

Positive Psychology Seligman Protocol: Summary

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Objectives

- Present 2 new ways to use “signature strengths”
- Review all of the positive psychology strategies from this class series



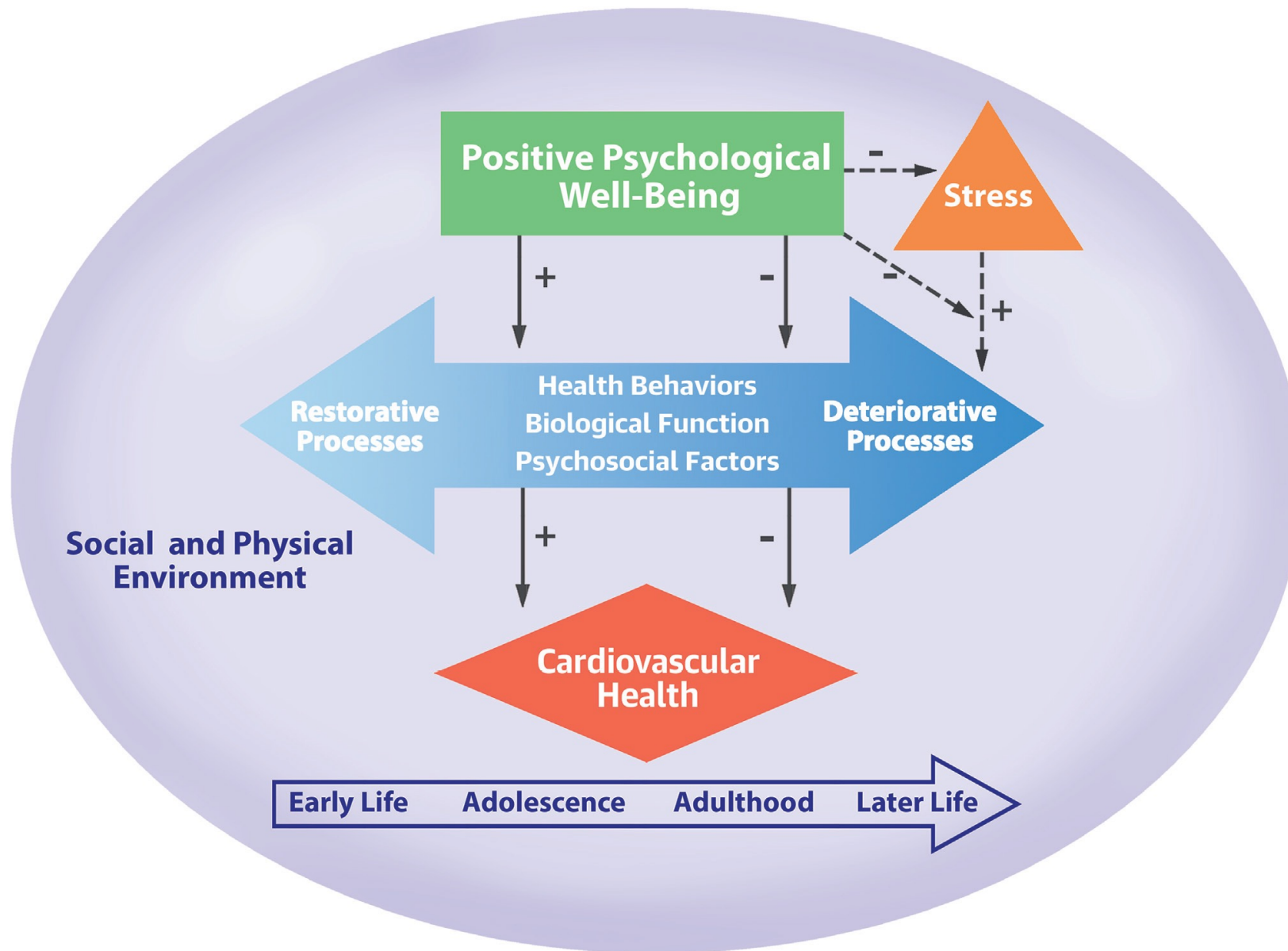
Goals

Increase

- **Positive Emotion** (happiness, joy, gratitude, love, hope, life satisfaction)
- **Engagement/ “Flow”**
- **Relationships** (Feeling supported, loved, and valued by others)
- **Meaning & Purpose**
- **Achievement** (intrinsic goals, sense of pride)

