people undoubtedly will experience life-changing insights, the meta-analysis of clinical research (Wade et al., 2014) suggests modest mean changes of only about .05 SDs for a 30-min sermon.

Research on an intervention can make it necessary to study briefer micro-interventions to improve the larger interventions. Fifth, a search is needed for brief interventions to use within more established longer interventions. The dose-response regression line for focusing on forgiving is well-established with over 60 RCTs. Seeking to “get above” the regression line should be a major priority for established interventions like REACH Forgiveness, Enright's process model (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015), or Luskin's (2001) Forgive for Good approach. Improvement of the entire treatment can only come with incorporation of more powerful micro-interventions. For example, as I noted above, paying attention to the *benefits* of forgiving for as little as ten minutes can result in a .2 SD increase in forgiveness.

Thus, in the case of a pastor's sermon mentioned above, including a brief discussion of the benefits of forgiving might well get its efficacy above the regression line. In addition, instead of trying to promote forgiveness in the other twenty minutes of the sermon, it might be more useful to motivate parishioners to use the sermon to seek established interventions of forgiveness—like psychoeducational groups or individual do-it-yourself workbooks to promote forgiveness. I have developed a two-hour workbook version that seeks to do this (see www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com), and that is currently being tested at numerous sites in RCTs around the globe in an App form on cellphones.

Systematic dismantling research can help understanding of why an intervention works. Sixth, for all positive psychology interventions, doing systematic dismantling research helps find out what aspects of treatments are working. As I reported for the development of the REACH Forgiveness model, Worthington and his colleagues (in various publications) tested versions of the intervention with REA, and also REACH steps. In addition, some dissertation research, has examined other components. Bryant (1999) examined only the commitment and hold on to forgiveness (i.e., the CH) portion of REACH Forgiveness. Those components in isolation were not strong enough to promote forgiveness. Other dissertation research, reported in Worthington et al. (2000) investigated REACH delivered ten-minute mini-interventions examining only RE, REA, REAC, and REACH. Those very brief interventions were found not to be efficacious in the abbreviated form. The article concluded that time was needed to promote forgiveness. The meta-analysis by Wade et al. established that indeed only about .1 SDs of change per hour of intervention could be expected. Thus it is not surprising that brief interventions, regardless of the content, were ineffective.

Recent research has continued to examine which aspects of REACH Forgiveness are efficacious. Wade et al. (2018) have examined $N = 162$ individuals with severe intractable problems forgiving recruited from the community. They assigned the clients to Yalom-based group process therapy discussing forgiveness or to REACH Forgiveness psychoeducational group treatment. The psychoeducational REACH Forgiveness was slightly more efficacious, suggesting that providing some guidance according to content of discussion regarding forgiveness might indeed be efficacious. This calls into question a strict interpretation of Wade et al.'s (2014) meta-analytic finding that all treatments of forgiveness might be equally effective per hour of intervention. One other recent application of forgiveness was Sandage et al. (2015), in which the REACH Forgiveness treatment was integrated into a large clinical trial of patients with borderline personality disorder diagnoses that were being treated using Dialectical Behavior Therapy (Linehan, 1993). Assessments before and after the module showed that people benefited from the treatments, and no adverse reactions were reported among the borderline personality disorder patients.

Other positive psychology interventions involving REACH Forgiveness have been subjected to systematic dismantling analyses. Hammonds and Worthington (1985), Worthington, Buston, & Hammonds, (1989), Worthington et al. (1995, 1997), Ripley and Worthington (2002), Burchard et al. (2003), Worthington et al. (2015), and Ripley et al. (2014) have taken apart the Hope-Focused Approach (HFA) to couple enrichment and therapy. Hammonds and Worthington examined group processes for

groups of student couples. They found leaders to be essential to effective couple enrichment groups. Buston et al. compared delivering the HFA in counselling with couples or in groups of student couples. They found that individual work with couples was more effective than was work in groups for couple enrichment. Worthington et al. (1995) examined the efficacy of assessment and feedback to individual student couples, finding the assessment and feedback to promote positive changes in couple relationships—that bordered on one-fifth of the change in entire enrichment groups. Worthington et al. (1997) tested the entire HFA intervention for couple enrichment in a five-hour group format with student couples, finding it efficacious.

Ripley and Worthington (2002) compared FREE and HOPE in a five-hour psychoeducational group format with community couples who had been married for up to 19 years, and they concluded that the intervention would more likely be efficacious if delivered to couples individually rather than groups of couples, which supported Buston et al.'s findings with student couples earlier. Burchard et al. (2003) conducted a pilot study with community couples married a mean of only five months. They gave the 20 couples nine hours of individual couple enrichment counselling using FREE, HOPE, or repeated retesting. Couples receiving both FREE and HOPE had increased sense of marital quality of life relative to the retested couples. That pilot study led to a large clinical trial using the same design of 156 couples who were assessed five times using self-report, behavioural, and cortisol measures. FREE and HOPE were efficacious relative to no treatment. Ripley et al. (2014) investigated couples who sought couple therapy at a community clinic. They compared a Christian-accommodated and secular HFA with Christian couples who received a mean of 12 h of couple therapy. No differences were found.

6.2 Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Intervention Research

As interventions are globalized, multicultural and cross-cultural research studies are more often needed. This has begun, as is evident in a study by Lin et al. (2014) who found that foreign-born students and Virginia-born students—both residing in the USA at the time—responded equally well to psychoeducational REACH Forgiveness groups in which both participated in equal numbers. Lin et al. also found that facilitators from the USA did not differ from facilitators from other countries in outcomes. This might, at first blush, suggest that REACH Forgiveness interventions might not need to be adapted for culture. However, all of the students in Lin et al.'s study were students at Virginia Commonwealth University, so (1) some degree of acculturation must already be assumed; (2) the study was performed within a United States university, placing a situational pressure to accept the non-culturally adapted treatment; and (3) students presumably were competent in English and thus did not have the treatment translated, which also might affect its efficacy. Thus, while the evidence that people from the USA did not differ from people from other countries is suggestive, it is not near the level of proof.

Another practical implication of the existing research is that research is needed on cross-cultural applications of REACH Forgiveness. A few interventions have been tested in other countries. Worthington et al. (2010) adapted REACH Forgiveness both to Filipino and Christian cultural exigencies. In applications with individuals in non-urban churches in the Philippines, forgiveness was promoted. In an application at the University of the Philippines, a version of REACH adapted to Filipino but not Christian considerations was efficacious. Besides those non-RCT studies, REACH Forgiveness RCTs have been completed, but not (yet) accepted for publication, in both the Philippines and Indonesia.

To facilitate use of interventions around the globe, do-it-yourself workbooks that are widely available are useful. These English language workbooks are accessible at www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com. English is the most used language, but translating the workbooks for people who do not have the facility in English as a second (or other) language is needed so that people with lower levels of education and language facility can benefit. In addition, not everyone has access to the internet, so even though the workbooks can be downloaded and worked with offline, they must be retrieved online (or through direct mail of hardcopies). Additional modes of distribution must be developed for wide dissemination of workbooks around the globe. In an in-progress grant-funded study, we are disseminating the 2-hour workbooks by cellphone App.

Besides do-it-yourself workbooks, web-based interventions are needed. One of these reasons for creating web-based interventions is the availability of the web to attract people of all cultures and ethnic identities. Nation, Wertheim, and Worthington (2018) have developed a web-based version of REACH Forgiveness. They posted this in Australia and drew 130 participants mostly from the Austral-Asian area but with some from farther afield. People were randomly assigned to immediate treatment or a waiting list. Those who completed the web-based intervention forgave more than did people who were waiting. However, a severe limitation was noted. Only 36 people completed the full seven-hour program, so attrition was a large problem. No apparent differences were found between completers and non-completers. Other limitations could have affected who participated. The web-based treatment was in English, and thus people who did not have sufficient ability in English might have self-excluded, or, if they participated, might not have understood some of the subtler points.

Ironically, do-it-yourself workbooks are essentially equivalent in content, time, and types of exercises as web-based online intervention. Yet, workbooks resulted in little attrition, but web-based intervention of Nation et al. had huge attrition. This raises some questions. Is this a reliable finding? And if so, why the difference? I have some tentative speculations that deserve investigation. First, there is an internet culture that tends to favour brief internet interventions—perhaps four or five minutes. Such expectations have been created through BVMP (pronounced “Bump” and standing for Branded Viral Movie Predictor). The advertising philosophy of BVMP is that advertisers seek to create a transaction—we watch a brief video that has their brand within it, and in return we are entertained. These advertisements are ubiquitous on the web, and they have conditioned people to expect that time in front of a web-

based product will result in immediate benefit (Coker, 2016). A true psychological intervention taking multiple hours might not be able to compete for many people. Second, printed material creates another set of expectations. People have grown up working on printed material in school, and typically associate it more with learning.

7 Future Directions

7.1 *High Standards for the Creation of New Interventions*

In an era of evidence-based practices in psychology, creating new interventions takes on added complexity. Much research exists supporting numerous evidence-based practices, so the days are gone when practitioners can ethically simply start treating clients with original clinical interventions. There is pressure to use evidence-based practices rather than begin with a new treatment. If a psychotherapist does wish to try out a new intervention, the psychotherapist must, at a minimum, inform the client that the intervention used is untried, unsupported (scientifically) and that there are known-efficacious treatments that are available. These ethical requirements will likely sharply curtail the number of psychotherapist-initiated interventions. Perhaps clinician-scientists who have ready access to Institutional Review Boards and who are in settings like universities and medical centres that are known for conducting original research can still investigate new treatments. But practice-initiated treatments might be a thing of the past.

Even clinician-scientists will likely not simply be able to randomly, on the basis of clinical experience, create a new intervention. Instead, the advance of basic scientific studies will necessitate that there must be some research basis for the new clinical approach. There will be increasing pressure to create translational clinical interventions, in which basic science forms the basis of the intervention. Control groups will need to be more carefully chosen than no-treatment controls. Some active alternatives will need to be compared to new interventions. For example, a new intervention to treat post-traumatic stress disorder will need to be compared to proven effective treatments, like cognitive restructuring or exposure. At a minimum, controls like the psychotherapist's treatment as usual will need to be used.

Big data will aid in developing new interventions. Already, using text analysis of social media platforms can yield samples of over a million (Weir, 2018). With those huge samples (relative to samples usually available in the past), hypothesis generation is more of a focal interest than hypothesis testing.

7.2 *Changes in Intervention Modalities*

There will likely be changes in the way interventions have been traditionally developed and marketed due to evolving changes in technology. For example, do-it-yourself workbook interventions are likely to be more popular (Kazdin & Rabbitt, 2013) as treatment moves beyond the 50 min hour. In fact, the Fall 2018 issue of the APA Practice Organizations magazine, *Good Practice: Tools and Information for Professional Psychologists*, had an article entitled, “More Than Just the 50-min Session,” in their Practice Trends section. Fortunately, my colleagues and I have developed a number of do-it-yourself workbooks—on forgiveness (using REACH Forgiveness), self-forgiveness (Griffin et al., 2015), humility, patience, and positivity (all in Lavelock et al., 2017)—that have been tested for efficacy. I described only the forgiveness ones earlier in this chapter.

My colleagues and I have developed one online intervention study using the REACH Forgiveness method (Nation, Wertheim, & Worthington, 2018). It was plagued, as most electronic web-based interventions are, by high attrition. That attrition can be reduced by monitoring and frequent interacting with participants, but in a way that simply shifts an interventionist’s activities from direct delivery of service to providing for monitoring and routine responding, which most professionals do not find exciting. Even supervising such routine activities is not exciting. To maintain motivation of interventionists, other means of minimizing attrition are needed.

Cultural tailoring and technologies. In many cases, effectiveness of a treatment is improved by adapting it to some cultural exigencies. This does not always increase efficacy. With the multitude of existing evidence-based practices in psychology, it is extremely expensive to translate to English or adapt to multiple cultures each treatment.

In our study by Nation et al. (2018) on a web-based REACH Forgiveness trial, we found that compliance through the entire seven hours of treatment was poor, and only about 30% of the participants completed the treatment. Web-based interventions are attractive. The web is always available for those with web connections. Computer-access and web connections are expanding worldwide. Web-based interventions can attract people of all cultures and ethnic identities. On the flip side, however, the interventions are necessarily able to tailor to only a limited number of cultures at any time because they can present only in a few languages on a single website, and even if they present a popularly used language, like English or Spanish, the cultural differences among Spanish-speaking countries (for example) are vast. This multicultural mismatch between users and interventions must be addressed.

Other technologies. Technology will become a bigger player in intervention science. We have begun to see this with do-it-yourself workbooks available on websites. However, web-based interventions, apps, and interventions that combine different technological modalities are needed in the future. In addition, telepsychology will expand. The reach of face-to-face psychotherapy can be greatly extended by having people remote from psychotherapy or intervention services connect online. YouTube informational videos and talks of the 18-min TED-talk variety can pro-

vide easy-to-use information online. Apps for phones can be used to provide data or even consultation in almost real time on problems that involve self-control—such as anger management, health-related difficulties (like eating disorders, suicide prevention, weight loss), couple communication problems, family conflict, workplace conflict. Apps can attempt to have a direct effect on mental health, but that will likely be only moderately effective. Few intractable problems will yield strongly to what an app on a mobile phone can provide. However, apps can instigate limited change and can direct people’s attention to the self-help resources, like forgiveness workbooks, that are needed but take longer than a few minutes. Finally, telepsychology will increase, so easy-to-deliver counseling through face-to-face interaction by phone or other remote electronic device will be needed.

7.3 Changes in the Types of Interventions People Are Looking for

I anticipate several changes in intervention science in positive psychology. (a) Interventions will be briefer. People on the internet are looking for rapid fixes to problems, so I expect that more brief interventions will be developed. The desire to resolve problems in 4-min YouTube videos manifests as a need to develop shorter interventions. It is likely that “wise” interventions of just a couple of hours in duration (Walton, 2014) will become more common riding the coattails of the YouTube intervention. (b) Interventions that are evidence-based will be preferred. People will develop a desire for proven-effective interventions due to cultural trends in evidence-based medicine and the salience of research in pop culture, from evidence-based nutrition, to yoga, to sunscreen. Therefore, to meet this desire, establishing the true psychological efficacy, effectiveness, and use when widely disseminated will be a challenge of the future. (c) More culturally tailored interventions are needed, perhaps with branching programs to assist with tailoring. The world is shrinking, and the awareness of cross-cultural differences and similarities is becoming something on people’s minds. (d) Finally, people will want more technology. Technology will thus become a bigger player in intervention science. With forgiveness interventions, in particular, I expect several additional changes will occur. But, as one focal point, more attention will be aimed at providing additional ultra-effective micro-interventions that might, when added to a developed macro-intervention, can help move it above the dose-response regression line of .1 SD per hour of intervention.

7.4 Changes in Intervention Goals

I also anticipate more attention to enrichment and prevention as intervention goals. Practice has shifted from patients seeking out psychotherapy when they have a very

bothersome problem, to people on the internet looking for (rapid) fixes to problems that are not yet to the level of severity that they want to (or perhaps need to) seek counseling or psychotherapy.

This is a happy coincidence with the founding of positive psychology. Positive psychology has shifted the emphasis from solving psychopathological problems to the positive side of living: seeking subjective well-being and virtue. As an intervention goal, people now are oriented toward increasing their subjective well-being—perhaps more than toward building a strong virtuous character (also a goal of positive psychology), though the two are intertwined. This has not replaced, but supplemented goals of coping with psychopathology. I look toward the future and what we can expect from positive psychology interventions. I anticipate that movement will include, not merely happiness interventions, but also more attempts to form virtuous character traits—like gratitude, mindfulness, forgiveness, humility, self-control, justice-orientation, patience, grace, altruism, and others.

7.5 Changes in Types of Clinical Science Studies

Effectiveness trials. Efficacy studies are highly controlled studies with high internal validity. The gold standard is the randomized controlled trial. However, there is an increasing need to show that interventions can work, not only in the controlled clinical lab environment but in the real-world environment of the actual practitioner. Effectiveness studies tend to be well-controlled, but interest in external validity is often stronger than interest in internal validity. Thus, random assignment to treatment is not always the sine qua non of a good effectiveness study. Randomization is possible—especially if practitioners use their treatment as usual (TAU) as the alternative treatment. Then, they merely have to agree to use some randomization method to assign patients to a treatment being tested or to TAU. For effectiveness studies, it is often difficult to show that treatments are as effective as they appeared to be in efficacy trials (for reviews, see Southam-Gerow & McLeod, 2013). For example, Smith et al. (2017) examined 954 treatment sessions from 89 youth in either an efficacy or an effectiveness trial. In both settings, therapists trained and supervised in individual CBT delivered manual-prescribed interventions equally effectively. But as time went on, those trained in research settings used even more CBT interventions, but those from practice settings stopped using the CBT interventions. That suggested reasons that effectiveness trials had less positive outcomes than did efficacy trials.

Dissemination studies. In clinical science, we are in a dissemination crisis (McHugh & Barlow, 2012). Many of the evidence-based practices of psychology, established on the basis of efficacy research, are not doing as well in effectiveness trials (see Southam-Gerow & McLeod, 2013). This is especially true in dissemination trials in which entire systems of psychotherapy, such as Veterans Administration psychotherapists or state mental health employees in community service boards that might mandate a particular type (or types) of treatment for a particular disorder. Dissemination is hard to enforce because practitioners in the system might not feel

that they have a choice. They might deviate frequently from approved clinical manuals, substituting their own practices. They might hide their deviations from manuals from their supervisors. The result is a weakening of the effects of evidence-based treatments. In the future, supervision and compliance monitoring must become more effective, and motivational approaches to agency counselors must be improved to inspire allegiance to the evidence-based practice in psychology.

7.6 Changes in Attitudes of Clinicians and Clinical Researchers

As technological sophistication and do-it-yourself interventions increase, what does this mean for the practitioner and interventionist? Hess and Ludwig (2017) have suggested that by 2027, most things humans now do will be able to be performed better by machines or robots. Thus, machines or robots will increasingly be used in lower-level jobs, and perhaps even more interpersonal jobs. To keep humans relevant, we need to cultivate things that machines cannot. They point to humility as being “the new smart.” Interventionists must be aware that robots and machines will likely begin to be used in psychological interventions, and that requires human interventionists to embody humility if we want to connect strongly with people seeking to forgive.

8 Summary

To summarize, as always, implications for the future boil down to being resilient to adjust to change. Whether it is learning new technologies, adjusting to a new cross-cultural, multi-cultural globalized world, or acting in the new smart (i.e., humility), resilience to demands for change will be essential.

9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to reflect on the history and future of positive psychology interventions. I have done so by using the clinical research I have done with my many talented collaborators over the years to develop, scientifically test, and disseminate forgiveness interventions, specifically the REACH Forgiveness intervention. I drew on personal experience at developing positive-psychology-related interventions and took the reader through a roughly chronological journey that led us to some speculations about the future. These modifications in intervention practice have thus far, and likely will increasingly in the future, involve changes in the way interventions are developed and marketed. Do-it-yourself workbooks, online interventions, and

new technologies are considered—and some of their promise and potential pitfalls are noted. An increasingly globalized world has raised cultural awareness and cultural humility to new levels. The overall challenge for the future is to be resilient in adjusting to demands for accelerated change.

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The Potential of Job Demands-Resources Interventions in Organizations



Jessica van Wingerden and Leoni van der Vaart

Abstract Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, amongst others, proposes that employee work engagement and job performance are the result of an optimal balance between job demands and (personal and job) resources. According to JD-R theory, every job is characterized by a specific set of job demands and resources. JD-R theory states that positive organizational interventions that aim to optimize job demands and resources will lead to improved levels of work engagement and performance and may therefore be appealing for contemporary organizations that want to stimulate employee well-being and improve their performance from which they can outstand their competitors. In this book chapter, we present and discuss the motivational potential of job demands-resources interventions from both an organizational (top-down) and an employee (bottom-up) perspective, and their effectiveness.

Keywords JD-R theory · Positive organizational interventions · Work engagement · Performance

1 General Introduction: Importance of Work Engagement

Research has repeatedly confirmed that employees who are engaged in their work contribute significantly to the quality of service, productivity and innovation (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Konermann, 2012; Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005). Engaged individuals are energetic and enthusiastic about their work. So, it is

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not surprising that work engagement has important consequences for organizations. Work engagement not only leads to excellent performance, it also contributes to commitment to the organization and customer loyalty (Halbesleben, 2010; Salanova et al., 2005). Engaged employees bring positive energy to the workplace because they are enthusiastic and vigorous and they connect easily with colleagues (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). As a consequence of these positive relations, organizations are interested in how they can increase employees' work engagement and subsequently their performance.

Over the years, work engagement and performance have gained ample research attention as illustrated by the number of scientific papers on this topic (for a meta-analysis, see Halbesleben, 2010; Christian et al., 2011). An increasing number of researchers not only study the work engagement concept from a theoretical perspective but also focused on applying the theoretical knowledge on work engagement in practice (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). A theory that helps us to understand work engagement, its antecedents and outcomes is Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). According to this theory, work engagement is mostly determined by job resources (such as social support, feedback and development opportunities) and personal job resources (such as optimism and self-efficacy). These resources have the greatest impact when they are actually needed, namely when the job demands are high. According to the JD-R theory, employees are engaged and perform well particularly when the work environment is characterized by high and challenging job demands in combination with sufficient (job and personal) resources. This model is supported by empirical evidence accumulated over the last 15 years (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Halbesleben, 2010; Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011).

JD-R theory suggests that work engagement and performance can be fostered through interventions that stimulate participants to optimize their levels of job demands and/or (job and personal) resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). These interventions can be initiated by both employees (bottom-up) and management (top-down). Employees may for example, proactively adapt their job demands and resources through job crafting. Management may offer their employees a work environment characterized by a sufficient amount of resources and challenges, or they may facilitate the optimization of job demands and resources by offering positive organizational interventions. Although theoretically the drivers of work engagement are well established, the empirical evidence for fostering work engagement and performance through interventions is still relatively scarce (see Knight, Patterson, & Dawson, 2017 for an overview). So, an important question is how work engagement can be increased by interventions focused on optimizing job demands and (personal and work-related) job resources, as JD-R theory suggests (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). In this chapter the theoretical framework of JD-R theory and positive interventions within organizations will be addressed first, followed by an overview of several types of positive organizational interventions within a JD-R framework and their effectiveness.

2 Job Demands-Resources Theory

In the transition from the 20th to the 21st century, researchers in the field of organizational psychology began to show more interest in positive work experiences. The positive psychology movement and interest in subjects like work engagement and well-being expanded greatly in the early years of this century. Researchers no longer focused on only negative work-related experiences like job stress and burnout. The focus shifted to healing people and how to make them stronger (Meyers, van Woerkom, & Bakker, 2013). How do you increase people's enthusiasm? How do you help them to excel and develop their strengths? These are examples of questions central to positive organizational psychology (Meyers et al., 2013). Positive psychology inspired researchers around the world to develop new models and theories, e.g. the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), which is characterized by a positive psychological focus, is an example of this. The JD-R model has been applied in a lot of studies (Halbesleben, 2010; Nahrgang et al., 2011) to analyze both job stress (Demerouti, Bakker, Jonge, et al., 2001) and motivation (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). Over the past ten years, the JD-R model has developed into the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

One of the core assumptions of the JD-R theory is that every job is characterized by a set of job demands and resources (personal and work-related). Job demands are the physical, social or organizational aspects of the job that require physical and/or cognitive engagement and that are associated with physical and psychological costs (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, et al., 2001, p. 501). Job demands can be divided into those that challenge and those that hinder (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; LePine, LePine, & Jackson, 2004). Examples of challenging job demands are work pressure and complex assignments, while role conflicts and poor physical working conditions are examples of hindering job demands. Job resources are the physical, psychological, social and organizational aspects of the job that help employees to achieve their work goals (Demerouti, Bakker, Jonge, et al., 2001). Job resources can be divided into several levels: organizational (e.g., salary), interpersonal and social (e.g., support from managers), practical working level (e.g., clarity of roles) and task levels (e.g., feedback). Job resources can buffer or reduce the impact of job demands and the associated costs (physical and psychological), but also stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti, Bakker, de Jonge, Janssen, & Schaufeli, 2001). The JD-R theory hypothesizes that when employees are confronted with challenging job demands, the motivational potential of job resources is strengthened (Bakker, 2011) resulting in work engagement and performance.

3 JD-R Theory, Two Psychological Processes

The JD-R theory distinguishes not only the above-noted core elements, but also two independent psychological processes. These are the motivational process and a health impairment process. The health impairment process starts with persistently high job demands that deplete an employee's energy levels and lead to exhaustion and health-related problems. Research has repeatedly shown that with job demands like high workload and emotional pressure, exhaustion can be predicted in various occupational groups (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Demerouti, Bakker, & Bulters, 2004). The motivational process, on the contrary, starts with job resources that have the potential to encourage employees in achieving their work goals (Boyd et al., 2011). Earlier studies suggested that different job resources, like social support from colleagues, performance feedback and supervisory coaching, lead to work engagement and subsequently better performance (Bakker, 2011). According to the JD-R theory, job resources buffer the negative effects of job demands on stress levels.

Additionally, challenging job demands reinforce the positive effect of resources on work engagement. So, employees have the greatest chance of being engaged when they experience an optimal balance of job resources and challenging job demands (Bakker, 2011; Halbesleben, 2010). Given that the objective inherent in this book chapter is to increase work engagement and performance through interventions, most of the focus will be on the motivational process within the JD-R theory and the various elements of the JD-R model.

4 JD-Theory, Personal Resources

The JD-R theory entails that next to job demands and job resources, personal resources are also important predictors of work engagement and performance. Personal resources refer to those aspects of an individual that are associated with the ability of a person to successfully control and influence his/her environment (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003). Personal resources are known for being functional in achieving goals and have the potential to stimulate personal growth and development (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). The function of job resources and personal resources are therefore largely comparable. Both stimulate personal growth and help employees to achieve work-related goals. Yet job resources and personal resources also differ: while job resources are specifically linked to a job and the working environment, personal resources are part of an individual and therefore not necessarily related to a context. Examples of personal resources are self-efficacy, optimism, personal effectiveness, resilience, and self-esteem. The combination of four personal resources self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience is also known as psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Research has shown that these four personal resources, or psychological capital, can be developed by interventions (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008).

5 Positive Organizational Interventions: General Introduction

Interest among researchers in positive psychological behavior and positive organizational interventions grew along with the introduction of positive psychology. Positive organizational behavior is defined as “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today’s workplace” (Luthans, 2002, p. 698). This link between positive behavior and the working environment formed the rationale underlying positive organizational interventions. Before the introduction of positive psychology, organizational interventions were primarily geared to preventing absenteeism and treating occupational illnesses (e.g. burnout) (Le Blanc & Schaufeli, 2008; Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, Sheep, & Kladler, 2001). After the introduction of positive psychology, the focus on enhancing positive psychological states like work engagement increased (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). With the growing evidence that positive psychology has a positive impact on employee’s well-being and organizational performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014, 2017), practitioners started trying to implement interventions based on its principles in organizations. This link between positive behavior and the working environment formed the rationale underlying positive organizational interventions (Van Wingerden, 2016). Positive organizational interventions aim to cultivate well-being and performance. This means they are advantageous to employees as well as employers.

Therefore, the interest in enhancing well-being via positive organizational interventions among researchers has been growing. Several studies revealed evidence for the effectiveness of positive interventions (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), and awakened the interest from organizations, managers and practitioners. Since then, positive organizational interventions, both classroom interventions and online interventions, were implemented in practice and have turned out to have the potential to increase employee well-being (Meyers et al., 2013; Giga, Noblet, & Cooper, 2003).

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2014) positive organizational interventions based on the JD-R theory are geared to optimizing job demands, job resources and personal resources. The JD-R theory holds that these interventions can involve individual aspects of change as well as organizational aspects. Bolstering an employee’s strengths by an online intervention or strengthening an organization through group training sessions are examples of this. The JD-R theory also describes two intervention objectives: optimizing personal resources and adjusting job demands and job resources. An example of an intervention aimed at optimizing personal resources is training an individual’s resilience and the ability to cope with stress. An example of an intervention aimed at adjusting job demands and job resources is a job crafting training.

In summary, positive organizational interventions according to the JD-R theory are differing combinations of intervention levels (individual versus organizational) and intervention targets (the working environment versus the person). Within this

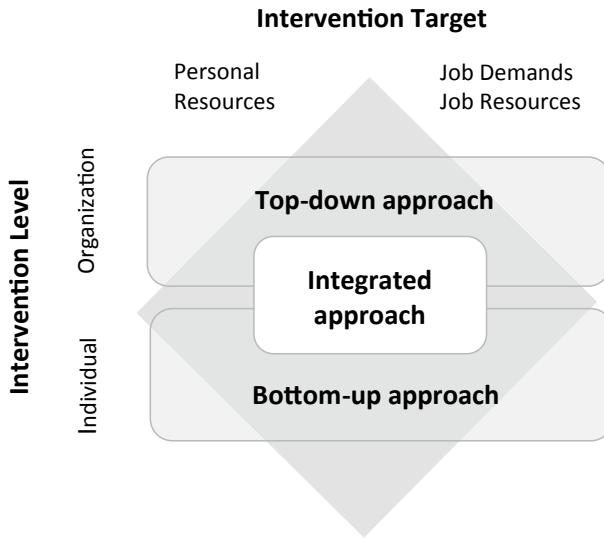


Fig. 1 JD-R intervention model

framework, a JD-R intervention can involve a combination of a top-down (initiated by management) and bottom-up (initiated by employees) approach. Which type of JD-R intervention fits best depends on the problem or issue regarding an individual or organization (Fig. 1).

6 JD-R Interventions: A Top-Down, Bottom-up and Integrated Approach

In line with the JD-R intervention model above, we can identify three different JD-R intervention approaches: top-down, bottom-up and/or an integrated approach combining top-down and bottom-up. Within all three approaches, JD-R interventions are aimed at building personal resources and/or optimizing job demands and resources.

Top-down approach. Personal resource building interventions focuses on developing individuals who: (a) have the “confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (b) make a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (c) persevere toward goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (d) sustain and bounce back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success when beset by problems and adversity” (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 3). In other words, individuals that display high levels of psychological capital (PsyCap). Accordingly, Luthans et al. (2006) developed a training intervention to enhance PsyCap and found preliminary support that interventions can indeed increase PsyCap. Hope is created by allow-

ing individuals to set personally meaningful goals, developing multiple pathways to achieve these goals and preparing for possible obstacles. Efficacy is enhanced by creating opportunities to experience real or imaginary success in achieving these goals and providing encouraging feedback during the process. Anticipating setbacks, identifying ways to deal with them, as well as building confidence, ensures more realistic optimism. When confronted by setbacks, individuals are encouraged to evaluate what is within or without their control as well as their options for taking action. In doing so, resilience is built (Luthans et al., 2006). In a follow-up study, Luthans et al. (2008) validated the preliminary findings of Luthans et al. (2006) using individuals from different organizations, job levels and types. Demerouti, van Eeuwijk, Snelder, and Wild (2011) extended this idea by including others to rate trainees in addition to the trainees rating their own PsyCap levels. Both sources reported similar increases in PsyCap. Luthans, Avey, Avolio, and Peterson (2010) showed that organizations not only can develop PsyCap but that it also leads to better on-the-job performance.

JD-R Interventions aimed at optimizing job demands and building job resources can, for example, focus on strategic human resource (HR) management and job (re)design to physical, social or organizational aspects of the job. Organizations can change the way in which they approach HR *management*. HR practices such as employee selection, socialization, performance management and learning and development play a key role in managing job characteristics (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). To illustrate this, Van Erp, Gevers, Rispens, and Demerouti (2018) implemented a by-stander conflict training program to enhance the personal (i.e. conflict management efficacy and perspective taking) and job (task and emotional support) resources of paramedics. The study demonstrated that organizations can enhance resources via training programs and that these programs can have positive outcomes for affective well-being and job dedication (Van Erp et al., 2018). In another study, Schaufeli (2017) provided support for a top-down approach in the implementation of a comprehensive intervention aimed at decreasing job demands and increasing (job and personal) resources. The HR cycle was updated to keep jobs challenging, opportunities for learning and development were created, regular top management visits were implemented to improve communication and recognition, and the organization upgraded their ICT-systems. One-year follow-up surveys indicated that comprehensive top-down interventions were effective in increasing engagement, job satisfaction, organizational and team commitment (Schaufeli, 2017).

Another top down approach is to evaluate the way in which jobs are designed and to redesign them. *Job design* describes “how jobs, tasks, and roles are structured, enacted, and modified, as well as the impact of these structures, enactments, and modifications on individual, group, and organizational outcomes” (Grant & Parker, 2009, p. 319). Job redesign interventions aim to change the characteristics of the job as a means to enhance employee and organizational outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Jobs designed to have motivating characteristics, like autonomy and social support as well as reasonable levels of job demands, have positive individual and organizational outcomes (Parker, Van den Broeck, & Holman, 2017) as demonstrated by Holman and Axtell (2016). They implemented a job re-design intervention that

started with identifying core job tasks and obstacles, followed by eliciting proposed changes that would optimize both well-being and performance. After buy-in was obtained from all stakeholders, job changes were initiated over a period of four months. Results indicated that the intervention induced positive changes in well-being, performance, and psychological contract fulfilment (Holman & Axtell, 2016).

Leaders can also play an important role in managing the job demands and resources of their followers in a way that promote work engagement (Schaufeli, 2015; Knight et al., 2017) and it is important that they are trained to manage employees work environment accordingly. More specifically, leaders provide followers with resources (i.e. control, social support, role clarity, and performance feedback) and minimize their challenging demands (e.g. work overload, work-home interference and poor physical work environments). Transformational and empowering leadership is particularly valuable to develop engaged followers through the management of job characteristics (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Derks, 2016; Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, Sleebos, & Maduro, 2014; Breevaart et al., 2014; Hetland, Hetland, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2018; Thun & Bakker, 2018). Drawing on the JD-R theory, Biggs, Brough, and Barbour (2014) implemented a leadership-development intervention in which police officers were trained to provide supportive and transformational leadership behaviors. The results indicated that leadership behaviors influence subordinates' perceptions of work characteristics which in turn had a positive effect on subordinates' job satisfaction and work engagement (Biggs et al., 2014).

Taken together, studies on intervention programs that target job demands and (job and personal) resources demonstrate that these interventions have positive individual and organizational outcomes and that a top-down approach is a promising avenue to enhance employee well-being and performance. It is important note that a top-down approach should start with an assessment of the current state of demands and resources in the organization (Bakker, 2015; Schaufeli, 2017) and hence the options are infinite.

Bottom-up approach. From a bottom-up perspective, employees can create a motivating work environment for themselves using job crafting. Job crafting is a bottom-up approach of employees (re)designing their job by proactively adjusting aspects of their job and work relationships to their personal preferences and wishes (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Crafting, from the perspective of the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), means employees can initiate actions to build job resources (i.e. increase social job resources, increase structural resources, increase challenging job demands, and/or decrease hindrance job demands (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012). Several researchers evaluated the potential of job crafting to enhance employee well-being and performance. For example, Gordon et al. (2018), Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, and Peters (2015) and Van Wingerden, Bakker, and Derks (2017a) designed crafting interventions that teach employees to view their work environment as a collection of demands and resources that can be transformed using job crafting behavior. Participants were encouraged to develop and implement personal crafting plans with the goal of reducing demands and increasing challenges and resources over a period. All three studies reported

positive results for the crafting interventions. Employees reported more crafting behaviors and job resources (Van den Heuvel et al., 2015; Van Wingerden, Derks, & Bakker, 2016) and they experienced more well-being (i.e. positive affect and engagement) (Gordon et al., 2018; Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). Their personal resources also increased (i.e. self-efficacy) (Van den Heuvel et al., 2015; Van Wingerden et al., 2016) as well as their performance (Gordon et al., 2018; Van Wingerden et al., 2016). The performance effects were also sustainable over time (Van Wingerden, Bakker, & Derks, 2017b).

Another promising bottom-up JD-R Intervention entails building personal resources by means of individual strength-use. In the JD-R theory, strength-use takes a similar place as job crafting. Using one's strengths contributes to your personal resources and indirectly to engagement and performance. In turn, engaged people are also more likely to use their strengths (Bakker & Van Woerkom, 2018). Strength-based interventions are commonly used by positive psychologists (Seligman et al., 2005; Louis & Lopez, 2014) as a self-help technique (Seligman et al., 2005). In such interventions, individuals identify perceived strengths and are encouraged to either use their top strengths more (or instead more effectively), or in new or different ways (Louis & Lopez, 2014). Mitchell, Stanimirovic, Klein, and Vella-Brodrick (2009) demonstrated that subjective well-being is enhanced with an online self-guided strengths intervention. Gander, Proyer, Ruch, and Wyss (2013) reported similar positive results by demonstrating that strength-use interventions significantly increased happiness and alleviated depressive symptoms. Hence, bottom-up approaches (like job crafting and strength-use) are promising avenues to enhance employee well-being and performance.

JD-R Interventions, an integrated approach. JD-R Interventions cannot only be seen from a top-down and/or bottom-up approach, but also from an integrated approach, combining both perspectives. Although positive organizational interventions with different approaches may seem to aim at the same goal—enhancing employee wellbeing—their impact and influence may differ from each other. Interventions at the individual level may have a different impact on aspects of employee well-being than interventions at the organization level. A literature review study by Giga et al. (2003), which examined 16 stress management interventions, revealed that interventions aimed at fostering employee well-being on individual level turned out to be most effective in enhancing mental and emotional well-being, while interventions aimed at fostering employee well-being on organizational level were most effective in enhancing employee health and performance. Combined, the different types of positive organizational interventions may be complementary and reinforce each other. Therefore, it may be the most effective for organizations to first empower employees at the individual level before implementing interventions at the organizational level. The intervention target within the integrated approach may be aimed at personal resources, job demands and job resources and/or a combination of both perspectives. An intervention with an integrated approach may for example start with the redesign of jobs via HR policies and practices (top-down) and at the same time facilitate employees to pro-actively optimize their job demands and resources themselves (bottom-up). Or, the intervention may contain training aimed at enhancing

employees' resilience and at the same time teach them how to recognize stressful work situations and influence and/or adapt them. The outcomes of intervention studies with an integrated approach revealed they are promising in enhancing employee well-being and performance.

Munz, Kohler, and Greenberg (2001) examined a positive organizational intervention with an integrated design among employees working in telecommunication organization. Their intervention aimed to empower employees via self-management training, and at the same also teaches employees how to recognize and reduce stressful and/or hindering work situations. The outcomes of the study by Munz et al. (2001) revealed a positive effect of the intervention on participants well-being. Further, compared with the control group, participants' productivity enhanced significantly while their absence decreased. Van Wingerden et al. (2016) tested a positive organizational intervention based on JD-R Theory. Their JD-R intervention contained exercises aimed at increasing personal resources, job resources and challenging job demands. To increase personal resources exercises were used to increase participants' levels of hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience (PsyCap). Exercises and proactive goal-setting stimulated participants' job crafting behavior. The results of the study by Van Wingerden et al. (2016) revealed that the JD-R intervention was successful: compared to the control group, personal resources, job crafting, work engagement and self-ratings of job performance of the participants of the intervention group significantly increased after the JD-R intervention.

7 Factors for Successful Implementation

Whether or not JD-R Interventions may turn out to be effective may not only depend on the intervention design but also on their implementation (Van Wingerden, 2016). The successful implementation of organizational interventions depends on various factors (Briner & Walshe, 2015; Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013; Nielsen, Randall, Holten, & González, 2010). A specific and phased approach will increase the chance of successful implementation (Van Strien, 1997). One implementation method for positive organizational intervention is Van Strien's regulatory cycle. This is a method for carrying out research that is aimed at creating interventions in practice. The regulatory cycle is usually initiated by identifying an existing problem in a real situation that needs a solution. The problem, its potential causes and the consequences are then analyzed to understand the issue. Subsequently, in the third step of the cycle, a plan and the actions necessary for implementing the plan are designed. Within this step a solution is designed that is expected to solve the problem. Designing an intervention to solve a problem is a good starting point, though real change primarily depends on the implementation of the intervention (Van Strien, 1997).

Specific factors are worth taking into account concerning intervention implementation. Research has shown that the success of an intervention depends on the fit between the intervention and the envisaged change, but also on the degree to which participants are involved in the decision-making regarding the interventions

(Heaney, 2003; Kompier, 2002; Kompier, Cooper, & Geurts, 2000; Nielsen et al., 2010; Semmer, 2006). Further important factors are the content of an intervention program, the quality of the trainers, the engagement of managers, employee motivation and the organization's commitment (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013; Nielsen et al., 2010). Communication also plays a role. By sharing clear information about the objectives with participants in an intervention program beforehand, the chances of a successful intervention are increased (Kraiger, Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 1995; Nielsen et al., 2010). In addition to the factors noted above, the effectiveness of the intervention can also be reinforced by the right location for the training. Learning at work is more effective than learning at an external location because direct links to the working situation can be made (Kessels, 1993). If a clear connection to a work context is made during the training sessions, it makes participants more engaged and interested which amplifies the transfer (the actual application after the training of things learned) (Kessels, 2001). Thus, interventions close to participants' workplaces that contain exercises related to and relevant for the participants' work may be the most effective.

8 Practical Implications

The theoretical framework and studies discussed in this book chapter have contributed to a better understanding of the potential of Job Demands-Resources Interventions in practice, from both a top-down and/or bottom-up approach; on participants' work engagement and performance. JD-R interventions aimed at enhancing employees' work engagement and performance are important because engaged employees are proactive, open to learning new things, and enthusiastic about their jobs (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Also, they are more productive and innovative (Harter, Smidt, & Hays, 2002; Konermann, 2012), healthier and they perform better (Halbesleben, 2010) than non-engaged employees. Thus, interventions can be beneficial for both employees and organizations as a whole. The theoretical framework and studies discussed in this chapter showed that investing time and money in positive organizational interventions may be worthwhile. More specific, the outcomes of the first studies imply that JD-R interventions with both a bottom-up and top-down approach can be used as a tool for human resource management. These findings can be implemented in several ways.

First, management should be aware of the balance between job demands and resources experienced by their employees. It is advised to use surveys to examine whether employees experience sufficient resources and challenges at work. Based on the outcomes of the surveys, individualized reports could be made including personalized feedback and suggestions on how employees themselves could optimize their resources and challenges at work. Senior management may facilitate employees by promoting a dialogue on the results of the individual feedback reports during work hours. This underlines the importance and encourages employees to get started with the results. Following the principles of servant leadership (Finley, 2012), super-

visors may actively support employees, for example by giving autonomy at work, providing employees with constructive feedback at work, and by offering sufficient opportunities for professional development. Supervisors may also stimulate members of their team to give each other feedback and offer social support in demanding situations or when the manager is not around. Increasing employees' work engagement through positive organizational interventions may help employees to deal with a high workload and emotionally demanding situations at work and stimulate them to stay enthusiastic about their profession and satisfied with their job.

Second, the studies related to the bottom-up approach revealed that although job crafting and strength use concerns employees' self-initiated behavior, job crafting behavior and strengths use can be facilitated through interventions. Based on the findings, it could be advised to offer job crafting and strengths use interventions and facilitate employees' pro-active behavior. The skills participants develop during these interventions can be used when there are changes in participants' work environment or when their personal needs change (Petrou et al., 2012). Also, management should be aware of the impact of the feedback employees receive on their strengths use and job crafting actions. Since the feedback employees receive on their proactive behavior may either create more possibilities for or inhibit proactive behavior in the future (Wrzesniewski, 2003), this is highly relevant. Employees' perceived opportunities to initiate proactive behavior to optimize their job demands and resources might determine their actual behavior. Expressing appreciation for bottom-up proactive behavior to both individual employees and teams is an example of an approach that encourages job crafting behavior and strengths use at work. Sharing knowledge with employees about the power of proactively optimizing challenges and resources may be a good starting point. From their modelling role, senior management may share their successes, which may inspire their employees (Boone & Makhani, 2012).

9 Future Directions

9.1 *Intervention Studies Using an Integrated Approach*

The majority of intervention studies take an either-or approach while a combination of top-down and bottom-up may be a more feasible (and perhaps more effective) because the organization and the individual can meet halfway. To this extent, Van Wingerden et al., (2016) provided initial evidence for the superiority of such an integrated approach for performance but more research is needed to replicate this finding.

9.2 *Multi-level, Longitudinal Designs*

Most applied JD-R research investigates the strain and motivational processes at the individual level (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018). It is not unexpected then that intervention research followed suit. More recently, Bakker and Demerouti (2018) provided an overview of the multiple levels of the JD-R theory in which they argue that organizations at large or management, the leader, and the team not only influence but also interacts to influence the individual. As the applied research field will advance knowledge regarding multiple levels and their interactions, we propose that (experimental) intervention studies using an integrated approach use this knowledge to prove causality. Although some researchers (e.g. van Wingerden et al., 2017b) already investigated the long-term impact of JD-R interventions, more such studies are necessary to establish the sustainability of these interventions (Knight et al., 2017).

9.3 *Blended Intervention Approach*

With an increase in the use of internet technology, self-guided interventions (websites and apps) are becoming increasingly more popular. These online interventions provide several benefits. For example, it can be administered over long distances, clients work at their own pace, and travel costs are minimized (Erbe, Eichert, Riper, & Ebert, 2017). This makes online interventions a lucrative delivery mode for organizations. However, Scholten et al. (2017) have published several articles highlighting the challenges related to adherence to these types of interventions. The absence of the ‘therapist’ is often highlighted as a key factor to adherence. Blended interventions may be an ideal midway for organizations to reap the benefits of online interventions while increasing adherence with minimal involvement of the psychologist/trainer. Blended interventions consist of a combination of face-to-face and self-guided online sessions (Erbe et al., 2017). We propose that researchers design and evaluate integrated interventions delivered in a blended mode (i.e. a combination of self-directed online activities and classroom-based offline activities).

10 Conclusion

In this book chapter we examined and discussed whether positive organizational interventions based on JD-R theory can enhance employees’ work engagement and performance. Based on a Job Demands-Resources Interventions model, we discussed three approaches towards JD-R interventions; interventions based on a top-down approach; (b) a bottom-up approach; and (c) combining both a top-down and bottom-up approach. The theoretical background and studies discussed in this chapter revealed that interventions based on the principles of JD-R theory can increase employees’ work engagement and performance. These studies with different intervention approaches showed that JD-R theory can be turned into practice via interven-

tions. Although there is still much to reveal and discover, JD-R interventions seems to be promising for organizations that want to enhance employee engagement and performance.

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The Effectiveness of Positive Psychology Interventions in the Workplace: A Theory-Driven Evaluation Approach



Scott I. Donaldson, Joo Young Lee and Stewart I. Donaldson

Abstract Positive Work and Organizations (PWO) continues to permeate organizations that desire to improve employee positive functioning. One aspect of PWO includes positive psychology interventions (PPIs) at work, which uses the theory and scholarship of positive work and organizations to design interventions aimed at improving employee work outcomes. A recent systematic review and meta-analysis by Donaldson, Lee, and Donaldson (under review) found a link between PPIs at work and improving desirable and reducing undesirable work outcomes. The purpose of this chapter was to synthesize the empirical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of PPIs at work, using a theory-driven evaluation (TDE) approach. TDE refers to the systematic use of substantive knowledge (i.e., social science theory, stakeholder theory, or some combination of both) about the intervention under consideration to improve, produce knowledge, or determine its merit, value, and worth (Donaldson, in *Program theory-driven evaluation science: Strategies and applications*. Psychology Press, New York, 2007). This systematic review will provide valuable information for practitioners deciding to use PPI's in their organizations.

Keywords Positive psychology · Interventions · Theory-driven evaluation · Multi-national

1 Introduction

Positive Work and Organizations (PWO) has galvanized the workplace in several continents, spawned university programs, and inspired professional disciplines since its inception nearly two decades ago. Donaldson and Ko (2010) were the first to reveal an emerging body of PWO literature and scholarship published in the US, Europe, and other parts of the world, demonstrating its upward growth in the new millennium.

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Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) at work have also developed extensively in the past 20 years, along with research demonstrating a link to work outcomes. A recent meta-analysis by Donaldson, Lee, and Donaldson (under review) found that positive psychology theory (whether interventions used PsyCap, job crafting, strengths theory, etc.) had a unique impact on work outcomes.

There currently exists an opportunity to map the terrain of positive psychology interventions (PPIs) at work, especially as corporate leaders and human resource managers continue to invest in employee well-being (Agarwal, Bersin, Lahiri, Schwartz, & Volini, 2018). One approach toward understanding the impact PPIs are having on employee optimal functioning is theory-driven evaluation science (TDE). TDE is an evaluative strategy designed to systematically use substantive knowledge (i.e., social science theory, stakeholder theory, or some combination of both) about the intervention under consideration to improve, produce knowledge, or determine its merit, value, and worth (Donaldson, 2007). The purpose of using a TDE approach is not just to understand if PPIs work in the organizational setting, but also why they work. TDE provides valuable information on how positive psychology theory is expected to improve employee outcomes compared to how it actually improves employee outcomes. It also incorporates intervention characteristics in the evaluation process (e.g., intervention delivery method, target audience, intervention protocols) to help determine important moderators that facilitate or hinder intervention effectiveness. The application of TDE to PPIs at work will glean insight on which positive psychology theories work, why, and under what conditions they can best improve employee positive optimal functioning. Thus, there are two goals of this chapter: (1) evaluate theories of change used in PPIs at work and (2) evaluate the implementation of PPIs at work.

1.1 Background of Positive Work and Organizations

The founding pioneers of positive psychology, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), developed three pillars of positive psychology: positive subjective experience (e.g., well-being, contentment, flow, pleasure, and hope), positive character traits (e.g., grit, wisdom, resilience, and creativity), and positive institutions (i.e., organizations, communities, and societies that promote citizenship and civic responsibility). Along with the positive psychology movement, Warren, Donaldson, and Luthans (2017) proposed an umbrella term called positive work and organizations (PWO), which encourages cross-pollination of research among positive organizational psychology (POP), positive organizational behavior (POB), and positive organizational scholarship (POS). The need for a unifying framework is in response to the impact the positive orientation has had beyond its original boundaries (e.g., applied organizational psychology, organizational behavior, and management). For example, POP, POS, and POB are now influencing technology, hospitality and management, law, and financial planning, due to the growing popularity positive psychology is receiving in the workplace (Warren et al., 2017). The goal of PWO is to encourage

dialogue across subfields and serve as a clearinghouse for best practices in positive psychology theory building and practice.

Luthans (2002) established positive organizational behavior (POB) and introduced PsyCap as a human psychological capacity that consists of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. Similarly, Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn (2003), who developed positive organizational scholarship (POS), were the first to study organizational virtuousness, positive deviance, and appreciation cultures. Finally, Donaldson and Ko (2010) defined POP as “the scientific study of positive subjective experiences and traits in the workplace and positive organizations, and its application to improve the effectiveness and quality of life in organizations” that encompasses POB and POS, closely addressing Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi’s (2000) claim for the organizational context (p. 6). The key distinction between positive organizational research and traditional organizational research relates to the perspective that views employees as assets to be developed, rather than problems that need to be fixed (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

1.2 Positive Psychology Interventions in the Workplace

Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) in the workplace refer to any intentional activity or method in organizations that utilizes the three pillars of positive psychology (Meyers, van Woerkom, & Bakker, 2013). They include interventions that use positive subjective experiences as part of the intervention method and not just a by-product or consequence of a particular intervention, interventions that aim to identify, develop, or broaden human character strengths, and interventions that identify, develop, or broaden organizations or organizational subgroups.

In this chapter, we build on the work of Meyers et al. (2013) and broaden the definition to include interventions that explicitly utilize the theory and scholarship of positive work and organizations to generate processes (e.g., resources, activities, & outputs) aimed at improving work outcomes. We refer to Donaldson et al.’s (under review) study sample ($N = 22$) for this chapter because we aim to expand their research using an evaluation lens. We focus on five types of interventions that most frequently appeared in the positive psychology intervention literature (Donaldson, et al., under review). They include: (1) psychological capital interventions, (2) employee job crafting interventions, (3) employee strengths interventions, (4) employee gratitude interventions, and (5) employee well-being interventions.

1.2.1 PsyCap Interventions

Luthans, Avolio, Avey, and Norman (2007) developed psychological capital (PsyCap) as a higher order construct that represents four positive subjective experiences at work: hope (redirecting paths to work goals), resilience (ability to bounce back at work), self-efficacy (confidence in one’s ability to succeed at work), and optimism

(positive attributions about the future of work). PsyCap is a “state-like” construct that is optimal for human resource practices because it is flexible and open to development. Research on PsyCap interventions has found a link to improved job performance, work engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010). For example, Zhang et al. (2014) tested a PsyCap intervention with five Chinese companies based on Luthans et al. (2006) micro-intervention model. This intervention consisted of four online training sessions, targeting each of the four components of PsyCap. Participants were also encouraged to create specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound (SMART) goals. The intervention group had significantly higher job performance compared to a control group at posttest, supporting the relationship between PsyCap and job performance.

1.2.2 Employee Job Crafting Interventions

Job crafting refers to proactive behaviors that engage employees in the redesign of their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Research has suggested that job crafters (a) create an optimal fit between work demands and personal strengths and (b) experience personal growth, well-being, and work engagement (Bakker, Rodriquez-Munoz, & Sanz-Vergel, 2016; Demerouti & Bakker, 2014). The jobs-demands resources (JD-R) theory provides a model for employees to alter job demands and personal resources. Intervention studies with JD-R model showed mixed results. For instance, Van de Huevel, Demerouti, and Peeters (2015) reported that an intervention with the JD-R model significantly increased leader-member exchange and significantly decreased negative affective well-being. However, the JD-R model is likely to have a longitudinal positive impact in organizations. For example, whereas Van Wingerden, Derks, and Bakker (2017b) reported that a job crafting intervention did not improve work engagement in the study with six weeks, Van Wingerden, Derks, and Bakker’s (2017a) found that a job crafting intervention that used JD-R model as the theory of change improved work engagement up to one year after the intervention was administered (Table 1).

1.2.3 Employee Strengths Interventions

Individual character strengths have been defined as “ways of behaving, thinking or feeling that an individual has a natural capacity for, enjoys doing, and which allow the individual to achieve optimal functioning while they pursue valued outcomes” (Quinlan, Swain, & Vella-Brodrick, 2012, p. 1146). Existing questionnaires and inventories, such as Values in Action (VIA) and Realise 2, help employees identify their strengths at work (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Harzer and Ruch (2012) had participants learn about their four highest character strengths, think about ways they could use these strengths in the workplace, and develop if-then-plans to implement them in practice (see Table 2). Prior research has shown that strengths interventions are an effective tool for improving transformational leadership, calling at work, and

Table 1 Theories of Change (TOC)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Chan (2010)	Gratitude	Count-your blessings model	N	Gratitude has a causal influence on well-being, and an effective strategy to enhance well-being is to lead people to count their blessings or to reflect on those aspects of their lives for which they are grateful	Increase in subjective well-being consistent with gratitude interventions used in the Chinese population	Significant decrease in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization—aspects of Maslach’s burnout inventory	Chan (2009), Froh et al. (2008), Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), Seligman et al. (2005, 2006), Watkins et al. (2003)
Harty et al. (2016)	Gratitude	Count-your blessings model	N	Grateful outlook creates more positive and optimistic appraisals of one’s life, higher levels of positive affect and more pro-social motivation	Psychological capital can play an important role in performance, satisfaction and devotion to work, resulting in less absence from work due to illness and a reduction in cynicism, deviant behavior, stress-related symptoms and resignations	Significant increase in job satisfaction	Emmons and McCullough (2003), Seligman et al. (2005)
Grant and Gino (2010)	Gratitude	Gratitude expressions	N	Gratitude expressions can increase helpers’ prosocial behaviors by increasing their agentic feelings of self-efficacy and their communal feelings of social worth	Prosocial behavior will increase based on the number of voluntary calls that each fundraiser made during the week before and the week after the intervention	Significant increase in prosocial behavior	McCullough et al. (2001)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Kaplan et al. (2013)	Gratitude	Sustainable Happiness Model	N	Volitional actions can influence well-being, that is, people can intentionally facilitate cognitions and behaviors to increase their own happiness and well-being	Research suggests that effect sizes associated with these types of interventions are larger for the components of subjective well-being (including affect) than for other psychological outcomes such as eudaimonic well-being or depression	Significant increase in Positive affective well-being and negative affective well-being	Bolier et al. (2013), Lyubomirsky et al. (2005)
Winslow et al. (2017)	Gratitude	Sustainable Happiness Model	Y	Gratitude counteracts the "negativity bias" by shifting employee' focus from negative events to positive ones	Job related positive and negative affective well-being (PAWB and NAWB) and job stress will improve	Null findings for positive affective well-being and negative affective well-being. Null findings for job satisfaction and job stress	Baumeister et al. (2001), Lyubomirsky et al. (2005)
Van Wingerden et al. (2016)	Job Crafting	JD-R Model	Y	JD-R theory postulates that job resources gain their motivational potential when employees are confronted with highly challenging job demands	JD-R model suggests that work engagement and performance can be fostered through interventions by targeting at the most important job demands and (job and personal) resources	Significant increase in work engagement and in-role performance	Bakker (2011), Bakker and Demerouti (2014)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Demerouti et al. (2017)	Job Crafting	JD-R Model	N	Through proactive behaviours like job crafting, individuals are likely to become more open to the ongoing changes and adapt more successfully to these changes	Job crafting can improve employee well-being, job characteristics and job performance in changing settings	Significant increases in positive affect well-being, openness to change, and adaptive performance	Gordon et al. (2013), Kramer et al. (2004), Van Den Heuvel et al. (2015)
Van Wingerden et al. (2017b)	Job Crafting	JD-R Model	Y	The JD-R model provides a clear description of the way demands, resources, psychological states, and outcomes are associated. Additionally, personal resources can be helpful in dealing with the job demands and may contribute to improved performance	The JD-R model suggests that work engagement and performance can be fostered through interventions that stimulate participants to optimize their job demands and (job and personal) resources	Significant increase in work engagement and in-role performance	Bakker (2011), Bakker and Demerouti (2008, 2014), Bakker et al. (2012), Demerouti et al. (2001)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Van den Heuvel et al. (2015)	Job Crafting	JD-R Model	N	The content of the job crafting intervention is based on the role of job crafting in the JD-R model	Personal resources help to deal with adversity, goal attainment, and adaptivity	Significant increase in leader-member exchange and significant decrease in negative affective well-being. Null findings for positive affective well-being	Bakker et al. (2014), Van den Heuvel et al. (2014, 2010), Xanthopoulos et al. (2009)
Van Wingerden et al. (2017a)	Job Crafting	JD-R Model	Y	The JD-R model provides a clear description of the way demands, resources, psychological states, and outcomes are associated. Additionally, personal resources can be helpful in dealing with the job demands and may contribute to improved performance	The JD-R model suggests that work engagement and performance can be fostered through interventions that stimulate participants to optimize their job demands and (job and personal) resource	Null findings for work engagement but significant increase in in-role performance	Bakker (2011), Bakker and Demerouti (2008, 2014), Bakker et al. (2012), Demerouti et al. (2001)

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Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Williams and Waters (2016), Williams et al. (2017)	PsyCap	IO-OI Model	Y	The IO-OI model is a dual approach process model that proposes that work happiness is influenced by factors 'inside' the employee and factors 'outside' of the employee. Factors inside the employee are those that influence an employee's experience of work and that cannot be separated from the individual, such as attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors	Seeing more virtues in others elevates organization members to behave more virtuously. The elevation proposition explains how the processes of selective exposure and confirmation bias may contribute to increasing the capacity for virtuousness at the collective level, thus building organizational social resources leading to increased work happiness	Null findings for organizational virtuousness	Fisher and Boyle (1997), Luthans Williams et al. (2015), Williams et al. (2016), Unpublished; Youseff and Luthans (2011)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Yuan (2015)	PsyCap	PsyCap Microintervention model & Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory	N	According to the COR theory, people seek to obtain, retain, and protect resources; and stress occurs when there is a net loss of resources, the threat of loss, or a lack of resource gain following the investment. At the same time, resource gains could buffer the negative effects of resource loss and create more opportunity for further gains. PsyCap on the other hand, just like human and social capital, can be considered as another resource that is developable and accumulative	There is evidence of PsyCap among the Chinese population. PsyCap was positively associated with employer-rated performance	Significant increase in work engagement	Hofböll (2002), Luthans (2004, 2008), Luthans et al. (2008)

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Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Zhang et al. (2014)	PsyCap	PsyCap Microintervention model	Y	The principles of PsyCap will improve organizational competitiveness	PsyCap directly influences job engagement, job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, counterproductive work behavior, and organizational citizenship behavior	Significant increase in job performance	Avey et al. (2010), Luthans et al. (2006, 2007)
Williams (2010)	Strengths Theory	Clifton Strengths Finder	N	Principles can be used to govern the development of strengths, including knowing one's strengths, valuing one's strengths, assuming personal responsibility for developing the strengths, and practicing the strengths	The intended positive effect on employee engagement is to help create a fulfilling work environment where employees (a) are not afraid of appraisals, (b) look forward to receiving performance feedback, and (c) are clear about how their strengths help them contribute to the organization	Null findings on performance appraisals	Clifton and Anderson (2006), Gable and Haidt (2005), Kowalski (2008), Lindbom (2007)

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Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Harzer and Ruch (2015)	Strengths Theory	VIA Framework	N	The application of individual signature strengths is related to positive experiences in life, like life satisfaction, well-being, and meaning in life as well as to positive experiences at work, like job satisfaction, pleasure at work, meaning at work, and job performance	Individuals with a calling perceive their work as being meaningful, due to helping other people or the broader society (directly or indirectly). Individuals with a calling regard their work to be their purpose in life rather than a means for financial rewards or career advancement	Significant increase in calling	e.g., Dik and Duffy (2009), Elangovan et al. (2010), Harzer and Ruch (2013, 2014); Littman-Ovadia and Steger (2010), Proctor et al. (2011), Wood et al. (2011), Wrzesniewski et al. (1997)
Mackie (2014)	Strengths Theory	Manualization Framework	N	Manualization offers the opportunity to be specific and consistent about what is meant by strengths development by requiring the coachee to rate themselves on four criteria	Executive coaching that explicitly targets leadership development must by necessity, use reliable and valid measures of leadership behavior that gather data from a wide range of stakeholders to assess the impact of the coaching intervention	Significant increase in other-rater feedback on transformational leadership	Biswas-Diener et al. (2011), Bowles et al. (2007), Kaufman (2006), Seligman (2007)

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References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Meyers and Van Woerkom (2017)	Strengths Theory	Positive-activity model	N	Engaging in positive activities, such as employing one's strengths, makes people feel good about themselves in the short term, which contributes to their longer term well-being	Results of prior research have supported an association between identifying and working on one's strengths and positive affect, self-efficacy as a component of PsyCap, and satisfaction with life	Significant increase in work engagement and significant decrease in burnout	Douglass and Duffy (2015), Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013), van Woerkom and Meyers (2015), Wood et al. (2011), Zwart et al. (2015)
Page and Vella-Brodick (2013)	Strengths Theory	Character Strengths and Virtues Framework	N	Individuals who use their strengths at work are more likely to be engaged and happy in their jobs. This in turn predicts other valued organizational outcomes, including business unit performance, turnover and productivity	Strengths can lead to increases in well-being, including lowered stress, greater self-esteem and improved vitality and positive affect, as has been shown in longitudinal research	Null findings on work related well-being	Harter et al. (2002), Wood et al. (2011)

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Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Neumeier et al. (2017)	Well-Being	PERMA	N	PERMA proposes that wellbeing consists of five components: positive emotions (experiencing positive emotions such as happiness, hope, and joy), engagement (being highly absorbed and interested in life activities; experiencing flow and focused attention; and using one's strengths), relationships (feeling valued by others and having close, mutually satisfying relationships), meaning (having a sense of purpose derived from something viewed as larger than the self), and accomplishment (striving for achievement; feelings of mastery)	PERMA improves organizational outcomes of higher workplace well-being levels including lower absenteeism, higher job satisfaction, less turnover intention, better organizational citizenship behavior, and higher customer satisfaction	Significant increase in employee well-being	Boehm and Lyubomirsky (2008), Bowling et al. (2010), Diener and Seligman (2004), Layous et al. (2014b), Lyubomirsky et al. (2005a), Wright (2010), Pelled and Xin (1999)
Laschinger et al. (2012)	Positive Relationships	CREW Program	N	CREW was designed to promote positive interpersonal working relationships among healthcare workers	Numerous anecdotal reports of uncivil behavior in nursing settings and empirical studies indicate that high levels of supervisor and coworker incivility can have detrimental effects, such as lower productivity and organizational commitment	Significant increases in empowerment, trust in management, and significant decreases in supervisor incivility	Lewis and Malecha (2011), Osatuke et al. (2009), Smith et al. (2010)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

References	PP theory	Change model	Explicit TOC (Y/N)	Implicit TOC	Expected work outcomes	Actual work outcomes	Supporting literature
Fiery (2016)	Self-Compassion	JD-R-Model & Self-Compassion	Y	The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework is considered the dominant model of work stress in the literature today, and is increasingly used to explain how and why individuals may differ in their well-being in the face of similar job demands and resources	Self-compassion is predictively and longitudinally associated with decreased stress and anxiety; it negatively predicts emotional exhaustion and positively predicts job satisfaction in preliminary cross-sectional studies among clergy and first-year pediatric residents	Significant increase in work-related psychological flexibility	Bakker and Demerouti (2014), Barnard and Curry (2012), Neff et al. (2007), Olson et al. (2015)

the performance appraisal process (Harzer & Ruch, 2012; Mackie, 2014; Williams, 2010).

1.2.4 Employee Gratitude Interventions

Gratitude interventions at work are designed to help employees notice and appreciate the positive aspects of work life (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). For example, Chan (2010) and Harty, Gustafsson, Bjorkdahl, and Moller (2016) tested gratitude interventions that asked employees to record three good things that they are grateful for related to their job. These interventions used the count-your-blessings model, which assumes a grateful outlook will create positive and optimistic appraisals, improving well-being at work (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Employees that were in the gratitude condition had higher job satisfaction and self-efficacy compared to a control group after a 10-week intervention program.

1.2.5 Employee Well-Being Interventions

The last two types of positive psychology interventions included in our review are employee well-being, including positive relationships and self-compassion interventions, which utilize Seligman's Theory of Well-Being known as PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment; Seligman, 2011). These interventions have been shown to not only improve well-being in the workplace, but also lower absenteeism, higher job satisfaction, less turnover intent, and organizational commitment (Laschinger et al., 2012). For example, the CREW (positive relationship) intervention is organized around five activities: promote respectful interactions among staff on unit, develop skills in conflict management, teambuilding on unit, share successes within and outside of units, and eliminate negative communication associated with poor resources system (Laschinger et al., 2012). The results from a hospital setting with nurses revealed significant increases in empowerment in the intervention group compared to the control group, which has also been linked to improved organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and mental and physical health (Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2004; Laschinger, Finnegan, & Wilk, 2009).

2 Theory-Driven Evaluation

Scholars, practitioners, and human resource managers will likely want to know why and under what conditions PPIs at work are the most efficacious. TDE was chosen as a framework to evaluate the selected interventions because it is a tool through which we can understand both outcomes and mechanisms that foster intervention success or failure. Rogers (2000) defines TDE as "an explicit theory or model of

Table 2 Action model

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Chan (2010)	Gratitude	Weekly log of three good things recorded using a count-your-blessings form	Naikan-meditation-like questions through an online questionnaire	Online	Chinese University of Hong Kong	Chinese school teachers
Harty et al. (2016)	Gratitude	Observing and documenting things they are appreciative for on five occasions	Five step protocol with lectures and instructional activities	Two researchers	Non-governmental organization	Physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, assistant nurses, etc.
Grant and Gino (2010)	Gratitude	A director of annual giving visited the organization to thank the fundraisers for their work. She explained to the fundraisers, "I am very grateful for your hard work. We sincerely appreciate your contributions to the university"	In-person conversation	Director of annual giving	Public university	Fundraisers at a university
Kaplan et al. (2013)	Gratitude	Log at least three times per week things that they are grateful for related to their job	Gratitude prompt	Online	Two large public universities	Staff members (e.g., administrative assistant, program coordinator, financial aid)

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Winslow et al (2017)	Gratitude	At least twice weekly, participants were asked to think about and record two things in their job or work for which they are grateful (examples included supportive work relationships, sacrifices or contributions that others have made for you, advantages or opportunities at work, and thankfulness for the opportunity to have your job in general)	Gratitude prompt	Online	Large social service agency	Agency Directors
Van Wingerden et al. (2016)	Job Crafting	Participants acknowledged, shared and discussed their thoughts and feelings about their career with each other. They looked back on things they experienced at work, shared the things they like in their recent job and discussed their future ambitions. Second, the participants practiced giving and receiving feedback including gracefully receiving compliments. Third, they practiced refusing requests. Fourth, participants made an overview of their job tasks and their personal strengths, motivation, and possible risk factors at work	Michigan Job Crafting Exercise	Trained facilitators	Healthcare organization	Healthcare professionals (treat hearing impairments)

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Demerouti et al. (2017)	Job Crafting	This intervention consisted of a one-day training that focuses on achieving individual changes at two different levels: (1) cognitions, and (2) behavior (Zwaan, Van Burk, & Janssen, 2005). To achieve the first goal, employees are encouraged to reflect on their work situation and to recognize their work tasks and aspects of their job that they would like to change. The second goal is achieved through familiarization with the theory on job crafting and the JD-R model	Michigan Job Crafting Exercise	Trained facilitators	Municipality	Social services municipality
Van Wingerden et al. (2017) (2)	Job Crafting	The participants made an overview of their job tasks and sorted them into three categories: tasks they spent a lot of time at, tasks they had to do often, and tasks they had to do sometimes. They also designated whether they did the task individually or with others. The participants wrote the outcomes on small, medium, and large notes and stuck them on a piece of brown paper. After this, they labeled the tasks in terms of urgency and importance. Then the participants made an overview of their personal strengths, motivations, and possible risk factors in their work and matched these to their tasks. At the end of the first training session, they made a personal crafting plan	Michigan Job Crafting Exercise	Trained facilitators	Primary schools for special education	Teachers

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Van den Heuvel et al. (2015)	Job Crafting	The training day included background theory on the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Participants mapped their tasks, demands, and resources on a poster. Reflection on the poster helped them to identify situations at work they would like to craft. Personal crafting stories were shared and analysed in the group. Following this, a plan with specific job crafting goals, such as how to seek resources, how to reduce demands, and how to seek challenges, was drawn up by each participant	Michigan Job Crafting Exercise	Trained facilitators	Police district	Police officers
Van Wingerden, Bakker, et al. (2017) (1)	Job Crafting	The job crafting intervention consists of exercises and goal setting aimed at increasing social job resources, increasing challenging job demands, increasing structural job resources, and decreasing hindering job demands	Michigan Job Crafting Exercise	Trained facilitators	Primary schools for special education	Teachers
Williams et al. (2017)	PsyCap	Participants are taught how to dispute negative thinking patterns with more optimistic perspectives, to foster optimism and hope; participants learn about the ABC Model of cognitive behavioral therapy (Ellis, 1957) and how to identify deeply held beliefs that may be driving unhelpful thought patterns and behaviors to build resilience; and at the end of each topic, participants identify how they could use the skill or knowledge taught in their personal and professional lives to build efficacy	PsyCap research and materials from UPENN's Positive Psychology Center	Trained facilitators	Large independent school	Teaching and non-teaching roles

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Williams and Waters (2016)	PsyCap	Participants are taught how to dispute negative thinking patterns with more optimistic perspectives, to foster optimism and hope; participants learn about the ABC Model of cognitive behavioral therapy (Ellis, 1957) and how to identify deeply held beliefs that may be driving unhelpful thought patterns and behaviors to build resilience; and at the end of each topic, participants identify how they could use the skill or knowledge taught in their personal and professional lives to build efficacy	PsyCap research and materials from UPENN's Positive Psychology Center	Trained facilitators	Large independent school	Teaching and non-teaching roles
Yuan (2015)	PsyCap	Four training sessions each targeting an aspect of PsyCap: (1) hope using SMART goals, (2) self-efficacy using expressive writing, (3) optimism taught using the ABCDE model, (4) resilience using risk management and resource leverage practice skills	<i>Happy@Work</i> training materials	Online	Chinese University of Hong Kong	Random employees of organizations in China
Zhang et al. (2014)	PsyCap	Then they were provided with the structured reading material, and informed that they had 30 min to read the material independently and silently	Structured reading materials	Trained facilitator	Beijing Normal University	Employees of five random companies in China

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Williams (2010)	Strengths Theory	Participants did an online strengths-identification assessment, received feedback on their respective strengths from the facilitator, and received training on how to incorporate a discussion on strengths into the organization's existing performance-appraisal interview	Strengths-identification assessment	Online and facilitator	Non-profit community health organization	Leaders
Harzer and Ruch (2015)	Strengths Theory	Participants were invited to a web-based training platform; there they learned about their four highest character strengths (derived from the rank order of the VIA-IS scales in the pretest) in step 1. In step 2 they thought about daily activities and tasks at work, and subsequently, in step 3, collected the ways they currently use their signature strengths in daily activities and tasks at work. Finally, in step 4, they developed if-then-plans about how to use the four highest character strengths in new and different ways in daily activities and tasks at work	Activities outlined by Seligman (2005)	Online	University of Zurich	Diverse group of German-speaking employees in different jobs
Mackie (2014)	Strengths Theory	Each coachee received six 90-min coaching sessions that followed a format articulated in their coaching manual	Interview protocol, 360-degree feedback, Realise2 inventory	Executive coaches	Multinational non-profit organization	Senior managers

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Meyers and Van Woerkom (2017)	Strengths Theory	Before the training, participants were asked to complete a preparatory assignment (strengths identification). To this end, they received a stack of strengths cards with 24 strengths applicable in the working context and some blank cards that could be filled in individually. Participants were triggered to search for their own talents. Subsequently, participants took part in a half-day face-to-face training which was given to 40–45 individuals at a time and was facilitated by two professional trainers	Strengths questionnaires, feedback from third parties, and self-reflection exercises	Trained facilitator	Dutch consultancy organization specialized in training and development	Convenience sample of employees in implementing organization

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Page and Vella-Brodtrick (2013)	Strengths Theory	<p>The program consisted of six, 1 hour, small group-based sessions. Each session was facilitated by the first author according to a set training manual to ensure consistency across groups. Participants focused on their strengths and learnt from their best (or peak) experiences, to increase motivation and facilitative change, as per Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider 1986; Cooperrider et al. 2008). Care was taken to optimize well-being and learning outcomes for participants by facilitating sessions in a positive, supportive and affirming environment (Joseph and Linley 2006) and providing opportunities for autonomy and group discussion (Ryan and Deci 2000; Vella 2000). The facilitator recorded adherence to this approach using field notes and ratings (five-point Likert scale where 1 = poor adherence and 5 = strong adherence), which was completed at the end of each session. Notes and ratings were also taken regarding other elements of delivery, including fidelity and participant attendance. This data formed part of the process evaluation</p>	Training manual	Researcher	Large government agency	Customer service, HR, marketing and communications

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Neumeier et al. (2017)	Well-Being	The PERMA framework of Seligman's wellbeing theory (2011) was applied to select the varied PIs for the programme. For each selected PI, empirical research suggested that the exercise affects at least one of the five wellbeing components proposed by the PERMA framework, covering all five components in their combination. In each) that could be integrated into the daily working routine in different workplace settings (i.e., self-reflective writing exercises and activities that did not require any special material or environment)	Seven PERMA-based exercises	Online	LMU Munich	Self-registered employees (online)
Laschinger et al. (2012)	Positive Relationships	The CREW program organized five activities: promote respectful interactions among staff on unit, develop skills in conflict management, teambuilding on unit, share successes within and outside of units, and eliminate negative communication associated with poor resources system	CREW process manual	Trained facilitator	Hospital	Nurses

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

References	P.P. theory	Intervention exercises	Intervention protocols	Intervention implementers	Implementing organization	Target group
Fiery (2016)	Self-Compassion	<p>The first week's meditation, a compassionate body scan, is designed primarily to facilitate mindfulness by asking the listener to get in touch with and "just notice" bodily sensations, and is very similar to the first in a series of guided meditations implemented in the widely accepted and researched Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1982). The second week's meditation is grounded in the breath, again incorporating mindfulness, but also self-kindness and common humanity as listeners are asked to breathe in affection and kindness to themselves while breathing out affection and kindness toward others who are suffering. The third week's meditation is a variant of a "loving-kindness" meditation, an ancient Buddhist practice designed to increase goodwill toward the self and others</p>	<p>Three guided self-compassion meditations taught in the Mindful Self-Compassion program</p>	Online	Animal shelter	Random employees at an animal shelter

how the program causes the intended or observed outcomes and an evaluation that is at least partly guided by this model” (p. 5). Similarly, Chen (1990, 2005) suggested the key tenet of TDE is an evaluation guided by a conceptualization or rationale of intervention theory. This includes a set of implicit or explicit assumptions about the intervention under consideration, and what is required to produce desired change. This type of evaluation approach differs from what is called “black box” evaluation, which is only interested in the connection between the intervention and outcomes. Further, TDE encompasses descriptive assumptions (i.e., change model) about the intervention, which detail causal processes expected to happen, and prescriptive assumptions, or steps that need to be taken to produce desired outcomes (Chen, 1990). TDE can improve evaluation design by helping disentangle the relationship between intervention theory and implementation, inform evaluation methods, and understand contextual factors that are relevant to interested stakeholders (Donaldson, 2007). TDE has influenced a broad range of evaluations, including W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s (2000) community change initiatives, The Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), among many more (Coryn, Noakes, Westine, & Schroter, 2011).

2.1 Change Model

The theory of change consists of stakeholders’ shared understanding of what is expected to happen between the intervention and outcomes. In our chapter, the interventions consist of positive psychology theories used in PPIs at work and their relationship with work outcomes (e.g., work engagement, performance, etc.). The interventions may also include determinants, or mechanisms upon which the intervention may be developed. Examples include intervention delivery type (e.g., online, in-person, group) and other intervention characteristics, such as length of intervention, setting, industry type, etc. See Fig. 1 for TDE framework.

2.2 Action Model

Whereas the change model is concerned with how the intervention will cause a change in work outcomes, the action model is focused on aspects of intervention implementation. We included Chen’s (1990) action model in our evaluation: the implementing organization, intervention protocols, intervention implementers, and target group. Implementing organization refers to the entity that allocates resources, trains, recruits, and coordinates the intervention. Intervention protocols are the materials, deliverables, or activities of an intervention. For example, participant may be given structured reading material or told to perform certain activities, such as meditation exercises. Intervention implementers are the people responsible for delivering the intervention, including trained facilitators, coaches, and researchers. Lastly, the

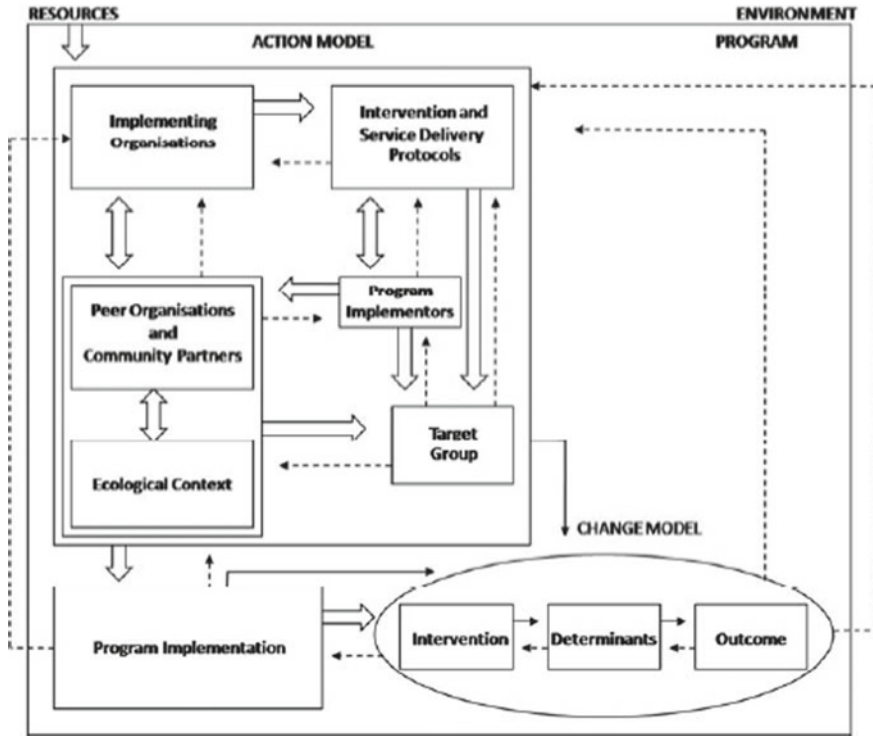


Fig. 1 Change model and action model (Chen, 2012)

target group refers to the types of participants (e.g., demographic characteristics), including their willingness to be committed to and cooperate with intervention protocols.

2.3 Search Strategy

Before we use theory-driven evaluation to review PPI’s at work it is necessary to outline the search strategy and inclusion criteria. Donaldson et al. (under review) conducted a systematic literature search, and examined the *Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship* to develop an initial list of search terms (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). Based on central themes outlined in the volume and prior work from Meyers et al. (2013), they created broad search terms that they believed would capture positive interventions at work. The first search terms consisted of “positive organizational behavior”, “positive organizational scholarship.” The second search terms included combinations of “intervention,” “work* (workplace)”, “organization* (organizational)”, “employee”, “manager,” “training,” and “group inter-

vention.” Those search terms were then entered into three electronic databases: PsycINFO, PsycArticles, and ISI Web of Science.

After investigating online databases, they then searched specific constructs (e.g., psychological capital, job crafting, & strengths theory) based on their representation in the POP, POS, and POB literature (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2011). They also examined the *Journal of Happiness Studies* and *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* because they are known to be major outlets for publishing positive interventions at work. Lastly, to combat the threat of publication bias they sent out two announcements to the *Academy of Management Listserv* and the International Positive Psychology Association’s, *Positive Work and Organization Newsletter* for any unpublished data on positive interventions at work. We use this literature search to identify relevant papers for our chapter.

2.3.1 Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria included:

Positive psychology intervention is defined using Donaldson and Ko’s (2010), and Warren, Donaldson, and Luthans’s (2017) review of POP, POS, and POB, and/or explicitly in line within the theoretical tradition of PWO. If the intervention included a mixture of POP, POS, and POB with traditional organizational behavior, it was excluded from the analysis.

Studies were included if they (a) implemented an experimental or quasi-experimental intervention in an organizational setting (e.g., with employees, managers, teachers, nurses, staff members, etc.), (b) and included pre- and post- test measures at, (c) the individual, team, or organizational level (Meyers et al., 2013).

Peer-reviewed journal articles (in English), unpublished articles, working papers, and dissertations published between the years 2000 and 2018 were included in the analysis.

2.4 Study Characteristics

Twenty-two intervention studies were included in this review, representing PPIs at work conducted across 10 countries, including Australia, China, United States, and Netherlands to name a few. There were five positive psychology theories represented across the 22 studies: psychological capital, job crafting, gratitude, strengths theory, and well-being. These interventions were also conducted in several types of industries, including education, police, health, and government. The distribution of gender varied across the studies, ranging from 36.8 to 96% of women included in the study. We also captured whether or not the interventions used randomization, the intervention delivery type (e.g., individual, group), length of the intervention, and outcome measures. Table 3 shows all relevant study characteristics.

Table 3 Study Characteristics

Reference	Doc type	Country	Industry	% of female	Design	Pos. theory	Int. Type	Int. Style	Length of Int.	Outcome measure
Chan (2010)	J	China	Edu	82	NR	Gratitude	O	TE	>1 M	MBI
Demerouti et al. (2017)	J	Greece	Multi	68	NR	Job Crafting	I	TE	<1D	JAWS; OC; AP
Fiery (2016)	D	United States	Service	91	R	Self-compassion	O	TE	1 M	WAAQ; DISC; MBI; UWES
Grant and Gino (2010)	J	United States	Edu	76	R	Gratitude	I	TE	<1D	PBS
Harty et al. (2016)	J	Sweden	NGO	77	NR	Gratitude	G	TE	>1 M	PPWQ
Harzer and Ruch (2016)	J	Germany	Edu	45	R	Strengths Theory	O	TE	1 M	CS
Van den Heuvel et al. (2015)	J	Netherlands	Police	37	NR	Job Crafting	I	TE	1 M	LMX; JAWS
Kaplan et al. (2014)	J	–	Edu	87	NR	Gratitude	I	T	>1 M	GAC; JAWS (PAWB & NAWB)
Laschinger et al. (2012)	J	Canada	Health	–	NR	Positive Relationships + Empowerment	G	TE	>1 M	CWEQ; WIS; ITWS
Mackie (2014)	J	Australia	NP	54	NR	Strengths	I	TE	>1 M	MLQ

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Reference	Doc type	Country	Industry	% of female	Design	Pos. theory	Int. Type	Int. Style	Length of Int.	Outcome measure
Meyers et al. (2016)	J	Netherlands	Consulting	72	NR	Strengths	I	TE	<1D	UWES; UBS
Neumeier et al. (2017)	J	-	Multi	67	R	PERMA + Gratitude	O	TE	<1 M	WSWB; GSWB
Page et al. (2013)	J	Australia	Gov	73	R	Strengths	G	T	>1 M	WWBI
Van Wingerden et al. (2016)	J	Netherlands	Health	96	NR	JD-R + PsyCap	I	T	>1 M	UWES; IRP
Van Wingerden, Bakker, et al. (2017) (1)	J	Netherlands	Edu	89	NR	Job Crafting + PsyCap	I	TE	>1 M	UWES; IRP
Van Wingerden, Derks, et al. (2017) (2)	J	Netherlands	Edu	83	NR	Job Crafting	I	T	>1 M	UWES; IRP
Williams and Waters (2016)	J	Australia	Edu	61	NR	PsyCap	G	T	<1 M	OVS; UWES; JAWS; JIG; OCS
Williams (Williams 2010)	D	United States	Health	NA	NR	Strengths	I	T	<1 M	GPA

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Reference	Doc type	Country	Industry	% of female	Design	Pos. theory	Int. Type	Int. Style	Length of Int.	Outcome measure
Winslow et al (2017)	J	United States	Services	92	NR	Gratitude	O	TE	1 M	JAWS; JS; ITQ
Yuan (2015)	D	China	-	76	R	PsyCap	O	TE	1 M	UWES; HPQ
Zhang et al. (2014)	J	China	Multi	41	NR	PsyCap	I	T	<1D	CPQ
Zhao (2012)	D	England and Wales	NP	73	R	Forgiveness	O	TE	>1 M	OBSE; JIG; FIW; SAE

Note Type of documentation: *J* Published in a peer reviewed journal; *D* Dissertation

Design: *R* Randomized allocation; *NR* Non-randomized allocation

Length of Int.: *Int.* Intervention; *M* Month; *D* Day

Int. Type: *I* individual; *G* group; *O* online

Int. Style: *TE* Training & Exercise; *T* Training

Measure: *AP* Adaptive Performance; *CPQ* Contextual Performance Questionnaire; *CS* The Calling Scale (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011); *CWQE* Conditions for Work Effectiveness Questionnaire; *FIW* Forgiveness inventory for workplace; *GPA* Group performance appraisal; *HPQ* Work Productivity; *IRP* In-role performance (William & Anderson, 1991); *ITQ* Intention to quit (Cammann et al., 1983); *ITW* Interpersonal Trust at Work Scale; *JAWS* Job-related Affective Well-being; *JIG* Job in General (Balzer et al., 1997); *JS* Job satisfaction (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951); *LMX* Leader Member Exchange; *MBI* Maslach Burnout Inventory; *MLQ* Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1997); *NAWB* Negative Affective Wellbeing; *OBSE* Organization based self-esteem; *OC* Openness to change; *OCS* Organizational Commitment Scale; *OVS* Organizational Virtuousness Scale; *UBS* Utrechtse burnout Scale; *UWES* Utrecht work engagement scale, 2006; *PAWB* Positive Affective Wellbeing; *PBS* Prosocial behavior scale; *SAEI* State-trait Anger Expression Inventory; *WAAQ* Work-Related Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (Bond et al., 2013); *WIS* Workplace Incivility Scale; *WWBI* The Workplace Well-being Index (Page, 2005)

3 Key Evaluation Questions

To date, there have been systematic reviews and meta-analyses, but no study that uses a TDE framework to evaluate PPIs at work. Thus, this study is the first of its kind to bridge evaluation science and PWO for the purposes of investigating the impact of PPIs in the workplace. We sought out to address two evaluation questions:

Which theories of change are used in PPIs at work? To what extent are theories of change efficacious toward improving desired work outcomes?

How do characteristics of the action model impact the efficacy of PPIs at work? What is the role of intervention implementers, implementing organizations, intervention protocols, and target groups?

4 Evaluating PPIs at Work

4.1 *Theories of Change and Action Models*

4.1.1 Employee Gratitude Interventions

Two theory of change models appeared in employee gratitude interventions: the count-your blessings model (e.g., Chan, 2010; Harty et al., 2016) and the sustainable happiness model (e.g., Kaplan et al., 2014; Winslow et al., 2017). None of the papers provided an explicit (i.e., graphical) theory of change between gratitude interventions and their studied work outcomes. However, the implicit theories of change for the count-your-blessings model purported that gratitude has a direct influence on well-being by creating positive appraisals about one's life (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Seligman et al., 2006) whereas the sustainable happiness model focused on shifting employee' focus from negative events to positive ones (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Voh, 2001; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

In terms of work outcomes, various desired and undesired outcomes were measured, such as job satisfaction and job affectivity. The count-your-blessings model significantly increased job satisfaction (see Harty et al., 2016), whereas the sustainable happiness model showed no effect on job satisfaction (see Winslow et al., 2017). The count-your blessings model also decreased negative affectivity (i.e., emotional exhaustion and depersonalization; Chan, 2010). However, the sustainable happiness model showed mixed results from two different studies: Kaplan et al. (2013) reported that the sustainable happiness model decreased negative affectivity whereas Winslow et al. (2017) reported null results on decreasing both negative affective wellbeing and job stress.

From the action model perspective, there were no differences in the type of delivery methods; that is, both Kaplan (2013) and Winslow et al. (2017) delivered interventions via web-platforms using a gratitude prompt. Both studies used similar exercises,

which consisted of participants recounting up to three things they are grateful for at work. However, the target group and implementing organization of the two studies showed noticeable differences. A majority of Kaplan's (2013) target audience were employees in administrative jobs (92% of the participants) in two large universities in the US whereas Winslow et al.'s (2017) had a wide range of audience types that included client-facing jobs (47% of the participants) and managers (21%). Therefore, Winslow et al.'s (2017) audience was more heterogeneous than Kaplan's (2013). See Table 1 for complete list of theories of change.

4.1.2 Employee Job Crafting Interventions

The JD-R model was chosen unanimously in the employee job crafting interventions. Unlike the gratitude interventions, the majority (60%, $n = 3$) of job crafting interventions presented a theory of change to support their interventions. The JD-R model provides a clear description of employee personal resources, job demands, and the best way to adapt successfully at work (Bakker, 2011). The theory postulates if employees become aware of their psychological and personal resources they will be better able to perform and meet job demands. Work outcomes included in the theories of change were primarily focused on work engagement, in-role performance, and positive and negative affective well-being at work. However, other work outcomes included openness to change, adaptive performance, and leader-member exchange. Van Wingerden et al.'s (2016, 2017) found a significant increase in work engagement and in-role performance after a job crafting intervention whereas Van Winderden et al. (2017) had null findings for work engagement but significant findings for in-role performance. Demerouti et al. (2017) found that an employee job crafting intervention significantly increased positive affective well-being at work, openness to change, and adaptive performance, while Van den Heuvel et al. (2015) had null findings for positive affective well-being at work, but a significant increase in leader-member exchange and a significant decrease in negative affective well-being at work.

All of the employee job crafting action models were based on the Michigan Job Crafting Exercise, and all used trained facilitators to manage a series of activities, including a critical reflection, feedback session, and action planning workshop (see Table 2 for action models). Moreover, these interventions were conducted in several different types of organizations, including healthcare ($n = 1$), primary schools for special education ($n = 2$), municipality ($n = 1$) and police district ($n = 1$). One key theme in the employee job crafting interventions was educating participants on the background of JD-R theory, and a deliberate focus on creating specific job crafting goals.

4.1.3 PsyCap Interventions

There were three theories of change presented in the PsyCap intervention studies: IO-OI (Inside Out-Outside In) Model, PsyCap Micro-intervention Model, and combination of the PsyCap Micro-intervention Model & the Conservation of Resource (COR) theory. The IO-OI proposes that employee well-being is impacted by psychological factors inside the employee and outside the employee (Williams, Kern, & Waters, 2016). Psychological factors inside the employee are malleable and include attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Factors outside the employees are beyond the control of the individual, such as organizational culture. This model proposes that elevating organizational members to see the best in others will propel them to act more virtuously. The PsyCap/COR theory intervention postulated that people try to protect valuable resources at work, especially when there is a threat of loss. However, the negative impact of these losses can be mitigated by PsyCap, which is a developable employee resource. The outcomes included in the PsyCap interventions were organizational virtuousness, work engagement, and job performance. Yuan (2015) and Zhang et al. (2014) reported significant increases in work engagement and job performance, respectively. Williams et al. (2016) found null improvements in organizational virtuousness.

The action models in our PsyCap interventions included targeted activities for each of the sub-components (i.e., hope, resilience, optimism, and self efficacy). For example, Yuan (2015) used SMART goals, expressive writing, ABCDE model, and risk management exercises to teach each component of PsyCap in his intervention. Williams, Kern, and Walters (2017) and Williams et al. (2016) leveraged PsyCap research and materials from University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Center, and Zhang et al. (2014) used the Happy@Work training and structured reading materials. Trained facilitators administered three of the four PsyCap interventions and one was administered online. Finally, the target groups consisted of employees in random organizations and an independent school (teaching and non-teaching positions).

4.1.4 Employee Strengths Interventions

There were five different theories of change used in the employee strengths interventions: Clifton Strengths Finder, VIA framework, manualization framework, positive-activity model, and Character Strengths and Virtues framework. However, while these studies used different theoretical models, their underlying logic remained similar. That is, developing employee strengths should lead to increased desirable and reduced undesirable work outcomes. For example, the outcomes from the theories of change included performance appraisals, calling at work, other-rater feedback on transformational leadership, work engagement, burnout, and work-related well-being. Unlike other positive psychology theories included in our paper, employee strengths interventions reported a diverse set of work outcomes. The intervention that used the Clifton Strengths Finder reported null findings on the performance appraisal

process (Williams, 2010), and the intervention that used Character Strengths and Virtues (CSV) framework found null increases in work related well-being (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2013). On the other hand, Harzer and Ruch's use of the VIA framework was successful at increasing calling in the workplace, the positive-activity model found significant increases in work engagement and decreases in burnout (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2017), and the manualization framework found significant increases in other-rater feedback on transformational leadership (Mackie, 2014).

Employee strengths theory intervention action models followed a similar format: a strengths-identification assessment followed by a training session on how to incorporate strengths in the workplace. For example, Harzer and Ruch (2012) used the VIA to educate their participants on their four highest signature strengths. They were then asked to think about their daily work activities, and how their strengths play out in those tasks. The last step challenged employees to use their signature strengths in new and meaningful ways at work. In addition to the VIA, there were other strengths assessments used, such as Realise 2 Inventory and 360-feedback (Mackie, 2014), Seligman's (2011) strengths-identification activities (Harzer & Ruch, 2012, Williams, 2010), and self-reflection exercises (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2017). Williams (2010) and Harzer and Ruch (2012) used web-based platforms, whereas Mackie (2014) used executive coaches, Meyers and Van Woerkom (2017) used a trained facilitator, and Page and Vella-Brodrick (2013) used a researcher to implement the intervention. The implementing organizations included the university setting ($n = 1$), non-profit organization ($n = 2$), training and development consultancy ($n = 1$), and government agency ($n = 1$). Finally, the employees that participated in the strengths interventions consisted of leaders, senior managers, HR, and marketing communications employees.

