CHAMPS/WMT AHEC RESILIENCY LEARNING COMMUNITY

BUILDING RESILIENCY SKILLS: WALKING TOGETHER TOWARDS HEALING IN A TIME OF COLLECTIVE LOSS

WEEK FOUR: POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN DIFFICULT TIMES

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Dealing with Difficult Emotions with Eudaimonic Happiness

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Openings

- Introduction and welcome
- Sign in using the chat box with a positive thought or experience that you’ve already had today (although you can create one now if you need to)
Today’s Goals

- Recognize the natural power of negative thoughts and experiences
- Identify tools for dealing with negative thoughts and experiences
- Practice . . . and . . . homework
- Quotation: “The mind is a terrible place . . .”
- Let’s go there together
Ever have a . . . “I’ve been here before” sort of feeling?

All humans tend to have patterns around particular emotions

Whispering story

It might be anger or fear/anxiety or guilt or sadness [these are the most troubling]
How Emotional Redundancy Works

- There’s a trigger

- Whispering story – I want things to go the way I want things to go and if they don’t I feel angry and try to force them to.

- Sometimes we’re aware of our triggers

- Other times the triggers are slippery and hard to identify and anticipate
What Are Your Triggers?

- Usually people and situations:
  - Someone is condescending, or acts morally superior
  - Something is unfair or unjust
  - Someone says something annoying: “If he says that again”
  - Someone cuts you off in traffic
  - Basketball refs; government officials
  - Parents/siblings/romantic partners
  - What’s triggering in YOUR world?
Focus on the negative [This is terribly fun]

What’s wrong with you?

Build your awareness of ways that you’re engaging in maladaptive and unhealthy ways

Try to fix them
The Last 15 Years of Psychotherapy

- We’re all flawed
- Our own thoughts undermine us . . . that’s perfectly normal . . . we spoil good times and linger on the negative (bedtime stories)
- Of course we can think ourselves into the pit of depression or a fit of anger
- Let’s mindfully accept our flaws and practice behaviors and thinking that represent our most positive values (knowing we’ll fail)
Homework 1: Savoring Choices

- Make a list of positive memories. Then, transport yourself to reminisce. Choose one. Retrieve it. Play it back. Explore it, feel it, elaborate on the details.

- Engage in mutual reminiscence

- Celebrate good news longer than you would

- Be open to noticing and lingering with observations of beauty (in eye of beholder) and excellence
Homework 2: Best Possible Self

- From Laura King, professor at U of Missouri-Columbia

- Spend 10 minutes a day for four consecutive days writing a narrative description of your “best possible future self.”

- Pick a point in the future – write about what you’ll be doing/thinking then – and these things need to capture a vision of you being “your best” successful self
Homework 3: Three Good Things

- The most well-known evidence-based happiness assignment is Martin Seligman’s Three Good Things activity.
- Write down, for one week, before you go to sleep, three things that went well for you during the day, and then reflect on why they went well.
- Here’s a one-minute video of Seligman describing the activity: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOGAp9dw8Ac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOGAp9dw8Ac)
Homework 4: Happy Songs

- Select a song that has triggers positive emotions for you.

- Listen to the song twice, just letting the song do its work. You can do this with a friend or by yourself. Don’t WATCH the song. If it’s a music video, shut your eyes and listen.

- After you’ve listened twice and let the positive feelings come, linger with the positivity
Over this coming weekend you could watch John Krasinski’s “Some Good News”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5pgG1M_h_U

Or you could watch John and Rita S-F’s Happy Habits video series:
https://coehs.umt.edu/happy_habits_series_2020/default.php
But instead, your assignment is to witness something inspiring in the REAL WORLD.

Remind yourself to watch for something inspiring. It can be anything, a sunset, an act of kindness, a musical performance, whatever.

Just watch and listen for it. . . and see what happens
For more homework, and more in-depth discussion, search: john sommers-flanagan + happiness homework

Example:
https://johnsommersflanagan.com/2020/01/18/happiness-homework-week-one-university-of-montana/