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Agenda

- Brief Overview of Positive Psychology
  - Well-being and Resilience
- Brief Overview of Positive Education
- Strengths of Character
  - Signature Strengths
  - Character Strengths in Leadership, Teams and Relationships
- Positive Relationships
  - Active Constructive Responding
- Optimism and Gratitude (if time)
- Case Study of Effective Positive Education
Positive Psychology Overview
“Positive psychology is the scientific study of what it is that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.”

- Martin Seligman
Positive Psychology in Schools: Positive Education

- Positive education is the application of positive psychology content into schools to enhance student and teacher well-being and achievement.

- Research suggests:
  - Decreases symptoms of depression and anxiety
  - Improves life satisfaction, well-being and mental health
  - Decreases conduct problems, substance abuse, hopelessness
  - Improves academic achievement, motivation, engagement, academic expectations, hope, self-worth
  - Improves social support and trust.
Strengths of Character

Based on the work of
Dr. Martin Seligman
Dr. Chris Peterson
Dr. Ryan Niemiec
Dr. Leah Waters
Background

Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
Character Strengths Definition

- Personality traits that are displayed through thoughts, emotions, volitions and behaviors across domains of one’s life.
- Building blocks of human flourishing.
Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

1. Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence
2. Bravery
3. Caution/Prudence
4. Creativity
5. Critical Thinking/ Open mindedness
6. Curiosity
7. Fairness
8. Forgiveness
9. Gratitude
10. Honesty
11. Hope/Optimism
12. Humility
13. Humor & Playfulness
14. Kindness
15. Leadership
16. Love
17. Love of Learning
18. Persistence
19. Perspective/ Wisdom
20. Self-Control
21. Social Intelligence
22. Spirituality/Faith
23. Teamwork/Loyalty
24. Zest/Passion
Signature Strengths

Based on the work of
Dr. Martin Seligman
Dr. Chris Peterson
Dr. Ryan Niemiec
WHY: Signature Strength Research

- When individuals apply their signature strengths:
  - Increases life-satisfaction
  - Increases motivation, engagement, vitality and the experience of positive emotions
  - Decrease depression and stress
  - When applied at work increases job satisfaction, productivity, engagement at work, and meaning in their work
Signature Strengths

- Signature strengths are the character strengths in which one feels:
  - Energized
  - Self motivated
  - Authentic
  - The best of who you are
We are not equally dominant in all 24 character strengths.

The character strengths that are most dominant in us are called our signature strengths.

The VIA survey is a tool to help us reflect on what role each of the 24 character strengths are playing in our lives.

We can develop character strengths that we value.
Who Cares?

“The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.”

- C.G. Jung
Name the signature strengths you see the main character display and the behaviors associated with each strength.
## Common Misconceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misconception</th>
<th>Clarification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We use our strengths in isolation.</td>
<td>1. We use our strengths in synergy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. We should only focus on our signature strengths and ignore our weaknesses.</td>
<td>2. All 24 character strengths are valuable, and there is value in working on weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If it is not a signature strength it means we are not proficient when using it.</td>
<td>3. We can be skilled at using a strength even though it is not a signature strength.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shadow Side of Strengths

When our character strengths get us in trouble:

- At the wrong time, place, context
- Overuse
- For malice intent
- Not attuned to others
- To diminish self or others
Character Strengths in Leadership, Teams and Relationships

Using the best of ourselves to bring out the best in others.
Why: Strengths in Leadership, Teams and Relationships

- Enabling others to bring the best of who they are (Signature Strengths) increases relationship satisfaction, job satisfaction, and performance.

- Great leaders inspire others when they display the best of who they are (Signature Strengths).
Character Strengths In Leadership, Team & Relationships: Discussion

- What did Coach Boone do to unite this team?

- How do his signature strengths show in his behaviors?

- Did others play a role in uniting the team and how did their strengths show?
Great Leaders

- Great leaders inspire others with the best of who they are (Signature Strengths).
- Great leaders give others the opportunity to bring the best of who they are (Signature Strengths).
  - Energized
  - Intrinsically motivated
  - Authentic
  - The best of who they are
Great Leaders: Who inspires you?