Decrease

- **Depression**
- **Anxiety and Worry**
- **Perceived Stress**



PPI Program Guidelines

- You are invited to **commit** to this program
- Complete the **surveys**
- Set **personalized goals** at the end of every class
- **Complete the “minimum dose”** for all positive psychology strategies between classes, when that is specified
- **Keep track** of what you do on a tracking sheet (self-monitoring form)

Seligman PPI

Module 1: Increase Satisfaction About the Past

Module 2: Enhance Happiness in the Present

Module 3: Optimism About the Future

Module 4: Renewing Strength and Virtue

Module 5: Valuing & Using Strengths & Virtues

Module 6: Enhancing Meaning in Life



Using Our Strengths and Virtues



Modules 5 and 6



What Are Character Strengths?

- Character strengths are the positive parts of our personality that make us feel authentic and engaged. They are a core and foundational part of who we are. Our strengths are linked to our development, wellbeing, and life satisfaction (Niemiec, 2013).



Wisdom and Knowledge

- These strengths are useful in helping us learn and gather knowledge.
 - **Creativity** (e.g. Albert Einstein's creativity led him to acquire knowledge and wisdom about the universe)
 - **Curiosity**
 - **Open-mindedness**
 - **Love of Learning**
 - **Perspective and Wisdom**





Courage

- These emotional strengths empower us to tackle adversity and how we tend to work through it.
 - **Bravery**
 - **Persistence**
 - **Integrity**
 - **Vitality**



Humanity

- These strengths come into play by helping us build and maintain positive, warm relationships with others.
 - **Love**
 - **Kindness**
 - **Social intelligence**



Justice

- With these strengths, we relate to those around us in social or group situations.
 - **Citizenship/ Duty/ Teamwork/ Loyalty:**
Being an active citizen who is socially responsible, loyal, and a team member.
 - **Fairness**
 - **Leadership**



Temperance

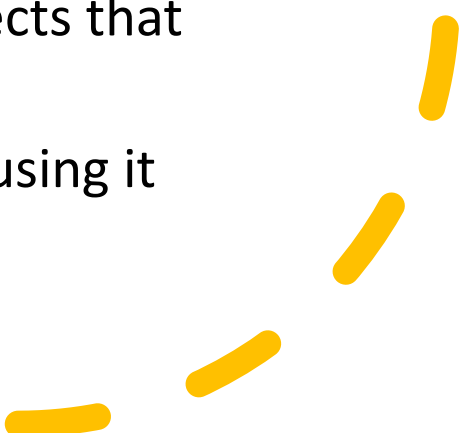
- Being forgiving, merciful, humble, prudent, and in control of our behaviors and instincts prevents us from being arrogant, selfish, or any other trait that is excessive or unbalanced.
- Strengths that are included in this virtue are those that protect against excess:
 - **Forgiveness and mercy**
 - **Humility and modesty**
 - **Prudence**
 - **Self-Regulation and Self-control**



Transcendence

- Strengths that accompany this virtue include those that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning:
 - **Appreciation of beauty and excellence**
 - **Gratitude**
 - **Hope**
 - **Humor and playfulness**
 - **Spirituality, or a sense of purpose**

What are Signature Strengths?

- A sense of ownership and authenticity
 - A feeling of excitement while displaying it, particularly at first
 - A rapid learning curve as the strength is first practiced
 - Continuous learning of new ways to enact the strength
 - A sense of yearning to find ways to use it
 - A feeling of inevitability in using the strength
 - Invigoration rather than exhaustion while using the strength
 - The creation and pursuit of personal projects that revolve around it
 - Joy, zest, enthusiasm, even ecstasy while using it
- 



Identify Signature Strengths in Your Partners & Children

Strategy #1

Identify Your Partner's Signature Strengths



Review the 24 strengths and identify the top 3 strengths that characterize your partner



For each strength, write down a recent admirable incident when they displayed that strength



Let your partner read what you wrote and ask them to also do the same exercise!

