

## Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** We would like to know what thoughts about life you've had *during the past several weeks*. Think about how you spend each day and night, and then think about how your life has been during most of this time. Here are some questions that ask you to indicate your satisfaction with life. In answering each statement, circle a number from **1** to **6**, where **1** indicates you **strongly disagree** with the statement and **6** indicates you **strongly agree** with the statement.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1. My life is going well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My life is just right.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I would like to change many things in my life.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I wish I had a different kind of life.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I have a good life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I have what I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My life is better than most kids'.	1	2	3	4	5	6

### For Practitioner Use Only—Scoring Directions:

\*Reverse-scored item (subtract student response from 7)

$$\text{Global} = (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7) / 7$$

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## Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** We would like to know what thoughts about life you've had *during the past several weeks*. Think about how you spend each day and night, and then think about how your life has been during most of this time. Here are some questions that ask you to indicate your satisfaction with life. In answering each statement, circle a number from **1** to **6**, where **1** indicates you **strongly disagree** with the statement and **6** indicates you **strongly agree** with the statement.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1. My friends are nice to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I am fun to be around.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I feel bad at school.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I have a bad time with my friends.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. There are lots of things I can do well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I learn a lot at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I like spending time with my parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My family is better than most.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. There are many things about school I don't like.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I think I am good-looking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. My friends are great.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My friends will help me if I need it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I wish I didn't have to go to school.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I like myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. There are lots of fun things to do where I live.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. My friends treat me well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Most people like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. My family gets along well together.	1	2	3	4	5	6

(continued)

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**Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) (page 2 of 3)**

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
19. I look forward to going to school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. My parents treat me fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I enjoy being at home with my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I like being in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. My friends are mean to me.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I wish I had different friends.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. School is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. I enjoy school activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I wish I lived in a different house.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Members of my family talk nicely to one another.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. I have a lot of fun with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. My parents and I do fun things together.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. I like my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I wish I lived somewhere else.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. I am a nice person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. This town is filled with mean people.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. I like to try new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. My family's house is nice.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. I like my neighbors.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. I have enough friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. I wish there were different people in my neighborhood.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. I like where I live.	1	2	3	4	5	6

\*\*\*Student, please stop here, thank you!\*\*\*

(continued)

**Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)** (page 3 of 3)

**For Practitioner Use Only—Scoring Directions:**

\*Reverse-scored item (subtract student response from 7)

$$\text{Friends} = (1 + 4 + 11 + 12 + 16 + 23 + 24 + 29 + 38) / 9$$

$$\text{Self} = (2 + 5 + 10 + 14 + 17 + 33 + 35) / 7$$

$$\text{School} = (3 + 6 + 9 + 13 + 19 + 22 + 25 + 26) / 8$$

$$\text{Family} = (7 + 8 + 18 + 20 + 21 + 28 + 30) / 7$$

$$\text{Living environment} = (15 + 27 + 31 + 32 + 34 + 36 + 37 + 39 + 40) / 9$$

## Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** We would like to know what thoughts about life you've had *during the past several weeks*. Think about how you spend each day and night, and then think about how your life has been during most of this time. Here are some questions that ask you to indicate your satisfaction with life. In answering each statement, circle a number from **1** to **7**, where **1** indicates you feel **terrible** about that area of life and **7** indicates you are **delighted** with that area of life.

	Terrible	Unhappy	Mostly dissatisfied	Mixed (about equally satisfied and dissatisfied)	Mostly satisfied	Pleased	Delighted
1. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>family life</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>friendships</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>school experience</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would describe my satisfaction with <i>myself</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I would describe my satisfaction with <i>where I live</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I would describe my satisfaction with my <i>overall life</i> as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Social Emotional Health Survey—Secondary Version (SEHS-S)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Please *circle* the number that corresponds to the response that indicates how true each of these statements is about you.

	Not at all true of me	A little true of me	Pretty much true of me	Very much true of me
1. I can work out my problems.	1	2	3	4
2. I can do most things if I try.	1	2	3	4
3. There are many things that I do well.	1	2	3	4
4. There is a purpose to my life.	1	2	3	4
5. I understand my moods and feelings.	1	2	3	4
6. I understand why I do what I do.	1	2	3	4
7. When I do not understand something, I ask the teacher again and again until I understand.	1	2	3	4
8. I try to answer all the questions asked in class.	1	2	3	4
9. When I try to solve a math problem, I will not stop until I find a final solution.	1	2	3	4
10. At my school there is a teacher or some other adult who always wants me to do my best.	1	2	3	4
11. At my school there is a teacher or some other adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	1	2	3	4
12. At my school there is a teacher or some other adult who believes that I will be a success.	1	2	3	4
13. My family members really help and support one another.	1	2	3	4
14. There is a feeling of togetherness in my family.	1	2	3	4
15. My family really gets along well with one another.	1	2	3	4
16. I have a friend my age who really cares about me.	1	2	3	4
17. I have a friend my age who talks with me about my problems.	1	2	3	4
18. I have a friend my age who helps me when I'm having a hard time.	1	2	3	4
19. I accept responsibility for my actions.	1	2	3	4
20. When I make a mistake I admit it.	1	2	3	4
21. I can deal with being told no.	1	2	3	4
22. I feel bad when someone gets his or her feelings hurt.	1	2	3	4

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Social Emotional Health Survey—Secondary Version (SEHS-S) (page 2 of 3)

	Not at all true of me	A little true of me	Pretty much true of me	Very much true of me
23. I try to understand what other people go through.	1	2	3	4
24. I try to understand how other people feel and think.	1	2	3	4
25. I can wait for what I want.	1	2	3	4
26. I don't bother others when they are busy.	1	2	3	4
27. I think before I act.	1	2	3	4
28. Each day I look forward to having a lot of fun.	1	2	3	4
29. I usually expect to have a good day.	1	2	3	4
30. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad things.	1	2	3	4

	Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	Quite a lot	Extremely
31. How much do you feel <b>energetic</b> right now?	1	2	3	4	5
32. How much do you feel <b>active</b> right now?	1	2	3	4	5
33. How much do you feel <b>lively</b> right now?	1	2	3	4	5
34. Since yesterday how much have you felt <b>grateful</b> ?	1	2	3	4	5
35. Since yesterday how much have you felt <b>thankful</b> ?	1	2	3	4	5
36. Since yesterday how much have you felt <b>appreciative</b> ?	1	2	3	4	5

\*\*\*Student, please stop here, thank you!\*\*\*

(continued)

**Social Emotional Health Survey—Secondary Version (SEHS-S)** (page 3 of 3)

**For Practitioner Use Only—Scoring Directions:**

Belief in self = sum of items 1–9 [range = 9–36]

Belief in others = sum of items 10–18 [range = 9–36]

Emotional competence = sum of items 19–27 [range = 9–36]

Engaged living = sum of items 28–36 [range = 9–42]

Total covitality = sum of items 1–36 [range = 36–150]

\*Low  $\leq$  85; low average = 86–106; high average = 107–127; high  $\geq$  128



## Social Emotional Health Survey—Primary Version (SEHS-P)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Please circle from **1** to **4**, where **1** is **almost never** and **4** is **very often**, how true each of the following statements is for you.

	Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1. I am lucky to go to school.	1	2	3	4
2. I am thankful that I get to learn new things at school.	1	2	3	4
3. We are lucky to have nice teachers at my school.	1	2	3	4
4. I feel thankful for my good friends at school.	1	2	3	4
5. When I have problems at school, I know they will get better in the future.	1	2	3	4
6. I expect good things to happen at my school.	1	2	3	4
7. Each week, I expect to feel happy in class.	1	2	3	4
8. I expect to have fun with my friends at school.	1	2	3	4
9. I get excited when I learn something new at school.	1	2	3	4
10. I get really excited about my school projects.	1	2	3	4
11. I wake up in the morning excited to go to school.	1	2	3	4
12. I get excited when I am doing my class assignments.	1	2	3	4
13. I finish all my class assignments.	1	2	3	4
14. When I get a bad (low) grade, I try even harder the next time.	1	2	3	4
15. I keep working until I get my schoolwork right.	1	2	3	4
16. I do my class assignments even when they are really hard for me.	1	2	3	4
17. I follow the classroom rules.	1	2	3	4
18. I follow the playground rules at recess and lunch/break times.	1	2	3	4
19. I listen when my teacher is talking.	1	2	3	4
20. I am nice to other students.	1	2	3	4

## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

INTRODUCTION TO THE WELL-BEING PROMOTION PROGRAM		Core Session 1: Student Group
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a supportive group environment.</li> <li>• Increase awareness of subjective well-being.</li> <li>• Introduce students to the broad determinants of happiness.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	A. Get to Know You Activity: You at Your Best B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and the Importance of Happiness C. Clarify Purpose of the Group D. Establish Group Norms E. Homework: You at Your Best	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Binder</i> to hold documents provided and created throughout the program, to stay in the practitioner's possession for ready access at the beginning of each group session</li> <li>• <i>Folder</i> in which students can transport group homework assignments, to stay in the student's possession for ready access between group meetings</li> <li>• White board or easel</li> <li>• <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>Overview of Program Activities</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>Confidentiality</i> handout</li> </ul>	
<b>Procedures Defined</b>		
<b>A. Get to Know You Activity: You at Your Best</b>		
<p>This activity provides an initial boost of happiness (Seligman et al., 2005). It is included here as an introductory exercise in part to enhance engagement and to amplify effects of later activities.</p>		
<b>Set the Stage</b>	<i>Before we talk about why we're all here in this group, I'd like to do an activity to help us get to know one another, in particular what we are each good at.</i>	
<b>Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide students with a plain sheet of lined paper.</li> <li>• Ask them to write about a time when they were at their best.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Doing something really well.</li> <li>◦ Going above and beyond for someone else.</li> <li>◦ Displaying a talent.</li> <li>◦ Creating something.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Personal Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once completed, ask them to take a few minutes to reflect on the story.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Remember the feelings of that day.</li> <li>◦ Identify the personal strengths they displayed in the story.</li> <li>◦ Think about the time, effort, and creativity that comprised such an accomplishment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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<b>Shared Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to share their story with the group and one or two reflections.</li><li>• Initiate reflections on each group member's story with identifications or reaffirmations of strengths displayed within the story.</li><li>• Encourage group members to reflect on the positives in each other's stories.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Something they admired or liked in the story.</li><li>◦ Strengths the presenter demonstrated in the story.</li><li>◦ A quality they share with the presenter.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Retain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make a photocopy of the "You at Your Best" stories.</li><li>• File the copy of the story in a binder you will keep for future reference by you or the student, such as in the event the student forgets to bring his or her homework folder back to group the next session.</li><li>• Place the original story in a folder the student will use to keep his or her homework assignments for, and notes from, the Well-Being Promotion Program group.</li></ul>

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### **B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and the Importance of Happiness**

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<b>Set the Stage</b>	<p><i>What do you think this group is all about?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Once answers are received, state that the group is about happiness.</li></ul>
<b>Introduction to Happiness</b>	<p>Pose these questions to the group and facilitate a brief discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>When someone says he or she is "happy," what does he or she mean? What does "happiness" mean to you?</i></li><li>• <i>Why is being happy important? Why is happiness important to you?</i></li><li>• <i>What do you do to increase your own happiness?</i></li></ul> <p>No specific answers are necessary. Simply facilitate students' thoughts and discussions on these topics. Participate in the discussion as well with examples from your own life in order to develop a relationship with the group.</p>

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### **C. Clarify Purpose of the Group**

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This discussion will introduce students to the purpose of the group: to use our power to change our personal happiness to the upper bounds of our set point through building purposeful thoughts and activities that move us toward the upper part of our emotional range.

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<b>Introduce the Determinants of Happiness Theory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share the <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure.</li><li>• Explain that happiness is determined by three things: our genetics, our life circumstances, and our purposeful activities. Example script: <i>Look at the What Determines Happiness? figure. Scientists find happiness is made up of three things: a genetic or biological set point, purposeful activity, and life circumstances. Set point is the biggest cause of happiness and it is controlled by our genetics. We all have a range of ability to be happy based on what we're born with. Let's use the ruler and pretend that people can be happy on a scale of 1–6. Some people's ranges are naturally high, so even when they are at their lowest happy level, they may seem a lot happier than other people. In that case, their range could be 4–6. However, some people's ranges are lower, so they don't seem happy that often. They may have a range of 0–2. A person's set point is the level of happiness they usually have within their range. For example, a person could have a range of 3–5 but is usually at a 4 level of happiness. It is a good thing that genetics isn't the only thing that makes up happiness, or else we wouldn't be able to get any happier. Changes in life circumstances and purposeful ways of thinking and acting help us to move our level of happiness within our ranges. Circumstances are facts of life, such as the state you live in, your age,</i></li></ul>
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(continued)

*how much money you have, and the school you go to. These are things that we usually can't change or can't do so very easily. The key to increasing happiness within our ranges is purposeful activity—in other words, what you choose to do or think. Purposeful activity includes the things you do, the way you think, your attitudes, and your goals. Everyone has the opportunity to increase his or her level of happiness through purposeful activities and that's what we'll be talking about in the group. The purpose of this group is to increase your happiness by talking about good attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and activities from your past, present, and future. During our meetings, we'll learn how to make our purposeful activities (those things we choose to do and think about) more in line with activities seen in people who feel pretty happy with their lives. What questions do you have?*

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- Check for Comprehension**
- Distribute the *Overview of Program Activities* handout.
  - Ask students to complete the key for the figure (three determinants of happiness) and the first question regarding the focus of group meetings (answer: purposeful activities).
  - Reinforce effort; guide students to correct answers as needed.
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#### **D. Establish Group Norms**

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Provide clear expectations for appropriate behavior during meetings. Behavior should convey respect for classmates and maximize opportunities to engage with the activities and thereby increase personal happiness.

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- Set the Stage**
- Discuss the logistics of group meetings. When, how often, and where students will meet with the group leader; how the group leader will coordinate this schedule with classroom teachers; use of hall passes, and so on. Example script:  
*We'll meet once each week, for the next 10 weeks, in this room, at this time—third period. No need to check in with your third-period teacher first; I'll e-mail her to confirm you were here today. When your second-period class is dismissed, stop by your locker to get your folder for our group, then come straight here.*
  - Revisit the *Overview of Program Activities* handout; complete questions 2–4.
  - File completed worksheet in students' folders for their future reference.
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- Confidentiality**
- Pose these questions to the group and facilitate a brief discussion:
    - *Have you heard the word confidentiality before?*
    - *How would you define confidentiality for this group? (e.g., confidential = private or secret).*
  - Compile students' ideas into a confidentiality definition on the board. Make sure that it includes the following components:
    - Respect for others' privacy outside of group.
    - Times when the group leader will have to break confidentiality (e.g., danger to self, danger to others, student is in danger).
    - Any other concerns students express.
  - Distribute the *Confidentiality* handout.
  - Ask students to write the definition on the worksheet.
  - File the completed worksheet in students' folders for future reference.
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(continued)

- Develop Additional Group Rules for Behavior**
- Develop a short list of group rules. These rules are intended to facilitate an atmosphere of trust and engagement. Rules for appropriate behavior in the group should also be consistent with existing school rules and behavioral expectations, such as those rules that are explicated in the school's PBIS program.
  - Record and post group rules for future reference.
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**E. Homework: You at Your Best**

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- Set the Stage**
- Discuss specific incentives that will be provided weekly for completion of group homework, such as school supplies, stickers, candy, tickets toward rewards used in the school's PBIS program, and so on.
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- Assign**
- For each night this week, students should read their story and think about the strengths they demonstrated in the story.
  - Encourage students to add more details and length to the story.
  - They can share the story with family members or someone else if they like.
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- Looking Ahead**
- A brief discussion in the next session will touch on student follow-through with homework and resulting feelings of happiness.
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## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

GRATITUDE JOURNALS		Core Session 2: Student Group
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore students' current levels of gratitude.</li> <li>• Define gratitude and how it can impact happiness.</li> <li>• Learn a method of using gratitude to focus on positive interpretations of past events.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	A. Review Homework: You at Your Best B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and Importance of Gratitude C. Gratitude Journals D. Homework: Gratitude Journal on a Daily Basis	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (stickers, candy, pencils, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• Small squares of paper for students to note self-identified ratings</li> <li>• Notebook or journal with blank cover to be inserted in group folders</li> <li>• Pens, pencils, markers, or other colorful supplies to decorate journals</li> </ul>	
<b>Procedures Defined</b>		
<b>A. Review Homework Assignment: You at Your Best</b>		
<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students how often they read their “You at Your Best” stories.</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., candy) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not comply with the daily requirement, stress the importance of daily effort for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>	
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to share any new reflections that they had over the week when revisiting their “You at Your Best” story.</li> <li>• Ask students to share if they felt any difference in happiness since the last session.</li> </ul>	
<b>B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and Importance of Gratitude</b>		
<b>Set the Stage</b>	<i>What is gratitude?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate a brief discussion on what students think constitutes gratitude.</li> <li>• Record students' responses on the board. Circle and discuss key terms, phrases, and or themes. Provide a common definition, such as:   <i>You feel gratitude (thanks, appreciation, grateful) when you recognize that you received an intentional act of kindness from another person. More specifically, you feel gratitude after gaining a benefit that you view as valuable, that was provided intentionally and altruistically (not for ulterior motives), and occurred at some cost to the person who provided the benefit.</i> </li> </ul>	