- Name the person who has inspired you the most throughout your life.
- Describe a moment that exemplifies why you picked this person. What impact did they have on you?
- What are the character strengths that this person displayed that enabled him/her to inspire you?
Strength Based Leadership: Bringing Out the Best in Self and Others

**Self:** When is it a challenge for you to bring the best of who you are? What makes it a challenge? How can we be more intentional in bringing in the best of who we are?

**Others:** What is a strength of someone you lead that may be stifled? (Spouses/Children) How can you help cultivate that strength in them?
Positive Relationship

Based on the work of

Dr. Shelly Gable

Drs. John and Julie Gottman
WHY: Active Constructive Responding (ACR)

- When someone shares a positive experience with us there are **four ways** we tend to respond.
- Only one of the four ways we respond builds the relationship:
  - Increase trust
  - Increase intimacy
  - Increase connection
  - Decrease conflicts
  - Increase satisfaction with the relationship
  - Increase overall life satisfaction and well-being
  
  for both people, the person sharing the good news and the person responding.

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Skill for when someone chooses you to share a positive experience with you.

Dr. John Gottman describes it as a “bid” to share the life of that person. A “bid” is an attempt to gain attention, affection, or acceptance.

Part of the skill is reframing how we interpret these “bids” from not important to seeing them as a gift. An opportunity to share in someone's joy, build the relationship and increase our own well-being.
## Active Constructive Responding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Constructive Responding</th>
<th>Passive Constructive Responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active</strong></td>
<td><strong>Passive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides authentic, enthusiastic support.</td>
<td>• Provides understated support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helps the person to elaborate the experience by asking questions and/or helping them to describe the experience.</td>
<td>• Support often offered in a distracted, quiet, delayed, low energy manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Matches and builds upon the sharer’s excitement.</td>
<td>• The conversation deteriorates. The sharer’s excitement is stifled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destructive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Destructive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The event shared is disparaged.</td>
<td>• The event shared is ignored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The focus is on the negative aspects of the event.</td>
<td>• The focus is shifted to another topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The conversation is dismissive, demeaning, or apprehensive. The sharer’s excited is squashed.</td>
<td>• The conversation is avoided. The sharer’s excitement is stifled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are Challenges to Providing ACR?

- How can I stay authentic if I just don’t care?
- What if they share news that I find dangerous?
- What if they pick the wrong time, wrong place or wrong topic?
## My Patterns

### List the important people in your life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Note the % you respond</th>
<th>Note the % you respond</th>
<th>Note the % you respond</th>
<th>Note the % you respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Constructive</td>
<td>Passive Destructive</td>
<td>Active Destructive</td>
<td>Active Constructive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Understated support&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Changing the focus&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Squashing their joy&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Sharing in their joy&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers &amp; Best Friends</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Friends</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What gets in the way of me applying Active Constructive Responding with others?

- Core belief “Being a good friend means telling people what they don’t want to hear”.
- Shadow side of critical thinking. Seeing myself as a problem solver.
- Lack of sleep.
- Busy with work.

### What are strategies I can use to further apply Active Constructive Responding with others?

- Reframing the experience as a gift.
- Personal Motto “They are picking me out of everyone in the world”.
- Using signature strengths of Curiosity and Humor.
- Implementation Intention “When I am tired or too busy and catch myself not applying ACR, remind myself it only takes a minute so just suck it up”.

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Optimism and Gratitude

Based on the work of
Dr. Martin Seligman
Dr. Karen Reivich
Dr. Robert Emmons
Dr. Roy Baumeister
Optimistic thinkers perform better in sports, work, and school.
Optimistic thinkers tend to overachieve, pessimistic thinkers tend to underachieve.
Optimistic thinkers are healthier and live longer.
Optimistic thinkers are seen as better leaders.
Optimistic thinkers are happier and less depressed.
Optimistic thinkers grow from failure and learn from setbacks.
Optimistic Thinking

Optimistic thinkers seize the good, focus on what they can control, and compartmentalize what they can’t control to take purposeful action.

- **Seize the Good:** Optimistic thinkers notice, expect and reflect on the good in the world.

- **Grab Control.** Optimistic thinkers focus on where they have control, can create change or influence.

- **Compartmentalize.** Optimistic thinkers do not ruminate about what they don’t have control over, nor do they let negative factors contaminate many aspects of their lives. They are able to focus on the areas of their lives where they can still excel.
Negativity Bias is the human tendency to give the majority of our attention to negative information over positive or neutral information.
5 Minute Exercise: Each day record 3 good things and reflect on each.