Identify Your Children's Signature Strengths



Have your child complete the VIA-Y Survey to get immediate feedback on your child's signature strengths



Similar survey on Pages 232-244 in the Authentic Happiness book



Reward all displays of all your child's signature strengths!



Use a Signature Strength to Advance a Cause Greater than Yourself

Strategy #2

Building Meaning and Purpose



Examine your signature strengths



Identify ways that you can use them in new ways, specifically so that you advance a cause greater than yourself



Review of Seligman PPI Strategies

Modules 1-6

Express Gratitude



Spend at least 5 minutes every day, preferably right before brushing your teeth before bed



Prepare a notepad with at least 14 pages



Think back on the past 24 hours, and write about up to 5 things in your life that you are grateful or thankful for



Repeat on 14 consecutive days



Practice Forgiveness

- **REACH:** 5-step process for facilitating forgiveness (Everett Worthington, PhD)
- **Recall the hurt**
 - In as objective a way as you can
 - Do not think of the other person as evil
 - Do not wallow in self-pity
 - Take deep, slow, calming breaths as you visualize the event



Enhancing the Pleasures

- Counter habituation by spacing your pleasures and **entering into a surprise arrangement** with a friend or lover
- **Savoring**
 - Share your pleasures with someone else
 - Memory-building: Take mental photographs
 - Self-congratulation
 - Sharpening perceptions
 - Absorption
- **Mindfulness**