*(continued)*

<b>Rate Your Gratitude</b>	<p><i>We are going to rate our own level of gratitude.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw a number line from 0 to 10 on a white board.</li> <li>• Distribute small, blank pieces of paper.</li> </ul> <p><i>Think about how often you have felt grateful in the past few months. On a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being never grateful, 5 being sometimes grateful, and 10 being always grateful, rate your gratitude.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to write their ratings on a piece of paper and fold it over.</li> </ul>
<b>Shared Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a round-robin fashion, ask each student to share his or her number and the reason he or she chose it.</li> </ul>
<b>Introduce Links between Gratitude and Happiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Why may gratitude be important?</i></li> <li>• <i>Why is it important or not important to have gratitude in your life?</i></li> <li>• <i>Do you think being grateful can increase happiness? Why or why not?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Discuss how <i>gratitude helps us focus our emotions on the positive parts of our pasts as related to school, friendships, and in family life.</i></li> <li>◦ Provide a personal example of a time in which you have felt grateful and how that refocused your attention on a positive experience.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>C. Gratitude Journals</b>	
<p>Emmons and McCullough (2003) found that daily attention to grateful thoughts increased happiness. Gratitude journals are a method of focusing student thoughts on things, people, and events for which they are grateful. The intensity is high for the first week, in that students are asked to journal daily. This is in line with Emmons and McCullough's finding that higher intensity led to greater happiness gains. Later, journaling is suggested on a once-per-week basis.</p>	
<b>Create a Gratitude Journal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide each student with a plain-cover journal or notebook.</li> <li>• Ask students to use the writing/art materials to design a cover that shows something positive about their history. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Something they have done, was given to them, part of a family event, or any other kind of experience valued as positive.</li> <li>◦ Encourage them to draw a picture, write, or use a combination of writing and drawings/symbols.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Use the Gratitude Journal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the time to decorate the journals is over, explain their intended use. <p><i>I want you to take 5 minutes, think about your day, and write down five things in your life that you are grateful for, including both small and large things, events, people, talents, or anything else you think of. Some examples may include generosity of my friends, my teacher giving me extra help, family dinner, your favorite band/singer, and so on. [Provide examples relevant to your students that you are aware of.]</i></p> </li> <li>• Help students complete an initial entry in the group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Give students about 5 minutes to list five things for which they are currently grateful.</li> <li>◦ Explain that a variety of responses is acceptable and expected.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Shared Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the independent writing time is over, prompt each student to share one or two of their responses with the group.</li> <li>• In light of students' typically relatively low satisfaction with school, draw particular attention to things or people pertinent to school that students comment on in a positive manner.</li> </ul>

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**D. Homework: Gratitude Journal on a Daily Basis**

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**Assign** *For each night this week, I want you to set aside 5 minutes before you go to sleep. At that time, think about your day and write down five things in your life that you are grateful for, just like we did here today in your journals. Remember that you can include events, people, talents, or anything else you think of, whether it is large or small. Also, you can repeat some things if they are really important to you. But also try to think of different ones as well.*

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- Looking Ahead**
- Explain that students will never be asked to share all of their responses, but to become comfortable with sharing two to three of their recorded responses in the next group meeting.
  - Students should leave the meeting with the decorated notebooks added to their homework folder.
  - Remind students of the incentives they can receive contingent on homework completion and return of the gratitude journal.
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## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

GRATITUDE VISITS		<i>Core Session 3: Student Group</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore students' experiences with gratitude journals.</li> <li>• Make connections between grateful thoughts and positive feelings about the past.</li> <li>• Learn to incorporate actions/expressions of gratitude.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Review Homework: Gratitude Journals</li> <li>B. Gratitude Visit</li> <li>C. Group Discussion: Positive Feelings about the Past</li> <li>D. Homework: Carry Out the Gratitude Visit</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (stickers, pencils, etc.)</li> <li>• Access to computer lab or letter stationery</li> <li>• Letter-size envelopes</li> <li>• <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>Gratitude Visit Planning Form</i> handout</li> </ul>	
<b>Procedures Defined</b>		
<b>A. Review Homework Assignment: Gratitude Journals</b>		
<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students how often they completed the gratitude journals.</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., pencil, sticker) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not journal regularly, stress the importance of daily effort for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>	
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to choose two to three things for which they recorded being grateful to share with the group.</li> <li>• Discuss the significance of gratitude for these things in terms of positive feelings about the past.</li> <li>• Ask students to share any changes in feelings of gratitude or happiness.</li> </ul>	
<b>B. Gratitude Visit</b>		
<p>Completion of a gratitude visit is associated with positive, enduring changes in happiness (Seligman et al., 2005). The activity below is adapted from that original research.</p>		
<b>Set the Stage</b>	<p><i>We all have people in our lives who have helped us in some way. This helping can be part of someone's job, like a teacher or parent, or help that someone gives without being required to. Even when people's kindness or help is provided as part of their job, the help can be important because of the way they did it or how it benefited us so much. Sometimes other people's kindness toward us goes unnoticed or unrecognized.</i></p>	
<b>Identify People to Whom We Are Grateful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide some examples of people who were particularly kind or helpful to you during childhood who were never properly thanked.</li> <li>• Distribute the <i>Gratitude Visit Planning Form</i></li> <li>• Ask students to write a list of people who had been especially kind to them but may not have been properly thanked.</li> </ul>	

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<b>Plan a Gratitude Visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help students identify someone from their list of people to whom they are grateful that they could feasibly meet in person to deliver such a letter.</li><li>• Assist students in composing a one-page letter that describes the reason(s) why they are grateful to this person.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Secure access to computers in advance if students prefer to type.</li></ul></li><li>• Assist students in planning a day and time during which they will read the letter aloud to the person (complete the <i>Gratitude Visit Planning Form</i>)</li><li>• Instruct students to read aloud the letter slowly with expression and eye contact during a face-to-face visit.</li><li>• Ask students not to reveal the reason why they want to meet with the person; instead, simply make plans to spend time with the person.</li></ul>
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### C. Group Discussion: Positive Feelings about the Past

<b>Introduce the Thoughts–Feelings Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss the connection between students’ thoughts of the past and current affect. <i>How has gratitude—noticing, writing about, and talking about the good things in your life, and thinking about the people to whom you are thankful—refocused your thoughts and changed your feelings?</i></li></ul>
<b>Revisit the Determinants of Happiness Theory: Emphasis on Purposeful Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure and discuss how grateful thinking is a purposeful activity. Example script: <i>Doing things like gratitude journaling and visits refocuses thoughts on the positive parts of your past, which increases positive attitudes about your history and your life (brings you into the upper range of your set point [reference ruler]). Such activities can even help you feel more confident in your goals because you recognized people in your life who are there to help you.</i></li></ul>

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### D. Homework: Carry Out the Gratitude Visit

<b>Assignment 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Before the next group meeting, students should carry out the gratitude visit.</li><li>• <i>Note:</i> In situations in which the student does not have the means to meet with someone to whom he or she is grateful, or cannot identify a person, ask the student to continue daily gratitude journals as done the previous week.</li></ul>
<b>Assignment 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask all students to complete at least one gratitude journal entry at some point during the week before the next session.</li></ul>
<b>Looking Ahead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students should leave the meeting with the completed <i>Gratitude Visit Planning Form</i> and the decorated notebooks in their homework folders.</li><li>• Remind students of the incentives they can receive contingent on homework completion and return of the gratitude journal.</li></ul>

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## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

ACTS OF KINDNESS		Core Session 4: Student Group
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define kindness (i.e., a character strength), and how it can impact happiness.</li> <li>• Explore students' current frequency of kind acts.</li> <li>• Learn a method of using kindness to create a focus on positive interpretations of present events.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Review Homework: Gratitude Visits and/or Gratitude Journals</li> <li>B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and Importance of Kindness</li> <li>C. Student Estimations of Acts of Kindness</li> <li>D. Homework: Performing Acts of Kindness</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (stickers, pencils, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>Performing Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> handout</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

A. Review Homework Assignment: Gratitude Visits and/or Gratitude Journals	
<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students about their progress with carrying out the gratitude visit.</li> <li>• Ask students about their progress with completing one or more gratitude journal entry.</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., candy) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not complete the gratitude visit as assigned, problem solve barriers and create a plan for a visit this week. Stress the importance of continued effort between sessions for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to share their experiences during and after the gratitude visits.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>How did the recipients of the visit respond?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>How did they and you feel following the visit?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• For students who continued to complete gratitude journals, ask them to select and share one entry with the group.</li> <li>• Ask students to share any changes in happiness since the last meeting.</li> </ul>

B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and Importance of Kindness	
<p>Acts of kindness provide a way to boost moods and make long-lasting changes in well-being through satisfying basic human needs of relatedness (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, &amp; Schkade, 2005). Kindness has been defined as a character strength, which causes and stems from happiness (Otake et al., 2006; Park, Peterson, &amp; Seligman, 2004). The following discussion is based on this research.</p>	

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**Set the Stage; Define Kindness as a Character Strength Related to Happiness**      *What is kindness? What do you think of when someone is called a kind person? What specifically is that person doing?*

- Facilitate a brief discussion on what students think constitutes kindness.
- Record students' responses on the board. Circle and discuss key terms, phrases, and or themes. Provide a common definition, such as:  
*Acts of kindness are behaviors that benefit other people or make others happy, typically at the cost of your time and effort. When a person consistently performs these acts of kindness, we say he or she is kind, or he or she possesses the virtue of kindness. A virtue, also called strength of character, is a moral strength that people do by choice. We'll talk more about character strengths next week.*

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**Introduce Links between Kindness and Happiness**      *Why may this particular character strength—kindness—be important?*

- *Why is it important to display kindness in your life?*
- *Do you think being kind can impact happiness? Why or why not?*
- Discuss how kindness helps us focus our emotions on the positive parts of our **present lives**, for example through:
  - Creating a positive view of others and the community.
  - Increased cooperation.
  - Awareness of your own good fortune.
  - Seeing yourself as helpful.
  - Increased confidence and optimism about being able to help others.
  - Getting others to know and like us.
  - Receipt of appreciation and gratitude.
  - Others reciprocating kindness and friendship toward you.
- Provide an example of a time when you have been kind to someone, and how that refocused your attention on a positive situation.

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### C. Student Estimations of Acts of Kindness

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Otake and colleagues (2006) found that happiness could be increased through simply counting the acts of kindness that one performs over a week's time. The basis of that research is used in this preparatory exercise for the upcoming assignment to enact acts of kindness for homework.

