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all about people

Centre for the
Advancement
of Positive
Behaviour
Support



Developing PBS practice

Centre for the Advancement of PBS

BILD, Birmingham Research Park, 97 Vincent Drive,
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2SQ

0121 415 6970 | capbs@bild.org.uk | www.bild.org.uk/capbs

The CAPBS 2016 Webinar Series: Developing PBS Practice

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Applying positive psychology to behaviour supports



Dr Andrew McDonnell

Studio III

CAPBS



Applying Positive Psychology to Behaviour Supports

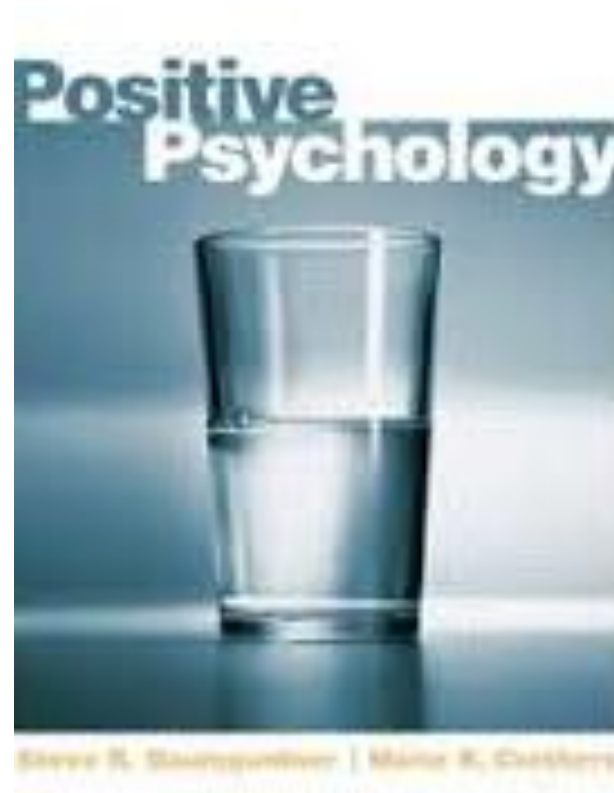
Andrew McDonnell, PhD.

andym@studio3.org

@lowarousal

Positive Psychology

- Positive psychology is concerned with the pleasant life, the engaged life and the meaningful life (Carr 2011, pp2)



Challenging Behaviour

- The term challenging behaviour was first adopted in 1987 by Blunden and Allen (1987).
- Culturally, abnormal behaviour(s) of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to the use of ordinary community facilities". (Emerson ,1995)
- It could be argued that the term has probably become so much a part of the language that it requires a change.