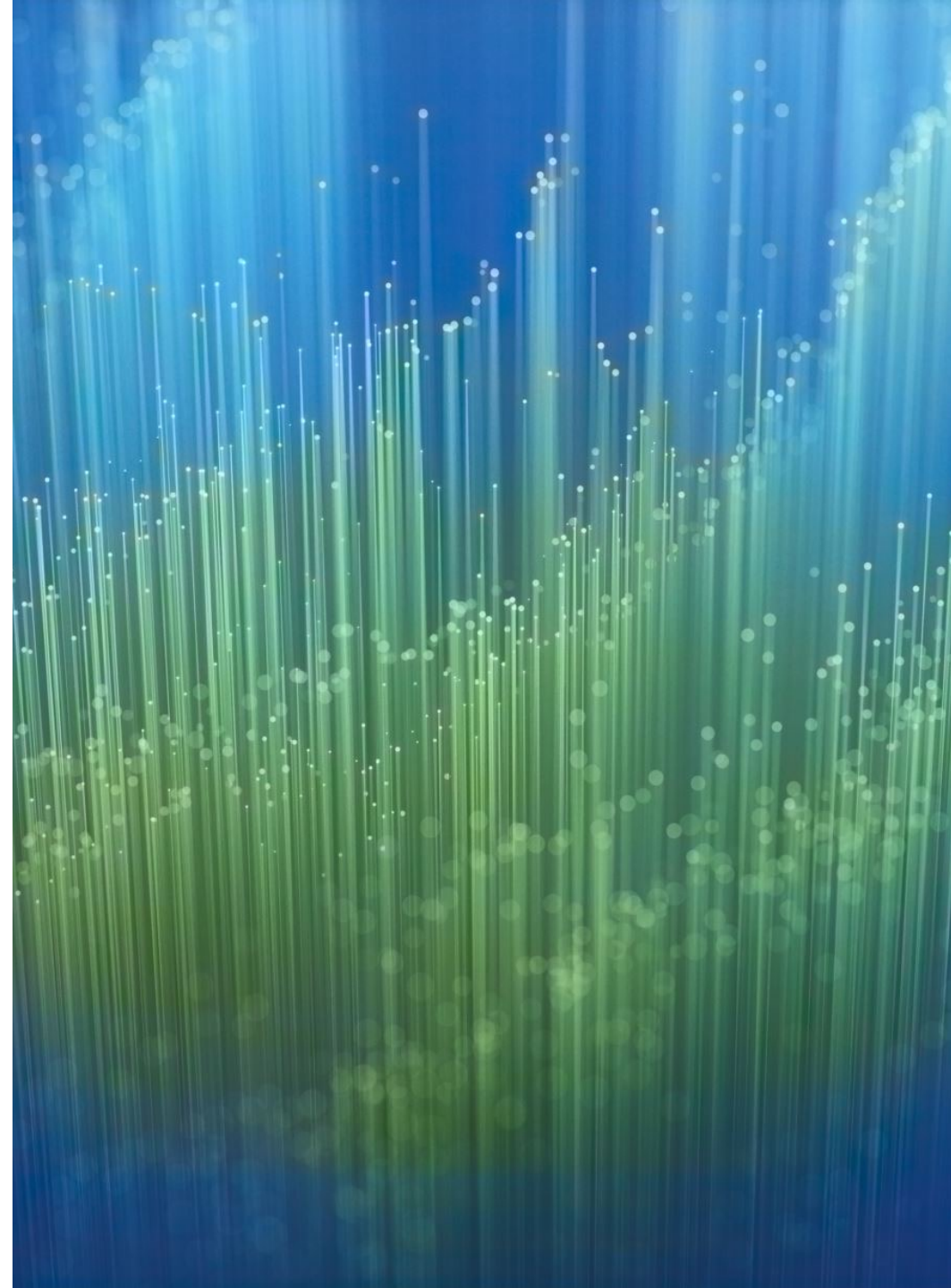
Types of Savoring

Basking: receiving praise and congratulations

Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude for blessings

Marveling: losing the self in the wonder of the moment

Luxuriating: indulging the senses



Savoring

- Identify a happy, joyful, or pleasant event that happened to you
- Think about the people, smells, sounds, physical sensations, and sights that you experienced
- Try to re-create the positive emotions that you felt around the time of the event
- As you are savoring, let your thoughts wander to anything else about the happy experience that makes you feel good. Then, just mentally hold on to whatever feels good.
- Take a deep breath, and pay attention to how these emotions feel in your body. Let the emotions fade on their own, until you are ready to go back to whatever else you were doing.



Have a Beautiful Day

- Set aside a free day to indulge your favorite pleasures
- Design what you will do, hour-to-hour
- 1 day every month



Finding Flow Activities (Kotler, 2021)

- **1. Identify your most enjoyable activity (*intrinsically* rewarding)**
 - e.g., Cooking, gardening, hiking, running, swimming, gaming, yoga, painting, crafts, etc.
 - Make sure to carve out enough time
 - **Minimum Dose:** Kotler (2021) recommends at least 90 minutes once or preferably twice a week to immerse yourself in the activity undistracted.
 - Elimination of distraction and multitasking are crucial for triggering a flow state
- **2. Identify your most focused time of day**
 - People vary – best in the morning, evening, after a nap, etc.
 - Take 5-minute breaks every 20-30 minutes
- **3. Choose a daily recovery time (Kotler, 2021)**
 - Ensure you have a segment of time every day when you completely detach from work and technology
 - You may do this by spending time with loved ones, watching a movie, walking your dog, or meditating. You might enjoy a combination of these things.

Optimism vs. Pessimism

People who make **permanent, universal, and personal explanations for good events, as well as temporary and specific explanations for bad events**, bounce back from troubles quickly (are resilient) and get on a roll easily when they succeed once.

Conversely, **people who make permanent, universal, and personal explanations for bad events, and temporary, specific, and external explanations for good events**, tend to collapse under pressure across life situations (NOT resilient) and rarely get on a roll after a success.

