

Wellness Wednesday
Memo 3
Jan. 22, 2020

Happy Wednesday!

Positive Psychology is concerned with finding meaning in life rather than being overwhelmed by its challenges. The focus is on our assets instead of our deficits. The challenge is that we humans tend to be predisposed to see the negative and finding a positive focus takes practice. Positive Psychology is becoming a popular approach to social and emotional learning and many schools are using its tenants in the classroom. Before we jump into using Positive Psychology with our students, we may need an intro or a refresher course ourselves so that's what we're doing this week.

Let's start here:

<https://psychcentral.com/blog/3-ways-to-cultivate-happiness/>

Nurturing happiness means making it a priority to "savor the moment", to recognize and share our "gratitude", and to be kind, compassionate, and appreciative to ourselves.

Do you need some practice in one or more of these areas? I know I do. Here's some additional reading on each of these three approaches to nurturing happiness:

Savor the Moment

Have you ever looked forward to a vacation or an event for a long time and then, when it arrives, you're so busy making sure everything goes just right, that everyone has fun, that you capture the perfect pictures etc. that the moment passes and you hardly had time to enjoy it? I think we're all guilty of that and not just in those big moments. There are lots of moments that we don't enjoy to the fullest or that we miss out on all together. Take for instance that sunrise this morning. Did you take time to drink that in? Here are some tips to help you practice being in the moment:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-savor-the-moment-3144633>

An Attitude of Gratitude

Unleashing our gratitude can have a powerful impact on our happiness as our other articles have explained, but don't go starting that daily gratitude journal just yet. I love this article from UC Berkeley because they recognize that if keeping a journal feels like just another item on your to-do list, you won't benefit from the experience. The article has some great tips for experiencing and acknowledging gratitude without getting bogged down in the process.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/tips_for_keeping_a_gratitude_journal

Self-Compassion

This article is geared toward Social Workers but it is equally applicable to teachers and other school staff: "**self-compassion is a valuable tool for caregivers (and mental health professionals)**. It helps them experience less burnout and caregiver fatigue, as well as greater satisfaction with caregiver role." Each one of you is a caregiver - you care for hundreds of students a day and then turn around and care for your families and friends. Make sure that you're also taking time to care for yourself - and while a day at the spa is nice, self-compassion involves much more than those quick moments of self-indulgence. This article is so jam-packed with good information that I'm going to spend next week's memo unpacking it for us. Here's the link if you want to read ahead. If not check out the graphic below for a quick overview of self-compassion.

<https://www.socialwork.career/2017/07/self-compassion-boosts-wellbeing.html>

(Scroll down for the graphic)

WHY AND HOW TO EMBRACE SELF-COMPASSION

www.SocialWork.Career

3 Components



Self-Kindness

Treat self with care and understanding
Soothe and comfort

Common Humanity

See own experience as part of larger
human experience (we all suffer)
Recognize life's/our imperfections

Mindfulness

Acknowledge & accept nonjudgmentally
emotions

Self-Compassion Leads to:



Increased resilience
(ability to cope
with difficult
situations)



Less burnout
and caregiver
fatigue

**DON'T
QUIT**

Greater
motivation



Greater
satisfaction with
caregiver role

Suffering = Pain X Resistance

Pain is inevitable; suffering is optional.

You add on suffering to your pain when you resist your pain.

When struggling, give yourself compassion - not to feel better but because it feels bad.

How to Address Difficult Emotion

Label emotion

Find emotion in body

Soothe & comfort self for
having difficult emotion



Backdraft = Discomfort that can arise as reaction to self compassion practice

Backdraft Antidotes

Mindfulness (or label emotion as backdraft)

Breathe

Pet a furry friend

Drink a cup of tea

Ground self with physical sensation

Or stop, allow self to be a slow learner of self-compassion



Reference:

Neff, K. (2017, May 20). The Art of Mindfulness and Self-Compassion. Eileen Fisher Learning Lab. New York.

www.SocialWork.Career