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**Identify Acts of Kindness**      • Facilitate a discussion of various acts of kindness performed by you, youth, and adults in students' lives, then the students themselves.

- Begin by providing some examples of acts of kindness that you have performed recently, focusing mainly on the past week.
  - Make sure that you provide a wide range of acts of kindness that are authentic to you but also relatable to the group.
  - Give yourself a loose estimate of the amount of kind acts you perform in a week (e.g., three to five, four to six, or seven to 10).
- Ask students to think about the people in their lives such as family, classmates, other friends, and teachers.
  - Ask them to provide a few examples of kind acts they observed by these significant figures in their lives during the past week.
  - Ask them to provide a weekly estimate of how often an identified person demonstrates such kind acts.

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<b>Rate Your Kindness</b>	<p><i>We are going to think about kind acts we have demonstrated, and estimate our own typical kind acts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to provide some examples of acts of kindness that they have performed in the past week. If it is too difficult for students to think of acts of kindness limited to this time frame, they can think back to the past 2 or 3 weeks.</li><li>• Keep in mind that kindness was described as a moral virtue, and thus it can be interpreted as negative, perhaps even shameful, if a student shares he or she has low levels of kind acts. Facilitate a climate of openness and nonjudgmental attitudes. Example script: <i>People vary in the amount of kind acts they perform. This is not a reflection on the quality of their moral character. As will be examined in the next session, character strengths come in many forms. People are stronger than others in different areas.</i></li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distribute small, blank pieces of paper.</li><li>• Ask students to give themselves a weekly estimate of personal kind acts; they can write this on the piece of paper and fold it over.</li><li>• Explain that we are going to aim to increase this number in the coming week, through performing five acts of kindness on a single day.</li></ul>
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#### **D. Homework: Performing Acts of Kindness**

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Lyubomirsky, Tkach, and Sheldon (2004) found that people who performed five acts of kindness in 1 day, each week for 6 weeks, showed a significant increase in well-being. This week's homework assignment is based on that and subsequent research.

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<b>Assign</b>	<p><i>I want you to pick a day this week to perform five acts of kindness. As we talked about, acts of kindness are behaviors that benefit other people or make others happy, typically at the cost of your time and effort. They can range from small acts, like giving a compliment or holding a door, to large acts like helping your dad wash his car.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help students brainstorm some ideas of the acts of kindness they might like to perform.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Which can they do at school? [In the classroom? Before school or during lunch?]</li><li>◦ Which can they do at home?</li></ul></li><li>• Distribute the <i>Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> to jot down their plans as well as record additional kind acts after they have been performed.</li><li>• Ask students to decide on a date to perform the acts.</li></ul>
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<b>Looking Ahead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain students will never be asked to share all of their responses, but to become comfortable with sharing two to three of their acts of kindness and related feelings in the next group meeting.</li><li>• Students should leave the meeting with the <i>Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> added to their homework folder.</li><li>• Remind students of the incentives they can receive contingent on homework completion and return of the <i>Acts of Kindness Record Form</i>.</li></ul>
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## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

INTRODUCTION TO CHARACTER STRENGTHS		Core Session 5: Student Group
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define character strengths and virtues, and how use of strengths can impact feelings of happiness in the present.</li> <li>• Explore students' perceived character strengths.</li> <li>• Reinforce acts of kindness.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Review Homework: Performing Acts of Kindness</li> <li>B. Group Discussion: Character Strengths and Virtues</li> <li>C. Student Identification of Perceived Character Strengths</li> <li>D. Group Discussion: Positive Feelings in the Present</li> <li>E. Homework: Continue Performing Acts of Kindness</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (candy, stickers, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• Lined paper</li> <li>• <i>VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>Performing Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> handout</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

#### A. Review Homework Assignment: Performing Acts of Kindness

<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students about their progress with completing all five acts of kindness during the week.</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., candy) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not perform the acts of kindness as planned, problem solve barriers and explain that they will have another opportunity to do so this week. Stress the importance of continued effort between sessions for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to share two to three acts of kindness they carried out.</li> <li>• Discuss the significance of acts of kindness in terms of positive feelings about the present, ensuring that the acts performed benefited someone else at the cost of the student's time and/or effort.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>How did the people who benefited from your kind act(s) respond?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>How did you feel following the kind act(s)?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Inform students that their homework for this week will be to continue doing acts of kindness in the same manner.</li> </ul>

#### B. Group Discussion: Character Strengths and Virtues

Park and colleagues (2004) defined character strengths as “traits that reflect thoughts, feelings, and behaviors” (p. 603). These strengths are identifiable but related and used voluntarily in differing degrees by individuals. Strengths are dispositions to act that require judgment and enable people to thrive. On this basis, lead the following discussion.

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<p><b>Set the Stage; Distinguish Character Strength from Talent</b></p>	<p><i>How would you define a character strength or virtue of a person?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage an active discussion of the meanings of these words.</li> <li>• Be sure to discuss that character strengths are moral strengths done by choice, which is different from talents:</li> </ul> <p><i>Talents are qualities that you are born with but may be improved somewhat by purposeful actions (e.g., perfect pitch in your singing voice, rhythm in dance, running speed). However, character strengths are moral virtues that are built up and used by choice (honesty, kindness, fairness, creativity).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide examples of your own talents versus moral strengths.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Introduce the VIA Classification System for Strengths</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute the <i>VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout.</li> <li>• Interactively discuss the meanings of each of the 24 identified strengths.</li> <li>• With a round-robin method, ask each student to read aloud one of the character strength definitions and say what that means to him or her; ensure that students understand meanings by clarifying definitions as necessary.</li> <li>• Describe each virtue category before students read and discuss the strengths that comprise them. This will give the character strengths context and clarify that the broad virtue categories are more general, not character strengths in themselves.</li> <li>• Continue the round-robin to ensure each student has several turns to define and discuss character strengths.</li> </ul>

### C. Student Identification of Perceived Character Strengths

<p><b>Strengths Spotting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrieve students' completed "You at Your Best" activity (from leader binder or student folder) from the first group session.</li> <li>• Ask students to reread their stories to themselves.</li> <li>• Briefly summarize the "You at Your Best" story you shared earlier, and suggest some character strengths (consistent with the terminology used in the <i>VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout) of your own that you demonstrated in that story.</li> <li>• Ask students to identify which strengths listed on the <i>Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout they personally demonstrated in the context of their "You at Your Best" stories.</li> <li>• Ask students to discuss strengths they have seen the other students in their group display in the context of the group meetings or elsewhere, such as in class or in another situation at school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identify Perceived Top Five Character Strengths</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering these strengths that students have noticed in themselves, or that their peers have recognized in them, ask students to identify what they believe are their top five strengths, as selected from the <i>VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ask each student to write down his or her own identified strengths on a piece of lined paper.</li> <li>◦ Ask students to share the strengths they chose for themselves and write them out on the white board.</li> <li>◦ Assist students to look at the strengths shared by different group members.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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#### D. Group Discussion: Positive Feelings in the Present

<b>Introduce the Actions– Feelings Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss the connection between how using character strengths may relate to feelings of happiness in the present (your day-to-day life): <i>When you are using your character strengths in everyday life, what are your thoughts and feelings typically like?</i></li><li>• Record students' ideas on the board. Add and discuss these ideas as needed:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Focus on current efforts; concentration.</li><li>◦ Engaging in challenges that build on abilities and skills.</li><li>◦ Absorption in a task where time flies by.</li><li>◦ Creating and working on clear goals.</li><li>◦ Immediate feedback from others and yourself.</li><li>◦ Sense of self-control.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Revisit the Determinants of Happiness Theory: Emphasis on Purposeful Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure and discuss how good feelings resulting from use of character strengths are due to the choice and effort in using them; thus, enacting character strengths is another example of a purposeful activity tied to happiness. Provide an example: <i>A cashier undercharges you for your order. Although you think that the items are overpriced and you really want to keep the extra money, you tell the cashier that you owe more than he stated. (Or: You are walking behind a man at the mall. A 20-dollar bill falls to the ground. Although you have something you would like to buy and you really want to keep the extra money, you call out "Hey mister, you dropped some money" and run after him with the \$20 you picked up). You feel good about yourself afterward because you chose to exercise your character strength of honesty.</i></li><li>• Ask students to pick one of the strengths they listed for themselves and explain to the group how it may take effort to use it.</li><li>• Explain that the next few sessions will focus more on discovering and using top character strengths.</li></ul>
<b>Prepare for Focus on Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collect each student's list of self-identified strengths; store in your group binder for reference during the next session.</li><li>• Explain that students will complete an online survey to identify their character strengths in the next session, and compare the strengths they chose for themselves with the survey results.</li></ul>

#### E. Homework: Continue Performing Acts of Kindness

<b>Assign</b>	<p><i>Just like last week, I want you to pick a day this week to perform five acts of kindness. Remember, changes in happiness occur with repeated use of exercises such as performing acts of kindness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distribute an <i>Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> to jot down their plans as well as to record additional kind acts after they have been performed.</li><li>• Ask students to decide on a date to perform five acts of kindness.</li><li>• Remind students that acts of kindness are small-to-large actions that benefit or make others happy, typically at the cost of their time and effort.</li></ul>
<b>Looking Ahead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inform students that they will be asked to share two to three of their acts of kindness and related feelings in the next group meeting.</li><li>• Students should leave the meeting with the <i>Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> added to their homework folder.</li><li>• Remind students of the incentives they can receive contingent on homework completion and return of the <i>Acts of Kindness Record Form</i>.</li></ul>



## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

<b>ASSESSMENT OF SIGNATURE CHARACTER STRENGTHS</b>		<b>Core Session 6: Student Group</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify students' signature strengths through a survey that assesses multiple aspects of each strength.</li> <li>• Discuss students' individual signature character strengths.</li> <li>• Explore new ways to use one signature strength.</li> <li>• Develop individualized plan for new uses of one signature strength.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Review Homework: Performing Acts of Kindness</li> <li>B. Survey Assessment of Character Strengths</li> <li>C. Discussion: Expected versus Survey-Identified Signature Strengths</li> <li>D. Homework: Use the First Signature Strength in a New Way</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (candy, stickers, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• Students' handwritten lists of self-identified strengths created in the previous session</li> <li>• Lined paper</li> <li>• Access to computer lab and the Internet</li> <li>• <i>VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>New Uses of My First Signature Strength</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>Performing Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> handout</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

<b>A. Review Homework Assignment: Performing Acts of Kindness</b>	
<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students about their progress with completing all five acts of kindness during the week.</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., candy) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not perform the acts of kindness as planned, problem solve barriers. Stress the importance of continued effort between sessions for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to share one or two acts of kindness they carried out.</li> <li>• Discuss the significance of acts of kindness in terms of positive feelings about the present; emphasize the benefit to others that came at the cost of the student's time and/or effort.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>How did the people who benefited from your kind act(s) respond?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>How did you feel following the kind act(s)?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Inform students that their homework for this week will have two parts, one of which they will plan today (use of character strengths in new ways). For the second part, students are encouraged to continue completing activities that increase their happiness by choosing between continuing acts of kindness or returning to their gratitude journal.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Survey Assessment of Character Strengths</b>	

The VIA Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA–Youth) was developed by Park and Peterson (2006) as an extension of their original adult version. The aim of this assessment is to identify individual

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adolescents' personal ranking of the 24 character strengths with particular emphasis on their top five strengths, known as signature character strengths. The VIA Institute recently developed a shorter assessment of the 24 character strengths in youth ages 10–17. Seligman (2011) discussed how use of one's signature strengths is a key route to sustainable increases in happiness.

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**Prepare** Prior to this session, register on the website *www.character.org* or *www.authentic happiness.org*. This will permit you access to the online version of the VIA Youth Survey or the VIA–Youth, respectively. You can log on multiple student users on separate computers, simultaneously under your account/logon, thus precluding the student from having to enter personal information or create his or her own account on a website.

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**Complete the VIA–Youth**

- Explain that researchers have developed a survey that helps people identify and rank their character strengths. The top five strengths are called *signature character strengths*.
- Explain there is a website on the Internet with surveys designed to help people identify their signature strengths, specifically *www.viacharacter.org* [alternative full-length (198-item) youth VIA survey can be accessed at *www.authentic happiness.org*].
  - Once on the website, scroll down and click on the “Take Survey” link.
  - Select the link for the VIA Survey for Youth.
  - Follow the online instructions for registering the student and completing the survey.
  - Read aloud the instructions for completing the questions provided online.
- Monitor students as they individually complete the survey; answer questions as necessary and provide encouragement to complete the survey, which may take 15–40 minutes depending on youth reading speed and version of survey selected (brief or original).

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### C. Discussion: Expected versus Survey-Identified Signature Strengths

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**Review of Top Character Strengths Yielded from the VIA–Youth**

- As a student completes the online survey, print out his or her top five signature character strengths. If a printer is not available, circle the signature strengths on the *VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths* handout; number them from 1 to 5 as indicated by the website feedback.
  - *Note:* If a student expresses disagreement with a top five strength as “not true for me,” click on the “display all strengths” option and replace the disputed strength with the sixth (or seventh, if needed) strength identified in the assessment.
- Give students an opportunity to review the printout (or individualized *VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths* handout) and their handwritten lists of self-identified strengths (as completed last session).
- On an individual and/or small-group level (depending on students' rate of survey completion), discuss the following topics:
  - *Are your signature strengths from the survey the same or different from the strengths you wrote about yourself before we went online?*
  - *Reactions to your computer-generated signature strengths?*
    - Expect surprise, expected, happy, disappointed, or curious.

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**Identify Signature Character Strengths**

- Introduce the notion of “signature strengths”:  
*Sometimes the computer-generated strengths don't feel like they are a good fit. That's OK; just don't concentrate on using them. Instead, think about how you use the strengths that do fit you. The ones that fit may feel just right, may be exciting to use, may help you to do well in new activities, may be something you enjoy doing, may be something that gets you pumped up, or something you want to try using in different ways.*

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- Example of leadership as a signature strength:  
*You may be the kind of person who thinks that being a leader is something you can do well, you get excited about the chance to lead groups in class work, in sports, or on trips, or you may already be a leader on your football team but you also want to be student government president and lead a food drive at school for Thanksgiving. Being a leader just feels like it is right for you.*
- Are there any strengths that you feel just don't fit you? Why?
  - Examples of ways strengths may not fit:
    - Strength doesn't feel "like me."
    - Not comfortable using the strength.
    - Can't think of example situations they could use the strength.
- Assist students to cross off on their printout any strengths that don't seem to fit, as these are not signature strengths.

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- Current and Future Strengths Use**
- Which of your signature strengths do you use often?
  - Can you think of ways you have used your signature strengths recently?
  - Ask students to pick one strength they would like to work on this week and give an example of one way they already use that strength.
  - Explain the homework assignment to individual or small groups of students.

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**D. Homework: Use the First Signature Strength in a New Way**

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- Assignment 1** *I want you to use the signature strength you picked in new ways each day of the upcoming week.*
- Help the student brainstorm ideas of new ways to use the strength; other students can offer ideas, especially if they chose the same strength to target.
  - Distribute the *New Uses of My First Signature Strength* record form to jot down their plans. Ask students to write down the feelings they had after they used their strength each day, as well as record additional different ways that they used the strength during the week.
  - Encourage students to try a different way to use the character strength if they encounter obstacles with the plan on their record form.
  - Store copies of the VIA–Youth results, lists of perceived strengths, and *New Uses of My First Signature Strength* record form in the group binder.

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- Assignment 2**
- Ask students to choose whether they will continue doing acts of kindness or return to their gratitude journal. Note their selection so you can follow-up appropriately next session.
  - Distribute an *Acts of Kindness Record Form* if relevant.
  - Review procedures for gratitude journaling if relevant.

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- Looking Ahead**
- Inform students that they will be asked to share their signature strengths and two new uses and related feelings in the next group meeting.
  - Students should leave the meeting with the *New Uses of My First Signature Strength* record form, as well as the printout of their top five signature strengths, added to their homework folder.
  - Remind students of the incentives they can receive contingent on homework completion and return of the *New Uses of My First Signature Strength* record form.
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## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

USE OF SIGNATURE STRENGTHS IN NEW WAYS AND SAVORING		Core Session 7: Student Group
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore students' use of their signature strengths in new ways and problem solve obstacles.</li> <li>• Make connections between activities that use signature strengths and positive feelings.</li> <li>• Explore new ways to use signature strengths across life domains.</li> <li>• Learn methods of savoring to expand positive experiences with use of signature strengths.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Review Homework: New Uses of the First Signature Strength</li> <li>B. Explore and Plan New Uses of Signature Strengths across Life Domains</li> <li>C. Group Discussion: Savor the Experience</li> <li>D. Homework: Use the Second Signature Strength in New Ways with Savoring</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (candy, stickers, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• List of signature character strengths from the previous session</li> <li>• <i>VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>New Uses of My Second Signature Strength</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>Performing Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> handout</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

A. Review Homework Assignment: New Uses of the First Signature Strength	
<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students their progress with acts of kindness <i>or</i> gratitude journaling.</li> <li>• Ask students about their progress with using a signature strength in new ways each day since the last session.</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., candy) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not use their character strength as planned, or complete the record form, problem solve barriers. Stress the importance of continued effort between sessions for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to share one act of kindness <i>or</i> one item on a gratitude entry.</li> <li>• Ask students to share with the group their signature strengths from the online survey, and how well that matched up to the ones they wrote for themselves (refer students to the copies of their VIA–Youth results and their self-generated lists of strengths in the binder if needed).</li> <li>• Ask students to get into pairs and interview their partner about the signature strength they chose to enact for homework.</li> <li>• Each partner should talk about two examples of new ways each used his or her chosen signature strength during last week, and share his or her feelings related to the use of strengths. The partners will then report to the group.</li> <li>• If challenges to using a strength arise, lead a problem-solving discussion with the group regarding how to overcome and avoid identified obstacles.</li> </ul>

*(continued)*

**B. Explore and Plan New Uses of Signature Strengths across Life Domains**

People who use their signature strengths in new ways show some of the greatest and most enduring gains in happiness, even compared with the effects of other positive psychology interventions (Seligman et al., 2005). Lasting happiness comes from using signature strengths across life domains. For youth, we focus on school, friendships, and family.