How to Identify & Dispute Pessimistic Thoughts

Adversity = something that comes up in your life

Belief = automatic thoughts triggered by adversity


Consequence = usual consequences of the belief

Disputation = disputing/arguing/challenging the routine belief


Energization = emotional response to disputing/challenging the belief

ABCDE Model & Cognitive Therapy

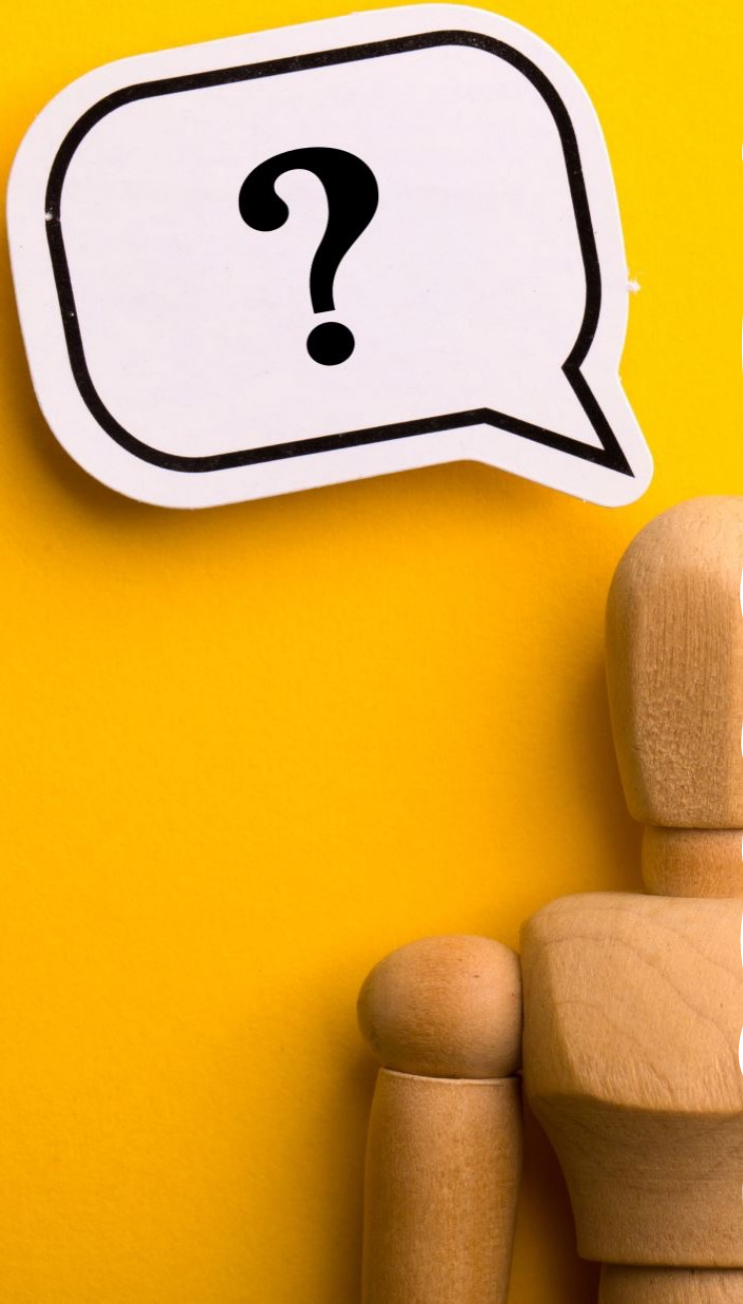
Seligman's ABCDE strategy is basically using cognitive therapy techniques to identify, evaluate, and challenge negative thinking – specifically targeting thoughts and beliefs that cause pessimism



Reviewing the list of cognitive distortions can also help us see the falsehood in our thinking



Challenging questions from Cognitive Therapy can also help us improve our ability to dispute with pessimistic thoughts



Testing Your Thoughts (Challenging Questions)

- 1. What is the situation? **Select an "adversity"**
- 2. What am I thinking or imagining?
- 3. What is the cognitive distortion? **(optional)**
- 4. What makes me think the thought is true?
- 5. What makes me think the thought is not true or not completely true?
- 6. What's another way to look at this?
- 7. If the worst happens, what could I do then?
- 8. What's the best that could happen?
- 9. What will probably happen?
- 10. What will happen if I keep telling myself the same thought?
- 11. What could happen if I changed my thinking?
- 12. What would I tell my friend or family member **[think of a specific person]** if this happened to him or her?
- 13. What would be good to do now?