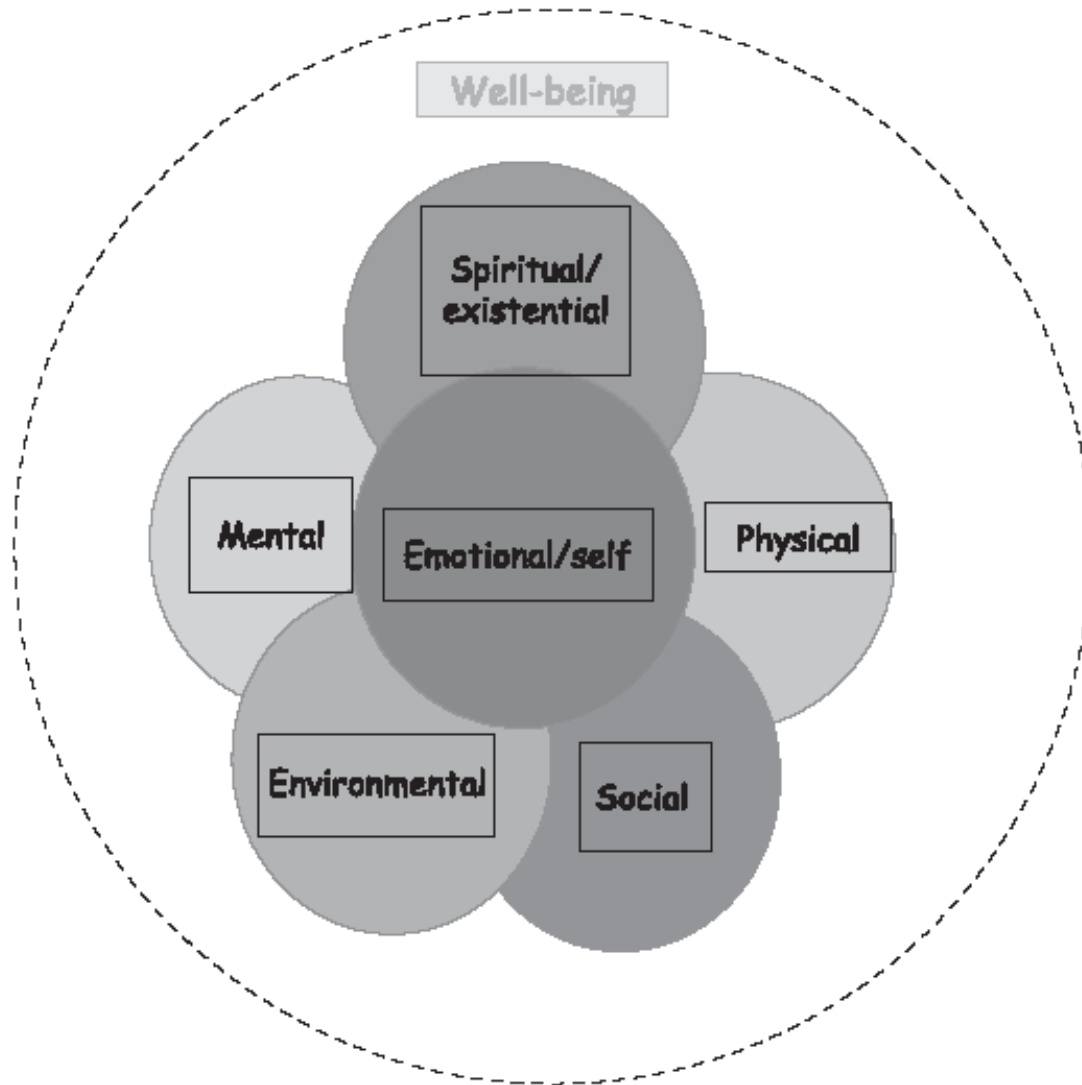
Behaviours of Concern

- The term 'challenging behaviour' should be replaced with 'behaviour of concern' to highlight the ideal response of support staff rather than the challenge they must overcome. (Chan, et al, 2012).



What is wellbeing?

- "In essence, stable wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. When individuals have more challenges than resources, the see-saw dips, along with their wellbeing, and vice-versa." (Dodge et al, 2012) pp230



Longevity Health and Subjective Wellbeing (Diener & Chan 2011)

- Life satisfaction.
- Absence of negative emotion.
- Optimism.
- Positive Emotion.

Frederickson 2013

- Joy
- Serenity
- Gratitude
- Interest
- Hope
- Pride
- Amusement
- Inspiration
- Awe
- Love (Multicomponent)