<b>Explore Current Use of Strengths</b>	<p><i>In which ways do you currently use your signature strengths?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompt students to pick two strengths (different from the one they worked on for homework) and share examples of how they have shown that strength in school, friendships, and/or with family.</li> <li>• Use a round-robin method so each student has an opportunity to share.</li> <li>• Explain that research findings show that use of character strengths <i>in new ways</i> is a good way to increase happiness in the present (emphasis on not just using strengths more, but in <i>new and different ways</i> than ever before).</li> </ul>
<b>Domains of Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that there are three important areas of life for students their age, including school, friendship, and family. To maximize happiness, utilize character strengths in new ways in each area of life.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Provide an example:                 <p><i>A student whose signature strength is creativity can use it in school by joining the art club or organizing the layout of the school newspaper, in friendship by thinking of new activities friends can do together, and with family by coming up with new ways to save family memories, such as in a scrapbook.</i></p> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Plan Future Strengths Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to pick a signature strength that they would like to work on this week (which may not be the same as last week’s homework).</li> <li>• Distribute lined paper; ask students to independently make a list of ways to use this signature strength that are unique or different from prior usage.</li> <li>• Monitor the lists to ensure activities listed are manageable and concrete. For instance, if a student’s character strength is “fairness,” maybe he or she can intervene when he or she sees a younger or smaller sibling getting taken advantage of by an older relative. Such a plan is more feasible than joining the student council between groups.</li> <li>• Write the life domain categories on the board.</li> <li>• Ask for two volunteers to share their lists with the group.</li> <li>• Ask an individual volunteer to state the signature strength and ways in which he or she has thought about using it differently. For each suggested use, ask the group which life domain category the activity would go under—record the activity under the appropriate heading on the board.</li> <li>• Ask the group to brainstorm other ideas for use of this strength; add them to the board under the appropriate life domain.</li> <li>• Clarify any suggestions that may stray from the meaning of the strength and guide students to more targeted suggestions. Keep the <i>VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout accessible in the event students need help remembering the meanings of the strengths.</li> <li>• Distribute the <i>New Uses of My Second Signature Strength</i> record form.</li> <li>• Ask the volunteer student to write down the ideas that appeal to him or her on the <i>New Uses of My Second Signature Strength</i> record form, making sure to note the life domain. Do not plan the days just yet.</li> <li>• Ask the volunteer student to identify potential obstacles to carrying out the strength use plan this week. Problem solve with the group in terms of how those obstacles could be addressed or avoided.</li> </ul>

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- Time permitting, repeat this process with a second volunteer.
- Ask students to form small groups, preferably that include students who selected the same strength to target. Members of the group should help one another complete their *New Uses of My Second Signature Strength* record form by going through their prepared lists of uses of strengths and determining domains as well as brainstorming other ideas and problem solving potential obstacles. Ideally, each small group is facilitated by a co-leader and assisted by the student volunteer(s) who has already prepared his or her record form.
- Once each student in the small group has prepared his or her record form, tell students to write in the days this week they think they can do each of the ways to use their strengths. The days do not have to be in order, but each day of the week should be designated for use of their strength.
- Make a copy of each student's *New Uses of My Second Signature Strength* record form.

### C. Group Discussion: Savor the Experience

Bryant and Veroff (2007) defined savoring as attending to, appreciating, and enhancing the positive qualities of one's life. In middle school students, youth who savor (maximize) a positive event are more likely to maintain highly positive emotions about the situation, whereas minimizing a positive event is tied to symptoms of internalizing and externalizing problems (Gentzler et al., 2013).

**Introduce Savoring; Relate to Positive Feelings in the Present** *Savoring is the term for when you pay attention to, appreciate, and boost your positive experiences in the present. When you savor, you pay extra close attention to things that you are enjoying now, such as when you pay attention to the taste of a favorite meal, the notes in a favorite song, or a job well done. What are some things that you think would be worth savoring?*

- Prompt for preferred foods, vacations, activities, events, friendships, TV shows, and so on.

*Savoring makes us happier by stretching out the positive feelings of those activities, foods, events, and so on, to last longer in the present. When you savor, you slow down time by purposefully focusing on the good experience before moving on to something else. Instead of going fast into future stuff, you stay and enjoy the present moment.*

**Ways to Savor** *We can make the good feelings we have when using our signature strengths last longer by savoring.*

- Introduce two easy ways to savor that take very little time:
  1. Share the experience with someone else: *You could tell a friend or relative about how you used your strength, and how it felt to use it.*
    - *You already savored in this way when we went over homework and you interviewed each other . . . you shared your positive experiences.*
    - *When talking to your partner, did you relive the good feelings that came from using your strength earlier in the week?*
  2. Absorb yourself: *Take a minute to close your eyes and think about your positive experience, and the specific good feelings you had; you could even congratulate yourself on a job well done.*
    - *Let's all practice absorbing ourselves now. Think about one of the ways you used your strength for homework. How did it feel? How did others react? Was it something you could congratulate yourself on?*
    - Instruct everyone to close their eyes for a minute to savor.

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- Share how good you feel after reflecting on a use of your strengths. Explain the good feelings connected to your recent actions.
- Ask for one or two volunteers to share their reflections.

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**D. Homework: Use the Second Signature Strength in New Ways with Savoring**

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**Assignment 1** *I want you to use the signature strength you picked in new ways each day of the upcoming week, across life domains as you prepared on the New Uses of My Second Signature Strength record form.*

- Ask students to use their record form to write down the feelings they had after they used their strength each day, record additional different ways that they used the strength during the week, and note how they savored the experiences (e.g., who they talked to or when they thought about it).
- Encourage students to try a different way to use the character strength if they encounter obstacles with the plan on their record form.
- Store a copy of the *New Uses of My Second Signature Strength* planning form in the group binder.

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**Assignment 2** • Ask students to choose whether they will perform acts of kindness or complete a gratitude journal. Note their selection so you can follow-up appropriately next session.  
• Distribute an *Acts of Kindness Record Form* if relevant.  
• Review procedures for gratitude journaling if relevant.

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**Looking Ahead** • Inform students that they will be asked to share one to two new uses of the strength, related feelings, and methods of savoring in the next group meeting.  
• Students should leave the meeting with the *New Uses of My Second Signature Strength* record form added to their homework folder.  
• Remind students of the incentives they can receive contingent on homework completion and return of the *New Uses of My Second Signature Strength* record form.

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## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

OPTIMISTIC THINKING		Core Session 8: Student Group
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make connections among activities that use signature strengths, savoring, and positive feelings.</li> <li>• Define optimistic thinking and how it can impact happiness as related to the future.</li> <li>• Learn the method for developing an optimistic explanatory style.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	A. Review Homework: Use Signature Strength in New Ways with Savoring B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and Importance of Optimism C. Develop an Optimistic Explanatory Style D. Homework: Optimistic Thinking	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (stickers, candy, pencils, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• Lined paper</li> <li>• <i>New Uses of My Third Signature Strength</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>Examples of Optimistic Thinking</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>My Optimistic Thoughts</i> handout</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

#### A. Review Homework Assignment: Use Signature Strength in New Ways with Savoring

<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students about their progress with acts of kindness <i>or</i> gratitude journaling.</li> <li>• Ask students about their progress with using a signature strength in new ways each day, followed by savoring, since the last session.</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., candy) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not use their character strength as planned, or savor, or complete the record form, problem solve barriers. Stress the importance of continued effort between sessions for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>	
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to share one act of kindness <i>or</i> one item on a gratitude entry.</li> <li>• Ask students to provide one to two examples of ways they used the signature strength they chose to enact for homework.</li> <li>• Encourage reflection on their feelings related to the use of strengths.</li> <li>• Ask students how they savored the experience and how that may have enhanced positive feelings.</li> <li>• Facilitate group discussion and encouragement over one another's use of strengths and savoring.</li> <li>• If challenges to using a strength arose, lead a problem-solving discussion with the group regarding how to overcome and avoid identified obstacles.</li> <li>• Ask students to choose a different signature strength to target for homework, and independently complete the <i>Uses of My Third Signature Strength</i> record form during this week (applying the process learned last week).</li> </ul>	

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**B. Group Discussion: Initial Definition and Importance of Optimism**

**Set the Stage** *What is optimism?*

- Facilitate a brief discussion on what students think optimism means.  
*We've all had people tell us to think more optimistically, to smile, or to be positive. What does thinking optimistically mean to you?*
- Record students' responses on the board. Circle and discuss key terms, phrases, and or themes. Provide a common definition, such as:  
*You feel optimism when you feel that your future holds many positive events because of your talents and effort; bad things that happen will be short-lived.*

**Rate Your Optimism** *We are going to rate our own level of optimism.*

- Draw a number line from 0 to 10 on a white board.
- Distribute small, blank pieces of paper.  
*Think about how often you have been optimistic in the past few months. On a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being never optimistic, 5 being sometimes optimistic, and 10 being always optimistic, rate your optimism.*
- Ask students to write their ratings on a piece of paper and pass it to the group leader. The group leader will circle each of the numbers indicated by the students on the number line and discuss the overall group range.

**Shared Reflection**

- In a round-robin fashion, ask each student share his or her number and the reason he or she chose it.