4.1.5 Employee Well-Being Interventions

Neumeier et al. (2017) and Laschinger et al. (2012) used aspects of Seligman's PERMA model in their theory of change. PERMA suggests there are five key elements of well-being: positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Further, PERMA is found to improve organizational outcomes, such as higher workplace well-being levels including lower absenteeism, higher job satisfaction, among many more. The work outcomes included employee well-being, empowerment, trust in management, supervisor incivility, and work-related psychological flexibility. Neumeier et al. (2017) found that an intervention designed using PERMA significantly increased employee well-being, and Laschinger et al. (2012) positive relationships intervention found significant increases in employee empowerment, trust in management, and significant decreases in supervisor incivility. Finally, Fiery (2016) used an intervention that combined self-compassion and the JD-R model. The paper reported that an intervention group had a significant increase in work-related psychological flexibility compared to a control group.

Action models in the employee well-being interventions included activities that targeted aspects of PERMA and guided meditations. For example, Neumeier et al.

(2017) had participants in the intervention group practice gratitude, savor the moment, visualize their best-self, and perform random acts of kindness. The self-compassion intervention included guided meditations taught in the Mindful Self-Compassion Program (Fiery, 2016). Two of the employee well-being interventions were administered online and one used a trained facilitator. The organizational settings included a university ($n = 1$), hospital ($n = 1$), and animal shelter ($n = 1$) with participants ranging from self-registered employees, nurses, and random employees at an animal shelter.

5 Discussion

Positive psychology interventions in the workplace have made tremendous strides in the past two decades. There now exists a robust body of literature, including primary intervention studies, review papers, along with a recent meta-analysis (Avey et al., 2011; Bolier et al., 2013; Donaldson et al., (under review); Gilbert, Foulk, & Bono, 2018; Knight, Patterson, & Dawson, 2017; Rudolph, Katz, Lavingne, & Zacher, 2017; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009) linking PPI's with work outcomes, including improved work engagement and well-being. This paper sought out to evaluate the efficacy of PPI's at work using a TDE framework. TDE offers a lens through which we can understand why and under what conditions PPI's are the most effective. The purpose of combining TDE and PPI's at work was to provide practitioners and scholars with information for designing and implementing future interventions in the workplace, as well as a framework to test the efficacy of such interventions. We sought to address two evaluation questions from the intervention studies we reviewed: (1) which theories of change are used in PPIs at work? (2) how does the action model impact intervention efficacy?

Chen (2012) and Donaldson (2007), prominent thought leaders in evaluation theory, conceptualize TDE as a framework to improve the design, implementation, and evaluation of organizational interventions. The key tenets of TDE include a theory of change and action model describing why the intervention should work, along with a plan to foster implementation. These models serve to reveal theoretical casual mechanisms (including social science theory and stakeholder theory) and the relationship between expected and actual intervention outcomes. Our evaluation revealed six types of positive psychology theories and 15 unique theories of change models. The majority of intervention studies did not include an explicit theory of change in their intervention design, but all 22 studies included an implicit theory of change with expected work outcomes. In addition, all papers provided literature to support their research hypotheses. The action models helped contextualize how the theories were implemented in practice, and which intervention characteristics served as important moderators in intervention effectiveness.

Employee gratitude interventions mostly relied on the count-your-blessing model and the sustainable happiness model. Unlike other hands-on interventions (e.g., trainings and workshops) included in our sample, employee gratitude interventions tended

to use simple intervention exercises (e.g., recount three good things) and an online platform. Beside one intervention with null findings, the other gratitude interventions reported significant increases in work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, prosocial behavior, and positive work-related well-being. A meta-analysis by Sitzmann, Kraiger, Stewart, and Wisher (2006) attests to the effectiveness of online interventions above and beyond traditional in-person approaches due to their ease, delivery, and cost. In addition, the implementing organizations and target groups included a variety of employees at different levels, suggesting that employee rank may not influence the efficacy of the interventions. For example, the sustainable happiness model for a university staff had a significant effect whereas the same model for a diverse group that includes sales managers and leaders had a null effect. However, the count-your-blessings model showed significant effects across different participants. Thus, if practitioners are looking for a simple and effective PPI that can improve workplace outcomes, the count-your-blessings model may be worth considering.

The JD-R model undergirded each employee job crafting intervention, which provides a clear connection between job demands, resources, psychological states, and their relationship with work outcomes. Our sample studies that used JD-R model interventions demonstrated improved work engagement and in-role performance. The interventions had similar theories of change and action models, maybe due to the institutional affiliation of the authors. Trained facilitators conveyed job crafting interventions in a group format using the Michigan Job Crafting Exercise. Knight et al. (2017) suggested that group interventions are effective because they engender a climate of social support. Moreover, Donaldson et al. (under review) found types of intervention (i.e., group, on-line, and individual) moderated the relationship between positive psychology interventions and desirable work outcomes (e.g., engagement). The employee job crafting interventions we reviewed engaged participants in a group setting, were detailed activities, and focused on creating actionable goals. Thus, employee job crafting interventions in our sample demonstrated the utility of the JD-R model and importance of effective delivery methods.

Like the employee job crafting interventions, PsyCap interventions were also grounded in a wealth of research. For example, research and materials from University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Center were used in two interventions, and the other two interventions included Luthans et al. (2007) exercises and the Happy@Work training program (see Table 2). Consistent with Donaldson et al.'s (under review) finding that PsyCap interventions were effective at improving desirable and undesirable work outcomes, along with numerous primary studies linking PsyCap to work outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, we suggest PsyCap is a great tool for organizational interventions. The four sub-components of PsyCap allowed intervention designers and implementers to target activities aimed at improving each construct, which has been demonstrated to influence work outcomes.

The employee strengths interventions in our sample provided five different strengths frameworks applied in organizations. Also, each intervention measured a different work outcome such as calling at work, transformational leadership, and work engagement. The diversity of implementing organizations (e.g., non-profit, uni-

versity, corporate, and government) and implementers (e.g., online, coaches, trained facilitator, researcher) highlighted the dynamic nature of using strengths in the workplace.

Employee well-being interventions were related to significant increases in employee well-being, empowerment, trust in management, and supervisor incivility. The PERMA model served as a guiding framework for intervention exercises, two of which were conducted online, and a third, which used guided self-compassion meditations. Practitioners looking to target Seligman's five aspects of well-being (i.e., PERMA) in organizations can impact work relationships and work-related well-being.

6 Practical Implications for Multi-national Contexts

The practical implications of these evaluation findings are useful for scholars and practitioners interested in PPIs at work and frameworks to evaluate their efficacy. A TDE approach was useful for bridging the gap between what is expected to happen and what actually happened in these interventions. It allowed us to evaluate the relationship between theory, measurement, and implementation. For example, when practitioners look to improve work engagement, PsyCap, job crafting, and PERMA may be theories they consider for a change model. As such, practitioners interested in using a specific type of intervention or work outcome can use these findings in their organizations.

We also evaluated multi-national characteristics of PPIs at work that can offer insight to practitioners in the field of positive organizational psychology. First, we observed that some theories were more actively studied in certain countries. For example, the Netherlands was the dominant country that conducted job crafting intervention studies (75%; four papers). No job crafting intervention studies were found in the US. This was interesting because even though the JD-R Model was developed by a group of scholars in the Netherlands (see Bakker, Demerouti, 2006), the US based Michigan Job Crafting Exercise was used to apply the JD-R model. Future research on job crafting interventions in the US and other countries (i.e., Asian countries) may answer this more accurately and provide insight for the effect of job crafting interventions across different countries.

In the US, gratitude interventions at work were studied more than any other positive psychology interventions: three out of five studies in the US were gratitude interventions. Research suggests that other-focused contemplation might be more appropriate for a collectivistic rather than individualistic culture (Boehm, Lyubomirsky, & Sheldon, 2011). Nonetheless, gratitude intervention studies from Asian countries were absent. To better understand the effect of gratitude interventions across nations, we encourage future intervention studies that diversify study samples from single national to multi-national samples to compare the results.

Finally, strengths intervention studies were found from multiple countries that include Australia, Germany, Netherlands, and the US. We found no strength inter-

vention studies from Asian countries. It may be the case that instead of emphasizing individual signature strengths, Asian employees may be susceptible to carrying out organizational needs before their own. Future research should better understand the role that culture plays in these types of interventions.

6.1 Future Directions and Limitations

There are several areas of future research that would improve PPIs at work, especially in multi-national work settings. First, future research could compare the effectiveness of PPIs at work to traditional organizational behavior interventions across multi-national settings. As aforementioned, we found job crafting intervention papers only from European countries, and the majority of gratitude intervention studies appeared from the US. There were no strengths interventions in Asian countries. As a result, without more intervention studies, interpretation of these findings is limited.

It would also be useful to understand approaches used in each country, and intervention characteristics that moderate success or failure. The current study sample did not show a clear distinction between nations in their implementation strategy, which we assume is not reflected in their design of the action model. Considering cultural differences (e.g., collectivism and power distance) may moderate the effect of interventions, and clearer depiction of how researchers operationalize cultural aspects may be needed in the future studies to better understand multi-national characteristics.

Finally, future studies could be dedicated to evaluating measures used in these types of interventions. Donaldson et al. (under review) categorized work outcomes as desirable and undesirable. As such, reviewing the psychometric properties of measures underneath these categories would provide more support for their statistical conclusions. Lastly, this study adhered to a rigorous inclusion criteria set forth by Donaldson et al. (under review), which only included 22 studies. Future scholars and practitioners would benefit from reviewing all types of interventions studies using PPIs at work (i.e., those published, unpublished, etc.) to broaden the knowledge base and inform future research and scholarship. Lastly, while TDE is a great starting point, other evaluation approaches could be considered in future studies to leverage more perspectives, besides the role of theory and implementation.

7 Conclusion

As the 21st century workplace continues to evolve, there is no doubt PWO is in a great position to solve workplace challenges. By synthesizing what is known about PPIs at work and using a TDE framework to evaluate the efficacy of such interventions, we have provided scholars and practitioners a value proposition for using positive psychology in their organizations. We have also shown which positive psychology

theories have been used, and under what conditions they have been the most efficacious. Finally, this study provided a foundation for understanding how PPIs at work are designed, measured, implemented, and evaluated in terms of their efficacy to influence work outcomes. More research is needed to further these aspects of PPIs at work so organizations can create a culture of flourishing and productivity.

*References marked with an asterisk indicate interventions included in our review. References included in Tables 1–2 available upon request.

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The Theory of Planned Behaviour as a Frame for Job Crafting: Explaining and Enhancing Proactive Adjustment at Work



Arianna Costantini, Andrea Ceschi and Riccardo Sartori

Abstract Rapid changes in the work environment require employees to proactively shape their job characteristics to sustain motivation, energy, and performance. Traditionally, job redesign was mainly a top-down process, where the management of an organisation was in charge of defining the most appropriate job description of a mansion. Today, such an approach does not respond anymore to the challenges of the work environment, and awareness has developed among scholars and practitioners about the importance of empowering individuals to let them adjust their job characteristics to reach organisation goals, i.e. through job crafting interventions. In this theoretical contribution, we propose the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) as a framework to design positive psychology interventions aiming to enhance adaptive job crafting behaviours. We argue that the TPB provides a solid foundation to explicate the mechanisms by which job crafting positive interventions are expected to exert their effects on behaviour. Such an approach allows targeting the content and the tools of the interventions based on participants' needs, effectively addressing the causal determinants of behaviour and behaviour change in multicultural organisational contexts.

Keywords Job crafting · Theory of planned behaviour · Job crafting intervention · Behaviour change interventions · Positive interventions

List of Abbreviations

TPB Theory of planned behaviour

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1 Introduction

Nowadays, change and growing complexity characterise the nature of work and call into question workers' career identity, emphasising individual responsibility in the design of unique, professional paths. Such a framework poses essential challenges for people at work, who may find in it the chance to realise distinctive, personalised and self-managed career stories, but also, on the other hand, who could feel threatened as for the awareness of unpredictable working life. Organisational careers that traditionally occurred within a single work context are nowadays replaced by boundaryless, self-managed work stories, where people are regularly asked to shift roles, enhance capabilities and re-adapt to new work environments (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Hall, 2002; Leana & Rousseau, 2000). That is, employees are called to be not only role-taker but also role-makers (Moynon, Raaphorst, Groeneveld, & van de Walle, 2018).

Against this background, employees' self-initiated behaviours become critical to ensure competitiveness and innovation, since organisational processes and forms are fluctuating in a changing context (Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2016). To benefit from such challenges, organisations need to identify effective approaches to stimulate and support employees' self-management skills in a culturally sensitive way. Specifically, there is a need for acknowledging the common and distinct psychological processes underlying individual proactive strategies across different organisational and cultural contexts. Knowing the mechanisms underlying individual judgement and employees' behaviours is key if employees' proactivity has to be sustained and supported in the work environment. Understanding the link between individual cognitive antecedents and cultural patterns and how they influence proactive adaptation to the work environment is critical to implement psychological interventions aiming at supporting such behaviours (Bagozzi, Wong, Abe, & Bergami, 2000; Henrich et al., 2005; O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, & Doerr, 2014; Sturman, Shao, & Katz, 2012; Morris, Savani, Mor, & Cho, 2014).

The main goal of this theoretical chapter is to propose a framework, i.e. the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), to design psychological interventions supporting employees' proactive adjustment to the work environment, i.e., job crafting, based on common psycho-social mechanisms that span different cultures. We argue that such an approach can provide important insights to develop behaviour change interventions focused on enhancing employees' self-management of their job demands and resources in a culturally sensitive way, eventually promoting higher well-being at work. By leveraging on psychological beliefs, social norms, and perceptions of control as determinants of individual intention to engage in job crafting, interventions aiming to support job crafting can be successful among different cultural backgrounds in that they rely on common psychosocial mechanisms driving behaviours (Wiethoff, 2004).

By proposing the TPB as a guide to design and implement job crafting interventions in organisations, we seek to encourage future scholarship and practice that examines and scrutinises the context, mechanisms, and outcomes for intervention

effectiveness in a systematic way. Before exploring how the TPB can be used to promote employees' job crafting behaviours within a diversified work environment, we will present an overview of the TPB and of how job crafting has been conceptualised within the job demands-resources theory. We will then propose practical recommendations to (1) design job crafting interventions drawing on the principles of the TPB and (2) select the proper intervention techniques to sustain the drivers of behavioural intention and the translation of intention into behaviours. We then conclude with a discussion on future research about the potential of the TPB to design job crafting intervention and enhance proactive adjustment in multi-cultural settings.

2 The Theory of Planned Behaviour as a Conceptual Framework to Study Job Crafting

Within the current work environment, employees are required to adjust the mobilisation of their resources to remain competitive or as a means to face fluid job demands. The term "job crafting" has been coined to describe changes employees make in their jobs and relationships with others to experience enhanced meaning in work and attain a positive work identity (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). While previous studies provided valuable insights into the predictors of job crafting (e.g. Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012; Bipp & Demerouti, 2015; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2014; Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012), shedding light on the dispositional factors underlying employees' choice to craft their job, they fail to consider the complex web of concomitant factors that may influence job crafting behaviours within organisation boundaries.

To fill this gap and further our understanding of the factors that jointly drive employees' engagement in job crafting, we propose to rely on the TPB (Ajzen, 1991, 2015). Such a theoretical framework permits to integrate contextual and cognitive factors underlying job crafting behaviours. Indeed, while job crafting refers to a broad class of conscious and intentional changes made to one's work (Bruning & Campion, 2018), few studies have explicitly investigated the theoretical mechanisms underpinning the volitional processes driving job crafting behaviours. Examining the role of beliefs that a given behaviour, such as job crafting, will result in the desired outcome (Pinder, 2014), is critical to understand how such a behaviour unfolds as a dynamic, proactive process at work. Both the TPB and literature on job crafting build on the assumption that the target behaviour concerns a domain in which employees are agentic and anticipatory in their actions (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Accordingly, beliefs and behavioural intentions serve as a linking pin between individual dispositions or situational perceptions and subsequent engagement in job crafting. As such, investigating the role of such beliefs for job crafting may yield theoretical clarity (Shoss, Jundt, Kobler, & Reynolds, 2016), thus advancing the understanding of their motivational impetus in a manner consistent across the proactive, behavioural, and motivational pieces of literature. Moreover, the TPB provides a solid background

for conducting behaviour change interventions in a culturally sensitive way in that it relies on psychosocial mechanisms that are central when trying to understand when and why employees decide to change their job to improve it proactivity.

3 The Theory of Planned Behaviour

The TPB is a social psychology theory that has been widely applied to understanding behaviour in a variety of organisational settings. It is a cognition-based theory that deals with the relations among beliefs, norms, control, intentions, and behaviours, which has had a widespread application due to its practical approach to change behaviours by changing the cognitive structures underlying those behaviours (Fox & Spector, 2010).

According to this theory, the primary driver of behaviour is individuals' willingness to perform a behaviour. In turn, such a willingness (or intention) is preceded by individuals' perceptions of efficacy regarding their ability to engage in the target behaviour, by attitudes toward the outcomes resulting from performing the behaviour, and by beliefs related to how the behaviour is evaluated in the social structure in which it occurs.

Specifically, *intention* in the TPB is an indication of a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour and is assumed to be the immediate antecedent of behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). It captures the motivational factors that influence a behaviour, which indicates how hard people are willing to try, and how much of an effort they are planning to exert to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). When behaviours pose no serious problems of control, they can be predicted from intentions with considerable accuracy (Ajzen, 1991). Accordingly, employees will engage in job crafting behaviours based on the strength of their intentions. *Attitudes* represent the overall evaluation of the consequences of a particular behaviour. If the behaviour in question is believed to have positive consequences, then it is more likely that the individual will engage in such behaviour. If employees believe that engaging in job crafting will reflect in higher well-being at work, then they will be likely to develop behavioural intentions towards job crafting. *Perceived norms* concern perceptions of the social pressure to perform (or not) a behaviour. If individuals believe that significant others (e.g., co-workers, supervisors) approve of job crafting, then it is likely that they will engage in such behaviours. Accordingly, the social structure in which individuals are embedded is key when trying to understand the factors underlying employees' engagement in proactive behaviours. Indeed, social structures shape individuals' experiences and ultimately their values, beliefs, and behaviours (Stern, Dietz, Kalof, & Guagnano, 1995). It is important to note that in the organisational context social norms are likely to be highly influenced by the organisational culture, in that it constitutes the meaningful context for the creation of the attitudes and beliefs that ultimately guide employees' behaviours (Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006). Lastly, *perceived behavioural control* refers to the extent to which employees perceive job crafting behaviour to be under their control. Namely, it reflects an individual's perceived degree of difficulty

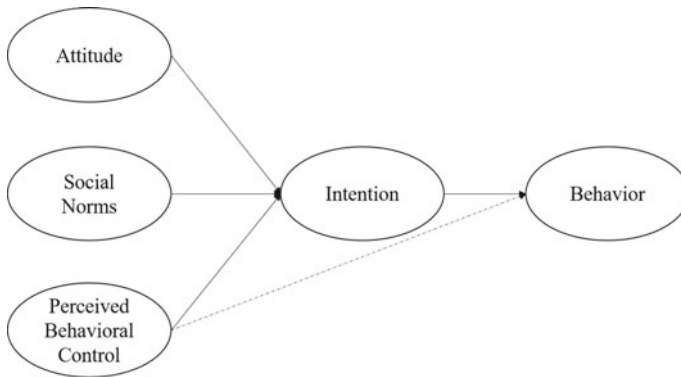


Fig. 1 The theory of planned behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991)

to perform a behaviour and to whether he/she believes to have the ability to engage in the target behaviour. That is, individuals will be more likely to engage in job crafting if there are limited perceived factors that prevent them from accomplishing their goals and if they believe they can do so. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the TPB.

The TPB is a useful framework to design behaviour change interventions and to explicate the mechanisms by which interventions are expected to exert their effects on behaviour (Steinmetz, Knappstein, Ajzen, Schmidt, & Kabst, 2016). Empirical evidence has shown that intentions to behave are the best predictors of actual behaviours, accounting for 24% of the behavioural variance (Winkelkemper, 2014; Armitage & Conner, 2001). Even though the relative importance of attitude, social norms, and perceived behavioural control in the prediction of intention is expected to vary across behaviours and situations (Ajzen, 1991), meta-analytic findings showed that the TPB accounts for 27 and 39% of the variance in behaviour and intention, respectively (Armitage & Conner, 2001). The theory’s ability to predict behaviours across a variety of behavioural domains (e.g. Haus, Steinmetz, Isidor, & Kabst, 2013; Overstreet, Cegielski, & Hall, 2013; Scalco, Noventa, Sartori, & Ceschi, 2017) provides a strong theoretical foundation for the development of behaviour change interventions, including those aiming at fostering higher wellbeing in the workplace through the empowerment of employees’ engagement in job crafting strategies.

4 The JD-R Approach to Job Crafting

Job crafting has been defined as self-initiated change behaviours that employees engage into align their jobs with their preferences, motives, and passions (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The distinctive characteristic of job crafting is that such a bottom-up redesign approach starts with the initiative of the employee,

who has the opportunity to put into action his/her attitude toward proactive work behaviours (Tims et al., 2012). Such a characteristic differentiates job crafting from other bottom-up job redesign approaches, recognising the individual a significant role in reaching higher levels of positive experiences at work. That is, job crafting builds on individual agency and on the extent to which discretionary behaviours are recognised as possible strategies to define the work environment. Within such a view, the individual at work becomes in charge of his/her job redesign strategy, rather than being only a receiver of top-down policies. Moreover, organisational boundaries define enabling or restricting factors referred to employees' engagement in job crafting behaviours. Accordingly, a complementary perspective involving the management of both individual psychosocial factors motivating bottom-up job redesign *and* top-down practices or support is needed if job crafting is to be supported (Demerouti, 2014).

Since its inception in the field of work and organisational psychology and broadening its original framework, the construct of job crafting has been conceptualised within the Job Demands-Resources Model (Tims & Bakker, 2010; concerning the JD-R model see: Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) and defined as a proactive employee behaviour consisting of resources and challenges seeking, and demands reducing (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012). Crafting job resources could take the form of increasing structural (e.g. trying to learn new things) or social (e.g. asking for performance feedback) resources. Increasing challenging demands consists of seeking new and challenging tasks at work (e.g. voluntary taking on new responsibilities or additional tasks; Hakanen, Peeters, & Schaufeli, 2017), which sustain motivation, mastering, and learning (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Decreasing hindering job demands (e.g. making sure that one's job is mentally less demanding; Tims & Bakker, 2010) refers to a health-protecting coping mechanism adopted to reduce demands perceived as excessively high.

Building on the JD-R perspective, several studies have been conducted to understand how job crafting is related to employees' well-being and work-related outcomes. Findings have shown that *expansion job crafting strategies* aiming at making the work environment more resourceful and challenging are positively related to several work-related outcomes, such as work engagement (Vogt, Hakanen, Brauchli, Jenny, & Bauer, 2016), job performance (Demerouti, Bakker, & Gevers, 2015; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2015), and person-job fit (Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, & Bakker, 2014; Tims et al., 2016). On the contrarily, employees' engagement in *job crafting contraction strategies*, i.e. those focused on decreasing the demanding aspects of the job, are not or even negatively related to employees' health, motivation, and performance (Demerouti, Bakker, & Halbesleben, 2015; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2018; Mäkikangas, 2018; Rudolph et al., 2017; Weseler & Niessen, 2016).

These findings suggest that organisations aiming to sustain wellbeing at work may invest in job crafting bottom-up interventions that help individuals to understand how to proactively engage in the self-management of their demands and resources constructively. That is, such interventions should raise awareness of the implications of different types of job crafting and sustain proactive behaviours leading to increases in

resources and in the pursuit of challenging tasks. On the other side, job crafting interventions should also try to change employees' behaviours positively, meaning that they should try to lower employees' engagement in contraction-oriented strategies that may be harmful to their work-related well-being.

5 Practical Implications to Design Job Crafting Interventions Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour

Besides providing a theoretical framework to broaden our understating of the sources of job crafting behaviour in the workplace, the TPB also offers essential insights to design job crafting interventions aiming at motivating or supporting the implementation of positive job crafting behaviours in different ways. Also, building on evidence from research supporting the cross-cultural generalizability of the measures and pattern of effects for the TPB (Nigg, Lippke, & Maddock, 2009; Hagger et al., 2007; Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006; van Hoof, Born, Taris, & van der Flier, 2006; Pavlou & Chai, 2002), the following practical recommendations are likely to be useful for designing effective positive job crafting behaviours in multi-cultural contexts.

Depending on whether employees intend to craft their jobs without knowing how to do it best, or whether they are not motivated to do so, different interventions should be designed to be effective. For example, if employees are already willing to engage in job crafting, interventions should be targeted to support *implementation processes* aiming at translating intentions into behaviours. That is, when employees already intend to perform job crafting, interventions should be designed to enable them to carry out their intentions, increasing their actual and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2015), for example through behaviour change methods based on goal setting, self-monitoring, planning, or increasing skills (Steinmetz et al., 2016).

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the different processes involved in the design of implementation and motivation interventions to support job crafting behaviours based on the principles of the TPB.

Differently, interventions based on *motivational processes* should be implemented when employees are not aware of the positive outcomes deriving from expansion job crafting strategies. In this case, interventions should be focused on raising awareness about the positive outcomes deriving from seeking more resources and challenges (i.e. attitudes), raising perceptions that the organisation approves such behaviours (i.e. social norms) and eventually providing ideas or tools to decrease actual barriers or generate facilitators to craft one's job (i.e. perceived behavioural control). Such motivational interventions build on the assumption that changing beliefs is the main route to change motivation to perform a certain behaviour, representing the first step to support the intention to behave and then, afterwards, implementation interventions (Steinmetz et al., 2016). That is, a structured application of the TPB permits to explain how each of its components differently informs job crafting strategies, providing indications for intervention design and structure.

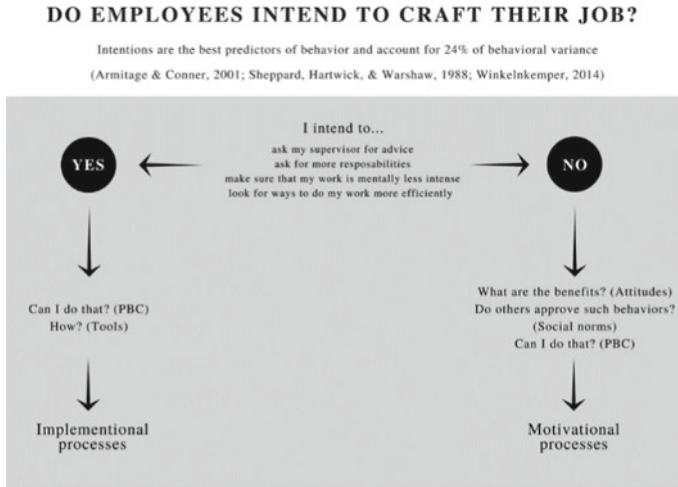


Fig. 2 Representation of the processes implied in different job crafting interventions based on the theory of planned behaviour, based on Steinmetz et al., (2016)

For example, interventions may be focused on enhancing favourable evaluations towards expansion job crafting by exploring and strengthening beliefs on how such behavioural strategies are likely to lead to desirable consequences, eventually resulting in positive attitudes towards job crafting behaviours. Given that behavioural beliefs are formed in association with specific contextual attributes, the intervention provides a trustful context to gain insights on the possible social and environmental consequences stemming from the engagement in such behaviours. That is, specific behaviour change techniques may provide information about what people and their social environment think about the behaviour *before* actually engaging in it during the daily working routine, eventually clarifying whether other colleagues will like, approve, or disapprove what a person will be doing. Likely, the intervention can provide a space to focus on raising individual awareness on the pros and cons of job crafting behaviours, which provides the basis to reframe and evaluate how such behaviours can be linked to specific positive or negative consequences at work.

When employees craft their jobs, they do so also to make it more meaningful. However, such a sensemaking process does not occur in isolation and is instead informed by the social context or the work environment, i.e. the organisation. Accordingly, social information processing and social identity play a role in informing how individuals' behaviour is influenced by the information they gather from their immediate social environments, i.e. co-workers and supervisors, which also shapes their understanding of expectations regarding their behaviours (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; Fox & Spector, 2010). Moreover, within the current unpredictable work environment, informational social influence becomes crucial to reduce uncertainty about the interpretation of events and their meaning (Festinger, 1954). That is, the more ambiguous

the job aspects, the more employees will rely on social comparison to assess them (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Indeed, knowledge of others' evaluation gives employees ideas as to how to better manage job demands and resources, and others' behaviours provide a guide to model one own's behavioural tendencies. Different behavioural change techniques may be used along with information about social consequences and others' approvals of engaging in different job crafting strategies. These may include social support, i.e. advising on, arranging or providing practical help and/or support for performance of specific, self-settled job crafting behaviours, and social comparison, i.e. drawing attention to others' performance or best practices about situations in which engagement in job crafting resulted to be successful for performance and/or wellbeing. Also, social incentive, i.e. communicating that verbal or non-verbal rewards will be delivered when there has been effort or progresses to make the work environment more resourceful and challenging (Michie et al., 2013), are likely to be useful to sustain positive social norms informing job crafting behaviours.

To define job crafting activities as volitional, conscious, and intentional changes made to one's work (Bruning & Campion, 2018) implies referring to behaviours over which the employee experiences some extent of control (Webb & Sheeran, 2006). Indeed, agreement exists that experienced efficacy or individual's sense of confidence that one can act effectively to orchestrate behavioural outcomes (Bandura, 1977a, b) is a key psychological mechanism explaining proactive behaviours in the workplace (Grant & Ashford, 2008). In the TPB, perceived behavioural control refers to the perceived ability to perform the target behaviour (Ajzen, 2002) and, importantly, can serve as a direct determinant of behaviour when perceptions of control reflect the amount of actual control over the performance (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Behaviour change techniques can be used to support employee's beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of actions to make the work environment more aligned to his/her needs through expansion job crafting. These may include strategies to restructure the physical or social work environment, for example, to facilitate performance of behaviours aiming at increasing social and structural resources, and problem-solving approaches, which aim at supporting the employee to analyse factors influencing expansion behaviours and generate strategies to overcome barriers and increase facilitators. Moreover, goal setting and action planning seem particularly useful techniques to facilitate and support employees in the pursuit of new challenges at work. By setting behavioural goals and detailed planning of performance of behaviours regarding context, frequency, duration, and intensity, employees can be supported not only to identify clear goal intention but also specific strategies to deal effectively with self-regulatory issues during goal striving (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006).

Table 1 links the TPB components to expansion job crafting strategies and provides examples of behavioural change techniques to be used during interventions to support the positive, proactive self-management of the characteristics of the work environment.

Overall, job crafting interventions based on the TPB can be effective to sustain expansion-oriented job crafting *and* to limit employees' engagement in contraction-oriented job crafting. To reach these aims, research suggests that *positive* behaviour

Table 1 Components of the TPB linked to expansion job crafting and behaviour change techniques

TPB component	TPB definition	Application to expansion job crafting		Behaviour change techniques
		Seeking resources	Seeking challenges	
Attitudes	The person’s evaluation of the target behaviour and the likely outcomes	Asking my supervisor for advice makes my work better. It gives me insight on aspects I did not consider before, enriching the quality of my output	Joining new projects makes my work experience more engaging. I have the chance to unfold competencies that otherwise would be dormant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the consequences of the behaviour • Social and emotional reactions of the behaviour • Pros and cons
Social Norms	The person’s normative beliefs about social pressure to engage (or not) in the behaviour	I noticed that in my work environment my colleagues tend to ask for advice when uncertain	In my work unit, it is valued when one has the initiative to ask for more tasks when a work is finished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about others’ approval • Practical and emotional social support • Social incentives • Modelling
Perceived Behavioural Control	The person’s perceived ability to perform the behaviour	I know how to make sure to obtain the feedback I need on my tasks	I feel like I have the information needed to learn about new developments and opportunities in my work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse barriers and facilitators • Goal setting • Action planning

Note Behaviour change techniques are described according to Michie’s et al. (2013) taxonomy

change interventions should be implemented, meaning that interventions should be designed to support the individual tendency to change beliefs toward more positive information rather than focusing on negative outcomes likely to happen in the future (Sharot, Korn, & Dolan, 2011). Indeed, research shows that warnings about adverse, future consequences have minimal impact on changing behaviours because they are associated with negative feelings that make people feel bad (Ruiter & Kok, 2005; Ben-Ari, Florian, & Mikulincer, 1999; Ennett, Tobler, Ringwalt, & Flewelling, 1994). As a result, people tend to avoid such negative information, for example by strengthening individual beliefs about the low likelihood that negative outcomes may result from engaging in potentially harmful behaviour. Accordingly, interventions focused on communicating the negative effects of decreasing hindering job demands on work-related wellbeing may be ineffective or even counterproductive. On the con-

trarily, positive information makes people feel good, so people tend to seek it out. Moreover, research shows that cognitive functions are more efficient when positive information has to be processed (Sharot, Korn, & Dolan, 2011; Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1997). It follows that job crafting interventions aimed at supporting expansion job crafting and lowering contraction tendencies should focus on (a) reward employees for engaging in behaviours aiming at making the work environment more resourceful and challenging, so as to strengthen positive attitudes associated to the outcomes of expansion-oriented behaviours; (b) highlight that people in the organisation value employees' proactive behaviours aiming to realize gains in motivation and health, so as to communicate that the cultural and social context supports such positive behaviours; (c) provide employees with the tools to monitor and be aware of their progress related to their engagement in expansion job crafting compared to contraction behaviours.

6 Future Directions

In this chapter, we provided an integration of the TPB and job crafting research to (a) broader knowledge on how job crafting arises in the workplace and (b) design and implement positive behaviour change interventions aiming to support expansion-oriented job crafting and lower contraction behaviours.

Even though the predictive value of the TPB to explain behaviours has been supported in a wide range of life domains (e.g., proactive environmental behaviours, Cordano & Frieze, 2000; Marshall, Cordano, & Silverman, 2005; students' physical proactivity, Wing Kwan, Bray, & Martin Ginis, 2009; proactive work behaviour, Shin & Kim, 2015), to the best of our knowledge no studies investigated whether such a theoretical framework may be useful to disentangle factors influencing a specific form of proactive organisational behaviour, i.e. job crafting. Moreover, despite much research has provided insights on the conditions for job crafting to arise in the workplace, a model that can explain the predictors of job crafting considering both personal and situational conditions upon which most behaviours are dependent (Ohly, Sonnentag, Niessen, & Zapf, 2010) is still missing. Accordingly, future research could try to validate our model proposing the integration of the TPB and job crafting, to shed light on whether job crafting is a planned, intentional behaviour, and on how beliefs influence job crafting behaviours, social norms, and perceptions of behavioural control.

Previous research shows that depending on the targeted behaviour, significant differences in the relationships among attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioural control predicting intentions can be observed across different cultures (Hagger et al., 2007). That is, even though the pattern of influence of the constructs of the TPB is consistent across different cultural groups in predicting intentions and behaviours, there may be some differences in the relative contribution of the constructs leading to intentions across cultures. Such differences may be explained since employees with different cultural background are likely to differ in their attitudes, values, and norms,

because of their different cultural roots (van Hooft, Born, Taris, & van der Flier, 2004). For example, the extent to which a culture is characterised as individualistic or collectivistic may influence the subjective weight of attitudes and social norms informing behavioural intention and behaviour. Whereas people in individualistic cultures tend to perceive themselves as autonomous individuals who are independent of the group, people who are part of collectivistic cultures perceive themselves as interdependent with their group (Hofstede, 1991). Accordingly, research has shown that in collectivistic cultures behaviour is guided more by social norms than by personal attitudes, whereas the opposite is true in individualistic cultures, in which people tend to give priority to personal goals over collective ones (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Future research could investigate whether the importance of the drivers of intention to engage in job crafting varies based on cultural backgrounds, and specifically based on cultures that differ in the extent to which they are characterised as individualistic or collectivistic. Such research is important especially when *motivational* interventions to foster expansion-oriented job crafting are to be designed, given that employees from different countries may differ in the relative importance of the drivers of their intentions to engage in job crafting. Against this background, the TPB helps to understand the dynamics of positive job crafting interventions among different cultural contexts, allowing to designing and weighing the relative importance and centrality of social norms, attitudes and individual perceptions of control based on the specific characteristics of a given cultural context. On the other side, given that no variation in the relative contribution of intentions to behaviours is observed (Winkelkemper, 2014; Armitage & Conner, 2001), even in cross-cultural studies (Walker, Courneya, & Deng, 2006; Chatzisarantis & Hagger, 2005; Bagozzi, Lee, & van Loo, 2001), *implementation* interventions based on the TPB are likely to be effective among employees regardless of their cultural background (Hagger et al., 2007).

Given the importance of organisational culture to promote proactivity at work (Crant, 2000), an interesting avenue for future research is to investigate how organisational *and* individual cultural background may interact in influencing the beliefs constituting the motivational drivers of intentions. That is, the relative importance of personal values and beliefs influencing employees' willingness to engage in job crafting may vary not just because of cultural differences but also based on a broader range of other contextual, organisational variables. Research is needed to unpack the mechanisms and boundary conditions interacting with the social-psychological pattern of meanings, beliefs, and norms linked to job crafting intentions and behaviours.

7 Conclusion

Proactivity in work life is perhaps more critical than ever before, given that today in organisational contexts the ends, but not the means, are typically specified (Grant & Ashford, 2008). In this chapter, we proposed the theory of planned behaviour as a useful framework to disentangle the motivational and contextual drivers underly-

ing job crafting behaviours. Besides, such a background suggests relevant practical insights to design positive behaviour change interventions supporting employees' adaptive job crafting behaviours. It is hoped that this proposal will further stimulate research on the nature of job crafting and on how to support it.

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Forgiveness Interventions from a Multicultural Perspective: Potential Applications and Concerns



Meredith V. Tittler and Nathaniel G. Wade

Abstract Forgiving others for their offenses has been shown to have considerable, wide-ranging effects for people from improved relationship satisfaction and mental health to better physical health in old age. Furthermore, evidence shows that professional interventions designed to help people forgive others are effective. However, little research has explored these findings with a multiculturally-diverse sample of individuals. In many parts of the world, there is a history of oppression of individuals who do not identify with the majority or privileged identity groups (e.g., in the United States: those who are not European-American, heterosexual, male). This oppression can result in psychological wounds and negative health outcomes that can be carried a lifetime and passed down through generations. Forgiveness might provide a measure of relief and healing for these groups. However, forgiveness might also be used in oppressive ways by privileged groups to further demoralize and control marginalized groups. Even in the hands of well-meaning individuals, forgiveness might lead to as much or more negative outcomes than positive ones for some people. This chapter provides a systematic review of the literature on forgiveness in multicultural contexts with a focus on three dimensions of identity: race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender. We examine the role of forgiveness in such contexts and how mental health providers and other professionals might (or might not) promote forgiveness in multiculturally-competent ways with individuals who hold historically marginalized identities. Recommendations and suggestions to minimize further oppression and maximize the potential of interventions designed to promote forgiveness are also provided.

Keywords Forgiveness · Race · Gender · Sexual orientation · Forgiveness interventions

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1 Introduction

Forgiveness has been a topic of much empirical attention in psychology and related fields over the last two decades, after a long period of virtually no research (Witvliet, 2014). This work has resulted in several developed literatures in various areas of forgiveness studies from intergroup forgiveness to forgiveness and health to the social-psychological processes of forgiveness (Worthington & Wade, in press). The field has matured and there is much to learn from existing research. One of the primary areas this is true is in the development and testing of interventions designed to help people forgive. Our chapter will explore this literature with a critical eye on the multicultural aspects of this research and the applications and implications for individuals with marginalized identities.

1.1 Definition of Forgiveness

Because different research groups emphasize different aspects of forgiveness, defining forgiveness is an important first step in understanding a particular literature within the field. Within the research that explores interventions to help people forgive others, a general consensus about a definition of forgiveness has been reached (Wade & Worthington, 2005). In general, forgiveness is seen as an internal process that occurs within an individual who has been injured or hurt. This process involves acknowledging and resolving the negative feelings and thoughts resulting from the hurt (such as vengefulness and bitterness) along with the return of prosocial thoughts and feelings about the offending person. These might include empathy, compassion, and love, or might simply be a return to neutrality toward the individual if there was never a close relationship before. Furthermore, researchers agree that forgiveness is not the same as condoning an offense, forgetting, justifying, or excusing (Wade & Worthington, 2005). In addition, forgiveness occurs separately from reconciliation, or returning to a trusting relationship with an offender. One might forgive and not necessarily reconcile, if the person or situation is not trustworthy or safe. There are also more specific types of forgiveness that researchers have measured within the intervention literature. *Trait* and *dispositional* forgiveness have been defined as a general tendency to forgive transgressions across situations and time (e.g. Hook, Worthington Jr., Utsey, Davis, & Burnette, 2012; Burrows & Hill, 2012). *Emotional* forgiveness has been defined as the replacement of, “negative emotions associated with unforgiveness with positive other-oriented emotions,” (Lin, Mack, Enright, Krahn, & Baskin, 2014, p. 781). Emotional forgiveness has been contrasted with *decisional* forgiveness, which has been defined as the act of making a decision to forgive, (e.g. Lin et al., 2014).

1.2 Overview of Forgiveness Interventions

Helping people to forgive others through psychologically-oriented interventions has received a considerable amount of attention. From a clinical research perspective, several treatment models have been developed and tested with various participants. By far the two most popular and well-researched models are Enright's Process Model (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000) and Worthington's REACH Forgiveness Model (Worthington, 2001). Other models have been articulated for specific situations or populations, but even these share many elements with the two main models (Wade & Worthington, 2005). In general, forgiveness interventions share in common efforts to help victims (a) recall and share the details of the offense, (b) look at the offense and its effects in new ways, (c) develop empathy for the offending person, and (d) make a commitment to forgiving the person, even though it can be a long process with emotional ebbs and flows (Wade & Worthington, 2005).

Enough efficacy research has been done on forgiveness interventions to provide a strong estimate of their effect. In the most comprehensive meta-analysis to date, Wade, Hoyt, Kidwell, & Worthington, Jr. (2014) analyzed 53 pre-to-post treatment effect sizes ($N = 2323$) comparing forgiveness interventions with alternative treatments and no treatment (e.g., wait list control groups). They found that participants receiving forgiveness interventions increased forgiveness more than participants in either the alternative treatments (Becker's Delta = .45 [.21, .69]) or the no-treatment conditions (Becker's Delta = .56 [.43, .68]). Furthermore, those in the forgiveness interventions compared to the no-treatment conditions reported less depression (Becker's Delta = .34 [.17, .52]) and greater hope (Becker's Delta = 1.00 [.38, 1.62]) following treatment. Finally, the researchers reported that treatment duration was a significant predictor of study effect size, such that despite treatment model or modality, interventions that lasted longer helped participants achieve more forgiveness.

In general, forgiveness interventions seem to be helpful for increasing forgiveness and hope and decreasing depression (Wade et al., 2014). They are also more effective than alternative treatments not designed specifically to increase forgiveness (Wade et al., 2014). However, most of this research has focused on helping people forgive a specific hurtful event and has not explored potential side-effects of forgiving others, such as forgiveness encouraging someone to return to a hurtful relationship (with notable exceptions reviewed below). In addition, most of the intervention research has been conducted with individuals from western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) nations and those who hold majority identities (e.g., European-Americans, heterosexuals). The application of forgiveness interventions for people with marginalized identities has not been thoroughly examined. An over-reliance on WEIRD and majority samples might not provide accurately generalizable results (Heinrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). In the rest of the chapter, we explore the potential benefits and pitfalls of applying forgiveness interventions to individuals, specifically racial minorities, gay and lesbian individuals, and women, in cultural settings where they are traditionally oppressed.

1.3 Forgiveness and Multicultural Considerations

With the rapid growth of forgiveness intervention research over the past thirty years also came some vocal critics of the movement. One notable critique is the lack of cultural considerations addressed in the literature in regards to facilitating these forgiveness interventions with diverse populations.¹ This has two main components. First, without adequate data, we cannot conclude that forgiveness interventions are effective for people with marginalized identities. Second, some critics warned of the possible harm facilitators of these interventions could do despite good intentions. The main critics of the forgiveness movement have approached their critiques from a feminist perspective (e.g., Lamb, 2002, 2005). From this perspective, Lamb (2005) argues that forgiveness interventions ignore the group identities that individuals hold. Given the lack of power different minority groups currently and historically have held, it is important to take the cultural context into account when facilitating forgiveness therapies with different populations. Lamb also suggests that a therapy that purports to replace anger with positive feelings appears to, at least in some ways, be also serving the needs of privileged members of society who get to be “let off the hook.”

Although, Lamb’s critique focuses more specifically on the potential negative effects for women, her cautions can also be applied to working with other marginalized populations. Researchers in the field and proponents of forgiveness interventions have acknowledged the concerns posed by critics like Lamb and have echoed the call for further research to investigate the potential negative effects of promoting forgiveness with less-privileged social groups (e.g., Wade, Johnson, & Meyer, 2008). This chapter will continue this dialogue.

2 Forgiveness Interventions and Marginalized Populations

Without adequate data, we cannot conclude that forgiveness interventions are effective for people with marginalized identities. There may be cultural components of one’s different identities that interact with the basic premises of the most popular forgiveness interventions and render them less effective with certain populations (see Fig. 1).

¹We wish to acknowledge the important and growing literature on forgiveness in non-Western cultural settings, such as research on forgiveness in Africa (e.g., Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Stein et al., 2008; for a review see Worthington, in press). We do not specifically review that research here because it does not directly address the processes and outcomes of forgiveness interventions for people who are oppressed minorities within their cultural settings. However, we do address the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission later in this chapter.

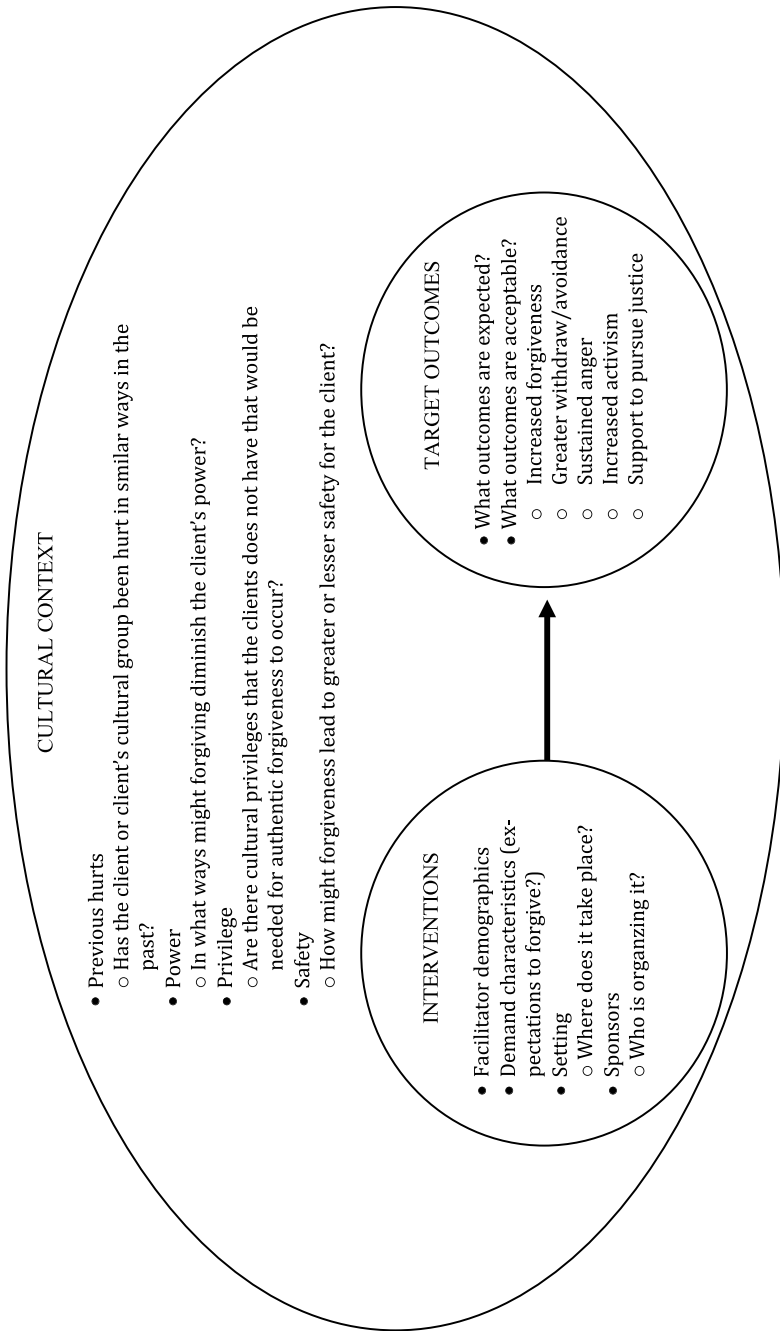


Fig. 1 Important considerations of forgiveness interventions and target outcomes with marginalized individuals within a cultural context

2.1 *Racial and Ethnic Identity*

We found no studies that specifically examine how the racial/ethnic identity of participants in the US affects the outcome of forgiveness interventions. There have been a few studies assessing the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions in cultures outside of the US or with specific cultural groups within the US. Lin et al. (2014), for example, investigated the effectiveness of a forgiveness intervention with individuals who immigrated to the US as children or came to the US as international university students. In this study, country-of-origin did not moderate the effect of the forgiveness treatment; all participants responded to the treatment in an equivalent way. However, country-of-origin was related to forgiveness, such that foreign extraction students reported less emotional forgiveness following the treatment than did domestic students. Worthington et al. (2010) investigated the effects of a forgiveness intervention within a Christian population in the Philippines. The culturally adapted forgiveness intervention was effective in increasing levels of forgiveness and decreasing unforgiving motivations. The study, however, did not use a control group, thus change due to time versus the intervention is uncertain.

Other researchers (Ji et al., 2016) adapted the Enright process model of forgiveness for a Chinese college student population in mainland China. In this study, the intervention was effective for increasing participants' forgiveness attitudes, although the researchers found no effect on empathy, self-esteem or anxiety. Although this study had a control group, it also had a very small sample size of 26 participants (treatment condition, $n = 16$). Despite the limitations to these studies, they provide initial evidence that forgiveness interventions, at least ones that are culturally adapted, may be effective with different cultural populations.

Although we were not able to find studies comparing the relative efficacy of forgiveness interventions across racial minority and majority groups, there have been studies that have examined the relationship between racial/ethnic identity, levels of forgiveness, and other variables. Krause (2012) found that older Mexican Americans and African Americans were more likely to forgive others than older European-Americans. They were also more likely to say they forgave themselves than European-Americans. In contrast, a study examining whether religious involvement conferred greater benefits through forgiveness for Black Americans and Hispanic Americans than for European Americans, found no difference across these three racial/ethnic groups (Sterthal, Williams, Musick, & Buck, 2012). The researchers in this study also found that forgiveness was similarly related to mental health benefits for all three groups.

Other authors have provided strong theoretical arguments for why levels of forgiveness may vary based on one's ethnic/cultural identity. Smith and McFarland (2015) contend that for some racial minority groups, "being forgiving may be important in maintaining valuable social...connections" (p. 192). These authors also argue that members of the same race may share "constellations of knowledge" (p. 191) which may shape expectations regarding interpersonal relationships and have an effect on one's likeliness to forgive. They also argue that individualistic and collec-

tivistic cultural orientations would have an effect on one's forgiveness behavior such that those from a collectivistic culture would be more likely to forgive. This has been partially supported by cross-cultural research. For example, Indonesian undergraduate students showed higher scores on willingness to forgive and lower resentment scores than French students (Suwartono, Prawasti, & Mullet, 2007). This difference in forgiveness may be a result of a stronger collectivistic culture in Indonesia than France. However, this mediation was not directly tested. In direct tests of collectivism and forgiveness, Hook et al. (2012) showed that collectivism was related to making a decision to forgive. Furthermore, they showed that the relationship between collectivism and decisional forgiveness is moderated by the tendency to forgive; those who saw themselves as more collectivistic had greater tendencies to forgive in general and that predicted greater decisional forgiveness for a specific offense. Major, Wade, and Brenner (in press) replicated and extended these results, showing that collectivism is related to trait and decisional forgiveness and that being motivated to forgive to maintain important relationships is one reason why people make the decision to forgive.

2.2 *Sexual Identity*

The few studies we found investigating the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions with individuals identifying as sexual-minorities have examined hurts these individuals have endured related to their sexual identity. There is no theoretical basis for why one's sexual orientation would affect their receptivity to a forgiveness intervention, unless the hurt or transgression was related to one's sexual identity. In such a case, the process of forgiving such a hurt is more likely to intersect with identity issues and potentially raise concerns related to past traumatic experiences and familial and/or societal rejection. Therefore, for this identity group, we will focus on research that has focused on facilitating forgiveness interventions with LGBTQ individuals who have sustained transgressions or hurts of a homophobic nature.

Charles (2013) found that a forgiveness intervention based on Enright's (2001) Process Model of Forgiveness helped LGBTQ teenagers forgive homophobic offenses. Participants were randomly assigned to a treatment condition or a wait-list control condition. Participants in the treatment condition showed a significant increase on a 1-item forgiveness scale and a significant reduction in anxiety compared to their pre-test scores. There was also a difference on these measures compared to those in the wait-list control condition. This study provides some evidence for the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions with an LGBTQ population who wish to forgive a homophobic offense. The study has some limitations though, most notably the small sample size ($N = 26$). The researchers report that they had 10 participants withdraw from the study before the start of the intervention. Of those 10 participants, 7 (70%) of them identified as African American. It is not clear why a disproportionate number of African American participants dropped out of the study, but it does raise

the important question of how intersecting identities may interact with forgiveness interventions.

The only other forgiveness study we found testing an intervention with an LGBTQ sample was one that investigated the effects of a writing exercise to promote forgiveness (Crowley, 2014). In this study, participants wrote about hate speech they had endured related to their sexual orientation. Participants were placed in one of two treatment conditions: in one, participants wrote about the benefits that came from the traumatic event; in the other, participants wrote about the details of the traumatic event. A control group wrote about an unrelated event. Those in the two treatment conditions had lower levels of cortisol (a stress hormone) after the intervention. Those in the benefit-finding group also showed an increase in forgiveness. Although this study did not capture other mental-health measures that could demonstrate positive (or negative) effects of increasing forgiveness in the LGBTQ population for homophobic offenses, there is some evidence that interventions to promote forgiveness in this context decrease stress responses at the very least. Whether or not this is related to the increase in forgiveness needs to be examined further.

In studies outside of the intervention literature, McCarthy (2008) found that greater levels of “letting go” forgiveness, defined as “an absence of negative affect regarding the incident and/or perpetrator” (p. 73) predicted lower psychological distress in sexual-minority participants. “Letting go” forgiveness was also a significant moderator of the relationship between religious victimization and psychological adjustment such that for those with higher forgiveness, the degree of religious victimization (i.e., the degree to which participants heard messages in their life about homosexuality being a desecration to religious institutions) was not related to greater psychological distress; the data supported the idea that forgiveness might buffer the effects of religious victimization on psychological distress. “Letting go” forgiveness was also a predictor of greater sexual identity development.

Dispositional forgiveness in LGBTQ individuals might also mediate the relationship between shame proneness and self-esteem (Greene & Britton, 2013). This suggests that one’s capacity or tendency to forgive may affect the degree to which experiences of feeling shame translate into lower feelings of self-worth. Dispositional forgiveness is also a significant predictor of self-esteem in an LGBTQ population. Despite legitimate concerns that promoting forgiveness within marginalized populations may result in deleterious effects, these studies provide some evidence that certain types of forgiveness are related to positive adjustment for LGBTQ individuals. More research is needed to discern whether there are certain circumstances or individual characteristics that would moderate the effect of forgiveness interventions. It is possible that promoting forgiveness in an individual with lower sexual identity development would run the risk of promoting premature foreclosure on forgiveness. In addition, general tendencies to forgive that occur naturally in some people are different than a formal intervention to help all people forgive. There are many ways to respond to being hurt or offended; forgiveness is only one in a long list of ways to cope (Worthington & Wade, 1999). Furthermore, if broadly and indiscriminately applied, forgiveness intervention efforts can easily come across as moral imperatives (i.e., “you must forgive to be a good person”) that can do serious harm to individuals who hold marginalized identities.

2.3 Gender

We found no intervention studies with the expressed intent to study the effect of forgiveness interventions across gender differences, however there is evidence suggesting that gender plays a role in the forgiveness process. A meta-analysis by Miller, Worthington Jr., McDaniel (2008) examining gender differences in forgiveness found that women, on average, were more forgiving than men by slightly more than a quarter of a standard deviation. The mean d for the distribution of effect sizes across the 70 studies was .28 (95% confidence interval of .21–.37). Furthermore, the researchers found that gender differences may vary based on type of forgiveness. The specific effect size for gender differences in forgiving a romantic partner was .32, with women being more forgiving of romantic partners than men. However, there was not a significant gender difference for forgiveness following interventions. Across measures of trait forgiveness the authors found significant gender differences with females showing more of this type of forgiveness than males.

Researchers have explored different reasons why gender differences may exist such as differences in how women and men are socialized regarding expected behavior for forgiveness. Also, socialization might motivate women to focus on preserving relationships and motivate men to preserve justice and order (Miller et al., 2008). This hypothesis is supported by research that has shown that women are more likely to forgive partner transgressions than men, (Sidelinger et al., 2009). Other research has shown that men and women conceptualize forgiveness differently with women viewing forgiveness as involving releasing fear and anger more than men do (Denton & Martin, 1998). This difference in conceptualization could explain at least part of the gender differences that have been found, especially if one definition is more in line with the definition researchers also endorse. Some researchers have proposed that the traditional gender norms associated with masculinity may impact men's likelihood to forgive (Hammond, Banks, & Mattis, 2006). Some research has supported this idea, with findings that men's higher endorsement of traditional masculine values was negatively related to willingness to forgive (Walker & Doverspike, 2001).

3 Forgiveness Interventions: Specific Concerns in Working with Diverse Identities

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, one of the main critiques of the forgiveness movement is the potential message this movement communicates that oppressed individuals *should* forgive their oppressors (Wade et al., 2008). The risk for this is especially high when the facilitator of the intervention holds privileged identities that the client or participant does not hold and/or the transgressions to be forgiven are related to the individuals' marginalized identities. In short, context matters (see Fig. 1). Understanding how particular contextual issues might affect marginalized individuals receiving forgiveness interventions is important. We address those issues in the following section.

3.1 *Racial/Ethnic Identity*

When considering forgiveness interventions for people of a marginalized racial or ethnic identity, the historical context of race relations in that individuals' current (or native) country must be taken into account. For example, in the United States, the consideration of forgiveness interventions for African Americans must attend to the historical relations between European Americans and African Americans. These relations are complex and represent longstanding, traumatic experiences stretching back to slavery. Without attending to this history, and the current implications of such a history, those offering forgiveness interventions may do more harm than good.

3.1.1 *Interpersonal Forgiveness of Racial Offenses*

Two of the ways forgiveness has been conceptualized in the literature are inter-/intrapersonal forgiveness and intergroup forgiveness. In the intervention literature the inter-/intrapersonal conceptualization of forgiveness is the most common (e.g. Wade & Worthington, 2005). In this conceptualization, forgiveness is considered in the context of a relationship between individuals in which one of the individuals has committed a hurt or transgression against the other. Researchers clarify that often the process of forgiveness is an intrapersonal process especially in cases where reconciling or returning to a relationship with the offender is not a desirable, or even possible, outcome. When considering facilitating interpersonal forgiveness with individuals with diverse racial/ethnic identities, the type of transgression (whether it's related to one's racial identity) and the racial/ethnic identities of those involved (the transgressor, the facilitator, the client/participant) should all be taken into consideration. Furthermore, addressing issues of justice are crucial for genuine forgiveness to occur that does not further victimize those who are marginalized. Understanding how justice relates to forgiveness helps with this process.

Worthington (2003) has proposed the idea of a "justice gap" which he describes as the distance between the level of justice desired by the victim and the actual level of justice that is perceived to have been doled out. Worthington argues that this gap between desired justice and perceived level of justice will affect the likelihood of the injured to forgive the offender, with a wider gap making forgiveness less likely. He proposes that offering forgiveness could be seen to reduce the amount of justice meted out and therefore may make the aggrieved party less willing or likely to forgive. For a person of color, any perceived grievance related to their racial identity may be seen as less forgivable given the fraught history of race-relations in the US.

Given the sensitivity and history involved in racially-motivated offenses, working with a person of color to help them forgive such an offense could arguably be better facilitated by a counselor who shares the client's racial identity as opposed to a European-American counselor. Research in counseling has shown that African American clients prefer a counselor who matches their racial identity more than other racial/ethnic groups, and unlike other racial-ethnic groups, African American clients

also fare better with a counselor who shares their racial/ethnic identity (Cabral & Smith, 2011). One can imagine that the size of this effect would be larger in the context of forgiveness therapy when the offense to be forgiven is related to one's racial identity. The context of a European American counselor working with an African American client to help them forgive a racist offense could play a role in perpetrating harmful societal messages that racist behaviors by European Americans should be pardoned with no consequences for the offender. Despite the positive benefits touted by forgiveness researchers, in this situation the harm may very well outweigh the good that could come.

Regardless of whether the counselor's racial identity is shared by the client, the question of whether forgiveness is the "best" option for an individual who has suffered a racial transgression is an important one to explore. Murphy (2005) argues anger and resentment are healthy reactions to transgressions. He also suggests that feelings of resentment and drives for revenge are indicators of self-respect and help maintain a social order. Other critics of the forgiveness movement argue that replacing anger with forgiveness could thwart important social movements that are fueled by people's anger while forgiveness may offer relief to those that have, "less access to legitimated forms of retribution and revenge" (Lamb, 2005, p. 73). Sandage and Williamson (2005) point out that discussions of "power and control" are left out of the forgiveness literature. With marginalized people, especially in the case of individuals who have suffered generational trauma, it is important to ask whether there are other options besides, or in addition to, forgiveness such as legal retribution or personal activism (Chubbuck, 2009).

3.1.2 Intergroup Forgiveness

In the context of intergroup forgiveness, the act of forgiving is given from individual to group, as opposed to from individual to individual (Leach, Baker, & Zeigler-Hill, 2011). In the context of intergroup forgiveness, Leach and colleagues explain that an Black individual could feel animosity towards White people as a group even though most White people have never committed a transgression against them. Leach and colleagues also explain that a Black person may have some positive relationships with White people, but still feel negatively towards White people as a whole for various reasons, such as the amount of privilege the group holds in society.

Unlike the definition of forgiveness that has been used in the intervention literature that suggests that reconciliation is a separate process from forgiveness and should often not be encouraged within forgiveness therapy, some researchers in the intergroup forgiveness area have suggested that reconciliation is a necessary element of intergroup forgiveness. Staub (2005) writes about intergroup forgiveness in the context of the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda. Staub argues that in the wake of serious violence, when groups continue to live together, reconciliation is necessary and crucial for the prevention of future violence. Forgiveness is important, he argues, because it is related to reconciliation. He differentiates the two terms by defining forgiveness as a process that can be one-sided in which the harmed party has a change

in feelings towards the offending party. Reconciliation requires a mutual change in both parties. Forgiveness of one group of people after an experience of violence by the hands of another group of people requires, “acknowledgement of harm doing by the perpetrators, empathy for the victims, and expressions of regret” (Staub, 2005, p. 444).

With these considerations in mind, Staub (2005) examined an intervention in Rwanda in which local people led mixed dialogue groups of Tutsis and Hutus individuals. Participants in the intervention groups showed reduction in trauma symptoms from before the treatment to 2 months follow-up. They also showed more positive affect toward members of the other group, which included a “conditional forgiveness” described as, “greater openness to forgiving members of the other group under certain conditions” (Staub, 2005, p. 452).

These results are similar to findings from qualitative research on intergroup forgiveness amongst indigenous and nonindigenous Australians. Indigenous participants expressed the need for an apology before being able to consider forgiving nonindigenous Australians (Mellor, Bretherton, & Firth, 2007). In another study in the Democratic Republic of Congo, researchers investigated individuals’ beliefs about intergroup forgiveness and what components were deemed necessary to forgive (Kadiangandu & Mullet, 2007). The components included that the intergroup forgiveness process be democratic, public, include free expression of thoughts and emotions and be aimed at reconciliation.

There is no better example of the power of forgiveness and reconciliation across groups of people than the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa (Cairns, Tam, Hewstone, & Niens, 2005; Stein et al., 2008). Although not universally applauded, the TRC attempted to provide justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation through a restorative, rather than punitive, justice approach. The TRC was created in post-Apartheid South Africa as a means for addressing past violence committed by the apartheid government with the goal of moving towards reconciliation and a peaceful majority rule in South Africa. In an effort to achieve this aim the TRC was charged with the task of “documenting the atrocities of the apartheid era” (p. 501, Gibson & Gouws, 1999) as well as offering amnesty to past perpetrators of violence (Gibson & Gouws, 1999). The creation of this commission spurred such efforts in other cultures as well, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada, which addressed the oppression of Aboriginal peoples through forced Euro-centric schooling (Stanton, 2011).

The intergroup forgiveness research suggests important considerations for working with clients of color in the context of forgiving a racial-offense. A first step is deciding whether or not to conceptualize the offense as one warranting interpersonal or intergroup forgiveness. As Davis et al. (2015) explain, “when offenses occur consistently over time by members of a particular group, targets of the offenses may view them as part of a pattern of intergroup relations, and they may attribute the cause of the offense to the stable characteristics of the offending group” (p. 403). Therefore, it may be appropriate to conceptualize racial-offenses as ones that would warrant intergroup forgiveness as opposed to interpersonal forgiveness. Based on the research reviewed above, this may imply that the forgiveness process requires a

mutual, back-and-forth dialogue between the parties, with justice and reconciliation as part of the process, before the individual feels willing or should be encouraged to forgive.

3.1.3 Predictors of Forgiveness of Race-Related Offenses

The issue of examining forgiveness in the context of working with marginalized racial/ethnic identities becomes very salient when the offenses being forgiven implicate one's racial/ethnic identity especially in light of wrongs committed by members of the dominant racial identity. Hammond et al. (2006) make the point that forgiveness interventions have primarily been focused on working with individuals who have sustained a hurt in the context of a close interpersonal relationship. Their paper addresses the question of whether these interventions could be applied in the context of offenses that occur between strangers, such as is often the case with racial microaggressions. In this study the researchers investigated possible moderators of African-American men's willingness to forgive instances of racial discrimination. They found that men who were less neurotic as well as those who were less likely to endorse beliefs that men should limit emotional disclosure were more likely to forgive. Social support and higher levels of religious coping were also predictive of participants' reported willingness to forgive. They found an interaction with age and restrictive emotionality, such that lower levels of restrictive emotionality were predictive of likeliness to forgive in younger, African-American men while higher levels of restrictive emotionality were predictive of likeliness to forgive for older, African-American men.

Burrows and Hill (2012) also investigated factors affecting the relationship between perceived racial microaggressions and forgiveness. In this study, the authors found that dispositional forgiveness was associated with lower levels of negative affect after reading a scenario depicting a racial microaggression. This relationship was moderated by race such that the effect was significantly stronger for racial minorities than for White participants. The relationship between dispositional forgiveness and cognitive performance after reading about a racial microaggression was also moderated by race, such that forgiveness for Whites was unrelated to their cognitive performance, but was significantly related to the cognitive performance of racial minorities after reading about a racial microaggression scenario. A limitation of this study was that there were half as many racial minority participants ($n = 66$) as White participants ($n = 132$) limiting the power to detect real effects. The results do, however, provide some insight on what individual factors may be significant when investigating how one perceives racial discrimination. In the context of creating a forgiveness intervention for racial minorities who have suffered racially-themed transgressions, this study suggests that those who are most burdened by racial transgressions may also be the ones less likely or willing to forgive.

Hammond, Banks, and Mattis (2017) use the term everyday racial discrimination (ERD) to describe subtle presentations of racial discrimination. Given that forgiveness therapy has shown to be effective in increasing positive affect and decreasing

anxiety and depression, they purport that it could also be effective for individuals who are especially bothered by ERDs. The authors acknowledge that at the time of their article, given the socio-political climate in which the general US society did not acknowledge the experience of ERDs, forgiveness in the context of race-related transgressions may be very difficult for people of color. The researchers found that African-American men who reported less forgiveness of ERD and more ERD experiences, reported more depressive symptoms. They also found that forgiveness was related to less depressive symptoms, but only for younger men (ages 18–25). In addition, a significant interaction between ERD and forgiveness of racial discrimination indicated that for those with less forgiveness, greater ERD was related to greater depressive symptoms.

These findings suggest important implications for the facilitation of forgiveness interventions with a racially/ethnically diverse sample. Age may be an important moderator for the effects of forgiveness within this population. Forgiveness may be related to less depressive symptoms in younger clients but not in older clients (Hammond et al., 2006) and age may be a significant moderator of forgiveness behaviors (Hammond et al., 2006). It is possible that generational effects are stronger in this population given the major changes in racial laws that have occurred in a relatively short span of time in the United States. Understanding what forgiveness means, how it is applied, and what effects it has in different generational cohorts is an important avenue for future research. Such findings could have important implications for the kinds of forgiveness interventions that are offered to people of different ages within certain racial/ethnic groups. The findings also suggest that promotion of forgiveness of racist offenses may have some benefits for racial/ethnic minorities. More research is required to fully understand the scope of the possible benefits and risks.

3.2 *Sexual Identity*

The construct of intergroup forgiveness in the context of working with LGBTQ individuals may not hold the same saliency as it does for racial/ethnic minorities. Sexual orientation is often an invisible identity. As a result, one of the main forms of offense or oppression for this group has been the social pressure to conform at least outwardly to heterosexual norms, even explicitly asking LGBTQ individuals to hide their sexual identities, as is the case with “don’t ask, don’t tell” policies. Other forms of offense can be even more extreme, such as hate speech, verbal, physical, or sexual assault, or through harmful “therapeutic” practices, such as conversion therapy that attempt to get rid of this piece of an individual’s identity (Haldeman, 1994). Given the potentially invisible nature of an LGBTQ identity, framing forgiveness therapy in terms of intergroup forgiveness may not be the most effective approach. For individuals who choose to hide their identity an interpersonal forgiveness strategy might be more appropriate. In contrast, intergroup forgiveness approaches might be most effective for those who visibly and publicly embrace their sexual identity and the LGBTQ community. Regardless of approach or method, potential implications

of encouraging forgiveness of homophobic transgressions in the context of larger societal systems must be kept in mind.

As described above in the context of working with racial/ethnic minority individuals the nature of the transgression and the sexual orientation of the client/participant, the offender and the therapist are important to consider. Given the continued marginalization of LGBTQ individuals, it is especially important that therapists with a heterosexual orientation maintain awareness of their privilege and consider the larger social implications that may be at stake when asking an LGBTQ individual to forgive a homophobic transgression. Replacing anger with forgiveness in marginalized individuals could thwart the impetus behind important social movements seeking to achieve justice and equity. One important finding reviewed earlier in this paper, suggests that higher levels of certain types of forgiveness (such as “letting go” forgiveness) may be related to a more developed and mature sexual identity (McCarthy, 2008). This finding suggests that promoting forgiveness with this group may actually have a positive net effect on the larger promotion of LGBTQ rights. More research is needed in this area to explore individual moderators of this effect and to understand further what risks and benefits may be present in this context.

3.3 Gender

Similar to working with an LGBTQ population, the construct of intergroup forgiveness in the context of working with women likely does not hold the same saliency as it does for racial/ethnic minorities in the United States. However, as a group that is and has been marginalized and oppressed in many ways, similar concerns must be considered when working with this population in the context of forgiveness interventions. Similar to the other social-identities discussed above, before facilitating forgiveness therapy with female clients, one must take into account the nature of the transgression, the gender of the transgressor, and the gender of the counselor or facilitator. When the transgression committed against a woman is that of sexual or physical abuse perpetrated by a man, the promotion of forgiveness with this client carries many potential risks (Lamb, 2002). Lamb (2002) argues that for a person to forgive in a way that is helpful to them, they must possess agency or autonomy. She goes on to argue that cultural pressures as well as the trauma from abuse, may make a female client less likely to experience this agency. Therefore, forgiveness interventions risk holding survivors of interpersonal violence responsible for their inability to forgive. Given the message women in many cultures receive to not be angry or disruptive, the risk of premature forgiveness may be high for women (Lamb, 2002).

McKay, Hill, Freedman, & Enright, (2007) have attempted to address some of the concerns put forth by feminist critics by analyzing Enright’s Process Model of Forgiveness using a format developed by Worell and Remer (2003) to assess how well a therapy fits within a feminist framework. McKay et al. (2007) suggest potential adjustments to Enright’s model to make it more in line with a feminist approach, such as making a more expressed intent to develop an egalitarian relationship between

therapist and client and paying close attention to the client's identities that may contribute to a feeling of marginalization or oppression in the therapy relationship and in society at large. The authors also stress that when exploring the client's anger, the counselor should make certain that the client's identity as a woman is fully explored as well as any messages the client may have received about expressing anger. This will serve the purpose of ensuring the client is truly able to express anger and can spend as much time as necessary exploring and processing her anger before *choosing* to move on to the process of forgiving, if that is something she opts to do. McKay et al. (2007) make the point that forgiveness should always be presented as one of many options the client could work towards to relieve some of her burden, but it is not the only option. During this stage of counseling, the therapist can make sure the client is not "succumbing to 'role-expected forgiveness'" (p. 22). Other authors have echoed the importance of reflecting on other options of handling one's anger such as using legal routes or becoming involved in social activism (e.g. Chubbuck, 2009).

4 Practical Implications

The suggestions offered by McKay et al. (2007) could be applied when working with any client(s) who holds marginalized identities. McKay et al. (2007) acknowledge the importance of creating an egalitarian counseling environment in which the power differential between the counselor and client is explored and minimized as much as possible. They also stress the importance of exploring the client's relationship with anger and the societal messages the client has received about expressions of anger. The idea of forgiveness is then presented as one of many options to ensure the client is given full agency to make that decision themselves. The therapist should check-in to assure the client is not prematurely foreclosing on the option of forgiveness, if that is the option they choose (McKay et al. 2007). Although the authors were assessing ways to adjust Enright's process model of forgiveness to make it compatible with a feminist framework, the suggestions they offer would apply to working with the other marginalized identities this paper has addressed.

In the case of intergroup forgiveness, in which a client or individual has anger or animosity towards a larger group, the steps towards resolution may look different. Research in intergroup forgiveness supports the notion that reconciliation and an apology from the offending group may be necessary, and clinically advised, before someone considers forgiveness of the offending group (Staub, 2005). Staub (2005) suggests that forgiveness without reconciliation could be harmful for the individual in the contribution it would make in continuing a cycle of oppression. In the context of intergroup forgiveness, the definition of forgiveness as it is currently conceived in the counseling field, may need to be adjusted to include reconciliation and apologies from the offending group. Interventions, such as intergroup dialogue, in which members from the marginalized and privileged social-identity groups have structured dialogue, may be a necessary first step to promote forgiveness within those with marginalized

identities who hold animosity towards a larger social-identity group as opposed to the more individual, intra-personal work the forgiveness interventions traditionally have espoused.

5 Future Directions

One important area of future research is in exploring the application of forgiveness interventions from the perspective of intergroup forgiveness. The vast majority of forgiveness intervention research is in the area of interpersonal forgiveness (Leach et al. 2011). One point explored in this chapter is whether hurts, related to one's marginalized identity(ies), would be better addressed in a framework of intergroup forgiveness. Given that homophobic, sexist or racist transgressions may be viewed by the individual as part of a larger pattern of oppression and marginalization by various privileged groups (Leach et al. 2011), the conceptualization of forgiveness as an intergroup forgiveness process instead of an interpersonal forgiveness may be more appropriate. There are few established models of intergroup forgiveness interventions aside from the larger societal experiments, such as the TRC in post-apartheid South Africa, that have been initiated in the wake of societal intergroup trauma or violence. Development of ways to assess whether an individual conceptualizes their anger and hurt as an intergroup, as opposed to an interpersonal hurt, is an important next step in this area. Important future steps, farther down the road, would be to develop and empirically test intergroup forgiveness interventions to assess whether they are effective in repairing relations between individuals in different identity groups. Studies comparing intergroup forgiveness interventions to interpersonal forgiveness interventions would be necessary to assess the relative benefits and drawbacks of each approach.

Other areas of future research in the realm of interpersonal forgiveness interventions with individuals with marginalized identities could be assessing the application of the feminist framework to a forgiveness intervention that McKay et al. (2007) explore in their paper. A comparative study assessing the effectiveness of an intervention adapted to the feminist framework compared to a traditional forgiveness intervention would be an important area to explore. Client characteristics that moderate the effectiveness of these two interventions would also be important to explore. It is possible that degree of identity development or level of felt marginalization would be important areas of assessment prior to deciding which type of forgiveness intervention to implement.

The moderators specific to each identity group explored in this chapter also require further studies to discern the size of those effects. In African-American populations, it is possible that there are generational effects that may moderate the effectiveness of forgiveness in this population (i.e. Hammond et al. 2017). Further studies are required to investigate whether this effect replicates or whether it's a large enough effect to impact the outcome of forgiveness interventions within an African-American population. In LGBTQ populations, intersecting identities (i.e. racial, religious) may

be especially relevant to this population and could have an effect on the outcome of forgiveness interventions as well as the likelihood to sign-up for these interventions. It is possible that an LGBTQ individual's other marginalized identities feel more salient to them and perhaps forgiveness interventions that purport to focus solely on homophobic transgressions may be inadvertently alienating a large percentage of the LGBTQ population. In the area of gender, type of forgiveness is one important area of future exploration. The finding that gender differences appeared across types of forgiveness but did not appear in forgiveness intervention studies (Miller et al. 2008) is an interesting finding and one that requires more follow-up to assess why those differences appear.

The opportunities for future research in the area of forgiveness in a multicultural context are broad and carry the potential for large societal impact. This chapter has explored the potential concerns and applications of forgiveness interventions in a multicultural context, from individual predictors and moderators of interventions to the potential impact of larger society-level group interventions. It is our hope that this area of research continues to be explored and that multicultural-informed interventions that contribute to an awareness of individual as well as societal impacts continue to be developed.

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Positive Leadership: Moving Towards an Integrated Definition and Interventions



Kgomotso Silvia Malinga, Marius Stander and Werner Nell

Abstract There has been a shift in organisations towards leaders who are positive and able to create positive work environment for employees, as well as build relationships through teamwork and trust. Many have argued that positive leadership is needed in dealing with challenges that leaders face in organisations due to the constantly changing world of work. Although there are numerous studies on positive leadership, there is still confusion and considerable variability regarding the conceptualisation of positive leadership in literature. This chapter commences by outlining the findings of a critical review of existing literature on the topic of positive leadership, which considered both quantitative and qualitative articles published in English that contained conceptualisations, definitions, descriptions, behaviours, characteristics, or principles of positive leadership. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The key themes that were derived from the data included a number of leadership traits, motivational characteristics, as well as specific leadership behaviours. Secondly, this conceptualisation is used as the basis for proposing an integrated definition of positive leadership, which in turn is utilised in the final part of the chapter to propose three positive leadership interventions.

Keywords Critical review · Leadership · Positive leadership · Positive leadership behaviours · Thematic analysis · Interventions

1 Introduction

Leaders are feeling challenged and overwhelmed in organisations due to the constantly changing world of work which is characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013). Similarly, Luthans and Avolio (2003) report that leaders in organisations are facing the challenges of declining hope, optimism and confidence in themselves

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and their employees, due to the constantly advancing technology, globalisation, and uncertain economic climate (Basson, 2008; Gallup, 2017; Meyer, 2007). In light of these eventualities, Rodriguez and Rodriguez (2015) argue that leaders in organisations have the duty of making sure that their employees find meaning, are engaged, and feel safe at work. A positive leadership approach has been proposed as a viable means of achieving states such as these. Positive leadership was born when researchers started to apply the elements of positive psychology to leadership (Gauthier, 2015). According to Gauthier (2015), leaders influence the behaviours of their employees and the environment in which they work, be it in a negative or positive manner. The behaviour of the leader has an impact on the employees' well-being and levels of stress (Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010; Wijewardena, Samaratunge, & Härtel, 2014), and in particular, positive leadership behaviours such as giving support and behaving ethically were shown to have a positive effect on employee well-being (Wijewardena et al., 2014). Positive leaders thus focus on positively influencing their employees and encouraging them to flourish in their work (Gauthier, 2015).

Positive leaders have been noted to portray leadership behaviours such as empowerment (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004), communication, motivation, and keeping their employees accountable (Wijewardena et al., 2014). In addition, emotional intelligence and optimism are identified by Tombaugh (2005) as the leadership traits that positive leaders can develop to enable them to deal with the constantly changing world of work, and subsequently to keep their employees motivated. Positive leadership is needed in the development of positive organisations that focus on strengths-based approaches (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007). Further emphasising the importance of positive leadership, Clifton and Harter (2003) report that top-performing managers focus their energies on developing their employees' strengths. Leaders who employ strategies to develop and utilise employees' strengths have the potential to improve employee productivity (Gallup, 2017). Given these positive outcomes, Tombaugh (2005) advises managers who are interested in developing positive leadership skills to study the literature available on the subject. However, Gladis (2013) and Zbierowski (2016) point out that little research has been done in the field of positive leadership, because the concept is relatively new. Compounding this paucity of literature is the fact that considerable variation exists in current conceptualisations of positive leadership (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Avey, Avolio, & Luthans, 2011; Avey, Hughes, Norman, & Luthans, 2008; Blanch, Gil, Antino, & Rodríguez-Muñoz, 2016; Cameron, 2008; Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2013; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013) which makes it difficult to measure (Antino, Gil-Rodríguez, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Borzillo, 2014), study, and conceptualize positive leadership (Blanch et al., 2016).

In an effort to address these concerns, this chapter outlines various conceptualisations as well as an integrated definition of positive leadership based on a critical review of existing literature, and concludes with an overview of three interventions related to this conceptualisation.

2 Positive Psychology

Although positive psychology was first introduced by Abraham Maslow in 1954 (Snyder & Lopez, 2009), it only gained popularity 44 years later, when it was reintroduced by Martin Seligman at the 1998 American Psychological Association convention (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Psychology used to focus on illness, weaknesses and flaws ever since World War II and it was concerned mainly with finding ways and tools to heal illnesses; the focus was never on the positives and how to enhance human potential (Seligman, 2002). As a result, a perception was created that psychology only focuses on human pathology (Seligman, 2002). Before positive psychology was introduced, researchers felt that there was a lack of information regarding how and what would “make life worth living” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Furthermore, as much as psychology made it possible to understand what is wrong with individuals and how to fix it, there was a need to understand what is right with individuals (Gable & Haidt, 2005) and how to optimise it—which is the main focus of positive psychology. Over time, this positive approach towards human behaviour spilled over to the workplace, and to leadership.

Positive psychology is “the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions” (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p. 103), whereas positive organisational scholarship is concerned with the study of positive outcomes, processes and attributes of organisations and their employees (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). Positive organisational scholarship focuses on enhancing and utilising human strengths in order for employees to prosper and thrive in their organisations, rather than focusing on what is wrong (Zbierowski, 2016). In order to ensure the success of organisations, today’s leaders need to focus on what works for the organisation, to identify and recognise employees’ strengths, and to find ways of continuously empowering their employees. Collectively, such behaviours are seen as representing positive leadership (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Blanch et al., 2016; Gilbreath & Benson, 2004; Wong & Cummings, 2007).

3 Positive Leadership

Positive leadership has become a focal construct for studying leadership in organisations (Blanch et al., 2016). From the 1990s, organisations have been increasingly placing value on leaders who have the ability to build positive working relationships among team members, leaders who are true to themselves, and leaders who are positive (Härtel, Kimberley, & McKeown, 2008).

The results of the study conducted by Arakawa and Greenberg (2007) have shown that leaders who possess positive leadership behaviours such as focusing on the strengths of their employees, staying positive in the face of difficulty, and frequently recognising the good work of their employees, contribute to the success of the organisation as a whole. In addition, Youssef-Morgan and Luthans (2013) express the view

that positive leadership is crucial in organisations, particularly in trying times, and based on their study they report that high management performance (in terms of decision making and interpersonal tasks) is associated with high levels of positive affect. To further emphasise the importance of positive leadership, Nel, Stander, and Latif (2015) reported that positive leadership has a significant positive relationship with psychological empowerment, which means that employees appreciate leaders who encourage them and who focus on their strengths during trying times.

Positive leadership has been defined in different ways since its emergence and no single integrated definition or conceptualisation exists (Avey, Hughes, Norman, & Luthans 2008; Avey, Avolio, & Luthans 2011; Kelloway et al., 2013; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013). Furthermore, Antino et al. (2014) argue that although positive leadership has been widely researched, there is still a lack of relevant contributions relating to how to measure positive leadership. Zbierowski (2016) echoes this notion, and points out that there is a lack of literature in the field of positive leadership and the field is “characterised by high degree of complexity and disorder” (p. 81). Blanch et al. (2016) also suggest that there is a “need to generate research that determines how to accelerate the emergence and development of positive leadership” (p. 173).

Against this background, this chapter outlines the findings derived from a critical review that aimed to address the identified gap and conceptualise positive leadership within the time frame of 1998–2016, with the intention of formulating an integrated definition that might serve as foundation for more unified measurement and development of this construct in future. The latter part of the chapter will discuss a few interventions related to positive leadership.

A thorough and rigorous search was conducted on published and peer-reviewed data of conceptualisations of positive leadership, and care was taken to ensure that selection bias was avoided during this process. Articles and chapters in specialist books were eligible for inclusion if they were (a) peer-reviewed with a focus on positive leadership published between 1998 and 2016, as well as any seminal works published before the stated time frame. The reason for selecting data from 1998 is that positive psychology which is used as the framework for this study was introduced in 1998 (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000); (b) national and/or international studies; (c) articles written in English; (d) peer-reviewed quantitative and qualitative studies; (e) contained in psychology and business journal databases namely: EBSCOhost; Emerald Insight Journals; Google Scholar; JSTOR; Sabinet Online; SAGE; ScienceDirect; and Web of Science; and (f) retrievable via the key search term of “positive leadership”.

The flow chart outlined below reflects the sampling strategy that was followed and serves as an audit trail to record the articles retrieved (Fig. 1).

The selected literature was read to gain insight into the views, viewpoints and current knowledge and conceptualisations of positive leadership, and subsequently subjected to thematic analysis, which is a qualitative analytical method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes or patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is appropriate for this study because the aim of the critical review is to analyse the themes that are identified from the existing literature on conceptualisations, definitions, characteristics and descriptions of positive leadership,

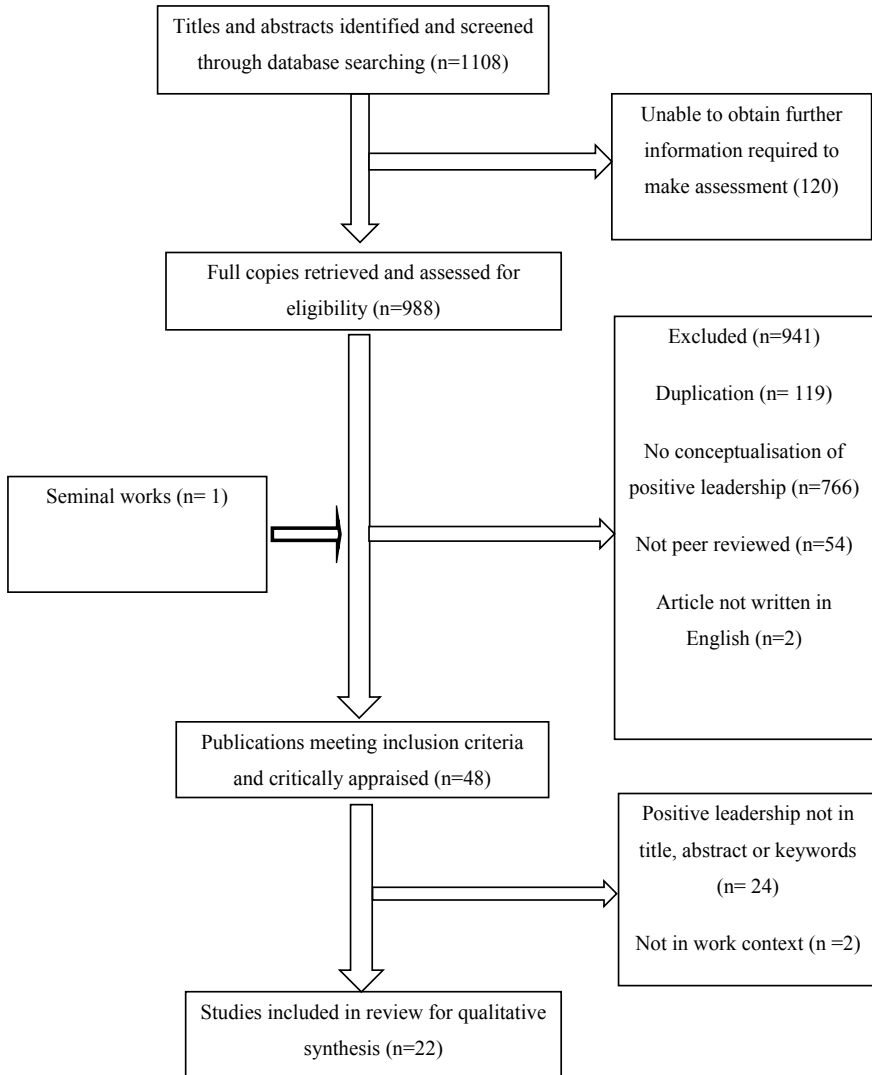


Fig. 1 Flow chart of study selection process

and to develop an integrated definition of positive leadership. The phases for conducting a thematic analysis included the following: (a) becoming familiar with the data; (b) generating initial codes; (c) searching for themes; (d) reviewing themes; (e) defining and naming identified themes; (f) reporting the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.1 *Defining Positive Leadership*

As a prelude to discussing the main themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of existing conceptualisations of positive leadership, an overview is given below of a number of these definitions in order to illustrate the various ways in which this construct has been conceptualised in existing literature.

Lloyd and Atella (2000) suggest that the major elements comprised in a vision of positive leadership are “commitment, courage, dignity, healthy control, choice, decision, will to action, responsibility, freedom, challenge, personal meaning, authentic community, communication, activism, social support, and faith” (p. 156–157).

Fry and Matherly (2006) define positive leadership as “leadership that develops higher level, universal moral values and character, enhances employee meaning and connection and maximises both employee well-being and sustained performance excellence” (p. 11). Antino et al. (2014) agree and allude that positive leadership “focuses its actions on what is good and on encouraging human potentialities, motivations and capacities; it refers to the way leaders encourage outstanding performance by centring on virtue and eudemonism, which justifies what a person does if their goal is to attain happiness and positive leadership behaviour shows a bias towards the positive end” (p. 590). This means that positive leadership is concerned with excellent performance and improving employees’ sense of meaning.

Arakawa and Greenberg (2007) define positive leadership as “employing a strengths-based approach, maintaining a positive perspective, and frequently providing recognition and encouragement which increases the engagement and productivity of employees” (p. 2). Additionally, Robison (2007) is of the opinion that the role of the positive leader is not merely to focus on employees’ weaknesses, but rather to focus on employees’ strengths and find ways of leveraging these strengths to the benefit of the employee and the organisation at large. Hence, positive leadership is seen as a process of focusing on the employees’ strengths and recognising good work that will result in employees being more productive and engaged at work.

Cameron (2008) believes that positive leadership refers to “an emphasis on what elevates individuals and organisations (in addition to what challenges them), what goes right in organisations (in addition to what goes wrong), what is life-giving (in addition to what is problematic or life-depleting), what is experienced as good (in addition to what is objectionable), what is extraordinary (in addition to what is merely effective), and what is inspiring (in addition to what is difficult or arduous)” (p. 3–4). In this case, positive leadership is described as a process of considering the good and the bad in individuals as well as in the organisations.

Hannah, Woolfolk, and Lord (2009) define positive leadership as “the activation of a set of cognitions, affects, expectancies, goals and values, and self-regulatory plans that both enable and direct effective leader behaviours” (p. 270). Hannah et al. (2009) further argue that positive leadership is a self-regulatory process that focuses on a leader’s self-construct—something that will later benefit both the leader and the employee.

Smith, Koppes Bryan, and Vodanovich (2012) define positive leadership as “either transformational or authentic leadership” (p. 176) and remark that “positive leadership features motivational and ethical characteristics and behaviours of leaders that result in positive employee outcomes and increased performance” (Smith et al., 2012, p. 175). From this definition one can highlight that according to Smith et al. (2012), positive leadership is conflated with either transformational or authentic leadership.

Youssef and Luthans (2012) define positive global leadership by taking into account the antecedents and outcomes of positivity as “the systematic and integrated manifestation of leadership traits, processes, intentional behaviours and performance outcomes that are elevating, exceptional and affirmative of the strengths, capabilities and developmental potential of leaders, their employees and their organisations over time and across contexts” (p. 541). One can argue that even though this definition might seem comprehensive, it still lacks some aspects that might explain positive leadership, such as enhancing positive emotions, and recognising and encouraging good work.

Kelloway et al. (2013) define positive leadership as “leadership behaviours that result in employees’ experiencing positive emotions” (p. 108). This definition only focuses on the behaviours of the leader and how they should affect the employees’ positive emotions.

De Cremer, Van Dijke, and Bos (2004) argue that “positive leadership styles like self-sacrifice will have a stronger impact on employees’ attitudes and judgments when organisational outcomes are perceived and experienced as unfavourable or more negative” (p. 466). In particular, here the emphasis is on the positive leader’s ability to sacrifice his own needs to ensure the success of the organisation.

Tombaugh (2005) alludes that “positive leaders must move beyond worn out military models or fictional characters, developing new skills and traits that support a strengths-based organisational culture” (p. 16). Additionally, Blanch et al. (2016) conceptualise positive leadership into three components, namely “(1) it places the focus on people’s strengths and abilities that reaffirm their human potential, (2) it emphasizes results and facilitates above average individual and organisational performance, and (3) its field of action is concentrated on the components that can be seen as essential virtues of the human condition” (p. 173). It can be noted that the emphasis in this definition is on adopting a strengths-based approach whereby positive leaders should create a culture where employees’ strengths will be continuously developed and utilised, leading to improved performance.

According to Wong and Cummings (2007), “positive leadership behaviours (transformational, empowering, and supportive) may be associated with outcomes through facilitation of more effective teamwork” (p. 517). Furthermore, Wijewardena et al. (2014), in their study of creating better employees through positive leadership behaviour in the public sector, examined “two positive leadership behaviours, namely, support and ethical behaviour and their impact in aiding employees experience positive emotions and increasing social well-being, organisational citizenship behaviour, and individual and organisational performance” (p. 290). This means that positive leaders will be able to achieve organisational goals through empowering and supporting their employees.

“Positive leadership emphasises the need for positive climate, positive relationships, positive communication and positive meaning” (Oades, Crowe, & Nguyen, 2009, p. 34).

Positive leadership is a relatively new approach to leadership and positive leadership it is based on the concept that workers are happier and more productive when they work in a positive environment. Positive leadership is an approach where the leader uses positive strategies within five major areas to influence his/her employees to achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation. The five dimensions that surround and influence the organisation include (a) building a positive structure, (b) operating with a positive purpose, (c) establishing a positive climate, (d) developing positive relationships, and (e) engaging in positive communications. Positive leadership is more than just a leadership style; it is a leadership approach; it is a mind-set. Positive leaders have high expectations for their employees, the quality of their products, and the quality of their customer service. They just approach their expectations with a positive, can do, attitude (Gauthier, 2015, p. 7).

Liu, Siu, and Shi (2010) argue that “positive leadership, which comprises positive attitudes of passion, skills, and confidence to inspire employees, has the potential to elevate employees in the long term in areas such as trust, commitment, and well-being” (p. 456). This means that organisations that employ positive leaders will witness increased levels of employee trust, employee commitment and employee well-being.

