

A. Description

Today's tsunami of trauma-informed clinical services is buoyed by peer support that promotes wellness and resilience or recovery. Based on blending the social model of recovery with positive psychology's evidence-based principles and practices, this webinar briefly covers how to promote wellbeing while recognizing and fostering growth and resilience within peer support relationships. Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify five aspects of the social model of recovery.
2. Explain five research-based elements of wellbeing,
3. Describe three common beliefs that stunt recovery or resilience following setbacks or traumatic events, and
4. List five contributors to, and two exercises for, post-trauma growth.

The goal: A habit of engaging in compassionate conversations with equanimity that promote resilience.

B. Social Model of Recovery Programs (Borkman et al, 1998)

1. Emphasize social and interpersonal connection aspects of recovery.
2. Value experiential knowledge.
3. Promote peer-to-peer connections, mutual aid and other supportive environments in which recovery or wellbeing is the common bond.
4. Require active work in an individualized recovery program.
5. Emphasize peer-to-peer AND practitioner-client relationships that mutually blend or enhance treatment and recovery or wellness plans.

C. Well-being's Five Elements. PERMA: No one element defines well-being but each contributes

*Happiness' three aspects feed into life satisfaction

1. Positive emotion*: The pleasant life; pleasure, ecstasy, comfort, warmth, etc.

See Solomon, R. L. (1980). The opponent-process theory of acquired motivation: The costs of pleasure and benefits of pain. *American Psychologist*, 35, 691-712.

“How strange would appear to be this thing that men call pleasure! And how curiously it is related to what is thought to be its opposite, pain! The two will never be found *together* in a man,



and yet if you seek the one and obtain it, you are almost bound always to get the other as well, just as though they were both attached to one and the same head. . . . Wherever the one is found, the other follows up behind. So, in my case, since I had pain in my leg as a result of the fetters, pleasure seems to have come to follow it up.” Plato. *Phaedo*.

2. Engagement*: Thought and feeling are usually absent in the flow state; you go into flow when your highest strengths are deployed to meet the highest challenges that come your way

3. Relationships: Doing a kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being

“The capacity to *be* loved is the master strength” George Valliant (2000)

4. Meaning*: Belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self

5. Achievement: Accomplishment for the sake of accomplishment; when free of coercion is often pursued for its own sake, even when it brings no positive emotions, meanings or relationships

Well-being is a combination of feeling good as well as actually having meaning, good relationships and accomplishment

D. Post-traumatic Growth

1. The PTG Inventory emdrhap.org/content/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/VIII-B_Post-Traumatic-Growth-Inventory.pdf

2. Three Ps Stunt Recovery Following Setbacks/Trauma

a. Personalization: Believing that we are at fault or personally responsible

b. Pervasiveness: Believing that an event will affect all areas of our life

c. Permanence: Believing that the aftershocks of an event will last forever

“Resilience comes from deep within us and from support outside of us. It comes from gratitude about what’s good in our lives and from leaning into the suck. It comes from analyzing how we process grief and from simply accepting the grief. Sometimes we have less control. Other times we have more. I learned that when life pulls you under, you can kick off the bottom, break the surface, and breathe again.”**

3. PTSD reportedly occurs in 20% of the Americans who served in Iran and Afghanistan while the British rate is 4%; no such comparable effects have been found following the Civil War.

Intense depression and anxiety are common following extreme adversity (and prosperity) yet in the long run the individuals arrive at a higher level of psychological functioning than before



“What does not kill me makes me stronger” Friedrich Nietzsche. (1889). *Twilight of the idols*.

E. Five Contributors to Post-traumatic Growth

1. Understand the response to trauma: shattered beliefs about the self, others and the future
2. Anxiety reduction: techniques for controlling intrusive thoughts and images
3. Constructive self-disclosure: telling the story
4. Create a trauma narrative: embrace the paradox of loss and gain, grief and gratitude, and vulnerability and strengths – personal strengths called upon, some relationships improved, spiritual life strengthened how life itself was better appreciated, and what new doors opened
5. Articulate life principles and stances that are more robust to challenge: may include new ways to be altruistic, accepting growth without survivor guilt, crafting a new identity as a trauma survivor or newly compassionate person, and taking seriously the s/heroic journey myth to tell the world an important truth about how to live

“The one thing you can’t take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me. The last of one’s freedoms is to choose one’s attitude in any given circumstance.” Viktor Frankl. (1946). *Man’s search for meaning*

F. Joy Notes

“Having fun is a form of self-compassion; just as we need to be kind to ourselves when we make mistakes, we also need to be kind to ourselves by enjoying life when we can.... Seeking joy after adversity is taking back what was stolen from you.... But happiness is the frequency of positive experiences, not the intensity.”**

Write down three moments of joy each day! Typically these are momentary flashes. So as you go through your day, recognize them and say to yourself, “this will go in today’s Joy Notes!”

G. VIA Character Strengths Survey

Register (free!), complete the 240-question survey, and receive your strengths inventory report: viacharacter.org

Overview of the VIA Character Strengths: The good in you - viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/Science-Of-Character

“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.” Viktor Frankl. (1946). *Man’s search for meaning*.



References

1. Borkman, T. Kaskutas, L. A., Room, J., Bryan, K., & Barrows, D. (1998). An historical and developmental analysis of Social Model Programs. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 15 (1), 7–17.
2. Sandberg, S. & Grant, A. (2017). *Option B: Facing adversity, building resilience and finding joy*. New York: Knopf.** leanin.org
3. Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourishing: A visionary understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Simon & Schuster. authentichappiness.org
4. Tedeschi, R. G. & Calhoun, L. G. (1999), The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory: Measuring the positive legacy of trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 9 (3), 455 – 471.
5. University of Pennsylvania’s Positive Psychology Center: ppc.sas.upenn.edu and Authentic Happiness: authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu
6. Values in Action Institute on Character: viacharacter.org