**Introduce Links between Optimism and Happiness** *Why may optimism be important?*

- Do you think it is valuable to be optimistic?*
- Do you think being an optimist can increase happiness? Why or why not?*
- How can being optimistic help you in school? In friendships? In family life?*
- How is optimism related to your happiness about the future?*
  - Cover resilience in the discussion. Example script:  
*Optimistic thinking leads to resilience: feeling like you can face any bad situation and come out OK.*
- Because of resilience, you are more likely to try when things get hard.*
- A person who doesn't think optimistically may instead feel helpless and give up easily, which means missing out on possible success.*
- However, a resilient person keeps trying until he or she accomplishes what he or she wants in life.*
- Remember, we discussed increasing happiness through purposeful activities. Optimistic thinking is one form of purposeful activity (in this case, a purposeful attitude) and it can help you get involved in other kinds of activities as well.*

**C. Develop an Optimistic Explanatory Style**

The focus of this activity is on using Seligman's (1990) description of an optimistic explanatory style to increase optimistic thinking. Rather than completely changing students' explanatory style, the goal of this activity is to teach students how to increase the use of optimistic thinking.

**Explain Optimistic Thinking** *Everyone can learn to think more optimistically, even those who already rated themselves highly on optimism.*

- Distribute the *Examples of Optimistic Thinking* handout.  
*Look at your worksheet. Optimistic thinking is broken into two categories: the way you look at good events and the way you look at bad events. Thinking optimistically means:*

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- *Thinking about good things in your life as being permanent, such as being caused by your traits and abilities. Look at the “Good Events” column under “Permanent.”*
  - *You might say, “I made the goal because I’m talented in sports.” A talent is a permanent ability.*
- *Also, you would see bad events as temporary, only lasting as long as your mood or effort. Look at the “Bad Events” column under “Temporary.”*
  - *That would be like saying, “Even Beckham would have missed that one; I’ll probably make the next goal I try for.” The missed goal was a one-time thing.*
- *Also, optimists see good events as widespread—that is, happening throughout life. Look at the “Good Events” column under “Widespread.”*
  - *That would be like thinking, “I do well in my classes because I check my agenda and do my homework every day after school.” Good homework habits are something that are part of your routine, and affect your performance in all of your classes.*
- *Optimists see negative events as specific to certain areas of life. Look at the “Bad Events” column under “Specific.”*
  - *You may think, “I made a poor grade on my math test because I did not understand the ideas that were taught when I was out sick.” Math is only one subject, not all of school. The test you did poorly on covered the material you missed, not all of math. When you are present for the lessons, you could do better at a math test.*
- *Optimists take credit for causing good events in their lives but blame other sources for bad events.*
  - *Look at the “Good Events” column under “Take Credit.” An optimist would think, “I won the contest because of my effort and talent in creative writing.” You won the contest because of your hard work and talent, not something other people did.*
  - *Look at the “Bad Events” column under “Blame Other Sources.” An optimist would think, “I lost the contest because I needed better materials to prepare myself.” You lost the contest because of poor materials, not because you didn’t try hard.*

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**Practice Thinking Optimistically**

- Guide students to complete the practice section of the *Examples of Optimistic Thinking* worksheet.
  - Help students to identify events as good or bad and develop optimistic thoughts corresponding to events.

*First, read the event and then decide if it is a good or bad situation.*
  - *If it is a good situation, write an optimistic thought that is permanent, widespread, or takes credit. If it is a bad situation, write an optimistic thought that is temporary, specific, or blames another source.*
  - Point to the *Examples of Optimistic Thinking* worksheet as providing an explanation.

*Let’s do the first one together.*
  - *Is this a good or bad situation? It’s a good event. Write “good” under the event.*
    - *What’s something permanent that I can say about it?*
    - *What about widespread?*
    - *Taking credit?*
- Complete the rest on your own and then we’ll discuss.*

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**Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers** (page 4 of 5)

- Monitor students' work to make sure that they use this format for all of the answers. Examples of optimistic thoughts include (in order of appearance on the *Examples of Optimistic Thinking* worksheet):
  - This is a good event:
    - Permanent: "I was invited because I am a fun person."
    - Widespread: "I was invited because I am always cheerful."
    - Taking credit: "I was invited because I helped come up with ideas for the theme of the party."
  - This is a bad event:
    - Temporary: "She probably isn't feeling well and will call me as soon as she is better."
    - Specific: "My other friends have called me back, so if there is a problem, it is just between the two of us."
    - Blame other sources: "She has been under a lot of stress with having trouble in school and her parents arguing; she may not feel like talking, and it probably doesn't have anything to do with me."
  - This is a good event:
    - Permanent: "My parents increased my allowance because I have shown that I am a responsible person."
    - Widespread: "My parents have increased my allowance and may make my curfew later because they trust me to be responsible in school, at home, and with my friends."
    - Taking credit: "It was because I made the effort to show them how responsible I can be by taking care of our pet, that my parents increased my allowance."
  - This is a good event:
    - Permanent: "My science group did well because we are smart, hardworking students."
    - Widespread: "I always do well on my class projects because I work well in groups."
    - Taking credit: "I had a large part in why our group did well because I organized our project and acted as the group leader."
  - This is a bad event:
    - Temporary: "I did poorly on my assignment because I only had a little bit of time to work on it. I will start on the next assignment sooner and likely do much better."
    - Specific: "This was a very difficult assignment, not like most of my schoolwork. I have done well on other projects."
    - Blame other sources: "I didn't have enough time for this project because of other responsibilities, which distracted me from doing my best."

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**Shared Reflection**

- After the independent writing time is over, prompt each student to share one to two of their responses with the group.
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**D. Homework: Optimistic Thinking**

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**Assignment 1** *I want you to purposefully use optimistic thinking one time each day until the next session. Record the situation and your optimistic thought on the My Optimistic Thoughts record form. Let's complete the first line together.*

- Distribute the *My Optimistic Thoughts* record form.
- Ask two or three students to volunteer a situation from their day (or yesterday).
- Ask the first student to describe the situation and then briefly write it under the event or situation category.
- Ask the student to decide if it was a good or bad event and fill in that column accordingly.
- Ask the student how the situation could be thought of more optimistically; encourage thoughts from other students, particularly if the student struggles to generate optimistic thoughts.

*Remember: If the situation is negative, the optimistic thought must be temporary, specific, and/or blaming another source. If it is positive, the thought must be permanent, widespread, and/or taking credit for oneself.*

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**Assignment 2**

- Ask students to use their chosen signature strength in a new way each day and complete the *New Uses of My Third Signature Strength* record form.
- Help students brainstorm ways to use their strengths and note ideas on their record form as time allows.
- Store a copy of the *New Uses of My Third Signature Strength* planning form in the group binder.

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**Looking Ahead**

- Inform students that they will be asked to share one to two situations that they experienced and then thought about in an optimistic way.
- Students should leave the meeting with the *New Uses of My Third Signature Strength* record form and the *My Optimistic Thoughts* record form added to their homework folder.
- Remind students of the incentives they can receive contingent on homework completion and return of the *My Optimistic Thoughts* and *New Uses of My Third Signature Strength* record forms.

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## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

HOPE		Core Session 9: Student Group
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make connections between optimistic thinking and positive feelings.</li> <li>• Define hope (i.e., goal directed) and how it can impact happiness as related to the future.</li> <li>• Learn the method for developing hope by envisioning goals, paths to achieve goals, and motivation for success.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Review Homework: Optimistic Thinking</li> <li>B. Initial Appraisal of Hope</li> <li>C. Group Discussion: Definition and Importance of Hope</li> <li>D. Writing Activity: Best Possible Self in the Future</li> <li>E. Homework: Best Possible Self in the Future (Expanded)</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (stickers, candy, pencils, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• Lined paper</li> <li>• <i>Examples of Optimistic Thinking</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>New Uses of My Fourth Signature Strength</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>My Optimistic Thoughts</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>Acts of Kindness Record Form</i> handout</li> </ul>	
Procedures Defined		
A. Review Homework Assignment: Optimistic Thinking		
<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students about their progress with using a signature strength in new ways each day, followed by savoring, since the last session.</li> <li>• Ask students about their progress with optimistic thinking each day since the last session.</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., candy) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not use optimistic thinking as planned or complete the record form, problem solve barriers. Stress the importance of continued effort between sessions for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>	
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to share one to two examples of ways they used their strength and the feelings that co-occurred or followed. Did savoring stretch out those positive feelings? Were there any problems the group could help with?</li> <li>• Ask the group how they felt using optimistic thinking.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did it produce any positive feelings about situations?</li> <li>○ Was it difficult to do?</li> <li>○ Anything they liked or did not like about completing the activity?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

*(continued)*

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- Ask volunteers to read some of their situations (approximately two) and their corresponding optimistic thoughts. *Reminder: If the situation is negative, the optimistic thought must be temporary, specific, and/or blaming another source. If it is positive, the thought must be permanent, widespread, and/or taking credit for oneself.*
  - If the student does not follow this format, review the examples on the *Examples of Optimistic Thinking* handout and assist with rewriting the optimistic thought. Group members may provide assistance.
- To show versatility of optimistic thinking, ask the group to think of a different way the situation could be thought of optimistically for two to three student responses.
  - For example, if the event was positive and the student wrote a permanent optimistic thought, challenge students to think of a widespread or taking-credit optimistic thought for the same situation.
- Once each student has had an opportunity to participate, explain the snowball effect of optimistic thinking:

*The great thing about optimistic thinking is that it has a snowball effect. Have you ever heard of a snowball effect? When snowballs roll, they pick up more snow and get bigger. When people start practicing optimistic thinking, it starts to take over how they think. At first, it takes work trying to come up with optimistic thoughts. You have to really think about the situation. But soon it becomes natural and easy. So, keep working on those optimistic thoughts and see if you can get it to snowball.*

### B. Initial Appraisal of Hope

<b>Set the Stage</b>	<p><i>What is hope?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate a brief discussion on what students think constitutes hope.</li><li>• Can provide students with brief definition of hope as “feeling that something desired may happen” or “wishing that certain things will happen”</li><li>• Record students’ responses on the board.</li><li>• Hope is defined more extensively in the next section.</li></ul>
<b>Rate Your Hope</b>	<p><i>We are going to rate our own level of hope.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draw a number line from 0 to 10 on the board.</li><li>• Distribute small, blank pieces of paper.</li></ul> <p><i>Think about how often you have felt hope in the past few months. On a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being never hopeful, 5 being sometimes hopeful, and 10 being always hopeful, rate your level of hope.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to write their ratings on a piece of paper and fold it over.</li></ul>
<b>Shared Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In a round-robin fashion, ask each to student share his or her number and the reason he or she chose it.</li></ul>

### C. Group Discussion: Definition and Importance of Hope

Snyder and colleagues (2005) define hopeful thinking as comprising both the ability to envision viable methods for goal attainment and belief in one’s ability to utilize those methods in reaching specific goals. The following discussion is based on their work.