In their article, James, Wooten, and Dushek (2011) loosely characterised positive leadership “as abnormally positive behaviour relative to that would be expected for the crisis circumstances” (p. 459).

Positive leadership means entrepreneurial mind-set of managers who are entrepreneurially alert—monitor the environment searching for opportunities, recognize them and utilize them even where competitors perceive threats; leadership based on trust between managers and employees; fair management that creates the perception of justice among employees in terms of following clear rules of appraisal, salaries and promotions; and lastly looking into the future with hope and optimism (Zbierowski, 2014, p. 59).

In the above case, positive leadership focuses on hope, optimism, trust relationship and fairness. In contrast, Lam and Roussin (2015) argue that ...effective positive leadership is not unerringly optimistic in all moments and in all things. Instead, it is a responsibility to create a positive work environment for everyone working in your company. This means that managers have to not only keep their people happy, but also eliminate the negative, which can be the wrong people, the wrong process, the wrong equipment, or other processes that should be eliminated. In the elimination of this negative, sometimes critical (or focused-negative) behaviours are required of the positive leader (p. 29).

According to Davenport, Allisey, Page, LaMontagne, and Reavley (2016), “positive leadership styles consist of managers making an effort to involve employees in problem solving and decision making, and managers aiming to provide negative feedback in a positive way ensuring that the employee feels validated by using statements that emphasise flexible, two-way problem solving” (p. 420). This implies that pos-

itive leaders typically involve employees in decision-making and problem-solving processes.

3.2 An Integrated Conceptualization of Positive Leadership

The various conceptualizations of positive leadership (such as those outlined above) that have been identified during the course of the critical literature review were subjected to thematic analysis in order to identify common themes, as well as the inter-relationships between these themes. The integrated conceptualization of positive leadership that was derived from this process is visually depicted in Fig. 2.

As reflected in Fig. 2, thematic analysis of existing definitions of positive leadership suggests that this construct can be conceptualised in terms of certain leadership *traits* that the positive leader should possess, as well as certain leadership *behaviours* demonstrated by the leader, which will result in certain leadership *outcomes*, which benefit the employees, the leader, and the organisation as a whole. The following section expounds on each of these facets and their related categories and themes.

3.3 Leadership Traits

Thematic analysis of existing definitions indicates that positive leadership traits include optimism and a ‘can-do’ mind-set, altruism, an ethical orientation, and motivational characteristics.

3.3.1 Optimism and a ‘Can Do’ Mind-Set

Research has shown that positive leaders who are optimistic (Lam & Roussin, 2015; Zbierowski, 2014) and hopeful about the future (Zbierowski, 2014) have a positive impact on leadership outcomes, such as increased employee engagement and increased employee productivity (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007). According to the literature, a positive leader must have a ‘can-do’ mind-set (Gauthier, 2015), which means that he or she should generally have a positive attitude and be able to stay positive in the face of difficulty (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007).

3.3.2 Altruism

Not only is a typical positive leader optimistic, but he/she usually also places the needs of others before his/her own to ensure that the organisational goals are achieved. According to De Cremer et al. (2004), a positive leader is able to make self-sacrifices, and such a leader (compared to self-benefiting leaders) has been reported to be

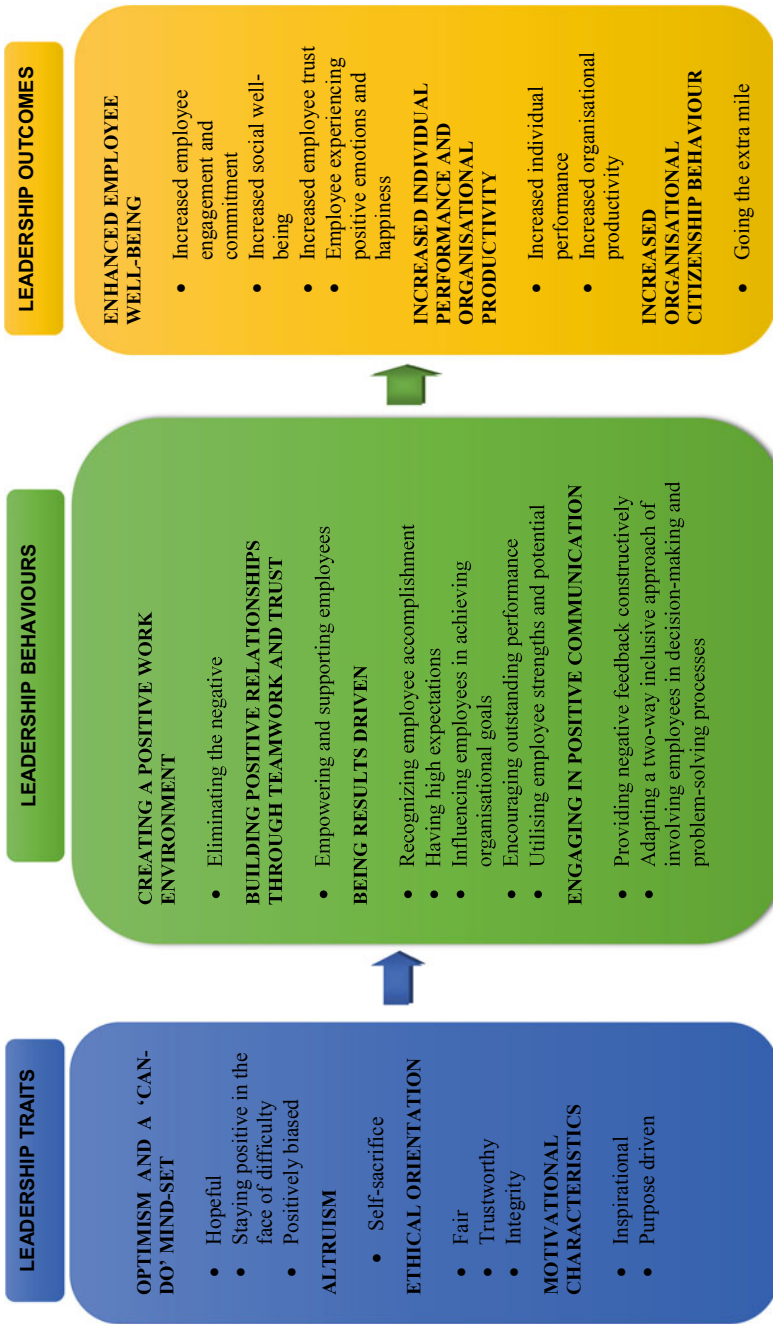


Fig. 2 Categories and themes of positive leadership

more effective in motivating employees. Choi and Mai-Dalton (1998) agree and propose that self-sacrifice is positively related to employees' organisational citizenship behaviour.

3.3.3 Ethical Orientation

A positive leader should display ethical characteristics (Smith et al., 2012; Wijewardena et al., 2014) and has to be fair towards his/her employees (Zbierowski, 2014). A leader who is ethical and has integrity (Antino et al., 2014; Zbierowski, 2016), and who acts in a manner that is trustworthy and fair towards employees, will likely elicit positive leadership outcomes. For instance, his/her employees may experience positive emotions (Wijewardena et al., 2014), increased social well-being, increased organisational citizenship behaviour, and enhanced individual and organisational performance (Smith et al., 2012; Wijewardena et al., 2014).

3.3.4 Motivational Characteristics

A positive leader does not only function with a positive purpose (Gauthier, 2015) and meaning (Lloyd & Atella, 2000; Oades et al., 2009), but is also able to motivate (Antino et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2012) and inspire his/her employees (Liu et al., 2010). A positive leader has the ability to make employees feel appreciated and find meaning in their work. Positive leaders believe in their employees, they focus on positives rather than negatives, and whilst still able to assertively address negative behaviours on the part of their employees when required, they refrain from unnecessarily discouraging them. Such leaders will likely elicit a variety of positive emotions and other positive outcomes from employees, for instance increased performance (Smith et al., 2012).

3.4 Leadership Behaviours

Thematic analysis of conceptualisations of positive leadership indicates that it is associated with a number of positive leadership behaviours that may be categorised under three themes: creating a positive work environment, being results driven, and engaging in positive communication.

3.4.1 Creating a Positive Work Environment

A positive leader should strive towards creating a positive work environment in order to ensure that even though there is friction and disagreements in the workplace, employees work in harmony, are able to achieve the organisational goals,

and feel empowered. Research has also shown that employees tend to be happier and more productive when they operate in a positive work environment (Gauthier, 2015). Such an environment is actualised by eliminating the negative, which may take the form of the wrong people, the wrong processes and/or the wrong equipment (Lam & Roussin, 2015), which might be hindering the employees' work progress and performance. By doing so, the positive leader is able to focus on the positives and ensure that the working environment is conducive to all. A positive leader continuously builds positive structures through appointing the right talent, sharing the organisational vision and goals, and focusing on organisational effectiveness (Gauthier, 2015). Despite that, Learmonth and Humphreys (2011) alluded that eliminating the negative is risky, firstly because there is a possibility that what some people may experience as negative others may perceive such as positive, and secondly, because by so doing there is lack of acknowledgment that most people experience work as negative and degrading. Additionally, Fineman (2006) states that exclusively focusing on the positive epitomizes "a one-eyed view of the social world" (275), not only that, but it also limits the opportunity to implement positive changes that usually arise from negative experiences.

3.4.2 Building Positive Relationships Through Teamwork and Trust

A positive leader is regarded as a leader who can be trusted and is able to cultivate trust among his/her employees (Liu et al., 2010; Zbierowski, 2014). Such a leader also has the ability to develop positive relationships (Gauthier, 2015; Oades et al., 2009) through teamwork and trust (Liu et al., 2010; Zbierowski, 2014). A positive leader generally empowers (Wong & Cummings, 2007) and supports his/her employees (Lloyd & Atella, 2000; Wijewardena et al., 2014; Wong & Cummings, 2007) to increase organisational citizenship behaviour, social well-being, individual and organisational performance. All of this results in employees experiencing positive emotions (Wijewardena et al., 2014).

3.4.3 Being Results Driven

Positive leaders are "results driven" in that they encourage outstanding performance (Blanch et al., 2016; Wijewardena et al., 2014; Youssef & Luthans, 2012; Zbierowski, 2016). They also have high expectations of their employees (Gauthier, 2015; Hannah et al., 2009), and encourage them to achieve organisational goals (Gauthier, 2015; Hannah et al., 2009). A positive leader pursues success, continuously boosts and develops employees' strengths and potential, and generally recognises employees' accomplishments (Antino et al., 2014; Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Blanch et al., 2016; Tombaugh, 2005; Youssef & Luthans, 2012)—thereby promoting increased employee engagement and productivity (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007).

3.4.4 Engaging in Positive Communications

Positive leaders generally communicate in an empowering and supportive manner with their employees (Cameron, 2008). In particular, they could do so by showing appreciation for good work, and by providing negative feedback constructively (Davenport et al., 2016). They further adopt a two-way inclusive communication approach in which they involve employees in the processes of decision making and problem solving (Davenport et al., 2016).

3.5 Leadership Outcomes

In the literature, positive leadership is associated with a number of leadership outcomes. The three main themes that emerged in this regard centre on employee well-being, increased organisational performance and productivity, and increased organisational citizenship behaviour.

3.5.1 Employee Well-Being

Positive leaders, via their leadership traits and leadership behaviours, are reported to have an impact in terms of increased employee engagement (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007), increased employee social well-being (Wijewardena et al., 2014), increased employee trust (Liu et al., 2010), and increased employee commitment (Liu et al., 2010; Lloyd & Atella, 2000). All these constructs can contribute to employee well-being. When employees regard their leaders as positive leaders, they experience positive emotions at work (Kelloway et al., 2013; Wijewardena et al., 2014). Lastly, positive leaders have the ability to keep their employees happy (Gauthier, 2015). Thus, by appointing positive leaders, organisations contribute towards the overall well-being of employees.

3.5.2 Increased Individual Performance and Organisational Productivity

Positive leadership traits such as optimism and a ‘can-do’ mind-set, motivational characteristics, and an ethical orientation have been reported to result in increased individual and organisational performance (Smith et al., 2012; Wijewardena et al., 2014), and positive leadership behaviours such as being results driven and creating positive work environment also result in increased employee productivity (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Gauthier, 2015). This means that organisations that appoint positive leaders will likely experience an increase in employee performance and organisational productivity levels.

3.5.3 Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Research shows that positive leadership traits such as an ethical orientation, as well as positive leadership behaviour such as creating a positive work environment, result in increased organisational citizenship behaviour (Wijewardena et al., 2014). This means that employees who regard their leaders as positive leaders are more likely to relate to the organisation, and they tend to be more likely to go the proverbial extra mile for their organisation.

3.6 *Developing an Integrated Conceptualization of Positive Leadership*

Although many studies have examined positive leadership (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Cameron, 2008, 2013; Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014; Härtel et al., 2008; Kelloway et al., 2013; Nel et al., 2015; Salmi, Perttula, & Syväjärvi 2014; Wijewardena et al., 2014; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013; Zbierowski & Góra, 2014), and although most leadership theories such as authentic leadership and transformational leadership are positively oriented (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013), there still exists much confusion and varied opinions regarding the nature of the construct of positive leadership in the literature.

Compounding this situation even more, no reviews aiming to investigate and provide an integrated definition of positive leadership could be found. Moreover, the lack of a clear conceptualisation of this construct adversely affects any efforts aimed at operationalising it. This in turn undermines any attempts at empirically measuring and comparing positive leadership, given that such measurements are often derived from differing (and therefore non-comparable) conceptualisations.

By proposing an integrated definition of positive leadership, it is hoped that this will support efforts to operationalise positive leadership and develop a measurement tool for positive leadership. Based on the themes identified via the thematic analysis of available literature on the subject, the following integrated definition of positive leadership is proposed:

Positive leadership is an approach towards leadership that is characterised by the demonstration of leadership *traits* such as optimism and a ‘can-do’ mind-set, altruism, an ethical orientation, and motivational characteristics, as well as leadership *behaviours* that entail the creation of a positive working environment, the development of positive relationships, a focus on results, and positive communication with employees. These traits and behaviours in turn result in positive leadership *outcomes* such as enhanced overall productivity and performance levels, improved organisational citizenship behaviour, and enhanced employee well-being.

From the above proposed integrated definition of positive leadership it can be noted that positive leadership is indeed a combination of a number of other leadership styles such as transformational (Bass, 1999; Braun, Poes, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013;

Crafford et al., 2006; Munir, Rahman, Malik, & Ma' Amor, 2012; Tsai, 2011; Weberg, 2010); ethical (Ahmad, Gao, & Hali, 2017; Moorhouse, 2002); servant (Russel & Stone, 2002; Van Dierendonck, 2011); empowering (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2011; Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000; Hakimi, Van Knippenberg, & Giessner, 2010; Konczak, Stelly, & Trusty, 2000); and authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Positive leadership also employs a strength based approach as well as empowering leader behaviours (Konczak et al., 2000).

According to Liu et al. (2010), transformational leadership is the closest leadership style to positive leadership. Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as “an ongoing process whereby leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation beyond self-interest to serve collective interests” (p. 20). Positive leadership is similar to transformational leadership in the sense that both types of leaders inspire and motivate employees in achieving organisational goals and in performing exceptionally; and they also invest energy in employees' development and growth (Crafford et al., 2006). The distinction between positive leadership and transformational leadership is that positive leaders are ethically oriented over and above being transformational, whereas transformational leaders have the ability to transform their employees yet may be perceived as abusive towards their employees and may even act in unethical manner (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, & Wu, 2018).

Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) defined ethical leadership as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (p. 120). Ethical leadership and positive leadership are similar in a way that both leadership styles encourage two-way communication among employees and strives to involve employees in decision making. Ethical leaders strive to do the right thing and to act in an ethical manner at all times as with positive leaders, however ethical leaders are not necessarily authentic compared to positive leaders (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

According to Greenleaf (1970) servant leadership “focuses on putting the needs of the followers and stakeholders first” (p. 13). Servant leadership suggests that overall organisational goals will be achieved by firstly facilitating the needs, development and well-being of followers (Hoch et al., 2018). Positive leadership is also similar to ethical and servant leadership as some of the traits identified in positive leadership include that of being ethical and altruistic, whereby the positive leader is perceived as being fair towards his/her employees and tends to put the needs of others before his/her own needs (De Cremer et al., 2004). Both servant and positive leaders inspire their employees, however the difference lies in their primary focus. Servant leaders' primary focus is on employees whereas positive leaders' primary focus is that of achieving organisational goals as well as inspiring, motivating, and encouraging employees towards achieving those organisational goals (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003).

Lastly, authentic leaders are defined as “those leaders who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own

and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character" (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 802). Similar to an authentic leader, a positive leader utilises empowering leader behaviours and continuously identifies, develops and utilises employee strengths and potential in achieving organisational goals. Authentic leadership is positively oriented but not identical to positive leadership because both positive leaders and authentic leaders are optimistic and hopeful about the future, yet authentic leaders maybe authentic and not necessarily transformational (Avolio et al., 2004), whereas, positive leaders are ethically oriented, authentic and transformational. Whilst authentic leaders are genuine (and thus not always necessarily positive), one critique of positive leaders is that focusing on too much positivity might have a negative effect on relationships (Gottman & Levenson, 1992). In particular, when a leader is too positive in their interaction with the employees, the employees might perceive their leader as not genuine in their communication and might have difficulty in trusting what their leader say (Gauthier, 2015; Gottman & Levenson, 1992).

Although existing definitions of positive leadership do not explicitly state that authentic leadership traits such as self-awareness, authenticity and genuineness (Walumbwa et al., 2008) are important for positive leadership, it is nonetheless implied via the other traits (such as ethical orientation, motivational characteristics and altruism) that a positive leader is supposed to possess. Notably, positive leadership is a combination of the abovementioned positive forms of leadership.

The definition of positive leadership proposed in this chapter addresses a gap in the current literature, and it is hoped that this will contribute to an enhanced and integrated conceptualisation of positive leadership. Previous research highlighted that there is a lack of contributions in relation to the acceleration, emergence and development of positive leadership (Blanch et al., 2016; Zbierowski, 2016), as well as to how positive leadership should be measured (Antino et al., 2014). The proposed integrated definition of positive leadership provides a basis for clearer operationalisation, which would consequently make it possible to draw comparisons between different studies.

It is recommended that the proposed integrated definition of positive leadership be operationalised and used as a basis for studying and developing positive leadership in organisations. Finally, it is also hoped that this conceptualization will serve as basis for informing and for developing interventions aimed at enhancing positive leadership. As a first step towards the latter end, the chapter is concluded with a discussion of three positive interventions based on the integrated conceptualization of positive leadership.

4 Positive Interventions

Based on the model depicted in Fig. 2 one can deduce that various existing positive interventions will be applicable to positive leadership development. Potential positive interventions include: Developing leaders' and employees' Psychological Capital,

that is creating hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy as leadership traits and behaviour; developing leader's emotional maturity (or Emotional Intelligence) as a characteristic of successful and positive leaders; focusing on job crafting; creating meaning; building trust; using humour in the workplace; empowerment; applying mindfulness, and improving cultural sensitivity training can all be optimised as positive interventions to create a culture where a more positive approach to leadership will thrive.

For the purpose of this chapter we will provide a brief and broad general outline of three interventions that may contribute to creating a positive culture whilst simultaneously contributing to improved business results: Developing the leader as optimizer of potential; strengths-based expectations and encouragement, and developing the leader as a team developer.

4.1 Developing the Leader as Optimizer of Potential (The Manager as Coach)

Within a volatile and uncertain business world there is a strong business case for developing positive leaders. Chamorro-Premuzic, Adler and Kaiser (2017) postulate that investing in the people meeting organisational demands will maximize business returns. One way of having competent people is to develop them. Various studies have identified people development as a core competence of leaders, now and in future (Ellinger, 2013; Giles, 2016; Zenger & Folkman, 2014). Stander, van Dyk and Stander's (2018) research indicated that there are significant relationships between employees' perceptions of their manager as coach, work engagement, subjective well-being, performance and employee's intention to stay with the organisation (which are all outcomes of positive leadership). According to Fig. 2 Positive leaders typically create a safe, trusting environment where employees have a sense of belonging, can be empowered, and experience engaging interactions while driving for results. These are all elements of coaching and people development, reinforcing the importance of the positive leader to be competent and passionate about people development. However, an important stumbling block in the way of achieving these aims is managers' competence in developing people. Despite the fact that it holds a lot of promise as a strategy for supporting positive leadership, it is the author's experience that coaching and developing people are activities that a high percentage of managers feel uncomfortable with, which is compounded by the fact that they typically have very little formal training in developing people. Based on several decades of exposure to the industry in various capacities, the second author's experience is that managers are well aware of this competence gap and more than willing to address it. We would propose that organisations seeking to enhance positive leadership should train their managers to master a coaching model.

The GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) is a very popular example of such a model, and is relatively easy to understand and apply. The model could be applied (coach the

coach) on positive leader behaviours like creating a positive environment, building positive relationships; managing for results and applying engaging communication. The coaching can be structured according to identifying and prioritising specific outcomes or goals (G), assessing the existing situation or reality in terms of obstacles, as well as existing and required resources related to the goal (R), exploring possibilities and various alternative strategies and options to achieve goals (O) and get participant to commit or exert their will in taking specific action steps as part of the way forward (W).

Training in a specific model such as GROW should be further supported by enhancing specific ancillary skills and attitudes. This could be gained by a combination of class room training and a more on-the-job approach like coaching.

Steelman and Wolfeld (2018) mentioned that a manager-coach must be able to: “evaluate patterns and trends in employee performance, create awareness through ongoing feedback, provide learning experiences, allow opportunities for reflection and assist in action planning and identifying critical steps to goal accomplishment” (p. 42). Grant (2017) comments that leaders need to build a culture of quality conversations by means of workplace coaching. Steelman and Wolfeld (2018) referred to three factors as being important in becoming a good manager-coach: Specific behaviours needed to be a coach, creating positive relationships with direct reports, and following a sound feedback process. These three factors can be a useful framework to add to the training of a specific coaching model (such as GROW) to develop managers as coaches.

4.1.1 Specific Behaviours Needed to Be an Optimizer of Potential

Hamlin, Ellinger and Beattie (2006) reported a summary of their research on *coaching behaviours* between 1997–2004, and concluded that the following are some of the behaviours needed: A questioning approach when discussing development needs and interventions, being a resource of support and information for employees, transferring ownership of tasks to direct reports, creating a learning environment, communicating expectations, broadening employees’ perspectives, engaging with employees, caring, informing, being professional, advising, reflective thinking, empowering, challenging, proactive management, supportive leadership, inclusive decision making, consults widely and keeps people informed. A core behaviour of the modern manager as coach is the ability to identify and focus on individual strengths (opposed to weaknesses) and to support the employee to optimise the use of these strengths (refer to next section). Organisations can facilitate developing managers in the following specific behaviours: Active listening, observation of behaviour, accurate responding, honest value add feedback, setting clear expectations and communication, facilitation, challenging thinking, removing obstacles, creating ownership and driving for results. A combination between classroom education and practical coaching in specific behaviours and competencies are proposed.

4.1.2 Leaders' Positive Relationship with Employees

Gregory and Levy (2010) identified four dimensions for a high quality *coaching relationship*: Genuineness, effective communication, comfort with relationship, and facilitating development. According to Grant, Passmore, Michael, and Parker (2010), the presence of integrity, trust, genuine interest, clear intent, commitment and support for employees' development from their coaches intensified coachees' growth experiences. Grant (2014) is of the opinion that commitment, trust, and respect create feelings of understanding that are important for the development of quality coaching relationships. Ellinger (2013) adds to this that a good manager-coach also has the confidence needed to share experiences and skills with direct reports. Kim and Kuo (2015) stated that a manager's trustworthiness can be a critical element to establish an effective relationship between manager and employee. They further reported that employees who received coaching had more trust in their managers. Training in emotional intelligence to improve relationships, supported with workplace coaching and mentoring can be valuable for managers to create positive relationships.

4.1.3 Following a Sound Feedback Process

Mann and Wigert (2018) report that recent Gallup research found that only 25% of employees strongly agree that their *manager's feedback* is meaningful. It is expected that managers should be able to give clear, direct feedback in a respectful manner. Employees should be able to gain deeper insight into their own behaviour while the coach facilitates plans of action for further development and growth. One can assume that a positive leader will empower or create a psychological safe environment where the employee will be willing to ask for feedback. Steelman, Levy and Snell (2004) identified seven dimensions that will contribute to favourable feedback environment: Manager credibility, quality of feedback, feedback delivery, promotion of feedback seeking, frequency of favourable feedback, frequency of unfavourable feedback and manager availability" (p. 173). Specific training programs, for example conducting crucial conversations, are available to enhance feedback skills and creating a healthy feedback environment.

Cilliers (2011) found improved intrapersonal awareness, openness to emotional experiences, and the ability to express needs and feelings as some of the outcomes of positive psychology leadership coaching. Organisations can add to this improved intrapersonal functioning training and development according to the above behavioural criteria. These interventions will contribute to enhanced employee well-being, increased individual and organisational performance, as well as increased organisational citizenship behaviour. It is important to note that developing the leader as coach holds definite advantages for the company, employees as well as for the leader. Another approach that a leader can adopt is that of encouraging the employees and focusing on the strengths-based expectations of employees.

4.2 *Strengths-Based Expectations and Encouragement*

A major theme that emerged from the literature is that positive leaders are able to strike a balance between having high expectations of employees and simultaneously providing them with ample encouragement in a way that facilitates outstanding employee performance (e.g. Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007). However, it would appear that successful positive leaders would generally approach these tasks idiosyncratically in accordance with their own individual natures, which may result in greatly varying or inconsistent outcomes. However, drawing on the strengths-based approach that is proposed within the context of Positive Psychology (e.g. Magyar-Moe, 2009; Rashid, 2008; Seligman, 2011; Wong, 2006), we propose a more structured and systematic approach to positive leadership-related expectations and encouragement that holds the prospect of being able to produce results in a more consistent and replicable manner. As an intervention, this strategy entails the positive leader identifying individual employee strengths and then tailoring both expectations as well as encouragement to these strengths, as opposed to a more generic proverbial ‘gunshot’ approach where similar expectations and methods of encouragement exist for all employees.

In brief, this process involves the following steps:

- In collaboration with the positive leader, each employee’s signature strengths and preferences are identified, using freely available online instruments such as the Values in Action survey (VIA) (Peterson & Seligman, 2003), or the Gallup Strengths-Finder (Rath & Conchie, 2008), MBTI or- Team Management Profile (Margerison & McCann, 1990). Another possibility is to assess the employee against a competency profile in an interview, a 360° assessment or a development centre. The initial report would ideally be discussed among the manager and employee, and agreed adjustments and revisions of the report could be made until the report is deemed by both parties to adequately reflect the employee’s signature strengths. As an illustrative example, a given employee might be identified as having the VIA strength of bravery.
- The leader subsequently adjusts his or her expectations of the employee in accordance with each’s unique strengths and the specific business context the employee is operating in. This process could also be utilised to support role clarification, which has in itself been found to be associated with increased employee performance, reduced levels of stress and anxiety, reduced employee turnover etc. (Forsyth, 2014). In the context of this positive leadership intervention, the leader goes beyond the very important fundamental step of clarifying role expectations (Schmidt, Roesler, Kusserow, & Rau, 2014) by actively augmenting this process with a strengths based approach. In a related fashion, expected end-results can be formulated and organisational tasks be allocated to different employees (with the implicit attendant expectations that these be fulfilled to a high standard of performance) on the basis of their strengths. Taking the previous example, the employee with the strength of bravery could be allocated a task involving a calculated risk

or courage, such as approaching a potential new high-value client and conducting a presentation.

- The leader provides encouragement to each employee in a manner that is congruent with the employee's individual strength profile. For instance, the brave employee could be encouraged using arguments, phrases or a general approach that evoke or call upon his strength of bravery. It is recommended that during this process the leader and employee explore ways to optimize strengths to address areas of development.
- Through a process of continual monitoring and feedback this process is adjusted as necessary. Doing so will also address the commonly identified need of employees to interact more with leaders. In turn, this interaction with the leader will play a further developmental role.
- The employee could be encouraged to use these strengths to develop his/her own identity and promote his/her own personal brand within the organisation.
- By adjusting expectations and encouragement to the specific signature strengths of each employee, a far greater likelihood exists that such expectations and encouragement would indeed be experienced as motivational and consequently result in effective and positive outcomes for not only the organisation as a whole, but also for the employee. Given that this approach prompts employees to act in ways that draw upon their signature strengths, and also that such an approach has been shown to be related to enhanced psychological well-being (Magyar-Moe, 2009; Seligman, 2011), it is likely that outcomes such as enhanced employee engagement, well-being, positive emotions and trust would follow to some degree when this approach is adopted. Lastly, the leader can adopt the approach of being a leader as a team developer.

4.3 Leader as a Team Developer

The final intervention that is outlined in this chapter is that of a Positive Leader as a team developer. The literature shows that a positive leader is one who is able to promote positive relationship among employees through developing trust and teamwork (Liu et al., 2010; Zbierowski, 2014). Bligh (2017) defined trust as “an expectation or belief that one can rely on another person's actions and words and that the person has good intentions to carry out their promises” (p. 21). The question that might be asked is how can a Positive Leader develop trust within his or her team? Trust may be developed by being ethical, honest, transparent, and having integrity (Antino et al., 2014; Zbierowski, 2016). Below we propose steps that a positive leader may follow in building trust amongst the team members.

Employees will trust their leader if they feel that their leader takes time to build relationships with them and get to know them by implementing an open door policy, as well as investing in informal sessions with their team members such as coffee time, team building activities, social gathering or monthly breakfast away from the office. As proposed by Lencioni (2003), the first step in building trust requires the leader

to set an example by first opening up to his or her team members before expecting the team members to open up to him or her. One practical example of opening up to employees may be that of the leader sharing their work and life story with them or something that their employees may not know about them. This way the leaders allow themselves to be open and comfortable around their employees, which in turn, will make their employees feel safe and comfortable with opening up to their leader (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; McManus & Mosca, 2015).

Once the team members and their leader are able to be open and comfortable around one another, the leader should empower their employees by allowing them the opportunity to make decisions in the area of their expertise, and to trust them enough that they will do their jobs effectively without being micromanaged. With that being said, a leader needs to know their employees well enough to know which strategy to use when managing them. A positive leader is capable of acknowledging that micromanaging employee “A” might be appreciated, but that employee “B” might feel that they do not need to be reminded of their work and that they would rather prefer being given autonomy when performing their work. The leader may utilise the Team Management Profile (Margerison & McCann, 1990) or MBTI assessment (Briggs & Briggs Meyers, 2015) in establishing employee’s preferences and understanding the differences among his or her employees’ preferences. For an example employee “A” might prefer more structure and clear deadlines when given a task, whereas employee “B” might prefer less structure when given a task. Being aware of these differences and preferences will help a leader in empowering his or her employees.

The leader as a team developer will need to emphasise collaboration among employees and encourage employees to support one another. Being aware of the employees’ preferences through the use of MBTI or Team Management Profile may help the leader in grouping together the employees who have opposite preferences to collaborate and support one another. In this way the team members will be able to trust one another and their leader, as well as work together and support one another. According to Lencioni (2003) once the trust has been developed, the team members will be inclined to engage in constructive conflict; will be committed to the organisation; will take accountability for their action; and will be results-oriented. All of which cannot be achieved if trust is not developed amongst team members.

A leader as a team developer should inspire and motivate employees, provide support and empower employees, all of which will lead to increased employee performance (Smith et al., 2012), as depicted in Fig. 2.

5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the findings derived from a critical review of the positive leadership literature which was informed by the aim of creating an integrated definition of positive leadership. The findings suggest that positive leadership consists of leadership traits (optimism and a ‘can-do’ mind-set, altruism, an ethical orientation, and

motivational characteristics); that a positive leader should possess, as well as specific leadership behaviours (creating a positive working environment, developing positive relationships, focusing on results, and engaging in positive communication with employees); and that these behaviours will in turn enhance certain leadership outcomes (such as enhanced overall productivity and performance levels, improved organisational citizenship behaviour, and enhanced employee well-being) that are beneficial to the leader, his/her employees and the organisation as a whole.

It is hoped that the proposed integrated definition of positive leadership could be used as the starting point to develop a valid and reliable measure of positive leadership in an organisational context. This definition was also used as basis for proposing three general positive leadership interventions that leaders can adopt which will be beneficial to the leader, employees and the organisation as a whole.

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Virtue Interventions and Interracial Interactions



Madison Kawakami Gilbertson, Sarah Schnitker and Evelyn R. Carter

“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, ‘It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’ Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”

—Fred Rogers (as cited in Jackson & Emmanuel, 2016, p. 18).

Abstract Majority group members are important actors for increasing positive interracial interactions in multicultural environments. Research has demonstrated that psychological factors may hinder majority group members from greater engagement in interracial interactions (e.g., emotion dysregulation, race-based stress), so psychological interventions targeting majority group member engagement in interracial interactions are needed. Using a theory-based approach, we will examine how positive psychological interventions, specifically virtue interventions targeting White students in a U.S. context, could increase emotion regulation capabilities in response to race-based stress, alleviate threat, and result in greater engagement in interracial contact. Whereas many current standalone interventions to decrease racial prejudice are often deficit-based and have questionable efficacy (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell 11:207–227, 2012), a strengths-based virtue approach might be more effective in decreasing anxiety and increasing self-efficacy in interracial interactions. Drawing from the virtue literature, the chapter will discuss how patience and courage interventions are well suited to address the psychological factors that negatively affect White people in multicultural contexts and hinder overall efforts to increase interracial

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cial interactions. Hypotheses for intervention outcomes and how those outcomes may impact majority group members are described. In sum, we offer an important theoretical grounding for future research on positive psychological interventions that aim to increase White engagement in interracial interactions in multicultural environments.

Keywords Interventions · Positive psychology · Virtue development · Intergroup contact · Patience · Courage

1 Introduction

Danny is a White college freshman from a small town in Minnesota who has just started school at a prestigious, private university in California. In addition to the coursework and small class sizes, Danny chose to attend this school because of its diverse student population. Coming from a small high school with almost no ethnic diversity, he's eager to meet and learn from people with different backgrounds.

Despite his motivation to meet people from different backgrounds, Danny finds himself connecting most easily with a few other White students who are from the Midwest when he arrives to college. When he does try to engage in conversation with one of his Black classmates, he finds himself feeling awkward and a little bit nervous about saying something offensive. Based on what he has seen on social media, he feels like anything he says could be perceived as racist or intolerant, so he tries to be extra careful. But it feels exhausting because he finds himself monitoring everything he says. He realizes that he never has to worry about those things when he's talking with the White students in his class, and it just seems easier to connect with and build friendships with his White classmates.

2 The Problem: A Lack of Interracial Interactions on College Campuses

Danny's college experience is like those of millions of White students who enroll in colleges and universities across the United States every year. Most White college students will become friends with other White college students. This trend, which was first observed in 2003 (Massey, Charles, Lundy, & Fischer, 2003), is still the case in 2018 (Carter et al., 2018). Although there have been increases in diversity across college campuses in the United States, most are still predominantly White institutions (Harvey, 2001; Hurtado, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen, & Milem, 1998; Massey et al., 2003). As a result, White majority students have many potential friends to choose from within their racial group, and they do not have to engage in interracial interactions (and they may not even try because of how anxiety-inducing interracial interactions can be; Richeson & Shelton, 2007). When majority group students, like

Danny, experience discomfort, nervousness, or stress in interracial interactions, it is easy for them to withdraw and find other White friends with whom it may be easier to form relationships. What might explain this disconnect between Danny's desire for connection with people from different backgrounds, or different racial groups, and the reality of his siloed interactions?

In addition to anxiety, research has also shown that pre-college racial environments and students' prior experiences with either homogeneous or diverse peers can have an impact on with whom students choose to interact in college (Saenz, Ngai, & Hurtado, 2006). Like Danny, many White students enrolling in primarily White institutions will come from homogeneous racial environments (Orfield, Bachmeier, James, & Eitle, 1997; Orfield & Lee, 2006). Without explicit intervention, it is likely that they will continue to engage in similar pre-college patterns (Saenz et al., 2006). In doing so, White students may not have to acknowledge the racially homogeneous environments in which they exist. These choices about with whom to interact can have wide-reaching impact on White students' future attitudes toward outgroups. In several studies, researchers have shown that cross-group contact (e.g., cross-group friendship and interracial interactions) over time results in more positive out-group attitudes and a greater likelihood that majority group members will be able to identify wrongful exclusion (Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2008; Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009; Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007; West & Dovidio, 2012).

For Danny, this presents a dilemma. Although he expressed an explicit desire to engage in more intergroup contact in college, barriers like anxiety and limited previous experience engaging with people from different backgrounds abound. And Danny is not alone. Millennial and post-millennial college students often express a desire to learn from others and confront bias and inequality in their communities ("2014 MTV/David Binder Research Study," 2014) but find themselves struggling to develop friendships across racial and ethnic groups.

However, let's consider an alternative trajectory: Danny remains less engaged with his Black classmates, but one day he is reminded by a teacher from home about how excited he was to interact with and learn from with people who are different from him. After the conversation, despite his nervousness, he makes a conscious effort to chat with his Black classmates. Some of these initial conversations turn into study groups and coffee meetings; these lead to invitations to events hosted by the Black Student Union, which Danny accepts. Through this gradual process of building genuine friendships, the stereotypes and anxiety he originally had may begin to diminish. Danny's interracial interactions in college put him on a trajectory towards a future with less racial bias and prejudice. This could lead to his involvement in collective action, confronting bias in a future workplace, and intentional pursuit of diverse friendship networks. Concrete actions like these, which promote equity in social spaces and workplaces, may eventually produce environments of true inclusion for minority group members. But, as Danny's story highlights, there are points where things could have gone differently. There are key junctures during which Danny will be faced with discomfort or anxiety in interracial interactions, and his response to those feelings are pivotal for determining which trajectory Danny's life will take. Will he be courageous and take the first step even though it's uncomfortable? Will he have

patience to continue to pursue interracial interactions even when those interactions are challenging?

Encouraging genuine interracial interactions at these critical junctures is important. Thus, the question becomes how we can create environments where someone like Danny can view college as an opportunity to step outside his comfort zone and engage in interracial interactions. We propose that positive psychology's emphasis on a strengths-based, character building approach through virtue interventions provides the most promising strategy for increasing majority members' engagement in interracial interactions. Although we highlight the experience of Danny, a White male in the United States, many of the principles discussed could translate to other minority-majority group interactions in diverse contexts. From age-old tension between minority-majority groups (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians) to the ongoing adjustment of communities faced with high levels of global migration (e.g., Europeans and refugees), the need for positive intergroup interactions is global and not limited to the United States.

3 Chapter Overview

In the following pages, our goal is to provide a theoretical foundation demonstrating how virtue interventions can provide a pathway for greater engagement in interracial interactions in a U.S. university context. In the first section of the chapter, we broadly explore the challenges White people face regarding interracial interactions. Then, we focus on how virtue interventions may help White people overcome the challenges of interracial interactions. Next, we provide examples of possible virtue interventions, inspired by the existing literature, that could effectively increase interracial interactions in U.S. universities. To conclude, we identify future directions for research on virtue interventions and interracial interactions. Given the dearth of research establishing the efficacy of interventions targeting majority group members to increase interracial interactions, we hope this research will provide a compelling framework for future empirical work.

4 Interracial Interactions Are Difficult for White People

One of the primary obstacles to greater engagement from White people in interracial interactions is anxiety. Anxiety, both during (Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Richeson & Shelton, 2003) and in anticipation of interracial interactions (West & Dovidio, 2012), is a common theme throughout the literature on White experiences of interracial interactions (Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, & Kowai-Bell, 2001; Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Hyers & Swim, 1998; Shelton, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Several factors related to anxiety may hinder White people's engagement in interracial interactions. First, interracial interactions can be cognitively and emo-

tionally draining for both White people and minorities (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). Interracial interactions act as stressors that elicit physiological, emotional, and behavioral responses (Blascovich et al., 2001; Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Tropp, 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Trawalter, Richeson, & Shelton, 2009). In interracial interactions, researchers have observed that White participants have increased cardiovascular activity (Blascovich et al., 2001) and cortisol reactivity (Page-Gould et al., 2008), so they tend to withdraw from race-related conversations (DiAngelo, 2011). Moreover, the effort to self-monitor verbal and nonverbal behavior is stress-inducing for White people (Richeson & Shelton, 2007).

In addition to these physiological factors, interracial interactions also generate psychological feelings of threat related to racial stereotypes. Researchers have observed that racial stereotyping, or the expectations and beliefs people have about particular social groups, can begin as early as age six (Hamilton & Trolie, 1986; Pauker, Ambady, & Apfelbaum, 2010). Many researchers have highlighted how the salience of racial stereotypes influences a wide range of psychological and behavioral outcomes (Critcher & Risen, 2014; Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004; Kunda & Spencer, 2003; Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). White people's concerns about whether they are confirming stereotypes (i.e., concerns about how they are viewed by minority groups) is of particular importance in interracial interactions. For example, Vorauer et al. (1998) demonstrated how White Canadians' perception that they were negatively stereotyped by a lower status group negatively affected their attitudes regarding an intergroup interaction.

Researchers have also found that White people's typical goals in interracial interactions are to be liked and to appear moral (i.e., non-prejudiced, unbiased, open-minded, tolerant; Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010). These goals are made even more salient in threatening situations when a majority group person perceives that they may not be liked or may not appear moral based on stereotypes about White people (Bergsieker et al., 2010; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In response to prejudice concerns, White people will engage in cognitively taxing self-monitoring that includes suppression of thoughts, emotion, and behaviors (Trawalter & Richeson, 2006), or they engage in behavior that they *think* will make them appear non-prejudiced (e.g., colorblind behavior; Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008). This type of self-monitoring is self-focused and motivated by a desire to avoid moral judgment rather than other-focused and mindful of the needs of the minority partner. Overall, White people's focus on regulating the appearance of prejudice can lead to anxiety and ultimately avoidance of interracial interactions.

White people's avoidance of interracial interactions (or even discussions of race) is an undesirable outcome because interracial interactions are an important catalyst through which White people begin to understand their role in confronting racial bias and prejudice. By avoiding interracial interactions, White people miss out on opportunities to decrease prejudice, increase empathy and perspective-taking, and better manage stress that arises from contact with outgroups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Without growth in these areas, it is unclear how broader issues of racial conflict and inequities can be effectively resolved. As we know from following Danny's story, it is

difficult to interact with someone from a different race, but interracial interactions are perhaps the most critical starting point for prejudice reduction (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). Furthermore, researchers posit that positive contact over time should promote a buffering effect against perceived threat that White people may experience, which, in turn, might lead to more positive intergroup relations (Craig, Rucker, & Richeson, 2017; Levin, van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003).

5 Ironic Effects of Suppression

Despite these strategies for overcoming the anxiety associated with interracial interactions, it is also important to consider what challenges White people may encounter when they choose to engage in interracial interactions and actively try to reduce their own prejudices and bias. Due to strong societal and personal norms against the expression of bias, many work to suppress stereotypes and self-monitor their behavior during interracial interactions to avoid appearing biased. Stereotype suppression, or the attempt to decrease bias by avoiding all stereotypic thoughts, is rarely an effective form of self-regulation and can even cause stereotypes to rebound even more strongly and undermine positive intergroup contact (Monteith, Sherman, & Devine, 1998; Wegner, 1994).

In one study, researchers found that White conversation partners who put more effort into self-monitoring to control their racial bias were actually perceived less positively by their partners than those who put in less effort (Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, & Trawalter, 2005). These “ironic” effects of suppression occurred because White conversation partners, who worked carefully to control their behavior to ensure it aligned with their egalitarian goals, were self-monitoring to such an extent that their behavior seemed unnatural and stilted. Their conversation partners then drew the conclusion that their White partner was uncomfortable in the interracial interaction *because* they held racial bias against their partner. Other researchers have observed similar results: when people are more aware of their biases, and are eager to change them, they self-monitor in a way that may come across as odd, awkward, or prejudiced (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Perry, Murphy, & Dovidio, 2015b). This can be further explained by Wegner’s (1994) ironic processes of mental control. The self-control of mental states results in dual operating processes: (a) one which promotes the desired mental state and (b) another that delivers content inconsistent with the desired mental state. Unfortunately, in situations that decrease cognitive capacity (e.g., stressful situations), the second process often supersedes the first, resulting in easier accessibility to content that supports the opposite of the desired mental state. In other words, White conversation partners who are eager to change their biases may expose themselves to stress and anxiety during an interracial interaction. The stress they experience reduces their cognitive capacity and therefore actually makes them more likely focus on or even endorse the very biases they are trying to reject (Wegner, 1994)!

6 The Goal: Increasing White Engagement in Interracial Interactions

Although stereotypic suppression is not an effective form of self-regulation, there are some successful documented strategies for making people aware of and reducing their own prejudice and bias (Monteith, 1993; Monteith, Arthur, & Flynn, 2010; Son Hing, Li, & Zanna, 2002). Perry, Dovidio, Murphy and van Ryn's (2015a) work also demonstrates that if people can persist through these awkward interactions, things will eventually improve. When White people who want to change their biases consistently engage in intergroup interaction over time they do become more comfortable in their interactions (Levin et al., 2003). It is possible that this interaction even changes people on a physiological level; Blascovich et al. (2001) observed that participants who reported more previous contact with Black people exhibited less physiological activity associated with threat during interracial interactions in the lab.¹

Overall, because anxiety during interracial interactions is so prevalent for White people, interventions must consider how to help White people reduce their anxiety, employ *effective* self-regulation strategies, and persist in their interactions with non-White people over time.

To increase White engagement in interracial interactions, it is essential to address the anxiety that White people feel and encourage a positive response to interracial interactions. Shelton, Richeson, and Vorauer (2006) note that there are three main responses to interracial interactions: avoidance, outgroup devaluation/derogation, and behavior modulation/regulation. For White students like Danny, this may look like avoiding interactions with Black classmates to escape discomfort, emphasizing negative stereotypes of Black classmates to justify his avoidance, or genuinely attempting to engage and, by doing so, change his own behavior and regulation capacities. Creating and sustaining environments with less prejudice and bias is dependent on White people choosing behavior modulation and regulation over the other two responses. If we understand interracial interactions as initial stress reactions and coping responses (Trawalter et al., 2009), what psychological tools can we provide to White people that can encourage a coping response that embraces behavior modulation and regulation and continued engagement?

7 The Promise of Positive Psychological Interventions

We hypothesize that interventions favoring approach motivations and goals, which focus on “the impulse to go toward” a particular stimulus (Harmon-Jones, Harmon-Jones, & Price, 2013, p. 291), may be particularly effective for White people's

¹However, it is also important to note that in this particular study the levels of prior contact with Black people were not experimentally manipulated. More experimental research is necessary to explore whether prior contact with non-White people is the definitive cause for lower levels of physiological levels of reactivity.

engagement in interracial interactions. Positive psychological interventions (PPIs) fit the criteria particularly well because of their emphasis on flourishing rather than malfunction (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Instead of seeking to help people suppress “bad” thoughts or behavior, the goal of a PPI would focus on what people should aim towards, seek, or become in order to flourish in a diverse society.

Approach goals can be best understood as the pursuit of a desired state of being (i.e., moving towards a goal of becoming a tolerant person; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Elliot, 2006). Avoidance goals, on the other hand, involve distancing oneself from an undesirable state (i.e., trying to avoid becoming a racist person; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Elliot, 2006). Researchers have documented that people anticipating interracial contact have higher avoidance motives (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). Whereas avoidance goals are associated with suppression (i.e., trying to not think racist thoughts; Monteith et al., 1998) and cognitive depletion (Richeson & Shelton, 2007), approach goals may result in the adoption of strategies by which White people could focus on similarities or making a connection with minority interaction partners (Murphy, Richeson, & Molden, 2011). Fostering approach goals (i.e., “I want to be courageous in this interaction”) via a positive psychological intervention may be more effective than avoidance goals (i.e., “I do *not* want to appear prejudiced or racist) in facilitating positive interracial interactions. PPIs will not eliminate White people’s anxiety entirely from interracial interactions, but PPIs may provide a helpful way to prevent debilitation and reframe anxiety as a way to motivate engagement in interracial interactions (Schultz, Gaither, Urry, & Maddox, 2015).

7.1 *What Is a PPI?*

PPIs have existed since the 1970s (Fordyce, 1977), but research has grown in this area of study in recent years, especially following Seligman’s (1999) call for research in the emerging field of Positive Psychology. From educational (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009) to clinical settings (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), researchers have demonstrated the efficacy of PPIs. Often PPIs aim to increase happiness or life satisfaction (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), but they can also include any intervention that focuses on positive topics, employs a positive methodology, targets a positive outcome, or promotes flourishing (instead of aiming to fix malfunction; Seligman, 2002). The primary distinction of PPIs in comparison to other psychological interventions is their motivational focus. Rather than focusing on fixing a problem (as is the case for traditional interventions), PPIs focus on building strengths.

Past PPIs have included elements related to strength-building (Proyer, Ruch, & Buschor, 2013; Seligman et al., 2005), gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010), forgiveness (Baskin & Enright, 2004; McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006), giving monetarily to others (Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008), compassion (Hofmann, Grossman, & Hinton, 2011), and belonging (Walton

& Cohen, 2007). As this list demonstrates, PPIs use diverse methodology and target myriad positive goals to promote human flourishing.

7.2 Effective Interracial Interaction Interventions in the Literature

Overall, the literature on experimental interventions to increase White people's engagement in interracial interactions is limited. Very few interventions targeting majority group members have been scientifically tested, and no studies have tested the efficacy of virtue interventions in increasing interracial interactions. The paucity of experimental research in this area presents an opportunity for future researchers that must be built on a strong theoretical foundation. It is also critical to empirically test the efficacy of interventions in order to understand the mechanisms involved and to minimize the potential for harm (especially because exposure to interracial interactions has been linked to increased anxiety in White people; Blascovich et al. 2001; Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Hyers & Swim, 1998; Shelton, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

Based on the limited research in this area, initial research on interventions targeting White people's engagement in interracial interactions has yielded important insights. For example, achieving a balance between challenging White participants and helping them effectively cope with anxiety is a dominant theme (Avery, Richeson, Hebl, & Ambady, 2009; Murphy et al., 2011; Schultz et al., 2015). The interventions that were most successful at increasing White engagement in interracial interactions adopted a learning-oriented or approach-oriented model (Murphy et al., 2011), which aligns well with the goal of PPIs. Several studies focus on a learning-oriented approach: In one promising study, researchers told White participants that interracial interactions were anxiety-provoking but that choosing to engage may reduce feelings of anxiety in the future (Schultz et al., 2015). Participants in the experimental group were more likely to engage with Black partners over White partners and demonstrated more positive non-verbal engagement in the interaction. In addition to normalizing White people's experiences of anxiety, researchers also introduced a more positive way for White participants to think about the anxiety. Instead of emphasizing an avoidance goal of appearing non-prejudiced, the researchers' emphasized the approach goal of engagement, which yielded positive results. Perry, Dovidio, et al. (2015a) suggest that interventions designed to build self-efficacy in interracial interaction may also prove effective. These successful positive approaches to interracial interactions provide a firm foundation for developing a PPI.

8 Developing a PPI for Interracial Interactions

Considering the threat, anxiety, and discomfort often experienced by White people in interracial interactions, we propose that virtue PPIs (a combination of skills and a higher order meaning system) will yield the most effective results.

8.1 *Defining Virtue*

In recent years, researchers have experimented with positive psychological interventions that aim to foster virtue (see Proyer et al., 2013; Seligman et al., 2005; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). The psychological definition of virtue (sometimes also referred to as “character strength”) continues to evolve. Fleenor, Furr, Jayawickreme, Meindl, and Helzer (2014) proposed a definition of virtue that focuses on “characteristics that are descriptive of actions, cognitions, emotions, and motivations that are considered to be relevant to right and wrong according to a relevant moral standard” (p. 181). Although this definition identifies some of the key elements of virtue, critics have noted that it lacks an adequate exploration of moral identity, purpose, and contextualized measurement (Nucci, 2016).

Drawing from McAdams and Pals’ (2006) personality theory, Schnitker, Houlberg, Dyrness, and Redmond (2017b) address these concerns with a new model of virtue theory that defines virtues as hybrid personality units that are comprised of characteristic adaptations and narrative identity. They contend that virtue must be understood not as what it “is” (i.e., as a trait), but what it “does” (i.e., as a characteristic adaptation; Cantor, 1990). This small, but critical difference, is supported both by the philosophical (MacIntyre, 2007) and psychological literatures (Brown, Spezio, Reimer, Van Slyke, & Peterson, 2013; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2014), which emphasize the “doing” (versus the “having”) of virtue.

8.2 *Characteristic Adaptations and Expressions of Virtue*

What then is a true expression of virtue? The emotion regulation strategy of cognitive reappraisal would be a characteristic adaptation related to patience. Cognitive reappraisal utilized to wait calmly when confronted with frustration, adversity, or suffering would be understood as an expression of patience. In another example, increasing self-efficacy as a way to better equip one to respond to threat would be a characteristic adaptation related to courage. When feelings of self-efficacy are deployed to confront a challenge, save a life, or act on one’s conscience in the face of opposition, they would be understood as an expression of courage.

8.3 Narrative Identity

However, a definition of virtue that only includes characteristic adaptations but does not consider moral meaning or the context of enactment is incomplete (McAdams, 2014; Schnitker, Houlberg, et al., 2017b). True virtue must also be accompanied by a narrative identity or self-concept characterized by moral engagement. In other words, virtuous action cannot exist solely for the benefit of the self—instead, virtuous action must be paired with a *transcendent narrative identity*, or an identity that highly values something or someone beyond the self (Brown et al., 2013; Colby & Damon, 1994; Hampson, 2012; Hart & Fegley, 1995; Schnitker, Houlberg, et al., 2017b). Narrative identities connect people's identities with the meaning-making systems that they use to navigate their specific contexts (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

A *transcendent* narrative identity is defined by a narrative identity committed to meaning-making systems that point an individual to something bigger than him or herself and the present circumstances. For example, a college freshman who studies so she can become a lawyer to make as much money as possible in order to live a life of luxury would not be exhibiting the virtue of self-control (though she possesses the characteristic adaptations supporting the virtue). In contrast, another college freshman who studies so she can become a lawyer and work for social justice and the greater good of society would be displaying the virtue of self-control. In both instances, behavior may look similar, but the motivation and meaning behind the actions are starkly different. Some definitions of transcendence also include a responsibility to the "other" (King, Clardy, & Ramos, 2014). Both religious (e.g., faith communities) and secular contexts (e.g., patriotism) can have expressions of transcendence, and can contribute to the development of transcendent narrative identity. It is only through the guiding force of a transcendent narrative identity that characteristic adaptations can be expressed as virtues. Otherwise, characteristic adaptations can be applied to the pursuit of immoral or amoral goals.

Thus, virtue PPIs targeting interracial interactions must not only include skill development but also the development of a transcendent narrative identity. For example, we hypothesize that a PPI targeting only emotion regulation for White people will not necessarily result in virtuous action in interracial interactions. When emotion regulation skills are not connected to a transcendent sense of identity or a larger meaning-making system, why should people be motivated to develop or employ these characteristic adaptations for anything other than their own benefit? A virtue intervention, on the other hand, can (and, arguably, must) provide a framework that connects the development of characteristic adaptations (e.g., emotion regulation or coping with threat) with the development or activation of a transcendent narrative identity.

Virtue development can uniquely target characteristic adaptations *and* address narrative identity, including the moral intentions or moral contexts that shape a person's sense of narrative identity. Instead of a sole focus on teaching skill development strategies, virtue development interventions must also consider the broader context of their participants, create opportunities for narrative identity development, and,

ultimately, help participants develop a sound moral motivation for virtuous action. Figure 1 depicts how both characteristic adaptations and narrative identities might support the formation of courage and patience.

8.4 Why Courage and Patience?

From generosity to gratitude, psychologists have studied, classified, and categorized many different types of virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). For interracial interactions, we contend that two interconnected virtues—courage and patience—are particularly important. Courage and patience can help facilitate the steps that White people need to take to engage and persist in interracial interactions. Furthermore, many of the barriers to interracial interactions involve the regulation of emotions such as fear, anxiety, or anger. Courage and patience are virtues intricately connected to effectively managing negative emotions, and they draw on many of the same characteristic adaptations related to emotion regulation. Although this chapter focuses only on two related virtues (i.e., courage and patience), a variety of virtues (e.g., intellectual humility, interpersonal generosity), could be considered as researchers continue to examine interracial interactions.

8.4.1 Courage

Social psychologists Seligman and Peterson define courage as “emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal” (as cited in Seligman et al., 2005, p. 412). Researchers have also emphasized a moral component of the virtue of courage, which says that courage must include the pursuit of a just or noble goal (Putman, 2001; Woodard, 2004). In this chapter, we will focus specifically on *psychological courage*, which is defined as the ability to confront destructive habits and anxiety, step out of one’s comfort zone, or face internal fears (including acknowledging that one has a problem; Pury et al., 2014; Putman, 2004). Developing psychological courage can help White people confront their own bias, prejudice, or racism. Using courage in an intervention would also provide a way to address White people’s motivation to engage in interracial interactions as a moral imperative. As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, interracial interactions provoke anxiety, which is rooted in fear. Fostering courage in White people may empower them to confront their fears and take the first step of engaging.

8.4.2 Patience

Schnitker (2012) defines patience as “the propensity of a person to wait calmly in the face of frustration, adversity, or suffering” (p. 263). Patience can be enacted

Narrative Identity Examples	
Courage:	I am motivated to be courageous even when I might feel uncomfortable because I believe in equality for all.
Patience:	I am motivated to pursue patience in interracial interactions, especially when I make mistakes or feel uncomfortable, because I want to be a part of an inclusive campus.

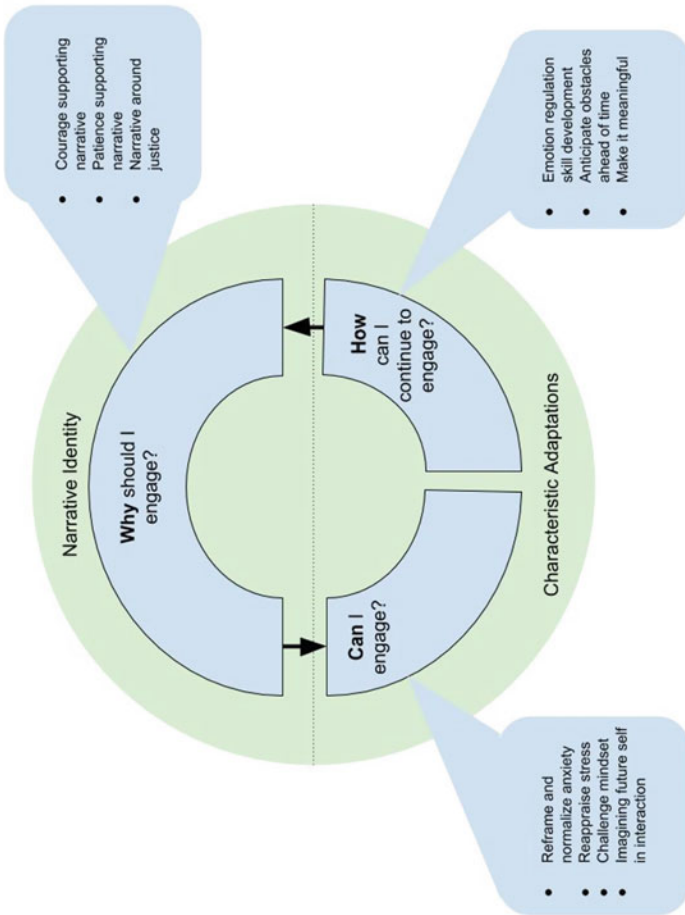


Fig. 1 PPI model for interracial interactions

under mundane, everyday circumstances (i.e., waiting in a long line at the grocery store) or circumstances that are significant and long-term (i.e., enduring chronic pain). The development of patience may be particularly salient when addressing the disengagement of White majority members in interracial interactions. Extrapolating from Schnitker, Felke, Fernandez, Redmond, and Blews' (2017a) work on linking patience and suffering, we propose that applying patience in interracial interactions may be beneficial, especially when White people experience extreme discomfort. Last, patience has been shown to increase persistence in the face of obstacles in regards to goal pursuit (Thomas & Schnitker, 2017).

When White people encounter difficulty, frustration, and obstacles in interracial interactions, patience may enable them to persist towards a goal of greater engagement (especially when engaging in interracial interactions is difficult, uncomfortable, or anxiety-inducing). Repeated, consistent contact (not a single interracial interaction) is necessary to reduce implicit bias and engage in authentic interactions (Blascovich et al., 2001; Page-Gould et al., 2008; West & Dovidio, 2012). By cultivating patience, it is likely that White people will be able to engage in continued interracial interactions without falling prey to recklessness (railroading others when anxious or letting anxiety create a false friendliness) or *acedia* (psychologically or physically exiting the conversations when anxiety arises; (DiAngelo, 2011; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Matias & DiAngelo, 2013).

8.4.3 Connecting Courage and Patience

Although many modern readers might see courage and patience as polar opposites, some virtue theorists, who maintain that virtues are the golden mean between two vices, would actually view them as complementary (Pianalto, 2016). Classical conceptualizations of patience have characterized it as the mean between recklessness, a vice of deficiency, and *acedia* (translated as sloth or disengagement), a vice of excess (Schnitker, 2012). Courage is similarly characterized as the mean between the deficiency vice of cowardice and the excess vice recklessness. Thus, the vice of deficiency for patience and the vice of excess for courage are similar—both recklessness. Likewise, cowardice and *acedia* are very similar in that they both involve disengagement from the goal at hand. Given the reciprocal nature of patience and courage, interventions should strive to cultivate the two in tandem because they balance each other. Figure 2 depicts a flowchart demonstrating the ways courage and patience may change the pathways by which opportunities by which the way White people respond to opportunities for interracial interactions produce more or less inclusive environments.

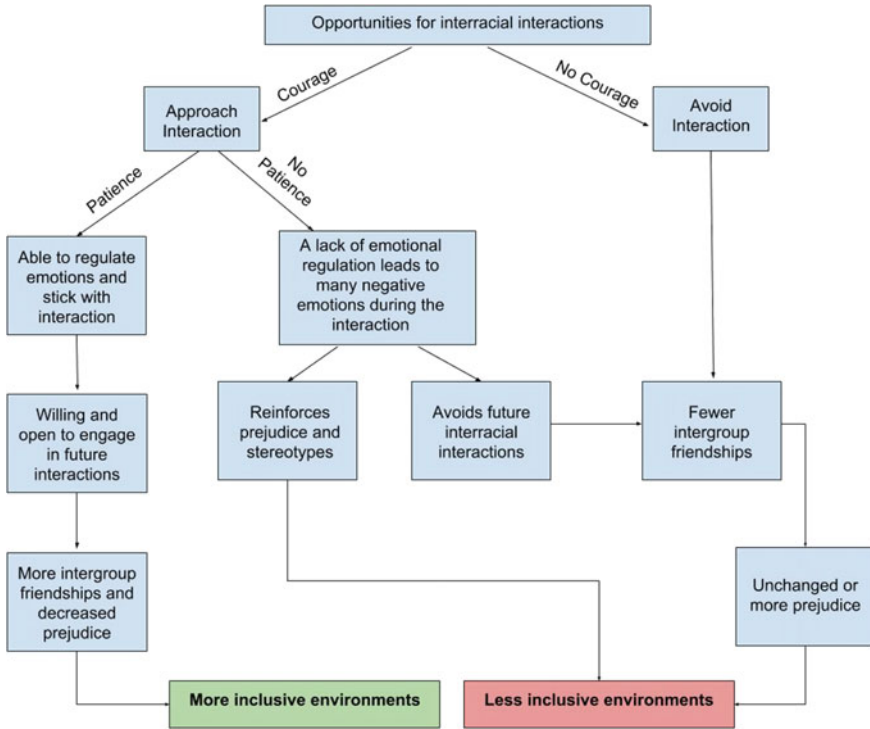


Fig. 2 Flowchart demonstrating courage and patience for inclusivity

9 Opportunities for Courage and Patience Intervention

In terms of characteristic adaptations, the goal of a courage and patience virtue intervention for interracial interactions is simple: increase a White person’s capacity to effectively manage anxiety enough (without the expectation of total comfort) to enable engagement in interracial interactions. Existing courage and patience interventions have been linked to increased emotion regulation (Pury, 2008; see reappraisal in Schnitker, 2012), so they are well suited to assist in interracial interactions.

For both virtues, activating and nurturing a transcendent narrative identity alongside skill development will be key. A transcendent narrative will frame action not with an emphasis on the self (i.e., I want to engage in interracial interactions to prove that I’m not a bad person or prove that I’m a good person), but instead will highlight the importance of the other (i.e., I want to engage in interracial interactions because I truly care for others and I want the community that I live into to be a place where everyone can flourish). Virtue interventions uniquely provide the avenue to focus on the “other” (instead of the self), and White students’ motivation for engagement in interracial interactions can be addressed and emphasized.

10 Practical Implications: Courage and Patience Interventions

What might courage and patience interventions look like? These interventions may be direct (e.g., modeling successful interracial interactions) or indirect (e.g., meditation to increase patience with no reference to interracial interactions). In terms of practicality, the virtue PPIs should be developed with the goal of addressing the following questions for White participants about interracial interactions:

1. *Why* should I engage?
2. *Can* I engage?
3. *How* do I continue to engage (when it's uncomfortable or when I mess up)?

Table 1 summarizes potential intervention activities based on previous research that would fall under each of these categories.

10.1 *Why Should I Engage? Activating a Transcendent Narrative Identity*

Why should people put themselves in uncomfortable or anxiety-inducing situations that provide them with no immediate or direct benefits? Unlike many PPIs that aim to increase life satisfaction or happiness (i.e., well-being variables that directly benefit the participant), a PPI encouraging White people's engagement in interracial interactions will require a compelling reason for engagement.

Promoting a transcendent narrative identity for White people will be important both prior to interracial interactions and during interracial interactions. In Pury et al.'s (2014) review of courage interventions, they suggest interventions that enhance the nobility of the goal may be an effective way to target courage development. This can be achieved by activating a transcendent narrative identity that emphasizes a just or courageous mindset by emphasizing a particular aspect of one's identity or a relevant role. In one study (Osswald, Greitemeyer, Fischer, & Frey, 2010), participants placed in an experimental condition emphasizing their identity as a just person were more willing to exercise courage and discuss their views with a potentially hostile audience in comparison to participants in the neutral condition.

Another type of courage intervention described by Pury et al. (2014) that may activate a transcendent narrative identity is encouragement. According to Pury et al. (2014), encouragement "can give a person reason to exercise psychological, physical, or moral courage. For instance, one may subscribe to a certain religion or set of values and be indirectly encouraged to act in the name of one's beliefs" (p. 171). Encouraging people to act in accordance with their stated values (especially those values related to a transcendent narrative identity associated with egalitarianism) may be a powerful motivator to act courageously in situations where it might be easier to deviate from those values. In Danny's case, this may involve an intervention that

Table 1 Potential intervention activities for building patience and courage related to intergroup interaction

Goal	Intervention activity	Intervention participants may say ...	Example of transcendent narrative identity activated	Targeted psychological process	Support in the literature for intervention
<i>Why Should I Engage?</i>					
Promote a just or courageous mindset	Have participants write about a moment in the past when they demonstrated courage; have participants focus on courageous aspects of their identity	I am a just and courageous person based on past experiences	Courage: I am motivated to be courageous so I can help others	Increase approach motivation	Osswald, Greitemeyer, Fischer, and Frey (2010)
Provide encouragement to act in a courageous manner	Remind participants of their stated values (i.e., egalitarianism) before a situation in which it might be more comfortable to deviate from those values	I have certain beliefs, I can act courageously in a way true to those beliefs even when it is hard	Courage: I am motivated to engage in courageous behavior because of my beliefs	Introduce cognitive dissonance as a way to connect participants' values to behavior	Pury et al. (2014)
<i>Can I Engage?</i>					
Reframe and normalize feelings of anxiety	Provide an explanation of the challenges of interracial interactions; emphasize that these challenges are both normal and malleable	I am experiencing a challenge, but because I know that I can be patient with myself, I know that I can persist and improve	Patience: I am motivated to pursue patience and persist because having a diverse group of friends is important to me	Address stereotype threat	Carr, Dweck, and Pauker (2012); Frantz, Cuddy, Burnett, Ray, and Hart (2004), Goff et al. (2008), Neel and Shapiro (2012), Yeager et al. (2016)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Goal	Intervention activity	Intervention participants may say ...	Example of transcendent narrative identity activated	Targeted psychological process	Support in the literature for intervention
Reappraise the stress of an interracial interaction as a challenge rather than a threat; increase self-efficacy in interracial interactions	Provide training, education, and opportunities to practice and learn from mistakes in learning-oriented environments	I still may feel afraid of making mistakes in an interracial interaction, but I can be courageous because I have done everything I can to prepare	Courage: I am motivated to be courageous even when I might feel uncomfortable because I want everyone to feel included on-campus	Emotion regulation (via reappraisal)	Jamieson, Peters, Greenwood, and Altose (2016), Schultz et al. (2015)
Practice how one might respond meaningfully in an interracial interaction	Have a participant imagine a future self engaging in a positive, meaningful interracial interaction	I can be courageous in a real-life interracial interaction because I have thought about it before	Courage: I am motivated to be courageous because it connects me with others	Emotion regulation	King (2001)
<i>How Do I Continue to Engage?</i>					
Teach general emotion regulation skills to manage anxiety	Have participants practice a patience meditation daily for two weeks; model effective cognitive reappraisal	I develop patience over time so that when I experience a situation that is stressful or anxiety-inducing, I feel like I can persist	Patience: I am motivated to be patient because I can have a positive impact on the people and world around me	Emotion regulation	Schnitker, Felke, et al. (2017a), Thomas and Schnitker (2017)
Make interracial interactions meaningful	Have participants write about why it is important to them to continue to engage in interracial interactions even when it is difficult	Even though I'm really uncomfortable, I have to be patient because my efforts matter and I am working towards a worthy goal	Patience: I am motivated to be patient in interracial interactions because I believe it will make my school a better place	Emotion regulation; goal pursuit	Schnitker, Felke, et al. (2017a), Thomas and Schnitker (2017)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Goal	Intervention activity	Intervention participants may say ...	Example of transcendent narrative identity activated	Targeted psychological process	Support in the literature for intervention
Anticipate obstacles ahead of time	Have participants think about an interracial interaction and then ask them to write down anticipated obstacles, things about the interaction that may be awkward, and mistakes that they might make; then ask participants to write what they will do if any of the things they noted were to happen	I've thought about things that might be an obstacle to a positive interracial interaction, and I have a good sense of what I would do if I experienced those obstacles	Patience: I am motivated to be patient, even when I encounter obstacles, because I believe pursuing equality and justice are the right things to do	Implementation intentions	Gollwitzer (1999), Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006)

would help him to identify a transcendent narrative based on his Lutheran religious values of God's justice in the world. By making this transcendent narrative salient at a strategic moment, the intervention would encourage Danny to act in accordance with those values—even when it is difficult to do so.

10.2 Can I Engage? Responding to Threat and Anxiety with Courage and Patience

Establishing a reason to engage by activating a transcendent narrative identity is only the first step towards an interracial interaction. An effective virtue PPI for interracial interactions must also address anxiety and threat that may prevent a White person from engaging in an interracial interaction.

First, an intervention may reframe and normalize feelings of anxiety. Yeager et al. (2016) have examined how the effects of positive psychological belonging interventions have increased positive outcomes for disadvantaged students by addressing social identity threat. Lay theory interventions, like the belonging intervention, provide participants with a way to assign meaning to their experiences, help people to make sense of challenges, and provide access to the tools to overcome obstacles. Providing an alternative lay theory, that emphasizes the challenges of interracial interactions as both normal and improvable, may be able to counter both avoidance and withdrawal behavior among White people faced with negative stereotypes (e.g., Carr et al., 2012; Neel & Shapiro, 2012).

It may also be helpful for White people to reappraise the stress of interracial interactions as a challenge rather than a threat. Jamieson et al. (2016) describe challenge states as scenarios in which people perceive that they have coping resources that exceed the stressful demands of a situation. Threat states are activated when the demands of a stressful situation are perceived as exceeding coping resources. An important part of an interracial interaction intervention for White people will be bolstering coping resources and increasing self-efficacy (see Schultz et al., 2015). Increasing self-efficacy may involve interventions that provide training, education, and opportunities to practice and learn from mistakes in learning-oriented environments. Ultimately, the intervention should positively frame anxiety as a sign that White people are responding to a challenge, marshalling resources, and have the means to respond to a surmountable challenge.

After Danny chooses to engage in interracial interactions, he will likely feel anxiety arise, and interventions can help Danny cope with the stress and anxiety. An intervention at this stage could encourage him to anticipate, normalize, and reframe the anxiety he feels as a challenge that he is equipped to handle. Meaning-making interventions (e.g., King, 2001), in which Danny would imagine his future self engaging in meaningful interracial interactions, may also provide a way to manage stress and anxiety. Another type of intervention may utilize narratives to model acts of

courage in interracial interactions for Danny so that he can emulate and reference them in his real-life interracial interactions when he feels anxiety.

10.3 How Do I Continue to Engage?

The first two questions address how White people might take the first step to engaging in an interracial interaction. However, for lasting change to occur, White people must continue to engage in interracial interactions—especially when it is difficult, when mistakes are made, when engaging is tiring, and when it would be easier to withdraw. Patience interventions may be particularly important in addressing continued engagement in interracial interactions. Schnitker, Felke, et al. (2017a) observed that transcendent meaning-making was an important factor in whether or not people exercised patience when faced with obstacles to their goals. Thomas and Schnitker (2017) observed similar trends: people were more likely to exercise patience and effort on goals that were meaningful to them. They also found that patient people were more likely to pursue meaningful goals (Thomas & Schnitker, 2017). These findings suggest that virtue PPIs intending to foster continued engagement in interracial interactions might be most effective when directly re-activating or reminding participants of a transcendent narrative identity that can meaningfully frame their efforts. At the same time, indirect interventions to build patience, like meditation or teaching general emotion regulation skills (like cognitive reappraisal), may also have an effect (Schnitker, 2012).

Virtue PPIs that prepare White people for potential obstacles may also prove effective. Gollwitzer (1999) worked with people whose goals included weight loss or smoking cessation. By anticipating obstacles ahead of time, people are more likely to be able to automatically respond with a plan to overcome the anticipated obstacle. In a meta-analysis of studies on implementation intentions, Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006) found that implementation intentions helped people attain their goals and shielded against disengagement in the face of obstacles or failure. By anticipating potential obstacles ahead of time, White people may be better able to stay engaged even when they make mistakes, fail, or encounter obstacles.

For Danny, this might mean reminding him of transcendent narrative, looking at the bigger picture, and re-committing to his goal of engaging interracial interactions. It may be helpful for him to reflect on why he's engaging in interracial interactions and how it aligns with his values. Reflecting on where he has felt anxiety or experienced difficulty may also help him better prepare for future challenges.

11 Preparing for Experimental Studies

In this chapter, we have described a wide range of intervention activities that may be experimentally tested in a U.S. university context. In addition to consideration of which activities will be most relevant and beneficial for a particular sam-

ple, researchers should also thoughtfully examine which measures might be most helpful in determining the effectiveness of the intervention. Key outcome measures may include virtue (e.g., 3-Factor Patience Scale and the revised Courage Measure; Howard & Alipour, 2014; Schnitker, 2012), threat and anxiety (e.g., State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Stress Appraisal Measure, and Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; Peacock & Wong, 1990; Spielberger, 1983; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), friendship networks, and interracial interactions (e.g., Interracial Interactions Intentions; Perry, Murphy, et al., 2015b). Researchers should monitor anxiety measures to minimize risk and harm to participants. Mediating or moderating variables like pre-college exposure to diversity or the ethnicity of participants' roommate(s) may also be considered.

Researchers may also want to think carefully about the demographics of student populations from which they are recruiting. For example, to measure the frequency of student interracial interactions, there must be opportunities for White people to engage in interracial interactions. An ideal population would consist mostly of White students with enough non-White students to provide opportunities for interracial interactions to occur. Also, researchers should consider which students might best positioned to yield benefits from the intervention. For example, it is unlikely that a student who has a low interest in reducing his or her prejudice will benefit from the intervention. A pre-survey to screen participants ahead of time for willingness and motivation to decrease prejudice and engage in interracial interactions may be helpful in determining which students will benefit most from the intervention.

12 Future Directions

Looking ahead to the future of employing PPIs to increase intergroup engagement, we propose several paths forward. Experimental research that tests the efficacy of courage and patience PPIs in interracial interactions, both inside and outside the lab, is a critical first step. We have offered many potential PPIs that target interracial interactions, but it will be necessary to determine which courage and patience PPIs have the greatest impact. College campuses, especially freshman populations, may present unique opportunities to observe how PPIs targeting interracial interactions may influence developing friendship networks, collective action, and bias reduction. Also, much of the research on interracial interactions has focused on Black-White interactions, but a diverse college campus may offer increased opportunities to observe how these interventions might work differently for Latinx-White, Asian-White, and Native-White interracial interactions.

Thinking beyond race relations in the United States, it will be important to consider majority and minority groups in other contexts around the world. For example, could patience and courage interventions increase intergroup interactions between other majority and minority groups in multicultural contexts (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians, Christians and Muslims in the U.S., or LGBTQ people and conservatives in Russia)?

Accounting for cultural considerations in each context would be critical to developing effective interventions.

It will also be beneficial to examine at which points it is most effective to employ virtue PPIs to facilitate intergroup engagement. At which developmental phase over the life course will the virtue PPIs yield the most impact? In this chapter, we have chosen to focus on young adults during the transition to college because it's a developmentally sensitive time when people are open to new ideas (Arnett, 2000) and because the college environment offers an opportunity for virtue PPIs to be easily implemented. Moreover, changing interracial interaction patterns early in life has the potential to alter the entire life course trajectory of interactions. There are only a few longitudinal studies that focus specifically on majority group members and interracial interactions, but the results from these studies point to encouraging long-term outcomes when White people engage in interracial interactions. Researchers found that over the course of college, students with more outgroup friendships in their senior year demonstrated less ingroup bias and intergroup anxiety (Levin et al., 2003). Other studies demonstrate how exposure to interracial interactions can alter future thinking, behavior, and outcomes. For example, meta-analysis findings demonstrate that intergroup contact reduces prejudice by increasing knowledge of outgroups, developing empathy and perspective taking, and reducing anxiety (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Extrapolating from these findings and building on the work of life course researchers (Elder, 1985), it is reasonable to hypothesize that changing interracial patterns at a critical timepoint, like the start of college, can change the way students experience bias and anxiety such that they create more inclusive environments over a lifetime. However, other developmental transition points for virtue PPIs should be considered by researchers as well (e.g., interventions for children and parents that would encourage interracial interactions in the very earliest years).

If virtue PPIs prove effective for increasing positive interracial interactions in laboratory studies, researchers should also consider how they could be implemented at scale and applied more broadly in real-world environments. The College Transition Collaborative (CTC; <http://collegetransitioncollaborative.org/>), a project started at Stanford University's Project for Education Research that Scales (PERTS; <https://www.perts.net/>), may provide a compelling model for implementing future psychological interventions in real world environments. With an emphasis on research, collaborative partnerships, and making resources easily accessible to practitioners, the CTC has integrated psychological interventions (that have been shown to boost retention and academic achievement for underrepresented minority and first-generation college students) into the college transition process at 28 colleges and universities. Overall, researchers should consider how peer-reviewed research with the potential for practical implementation might be disseminated and scaled.

Additionally, the focus of this paper has been on the development of interventions targeting majority group members precisely because they are rarely the target of PPIs and have untapped potential to enact change in their environments. However, virtue-focused PPIs may also be advantageous to minority group members who *must* engage in acts of patience and courage daily as they navigate majority-White spaces that may be unjust, anxiety-provoking, frustrating, and emotionally depleting.

Developing interventions focused on minority group members that increase courage and patience may promote more psychological resources that can help to buffer the negative effects of everyday stressors (e.g., microaggressions, anxiety about being a target). We also want to emphasize that we are **not** suggesting that virtue development for minority group members will solve the problem of inequity and inequality present in the United States today. These types of interventions for minority group members may serve as a band-aid, intended to buffer negative psychological effects, but they do not, and cannot, address the root cause. More (arguably, much more) will be required of majority group members at both the individual and systemic levels to address the root causes of inequality and racism to create multicultural environments of true inclusion and equity.

Last, we have argued that virtue PPIs may be an effective way to reduce implicit bias, racism, and prejudice on an individual level for White people through interracial interactions, but this is only the first step. Unfortunately, research has shown that many White people prefer to endorse support for racial equity at an individual level (e.g., “Solving problems of race depends on individuals changing their attitudes”), but are resistant to acknowledging systemic factors that encourage and maintain racial inequality (Adams, Edkins, Lacka, Pickett, & Cheryan, 2008; DiAngelo, 2010; Zamudio & Rios, 2006). It is critical that we acknowledge the many systemic factors in American life (and in multicultural societies everywhere) that promote inequality for minorities and segregation between groups. Our hope is that virtue PPIs would help White people be better positioned to examine and more motivated to change the many system-level factors that contribute to inequality.

13 Conclusion

There are many opportunities for majority group members to shirk responsibility, yield to fear, and act with impatience in favor of a more comfortable, “safer” path. Virtue PPIs offer a compelling alternative trajectory; they emphasize the bigger picture, encourage people to look beyond themselves, and demonstrate how majority group members can act courageously and patiently in interracial interactions. With time, small acts of patience and courage can dramatically shift life trajectories so that people are equipped to create multicultural environments of equity and inclusion.

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Exploring Positive Psychological Interventions as Race, Gender and Disability Intersect



Chandra Donnell Carey, Jenelle S. Pitt, Jennifer Sánchez, Stacie Robertson and Elias Mpofu

Abstract This chapter will discuss the need for a positive psychology framework that can be useful for counseling individuals toward healthy social identity development considering the intersectionality of race and ethnicity with, gender and disability in the United States. It aims to elucidate the qualities of a culturally responsive, strengths-based perspective to examine well-being for historical socially marginalized groups. Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman (*American Psychologist*, 55:5–14, 2000) have presented a schema regarding the strength of our positive humanity; as the diversity of our society grows, there does appear to be a need to have focused understandings of identities that are colored by intergenerational experiences of oppression and cultural subversions. The complex nature of intersecting identities calls to question, how broadly-based themes of the strengths of individuals can adequately address multiple aspects of one's identity. This chapter will utilize an intersectionality (Crenshaw in *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989:139–167, 1989) approach to decipher collective strengths among historically marginalized groups. Understanding how cultural context and environment can mold an interpretation of strength (Wright in *The handbook of social and clinical psychology*. Pergamon, New York, pp. 469–487, 1991) across multiple identities is critical. The chapter will begin with a

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review of the history of positive psychology in addressing targeted cultural variables of: (a) race/ethnicity; (b) gender and (c) disability, specifically focused on mental health support interventions. We highlight the attributes of an intersectionality-based clinical approach to counseling for social identity development at the confluence of race, ethnicity, gender and disability.

Keywords Positive psychology · Intersectionality · Race · Gender · Disability

1 Introduction

Historically, it has been argued that ‘our common humanity is strong enough to suggest psychological goals to strive for, that cut across social divides’ (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000, p. 90). However, within present-day contexts of the vast dimensions of diversity in a global society, it seems highly relevant to explore the attributes of clinical approaches to counseling which can enhance social identity development at the confluence of multiple identities. It appears to be pertinent at this juncture to query the efficacy of seemingly ahistorical approaches in order to address individual identities that are colored by intergenerational experiences of oppression and cultural subversions. An even more challenging question presents itself when you seek to understand how broad variables such as ‘strengths’ can be specific enough to account for complex diversity at the intersections of multiple identities. Understanding how cultural context and environment can mold an interpretation of strength (Wright, 1991) across multiple identities is critical.

Multiculturalism, the “4th force of psychology” has been prominently featured in the literature for approximately 30 years, with a key focus surrounding recognizing individual identity and the impact of multiple factors on behavior (e.g., class status, ability, gender, historical and systemic biases). The resulting explorations seemed to suggest a focus on the interactions between the individual, their varied cultural identities and behavior, versus the previous focus in the literature on group identity and “humanity” as the critical component of identity. Positive psychology posits that personal characteristics and traits can help individuals learn to flourish and find happiness; “however, there has been little effort to highlight the cultural factors that influence health and the meaning of the good life” (Lopez, Prosser, Neufeld, & Rasmussen, 2002, p. 701).

One potential framework is ‘intersectionality’ (Crenshaw, 1989). Few studies have utilized an intersectionality approach to understand collective strengths among historically marginalized groups; strengths that arise from lived experiences with race, gender and/or disability status. It suggests a more focused manner of navigating positive psychological interventions with individuals who have intersecting racial/ethnic, gender and disability-related identities is warranted.

Intersectionality as a term was first developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw a critical race scholar (1989) to address the legal challenges surrounding gender discrimination and the compounded effect of both racial and gender discrimination. This construct provided a platform to discuss multiple identities and the complexities surrounding

identity, when an individual is viewed holistically. With roots in Black feminist-activist thought (Rosenthal, 2016) the framework or theory provides a scholarly platform to consider multiple avenues of oppression and the resulting impact on the individual. This theoretical framework thus allows for a positive psychology schema that can be useful for counseling individuals toward healthy social identity development in sync with the intersectionality of race-ethnicity, gender and disability in the United States. This chapter aims to explore the qualities of a culturally responsive, strengths-based perspective to examine well-being for historically socially marginalized groups with multiple identities. Thereby exploring the potential merging of the constructs of positive psychology with very tenets of intersectionality.

The term “intersectionality” was born out of feminist research and studies of racism. The United States in the 1980’s demonstrated seemingly diametrically opposed lived realities where there were apparent increases in financial access for people of color and women, but also harsh social penalties for those with lower social capital (Hochschild, 1998). The navigation of racial politics and psychological well-being occurring, while excluding considerations of gender or social class appeared to create parallel bodies of literature focused on singular identities. That singular focus inhibited a thorough review of health and well-being or political behavior of individuals that simultaneously inhabited these multiple identities (Cole, 2009). Crenshaw (1989), originally coined the word ‘intersectionality’ to describe the intersection of race and gender, indicating that existing feminist theories did not consider the lived experiences of women of color and how these experiences might differ from those of women from a white or European background. There existed an overall assumption that women are a homogeneous group, ignoring factors of racism, classism or other identities that might factor into ones lived experiences. Ignoring that women of color may experience both sexism and racism in studies of feminism, excluded the woman of color, neglecting her specific concerns and her specific struggles in conversations surrounding women’s rights.

While feminist theories assumed women were a monolith solely defined by gender, critical race theorist also assumed that the experience of people of color were solely defined by race or ethnicity. Intersectionality argues that this is not the case and that a woman of color has lived experiences different from both a man of color and a woman who is from a more privileged racial status. Intersectionality therefore, acknowledges these differences, recognizing that adding race to feminist theory or gender to racism theories does not fully resolve the issue (Shields, 2008). Crenshaw (1989) noted that “the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism...” (p. 140). Recognizing that individuals are not experiencing double discrimination, but an interaction based on their multiple identities, Mahalingam, Balan, and Haritatos (2008) note there are three tenants of intersectionality:

- (a) No social group is homogeneous
- (b) People must be located in terms of social structures that capture power relations implied by those structures
- (c) There are unique, non-additive effects of identifying with more than one social group (pp. 326).

Overall, intersectionality shines a light on how multiple forms of inequality and identity interrelate, recognizing that for individuals, no one identity explains life experiences, neither experiences of privilege nor experiences of oppression. Instead, it is the combination of identities that presents a unique experience of its own. Intersectionality allows for the overlap of multiple identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, abilities/disabilities). The lens of intersectionality attempts to keep marginalized individuals from being further oppressed by the movements meant to be supportive. A recent systematic review of the literature on positive psychology, gender, race and ethnicity found that the “intersectionality perspective in positive psychology research remains a largely unexplored area” (Donaldson, Dollwet, & Rao, 2015, p. 25). Positive psychology thus has a pivotal opportunity to move beyond a consideration of multiple identities, still in isolation of each other, to a concerted focus on understanding and building strengths at the intersections of multiple identities.

2 Construction of Intersectionality

Cole (2009) presented an overview of the varied constructions of intersectionality. It is essential for therapists to be familiar with the varied presentations of intersectional identity. The essential tenets of intersectionality highlight several key factors: (1) shared group identities are not homogenous; (2) individuals must be examined within the social dynamics and power structures of the identities they hold (Mahalingam et al. 2008); and (3) there may exist multiple and non-additive effects of having multiple identities. The 3rd construction is perhaps the most recognizable from earlier theoretical iterations with the terminology, ‘double or triple-jeopardy’ (Beale, 1970). The idea is that someone with two identities that tend to be devalued in society will experience more hardship than someone who identifies with one like identity. Similarly, *triple jeopardy* or the concept of *triple threat* has been used by authors to illustrate effects resulting from three marginalized identities, for instance, across (a) race/ethnicity, gender (assignment)/gender (expression), and affectional orientation (Greene, 1995; Meyer, 2010); (b) race, disability, and poverty (Block, Balcazar, & Keys, 2001; Pitt, Romero-Ramirez, Lewis, & Boston, 2010); and race, class, and gender (Hill Collins, 2009). Overall, the *jeopardy* concept traditionally underscores attention to more than one system of mistreatment based on each identity variable with the idea being that effects become additive in nature. Take for instance, Albert, a 27-year old Latino male who falls while from a roof while working and injures his back. Due to the nature of the injury (i.e., spinal cord), Albert now has a permanent physical disability that prevents him from engaging in any labor-intensive work. The abrupt change in his life has also caused significant conflict within Albert’s marriage and family due to his inability to provide as the head of household and be intimate in ways he once was with his wife. Prior to his job in construction, Albert graduated from high school and took some community college courses. Some factors to consider from a *double* or *triple* jeopardy perspective include Albert’s race/ethnicity, gender, ability status, class, and educational attainment. While double and triple jeopardy provides a

base by which to understand clients and a bit about the contexts which influence them, Ransford (1980), King (1988), and Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black and Burkholder (2003) offered contributions that stretched outside of the perspective of independent and cumulative impact. An intersectional framework can be used to conceptualize the complexity of multi-faceted and interactive dimensions of marginalization and control over and beyond double and triple jeopardy. For example, Albert may be supported in finding employment (i.e., front desk clerk) that allows him to provide for his family and contribute to his community. Simultaneously, his status as a Latino-male who has a permanent physical disability that also impacts his intimacy levels, and is working in a specific type of job that may not align well with gender and cultural expectations causes him to be shunned. If Albert were a client, the counselor would need to understand that the ongoing exposure to varying social positioning due to status creates “unique social space[s]” (Ransford, 1980, p. 277) that many clients must navigate as part of their lived experience.

3 The Intersection of Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Disability

In that intersectionality provides a framework for race/ethnicity and gender, it also can provide a lens in which we can view the unique challenges of people with multiple additional identities including disability. In this context, intersectionality provides an acknowledgment that disadvantage, exclusion, and inequality can be based on the interaction of multiple risk factors (AAPF, n.d.). In viewing disability, gender and race/ethnicity, intersectionality recognizes the interrelatedness of the multiple dimensions of identity and points out that these dimensions are interrelated and influenced by each other and society. It is this interaction and influence of one dimension of identity on the other that creates an element of one’s overall identity. In this framework, identities are interrelated and influenced by each other and by society (Mahalingam et al., 2008). This concept, however, is different from the historical views of researchers investigating issues of disability.

Historically, disability has been given “primacy” over issues of gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, age, and/or cultural background (Goethals, De Schauwer, & Van Hove, 2015). Disability research often assumes that the experience of disability and the experiences of individuals with disabilities are similar, regardless of other dimensions of identity. Using the concepts of intersectionality in disability-related research allows us to recognize that a woman of color with a disability has unique experiences that does not mirror any other group of individuals with disabilities. The interplay of racism, sexism and ableism each affects how she will navigate through the world and the affects where she finds in-group connections.

The effects of diverse experiences connected to varied identities can be seen in certain disability related statistics. For example, in a study conducted in the late 90’s in the United States, Native American and Black women had the highest rates of disability compared to other women (White, Asian, and Hispanic), additionally nearly all women have a higher rate of disability than their male counterparts except Native

American populations where the rate of disability is nearly the same regardless of gender (Jans & Stoddard, 1999). More recent data collected in 2016 show similar findings with Native American and Black women experiencing higher rates of disability than their counterparts from other racial/ethnic backgrounds (Erickson, Lee, & Von Schrader, 2017). Other statistics show that women with disabilities are at the highest risk for experiencing sexual assault, with men with disabilities experiencing sexual assault at the next highest rate. The factor of disability alone increases the risk of sexual assault (Basile, Breiding, & Smith, 2016). Yet, as a whole society often does not address this difference or the differences in which offenders are treated based on the identities of the victim.

In reviewing these statistics on sexual assault, it should be noted that statistics by gender, disability, and race/ethnicity are not available. In the Basile et al. (2016) study, 75% of the population surveyed self-identified as Non-Hispanic White, thus making it difficult to address issues of sexual assault by gender, race/ethnicity and disability. This study addresses issues of violence based on two the dimensions of gender and disability. From these statistics, we have no understanding of the impact of sexual assault on a person who has multiple social identities. What is the interplay between racism, sexism and ableism when it comes to sexual violence? Is there a group more vulnerable than others in this equation? Broadly speaking, this isolation of identities does not allow us to fully understand the complexities of the intersectional lived experience (Pena, Stapleton, & Schaffer, 2016).

Disability diagnosis (Pena et al., 2016), services provided, and overall health care received are affected by the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender for the individual with a disability. It has long been noted that male African American students are more likely to receive a learning or behavioral disability diagnosis, thus placing them in Special Education and leaving them at risk for higher rates of dropping out of school (Woodson & Harris, 2018). Another example was noted in research conducted in South Africa, but comparable to global research, where investigators found women were less likely to be asked for the proper samples needed to diagnosis tuberculosis (Smith, Burger, Classsens, Ayles, & Beyers, 2016). Citing gender bias in testing, this study also hints at a circular problem in diagnosing women in general. The results of this study indicate that the prevalence of tuberculosis tends to be higher in males than in females. With this statistic in mind, medical professionals are less likely to test for tuberculosis when a woman comes in with a persistent cough. This lack of testing and subsequently lack of diagnosis then leads to less women being diagnosed with TB, which in and of itself could explain why TB is seen as more prevalent in men.

Globally, there has been a movement to address issues of intersectionality as they affect civil rights. In 2013 the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held a general discussion on the women and girls with disabilities. Citing that most non-discrimination laws and policies operate on a one-dimensional approach, lumping all women into one monolithic category, ignoring issues of disability, race/ethnicity and social class to name a few. The precipice for including discussion on gender and disability was born out of a 2001 World Conference that included gender into conversations on racism and racial discrimination, recognizing

that people undergo multiple forms of discrimination (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, 2014). This acknowledgement of intersecting identities and their connection to human rights is a large step forward in developing a means of addressing these issues. It should be noted, however, in the discussion of gender and disability, issues of race/ethnicity were only addressed in a limited manner and disability was not addressed in conversations on gender and race/ethnicity and racial discrimination discussions. Seeking a framework that would capture the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender and disability and their influence on overall well-being appears to be a timely venture, given the prominence of positive psychology in the literature, a framework to guide professionals is needed.

4 History of Positive Psychology in Addressing Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability

Positive psychology, with its focus on individual character strengths and virtues, was officially born in 1998 (Seligman, 1998). Despite the impressive empirical evidence to support positive psychology and its claims of multi- and cross-cultural applications (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000), it has received its fair share of criticism. Critics of positive psychology claim that it reinforces western (e.g., European, U.S.) values and definitions of happiness. Some of the main criticisms of positive psychology include its focus on elitist (Wong & Roy, 2017), individualist (Miller, 2008), and faithless (Nelson & Slife, 2017) ideals, while ignoring significant issues, such as repression, inequity, and poverty often encountered by individuals belonging to marginalized minority groups. Moreover, much of the research on positive psychology was based on predominantly White samples (Lopez et al., 2002). However, despite these factors, positive psychology sparked the interests of researchers and practitioners regarding its applicability and utility with culturally diverse individuals.

