Positive Psychology Coaching

Suzy Green & Paula Robinson
Co-Founders,
Positive Psychology Institute
www.positivepsychologyinstitute.com

Aims & Objectives

- Define PP Coaching
- Draw on the fields of Coaching Psychology (CP) & Positive Psychology (PP)
- Discuss how PP is a "perfect partner" for EB Coaching
- Identify key PP Theories/Models/Tools relevant to EB Coaching
- Examples: Tales from the field
- PP Coaching Practice!

PP Coaching: A Working Definition

- The application of Positive Psychology theories and techniques to Evidence-Based Coaching (Coaching Psychology)
- Where EB Coaching is used as a methodology/ framework for the application of positive psychology for the enhancement of well-being and optimal functioning…

PP Coaching: A Working Definition

- Positive Psychology Coaching is the application of positive psychology theories and techniques that utilises evidence-based coaching (Coaching Psychology) as a framework for the facilitation of optimal functioning
- *(Green & Robinson, 2011)*

Coaching Psychology: A Definition

An ***applied positive psychology*** that draws on and develops established psychological approaches …can be understood as being the *systematic application* of behavioural science to the enhancement of life experience, work performance and wellbeing

(APS IGCP Mission Statement)

PP Definitions

Positive Psychology works to promote optimal functioning across the full range of human functioning, from disorder and distress to health and fulfilment (Linley & Joseph, 2004)

Applied Positive Psychology (which includes coaching) is the application of positive psychology research to the facilitation of optimal functioning (Joseph & Linley, 2006)

CP and PP:
Complementary Approaches

- Optimal functioning
- Enhanced performance
- Enhanced psychological well-being
- Focus on strengths

CP and PP:
Desired Outcomes

- Positive human functioning
- Achievement of optimal health & well-being
- Psychological well-being - not just happiness!
- Pleasure, meaning & engagement in life & work

CP and PP:
Values & Assumptions

- Actualising Tendency (Rogers, Maslow, Horney)
- Human nature is basically positive & constructive
- Motivated to pursue the "good life"
- Both science and art
- Client as own best expert
- Capacity for change

CP and PP:
Perfect Partners @ Work

- CP already present in organisations
- Interest in APP also growing
- CP can not only help with disseminating PP research, it can also be an active part of research - feedback loop

CP and PP:
How do they differ?

	Positive Ψ	Appl. Positive Ψ	Coaching Ψ
Primary purpose?	Research of PP constructs	Translation of PP research into practice	Translation of PP research into practice
For whom?	For everyone!	For everyone!	Languishing to Flourishing

CP and PP: Some issues

- CP currently focused on "execs" at work
- However, APP for everyone!
- Need for push-down of CP as an APP in organisations (e.g. workplace coaching)
- Also use of Personal (Life) Coaching as a mental health promotion strategy.

PP Coaching:
Coaching for a Flourishing Life

"To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all"

Oscar Wilde

Flourishing?

- Defined as a state in which an individual feels positive emotion toward life and is functioning well psychologically and socially.
- Flourishers have excellent emotional health, miss fewer days off work and have fewer physical limitations in their daily lives.

Well-Being?

- Subjective Well-Being (SWLS + PANAS)
- Psychological Well-Being

Psychological Well-Being
(Ryff, 1989)

- ***Autonomy:*** independence & self-determination;
- ***Environmental mastery:*** the ability to manage one's life;
- ***Personal growth:*** being open to new experiences;
- ***Positive relations with others:*** having satisfying high quality relationships;
- ***Purpose in life:*** believing that one's life is meaningful;
- ***Self-acceptance:*** a positive attitude towards oneself and one's past life

Authentic Happiness Theory
Seligman (2003)

3 Roads to the Good Life….

- The Pleasurable Life
- The Engaged Life
- The Meaningful Life

PERMA

- Positive Emotions
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishment

Coaching for a Flourishing Life

- Who comes for PP Coaching?
- The languishers (dissatisfied).
- The moderately mentally healthy.
- Common goals are health & well-being.
- Access to the most current theory & research on "well-being" is essential for evidence-based practice.