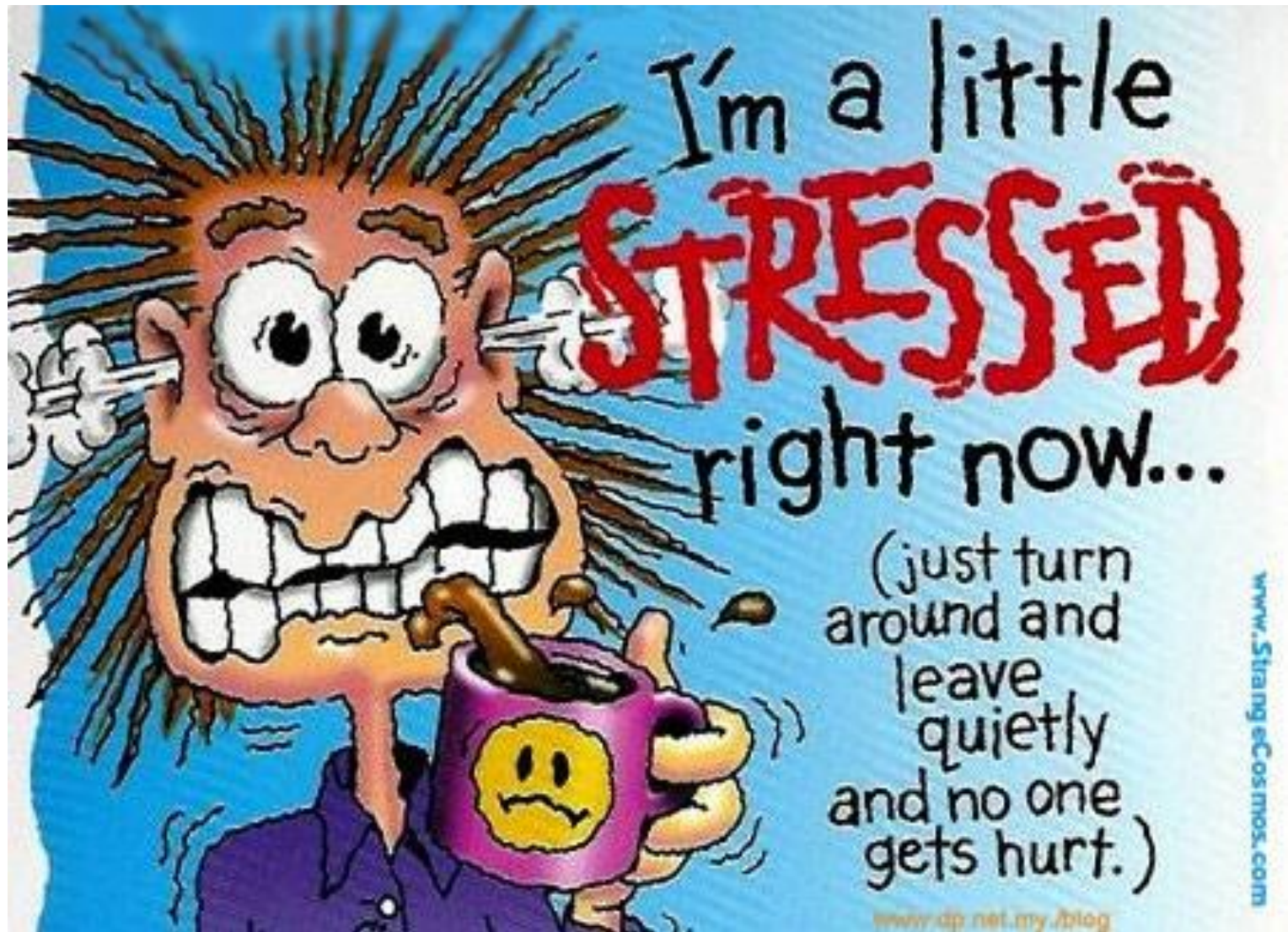
Benefits of Wellbeing

- Evidence shows that people with positive well-being
 - Live longer
 - Have less coronary heart disease
 - Are more likely to survive cancer
 - Show faster wound healing times
 - Are less likely to succumb to a standard dose of virus

Wellbeing Focus

- Use positive language
- Focus on positive experiences and activity.
- Avoid focussing on negatives.
- Model positive engagement with people.





I'm a little

STRESSED

right now...

(just turn
around and
leave
quietly
and no one
gets hurt.)

www.Strangecosmos.com

www.dip.net.my/blog

Lazarus & Folkman 1984

- Lazarus & Folkman (1984) described a transactional model of stress emphasizing interaction between an individual and his/her environment.
- Stress occurs when the demands of stressors outweigh coping responses and there is a clear interaction between environmental and physiological events. Implicit in this model is the cognitive appraisal of threat.

Stress and Coping

- Lazarus & Folkman (1991) linked stress and coping.
- Coping strategies are a critical variable in this model.
- In this model individuals with high levels of stress , but with high levels of coping responses do OK.

Physical Wellbeing Focus

- Increase cardiac activity of all types.
- Focus on everyday health issues that may be unresolved (ie gastric issues, pain, migraine etc).
- Focus on sleep.
- Focus on diet.
- Give people more control over their lives.



Work from a positive framework

- The emergence of positive psychological approaches to working with people with intellectual disabilities has been partly a focus on constructional approaches (Goldiamond, 1974) to behaviours
- Focus on strength building and resilience rather than repairing damage.



Martin Seligman

- Seligman started his career conducting animal experiments (usually involving electric shocks see learned helplessness). He is now a leading guru in positive psychology.
- He is one of the most cited psychologists of the 20th Century.
- This is a major transformation and quite inspirational.



The PERMA Model (Seligman, 2011)

- Positive emotions
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishment \ Achievement.

Positive Emotions

- Feeling good helps us to perform better at work and study
- It boosts our physical health by strengthening the immune system.
- Feeling good is contagious. Seeing smiles makes us want to smile. Hearing laughter makes us feel like laughing.

"Positive Emotions"

- Love
- Gratitude
- Interest
- Joy
- Hope
- Amusement
- Pride
- Inspiration
- Awe
- Serenity

Measuring happiness

- There have been many attempts to measure happiness.
- Fordyce (1988) developed a simple 2 item measure.



In general how happy do you feel?

- 10 point scale ranging from 10= feeling ecstatic, joyous, fantastic to 0= utterly depressed or completely down

On average what percentage of the time do you feel happy (or unhappy or neutral?)

- Percentage

Question 1 = 6.9

- Question 2 Average score = 54%

Vermeulen 2014: Positive focus on happiness

- Good feeling Street: A group based exercise to identify activities which lead to good feelings.
- Good feeling sensory circuits: A way to focus on positive sensory experiences
- A positive stress questionnaire.

Three Good Things Exercise

- Three good things in life - Participants were asked to write down three things that went well each day and their causes every night for one week. In addition they were asked to provide a causal explanation for each good thing.