Some researchers refer to their findings of universal attributes (e.g., happiness) across cultural groups to support positive psychology's culture-free perspective (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Snyder & Lopez, 2007), while others stress that although positive attributes are found in all cultures, they are rooted in culture and differ accordingly (Sandage, Hill, & Vang, 2003). We submit that the positive attributes and expressions of them across specific cultural identities such as race/ethnicity, gender, and disability present a unique opportunity for positive psychologists to leverage the strengths-based focus across multiple identities to facilitate highly individualized successful outcomes.

Race/ethnicity. Race and ethnicity are dominant identities within the United States. Although the majority of the American population remains White, there has been an increase of individuals who belong to diverse and multi-racial/ethnic minority groups. One of the fastest-growing minority groups are Hispanics/Latinx. Individuals with Hispanics/Latinx identities tend to hold more collectivistic values and share the Spanish language. Aligning with positive psychology, one of the ways

this group tends to address life's problems are with "dichos" or Spanish proverbs (Zuñiga, 1991), which "teach the art of living by overcoming losses and celebrating life's blessings" (Comas-Díaz, 2006, p. 444). In addition, among Mexican American youth, life satisfaction was found to be related to and influenced by familism (Edwards & Lopez, 2006). There is research that clearly shows differences relating to positive psychology attributes when comparing White and non-White groups. For example, when comparing optimism and pessimism in Asian Americans and European/White Americans, the two groups did not differ in levels of optimism and depressive symptoms; however, Asian Americans had higher levels of pessimism than European/White Americans, with pessimism being positively correlated with problem-solving among Asian Americans, despite their negative correlation among European/White Americans (Chang, 1996). Examining the cultural influence on constructs such as hopefulness, happiness and life-satisfaction is clearly a complex issue, which calls for a sophisticated framework to best serve an increasingly diverse client-base.

The evidence supporting the variation in positive psychology among racial/ethnic minority groups when compared to the majority, resulted in identification of culturally-related personal skills (e.g., bi- or multi-lingual skills), interpersonal supports (e.g., extended families), and environmental conditions (e.g., prayer or meditation space; Hays, 2001). Recently, scholars have advocated using a culturally-informed positive psychology approach to help racial/ethnic minority clients by capitalizing on the strengths of their particular racial/ethnic groups to improve their psychological well-being, but also to improve their environment and communities (Chang, Downey, Hirsch, & Lin, 2016), which is historically more in-line with their culture and values. However, as the racial and ethnic demographic and cultural groups in America continue to change, through immigration, assimilation, or blending, it will be important to explore the processes of biculturalism essential to well-being (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2009). Incorporating an intersectional framework into positive psychology can facilitate a broader exploration of constructs key to positive psychology.

Gender. Positive psychology ascribes to a masculine framework. Some scholars have proposed focusing on those positive aspects of masculinity when working with males in order to foster positive psychotherapy outcomes (Kiselica, Englar-Carlson, Horne, & Fisher, 2008). For example, when working with males, the positive psychology/positive masculinity (PPPM) framework, which focuses on healthy traditional male strengths such as, building relationships through shared activities (e.g., sports), demonstrating caring by taking on a protective role (e.g., provider), being self-reliant (e.g., using one's own resources to overcome life's problems), risk-taking (e.g., protecting others from danger), and using humor (e.g., as a way to cope), can be used to help them overcome maladaptive behaviors (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). There is research to substantiate such claims. One study found that males who endorsed traditional Western masculine values such as risk-taking, also reported higher levels of courage and endurance (Hammer & Good, 2010).

There are obvious differences between socialized gender norms. For example, females are more likely to perceive and express gratitude (Kashdan, Mishra, Breen,

& Froh, 2009). However, when examining the role of gratitude on family support, only males, when compared to females, were found benefit by exhibiting gratitude (Froh, Yurkewicz, & Kashdan, 2009). Feminist scholars have expressed their concerns about positive psychology's "conception of a self-contained individual" which perpetuates gender inequality (Becker & Marecek, 2008, p. 1769). In fact, recent studies have found that some of these desired masculine behaviors are even counterproductive among males. For example, males who endorsed traditional Western masculine values such as being in control of their emotions and self-reliant, also reported lower levels of courage, autonomy, and resilience (Hammer & Good, 2010). Moreover, gendered social norms and values can also differ based on culture identification and assimilation. For example, while an American White male might consider autonomy and self-reliance to be a strength, whereas a male from a collectivist culture might perceive autonomy and self-reliance as "undermining of the community" (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010, p. 279). The conflicted understanding of how one cultural identity impacts individuals; requires how other identities can be addressed through a positive psychological framework.

Disability and Mental Health Support Interventions. The rehabilitation counseling profession is fundamental in addressing disability and mental health support interventions leading to increased quality of life (QOL) outcomes. Although "positive psychology" as is commonly understood today began only 20 years ago, among rehabilitation professionals (e.g., rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation psychologists), it has been around at least a half century prior. While the rest of society (most scholars included) tended to view people with disabilities as less fortunate, needing to be cared for, or even pitied, individuals belonging to these marginalized groups often viewed themselves more favorably (Dembo, Leviton, & Wright, 1956/1975; Wright & Howe, 1969; Wright & Lopez, 2002). Research and medical professionals were repeatedly encouraged to utilize a strengths-based approach when working with clients in order to facilitate treatment recommendations and assist with problem-solving (Wright & Fletcher, 1982).

Rehabilitation scholars have examined positive psychology factors, such as hope, resilience, and meaning-making in individuals with various populations including veterans with spinal cord injuries (deRoon-Cassini, de St Aubin, Valvano, Hastings, & Horn, 2009), cancer survivors (Katz, Flasher, Cacciapaglia, & Nelson, 2001), and HIV/AIDS (Sung, Muller, Ditchman, Phillips, & Chan, 2013). Positive psychology has also been explored with individuals with psychiatric conditions including cognitive, depressive, bipolar, schizophrenia spectrum, trauma-related, and substance use disorders. For example, positive coping predicted resilience, social functioning, and social support among individuals with depressive, bipolar, and schizophrenia spectrum disorders (Sánchez, Umucu, Schoen, Barnes, Chan, & Bezyak, 2016). Focusing on strengths-based activities predicted happiness among individuals with cognitive disorders (Andrewes, Walker, & O'Neill, 2014). Hope and optimism predicted life satisfaction in adolescents with cognitive disorders (Shogren, Lopez, Wehmeyer, Little, & Pressgrove, 2006). Resilience predicted more positive outcomes among individuals who had experienced adverse childhood experiences (Meng, Fleury, Xiang, Li, & D'Arcy, 2018). Ultimately, mental health and positive emotions are

associated with numerous benefits including physical health, social support, and participation in life roles (Kobau et al., 2011).

Positive psychological interventions have actually been found to benefit individuals with depressive symptoms more than those who were non-depressed (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). However, disability, like gender or race/ethnicity, is a singular identity status. It is clear that rehabilitation counseling has been able to leverage tenets of positive psychology, but an integrated approach that is rooted in intersectionality is needed for understanding the intersections of identities and the impact on facilitating meaningful hopefulness that is respectful of those identities.

5 The Argument for a Model of Intersectional Intervention

As counselors start to develop their understanding of *intersectionality*, the base idea is the application of seeing the lived experiences of clients who are “multiply-burdened... [whose experiences] cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140). What we know from the literature and qualitative accounts reviewing issues surrounding identity is that often in the day to day experience, it is challenging for individuals to disentangle their individual identities as they vacillate between privilege and oppression. An intersectional approach provides a fuller picture of the complexity of multiple identity dimensions, interlocking systems of oppression (Hill Collins, 2009), and the reciprocal ways in which these systems are reinforced. Simultaneous and interactive oppressive systems often force clients to navigate multiple points of mundane extreme environmental stress (MEES) (Carroll, 1998; Pierce, 1975) as part of their lived experiences. Recent evaluations of morbidity prevalence has additionally investigated the impact of daily MEES on physical health factors for individuals with salient multiple identities. Geronimus (1996) first addressed the concept of *weathering*, which presents with negative physiological consequences of social inequality; examining the impact of daily systemic oppression and racism. This dynamic representation of stress is intentionally designed to be relentless in its fragmentation and silencing of individuals. As such, it is important for counselors to operate with awareness regarding the destructive and diminishing aspects of such powerful and controlling systems particularly as they relate to client processes and outcomes. When working with clients for who MEES reflects reality, counselors should also note that clients are likely developing essential skills needed for not only surviving but thriving in such environmental contexts. The navigation of these contexts allows for development of skills which not only capitalizes on singular cultural norms, but also those gained from the intersections of those norms. This insight serves as a profound, strengths-based starting point for counselors who want to provide high-quality services.

As an extension of strengths-based clinical work and constructs, *resilience* would be one construct to examine in the context of intersectionality. While there are many ways to conceptualize resilience, for the purposes of this chapter and bearing in mind the client population (i.e., nexus of race/ethnicity, gender, and disability) under

discussion, resilience can be defined as, “the capacity for successful adaptation, positive functioning, or competence... despite high-risk status, chronic stress or following prolonged or severe trauma” (Egeland, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1993, p. 517). This is a fitting conceptualization as experiences pertaining to intersectionality are often framed as pervasive and traumatic (Bowleg et al., 2003; Pitt, 2016) while also described as spaces used for rebuilding of self and increased functioning amidst adversity. Our basic humanity dictates that each person is a cultural being and a part of the equation of diversity (Gines, Carey, & Wilson 2018); thus the onus in a clinical setting rests with the counselor and client to identify and discuss the relevant intersections of identity.

Depending on certain counselor factors (e.g., comfort, knowledge, skills, etc.), *ego resilience* may be another area by which assessments, exploration, goal setting, plan development, and therapeutic techniques can be adapted relative to intersectionality and clients (Olaoye, 2012). Ego resilience specifically reflects one’s ability in adapting to environments (Block & Block, 1980; Block & Kremen, 1996). Additionally, higher levels of ego-resilience have been linked to the generation of positive emotions thus leading to increased levels of thriving in the face of hardship and difficulty (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001). Positive emotions such as love, joy, hope, and satisfaction can be used by individuals to “bounce back” (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004, p. 320) from adverse situations.

Moreover, the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001) also has its place in intersectionality as it can be used to explore spaces of *hope* and *satisfaction* in the clinical context. This particular theory frames the accumulation of positive emotions experienced by the individual thus resulting in resources that can be used for the promotion of overall wellness and healthy social identity development. Along similar lines, exploring *character strengths* and *virtues* as part of positive psychological interventions in the context of intersectionality is worthwhile. Peterson and Seligman (2004) note 24-character strengths (e.g., love, forgiveness, hope, creativity, etc.) and 6 virtues (e.g., wisdom, courage, transcendence, etc.) that can be used as counselors work with clients particularly around notions of adaptability, goals, and optimal functioning.

Still for some populations at the nexus of race/ethnicity, gender, and ability status, for example, authors have examined the construct of *resistance* (rejection of prevailing socio-political and cultural norms) in the context of intersectionality (Gunn, Sacks, & Jemal, 2018; McDonald, Keys, & Balcazar, 2007; Pitt, 2016) finding that individuals become more creative as they navigate life on the margins and move towards greater experiences of hope, healing, knowledge, and “power of self-definition” (Hill Collins, 2009, p. 107). Bell Hooks describes spaces of resistance as “site[s] of radical possibility...” (p. 341) whereby “the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds” (Hooks, 1990, p. 341) is both transformative and empowering. Engaging different forms of resistance strategies, for many, leads to resiliency and positive emotions. As such, it cannot be ignored when exploring interventions in the context of intersectionality.

While the focus of resiliency, positive emotions, character strengths and virtues as part of the positive psychology continuum rests on adaptation and positive out-

comes due to buffering against effects of stress, it should be noted that vulnerability to stress is still present for individuals functioning within an intersectional framework. An important takeaway for counselors is that resilient individuals hone their capacity to rebound from stress in ways that others do not (Garmezy 1991; Tugade, & Fredrickson, 2004). This is essential for clinicians to grasp as their actions albeit unintended should not contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes based on client type. For clients who the convergence of identities and social positions places them in contexts where strengths must be enacted in order to thrive in certain environments, assuming that those individuals are somehow *superhuman* (e.g., *Super Black Woman*, *Super Crip*, etc.) in nature overlays a false identity and negates legitimacy as it excludes fuller examination of processes that are occurring within and around individuals from an intersectional lens. From a clinical standpoint, this type of “short changing” and still singular-identity focus ultimately results in a disservice to understanding and relating to individuals from a holistic perspective.

6 Future Directions

Walking in the other person's shoes is a familiar adage in the counseling context. At its most fundamental level, the clinical mantra serves as a charge for counselors to seek understanding of clients' stories, processes, and outcomes from their perspective. Moving into this space requires that counselors use lens that attempt to hold clients in their truest form. Counselors should “note that ‘intersectionality’ does not refer to a unitary framework but a range of positions and that essentially it is a heuristic device for understanding boundaries and hierarchies of social life” (Anthias, 2013, p. 4). As such, intersectionality can be applied as a lens or framing when working with individuals who experience multiple intersecting identities and social positioning as the goal is to better understand the complexity that exists as part of clients' lived experiences.

Use of this lens is multifold. McCall's work (2005), although used in the context of research methodologies, is highly transferable to clinical contexts given the attention on categories via the use of (1) narratives (intersectionality understood through the position of lived experiences of each individual) or *anticategorical* approach; (2) differences across identity dimensions (intersectionality understood through a single dimension i.e., *disability* that is more fully explained from the influence of other dimensions that comprise the individual i.e., *race* and *gender*) or *intracategorical* approach; and (3) interrelations of categories (intersectionality understood from relationship among categories that yield social groupings) or *intercategorical* approach. Exploration of intersectionality using McCall's work offers a way to attend to the multi-faceted nature of human beings in a therapeutic context.

Use of intersectionality as part of the discourse and practice in clinical contexts allows for advocacy and promotion of client welfare via ethical responsibility. Intersectionality framing not only facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of clients but can also shed light on factors that influence clients' social identity devel-

opment, as well as the rebuilding of identity across the confluence of race/ethnicity, gender, and disability, for instance. Counselors should note that an intersectional approach versus a unilateral one to social identity development is viewed as necessary (Bowleg, 2008). As the clinical context can serve as a transformative space for clients, employing an intersectionality-based framing allows for interactive viewpoints to exist among contexts (i.e., political, social, environmental, etc.) and stressors (i.e., racism, sexism, ableism, etc.) that influence clients' wellness and overall process of healthy identity development.

The authors posit that de Vries' (2015) model offers another way counselors can incorporate intersectionality framing in their work with clients due to further support positive social identity development. Components of the model include (a) 12 social categories (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexuality, etc.), (b) interrelations among the categories, and (c) influence of social structures (i.e., legal and educational systems, family structures, etc.) yielding a more comprehensive and dynamic view of clients within structural social domains. Similar to ways in which wellness models may be used in clinical contexts, de Vries' (2015) model could be used to better understand how clients are socially positioned across contexts. This knowledge is powerful in guiding service provision.

Due to the emphasis on understanding the relationships among and between various categories and social positioning when using *intersectionality* as a framework, counseling techniques can be better adapted to fit clients. It is important to note that there is no "magic bullet" (Hancock, 2007) relative to working with clients whose social identity development is impacted by the convergence of race, ethnicity, gender, and disability, for instance. Yet, intersectionality as a tool in the clinical context is robust enough to be adapted across diverse client types. It is important to remember that an intersectionality-based clinical approach truly comes alive in the hands of counselors should they choose such an approach. An intersectional framing allows counselors (from a standpoint of empathy) and clients (creating deeper levels of self-awareness and movement towards optimal functioning) to develop deeper understanding of the complexity surrounding experiences of *otherness*, *sense of belonging*, *marginality*, *resistance*, and *visibility* (Anthias, 2013; Hooks, 1990; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), as well as the dynamics of power due to shifting identities and contexts (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). According to Cho et al. (2013): what makes an analysis intersectional—is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power. This framing—conceiving of categories not as distinct but always as permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power—(p. 795).

Because of the mutability of positions and interrelation among systems of power, incorporating the influence of social structures or *societal arenas* (Anthias, 2013, p. 11) into the analysis or intersectional framing that is engaged in within the clinical setting is significant. When one thinks about what brings clients in for counseling, structures that influence their quality of life and overall wellbeing must be accounted for. Anthias (2013) further substantiates the importance of societal arenas as a factor for intersectional framing as they can be examined from the standpoint of how they

contribute to social positions and practices (e.g., educational, legal, and political systems; family structures; images; identity practices; etc.) and how individuals respond to and navigate such spaces.

Counselors seeking to understand and support clients in moving towards deeper levels of empowerment (Block et al., 2001) in the context of shifting experiences of privilege, advantage, and visibility can benefit from employing conceptual complexity—a unique application that intersectional framing offers. While intersectionality is recommended, clinicians have to be careful of unintentionally reinforcing oppressive, one-dimensional contexts that fall short of fully framing clients' experiences particularly when counseling, in essence, is created to be a therapeutic safe space. Minimization of voice, assumption of identity, and even avoidance of certain topics are a few ways in which counselors can unknowingly marginalize clients in the clinical context and further jeopardize positive mental health outcomes (Greene, 1994; Olaoye, 2012).

Questions that counselors ask as part of an intersectionality-based clinical approach should be rooted in *intersectionality*. Though this seems rudimentary in nature, behaviorally, clinicians may not automatically engage in this approach and/or enfold it into their clinical interviewing, assessments, etc. Accessing deeper authentic responses from clients that provide fuller pictures of who they are would require posing inquiries around experiences of marginalization, prejudice, and stress versus identity variables (e.g., race, sex, gender, ability status) in isolation (Bowleg, 2008). For example, when attempting to connect with clients, counselors want to be careful about inadvertently asking clients to rank their identities or fit into pre-defined categories relative to race/ethnicity, gender, and disability, for instance (e.g., *Tell me about life as a Latino man who is diagnosed with schizophrenia*). In certain contexts, given the preceding example, the individual may experience more pervasive negative treatment given the social positioning of disability status as influenced by race/ethnicity and gender. However, if counselors design the context for intersectional dialogue and framing (e.g., *Tell me about stress... [marginalization, discrimination, isolation, etc.] you experience as a result of identities that are important to you*) in the clinical context, chances are clients will provide intersectional responses (Bowleg, 2008; Hancock, 2007) thus leading to greater insight. Continuing to adapt and extend questions to systems and structures that shape client's lived experiences is also a part of the intersectionality-based approach that would be recommended.

Outcomes in counseling are a result of client/counselor variables and their relative interaction. Understanding the complexity that both counselors and clients bring to the clinical interaction serves as a crucial site for success and must be accounted for as part of employing a healthier clinical approach. Developing a fuller understanding of how the confluence of identities and intersecting systems can shape experiences of power, privilege, advantage, and visibility, as well as the process of identity development can guide counselors in more increased levels of perspective-taking and relating to clients from a stance of authenticity and depth. The idea is to use an approach grounded in intersectionality to support clients in optimal functioning.

7 Conclusion

The impetus to interact with our clients holistically; to help facilitate skills which will enhance resilience from a strengths-based perspective; and to effectively utilize the residue strengths clients have developed over the course of their lives, will require more from clinicians. While previous models of culturally-responsive counseling have addressed groups traditionally marginalized in a singular fashion; there have been those investigations that consider the impact of factors as they converge, such as gendered racial identity (Jones & Day, 2018) or disability and queerness (Clare, 2015); the present global society requires a more nuanced review of identity and understanding both the intersections and salient features of identity as it varies from person to person.

An intersectional perspective within a positive psychology framework promotes opportunities to not only build but to capitalize on strengths and assets that the individuals bring as a result of their “survival” in a society that promotes a singular dominant identity as the model. Clinicians are called to openly explore not the singular identities we all hold, but to question and examine the broadness of identities that intersect to form the lived experience of the individuals they are treating. A vigorous respect for the intersection of identity and the beneficial impact it can have on the implementation of positive psychology in treatment will be critical to the field’s growth and ability to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and dynamic society.

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Adventure Therapy and Positive Psychology: A Match Made in ... Nature



Johan Potgieter

Abstract In the challenging and resource scarce South African context, characterized by its cultural diversity, the deliberate combination of adventure therapy and positive psychology holds significant promise to address a number of the criticisms levelled against so-called ‘traditional’ modes of therapy. This chapter introduces the deliberate and strategic combination of adventure therapy and positive psychology as one possible answer to the World Health Organization’s call for the development of novel, integrated interventions that develop with populations, strive to both prevent disease and facilitate mental health, and make optimal use of resources within the person and his/her environment. As a new branch of psychology, it is important that positive psychology continues designing innovative interventions and incorporating interventions from other therapeutic fields that support the psychological well-being of individuals. Since the majority of positive psychology interventions are written- and verbal-based, this chapter invites clinicians and researchers from the field of positive psychology to expand their toolbox by incorporating nature-based adventure therapy intervention. Results from a number of recent South African studies, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, show significant increases in self-reported levels of a number of well-being indicators after conducting interventions in an adventure and nature-based context. These constructs include character strengths, resilience, self-regulation and grit. When integrated into the therapeutic space by positive psychologists and psychotherapists, adventure therapy can help build resilience in individuals and groups within non-clinical settings. This will represent an additional tool to prevent stress-related pathology in relatively healthy populations, and will positively impact the reach, scalability and affordability of health-promotion interventions delivered in resource-scarce contexts like South Africa.

Keywords Positive psychology · Strengths perspective · Intervention · Adventure therapy · Resilience · Mental health

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Preamble: Thoughts on Terminology

Gillis and Ringer (1999) define adventure therapy (AT) as, "... the deliberate, strategic combination of adventure activities with therapeutic change processes, with the goal of making lasting changes in the lives of participants" (p. 29). Beringer and Martin (2003) argue for the use of the term *eco-adventure therapy* (p. 37) in acknowledgement of the important role that a person's relationship with the environment, both socio-cultural and biophysical, plays in these interventions and indeed in all forms of adventure therapy. It is with recognition of this role that the term *adventure therapy* will be used throughout this chapter, as it is most commonly used in literature to represent a rather eclectic field of nature-based or -assisted therapies. These include a diversity of programs, practices and philosophies, including ecotherapy, wilderness therapy, and horticulture therapy. Even with regard to what constitutes 'therapy', there is an ongoing debate and degree of controversy. The term 'therapy' is generally considered to represent a rather tightly defined area of practice, most often indicating a form of treatment designed to relieve or cure some form of injury, disease, or disorder (Merriam-Webster, 2018), and most often after the establishment of a therapeutic relationship between a client and a therapist. It is important to note, though, that an activity or intervention can be 'therapeutic' (therefore facilitating a change toward a healthier state of functioning), without necessarily being focused on a clinical population, or falling strictly within the curative paradigm. The term *adventure therapy* is therefore used in this chapter to represent a group of intervention programmes aimed at the facilitation and the promotion of the bio-psycho-social health and well-being of individuals, groups and communities in general, and not only those living with a particular psychological affliction.

1 Introduction: Global and Local Concerns Regarding Health and Well-Being

While traditional health care has done well in combating various forms of infectious disease and pathology, it has struggled to maintain its effectiveness in a rapidly changing environment. Living in the third millennium means having to contend with lifestyle changes brought on by the explosion of new information, and rapid rates of industrialization and urbanization (Maller, Townsend, Pryor, Brown, & St Leger, 2005). The stress associated with these lifestyle changes has become a global problem (Annerstedt et al., 2010) that has been shown to constitute a growing risk factor for development of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease and diabetes. In this third millennium, where the clichéd expression, "Faster! Higher! Further!" seems to have become our reality, the helping professions have come under increasing pressure due to large generational increases that have been observed in various forms of pathology, and particularly psychopathology in western samples (Twenge, Gentile, DeWalt, Ma, Laceyfield, & Schurtz, 2010). A number of South African studies (Malan et al., 2012; Mashele,

Van Rooyen, Malan, & Potgieter, 2010; Pisa, Behanan, Vorster, & Kruger, 2012; Teo, Chow, Vaz, Rangarajan, & Yusuf, 2009) suggest that the non-western context offers no exception to this international trend. While there is no doubt that improved diagnostic procedures, and increased awareness of and attention to healthcare has played a significant role in this regard, the World Health Organization (2013) has called for health care professionals to constantly challenge themselves to adapt to a rapidly changing environment, and strive to do better in the prevention on these lifestyle related diseases.

2 Psychology: A Discipline in Crisis?

Much of the current concern about the effectiveness of global health care relates to emerging evidence that even the so-called Evidence-based interventions (EDI's) are less that effective in dealing with current health care challenges. Are we doing enough as psychologists? Is what we are trying to do effective? In his attempt to address this question, Seligman (2006) referred to the 65% barrier when considering both the percentage of clients who report symptom relief due to psychotherapy, and the percentage of relief that they experience from their symptoms. This seems like a reasonable success rate, until it is contextualized by a placebo-effect ranging between 45 and 55%, depending on the relevance of the placebo. It is therefore not surprising that, in his 'State of the Science' article, Kazdin (2015) eludes to the fact that Psychology may be described as a discipline in crisis. The field of psychology has indeed attracted growing criticism since the turn of the century (Goldberg, 2000) for a number of reasons. Firstly, the lack of availability of psychological services has become a major concern. Kazdin (2015) highlights an alarming scarcity of mental health professionals and psychological services for those most in need of treatment, including children, the elderly, ethnically diverse populations and those finding themselves in remote rural areas. Kessler et al. (2009) found that 25% of US citizens meet criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder, and that approximately 70% of these individuals do not receive any form of treatment. The situation is even worse in resource-scarce contexts like the developing countries, where wide-spread poverty and the under-resourced public health sector often place psychotherapy beyond the reach of those most in need. Secondly, substantive concerns have been raised regarding the palpable impact of the 320 or so existing evidence based psychotherapies (EBP's) (United States Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2014). According to this report, after decades of research we remain largely uninformed regarding whom a given EBP is likely to be effective for, and how to use information at our disposal to guide us when making clinical and treatment-decisions, mainly due to serious methodological concerns regarding existing studies. Thirdly, the traditional emphasis on individualism/anthropocentrism that has characterised psychology has been questioned, especially within contexts characterized by a mixture of individualistic and more collectivistic cultural groups. The majority of existing EBP's have been developed, implemented and evaluated in Western contexts, raising concerns

regarding their applicability in more diverse cultural contexts (Berry, 2013; Goldberg, 2000). Fourth, psychology has been criticized for being overly pessimistic and reductionistic (Goldberg, 2000). Due to its traditional focus on the pathological/medical model, which emanates from the curative paradigm that still dominates the health professions, therapy has proven too costly in contexts with little resources. This impacts negatively on its accessibility to large and diverse groupings of underserved individuals. Lastly, psychology has been criticized for not remaining relevant to the broader, relatively 'healthy' population (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

One-to-one in-person treatment by a highly trained mental health professional has proven its effectiveness in improving the mental health of individuals suffering from various afflictions. Due to limitations in terms of its reach, scalability and affordability, its effectiveness as the dominant modality of intervention in especially resource scarce contexts like South Africa need to be reconsidered, however. It therefore seems both timely and justified for novel, integrated models of intervention, that are aimed at prevention rather than cure and lend themselves to application on a larger scale to be considered and empirically evaluated (Annerstedt & Währborg, 2011; Kazdin, 2015). This is in line with a call, now more than a decade ago, from the WHO for psychology to evolve with the populations that it is serving, and for interventions that will effectively promote health and optimal functioning in individuals, communities and whole populations. These interventions should make optimal use of resources within individuals and the environment, and aim not only to combat disease after diagnosis, but to prevent it from occurring (WHO, 2004). So then, where do we start in our attempts to address this challenge? Seligman (2006) offers one possible avenue when he refers to clinical psychologists and psychiatrists as firefighters, and suggests for these professions to regain their focus on fire prevention.

3 Psychological Well-Being and the Strengths-Based Approach

One relatively recent development within psychology that has embraced this challenge and has indeed flourished since its 'birth' almost two decades ago (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) is the movement of positive psychology (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Donaldson, Dollwet, & Rao, 2014). Within this movement a vast number of interventions have been developed, and found to enhance well-being (Bolier et al., 2013; Sin & Lyubormirsky, 2009) by focusing on the development of positive constructs such as hope, savouring and gratitude, optimism and forgiveness to name a few (Dimitropoulou & Leontopoulou, 2017). Identified as 'psychology's forgotten mission' (Seligman, 1998) the identification, building and effective use of character strengths that would help to prevent the occurrence of pathology, disease and infirmity has become an area of particular interest within positive psychology. As stated by Seligman (1998), the discovery of human strengths that can act as

buffers against mental illness has led to a renewed emphasis on prevention, and the development of our understanding of how to foster these strengths in young people.

The ‘problem and deficit-focused paradigm’ with its focus on etiological factors associated with disease and the treatment of human psychopathology has dominated the profession of psychology since WW II (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2005). This has since made way for a renewed focus on individual, interpersonal, community and cultural factors that could interact with existing risks and resources, and influence health-promoting behaviour (Ahern, Kiehl, Sole, & Byers, 2006), and for the development of new and novel approaches to facilitate individual and community well-being.

4 A Novel Approach to the Facilitation of Well-Being

One such approach that provides an ideal context for the facilitation of psychological strengths, and in combination with newly developed positive psychological interventions could potentially address many of the concerns raised about the effectiveness psychotherapeutic approaches in a changing world, is that of adventure therapy. The following section will address its potential for the development of individuals’ psychological strengths and resilience (the ‘what’), the context within which this would typically happen (the ‘where’), the process by which change is brought about (the ‘how’), and the developmental phase that this intervention is ideally suited for (the ‘when’).

4.1 *The ‘WHAT’: Resilience*

In positive psychology’s search for protective factors that would not only prevent the occurrence of pathology, but also enhance the health and well-being of individuals, the term ‘resilience’ has become an important mental health construct (Brennan, 2008). Resilience is not a new concept, but one that has attracted an increasing amount of research attention because of the challenges to individuals’ well-being. Defined broadly as a pattern of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity (Crawford, Wright & Masten, 2006), resilience has come to be conceptualized in various ways. Early conceptualizations viewed resilience a set of personal traits or attributes that lead to positive outcomes like successful adjustment and well-being despite the presence of adversity (Ahern et al., 2006; Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005). Personal attributes like motivation, intelligence, confidence, problem solving, self-regulation and forward thinking were found to contribute strongly to an ‘adaptive toolkit’ of skills that lies *within us*, and that enabled children from disadvantaged backgrounds be resilient (Masten, 2013). More recently, however, there has been a realization that resilience cannot be thoroughly understood, nor significantly improved by only focusing on individual level factors such as psycho-

logical strengths. According to Ungar (2008) resilience is also about the extent to which “a person’s context has elements that nurture this resilience” (p. 94). This has necessitated researchers to consider that resilience goes beyond the sum of an individual’s risks and assets, but also involves contextual aspects, or that which is *around us*. Thirdly, it also involves a dynamic process of adaptation, reflecting a person’s “...need to take proactive and reactive measures in the face of adversity.” (Kotzé & Nel, 2013, p. 3). Resilience is therefore also about the ways in which individuals access sources of support, and how a person engages others. This depends on qualities like empathy, sociability, warmth, expressiveness, and the ability to ask for help or access social support. Therefore, that which happens *between us*.

An important distinction is made between different types of resilience. *Status quo resilience* refers to a person’s ability to regain his/her shape, or to get back on their feet after suffering a significant setback; bouncing back so to speak. *Transformational resilience* on the other hand refers to the ability to take advantage of change in order to transform, change shape, grow and be able to function better in your environment. More than merely ‘bouncing back’, this can be equated to ‘bounding forward’. This makes resilience also very much about what lies *beyond us* (Masten, 2013).

As Ungar (2008) states, there is much overlap between these conceptualizations, and each of them is supported by a substantial body of literature. Rather than attempting to solve the debate on the conceptualization of resilience, we have adopted the following inclusive and multidimensional definition of resilience, formulated by Windle, Bennett and Noyes (2011) after their systematic review of research articles on resilience and its measurement: “*Resilience is the process of negotiating, managing and adapting to significant sources of stress or trauma. Assets and resources within the individual, their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation and ‘bouncing back’ in the face of adversity. Across the life course, the experience of resilience will vary.*” (p. 163).

This definition implies the capacity to face, overcome and be strengthened and transformed through experiencing adversity, and the ability to embrace difficulty and reframe it as a learning experience (Grotberg, 1997).

Considering the above, the question of whether the pursuit of higher levels of resilience is a worthwhile endeavour is answered with a resounding “YES!”. There is a growing certainty that individuals, communities and countries would benefit from developing the resilience required to better handle risks and challenges, even before they arise. Whether the development of higher levels of resilience can indeed be facilitated within the person and context, and whether this can happen without exposing individuals and communities to significant risk or adversity has proven a slightly more difficult question to answer. Support for the potential development of resilience is found in the relatively recent development of a number of strengths-based interventions. These interventions have produced promising results in western contexts, not only in terms of reductions in common mental and behavioural problems, but also in fostering a broad range of positive outcomes. These include increased resilience and well-being in a variety of contexts, ranging from schools (Huppert, 2009; Proctor et al., 2011) to the military (Chittick, 2016).

Although the identification of resilience therefore requires the presence of significant stress and trauma, there has been growing acknowledgment for the fact that the assets, resources and processes involved in resilience (Windle et al., 2011) can be developed outside of times of risk and adversity. In fact, Kotzé and Nel (2013) state that “positive psychologists now recognize that resilience involves everyday skills and psychological strengths that one can identify, measure, maintain and nurture in people of all ages and psychological conditions.” (p. 1). A large number of strengths-based resilience enhancing programs have since been developed and successfully applied in a variety of contexts internationally. The effectiveness of these strengths-based interventions have also shown moderate to large effects in terms of both combating pathology, and promoting well-being in non-Western contexts (Hendriks et al., 2018; Van Zyl & Rothman, 2012). Although the application of such interventions within natural settings has been proposed by Ungar et al. (2005) more than a decade ago, it is only now starting to attract an increasing amount of research attention.

4.2 The ‘WHERE’: Nature-Assisted Intervention

A development that has recently attracted much attention in international research as an innovative approach toward both the treatment of psychopathology (Corazon, Stigsdotter, Jensen, & Nilsson, 2010; Annerstedt & Währborg, 2011) and the facilitation of well-being and optimal functioning (Hinds & Sparks, 2011; Johnsen, 2011) is that of nature-assisted therapeutic intervention. The psychological benefits of being in nature have received increasing attention as an intervention that is both affordable and effective at population level (Maller et al., 2005; Mutz & Müller, 2016). Rooted in the biophilia hypothesis (Wilson, 2002), which states that we have an “innate tendency to focus upon life and lifelike forms, and in some instances to affiliate with them emotionally” (p. 134), research suggests that our well-being is strongly influenced by this innate, biologically programmed tendency to connect with nature (Hinds & Sparks, 2011; Jordan, 2009). Among the early indications of the effects that nature might have on our psychological and biological functioning are studies that found that outdoor living improved the condition of psychiatric patients (Caplan, 1967), and that a view of nature from a hospital window improved patients’ post-surgery recovery (Ulrich, 1984). Increasing calls for a more systematic incorporation of nature into psychological interventions as a post-modern experiential approach have led to the development of ‘nature-assisted therapy’. This serves as an umbrella term for interventions based on experiences and activities in a nature setting, which is specifically designed to support the improvement of psychological well-being. Frameworks and theory that have subsequently been developed (Berger & McLeod, 2006) have yielded positive results in both clinical and non-clinical groups (Annerstedt & Währborg, 2011; Hinds & Sparks, 2011; Johnsen, 2011; Corazon et al., 2010; Walsh, 2011). A number of explanations for the effectiveness of nature-assisted inter-

ventions in both the reduction of pathology and enhancement of well-being have been offered, and include the following:

- (a) Nature provides a ‘break’ from client’s familiar and demanding urban environment and the associated attention fatigue and stress. Because of its unfamiliarity, the natural environment can assist participants in considering and adopting new perspectives on issues in their lives, and to experience more positive emotions (McKenzie, 2000). In a recent study by Denovan and Macaskill (2017), the broaden-and-build theory proved useful to explain the development of a number psychosocial resources (including resilience) of a group of individuals after partaking in a leisure activity.
- (b) Nature provides an ideal environment for change to occur. The constructive levels of stress and challenge, a sense of the unknown, and the perception of risk (McKenzie, 2000, p. 20) that exposure to a natural environment offers, often take individuals out of their comfort zones, and into a psychological stretch zone which sets them up for personal growth and the willingness to take the initiative. Ingulli and Lindbloom (2013) have for instance reported significant correlations between participants’ perceived connection to the natural world, and their subjective experience of psychological resilience.
- (c) In contrast to the psychologist’s consultation room, which is most often a static context that is controlled by the therapist, the natural environment can be used as an independent setting that indeed acts as a dynamic partner, bringing a new dimension to therapy, and helping to shape the therapeutic process (Berger & McLeod, 2006).
- (d) The natural environment offers an ideal context to demonstrate, through creative metaphor, the dynamic interaction between person and environment, and its implications for well-being. This may include the use of sensory experiences, horticultural activity, nature-related stories and symbols and adventure activities (Corazon et al., 2010).
- (e) Nature has healing qualities in itself. Contact with the natural environment has spiritual and aesthetic properties that facilitate restoration and change (Frumkin, 2001; Maller et al., 2005). Irrespective of the therapeutic approach, time in nature creates a state of positive affect that, according to Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) is essential for growth, development and eventual self-actualization.

In a review of empirical, theoretical and anecdotal literature, Maller et al., (2005) notably conclude that nature should be considered as more than a mere novel setting for psychotherapy, and that contact with nature can be considered as an ‘important upstream health promotion intervention’ (p. 45) that can effectively facilitate optimal functioning at individual, community and population level. Developers of public health policy in resource-scarce contexts are therefore increasingly being challenged and encouraged to examine the potential of so-called ‘ecological’ solutions alongside the clinical and behavioural interventions that have been developed thus far (Baumgardner & Crothers, 2010), and that often only benefit those that can afford it.

4.3 The 'How': Adventure Therapy

Although the use of adventure to facilitate well-being can be traced back to the history of many cultures, the creation of Outward Bound by Kurt Hahn in the 1930's (Ouward Bound International, 2019) is widely considered the birth of AT as we know it today. Hahn developed a practical curriculum that rewarded youth for the development of physical skills as well as learning to live in the outdoors through an expedition, in addition to achievements in the classroom. Physical activity within a natural environment was therefore a critical aspect of the Outward Bound philosophy from the outset. According to Jordan (2009) contact with nature offers therapeutic benefits on two levels: (1) By the person passively receiving restorative benefits of nature by just spending time in a natural environment, or (2) by active engagement with nature, where the resources offered by the natural environment is actively utilized in the therapeutic process. Active engagement (play) within the natural environment has long been argued to be beneficial for children and adults alike (Brown & Vaughn, 2009; Dubos, 1980; Orr, 1993). Grouped together under the term 'Adventure therapy', these forms of active engagement with nature include a diversity of philosophies, programs and practices that can collectively be defined as, "...the deliberate, strategic combination of adventure activities with therapeutic change processes with the goal of making lasting changes in the lives of participants." (Gillis & Ringer, 1999, p. 29). This definition also captures the most important difference between adventure therapy, and participation in a leisure activity. Typically utilizing natural environments/the outdoors/wilderness as a location, it draws strongly from psychological theory during programme development and the interpretation of results. Adventure therapy challenges clients both physically and psychologically, and provides opportunity for practical experience and use of metaphor that enriches the client's growth process (Berger & McLeod, 2006).

In spite of its diversity, Williams & Allen (2012) identified a number of important points of commonality in a survey of adventure therapy programmes offered in Australia which, alongside the USA, is considered one of the leading nations in terms of its practice. These include:

- (a) the explicit use of personal challenge, activity and experience as a basis of learning, exposure to nature, guidance of participant experiences, and consideration of social context in the design of outdoor programs,
- (b) the identification of personal and social development as the most salient goals by practitioners involved in these outdoor programs, and
- (c) the overwhelming use of informal forms of evidence, such as personal observation or anecdotal participant reports in practitioners' evaluation of the outcomes of their work. (p. 5).

Adventure therapy has gained widespread application as a change-oriented and group-based experiential learning process, and as one of the more active ways of incorporating nature/wilderness into therapy (Annerstedt & Währborg, 2011). A host of outdoor experiential interventions have therefore been developed recently,

typically involving the delivery of a program to small groups of participants in a natural/wilderness setting (Ritchie et al., 2012). This includes both healthy and clinical or high risk groups. In his meta-analysis, Bowen (2013) describes how AT produced practically significant improvements (Hedges' $g = 0.47$) across a variety of areas of functioning, including academic performance, dysfunctional behavior like truancy and substance abuse, clinical symptoms like anxiety and depression, family functioning like parent-child relations, morality and spirituality, physical health like weight and somatic symptoms, self-concept represented by levels of self-control and self-efficacy, and social development, operationalized as decreased alienation and increased social skills. Results also showed long-term maintenance of these short-term gains, and a much more pronounced effect than so-called alternative ($g = 0.15$) and no-treatment ($g = -0.03$) controls. Although these effects were not as strong as that found in one-on-one psychotherapy, the results remain impressive if one considers the group-based nature of adventure therapy, the duration of treatment, and the quantity of therapeutic contact. Bowen (2013) also remark on the trend toward larger effects for AT interventions reported over time since 1960, suggesting an increase in the quality and effectiveness of these interventions.

Little is unfortunately understood about the process by which the personal growth, enhanced interpersonal skills, and group development reported to result from outdoor programmes, is brought about. Neil (2008) found that less than 1% of these programmes undergo empirical programme evaluation. While rich anecdotal evidence seems to strongly suggest the importance of these interventions in the promotion of resilience and well-being, Beringer and Martin (2003) remark that the outcomes and dynamics of 'adventure therapy' remain somewhat mysterious given that "empirical evidence of why and how adventure therapy works is inconclusive and contested." (p. 31). These and other authors make a strong argument that adventure therapy's 'alleged effectiveness' be supported through 'systematic and rigorous enquiry' regarding the effects and dynamics thereof. Passarelli, Hall and Anderson (2010), is of the opinion that research and theory from the relatively new movement of positive psychology offers a range of perspectives on the process by which these outcomes are achieved. Apart from offering an opportunity for the development of a variety of psychological strengths, the following mechanisms could be put forward to explain the possible mechanisms by which adventure therapy could enhance the resilience of individuals:

- (a) Recent studies suggest that frequent exposure to manageable levels of stress within a controlled environment leads to an increase in stress resistance and resilience. Initial animal models (Parker, Buckmaster, Schatzberg, & Lyons, 2004) showed that, almost like a muscle getting fit through exercise, 'stress inoculation' leads to enhanced emotional and neurobiological functioning under stress. These results have been replicated in humans (Wu et al. 2013) and have been successfully used in military contexts (Robson & Manacapilli, 2019). The perception of risk that individuals experience during adventure activities therefore offers a proxy for real-life situations, but does so within a safe environment

where the consequences of failure are limited, and which offers opportunity for guided reflection, growth and development of skills.

- (b) Within the context of positive psychology, research suggests that an integration of the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to well-being should be considered optimal for facilitating positive changes within an individual—thus bringing about lasting personal change, while at the same time enjoying the experience through engaging in activities one finds pleasurable (Henderson & Knight, 2012). The adventure experience, while stretching the individual and therefore providing an ideal context for growth, also involves enjoyable activities which draws from the power of positive emotional experience.

4.4 The WHEN: Developmental Considerations

The timing of such intervention is an important consideration. Human development is complex, with various risks associated with the different developmental periods. It however also provides us with windows of opportunity during which the successful facilitation of particular skills are particularly high (Ungar et al., 2008). The adolescent developmental period, during which the individual is primarily tasked with developing his/her own identity, provides one such window of opportunity between the 13th and 25th years of life. In this regard, Bowen (2013) have found individuals slightly later in this age range to benefit more, most probably because of their greater cognitive capacity for decision making, problem solving, abstract thinking, reasoning and self-regulation. In the hands of the skilled practitioner, adventure therapy interventions could however be adopted to accommodate individuals from a wide age range, and varying physical and mental ability levels.

5 Rationale for the Facilitation of Resilience Through Adventure Therapy

Adventure therapy accommodates mental health practitioners' growing awareness of the importance of context, and recognizes the important role of the interconnection between an individual and his physical and social environment in predicting well-being outcomes (Maller et al., 2005). This represents a strong conceptual link between Adventure therapy philosophy and the more recent conceptualizations of resilience as described in a previous section. Ungar et al. (2005), who is well-known internationally for his research on resilience, states that 'there is a remarkable similarity between the anticipated outcomes from outdoor adventure programming and characteristics of resilient individuals' (p. 325). Adventure therapy programs are developed to include a host of natural challenges that require both interpersonal cooperation and personal effort to successfully overcome. These challenges represent a proxy for the

risk experiences and adversity faced in everyday life, and therefore provide an ideal context for the development of resilience. By taking part in adventure interventions, the learning occurs when individuals are taken out of their comfort zones and into a psychological stretch zone where they become aware of their personal boundaries. As Csikszentmihalyi (1990) remarks, “Challenge gives people vision and direction, focus and perseverance...” (p. 17). This statement reminds strongly to the concept of resilience. It is therefore hypothesized that, in spite of it being a potential source of stress, a person’s environment could also represent an important resource that, in interaction with his/her individual strengths, could facilitate the development of resilience and growth toward positive well-being.

6 Concluding Comments: Relevance and Importance in the South African Context

As a discipline, psychology needs to remain relevant by considering new models of intervention that curb existing concerns regarding its reach, scalability and affordability. Kazdin (2015) proposes models that can be delivered on large scale (therefore in group context), is affordable, and can be provided in multiple settings. Recent efforts to develop such alternatives have focused strongly on technology (smartphones, tablets and the Web) and creative methods of delivery through texting and interactive apps for instance. Although these online and self-help interventions require little or no guidance by a mental health professional, and have gone a long way toward establishing alternatives to the dominant model in psychology, individuals living in developing countries often do not have access to these technologies, let alone the skills to use them.

AT represents an alternative that could be used to develop individuals’ character strengths, and therefore also the resilience and well-being of individuals finding themselves in such resource-scarce contexts. It is not proposed as an alternative to clinical psychology, or a ‘fix-all’ wonder cure, but as another arrow in the quiver of those interested in improving the psychological well-being of individuals in need thereof. Especially within non-western and under-resourced public health sector, AT interventions could provide a number of important benefits that addressed the concerns raised by Kazdin (2015) earlier in the chapter:

1. Psychology’s traditional focus on the pathological/medical model is addressed by AT adopting more of a preventative focus. This is widely considered a more cost- and time-effective alternative that could supplement existing curative interventions. Adopting a preventative approach also addresses the criticism of psychology’s lack of relevance to relatively ‘healthy’ populations.

2. Although it also lends itself to delivery as one-to-one in-person treatment, AT interventions aimed at larger groups will reach more individuals in need of psychological services, especially in underserved groups and communities. The group format of treatment delivery adopted in many AT programmes also holds promise for being more appropriate and effective within collectivistic groups and communities.
3. A review of literature on AT suggests that, although research has until recently been of a 'less rigorous character' (Annerstedt & Währborg, 2011, p. 372), the relatively small number of systematic research studies that have been done have produced a 'small but reliable evidence base' (p. 385) that does suggest that incorporation of nature and adventure into psychological interventions could be an important public health intervention. Although limited empirical research regarding the well-being benefits of AT (Maller et al., 2005; Berger & McLeod, 2006) have been done, early results from collectivistic contexts have been encouraging. This includes significant reductions in anxiety and depression, and a significantly increased level of self-esteem in learners from Hong Kong, China. The TREA (Training Resilience through Eco-Adventure)-project has also recently provided promising results in a South African context, with significant increases reported in resilience (Boyers, 2015), self-regulation (Barnard, 2015), psychological well-being (Labuschagne, 2015), and grit (Pienaar, 2017) of various groups of participants. These results suggest that a focus on the enhancement of psychological strengths and resilience of youth through nature-assisted, and especially AT programmes, offers a potentially valuable addition to the more than 160 successful positive psychology interventions (Donaldson et al., 2014) developed thus far.

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High Performance Learning: Towards a Theory for Optimising Potential in Multi-cultural Education Contexts



Mary M. Grosser and Mirna Nel

Abstract Framed within the global philosophy and practice of inclusive education, this chapter aims to explore a theoretical perspective for optimising learning potential in multi-cultural education contexts. Although multi-cultural education is embraced around the world, it appears that only restricted advancements have been made to achieve viable effects. To offer a potential solution for the aforementioned, the chapter firstly elaborates on the conceptualisation of multi-cultural education as the holistic development of potential and critical abilities (skills, attitudes, values, dispositions) of all students (not only marginalized groups) regardless of their differences. Secondly, High Performance Learning (HPL) Theory that builds on the advances of Human Capital Theory, Positive Education, Growth Mind-Set Theory, Neuroscience and Social Constructivist Learning Theory is scrutinised to identify beneficial, practical pathways for achieving higher levels of human potential, and enabling all students to benefit from positive education interventions in multi-cultural contexts.

Keywords Inclusive education · Multi-cultural education · High performance learning theory · Positive education · Growth mind-set theory

1 Introduction and Problem Statement

In the last few decades, diversity in classrooms in terms of different cultures, religions, languages, gender, disability, social class, language, and sexual orientation has been increasing internationally. This is as a result of a global movement to a more inclusive, multi-cultural approach to education, where exclusion from access to equal education participation, based on these afore-mentioned features, are deemed as discriminatory and perpetrating social justice. Consequently, the purpose of inclusive education is to eradicate exclusion because of prejudiced attitudes and responses to diversity and

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believing that education is a basic human right, which can provide a foundation for a more just society (Ainscow, 2014; Nel, 2018). These values of inclusive education have been integrated in the Education for All (EFA) campaign, which was initiated at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, and re-asserted afterwards at World Education Conferences in 1994 in Salamanca, Spain; in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal; and then again in 2015 in Incheon, South Korea (Nel, 2018). The EFA movement affirms:

All children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be (UNESCO, 2000, p. 8).

This implies that education should develop each student's talents and potential, as well as their personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies (UNESCO, 2000). In addition to this, the Salamanca Statements (UNESCO, 1994) maintained:

Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other condition. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups (p. 6).

These principles are reflected in most countries' education policies. However, a plethora of research have shown that fully inclusive schools still seem to be an ideology and somewhat troubled, problematic and contested in practice (e.g. Azorin & Ainscow, 2018; Booth, 2011; Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit, & Van Deventer, 2016; Engelbrecht, Savolainen, Nel, Koskela, & Okkolin, 2017; Walton, 2015).

In contrast with the belief that diversity should be used as an opportunity to create rich learning environments, cultural differences as part of multi-cultural education in particular, seem to be often highlighted in schools, resulting in diminishing culture as an active ingredient in transforming schools to become more inclusive (Kozleski & Choi, 2018; Kozleski & Waitoller, 2010; Wilson, 2012). Kozleski and Choi (2018) report that it is rather used as a discriminatory way to sort and differentiate culture groups. It is therefore critical to acknowledge ethnic oppression and stratification by purposefully addressing it in an inclusive education system (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007).

The slow progress to fully inclusive, multicultural education systems is also evident in United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) reports on the EFA movement. The 2015 EFA report, as well as another report by UNESCO named, *Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All* declared that there are persistent cultural and social barriers evident in schools, such as a bias against educating girls or prejudice against ethnic minorities (UNESCO, 2015a, b), which are not completely addressed by governments. Furthermore, there seems to be a general lack of incorporating cultural diversity in curricula, learning material and teaching practices (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018; Hilt, 2015; Hue & Kennedy, 2012).

This results in devaluing cultural identities, which can cause educational harm to students whose own cultural values and experiences are not considered in education (UNESCO, 2015b). Thus, there needs to be a shift to more equity when transforming schools to become fully inclusive, multicultural environments.

In response to the findings of these reports the recent Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action was accepted by 160 countries in order to address the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Developmental Goal (SDG) 4: *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* (UNESCO et al. 2015). In this Education 2030 declaration, it was asserted that an appreciation of cultural diversity and of cultures' contribution to sustainable education development should receive more attention. However, this will require that education standards be redefined, curricula and teaching practices be reviewed in terms of local cultures, cultural expressions and heritage, as well as their diversity, while emphasizing the importance of respect for human rights (UNESCO et al. 2015). Integral to developing such a truly inclusive multicultural education system is an inclusive pedagogy approach. An inclusive pedagogy can be defined as:

An approach to teaching and learning that supports teachers to respond to individual differences between students, but avoids the marginalization that can occur when some students are treated differently (Florian, 2014, p. 289).

As a result, the purpose of this chapter is to propose a theoretical perspective for constructing a rich learning environment where lessons and learning opportunities are sufficiently accessible to everyone, so that all are able to participate (Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012; Florian & Linklater, 2010) and achieve advanced performance (Eyre, 2016). Advanced performance refers to students who are academically successful, able to make leading contributions to society; prepared for the work place and life, keen to improve the world, and equipped to deal with the unexpected (Eyre, 2016).

2 Multi-cultural Education: A Conceptualisation

Although inclusive, multi-cultural education is embraced around the world, it appears that only restricted advancements have been made to achieve viable effects. Inefficient mechanisms to optimise the learning potential of all students, and failure to proceed beyond a mono-cultural frame of reference that assumes certain pedagogical practices are equally good for all students, seem to exist (see Sect. 1).

The definition of multi-cultural education is broad and diverse, having different meanings at different times (Mostafazadeh, Keshtiaray, & Ghulizadeh, 2015). When multi-cultural education emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, it initially implied education that included different cultures in the curriculum. Later on, this definition was extended to also include different ethnic, racial, social, gender and special needs groups (Hasan, 2012; Mostafazadeh et al., 2015).

In addition, multi-cultural education has been defined as an approach to teaching and learning that emphasises democratic values (Duhon, Mundy, Leder, LeBert, &

Ameny-Dixon, 2002), is based upon consensus building and respect for and interest in diverse cultural, disability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic and socio-economic groupings (Gorski, 2006; Reich, 2002; Wilson, 2012), aimed at fostering cultural pluralism within societies and classrooms (Wilson, 2012). In a teaching context, instruction needs to be designed so that it is appropriate for different cultures (Wilson, 2012).

In the 1980s, James Banks, one of the pioneers of multi-cultural education, shifted the conceptualisation of multi-cultural education to include all structures, policies and matters that schools should manage (teaching methods, instructional material, teacher attitudes, and assessment of student performance) to improve educational outcomes for all students. This conceptualisation encapsulates the current definition of multi-cultural education (Banks, 1988, 1989, 2008; Mostafazadeh et al., 2015; Perveen, 2014; Yilmaz, 2016). According to Banks (1999), multi-cultural education should encompass the idea that all students, irrespective of their gender, social class, ethnic or cultural characteristics, religion, disability and sexual orientation need to receive equal opportunities to learn and develop in schools. Supporters of this approach, contend that students should therefore be prepared to take on the role of change agents in societies (Mapuranga & Bukaliya, 2014), in order to address existing conditions in relation to discrimination, inequality and inequity.

In support of Bank's view (1999, 2008), this chapter conceptualises multi-cultural education as providing opportunities for holistic development of potential and critical abilities of all students (not only marginalized groups) regardless of their differences, and suggests that any predisposition to optimising learning potential can be exploited and managed. Marginalized groups include individuals, groups of people and families that face systemic, economic, political, social and cultural barriers. They often include, among others, rural communities, people with disabilities, refugees, migrants, and ethnic minorities. However, apart from the aforementioned groups, all students must receive equal opportunities to achieve their full potential, and develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and dispositions to participate, interact and communicate in a challenging and multi-cultural society (Banks & Banks, 1993; Mostafazadeh et al. 2015). Optimising the potential of all students entails the acquisition of thinking skills, attitudes, values and dispositions (see Sect. 3), to advance the cognitive (intellectual) and social and emotional growth (Mapuranga & Bukaliya, 2014) required for academic success, and dealing with challenges in life and the workplace.

2.1 Multi-cultural Education: Components, Outcomes, and Approaches

According to Mostafazadeh et al. (2015, p. 7), multi-cultural education contains the following key components: Anti-racism education, acceptance of diversity, peaceful coexistence with other groups, education, justice, flexible education programmes,

using a variety of teaching methods, using a variety of educational materials, using a variety of assessment techniques, personal development, addressing cultural literacy development, study other cultures of the world, strengthening the spirit of tolerance and acceptance of different ideas, empowerment for social reform, training of human capacities, promote mutual respect for differences among people, human tendency to create social trends rather than specific [trends], positive attitude to different cultures, helping to develop a positive self-concept, to protect minority languages, learning to respect the cultures of others, helping children to become productive individuals in a multicultural society, increase students' knowledge about other cultures and strengthen inter-cultural and intra-cultural communication.

A closer examination of the nature of the aforementioned components clearly distinguishes between the cognitive and social emotional dimensions of multi-cultural education, that need to inform the formulation of outcomes to be achieved within a multi-cultural education context.

Aligned to the aforementioned components, Banks (2001), Gay (1994), Perveen (2014), Sleeter (2005), Vavrus (2010) suggest the following student outcomes of multi-cultural education:

- (1) All students should be encouraged to affirm themselves as unique individuals who accept and respect the individual identities of other students.
- (2) Students should learn about their own cultural group as well as about other cultural groups and develop an appreciation and respect for their own culture and cultural diversity.
- (3) Students should engage in cross-cultural dialogue in order to reduce biases.
- (4) Students should acquire the skills to become critical thinkers who can make intelligent decisions about problems and conflicts, and question the status quo.
- (5) Students should acquire core skills, strategies, attitudes and values to respond to issues that would promote social justice (reduce discrimination, equity and inequality).

In order to achieve the outcomes of multi-cultural education, Banks (1994) distinguishes four approaches to education. The *contributions approach* acknowledges and infuses the contributions of minority groups into the curriculum, such as ethnic heroes and special celebrations, but does not address issues of inequality and discrimination (Alismail, 2016). Different ethnic and heritage themes and perspectives are addressed in the school curriculum with the *additive approach*, but without addressing issues of inequality and discrimination (Alismail, 2016). Both of the preceding approaches do not allow students to participate critically in discussions about issues around social injustice. The *transformative approach* is mainly critical (Alismail, 2016), because it teaches students to evaluate underlying cultural assumptions, and integrates perspectives and experiences of different ethnic and minority groups into the curriculum. Moreover, it promotes democracy by educating for equity and justice. The *social action approach* aims to teach students thinking and decision-making skills (Alismail, 2016) which, among others, will empower them to think critically about dealing with privilege, equity and equality, as well as prepare them to support social change.

In addition to the four approaches, Banks (1999, 2006) and Banks et al. (2005) accentuate that *all* aspects of education need to be transformed in order to promote multi-cultural education, namely teaching methods and strategies, learning material, teacher attitudes about student potential and assessment of student performance. Extending on the aforementioned, content integration would therefore imply that concepts, values and materials from diverse cultures are included and addressed during teaching. Knowledge construction in inclusive, multi-cultural environments need to move beyond the belief that a fixed body of knowledge needs to be transmitted by teachers and received by students, and also include self-discovery and independent construction of knowledge (Ertmer & Newby, 2013; Schraw & Olafson, 2003). Knowledge is also grounded in differentiation between cultures, attitudes, norms and values, contains multiple truths, and depends on the perspective of a person (Stoel et al., 2017). Teachers must therefore transform their teaching methods and strategies to ensure equity pedagogy (i.e. teaching and assessment) that would accommodate students' cultural differences and learning style needs in order to enable them to achieve academically. Prejudice reduction must be enhanced by teaching students important attitudes and dispositions such as empathy, open mindedness and tolerance, and schools are obliged to empower families to eliminate aspects that obstruct learning and development of students.

2.2 Multi-cultural Education: Theoretical Perspectives

In order to identify a theoretical perspective that could frame positive teaching interventions that optimise learning potential in a multi-cultural context, a number of theoretical lenses were scrutinized to enable a broad and structured understanding of the theory, concepts and activities relevant to multi-cultural education.

A brief overview of some important theoretical lenses that could support holistic, multi-cultural education follows below.

2.2.1 Human Capital Theory

Central to Human Capital Theory (HCT) is the notion of how education can increase the cognitive capacity (innate abilities) knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes, attributes and values that individuals need to possess to enable them to become economically productive (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008), and contribute to their personal and social well-being (Campbell-Barr & Nygård, 2014; Keely, 2007). In support of multi-cultural education, HCT is therefore concerned to systematically nurture and optimise the performance of all students, and encourage excellence and set high expectations for all students (Eyre, 2011). Thus, beliefs about fixed ability are regarded as erroneous and all students are regarded as capable of achieving academically, when given opportunities and support (Eyre, 2016).

2.2.2 Positive Education

As with multi-cultural education, the main aim of Positive Education (PE) is to enable all students to succeed, prosper and flourish (Noble & McGrath, 2015). According to Borkar (2016) as well as McGrath and Noble (2011), teachers should create learning opportunities that would enable students to acquire core competencies (skills, strategies, attitudes, values and dispositions) for responsible decision-making and problem solving as well as handling interpersonal situations in a positive way. In order to entitle all students to achieve academic and life success, learning opportunities should involve the shaping of positive emotions (Frederickson, 2004; Seligman, 2011), engagement (Seligman, 2011; Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan, & Lorentz, 2008), relationship development (Gottman & Silver, 2015; Selgiman, 2011), construction of meaning and opportunities for accomplishment (Seligman, 2011), as well as focus on student strengths, and developing the capacity to be resilient (Dimitropoulou & Leontopoulou, 2017; Noble & McGrath, 2015).

Considering the aforementioned, the development of positive emotions enhances resilience (Tugade & Frederickson, 2004), and functioning at optimal levels (Frederickson & Losada, 2005). Engagement, that relates to being interested in learning, is regarded as a strong predictor of academic achievement (Noble & McGrath, 2008). Establishing positive social relationships contribute to belonging, engagement, motivation and achievement (Gristy, 2012). Being able to see meaning and direction in life is instrumental in promoting happiness and satisfaction with life (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013), and making progress in achieving one's goals leads to external acknowledgment and a personal consciousness of one's successful achievements (Seligman, 2011). Curriculum opportunities should afford all students the chance to receive support to develop their strengths and weaknesses in relation to growing positive emotions, becoming engaged in learning, establishing relationships, discovering meaning in life, and making progress towards achieving goals (Noble & McGrath, 2015).

Optimal well-being (flourishing and functioning as an individual and a group), that forms the core of PE, in essence implies that students need to reach their potential beyond learning and academic achievement (Seligman, 2012).

2.2.3 Growth Mind-Set Theory

Growth Mind-Set theory (GMST) advocates for a belief that existing ability and potential is malleable (Lin-Siegler, Dweck, & Cohen, 2016), and consequently high levels of academic performance are possible for all students (Eyre, 2016). In support of multi-cultural education, GMST postulates that it is important that students receive adequate and challenging opportunities as well as appropriate support to remove obstacles that obstruct their chances of being successful (Eyre, 2016). According to Eyre (2016, p. 17, 21) one can exploit, or manage any predispositions and become successful, by planning proactively for student success and building capability systematically.

2.2.4 Neuroscience

According to Neuroscience (NS) the brain is malleable (Jonides, Jaeggi, Buschkuhl, & Shah, 2012), and students are capable of becoming more intelligent and better at achieving academically (Eyre, 2016). Confirming to multi-cultural education, teachers should therefore refrain from classifying students into groups of good or poor achievers and rather regard all students as being capable of achieving academic success. Innate ability should consequently not be regarded as the main contributing factor to poor academic performance. However, it is also crucial to address barriers and obstacles related to gender expectations, socio-economic factors, cultural traditions, and specific learning difficulties (Eyre, 2016). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that for some students the road to achieving success might be longer and more difficult than for others, but not impossible.

2.3 *Cognitive and Social Constructivist Learning Theory of Vygotsky (1896–1934)*

A strong connection exists between multi-cultural education and cognitive constructivism (CC) (Killen, 2015) and social constructivism (SC) (Beaumie, 2008). Social constructivism supports knowledge construction through social and cultural interaction, and multi-cultural education foregrounds learning about other cultures with the aim to understand other cultures and working towards a concept of mutual knowledge shared by different people (Lowenthal & Muth, 2008). Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism links the cognitive abilities of students to their specific cultures; consequently, accentuating the construction of social bridges to learn common values within and over cultures (Beaumie, 2008). Cognitive constructivism focuses on developing the thinking processes (remember, understand, analyze, apply, evaluate, create) that all individuals use to make sense of the world. Students are encouraged to actively construct knowledge for themselves by selecting and interpreting information (Killen, 2015).

Cognitive and social constructivist learning theory aligns well with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) supports the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values that will enable students to feel in control of their own lives and nurture their natural tendency to be curious (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). Additionally, social constructivist learning theory will advance the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes of social emotional learning (SEL) to enable students to understand and manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, and establish and maintain positive relationships (Cefai, Bartolo, Cavioni, & Downes, 2018).

In summary, Table 1 illustrates how the various theoretical perspectives discussed above support the main tenets of multi-cultural education.

Although all of the theoretical perspectives align well with major tenets of multi-cultural education, not one of them provides a generic, systematic and practical way

Table 1 Theoretical underpinnings and tenets of multi-cultural education

Main tenets of multi-cultural education	Theoretical perspectives
Optimising potential of all: core knowledge, skills, strategies, competencies, attitudes, attributes, values	HCT, Neuroscience, PE, CC, SC
High expectations for all	GMST, NS
Optimising personal and social well-being, flourishing—preparing for workplace and life	HCT, PE
Opportunities and support to optimise potential	HCT, PE, GMST
Ability is not fixed	HCT, GMST, NS
All to succeed and prosper and become more intelligent and improve academic achievement	PE, NS, GMST
Focus not only academic achievement—also emotional development and relationship development; personal and social well-being; prejudice reduction—democratic values	PE, SC (SDT, SEL)
Ability not the only factor that determines achievement	NS, GMST
Equal opportunities and diverse instructional approaches to optimise potential (cognitive and social emotional) of all students	HCT, PE, GMT, NS, CC, SC (SDT, SEL)
Knowledge construction through social cultural interaction and negotiation	SC

that promotes a pedagogy for optimising potential in an inclusive, multi-cultural education context.

High Performance Learning (HPL) theory however, builds on the advances of the aforementioned theories, and additionally identifies generic, beneficial, practical and systematic pathways for achieving higher levels of human potential, that would enable all students to benefit from positive education interventions in a multi-cultural context. HPL is therefore suggested as a theoretical perspective for optimising learning potential in multi-cultural education contexts.

3 High Performance Learning Theory: A Theoretical Perspective to Positive Psychological Capacity Development and Intervention Within Multi-cultural Contexts

High Performance Learning (HPL) theory advocates for learning environments free of discrimination and inequality and ensures that all students are empowered with knowledge, skills, positive feelings, values and attitudes to enable them to participate in society as knowledgeable, productive and creative citizens in a democratic society.

3.1 The High Performance Learning Framework and the Practical Implications for Designing Interventions in a Multi-cultural Context

Globally, emphasis in education systems continues to be placed on difference; to divide able and less able students resulting in the belief that some students will achieve high academic performance and others less so. This belief is generally embedded in the conviction that people are born with a fixed ability/intelligence (Dweck, 2006; Eyre, 2016). Believers in a fixed ability presume that no amount of input from parents or schools will enable a child to become an advanced performer (Eyre, 2016). Consequently: instead of aiming high for everyone, education has committed to becoming more and more adept in measuring how much cognitive potential each child possesses and using tests to define this (Eyre, 2016, p. 17).

Even though it is accepted by educators that contextual factors such as systemic barriers, environmental contexts and family background can play a role, it appears that these are regarded as less impactful than inherited characteristics (Eyre, 2016). This view defines a fixed mind-set, which in many instances are applied to minority ethnic or certain racial groups. This is evidenced in several research studies (e.g. Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010; Kvande, Belsky, & Wichstrøm, 2018; Niedenfuier, 2015; Sullivan, 2011) which found that there is disproportionality in placement of these afore-mentioned students in special education, especially if they have low socio-economic status and/or struggle with the medium of instruction. Kvande et al. (2018) contribute this to cultural bias.

In contrast, based on the inclusive principle and the human capital paradigm, that all students are able to learn, grow and achieve, HPL theory, asserts that all students are able to achieve highly and that no student is born with a fixed ability (Dweck, 2006; Eyre, 2016). Thus, this growth mind-set contends that the basic qualities that one is born with can be cultivated through application and experience (Dweck, 2006; Haimovitz & Dweck, 2016), which implies that intelligence can be enhanced (Sternberg, 2005). This is furthermore affirmed in psychology and neuroscience research which have revealed that the brain has more plasticity than ever thought (Doidge, 2007) (see Sect. 2.2.4). Consequently, dedication and persistence, even when there are barriers to learning, can result in advanced cognitive performance and outstanding achievement (Boaler, 2013; Drummond et al., 2013; Eyre, 2016; Haimovitz & Dweck, 2016). Yet, this requires that opportunities are created and support is rendered.

The HPL framework, developed by Eyre (2016) provides a holistic approach to ascertain advanced performance for all or most students. The goal of the HPL framework is to develop Advanced Cognitive Performance characteristics (ACPCs) as well as Values, Attitudes and Attributes (VAAs). The ACPCs refer to the ways of thinking that students need to develop. Integral to the ACPC's is critical and creative thinking, as well as problem solving skills. Developing these skills will empower students to play a more active role in their own learning and become more autonomous. However, Eyre (2016) avers that ACPC's cannot be isolated from

Table 2 Categories of ACPs

Creating	Meta-thinking	Linking	Analyzing	Realizing
Intellectual playfulness	Meta-cognition	Connection finding	Precision	Automaticity
Originality	Self-regulation	“Big-picture” thinking	Critical thinking	Speed and accuracy
Evolutionary and revolutionary thinking	Strategy planning	Generalization	Complex problem-solving	
Flexible thinking	Intellectual confidence	Abstraction		
Fluent thinking		Imagination		
		Seeing alternative perspectives		

VAA’s. She calls it the double helix and affirms that neither will deliver success alone (Eyre, 2016, p. 31). Focusing on VAA’s, will develop character and personality related to perseverance, resilience, enterprise, global awareness and concern for others.

Eyre (2016) groups the ACPCs into five categories, as indicated in Table 2. Firstly, students need to become sophisticated at being *creative*, fluent and original thinkers. Secondly, *meta-thinking* expects of students to be continuously aware of their own thinking, thus planning, monitoring and evaluating their own thought processes to become more effective. Thirdly, students need to view learning as a process of *linking* different sets of information with one another, and not as a series of isolated events. Fourthly, achieving good academic performance depends on the accurate, critical and logical way of *analyzing* information. Finally, *realising* enables a student to acknowledge that other attitudes and dispositions such as working with speed and accuracy and practicing skills to apply them without difficulty would optimise learning (Eyre, 2016).

The ACPC’s concentrate on the following cognitive domains that address the cognitive components of multi-cultural education (Eyre, 2016):

1. Meta cognition: The ability to use a wide range of thinking approaches and to transfer knowledge from one circumstance to the other.
2. Self-regulation: The ability to plan, monitor and evaluate one’s own work.
3. Strategy planning: Approach new learning by actively connecting it to existing knowledge.
4. Intellectual confidence: The ability to articulate personal views based on evidence.
5. Generalisation: To see what is happening in a particular situation and extrapolating what is happening to other similar situations.
6. Connection finding: Use connections from experiences to seek possible generalisations.

Table 3 The categories of VAAs

Empathetic	Agile	Hard-working
Collaborative	Enquiring	Practice
Concerned for society	Creative and enterprising	Perseverance
Confident	Open-minded	Resilience
	Risk-taking	

7. Big picture thinking: Work with big ideas and holistic concepts.
8. Abstraction: Move from the concrete to the abstract very quickly.
9. Imagination: Represent a problem in relation to more extended and interconnected prior knowledge.
10. Seeing alternative perspectives: Take on the views of others and deal with complexity and ambiguity.
11. Critical or logical thinking: The ability to deduct, reason, hypothesise and seek supporting evidence.
12. Precision: Work effectively with the rules of a domain, and adhere to specific criteria.
13. Complex problem solving: The ability to break down a task and decide on a suitable approach to solve a problem.
14. Intellectual playfulness: Recognise rules and bend them to create something new that is valid.
15. Flexible thinking: The ability to abandon one idea for a new and better idea, or to generate multiple solutions.
16. Fluent thinking: The ability to generate many ideas.
17. Originality: The ability to conceive something entirely new.
18. Evolutionary and revolutionary thinking: The ability to create new ideas through building on existing ideas or diverting from them.
19. Automaticity: The ability to use some skills with ease that they no longer require active thinking.
20. Speed and accuracy: The ability to work at speed and with accuracy.

The VAAs, summarized in Table 3, can be grouped into three categories, namely “*Empathetic, Agile and Hard-working*” (Eyre, 2016, p. 67). The *empathetic* category comprises the ability to work independently and in collaboration with others to achieve outcomes. Moreover, empathy involves displaying concern for society and confidence in dealing with challenges and problems. *Agile* students are curious and keen to learn in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, are open-minded and flexible in their thinking, and responsive to disruption and change (Anderson, 2017). *Hard work* embraces practice, persistence and resilience, irrespective of the obstacles confronted with.

The VAA’s develop wider learning dispositions needed for cognitive as well as lifetime success that speak to the social emotional components of multi-cultural education. They are (Eyre, 2016):

1. Collaboration: The ability to seek opportunities to receive feedback to your work, present your own views and ideas, listen to the views of others, and being willing to work with others.
2. Concern for society: The ability to know the contribution you can make to society to the benefit of the less fortunate, demonstrating citizenship and being sensitive to the cultural heritage of others.
3. Confidence: A belief in one's own knowledge, understanding and action. Recognize when change in beliefs is necessary based on additional information or arguments from others.
4. Enquiring: The ability to be curious, proactive and keen to learn. Willingness to work alone and think independently.
5. Creative and enterprising: Being open minded and flexible in thought processes.
6. Risk-taking: Demonstrating confidence to experiment with novel ideas, working in unfamiliar contexts, tolerating uncertainty and avoiding premature conclusions.
7. Open-mindedness: Taking an objective view of different ideas and beliefs.
8. Practice: Training and preparing through repetition of processes to become more proficient.
9. Perseverance: To keep going and not give up in the face of challenges and obstacles.
10. Resilience: To overcome setbacks and remain confident and focused to move forward.

3.1.1 The Seven Pillars of High Performance Learning for Supporting Multi-cultural Education

In order to develop these ACPCs and VAAs, the HPL framework is based on seven pillars which must be incorporated in interventions that aim to provide opportunities and support to ascertain advanced performance. These are: (i) a mind-set shift; (ii) the implementation of inquiry based learning as teaching strategy; (iii) expertise development, (iv) practice and training, (v) feedback, (vi) parental involvement, and (vii) doing things with students and not to students (Eyre, 2016).

Pillar 1: A *mind-set shift* towards a positive, growth mind-set, based on the belief that potential can be developed and enhanced, is a critical feature of the HPL framework. This involves an unwavering belief that ability is flexible, and can be nurtured through stimulating teaching and learning opportunities and appropriate support (Dweck, 2006; Eyre, 2016). Students also need to be taught that their brains are capable of developing new abilities, and that they need to take specific actions to develop the new abilities.

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs, about the malleability of the brain are crucial to implement HPL (Eyre, 2016). Additionally, teacher attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about teaching also impact the extent to which teachers allow learner involvement

during teaching, and the teaching strategies they employ to create a challenging climate for all students (Van de Grift, 2007).

Pillar 2: The second pillar in the HPL framework is the application of *inquiry-based learning* (IBL). In IBL students are central to their own learning, i.e. they control it (Lonka, 2018). This requires that content and learning be linked to personal interests and embedded in a meaningful context by engaging with authentic world problems and topics that have real meaning for students. An IBL approach allows students to engage actively with new knowledge, and also become knowledge creators rather than knowledge consumers. Teachers therefore need to guide students in obtaining the ability to search, produce, evaluate, edit, and publish data and ideas, which imply a constructionist approach to teaching (Eyre, 2016; Lonka, 2018). Some of the strategies that promote enquiry-based learning and also accommodate different learning style interests, foreground the development of core thinking skills, strategies, dispositions, attitudes, and values that students need to acquire in multi-cultural education contexts, are briefly explained below.

Problem-based learning (PBL) is student-centered teaching and learning in which students learn about a subject through the experience of solving problems, or deal with practical problems related to real-life experiences. The goals of PBL are to help the students develop flexible knowledge, effective problem solving skills, self-directed learning, effective collaboration skills and intrinsic motivation (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

Research demonstrates the value of *didactic play* for the development of language, self-regulated learning, attention, cognitive skills (creativity, problem solving), social and emotional skills (dispositions and attitudes) as well as literacy and mathematics skills (Bodrova & Leong, 2012; Diamond & Lee, 2011). Play creates opportunities for manipulation of objects, the creation of something new, pretending, and following rules, solving problems, strategizing and setting goals, which are all activities with a cognitive focus. It is therefore a valuable tool to enhance learning and in particular to optimise potential among young students.

Stories are a suitable tool to convey messages, contextualise an argument and model behaviour (Van Aswegen, 2015). Young students love stories and will therefore be motivated to get involved in this activity. Fisher (1998) asserted that although stories are intellectual constructions, they are lifelike, and can be used to symbolise abstract concepts. An advantage of stories is also that they can be adapted to the students' conceptual and linguistic level (Loukia, 2006).

The *Six Thinking Hats* strategy enhances the flexible use of different modes of thinking (factual, evaluation: critical thinking, creative thinking, synthesis, argumentation) through thoughtful questioning. The different modes of thinking are connected to a specific colour hat, and students practice the various modes of thinking by switching to the different coloured hats during teaching (De Bono, 1992).

Cooperative learning is a powerful strategy that proposes many ways of structuring the social dimension of learning, and teaches students how to work together to achieve a common goal. Social interaction creates opportunities for students to engage in cognitive processing of information, and to acquire important dispositions such as empathy, humility, responsibility and communicating with clarity and precision (Grosser, 2018; Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

Dialogic education equips students with dialogue skills, enables them to participate meaningfully in conversations and to take the conversations forward (Wegerif, 2013). Dialogue is therefore not simply an opportunity where people share information to solve a problem, and does not view knowledge as fixed, but rather provisional and negotiated (Wegerif, 2013). Students need to acquire the skills to engage respectfully with others in meaningful dialogue about various knowledge claims in relation to specific cultures, and communicate their own views with clarity and precision (Costa & Kallick, 2009). Dialogic education values thinking, reasoning and collaboration skills more than the possession of a body of fixed knowledge.

Philosophical enquiry does not aim for students to find correct answers or to reach consensus, but rather to gain deeper insight and understanding into information. Philosophy for Children, a programme designed by Lipman (1988), demonstrates to teachers how education contexts can become a community of dialogue (involving listening and reasoning) about difficult puzzling curriculum-related issues as well as issues central to human existence. Students share their reasoning about issues with one another, and learn how to appreciate and evaluate diverse perspectives.

Argumentation involves that students are taught the skills of critical reasoning; how to question, analyse, interpret and evaluate ideas and beliefs, check them for accuracy, and identify biases (Van den Berg, 2010, p. 3). Critical reasoning should be applied as much to one's own beliefs and ideas as to those of others as well as to curriculum-based issues. The teaching/learning process involves both individual and group work at the discretion of teachers.

Thinking Maps involve the application of the eight important cognitive processes across subject fields that are required for effective learning by using a visual strategy for each cognitive process. These processes are: Defining in context (to label or to define), describing qualities, properties, characteristics or attributes, comparing or contrasting—looking for similarities and differences; classifying, categorizing and grouping, identifying part-whole relationships; sequencing and ordering information, identifying cause and effect relationships, and identifying analogies (simile, metaphor) (Hyerle, 2014).

Habits of Mind are important cognitive dispositions for effectively completing learning tasks and solving problems in and beyond the classroom (Costa & Kallick, 2009). Habits of Mind are dispositions that improve thinking and attitudes towards learning and solving problems and refer to the following: being persistent; managing impulsive working ways; listening with understanding and empathy; thinking flexibly; thinking about the own thinking (meta-cognition); striving for accuracy; questioning and posing problems; applying past knowledge to new situations; communicating with clarity and precision; gathering data through all senses; creating, innovating and imagining; finding humour, taking responsible risks, thinking interdependently, responding with wonderment and awe and remaining open to continuous learning (see the link in Sect. 3.1 with the VAAs identified by Eyre, 2016). In support of PE, acquiring well-developed Habits of Mind will enable students to reach their potential beyond learning and academic achievement (Seligman, 2012).

The application of the strategies indicated above, enables students to experience learning in more than one sensory mode and in different ways, namely visual, aural,

written and kinaesthetic, thus supporting multi-modal learning (Sankey, Birch, & Gardiner, 2010). **Pillar 3:** The third pillar of the HPL framework focuses on *expertise development*. Expertise development involves a negation from placing emphasis predominantly on mastering a curriculum, learning subject content and passing exams. It aims at developing the ACPCs and VAAs associated with expertise in certain specialist domains, which are also essential for students to develop into advanced performers after school and later in life. It entails, for example, becoming a mathematician and not merely learning mathematics (Eyre, 2016).

Pillar 4: *Practice and training* is the fourth pillar in the HPL framework, and is built on the belief that superior performance can be taught (Jonides et al., 2012). Focused, extended and deliberate practice linked to the ACPC's and VAAs, in particular perseverance in the face of obstacles, is required to develop expertise and achieve high performance (Ericsson, 2006; Ericsson, Roring, & Nandagopal, 2007; Eyre, 2016).

Pillar 5: The fifth pillar in the HPL framework is *feedback*. Targeted and constructive feedback on the progress of learning, eliciting positive emotions and promoting student autonomy (Fletcher, 2018; Hattie, 2008; Ryan & Henderson, 2018), is a central element of HPL. Feedback should therefore not only focus on enhancing cognitive abilities (ACPCs), but also instill confidence and well-being (VAAs), while addressing the gap between current and optimal performance, emphasizing growth and what is realistically possible to achieve (Eyre, 2016). Constructive and regular feedback specifies to students what they have to do to improve the application of the ACPCs and VAAs. Aligned to PE, feedback should not only guide the development of the ACPCs and VAAs, but also optimise confidence, motivation and persistence (Voerman, Korthagen, Meijer, & Simons, 2014).

Pillar 6: *Parental involvement* is the sixth pillar in the HPL framework. Constructive involvement of parents can enhance the educational process as they can add insights and knowledge that could strengthen academic and social programmes at schools (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Olsen & Fuller, 2008). Having parents and schools work in harmony, suggests that there is a shared agenda about removing barriers that inhibit successful learning rather than assigning blame if students experience difficulties. Parental involvement results in a committed shared interest between parents and the school in a child's learning and current and future performance in relation to the development of the ACPCs and VAAs (Eyre, 2016). Empowering families to eliminate obstructions that hinder the full development of student potential is regarded as an important element of multi-cultural education (Banks, 1999). It is important to teach parents about brain plasticity as well, in order for them to understand that their children are capable of developing new abilities and that they, in collaboration with the school, can assist in the developing of the new abilities.

Pillar 7: The final pillar in the HPL framework is termed as: *With students and not to them*. This necessitates creating a safe learning environment where teachers are interested in the development of their students' strengths, thoughts, emotions and motivation (Lonka, 2018). Active participation by students in the classroom by employing an engaging student-centered pedagogy, should be the central teaching strategy. In such a social constructivist approach students are encouraged to become

progressively involved to take responsibility and make decisions for their own learning (i.e. self-regulated learning) (Eyre, 2016; Hattie, 2008; Lonka, 2018). According to Eyre (2016) and Lonka (2018), this approach to teaching and learning has a better chance in yielding effective students who will achieve highly in school, as well as after school.

Figure 1 pieces the information about HPL theory and its role in supporting multi-cultural education together to illustrate the interrelatedness of the pillars that constitute HPL, and to draw logical inferences about the potential of HPL theory as a perspective for positive psychological capacity and potential development within multi-cultural contexts.

According to Fig. 1, education interventions that aim to optimise potential in a multi-cultural context need to operate from a *growth mind-set* (see Sect. 2.2.3) that does not doubt students' ability to improve their performance, but expects more of all students and provides support to all students to increase their efficiency towards achieving learning outcomes.

IBL has to stand central to achieving the outcomes of multi-cultural education, and places a strong focus on "how" subject content is taught. HPL assumes a transformative (McGonigal, 2005; Mezirow, 1997), experiential (Jensen, 2005), constructionist (Eyre, 2016; Lonka, 2018), and social constructivist (Lowenthal & Muth, 2008) approach to teaching and learning, where a student builds his or her own academic capability, guided by teachers. Constructionist principles emphasise assisting students to produce novel ideas and constructs that others can physically observe and appraise. Social constructivist principles are cognitive and social in nature, and support transformative teaching and learning that advocates for dynamic relationships between teachers and learners during learning in order to promote achievement, thinking, and social emotional development (Mezirow, 1997). Consequently, transformative learning requires an environment that encourages and rewards intellectual openness (McGonigal, 2005), and involves both an individual and a social process. It requires critical reflection not only of own assumptions and understanding, but also reflection through discussion and conversation with others about viewpoints and perspectives (McGonigal, 2005). In addition, research in the neurosciences (Berninger & Richards, 2002; Jensen, 2005) (see Sect. 2.2.4), emphasise the important role that experiential learning plays in developing thinking and learning potential. Experiential learning is based on the following assumptions: a person learns best and is more committed when (1) involved in independent learning; (2) discovers knowledge independently; and (3) sets own learning goals and pursues own achievement (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). IBL places cognitive demands on students that would encourage independent thought and build dispositions such as intellectual confidence (Green & Murriss, 2014; Wegerif, 2013).

Nested within the provision of IBL opportunities, are the pillars of expertise development, practice and training, feedback, parental involvement and doing things with students not to them, which are key to ensuring and supporting the success and benefits that students could achieve with enquiry-based learning opportunities.

HPL is more concerned with pedagogy than content (Eyre, 2016), and therefore supports the *transformative* and *social action* approach to multi-cultural education (Banks, 1994) (see Sect. 2.1). The HPL framework is however not rigid and pre-

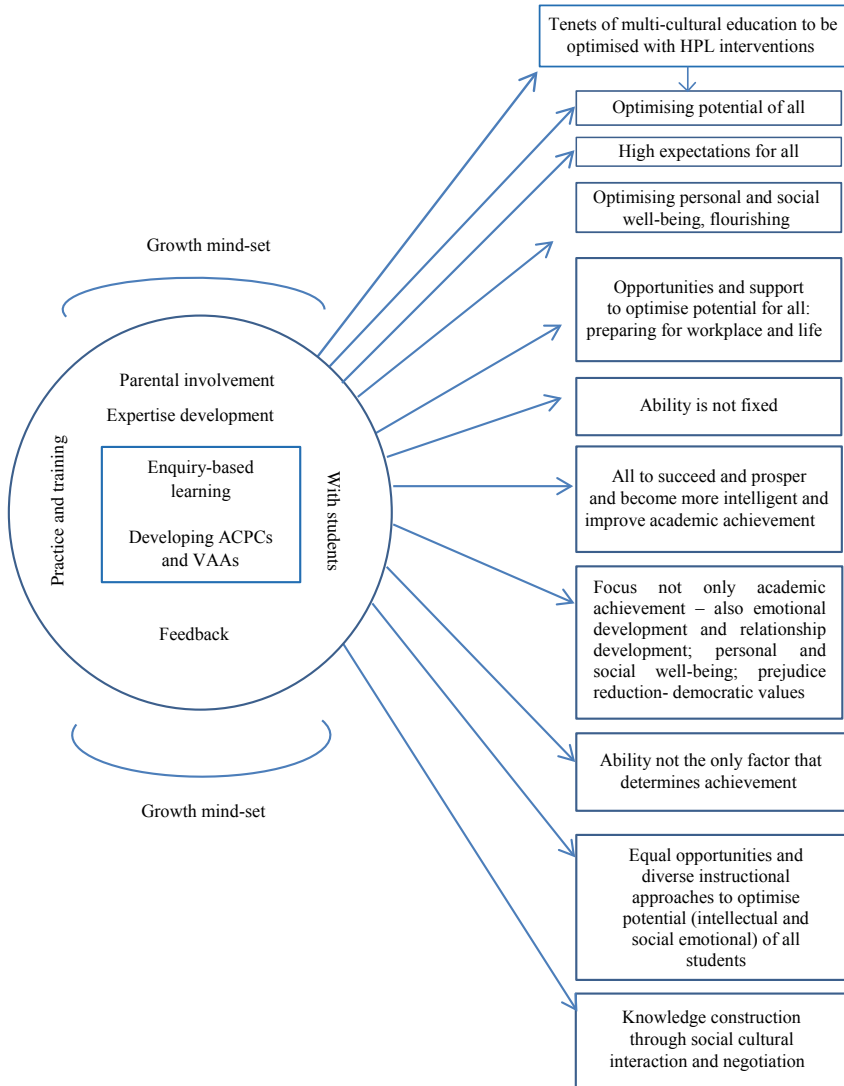


Fig. 1 Contributions of HPL theory to interventions in a multi-cultural education context

scriptive in terms of learning content, which would leave room to also incorporate a *contributions* and *additive approach* to multi-cultural education within the framework (Banks, 1994) (see Sect. 2.1).

Eyre (2016) advises that teachers should teach to the top group of learners rather than the middle group and provide additional support and enrichment activities to enable students who find it difficult to reach the top to work towards accomplishing difficult requirements. In upholding principles of PE, it is important that students see

that progress is possible in order to avoid negativity, boredom, stress and discouragement.

Placing the HPL framework at the heart of teaching would enable the holistic development of students' potential (cognitive and social emotional potential) in the following ways: Students start thinking independently when they generate and explore information; gain confidence in their own reasoning; acquire thinking skills, dispositions, values and attitudes that enable them to justify what they think and to analyse and evaluate the thinking of others; learn to communicate with others that makes it possible for new understandings to emerge from different perspectives; gain dispositions, attitudes and skills that are essential for academic performance and for citizens of a thriving democracy, making them better prepared for an unpredictable future. Advancing HPL will ensure fairness and opportunity for equitable, and quality education that promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. HPL applies to all students, and does not regard factors specific to one's personal conditions (socio-economic standing, race, gender, disability etc.) as detrimental to achieving success (Starmans, Sheskin, & Bloom, 2017). HPL promotes the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are beneficial to becoming productive, competitive and employable citizens in society.

4 Future Directions: Making Multi-cultural Education a Reality

For multi-cultural education to be successful, teachers and policy makers need to firstly appreciate the need for multi-cultural education; understand the importance of teaching each student according to his/her needs, and acquire growth mind-sets to believe that the potential of all students can be optimised with challenging learning opportunities and support.

Multi-cultural education has implications for modifying teacher education programmes and curricula that in short, need to view the role of teachers as creating learning opportunities that are: humane, intellectually challenging, and pluralistic (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 33).

To create the aforesaid learning opportunities, teachers require a comprehensive understanding about multi-cultural education and its benefits, acquire knowledge of the cognitive and social emotional skills, strategies, dispositions, attitudes and values that students in multi-cultural contexts need to acquire, and are presently not explicitly taught in teacher education programmes (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Hill, 2000; Hoadley, 2013; Killen, 2015). In this regard, regardless of the barriers that place a student at risk, research evidence indicates that the quality of a student's intellectual engagement and achievement is linked to addressing their social emotional development as well (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003; Kessler, 2000).

It is essential that teacher education programmes accentuate practical ways according to which teaching in multi-cultural education contexts could optimise the

development of care, respect, tolerance and understanding by engaging with diversity in perceptions and understandings. Teachers need to be trained to support students to learn how to engage with diversity, seeking understanding across lines of difference and talking about common understandings and real differences. Additionally, learning opportunities that require physical and mental effort should emphasise the development of the core ACPCs and VAAs.

According to Mapuranga and Bukaliya (2014), tertiary institutions involved in teacher education could also play a crucial role in drafting curricula and producing learning material that emphasise multi-cultural education. Moreover, these institutions can provide training in multi-cultural education to in-service educators and administrative officials that are accountable for the success of multi-cultural initiatives in education to enable successful implementation in schools.

School-wide implementation provides greater possibilities to reinforce the principles of multi-cultural education across a wide spectrum of students. Thus, greater success with multi-cultural education will be achieved with school-wide implementation instead of isolated classroom-based implementations (Banks et al., 2005), starting at early childhood level (Mapuranga & Bukaliya, 2014).

Eyre (2016) argues that encouraging a multi-cultural philosophy in communities and societies would make it easier for multi-cultural principles to permeate the school and education. Communities and societies could start realising that upholding multi-cultural principles is good for everyone not only for students.

5 Conclusion

The HPL framework provides a theoretical language and practical pathways towards an inclusive, multi-cultural pedagogy. It communicates with teachers about creating learning opportunities that develop cognitive and social emotional potential in students in multi-cultural education contexts. The HPL framework can assist teachers in designing learning environments that foster positive relationships where uniqueness and diversity is acknowledged and respected, and cognitive as well as social emotional learning are foregrounded (Folsom, 2005).

Future studies on the individual components (pillars) of the HPL framework and their effects on optimizing cognitive (ACPCs) and social emotional (VAAs) potential across different grades in multi-cultural contexts could generate in depth-data about the contribution and value of each pillar in relation to effective multi-cultural education. Longitudinal studies involving the effect of HPL on optimising cognitive and social emotional potential during teaching would conclusively confirm the potential of HPL for optimising potential in multi-cultural education contexts.

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Well-Being at Work: Applying Dynamics of Affect in Positive Psychological Interventions



Joanna Sosnowska and Yannick Griep

Abstract Recently, there have been repeated calls in the affect literature to acknowledge the dynamic nature of affective experiences. In order to understand how daily fluctuations of affect impact employee well-being at work, scholars have proposed to focus on several dynamic elements of affect such as self-regulating forces, or the extent to which we experience different emotional states. So far, the dynamic elements of affect have been examined in relation to various well-being outcomes at work such as burnout and work engagement. Whereas this dynamic and integrative approach to affect has sparked novel research, one of the major challenges pertains to the practical use of the dynamic properties of affect in the workplace. In this chapter, we address this issue by focusing on how dynamic properties of affect can be applied in positive psychological interventions with the aim of improving employee well-being at work. First, this chapter focuses on the existing dynamic concepts of affective experiences. Second, the existing literature on affect dynamics and well-being at work, and how the current knowledge can be used when creating positive well-being interventions at work are analysed. Third, the chapter offers practical solutions for organizations and employers wanting to improve employees' working experience, as well as recommendations that can be directly engaged in by employees. Altogether, by explaining how the current knowledge on dynamics of affect can be used in positive psychological interventions, the present chapter contributes to better understanding of how to improve employees' well-being at work.

Keywords Well-being · Affect · Dynamics · Practical implications

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1 Introduction

Every human experience is linked with emotions and the nature of those affective experiences can fluctuate over time, situations, and context; meaning that affective experiences are inherently dynamic (Kuppens, Mechelen, Nezlek, Dossche, & Timmermans, 2007). Changes in affective experiences are particularly important at work because employees are often under pressure to alter, suppress or regulate their affective states in line with social and organizational norms (e.g., Grandey, 2003). These processes in turn, have an impact on their well-being because they can either lead to fatigue and strain (i.e., the depleting effect of emotion regulation; Grandey, 2003), or to increased levels of vigour and energy at work (i.e., fluctuating between high activation emotions and low activation emotions allows one to recover at work). Yet, knowing under which conditions employees will thrive is difficult to assess using a traditional and static approach to individual differences because it focuses on how people differ from each other on average. A dynamic approach on the other hand, looks at intrinsic and within-person fluctuations of affect, which in turn allows for a better assessment of the conditions under which employees are most likely to flourish—work within optimal range of functioning, characterized by growth, resilience and positivity (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Therefore, although studying dynamics of affect is rather challenging from a methodological standpoint due to advanced methods and statistics required to do so, the interest in dynamics of affective experiences has increased rapidly because this approach provides new ways to assess how affective processes may lead to changes in well-being at work, including concepts such as burnout or engagement (i.e., Beal & Ghandour, 2011; Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Dalal, 2013; Sosnowska, Hofmans, & De Fruyt, 2017).

