POSI TIVE EDUCATION

PRO FESSOR LE A WATERS UNI
VERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VI CTOR I A, AUSTRALIA

PRESENTATION AIMS

• Youth wellbeing statistics

• A positive psychology approach

• Positive psychology in schools: Positive Education

SOME DEPRESSING STATISTICS

• 26% of young Australians experience mental disorder (ABS, 2010)

• World Health Organisation states that: “WHO figures clearly show that the burden because of depression is likely to increase so much so that in 2030 this will be the single biggest cause for burden out of all health conditions.”
WHAT IS POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

Positive psychology conducts scientific inquiry into the factors that help individuals, communities and organisations thrive by building on their strengths and virtues

(Peterson, 2008)

OLD IDEAS OF WELLBEING

MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

Unwell  Languishing  Mentally healthy  Flourishing

Mentally ill  Absence of health  Functioning normally  Emotional vitality
Feelings of emptiness  Elevated
Stagnation in life  Psychological function  Elevated social functioning
PROFESSOR COREY KEYS

Removing negative states
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insecurity
- Addiction
- Violence

Promoting positive states
- Hope
- Optimism
- Empathy
- Courage
- Gratitude

-5 0 +5

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

BRINGING IN ENABLERS

PROFESSOR KIM CAMERON

Cameron (2004, 2011)

PP IS A GROWING FIELD


410% increase
POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IS A WORLD-WIDE MOVEMENT

International Positive Psychology Association
Chinese Positive Psychology Association
Japanese Positive Psychology Association
Singapore School of Positive Psychology
European Positive Psychology Association
Australian Positive Psychology Association
New Zealand Positive Psychology Association
Canadian Positive Psychology Association
Mexican Positive Psychology Association
Irish Positive Psychology Institute

WELL-BEING AT A CRITICAL AGE

Neuroplasticity
The brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life.

In order to connect, the neurons need to be stimulated through activity.

Source: medical.net

DOES POSITIVE EDUCATION WORK?


Positive Psychology Programs increase:
• Hope
• Gratitude
• Serenity
• Resilience
• Character strengths
• Life satisfaction
• Self acceptance
DOES POSITIVE EDUCATION WORK?

Students with high wellbeing:
• Find school more interesting
• Feel good at school
• Report that they are learning a lot
• Are eager to go to school
• Are more satisfied in their school relationships

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
Research study by Professor Joseph Durlak and Professor Roger Weissberg (2005), USA

- A meta-analysis of 213 studies
- 270,034 student from kindergarten to high school
- Students enrolled in a social and emotional learning programs ranked **11% points higher on achievement tests**

CHARACTER STRENGTHS
HOW CAN YOU USE STRENGTHS?

- The VIA survey (you and your children)
- Art/Craft project
- Stories and heroes
- Using strengths language
- Strength of the month
- Photos of strengths
- Family tree using strengths
- Spotting strengths in others
- Write your children a gratitude letter and tell them about their strengths

FAMOUS PEOPLE, ICONS, HEROES

Positive Psychology at the Movies

Ryan Niemec
POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY APPS

• i-gratitude
• Gratitude journal
• Growing gratitude
• The gratitude habit
• HappyApp

• LiveHappy
• Meditator
• Mindfulness
• Pranayama – universal
• Smiling minds

WELLBEING IS CONTAGIOUS

• Emotions of one person effect the emotions of another.

• Emotions spread/transfer across people in a group setting and create a shared social-moral experience.

THE SPILLOVER EFFECT
FURTHER READING

‘Thanks: How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier’ by Robert Emmons

‘Parenting From the Inside Out’ by Daniel Siegal

‘The Optimistic Child’ by Martin Seligman

‘The Secret of Happy Children’ by Steve Biddulph

‘The How of Happiness’ by Sonia Lubomirksy

‘Authentic Happiness’ by Martin Seligman