Positive Psychology
Theory of Well-Being - PERMA

PERMA Theory

▶ **P**ositive Emotion

▶ **E**ngagement

▶ **R**elationships

▶ **M**eaning

▶ **A**ccomplishments

Positive Emotion Vs PERMA

- The Happiness Conundrum
  - Flourishing and well-being has to do with a lot more than simply the absence of misery

  - People are positioned at different points along the line from happy to unhappy

  - Happiness cannot simply be defined in terms of happy mood, enjoying life, having fun, being cheerful etc.
    - 50% inherited and normally distributed

  - Research shows that individuals vary across the five different elements i.e. PERMA

Engagement

- Seligman see this as the ability to be in a flow state
  - Research shows that when strengths match demands of tasks this is best for achieving flow
  - So use signature strengths to improve flow experiences
  - Use your signature strengths to do tasks you don't like doing.

- Engagement according to PERMA theory typically refers to time spent in a flow state
  - The presumption is that this might happen alone or within a group
  - Most people prefer working together with others but for those who often find themselves alone, or prefer to work alone, engagement in tasks can bring a sense of happiness

Good Relationships

- Good relationships involves skills

- In a changing world there is often a greater need for a higher level of skills for success in relationships
  - Communication skills are especially important
  - Skills to enhance empathy and listening help
  - Problem solving skills are also beneficial

- We want to get others to like us
- We want to get along with our peers
- We want to know how to tell a good story
- How to ask the right questions etc.
- Develop our emotional intelligence

Meaning

- How to Find/Create Meaning **in** Life (science) versus
- The Meaning **of** Life (philosophy)

- Martin Seligman sees 'meaning' in terms of the sense of belonging to something bigger than yourself
  - Meaning and purpose can probably be divided into
    - Things and people that are personally meaningful
    - Those things and people that are collectively meaningful

- In a Pluralist society as opposed to a mono-cultural society
  - meaning and purpose may be more challenging
  - there can be divided loyalties/ diversity of opinions about life
  - There may be a difference between
    - The traditional ecological model in a mono-cultural context compared to
    - The relational-network model of community
    - People sometimes navigate multiple communities

Accomplishments

- Achieving mastery and competence is important

- Deskilling is a common challenge in today's world

- Competition can lead to winners and losers (finite versus infinite games)

- Finding stable employment can prove to be challenging

- Finding a permanent home is no longer a certainty for many people

Character Strengths across Occupations