Applying a dynamic framework to the study of affect opens up novel and challenging research avenues, as well as allows us to develop more tailored and effective interventions. Therefore, this chapter starts with an overview of the theory of dynamics of affect and how said dynamics influence well-being outcomes at work. In particular, this work focuses on several ways to capture changes in affect, including self-regulating forces, or the extent to which people experience different affective states (Kuppens, Oravecz, & Tuerlinckx, 2010). By explaining the theory of dynamics of affect, this chapter aims to stimulate discussion on how researchers can use theory to formulate new and advanced research questions related to implications of dynamics of affect at work. Next, there will be an overview of positive psychological interventions that organizations and employees can use to apply dynamics of affects in the workplace. Finally, the chapter will discuss opportunities for future research on investigating the efficacy of dynamics of affect in the workplace.

2 Dynamic Approach to Core Affect

Experiences of feeling the underlying emotional states, referred to as affective states, occur along a continuum of two dimensions: they can either be positive or negative, and they can either be active or passive. In other words, affective states are a blend of valence (pleasure—displeasure dimension) and arousal (activation—deactivation dimension), which represents the core effect of an individual (Russell, 2003). Both dimensions are independent from each other, meaning that some affective states are characterized by low values on one dimension, while having high values on the other dimension. For example, you can feel excited—an affective state which is high on both activation and pleasure—but you can also feel nervous—an affective state which is high on activation, yet low on pleasure (see Fig. 1 for more examples). Placing affective states along those two dimensions allows us to structure complex affective experiences in a relatively straightforward way.

A structural approach to affect is important in defining affect and understanding how antecedents and consequences of different affective states impact our perception, cognition and behaviours (Russell, 2003, 2009). Nevertheless, it is important for researchers and practitioners to consider changes in those affective experiences. However, to date, changes in affective states are often ignored when studying affect. Yet, they are an inevitable part of everyday life because they inform people about important events that may lead to negative or positive outcomes, including well-

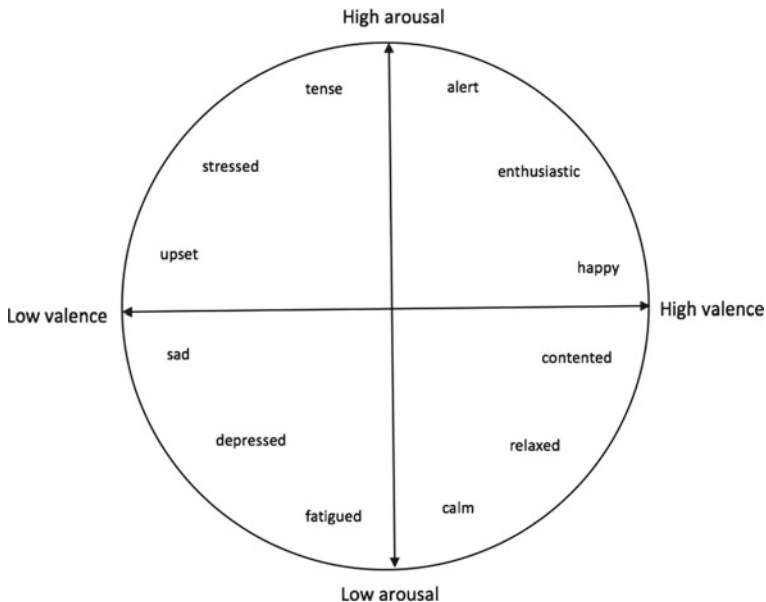


Fig. 14.1 Examples of affective states across core affect dimensions of valence and arousal (For the original affective circumplex see Russel, 2003)

being (Scherer, 2009). When researchers address changes in affect they can capture the true nature of affective experiences. Moreover, people differ in the way their affect changes, including direction and rate of change (Kuppens, Allen, et al., 2010; Beal & Ghandour, 2011). Omitting this information from research leads to a rather limited picture of affective processes. Therefore, there has been a call in the literature for scholars to look at patterns of affective changes and the underlying processes.

A theoretical approach that focuses on changes and processes over time, as opposed to focus on stable descriptions of human experiences, is the dynamic approach. A dynamic approach to affect hence provides a framework for patterns of affective changes, because it conceptualizes affect as a dynamic process in which affective states change over time (Thargard & Nerb, 2002; Witherington & Crichton, 2007). Instead of looking at general predispositions (e.g., tendency to experience positive or negative affect), a dynamic approach looks at patterns of change in affect (e.g., intensity of valence fluctuation during the day).

Although every affective state is a result of dynamic interactions between person and environment (Baird, Le, & Lucas, 2006), there are certain regularities that can be used to describe the dynamics of affect. For example, Mischel and Shoda (CAPS model; 1995) suggest individual differences, such as personality or affect, are based on contingencies, and each contingency is governed by a specific 'if... then' rule, for example 'if the workload is high, then the person is very organized'. The dynamic approach is particularly useful when studying affective experiences because it addresses why specific affective states arise in a specific context, instead of establishing general affect rules (i.e., higher level of affective stimulation is linked with higher levels of work engagement) that are not always applicable across different situations. For example, affective stimulation may lead to increased engagement only amongst those who have sufficient emotional resources, while for those who are emotionally exhausted, affective stimulation may have a negative effect. Using a dynamic framework allows researchers to ask more advanced research questions that are more aligned with an individualistic approach to employees' well-being. Some examples of said research questions would be: Under what circumstances can employees, who are emotionally depleted or burned out, experience higher level of positive affect? What situational factors trigger changes in affect amongst those who are at risk of burnout? How can employees and organizations take into account within-person differences in affective states to help counteract the negative impact of some work situations (i.e., work conflict, psychological contract breach)?

Furthermore, applying a dynamic framework to study affective experiences goes beyond a traditional functionalist approach to affect by acknowledging that affective states can arise as a by-product of complex internal mechanisms (Beal & Ghandour, 2011; Witherington & Crichton, 2007). For example, according to a functionalist approach every state serves a particular function in our life because it allows us to identify situational factors and differentiate between threatening or arousing stimuli (fear vs. excitement). In contrast, in a dynamic approach to affect, particular states develop and emerge from interactions between multiple components (i.e., appraisal, goals, instrumental actions) and they are thus multiply determined. In other words, each affective state has multiple antecedents that actively interact: anxiety arising as

a function of dynamic interaction between situation appraisal, unmet goals or needs, and our actions in that particular situation. In contrast, the traditional approach to affect, focuses on the function of the affective state, such as anxiety arising to inform us that a situation threatens our well-being. Acknowledging the dynamic character of affective states allows researchers to understand how and why the same affective state arises in different contexts and situations. Using a dynamic approach to affect thus allows research to go beyond traditional stimulus—response relationships (i.e., traditional functionalist approach) and answer more advanced research questions, which in turn opens up opportunities to design and implement more tailor-made interventions for well-being at work.

Moreover, a dynamic approach to affect accounts for the fact that most affective events are temporarily bound (i.e., they have a starting point and an end point) and change over time (Beal & Ghandour, 2011; Kuppens, Oravecz, et al. 2010). Temporal dimension in dynamics represents the timeframe within which the changes in affect occur, including their duration, intensity across time, their inertia (i.e., resistance to change) and timeframe for self-regulation (i.e., Verduyn, Delvaux, Van Coillie, Tuerlinckx, & Van Mechelen, 2009; Kuppens, Allen, & Sheeber, 2010, Koole, 2008). Temporal characteristics of affect provide important information about dynamic changes in affect (e.g., how long affective states last, how fast they are being regulated, how their intensity develops over time). Temporal fluctuations are particularly important in research on affect to move from static and isolated assessment of affective states to explorations of how affective experiences unfold over time and impact important employee outcomes. For example, Why do some people experience intensification of negative feelings as a result of rumination, while others ‘forgive and forget’? Why can the same person ruminate in one situation and forgive in the next situation? How do different time frames of psychological interventions affect their success and positive outcomes?

Finally, adopting a dynamic approach to affect, implies that researchers need to be cognizant of the fact that people differ not only between each other (e.g., some people are more likely than others to experience positive affect), but people also differ on within-person level (e.g., the same person is more likely to experience positive affect in some, but not all, situations). Therefore, the results and mechanisms that occur on a between-person level (i.e., people who have higher autonomy at work experience higher job satisfaction), may not necessarily replicate on the within-person level due to intra-individual boundaries (Thargard & Nerb, 2002; Kuppens, Oravecz, et al., 2010). Intra-individual boundaries represent any conditions that limit relationships observed on a between-person level (i.e., differences between people), and as a result they may affect the character of those relationships on within-person (i.e., differences within the same person over time or context) level. For example, individual differences in positive or negative affect (i.e., some individuals are more prone to experience positive emotions than others) are situation-bound; the same person may experience different levels of affect depending on the conditions in which this person operates. These intra-individual boundaries also have important

consequences for practice and the postulation of novel research questions such as: What are the practical constraints that limit the research on affect at work? How can employees and organizations use their power to address those limitations and create a flourishing work environment?

3 Literature on Dynamics of Affect—A Review of Relevant Concepts

Literature on a dynamic approach to affect encompasses core affect trajectories, affect spin and pulse, and affect regulation. Literature on these constructs is briefly reviewed.

3.1 Core Affect Trajectories

One of the ways to capture dynamic changes of affect is examining core affect trajectories. Core affect trajectories look at the whole process of affect development over time instead of focussing on isolated affective states at discrete points in time (Kuppens, Oravecz, et al. 2010; Kuppens et al., 2007). Affect trajectories are based on a data driven, bottom up approach, meaning that the general information about an individual (i.e., tendency to experience positive or negative affect) is based on a series of affective states and behaviours. In contrast, traditional approaches are based on a top-down approach, meaning that the general predispositions are assessed at one point in time via a general scale (i.e., questions such as ‘indicate the extent you have felt excited *over the past week*’) and those general predispositions determine affective states. Therefore, looking at core affect using a data driven, bottom up approach, allows researchers to examine the actual affective states as they emerge in real-life context, as opposed to predicting them from general dispositions. Moreover, a core affect trajectory is based on path continuity, meaning that each affective state depends on the previous one; one’s current affective states is influenced by one’s past affective states and will shape one’s future affective states.

There are several ways in which research describes core affect trajectory as a whole. One way to do so is including variability of affective states—the extent to which people experience different affective states. For example, Kuppens, Oravecz, et al. (2010) looked at variability across both dimensions of core affect and found that high variability of states alongside valence dimension was linked with lower self-esteem, while high variability of the arousal dimension was linked to increased self-esteem. Kuppens, Allen, et al. (2010) moreover looked at the temporal dimension of affective changes as a way to describe core affect trajectories. More specifically, they looked at the time it took respondents to regulate affective states. Their results indicated that slow self-regulation of arousal states is linked with high rumination,

while fast self-regulation is linked with reappraisal as a coping mechanism. These results show that by focusing on dynamic properties of affect, researchers are better able to understand the consequences of negative events at work, and why some people lean towards more effective coping strategies such as reappraisal. By focussing on core affect trajectories, affective processes are considered as a whole instead of reducing them to a number of individual affective states. By doing so, researchers can look at how changes in affective states impact the existing interactions between situational factors and well-being instead of looking at how particular situational factors trigger certain states (e.g., lower work engagement as a result of work conflict). Because several scholars (e.g., Houben, Van Den Noortgate, & Kuppens, 2015) have indicated that psychological flourishing is linked with specific patterns of emotional fluctuations, rather than particular emotional states, it is important to acknowledge the role of affect trajectories in predicting well-being at work. Within this focus on core affect trajectories researchers can then focus on questions such as do initial level of engagement affect involvement in conflict at work? Do change magnitude in affective states counteract negative outcomes of work conflict; are people that experience less change more or less resilient to the negative impact of work conflict? Asking such questions goes beyond a traditional static approach to affect and can further our understanding of affective changes and how they impact well-being at work.

3.2 *Affect Spin and Pulse*

Beyond focusing on core affect trajectories, several scholars have focused on affective variability or the extent to which people experience different affective states at the within-person level (Timmermans, Mechelen, & Kuppens, 2010). For example, imagine two individuals who experience similar average levels of positive affect, but one individual displays a wide range of affective states (i.e., ranging from high positive states such as happiness and excitement, to less positive states such as tense or tired), while the other individual may constantly display similar levels of affective states, neither low or high in positive affect (i.e., calm or serene). This type of variability focuses on the quality of core affect and is referred to as affect spin (Beal et al., 2013; Moskowitz & Zuroff, 2004). People can vary in their affect across both valence and arousal dimensions, and the extent of those changes across both dimensions provides valuable information about an individual. For example, Beal et al. (2013) have shown that affect spin increases potential strain and fatigue resulting from emotion regulation and high reactivity to affective events serve as a buffer against negative consequences such as burnout. This is particularly important in customer service jobs, where employees need to actively regulate their affective states on a day-to-day basis. Yet, not all employees suffer from emotional exhaustion and burnout as a result of emotional labour. Looking at dynamics of affect such as affect spin, allows us to better understand why some individuals are more prone to experience negative outcomes of emotion regulation.

The variability of affect can also be examined in terms of intensity of affective states, referred to as affect pulse (Moskowitz & Zuroff, 2004). For example, people may experience low affect pulse and continuously experience neutral states, or they may experience strong fluctuations in the intensity of their states, ranging from very intense states (e.g., anger or excitement) to low intensity states (e.g., feeling content or uninterested). Because each affective state can be described in terms of its intensity, and because this level of intensity may vary depending on contextual or individual difference variables, it is important to include that information in our research. To illustrate this importance, consider the following example: employees may experience qualitatively similar affective states (i.e., positive affect), yet, for some employees the intensity may vary more than for others, which in turn could potentially impact their well-being (i.e., very high pulse leading to depletion, while very low pulse leading to lower engagement). However, these assumptions are merely theoretical because the research on affect pulse is still in its early stages and there are no studies looking at how different levels of affect pulse would relate to negative outcomes. Nevertheless, the knowledge on affect spin and pulse can be used to examine employees' well-being through research questions such as: are people who experience different levels of intensity in their affect more engaged at work? Does the extent to which employees experience different positive and negative states affect their interpersonal behaviours at work? Does the extent to which employees experience different positive and negative states impact how they are perceived and evaluated by other parties? Does the extent to which employees experience different positive and negative states elicit greater reactivity to affective events, and therefore buffer the potential negative outcomes such as fatigue? Such questions allow researchers to address issues that were left unexplained by a traditional static approach to the study of affect and well-being at work.

3.3 *Affect Regulation*

Seeing that affect is subject to change, it is also important to address how individuals maintain stability in their affective system, and why affective states fluctuate around a central point (i.e., the baseline toward which affective states converge). Affect regulation is crucial to maintain stability in the affective system and allows for general adaptation (Fajkowska, 2015), and several scholars (e.g., Johnson & Nowak, 2002) have suggested that a lack of self-regulation is linked with mental health issues such as bipolar disorder or suicidality. Self-regulation mechanisms have been used to describe a temporal dimension in affective changes, using for example rate and acceleration of overall changes or how fast people regulate our affective expressions (Beal et al., 2013; Chow, Ram, Boker, Fujita, & Clore, 2005). Overall, the research suggests that affect regulation is a meaningful individual difference (i.e., some people regulate their affect faster than others) which in turn, has an impact on individuals' well-being (Beal et al., 2013). Affect regulation is particularly important when studying changes in the workplace because certain environmental circumstances may lead

to the experience of affective states that one may not be able to express at work for various reasons (e.g., getting annoyed with an unpleasant customer, or feeling upset due to non-work related reasons). The speed at which individuals regulate those affective states provides important information about the core affect as a complex and dynamic process. It allows researchers to address important issues related to well-being at work, such as: Do fast rate of changes in affective states lead to emotional exhaustion? Are negative consequences of affect regulation (e.g., emotional and cognitive fatigue) time-dependent? Do they emerge depending on how long or how fast individuals regulate their affect? Such questions could not be addressed using a traditional static approach based on between-person differences. Looking at the within-person dynamics of affect and their temporal dimension can push the research on well-being towards more individualistic approach, which in turn can lead to more effective work interventions.

4 Dynamics of Affect and Well-Being

The dynamic concepts of affect presented in the first part of this chapter, including core affect trajectories or affect spin and pulse, open up new opportunities for psychological interventions targeting employee well-being. In what follows, this chapter will look at two widely studied concepts related to well-being at work, namely engagement and burnout. The general assumptions of each concept and the link to affect will be explained. Next, it will be shown how a dynamic affect orientation may improve our understanding of work-related engagement and burnout.

4.1 *Well-Being at Work*

Psychological well-being is a broad construct that involves both presence of positive indicators (i.e., positive emotions, happiness, satisfaction, high self-esteem) and the absence of negative indicators (i.e., negative emotionality, mental health issues, psychological maladjustment; Houben et al., 2015). Two widely studied concepts related to well-being at work are engagement and burnout, with work engagement being a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008), and burnout being a state of physical and emotional exhaustion characterized by reduced sense of accomplishment (Schaufeli & Maslach, 2017). Both engagement and burnout are important and prevalent phenomena in the workplace context. Work engagement for example, does not only increase individual's well-being, but has also a spill-over effect into other domains of life. In other words, employees who experience positive states of immersion and well-being at work tend to experience positive states outside of work (Bakker et al., 2008). Job burnout on the other hand has a negative impact

on both individuals and organizations and is increasingly prevalent across different sectors and occupations (Marek, Schaufeli, Maslach, 2017).

The state of well-being at work, or lack of thereof, has been linked to various outcomes for both individuals and organization. At the individual level, several scholars (i.e., Taris & Schaufeli, 2015; Eger & Maridal, 2015; Sin & Lyunomirski, 2009) have demonstrated that low well-being is linked with negative outcomes such as increased stress, reduced sleep quality, higher risk of chronic work-related illnesses, and increased anxiety and depression. At the organizational level, Harter, Schmidt and Keyes (2003) have demonstrated that low engagement is linked to increased financial costs, increased turnover, increased absenteeism, and reduced productivity. Hence, it is important to invest and develop both theory and practice related to well-being at work. So far, research has focused on core affect to understand how and why people experience different levels of well-being at work. However, by adopting a dynamic approach to affect researchers are able to further advance our knowledge, and suggest how to create healthy and safe work environments in which employees can flourish and organizations can maximize their potential.

4.2 Dynamics of Affect and Work Engagement

Work engagement is a core construct in work and organizational psychology that defines high level of work-related motivation (Bledow, Schmitt, Frese, & Kuhnel, 2011) and it is characterized by three elements: (1) vigour (i.e., the level of energy at work), (2) dedication (i.e., being strongly involved in job related tasks and responsibilities), and (3) absorption (i.e., being fully and happily concentrated in one's work). Work engagement is an affective-motivational state (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) that has often been linked to core affect. Yet, only recently scholars have started to focus on the role of dynamic affect in relation to work engagement. For example, Bledow et al. (2011) reported that work engagement emerges from a dynamic interaction between positive and negative effect (e.g., events that triggered negative emotions in the morning are linked to engagement in the afternoon when individuals experience positive emotions). Furthermore, Ouweneel, Len Blanc, and Schaufeli (2012) showed that there is a reciprocal relationship between positive emotions and engagement—those who experience positive emotions tend to be more engaged at work, and vice versa, those who are engaged at work tend to experience more positive emotions. Together, these results show that employees influence situations as much as they are influenced by situations. Hence, it is important to apply our understanding of how dynamics of affect have an impact on employees' well-being in order to create work environment where people can flourish.

4.3 *Dynamics of Affect and Burnout*

Despite common misconception that burnout is the opposite side of work engagement, scholars have consistently shown the two constructs represent different entities and describe different elements of work-related well-being (Bakker et al., 2008). Burnout is a state of mental and physical depletion caused by one's professional life described via three main characteristics (Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, & Schwab, 1986): (1) emotional exhaustion (i.e., draining of emotional and mental energy), (2) cynicism (i.e., a negative attitude towards one's work), and (3) reduced professional efficacy (i.e., self-doubt about capability to fulfil job responsibilities). A range of studies have demonstrated that burnout, akin to work engagement, has an affective basis that can be predicted by the dynamics of affect. For example, affect regulation has been linked to depleting outcomes, such as emotional and cognitive strain and fatigue (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 2002; Koole, 2008). Moreover, Beal et al. (2013) reported affect spin is an important factor in the link between affect and job burnout. Their results showed although affect spin represents a broader range of reactivity to affective events (i.e., more extreme emotional reactions) and potentially is accompanied by a higher emotional strain, it also served as a buffer to the depleting effects of affective events, such as emotional exhaustion. In other words, strain from active affect regulation may be detrimental at first for individuals with high affect spin, but it has less durable influences on emotional resources over time compared to individuals with low affect spin levels.

5 Practical Implications

Organizations have a fiduciary responsibility to stakeholders. Many contemporary organizations embrace the value of human capital to maximize profits. Thus, workplaces are interested in strategies to improve talent performance via employee well-being. Several strategies to increase employee performance fall under the purview of positive psychological interventions—psychology-related actions (i.e., training, exercises, therapy)—that aim to increase positive feelings and behaviours (Boiler et al., 2013). This part of the chapter discusses practical implications of applying dynamics of affect to positive psychological interventions for improving employee well-being.

6 The Current State of Positive Psychological Interventions

The overall value of positive psychological interventions is vast, with research demonstrating that happy people are healthier, more successful, and more socially engaged (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). In the workplace context, happy

employees are more engaged (Fisher, 2010), less likely to suffer from burnout (Dierendonck, Garssen, & Visser, 2005), and more productive and committed to their organization (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Research on dynamics of affect provide support for how to incorporate complex individual differences to improve well-being at work. Looking at different dynamic elements of core affect (e.g., spin, pulse, or self-regulation) may lead to a comprehensive understanding of affect at work, which in turn may lead to higher well-being. In the following section, this chapter provides recommendations on how to apply knowledge of employee dynamic affect to psychological interventions for improving employee well-being.

7 Dynamics of Affect in Psychological Interventions: A Guide for Organizations

Organizations can apply the dynamic affective approach to the development and implementation of psychological interventions through a variety of ways. First, Sosnowska et al. (2017) found that employees who, over time, experience various levels of affective arousal (i.e., experiencing high vs. low stimulation from the environment) tend to feel vigorous at work, regardless of their baseline arousal level. Therefore, from a practical point of view, it would be beneficial to introduce more variability in arousal-related stimuli at work because this might increase employees' vigour levels at work. Although Sosnowska and colleagues' (2017) findings should not be interpreted in a causal way, they suggest that work interventions such as alternating between high- and low-arousal tasks may help employees who typically do not feel energetic at work. Building on these findings, it is suggested to first assess how stimulating job-relevant tasks are (based on employees' perception); when employees believe that most of their tasks are very similar in their arousal level, organizations could introduce new tasks that differ in their stimulation level. For example, if the job involves tasks that do not increase affective arousal, such as repetitive simple tasks that do not require interactions with other employees (e.g., production line tasks), organizations could introduce task rotation to stimulate affective changes amongst their employees, and, by doing so, potentially increase their vigour and engagement. In contrast, jobs that are based on a constantly stimulating tasks, such as floor manager of a busy restaurant (i.e., complex interactions with both customers and team members), might benefit from introducing tasks that do not induce arousal in affect or additional stimulation (i.e., simple manual tasks performed alone such as folding napkins or setting up tables). By doing so, these employees can recharge and alternate between very stimulating tasks and more relaxing tasks, which in turn would increase their vigour and engagement.

Following these findings and recommendations, it should be pointed out how important recognizing the role of dynamic interactions between positive and negative affective experiences is. For example, Zautra, Affleck, Tennen, Reich, & Davis, (2005) suggested that in non-stressful conditions people may experience higher well-

being if they experience high emotional complexity of positive and negative affect. More specifically, Zautra et al. (2005) reported that people can benefit from independence of positive and negative affect, meaning that their emotional responses related to positive affect (joy versus apathy) are independent from negative affect states (fear versus calm). In other words, emotionally complex states, such as feeling happy (high positive affect), yet calm (low negative affect) at the same time, may provide much needed stimulation in non-stressful conditions. In contrast, in stressful conditions, increased emotional complexity is maladaptive because it consumes individual's cognitive and emotional resources. For example, in stressful conditions coherence between positive and negative affect is more beneficial (e.g., feeling nervous and excited at the same time as oppose to nervous and depressed). Moreover, positive affective events have the potential to reduce negative affective events in stressful situations. Positive psychological interventions could focus on increasing emotional complexity during non-stressful times because in these circumstances employees would benefit from the experience of more complex affective states (i.e., higher well-being). For example, if an employee tends to experience high levels of positive and negative affect (i.e., enthusiasm and stress), reducing negative affect via relaxation techniques would be beneficial. Furthermore, increasing positive affective events during stressful time (i.e., positive feedback, team bonding time, additional one-off benefits) could reduce negative feelings and therefore improve employees' well-being.

Finally, organizations could improve employee well-being by focusing on affect regulation at work. The research suggests that in the process of regulating affect, the strategies individuals employ in close temporal proximity of an event (i.e., reappraisal of the situation) have different consequences than the strategies individuals employ after a certain amount of time has passed (i.e., suppression of negative emotions; Gross, 1998); demonstrating that the temporal dimension of affective experiences is an important factor. More specifically, Gross (1998) argued that individuals initially tend to regulate their affect by engaging in reappraisal of the situation that triggered our initial affective response. By trying to change the way people think about the situation, people are able to soften its emotional impact and behavioural expression. However, as time passes by, individuals tend to regulate their affect by engaging in suppression by inhibiting the outward indicators of their affective states. Although suppression inhibits behavioural expression of affective states (e.g., showing frustration with an unpleasant customer), it does not decrease the experience of the affect itself. Suppressing affective states has a detrimental impact on employees such as strain, fatigue and emotional exhaustion (Gross & John, 2003). Potential psychological intervention can therefore focus on increasing reappraisal strategies amongst employees in order to reduce the potential negative costs of affect regulation. When developing the interventions, it is important to remember that each individual's perceptions of a given situation can be substantially different from other individuals. As such, the intervention's content should be tailored to each individual, as oppose to giving everyone the same set of guidelines. For example, employees may differ in their sensitivity to social cues, which may have a different extent of emotional reactivity, which will differentially affect how they perceive and interpret situations

at work. An effective intervention should therefore be cognizant of these individual differences by for example including an evaluation of employee's cognitive and affective schemes (i.e., looking at quality and intensity of the affect experienced at work).

8 Dynamics of Affect in Psychological Interventions: A Guide for Employees

Although a dynamic approach to affect offers valuable insights into how organizational leaders can improve employee well-being, it is equally important to focus on how individuals can proactively improve their state of well-being at work through focusing on dynamic changes in affect. More specifically, this work will first look at how individuals can become agents of their own career in order to improve their well-being. Next part will focus on building personal resources as a way to increase engagement and adjustment. Finally, it will be addressed how individual differences in affect spin are linked to intrinsic motivation, and how that can be used to develop positive psychological interventions.

One way to employ dynamics of affect in positive psychological interventions is to focus on employees as an agent of their own career (i.e., Stander & Rothmann, 2010). Empowering employees to take control of their job would allow them to adjust its characteristics, such as task variety, flexibility, engagement with others, and to account for changes in their affect. Each employee may have different needs when it comes to his/her working environment, and each employee's core affect influences the extent to which (s)he is satisfying these needs. At the organizational level, it is not possible to be fully aware of the complex dynamics of affect for each employee, and as such it is not possible for an organization to address each employee's needs adequately. The appropriate action would be to empower employees to make their own decisions regarding their work to accommodate for the complexity of affective experiences at work. There are several ways in which employees can re-shift the power dynamics at work and become agents of their own career, for example through decentralization of decision-making, optimization of working conditions, increased job autonomy (i.e., Carter, 2009; Tuckey, Bakker, & Dollard, 2012; Breevaart, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2014). However, these methods are job- and sector- dependent. For example, the solution that would work for blue collar workers (possibility to rotate between jobs or tasks), may not work for white collar workers, where job crafting (customizing the job by altering tasks and interactions with others; Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008) would be a more adequate solution.

Yet another way to incorporate affect dynamics into positive psychological intervention, is building personal resources. Based on Broaden and Build Theory (Fredrickson, 1998), it can be argued that positive affective states signal well-being in the moment, but also help to build personal resources that aid future well-being. Positive emotions broaden and foster exploratory behaviours that create learning

opportunities and increase employees' psychological adaptability. In contrast, the experience of negative emotions limits one's behavioural options. In line with these arguments, Fredrickson and Losada (2005) have showed that trajectories of core affect states (negative versus positive emotions) were an important predictor of well-being at work. More specifically, Fredrickson and Losada (2005) argued that the ratio of positive to negative affect states had to be over 2.9 to lead to future well-being. Moreover, their results showed that experiencing no negative emotions, or having very high positive to negative states ratio (over 11.6) led to decreased well-being, meaning that lack of negative emotions has a negative impact on well-being as well. This finding is particularly important in the context of working environments where positive and negative situations are often intertwined. Moreover, these findings indicate that well-being does not necessarily refer to a complete absence of negative states, but rather describes a dynamic process that leans in towards positive affective states. In other words, employees should be aware that certain forms of negativity can actually promote flourishing and well-being in the long run, especially when these negative affective states are time-limited and situation-bound (i.e., temporary guilt); negative states are part of human life and accepting them allows for future growth and building personal resources.

Finally, several scholars have demonstrated that the link between intrinsic motivation at work and employee well-being is related to daily changes in affect. For example, Beal and Ghandour (2011) reported a substantial positive connection between daily intrinsic motivation and fluctuations in daily affect, as indicated by positive affect. However, they also found that individuals with high affect spin experienced a stronger positive relation between intrinsic motivation and time lagged positive affect (measured the day after). In contrast, individuals with low affect spin did not experience a similar lingering positive influence of intrinsic task motivation on their affect. These results suggest that positive psychological interventions should be tailored to individuals' level of affect spin. That is, individuals characterized by low affect spin, will experience increased well-being as a result of high motivation only on temporary basis. Interventions could therefore focus on maintaining high levels of motivation through the course of the day or week. In contrast, individuals with high affect spin appear to react more strongly to positive events (such as increased intrinsic motivation) and their affective reactions last longer. However, this poses certain threats to their well-being (i.e., stronger and more lasting negative reactions to negative events; Beal & Ghandour, 2011) which can be addressed in positive interventions. For example, interventions could focus on anchoring their affective state in the current moment via various meditation and mindfulness techniques because several studies have shown that meditating has a positive impact on well-being (Cavanagh et al., 2013; Feicht et al., 2013). Meditation and mindfulness is about how to observe and accept one's feelings without judgement, and without acting upon them. Especially for those, who react stronger to negative events, meditation and mindfulness may offer resources necessary to deal with adverse situations in a healthy way, and potentially reduce the negative outcomes such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Cavanagh et al., 2013; Ivztan & Lomas, 2016).

9 Future Directions

Applying dynamics of affect in positive psychological interventions is challenging, yet a worthwhile task. This chapter discussed how the existing concepts of dynamics of affect can be linked with research on well-being at work (i.e., work engagement and burnout). Although this work made several suggestions for how a dynamic approach to affect could lead to the development of practical implications, and presented some suggestions for both employees and organizations, it is acknowledged that these suggestions are merely based on theory and a conceptual understanding of dynamics of affect. In order to use dynamics of affect to enhance employees' well-being, the presented suggestions should be examined empirically.

First and foremost, it must be acknowledged that the research on dynamics of individual differences such as affect, requires more intensive data collection procedures (e.g., experience sampling methods). Applying more individualistic approaches to well-being at work through dynamics of affect (i.e., focus on within-person changes), means that it cannot be simply assumed that a single intervention will work for each employee. In contrast, one might have to tailor the intervention to the specific needs and affective experiences of each individual if one want to maximize the well-being of each individual at work. Yet, the benefits of such an individualistic approach can be vast, and it is strongly encouraged to shift the focus from unified solutions, based on between-person differences, towards idiosyncratic solutions that appreciate the uniqueness of each employee intrinsic dynamics. Moreover, there are already existing guidelines for research methods adequate to studies on dynamics of individual differences. For example, experience sampling methodology is a straightforward and appropriate method for data collection, which can be then analysed for the purpose of psychological intervention. Catterson, Eldesouky and John (2017) provide a good example of such study, in which they used an experience sampling approach to emotion regulation in order to examine emotion suppression in specific situations. For a comprehensive review of experience sampling methodology applied in the studies on well-being, the reader is referred to the review of Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (2014). In their work, they focus on experience sampling method as a measure for the frequency and patterns of mental processes in everyday-life situations, including emotional and cognitive experiences, patterns of social interactions or daily activities and quality and intensity of thoughts. The article also reviews practical and methodological considerations of this method, which are particularly applicable in psychological interventions.

10 Conclusion

This chapter focused on how different concepts related to dynamics of affect, namely core affect trajectories, pulse, spin and self-regulation, can be applied in the studies on employees' well-being. Looking at dynamic, within-person fluctuations of affect

in relation to work engagement and burnout, opens up new possibilities in positive psychology applied at work, as it can be utilized in more tailored and individualised psychological interventions. That in turn, can help to create more positive, engaging work environment, where employees can thrive and fulfil their potential.

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Gratitude in Sport: Positive Psychology for Athletes and Implications for Mental Health, Well-Being, and Performance



Nicole T. Gabana

Abstract This chapter focuses on the potential benefits of gratitude cultivation and expression in the sport context, as it pertains to the positive mental health and well-being of individual athletes and teams. Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) that aim to cultivate grateful thoughts, feelings, and actions have demonstrated positive effects on mental and physical health among youth, college-age, and adult populations. Some of these benefits include increased life satisfaction, social connectedness, positive affect, resilience, altruism, better quality of sleep, and reduced psychological distress. Specifically, in the athletic population, recent research has shown that athletes who have higher levels of gratitude also report greater social support, life and sport satisfaction, team cohesion, and lower levels of burnout. Framed within the context of Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions, the author will discuss how gratitude can broaden athletes' perspectives by noticing the good, and build their resources by increasing the perception of available support. The literature on gratitude PPIs to date will be discussed, considering specific implications for athletic populations. Potential applications for sport psychologists and other practitioners working in a performance context will be provided. Finally, the author will provide caveats and considerations of implementing gratitude PPIs among sport and performance populations, including limitations of the current body of literature, contextual factors, and future directions. Overall, this chapter emphasizes that the utilization of positive psychology in sport may be advantageous for athletes, coaches, and teams, and calls for further empirical study and applied focus in this area.

Keywords Sport psychology · Athlete · Mental health · Well-being · Performance

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1 Introduction

Sport psychology, which has roots in the fields of psychology and sport science, is similar to positive psychology in that it seeks to understand the mechanisms underlying optimal human performance, specifically in the kinesthetic realm. The broader domain of performance psychology may additionally include musical performance, military performance, or surgical performance, to name a few; however, for the purposes of this chapter, the integration of positive psychology specifically as it relates to the realm of sport domain will be discussed. Just as sport psychology is concerned with studying what aspects lead to optimal mental and physical performance, the science of positive psychology seeks to investigate what factors contribute to optimal human functioning, societal flourishing, and subjective, psychological, and social well-being. Since its origin, positive psychology has been primarily concerned with studying human flourishing in order to move toward a deeper understanding of human potential and well-being (Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood, 2006). This is in contrast to the longstanding psychopathology model which has focused much energy on identifying, understanding, and treating disorders of the human mind and symptom amelioration (Waterman, 2013).

The field of sport psychology has focused on understanding the characteristics needed for optimal performance in sport, as well as enhancement of athlete mental health and well-being (Aoyagi, Portenga, Poczwardowski, Cohen, & Statler, 2012). Since positive psychology has focused on understanding psychological functioning at its best (i.e., flourishing; Keyes, 2002), it shares a common interest with sport psychology. Both domains can be used prescriptively (i.e., to address a problem), preventatively (i.e., to prevent a problem), as well as for enhancement (i.e., to make what is already good, better). For example, a person may seek a sport psychologist to promote multicultural awareness among team members (preventative), to address performance anxiety (treatment), or to achieve optimal attentional focus during a game (enhancement). Similarly, positive psychology can be applied in all three conditions as well, and offers a unique perspective to applied sport psychology given its roots in the optimization of human strengths. Interventions associated with positive psychology concepts such as gratitude, optimism, and hope have been related to positive outcomes in a variety of clinical circumstances (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Recently, sport psychology researchers and professionals have discovered that borrowing concepts and techniques from the positive psychology literature may offer valuable insight and intervention strategies for addressing sport and performance concerns.

Similar to traditional psychopathology, sport often preaches an improvement mentality (i.e., how to fix what is going wrong). Directing attention to areas of improvement is an integral part of sport, whether performing or coaching. Much can be gained from addressing weaknesses or problem areas; however, spending time identifying strengths and successful experiences can be just as informative and effective in the performance enhancement process (Wagstaff & Leach, 2015). Wagstaff and Leach (2015) advocated for a strengths-based model among performers and acknowl-

edged that while focusing on minimizing, correcting, or eliminating weakness can be conducive to high performance, the development of strengths is crucial to the improvement process. Researchers advised that “positive psychological phenomena need not be emphasized at the cost of exploring pathology” (p. 79), arguing for an integration and alignment of both strengths- and pathological-based research in performance arenas. Sport psychology practitioners have long encouraged a balanced perspective; that is, for athletes and coaches to not only identify what can be better, but to also examine what is going well in order to repeat successful behaviors in the future. In this way, merging two fields both focused on optimizing human potential (i.e., positive psychology and sport psychology) seems to be a natural and appropriate fit.

Within the field of positive psychology, the concept of gratitude has most notably drawn attention in the past two decades from researchers and practitioners alike. Integrating the fields of positive psychology and sport psychology, this chapter focuses on the relevance of gratitude to the sport context, specifically its relationship to athlete mental health, well-being, and performance. To this aim, an overview of the literature on positive emotions, gratitude, and gratitude interventions will be provided to present a theoretically-guided rationale for the relevance of gratitude in sport. Next, the empirical literature on athlete gratitude will be reviewed to date, including the potential applicability of gratitude interventions in sport. Practical implications for the unique athlete population will be discussed, with particular attention to athlete mental health, well-being, and performance. The chapter concludes with guidelines for athletes, coaches, parents, and sport psychology practitioners, implications for future research, and a conclusion of key points.

2 Review of Literature

In a meta-analysis of nearly 300 empirical studies on positive affect, researchers found that positivity is not only related to success in life, but also predicts it (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Therefore, it is not enough to say that successful people happen to experience more positive emotions, but rather that experiencing positive emotions can, in fact, lead to greater success. Fredrickson (2001) reported that positive emotions can have an “undoing” effect on negative emotions, even to the point of improving physical health as well as psychological well-being. Researchers found that when people experience positive emotion immediately following a high-activation negative emotion (eliciting a physiological response), the cardiovascular system tends to recover more quickly (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998; Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2000). Athletes may experience an amalgam of positive and negative thoughts and emotions within the context of performance. Therefore, combatting negative self-talk with more positive, productive thoughts may have an enhancing effect on performance and general athlete well-being.

According to Barbara Fredrickson, a prominent U.S. researcher, author, and professor of positive psychology, experiencing positive emotions affects our cognition

in two major ways: (1) positive emotions broaden our conceptualization of a given situation, expanding our ideas and potential actions; and (2) build our network of resources by encouraging the development and utilization of strengths, abilities, and reserves (Fredrickson, 2001, 2004). The Broaden and Build Theory purports that positive emotions facilitate problem-solving through enhanced creativity, since we tend to view a greater range of possibilities (e.g., solutions) when experiencing positive emotions as compared to negative emotions. In contrast, negative emotions tend to narrow our focus, which has served an adaptive evolutionary function to protect us from potential threat or harm. For example, experiencing fear or anxiety after seeing a bear on a hike would narrow attentional focus, allowing one to concentrate on the best possible escape route. Negative emotions serve a purpose; however, in modern society, negative emotion may impede our ability to consider a range of possibilities and think creatively during problem-solving and decision-making processes, especially in situations which are not dangerous or life-threatening. Wagstaff and Leach (2015) proposed that cultivating positive emotions during stressful times may actually enhance an individual's ability to cope with adversity, and foster facilitative cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses in the face of challenge. Adversity is inevitable in competitive sport; therefore, finding ways to cultivate positive emotion in sport may be particularly conducive to optimal athletic performance, as well as athlete mental health and well-being.

In addition to broadening one's mindset, positive emotions can help build and utilize valuable resources to achieve positive outcomes (Fredrickson, 2001). For example, experiencing the emotion of hope during times of trial may inspire one to draw upon one's strengths during a difficult situation (Wagstaff & Leach, 2015). Consider the challenge of acquiring a new skill in sport; maintaining a positive attitude or bringing humor into the situation may increase "stick-with-it-ness" throughout the challenging process (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). Additionally, finding ways to cultivate positivity amongst athletes on a team may produce benefits for group dynamics, team cohesion, and interpersonal functioning, since PPIs have been associated with better relationships and higher levels of interpersonal connectedness (Fincham, 2000; Fredrickson, 2009; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010) and enhanced subjective and psychological well-being (Bolier et al., 2013). In addition to potential psychological and social benefits, PPIs may hold potential implications for performance as well. In a meta-analysis of sport-specific interventions, researchers reported that psychological and psychosocial interventions have been shown to enhance sport performance, with larger effects for those which included an active social component (Brown & Fletcher, 2017).

2.1 Gratitude

Of the number of positive psychology topics examined in recent years (e.g., resilience, grit, mindfulness), gratitude remains relatively understudied in the context of sport. Trait gratitude can be conceptualized as a "life orientation towards noticing and

appreciating the positive in life,” rather than merely feeling appreciation toward others (Wood et al., 2010, p. 3). While this defines gratitude as a disposition, gratitude can also be a state of feeling, or an act outwardly directed toward another (e.g., writing a gratitude letter, saying ‘thank you’) or expressed privately (e.g., gratitude journaling). Other researchers define gratitude as the “sense of thankfulness that arises in response to receiving any kind of personal benefit (be it material or nonmaterial) as a result of any transactional means (be it a personal encounter with another person, with nature, with an object, or even with ideas)” (Furlong, You, Renshaw, O’Malley, & Rebelez, 2013, p. 755). There is a general consensus in the positive psychology literature that gratitude is a good indicator of subjective well-being (i.e., happiness) given its numerous associations with other positive social, physical, and mental health indicators such as optimism, life satisfaction, social connectedness, hope, forgiveness, prosocial behavior, sleep quality, and positive affect; in addition, gratitude has been negatively correlated with measures of personal and social ill-being such as depression, anxiety, negative affect, materialism, aggression, burnout, envy, and psychological distress (Algoe, Gable, & Maisel, 2010; DeWall, Lambert, Pole, Kashdan, & Finchman, 2012; Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008; Froh, Yurkewicz, & Kashdan, 2009; Gabana, Steinfeldt, Wong, & Chung, 2017; Lanham, Rye, Rimsky, & Weill, 2012; McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002; Wood et al., 2010).

More recently, gratitude has been connected to resilience, suggesting that gratitude may serve as a protective factor and/or coping mechanism in the face of adversity. In a study surveying U.S. college students 4-months after a campus shooting, researchers found resilience to be a buffer (i.e., mediator) between trauma exposure and post-traumatic stress. Similarly, gratitude positively mediated the relationship between posttraumatic stress and posttraumatic growth, in that participants who reported higher levels of trait gratitude indicated more positive growth following the trauma (Vieselmeyer, Holguin, & Mezulis, 2017). In this way, resilience and gratitude may work hand in hand, with the former preventing negative outcomes and the latter promoting positive outcomes after a traumatic event (Vieselmeyer et al., 2017). In a related study among undergraduate students in India, trait gratitude was found to be a significant predictor of resilience (Gupta & Kumar, 2015). Results of a multiple regression analysis revealed that predictors of gratitude, acceptance, and forgiveness accounted for 66% of the variance in resilience scores, with gratitude emerging as the largest predictor of resilience among the three. Given that resilience is recognized as a highly valued and desired trait among athletes both on and off the field (Wagstaff & Leach, 2015), further empirical investigation of the relationship between gratitude and resilience in sport is warranted. Particularly, gratitude intervention researchers should consider measuring resilience as an outcome variable in future studies, both in general and sport-specific populations. In the next section, a summary of gratitude intervention research will be provided, with consideration of implications for sport.

2.2 *Gratitude Interventions*

In some of the earliest research on gratitude interventions, Emmons (1999) found that undergraduate students who wrote down five things they felt grateful for in the past week were significantly more optimistic and felt better about their lives in general, compared to students who wrote down either five general events or five stressors that occurred during the week. Additionally, the gratitude group had lesser somatic complaints, spent more time exercising, and reported making more progress toward goals than the other two groups (Emmons, 1999). PPIs aimed at cultivating gratitude have demonstrated a number of intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits, specifically increased subjective well-being, lower depression, positive emotions, and stronger interconnectedness with others (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Wood et al., 2010). In a review of cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental studies focused on gratitude, Wood et al. (2010) reported a number of psychological and physical benefits correlated with gratitude; specifically, trait gratitude was associated with better health outcomes (e.g., better quality of sleep), greater life satisfaction, lower risk of mental illness, and better quality relationships. Additionally, numerous studies have reported associations between gratitude and a range of variables such as enhanced enthusiasm, alertness, energy, goal attainment, determination, emotional closure, better psychotherapy outcomes, positive affect, perceived social support, and altruism (Wood et al., 2010).

While interventions aimed at increasing gratitude (e.g., gratitude lists, grateful contemplation, expressing gratitude behaviorally) have been linked to enhanced well-being, it is unclear how their effectiveness compares to a control group or other types of interventions (Wood et al., 2010). In a meta-analysis of gratitude interventions, Davis et al. (2016) cautioned researchers from overemphasizing the potential effects of gratitude on positive outcomes, as their analysis found gratitude interventions to be “marginally better” than a matched-activity comparison group (p. 24) for improving psychological well-being. Furthermore, Davis et al. found that “gratitude interventions did not outperform psychologically active conditions” (p. 26). However, Dickens (2017) pointed out that a major limitation of Davis et al. (2016) was that researchers grouped positive, negative, and neutral conditions into one comparison group, which distorted results. Dickens claimed that “valence of the comparison group is likely to influence the magnitude of the effect sizes” (p. 195); therefore, she conducted a meta-analysis to compare gratitude interventions with neutral, negative, and positive comparison groups.

Using 56 meta-analyses, Dickens (2017) included 38 studies with 282 effect sizes, finding mixed results for the effectiveness of gratitude interventions on various markers of well-being. Specifically, Dickens reported that when post-intervention scores were compared to a neutral condition group, gratitude interventions had notably higher effects on the variables of grateful mood, life satisfaction, positive affect, happiness, optimism, quality of relationships, dispositional gratitude, and overall well-being; the gratitude intervention group also demonstrated lower levels of depression than neutral conditions. Contrary to previous reports, however, Dickens (2017) did

not find gratitude interventions to be more impactful on physical health, exercise, or stress. She also examined these effects at a delayed follow-up time point, and found that some positive effects of the gratitude intervention group (i.e., higher well-being and happiness, lower depression) were sustained longer than the neutral comparison group.

When compared to a negative intervention group at post-intervention, gratitude interventions demonstrated similar effects for both positive and negative variables above and beyond negative interventions, with small differences in physical health, prosocial behavior, and sleep in favor of the gratitude intervention condition (Dickens, 2017). Grateful mood was the only positive outcome that demonstrated a notable difference at the delayed follow-up. When gratitude interventions were compared to a positive intervention group, the gratitude intervention group showed a substantial difference in enhanced well-being, but differences on outcomes of other variables were not found (i.e., quality of relationships, life satisfaction, happiness, grateful mood, positive and negative affect, depression, optimism, stress, self-esteem, physical health, and sleep). At a delayed follow-up, a small difference in well-being was observed. Therefore, Dickens (2017) concluded that gratitude interventions do not seem to demonstrate more effectiveness than other types of positive interventions, such as strengths-based activities.

With these caveats and considerations in mind, it is still apparent that utilizing gratitude PPIs within a sport context might be advantageous in providing athletes with strategies and coping skills to target desired outcomes relevant to sport performance. While many empirical studies have consisted of one-time interventions such as making a gratitude list (e.g., Gabana, Steinfeldt, Wong, Chung, & Svetina, 2018), gratitude journaling (e.g., Lambert, Fincham, & Stillman 2012), writing gratitude letters (e.g., Wong et al., 2018), or writing down “three good things” (e.g., Seligman et al., 2005), researchers have suggested that multi-session gratitude programmes may be more likely to have lasting effects due to increased dosage (Davis et al., 2016). For example, Rash, Matsuba, and Prkachin (2011) found that repeated gratitude contemplation over the course of a 4-week intervention programme significantly increased self-esteem and life satisfaction in comparison to a control group. In this study, participants in the gratitude group were asked to think about what they were grateful for (e.g., people, items, events) and “to experience and maintain the sincere heart-felt feelings of gratitude associated with that thought” (p. 358). After this reflection, participants were asked to journal about their experiences of gratitude for at least 5 min, twice a week for 4 weeks (Rash et al., 2011). Multi-session interventions involving repeated gratitude activities may be more effective at promoting a grateful disposition because of their potential to produce a habit through repeated practice.

State gratitude may serve as a buffer for stress because it has been found to moderate the relationship between stress and variables such as self-esteem, worry, adjustment, and negative affect (Nezlek, Krejtz, Rusanowska, & Holas, 2019). In this study, Nezlek et al. had 131 psychologically healthy adults report their daily events, how grateful they felt that day, and daily well-being over the course of 2 weeks. Researchers found that on days when people reported higher levels of felt gratitude,

the relationship between daily stressful events and self-esteem and depressogenic adjustment were weaker. This was also the case for correlations between stress and worry and negative affect. Furthermore, the strength of the relationships between gratitude and worry, negative affect, and depressogenic adjustment were stronger on days when participants reported less positive events. This means that higher levels of daily (state) gratitude can have a positive impact on the way people experience negative events. Nezlek et al. purported that feelings of gratitude can compensate for having a less positive day, congruent with previous findings (e.g., Lambert et al., 2012).

Gratitude has also been studied in the youth population, specifically. A longitudinal study on U.S. high school students found that higher levels of gratitude in adolescents were associated with better adjustment, social relationships, and psychological well-being (Bono, Froh, & Emmons, 2012). Researchers reported that gratitude predicted higher levels of positive emotions, happiness, and life satisfaction at the end of high school. Specifically, students who developed more gratitude throughout high school, based on self-report data, demonstrated better behaviour in school (e.g., not cheating), including behaviour toward peers (e.g., not teasing; Bono et al., 2012). Other studies have linked gratitude to higher levels of optimism and life satisfaction, and lesser physical complaints and negative affect in young adults (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Gratitude interventions have also produced positive effects in elementary school students, with a five-session gratitude curriculum resulting in higher levels of positive affect, grateful thinking, and behavioural gratitude expression. Researchers emphasized that “education that facilitates cognitive appraisals that produce gratitude should be encouraged as early in life as possible so that young persons have a head start toward becoming mature receivers and providers of benevolent actions” (Froh et al., 2014, p. 148). Since trait gratitude can be increased with intentional practice over time, developing a grateful mindset at an early age may pay dividends for coping with adversity later in life.

Much of the data on correlates of gratitude and the effects of gratitude interventions have been collected on college students in the U.S. Recently, researchers have even investigated the neural correlates of gratitude, providing evidence that both the experience and expression of gratitude ignite particular parts of the brain associated with moral cognition and positive emotion, such as the anterior cingulate cortex and the medial prefrontal cortex (Fox, Kaplan, Damasio, & Damasio, 2015; Kini, Wong, McInnis, Gabana, & Brown, 2016). Kini et al. additionally found that participants in a gratitude letter writing condition demonstrated increased behavioural expressions of gratitude (operationalized by a “Pay it Forward” activity measuring the amount of money participants decided to pass on to a third party, from what they received from a benefactor) and significantly greater neural modulation by gratitude in comparison to a control group. This means that when participants were making the decision about how much money to give, more neural activity was observed in the region of the brain correlated with self-reported gratitude.

Gratitude interventions have also been found to result in improved mental health outcomes for college students. Effects on both measures of well-being and ill-being have been indicated, such as greater optimism, school connectedness, happiness, life

satisfaction; and lesser stress, depressive symptoms, and negative affect, respectively (Renshaw & Hindman, 2017; Renshaw & Rock, 2018). Gratitude has also been linked to lower levels of depression and anxiety among the general adult population (Petrocchi & Couyoumdjian, 2016). Interestingly, researchers suggested that gratitude may be a protective factor against psychopathology because of its ability to foster a less critical and more compassionate attitude, both toward oneself and others (Petrocchi & Couyoumdjian, 2016). This aligns with mindfulness and acceptance-based therapeutic approaches which have demonstrated intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits on mental health, well-being, and performance in both general and sport-specific domains (e.g., Baltzell & Akhtar, 2014; Gardner & Moore, 2012; Neff, 2003; Noetel, Ciarrochi, Van Zanden, & Lonsdale, 2017). Of particular note, a recent multi-session gratitude intervention entitled the “Gratitude Group Program” was tested among college students who attended a series of five 90-min sessions, conducted once per week for 5 weeks (Wong, McKean Blackwell, Goodrich Mitts, Gabana, & Li, 2017). This study was the first of its kind to focus on cultivating gratitude as its core goal, within a group therapeutic model. Sessions included didactic, discussion-based, interpersonal, and experiential components, in addition to weekly homework assignments to encourage gratitude practice between sessions (e.g., writing down three good things, five times per week). Session topics included micro and macro gratitude, interpersonal gratitude, gratitude savouring, and redemptive gratitude. Results revealed that after participating in the Gratitude Group Program, participants exhibited significant improvements in state and trait gratitude, life satisfaction, and meaning in life, and decreased levels of psychological distress post-intervention (Wong, McKean Blackwell et al., 2017). Similar multi-session programs may be designed and tailored to the athlete population, by making content and practice relevant to the sport setting.

In addition to the general population, gratitude interventions have also demonstrated improved outcomes for psychotherapy clients specifically. Wong et al. (2018) found that individuals enrolled in psychotherapy for mental health issues who also participated in a gratitude letter writing intervention reported significantly better mental health outcomes than those in both control and expressive writing conditions, while the latter two conditions did not differ significantly. One of the reasons gratitude writing may produce positive effects on mental health for a range of populations (e.g., youth, college students, adults, psychotherapy clients) may be attributed to cognitive reappraisal. Furthermore, in examining gratitude among prison inmates, Wong, Gabana, Zounlome, Goodrich Mitts, and Lucas (2017) noted that positive benefit appraisals (i.e., one’s attributions about the help received from others; Wood, Joseph, & Maltby, 2008) and positive reframing (i.e., re-perceiving a negative experience in a more positive way; Lambert et al., 2012) played a role in the association between higher state gratitude and lower levels of psychological distress. Intentionally paying attention to the good things in life, or what is going well, can amplify positive emotions and experiences even further, thereby maximizing their effect on mental health and well-being. Furthermore, cultivating and expressing gratitude may produce positive effects because through its generation, whether as a thought, emotion, or behaviour, it can help a person reframe a negative experience in a positive

light (Lambert et al., 2012). In this way, gratitude may be a valuable preventative, treatment, or optimization tool.

Gratitude has a tendency to strengthen existing interpersonal relationships by reinforcing social bonds and socially inclusive behaviours (Bartlett, Condon, Cruz, Baumann, & Desteno, 2012). For this reason, social implications abound for the team setting, particularly in the sport context. In a randomized controlled trial, O'Connell, O'Shea, and Gallagher (2017a) found that gratitude journaling predicted higher life satisfaction and improvements in friendship when compared to an active journaling control group. Intentionally journaling from a grateful perspective about daily events exhibited more positive outcomes due to the mediating effect of increased levels of dispositional gratitude on perceived friendship quality (O'Connell et al., 2017a). Furthermore, cultivating interpersonal gratitude (i.e., directed toward others) versus self-focused gratitude (i.e., no social interaction) may heighten relationship satisfaction even more (O'Connell, O'Shea, & Gallagher, 2016). In addition to gratitude writing interventions, activities which encourage expression of felt gratitude toward others are especially recommended for deriving positive social and interpersonal outcomes (O'Connell, O'Shea, & Gallagher, 2017b). Gratitude has a tendency to promote and encourage prosocial behaviour and foster prosocial personality characteristics such as humility, reciprocity, forgiveness, interpersonal connectedness, and motivation toward self-improvement (Algoe, 2012; Armenta, Fritz, & Lyubomirsky, 2017; Toussaint & Friedman, 2009).

These results highlight the wide range of benefits of expressing gratitude, not only psychologically, but physically, neurologically, and behaviourally as well. While gratitude is most often understood as a personality disposition, this cognitive, affective, and behavioural trait is thought to be relatively malleable (Renshaw & Rock, 2018), especially with practice over time. Individuals, such as athletes, may benefit from gratitude interventions because their primary goal is to intentionally cultivate gratitude. Viewing gratitude as a mental skill or life skill means that it can be effectively practiced and grown over time, fostering a more grateful mindset which may be advantageous to a range of populations including youth, college students, and adults alike. Since gratitude is a virtue with a strong social and interpersonal focus (Emmons & Mishra, 2011), interventions geared toward cultivating and expressing gratitude may be well-suited for athletic populations, since psychosocial interventions have been shown to be particularly effective in enhancing sport performance (Brown & Fletcher, 2017). In the next section, an overview of the empirical research on athlete gratitude is provided, followed by a discussion of gratitude interventions in the context of sport.

2.3 Athlete Gratitude

To the author's knowledge, the entirety of empirical research to date specifically geared toward studying the concept of gratitude in athletes has been conducted in the past decade. The first known study to examine athlete gratitude was conducted

by Chen and Kee (2008) in Taiwan. Researchers found that trait gratitude, as measured by the Gratitude Questionnaire—6 (GQ-6; McCullough et al., 2002), predicted higher life and team satisfaction and lower levels of athlete burnout. Sport-domain gratitude, measured using a sport-specific adaptation of the GQ-6, was strongly correlated with team satisfaction (Chen & Kee, 2008). This seminal study demonstrated the value in studying the concept of gratitude in athletes, and suggested that examining domain-specific gratitude may lend further insight into its relevance to the sport and performance setting. Researchers have continued to demonstrate that both general trait gratitude and sport-domain gratitude can impact athletes' experience in life and sport. Sport-domain gratitude has even been shown to significantly predict levels of athlete burnout and team satisfaction above and beyond general gratitude (Chen & Chang, 2017); both general and sport-domain gratitude were linked to life satisfaction, vitality, and self-esteem in both current and former athletes in the U.S. and Taiwan.

A series of studies, mostly sampling Taiwanese adolescent athletes, continued to illuminate the relationship between trait gratitude and a number of sport-related variables. In a sample of 291 Taiwanese high school athletes, gratitude was significantly correlated with team satisfaction, support from coaches, and support from teammates (Chen, 2013). Furthermore, gratitude was shown to predict both coach and team support, which in turn, resulted in higher levels of team satisfaction. It was noted that coach and teammate support were distinct from one another, suggesting that both the coach-athlete relationship, and one's relationship with teammates, comprise two unique avenues through which gratitude can affect team satisfaction. This supported Fredrickson's Broaden and Build Theory of positive emotions, in that when athletes were more grateful, they perceived more support available to them, thus broadening their perspective and building upon social resources.

Chen (2013) was the first to make the case that the coach may play a major role in how athletes experience and practice gratitude within the team context. Coaches have been shown to have significant influence over shaping their athletes' cognitions, emotions, and behaviours, given their frequent interactions on a daily basis (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Further empirical inquiries found additional connections regarding the instrumental role of the coach in how gratitude functions for athletes. Chen and Wu (2014) found that higher trait gratitude resulted in greater levels of self-esteem, only when the athlete had higher trust in their coach. In a similar fashion, gratitude negatively predicted experiential avoidance (i.e., an attempt to avoid or escape unpleasant or uncomfortable thoughts, emotions, sensations, or experiences) when perceived coach autonomy support is high, but not when coach support was low (Chen & Wu, 2016). Autonomy support is defined as "the attitude and practices of a person ... that facilitate the target individual's self-organization and self-regulation of actions and experience" (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 188). While this interaction only explained a small percentage of the variance, it acknowledges the breadth of factors related to gratitude within the performance setting.

Researchers have done well to not only focus on the main effects of gratitude on sport-related variables, but also examine the mediators and moderators of athlete gratitude. Other sport-related variables that have been examined in the extant

gratitude literature include athlete burnout, team cohesion, sport satisfaction, and perceived social support. Higher levels of athlete gratitude have been significantly correlated with lower levels of athlete burnout, albeit these associations were generally weak (Chen & Chang, 2014; Gabana et al., 2017). Chen and Chang (2014) noted that gratitude as a personality trait does not seem to directly influence athlete burnout, but that athletes who report more burnout may be less grateful. This is likely due to the three core characteristics of athlete burnout: (1) reduced sense of accomplishment, (2) devaluation of the sport experience, and (3) emotional and physical exhaustion (Raedeke & Smith, 2001). Based on a sample of 293 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) athletes in the U.S., Gabana et al. (2017) found that athletes with higher trait gratitude scored lower on the devaluation of sport experience dimension of burnout. This suggests that having a more grateful disposition may preserve an athlete's value for their sport, which holds implication for collegiate sport retention rates and an athlete's qualitative experience in sport. Specifically, boosting esteem support (e.g., self-esteem, sense of competence) may increase the likelihood that gratitude will have a positive impact on how much an athlete values their sport experience. Higher levels of gratitude, coupled with more informational and esteem support, also appears to have a preventative effect on the reduced sense of accomplishment component of athlete burnout (Gabana et al., 2017).

Furthermore, in this study, perceived available social support in sport was identified as a significant mediator in the relationship between an athlete's gratitude, sport satisfaction, and burnout. The higher an athlete scored on trait gratitude, the more they tended to perceive support available to them; and in turn, they were more likely to be satisfied with their sport and less likely to exhibit signs of burnout (Gabana et al., 2017). By itself, athlete gratitude was most significantly related to emotional support; however, results suggested that tangible support (i.e., concrete instrumental assistance) was especially relevant to the impact of gratitude on sport satisfaction. While one may question whether athletes who had more social support available to them, in turn felt more grateful, researchers tested this reverse mediation model and it was not found to be significant. This means that trait gratitude can actually influence one's perceptions of social support, which has positive implications for athlete well-being.

Team cohesion is closely related to social support, in that it has been identified as a valuable component of successful sport performance. Chen, Kee, and Chen (2015) found that the social cohesion explained the positive relationship between trait gratitude and life satisfaction among 300 Taiwanese high school athletes. In another study published the same year, gratitude was found to predict life satisfaction among collegiate athletes in Taiwan, but this association was weaker when athletes exhibited high ambivalence over emotional expression (Chen, Wu, & Chen, 2015). This suggests that athletes who do not value emotional expression may be less impacted by gratitude. However, even in college students who had a high ambivalence toward emotional expression, gratitude was significantly related to lower levels of loneliness and depression (Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2012). It is possible that gratitude may work more effectively to ameliorate negative symptoms (e.g., stress) than promoting positive outcomes when ambivalence over emotional expression is high (Chen et al.,

2012). In any case, it is worth exploring for whom gratitude interventions may be most effective.

Trait mindfulness may act as a moderator in the effect of gratitude on life satisfaction. Chen, Wu, and Chang (2017) found that the interaction between trait gratitude and trait mindfulness explained 2% of the variance in life satisfaction among 190 Taiwanese college athletes. In addition to performance-related variables, gratitude may also hold benefits for athlete mental health and well-being, particularly among adolescent and college-age sport populations. Since the general body of literature on gratitude has repeatedly reported meaningful relationships between gratitude and positive mental health and well-being, examining whether gratitude is related to better mental health and well-being among athletes and student-athletes in particular is worth investigating. College students in the U.S. are reporting increasingly more mental health concerns than ever before, and collegiate athletes are at equal and sometimes greater risk than the general college population, with one-third of college athletes in the U.S. reporting depressive symptoms (Cox, Ross-Stewart, & Foltz, 2017). This data corroborated the NCAA's report in 2016 which found that 30% of athletes reported being "intractably overwhelmed" in the past month (NCAA, 2016a). The organization recently released a best practices document for athletic departments, coaches, administrators, mental health professionals, sport psychology practitioners, and other relevant parties, emphasizing the importance of student-athlete mental health (NCAA, 2016b). Recently, the field of sport psychology has been charged with developing holistic, integrative, and innovative programming to address the mental health needs of college student-athletes, alongside performance enhancement goals and interventions.

2.4 Gratitude Interventions in Sport

While gratitude interventions have been widely studied in the positive psychology literature, there is only one known study to date which has explored the implementation of a gratitude intervention with athletes. Gabana et al. (2018) examined the impact of a one-time, 90-min Attitude of Gratitude workshop on 51 NCAA Division I college student-athletes in the U.S. The sample consisted of 27 male wrestlers and 24 female swimmers. The intervention was comprised of three components aimed at increasing athletes' state gratitude pre- to post-intervention: (1) didactic (i.e., learning about gratitude and its potential benefits in life and sport), (2) activity (i.e., gratitude list), and (3) discussion/debrief. After independently making a list of things they felt grateful for, athlete participants were prompted to reflect upon why they were grateful for each of the items, and then shared their responses with a teammate. The interventionist then facilitated a discussion among the larger group during which athletes reflected on how they felt whilst making the list and general reactions to the activity. Finally, athletes were debriefed on how to continue cultivating and practicing gratitude in their daily lives. Surveys were administered at three time points: pre- and post-intervention, and again at a 1-month follow-up.

Results of the Gabana et al. (2018) study indicated significant improvements in state gratitude, sport satisfaction, and perceived social support over time, supporting previous correlational studies (Chen, 2013; Chen & Kee, 2008; Gabana et al., 2017). Furthermore, significant decreases in athlete burnout and psychological distress were observed post-intervention, similar to findings of Chen and Chang (2014) and Wong, McKean Blackwell, et al. (2017). Given that this was the first study to test a gratitude intervention with athletes, future empirical studies are needed to investigate positive psychology interventions in sport. Findings are encouraging and hold promise for mental skills and life skills programmes for athletes which incorporate gratitude. Since significant time effects were observed on both measures of well-being and ill-being, gratitude interventions may have the potential to not only impact an athlete's performance and sport experience (i.e., increased sport satisfaction, decreased athlete burnout) but also their mental health and well-being (i.e., increased state gratitude and perceived social support, decreased psychological distress). Gratitude interventions may pose a creative and non-stigmatized tool for enhancing student-athlete well-being and may open the door for addressing mental health needs among this unique population.

3 Practical Implications for Multi-cultural Contexts

3.1 Athletes

Positive emotions have the potential to increase the closeness of interpersonal relationships (Fredrickson, 2009). Team sports, which rely highly on communication, collaboration, and cohesion, may benefit from PPIs because of the ability of positive emotions to produce a bonding effect. The culture of sport often brings together individuals from varying racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, socio-economic, educational, and linguistic backgrounds. Positive emotions foster intergroup connectedness and allow one to identify more closely with others, transcending cross-cultural boundaries (Fredrickson, 2009). The positive effects of gratitude go beyond one's circumstances (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014); athletes of all ages and competition levels may reap the benefits of practicing gratitude, not only within their athletic experience, but in their daily lives as well. Furthermore, fostering a grateful mindset outside of sport may have the potential to transfer over to the athletic context. Gratitude may assist athletes in more productive responses to negative events (Nezlek et al., 2019), such as less-than-ideal performance outcomes, unexpected events (e.g., injury), and transition (e.g., into college, out of sport). Recent gratitude interventions geared toward improving college students' mental health have incorporated creative methods such as instant communication technology (Renshaw & Hindman, 2017). As technology, particularly social media, has become increasingly more prevalent in athletes' day-to-day lives, the use of technological methods to facilitate gratitude

practice should be a consideration for both practitioners and researchers aiming to reinforce gratitude as a habit.

3.2 Coaches

Given that coaches have the potential to impact athlete gratitude which can further impact numerous elements of an athlete's sport experience, coaches should consider fostering a team climate which values the virtue of gratitude by self-modelling and emphasizing gratefulness in the sport context. Coaches are also encouraged to practice positive encouragement and clear, constructive feedback, in order to reap the benefits of gratitude in regard to enhancing sport satisfaction and decreasing burnout among athletes. Research has shown that business teams which have higher positivity ratios (i.e., more positive statements to every negative statement within the boardroom) tend to perform better and be more flexible, creative, inquisitive, adaptable, and resilient (Losada & Heaphy, 2004). Positivity ratios greater than 3 to 1 have been revealed to be a hallmark of both flourishing relationships and optimal performance (Gottman & Silver, 2000; Fredrickson, 2009). The positivity ratio may also be relevant to team dynamics in sport, such as the interactions among teammates or between players and coaches. Modelling and encouraging a more positive team environment may facilitate flexibility, creativity, adaptability, resilience, curiosity, and performance. Expressing gratitude may be one way for coaches and athletes to increase their positivity ratio within the team setting.

3.3 Parents

Parents are also encouraged to be mindful of their positivity ratios with their children. Given the benefits of cultivating gratitude among youth, parents of young athletes should consider practicing and emphasizing the virtue of gratitude at an early age, so as to help youth foster positive emotions, learn prosocial behaviour, build coping resources, and develop cognitive reframing skills. Modelling the expression of grateful feelings, thoughts, and actions is recommended.

3.4 Sport Psychology Practitioners

Sport psychology practitioners may consider devoting more time to cultivating gratitude as a type of mental skill in sport, for the purpose of developing coping strategies and resilience, emphasizing social support, building team cohesion, and helping the athlete reframe negative experiences or performance outcomes to facilitate a growth-oriented mindset. Wong, McKean Blackwell et al. (2017) suggested incorporating

gratitude into cognitive-behavioural approaches which emphasize the impact of one's thoughts on emotions and behaviour. This approach is widely used among many sport psychologists to help athletes gain awareness of how their thoughts affect their emotions and actions in sport and beyond. Gratitude interventions could also be paired with mindfulness training, which may further assist athletes in becoming more aware of, accepting, or letting go of negative thoughts and emotions.

Practitioners should consider a number of factors when designing and implementing PPIs such as age, culture, social support, motivation, and effort (see Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014). Person-activity fit is important when implementing PPIs, specifically related to enjoyment, benefit, and ease. People are more likely to adhere to activities they prefer, and experience greater increases in well-being when they enjoy the activity, feel benefited by it, and when it is not too difficult to complete (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014). Similarly, participating in a "preferred" activity (i.e., the person has indicated a preference for that specific concept and/or activity) has been shown to produce greater increases in well-being (Schueller, 2011). This has important implications for sport psychology practitioners aiming to introduce and/or continue administering PPIs to athletes and teams. Intra- and interpersonal factors that may influence the enjoyment, and in turn, the adherence of athletes to particular PPIs, should be considered. By gauging the particular dynamics of the group system (e.g., team climate), practitioners may adapt their approach to the team's unique culture. While person-activity fit is important, it is not the sole determinant of whether a PPI will be effective for a given individual or group (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014). Choosing activities that are engaging, efficacious, and backed by empirical support is paramount to PPI implementation.

Layous and Lyubomirsky (2014) noted that PPIs are not a "one-and-done" commodity meant to promise around-the-clock happiness: "Happiness-increasing strategies are not designed with the end goal of eliminating negative emotions altogether. The practice of positive activities can, however, serve as "daily emotional maintenance" for much of the general population. That is, if feeling down or stressed, an individual may be able to call upon a positive practice to mitigate or cope with her negative emotions" (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014, p. 28).

This more realistic approach of the utilization of PPIs calls upon active engagement with positive constructs at appropriate times. For instance, if an athlete participates in a gratitude intervention such as counting one's blessings once a week for one month, the athlete might later call upon this activity to increase positive emotions when experiencing adversity, recalling the positive aspects of life that bring happiness, hope, and appreciation. This is a way to build coping skills, and in turn, may foster positive habits and characteristics such as emotion regulation, mental toughness, and resilience.

4 Implications for Future Research

Although the fields of positive and sport psychology seem to be a natural fit, little research has been conducted to formally integrate the two fields (see McCarthy, 2011 for an overview of theoretical models examining the impact of positive emotions on sport performance and athlete psychological well-being). Researchers in both positive psychology and sport psychology should continue to explore state and trait gratitude among athletes, especially related to athlete mental health, well-being, and performance. Given that all studies on athlete gratitude have been conducted within the past decade, more research is needed on all fronts; that is, exploring the relationships between gratitude and other variables, parsing out mediators and moderators of these relationships, and testing the effectiveness of gratitude interventions in the sport context. Randomized controlled studies and those using comparison groups (e.g., gratitude intervention compared to a goal-setting intervention) are recommended, and researchers are encouraged to consider other potential variables impacting (a) levels of gratitude, and (b) effects of gratitude on athlete well-being and performance. These may include gender, sport type, team versus individual sport, cultural background, coach, competition level, and personality. More studies on U.S. athletes, athletes outside of the U.S. and Taiwan, and a wide range of developmental and competitive levels (e.g., youth sport, high school, collegiate, professional) would further add to the literature in this area, since current findings lack generalizability to specific sport populations (e.g., professional athletes).

Given that the majority of research on athlete gratitude has been conducted in Taiwan, athlete gratitude in more individualistic cultures such as the U.S. and Europe may look and function slightly differently. Chen and Kee (2008) found that among Taiwanese adolescent athletes, trait gratitude had a small but significant correlation with value traditionalism; specifically, athletes who had more respect for authority reported higher levels of gratitude. This demonstrates the importance of examining cultural factors that may influence one's experience of gratitude, such as collectivism and individualism. Culturally-adapted gratitude interventions may be a topic of further study and future researchers are encouraged to collect larger and more diverse samples.

A limitation of the first known study to explore a gratitude intervention with college athletes is that it utilized a one-time workshop, which may have minimal effects on an athlete's dispositional gratitude (Gabana et al., 2018). Athletes who continue to cultivate, practice, and express gratitude often may become more enlightened to the positive aspects of their life, and in turn, their athletic experience; therefore, longitudinal data on multi-session gratitude programmes should be examined in future research. Furthermore, this study did not utilize a control group, rendering it unclear whether significant positive outcomes post-intervention could be attributed to increased gratitude, directly. Future studies should compare gratitude interventions with other positive, neutral, and negative control conditions to elucidate and substantiate the potential effects of gratitude interventions in sport. In a similar vein, much of research on athlete gratitude consists of cross-sectional data, where causa-

tion cannot be inferred (e.g., Chen & Kee, 2008; Chen & Wu, 2014; Kee, Tsai, & Chen, 2008). While regression, mediation, and moderation analyses illuminate some of these findings (e.g., Chen, 2013; Chen & Chang, 2014; Chen et al., 2017; Chen & Wu, 2016; Gabana et al., 2017), more longitudinal data collected at multiple time points, especially when testing the effects of a gratitude intervention, is needed to give credibility to claims that cultivating gratitude in athletes is a worthwhile endeavor.

All of the research on athlete gratitude thus far has relied on self-report data which can be skewed by factors such as social desirability bias, demand characteristics, and dishonest reporting. Since gratitude can be classified as a thought, feeling, or behaviour, future studies may consider how to observe and record experiences and expressions of gratitude more organically. For example, Kini et al. (2016) measured behavioural gratitude by the amount of money participants gave away to a third party after receiving monetary support from a benefactor in a computer game. While this approach has its limitations as well, it would be interesting to consider how athletes might demonstrate gratitude cognitively, emotionally, or behaviourally within the context of sport, providing insight into how gratitude can be measured more objectively so as to reduce self-report bias. Researchers may consider utilizing social media platforms to examine athletes' public expressions of gratitude from a more qualitative, content-related perspective. In the future, performance outcomes might be examined alongside measures of gratitude to see if potential performance benefits exist for athletes who feel, think, or act with a grateful mindset.

Sampling issues can also limit the validity and generalizability of results. In a recent study by Chen and Chang (2017), participants aged 18 to 58 who self-identified as either current or former Division I, II, or III NCAA athletes were recruited online through Amazon Mechanical Turk software. Researchers have cautioned against explicitly listing eligibility requirements to minimize imposter respondents, as recent data have shown evidence to suggest that some participants falsify identification criteria in order to receive compensation for participation (Siegel & Navarro, 2019). Another limitation of Chen and Chang (2017) is that current and former athletes were analyzed together, which muddies conclusions given that many participants "had retired from their sports careers" (p. 655). This is especially problematic when measuring variables such as athlete burnout and team satisfaction, which are most accurately measured from a present or recent temporal standpoint. Reminiscing one's athletic career years later may not be representative of the athlete's experience at the time, since emotional memories may differ from non-emotional memories in regard to the details retained (Kensinger, 2009), thereby influencing the credibility and implications of results. Specifically, positive emotion has been associated with greater memory distortion than negative emotion, in that people who view an event as positive had less accurate memory for detail than those who interpreted an event as negative (Kensinger, 2009). Similarly, it would be expected that a current athlete would experience sport-specific gratitude differently than a former athlete who had retired from their sport years ago. While every study has its limitations, researchers and practitioners should examine all studies carefully, paying close attention to factors that could potentially compromise the validity and reliability of results.

Based on recent research demonstrating a connection between gratitude and resilience in the general college student population (Gupta & Kumar, 2015; Vieselmeyer et al., 2017), future studies should also explore whether gratitude is related to resiliency among student-athletes. Furthermore, future investigations could test whether gratitude interventions are efficacious in fostering resilience among athletes in both sport and in life (e.g., helping them cope with stressors, bouncing back from adversity, managing mental health concerns, or facilitating more positive outcomes after setbacks such as injury). Gratitude programmes implemented at the group level might be particularly well-suited for athletic environments. For example, injured college athletes from various sports teams could participate in a multi-session group program aimed toward cultivating gratitude during the process of rehabilitation and return to sport (e.g., see the Gratitude Group Program designed by Wong, McKean Blackwell et al., 2017). In addition to deriving potential benefits from gratitude cultivation and expression in a group setting, athletes might appreciate the opportunity to relate to other athletes experiencing a similar challenge or difficult time (e.g., injury, anxiety, depression, grief). Set within a gratitude framework, this may validate and normalize athletes' experiences, and lend itself to an even deeper bonding at the interpersonal level. Inspired by findings of Nezelek et al. (2019), having athletes keep track of daily events, perceived stress, state gratitude, and changes in affect could provide valuable information about when athletes feel more grateful, and whether this could serve as a buffer to negative events or daily stress.

Finally, it is worth reiterating that both Davis et al. (2016) and Dickens (2017) advocated for a temperate view of the impact of gratitude PPIs, given that more intervention studies are needed to demonstrate evidence for their efficacy. While empirical study on gratitude is flourishing, more research is needed to substantiate preliminary findings in the context of sport. That being said, research on athlete gratitude in the past decade has shown promising results for the potential of gratitude interventions to impact athlete mental health, well-being, and performance. A scientist-practitioner approach is strongly encouraged to ensure that sport psychology practitioners are operating from a place of empirically-supported treatment methods when designing interventions for athletes. Likewise, researchers are charged with maintaining an awareness of current issues in the field of applied sport psychology and athlete mental health so as to design studies relevant to practitioners' realities, thus lending further empirical support to current practice.

5 Conclusion

At the heart of the integration of sport psychology and positive psychology lies a holistic approach to athlete well-being. Researchers have found that athletes self-report both sport- and non-sport-related factors as contributors to overall well-being (Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014). An athlete's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours that are learned inside of the athletic arena have the ability to permeate other areas of the athlete's life. In a similar way, an athlete's personal mental health and well-being

can significantly influence their performance in sport (Morgan, 1985). Just as the development of physical skills takes time, effort, dedication, and repetition, so too does the mental training aspect of performance. Knowing when and how to summon positivity is essential to the successful application of positive psychology concepts to the sport domain (see Layouts & Lyubomirsky, 2014). The more an athlete practices cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude through constructive activities, the more easily the athlete is able to draw upon these skills when needed during trying times (Wagstaff & Leach, 2015).

There may be times where it is useful for an athlete to demonstrate negative emotions such as anger and frustration. Experiencing negative emotions can foster motivation to improve one's athletic abilities. For example, feeling dissatisfied with one's performance can inspire an athlete to train harder both mentally and physically. Positive psychology acknowledges the utility of negative emotions, so long as they do not impair one's ability to function optimally. While negative emotions can be facilitative to an athlete's growth and development, cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude and hope may aid athletes in performing both on and off the field (Wagstaff & Leach, 2015). Incorporating positive constructs can also be used to address a difficult or negative experience, which may facilitate the growth process (e.g., expressing gratitude toward lessons learned, strategies employed, coping mechanisms, and available support systems).

Based on a review of the extant literature, it can be concluded that the cultivation and expression of gratitude within the sport context poses a range of potential benefits for athlete mental health, well-being, and performance. In summary, the following key points are highlighted:

1. The fields of positive psychology and sport psychology share a common interest in optimal human functioning and can benefit from mutual sharing of guiding theoretical underpinnings.
2. Experiencing positive emotions may actually facilitate successful outcomes, rather than positive emotions merely being predicated on success.
3. Intentionally cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude in times of adversity may enhance one's coping skills, ultimately fostering resilience.
4. Gratitude interventions such as making a gratitude list, gratitude journaling, or writing a letter of gratitude have been associated with positive mental health and physical health outcomes. Recent meta-analyses on gratitude interventions encourage a temperate interpretation of these findings and call for further empirical study in this area.
5. Gratitude may serve as a protective factor against ill-being by way of mechanisms such as positive cognitive reframing; an attentional shift toward the good things in life; awareness and acknowledgement of support networks; enhanced interpersonal relationships and social connectedness; increased compassion toward oneself and others coupled with lower levels of criticism; and the broaden and build effects of positive emotions.

6. Gratitude interventions implemented at the team level may have the potential to strengthen social bonds, positively impacting athlete, team, and coach relationships.
7. Coaches and parents play a key role in promoting a grateful mindset, as athletes' thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are often shaped by those who are closest to them. Modelling an attitude of gratitude at home and within the team setting can empower athletes to cultivate and practice gratitude on a daily basis.
8. Athlete gratitude has been associated with a number of indicators of athlete well-being such as higher life satisfaction, sport satisfaction, team satisfaction, self-esteem, and team cohesion; better quality of relationships with teammates and coaches as indicated by higher levels of perceived social support and trust in one's coach; and lower levels of athlete burnout and psychological distress.
9. Grateful thinking may help athletes respond more productively to negative events, such as setbacks, perceived failures, unexpected events such as injury, and transitions.
10. Given the association between athlete gratitude and positive indicators of well-being, sport psychology practitioners (i.e., sport psychologists and mental performance consultants) are in a unique position to use empirically supported gratitude interventions to enhance athlete mental health and performance within the context of psychological skills training and/or mental health counseling, at both the team and individual levels.
11. Sport psychology practitioners should consider a number of factors when designing and implementing gratitude interventions such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, cultural background, social support, motivation, personal preference, group dynamics, and effort.

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Is Coaching a Positive Psychology Intervention? Exploring the Relationships Between Positive Psychology, Applied Positive Psychology, Coaching Psychology, and Coaching



Tim Lomas

Abstract Definitively identifying a particular activity as being a positive psychology intervention can be difficult. The issue is compounded by lack of clarity around where the boundaries of positive psychology itself lie, and how it intersects with conceptually-related disciplines. A case in point is coaching, which shares positive psychology's interest in enhancing wellbeing and performance across life domains. Coaching's status with respect to positive psychology is a matter of debate: is it a subset of positive psychology (e.g., part of its applied arm), or alternatively a distinct endeavour that overlaps in complex ways. This chapter considers these issues, looking firstly at the nature of positive psychology itself (including who practises it, and what constitutes a positive psychology intervention), and then at the relationship between positive psychology and coaching (as a case study to shed light upon the issues). Lessons will be drawn about how positive psychology interacts with kinship fields, and what it means to identify something as a positive psychology intervention.

Keywords Applied positive psychology · Positive psychology · Coaching · Coaching psychology

1 Introduction

This chapter is in two main parts. Part 1 asks three central questions relating to positive psychology (PP): (a) what is it, (b) who practises it, and (c) what constitutes a positive psychology intervention (PPI)? In each case, the answer is far from clear—hence the need for analyses such as the one here. Nevertheless, rough suggestions will be offered, although these are only basic heuristics, rather than fool-proof definitions, since exceptions to them can readily be identified. The debates surrounding these questions will then be explored in part 2 though the example of coaching, a field

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that is closely affiliated with PP. This will be used as a case study to shed led on the debates, and to clarify the answers tentatively arrived at in part 1.

2 The Nature of Positive Psychology

2.1 *What Is Positive Psychology?*

The status and identity of PP has always been somewhat opaque and contested. Initiated by Martin Seligman (and colleagues) in the late 1990s, it was initially intended to redress a perceived “negative bias” in mainstream psychology. Psychology as a whole was depicted as mainly concentrating on disorder and dysfunction, with little attention paid—outside pockets of scholarship, notably humanistic psychology (Waterman, 2013)—to more “positive” aspects of human functioning (e.g., happiness). Hence the value of a drive to redress that imbalance, legitimising and encouraging the exploration of these more positive phenomena. Thus, for instance, Linley and Harrington (2007) define PP as “the scientific study of optimal functioning, focusing on aspects of the human condition that lead to happiness, fulfilment, and flourishing” (p. 13).

So, as its name indicates, PP defined and distinguished itself by a concern with the “positive.” In that respect, Pawelski (2016a) has offered an illuminating descriptive analysis of the way this term functioned in the literature that helped found the field. He identifies five main usages: (1) a positive orientation (PP’s basic direction, i.e., being complementary to the “negative” focus of mainstream psychology); (2) a positive topography (its main areas of study, e.g., optimism, courage); (3) a positive target population (beneficiaries of PP, mainly non-clinical populations); (4) a positive process (approaches for achieving desired outcomes, such as building good qualities); and (5) a positive aim (PP’s ultimate goal, namely providing an “empirical vision for understanding and cultivating wellbeing”) (p. 343).

Added to this descriptive analysis, Pawelski (2016b) also offers a normative analysis, suggesting one inclusion criterion and five continuum criteria for identifying something as positive. The inclusion criterion is simply preference: a phenomenon is deemed positive if its presence is preferred to its absence. Then, the continuum criteria indicate the “degree” of positivity, with this being a function of: (a) relative preference (the strength of the preference for it over something else); (b) sustainability across time (the longer-lasting the better); (c) sustainability across persons (the more popular the better); (d) sustainability across effects (the more positive knock-on effects, the better); and (e) sustainability across structures (the more scalable and transferable across organisational and cultural contexts, the better).

Relatedly, the field is often understood with reference to the overarching notion of wellbeing. For instance, a broad, generic definition of PP is offered by Lomas, Hefferon, and Ivztan (2015), who position it as the “science and practice of improving wellbeing” (p. 1347). This aligns with Pawelski’s (2016a) analysis of PP’s “positive

aim,” in which he identifies PP’s “ultimate goal” as “providing an empirical vision for understanding and cultivating wellbeing” (p. 343). In such operationalisations, wellbeing is an all-encompassing term, enfolding the various components identified above by Linley and Harrington (2007) (e.g., optimal functioning, happiness, fulfilment, and flourishing). Indeed, wellbeing is increasingly favoured in academia as an overarching, multidimensional term, incorporating all the ways a person might hope to do or be well (de Chavez, Backett-Milburn, Parry, & Platt, 2005), including physical health (Larson, 1999), social relationships (Bourdieu, 1986), cognitive performance (Tang et al., 2007), and positive affect (Diener, 2000). For instance, Pollard and Davidson (2001) define wellbeing as “a state of successful performance across the life course integrating physical, cognitive and social-emotional function” (p. 10).

It is worth also noting at this juncture that wellbeing can be appraised in either deficit-based negative terms, or asset-based positive terms. With the former, wellbeing consists in the absence of some undesirable phenomenon (e.g., a mental health disorder), whereas in the latter it means the presence of a desirable one (e.g., purpose in life). Crucially, absence of a deficit does not necessarily entail the presence of an asset, i.e., that people are “flourishing.” A foundational metaphor in PP is a continuum, from a nominal minus 10, through zero and up to plus 10 (Keyes, 2002). Ameliorating deficits such as mental disorder constitutes bringing people up to “zero,” as fields like clinical psychology aim to do. While that is hugely beneficial, one can still aim to move people into the positive integers, and it is *that* which PP is generally regarded as focusing on. The metaphor is imperfect; for instance, people can be simultaneously situated both in negative territory (e.g., diagnosed with mental illness) *and* positive territory (e.g., excelling in certain aspects of living) (Keyes, 2002). On the whole though, it is a useful heuristic for clarifying the basic remit and scope of PP.

While such analyses are helpful, however, they also raise questions about the nature of the field’s “boundaries.” That is, for PP to have an identity, it must be possible to say that some things fall within its scope and others outside it. However, ascertaining where to “draw the line” is tricky, and moreover contested (with contrasting visions of the nature of the field). For instance, proponents of so-called “second wave” PP have suggested it is difficult to categorically identify a given phenomenon as positive or negative (Lomas & Ivztan, 2016b). After all, such appraisals are context dependent, and moreover the question turns on whether one is referring to positive vs negative *valence* (whether it feels pleasant or unpleasant) or positive vs negative *outcome* (whether it is ultimately beneficial). In certain circumstances, emotions that are negatively valenced may ultimately contribute to wellbeing (e.g., certain forms of adaptive anxiety are linked to proactive coping; Norem, 2001). As such, although such emotions may not usually be considered positive, they may yet be of value and interest within PP according to some perspectives.

Relatedly, there are issues around “ownership,” i.e., the extent to which phenomena identified as within the remit of PP “belong” to it, or rather are shared with other fields. Take the theory of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000), for instance. This is often depicted as integral to wellbeing, and cited as a key concept within PP. However, Deci and Ryan (1980) had been developing this theory for decades before PP

emerged. Moreover, Deci and Ryan themselves do not appear to strongly align with PP; at most they imply that PP would benefit from fully incorporating the implications of their theory (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004). As such, while PP has whole-heartedly embraced the theory (Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2013), that is not the same as “owning” it. It is perhaps better to say simply that it has “harnessed” it; but in a way that other fields have done too, such as coaching (Spence & Oades, 2011). We shall return to this point below.

Such debates remain ongoing, and will not be settled here. Nevertheless, in closing this section, I’ll end with a broad definition of PP, one that updates that of Lomas et al. (2015) cited above. To this, one might add the term *positive*, thus—as per the continuum metaphor—defining it as “the science and practice of improving positive wellbeing.” This helps differentiate PP from those fields that do not address wellbeing directly or primarily (e.g., conventional education), and also those that do focus on directly improving wellbeing but do so by alleviating negative aspects of it (such as clinical psychology). This formulation is still not perfect: it does not demarcate PP from related fields such as coaching, as we shall see below, nor is it immune from criticisms of the notion of the “positive” associated with second wave PP. That said, it will serve as a basic heuristic for now, and shall be explored more fully in the second half of the paper (in the sections on relationship configurations and identifying territorial claims).

3 Who Practises Positive Psychology?

Related to the issue of PP’s nature is the question of who studies and practises it. Is PP a distinct field or speciality, or rather an orientation that may be open to people from all disciplines? In the early years of PP, the emphasis was more on the latter. As Linley and Joseph (2004) put it, PP was a “collective identity” unifying researchers interested in “the brighter sides of human nature” (p. 4). According to this perspective, PP is more of an ethos, a way of “leaning towards” positive topics that is open to scholars and practitioners across all fields, from clinical psychologists (e.g., Wood & Tarrier, 2010) to neuroscientists (e.g., Urry et al., 2004). Alignment to this mind-set and identity narrative served to unify disparate scholars already working on topics that are now regarded as falling within the purview of PP, such as positive emotions or psychological development.

More recently, however, there have also been efforts to delineate PP as a specific discipline, endowing it with a distinct professional identity along the lines of specialities such as clinical psychology (Lomas & Ivztan, 2016a). Part of the impetus for this move comes from the proliferation of postgraduate PP courses, whose numbers have greatly expanded in recent years, organically leading to graduates and scholars self-identifying as “positive psychology practitioners” or even “positive psychologists” (even if the latter label is contentious, not least since “psychologist” is a protected title in many jurisdictions).

Two contrasting—and yet potentially complementary—perspectives on the nature of PP are therefore emerging. The “ethos” perspective holds that PP is open to, and conducted by, scholars across any area of psychology (and indeed other academic and professional fields). For instance, a clinical psychologist interested in theories and practices pertaining to flourishing could be said to be aligned or engaged with PP, as for instance elucidated by Wood and Tarrrier’s (2010) notion of “positive clinical psychology.” Indeed, people could even embrace aspects of PP—such as deploying a PPI—without specifically viewing themselves as being aligned with PP. Conversely, the “discipline” perspective views PP more as a distinct speciality, an identifiable branch of psychology, equivalent in some respects to fields like health psychology or clinical psychology—not legally or practically, one must add, but simply in the sense that a scholar or practitioner can specialise in PP (Lomas & Ivztan, 2016a).

Of course, as alluded to above, these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but may be complementary. It is perfectly feasible for one scholar from a distinct branch of psychology (such as clinical psychology) to take a keen interest in PP, and so affiliate to it from an ethos perspective, and for another scholar to primarily view themselves as being situated within PP, and so to self-identify with it from a discipline perspective. So, in closing, let’s offer another basic heuristic for the question of who practises (and studies) PP, namely, anyone who aligns themselves with the broad ethos of PP, and/or regards themselves as specialising in PP. Again, this answer is not perfect, as exceptions can easily be found. One can imagine someone—a schoolteacher, say—who neither aligns with the ethos of PP nor views themselves as specialising in it, but who nevertheless is for some reason conducting a PPI (and so, for that moment at least, is practising PP). However, it will do for now as a basic guiding rubric.

4 What Constitutes a Positive Psychology Intervention?

Finally, in addition to issues around the nature of PP and its practitioners, a third question arises which is central to this chapter: what constitutes a PPI, the applied practices which are central to the field? That is, PP has always been characterised by including a strong applied dimension, often referred to as “applied positive psychology” (APP). Collectively, one might refer to both PP and APP together using the acronym (A)PP. The roots of contemporary PPIs are commonly traced back at least as far as Fordyce (1977), who designed a course aimed at teaching participants basic “happiness principles,” together with cognitive and behavioural techniques to facilitate them, which led to significant increases in wellbeing. Since the inauguration of (A)PP, similar PPIs have proliferated, from gratitude exercises (Emmons & McCullough, 2003) to strengths interventions (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Collectively, such interventions have proved relatively effective across a range of outcomes, issues, and populations, although the evidence so far is not wholly conclusive. For instance, a meta-analysis of 51 independent PPI studies found some improvement

in wellbeing overall, although the results were mixed, and where positive outcomes were observed the effect sizes were often fairly small (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

As with (A)PP itself though, exactly what constitutes a PPI remains an open question. Lomas, Hefferon, and Ivztan (2014) define PPIs as “theoretically-grounded and empirically-validated interventions, activities, and recommendations to enhance wellbeing” (p. ix). However, even with such a generic definition, articulating the necessary and sufficient criteria for identifying a PPI is a complex process. In that respect, Parks and Biswas-Diener (2014) argued that there are no definitive definitions of a PPI, nor a clear set of guidelines for classifying interventions as such. At best, they found three broad conceptualizations of PPIs in the literature, namely definitions that were either: (a) content-level; (b) variable-level; or (c) wellness-oriented.