PP Coaching Assessments

- Satisfaction with Life Scale
- Life Balance Wheel
- Approaches to Happiness Questionnaire
- Psychological Well-Being
- Workplace Well-Being
- Authenticity Scale
- Hope Scale
- VIA/Realise2/Strengths Finder
- Strengths Knowledge/Strengths Use
- ***Which ones do you use?***

I can't get no life satisfaction

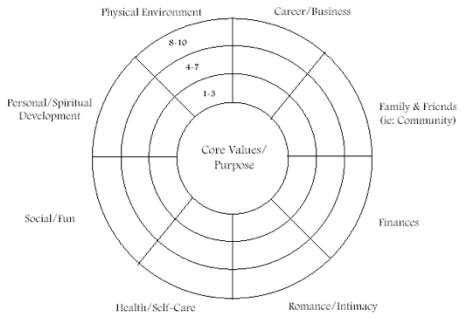
- *In most ways my life is close to my ideal*
- *The conditions of my life are excellent*
- *I am satisfied with life*
- *So far I have gotten the important things I want in life*
- *If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing*

7 Strongly agree
6 Agree
6 Slightly agree
6 Neither agree nor disagree
6 Slightly disagree
6 Disagree
1 Strongly disagree

Life Satisfaction Scoring

- 35-31 Extremely Satisfied
- 26-30 Satisfied
- 21-25 Slightly Satisfied
- 20 Neutral
- 15-19 Slight dissatisfied
- 10-14 Dissatisfied
- 5-9 Extremely dissatisfied

Life Balance Wheel



Key PP Theories

- Authentic Happiness Theory
- Self-Determination Theory
- Broaden & Build Theory
- Hope Theory

Authentic Happiness Theory

Seligman (2003)

- *Which road do you believe you are travelling along well?*
- *The Pleasurable? The Engaged? The Meaningful?*
- *Which road might need more attention?*
- *Share in pairs?*

Self-Determination Theory

(Deci & Ryan)

- ***Self Determination Theory*** is a developmental theory of motivation and personality;
- One of the most widely researched theories in psychology;
- Identifies reasons why people pursue their goals!
- Identifies three psychological needs: ***autonomy***, ***competence*** & ***relatedness*** ……

1. **The need for *Autonomy***
   The term autonomy literally refers to regulation by the self (self determination). It is the basic desire to be in control of one's environment and is a central force for intrinsically motivated behaviour.
2. **The need for *Competence***
   suggests that environmental mastery is a primary motive throughout life and the reward for achieving competence are feelings of internal pleasure, heightened self confidence and pleasant emotions.
3. **The need for Relatedness**
   suggests people are highly motivated to be recognised, connected to, or loved by others.

SDT Example:
4 Reasons Why You May Pursue your Goals …

Autonomous (internally motivated reasons)

Intrinsic	Identified
"I really enjoy it"	*"I value it, meaning"*

Controlled (externally motivated reasons)

Introjected	Extrinsic
"I should do it" guilt!	*"I'll get a detention, or recognition"*

Self-Determination Theory

- ***Self-Concordant or Authentic Goals***
- Research shows that those pursuing self-concordant or authentic goals have greater goal attainment and well-being

Check your answer?

1. *What are your reasons for being here today?*

There's nothing as practical as a good theory!

- ***Key Questions to Consider….***
- *How is this theory relevant to you personally?*
- *How is this theory relevant to you professionally?*
- *How is this theory relevant to PP coaching?*

Other Theories….

- Hope Theory
- Broaden & Build Theory

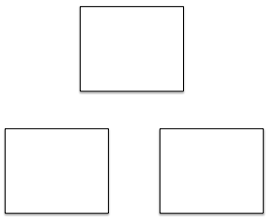
Broaden & Build Theory of Emotion (Frederickson, 1998, 2000)

- Asserts that positive emotions evolved as psychological adaptations that increased our human ancestor's odds of survival and reproduction.
- Negative emotions narrow people's behavioural urges towards specific actions
- However positive emotions widen the array of thoughts and actions

Broaden & Build Theory

- The benefits of broadened mindsets build a variety of personal resources, like social connections, coping strategies, environmental knowledge.
- Reserves that we can later draw on to manage threats (mental health prevention).

Triangle or Squares?