- What or who enabled this good thing to happen?
- What makes you grateful for this good thing?
- What can you do to enable more of this good thing to happen in the future?
WHY: Seize The Good

- When a habit counteracts the Negativity Bias and causes one to have:
  - **Better Physical Health**: improved quality of sleep, increased calmness, more time exercising
  - **Better Mental Health**: lower depression, less negative affect and higher life satisfaction
  - **Stronger Relationships**: increased pro-social behavior
  - **Improved Performance**: increased optimistic thinking and enables winning streaks
Other Gratitude Applications

- Expressing Gratitude
  - Strengthens social bonds
  - Increases self-efficacy, pro-social behavior and motivation

- What are ways we can further incorporate gratitude into our lives?
Video Discussion Questions

- What are the behaviors you saw that demonstrate optimistic thinking?

- How would he have handled this situation if he did not demonstrate optimistic thinking?
Optimistic Thinking

Optimistic thinkers notice and expect the positive, focus on what they can control, compartmentalize what they can’t control to take purposeful action.

- **Seize the Good**: Optimistic thinkers notice, expect and reflect on the good in the world.

- **Grab Control**: Optimistic thinkers focus on where they have control, can create change or influence.

- **Compartmentalize**: Optimistic thinkers do not ruminate about what they don’t have control over, nor do they let negative factors contaminate many aspects of their lives. They are able to focus on the areas of their lives where they can still excel.
Identify a motto, question or image to help you to seize the good, focus on where you have control and compartmentalize what you can’t control to take purposeful action.
Will this be on the test?

How do we enable students to internalize the positive education content and apply the principles in their everyday life?
Scholar Course

Workshops – After school, approximately 150 minutes in length.

- Workshop 1: PERMA, orientations to life theory and developing meaning and purpose.
- Workshops 2-3: Mindsets, worldview and attention control.
- Workshop 4: Confirmation bias.
- Workshops 5-6: Negativity bias, gratitude and active constructive responding.
- Workshops 7-8: Optimism, CBT skills: accurate, flexible and productive thinking.
- Workshops 9-10: Character strengths.
- Workshops 11-12 Grit, goal setting and habits.

Retreat “Writing your story” – 3 days, 2 nights took place in school library and cafeteria.

- Day 1: Group formation and defining the setting.
- Day 2: Defining the main character, defining the other characters, turning points.
- Day 3: Writing the rest of your story together.
# Survey Results of Hybrid Approach (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage of students who agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The program was life changing</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program helped me to overcome and grow from past adversities</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program helped me to become more resilient</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program helped me to become more confident</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program helped me to become more grateful</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend the program to others</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How often do you apply what you have learned from your Leadership Academy Scholar Experience.**

- 5 Everyday: 12 (%27.3)
- 4 Weekly: 22 (%50)
- 3 Monthly: 3 (%6.8)
- 2 Only when needed (dealing with a problem): 7 (%15.9)
- 1 Rarely: 0 (%0)
- 0 Never: 0 (%0)

Research Design to Measure Impact of the Retreat

Study: True experimental pretest-posttest control-group design

Group A R______ O ______ X______ O

Group B R______ O _______________ O

Change score for each participant measuring T2 - T1 for
- Satisfaction of Life according to the SWLS
- Well-Being according to WEMWBS
- Depressive Symptoms according to the CES-D10


Retreats Have an Amplifying Effect

Mean Change Scores (T2 - T1) for each student in SWLS, WEMWBS and CES-D10

- **Satisfaction With Life (SWLS)**
  - Scale 5 to 35
  - The retreat increased Satisfaction With Life 4.63 times more!

- **Well-Being (WEMWBS)**
  - Scale 14 to 70
  - The retreat increased Well-Being 3.67 times more!

- **Depressive Symptoms (CES-D10)**
  - Scale 0 to 30
  - The retreat decreased Depressive Symptoms 5.64 times more!

- **PP Workshops Only**
  - N= 121
  - 8.78***

- **PP Workshops Plus Retreat**
  - 7.23***
  - 2.39**
  - -0.74
  - -4.17***
Effective
Positive Psychology Retreats

- Community Building
- Forum for Open and Honest Discussion
- Reflection: Individually and Within Groups
- The Freedom to be One’s Self
- Well Trained Faculty and Peer Leaders