Content-level definitions essentially focus on positive topics—anything a client or practitioner deems positive in some way. The issue with such definitions is they are so broad that they encompass any intervention in which a person does something pleasant (regardless of whether this actually benefits their wellbeing). More selective inclusion criteria are offered by variable-level definitions, which require that interventions operate by a positive mechanism or target a positive outcome variable. Sin and Lyubomirsky’s (2009) definition of a PPI, for instance—namely, activities “aimed at cultivating positive feelings, positive behaviors, or positive cognitions” (p. 1)—falls into this category. However, Parks and Biswas-Diener suggest such definitions remain vague, as there is no requirement that the intervention defines its target variable, that the target variable has an empirical basis, or that the intervention actually changes that target variable. Finally, wellness-oriented interventions are PPIs designed to promote wellness rather than fix dysfunction, as per the continuum metaphor elucidated above. In that sense, a PPI is one that is targeted mainly at a non-clinical population. However, such definitions do not really accommodate the recent development of PPIs for clinical populations (e.g., Ruini & Fava, 2009).

Besides struggling to definitively identify exactly what constitutes a PPI, we also run into issues around boundaries and ownership (as we saw above with respect to theories like self-determination). Take the practice of mindfulness, for instance. This has been embraced as a PPI, and indeed is intimately linked to the kind of positive outcomes with which PP is invested (Ivtzan & Lomas, 2016). However, mindfulness was first harnessed in the West within clinical settings as a treatment for chronic pain (Kabat-Zinn, 1982), and has since been widely embraced by “deficit-focused” fields like psychiatry and clinical psychology for the alleviation of mental health issues (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002). And of course it was initially developed as a psychospiritual practice within Buddhism around 2,500 years ago (Lomas, 2017). Thus, by no stretch of the imagination does mindfulness “belong” to (A)PP, and likewise it feels hubristic to call it a PPI. Thus, as with self-determination theory, at best mindfulness is something that has been productively *harnessed* by (A)PP as a PPI (together with its concomitant theoretical perspectives).

Once again though, such debates notwithstanding, we’ll close here with a general albeit imperfect answer to the question of what is a PPI. In that respect, we might update the definition from Lomas et al. (2014), cited above, incorporating some of the critiques raised in this section. In that respect, one could usefully define PPIs as

“theoretically-grounded and empirically-validated interventions, activities, and recommendations to enhance positive wellbeing in mainly non-clinical populations.” This incorporates the expanded definition of PP elucidated above (incorporating the term positive), plus the limiting factor of focusing mainly on non-clinical populations. This definition aligns with more established ones, such as Sin and Lyubomirsky’s (2009) formulation: “a psychological intervention (training, exercise, therapy) primarily aimed at raising positive feelings, positive cognitions or positive behavior as opposed to interventions aiming to reduce symptoms, problems or disorders.” The main difference between the two is that the first formulation emphasises that PPIs are mainly—but not *exclusively*—used with non-clinical populations, whereas Sin and Lyubomirsky do not restrict it in that way. However, the Lomas definition does not *exclude* the use of PPIs with such populations (hence the inclusion of the qualifier “mainly”); it is more that, as a basic heuristic, it can be useful to regard PPIs as being mostly defined by their use in non-clinical contexts.

So, there are considerable debates around the questions of what PP is, who practises it, and what constitutes a PPI. We shall explore these issues in more detail in part 2, which offers a case study of coaching, and its relation to PP. As we shall see, coaching is closely aligned with PP, which means that their relationship sheds light upon the three questions raised above.

5 Positive Psychology and Coaching

5.1 What Is Coaching?

The roots of coaching stretch back at least as far as classical Greece, where elite athletes were instructed by professional trainers (Allen, 2016). This foundational association with sporting endeavour continues to the present, being one of the first instances of coaching being studied academically, namely by Griffith (1926), a sports psychologist. Rather than viewing sports coaching as simply a form of instruction (i.e., regarding the physical skills required), he saw the coach as fulfilling a broader pedagogical and therapeutic role, whose duties included motivating and attending to the psychological needs of athletes. This model of coaching was subsequently embraced in other endeavours, most notably business. Inspired by the likes of Gorby (1937), who suggested that coaching could improve productivity and profitability, the 1940s onwards saw coaches being hired to get the best out of employees. Such coaching often initially simply took the form of informal conversations, before being followed by more systematically-organised and model-driven forms of coaching interaction (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). This focus on occupational settings dominated the theory and practice of coaching for much of the 20th century. Then, in more recent decades, coaching has begun to be studied and deployed across myriad settings, from health behaviours (Young et al., 2014) to family dynamics (Allen & Huff, 2014).

As those developments were underway, the related paradigm of coaching *psychology* (CP) began to be identified, and differentiated from coaching. Lawther (1951) initiated this trend by discussing the “psychology of coaching,” and by the 1960s the term “coaching psychology” had begun to appear in the literature (e.g., Gaylord, 1967). However, it was not until the 1990s that CP as a distinct discipline, differentiated from coaching, began to really take hold (Passmore & Theeboom, 2016). A useful and common way of configuring their differences is to present coaching as an applied activity, and CP as the science of this activity. For instance, the International Coach Federation defines coaching a “partnering with clients in a thought provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.” CP could then be regarded as the scientific study and understanding of this relational process. In that sense, the domains of psychology which can inform this endeavour is very broad—from psychotherapeutic scholarship to work within occupational psychology. Thus, one can discern a parallel here with PP and APP, in that coaching can be regarded as equivalent to APP, and CP to PP. Collectively, both coaching and CP in this paper will be referred to using the acronym C(P).

In understanding CP as the science of coaching, however, several key questions emerge, namely: (a) what is the scope and remit of C(P), and (b), how do these differ from (A)PP? First, the nature of C(P) remains a matter of some debate. For instance, Passmore and Theeboom (2016, p. 30) shed light on attempts to fashion a working definition of coaching during a workshop at the 2002 annual conference of the counselling psychology division of the British Psychological Society. Initially, Grant and Palmer (2002) proposed that coaching should be defined as focusing on “enhancing performance in work and personal life domains with normal, non-clinical populations, underpinned by models of coaching in established therapeutic approaches.” However, critiques were made of that formulation, including in relation to the focus on “normal, non-clinical populations,” since coaching techniques were starting to be offered in clinical domains, and also regarding the assumption that coaching only draws on therapeutic models. Consequently, an amended definition was proposed, stating that coaching is concerned with “enhancing wellbeing and performance in personal life and work domains, underpinned by models of coaching in established adult learning or psychological approaches.” Of particular interest here is that this definition, apart from the reference to “models of coaching,” is highly similar to definitions of PP. So too are other definitions of coaching, such as Spence’s (2007) description of it as being “primarily concerned with human growth and change, based on the philosophical assumption that individuals have vast reservoirs of untapped potential within them and are naturally inclined towards developing that potential” (p. 256). Thus, even while the nature of (A)PP and (C)P themselves remains a matter of debate, the two fields clearly share significant intersections and overlaps.

5.2 *Intersections and Overlaps*

Evidently, (A)PP has close conceptual and practical affinities with C(P), with numerous scholars noting their convergences (e.g., Kauffman, 2006; Linley & Harrington, 2007; Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2010; Oades & Passmore, 2014; Van Zyl, Motschnig-Pitrik, & Stander, 2016). For instance, Linley and Harrington (2007) suggest that both fields: (1) are focused on the improvement of performance and well-being (as per Pawelski's (2016a) "positive orientation" and "positive aim"); (2) have an interest in engendering change across life settings, including personal life and in the workplace; (3) have a humanistic emphasis on facilitating development, and helping people fulfil their potential (per Pawelski's "positive process"); (4) assume such a thing as optimal environmental conditions that can/do promote flourishing; and (5) have an emphasis (albeit non-exclusively) on working with "normal" (i.e., non-clinical) populations (per Pawelski's "positive target population").

Indeed, such are the convergences between (A)PP and C(P) that we are seeing the emergence of hybrid paradigms such as "positive psychology coaching" (PPC) (Passmore and Oades 2014). Passmore and Oades describe this as "coaching approaches that seek to improve short term well-being (i.e. hedonic well-being) and sustainable well-being (i.e. eudaimonic wellbeing) using evidence-based approaches from positive psychology and the science of well-being and enable the person to do this in an ongoing manner after coaching has completed" (p. 68). They propose that PPC is underpinned by four key theories or models that are frequently associated with PP (cf. Pawelski's (2016a) "positive topography"): strengths (Proctor, Maltby, & Linley, 2011); broaden and build (Fredrickson, 2009); self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000); and wellbeing (Seligman, 2012). (However, it will be argued below that it is not helpful to view these theories/models as "belonging" to PP, and that CP could equally lay claim to them.) Moreover, evidence suggests that the application of such theories can assist in facilitating effective coaching. For example, identification and use of strengths in coaching settings can promote goal progress (Linley, Nielsen, Gillett, & Biswas-Diener, 2010), flow (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999), and psychological capital (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007).

In such emergent paradigms, the interaction between (A)PP and C(P) is usually portrayed as a mutually beneficial partnership, in which each brings different skills and strengths to the table. In that respect then, one can ask, what are the *differences* between (A)PP and C(P)? Whenever this question is posed, it is usually in terms of comparing PP (rather than (A)PP more broadly) with coaching (rather than C(P) more broadly). In that sense, PP tends to be viewed as bringing scientific theory and empirical rigour, and coaching as bringing applied practices and competencies (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). For instance, Kauffman (2006) describes PP as the "science at the heart of coaching" (p. 219), while Biswas-Diener and Dean (2010) celebrate coaching as "the natural choice for being the applied arm of positive psychology" (p. 5). As such, the relationship is often discussed in terms of how PP can further the evidence base and theoretical underpinning that coaching itself may need (Oades & Passmore, 2014). In turn, PP is often criticized for being dominated by theory that

has not (yet) been widely applied or tested in practical situations (Oades & Passmore, 2014). In that sense, coaching is often depicted essentially as a PPI (i.e., an applied forum in which PP can be practiced), and perhaps even the *exemplar* PPI (i.e., the most effective means of delivering the insights of PP).

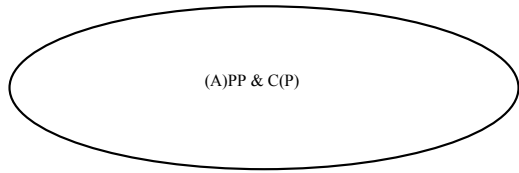
However, this formulation, (a) challenges the role of CP as the science of coaching, and (b) neglects the emergent praxis of APP. That is, regarding (a), describing PP as the “science at the heart of coaching” supplants the function of CP in this role, and yet there is evidently a flourishing paradigm of CP. Indeed, for that conventional view to hold, it would mean PP has exclusive access to, or ownership of, scientific theory and research, to which CP itself cannot lay claim. However, that argument cannot be supported. It is not the case that specific theories “belong” to PP—as illustrated above with self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). While PP has whole-heartedly embraced the theory (Ryan et al., 2013), that is not the same as “owning” it. Indeed, CP has likewise embraced the theory to its benefit (Spence & Oades, 2011). Thus, self-determination is not owned by PP, nor by CP, but rather is harnessed by both. Likewise, per point (b) above, PP also has its own applied dimension in the form of APP—a point which is overlooked if coaching is presented as the “applied arm” of PP. Of course, this then raises the question that is central to this chapter: is coaching a PPI? As the next section elucidates, there are various ways of answering this, and more generally of configuring the relationship between (A)PP and C(P).

6 Relationship Configurations

It has been argued above that *both* (A)PP and C(P) have theoretical/empirical dimensions (i.e., PP and CP), and *both* have a realm of applied practice (i.e., APP and C). That is, a great wealth of theories, evidence-bases, and applied practices have developed across psychology as a whole, and other allied disciplines, and these belong neither to (A)PP nor C(P), but can be harnessed by both. If that is the case though, how then can we appraise the intersection between (A)PP and C(P)? It seems that this relationship can be configured in one of four ways depending on how generously and expansively one defines the fields. First, (A)PP and C(P) as coterminous: both APP and C are essentially forms of coaching, and PP and CP draw on an equally broad range of theory and research in studying them. Second, C(P) as a subset of (A)PP: (A)PP encompasses C(P), with APP including more forms of practice than C, and PP including a wider range of theory and research than CP. Third, (A)PP as a subset of C(P): C(P) encompasses (A)PP, with C including more forms of practice than APP, and CP including a wider range of theory and research than PP. Lastly, (A)PP and C(P) as overlapping but distinctive: both (A)PP and C(P) draw on distinct, albeit partially shared, forms of practice (in the case of APP and C) and theory and research (with PP and CP).

Let’s consider these four possibilities in a little more detail. The first simply views (A)PP and C(P) as fundamentally coterminous, covering the same territory, as outlined in Fig. 1 below. From this stance, there is essentially nothing in C(P) that

Fig. 1 Interaction # 1 = (A)PP and C(P) as coterminous



Theoretical/empirical ex. (i.e., PP & CP)

- Self-determination
- Goal-setting
- Work engagement

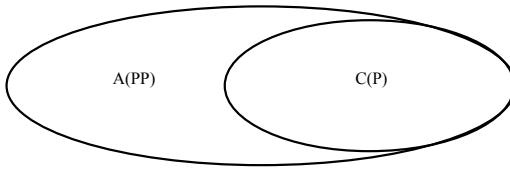
Applied ex. (i.e., APP & C)

- Career coaching
- Wellbeing counselling
- Mindfulness

could not also be said to pertain to (A)PP, and vice versa. That is, (A)PP and C(P) share numerous aims and concerns, including promoting wellbeing and performance, and facilitating the fulfilment of potential. In that respect, both PP and CP can draw on an equally wide range of theory and research, while at the same time, APP is regarded as synonymous with coaching. In terms of the central question of this chapter then, from this perspective, coaching is indeed a PPI, and moreover in effect is the *only* PPI (since the two fields wholly overlap). In the interests of openness, this is not my view, since my preferred configuration is the fourth one, in which (A)PP and C(P) are overlapping but non-identical. Nevertheless, regarding (A)PP and C(P) as coterminous is one model of their interaction, to which may appeal to some people.

The second perspective takes a more expansive view of (A)PP, and positions C(P) as its subset, as outlined in Fig. 2. From this stance, although (A)PP and C(P) share numerous aims and concerns (e.g., promoting wellbeing and performance), C(P) is not the *only* means by which these can be achieved. Other examples include macro-level initiatives such as the formation of public policy to promote wellbeing (Lomas et al. 2015). Thus, on this view, in terms of the chapter’s central question—coaching here is again viewed as a PPI, but not the *only* type of PPI (since C(P) could be regarded as a subset of the broader field of (A)PP). Again, this is not my preferred configuration, but is a logical possibility, and one which may hold some appeal.

Conversely, the third perspective reverses the scope of the fields in the second perspective, taking a more expansive view of C(P), and positioning (A)PP as its subset, as outlined in Fig. 3 below. For instance, whereas C(P) could be regarded as helping people improve in all aspects of life, (A)PP could be deemed as focusing on wellbeing in particular. Thus, on this view, (A)PP would be regarded as a subset of the broader field of C(P). As such, in terms of the central question, coaching here is viewed as only *sometimes* being a PPI (e.g., when it specifically focuses



Theoretical/empirical ex. (PP)

- Socio-economic factors
- Religion-health connection
- Cross-cultural ethnography

Applied ex. (APP)

- Systemic re-organisation
- Policy initiatives
- Sport and exercise

Theoretical/empirical ex. (CP)

- Self-determination
- Goal-setting
- Work engagement

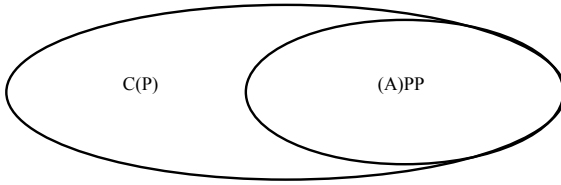
Applied ex. (C)

- Career guidance
- Wellbeing counselling
- Sporting training

Fig. 2 Interaction # 2: (A)PP as encompassing C(P)

on wellbeing), with there being other forms of coaching that are not examples of a PPI (because they are not directly concerned with wellbeing). This answer holds for my preferred fourth configuration too, and so is a resolution that is favoured here. However, in terms of the configuration itself, this third one is not preferred, not least because of the example given in relation to the second configuration above, where (A)PP includes macro-level initiatives which are broader than the scope of C(P) as traditionally conceived (Lomas et al., 2015). Nevertheless, this third configuration is also a logical possibility, and one which may resonate with some people.

Finally, one can configure the relationship such that (A)PP and C(P) constitute overlapping but not coterminous fields of endeavour. Here, (A)PP and C(P) both have theoretical/empirical and applied dimensions in common. However, they also have aspects which pertain to only one of the paradigms exclusively. If, for example, one defines (A)PP as the “science and practice of improving wellbeing” (Lomas et al., 2015, p. 1347), this leaves open the possibility of identifying forms of coaching that do not directly pertain to wellbeing, but rather just to performance. For instance, a person might receive coaching to better themselves at some discipline, such as job performance. While this activity may of course pertain to wellbeing—such as inducing flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)—it does not *necessarily* do so. One could conceivably imagine a person improving while deriving no direct wellbeing benefits—such as experiences of pleasure, or health improvements—from doing so. In that respect, (A)PP and C(P) might constitute an overlapping Venn diagram, as shown in Fig. 4. In terms of the central question, as noted above, this fourth configuration



Theoretical/empirical ex. (CP)

- Self-determination
- Goal-setting
- Work engagement

Theoretical/empirical ex. (PP)

- Wellbeing-related self-determination
- Wellbeing-related goal-setting
- Wellbeing-related work engagement

Applied ex. (C)

- Career guidance
- Goal-setting exercises
- Sporting training

Applied ex. (APP)

- Wellbeing-related career guidance
- Wellbeing-related goal-setting exercise
- Wellbeing related sporting training

Fig. 3 Interaction # 3: C(P) as encompassing (A)PP

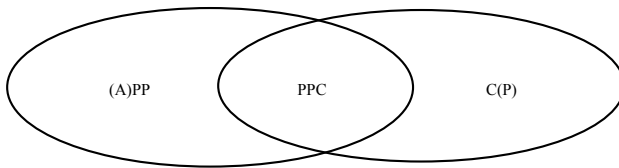
aligns with the answer generated by the third configuration. That is, coaching is only sometimes a PPI (e.g., when it specifically focuses on wellbeing), with there being other forms of coaching that are not examples of a PPI (because they are not directly concerned with wellbeing).

7 Identifying Territorial Claims

Let’s stay with this fourth perspective for a moment, since it is the preferred configuration here. In that respect, Fig. 5 offers a flow chart for identifying whether a given theory or practice pertains to either (A)PP, C(P), neither, or both—with both being an integrative paradigm such as PPC (Passmore & Oades, 2014). The first question is whether “it”—the empirical outcome, theoretical model, or applied practice in question—directly pertains to wellbeing (per Pawelski’s (2016a) ultimate “positive

aim” of PP). The qualifier “directly” is important here, albeit one that is difficult to definitively judge. After all, just about anything could be said to “indirectly” pertain to wellbeing, inasmuch as it is hard to conceive of something that does not affect wellbeing, however obliquely. Nevertheless, it would be prudent to at least attempt to only focus on phenomena that directly pertain to wellbeing, even if differentiating between direct and indirect is difficult in practice. This differentiation also means that it is possible to identify forms of C(P) that do *not* overlap with (A)PP, as alluded to in the paragraph above (e.g., forms of occupational coaching that do not enhance the client’s wellbeing).

If it is ascertained that a given phenomenon (e.g., applied practice) does not directly pertain to wellbeing, then this means it is not “within the scope” of (A)PP. (The phrase “within the scope” is preferable to formulations such as “belonging to,” for reasons outlined above.) That being the case, one can then ask whether the phenomenon involves a coaching relationship. Of course, there may be variation in how one chooses to define such a relationship, with the possibility of doing so more narrowly (e.g., limiting it to situations in which participants self-identify as coach



Theoretical/empirical ex. (PP) Theoretical/empirical ex. (PPC) Theoretical/empirical ex. (CP)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| - Socio-economic factors | - Self-determination | - Communication dynamics |
| - Religion-health connection | - Goal-setting | - Interpersonal influence |
| - Cross-cultural ethnography | - Work engagement | - Body language |

Applied ex. (APP)

Applied ex. (PPC)

Applied ex. (C)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| - Systemic re-organisation | - Career guidance | - Job performance |
| - Policy initiatives | - Wellbeing counselling | - Educational tutoring |
| - Sport and exercise | - Mindfulness | - Sporting training |

Fig. 4 Interaction # 4: (A)PP and C(P) as overlapping

and client), or more widely (e.g., all variations on that theme, such as mentoring). If the phenomenon does not involve such a relationship, then it falls within the scope of neither (A)PP, C(P), nor PPC. If it does, then it may represent a case of C(P) alone (i.e., an instance of C(P) that does not overlap with (A)PP). If the phenomenon does directly pertain to wellbeing, then once again, one can ask whether it features a coaching relationship. If not, then it falls within the scope of (A)PP alone (i.e., an instance of (A)PP that does not overlap with C(P)), whereas if yes, then it represents an instance of PPC (i.e., where (A)PP and C(P) overlap).

This flow chart may not always be easy to implement in practice. However, it does offer an initial way of appraising the ways in which (A)PP and C(P) overlap and yet also differ. It is hoped that this articulation will be useful to proponents of (A)PP and C(P) who are interested in exploring their integration over the coming years. That said, practitioners might prefer one of the other configurations elucidated above, or indeed may find themselves drawn towards another integrative model entirely. This chapter has not intended to be prescriptive in terms of advocating for a particular model (although I myself am drawn to the fourth one). Rather, it is just hoped that this discussion can contribute to the fruitful dialogue that has been unfolding between (A)PP and C(P) over recent years, thus helping to facilitate further collaboration and integration.

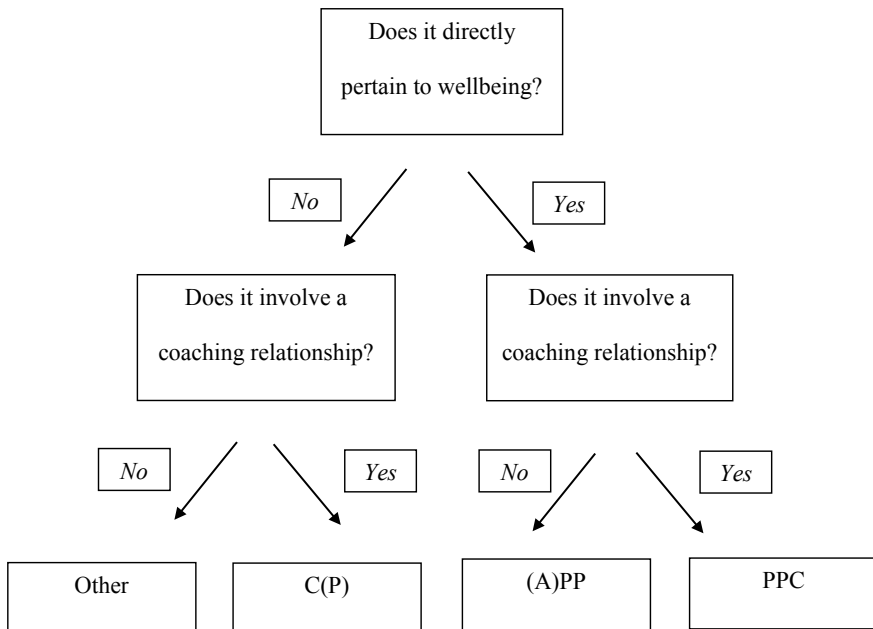


Fig. 5 Flow chart for differentiating between fields

8 Conclusion

This chapter began by exploring the nature of (A)PP (and its adherents and interventions), charting some of the debates in that regard. Even while these issues remain unresolved, the chapter sought to offer some basic heuristics in that regard. Thus, (A)PP was defined here as the science and practice of improving positive wellbeing, and as something practiced/studied by anyone who aligns themselves with the broad ethos of (A)PP, and/or regards themselves as specialising in (A)PP. As for PPIs, these were defined as theoretically-grounded and empirically-validated interventions, activities, and recommendations to enhance positive wellbeing in mainly non-clinical populations. Part 2 then shed light on the intricacies of these debates by exploring the status of C(P), and its relationship to (A)PP. In that respect, the chapter challenged the conventional assumption that PP brings empirical science to the partnership while coaching provides practical expertise. Rather, it was suggested that both (A)PP and C(P) draw on a common body of theories and practice—which, as such, “belong” to neither field—and also on theories and practices that fall within the scope of only one of these fields. In that light, the chapter sought to address the question of whether coaching constitutes a PPI. There are various ways of answering this, depending on which interactional model one is drawn to. From my own perspective, favouring the fourth model, I would argue that coaching—and its study in the form of CP—constitutes a PPI if it specifically focuses on wellbeing. In such cases, the coaching practice exists within the overlapping space of the Venn diagram labelled as PPC. Conversely, other forms of coaching (which do not focus specifically on wellbeing) would not be deemed a PPI. It is hoped that this analysis will be useful to scholars and practitioners in (A)PP and C(P), and will help to further the dialogue about the identity, purpose, and future of these important disciplines.

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Giving Positive Psychology Interventions Depth: A Jungian Approach



Daniël H. du Toit and Sonet du Toit

Abstract Positive Psychology is well established with its main constructs well defined and well researched. Interventions in this field of psychology are starting to get their rightful place, yet research indicates that the impact of these interventions are not showing consistent results. Positive Psychology was from its inception positioned as breaking away from traditional approaches, including that of Depth Psychology. Even though vast differences exist it might be valuable to reconsider this relationship and contemplate how Depth Psychology, mainly Jungian Depth Psychology, can be positioned as a resource to be used in conjunction with Positive Psychology. The aim of this chapter is to show how these two seemingly different approaches, despite their different theoretical foundations and different methodologies, have the potential to complement, enhance and enrich each other, especially regarding interventions. This chapter does not aim to draw a comprehensive comparison between the two approaches. The purpose is to present Depth Psychology in a demystified manner that particularly shows how Depth Psychology interventions can practically add to Positive Psychology interventions.

Keywords Depth Psychology · Positive Psychology · Jung · Archetypes · Interventions · Awareness · Unconscious · Art · Music · Dreams · Individuation

1 Introduction

Depth Psychology and Positive Psychology are two seemingly different approaches often viewed as being worlds apart. Depth Psychology is often regarded as focusing on that which is dark, painful and too complex to understand and Positive Psychology is regarded as focusing on that which is constructive, strengthening and meaningful.

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However, deeper reflection reveals that both are concerned with the innate human potential to grow, flourish and fulfil one's potential—a lifelong process that both approaches view as essential for development and positive human functioning.

Whilst the main constructs of Positive Psychology are well researched, interventions are less well established. Depth Psychology brings a long history of interventions shown to be effective in the long term. It brings with it a richness not only to enhance self-awareness, creativity and personal growth, but also to understand obstacles to personal growth. It further clarifies the landscape or layers of the psyche, resolve inner conflicts which might be hindrances to happiness or thriving, create meaning and assist in getting a realistic view on reality as projections and pre-conceived ideas are challenged. It also creates a connection with the inner world that leads to wholeness and fulfilment.

With both approaches striving towards a similar aim, although from different theoretical foundations, it has the potential to complement, enhance and enrich each other. With indications from research that current Positive Psychology interventions show mixed results (Bolier et al., 2013; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), this chapter endeavours to position Depth Psychology methods to add to Positive Psychology interventions. Rather than giving a theoretical discussion of the different paradigms and underlying principles and while presenting Depth Psychology in a manner that makes it accessible to readers who does not necessarily have prior knowledge of the field, the goal is to propose practically useful methods that could potentially result in a more holistic approach towards people's well-being and growth.

2 Overview of Jungian Depth Psychology

There is a saying 'time heals all wounds'. This statement is debatable. Unresolved life events are as if frozen in time and has the same impact in affecting one's present moment and happiness whether it happened 5 min ago or 60 years ago. Some people really spend a life time being stuck in unconscious, outdated patterns and are thus unable to find any true happiness or meaning. While Positive Psychology is largely concerned with positive aspects of life, such as flourishing, happiness and growth, Depth Psychology at its best frees one from one's past by addressing past wounds and thus lay the foundation for personal growth and development (Kalsched, 1996). Without such a foundation developmental interventions often do not bring sustainable change.

All interventions, like those offered by Positive Psychology, are aimed at bringing some form of change or transformation and both Positive Psychology and Depth Psychology believes in the individual's natural tendency to want to grow (Seligman, 2011; Hollis, 2001). Dr. Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and founder of Analytical Psychology noted "In the majority of my cases, the resources of consciousness have been exhausted; the ordinary expression for this situation is: 'I am stuck'" (Jung, 1933, pp. 70–71). On a practical level Depth Psychology is most useful when a person is stuck, out of options and has a feeling that he or she has no way to

go. A person could be stuck in a past trauma, experience being stuck amidst a crisis or challenge, in a growth process or even a healing process, or simply be stuck in a mundane life or job or relationship devoid of meaning or excitement, stimulation or fulfilment. Many people are stuck in outdated patterns which they on a level know is not good for them and is not bringing them any joy, but they seem unable to change. When a person is stuck many of the usual approaches would mostly only irritate and probably not help the person at all. For example, a person who is angry about a loss, might at that point not be ready to consider gratitude for what he or she still has.

On a practical level a client who engages in a counselling process may report that they experience being stuck in some of the following instances:

- A dead-end job and they do not have the confidence to move to a more fulfilling job
- A marriage with a husband or a wife who has had numerous affairs, but they are unable to end the marriage
- In self-destructive behaviours, for example, self-sabotage by always trying to say the right thing at the right time or in having outdated values and beliefs
- In an unfulfilling, immature relationship
- In compensatory behaviour patterns that are unstimulating, boring and unfulfilling
- In indecision on major issues in life
- In unsatisfying parenting patterns
- In resentment towards their partner or parents
- In the grieving process after experiencing the loss of a loved one

This of course is not the only application of Depth Psychology. It can also be used for personal growth, integration, creating meaning and to stimulate creativity. Depth Psychology interventions can be applied in the following broad ways:

- Integration with self
- Integration with the world
- Feeling a sense of self-worth and identity
- Facing reality as it really is, not through the filters of one's own pain and projections
- Integrate and make meaning of life experiences
- Resolve past traumas and complexes
- Creating meaning and discovering 'soul'
- Expressing one's unique gifts and talents in the world

Originally Depth Psychology focused on repressed traumas. The theory was that whatever a person could not face in the external world or in himself or herself was denied or repressed and then manifested in inappropriate ways and eventually caused the person not to function in an effective and mature way in society (Freud, 1961). Jung was the first to constitute that the unconscious did not only consist of repressed material but also one's creative side, inner knowing or knowledge, wisdom and 'inner gold' (Johnson, 2016; Jung, 1958, 1969). Jung could thus be seen as the first thinker to move away from the pathology model of psychology. Depth Psychology's therapeutic aims in its simplest form was to bring integration of the different aspects of the personality and also to integrate the person in his or her external world, such as

the community and society in which the person lives (Jung, 1948). Due to his focus on growth and wellbeing, this chapter refers mostly to Jung's contributions to Depth Psychology.

Jung described the unconscious as being layered with the external layers being closer to the surface than the layers at the core (Jung, 1960). He also differentiated between a personal unconscious referring to a person's individual complexes and unknown crevices as well as a collective unconscious containing 'archetypal' patterns and images all human beings share (Jung, 1939). Complexes are like unknown elements in the individual's unconscious which exerts influence over the person. Complexes are usually recognisable when a person's reaction to a situation is out of proportion to the reality of the situation. Individual complexes are rooted in archetypes which are part of the collective unconscious. Archetypes are the parts of human beings that connect them to all other human beings and their ancestors. Archetypes are usually unconscious and unobservable and can be activated by external events (Jung, 1939). Archetypes, once activated, can cause a person to act in a pattern which is totally uncharacteristic of him or her as a person. An archetype can be activated at any time. For example, when a person has a sudden bout of road rage when another driver unexpectedly swerves in front of him or her, the warrior archetype might have been activated. He or she might have a sudden surge of anger, feelings of righteous vengeance and an instant readiness to engage in a physical attack, like a warrior. Common as these reactions are, it is usually completely inappropriate in resolving the reality of congested roads and, if it happens often, could have very detrimental effects.

The main aim of a Depth Psychology intervention is to bring about more awareness. Greater awareness brings about greater freedom as a person who is more aware is less caught in the grip of unconscious patterns and unconscious prescriptions of his or her society. In 1890 already, William James said that consciousness gives one the free will to respond to the environment (Wilkinson & Chilton, 2018). Greater awareness brings more integration of conscious and unconscious aspects of the personality. This process of moving towards more awareness and integration is called individuation (Jung, 1948). The construct individuation differs from self-actualisation as it refers not only to the person fulfilling his or her full potential but also acknowledge that this needs to take place whilst fulfilling one's obligations and remaining meaningfully connected to others (Jung, 1960).

In Depth Psychology the process of individuation is often described as 'The Hero's Journey' (Campbell, 1968). The hero's journey has to do with breaking existing restrictive patterns. The hero is the person who is brave enough to leave the safety of known patterns and cultural restrictions; not a rebel who, like teenagers, challenges existing practices for the sake of challenging them, but one who thoughtfully considers cultural practices and has the courage to discard what goes against what is true to himself or herself. The metaphor of the journey is used to describe the movement out of what is known, comfortable and safe to a higher level of consciousness and integration. The individuation process continues throughout one's lifetime and brings ever deeper levels of consciousness. The well-known poet, T. S. Eliot, describes this as follows: "back where we started and know the place for the

first time”. Along the journey of individuation, a person experiences the adventure of life by making mistakes, ‘slaying dragons’ and embracing inner demons. Personal growth is thus a lifelong adventure where the hero is the one who suffers, probably also gets humiliated and along the way triumphs and uncovers the treasure of personal growth. While Positive Psychology acknowledges the impact of dysfunctional childhoods and trauma (Seligman, Rashid, & Parks, 2006), Depth Psychology is a faith in the positive development of the human being whilst welcoming the dark side of being human as an essential part of being healthy. It also takes into consideration past choices, cultural restrictions and responsibilities. Jung frequently said that the psyche will not tolerate self-deception (Jung, 1960). Depth Psychology allows for issues and strengths to be viewed within the context of change and places struggles within a natural context of cyclical growth (du Toit, Veldsman & Van Zyl, 2016).

The more a person is aware of unconscious aspects of the ‘Self’ (the total person, including both conscious and unconscious aspects) the more integration of the different parts of personality is possible (Jung, 1968). Thus, the person would become truer to himself or herself and be able to be truly authentic (du Toit, 2016). If a person is unintegrated and unaware a single severe life event, like losing a loved one in tragic circumstances, can potentially define a person. If the person can successfully integrate it, he or she could become known as a wise, compassionate person rather than someone who suffered a loss. If one does not get unstuck from such an event, a single life experience can define a person throughout his or her life.

3 Poisitive Psychology Ideals and Interventions: Possible Contributions by Depth Psychology

Positive Psychology’s vision, as described by Seligman (1999), is understood to be the creation of flourishing individuals and societies. Seligman acknowledged that little is known about how normal people flourish under benign conditions. Some of the prominent Positive Psychology ideals and interventions for attaining that vision, as well as how Jungian Depth Psychology interventions could possibly contribute, will be shown.

3.1 *Creating Meaning*

Creating meaning is a central construct in Positive Psychology. Seligman (2011) described meaning in terms of the individual utilising and applying key strengths in service of a greater purpose. According to Van Zyl, Motschnig-Pitrik, and Stander (2016) psychological meaning is created when a person feels, through contribution with his or her strengths, connected to the larger socially constructed reality. In Depth Psychology, meaning is closely connected to consciousness. Consciousness refers

to being aware of the outer reality as it really is but more so awareness of one's inner reality. Awareness of one's inner reality implies awareness to one's reaction to outside reality and events. Only when one is truly conscious one is free to respond in an authentic way to the outer reality (Hollis, 2001). In Depth Psychology personal growth comes from greater consciousness and growth is called the process of individuation. Individuation means that one more and more grows towards becoming the person one was destined to be. The more individuated person is mature and has the courage to stand up for what he or she truly believes. He or she also has the courage to stand up for his or her own growth even if that means standing alone (Woodman, 1985). One can for instance live an inauthentic life by allowing others to prescribe meaning and what should be meaningful. Depth Psychology does not view meaning as something we have or do only, but it is something we are (Hollis, 2001). A person who, for example, leads a life serving others could potentially be very inauthentic if this does not come from his or her inner values and priorities. Positive Psychology thus views meaning creation as stemming from using one's strengths in the service of a greater good. Depth Psychology, with its emphasis on consciousness in finding meaning, can be utilised to enrich meaning making interventions by also focussing on creating meaning from the client's inner world.

Being conscious allows one to learn the lesson from life that one should, even from trauma and challenges. Often people are stuck in limiting unconscious patterns due to learning the 'wrong lessons' from difficult events. The creation of meaning is then hampered as one is applying wrong learning in one's life.

Setting life-goals which are authentic is essential in creating meaning. Magyar-Moe et al. (2015) state that in the Positive Psychology intervention Hope Therapy, goal development for important life domains are important. It is not clear where these goals should be derived from apart from previous successes and peak experiences. Depth Psychology can contribute here to assist the person to really know himself or herself to thus find real authentic goals developed from the inside out. In setting life-goals a person should be able to draw on the ancient archetypal wisdom all human beings have available and not only from individual strengths utilised in the past or uncovering for the first time. Rowland (2017, p. 12) held that there is agreement amongst some of the founders of Depth Psychology that archetypes is all the ground we have to stand on in the process of making meaning.

Depth Psychology can further assist to really understand the dynamics of a person's psyche to harness unconscious inner resources as sources of motivation to achieve goals.

3.2 Building Resilience

Resilience is described as recovering to a normal way of functioning after a setback, stressful event or trauma (Gonzales, 2012; Smit, 2006). Robertson (2012) believes that resilience is built through various means, such as positive relationships, develop-

ing self-confidence and seeking opportunities for self-discovery and post-traumatic growth.

Depth Psychology takes a strong view on personal growth when going through difficult life experiences. To grow when faced with setbacks and severe challenges requires a high level of consciousness. Part of the individuation process is often to recover from hardships and to consciously grow through the process. Difficult experiences often bring forth our darkest sides. Consciousness comes from also acknowledging and integrating our darkness (Woodman, 1985). One needs to get to know oneself to find one's own true voice by also knowing one's vulnerability and wounds. When confronted with one's dark side one might experience emptiness, aloneness, a sense of falling, abandonment and pain (Ashton, 2007). If one does not accept and integrate these parts of oneself one creates what Winnicott (1971) calls a 'false self'.

In Depth Psychology the cycle of growth is often likened to death and birth (Woodman, 1985). Many people fear change because change implies the 'death' of some known and comfortable aspects; however, without such deaths the 'birth' of new life and higher levels of existence is not possible. Woodman (1985) states that change is a law of life. To remain fixed and not accepting the 'death' of a change implies stagnation, whereas the psyche's natural urge to wholeness impels us to accept 'deaths' in order to be whole.

Depth Psychology's contribution to resilience building includes bringing to consciousness and enabling a person to reflect on the internal processes that takes place during challenging situations. Depth Psychology also offers effective interventions to assist a person when recovering from trauma. A person stuck in trauma is unable to grow and experience wellbeing (Kalsched, 1996).

3.3 Developing Strengths

A central focus in Positive Psychology is the development of strengths, which releases a person's inherent psychological resources. People are often not conscious of their own strengths, nor are they aware of how these strengths manifest (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). To identify these strengths interviews, psychometric instruments and self-report questionnaires are often utilised, however, a person can only report what he or she knows. Depth Psychology utilises indirect methods, such as making use of art, music and the word association tests as these can be effective in bringing unconscious material, including strengths, into consciousness (du Toit, Veldsman, & Van Zyl, 2011).

Apart from assisting with identifying strengths, Depth Psychology methods could also assist with the development of strengths. Hypnosis can work effectively to build strengths by reinforcing positive beliefs and by dismantling beliefs and behaviours that work against the effective utilisation of strengths.

3.4 Authentic Intercultural Relations

Intercultural relations are probably one of our biggest challenges now and over the centuries. Positive Psychology focusses on the similarities between different cultural groups in addressing intercultural relations (Wilkinson & Chilton, 2018). Depth Psychology could possibly enrich Positive Psychology by offering insights into the dynamics of intercultural relations. For example, the perceived ‘otherness’ of people who are different from ourselves often lead us to emphasise and villainize the differences. From a Depth Psychology point of view, a person often projects that which he or she do not accept in himself or herself onto others and this projection is amplified when intercultural differences exist. Jung (1956, p. 355) said: “a person...imagines his worst enemy in front of him, yet he carries the enemy within himself”. Some intercultural conflicts span decades, and these are often based on imagined differences and grievances more than real conscious difference or grievances. Novelist Lourens van der Post in 1957 already wrote that imagined wrongs are much more difficult to forgive than real wrongs. In many cultures and between groups feuds sometimes existed over many years for example, Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Both Positive Psychology and Depth Psychology emphasise the importance of forgiving or letting go of wrongs. Complete forgiveness requires a high level of consciousness regarding the specifics of what exactly must be forgiven. If someone decides to forgive without honestly facing the wrongs that was done against him or her the specifics tend to creep back and take the person back to a state of feeling wronged.

Consciousness thus brings tolerance for differences as we are more able to see people as they really are and not through the lens of what we project onto them. Also, awareness that at an archetypal level we are similar, brings understanding that the same archetypes manifest differently in different cultures (Juma, du Toit & Van der Merwe, 2018) and allows otherness to be embraced more authentically.

3.5 Meaningful Relationships

Positive relations are integral to a person’s happiness (Seligman, 2011). Relationships are complex and without a high degree of maturity and consciousness very difficult to maintain. Hollis (2001) for instance found that a man will have distorted relationships with women if he does not know his own inner feminine side. The reverse is obviously also true. Ashton (2007) emphasised the importance of having a witness in one’s life. He describes a natural inkling to be seen as we truly are by those in close relationships with us. People want others to see and accept their dark sides, paradoxically those parts that they are ashamed of and if unconscious do not even accept in themselves. Relationships play a critical role in not only one’s happiness but also in gaining self-knowledge and growth. If one does not have an integrated positive relationship with oneself, relationships with others are destined to be superficial, lack meaning and be

difficult to maintain. Individuation is about becoming more mature and maturity is critical in maintaining positive relationships.

Depth Psychology interventions can thus enhance the Positive Psychology goal of creating positive relations.

4 Brief Comparison of Positive Psychology and Depth Psychology

Similarities and differences between these two approaches are highlighted to facilitate some understanding of how the fields could potential challenge and complement each other. This could inform the usefulness of Depth Psychology interventions in the field of Positive Psychology. As a comprehensive comparison between Positive Psychology and Depth Psychology is beyond the scope of this chapter, the following overview highlights some of the most important aspects.

4.1 Overview of Similarities

Similarities indicate common ground and agreement on fundamental aspects and possible provides a basis for cooperation between the two fields.

As described for Depth Psychology, the aim of Positive Psychology is also to create awareness (Van Zyl, Motschnig-Pitrik, & Stander, 2016). The difference is that in Depth Psychology material that is repressed and emotionally charged is also brought to the surface and integrated into consciousness. Depth Psychology encourages a healthy dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious parts of the mind. Very often parts of a person that he or she is most shameful of and do not acknowledge also contains strengths that should be brought into awareness to be available to utilise.

A core focus of Positive Psychology has been described as uncovering, developing and promoting the use of the 'ancient strengths within'. Archetypes, in Depth Psychology, are ancient inner creative drives found in all people. The two approaches meet again with this view which circumvents the emphasis on cultural differences, namely that this ancient part of being human is more essential than culture-coloured preferences.

Since its inception Positive Psychology deliberately moved away from the study of pathology, weakness and damage to the study of potential, strength and optimal living (Seligman, 1999). Years earlier, Jung took a stance against the then current thought in Psychology. He postulated that the unconscious mind did not only contain repressed traumas and guilt but was also the source of creativity and wisdom (Von Frantz, 1998) and in doing so transformed the view of the unconscious. Both Positive Psychology and Jungian Depth Psychology thus focus more on psychological health

Table 1 Summary of differences between positive psychology and depth psychology

Differences	
Positive Psychology	Depth Psychology
Research is mostly quantitative, utilising questionnaires. These are often self-report questionnaires	Research tend to be more qualitative, utilising drawings, dreams, stories and fantasies
Interventions deliberately focus on positive aspects. It moves the client away from negative aspects or symptoms towards positive aspects	Interventions focus on all aspects, positive as well as negative or rather shadow aspects. Welcomes symptoms or negative aspects as it views symptoms as communication from the unconscious mind. Might temporarily move into negative aspects
The counsellor or coach or therapist is the expert on Positive Psychology principles	The counsellor’s or coach’s or therapist’s starting point is ‘not knowing’. The client (and especially the client’s unconscious mind) is believed to be the expert
Intercultural differences are dealt with mainly by focussing on the similarities between all people	Intercultural differences are viewed as different manifestation of collective archetypal truths, which connect all people
Personal growth (and happiness) are viewed as the individual’s choice and right	Personal growth, explained through the construct of individuation, is viewed as fulfilling one’s potential whilst remaining meaningfully connected to the collective
A person’s life story is utilised to uncover strengths as well as the utilisation of these strengths in the past	Utilises a client’s life story to uncover underlying patterns and symbols
Brings strengths and resources to awareness	Brings strengths, resources and emotionally charged aspects to awareness

and optimal growth than pathology. Furthermore, both subscribe to human beings’ innate tendency towards growth.

4.2 Overview of Differences

The differences between Depth Psychology and Positive Psychology provides clues as to how the two approaches potentially challenge each other as well as indicate possible areas which need further exploration. In highlighting the differences the possible contributions of Depth Psychology interventions towards Positive Psychology outcomes may become more evident.

Some of the main differences between Positive Psychology and Depth Psychology are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 indicates that Depth Psychology deems it necessary to understand the unconscious mind, integrate different aspects of the self and integrate the person with

his or her world. It could therefore be expected that Depth Psychology interventions may offer just that to Positive Psychology.

The prominent Depth Psychology interventions aimed at gaining insight in and integrating different aspects of the unconscious mind will be discussed next. Positive Psychology generally does not utilise these interventions, however, exceptions will be pointed out.

5 Depth Psychology Interventions

Some of the main Depth Psychology methodologies will be discussed next and some examples cited to show how they could be utilised to facilitate healing and growth. The purpose of these examples is to provide the reader insight into the methods—how they could be applied and the value thereof—and are by no means comprehensive. The interventions will be presented as clear and simple as possible, but the purpose remains to give insight in its application and value and not to equip the reader to utilise these methods. Utilising most of these methods requires intense training.

This chapter will focus mostly on interventions with individuals, however, the same principles can usually be applied to a group of any size, which could be a family unit, a support group, a work team in an organisation, a whole organisation or even a country. In Depth Psychology a group could be seen as a living entity with its own psyche. A group, just like an individual, has a conscious mind, referring to things everyone in the group knows and is aware of and is called the collective conscious. Every group also has unconscious aspects which members of the group are unaware of. Some groups are also more integrated within themselves and their environment than other groups. The interventions which will be described for individuals can, in an adapted form, be utilised for groups to create awareness and insight into problems and challenges as well as highlight strengths.

Depth Psychology interventions aim to bring unconscious material to consciousness for purposes of both healing and growth. Unconscious material is difficult to access and only come to consciousness in symbolic form. The symbols from the unconscious then need to be understood and interpreted in terms of the experiences, culture, beliefs and history of the client. The various methods that can be utilised to achieve this will be discussed next.

5.1 *Dream Analysis*

Jung described dreams as the highway to the unconscious (Jung, 1963), meaning that dreams give unrestricted access to the material usually hidden in the unconscious. Most people dream every night. During deep sleep a person thus ‘wakes up’ to his or her inner world. Particularly dreams which are repetitive or emotionally charged could be a message from the unconscious. Dreams are usually symbolic and thus

the dreamer often do not understand its message or meaning. For example, a dream about someone who died might mean that the person in the dream is dead to the dreamer; not literary dead, but not of any real significance in his or her life. Though there are many ways to interpret a dream the best way remains, as in all counselling interventions, to mostly utilise questions. Allow the dreamer to reflect on his or her own dream. Ask probing questions, such as ‘Could you describe ...?’ At the most ask guiding questions like ‘Could it perhaps mean ...?’ In understanding the symbols in dreams, great caution must be taken. Though dreams usually have archetypal meaning and symbols are universal, using a dictionary for dream symbols is not advised, as dreams are also constituted by the dreamer’s own symbols and experiences. For example, a dream of a snake might indicate something primitive trying to break through but could also, for a particular dreamer be a warning regarding a dangerous or ‘poisonous’ aspect of his or her life. Dreams often highlight the most pressing issues of which the dreamer might be unaware and very often also suggests some indication of the way forward. Dreams are important enough for some people to dedicate a lifetime to studying and understanding dreams and there are several study groups and conferences dedicated to the study of dreams.

5.2 *Myths and Fairy Tales*

Stories are an ancient form of the expressions of human truths and transferring wisdom from generation to generation. In this way history, customs and culture are often passed on and people’s world views formed. Stories, in many ways and forms, are widely used as a means to understand one’s world and make sense of experiences. By analysing a story, one can identify elements that reflects one’s own reality. It is a safe container in which one can explore one’s own way in the world, one’s potential and one’s truths.

In Depth Psychology stories, usually myths and fairy tales, are used in a very particular way. Similar myths and fairy tales are created in different cultures around the world with similar elements and are seen as containing ancient archetypal truths (Von Franz, 1998, 1999). For example, the King, the Sorcerer, the Handsome Prince, the Wicked Witch and the Damsel in Distress are found in many myths and fairy tales.

Myths and fairy tales are inherently different. Myths refer to the hero’s journey and encountering archetypal forces represented as dragons and evil villains in his or her quest towards finding a treasure. Well known examples are the many myths around King Arthur as well as Lord of the Rings. In interventions myths can be used to gain insight in and understanding of a person’s growth process by understanding the growth of the characters in the myth through encounters with archetypal forces. The person can gain insight into his or her own growth through encountering challenges.

A fairy tale represents the psyche of a person with one dimensional characters (archetypes) conflicting within the person. Archetypal forces within a person struggles with no development or growth (Von Franz, 1999), meaning that the characters

remain as they are, for example, the evil Stepmother remains evil and the characters at best come to some harmony. The well-known fairy-tale, Snow White, offers a good example. If one considers the characters in Snow White as aspects of a single person's psyche, each person has aspects of the characters. Within each person hides a part that is as innocent as Snow White, another part that is tough like the Huntsman and another part that can be as wicked as the Stepmother. It could even happen that part of a person is poisoned and for all practical purposes 'dead' like Snow White lying in the glass coffin who needs to be awakened by the life-giving force of a brave Prince. When these parts of a person unite and form a strength which counters the power of our 'evil vindictive side', integration of these archetypal forces could bring maturation of the person as a whole.

5.3 Art as a Vehicle for Imagery and Symbols

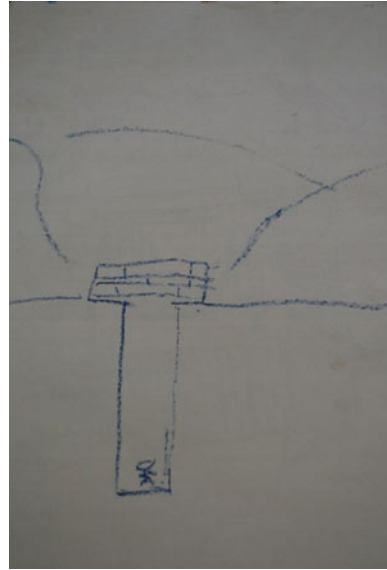
As with stories, the expression of daily experiences and also deep truths has been expressed in various forms of art for many centuries. Some rock paintings are estimated to be more than 33,000 years old. People seem to have had this need to express themselves in art forms since ancient times. Words are inadequate to express the depth and intricacies of the experience of both the reality of their external worlds and inner truths. Imagery could potentially symbolically represent unconscious psychic material such as complexes, inner conflicts, significant experiences and archetypal forces. Holdstock's (1986, p. 9) statement: "It is conceivable even, that art at its best is more psychological than psychology", indicates that art gives a unique window into a person's psyche.

The language of the unconscious is imagery and symbols (Jung, 1964). These cannot be accessed with rationality, logic and language but only through symbolic expression. We can never fully understand the unconscious mind but symbolic expression, such as art work, give us glimpses of its content and processes, especially of current relevant or pressing matters.

Creations such as drawings, paintings, clay work, mandalas and craftwork done in a state of deep relaxation could be symbolic expressions of unconscious material. These symbols are universal for all human beings and when interpreted gives insight into the present current psychological state and pressing issues of the person. In creating a work of art, the choice of image, colour, positioning and shape is not arbitrary but is assumed to represent inner material that the person would not have conscious access to. When these images are carefully interpreted some insight could be gained into the person's psyche. Images are usually interpreted with the client, in a social constructivist manner. Creations are treated with the greatest respect and appreciation; Jung went as far as calling such images sacred objects (Swan-Foster, 2018) because they symbolically represent a part of the person's soul.

An art creation thus brings some unconscious material into consciousness. For example, when a person is stuck and unable to bring about change to his or her life, a drawing can sometimes reveal the core of the problem and even give hints of the

Fig. 1 Example of a drawing



solution. A symbol once understood could bring movement; it becomes a symbol of transformation (Swan-Foster, 2018). Symbol creation acknowledges and drives the psyche towards wholeness. Access to deeper emotional states through symbols, as in art work, does not seem to be developed in Positive Psychology (Resnick, Warmoth, & Serlin, 2001).

Figure 1 is an example of how a drawing could bring awareness regarding the severity of a situation. The person who drew this was a male in his mid-thirties. On a conscious level, he was satisfied with his life. He stated that he was happy but had a vague inkling that something was missing. After he drew the picture, which he described as 'bleak and lifeless', he began to realise how stuck he really was in a life of meaninglessness. He drew himself very small in a deep pit, symbolic of how trapped, insignificant and helpless he really felt. On top of the pit, he drew a brick construction. In the discussion, he came to see that he has 'built' things into his life which kept him trapped. The drawing indicated that the only way to get out of the pit, would be to de-construct the 'bricks'. He also drew mountains in the background, which he later saw as a symbolic representation of distant dreams and visions he had for himself but could not see 'while in the pit'. Further discussions on the mountains revealed his true dreams, which could potentially give meaning to his life. This drawing brought an awareness which initiated major changes in his life.

Apart from utilising art to gain insight into a person's psyche, the art making process in itself is beneficial. Though art making is usually not part of Positive Psychology interventions, some research have shown the benefits of art creating activities for some of the positive psychology constructs. These indicate the benefits in terms of Seligman's model of wellbeing, namely PERMA (acronym for positive

emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement), some quality of life and flow measures (Wilkinson & Chilton, 2018). A number of studies with cancer patients indicated positive effects of art creation on overall health (Svensk et al., 2009), positive emotions (Babouchkina & Robbins, 2015), positive interaction and coping skills (Visser & Op'T Hoog, 2008).

5.4 Music

“Deeply listening to music opens up new avenues of research I’d never even dreamed of. I feel from now on music should be an essential part of every analysis”.

This quote from Jung denotes the profound relationship that exists between mind and music, as music evokes imagery responses, and recognises the therapeutic value of listening to music with heightened consciousness. The generic term for the forms of imaging to music in a deep state of relaxation is known as Guided Imagery and Music (GIM). Relaxation, listening to music, and imagery can be combined in countless ways for therapeutic purposes and can be varied to meet different client needs (Bruscia, 2015).

Adding the dimension of an altered state to music listening is a method for exploring the self and realising the potential of the person. The perceptions, emotions and material elicited by listening to music while in an altered state cannot be easily achieved through ordinary consciousness. “...a listener may be able to perceive music as color, shape, and movement; melodic sequences can evoke scenes from real life or fantasy; rhythmic patterns can elicit emotions of love, joy, union, loneliness, fear, grief; inspirational music can encourage deep religious experience” (Bonny & Savary, 2005, p. 26). Furthermore, “music listened to in altered states of consciousness can bring out things in you that nothing or no one has ever previously elicited. Many describe the experience as full of insight; others find a healing force; some let the music take them to unexplored provinces of the psyche; while for others it provides a heightened awareness of their ordinary world” (Bonny & Savary, 2005, p.19). More vital, creative and satisfying living might be the consequence of insights attained through this approach (Bonny & Savary, 2005).

A wide variety of techniques to access a person’s inner knowledge, wisdom and resources which lie hidden in the unconscious have been developed of which the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (BMGIM), a specialised form of GIM, is probably the most renowned.

Nine characteristics define the ‘Bonny Method’ (BMGIM) and is described by Bruscia (2015, pp. 1–2) as:

1. a one-on-one form
2. of exploring consciousness
3. which involves the client in spontaneous imaging
4. in an expanded state of consciousness
5. to predesigned programs of classical music

6. while dialoguing with a specially trained and qualified therapist
7. who uses nondirective, supportive, nonanalytical, music-based interventions
8. within a client-centered orientation
9. all within a session that has the following components:
 - a. Preliminary conversation
 - b. Induction
 - c. Guided music-imaging experience
 - d. Return and
 - e. Postlude discussion

Explained briefly, these components include assisting the client in setting a focus or an intention for the session during the preliminary conversation, which could for example relate to support and strengthening, releasing intense emotions, exploring a problem or a situation from a transcendent position, activating inner wisdom and so forth. The facilitator then guides the client into an altered state of consciousness in preparation for the music-imaging experience, after which the facilitation of the music-imaging experience and the return to consciousness is provided. Finally, the facilitator assists the client to gain insight into the experience as well as the implication for the theme that the client is currently exploring or addressing or reflecting on; this can be done through drawing a mandala and/or verbal discussion (Bruscia, 2015). Reflecting on the listening experience may bring immediate insights or require greater reflection and discussion to extract the symbolic meaning (Bonny & Savary, 2005).

Although specialised training is required to practice the outlined psychodynamic approach, the experience of listening to music with heightened awareness, being affected by the experience and gaining access to creativity, insight and self-realisation is open to all. Extraordinary listening experiences can be of value to anyone who is willing to transcend ordinary consciousness and enter a new dimension of awareness (Bonny & Savary, 2005).

5.5 *Film*

When Jungian analyst Dr. Lionel Corbett was asked in an interview to name films with a Jungian theme he replied, “all movies have a Jungian theme”. Although this statement is debatable, and film is not the exclusive domain of Depth Psychology, the appeal of many films, on an intuitive level, is the archetypal truths they depict. Films thus touch on and depict deep seated, unconscious aspects of being human. This is because immersion in a film places one in an altered state of consciousness. The ego is distracted and archetypal symbols bypass conscious evaluation and touch the viewer at an unconscious level, releasing archetypal energy.

The content of a few films which can be used in intervention to illustrate the encounters of archetypal forces are briefly outlined below.

Black Swan (2010)

The film, through the main character, a ballerina, illustrates many challenges such as perfectionism, an over-achievement drive and breaking ties with a controlling mother. The growth through integration of the dark aspects of herself is also powerfully depicted.

The Phantom of the Opera (2004)

If one understands the whole story as an internal struggle of the main character Christine, she must learn to not only accept the gifts from her dark side but also to embrace ('kiss') the parts of herself which she finds unacceptable. For many the dark sides of themselves are like phantoms lurking in the dark dungeons of their unconscious. These dark sides could be frightening and aggressive but could also be the source of creative talent like the phantom developed Christine's singing talent.

Moana (2016)

In this animation, which on the surface seems like a children's story, the main character individuates by breaking the self-destructive, restrictive beliefs of her group and embark on the journey of personal growth (the hero's journey). True growth is often not about becoming a good, well-adjusted citizen of one's group, but finding one's own identity, even if it means defying group expectations (Hollis, 2001). Often in films archetypes are depicted in such a way that they are easy to identify and their function in one's growth journey understood. In Moana these are depicted beautifully, for example, the wise old woman, the patriarch, the jester, mother earth, the mentor, the trickster, the villain and the goddess.

Frozen (2013)

This film depicts many archetypal aspects, perhaps part of the reason that it was one of the most popular fairy princess stories ever. One unusual aspect this film brings to the fore is learning to deal with one's gifts in such a way that it does not become a curse.

Through immersion in a film, a person's unconscious aspects are manifested through the process of identification and projection. This means that while watching a film, the person identifies with certain characters and experience events in the film as if it were his or her own experiences. For example, when the main character in the film must make a difficult ethical choice, the person watching gain insight in his or her own (usually unconscious) values. The person watching the film may also project unconscious complexes and archetypal material unto characters in the film and thus gain self-knowledge in his or her unconscious issues. Watching a film thus begins to make unconscious material conscious. Further discussions and interventions on the film could then further hone the gaining of self-knowledge and insight.

5.6 Writing to Organise Thoughts and as Symbolic Expression

Writing is one of the most widely practiced methods used for organising one's inner world by disentangling thoughts and feelings. When a person is confused and stuck, writing could facilitate clearing confusion, allowing new perspectives to emerge and shed light on new possibilities. Thoughts, feelings and fears may at times be perceived as somewhat vague while writing forces one to put these vague thoughts, feelings and fears into concrete words. For this reason, writing is more powerful than just thinking about one's challenge. When something is explained in words and written down, it gives the writer some control over it and it is organised into some structure. An issue that is upsetting and worrying is usually firstly dealt with in the limbic, or emotional, part of the brain. This part of the brain works with associations and feelings, not logic. When a person writes about an issue, therefore putting it into words, it moves to the neo-cortex, or logical, part of the brain. The neo-cortex has the ability to solve problems and generate alternatives. Translating vague thoughts, feelings and fears into words thus empowers the writer to gain control and identify possible options or courses of action. The writer can start differentiating and prioritising issues, rather than feel overwhelmed by a vaguely understood challenge and its impact.

While Positive Psychology encourages a practice like journaling, Depth Psychology enhance this intervention by understanding and explaining the process that takes place whilst writing. The process is made conscious and thus motivates the writer to implement the intervention as he or she can make sense of the process and understand the value of writing versus only thinking about one's situation. Depth Psychology further enrich this practice by understanding that which is expressed through writing—the deeper needs and motives expressed, even in symbolic form. This makes a much richer utilisation of the writing possible.

5.7 Word Association

The most widely use of word association is the Word Association Test (WAT), designed by Jung around 1910. Its current form is not very different from Jung's original version. The client, whilst in a state of deep relaxation, is confronted with words or short sentences. The client says whatever comes up when he or she hears the word. Words or sentences such as 'black', 'tunnel' and 'my mother always' is used. The words and/or reactions which comes to the fore is deemed to be unconscious constructs associated with the stimulus word. By confronting the client with a range of words, the skilful practitioner can create a 'map' of the client's unconscious including his or her unconscious beliefs about for example aspects such as his or her parents, intimacy and performance. Clusters of such beliefs, called complexes, can also be seen. These complexes could shed light on challenges such as anxiety, feelings of helplessness, low self-confidence or over-reactions. Apart from challenges,

the WAT also indicates unconscious areas of strength. These areas of strength are often unknown and underutilised.

The advantage of such a ‘map’ of unconscious aspects is that the roots of not only restrictive reactions or behaviour patterns are known, but also potential sources of strength. Interventions can then be focused to either resolve challenges or harness strengths. Considering that the client is usually unable to explain the unconscious powers at play, a wrong conclusion on the sources of problems is often very likely and could cause interventions to have a wrong focus. When the root is understood, an effective intervention becomes much more likely.

5.8 *Hypnosis*

Although hypnosis is no longer seen as a frightening or magical method where the client relinquishes power and everything is revealed and ‘cured’ in a flash, it is still met with scepticism from some. Related practices such as meditation, active imagination, guided imagery and deep relaxation is much more accessible for many as well as without the stigma and has consequently assisted with reducing the strangeness of hypnosis.

Hypnosis refers to an altered state of consciousness and is thus practiced in a state of deep relaxation. Different approaches have been developed, each with its own paradigms and methodologies. Some of these approaches include Medical hypno-analysis (which is close to Freud’s original theory), Ego State therapy and Ericksonian hypnotherapy.

In the hands of a skilled practitioner, hypnosis has many applications. Apart from accessing and integrating repressed material, and thereby enhancing integration, hypnosis can, for example, supplement wellbeing by assisting with healthy sleep patterns through practicing self-hypnosis. Hypnosis strengthens the use of affirmations and can be used to build self-confidence, reduce anxiety, access inner resources, enhance energy utilisation and uncover creative inner resources.

Jung himself did not use hypnosis but used **active imagination**, a technique very similar to hypnosis as it also involves deep relaxation and an altered state of consciousness which allows for access to the unconscious. Active imagination is more broadly acceptable as a natural process because it involves the spontaneous emerging of imagery, words or symbols to be worked with. It can be utilised to draw on unconscious wisdom to bring insight, solve problems or craft creative solutions.

From the interventions discussed, any could be utilised on their own or with other Positive Psychology interventions to achieve Positive Psychology ends. These methods are all primarily aimed at making conscious what is unconscious, integrating aspects of the personality and personal growth.

5.9 In Closing

Because the approaches of Positive Psychology and Depth Psychology are seemingly different, even opposing, little has been done to explore the synergies and challenges they could bring to each other. With little research conducted to combine these fields this chapter proposed Depth Psychology interventions as a possible means to compliment, enhance and enrich Positive Psychology interventions and outcomes. For future research a dialogue between the two approaches is suggested rather than any attempts to integrate them.

To conclude, why then should Depth Psychology be considered to enrich the attainment of the goals of Positive Psychology interventions? In the words of Johnson (1993, p. 36):

“No suffering is more unendurable than the presence of beauty that one cannot accept” and no tragedy greater than being caught in archetypal patterns that prevents one from authentically experiencing a positive and fulfilling life. Depth Psychology interventions assist to free people from the trappings of unconscious powers to become who they truly are in order to discover within themselves and within their worlds the capacity for beauty and positive growth.

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The Origin, Development, Validation and Application of the Positivity Projective and Enactment Technique



Frederik (Freddie) Crous

Abstract The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the current state of the Positivity Projection and Enactment Technique. The progression of the technique's origination, development, validation and application, which is contingent on critical life events the author were confronted with, is discussed. Reflecting on his lived experience of flourishing in the form of post-traumatic growth the author hypothesizes that positivity is embodied, confirmed by neoteny theory and embodied cognition/conceptual metaphor theory. The simple image associated with positivity, which he designed, proves to be a credible and valid projective and enactment technique which may serve as a mediation instrument for the facilitation and branding of positivity in general and well-being in particular.

Keywords Auto-ethnography · Appreciative inquiry · Mixed methods

1 Introduction

If positivity were to have a valid visual identity, what would it look like and why should it matter? With this chapter I address these questions with an approach, like Seligman (2018), of making the personal in relation to positivity, universal. Seligman makes use of autobiography as strategy, whereas I make use of auto-ethnography (Hughes & Pennington, 2017), by presenting an account and analyses of a lived experience of post-traumatic growth and one of its outcomes in the form of a simple visual image representing positivity which subsequently turned out to be a valid associative projective and enactment technique for the facilitation of well-being. The chapter is introduced with an evocative personal narrative evolving into a more analytical style (Wall, 2016).

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2 Post-traumatic Growth: A Lived Experience

One world is aware and by far the largest one to me, and that is myself...

Walt Whitman (1918). *Leaves of Grass*

Its own body, then, first of all, MUST be the supremely interesting object for each human mind.

William James (1892). *Psychology: Briefer course*

The hospital ward was dark. Everybody but me was asleep. A catheter, inserted just below my collarbone, reminded me of my first experience of dialysis that morning. At age 36 I was diagnosed with chronic renal failure, according to the doctor most probably caused some years before by a bacterial throat infection which triggered the accumulation of an antibody, Immunoglobulin A, in my kidneys resulting in inflammation. This slowed down my kidneys' ability to clean my blood from wastes and I eventually developed end-stage kidney failure. I was doomed to a routine of a four-hourly dialysis sessions, three times a week. Only a kidney transplant could save me from a grind that would restrict me from travelling and threatened my employability. Objectively viewed, my future looked bleak. However, as I have written elsewhere (Crous, 2007, p. 10), "I was somewhat startled to realise that I was not overwhelmed by the seriousness of my situation, that I had not framed it as a problem. I knew that had I done so, the seriousness of my circumstances would have created uncontrollable entropy in my mind. I discovered that I had—strangely enough—accepted my fate without having to go through any of Kübler-Ross's (1969) other phases of denial, anger, bargaining, and depression". Instead of being anxious I was aware of a deep sense of elation. The newly discovered inner strength that I had not previously been aware of set me at ease and I fell asleep.

Two days later, I went for my next dialysis. I did not like what I saw. All the other patients were flat on their backs, connected to their dialysis machines, covered in white bedding. Those with light complexion appeared a sickly yellow and those with a dark complexion had turned ashen grey. They were all asleep, but to me they appeared to be dead. So when the nurse wanted to connect the catheter protruding from my torso to a machine next to a bed, I resisted. I felt that I would betray my newly discovered strength by receiving dialysis lying down and asked her for a chair, because it would allow me to sit UP. For me, in that moment, the upright position represented being alive, strong and well. Therefore, for the rest of the time I was to undergo dialysis I made sure to sit up, even if it was on the bed.

The day I was discharged to become an outpatient, I was unsure on my feet but managed to pass through the front door without a wheelchair. Stepping into the sun I turned and raised my head to experience its warmth and comfort on my skin. This gave way to an intense, delirious feeling of being spiralled up and leaving me with a rich sense of appreciation. The realisation that I was fortunate to experience an authentic, deep-felt emotion triggered by something as simple as the warmth of the

sun—in spite of what would, for many, be a hopeless situation—turned into a profound experience of gratitude. For Emmons (2004), such a moment of overwhelming gratitude can be linked to Maslow's (1964) idea of a peak experience during which one characteristically feels extremely lucky, fortunate or graced. This experience left me with a warm feeling¹ in my chest, which would sustain me for the entire time I received dialysis treatment. Without me having to ask him, my amazing and kind-hearted younger brother, Dawie, offered to donate me his kidney. He had to undergo extensive compatibility tests and had to lose 11 kg before the surgeon, Prof. Botha, performed the transplant eight months later. As the anaesthetic wore off after the procedure I became aware of the post-operative pain, but instantly realised that I was physically well. My brother's kidney was functioning as if it were my own. The warm feeling in my chest, which had kept me elevated during the dialysis period, however, started to wane and with it my intense appreciation for life. I was slipping back, starting to take life for granted again. A mere three years after the transplant, following a routine visit to Dr. Margolius, the nephrologist, a nurse, Ronelle, inspected my blood counts and detected that I was losing blood. After various tests, Dr. Berkowitz, a gastroenterologist, informed me that the results of a biopsy of my stomach confirmed that I had developed cancer (a side-effect of the immune-suppressants I took to prevent me from rejecting my brother's transplanted kidney, which was only 50% compatible with my own tissue). As the doctor told me that I was, once again, faced with a life-threatening disease, that welcoming warm feeling which had comforted me during the time I was on dialysis, instantaneously returned to settle in my chest. It appeared without any conscious or deliberate effort on my part.

The chemotherapy treatment I was subsequently subjected to, ravaged my already compromised immune system. Moreover, because of complications I regularly had to deal with almost unbearable pain. Nevertheless, my new kidney did not falter. Eventually, Dr Ruff, the oncologist, gave me the good news that the treatment had been effective, and that I was a cancer survivor. Again, that warm feeling in my chest started to wear off. This time, however, I was determined not to take life for granted again.

With a keen interest in contemporary art, I had started to collect pieces that would portray or resonate with my lived experiences since the renal failure and gastric lymphoma, most of which share a common theme: elevation. Richard Kilpert's "dolosman" (Fig. 1), who defies gravity, serves as an example.

As indicated elsewhere (Crous, 2007), I am able to continuously 'dialogue' with this collection, which remains a deeply meaningful experience. In the words of Pierce, "objects hang before the eyes of the imagination, continuously re-presenting ourselves to ourselves and telling the stories of our lives in ways which would be impossible otherwise." (in Bal, 1994, p. 103). I echo the words of Dewey (1934, p. 18): "Art celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is." Yet, still I was yearning for a very simple image to live and work by, to remind me that life is

¹This feeling of warmth was most probably triggered by an activated vegus nerve.



Fig. 1 Richard Kilpert, *The Passion of A.K.* (undated). Private collection

worth living well (cf. Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006). As a lecturer in consumer psychology at the time, I was mentally framed to look out for an image in the form of a logo, a visual identity for positivity. As a schema, such an image, I believed, would enable me to connect with and structure positivity and well-being in my life.

3 Originating a Visual Identity for Positivity

Of course, I was not the first to come up with the idea of a visual image to represent positivity. Stamp (2013) indicates that in 1963, the State Mutual Life Assurance Company commissioned an American graphic artist working in the advertising industry, Harvey Ross Ball, to create a graphic symbol to raise morale amongst the company's



Fig. 2 The original smiley face by Harvey Ross Ball. Used with permission of Harvey Ball World Smile Foundation and World Smile Corporation. *Source* Stamp (2013)

employees after a stressful time of difficult mergers and acquisitions. In less than ten minutes Ball completed the design which was to become known as the smiley face. The design consists of a yellow circle with two black dots representing eyes and an oversized curve representing a smile (Fig. 2).

Stamp (2013) points out that there is no evidence that the image boosted morale. Nevertheless, the smiley face was an instant hit and was subsequently reproduced on a thousand pinned buttons. The smiley face came to be associated with happiness, and when two greeting card shop owners, the brothers Bernard and Murray Spain, added the slogan “Have a Happy Day” to the smiley face, they copyrighted a revised mark in 1971 and within a year managed to sell more than 50 million smiley face buttons and a range of other branded products. Moreover, they were of the opinion that their smiley face brand would improve the American nation’s optimism during the Vietnam War (Stamp, 2013).

According to Stamp (2013) in 1972 the French journalist, Franklin Lufranci, was the first person to register the smiley face as a trademark for commercial use. He started to use it for the purpose of focusing attention on rare instances of good news in the newspaper *France Soir*, but proceeded to trademark it simply as ‘Smiley’ in over 100 countries. His Smiley Company, which sold smiley T-shirt transfers, was grown into an empire by his son, Nicolas, distributing the smiley face trademark through global licensing agreements of which the current emoji is probably one. The Smiley Company has transformed a simple graphic sign, in the form of a smiley face, into an enormous business as well as a corporate ideology that embraces positivity. Back in the United States of America, Charlie Ball, the son of Harvey Ross Ball, established the Harvey Ball World Smile Foundation in 2001 to honour the name of the originator of the smiley face design. According to the foundation’s website it supports small,

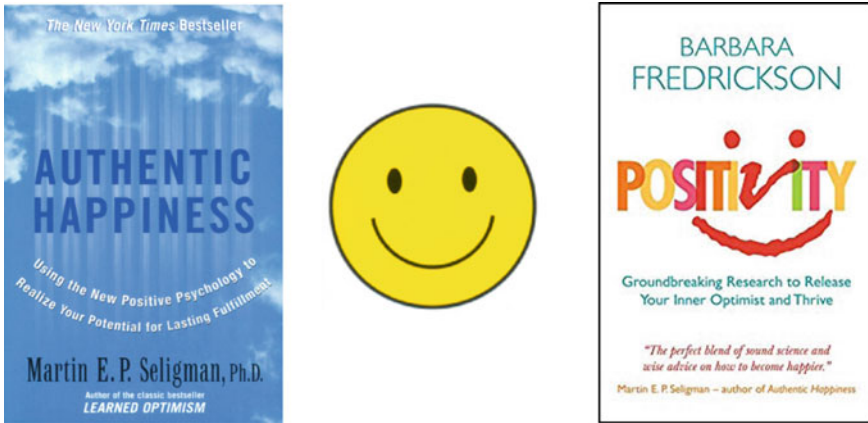


Fig. 3 The smiley face replicated on the covers of books by Martin Seligman and Barbara Fredrickson respectively. *Sources* Seligman (2002) and Fredrickson (2009)

neglected, grassroots charities. This gives expression to Fredrickson’s (2009, p. 17) viewpoint that positivity relates not only to *feeling* good, but also to *doing* good.

Martin Seligman and Barbara Fredrickson, two of the most dominant figures in the positive psychology movement, strongly oppose the association of the smiley face with positivity and/or happiness: “For now, I simply want you to recognise that it’s not as simple as the ever-popular yellow smiley-face icon implies ... this is why the yellow smiley face is the symbol that scientists working in positive psychology love to hate ... it trivializes the effort and sincerity that it takes to invoke genuine, heartfelt positivity” (Fredrickson, 2009, p. 36) and “positive social science is not an ideological movement or a secular religion ... or a smiley face ...” (Peterson & Seligman, 2003, p. 19). “Just as annoying...that awful smiley face whenever positive psychology made the news.” (Seligman, 2011).

Ironically, the front covers of two books on positive psychology, written by Seligman (2002) and Fredrickson (2009) respectively, incorporated versions of the smiley face (Fig. 3).

Despite Fredrickson and Seligman’s disapproval of the smiley face, I was convinced that there had to be a natural/scientific justification for its popularity. A possible explanation for the smiley face’s attractiveness may lie in the evolutionary idea of *neoteny*—the retention of juvenile characteristics (physical, behavioural and psychological) into adulthood (Charlton, 2006; Gould, 1977; Montagu, 1989), or as explained by Kampourakis (2018, p. 285), “... the extension of early stages of development [into adulthood], with later stages being shortened or eliminated.”

A comprehensive review of neoteny’s evolutionary complexities falls outside the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, it is sufficient to note that neotenic (child-like/youthful) physical features retained into adulthood, such as round-headedness, the absence of heavy brow ridges, a flat face, round eyes and a lack of excessive hair, provide the structure for neotenic-related behavioural/psychological character-

istics such as playfulness, affection, optimism, trust, openness, joyfulness, humour, lack of aggressiveness and friendliness, among others (Charlton, 2006; Gould, 1977; Montagu, 1989).

Neoteny suggests that positivity is embodied (cf. Johnson, 1987), and the smiley face indeed provides a schema representing the positive feelings/emotions/mood/affect associated with and expressed/elicited/projected/conveyed by the design (cf. Johnson, 2007). This design has been morphed with great effect into an emoji, which is used as medium to communicate emotions, especially positive emotions, on social media. Yet, the kinds of positivity associated with the smiley face are obviously limited to a particular part of the body—the face. I realised that although it is imperative to incorporate an adaptation of the smiley face when considering a visual image representing positivity it is not adequate, and does not give credible and full expression of my lived positive experience of *elatedness* in the face of life-threatening disease and physical agony. My body's revolt against lying down, and the urge to be in the *upright* position during dialysis, gave credence to my newly discovered psychological strength, the visceral *upward* spirals of appreciation and gratitude resulted from the warmth of the sun felt on my skin on exiting the hospital which resulted in a warm comforting sensation in my chest making me feel *elevated*.

The seminal work by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), *Metaphors we live by*, provided me with a theory to make sense of the verticality which had entered my life. They offer a bodily basis for understanding and meaning, suggesting that as far as verticality is concerned, the mind is embodied² to the extent that it is spatially oriented to categorise and position everything that is good (positive) as UP and everything that is bad (negative) as DOWN. “Thus, good is UP gives an UP orientation to general well-being, and this orientation is coherent with special cases like HAPPY IS UP, HEALTH IS UP, ALIVE IS UP, CONTROL IS UP” (p. 18). The inclination to employ an UP–DOWN orientation implies a schema of VERTICALITY, the abstract structure of thousands of vertical experiences, images and perceptions (Johnson, 1987). Not that there are many different UPs; verticality merely enters experience in a wide range of different ways, and so gives rise to many different metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For these authors, “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (p. 5). In this case, the bodily experience of verticality provides a physical basis for the abstract understanding of well-being.

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of embodied cognition, also referred to as conceptual metaphor theory³ made me realise that any meaningful visual design representing positivity should somehow combine neotenic facial features (similar to the smiley face) and the word UP, thus providing a visual structure or scaffold (Zongh & Murray, 2014) to aid in conceptualizing positivity and well-being. Years

²Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p. 17) suggest that “our sense of what is real begins with and depends crucially upon our bodies, especially our sensorimotor apparatus, which enables us to perceive, move, and manipulated, and the detailed structures of our brains, which have been shaped by both evolution and experience”. The body is a source, shaping abstract thoughts and meanings.

³When Lakoff and Johnson (1980) refer to metaphors such as ‘HAPPY is UP’, they state that it should be understood that *metaphor* means a *metaphorical concept*.



Fig. 4 A smiley face combined with the word UP. *Source* Hand-drawn reproduction of the original wording on the Shania Twain CD cover



Fig. 5 A variation on the smiley face and UP combination. *Source* Crous (2007)

ago, when passing by a music store, an advertisement of Shania Twain's compact disc, UP, caught my eye. Her version of combining a smiley face with the word UP, at the time prevalent in popular culture, made me realize I was on the right track (Fig. 4).

The design amused and inspired me, and I subsequently approached a graphic designer, Hester Roets, to come up with a similar image (see Fig. 5).

I decided to move my personal endeavour into the domain of research. A trial run/pilot study indicated that the image (in Fig. 5) elicited a range of positive emotions/states/feelings/affect, but not much more than what the smiley face on its own was able to generate. The findings included happy/happiness, joy/joyful, energy, liveliness, fun/funny, sweet, playful, cheerful, positive/positivity, ecstatic, friendly, up-beat, and optimism.

It became clear to me that a combination of the word UP and an upright figure might produce better results, since being upright, a basic or primitive image schema/metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Schnall, 2014), is associated with general wellbeing (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980); the erect posture of humans requires stability, suggesting health (Martin, 2010), and Zaltman (2003) regards UP as an archetypal image suggestive of achievement and excellence. And, of course, arguably the single-



Fig. 6 Visual blueprint for positivity. *Source* Crous (2007)

Table 1 UP-related appreciative inquiry process

Phases	Actions
Define-UP	Concept elicitation from the UP-logo
Discover-UP	Conversations in pairs (share UP-related experiences in their organisation Extraction of UP-themes
Dream-UP	Utilisation of UP-themes in creating an ideal image of one’s organisation Creative expression of UP-image
Design-UP	Design of an UP possibility statement Design of an UP architecture
UP-destiny	Monthly UP-date UP-praisal (as opposed to a performance appraisal)

Source Crous (Crous 2007)

most important development in human evolution was the advent of bipedalism—exclusively walking tall on two feet upon which all subsequent human evolutionary development is contingent (Kampourakis, 2018).

I subsequently asked the graphic designer to produce a design morphing a smiling, upright figure and the U of the word UP (see Fig. 6). A second pilot study indicated that the design was able to elicit more expressions of positivity than the smiley face on its own or the variation on Shania Twain’s design had done. I regarded this image as a blueprint for positivity.

I tested the feasibility of the design as an organization development instrument with 11 organisation development specialists in one of the South Africa’s largest organisations. For this purpose, the design was incorporated into an appreciative inquiry, a positive action research method applied for organisation development and change purposes (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008) (for an overview of the process, see Table 1).

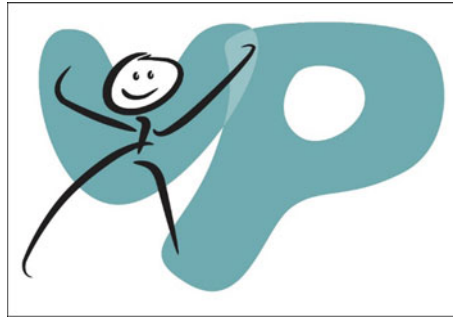


Fig. 7 The UP image (copyrighted), initially referred to as the positivity projective technique
Source Crous and de Chalaïn (2016)

A valuation of the intervention indicated that the design (which was referred to as a logo for the branding of positivity) was well received by the participants. One of the participants suggested that the logo should be employed to jump-start a positive build-up to the 2010 Soccer World Cup, of which South Africa was the host. The participants agreed that the image gave impetus to the appreciative inquiry process, and regarded the UP logo as a credible metaphor to live, work and develop by (Crous, 2007).

A similar intervention was done for a motor company's warehouse employees, with equal success. Most of the participants were not well versed in English, but the UP logo (see Fig. 6) enabled them to make sense of positive organisational experiences and practices, most probably because vertical orientation is one of a small number of primitive, basic image schemas prevalent in all the world's languages (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). This particular exercise made me realize that the UP image may be utilised as a powerful mediation instrument for positive organisation development and change in general and in particular for multicultural organisations facing significant language differences. Moreover, I began to realize that the UP image may be regarded as a technique to project positivity, given that participants were able to project/associate a large number of positive concepts with this image.

Feedback suggested that some experienced the image as too neotenic—the figure was baby-like. For this reason I approached another graphic designer, Dominique Williams, to reimagine the logo. She produced a bulging/rounded/blobby typeface resembling an amoeba-like UP word. I subsequently, spontaneously produced a stick person and superimposed it onto the word UP (see Fig. 7). Notably, paleo-anthropologists regard a delicate or slender build as associated with neotenic qualities

When a medium-enterprise company of 100 employees approached me to facilitate a process of rejuvenation in the organisation, I applied the new version of the UP image as a positivity image/sign/schema/metaphor/logo to inculcate positivity and well-being into the organisation. The marketing department used the image as a logo in printed material, and it was even transferred onto clothing which employees

later wore to work. The leadership development intervention was referred to as a Lead-UP, the management development intervention as a Manage-UP, and all the employees took part in Performing-UP. The time was ripe to validate the UP-image as a positivity projective technique.

4 Validating the Positivity Projective and Enactment Technique

A qualitative validation: The 2011 findings from a qualitative study by a student of mine, Elsmie Meiring, indicated that the UP image elicited 197 different words from 250 participants. These were clustered in terms of 28 themes: social standing, grit, autonomy, resilience, rigour, authenticity, childlike nature, spirituality, fulfilment, solidarity, respect, performance, motivation, self-efficacy, power, zeal, positive disposition, animation, physical action, love/charity, ambition, development, success, well-being, verticality, goodness, imaginative and trendy.

The words stated most frequently were happiness/happy (171), joy/joyful (70), positive/positivity (70), energy/energetic (56), excitement (50), smile/smiling (36), optimism/optimistic (26), enthusiasm (25), success (20), achievement (19), freedom/free (15), health (17), motivation/motivated (15), fulfilment (13), friendly/friendliness (12), love (10), fun (9), contentedness (8), confidence (8), exercise (7), active (7), kindness (6), cheerfulness (6), pride (5), self-esteem (5), spontaneity/spontaneous (5), lively (5), self-actualisation (5). A further 169 words were mentioned fewer than five times each.

The participants were able to describe a person who lives life in this way in detail, as presented below in seven thematic clusters:

- Having a positive disposition with an optimistic outlook on life, being able to see or find opportunities to pursue and spread happiness.
- Achieving, hard-working, motivated, self-directed and resilient; working towards a goal, ambitious and striving to succeed, overcoming challenges, acting on opportunities.
- Being good-natured, likeable, and concerned about others' well-being (individuals and communities).
- Exhibiting inner strengths, such as confidence and hope; taking risks, exploring and living life to the fullest.
- Joyful, being able to see and treasure what is good in life (appreciate and grateful), inspired, approaching life in a care-free/easy-going manner, being open to experiences and showing low levels of aggression.
- Being energised and enthusiastic about life in general, and viewing it as purpose and meaningful.


- High subjective well-being and living a healthy lifestyle, experiencing low levels of stress.
- Being extroverted and sociable, but nevertheless humble and down to earth (grounded).

Subsequent to this study the UP image was referred to as the Positivity Projection Technique (PPT).

A quantitative validation: Meiring (2011) proposed that the participants' responses suggest that the UP image may be a schema and metaphor for the constructs developed in positive psychology, including positive organisational scholarship (POS) and positive organisational behaviour (POB). I challenged a student of mine, Melissa Osher, to test this hypothesis, and her 2013 study subsequently aimed to determine the extent to which the UP image is associated with the psychological constructs embedded in the major theories of positive psychology, including positive organisational behaviour. For the purpose of this particular study, co-supervised by Paul Vorster, the prominent theories analysed included that of Seligman (2011)—his flourish theory which incorporates positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement; Fredrickson's (2009) ten forms of positivity include joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe and love; Diener's (1996) theoretical conceptualisation of subjective well-being (SWB), which includes happiness and life satisfaction; Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classification of character strengths and virtues, which include wisdom (perspective), creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, bravery, persistence, integrity, vitality, love, kindness, social intelligence, citizenship, fairness, leadership, forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation gratitude, awe, hope, humour, and spirituality; and Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) which emerged from POB and constitutes four mental states, namely confidence, hope, optimism and resilience (Luthans, 2002).

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was implemented and a non-probability sample ($n = 271$) was drawn. The data-collection instrument employed was a self-report questionnaire, consisting of Likert-type items related to positive psychological constructs. An example item used in the questionnaire appears below:

When I experience joy (experiencing playfulness and enjoyment when it is

unexpected), to what extent is this  ? ?

To no extent at all 1 2 3 4 To a very great extent

The statistical analyses that were carried out indicated that the UP image elicits eight distinct factors from the positive psychology canon, with an underlying general positive affectivity factor which may be represented by the UP image (see Fig. 8).

The results from both the qualitative and quantitative studies suggest that the UP image serves not only as a schema or metaphor for positivity, but may also be used as a

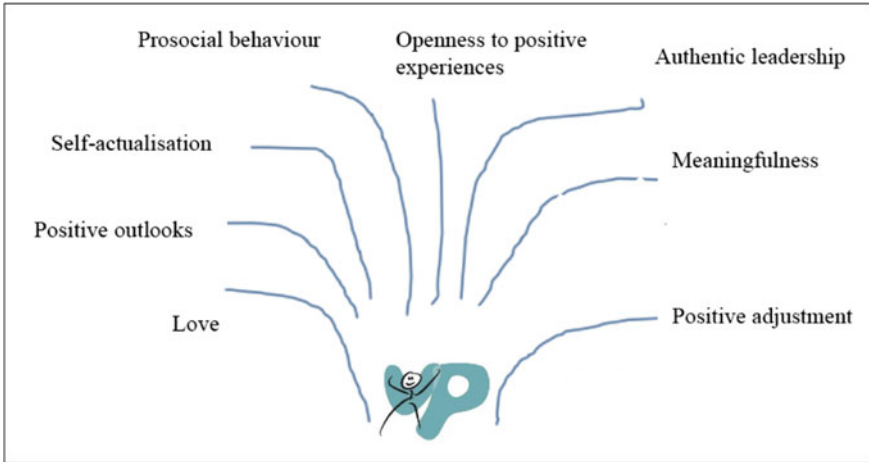








Fig. 8 The general factor underlying eight positivity factors. *Source* “The positivity projective technique in relation to the major psychological constructions in positive psychology,” by Osher (2013)

valid positivity/well-being projective technique. It differs from traditional projective techniques in that it is associative (cf. Hofstede et al., 2007), requiring the participant to connect the stimulus—in this case the UP image schema/metaphor—to the first words and thoughts that come to mind. The technique in the form of the UP image differs from traditional projective techniques in that it is unambiguous and simple. Furthermore, these qualities allow for the UP image to be employed for organisation development purposes to enact positivity/well-being.

An action research validation: As had been done with its blueprint, the UP image was embed in an appreciative inquiry protocol which Fataar (2016) used in a well-established creative agency in Johannesburg, known for its excellence in advertising and brand management. Six key members, representative of the organisation’s creative cohort, made up the purposive sample for a participative action research study.

A 5-D cycle consisting of five stages (Define, Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny) was facilitated. The findings (Fataar, 2016) indicated that the participants were able to define their organisation as being UP in terms of its youthful/playful as well as its strength-related qualities. To discover what is UP about their organisation, an interview protocol was used for interviews in pairs.

<p>DISCOVER </p>
<p>Question 1</p> <p>Please tell me about an experience at Agency X which you would describe as an  experience. Tell me in great detail about this experience.</p> <p>What made it happen? Who was involved? What was the outcome?</p>
<p>Question 2</p> <p>What is  about:</p> <p>our Agency X;</p> <p>our colleagues;</p> <p>our customers;</p> <p>our leadership; and</p> <p>yourself?</p>
<p>Question 3</p> <p>What is the single-most important factor that contributes to making Agency X an  or-organisation?</p>
<p>Question 4</p> <p>What are your hopes and wishes for making Agency X a truly  organisation? Name three. (Think big!)</p>
<p> Summary</p> <p>Reflecting on your complete interview, write down the best story, quote, or insight presented to you by your interviewee.</p>

Source Fataar (2016)

Key themes generated from the stories shared were mapped onto flipchart paper and deliberated. Six UP themes, representing the organisation’s positive core, were identified: strong leaders acting as mentors; goal-driven agency; unity in teamwork; recognition of excellence fosters positivity; creative and rewarding learning environment; and excellent reputation of the agency. The recognition of the positive core emanating from the UP image opened up the possibility of envisioning a positive future for their organisation, expressed as an UP dream. Asked to project three years into their future, the participants collectively envisaged their agency as being a globally recognised entity that displays innovative best practices, with authentic and accountable leaders facilitating excellence and establishing an ethical identity; becoming an award-winning, successful organisation (brand) with the ability

to positively impact the community; with agents acting as enablers and relationship consultants; and becoming a market leader and benchmark agency.

To bring their dream to fruition, the participants collectively designed an architecture which would involve obtaining role clarity, honing and developing leaders, personalising the agency, making actual work (rather than social events) positive experiences (starting with knowledge and skill sharing); and providing opportunities and creating environments for deep and meaningful conversations. For the destiny phase, all participants were able to express their commitment to deliver on the positive architecture constructed for a flourishing (UP) organisation. This study made it apparent that because the UP image can be utilized to enact positivity, it may be employed as a positivity projection *and* enactment technique.

5 Applying the Positivity Projection and Enactment Technique

On a professional level, when working with this technique for positive organisation development and change purposes, I tend to integrate it with the appreciative inquiry method in order to discover, dream, and design UP within the organization. For making UP the organization's destiny, I connect it with positive psychology exercises/strategies/activities. In this way, I encourage participants to *perform* UP: Relate UP—for investing in social connections, as suggested by Fredrickson (2009) and Lyubomirsky (2007), Speak UP—for constructive conversations, Write UP—such as a gratitude journal (Lyubomirsky, 2007), Mind UP—mindfulness and savouring (Fredrickson, 2009), Strengthen UP—completing the wide range of questionnaires to identify strengths, Craft UP—to craft their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) in such a way that job resources meet job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). Engage UP in order to experience psychological flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), Visualize UP—visualize a positive future (Fredrickson, 2009).

I am, however, mindful of the possibility that some participants may perceive the logo as a means of entrenching what Ehrenreich, (2009) refers to as the “tyranny” of positivity. As such, I always extend an invitation to participants to open themselves to UP on a voluntary basis. Because of the unease with the ‘positive’ in positive psychology, which has been prevalent since the inception of the positive psychology movement (Seligman, 2018), I tend to refer to the UP metaphor-logo as the Well-being Projective and Enactment Technique.

6 Conclusion

A critical event in my life, in the form of end-stage kidney failure took a positive turn when it gave way to post-traumatic growth, described by Taleb (2012) as anti-fragile behaviour. Reflecting on this experience I came to realise that this pathway to flourishing (cf. Seligman, 2011), was not the outcome of a wilful, deliberate or conscious decision I took. Rather, its origins was embodied: cognitively the spatial orientation of verticality (to be physically in the upright position) became upfront in my mind. Secondly, extremely strong visceral experiences of positive emotions of appreciation and gratitude triggered by something as simple as the warmth of the sun on my skin, in turn, activated a warm feeling in my chest which provided me with a sense of well-being for the entire eight months I had to undergo dialysis treatment. This warm feeling soon waned after the kidney transplant, but returned to comfort me when I was diagnosed with cancer. After having been informed that the treatment was effective I took a deliberate decision to embark on a search for a simple visual image, representing a visual identity of positivity, for reminding me to appreciate life; a logo to live and work by positively.

Embodied cognition theory (also referred to as conceptual metaphor theory) and neoteny theory guided me to design an image/sign consisting of a neotenic, flourishing figure, superimposed on the word UP, which serves as a basic metaphor or schema for everything that is positive, well or good. As an associative projection and enactment technique the design brings positivity, embodied in experience, to the conscious mind. Moreover it has proven to be a credible and valid mediation instrument for the facilitation and branding of positivity in general and well-being in particular, even in multi-cultural contexts.