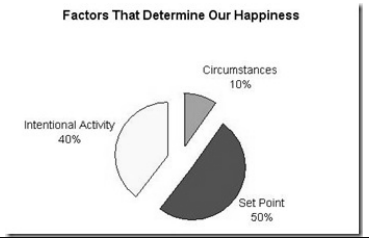


Positive Emotions

Professor Barbara Fredrickson

Joy
Gratitude
Serenity
Interest
Hope
Pride
Amusement
Inspiration
Awe
Love

Boosting Positive Emotions



Mood-Boosting Strategies

- Counting your blessings
- Cultivating Optimism
- Avoiding rumination & social comparison
- Practicing acts of kindness
- Nurturing relationships
- Doing more activities that engage you
- Replaying & Savoring life's joys
- Committing to your goals
- Learning to forgive
- Practicing religion & spirituality
- Taking care of your body eg exercise
- Developing strategies for coping
- Envisioning your Best Possible Self

(Lyubomirsky & Sheldon, 2007; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006)

And now to Coaching…

Evidence-Based Coaching

(Green, 2005)

- Evidence-based coaching draws on peer-reviewed, empirically validated research primarily from (but not limited to) the fields of psychology and adult education.
- An evidence-based coaching intervention uses best current information from valid research theory & practice.
- Requires coach to have the ability, knowledge & skills to identify, understand, determine its applicability and utilise such knowledge.

Evidence-Based Coaching -
What is the evidence so far?

- Grant (2003)
- Green, Oades & Grant (2006)
- Spence & Grant (2005)
- Green, Grant & Rynsaardt (2007)
- Grant, Green & Rynsaardt (2010)

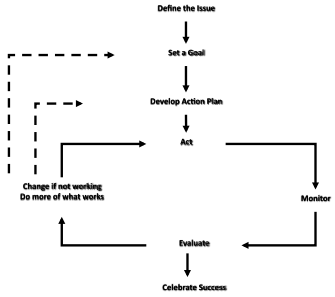
The Evidence-based Coach's Toolkit

- Generic Model of Self-Regulation
- Transtheoretical Model of Change
- Kolb Learning Cycle
- Cognitive-Behavioural Coaching
- Solution-Focused Techniques
- Psychodynamic Theory
- Goal-setting Literature
- + Many more…..

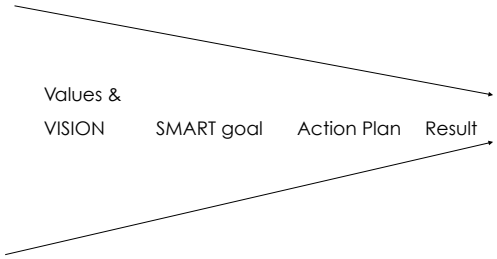
From Theory to Practice
The Roadmap of Change

- Starts with a sense of dissatisfaction with the present.
- Requires an inspirational and motivational vision of the future.
- Requires the skills to get there.
- An Action Plan
- Continuous & Deliberate Action.

The Generic Road-Map of Change



Fuzzy Vision to SMART goals



A VISION Of The Future

Benefits of developing a "fuzzy vision" are:

- Utilises the "attentional bias" i.e. primes us to identify opportunities to ensure goal attainment.
- Allows brain to disengage from worry and anxiety about the future – allows mindfulness.

A VISION Of The Future

In developing the "fuzzy vision" it is important that the client's core values are being lived in that future.

Self-Concordant Goals

The more clients short-term personal projects reflected their *underlying values and interests*, and were *relevant* to possible futures, the more they were likely to attain their goals and experience success.

(Sheldon, K. et al. 2002)

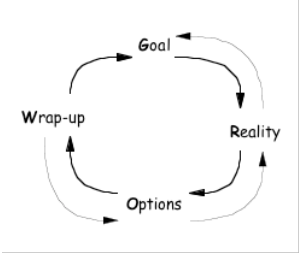
Determining One's Values

- Values Lists
- Questioning to elicit values eg ask client to describe "peak moments" or "must-haves" in their lives.
- Others?

Setting SMART goals

- Specific
- Measureable
- Authentic
- Realistic
- Time-framed

GROW Model



Coaching Review

- WWW
- What could you do more of?
- What would you do differently?
- Where to from here?

Where to from here…

- PP Coaching for a flourishing life.
- PP coaching as a mental health promotion intervention (Green Oades & Grant, 2006).
- Being a scientist-practitioner?
- Your thoughts…..

For more info:

Positive Psychology Institute
www.positivepsychologyinstitute.com
info@positivepsychologyinstitute.com