

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Module 33

Handling Your Stress - Coping

- Problem-focused coping
 - ▣ Address problem head-on
 - ▣ Espec. when we feel in control of the situation
- Emotion-focused coping
 - ▣ Avoiding the stressor
 - ▣ Espec. when we feel out of control

Learned Helplessness

- A feeling of helplessness and oppression
- Often after a series of situations where they perceived themselves out of control
- Makes you vulnerable to illness & depression

More money buys you a longer life?

- Money = feeling of control = better health
- No money = feel out of control = vulnerable to illness

Locus of control (location of control)

- External locus of control = feeling out of control of your destiny
- Internal locus of control = feeling you control your own destiny

Internal Locus of Control leads to

- Increased performance
- Better health
- Less depression
- Delaying gratification
- Handling stress
- Less obesity

Self Control

- ☐ Ability to control your impulses & delay gratification
- ☐ Using willpower "spends" energy
- ☐ Willpower can be strengthened w/practice

Optimists v. Pessimists

- ☐ Optimists
 - ☐ Expect to have control
 - ☐ Bounce back from setbacks
 - ☐ Are sick less often
- ☐ Pessimists
 - ☐ Expect to have results out of their control
 - ☐ Don't cope well with stress
 - ☐ Die earlier

Optimism is partially genetic

- ☐ Associated w/the nurturing hormone oxytocin
- ☐ Runs in families

Social Support

- ☐ Connected to positive feelings and happiness
- ☐ Better health
- ☐ Reduces stress hormones
- ☐ Improves immune response
- ☐ Allows us to release emotions (talk about feelings)
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- ☐ Can be friends, family, mate, pet...

How can I reduce stress?

- ☐ Exercise
 - ☐ Strengthens heart & reduces blood pressure
 - ☐ Reduces depression & anxiety
 - ☐ Causes brain to release stress-reducing hormones

How can I reduce stress?

- ☐ Relaxation/Meditation
 - ☐ Quieting of the mind & body
 - ☐ Slowing of thinking
 - ☐ Positive self-talk
 - ☐ Also massage

How can I reduce stress?

- ☐ Religious People
 - ☐ Live longer, healthier lives
 - ☐ Provides an opportunity for social connection
 - ☐ Fewer stress hormones
 - ☐ Do more volunteer work

What is Positive Psychology?

- ☐ Using psychology to understand happiness

3 “pillars” of Positive Psychology

- 1) Positive well-being
happiness w/your past & present, & optimism about the future
- 2) Positive character
enhancing creativity, courage, self-control, leadership, spirituality, integrity...
- 3) Positive groups, communities, and cultures
Fostering healthy and happy social groups

What affects our happiness?

- ☐ Wealth
- ☐ Ability to cope w/ups and downs
- ☐ Adaptation-level phenomenon
 - ☐ Judging current situation based on past situations
- ☐ Relative deprivation
 - ☐ Comparing ourselves to others

Happy People:

- ☐ Have close, positive relationships
- ☐ Get sleep and exercise
- ☐ Are optimistic
- ☐ Are kind & cooperative
- ☐ Have high self-esteem (in Western countries)
- ☐ Are actively religious

Happiness is NOT necessarily related to:

- ☐ Your age
- ☐ Your looks
- ☐ Your gender
- ☐ Your family tree

You can CHOOSE to be happy

☐ Challenge yourself. Choose one happy-factor you can do for the next 24 hours.

☐ Examples:

- ☐ Don't criticize anyone
- ☐ Use positive self-talk
- ☐ Don't complain about even one thing
- ☐ Meditate
- ☐ Notice all the ways you ARE in control of your life