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Frederik (Freddie) Crous (D.Com) currently heads up the department of Industrial Psychology and People Management at the University of Johannesburg. His lecturing/research/consulting experience over 28 years covers a range of domains, including consumer psychology, social psychology, career development, industrial psychological design, performance management, strategic management, organisational wellness, positive industrial psychology, the facilitation of change and coaching psychology. Renal failure in 1994, which required dialysis (four hours, three times a week for eight months) and a subsequent kidney transplant had a profound impact on Freddie, but not in a negative way. These traumas became growth experiences which triggered positive emotions that sustained him when he had to deal with the side-effects (such as cancer, diabetes and deep vein thrombosis) of the immuno-suppressants he takes so as not to reject his brother's kidney. These experiences led him to explore positive psychological constructs for the work context, which saw him become a driving force for the establishment of the positive action research method, appreciative inquiry, in South Africa.

Positive Arts Interventions: Creative Tools Helping Mental Health Students Flourish



Olena Helen Darewych

Abstract Throughout history, the arts such as dancing, drumming, painting, and storytelling have been used by humans as healing practices and creative means to express life experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Due to the natural evolution of the human capacity for creative expression, contemporary expressive arts therapists integrate creative interventions in their clinical practice to support the cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual well-being of clients. Expressive arts therapists who take on the role as educators commonly implement creative interventions in their active learning classrooms for mental health students to express and tangibly represent positive psychology concepts such as creativity, goals, strengths, and life meaning. This chapter provides an overview of the expressive arts therapies and presents action-oriented positive arts interventions that enable higher education mental health students to foster self-reflection and personal drivers in order to flourish as future mental health practitioners. Specifically, the aim is to highlight the extent towards which positive arts interventions could be employed to form cultural identity, identify character strengths, gain insight into creative self-care interests, and examine career anchors. Such positive arts interventions help students become self-aware and culturally-sensitive mental health practitioners in our pluralistic society. The chapter includes case examples illustrating the integration of the arts in higher educational settings.

Keywords Expressive arts therapies · Multicultural sensitive · Positive arts · Positive arts interventions · Positive psychology

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1 Introduction

Throughout history, the arts such as dancing, drumming, painting, and storytelling have been used by humans as healing practices and creative means to express life experiences, thoughts, and emotions (Haslam, 1997). The Egyptians and Greeks used drama and music for its reparative forces while the ancient San people in Africa created rock paintings to protect their herds (Malchiodi, 2005; Sandner, 1979). Due to the natural evolution of the human capacity for creative expression, contemporary expressive arts therapists and other creative arts therapists (e.g., art therapists, dance/movement therapists, drama therapists, and music therapists) integrate arts interventions in their clinical practice to support the cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual well-being of clients; especially for trauma survivors who struggle finding words to voice their suffering (Carey, 2006), individuals processing grief (Thompson & Neimeyer, 2014), and individuals with developmental challenges with minimal to low language skills (Darewych, 2018). Through the arts such as dance, drama, music, play, photography, and writing, individuals heal their mind, body, and soul (Rogers, 2016), express and symbolize their inner deep conflicts (Degges-White & Davis, 2011), activate their negative and positive emotions (Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016; Wilkinson & Chilton, 2018), and connect with the world around them with all their senses (Rubin, 1999). During an expressive arts therapy session, an individual may engage with one particular art form (i.e., painting, music, movement, role-play) or undergo “intermodal transfer” (Knill, 1978) by shifting from one art form to another and each creative form can enrich the other (McNiff, 2009).

In the past decade, a number of North American creative arts therapists have commenced designing arts interventions grounded in positive psychology theoretical underpinnings (Darewych, 2014; Lambert & Ranger, 2009; Tomasulo, 2014; Wilkinson & Chilton, 2013). Positive psychology’s theoretical model does not ignore individuals’ psychological crisis but places greater emphasis on their positive human attributes such as creativity, growth, resiliency, strengths, and overall well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & McCullough, 2000). Simultaneously, a handful of positive psychologists have introduced the arts to individuals as creative innovative tools to build upon their character strengths (O’Hanlon & Bertolino, 2012), express gratitude (Owens & Patterson, 2013), and to achieve life’s meaning (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Steger et al., 2013). Recently, positive arts interventions have been constructed to cultivate positive emotions, cognitions, and behaviours in individuals within clinical and supervisory settings (Darewych & Riedel Bowers, 2017).

Expressive arts therapists who take on the role as educators habitually establish creative didactic environments and infuse arts interventions in their participatory-style learning classrooms for higher education students to express and tangibly represent positive psychology concepts such as creativity, goals, strengths, and life meaning. The exploration of such positive psychology concepts within the academic context assist students in feeling capable and functioning well academically and professionally (Seligman, Ernst, Gilham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). Within higher

education settings simple, concrete art supplies are the mainstay primarily as a result of classroom constraints and due to the ease of clean up, storage, cost, and manageability. Art materials that meet these criteria include: magazine images, pencils, coloured pencils, markers, oil pastels, photo-copy paper, multicoloured construction paper, journaling books, scissors, glue, and tape. This is a direct contrast to art studio classroom spaces that have been purposely designed for art instruction and offer a full range of media including acrylic and water paints, dry and wet clay, plaster, drama props, music, as well as sand trays.

This chapter presents simple and action-oriented positive arts interventions that enable higher education (college and university) mental health students within a participatory-style learning classroom to form cultural identity, identify character strengths, gain insight into creative self-care interests, and examine career competencies. The following positive arts interventions will be described in great detail: *Cultural Identity Mask*, *My Strengths Collage*, *Matryoshka Nesting Doll*, *Creative Self-Care Interests*, and *Career Anchors*. These positive arts interventions foster students' interests in professional and ethical topics and help them become culturally-sensitive mental health practitioners in our pluralistic society. Case examples illustrate the use of these positive arts interventions within the academic context.

2 Cultural Identity

Culture “is associated with a racial or ethnic group as well as with gender, religion, economic status, nationality, physical capacity or disability, and affectional or sexual orientation” (Corey, Schneider Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 2015, p. 107). Due to North America’s expanding multicultural demographics, mental health practitioners are obligated to become culturally-sensitive; to approach the clinical process from the context of the client’s culture and to refrain from imposing their cultural values and biases on the client (Sue & Sue, 2007). In order to become an effective and culturally-sensitive mental health practitioner, the student must first understand their own cultural identity, values, and assumptions. Without such cultural self-awareness, the student may become a culturally encapsulated mental health practitioner, incapable of evaluating other viewpoints and insensitive to clients’ cultural differences (Corey et al., 2015).

The *Cultural Identity Mask* arts-based intervention prompts mental health students to explore their cultural identity. Using magazine images, multi-coloured paper, markers, coloured pencils, glue, tape, and scissors, students create their personal cultural identity mask, and during the creative process reflect upon their cultural identity, values, and biases. Upon completing their masks, students are divided into small groups and directed to share their cultural identity with group members and respond to the following questions: Which values are most important to you? How will your values effect your counselling work with clients? Think which clients whom you may struggle working with due to value differences or countertransference (e.g., clients who trigger personal needs, unresolved conflicts, or unfinished business). Figure 1

Fig. 1 My cultural mask

illustrates a *Cultural Identity Mask* created by Emily (pseudonym), a mature doctoral psychotherapy student and the following presents her expressive writing associated with her *Cultural Identity Mask*:

When creating my cultural identity mask, I started with the shape, creating a shape that was face like while also resembling a breast plate or armour. The eyes which I see as the window of the soul are filled with the question marks of my own curiosity and yearning for new experiences and learning. A woman riding a bicycle through nature fills the place where the nose belongs. It portrays my joy in being physically active and my love of nature. Sunflowers are a favourite of mine because they seem to shout “choose life.” They occupy the cheeks and the chin of my mask, marking the same place where the warm sun would burn my fair skin. The many spices occupying the space for the mouth represent my love of food and culture and the joy of being introduced to and accepted by a diversity of cultures. The pictures of people talking over food in the upper left corner, symbolizes the importance of celebrations, particularly Christmas as represented by the colourful basket of ornaments in the right hand corner. Even though I am an older white woman, for whom the Christian faith is central, I am most comfortable working in situations that honour diversity. The clinical populations that I would have most difficulty with would be those who work from a place of entitlement, and those who lack any curiosity, creativity or openness to change.

The *Cultural Identity Mask* arts-based intervention enabled Emily to creatively reflect upon her age, gender, meaningful religious celebrations, and personal values, explore potential clinical settings that she would be comfortable working in, and gain insight to the clients that she may find challenging to work with due to value differences.

3 Character Strengths

Character strengths are positive traits reflected in one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours which protect us from daily stressors (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). Positive psychologists Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed the Values in Action (VIA) Classification of 24 character strengths (e.g., kindness, persistence, teamwork, and zest) as a universal language for enabling individuals to define their positive traits. According to positive psychologist Niemiec (2014), character strengths work in clinical practice is a three-step procedure that includes the following: aware, explore, and apply. An individual must first understand the language of strengths and become aware of their character strengths. Once they gain awareness of their strengths, they can explore their strengths in greater depth through reflective journaling. Following the self-reflective process, the individual cultivates a number of strengths in their daily life often as a homework assignment.

The *My Strengths Collage* art-based intervention prompts individual's to explore their character strengths in creative ways (Darewych & Riedel Bowers, 2017). In the educational context, students are first introduced to the VIA 24 character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), and then prompted to create a strengths collage with pre-selected colour magazine images that symbolically illustrate their top five character strengths which are often referred to as signature strengths. Upon completion of the collage, students in small groups share their top five strengths with peers and describe how they apply three of their top character strengths with clients during their clinical placement practices. Figure 2 portrays a *My Strengths Collage* created by Lisa (pseudonym), a graduate level mental health student. Lisa created her collage on a bright pink 11 in. by 14 in. poster board. The selected images and words embodied her top five character strengths that of "humour, kindness, love of learning, perseverance, and zest." Lisa's free associative writing described how she applies her strengths of kindness and humour when working with clients who have a developmental disability:

- *Kindness*—When I am working with clients who have a disability, the main characteristic I do my best to display is kindness. Kindness can be shown in many different forms; it can be as simple as asking them how their week has been or being welcoming and compassionate towards them no matter what situation we are in. My hope is that kindness rubs off on them and that they treat others in their community kind; I also hope that others see me acting kind towards individuals who have a disability so that they see they are also deserving of the best. Hopefully, one day, kindness breaks any stigma towards individuals who have a disability.
- *Humour*—I adore bringing humor into my time with clients. I feel as though it lets them know that I am extremely easy-going and can see the brighter side of situations. I love when clients laugh with me as it feels like I have brightened their day. If they ever come in and they are having a bad day, I do my best to put a smile on their face—even if it is just for a split second.

The *My Strengths Collage* arts-based intervention provided Lisa with the opportunity to gain knowledge of the VIA 24 Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman,

Fig. 2 My strengths collage



2004), establish a vocabulary of strengths, identify her top five character strengths, voice her strengths with others, and reflect upon how she utilizes her strengths of kindness, humour, and love of learning with clients who have a developmental disability. Collage work in particular can bring to life both visually and symbolically, areas of character strengths, unresolved issues, and internal-external conflicts. For Lisa, the final collage expresses those aspects of herself that are resilient.

Another strengths oriented arts-based intervention is the *Matryoshka Nesting Doll* arts-based intervention (Reidel Bowers & Darewych, in press). Matryoshka dolls; also known as Russian nesting dolls, are colourful decorated wooden stacking dolls. When examined through a psychological lens, the doll's one-inside-another figures metaphorically exemplify an individual's repertoire of selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), role system (Landy, 1993), or self-aspects (McConnell, 2011) which are interrelated and continuously undergoing transformation. There are moments in an individual's life when their self-aspects harmoniously dance together in a circle. And then there are moments when a small number of self-aspects tussle for the commander-in-chief position.

In the educational context, the *Matryoshka Nesting Doll* arts-based intervention prompts students to playfully discover their self-aspects. When administering the creative intervention in the classroom, the instructor first presents a colourful decorated stacking Matryoshka doll and explains the self-aspects theory to students. Students are then prompted to define three to six of their self-aspects with "I am" statements (e.g., I am a student, a friend, a parent, a volunteer). Once students identify their self-aspects, they are given decorative paper, coloured markers, scissors, glue, and one of the free printable blank nesting doll paper templates available online, and directed to create a personal nesting doll ranking their self-aspects from the most (largest) to the least (smallest) prominent. The most prominent doll may represent the student's self-aspect that they typically project outward to the world whereas the least prominent doll may characterize their core self-aspect. Upon completion of their nesting

Fig. 3 My Matryoshka doll

doll art piece, each student is then invited to look at each self-aspect individually; particularly their current student and emerging mental health practitioner selves, and reflect upon each self-aspects' character strengths and values (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Students are then divided into small groups where they share their strengths with others and respond to the following question: How will your self-aspects effect the counselling process and in what ways are you capable of helping clients and yourself? To enhance the exploration of the question by students other creative options can be utilized. For example, students could be encouraged to enact one of their self-aspects through educational drama by speaking out their inner strengths, values, aspirations, and unique qualities. Further, the Matryoshka course-based written assignment directs students to write about three of their self-aspects and how each self may enhance and compromise their clinical relationship with current and future clients.

Figure 3 depicts the author's personal Matryoshka and the following expressive writing illustrates the author's self-aspects that of mother, student, teacher, therapist, artist, and dancer. The narrative describes each self-aspects' strengths, values, desires, and needs:

During the past 10 years, the Matryoshka mother has been the dominant figure and primary choreographer of my identity kibbutz and dance. She has dedicated a profusion of time and energy towards her children. As the primary caregiver, she is loving and nurturing. She is responsible for her children's wellbeing and endlessly shields them from danger. Motherhood has brought joy, happiness and even pandemonium to her life. Now in her forties, mother Matryoshka is physically and emotionally exhausted. She relentlessly bestows unconditional love for others yet she forgets to love and care for herself. The visible lines of exhaustion are beginning to appear on her face. Soon she will morph into a babushka; a wise old women. Currently, she feels threatened by the masculine student in the commune who has awakened from deep sleep and is growing daily in size. All of a sudden, he is prepared to engage with the world of academia. For ten years, the student respected the Matryoshka mother and allowed her to be the leading light for all villagers. While eavesdropping, the somnolent student learned from the mother empathy, kindness, and perseverance. However, the student became weary of listening to mother's soothing lullabies. As a result, he decided to apply to a doctoral program. In the background, the Matryoshka mother glares at the student with

piercing eyes. There are moments when she wishes he remained drowsy for he is consuming a wealth of energy. But the curious student stirred due to the realization that time on this earth is diminishing. His existential mind continues to write articles in order to print his expressions on paper; words which will continue to exist after his soul expires on earth. The student's current momentum, freedom and strength, has shifted the entire group dynamics within the Matryoshka circle. The teacher and therapist; known allies of the student, physically begin to move towards the bookish student. As they link, hand in hand, they collaborate on research projects and passionately exchange creative ideas. The therapist excitedly waltzes around the student and teacher as they expand their knowledge of creative therapeutic modalities as art, drama, movement, and music. As the student, teacher, and therapist physically and emotionally enmesh and create their own unique triangle within the township, the artist quickly shifts towards the mother to provide her with support and empathy. The artist is the spiritual healer within the township who tends to all physical and emotional fires. She is calm, centred, and Zen-like. In order to reduce tension within the identity ring, she feverishly paints Byzantine icons during silent and starry nights. Her icons summon the patron saints to protect all from evil and to bring peace amongst the villagers. As the artist explores her art form, the dancer swirls around the circle. The dancer is youthful and playful with her rhythm and movement. She is the life of the party, full of zest, and restores liveliness in all whom she touches. Similar to the artist, the dancer truly appreciates beauty, music, and nature. The dancer's primary life objective is to live in the here-and-now and to continuously connect with her surroundings. In her mind, the past and the future simply do not exist. My Matryoshka stands solidly while balancing the internal and external forces being tossed back and forth by her selves as they grow, strengthen, taper, shift, and realign.

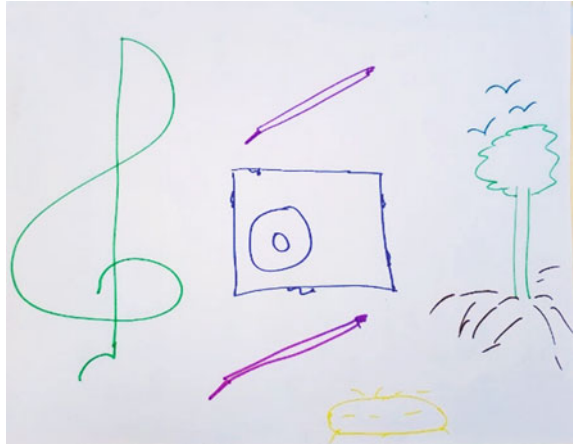
The nesting doll art piece offers mental health students a tangible image of their selves system; specifically their conflicting and harmonizing self-aspects, and a glimpse into how their current whole self is being influenced by other parts of themselves.

4 Self-care

Throughout their career, mental health practitioners regularly support individuals of all ages who have suffered from a traumatic life event. Yet, such emotional guidance can cause professional burn-out (Freudenberger, 1975), and compassion fatigue (Weiss, 2004). Consequently, it is important that mental health students and practitioners care for their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being by means of routinely engaging in self-care interests such as creative expressions, physical activities, and relaxation techniques in order to prevent the experience of burn-out and compassion fatigue. Further, the ongoing practice of self-care and monitoring for signs of burnout by mental health practitioners is considered an ethical obligation for their overall well-being and the wellness of their clients (Corey et al., 2015).

In the educational context, the *Creative Self-Care Interests* arts-based intervention prompts students to identify their personal self-care hobbies, activities, and interests. First, students are introduced to the concepts and signs of burn-out (i.e., feelings of emotional exhaustion, stress, and disengagement) and compassion fatigue (i.e., difficulty with concentration, productivity, and emotional presence) (Weiss, 2004), and then directed to create a simple drawing using coloured pencils or markers on a 8.5 in.

Fig. 4 Creative self-care interests



by 11 in. photocopy paper that symbolizes three creative interests that allow them to disconnect from life stressors and increase their stamina. Once students identify and complete their drawings, they are invited by the instructor to voice one of their creative self-care interests' in-class for all to become aware that self-care activities can be different for others. The course-based written assignment directs students to identify their past or current creative self-care interests, establish a new self-care activity they would like to explore in the future, and strategize a routine schedule aimed at engaging with a self-care activity that will sustain their emotional and physical vitality during their current educational journey. Figure 4 portrays Mary's (pseudonym) *Creative Self-Care Interests* drawing which she completed with coloured markers. In her journal book, Mary wrote:

Initially anxious about the creation of this art piece due to my inability to draw, I found the use of symbols was effective in unlocking my self-care interests. Music and nature which have always filled my life and fed my soul, provide the horizontal boundaries of this picture. Likely not coincidentally the symbols of treble clef and tree are both drawn in green, the colour symbolizing life and growth. Within the safety of these parameters lie two pens (pink) and a camera (blue box). Photography and writing provide a refreshing mental break for me as they force me to let go of all else and be in the moment. Baking (symbolized by the yellow pie at the bottom of the piece) is a more recent creative outlet that connects me to others as I give most baking away. The birds in the tree were added to symbolize a transformation that I am undergoing. A number of injuries have meant that I can no longer hike and enjoy back country canoeing which have been staples in maintaining physical, mental and spiritual wellness. The birds are inviting me to lay down that grief and take binoculars and camera lens as I take up a new natural interest in bird watching.

The *Creative Self-Care Interests* arts-based intervention allowed Mary to symbolically become mindful of her past and present creative interests that cognitively and physically ground her, disconnect her from career and life stressors, and rejuvenate her mind, body, and spirit.

5 Career Anchors

The transition from academia to industry can often be a challenging one. Consequently, it is important for mental health students to take a moment near the end of their academic journey to pause and reflect upon the knowledge and skills they have gained from their training program and how their education has morphed their career goals and identity. A student's choice of career or work setting is often determined by their career anchors. According to organizational psychologist Schein (1978), career anchors are the distinguished talents, needs, and values that shape an individual's career identity. Schein emphasized that the examination of personal career anchors can assist individuals with clarifying their career directions and goals.

The *Career Anchor* arts-based intervention invites mental health students to create a mixed-media collage or sculpture that symbolically depicts their talents, needs, and values. Further, the creative intervention enables students to deeply reflect upon their personal career goals rather than goals dictated by others. Through the creative and journaling process, students reflect upon the following four questions: What special talents and skills do you bring to the field of mental health? What resources can help you achieve your career goals? What do you hope your career will provide you or allow you to do? Which career setting do you believe matches your personal values the best? Figure 5 illustrates a *Career Anchor* mixed-method collage created by Katie (pseudonym), a graduate level art therapy student. In response to the prompting questions, Katie wrote in her creative journal:

I had set out to complete this image with a very divided, succinct version of the directive, as usual what I got was something I was not expecting. As I was collecting images I decided it was more important to focus on the under layer; I think this is because in order to be grounded in my profession I must have an appreciation of learning from all things before I began. These are the experiences and knowledge that shape who I am, how I understand others and how I work with them. Upon those base images and words I try to blur lines, to create new opportunities for different stories to emerge from the images. I value creativity, perseverance, and curiosity. I think that my professional work needs to mirror my values and I also need safety and stability in order to practice effectively. My talents, I feel are making spaces to explore new opportunities for others to fill and grow, be that a safe counselling space or a new Art Therapy program; bending and blurring what is possible for the profession through new and novel opportunities and approaches.

Katie's *Career Anchor* mixed-media collage brought her life experiences, personal values, and professional needs more clearly and visibly to view. Additionally, the creative process permitted Katie to reflect upon the resources that will help her excel as a professional art therapist.

6 Conclusion

Expressive arts therapists who take on the role as educators habitually establish creative didactic environments and infuse creative interventions in their participatory-style learning classrooms for higher education mental health students to express and

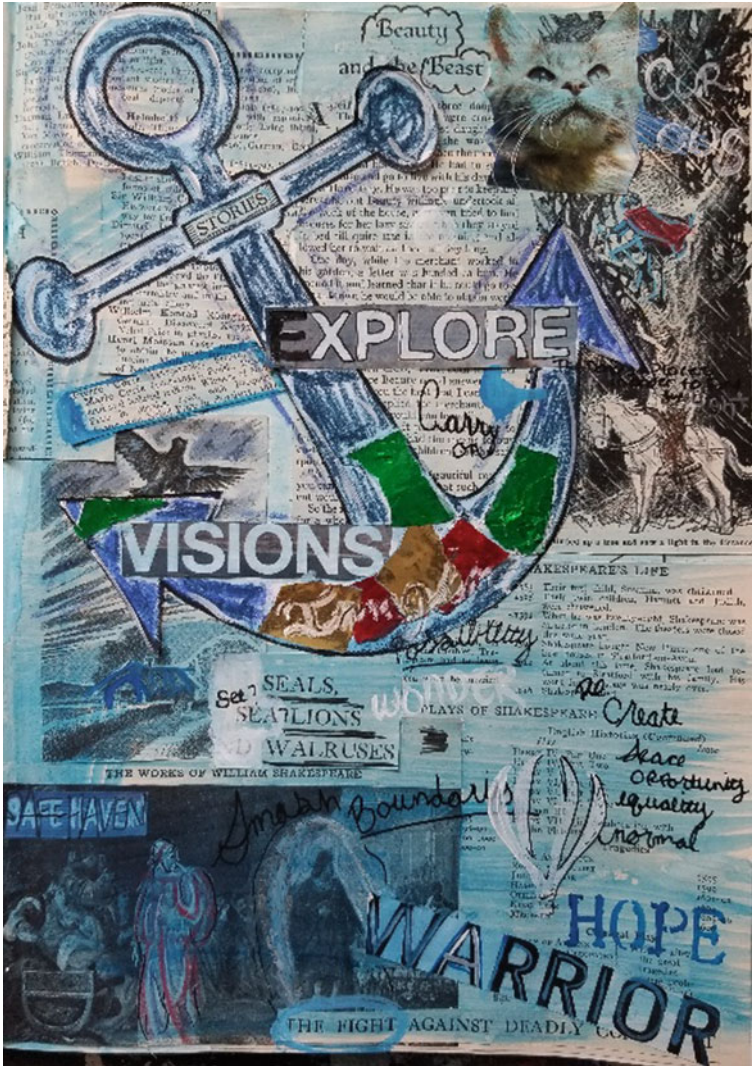


Fig. 5 Career anchor

tangibly represent positive psychology concepts such as creativity, goals, strengths, and life meaning. The exploration of such positive psychology concepts within the academic context assist students in feeling capable and functioning well academically and professionally (Seligman et al., 2009).

This chapter described simple and action-oriented positive arts interventions that enable higher education (college and university) mental health students to become self-aware, curious about professional and ethical topics, and culturally-sensitive mental health practitioners in creative and playful ways. The *Cultural Identity Mask*

informs students of their cultural identity, values, and biases. The *My Strengths Collage* (Darewych & Riedel Bowers, 2017) and *Matryoshka Nesting Doll* (Riedel Bowers & Darewych, in press) allow students to identify and explore their character strengths. The *Creative Self-Care Interests* invites students to gain insight to their past, present, and future self-care activities, while *Career Anchors* allows students to examine their career identity, values, needs, and goals. These positive arts interventions are also well suited for high-school youth who are developmentally and psychologically preparing to transition into higher learning and the workforce.

The positive arts interventions featured in this chapter are relatively new to the field of expressive arts therapy and positive psychology. Hence, future research, specifically mixed-methods studies with arts-based elements are necessary to determine in what ways such creative tools can help students undergo self-discovery, perform well academically and professionally, and flourish in our pluralistic society.

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Positive Self-leadership: A Framework for Professional Leadership Development



Marieta Du Plessis

Abstract Self-leadership, referring to self-influencing behaviours and thoughts geared towards enhancing performance, is an important tool for both individual personal mastery and organisational success. However, programmes aimed at developing self-leadership are still largely based on developing gaps in leader capability and reserved for those in formal leadership positions. Further, theoretical frameworks for the development of self-leadership from a positive psychological perspective are lacking in literature. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to develop a positive self-leadership development framework focusing on the optimisation of character strengths; interests and aspirations; abilities and talents; and environmental strengths. The aim is three-fold: (a) to conceptualise positive self-leadership, (b) to present a capability profile for positive self-leadership, and (c) to develop a positive psychological intervention protocol for developing positive self-leadership.

Keywords Positive self-leadership · Leadership development programme · Positive organisational interventions

1 Introduction

Typically, leadership is studied from a hierarchical point of view, where the leader influences his/her followers (Pearce & Manz, 2014). The hierarchical view of leadership has been criticised for implying that leadership activities are confined to the formal leadership role (Bligh & Kohles, 2012) which gives rise to reduced responsibility-taking, creativity and initiative by followers, as well as deference to the leader (Harris & White, 2009; Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007). This centralised perspective (i.e. the leader-as-a-role) is also mirrored in organisational practices such as leadership development, where leadership development training is restricted to employees occupying formal leadership roles (Pearce & Manz, 2014). However, globalisation and the need to

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adapt to fast-paced, competitive environments have led to a decentralisation in bases of power where employees are required to act as self-managers and self-leaders in order to perform (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Thus, not only managers/leaders but also employees need (self-) leadership skills (Dogan & Sahin, 2008; Neck & Houghton, 2006).

Self-leadership is a process of self-influence through which individuals navigate, motivate and lead themselves towards achieving desired behaviours and outcomes (Manz, 1992). Such a process includes individuals' control of their own behaviour, using specific behavioural and cognitive strategies (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Self-leadership transcends the notions of self-management, i.e. managing oneself through self-discipline to meet existing standards or objectives, typically set by a leader or someone else (Neck & Manz, 2013). Rather, self-leadership is about enhancing organisational performance through individual-initiated thinking and acting (DiLiello & Houghton, 2006).

As a normative process, self-leadership includes strategies to address the task (i.e. standards and objectives to be met), the motivation to achieve the outcome and the process of execution (Manz, 1991). Malinga, Stander and Nell (2019) argue that self-leadership is an advanced form of self-influence which stems from a culture of psychological safety. According to this view, self-leadership forms the core of personal empowerment and expands the boundaries of management practice (Ay, Karakaya, & Yilmaz, 2015). Self-leadership could therefore reduce dependence on traditional leadership roles through empowering individuals to take responsibility for their own work roles (Manz & Sims, 2001) and forms the basis of shared leadership (Houghton, Neck, & Manz, 2003). However, the ideals of self-leadership have neither been adopted into most organisations' talent management strategies, nor into formal leadership development processes or pipe lines (Stander & Van Zyl, 2019). Formatively, leadership development programmes often focus on developing general leader capability, compensating for deficiencies in managerial practices. This approach largely stems from the deficit-model which focuses on corrective or remedial action (Luthans, 2002). This deficit approach focuses on addressing "weaknesses" and fails to aid leaders in the optimisation or actualisation of their own potential. In contrast, positive psychological approaches to leadership development have brought new perspectives on the development of leadership capability (Harter & Rath, 2010). This positive approach focuses on the identification, utilisation and optimisation of individual signature strengths in order to develop positive leadership traits, behaviours and personal resource caravans (Hobfall, 2011; Van Zyl, Olckers, & Van Der Vaart, 2017; Van Zyl & Stander, 2013). A significant body of research pertaining to the application of positive psychological approaches to leadership development exists within literature; however, the transposition of such into self-leadership theory is not evident. In fact, traditional self-leadership theory is critiqued to entail energy-consuming behaviours that are resource depleting (Müller & Niessen, 2018) and difficult to enact if natural responses are simply superseded with conscious thought (Stewart, Courtright, & Manz, 2019).

Self-leadership theory is conceptually constructed from the business administration discipline, which focuses on the outcomes of behaviour (i.e. performance)

rather than the motivation of behaviour (i.e. personal strengths and needs). These approaches largely draw from the same fundamental theories on which positive psychology is based, but do not formally acknowledge such in their literature (Singh, Kumar, & Puri, 2017). Management literature is largely inattentive to the positive psychological attributing factors to individual behaviours, focusing on managing the outcomes/consequences of such behaviours for the individual, team and organisation. As such, no theory on self-leadership, incorporating approaches from both managerial and positive psychological disciplines, exists.

The self-regulating nature of self-leadership as well as the focus on intrinsic motivation and self-determination provides a good fit with positive psychology. Incorporating the competency-based development theories from management literature within the fundamental theories of positive organisational psychology (e.g., leader-empowering behaviours, psychological empowerment, strengths-based development, resource enrichment etc.), could result in an innovative approach towards understanding self-leadership, strengthened by both disciplines. It is argued that the incorporation of the fundamental principles of both these approaches could result in a new theory called positive self-leadership.

The purpose of this chapter is to (i) conceptualise positive self-leadership; (ii) present a capability profile for positive self-leadership; and (iii) develop a positive psychological intervention protocol for positive self-leadership development in multicultural contexts.

2 Conceptualising Positive Self-leadership

In order to conceptualise positive self-leadership, the history and development of the original self-leadership construct need to be unpacked.

2.1 *The History and Development of Classic Self-leadership Theory*

Self-leadership was developed in the mid-1980s by Manz (1983) in his practitioner-oriented book on self-leadership. The normative theory of self-leadership aimed to provide an expansion of the self-management theory and was rooted in clinical self-control theory (e.g., Cautela, 1969), influenced by the substitutes for leadership theory (Kerr & Jermier, 1978), and set within the theoretical framework of self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 1981), intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986).

The first empirical article on self-leadership appeared in 1987 (Manz & Sims, 1987) and the following two decades saw a rise in the publication of both popular management books and academic manuscripts on the topic. In the 1990s, the

constructive thought pattern strategy was further developed and extended under the name “thought self-leadership” (Manz & Neck, 1991). Thought self-leadership was also the first self-leadership intervention that was empirically tested (Neck & Manz, 1996). As the notion of self-leadership developed, the concept was also applied to self-managing teams and empowering leadership in the early 1990s (Neck & Houghton, 2006). More recent developments in literature indicates the expansion of self-leadership into emotion self-leadership (Manz, Houghton, Neck, Fugate, & Pearce, 2016), client-service self-leadership (Manz, Skaggs, Pearce, & Wassenaar, 2015) and higher-level self-leadership (Manz, 2015).

Self-leadership has also been extended to the team context as team self-leadership. Self-leadership in teams is viewed in a similar manner to self-leadership of individuals. That is, to what extent teams have influence over ‘what’ they do (i.e. setting standards and objectives), ‘why’ they do it (values and strategic reasons for the objectives) and ‘how’ they do it (actual performance) (Manz, 1991, 1992). In comparison, self-managed teams do not have control over what the tasks are and why they should be done; they only have control over how they will do it. Self-leadership in teams is likely to be most appropriate when there is a need for adaptation and creativity (Stewart, Courtright, & Manz, 2011).

Self-leadership is viewed as a normative process, with a strong focus on self-regulating and self-control behaviours on the part of the self-leading individual or self-leading team. Self-leadership strategies are conceptualised in three categories, namely behaviour-focused; natural reward; and constructive thought strategies (Manz & Neck, 2004). Behaviour-focused strategies include self-observation, self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment, and self-cueing. These strategies emphasise the importance of self-awareness as a necessary first step towards identifying and eliminating unproductive behaviours. Natural reward strategies are aimed at creating or finding situations where individuals find inherent reward in the task or activity. Strategies include building more pleasant and enjoyable features into an activity, and refocusing attention on inherently rewarding aspects of the task. Constructive thought pattern strategies are aimed at forming helpful thought patterns and habitual ways of thinking in order to impact outcomes positively. Strategies include identifying and replacing dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions, mental imagery (e.g., visualisations) and positive self-talk (Manz & Neck, 2004).

2.2 Juxtaposing Traditional Self-leadership and Positive Psychology Theory

When considering the theoretical frameworks that guide self-leadership, there is some convergence with positive psychological viewpoints. For instance, the self-regulation theory includes a promotion focus which operates on the basis of accomplishments, hopes and aspirations (Higgins, 1998). This theory furthermore states that individuals, who are confident and hopeful, tend to increase their efforts towards

goal attainment (Carver & Scheier, 1981). This view is consistent with the positive psychological construct of psychological capital, which includes hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism as psychological strengths (Luthans, 2002).

The concept of self-efficacy is also part of the social cognitive theory, which is one of the contexts within which self-leadership operates (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Most notably, self-leadership is informed by the concepts of intrinsic motivation and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to self-leadership, changing an unpleasant task into a more pleasurable activity (as one of the natural reward strategies) fosters enhanced competence, self-determination and task performance (Neck & Houghton, 2006). This is consistent with positive psychological views of meaningful work and being fully engaged in the task (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Positive psychological interventions such as job crafting (see Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) may, for instance, be used as a self-leadership strategy to refocus attention and priority on more pleasant aspects of the task. Furthermore, the self-regulatory process of self-leadership implies a system of feedback loops where an individual would adjust his/her effort in order to maintain a standard or desired state (Neck & Houghton, 2006). As a person becomes more comfortable with his/her behaviour and choices, there is a natural upward drift towards more challenging and complex goals (Vallacher & Wegner, 1985). This is consistent with the broaden-and-build theory of emotions (Fredrickson, 2001) where the experience of emotions broadens one's awareness and encourages novel, varied, and exploratory thoughts and actions.

The self-influence and self-regulation components of self-leadership draw upon the agency and motivation of those who practice self-leadership strategies. However, most studies have focused on the outcomes and behaviours of self-leadership (see Neck & Houghton, 2006 and Stewart et al., 2011 for a comprehensive review), with little focus on the psychological strengths that may influence the self-leadership processes. Hannah, Woolfolk, and Lord (2009) argue that a leader's context and role demands interact with his/her self-construct (i.e. an individual's cognitive and affective representation of his/her identity) in order to produce positive, effective leadership. I argue that a similar process would happen in the case of self-leadership. That is, in needing to lead oneself, one would draw on self-attributes and psychological resources as motivational components associated with self-regulation processes.

I argue that there is a need for a process-oriented theoretical framework that shows how aspects of the self (i.e. strengths and virtues) promote self-leadership. Strengths could serve as psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2001) to facilitate effectiveness across a wide domain of roles. Strengths serve as the locus or drivers of thoughts and behaviours (Avey, Luthans, Hannah, Sweetman, & Peterson, 2012). In fact, strengths form a core component of a number of positive leadership variables, such as authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and strength-based leadership (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Thus, I argue that self-leadership can be reframed through the incorporation of signature strengths and virtues as motives informing self-leadership behaviours. Furthermore, having a clear vision of one's purpose, long term aspirations and interests enhance goal-setting capacity as well as experiences of psychological wellbeing (Ryff, 1995). I argue that effective positive self-leaders would direct the

self-influencing process towards a clear purposeful vision which provides long term meaning for them.

The following definition of positive self-leadership is proposed:

Positive self-leadership refers to the capacity to identify and apply one's signature strengths to initiate, maintain or sustain self-influencing behaviours. It involves a process of self-inspiration which is fuelled by a clear, purposeful vision for one's life and the utilisation of signature strengths to achieve goals aligned to this vision. In effect, it pertains to the extent towards which individuals are able to harness their inner potential through optimising character strengths, employing latent abilities and talents, gathering environmental resources and fuelling such with long term aspirations and interests.

3 Capability Framework for Positive Self-leadership

Through the understanding of self-leadership processes and related positive psychological theories and frameworks, certain capabilities of positive self-leaders are identified and proposed. In this sense, capability is thought to be similar to the notion of cognitive and behavioural complexity in that expanded capability will provide for better adaptability across a wide range of situations (Hooijberg, Bullis, & Hunt, 1999). Thus, rather than focusing on skills (i.e. competencies), the capability approach to positive self-leadership is oriented towards building capacity in anticipation of unforeseen challenges.

The core dimensions of wellbeing and their informing theories identified by Ryff (1995) were used as a framework for identification of positive self-leadership capabilities. In keeping with the positive psychology perspective, a positive capability model (derived from the work of Stander and Van Zyl, 2019) was used as framework. The positive capability model is based on the work of Rapp and Goscha (2011) who proposed a strengths approach that is aimed at using strengths as a motivating force for leading a life determined by the individual and shaped by his/her own wishes (Ramon, 2013). The positive capability model implies a dynamic interaction between character strengths, abilities and talents, interests and aspirations, and environmental strengths (Stander & Van Zyl, 2019).

The "strengths-based capability" model by Stander and Van Zyl (2019) argues that positive capabilities comprise four areas: (a) character strengths (which refer to the moral strengths or traits defining us); (b) abilities and talents (i.e. the natural skills, aptitudes, competencies, values and experiences we naturally acquire over time); (c) interests and aspirations (i.e. the elements we draw energy and motivation from which fuel the application of our strengths); and (d) environmental strengths (which refer to the external resources individuals can employ or utilise, e.g., social support networks) (see Fig. 1). This model assumes that an individual's strengths are multifaceted and that "strengths" are the basis of individuals' holistic capability. The gift of this model is that it allows for different types of strengths to be employed in aiding individuals towards achieving their goals.

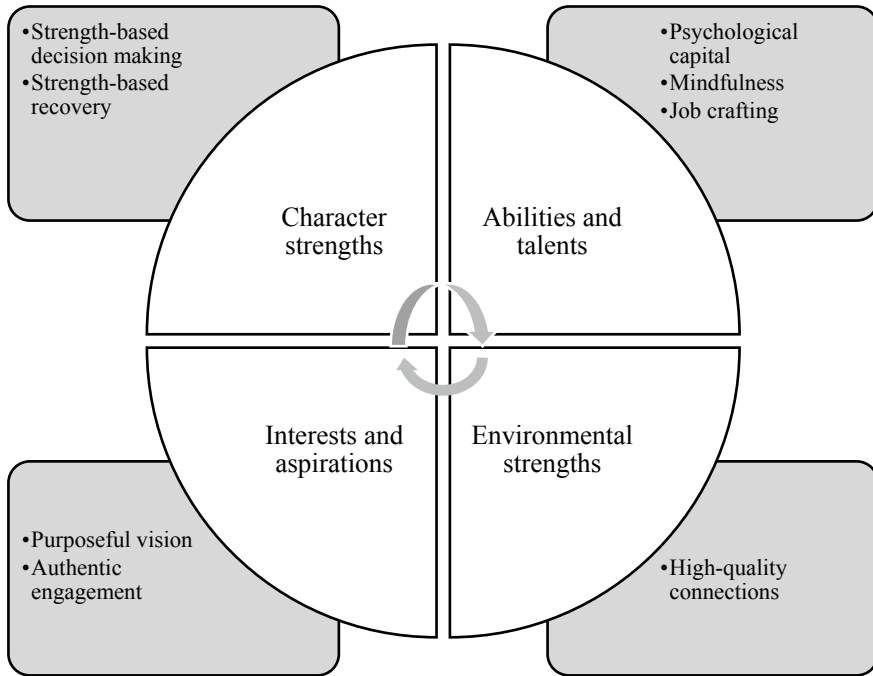


Fig. 1 The positive self-leadership capability model

The positive capability framework in Fig. 1 is aligned to the proposed definition of positive self-leadership. The inner circle presents the dynamic interaction between positive capabilities as proposed by Stander and Van Zyl (2019). Connected to each capability, certain topics/ideas are included that could serve as an intervention towards developing positive self-leadership capabilities. It is acknowledged that there may be many more methods to develop the proposed self-leadership capabilities. The provided ones are based on numerous hours of positive self-leadership development interventions in organisational settings.

3.1 The Character Strengths Capability

The positive self-leadership model includes, as a core component, character strengths. The inclusion of character strengths into the capability framework for positive self-leaders assists in moving beyond a problem-solving mentality towards a purposeful focus on strengths and goal alignment (Barrett, Cooperider, & Fry, 2005). Individuals who are able to identify and develop a heightened self-awareness of their strengths are more likely to leverage their positive attributes. Through strength-based decision making, they achieve higher levels of success (Hodges & Asplund, 2010). Further-

more, strengths are integrated into one's self-view. This change in an individual's perceived self-view will influence the lens used to interpret situations and contexts he/she is exposed to (Clifton & Harter, 2003). Such a different lens could assist in seeing the positive in situations and picking up environmental cues where signature strengths can be utilised.

Mindful that individuals face setbacks, strengths-use can facilitate recovery that is in line with what the individual desires (Rapp & Goscha, 2011). Recovery is a deeply personal process of adapting one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and/or roles (Anthony, 1993). Hence, recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose after facing a setback. This deep sense of learning is more than resilience; it involves a process of sense-making by using one's awareness of personal strengths to determine goals for purposeful working and living.

3.2 The Interests and Aspirations Capability

Interests and aspirations are what fuel motivation and drive for self-leaders. These unique, personal interests, hopes and dreams provide meaning and purpose for individuals. Having a clear purposeful vision for one's life is associated with the eudaimonic perspective of wellbeing, which focuses on meaning, purpose, expression of potential and being involved in something larger than the self (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Positive self-leaders can then use their purposeful vision to align and direct their goals.

Built from the notion of person-job and person-environment fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005), authentic engagement implies fully immersing oneself in a task/relationship which embodies the individual's values and interests. Through such engagement, the individual is not only able to perform well, but also to align his/her actions with his/her goals and long term aspirations.

3.3 The Abilities and Talents Capability

Abilities and talents form another integral component of the positive self-leadership capability model. This category includes skills, i.e. abilities acquired through training and practice, such as self-observation through mindfulness. Mindfulness refers to greater attention to and awareness of experiences occurring in the present (Creswell, 2017). A feature of mindfulness is the open and accepting attitude to experiences. This attitude of acceptance is not passive resignation to one's current circumstances, but rather inviting the experience in order to self-influence future behaviour.

Psychological capital (PsyCap) refers to psychological resources including self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience (Luthans, 2002). Positive self-leaders with high levels of PsyCap would be characterised by confidence to take on and exert the necessary effort into task achievement (self-efficacy), believing that they will be

successful (optimism), persevering towards goals, or if necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed (hope), and have the ability to bounce back to attain success (resilience).

Viewing abilities from a positive psychology lens includes job crafting. Job crafting involves changes to one's job in such a way that it better suits one's abilities and preferences (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008), changing the meaning of the job (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

3.4 The Environmental Strengths Capability

Environmental strengths refer to an individual's capability to draw on resources in his/her environment in order to assist in building his/her capabilities. This includes awareness of strengths, support and resources available in the environment and acting on these opportunities. Through relational crafting, individuals could connect with others excluded from their immediate environment in order to draw on their expertise, skill and support (Tims & Bakker, 2010). This could entail mentoring from a supportive colleague or leader, or even relationships formed in other spheres of life. Short-term, dyadic, positive interactions, also known as high-quality connections, are another form of positive mutuality. High-quality connections result in felt vitality, positive energy and could improve the quality of one's thinking (Dutton & Ragins, 2007).

4 Developing Positive Self-leadership: A PPI Protocol

Although the positive self-leadership capability model implies four quadrants of capabilities, there is a dynamic interaction between such. For instance, it would be important to know one's strengths (character strengths quadrant) in order to perform job crafting (skills and abilities quadrant). The model does not imply an order for the development of positive self-leadership capabilities, but as with traditional self-leadership, self-awareness would be a necessary first step of development (Manz & Neck, 2004).

For the purpose of the positive psychological intervention protocol, the proposed intervention is divided into three phases. The first phase would entail building awareness of each of the four positive self-leadership capabilities. The second phase could focus on self-confidence development in the four positive self-leadership capabilities; followed by suggestions for sustaining positive self-leadership capabilities.

4.1 Awareness of Character Strengths, Interests and Abilities, Abilities and Talents, and Environmental Strengths

The strength-based nature of positive self-leadership requires accurate knowledge of the self (Hodges & Asplund, 2010). This includes awareness of strengths, values, interests, aspirations, knowledge and skills, as well as the influence of environmental factors on the individual. It is important to note that I do not propose the necessity of a specific mix of character strengths for self-leadership. However, the focus is on being aware of one's unique set of strengths in order to self-influence the application of these strengths on a daily basis.

As a first step towards awareness, individuals could identify their strengths. One of the most well-known and ubiquitous strengths taxonomies are included in the VIA character strengths survey (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). There are also other methods and measures available to identify strengths, such as the Clifton Strengths Finder (Asplund, Lopez, Hodges, & Harter, 2009). Life stories and significant events can also be scrutinised for the identification of strengths. The Reflected Best Self Exercise (Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005) is an example of such an approach.

Similarly, individuals can also build awareness of their own interests, values and purpose. This could be developed through, e.g., a values exercise, life mapping, and a personal vision statement. Other exercises to build awareness could include self-observation skills and may include exercises such as journaling, keeping a list of critical events throughout the day, and asking for feedback from others (Neck & Manz, 2013). Should individuals identify counterproductive thinking or beliefs, aspects from cognitive behavioural therapy could be applied to challenge existing belief patterns. Coaching may also be a useful mechanism to help participants challenge their thinking patterns and to reinforce new habitual ways of thinking (Van Zyl & Stander, 2013).

The skill of mindfulness could be applied to facilitate greater awareness and focus on the present. Through this reflective capacity, the individual takes a non-judgemental approach and becomes aware of the constant stream of thoughts, steps back from it, and becomes an impartial witness to his/her own experience (Kabat-Zinn, 2009). Individuals could then use self-narration to rescript or replot the current moment as a method of self-influence (Kopelman, Chen, & Shoshana, 2009).

From the perspective of the environmental strength capability, individuals could build awareness of their social relationships and assess the quality thereof through relationship mapping exercises.

4.2 Developing Confidence in Positive Self-leadership Capabilities

The self-awareness development discussed in the previous section aimed to explore existing information about the individual, but has not been fully discovered, named or applied in his/her life. The section on building self-confidence in positive self-leadership skills will focus on building or practising abilities and talents, superimposed on the individual's understanding of his/her strengths, interests, values and purpose.

To enhance individuals' abilities and talents, development activities such as the Psychological Capital Intervention (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007; Luthans, 2012) could be used. These activities could be facilitated as group learning processes and experiential exercises. The content would include activities such as goal-setting; generating pathways and options to attain the set goals; considering possible obstacles to goal attainment; sharing the goal with other participants; being encouraged by their feedback; and reflection on strengths, past successes and stressors towards building resilience. Other activities could include group sessions where a major problem is identified and participants are forced to provide only positive answers and solutions to overcome the problem (Luthans, 2012). Furthermore, questions could also be posed to the group through the lens of hope, optimism, efficacy and resilience to assist in finding positive solutions to the problem. For instance, by asking "What positive outcomes could result from this problem?" could create optimism about the future.

In order to assist individuals to align their jobs with their motives, passions and strengths, a job crafting exercise such as the JCE (Berg, Dutton, Wrzesniewski, & Baker 2010) could be utilised. The JCE does not only help individuals to perceive their jobs as a fixed list of duties, but also as a set of building blocks that can be rearranged into a more meaningful whole. The skills learnt through this exercise can then be transposed to other life spheres.

Interpersonal skills such as connection and relationship building could be practised within a classroom setting. High quality connections, i.e. connections that are built on mutual positive regard, trust and active engagement from both parties, could be done through practical exercises.

4.3 Sustaining Positive Self-leadership Capabilities

In order to build self-efficacy for the positive self-leadership capabilities, individuals should continue their process of self-reflection after the formal training intervention has been completed. Mindfulness, coaching and reflection exercises (i.e. journaling) are mechanisms that can assist individuals reflect on their behaviour.

Environmental strengths within the organisation could further assist in sustaining positive self-leadership. Although it is not the only determinant, a positive organi-

sational climate is crucial for the development of positive strategies and strengths (Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011) as well as to build resource caravan pathways (Hobfoll, 2011). Such resource-enriching climates should include information sharing and autonomy. Empowering leadership is a central external force that influences individual self-leadership (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Stewart et al., 2011). Empowering leaders pass on influence to followers as part of the leadership process (Ford & Foltter, 1995) that enables them to practice self-leadership (Manz & Sims, 2001). It would also be beneficial to institute strength-based organisational practices, such as strength-based performance appraisals (see Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011).

4.4 Practical Implications for Positive Self-leadership Development

Leadership development in organisations often focus on the different roles a leader needs to fulfil (i.e. leading operations, devising strategy, implementing change processes and managing people). Each of these roles has essential competencies and traits; however, they all depend on self-leadership as foundation. Hence, it is advised that positive self-leadership development forms the basis of leadership development in organisations. Furthermore, positive self-leadership development training for employees who do not currently fulfil a formal leadership role is advised. Equipping these individuals with positive self-leadership capabilities will likely encourage greater ownership of their job tasks and better work behaviours (Shipper & Manz, 1992), as well as improved change agility, goal-orientation and higher levels of individual and organisational flourishing.

Apart from the content included in the positive self-leadership development intervention, the method of development is also of importance. Although positive self-leadership development could be done on an individual basis, a group setting provides a more realistic representation of the complex interaction between the self and the social and organisational environment (Fiedler, 1996). If the group setup includes diverse, multicultural participants, the employee/leader will be exposed to different points of view and acquire the ability to relate to others who are perceived to be different. Moreover, self-leadership is inherently individualistic in nature (Alves et al., 2006). Hence, individuals would be interested in building self-awareness, self-confidence and self-efficacy in their own strengths, also applying these strengths in their lives. A group setting would, however, allow different perspectives on an individual's self-view. Pearce and Manz (2014) suggest experiential and action learning approaches, where shared leadership is modelled (e.g., co-teaching with other instructors to model a shared approach). Participants should also be able to demonstrate self-leadership strategies in the classroom setting through presentation, active dialogue, peer coaching, etc.

The need for self-leadership appears to be universal across different cultures (Tay & Diener, 2011). However, it should be noted that certain individuals and cultures

may have a greater propensity to develop high levels of self-leadership. Traditional self-leadership research indicates that individuals with high levels of conscientiousness engage more in self-leadership strategies than those with low conscientiousness (Stewart, Carson, & Cardy, 1996). Self-leading teams have also been found to be more productive in collectivistic cultures (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001).

5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to conceptualise a definition, identify a capability framework and generate development guidelines for positive self-leadership. I argued that positive psychology frameworks contribute to self-leadership development through optimising character strengths, employing latent abilities and talents, gathering environmental resources and fuelling such with long term aspirations and interests. A positive self-leadership capability model, followed by training suggestions and guidelines aimed at improving the self-awareness, self-confidence and sustainability of positive self-leadership capabilities, were proposed. Future studies could operationalise the positive self-leadership construct through instrument development and intervention testing.

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Strengths Based Coaching—A Positive Psychology Intervention



Jolanta Burke and Jonathan Passmore

Abstract Strengths approaches have grown in popularity over the past decade, with a proliferation of writing, models and questionnaires used for strengths assessment and in coaching. These questionnaires include including VIA, Strengthscope and StrengthsFinder and Strengths Profile. The questionnaires have become a popular intervention for consultants, HR professionals and executive coaches for adding both personal development and coaching, to assisting with recruitment and selection. We will briefly review in the first section of this chapter three popular questionnaires, considering their development and constructs. In the second section we will explore positive psychology coaching as an intervention using questionnaires and strengths cards, before reviewing the research evidence and opportunities for future research.

Keywords Strengths coaching · VIA · StrengthsFinder · Strengthscope · Strengths cards

1 Introduction

For over a century both researchers and practitioners have been interested in talents as the nature of work has changed (Drake, 1935; Subarsky, 1948). This has seen the emergence of the ‘war for talent’ (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Alexrod, 2001), with corporations competing to recruit or retain what they perceive to be the most able employees. While the crash of 2009 saw a decline in this recruitment, the topic has re-emerged, with firms continuing to seek to attract the most able through their recruitment strategies. While talent is considered, in psychological terms, to be a natural or innate ability to achieve an outcome faster or to a higher standard (Duckworth, Eichstaedt, & Ungar, 2015), for these firms, it is considered to be ‘the bright

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and best from the top universities'. The psychological definition remains relevant, but the term continues to be overused in common parlance, leading to misunderstandings and confusion (Tansley, 2011). Of course examples like Enron (McLean, 2004) confirms that despite being the smartest guys, corporate failure can still follow, and factors like employee-role fit, motivation and experience remain factors to be considered in successful recruitment strategies', alongside innate ability (Goldstein, Pulakos, Passmore, & Semedo, 2017).

Alongside these discussions of talent, there has been significant interest in what might be considered to be the dark side of talent (Lombardo & Eichinger, 1999; Furnham, 2015). These writers and others like Robert Hogan (Hogan, 2007) have drawn attention to attributes, traits or talents, which can contribute to failure or derailment. One example is the development of a fixed mindset. For talented individual this can occur due to early successes in formal education or career, leading to less willingness to learn and adapt to changing role and competitive environmental demands (Dweck, 2009; Duckworth, 2016; Furnham, 2015). But the multiple examples exist across the behavioural spectrum.

One of the first attempts of combining talent with individuals' further development came from the Gallup StrengthsFinder (Clifton & Anderson, 2001–02). According to the Gallop model, while talents could be wasted (not developed), their development, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, talents can become a higher-order talents; a 'strength'. This concept of strength recognises the importance of both innate attributes with development.

In this chapter we explore; strengths based coaching. We will start by reviewing the development of different conceptual approaches to strengths that have been developed into three widely used questionnaires in strengths. We will briefly explore the development of these tools, and the themes which they include. In the second section we will explore positive psychology coaching and its use of strengths based questionnaires. In the third section will consider the research evidence and whether strengths coaching is an effective approach to use with clients. Finally, in this short chapter on interventions, we will review opportunities for future research.

2 Different Approaches to Strengths

Over the past two decades we have seen the emergence of a number of alternative approaches to strengths, such as Values into Action (VIA), StrengthsFinder and Strengthscope and their operationalization as tools for use in organisational or well-being coaching. In Table 1 we consider the development of these approaches. We will review three popular models that have been published in English.

StrengthsFinder is based on the theory that each adult possesses a number of personal character attributes, known as 'Talent themes' (Asplund, et al. 2014). Through awareness of these talent themes and focused practice, strengths can be created and effectiveness enhanced. The model consists of 34 strengths, such as strategic, learner, achiever, self-assurance, and woo (Gallup, 2018). These are sorted into four

Table 1 StrengthsFinder questionnaire’s 34 strengths

<p>Achiever—one with a constant drive for accomplishing tasks</p> <p>Activator—one who acts to start things in motion</p> <p>Adaptability—one who is especially adept at accommodating to changes in direction/plan</p> <p>Analytical—one who requires data and/or proof to make sense of their circumstances</p> <p>Arranger—one who enjoys orchestrating many tasks and variables to a successful outcome</p> <p>Belief—one who strives to find some ultimate meaning behind everything they do</p> <p>Command—one who steps up to positions of leadership without fear of confrontation</p> <p>Communication—one who uses words to inspire action and education</p> <p>Competition—one who thrives on comparison and competition to be successful</p> <p>Connectedness—one who seeks to unite others through commonality</p> <p>Consistency—one who believes in treating everyone the same to avoid unfair advantage</p> <p>Context—one who is able to use the past to make better decisions in the present</p> <p>Deliberative—one who proceeds with caution, seeking to always have a plan and know all of the details</p> <p>Developer—one who sees the untapped potential in others</p> <p>Discipline—one who seeks to make sense of the world by imposition of order</p> <p>Empathy—one who is especially in tune with the emotions of others</p> <p>Focus—one who requires a clear sense of direction to be successful</p>	<p>Futuristic—one who has a keen sense of using an eye towards the future to drive today’s success</p> <p>Harmony—one who seeks to avoid conflict and achieve success through consensus</p> <p>Ideation—one who is adept at seeing underlying concepts that unite disparate ideas</p> <p>Includer—one who instinctively works to include everyone</p> <p>Individualization—one who draws upon the uniqueness of individuals to create successful teams</p> <p>Input—one who is constantly collecting information or objects for future use</p> <p>Intellection—one who enjoys thinking and thought-provoking conversation often for his own sake, and also can data compress complex concepts into simplified models</p> <p>Learner—one who must constantly be challenged and learning new things to feel successful</p> <p>Maximizer—one who seeks to take people and projects from great to excellent</p> <p>Positivity—one who has a knack for bringing the light-side to any situation</p> <p>Relator—one who is most comfortable with fewer, deeper relationships</p> <p>Responsibility—one who must follow through on commitments</p> <p>Restorative—one who thrives on solving difficult problems</p> <p>Self-Assurance—one who stays true to their beliefs, judgments and is confident of his/her ability</p> <p>Significance—one who seeks to be seen as significant by others</p> <p>Strategic—one who is able to see a clear direction through the complexity of a situation</p> <p>Woo—one who is able to easily persuade (short for “Winning Others Over”)</p>
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business-competency-related domains of strategic thinking, executing, influencing, and relationship building.

Even though the concept of strengths is not new (e.g. Weick & Saleebey, 1995), StrengthsFinder was the first assessment tool, which helped individuals identify their strengths and create a language around them. As a commercial tool, it has been used extensively (Gallup, 2008), however a literature review by the authors (completed in 2018 for this chapter) reveals little peer review published material about the instrument, its development and its validity as a developmental tool.

Table 2 VIA strengths
VIA-IS (2018)

Wisdom and knowledge	Creativity Curiosity Judgment Love of learning Perspective
Courage	Bravery Perseverance Honesty Zest
Humanity	Love Kindness Social Intelligence
Justice	Teamwork Fairness Leadership
Temperance	Forgiveness Humility Prudence Self regulation
Transcendence	Appreciation of beauty Gratitude Hope Humour Spirituality

The second, popular strengths assessment is the Strengthscope (Brook & Brewerton, 2006). Its strengths are divided into four categories; emotional, relational, execution and thinking strengths, with 24 strengths. In addition to creating a strengths’ assessment, Strengthscope has also introduced the concept of strength-overuse (Brook, 2008), which has since been adapted by other strengths assessments. It refers to individuals overusing their strengths, which may result in their strengths becoming weaknesses. Of all the three tools, the StrengthScope is the only measure to have achieved the registered test status by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2017).

The third questionnaire which we will briefly review has had wide exposure; VIA-IS (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005), offering greater transparency in its conception, development and research (McGrath, 2014; McGrath, 2017a; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

VIA consists of 24 character strengths, divided into 6 virtues, wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence. The questionnaire aims to measure the frequency of use of the 24 strengths, with those most frequently used labelled as ‘signature strengths’ (Table 2).

Various studies have showed the benefits of using the VIA’s signature strengths on a regular basis, ranging from enhancement of well-being (Mongrain & Anselmo-Matthews, 2012), through to flourishing (Hone, Jarden, Schofield, & Duncan, 2014),

happiness (Proyer, Wellenzohn, Gander, & Ruch, 2014), satisfaction with life and reduction in anxiety (Peterson & Peterson, 2008). However, there is also evidence of the benefits of using and developing weaknesses that show positive outcomes (Rust, Diessner, & Reade, 2009). Therefore, what the research on character strengths claims is that as long as individuals develop their trait-like qualities, they are likely to see a range of benefits in their personal and professional lives.

The 24 VIA character strengths are not exhaustive, or exclusive. The developers of the model (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) recognise the model may need to change, along with changes to the questionnaire used to identify signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). McGrath (2017b) carried out significant work on reviewing the psychometric properties of the original questionnaire, and in the light of the research carried out in the first decade after its creation. This research confirmed the high validity of the questionnaire, but included recommendations about use, noting that higher levels of validity were achieved from the longer form questionnaire and noting the challenges of using the questionnaire with individuals with cognitive impairments.

This work has led to improvements to the questionnaires (McGrath, 2017b). They also indicate signature strengths, overuse, underuse and optimal-use of character strengths that identifies whether or not strength-use is balanced (Freidlin, Littman-Ovadia, & Niemiec, 2017), which can serve as a starting point for coaching discussions. Furthermore, they are available for 360° assessments, whereby partners can identify individual's perceived strengths (Kashdan et al., 2018), which can be compared to the self-assessed character strengths. Also, the new assessment can identify weaknesses and measures of virtues, not only strengths (McGrath, 2017b). Therefore, the measurement tools created extend to a comprehensive assessment of strengths.

Alongside these validated instruments, a host of consultants and practitioners are now publishing 'Strengths cards'. These cards typically consist of 40–80 playing cards with images, which aim to facilitate a discussion about the image and lead to an exploration of the client's strengths. However, our literature review found no peer review published research regarding the value, or the reliability or validity of strengths cards as a coaching tools.

We have briefly explored four different strengths frameworks which have been operationalized into questionnaires, as well as briefing discussing strengths cards. As a result we define strengths as “an attribute, either innate or learned, which when used by the individual leads to superior performance”.

As we discuss in the next section, both the questionnaires and strengths cards are being increasingly used in coaching work with clients. In the next section we will explore how they are being used and their contribution to outcomes.

3 Strength-Based Coaching Practice

With the growth of positive psychology coaching (Freire, 2013) coaching practitioners have been drawing on both positive psychological models to apply in their

coaching practice (Passmore & Oades, 2014a; 2015a; 2015b, 2016), as well as looking to strengths models to use with their clients (Kaufman, Silberman, & Sharpley, 2012; MacKie, 2015). Biswas-Diener and Dean (2007) began a discussion about positive psychology coaching pointing out the similarities between the fields of positive psychology and coaching psychology and encouraging using strengths assessments and their outcomes in a coaching practice. Biswas-Diener approach has been further advanced through a practical guide to applying positive psychology coaching with clients (Biswas-Diener, 2010). Following from this, strength-use has been proposed by Passmore and Oades (2014b), as a fundamental part of positive psychology coaching. More recently, Burke (2018) argued in the conceptual framework for a positive psychology coaching practice that using strengths questionnaires in coaching are an essential element of positive psychology coaching.

We suggest strengths questionnaires can be used in 4 main ways within the coaching practice, i.e. by; (1) creating coaches' awareness of strengths; (2) carrying out strength assessment with clients; (3) using strength-based coaching to develop confidence; and (4) coaching clients to further develop their strengths to improve personal performance. Each one of these approaches will be discussed below in more detail.

4 Creating Coaches' Awareness of Strengths

There is a multiplicity of benefits associated with identifying strengths that can be helpful in various aspects of individuals' lives. For example, the benefits of strength awareness in the workplace was studied in a sample of 10,000 employees in New Zealand, and the results showed that those who were aware of their strengths were 9.5 times more likely to psychologically flourish than employees who had no such awareness (Hone et al., 2014). Coincidentally, workplace strengths were also connected with employees' higher levels of vitality, concentration and experiencing harmonious passion (Dubreuil, Forest, & Courcy, 2014) as well as engagement at work (Crabb, 2011). Therefore, in this context, coaches awareness of their own strengths may serve as a benefit to them when working with clients, by increasing coach confidence and deepening the coaches' self awareness, through self-reflection.

Whilst to date, there is no specific research about the impact of strength awareness on coaches' effectiveness at work, a study with psychotherapists showed that priming therapists' attention to their strengths five minutes before the therapy sessions showed improved therapeutic relationship and outcomes measured at session 20 (Fluckiger & Grosse Holforth, 2008). Equally, when cognitive behavioural therapy was personalised to clients' strengths, as opposed to their deficits, the therapeutic process led yet again to better clients' outcomes (Cheavens, Strunk, Lazarus, & Goldstein, 2012). Therefore, it is possible that the same applies to a coaching intervention, whereby focusing on clients' strengths prior to the coaching session, may prove beneficial to both coaches and their clients. However, more research needs to be carried out to confirm this.

5 Carrying Out Strength-Assessments with Clients

Coaches may also use character strengths assessments as tools during a coaching intervention, either at an organisational client's request, as a strengths questionnaire, like the coaching, is part of the wider development programme, or because in discussion with the individual client, a strengths assessment has been agreed as part of the coaching assignment.

The coach may invite their client to complete one of the questionnaires as their homework before the session (Littman-Ovadia, Lazar-Butbul, & Benjamin, 2014). Or the coach may use strength cards to facilitate a strengths based conversations with coaching clients (Jumpp, 2018; Markström, 2011; Smith & Barros-Gomes, 2015). Strength cards may act as a more accessible and low cost way to encourage clients to reflect on their perceived strength. However, some clients may struggle to name their strengths (Hill, 2001), which would make such conversations more challenging than using an instrument that provides both terms and descriptions of these terms such as one of the strengths questionnaires discussed above.

When using any strength-assessments, Roche and Hefferon (2013) have argued that a structured coaching debriefing should form part of the process. In a qualitative study with 20 participants, they found that such a discussion lead to enhanced results, such as self-efficacy enhancement, stimulation of psychological development through self-awareness and insight, as well as strength development and use. Thus, if strengths are to be used in coaching, a structured approach is required for the most effective outcomes.

There are various models of strength discussions, that coaches may choose to apply, such as a simple identify and use approach (Biswas-Diener, 2010), or a three-step process of creating awareness, exploring strengths further and applying them accordingly (Niemic, 2013). Regardless of what model is being used, the coach needs to consider the intricacies of strength assessment and evaluation (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, & Minhas, 2011). We would argue, drawing from our practice, that strength-assessment is not about merely using strengths more, but using them in different social situations. Therefore, coaches need to help clients reflect upon how specific strengths can be used at work, at home and with friends, rather than simply encouraging clients to apply their strengths more frequently. Furthermore, we would suggest five factors that we have found useful when discussing strengths with clients: (1) strength tilt; (2) strength constellation; (3) strengths blindness; (4) strength sensitivity; and (5) social costs of strengths.

'Strength tilt' refers to an individual's interests and preferences, as well as ways in which strengths can be applied uniquely in each person, in order for them to live their lives in alignment with their values. Each strength profile identifies the 'Strength constellations', which are the interactions of strengths with each other. For example, an individual who frequently uses the strengths of fairness and bravery, would be more likely to stand up for someone who is unfairly treated than those who score highly in fairness but low in bravery. Therefore, such intricacies need to be considered in a coaching conversation. 'Strength blindness' refers to individuals not

appreciating their strengths and viewing them as something common and ordinary, rather than something that needs to be celebrated and developed further. ‘Strength sensitivity’ may occur in clients who are being criticised around their strengths or when they discuss the negative aspects of their strengths. Finally, the ‘Social cost of strengths’ denotes the perception others have of individuals’ strengths and the impact of it on how the client views their own strengths.

Each one of five factors need to be considered when debriefing clients on their strengths assessment. Recent developments in strength assessment also delves into the overuse and underuse of strengths as well as their optimal use to achieve desired results (Niemiec, 2018). Taking all into consideration, coach plays an important role in firstly guiding clients towards strength-assessments, but also in relation to helping clients make sense of the result of the assessment and the impact it has on their daily lives, as well as how individuals’ strengths can be used more effectively in their lives.

6 Strength-Based Coaching Practice

The first attempt of using VIA character strengths in a one-to-one work with clients came from Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson (2006) who made strengths-identification and strength-use part of a positive psychotherapy intervention. This work was further developed into Strength-based Careers Counselling (SBCC) (Littman-Ovadia et al., 2014) when the researchers brought together strength-centred therapy (Wong, 2006) with a strength-based counselling model (Smith, 2006), and VIA character strengths assessment (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Their aim was to help career counsellors/coaches facilitate their clients employment. The study results showed that over 80% of strength-based intervention clients reported achieving their goals three months later, in comparison to 60% of traditionally coached clients. Furthermore, clients undertaking the SBCC evaluated their careers coach much more favourably than the control group clients. This study showed the positive impact that strength-based coaching may potentially have on both clients’ outcomes, as well as their experience and satisfaction with the entire coaching process.

Strength-based coaching has also been shown to be effective when used with younger clients as well. In a pilot study with primary school children, researchers carried out group coaching sessions, during which they helped students identify their strengths and use them in an innovative way to strive for a personally meaningful goal, which resulted in their increased levels of engagement and hope (Madden, Green & Grant, 2011). These results echo other findings with disadvantaged primary school children, for whom strength-based coaching prompted a process of improvement in social skills, anger management and school attitude (Dennison, Daniel, Gruber, Cavanaugh, & Mayfield, 2018), as well as adolescents who have shown a decrease in depressive symptoms (Naify, 2009).

Similar studies, using strength-based models in a coaching practice have been used in business (Elston & Boniwell, 2011; MacKie, 2014; Welch, Grossaint, Reid, & Walker, 2014) and in coaching with private clients (McDowall & Butterworth,

2014). Therefore, whilst this is still a relatively new area of inquiry, the preliminary evidence is showing positive effects of using strength-based models. More research needs to be carried out in a coaching context in order to advance the theory and practice.

7 Developing Specific Clients' Strengths to Improve Their Outcomes

Over the last decade, a significant amount of research has focused on identifying specific strengths and their association with various outcomes. Writers such as Niemiec (2018) have encouraged practitioners to use this research with clients, encouraging them to develop their strengths in order to achieve their desired results. Research has shown perseverance is associated with work productivity (Littman-Ovadia & Freidlin, 2019), whereas curiosity, zest, hope, gratitude and spirituality are associated with work satisfaction (Peterson, Stephens, Park, Lee, & Seligman, 2010). Drawing on this research coaches may help clients achieve their goals but considering their personal strengths.

8 Suggestions for Future Research

Whilst all of the strength assessment organisations have developed tools for coaches allowing them to apply strengths in their work with clients (e.g. Brook, 2016; Strengthscope, 2018), there is limited research about the effectiveness of the questionnaires as a tool to enhance personal effectiveness.

Research is needed to explore the relationship between enhanced awareness, use of a specific strength and goal realisation. Work is also needed to examine in multiple contexts the application of strengths in work based tasks; does using a specific personal strength lead to performance gains?

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Building Bridges Through Talk: Exploring the Role of Dialogue in Developing Bridging Social Capital



Linda Doornbosch-Akse and Mark van Vuuren

Abstract This chapter examines the role of dialogue in building connections across socio-cultural and ideological divides. Applying the lens of dialogue, it seeks to promote bridging social capital in an increasingly fragmented and polarized society. Social capital is often seen as the glue that holds societies together. The central idea of social capital is that social networks and relationships matter, and provide individuals and groups with useful and beneficial resources in two ways. *Bonding social capital* refers to horizontal ties between individuals within the same social group who are similar to each other. *Bridging social capital* refers to ties between individuals or social groups who are dissimilar and which cross socio-economic and cultural divides. For a stable and healthy society, both forms of social capital are needed, but especially bridging social capital is important for reconciling democracy and diversity. Moreover, social relationships with others have a positive impact on individuals' well-being and life-satisfaction. This chapter explores the crossroads of two related, yet separated, areas of scholarship, namely social capital and dialogue studies. By reviewing their literatures and identifying areas where these disciplines might be brought together, it aims to demonstrate how dialogue can be used as a positive intervention to create bridging social capital. It will show how characteristics of dialogue foster the process of relationship building between people who are different. However, to successfully intervene in the formation of bridging social capital, it is crucial to consider the context in which it is built and maintained. Therefore, research needs to examine the *purpose* (why), the *places* (where), and the *people* (who) in the *process* (how) of building bridging social capital. As communication is crucial to cultivate relationships, this chapter asserts that creating bridging social capital is essentially a communicative accomplishment. The underlying long-term and challenging goal of building bridges through talk is to promote a more inclusive, empathetic, civil, and compassionate society.

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1 Introduction

In our network society where people have never been more connected, there is a growing sense of disconnection and division (Turkle, 2011). Putnam (2000) portrayed how individuals have become disconnected from family, friends, neighbours, and social structures since the 1950s. Over the last decades, Bishop and Cushing (2009) have noted the phenomenon of ‘ideological migration’. People have sorted themselves geographically, culturally, politically, and economically into like-minded communities. Furthermore, identity politics is undermining modern western democracies. The demands of recognition by specific identity groups (based on e.g. nation, religion, race, ethnicity, and gender) has severely fragmented the social cohesion that was once the foundation of political consensus and collaboration. Moreover, the cultural and ideological diversity threatens a common sense of belonging (Fukuyama, 2018). In an age of globalization and societies who have become increasingly diverse, most people live in tribes with those who share their lifestyle, values, and beliefs.

While division and self-segregation are not new phenomena in modern Western democracies, people nowadays have fewer opportunities to engage with those who are dissimilar. The geographic clustering in increasingly homogeneous communities, the splintered media landscape, the personalized web, and the general decline of trust in people and institutions (Edelman, 2018), have led to a society where people tend to live in their own bubbles (Pariser, 2011; Sunstein, 2017). As a result, they don’t know or interact with others who have fundamentally different worldviews, values, or identities.

The risk of fragmentation and clustering into like-minded communities is that it endangers shared conversations, experiences, and understandings, that are the lifeblood of a healthy democracy (Sunstein, 2017). In a democracy, people need to be confronted with opposing views. Instead, we are living in echo-chambers hearing views that reinforce our own. Democracy requires reliance on shared facts. However, people are being offered parallel and separate universes (Pariser, 2011). The result of this self-sorting is that individuals and communities have grown more extreme in their opinions and societies have become increasingly polarized. In the civic atmosphere of polarization and debate and the absence of multi-dimensional human connection, people see others with different identities or perspectives as an out-group or threat: “People are often left with thin, one-dimensional stories of “the other”: what they can glean from news reports and from their own circle” (Stains, 2016, p. 1523). To rebuild trust and relations, conversation and connections across differences are crucial for the benefit of individuals and society.

This chapter aims to promote bridging social capital in an increasingly fragmented and polarized society. The civil society forms an excellent place to build relations between people with fundamentally different backgrounds, values, and identities.

Yet, as the formation of bridging social capital can be strenuous and challenging (Putnam, Feldstein, & Cohen, 2004), this chapter emphasizes to use dialogue as a *process* to build relationships within existing networks/communities (e.g. educational, religious and local communities). To grasp the role of dialogue in building relationships across social cleavages, it will explore crossroads of two flourishing, yet separated, areas of scholarship that have evolved parallel over the last decades, namely social capital and dialogue studies.

By reviewing the literature and identifying areas where these disciplines might be brought together, it aims to demonstrate how dialogue can be used as a positive intervention to cultivate bridging social capital. It will show how characteristics of dialogue foster the process of relationship building between people who are different.

Furthermore, to successfully intervene in the formation of bridging social capital, it is crucial to consider the context in which capital is built and maintained. Therefore, the proposed intervention will not only include the *process* (how), but also the *purpose* (why), the *places* (where), and the *people* (who) which are involved.

This chapter has its roots in communication scholarship but finds a solid base in the broader field of social sciences, notably in the area of social well-being. Whereas most studies within the clinical and psychological tradition emphasize private features of well-being (Keyes, 1998), social scientists acknowledge that individuals are “embedded in social structures and communication” and that their well-being is associated with “the social nature of life and its challenges” (Keyes, 1998, p. 122). There is substantial evidence “that individuals with richer networks of active social relationships tend to be more satisfied and happier with their lives” (Amati, Meggiolaro, Rivellini, & Zaccarin, 2018). Positive relationships with others also contribute to a sense of belonging and community which increases social well-being of individuals (Prati, Cicognani, & Cinzia, 2017). The focus on the relational aspects of life (Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003) implies the study of communication which is crucial in developing relationships. Consequently, this chapter asserts that creating bridging social capital is essentially a communicative accomplishment. The underlying goal of building bridges through talk is to promote a more inclusive, empathetic, civil, and compassionate society.

This chapter is structured as follows. The first section gives a brief overview of the relevant literature on both social capital and dialogue studies. Next, it will identify areas where these disciplines can be brought together and present dialogue as an intervention to develop bridging social capital. Dimensions of dialogue will be unpacked to show how practical communication-based interventions like storytelling, shared language, narratives, and the exploration of identities contributes to bridging divides between people who are different. Finally, it will present future directions and conclusions.

2 Theoretical Background

To provide a solid foundation for the proposed intervention to promote bridging social capital, the following section will give an overview of the relevant literature on social capital and dialogue.

2.1 Social Capital

Over the last decades, the concept of social capital has become increasingly popular in a wide range of social science disciplines (Adler & Kwon, 2002). However, opinions are divided on how social capital should be defined and measured (Lillbacka, 2006). To understand the role of dialogue in the formation of bridging social capital, this summary will discuss definitions of (bridging) social capital, goals and benefits, characteristics and dimensions, contextual factors, the relationship with the field of communication, and the measurement of the concept.

2.1.1 Definitions

Due to the highly contextual nature of social capital and its multidisciplinary character, it is crucial to discuss the relation to the field and context in which the concept is studied. This study has its roots in the communication scholarship and focuses on building relationships across social cleavages to promote individuals' well-being and social cohesion. Therefore, the following section will more closely examine the *relational* aspects of *bridging social capital*.

In exploring the concept of social capital, many scholars have criticized the conceptual heterogeneity and the difficulty of its measurement. Yet, despite multiple theoretical perspectives, there is a consensus that social capital is derived from social relations. Social capital can be described as “the goodwill available to individuals and groups. Its source lies in the structure and the content of the actor’s social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor” (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 23). Based on the founding concepts of Bourdieu and Coleman, and current concepts of Burt, Putnam, and Lin, Häuberer (2011) defines social capital as “a property of relationships among individuals that are a resource actors can use and benefit from” (p. 249). Rostila (2010) argues that *social resources* are the actual ‘capital’ or ‘benefit’ that people derive from their networks/relations. These resources “evolve in accessible networks or social structures characterized by mutual trust” (p. 321). Prior definitions demonstrate that social capital is a resource, individuals can benefit from. In addition, Putnam (2000) underlines the importance of social capital as a collective resource and the benefits for society as a whole. Social capital is the glue that holds communities together and makes them work as a collective. It supports the idea that people rely on relationships with others to fulfill

social, cultural, and economic needs. Social capital enables collective action and, therefore, is a key component to building and maintaining a healthy democracy. This chapter emphasizes that relationships are the core of social capital and will use the following definition: *Social capital is an actual and potential resource individuals and groups can benefit from, based on goodwill and embedded in social relations.*

Amongst the numerous classifications, an important distinction can be made between bonding and bridging types of social capital (Putnam, 2000). *Bonding social capital* can be described as horizontal ties between individuals within the same social group who are similar to each other and have a shared social identity. These are often personal relationships with *strong ties*; close friends, family members and neighbours whom will help you in times of crisis or give personal support. Bonding social capital is often associated with strong norms and ‘thick trust’ (or: ‘particularized trust’) (Granovetter, 1973; Putnam, 2000; Sander & Lowney, 2006). *Bridging social capital* are *horizontal* ties between individuals who are dissimilar and which cross social divides (e.g. race, class, religion) or between social groups. These are often more impersonal relationships with *weak ties*, acquaintances whom you do not know very well, but whom you can ask for small favors. Bridging social capital is often associated with reciprocity and ‘thin trust’ (or: ‘generalized trust’) (Granovetter, 1973; Putnam, 2000; Sander & Lowney, 2006). This chapter will focus on how to promote bridging social capital in a fragmented multicultural society. To enhance a positive change for individuals and society, it is fundamental to intervene in social relationships.

2.1.2 Goals and Benefits

To understand the impact of bridging social capital for individuals’ well-being and the broader community, it is critical to examine its goals and benefits. Yet, specific goals of social capital depend on the context and the underlying goals of individuals, networks, associations, or organizations: “Social capital is usually developed in pursuit of a particular goal or set of goals and not for its own sake” (Putnam et al., 2004, p. 10). Research shows that both bonding and bridging social capital have positive outcomes for individuals and society. Social capital can make a positive contribution to a range of areas of well-being: e.g. education, employment, community safety, health, happiness (OECD, 2002). For individuals, social networks and relationships provide access to different types of social support: instrumental (aid & service), emotional (empathy, love, trust & caring), informational (advice & information), and appraisal (self-evaluation: constructive feedback, affirmation) (House, 1981 as cited in Heaney & Israel, 2008).

Nonetheless, in our fragmented, multicultural society, especially bridging social capital is “important for reconciling democracy and diversity” (Putnam et al., 2004, p. 279). Bridging social capital is also considered as “more valuable for the creation of collective resources as they facilitate cooperation between dissimilar people in a given social structure” (Rostila, 2010, p. 313). Research shows that for bridging social

capital more ties are better than fewer ties (Friedkin, 1982), and that the diversity of the weak-tie network leads to greater gains (Burt, 1992).

Bridging social capital has been linked to a wide range of benefits. It enables the acquiring of new information (Granovetter, 1973; Putnam, 2000) and helps people to expand their perspectives (broaden their worldviews); it gives access to power; it improves integration in the larger group (Adler & Kwon, 2002); and it promotes connections between heterogeneous groups and fosters social inclusion (Schuller, Baron, & Field, 2000). Bridging social capital also helps to cross divides by building trust and maintaining channels of communication between disputing groups, especially for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (Villalonga-Olives, Adams, & Kawachi, 2016). At a societal level, bridging social capital promotes civic engagement, economic well-being, and external (societal) trust (Adler & Kwon, 2002). In addition, Claridge (2018a, 2018b) summarizes the following benefits: bridging social capital crosses the boundaries of individuals and groups with different social backgrounds; attributes to increase tolerance and acceptance of others with different values and beliefs; it allows different groups to share and exchange information and ideas and it promotes innovation; it builds a consensus among groups with diverse interests.

Dark sides of social capital. Despite the fact that most studies focus on positive outcomes, some dark sides have been identified, most notably of bonding social capital. With the rise of the internet people expected an increase of bridging social capital, but just as in the real-world people tend to cluster into (filter) bubbles with like-minded others: “We’re getting a lot of bonding but very little bridging that creates our sense of the “public”—the space where we address the problems that transcend our niches and narrow self-interests” (Pariser, 2011, p. 17). Furthermore, inequality, exclusion of others, restrictions of individual freedoms, distrust and lack of cooperation are some of the negative outcomes of (bonding) social capital (Ayios, Jeurissen, Manning, & Spence, 2013). In their overview, Adler & Kwon (2002) define two types of risks of social capital. High internal linkages combined with low external linkages (bonding social capital), may create a situation where internal solidarity undermines the actor’s integration into the broader whole. Such ties may lead to isolation and fragmentation. The other potential risk is a situation with high external ties but low internal ties (bridging social capital). “Durkheim’s analysis of anomie provides an example; city life simultaneously increases contact with outsiders and undermines community solidarity, thus weakening collective norms” (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 32)

2.1.3 Characteristics and Dimensions

To intervene in the processes of creating bridging social capital, this section will explore two important dimensions of the concept. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) make the distinction between the *cognitive* (shared goals and values among actors) and *relational* (trust between actors) dimension of social capital. A third type is the *structural* dimension (connections among actors), which forms an important pre-

condition for the development of relational and cognitive social capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Claridge, 2018a, 2018b). In this chapter, social capital is considered a relational construct. Therefore, it will discuss in further detail characteristics of the relational and cognitive dimension. The *relational dimension* focuses on the particular relationships that people have and the nature of these relationships. Key facets of this dimension are: “trust and trustworthiness (Fukuyma, 1995; Putnam, 1993), norms and sanctions (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1995), obligations and expectations (Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1990; Granovetter, 1973; Mauss, 1954), and identity and identification (Hakanson & Snehota, 1995; Merton, 1986)” (as cited in Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 244). The *cognitive dimension* can be described as “resources providing shared representations, interpretations, and systems of meaning among parties (Cicourel, 1973)” (as cited in Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 244). Knowledge and meaning are always embedded in a social context. Two ways to achieve a sharing context are (1) shared language and vocabulary and (2) shared narratives; which means myths, stories, and metaphors (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). In addition, Claridge (2018a, 2018b) also mentions ‘shared values, attitudes, and beliefs’. Moreover, Putnam underlines the power of storytelling as an important mechanism of social connection. As stories help us to relate to one another (Putnam et al., 2004).

In sum, the *relational dimension* focuses on the nature and quality of actual relationships between people and includes feelings of trust within a specific social context, whereas the *cognitive dimension* relates to the shared understanding, goals, and values between people (Claridge, 2018a, 2018b).

2.1.4 Contextual Factors

Context, like the civil society (Robinson, 2011), is crucial for the creation and maintenance of social capital as relationships and shared values are deeply rooted in local circumstances which makes their meaning highly subjective. Social settings in which relationships are formed can be formal and informal, with either open (bridging) and/or closed (bonding) ties. When considering the access to social networks, two types of contextual factors are relevant: *collective assets* (e.g. economy, technology, and culture) and *individual’s characteristics* (e.g. ethnicity, gender and social standing) (Häuberer, 2011). Other scholars mention the impact of structural factors (e.g. inequality, level of education, and ethnic-racial composition of a population) (Cloete, 2014), and personality (Venkatanathan, Karapanos, Kostakos, & Gonçalves, 2012) in generating social capital. Attention to these factors is important to sensitize oneself for the impact of context on the formation of social capital.

2.1.5 Social Capital and the Field of Communication

Given the focus on building relationships, this chapter proposes a communicative approach of bridging social capital. However, “the literature about social capital and how it can be developed shows a rare connection with theories about communication

or just simple communication tactics” (Van der Kroon, Ten Pierick, De Vlieger, & Backus, 2002, p. 32). Authors (e.g. Bourdieu, 1986) who describe a link between social capital, communication and collaboration often only mention that face-to-face communication, dialogue and group facilitation are important features to achieve successful collaboration, but do not reveal how communication contributes to building social capital (Van der Kroon et al., 2002).

Research indicates that “the translation of the concept of social capital into communication research is dominated by a small group of political communication scholars” (Lee & Sohn, 2016, p. 728). Rojas, Shah, and Friedland (2011), for example, tried to advance a communicative approach to social capital. They consider communication as a fundamental source of societal integration. “Connections among people and between people and institutions are central to community life, the democratic ideal of participation, and any definition of social capital” (Rojas et al., 2011, p. 689). While most scholars focus on social ties, they indicate the importance of *communication* that flows through these ties. This is consistent with Coleman (1990) who asserts that “an important form of social capital is the potential for information that inheres in social relations” (p. 310). A communicative approach values the exchange of information and shared meaning between individuals and groups, and facilitates collective action (Rojas et al., 2011). Communicative social capital can be defined as “both the structural feature embedded in social ties and a resource of the individual comprised in information flows, with the interactions among these elements producing a range of pathways to participation and the reconstruction of social capital” (Rojas et al., 2011, p. 695). Therefore, “it is critical to reconceptualize social capital as a communication phenomenon because it is precisely through communication within networks that social ties are sustained and gain their mobilizing potential” (Rojas et al., 2011, p. 695). Despite the valuable perspectives and insights of their research, the impact of this communicative approach of social capital is restricted due to the focus on the field of mass media (news exposure and consumption) and civic engagement (societal integration).

To explain how communication contributes to building social capital, Van der Kroon et al. (2002) developed a framework in which they disclose how communication issues like patterned flows of information, mutual understanding, signaling and shared language are related to creating social capital. They consider dialogue as one of the most important communication tactics which facilitates collaboration and therefore promotes social capital. This chapter takes the relational and communicative approach of social capital a step further by presenting dialogue as a positive intervention to build connections across socio-cultural cleavages for the greater well-being of individuals and society.

2.1.6 Measurement

To unlock the many benefits of bridging social capital, it is crucial to understand the ways it is measured. According to Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, “bridging social capital (i.e. friendships across lines of race, religion, class, etc.) is the most impor-

tant under-measured form of social connections for many outcomes” (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009, p. 186). The tacit and relational nature of social capital makes it hard to measure (OECD, 2001). Moreover, the “lack of consensus about the exact and actual meaning of the concept means that we cannot simply discuss various operationalization’s of social capital and assess their validity and reliability” (van Deth, 2003, p. 81). Another complicating factor is that social capital can be measured on different levels: (a) social capital can be found in networks of individuals (micro level) and/or be seen as a collective good: in groups (meso level) or society (macro level). To grasp the complex multidimensional concept, research often focuses on indicators of social capital as *trust*, *networks*, and *norms*. Despite the lack of agreement in the literature about the conceptualization and operationalization, most scholars agree that social capital comprises both structural aspects (networks) and cultural aspects (norms and values, trust). Van Deth (2003) displays that research of social capital can be divided into studies which locate the source of social capital in the formal structure of the ties that make up the social network (*structural aspects*) or focus on the content and quality of those ties (*cultural aspects*). In current research of social capital polling methods and the use of straightforward survey questions dominate the field. Available alternative approaches are limited and mainly consist of the use of official statistics (e.g. published by government agencies) as inverse indicators (van Deth, 2003).

To gain insight in the *relational aspects* of social capital, research has to observe actual relationships. Instead of relying on polls with information on perceptions, additional methods (experiments, content analyses, official statistics etc.) must be used (van Deth, 2003). Furthermore, it is critical to examine the processes where social capital is built and maintained. In sum, to understand how to develop social capital, individual relations (micro-level) in specific contexts (informal settings with open ties) where people unite and cooperate with one another need to be studied. This is very complex. Therefore, a focus on dialogue as an intervention could be helpful to build connections between dissimilar individuals and groups.

2.2 Dialogue

Just like social capital research, dialogue studies have a multidisciplinary character and include different approaches. Dialogue is a still-evolving practice, trying to understand how connections between people with different worldviews, values, and identities can be promoted. Intergroup dialogue as a “face-to-face facilitated conversation between members of two or more social identity groups...” is a promising approach to “...create new levels of understanding, relating, and action” (Zúñiga, 2003, pp. 8–9). In addition, Stains (2016) portrays dialogue as a possible solution to overcome challenges to constructive public engagement. Firstly, with the decline of social capital and the phenomenon of ‘ideological migration’, there are fewer opportunities for human connection across divides. Those with different values, identities or perspectives are often seen as threats (Stains, 2016). Furthermore, confrontational

modes of communication dominate the public sphere (Stains, 2016; Escobar, 2009). Tannen (2013) uses the term ‘argument culture’ to describe how people approach the world with an adversarial frame in mind. Finally, polarization is one of the biggest challenges to our modern Western democracies. (Blankenhorn, 2015; Stains, 2016) “In a healthy community people are connected in a variety of ways (civic, religious, political, and other contexts). They are aware of how their values intertwine and overlap and they collaborate on shared interests as a matter of course” (Stains, 2016, p. 1525). In a polarized context without meaningful connections with others who are dissimilar, people start to define themselves in terms of ‘we’ and ‘they’. A dialogic approach helps to promote a more inclusive, empathetic and civil society.

To explore the role of dialogue in developing bridging social capital, the following section will discuss the relevant literature of (intergroup) dialogue, with a focus on dialogic communication scholarship. The brief summary contains definitions, goals and benefits, characteristics, contextual factors, the relationship with the field of communication and measurement of dialogue.

2.2.1 Definitions

Dialogue studies include a broad field of scholarships and practices and have many approaches and definitions. “Dialogue has become a key cultural term in many academic and public discourses” (Carbaugh, Boromisza-Habashi, & Ge, 2006, p. 27). In many situations and in spheres of intercultural relations, dialogue is considered to be a particularly productive form of communication. Despite the wide range of (general) qualities that are attributed to dialogue, the particular meaning of the concept depends on the context (Carbaugh et al., 2006). Dialogue discussed in this chapter will focus on the universal basic human need for connection and social belonging. It will refer to dialogue as a specific form of social interaction and reflected upon as a way of engaging, communicating and relating with people who are different from us.

David Bohm, one of the most cited authors on dialogue, explains that ‘dialogue’ has its origins in the Greek word ‘dialogos’: ‘dia’ meaning ‘through’ and ‘logos’ meaning ‘word’. “The picture of the image that this derivation suggests is of a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which will emerge some new understanding... And this shared meaning is the ‘glue’ or ‘cement’ that holds people and societies together” (Bohm, 1996, p. 2). Dialogue and social capital have in common that they both are seen as the glue that holds people and societies together.

In order to provide insight in the diversification and the multidisciplinary nature of dialogue studies, Escobar (2009) displays a categorization where three traditions (formalist, hermeneutic, and pragmatic) converge (Table 1).

Dialogue in the hermeneutic tradition is characterized by ‘questioning, rather than arguing’ and aims to achieve openness to new insights through a process of mutual exploration and understanding (Escobar, 2009). In this tradition dialogue is a form of *social reflection* which allows a process of creation of shared understanding between

Table 1 Three traditions that converge in dialogue studies

Model	Prototype of dialogue	Key ideas	Why dialogue?
<p>FORMALIST (Habermas) <i>Dialogue as social deliberation</i></p>	<p>Rational argument Deliberative emphasis</p>	<p>Based on reasoned, open, reciprocal and un-coerced arguments, participants reach understanding on how to coordinate their activities through normative commitments.</p>	<p>It serves as a social building block, based on communication rather than manipulation or coercion. It is a source of normative validity.</p>
<p>HERMENEUTIC (Gadamer, Bohm) <i>Dialogue as social reflection</i></p>	<p>Social and cultural inquiry; Epistemic emphasis</p>	<p>Questioning, rather than arguing, achieves participant’s openness to new insights based on mutual exploration that might foster unforeseen creativity.</p>	<p>It allows a process of creation of shared understanding by widening individuals’ standpoints through a process of reciprocal reflection.</p>
<p>PRAGMATIC (Dewey, Freire) <i>Dialogue as social action</i></p>	<p>Sharing common experience towards solving problems Action emphasis</p>	<p>Continuous interaction improves the abilities to solve common problems. It gives place to collective intelligence that surpasses specialized expertise and is grounded in diversified experience.</p>	<p>It redefines the role of technical expertise by counterbalancing it with simultaneous reliance on experience and local knowledge. Dialogue builds citizens and communities, rather than assuming them as preconditions to will-forming public talk.</p>

Adapted from Escobar (2009, pp. 51–52) based on Linder (2001)

individuals and groups with different backgrounds, values and (social) identities. Consequently, the hermeneutic view of dialogue forms a solid foundation to explore how to cultivate bridging social capital.