Engagement

- Many activities such as running, computer games chess etc motivate us. If you have a job you love, you probably feel this way at work. We are most likely to fulfil our own unique potential when we are engaged in activities that absorb and inspire us.



Physical Exercise

- There are relatively obvious benefits of regular exercise in reducing anxiety (Petruzello, Landers, Hatfield, Kubitz & Salazar, 1991).
- Exercise can reduce and stabilise cortisol levels over time (McCreadie & McDonnell 2013).
- McGimsey and Favell (1988) found that when severely aggressive and hyperactive clients were exposed to two daily periods of jogging and strenuous activities there was a systematic reduction in problem behaviour for 8 of the 10 participants to levels considered not a problem or only an occasional problem.
- Do we consider the physical fitness levels of staff who work with people who challenge?

Physical Exercise

- We achieve a sense of flow in many ways.
- Cardiac exercise is an area which we focus on when considering engagement
- Exercise can serve a dearousing function.
(McDonnell et al, 2015)



Flow States

- Achieving a sense of flow, is an important component of wellbeing.
- Flow experiences require complete immersion in an activity, whether playing a musical instrument, completing a complex technical task, or reading a book (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2009).
- Athletes often refer to such states as 'being in the zone'. Flow can also happen within social interactions, for example: when one is talking to a good friend or playing with a young child.
- According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), a flow state can also be achieved when the skills and resources available to an individual are fully engaged in managing an activity.

Relationships.

- Socially supportive relationships within families and close groups are associated with greater wellbeing health and longevity (Diener et al, 2008; Dickerson & Zoccola, 2009).



Relationships we expect people to develop relationships with challenging people

- Many challenging behaviours are triggered accidentally by carers and staff (McDonnell, 2010).
- Individuals may be difficult to support especially if their behaviour 'appears' explosive, or uncontrolled.
- 50% report feelings of anger after a physical assault (Lundstrom et al, 2007).
- IT is impacting on relationships, 25% of couples have texted partner when they are in the house! (Lenhart, Duggan & Smith, 2014)

Meaning

- This is a slightly deeper concept.
- We get meaning from the concept of belonging to social groups and networks.
- Living a meaningful life is, in essence, related to attaching oneself to something larger than oneself. It instills the sense that there is a larger purpose to life, and being a part of it confers meaning. Having such connections with something bigger is also an effective barrier against depression and other mental health issues.

Meaning: Sartre

- Man.... 'first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards... Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself' (*Existentialism is a Humanism*)



Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980)

Achievement\Accomplishment

- Past successes make us feel more confident and optimistic about future attempts.
- Goals are a focus of self discovery (see Maslow).
- Achieving goals helps self esteem and self worth.



Empathy and Double Empathy

- Many advocates of Theory of Mind argue that people with autism lack empathy. Due to the fact that they struggle taking the perspective of others and have difficulty reading emotions.
- Our experience is that many people can understand empathy but are relatively poor at expressing feelings.
- Empathy is different from sympathy.
- Milton (2012) referred to a double empathy problem where carers also struggle to empathise with people with autism. Encouraging empathy is a key positive component. "he has feelings like me".

Encourage more control

- We have long advocated giving more choice and control and choice to people with intellectual disabilities (Wolfensberger, 1983, Chan et al, 2011).
- Low arousal approaches encourage people to avoid controlling measures.
- When we take control what are teaching?
- Taking a step back and allowing a person to calm down will ultimately teach a person to self regulate.



Encourage Self Regulation

- Self regulation is a critical component of any intervention.
- John shouts and threatens staff daily (he used to hit them).
- John has been observed that he damages more property.
- John is attempting to regulate his behaviour
- "I don't want to hit staff because they are OK with me.

The case for positive recording

- We record negative behaviours on a regular basis.
- There is a danger that this creates a negative mindset.
- Try using an ABC format of recording with target behaviours of smiling, happiness and acts of kindness.
- We are currently conducting pilot research

Conclusions

- The PERMA framework provides a focus on positive elements of life.
- Positive emotion is focussed on very little in day to day practice. It is often assumed to occur as a by product of activity.
- The PERMA Model can be used to develop wellbeing plans for individuals.
- Concepts such as flow fit well within this model.
- Happiness is a better concept to use than quality of life.
- What constitutes happiness and wellbeing from a person on the autism spectrum may differ from our Neurotypical perspective (see Vermeulen, 2014)

Further Information

- Autism and stress, www.atlassautism.com
- Low arousal approaches
www.lowarousal.com.
- Training in behaviour management
www.studio3.org
- Martin Seligman, www.authentic happiness.com

Any questions?

More about the CAPBS 2016 Webinar series

www.bild.org.uk/capbswebinars

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