Practical Ways to Integrate Wellbeing into Special Education for Teachers and Students

OAR Webinar | March 20, 2024
“I have traveled to the ends of the earth to learn from autistic individuals. My hope is that through aligning the science and skills of happiness with autism intervention, wellbeing becomes accessible to all.”
“I believe passionately in the potential for human flourishing. Positive psychology allows me to cultivate growth through meaningful connections and joy.”
LEARN About the International Day of Happiness

On March 20, The International Day of Happiness, millions worldwide will participate in a global movement with activities promoting happiness and wellbeing. Like the United Nations, Proof Positive recognizes happiness as a universal right, which means the autism community — autistic individuals, educators, parents, caregivers, and service providers like you — deserve happiness.

At Proof Positive, we promote the happiness and wellbeing of all people as a partner in disability wellbeing. We know the world’s 70 million autistic people and those who support them may struggle to find happiness, so inclusion in the wellbeing movement and finding happiness is vital to the overall wellbeing of society.
What Kind of Happy Are You?

There are 10 Positive Emotions to describe good feelings:

- **Love**: A shared positive connection with someone
- **Inspiration**: Feeling moved or motivated by an uplifting experience
- **Gratitude**: Feeling thankful for the good things in life
- **Serenity**: The feeling of being calm and peaceful
- **Awe**: Feeling amazement or wonder when you see something powerful
- **Interest**: Having a curiosity or desire to learn, know, and explore
- **Joy**: Being surprised or delighted with a good thing
- **Pride**: Feeling fulfilled in ourselves for accomplishing a goal
- **Hope**: Believing that things will turn out for the best
- **Amusement**: Experiencing something fun, playful, or entertaining
Our What Kind of Happy Are You? poster activity and supplemental resources (made accessible for a variety of learners) are a great way to celebrate the International Day of Happiness. Download these free activities to practice and teach happiness today and everyday.

**ACTIVITY DOWNLOADS:**

What Kind of Happy Are You?
- Full 36x24 Poster (PDF)
- Poster Activity Slips (PDF)
- DIY Printable Poster Pieces (PDF)
- Poster Activity Instructions (PDF)

**ACTIVITY DOWNLOADS:**

Positive Emotions Flash Cards (PDF)
- Positive Emotions File Folders (PDF)
- Download ALL
The Science and Skills of HAPPINESS
What is Positive Psychology?

“Positive psychology is the scientific study of human strengths and virtues. The study of what constitutes the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life.”

— Dr. Seligman

“Positive psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions.”

— Dr. Gable
PERMA+ Theory of Wellbeing

POSITIVE EMOTIONS  ENGAGEMENT  RELATIONSHIPS  MATTERING  ACCOMPLISHMENT +HEALTH
PERMA+ Theory of Wellbeing

**P** Positive Emotions
Experiencing and striving to feel a variety of positive emotions.

**E** Engagement
Having interests and pursuits that captivate us and leave to regular experiences of flow.

**R** Relationships
Connect with others. Build a stronger environment in which you and others can flourish.

**M** Mattering
Creating purpose, passion, and fulfilment by connecting to and serving something larger than yourself.

**A** Accomplishment
Pursue bigger and better goals. Push yourself to reach new boundaries.

**+** Health
Engage in the 3 pillars of physical health with intention — sleep, nutrition, and movement.
“We believe that persons who carry even the weightiest psychological burdens care about much more in their lives than just the relief of their suffering. Troubled persons want more satisfaction, contentment, and joy, not just less sadness and worry.”

— Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005
WHAT WENT WELL

The act of training your brain to mindfully notice, remember and track the good things that happen each day.
Benefits of What Went Well

• Live longer, healthier lives
• Fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer
• Perform better at school, work and extracurricular activities
• Have stronger relationships
• Are less depressed and anxious

Based on the works of Robert Emmons and Martin Seligman
How to Practice What Went Well

• Get a journal, notepad, or app on your device
• Set a time each day that you will practice What Went Well
• Write down at least 3 good things from the day
• Reflect on what made each good thing special
• Share your good stuff with a friend or family member
Teach What Went Well
SKILL #2

Jolts of Joy

Jolts of Joy teaches us to intentionally experience higher levels of wellbeing and bursts of positive emotions across the day.
The Broaden and Build Theory
Benefits of Jolts of Joy (Positive Emotions)

- Open our eyes and minds
- Increase creative thinking
- Expand our visual field
- Allow for global thinking & diversity
- Prevent depression and anxiety
- Undoing effect
- Improve cardiac functioning
- Increase healthy sleep

Based on works by Barbara Fredrickson
How to Practice Jolts of Joy

- List 10 ways you experience positive emotions
- Include a variety of positive emotions
- Place the list where you will see it everyday
- Engage in a minimum of 3 Jolts of Joy per day
- Consider how you can be a Jolt of Joy for others
Teach Jolts of Joy
SKILL #3

Showcase the Good

Responding to other people’s good news in a way that enhances their joy and enables them to relive the positive experience.
### Active Constructive Responding

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<td>Showcases Good</td>
<td>Quashes the News</td>
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<td>Builds Joy</td>
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<td>PASSIVE</td>
<td>Quiet, Understated Support</td>
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Based on work by Shelly Gable
Benefits of Showcase the Good

- Increased wellbeing
- Stronger memories of positive events
- Increased positive affect
- Increased trust
- Stronger social connections
How to Practice Showcase the Good

• Share and spot good news
• Lean in when someone shares good news
• Ask questions to help the person relive their experience
• Utilize your strengths to show interest in the good news
Teach Showcase the Good

Showcase the Good
A Unit Study
Learning to notice, showcase, and savor the good news people share with us.
But does it work?
“We used to believe that when our son was successful, he would find happiness. But the harder we worked toward reaching the traditional goalposts of autism treatment, the further away both of those things felt. When we began incorporating positive psychology, everything shifted. His skill acquisition skyrocketed, and even more importantly, so did his self-esteem. **We had it backward — when our son found happiness, success followed.**”

— Christina Kirby —
PILOT STUDY

Collaboration with EPIC
# Staff Retention Data

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“When we spread the science and skills of happiness, we help create more nurturing and inclusive environments for our students with diverse needs. And then, both educators and students will thrive.”
Thanks for being a joy multiplier, advancing the wellbeing revolution, and creating a world where the autism community can access happiness and where wellbeing wins for all.
Join the Alliance

When you join the Autism Wellbeing Alliance you commit to creating a world where wellbeing wins for all, including autistic individuals.

First Name  Last Name

Email

Select One

Submit
Visit Our Skill Center

Learn more about the **SKILLS** of happiness!

- **PERMA+ Snapshot**
  Measure what matters most.
  Your wellbeing! Start here with the PERMA+ Snapshot.

- **Strengths Spotting**
  See the positive side of people!
  Strength Spot to improve your wellbeing, relationships and life satisfaction.

- **Positivity Portfolios**
  The little things count, and add up!!
  Use a Positivity Portfolio to feel more positive emotions.
Follow Us on Social Media

Invite your family, friends, colleagues — and especially those with autism — to celebrate the International Day of Happiness!
Visit Our Website! proofpositive.org