In defining the concept, this chapter will focus on *intergroup dialogue* as its goals are closely related to bridging social capital. Intergroup dialogue can be described as a “face-to-face facilitated conversation between members of two or more social identity groups that strives to create new levels of understanding, relating, and action” (Zúñiga, 2003, pp. 8–9). Dessel and Rogge (2008) define the concept as “a facilitated group experience that may occur once or may be sustained over time and is designed to give individuals and groups safe and structured opportunity to explore attitudes about polarizing societal issues” (p. 201). Practitioners in the field confirm the power of dialogue in building relationships and understanding. Essential Partners—an orga-

nization specialized in conducting intergroup dialogue in various settings—refers to dialogue as a “conversation in which people who have different beliefs and perspectives seek to develop mutual understanding. While doing so, they typically experience a softening of stereotypes and develop more trusting relationships. They often gain fresh perspectives on the costs of the conflict and begin to see new possibilities for interaction and action outside the dialogue room” (Herzig & Chasin, 2006, p. 4). This chapter emphasizes that social relationships between people who are different are at the heart of intergroup dialogue and will use the following definition: *intergroup dialogue is a facilitated face-to-face conversation—that may occur once or may be sustained over time—between people who have different backgrounds, worldviews, values or identities, which is designed to give individuals and groups a safe and structured opportunity to develop trust, relationships, mutual understanding, and collective action.*

2.2.2 Goals and Benefits

To measure the effect of dialogue for participants and whether it achieves desired outcomes, it is essential to identify and operationalize specific goals (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). “In the dialogue we create an empty space where we don’t have an object, we don’t have an agenda or program. We just talk with each other, and we are not committed to accomplishing anything. Nobody has to agree to anything. We simply listen to all opinions... Listening to all the opinions will bring us together” (Bohm, 1996, p. 13). So, dialogue has no fixed goal or prearranged/determined agenda. Dialogue is open-ended, whereas other forms of communication often seek closure (Escobar, 2011). Consequently, dialogue as a method can be distinguished from practices like debate, mediation, and deliberation which have specific goals, like convincing others, resolving a conflict or decision-making.

Although dialogue has no specific goals, the broad aim is to build understanding and relationships (Escobar, 2011). Dialogue seeks “to promote respectful inquiry, and to stimulate a new sort of conversation that allows important issues to surface freely” (Maiese, 2003).

Escobar (2011) presents the following overview of dialogue goals:

1. Learning enhanced understanding of a range of views, values, feelings, and positions.
2. Building a common language: bridging the gap between specialized jargons. This is critical in public engagement as we face the paradox of the world that is increasingly interconnected, and yet, even more fragmented in terms of specialized languages.
3. Co-creating meaning working towards shared interpretations that foster collective intelligence to deal with complex issues.
4. Building relationships that enable collaborative platforms and critical co-inquiry.
5. Defusing polarization, overcoming stereotypes, and building trust.

6. Discovery: finding of alternative pathways that are not the product of mere negotiation or bargaining, but the result of broadening and deepening perspectives through learning, exploration, and creative thinking (p. 33).

Given its focus on bridging social capital, this chapter focuses on goals of intergroup dialogue which include “relationship building, civic participation, and social change” (Dessel & Rogge, 2008, p. 199). Benefits of intergroup dialogue are the breakdown of stereotypes, improvement of (polarized) relationships, and amelioration of cooperation. In addition, intergroup dialogue enables critical self-reflection and perspective-taking, which are crucial to attitude change. Furthermore, it offers the opportunity for participants to examine social norms and ideologies that guide their (unconscious) beliefs. Other positive effects of intergroup dialogue are improved relationships between individuals and groups who hold (historically) opposing social identities and who view others as the out-group. Research shows that learning about other social groups fosters a reappraisal and recategorization of outgroups and the generation of empathy and positive emotion (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). Dialogue practitioners Herzig and Chasin (2006) underline the power of dialogue in building relationships and mutual understanding. “Through dialogue, people who seem intractably opposed often change the way they view and relate to each other—even as they maintain the commitments that underlie their views. They often discover shared values and concerns which may lead to collaborative actions that were previously unthinkable” (p. 2). Above-mentioned goals and benefits of dialogue depend on specific contextual factors, which will be discussed in a further section.

2.2.3 Characteristics

As mentioned before, intergroup dialogue is a facilitated group experience that is designed to give different individuals and groups a safe and structured opportunity to explore attitudes and to develop mutual understanding. “Characteristics of dialogue include fostering an environment that enables participants to speak and listen in the present while understanding the contributions of the past and the unfolding of the future” (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006, p. 304). Dialogue helps to identify assumptions, suspend judgements, enables inquiry and reflection, promotes genuine and effective listening, and supports collective thought and collaboration (Maiese, 2003). Practitioners in the field assert that intergroup dialogue stimulates new ideas and opens up possibilities for change by creating a safe environment, inviting people to share personal stories, and by exploring grey areas of their own beliefs (Herzig & Chasin, 2006). Other characteristics of dialogue that can be discerned are: (a) building a safe space, (b) openness, (c) respect, (c) storytelling, (d) listening, (e) suspending automatic response, judgement, and certainty, (f) collaborative inquiry, (g) finding common ground and exploring differences, and (h) balancing advocacy and inquiry (Escobar, 2011). The final section of this chapter will unpack relevant features of dialogue that contribute to the formation of bridging social capital.

2.2.4 Contextual Factors

Due to the multidisciplinary character of intergroup dialogue scholarship, dialogue has its practice in a number of fields, e.g. “social work, political science, social psychology, and communications” (Dessel & Rogge, 2008, p. 212). The specific goals and outcomes of dialogue depend on the context and culture in which it takes place. For example, “In highly polarized situations, differences in cultural norms may contribute to participants difficulty in communicating with and understanding each other” (Dessel & Rogge, 2008, pp. 216–217). The current ‘argument culture’ where people have adversarial frames in mind, influences and determines the effects of dialogue. Furthermore, individual values and cultural assumptions affect the outcomes dialogue (Bohm, 1996). In communication, people have different interests and basic assumptions about the meaning of life. “Most of these basic assumptions come from society and are rooted in culture, race, religion, and economic background” (Maiese, 2003). In addition, in a post-modern multicultural society where people no longer have one absolute truth, dialogue enables people with different backgrounds and identities to communicate their beliefs, values, and experiences. Moreover, the impact of dialogue—as a way of communicating and relating—depends on individual characteristics and personality traits. Research shows that individual differences and societal norms are important factors that impact intergroup dialogue (Pettigrew, 1998). Other scholars insist that dialogue requires specific skills (e.g. good listening, openness to new ideas and experiences, and suspending judgements and assumptions) which vary greatly amongst individuals. In sum, to evaluate the benefits and outcomes of dialogue, research needs to consider relevant societal and individual factors of the context in which dialogue takes place.

2.2.5 Dialogue and the Field of Communication

In the growing field of dialogic communication scholarship, a distinction can be made between the descriptive and the prescriptive streams of dialogue research (Stewart & Zediker, 2000). The descriptive study of dialogue “understands dialogue as a defining quality of human being” (Escobar, 2009, p. 52) and is “concerned with actual conversational exchanges” (Walton, 2000, p. 333). The prescriptive study of dialogue considers dialogue as a communicative ideal which can be achieved through principled practices. Dialogue refers to a special kind of contact (Stewart & Zediker, 2000). In prescriptive dialogue, “certain kinds of rules are laid down precisely” (Walton, 2000, p. 334).

In a plural fragmented society where conversations and relations between people who are dissimilar have become challenging and rare, prescriptive dialogue can be a first step in building more trusting relations. “The value of the formal dialogue is that it can be applied to an actual dialogue in a given case, and used as a tool to help analyze the case” (Walton, 2000, p. 334). Consequently, formal dialogue fosters ‘new possibilities for informal interaction outside the dialogue room’.

2.2.6 Measurement

This chapter follows Dessel and Rogge (2008) in their assessment of intergroup dialogue research and evaluation. They assert that scholars of intergroup dialogue need to define indicator variables of successful processes and outcomes. However, there is an ongoing debate among dialogue scholars about the value of assessing outcomes, as the impact of dialogue is often not immediate and hard to objectively measure. Dialogue practitioners (e.g. Essential partners) underline that causality is hard to prove as contextual factors and individual characteristics affect the outcomes of dialogue.

To measure the outcomes of dialogue, most scholars have used pre-experimental designs. Qualitative data analysis methods—except qualitative surveys—have been very limited. To examine the long-term effects, a range of methods and longitudinal studies are needed. Also, rigorous approaches to data-collection (e.g. recording interviews and coding), will contribute to the knowledge base of dialogue (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). Furthermore, the different methods and lack of uniform protocols makes it hard to compare the results of dialogue or to replicate the methods used. In future research established dialogue protocols need to be used, to achieve more uniformity (Dessel & Rogge, 2008).

Most studies of dialogue use convenience samples, rather than random samples (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). Despite the advantages of random samples, practitioners in the field of dialogue assert that voluntary participation in dialogue is crucial to foster ownership and responsibility. Participants have to show commitment in order to achieve the goals of dialogue. To advance dialogue research, scholars need to closely consider various methods and measuring instruments.

The preceding sections attempted to give an introductory outline of relevant findings in research on the field of social capital and dialogue. The next section will outline potential synergy between both fields and present dialogue as a positive intervention to develop bridging social capital.

3 Towards a Positive Psychological Intervention: Building Bridges Through Talk

Over the last decades, the fields of dialogue and social capital appear to have evolved in parallel. Yet, a number of scholars made important connections between both scholarships. Especially research in the field of deliberation partly overlaps and intersects with intergroup dialogue (Dessel & Rogge, 2008) and offers relevant data, insights, and expertise with regard to the role of dialogue in the formation of (bridging) social capital. After providing a brief overview of relevant crossroads between the fields of dialogue and social capital, this section will propose dialogue as a positive intervention in developing bridging social capital. Consequently, it will show how specific characteristics of dialogue foster the process of relationship building

between people who are different. As the nature of social capital is highly contextual, it emphasizes that to successfully intervene in the *process* (how) of building bridging social capital, it is crucial to consider the *purpose* (why), the *places* (where), and the *people* (who) which are involved.

Making the Connection: Crossroads of Dialogue and Social Capital

Over the past decades, scholars have developed important modes of public conversation in order to strengthen the foundations of civil society. Recently, a number of scholars have argued that dialogue should be considered as complementary to deliberation. Whereas the study of dialogue has its roots in social work (and/or philosophy), the concept of deliberation has largely grown out of political philosophy. Most conceptualizations of deliberation emphasize democratic principles such as fairness, equity, reasoned analysis, and focus on the public good. However, the emphasis on the reasoned arguments makes it hard to address conflicts based on moral differences (Black, 2008). Dialogue instead “is a way that groups can constructively deal with moral and cultural differences” (Black, 2008, p. 93). Dialogue comprises both cognitive and emotional aspects: “Dialogue is a special kind of communicative relationship; the kind of relationship which broadens worldviews, reshapes perspectives, and speaks to both our cognitive and emotional capacities for mutual engagement” (Escobar, 2011, p. 16). To promote meaningful interactions in a culture of polarization and debate, it is essential to identify both the content and the relational level of communication. Dialogue not only fosters the exchange of knowledge but also promotes empathy and understanding. Escobar (2011) states that deliberative dialogue enables “patterns that are crucial for building community resilience and social capital” (pp. 6–7). Important key features of deliberate dialogue—which can be related to the formation of bridging social capital—are: (a) the sharing of personal narratives, (b) provocative and open-ended questions (posed by one participant to another), (c) the questioning of some fundamental assumptions, and (d) the collective search for common ground. In the following section, relevant features that foster the creation of bridging social capital will be further unpacked.

By analyzing public conversations and their power to unite or divide people, Lohman and Van Til (2011) demonstrate how public deliberation and sustained dialogue can strengthen the social fabric of civil society. When Robinson (2011) displays the potential contribution of public deliberation to develop social capital, he underlines the importance of studying the *processes* in building relations. In a fragmented society with a decline of trust and the increasing influence of professionals and political state, ordinary people often feel disconnected. Encouraging deliberate discourse within and among groups helps people to engage in meaningful decision-making and facilitates building social capital. Like Van den Kroon et al. (2002), Robinson argues that dialogue can be considered one of the most important *processes* to create social capital. Dialogue facilitates the exchange of information and ideas and reveals people’s interest. It enables people to interact and relate, and promotes collective knowledge and achieving common goals (Robinson, 2011).

Aside from the field of deliberative dialogue, scholars and practitioners in other fields (e.g., community psychology, community development, civic or public jour-

nalism, education) emphasize the importance of (face-to-face) communication in building trust, relations, and a shared understanding within communities. Research of social capital could benefit from expertise, data, and findings of other disciplines to advance the knowledge of building connections across social cleavages.

Despite valuable insights of scholars and practitioners in various research fields, the processes by which bridging social capital is built seems to be an under-studied topic that deserves more attention (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). Understanding the processes of relationship building between people who are different, takes time and effort. To gain more insight, future research needs to observe and analyze amongst others personal (face-to-face) interactions, cooperative action, and the development of collective identification, shared norms, and understanding (Dryden-Peterson, 2010).

Dialogue as a Positive Intervention to Build Bridging Social capital

The presented overview of social capital and dialogue scholarship shows a strong potential for synergy between both concepts. Bourdieu (1986) posits that social capital resides in relationships, and relationships are created through exchange. Research in the fields of communication and deliberation underlines the potential of dialogue as a process to build and use social capital. Therefore, dialogue can be seen as a positive intervention in building social capital which is a core component in enhancing social well-being (e.g. happiness, life satisfaction, health) and has an important role in maintaining a healthy democracy.

In sum, this chapter emphasizes that *social relationships* are at the core of dialogue and bridging social capital. *Bridging social capital* can be described as horizontal ties between individuals and groups who are dissimilar and which cross social cleavages. *Intergroup dialogue*—as a facilitated conversation gives people who are dissimilar, a safe opportunity to explore attitudes and seek mutual understanding. For that reason, dialogue is a promising intervention to create connections between people with different backgrounds and identities.

In order to better understand how to create bridging social capital, research needs to examine the *relational aspects* of the concept. Following Rostila (2010), *structural* (networks) and *cultural* aspects (trust, norms, and values) are considered as preconditions for social capital. To foster relationships across divides, that are a valuable resource to individuals and society, *communication* is essential. *Dialogue* (as a specific form of communication) is an important *process* (intervention) that enables people who are different to develop more trusting relationships. While specific *goals and benefits* of dialogue depend on the context, it is crucial to examine *individual relationships* and relevant *contextual factors* (*structural* and *individual*) in the places (*formal and informal settings*) where bridging social capital is built and maintained.

Dialogue in Action: Purpose, Places, People and Processes in Building Bridging Social Capital

This paragraph explains how to use dialogue as a positive intervention to create bridging social capital. It will show how characteristics of dialogue can be used as practical

communication-based interventions to promote relationships between people who are not alike. Key features of dialogue will be related to specific goals/benefits (see Sect. 2.1.2) and/or characteristics (see Sect. 2.1.3) of bridging social capital. However, to develop a successful intervention, it is important to consider the context in which social capital is built and maintained. This implicates that besides studying the *processes (how)*, also the *purpose (why)*, *the places (where)*, and the *people (who)* need to be considered.

Purpose

The main purpose of bridging social capital is to provide individuals and groups with valuable resources they can use and benefit from. Developing a **shared language and vocabulary**...enables to **co-create meaning** and facilitates **access to these resources**.

The *cognitive dimension* of social capital refers to resources providing shared representations, interpretations, and meaning among different groups or individuals (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). To benefit from these resources, meaningful interactions are essential. Communication between different individuals and groups requires at least some shared context. Shared language and vocabulary and shared narratives are ways to achieve a shared context. In addition, “language is not a neutral medium” “...we create our social world as we collectively name them and try to make sense of them” (Escobar, 2011, p. 8). Thus, shared language is critical as reality is made of language. However, our multicultural network society in which people are increasingly interconnected, is at the same time more fragmented than ever, also in terms of (specialized) languages. Furthermore, in our post-modern culture, our understanding of truth has radically changed and has impacted the way we communicate. Nowadays, people no longer believe in a universal objective truth. The existence of truth is dependent on context, situation and time. As a result, the truth has become more dynamic and relational. The value of dialogue is that it enables people to develop a shared language and context and see others perspectives. Finally, the clustering in like-minded communities has led to an increasing polarization and more extremism. As a result, creating a shared context between people who frame topics differently, use their own metaphors and narratives, and demonize others and outgroups, is often hard and challenging. Scholars like Haidt (2012) and Lakoff and Johnson (2003) offer valuable insights on how to overcome (language) barriers by investigating underlying moral values, metaphors, frames and (cognitive) biases. Haidt and others use the Moral Foundations Theory to explain how different moral values determine why people frame issues differently. Based on research findings they give directions how to bridge (moral) gaps, for example by reframing topics. Lakoff, who is well-known for his research on metaphors, explains how (unconscious) metaphors structure our perceptions and understanding. Examining language and metaphors helps to understand how people think and to overcome (cognitive) biases and differences.

Places

The structural dimension of social capital (networks and connections amongst people) forms an important precondition to create cognitive and relational social capital,

that are a resource people can benefit from (see Sect. 2.1.3). Social networks and connections facilitate social interaction which in turn promotes the development of trust and shared goals and values.

An important characteristic of dialogue that promotes bridging social capital in an increasingly polarized society, is to **create safe spaces** in order to **build trust and relationships between people who are different**.

For dialogue practitioners, the “challenge in creating spaces for public engagement is to reduce the fear of harm, enhance the reward experienced by participating, and enable people to connect with one another in meaningful ways” (Stains, 2016, p. 1528). Building a safe space is an important characteristic of dialogue as it allows free flow of ideas and helps to build trust (Escobar, 2011). Social capital as a relational construct depends heavily on trust. Bridging social capital is often linked to ‘thin trust’ (or ‘generalized’ or ‘social’ trust) which is “based more on community norms than personal experience” (Sander & Lowney, 2006, p. 24). With the lack of spontaneous social connections across sociocultural and ideological divides and a culture debate, dialogue provides safe spaces that enable people who are different, to develop shared goals, values, and more trusting relationships. Dialogue hereby contributes to the formation of bridging social capital.

The civil society with a wide range of networks of association is a relevant context where social capital is built and maintained (Robinson, 2011). As the formation of bridging social capital can be difficult and challenging, it is essential to reuse existing networks for new purposes (Putnam et al., 2004). For example, networks in educational, religious, and local communities offer excellent opportunities for heterogeneous groups to connect and communicate. Dialogue studies show various examples of dialogue (about divisive topics like gender and race) in *educational settings*. In a society where the majority of students are educated in schools with like-minded others, it is important to create opportunities for young people to interact, collaborate, and to achieve shared goals with those who are different (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). In *local communities*, initiatives like the *Concord Project*, *Living Room Conversations*, the *Public Dialogue Consortium*, the *World Café*, the *National Issues Forums*, *Study Circles* and organizations/networks like the *Knight Foundation* and the *National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation* facilitate dialogue to promote bridging social capital. Furthermore, recent studies in the field of community psychology show the potential of creative place making (e.g. innovative arts practices) to enhance social cohesion and more inclusive communities (Thomas, Pate, & Ranson, 2015). In *religious communities* churches used to be built around a geographical community, however, nowadays they are constructed around people with similar lifestyles and values (Bishop & Cushing, 2009). In *Winsome persuasion*, Muelhoff and Langer (2017) encourage Christians to engage in dialogue with those who are different, in a culture of debate. To cross social, cultural and racial boundaries various faith communities have started initiatives of dialogue—both inside and outside their communities—to build relationships across divides. The best way to create opportunities to bring people together depends on the level of trust that exists in a specific context (Sander & Lowney, 2006). In general, dialogue between individuals or small groups in a local context is a good way to promote bridging social capital. For larger

groups, activities like a celebration or sharing food are easy ways to unite people who are different. Activities with the purpose of undertaking joint goals or individual relationship building require more trust and smaller groups (Sander & Lowney, 2006). In addition, to promote social cohesion and inclusion it is important to pay attention to the physical and symbolical elements of the places where interactions between people who are different takes place (Thomas et al., 2015). Further research and collaboration between scholars and practitioners in different fields, helps to gain insight into how to build and strengthen heterogeneous social networks and communities.

People

As a form of face-to-face communication, the success of dialogue and building connections across divides, depends heavily on the people involved. Building bridging social capital requires specific skills from dialogue practitioners and participants. An important precondition to building relationships across social cleavages—in a culture of argument and debate—is to equip facilitators of dialogue and improve the capacity of participants to connect and communicate.

One of the key features of dialogue that involves facilitators and participants is creating an atmosphere of **openness**...to promote the **exchange of new ideas and broaden people's worldviews**.

Bridging social capital gives access to power, new information, and broadens people's worldviews. In our current society where people tend to live in their own tribes of like-minded people, others are often seen as an out-group or threat. Stereotyping, demonizing, and dehumanizing makes it hard to have meaningful interactions with others who are different. Moreover, in a digital age, *face-to-face interaction* is indispensable to create empathy and understanding (Turkle, 2016). Or, as Brown (2017) states 'people are hard to hate close-up'. Dialogue encourages an open-minded attitude and helps to create empathy, and to expand people's perspectives. Dialogue stimulates a divergent flow of communication, whereas other forms of communication often seek a convergent flow (Escobar, 2011). Participants of dialogue "are asked to be open to multiple voices, styles of communication and perspectives" (Escobar, 2011, p. 22). Dialogue practitioners underline the critical role of facilitators in creating an open atmosphere and achieving successful results. For example, skilled facilitators will carefully plan dialogue sessions and frame interventions of participants in the right way. In addition, communication agreements between participants—which are used in structured dialogue settings—contribute to achieving an open-mindset, as "(1) they discourage old ritualized patterns of communication and (2) foster a respectful, safe environment in which participants can have a purposeful, fresh, and personal exchange of ideas, inquiries, and experiences" (Herzig & Chasin, 2006, p. 9). Future research can benefit from the resources and experiences of dialogue scholars and practitioners to promote the exchange of ideas and expand people's worldviews, which are important goals of bridging social capital.

The broad aim of dialogue and bridging social capital is building understanding and relationships. Dialogue enables people who are different to **find common ground and explore differences**...in order to develop **respect and mutual understanding**.

Exploring common ground and differences implies that “participants need not only to understand (inquire), but also to make themselves understood (advocate)” (Escobar, 2011, p. 31). Dialogue promotes processes that support speaking, as well as listening (Stains, 2016). It also invites participants to recognize and respect different perspectives (Escobar, 2011). Research shows that dialogue promotes a greater awareness of others’ positions, values, and worldviews. Bohm (1996) argues that dialogue enables collective thought which fosters trust and collaboration that are crucial to bridging social capital. Dialogue in the hermeneutic tradition allows a process of creation of shared understanding between individuals and groups with different backgrounds, values, and (social) identities (Escobar, 2009). Dialogue practitioners promote listening in order to understand, speaking to be understood, curiosity about others and oneself, and conversational resilience (trying to be genuinely interested even if it’s tough to listen) (Stains, 2016). In a culture of debate, it is crucial for people to develop strong social and communication skills to build relations with others (Crook, 2016). In order to promote a dialogic culture and to increase bridging social capital, research needs to address how to improve dialogic and interpersonal skills, especially for future generations.

In dialogue participants have to **suspend judgements and assumptions...in order to become aware of own (and others) beliefs and values.**

Dialogue calls for (temporarily) suspending one’s beliefs and assumptions. To foster dialogic communication, it is important that people are aware of their personal and cultural lenses (and values). In communication, people often express their (superficial) positions. Dialogue enables to explore the underlying interests, values, needs, and fears. Research on bridging social capital underlines the importance of shared norms and values as they promote the exchange of information, ideas, and innovation, and enable to achieve common goals. To explore underlying values, dialogue encourages people to control their automatic responses and suspend fundamental beliefs. This can be achieved by listening carefully, asking questions of genuine interest, and by bringing their assumptions into the open (Escobar, 2011; Herzig & Chasin, 2006). Practitioners of dialogue use thoughtful pauses to encourage reflection. “A truly fresh and constructive conversation often requires thoughtful pauses. These moments of silence are anything but empty” (Herzig & Chasin, 2006, p. 22). Pauses encourage participants to reflect on their assumptions, promote better listening and helps individuals to make thoughtful contributions. Furthermore, suspending judgements creates opportunities to learn from others and makes people feel respected and heard. To better understand how and which underlying values affect dialogue outcomes, future research needs to address specific cultural and personal values.

Finally, dialogue requires **collaborative inquiry...to explore common ground and support collaboration.**

Collaborative inquiry “refers to the shared investigation of issues that participants care about” (Escobar, 2011, p. 26). Dialogue requires a “willingness of the participants to place themselves at risk by sharing uncertainty and thus becoming somewhat vulnerable” (Escobar, 2011, p. 26). The fear of being vulnerable often has a negative impact on making connections with others who have different social backgrounds

(Brown, 2017). Co-inquiry includes asking genuine questions and developing shared language and narratives in order to explore common ground. Argyris' Ladder of Inference appears to be a useful tool to promote collaborative inquiry and the search for common ground (Escobar, 2011; Essential Partners, 2018). The ladder describes the mental processes that occur in our brain from receiving, selecting and interpreting data (or stories) to our conclusions or actions. It shows how psychological processes, underlying worldviews, values and assumptions, contextual factors (e.g. cultural, political) and our communication skills, affect our interactions with others who are dissimilar. As a result, the ladder helps to avoid misunderstandings, to improve communications between people with different backgrounds and beliefs. Also, it enables people who are different to find common ground and fosters collaboration. Therefore, it contributes to the formation of bridging social capital.

Processes

Following Robinson (2011), this chapter argues that dialogue can be seen as one of the most important processes to create bridging social capital.

Storytelling, as a critical feature of dialogue, helps to promote **shared narratives, sense-making, and humanity**.

“Sharing stories is one of our primary means of communication and sense making” (Escobar, 2011, p. 24). Stories allow people to talk about (world)views, values and beliefs and relate to their personal experiences. “Storytelling can promote dialogue in two ways. First, it helps participants co-create and manifest their identities in relation to one another and second, it enables them to imagine and appreciate each other’s perspectives” (Black, 2008, pp. 95–96). To promote human relationships and shared sense-making, dialogue practitioners invite participants to tell stories about their personal experiences, their values, and grey areas in their views (Essential Partners, 2018). Putnam et al. (2004) emphasize the power of storytelling as an important mechanism of social connection (and thus in building social capital). Stories help us to relate to one another as they promote a more fully-dimensional picture of people and emphasize common humanity. Storytelling, therefore, relates to characteristics of the cognitive social capital (shared language and narratives), and increases tolerance and acceptance of others with different values and beliefs, which are goals of bridging social capital.

In the process of building relations, identity can be considered as something which is created and negotiated through communication. **Exploring identities**, as an important characteristic of dialogue, therefore, fosters **social cohesion and inclusion**.

In general, people tend to act on behalf of their social identity. Strong identification with one group often leads to stereotyping and negative behavior against members of out-groups (Wieseke et al., 2012). Especially when people feel threatened in their identity, this may lead to polarization and division. Research indicates that the exclusion of others, distrust and lack of cooperation are some of the negative outcomes of bonding social capital. Dialogue plays a key role in shaping personal identity, as it represents “the process through which cultural values, beliefs, goals, and the like are formulated and lived” (Pearce & Pearce, 2004, p. 42 as cited in

Escobar 2009, p. 53). Through learning about others who have opposing social identities, intergroup dialogue builds relationships between people who are different and fosters reappraisal and recategorization of outgroups (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). Thus, dialogue promotes collective identification and enables people to develop broader identities (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). It, therefore, fosters social cohesion and inclusion which are important goals of bridging social capital. To understand how bridging social capital is created, negative outcomes of bonding social capital and the role of dialogue/communication in shaping identities need to be further examined.

Prior interventions demonstrate how key features of dialogue foster the formation of bridging social capital. This chapter explores the role of dialogue in building relationships between people who are different from a theoretical perspective and provides a theoretical framework. However, to grasp the implications of dialogue as a positive intervention to develop bridging social capital, practical research and the study of actual relationships is necessary. The following paragraph will give directions for future research and disclose the critical challenges that need to be addressed.

4 Directions for Future Research

Our current society has fewer possibilities for human interaction. Intergroup dialogue is a formal, structured way of conversation that facilitates communication across divides. However, these conversations often don't happen spontaneously and participation in dialogue is voluntary. As a result, the impact of the presented dialogic approach is limited. Future research needs to address how to foster and create inviting places where people who are different can connect and collaborate. To plant seeds of change, scholars of bridging social capital could partner with (intergroup) dialogue scholars (Nagda et al. 2009; Dessel & Rogge, 2008), collaborate with experienced dialogue practitioners, and explore how to reuse existing networks in different contexts.

Human relations are the core of dialogue and bridging social capital. Therefore, studies need to observe actual relationships and interactions in specific contexts (formal and informal settings, with open ties) where people unite and cooperate with one another. Nonetheless, this can be costly and time-consuming. In addition, the impact of dialogue is not immediate and/or in reality hard to objectively measure. Causality is difficult to prove as contextual factors and individual characteristics affect the outcomes. Scholars of future research need to examine appropriate qualitative methods (e.g. experiments, content analyses, observations), examine the context and advance the knowledge of outcome research. One way to achieve more uniformity and comparing the results is the use of dialogue protocols. For example, protocols from experienced dialogue practitioners (e.g. Reflective Structured Dialogue from Essential Partners) can be useful. In addition, longitudinal studies are needed to examine the long-term effects of dialogue. For dialogue practitioners, it is important

to equip facilitators and share their knowledge, to collaborate with scholars and to find resources to evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions.

Dialogue—as a special form of face-to-face communication—requires specific (social) skills. Turkle (2016) argues that in our digital age where people have less face-to-face interactions, they often bear social skills as empathy, which are necessary for constructive dialogue. In addition, in a culture of debate, meaningful interactions between people who are different has become hard and challenging. The experience of dialogue practitioners could be used to improve dialogic skills of individuals to mobilize bridging social capital. Especially, educational settings offer excellent opportunities to equip the future generation with better social and communication skills.

5 Conclusion

In an increasingly fragmented and polarized society, building bridges through talk can be hard and challenging. This chapter proposes dialogue as a promising tool to cultivate relationships across divides. As a structured and facilitated form of (face-to-face) communication, dialogue enables connections between people with different backgrounds, values, and identities. To successfully intervene in building connections across divides, it is important to examine the context in which social capital is built and maintained. Therefore, research needs to include the *purpose*, the *places*, and the *people* which are involved in the *process* of the creation of bridging social capital. By viewing social capital through the lens of dialogue, this chapter asserts that developing bridging social capital is essentially a communicative accomplishment.

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SOAR: A Framework to Build Positive Psychological Capacity in Strategic Thinking, Planning, and Leading



Matthew L. Cole and Jacqueline M. Stavros

Abstract Today's challenging global business and economic environment makes it necessary to develop strategic thinkers who perform well together and deliver results. Traditional ways of thinking about strategy may limit one's ability to effectively address and adapt to the ever-changing conditions and turbulent environment in which organizations operate. A McKinsey Quarterly study of 1300 global executives found that the highest performing organizations had a clear purpose, an understanding of strengths, shared aspirations, and leaders who knew how to unleash opportunities with a result-driven process. This chapter introduces SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results), an evidenced-based framework that is a profoundly positive approach to strategic thinking, planning, and leading used by hundreds of international organizations to build strategic capacity at the individual, team, and the organization level. SOAR's operating system is Appreciative Inquiry, one of the most effective and widely used approaches for fostering positive change. SOAR creates a reservoir of positive energy to frame issues from a solution-oriented perspective that is generative and focused on strengths, new ideas, innovations and the best in people to emerge. SOAR begins with a strategic dialogue among all stakeholders in a team or organization into what is working well (strengths), what are possibilities for growth (opportunities), what are individual and shared desires (aspirations), and what are measures of success (results). In this chapter, the convergence of research and practice on SOAR is discussed. Next, results are presented of empirical research on SOAR's role in building positive strategic capacity via the SOAR profile, a rapid assessment instrument used by individuals and teams to create a baseline understanding of one's natural ability to think, plan, and lead strategically from a SOAR-based perspective. The chapter concludes with a discussion of SOAR's role in promoting an inclusive environment that facilitates performance among multicultural teams and organizations in which SOAR-based strategy is a dynamic and generative process

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that focuses on strengths, whole system solutions, and stakeholder inclusion while building positive psychological capital.

Keywords Positive psychological capacity · Positive strategy · SOAR · Appreciative Inquiry

1 Introduction

In today's increasingly dynamic, global, and unpredictable business environment, organizations who know how to build positive psychological capacity in strategic thinking, planning, and leading will be resilient and thrive due to their capacity to be flexible, agile, and dynamic organizations (Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2009; Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Ma, Xiao, & Yin, 2018). Resilient organizations are able to thrive under challenging conditions because resources and adaptive capabilities are leveraged to generate strategic initiatives that address growth and build a successful future (Annarelli & Nonino, 2016; Sellberg, Ryan, Borgström, Norström, & Peterson, 2018; Teixeira & Werther, 2013). Strategic leaders in resilient firms formulate and implement strategic initiatives through flexible and adaptive strategic thinking, planning, and leading (Benito-Ostolaza & Sanchis-Llopis, 2014; Stavros & Cole, 2013).

Organizational resilience connects a definition of resilience as adaptive capacity and transformability, with management behaviors of strategic thinking, planning, and leading (Folke, 2006; Sheffi & Rice, 2005). In this context of organizational resilience, resilience is created through strategic initiatives created from adaptable, flexible, and innovative strategic formulation and implementation to create a competitive advantage (Annarelli & Nonino, 2016). At the root of strategic formulation and implementation is strategic thinking, a particular way of thinking involving a systems-based, future-focused, and holistic view of strategy (Liedtka, 1998a, 1998b), strategic planning, the use of strategic thinking ideas to formulate agile business plans, and strategic roadmaps (Harris & Ogbonna, 2006). Strategic leaders in today's highly volatile, unpredictable, and competitive marketplace who have developed positive psychological capacity, view strategy as a creative and dynamic process in which strategic thinking and planning are interactive, flexible, and ultimately build organizational resiliency to lead robust transformative activities (Graetz, 2002; Manfield & Newey, 2018; Rowe, 2001; Walker, Holling, Carpenter, & Kinzig, 2004).

Results of a McKinsey Quarterly study of 1300 global executives suggest the high-performing organizations in the 21st century will have a high strategic capacity for organizational resilience through successful employment of competitive strategies that deliver results, meet stakeholder's needs, and lead positive transformation and change (Isern & Pung, 2007). Similarly, developments in organization development (OD) have focused on positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities in today's workplace (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Thus, building positive psychological capacity in strategic thinking, planning and leading so that

leaders have a clear purpose, an understanding of strengths, shared aspirations, and know how to unleash opportunities with a result-driven process becomes an essential goal for building individual and organizational resilience (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005; Stavros & Wooten, 2012; Toor & Ofori, 2010).

Growing out of the theory and practice of both positive psychology and Appreciative Inquiry (AI), SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results), is an evidenced-based framework that is a profoundly positive approach to strategic thinking, planning, and leading used by thousands of international organizations to build resilience at the individual, team, and organizational level (Stavros & Saint, 2010). SOAR integrates positive psychology and AI through its focus on positive deviance (i.e., moving toward positive energy and away from negative energy), its encouragement of possibility thinking through generative conversations, and the formulation and implementation of a positive strategy by identifying strengths, building creativity in the form of opportunities, encouraging individuals and teams to share aspirations, and determining measurable and meaningful results (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012b; Stavros, Cooperrider, & Kelley, 2007). SOAR is a strategic framework that builds positive psychological capacity by using dialogue and generative conversations to transform strategic thinking, planning and leading into action.

This chapter begins with a description of SOAR's evolution from the fields of strategy, organization development (OD), Appreciative Inquiry (AI), and positive psychology. Next, empirical research is presented on AI as the mechanism of action by which SOAR increases positive psychological capacity in strategic thinking, planning, and leading. The chapter concludes with a discussion on using SOAR as a positive psychological intervention with the aim of building resilience at all levels of organizations.

2 The SOAR Framework

SOAR is a strengths-based framework with a whole system (stakeholder) approach to strategic thinking, planning, and leading (Cole & Stavros, 2013). The SOAR framework enhances strategic thinking, planning and leading through a positive guiding approach to *inquire* into strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and measurable results; *imagine* the most preferred future; create *innovative* strategies, plans, systems, designs, and structures to build a sustainable culture; and *inspire* organizational stakeholders to *soar* to a state of engaged high performance, execution of strategy, and profitable results (see Fig. 1) (Stavros & Cole, 2013).

SOAR integrates whole system thinking, strengths-based perspectives, and generative conversations of a system's strengths and opportunities to shape a preferred future that allows for positive changes in strategies, structures, business models, systems, and processes (Stavros & Saint, 2010). SOAR's strengths-based perspective refers to a focus on things that are right, things that can be enhanced, and things that are compelling to stakeholders (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009). SOAR's use of generative

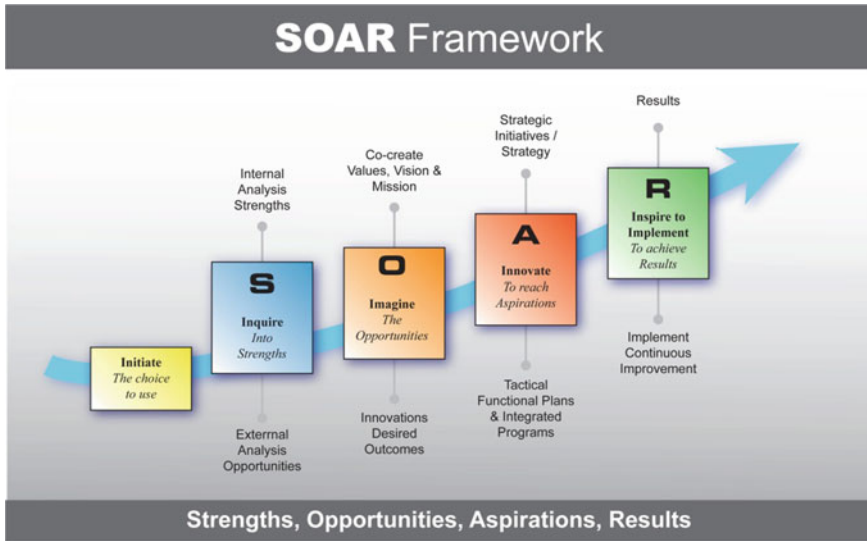


Fig. 1 The SOAR framework. *Source* www.soar-strategy.com

conversations means helping stakeholders create new strategy through their stories and conversations that allow them to share their work and organization perspectives differently (Bushe, 2013; Schon, 1979). Generative conversations occur when people engage in an interactive dialogue to discover or create new ideas useful for having a positive impact on a desired future (Bushe, 2007). Generative conversations leverage the capacity for strategic change to occur from even a single conversation (Stavros & Torres, 2018).

The SOAR framework facilitates generative conversations through SOAR-based generative questions. SOAR-based generative questions build positive psychological capacity through strategic inquiry with an appreciative intent by asking questions designed to generate a new and better future (Stavros, Cooperrider, & Kelley, 2003). SOAR-based generative questions are meaningful questions that elicit reflection and divergent thinking, encourage active listening and interactive collaboration, and force participants to reframe reality in novel and creative ways.

The SOAR framework transforms strategic thinking, planning, and leading through an emphasis on solution-seeking and generative conversations focused on individual, team, and organizational strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and desired results to build a positive future (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009; Stavros & Wooten, 2012). In addition to transforming strategic thinking, leading, and planning, the SOAR framework also supports diversity, multiculturalism, and teamwork by inviting all stakeholders to collaborate in generative conversations (Cole, Cox, & Stavros, 2016, 2018).

2.1 Origins of the SOAR Framework

The origins of the SOAR framework leverage the strengths and opportunities from the classic SWOT analysis, dialogue-based, whole systems approaches to OD, such as AI, and positive psychology (Bushe & Marshak, 2014). The classic SWOT analysis starts by giving equal attention to S, W, O and T (see Table 1). SWOT tends to divert conversations and resources away from strengths and opportunities by focusing on the weaknesses and threats against a company. One of the consequences of SWOT is that a company which focuses on correcting mistakes may be less able to devote resources toward a focus on positive deviance, new growth and opportunities, and resilience.

In contrast to SWOT, SOAR leverages the strengths of dialogical OD and its focus on generative dialogue and interactive communication (Bushe & Marshak, 2014) to focus energy on aspirations and results (Stavros & Cole, 2013). An overview of the comparisons and contrasts between the SWOT and SOAR frameworks is presented in Table 2. In practice, SWOT tends to be competition-focused—“just be better”, whereas SOAR is potential-focused—“be the best possible” and “what might be” (Stavros & Cole, 2013).

Table 1 Characteristics of SWOT

Internal environment (S & W)	Strengths Organization’s resources and capabilities Basic for developing “competitive advantage”	Weaknesses Lack of a resource or capability A “competitive deficiency”
External environment (O & T)	Opportunities Circumstances that support profit and growth (e.g., unfulfilled customer needs, new customers, new technology, favorable legislation)	Threats Circumstances that hinder profit and growth (e.g., more competitors, changes to revenue stream, restrictive regulations)

Table 2 Comparisons and contrasts between SWOT and SOAR

SWOT	SOAR
Focus on weaknesses and threats	Focus on strengths and opportunities
Competition focus—“Just be better”	Potential focus—“Be the best possible”
Incremental improvement	Innovation and value generation
Top down	Stakeholder engagement
Focus on analysis → planning	Focus on planning → implementation
Energy depleting	Energy creating
Attention to gaps	Attention to results

Note Adapted from Stavros and Hinrichs (2009, p. 12)

SOAR emphasizes strategic conversations to engage invited stakeholders to identify and analyze shared strengths, opportunities, and aspirations to achieve mutually beneficial results. The influence of dialogue and generativity on SOAR grew from the theory and practice of AI and positive psychology. SOAR builds on AI and positive psychology by using generative conversations to inspire open communication on solution seeking and thoughts about positive change. By using dialogue to create whole system conversations, the SOAR framework helps stakeholders share about strengths in themselves, their teams, and their organization to shape strategy and the strategic process. Thus, SOAR is framework that embraces solutions, innovations and positive success and helps the whole system develop a positive approach to strategic thinking, planning, and leading.

3 Appreciative Inquiry as the Operating System of SOAR

SOAR has its origins in AI and shares AI's philosophy and underlying values of positive psychology, dialogic communication, and generative conversations (Bushe, 2007, 2013; McClellan, 2007; Stavros & Torres, 2018; Whitney & Fredrickson, 2015). AI is a philosophy that "aims to uncover and bring forth existing strengths, hopes, and dreams: to identify and amplify the positive core of the organization. In so doing, it transforms people and organizations. With AI, the focus of attention is on positive potential—the best or what has been, what is, and what might be. It is a process of positive change" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 15).

AI is also a method of dialogue that reframes traditional managerial problem solving, such as, an organization is a problem to be solved, into, an organization is a solution to be embraced. AI assumes every organization has something that works well, and these organizational strengths provide the starting point for generative conversations to create positive change through shared dialogue (Cooper-rider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). AI is applied using the 4-D cycle with generative questions designed for each of the following four phases: Discovery ("What gives life", the best of what is—Appreciating), Dream ("What might be", imagine what the world is calling for—Envisioning), Design ("How can it be", determining the ideal—Coconstructing), and Destiny ("What will be", how to empower, learn and adjust/improvise—Sustaining) (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

AI invites people to engage in a shared dialogue about positive images and affirmations to create new and alternative possibilities. AI practitioners facilitate shared dialogue among stakeholders in an organization or community that focuses on what works well, rather than what is not working well (Whitney & Fredrickson, 2015). The shared dialogue occurs through AI-based conversations about gaps, possibilities, and a desired future (Bushe, 2007; Stavros & Torres, 2018).

SOAR builds positive psychological capacity for solution-based strategy from the generative conversations and positive interconnectedness of people, teams and organizations (Stavros & Cole, 2013). Through its focus on positive deviance, SOAR integrates the philosophies of AI and positive psychology by framing strategy as a

set of processes that enable collective resourcefulness and generative dynamics that lead to positive states or outcomes (Fredrickson & Dutton, 2008).

4 SOAR Through the Lens of Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is an umbrella term for positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Positive psychology is concerned with conditions and processes contributing to flourishing and optimal function of individual, teams, and organizations (Gable & Haidt, 2005). In the context of business and OD, positive psychology helps organizations flourish and thrive through the adoption of “a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potentials, motives, and capacities” (Sheldon & King, 2001, p. 216). Research confirms positivity ratios are significantly higher for individuals identified as flourishing relative to those identified as nonflourishing (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

SOAR through the lens of positive psychology reframes traditional perspectives of, what is wrong in people, into, what is right with people and what are their strengths and virtues (Seligman, 2005; Sheldon & King, 2001). Thus, SOAR through the lens of positive psychology refers to a focus on positive deviance (i.e., moving toward positive energy and away from negative energy), a focus on investigating positive outcomes, positive capabilities and activities that lead to flourishing, and a focus on appreciation, collaboration, virtuousness, vitality, and meaningfulness (Cameron et al., 2003; Cameron & McNaughtan, 2016). A positive lens is advocated because positive phenomena account for behavioral changes that may otherwise be overlooked (Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014).

In addition to the focus on positivity and conditions to create flourishing, positive psychology has important implications for organizational behavior and leadership by laying the foundation for “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement” (Luthans, 2002b, p. 59). In support of this call for measurement, the SOAR profile was developed. The SOAR profile is a self-report measure of SOAR-based capacity for strategic thinking, planning, and leading (Cole & Stavros, 2013, 2014; Cole, Stavros, & Zerilli, 2017). The SOAR profile measures both AI and the four elements of SOAR. Research with the SOAR profile has contributed to characterizing SOAR’s role in promoting diversity in teams (Stavros & Cole, 2015) and improving collaboration in teams (Cole et al., 2016, 2018; Cole & Stavros, 2016). In the next section, new research on SOAR’s role in building psychological capacity for resilience in people is described.

5 Empirical Study on SOAR, AI, and Organizational Resilience

5.1 Introduction

Organizational leaders and employees face constant changes in the work they do, how they perform at work, where they work, and who they work with. To successfully meet these changes, employees and leaders need to develop organizational resilience to positively adapt and thrive. Organizational resilience is “a positive psychological capacity to rebound, to ‘bounce back’ from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure” (Luthans, 2002a, p. 702). Resilient organizations have a competitive advantage because of adaptable, flexible, and innovative strategic thinking, planning and leading by organizational employees and leaders (Annarelli & Nonino, 2016; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Ma et al., 2018; Sellberg et al., 2018).

SOAR is action oriented and focuses energy on strategic innovative solutions, implementation, and obtaining results. Empirical research on SOAR from several recent doctoral dissertations and scholarly publications, as well as practitioner experience on SOAR over the past 20 years, underscores the efficacy of SOAR in building positive psychological capacity in strategic, thinking, planning, and leading (Cole & Stavros, 2016; Cole et al., 2016, 2018; Glovis, Cole, & Stavros, 2014; Sprangel, Stavros, & Cole, 2011; Stavros, Cole, & Hitchcock, 2014; Stavros & Cole, 2015). To demonstrate how SOAR promotes positive psychological capacity for organizational resilience, new empirical research is described on AI as the mechanism of action by which SOAR increases organizational resilience in students and working professionals. The study tested two hypotheses: (H1) AI is a positive predictor of SOAR, and (H2) AI mediates the positive effect of SOAR on organizational resilience. H1 was tested to understand if AI is the operating system of SOAR; H2 was tested to understand if AI is the mechanism of action by which SOAR effects organizational resilience.

5.2 Study Participants

A sample of 585 working professionals and business students was obtained by email invitations to complete an online eSurvey. In this study, research participants were protected according to the federal requirements specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Code of Federal Regulations, 45 CFR 46. Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample. The sample was relatively matched in terms of gender (46% female) and age, with 34% high school educated, 23% earning a Bachelor’s degree, and 43% earning a graduate degree. Approximately 75% of the study were white ethnicity. Almost 95% of the sample had experience working in teams, and over 50% had leadership experience.

Table 3 Sample characteristics

Characteristic	N	%	Characteristic	N	%
Total sample	585	100.0	<i>Ethnicity</i>		
<i>Gender</i>			Asian	53	9.1
Female	269	46.0	African-American	36	6.2
Male	316	54.0	Hispanic	19	3.2
<i>Age</i>			White	422	72.1
18–22	194	33.2	Other	34	5.8
23–32	97	16.6	Decline	21	3.6
33–42	164	28.0	<i>Team role</i>		
43–57	106	18.1	No team experience	30	5.1
58–80	24	4.1	Team member	236	40.3
<i>Highest education</i>			Team leader	319	54.5
High School Degree	201	34.4			
Undergraduate Degree	132	22.6			
Graduate Degree	252	43.1			

5.3 Study Variables

In addition to measuring demographic characteristics, the study survey was comprised of the SOAR profile, a brief self-report survey designed to help people understand how they most naturally approach strategic thinking, planning, and leading. The SOAR profile measured three constructs: SOAR, AI, and organizational resilience. SOAR and AI were measured by asking participants to estimate the frequency of focusing on different constructs when they approach strategy in their life, team and organization along a 10-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 4 = Rarely, 7 = Often, and 10 = Always). SOAR was measured by 12 constructs organized into the four elements of SOAR (STrengths scale = 3 constructs, alpha = 0.774; OPPortunities scale = 3 constructs, alpha = 0.839; ASPirations scale = 3 constructs, alpha = 0.683; RESults scale = 3 constructs, alpha = 0.807; SOAR full scale alpha = 0.837). AI was measured by 5 constructs representing the theoretical characteristics of AI: whole system, solutions, collaborative relationships, open communication, and stakeholder needs (AI scale alpha = 0.836). Organizational resilience was measured by asking participants to choose one of two views of strategic formulation and implementation: (1) strategic formulation and implementation are adaptable, flexible, and innovative (scored 1), or (2) strategic formulation and implementation are rigid and inflexible (scored 0). Statistical analyses were conducted in Minitab 18 and Mplus 8.1. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables in terms of mean, standard deviation, and intercorrelation. Cronbach’s alpha scale reliable coefficients are presented along the diagonal.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics of the study variables

	Resilience	AI	SOAR	STR	OPP	ASP	RES
Resilience	<i>n/a</i>						
AI	0.121**	<i>0.836</i>					
SOAR	0.092*	0.735**	<i>0.837</i>				
STRengths	0.066	0.627**	0.822**	<i>0.774</i>			
OPPortunities	0.124**	0.590**	0.814**	0.550**	<i>0.839</i>		
ASPIrations	0.074	0.567**	0.767**	0.535**	0.571**	<i>0.683</i>	
RESults	0.028	0.531**	0.744**	0.522**	0.452**	0.323**	<i>0.807</i>
Mean	0.79	7.73	7.84	7.84	8.10	7.57	7.84
SD	0.41	1.23	1.04	1.26	1.30	1.32	1.43

Note * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients are shown in italics along the diagonal

5.4 Common Method Variance

Harman’s single-factor test (Fuller, Simmering, Atinc, Atinc, & Babin, 2016) was used to test common method variance (CMV), which is defined as the amount of spurious correlation between variables created by using the same method, often a survey, to measure each variable (Craighead, Ketchen, Dunn, & Hult, 2011). This test was used to estimate CMV in the study by testing if the items that measured the independent variable (AI) and dependent variable (SOAR) to test H1 were found to measure one factor according to Harman’s single factor test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Specifically, exploratory factory analysis (EFA) was performed using the 5 items that measured AI and the 12 items that measured SOAR. Three factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1 (5.37, 1.29, and 1.02). The percentage of variance for these three factors were 35.8, 8.6, and 6.8%, respectively, refuting the presence of CMV in the study.

5.5 Study Results

H1 was tested to understand if AI is the operating system of SOAR. H1 was tested by using a structural equation model (SEM) to test the hypothesis that AI is a positive predictor of SOAR (see Fig. 2). Results found good model fit for the SEM using the following criteria for goodness of fit: RMSEA < 0.08, CFI > 0.900, and all factor loadings significant at $p < 0.05$ (Cheung & Lau, 2008). As shown in Fig. 2, AI was a significant positive predictor of SOAR (standardized $\beta = 1.001$, $p < 0.01$). Results support the hypothesis that AI is the operating system of SOAR.

H2 was tested to understand if AI is the mechanism of action by which SOAR effects organizational resilience. H2 was tested using a mediation path model to test

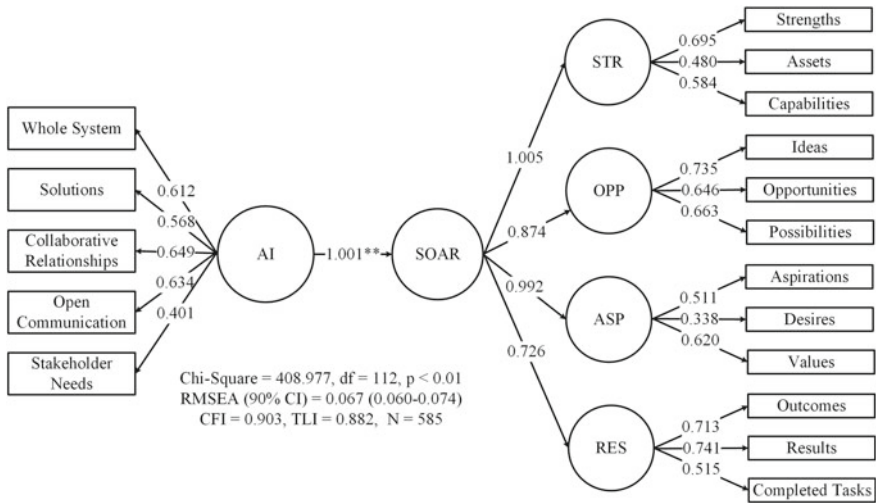
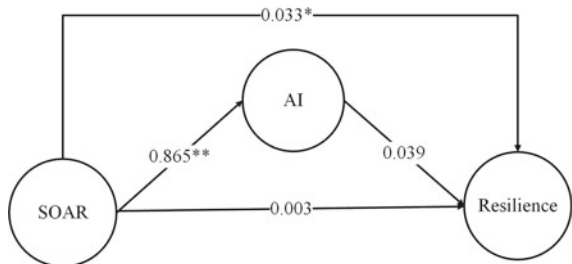


Fig. 2 H1: Structural equation model of AI as a predictor of SOAR

if AI mediates the relationship between SOAR and organizational resilience (see Fig. 3). Specifically, the indirect effect of SOAR having a positive effect on organizational resilience through AI; a bootstrapped confidence interval for the indirect effect was obtained using procedures described by Preacher and Hayes (2008). In the mediation path model, mediation is inferred if a significant indirect effect of the mediator (AI) is found on the relationship between the independent variable (SOAR) and the dependent variable (Resilience). Composite scores for SOAR, AI, and Resilience were used in the mediation path analysis; bootstrapped confidence intervals were generated for the indirect effect (5000 bootstrapped samples were used) (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Results found a significant indirect effect of SOAR predicting resilience through AI ($\beta = 0.033, p < 0.05$); the direct effect of SOAR predicting resilience was not significant ($\beta = 0.003, p > 0.05$). These results support the hypothesis that AI fully mediates the positive effect of SOAR on organizational resilience (Cheung & Lau, 2008).

Fig. 3 H2: Mediation path model of SOAR as a predictor of resilience through AI



6 Practical Implications and Recommendations on Using SOAR to Increase Positive Psychological Capacity

SOAR provides a dynamic framework for generative dialogue on strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results to build positive psychological capacity, and empirical research provides several practical implications and subsequent recommendations on using the SOAR framework to increase positive psychological capacity. Results of the empirical research found two main outcomes important for building positive psychological capacity. First, AI is the operating system of SOAR. Thus, SOAR requires AI to formulate and implement a positive strategy by identifying strengths, building on opportunities, sharing aspirations, and determining results. Second, AI mediates the positive relationship between SOAR and organizational resilience. With mediation analysis, insight is gained into the mechanism of action of predictors of resilience (Gunzler, Chen, Wu, & Zhang, 2013). As a mediator, AI helps explain how or why SOAR influences resilience. Organizational resilience was defined in the research as a shared mindset of flexible and agile strategic thinking, planning, and leading that blends creative solution seeking and action with a focus on the possible (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). In this context, resilience is a positive psychological capacity to overcome and succeed in the face of adversity, uncertainty, conflict, crisis, and failure (Luthans, 2002a).

For practitioners, this empirical research underscores SOAR's reliance on AI through its focus on positive psychology (i.e., positive deviance—moving toward positive energy and away from negative energy) and generative conversations to facilitate possibility thinking (Cameron et al., 2003; Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012a; Stavros et al., 2007). This research also implies strategic leaders should use the SOAR framework to formulate and implement strategic initiatives through flexible and adaptive ways to build resilience (Benito-Ostolaza & Sanchis-Llopis, 2014; Stavros & Cole, 2013).

Practitioners can use the SOAR framework “whenever the strategic planning process is done to complete environmental scanning; revisit or create organizational values, vision, and mission; formulate strategy, strategic plans, and tactical plans; and bring about transformational change” (Stavros et al., 2007, p. 378). The practical application of SOAR involves a series of generative conversations among stakeholders from all parts of the organization to gain a whole system perspective on the organization's values, vision, mission, strengths, strategic initiatives, aspirations, etc. The stakeholders can form in small groups from a variety of areas to dialogue on what happens when the organization is working at its best and how to apply that information to create a desired future. By incorporating relevant stakeholders from all parts of the organization in AI-based dialogue (including core high-level individuals, subordinates, and even customers, when applicable), the organization as a whole is given the opportunity to participate in the overall success of the project (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009).

The SOAR framework facilitates strategic conversations through SOAR-based questions that build positive psychological capacity through strategic inquiry with an

appreciative intent (Stavros et al., 2003). Table 5 presents examples of SOAR-based questions to increase positive psychological capacity for organizational resilience. For example, individuals are recommended to engage in a collaborative and inclusive dialogue on individual, team, and organizational level *strengths* as they relate to possibilities for solutions or innovations by asking the following questions: “What are our greatest strengths? What can we build on? What are we doing well? What makes us unique?” *Opportunities* that would benefit from solutions or innovations are address by asking the following questions: “What are the best possible market opportunities? What are our stakeholders asking for? How do we best partner with others? How can we differentiate ourselves from competitors?” *Aspirations* of a desired future indicative of resilience are addressed by asking the following questions: “To what do we aspire? What do we care deeply about? What is our preferred future? What strategic initiatives will support our aspirations?” Finally, measurable results indicating progress towards a goal or objective that reflects resilience are addressed by asking the following question: “What are the measurable results? How do we know we are succeeding? What do we want to be known for? What resources are need to implement our most vital projects?” (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009).

Finally, practitioners are also recommended to use the SOAR Profile to help understand positive psychological capacity. As a measure of SOAR and AI, the SOAR Profile helps practitioners and strategic leaders understand stakeholders’ natural SOAR-based capacity for strategic thinking, planning, and leading (Cole & Stavros, 2013, 2014; Cole et al., 2017).

Table 5 Example of SOAR-based questions

Planning processes	SOAR elements	SOAR-based questions
Strategic inquiry	Strengths	What are the greatest strengths of an individual, team, or organization? What are they doing well? What is unique? What can be built on?
	Opportunities	What are the best possible market opportunities for an individual, team, or organization? How do they differentiate themselves from competitors? What are stakeholders asking for? How to best partner with others?
Appreciative intent	Aspirations	What are the aspirations of an individual, team, or organization? What does they care deeply about? What is the preferred future? What strategic initiatives support aspirations?
	Results	What are the measurable results? How does an individual, team, or organization know they are succeeding? What do they want to be known for? What resources are needed to implement the most vital projects?

Note Stavros and Hinrichs (2009)

7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present SOAR and discuss how the SOAR framework can be used to build individual, team, and organizational level positive psychological capacity to create organizational resilience under any condition. Strategic leaders in resilient organizations formulate and implement strategic initiatives through flexible and adaptive strategic thinking, planning, and leading. SOAR influences organizational resilience and builds positive psychological capacity through AI, which is positive, whole system dialogue, inclusive, and generative-questions.

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Brief Positive Psychological Interventions Within Multi-cultural Organizational Contexts: A Systematic Literature Review



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Abstract Applications of brief positive psychology interventions (BPPI) within organisational contexts have soared within the last decade; yet academic literature on its effectiveness is limited. However, critics have raised concerns about the applicability, replicability and generalizability of those BPPIs published within academic literature; especially when applied within multi-cultural contexts. Given the ever-increasing diversity of the workforce due to factors such as globalization, migration and immigration, it is imperative to consider cultural context to design effective and meaningful BPPIs. While present literature addresses specific BPPIs in clinical samples and monocultural contexts, limited research exists with respect to the design of BPPIs applicable to multi-cultural organisational contexts. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a systematic literature review on multi-cultural BPPIs within organisational contexts and to present an overview of advances to date. We conducted a systematic literature review in Medline and PsycINFO using a comprehensive list of relevant search terms (2000–2018) to identify studies on multi-cultural BPPIs within organisational contexts. Findings provide support for the short-term effectiveness of various types of BPPIs in multi-cultural organisational contexts, however, the statistical power and long-term effects of these studies are questionable. Specifically, it seems that workplace mindfulness-based training, (web-based and multi-modal) stress management, and acceptance and commitment therapy mitigate consequences like stress and burnout, though more evidence is needed to support that BPPIs actively promote positive psychological outcomes. This chapter presents

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an overview of advances made to-date and aims to encourage researchers to consider multi-cultural aspects when developing BPPI interventions.

Keywords Brief positive psychological interventions · Multi-cultural contexts · Intervention research · Systematic literature review

1 Introduction

Investing in the wellbeing of employees results in many performance-related benefits for the individual (e.g., performance and job satisfaction), team (e.g., team flow, creativity, and increased collaboration), and organisation (e.g., staff retention and lower absenteeism) (Taris & Schaufeli, 2015). It is therefore not surprising that organisations are looking for cost-effective and short-term solutions to enhance the wellbeing of their employees (Ivandic, Freeman, Birner, Nowak, & Sabariego, 2017). Organisations seek brief, comprehensive and simplistic solutions or ‘interventions’ which do not significantly interfere with its day-to-day operations yet yields a maximum return on investment (Stander & Van Zyl, In Press).

Although various brief approaches to wellbeing interventions exist within the literature, none have been advocated, marketed or promoted as much as those stemming from positive psychology (Seligman, 2012). Positive psychology proposes that mental health or wellbeing is a function of the optimisation, utilisation and application of individuals’ signature strengths in order for them to feel good, function well, and fit into the societal context (Rothmann, 2013). This strengths-based or positive approach towards wellbeing resonates with organisations as it leans away from focusing on “correcting” what is wrong, removes the stigma related to mental health at work and is aligned to the principles of continuous improvement, and the actualisation of individuals’ potential (Gilbert, Foulk, & Bono, 2018; Ivandic et al., 2017).

Short term organisational interventions, drawing from this approach, aims to develop employees’ positive thoughts, feelings and behaviours in order to actualise their strengths and to optimize their potential (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). These interventions are traditionally referred to as ‘Brief Positive Psychological Interventions’ (BPPIs), and are promotion focused, limited in duration, simplistic in design, can be delivered in various forms, implemented at low cost (Ivandic et al., 2017) and can be implemented at an individual/team level or within the broader scope of an organisational development plan (Ivandic, 2018). Furthermore, BPPIs can be implemented rather easily and without special training or materials and they are scalable with limited cost implications (Shankland & Rosset, 2017).

BPPIs employ a wide variety of methodologies and can take many forms. Drawing from the work of Bolier et al. (2013), Ivandic (2018) indicated that BPPIs can be classified into brief (a) self-administered intentional activities, (b) short-term positive coaching and (c) group-based development initiatives. *Self-administered intentional activities* are delivered through channels such as self-help books, self-guided personal

development initiatives or online interventions (Schotanus-Dijkstra et al., 2017) and do not require the assistance of a professional for its implementation (Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2014). These BPPIs can reach a wider target group at a more effective cost (Bergsma, 2008). However, these interventions tend to have a low adherence rate because it assumes that a single intervention will fit the preferences/needs of all participants and achieve the exact same outcomes (Christensen, Griffiths, & Farrer, 2009; Schueller, 2010). These interventions assume a ‘one-size fits all’ model, not controlling for individual differences/preferences, personal strengths or developmental needs (Bolier et al., 2013). As such, scholars have recommended to provide more interactive support (Cuijpers, Donker, van Straten, Li, & Andersson, 2010) and to provide more personalized or tailored BPPIs (Schueller, 2011).

In line with a need to tailor interventions to individual needs, another type of BPPI is suggested: short-term *individual positive coaching*. Positive coaching refers to a “short to medium term strengths focused, goal orientated developmental process aimed at harnessing the inner potential (capability) of an in order to optimise performance, to actualise potential, enhance well-being and achieve work goals” (Van Zyl, Motschnig-Pitrik, & Stander, 2016, p. 316). These types of BPPIs are tailored to the specific developmental needs of an individual, and aids individuals to identify, and use their strengths in order to facilitate personal and professional growth (Van Zyl et al., 2016). Short-term positive coaching is generative in nature and has been found to enhance innovative work behaviours, builds positive relationships, enhances individual performance, lessens dependency on outside resources and results in higher levels of staff retention (Van Zyl & Stander, 2013). Although many benefits relating to positive coaching exists (Bolier et al., 2013), it is not resource-effective or scalable.

In contrast, *group-based development interventions* are more resource-effective and offer the additional opportunity of developing peer- or social support. These BPPIs are aimed at enhancing system-wide positive behaviours through strengths-training, skills-development, psychoeducation, or group/team development sessions (Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2014). These BPPIs result in greater commitment and adherence because they are usually aligned to organisational strategies and implemented across the board. However, these group-based development interventions also have a series of pitfalls such as logistic constraints (e.g., fixed meeting times and larger locations), specific facilitator training to deal with large groups, fewer opportunities to attend to individual needs (Paul-Ebhohimhen & Avenell, 2009) and a more time-consuming than other types of BPPIs.

Despite the inherent challenges of BPPIs, they are hailed as the holy grail of approaches/methodologies when it comes to the enhancement of positive mental health or wellbeing at work (Ivancic, 2018). However, an important question that has thus far been neglected pertains to the applicability and generalizability of BPPIs within multi-cultural organisational contexts.¹ Globalization, migration and immigration have led to an increased diversity of the global workforce (Harvey, Bolino, & Kelemen, 2018). Because individuals from different cultures approach, perceive, and

¹For the purpose of this literature review, “multi-cultural contexts” refer to settings in which individuals of more than one cultural background are present.

experience the workplace in different ways (Gelfand, Aycan, Erez, & Leung, 2017), these increased multi- and cross-cultural organisational contexts bring along new challenges for implementing BPPIs. Specifically, research has shown that person-activity fit significantly predicts the success of interventions (Schueller, 2014). This implies a necessity to ensure that interventions are not just aligned to people's preferences but also to their cultures. From its early beginnings, positive psychology has been warned to guard against a "one size fits all" approach to interventions (Norem & Chang, 2002). Interventions developed in one cultural context are not necessarily applicable to others (Bolier et al., 2013). Therefore, cultural diversity needs to be considered when choosing which types of BPPI should be implemented to ensure that it is effective and meaningful.

1.1 Importance of Cross-Cultural Differences in the Workplace

Cross-cultural researchers are increasingly interested in the effects of culture on workplace behaviour and motivation (Gelfand et al., 2017). Individuals from divergent cultural backgrounds think, feel, function, and approach life in significantly different ways (Winkelman, 2005). For example, research has found vast variations in communication styles (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2003), work-related values (Tran, Admiraal, & Saab, 2017), safety climate perceptions (Barbaranelli, Petitta, & Probst, 2015), and antecedents of employee wellbeing (e.g., Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002) across cultures. In an increasingly globalized world, BPPIs need to control for cultural differences in the workplace in order to positively impact employees' wellbeing, emotions, and behaviours.

In terms of *wellbeing*, for Western (European and American) individuals, decisive factors are personal (job) success, health, and self-esteem (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000). In contrast, for Asian individuals, wellbeing is associated with avoiding potentially negative social consequences, such as arousing others' jealousy or disturbing the harmony in (work-)relationships (Uchida & Kitayama, 2009). As a consequence, Asian individuals tend to strive for moderate, instead of maximized, positive experiences; a belief possibly informed by the Buddhist teachings that the middle way between pure pleasantness and self-mortification is most desirable (Spencer-Rodgers, Williams, & Peng, 2010; Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004).

Regarding *emotions*, a range of studies found that Asian individuals experience equal levels of pleasant and unpleasant feelings, while North American individuals report more positive than negative emotions (Kitayama et al., 2000; Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002; Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2002). These studies provided preliminary evidence that Asian individuals may have a more dialectical way of experiencing emotions.

Other research examined the differential effects of individual- versus group-based feedback in terms of self-efficacy, performance, and job satisfaction for individualists (United States) and collectivists (China and Czechoslovakia) (Earley, Gibson, & Chen, 1999). Results were inconsistent with the researchers' predictions: Collectivists showed a strong sense of self-efficacy if either individual or group feedback signalled successful performance. For individualists, self-efficacy was influenced by individual feedback only, regardless of the group feedback. Therefore, the authors highly recommend managers take cultural differences into account when providing performance feedback.

In terms of *behaviour*, one example of a cross-cultural difference is that some cultures encourage maintaining eye contact during (business) conversations, while it is socially inappropriate in others (Ekman & Friesen, 1972; Kupperbusch et al., 1999). Another example concerns the idea that networking behaviour might be culture-specific. According to Huang and Wang (2011), *guanxi*, the Chinese concept of the social relationships, may facilitate networking in contrast to their Western counterparts.

Taken together, these findings indicate that people from individualistic cultures might find less value in interventions designed for collectivistic cultures, in addition to differences that could arise due to other cultural factors. Organisations, functioning within the global business environment, that are interested in enhancing the well-being of employees, need to have a through-overview of which BBPIs are effective within multi-cultural contexts. However, to date no systematic synthesis of BBPI effectiveness within multi-cultural environments exist. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to provide a systematic review of the effectiveness of BPPIs carried out within multi-cultural organisational settings.

1.2 Present Systematic Review

Based on the findings that research may produce different results depending on the cultural context, the aim of the present study is to examine the effectiveness of BPPIs within multi-cultural organisational contexts. To achieve this objective, we conducted a systematic literature review on multi-culturally focused BPPIs in organisational settings to provide an overview of types of interventions used, their contexts, and the effectiveness thereof.

2 Method

2.1 Research Approach

We employed a systematic literature review to obtain data applicable to the purpose of this chapter. Prior to the start of the data collection, the systematic review was pre-registered on Prospero (ID: CRD42018108836). We employed the best practise guidelines as outlined by Cochrane (Dickerson, Scherer, & Lefebvre, 1995) and explicitly followed the PRISMA guidelines (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009).

2.2 Search Strategy

In September 2018, we searched the Medline and PsychINFO databases for relevant articles published in English between 2000 and 2018. Our search strategy was built upon the search strategy of Ivandic et al. (2017), who completed a systematic literature review related to workplace mental health and wellbeing interventions between 2000 and 2016. We completed a literature search using the same freetext/keywords and MeSH terms for our literature review. The significant difference between Ivandic et al. (2017) and this systematic literature review is that we focused on (a) BPPIs specifically conducted in multi-cultural contexts and (b) to expand the search parameters from 2000 to 2018.

Our systematic literature review was conducted as follows: We evaluated the 20 articles identified by Ivandic et al. (2017) in terms of whether the sample was multi-cultural. In parallel, we conducted a systematic literature review using the same search terms as outlined in Ivandic et al. (2017) for the years 2016–2018. This search provided us with a list of 20 additional articles for further evaluation. Taken together, we screened 40 articles for demographic information, specifically whether samples included participants of different cultural or national backgrounds. For those articles that did not report this information, we reached out to the corresponding authors to verify the potential multicultural nature of their sample. Articles for which authors could not be reached or did not respond within four weeks were not included in the final selection. In total, we reached out to 54 authors to collect more information on their sample, 25 of whom responded to our query (46.3% response rate).

2.3 Selection Criteria

Only academic, peer-reviewed publications/articles that was published between 2000 and 2018 where eligible for inclusion in this study. In order for articles to be included, the sample of a study had to consist out of employed individuals (i.e. participants

must not have been unemployed at the time of the study), between the ages of 17 and 65. Only workplace BPPIs that employed a randomized-control trial or a quasi-experimental design, which were published in English, were included. These interventions should specifically target the enhancement of mental health or wellbeing related outcomes, such as resilience, perceived stress levels, job satisfaction, work engagement and affect balance. We further included interventions at both the individual and organisational level, delivered in groups or individually, face-to-face or with the help of modern technology (e.g., app or online platforms). Since our focus was on BPPIs, programs, interventions, or treatments aimed at fixing, remedying, or healing something that is pathological or deficient—as opposed to building strengths—were excluded. Only brief interventions lasting up to 6 sessions (or 6 weeks), for no longer than an hour, were included. We also excluded unpublished work, dissertations and theses as well as conference proceedings. Finally, we excluded studies for which the number of participants with a multi-cultural background was below 5% of the total sample.

2.4 Eligibility Assessment

After following our search strategy, with pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria, two authors independently analysed the abstracts and full texts. A clear coding taxonomy was developed and strictly followed. Any disagreement was resolved by seeking an expert opinion. Studies were included if the average percentage of agreement between the parties involved in the coding process had at least a 90% overlap (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

2.5 Data Extraction and Data Synthesis

We extracted the following information about study characteristics: authors, intervention type, number of—and duration of sessions, mean age, delivery of the BPPI (group or self-help), recruitment, whether or not there was self-selection of participants, the presence of psychological problems and other inclusion criteria, the type of control group, the numbers of participants analysed at the post-test, the post-test attrition rate, outcome measures employed and the duration until the follow-up. When applicable and available, we also reported and calculated effect sizes (Cohen's *d*).

3 Results

This systematic review comprised seven studies evaluating workplace BPPIs in which participants of different cultural backgrounds were included. None of the studies explicitly investigated the cross-cultural differences in the effectiveness of the interventions. The PRISMA flow diagram is presented in Fig. 1. A brief description of the interventions employed (see Table 1) in the included studies as well as a detailed overview of the findings of each (see Table 2) is presented in the sections below.

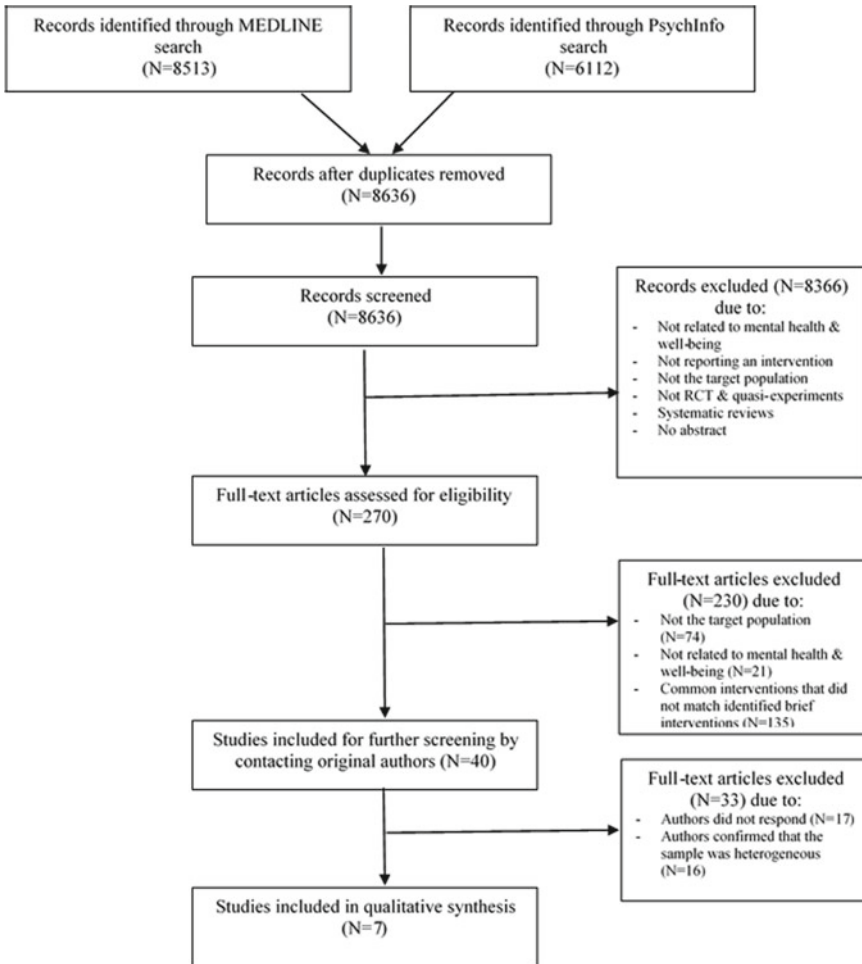


Fig. 1 Flow chart of the study selection process

Table 1 Short descriptions of brief interventions

Authors	Intervention group	Brief intervention description
Eisen et al. (2008)	Computer-Based Stress-Management Intervention Group (CB)	Online training on progressive relaxation and e-learning modules on stress management. Short self-administered intentional activities were encouraged to be employed daily
	In-Person Stress Management Intervention Group (IP)	Facilitator lead training on progressive relaxation and in-person training sessions presented on stress management. Short self-administered intentional activities were encouraged to be employed daily
	Wait-list Control Group (WC)	No Intervention
Hersch et al. (2016)	Experimental Group (EG)	Online e-Learning course with seven modules relating to stress management and mental health. Each module suggested several positive self-administered intentional activities to be employed
	Wait-list Control Group (WC)	No Intervention
Jennings et al. (2013)	Experimental Group (EG)	In-person training on emotional skills and mindful awareness practices. Participants were taught caring and compassion based self-administered practices
	Wait-list Control Group (WC)	No Intervention
Kemper (2017)	Experimental Group (EG)	Online case-study based e-Learning modules were presented to participants. Each module contained guided meditations in audio format which lasted between 5 and 20 min. Each module contained 1 to 3 self-administered intentional activities which participants were encouraged to employ
Koncz et al. (2016)	Experimental Group (EG)	One half-day introductory session was presented, whereby the core techniques of mindful meditation was taught. Five weekly sessions of 60 min were held, where new techniques were taught. A number of self-administered cognitive based mindfulness activities were provided as homework
	Wait-list Control Group (WC)	No Intervention

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Authors	Intervention group	Brief intervention description
Mackenzie et al. (2006)	Experimental Group (EG)	Four group-based mindfulness sessions were held. Participants were facilitated through a series of experiential mindfulness-based activities. Audio CDs with guided mindfulness practices were provided to participants. These required active practice of 10 min per day, for 5 days a week
	Wait-list Control Group (WC)	No Intervention
Stafford-Brown and Pakenham (2012)	Experimental Group (EG)	A group-based training intervention which spanned 4 sessions, was presented to participants covering topics relating to the acceptance and commitment of stress and stress related factors. Each session comprised of a training component, group discussions and a variety of experiential activities. Between-session self-administered activities were provided to participants
	Wait-list Control Group (WC)	No Intervention

3.1 *Brief Overview of the Interventions Employed*

All interventions employed incorporated a form of initial training, where the fundamental principles of the intervention were presented, the core techniques taught, and the self-administered activities explained. Each intervention comprised out of a series of self-administered activities, centred around the enhancement of the core concept being developed. However, it is to be noted, that none of the included studies, provided detailed descriptions of the intervention content, and did not provide examples of the experiential or self-administered activities which it employed. Table 1 provides a brief overview of the content of the interventions.

3.2 *Summary of Cross-Cultural Positive Intervention Studies*

The sample size of the included studies ranged from 14 to 134 participants. Of the seven studies identified, four evaluated group-level interventions (Eisen, Allen, Bollash, & Pescatello, 2008; Koncz et al., 2016; Mackenzie, Poulin, & Seidman-Carlson, 2006; Stafford-Brown & Pakenham, 2012), two evaluated individual-level interventions (Hersch et al., 2016; Kemper, 2017) and one was mixed (Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2013). The amount of sessions participants

Table 2 Characteristics of studies investigating the effectiveness of BPPIs within multi-cultural contexts

Author	Intervention	Number of sessions and duration	Mean age (range or SD)	Delivery	Self-selection	Control group	N analyzed (post test)	Attrition rate, % (post test)	Outcome measures	Intervention significantly affected	Effect size/change
Eisen et al. (2008)	Stress management	2, 2 weeks	44.38 (9.61)	Group (face-to-face and online)	Not self-selected	Waiting list	N _{ip} = 134 N _{cb} = 123 N _c = 31	64% 88% 0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSI-R JHCSTHA SUDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subjective units of distress 	Δmp 21.2 ($p < 0.01$) Δmcb 7.5 ($p < 0.01$) Not reported
Hersch et al. (2016)	Web based stress management	Open access	41 (22–65)	Individual/Self-help (online)	Not self-selected	Waiting list	N _c = 52 N _c = 52	13-40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSS SDS Coping WLO SUS SAU UDAS JS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall nursing stress Stress related to death and dying Conflict with doctors Inadequate preparation Conflict with other nurses Work load Uncertainty concerning treatment 	$t = -2.95$ ($p < 0.01$) $t = -2.24$ ($p < 0.05$) $t = -2.11$ ($p < 0.05$) $t = -1.95$ ($p < 0.05$) $t = -4.17$ ($p < 0.05$) $t = -2.30$ ($p < 0.05$) $t = -2.14$ ($p < 0.05$)

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Author	Intervention	Number of sessions and duration	Mean age (range or SD)	Delivery	Self-selection	Control group	N analyzed (post test)	Attrition rate, % (post test)	Outcome measures	Intervention significantly affected	Effect size/change
Jennings et al. (2013)	Social emotional competence	4, 4–6 weeks	36 (22–60)	Group/individual (face-to-face)	Not self-selected	Waiting list	Total = 53	5.60%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PANAS ERQ DPS CES-D TSES MBI TUS FFMQ CAQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional regulation Daily physical symptoms Teacher self-efficacy Burnout Time urgency Mindful observing Mindful non-reactivity Overall mindfulness 	<p>$d = 0.80$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$d = -0.32$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$d = 0.60$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$d = 0.40$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$d = -0.42$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$d = 0.69$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$d = 0.73$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$d = 0.56$ ($p < 0.05$)</p>
Kemper (2017)	Mindfulness training	Open access for 17 months	Not reported	Individual (online)	Self-selected	None	Total = 178	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAMS-R MAAS FFMQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive and affective mindfulness Mindful attention Overall mindfulness 	<p>$\Delta m = 1.4$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$\Delta m = 3.3$ ($p < 0.01$)</p> <p>$\Delta m = 6.0$ ($p < 0.01$)</p>
Konez et al. (2016)	Mindfulness stress management	6, 6 weeks	45.8 (10 EG, 42.1 (10.3) CG)	Group (face-to-face)	Self-selected	Waiting list	$N_c = 24$ $N_e = 29$	0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UWES K10 VPES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distress Wellbeing (work-life balance and wellness) Vigour 	<p>$t = -2.7$ ($p < 0.05$)</p> <p>$t = 2.7$ ($p < 0.05$)</p> <p>$t = 0.50$ ($p < 0.05$)</p>

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Author	Intervention	Number of sessions and duration	Mean age (range or SD)	Delivery	Self-selection	Control group	N analyzed (post test)	Attrition rate, % (post test)	Outcome measures	Intervention significantly affected	Effect size/change
Mackenzie et al. (2006)	Mindfulness based stress reduction	4, 4 weeks	44.78 (8.16) EG, 48.62 (6.52) CG	Group (face-to-face and CD)	Not self-selected	Waiting list	N _e = 16 N _c = 14	0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBI • SWLS • OLQ • Relaxation • LIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional exhaustion • Depersonalization • Life satisfaction • Relaxation 	$\eta^2 = 0.16$ ($p < 0.05$) $\eta^2 = 0.16$ ($p < 0.05$) $\eta^2 = 0.21$ ($p < 0.05$) $\eta^2 = 0.15$ ($p < 0.05$)
Stafford-Brown and Pakenham (2012)	Acceptance and commitment therapy-based stress management intervention	4, 4 weeks	29.45 (8.26)	Group (face-to-face)	Not self-selected	Waiting list	N _e = 28 N _c = 28	3.50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHPSS • GHQ • SWLS • WBSI • VLI • FFMQ • SES • WAI-SF • AAQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional self-doubt • Psychological distress • Over-identification • Self-efficacy • Mindfulness • Valued living 	$\eta^2 = 0.08$ ($p < 0.05$) $\eta^2 = 0.07$ ($p < 0.05$) $\eta^2 = 0.07$ ($p < 0.05$) $\eta^2 = 0.10$ ($p < 0.05$) $\eta^2 = 0.23$ ($p < 0.05$) $\eta^2 = 0.20$ ($p < 0.05$)

N_e Number of subjects in experimental group, *N_c* Number of subjects in control group, *N_{ip}* Number of subjects in the in-person group, *N_{cb}* Number of subjects in the computer-based group, *T* Total, *na* = not applicable, *CG* Control Group, *EG* Experimental Group, *JHCS/HA* Johnson & Johnson's Health Care System Insight Health Risk Appraisal, *PSS* Perceived Stress Scale, *MAAS* Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale, *JRTI* Job Related Tension Index, *PANAS* Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, *PS* Productivity Scale, *VAS* Visual Analog Scale, *URTI* Upper Respiratory Tract Infection, *FFMQ* Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire, *SWL* satisfaction With Life Scale, *K10* Kessler's Psychological Distress Scale, *MBI* Maslach Burnout Inventory, *ERQ* Emotional Regulation Questionnaire, *HADS* Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scales, *CAMS-R* Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised, *CES-D* Epidemiological Studies' Depression Scale, *UWES* Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, *NSS* Nursing Stress Scale, *WLQ* Work Limitations Questionnaire, *DPS* The Daily Physical Symptoms, *TUS* Time Urgency Scale, *CAQ* The CARE Acceptability Questionnaire, *SUDS* Subjective Units of Distress, *GHQ* General Health Questionnaire, *AAQ* Acceptance and Action Questionnaire, *SDS* Symptoms of Distress Scale, *SAU* Substance and Alcohol Use, *LIS* Intrinsic Job Satisfaction Scale, *VPEs* The Voice Project Employee Survey, *SUS* Substance Uses for Stress-Relief, *WAI-SF* Working Alliance Inventory Short Form, *WBSI* White Bear Suppression Inventory, *VLI* Valued Living Questionnaire, *TSES* Teacher Self-Efficacy, *OLQ* Orientations to Life Questionnaire, *MHPSS* Mental Health Professionals Stress Scale, *SES* Self-Efficacy Scale, *UDAS* Understanding of Depression and Anxiety Scale, *OSI-R* Occupational Stress Inventory—Revised Edition

engaged in ranged from 2 (Eisen et al., 2008) to 6 (Koncz et al., 2016), with the median being 4 (Jennings et al., 2013; Mackenzie et al., 2006; Stafford-Brown & Pakenham, 2012). However, Kemper (2017) and Hersch et al. (2016) employed an open access, web-based design that encouraged individuals to work through the material and apply the interventions at their own leisure. All interventions lasted less than 6 weeks.

Five studies included high-stress professions, such as healthcare workers (i.e. Nurses) (Hersch et al., 2016; Kemper, 2017; Koncz et al., 2016; Mackenzie et al., 2006; Stafford-Brown & Pakenham, 2012), one was focused on education professionals (Jennings et al., 2013) and another included manufacturing workers (Eisen et al., 2008). Studies were carried out in the USA (Eisen et al., 2008; Hersch et al., 2016; Jennings, et al., 2013; Kemper, 2017; Mackenzie et al., 2006), and Australia (Koncz et al., 2016; Stafford-Brown & Pakenham, 2012).

All studies employed a pre-post-test design, with no medium- or longer-term follow-up. None of the studies included samples with psychological problems. Except for one study (Kemper, 2017), all others included a waiting list control group. Attrition rates were reported between 0 and 88%. The web-based or computer-based interventions yielded the largest dropout rates (Eisen et al., 2008: 88%; Hersch et al. 13.4%). Kemper (2017) only used participants that completed the entire online intervention and that fully completed both the pre- and post-test, into his analysis. The attrition rate was not reported in this instance.

Three interventions involved face-to-face training (Jennings et al., 2013; Koncz et al., 2016; Stafford-Brown & Pakenham, 2012), two were delivered online (Hersch et al., 2016; Kemper, 2017) and two interventions consisted of mixed methods: face-to-face and computer-based (Eisen et al., 2008) and participants receiving a CD with guided meditations in addition to face-to-face training (Mackenzie et al., 2006).

All the studies measured both pathological and positive psychological states, traits and/or behaviours. The majority of the studies found significant effects of the employed BPPIs on reducing pathological experiences such as subjective or psychological experiences of distress (Eisen et al., 2008; Koncz et al., 2016; Stanford-Brown et al., 2012), nurses' stress (i.e. overall stress, stress related to exposure to death/dying, conflict with doctors, feelings of inadequate preparation, conflict with other nurses, work load, and uncertainty concerning the treatment of patients), burnout (Jennings et al., 2013) emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (Mackenzie et al., 2006), over-identification with problems (Stafford-Brown & Pakenham, 2012), time urgency and daily decrease in physical negative health symptoms (Jennings et al., 2013).

Positive psychological states, traits and behaviours which were enhanced due to the interventions were emotional self-regulation (Jennings et al., 2013), self-efficacy (Jennings et al., 2013; Stanford-Brown et al., 2012), mindfulness and related mindful experiences (mindful observations, -non-reactivity, -attention, and cognitive and affective mindfulness) (Jennings et al., 2013; Kemper, 2017; Stanford-Brown et al., 2012), relaxation (Mackenzie et al., 2006), vigour (Koncz et al., 2016), wellbeing (through work-life balance and wellness) (Koncz et al., 2016) and life satisfaction (Mackenzie et al., 2006).

The effect sizes of the interventions ranged from small to large. None of the studies reported a power analysis (to determine whether the sample size will be large enough to determine an effect), nor calculated any form of sampling adequacy.

4 Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a systematic literature review on multi-cultural BPPIs within organisational contexts and to present an overview of advances to date. Specifically, the aim was to provide an overview of the effectiveness of different types of BPPIs within multi-cultural organisational contexts through a systematic literature review. Our review indicated some support for the short-term effectiveness of some types of BPPIs in organisational contexts, however the statistical power and long-term effects of these studies are questionable.

The results showed support for the short-term effectiveness of BPPIs to reduce experiences of psychological distress, occupationally specific stress related experiences, burnout, exhaustion, depersonalisation, over-identification, time urgency and negative health related symptoms within multi-cultural contexts. Bolier et al. (2013) argued that although the original intent of positive psychological interventions is not necessarily focused on reducing psychopathological experiences, studies have shown that they are effective to reduce stress, and buffer against the onset of stress-related disorders like burnout. This is because the development of positive experiences or -capabilities may provide the energy required in order to initiate the actions needed to address the causal stressors (Wong & Roy, 2017).

Further, the results also showed that BPPIs could enhance emotional self-regulation, self-efficacy, mindfulness-based experiences, relaxation wellbeing and life satisfaction within the short term. This is inline the original idea postulated by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009), that focusing on the development of positive states, traits and behaviours may lead to increases in overall wellbeing, and life satisfaction, which in turn may affect general health related outcomes.

Although a large majority of positive outcomes were measured in each of the included studies, our results showed that most of the intended positive outcomes measured did not show any significant changes before and after the interventions. The primary impact of the interventions related to the management- and reduction of stress-related experiences such as psychological distress and burnout. It is therefore not certain whether these BPPIs did, in effect, enhance positive experiences or if the changes in positive experiences were only a consequence of the reduction of pathological symptoms.

While the results showed that the BPPIs included in this study, may be applicable to multi-cultural groups, the effectiveness of these studies should be taken with a proverbial 'pinch of salt'. Although all the studies (with the exclusion of Kemper, 2017) employed a true experimental design, none of the studies reported any form of sampling adequacy, and therefore there is no evidence that the samples used are indeed large or diverse enough to measure the intended effect of the interventions.

The marginal differences between pre- and post-measures and the rather significant differences in effect sizes, may be attributable to statistical artefacts (Van Zyl, Efendic, Rothmann, & Shankland, *In Press*; Wong & Roy, 2017). Larger samples, and longer term follow-up assessments need to be considered in order to determine whether the interventions do indeed significantly affect the reduction of stress and the enhancement of positive psychological experiences.

Another factor that needs to be considered is that out of 8513 records in which BPPIs were mentioned, only 7 pertained to BPPIs in multi-cultural organisational contexts. The results indicated that no study specifically investigated the effectiveness of a BBPI for different cultures. All the studies were conducted within Western countries (USA and Australia) which are known to be predominantly individualistic in nature. Therefore, the cross-cultural relevance and the possible applicability of these interventions to other multi-cultural contexts are questionable. Thus, results of this systematic review highlight that academic studies pertaining to the development, implementation and validation of BPPIs within multi-cultural organisational contexts are scarce and in dire need. The evidence is further limited by the fact that most studies did not capture and/or report the information on the cultural background of the sample, hence the small number of studies identified in this review.

Other reasons for the scarcity of research could pertain to the fact that more interventions address workplace physical health and safety due to the legal pressure to address said working conditions (e.g., Haynes et al., 2018; Ward et al., 2018; Zaira & Hadikusumo, 2017). There might be a concern that mental health interventions might expose stressful or otherwise negative work environments. However, our review suggests that these previous tendencies might be changing. Although most interventions and BPPIs seem to target other factors of employee wellbeing (e.g., safety), an increasing number of intervention and BPPI studies are focusing on mental health (i.e., five out of the seven studies identified were published after 2010).

The scarcity of available research including participants from multi-cultural backgrounds also means that at the present stage a differentiated evaluation or meta-analysis on the effects on participants from specific cultures is not possible. With a growing body of research, and more diligent reporting on the cultural backgrounds of participants, it will hopefully be possible to identify more specific effect sizes, for example for participants from Western versus Eastern samples.

The studies identified from this review applied individual, group and mixed (both group and individual) interventions. However, no study explicitly applied organisational-level interventions. This could be due to the more challenging nature of applying an intervention on this higher level. Nevertheless, it is a worthwhile avenue for future research, as a more comprehensive program, targeting the organisation as a whole, might yield even better and more lasting results.

Mental health problems at work are a rising concern and often times linked to poor performance, loss of productivity and sickness absence (OECD, 2015). BPPIs aim to build and strengthen positive qualities, which makes them highly suitable for the organisational context (Ivancic et al., 2017). By focusing on the positive, they carry less stigma, while enhancing wellbeing and thereby potentially organisational

outcomes (Meyers, van Woerkom, & Bakker, 2013). Furthermore, as our findings suggest, BPPIs could be effective for employees from various cultures, an important concern in an increasingly globalized workforce.

4.1 Limitations

Limitations of the present systematic review include that we focused our literature search on two databases and only included publications in English. However, our time frame allowed us to capture publications from the early beginnings of positive psychology until 2018. Another limitation was that most studies did not report the cultural background of their participants. Hence, we had to request additional information from corresponding authors, which may introduce recall bias because most authors did not systematically capture the cultural background of their respondents. Apart from potential faults in the recollection process, less than 50% of authors returned our inquiry, meaning that a number of studies could have been missed that actually included multi-cultural samples. Additionally, the publication bias towards significant findings might contribute to the fact that we only found evidence for the effectiveness of BPPIs across multi-cultural samples. On the other hand, the fact that all seven studies identified in this review reported significant impacts of their interventions suggests that these interventions might be effective regardless of cultural background.

4.2 Implications for Multi-cultural Contexts and Future Directions

The present review provides preliminary evidence regarding the effectiveness of BPPIs among individuals from multi-cultural backgrounds in organisational settings. We strongly recommend further and more systematic evaluations with clear reporting of participants' cultural background to empirically establish intervention effectiveness across cultures. In addition, all studies identified in this review were carried out in English-speaking countries. This finding might in part be influenced by our inclusion criteria (i.e., publication had to be in English). Nonetheless, this still means that more internationally published research in this area is required to truly examine the effectiveness of BPPIs in different countries. Furthermore, samples examined in the studies included in this review were mostly restricted to healthcare and education professionals. While we do not dispute that these populations are highly important to examine, due to the high-risk nature for job stress, we need more research among other study populations as well. Only with more evidence from different cultures and across different populations will we be able to identify BPPIs that are truly generalizable.

4.3 Conclusion

This review showed that we need more awareness among researchers regarding the potential influence of multi-cultural backgrounds on research findings and generalization. This data needs to be systematically captured during the research and more diligently reported in publications. Given that we live in an increasingly globalized world, researchers need to consider the possibility that we will have participants from different cultures in our studies, which might potentially influence our results. Moreover, we need more research placing a special focus on validating interventions across cultures. Only then will we be able to effectively apply interventions for different cultural contexts.

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