Summary: Optimism

Optimism can be learned!

Our thinking about the challenges, adversities, and set-backs we face determines our level of optimism, and it plays a BIG role in whether we are resilient

Pessimists see bad events as permanent, never-ending, generalize to many more (or most) other parts of life, and are the consequence of personal weaknesses and failing.

Optimists are the opposite: set-backs are temporary, time-limited, only relevant to that thing or part of life, and are the consequence of external causes.

Boost optimism by disputing and combatting with distorted thinking that promotes pessimism

The ABCDE strategy can help – anyone with experience with CBT or stress management has seen it before. We are just applying it now to pessimism!



VIA Survey of Character Strengths

- **The Values in Action (VIA) Survey of Character Strengths** is a 240-item face-valid self-report questionnaire intended for use with adults. The measure uses 5-point Likert-style items to measure the degree to which respondents endorse items reflecting the 24 strengths of character that comprise the VIA Classification. The survey takes about 25 minutes to complete, although there is no time limit.
- <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/resources/questionnaires-researchers/survey-character-strengths>
- **WEBSITE TO TAKE VIA SURVEY & GET FEEDBACK ON STRENGTHS**
- <http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/>



Self-Rating Scale

- Complete the “Signature Strengths, Self-Rating Scale” created by Jonathan Haidt, PhD:
<https://www.karenwyattmd.com/strengths-self-rating-scale.pdf>
- Identify and rank-order your top 5 strengths

Signature Strengths Exercise

- This week, create a protected time in your schedule when you will exercise one or more of your signature strengths **in a new way** either at home or in leisure, every day
- Examples:
 - Self-Control: choose to exercise rather than watch TV once this week
 - Perseverance: make a list of things you hope to accomplish in the day and then follow through on everything you listed
 - Curiosity: you might try a new way of doing something that you've never tried before





Summary

- **Assess:** Use the official VIA Signature Strengths survey (available online), or the self-rating scale to identify your top 5 signature strengths
- **Identify:** Every day, search for ways that you can use and practice your top 5 strengths
 - Print or post your signature strengths at home and at work – remind yourself of them
 - Consider keeping a journal of your ideas
- **Use: Signature Strengths Exercise**
 - **Minimum Dose:** every day for 1 week
 - Schedule time to use 1+ strength(s) in a new way

Summary of Positive Psychology Strategies

Gratitude Diary (5 minutes daily, for 2 weeks)

Forgiveness (REACH Method)

Entering into a surprise arrangement with a friend or lover

Savoring

Have a Beautiful Day

Identify and engage in “flow” activities (90 minutes, 1-2x/week)

ABCDE Method (dispute pessimistic thoughts)

Identify your Signature Strengths (e.g., VIA Survey)

Signature Strengths (use a strength in a new way every day for 1 week)

Booster Session: August 28th

- In ~2 months, we will meet again on Monday, 8/28 for a Booster Session
- For the next 2 months, **make a plan to practice the positive psychology strategies** that seem most helpful and relevant to you
- Also **experiment with other strategies that you don't think are as relevant to you** – we often don't recognize the value and benefits and won't know until we surprise ourselves!
- On 8/28, my focus will be on facilitating a discussion with you all about the things you did and experienced (not just reviewing the concepts and ideas!)
- Remember: the benefits of positive psychology come from doing the exercises themselves!
- Consider creating a calendar where you schedule what you will do to boost your positive psychological wellbeing!

Complete Questionnaires

- **Please complete the same questionnaires that you completed at the start of this class series on (or within 1 week of) Monday, July 10th**
- **Please complete the evaluation of me also! (Themis Yiaslas)**
- Linda will send you an email with instructions on how to do this!



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