<b>Present Definition in Line with Hope Theory</b>	<p><i>Now that we have shared our ideas about “what is hope,” I’m going to tell you how psychologists have defined hope:</i></p> <p><i>Having hope means believing that you can become motivated and find ways to meet your goals. This is like telling yourself, “I’ll find a way to get this done or make this happen!” When an obstacle gets in your way, having hope means believing you can find another way to meet your needs and coming up with ideas on what those other</i></p>
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ways might be. When you are hopeful, you believe that you can reach your goals because you have the ability and can get the resources—you are motivated. You might say to yourself, “Nothing can stop me!” For example, if you want to play basketball but you don’t make the school team, then you may organize a recreational team in your neighborhood so that you can play and practice somewhere besides school. Or, if you want to make a new friend and the first person you ask to go to the movies says “no,” then you identify another classmate and try a different approach.

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**Introduce Links between Hope and Happiness**

Present discussion questions to the group and ensure the topics below the questions are a part of the conversation:

*Thinking about hope like this, how can it be important or not important in your life? In school? In friendships? With family?*

- School:
  - Motivation to do well, work harder, be more successful.
  - Find different ways to meet goals such as get better grades, meet deadlines, or meet entrance criteria for academic programs.
- Athletics:
  - Greater performance because you get “psyched” that you can win, compete, or make it to the end.
  - Confidence in your abilities.
  - Willingness to practice harder because you think it will help you win.
- Social relationships:
  - Make new friends.
  - Work to maintain positive relationships with family and friends.
- Emotions:
  - Good feelings about yourself (self-esteem) and beliefs that you can do well (self-efficacy) because you are motivated and believe you can find ways to meet your goals.
  - Develop strategies to deal with stress and are motivated to use them because you believe one way will work.
  - More likely to problem solve when difficult situations occur.

*How do you think hope could impact people’s happiness about their future?*

- Allow a few minutes for student volunteers to offer ideas.
- Summarize student responses:

*Hope can help us focus on positive goals for our future. It limits feelings of helplessness through believing that there are ways to meet goals.*

- Tie in with optimism:

*Hope works like optimistic thinking about the future, in that people see the things they do now as leading to future benefits across life domains (widespread across school, friends, and family parts of life) and that they are lasting (or permanent parts of the future). On the other hand, misfortunes or problems are seen as temporary and limited to a particular situation, thereby minimizing impact on the future. When thinking that way, people are more likely to believe there are many different ways to meet goals and feel more motivated to work toward those positive future goals.*

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**D. Writing Activity: Best Possible Self in the Future**

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Envisioning and writing about life goals through an exercise termed one's "Best-Possible Self" (a version of the future self that accomplished desired goals) leads to greater happiness (King, 2001; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006b). This activity focuses on goals, paths to achieve goals, and motivation that provides a concrete way of practicing hopeful thinking.

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**Provide Rationale** Remind students that they have the ability to change their levels of hope by using hopeful thinking about their futures.

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**Write about Best Possible Self in the Future**

- Introduce activity:  
*I would like you to think about your life in the future. Take a few minutes to imagine that everything has gone as well as it possibly could. You have worked hard and succeeded at accomplishing all of your life goals. [Pause for approximately 2 minutes.]*  
*Now write about what you imagined (adapted from King, 2001).*
- Provide each student with lined paper.
- Allow about 5 minutes for students to write their thoughts and then ask them to share what they have written so far with the group.
- Encourage students to provide more detail in describing how they will meet their goals.
- Make copies of what they have written thus far; retain a copy in the group binder and return the original to students for storage in their group folder.

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**E. Homework: Best Possible Self in the Future (Expanded)**

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**Assignment 1** *I want you to continue writing about your best possible selves in the future. Review your story each night and add new thoughts and ideas. You can also make changes to what you have already written. Focus on identifying ways you can achieve the goals you imagine for your future.*

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**Assignment 2**

- Ask students to select an additional positive psychology activity that they have found to be the most personally meaningful.
- Offer these choices: acts of kindness, gratitude journals, use another signature strength in a new way each day, or optimistic thinking. Note their selection so you can follow-up appropriately during the next session.
- Distribute the corresponding record form as relevant.

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**Looking Ahead**

- Inform students that they will be asked to share at least one goal and one to two ideas for how to reach that goal in the next group meeting.
- Students should leave the meeting with the "Best-Possible Self in the Future" story and whatever record form is needed to complete the second assignment added to their homework folder.
- Remind students of the incentives they can receive contingent on homework completion and return of their enhanced "Best-Possible Self in the Future" story.

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## Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers

PROGRAM TERMINATION		Core Session 10: Student Group
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make connections between goal-directed thoughts and positive feelings.</li> <li>• Review the theoretical framework for increasing personal happiness.</li> <li>• Review the activities and exercises learned in the group.</li> <li>• Encourage a personal reflection.</li> <li>• Gather students' feedback on exercises perceived to be most helpful and activities they plan to continue.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Review Homework: "Best-Possible Self in the Future" and Self-Selected Activity</li> <li>B. Group Discussion: Review of Happiness Framework</li> <li>C. Personal Reflection: Progress during Group</li> <li>D. Wrap-Up and Solicit Student Feedback</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (stickers, candy, pencils, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• Lined paper</li> <li>• <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>Happiness Flowchart</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>Program Summary Sheet</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>Certificate of Completion</i></li> <li>• <i>Program Feedback Request</i> handout</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

A. Review Homework Assignment: "Best-Possible Self in the Future" and Self-Selected Activity	
<b>Assignment Completion and Reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students about their progress with the self-selected activity (use strength in new ways, optimistic thinking, acts of kindness, gratitude journaling).</li> <li>• Briefly check students' progress with reviewing and adding to their "Best-Possible Self in the Future" story (this is discussed in greater detail during the reflection).</li> <li>• Provide a small tangible reward (e.g., candy) for homework completion.</li> <li>• If students did not revisit their "Best-Possible Self in the Future" story, problem solve barriers and explain that they will have another opportunity to do so now, at the start of the session. Stress the importance of continued activity practice outside group meetings for changes in happiness to occur.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection, Part 1: Hope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to take a few minutes to reread their updated "Best-Possible Self in the Future" writing activity and reflect on their feelings, strengths, plans, accomplishments, and so forth.</li> <li>• Ask students to share their stories with the group, with one to two reflections.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Point out the multiple domains of life in which they envisioned their best-possible future selves (e.g., school, athletics, physical health, emotions, relationships).</li> <li>◦ <i>What changes/additions to your ideas about your best possible self in the future occurred since last session?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>Which goals in life seem most important to you? What ways can you go about achieving those goals?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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Session Protocols for Core Intervention Guide for School Mental Health Providers (page 2 of 4)

- Ask whether students felt any different after thinking about their future in a positive manner.
  - *Are you more motivated to work on future goals?*
  - Initiate reflections on group members' stories with identifications or reaffirmations of motivations and goal orientation within the story.
- Encourage group members to reflect on the positives features of one another's stories.
  - Something they admired or liked in the story.
  - Goals they share with the presenter.
  - Other ideas for ways of achieving goals.
- Once each student has had a turn, ask students how this activity has impacted their hope for the future, if at all.

**Reflection, Part 2: Independence with Positive Activities**

- Ask students to share one to two examples of the activity they chose to do for the second part of homework (gratitude journal, acts of kindness, character strengths, or optimistic thinking).
- Why did they choose that activity?
- What changes in mood occurred with or after that activity?

*You were successful in purposefully selecting and completing a positive activity all on your own, through practicing the strategies you learned in this group. Today is the end of the Well-Being Promotion Program. Your success between our meetings shows how you are ready to continuing practicing the positive activities in your daily life.*

**B. Group Discussion: Review of the Happiness Framework**

The goal of this program wrap-up is to review some of the primary concepts taught:

- Happiness can be best increased through *the purposeful activities* that we do each day (show the *What Determines Happiness?* figure).
- Lasting happiness comes from positive thoughts and feelings about one's past experiences, present behaviors, and positive views of the future (show the *Happiness Flow Chart* figure).
- Specific activities learned in this group create the positive thoughts and feelings that lead to lasting happiness.
- Continued practice of these activities (purposeful behaviors!), in particular the ones that the student felt "fit" him or her best, is essential to maintain gains in happiness.

**Group Review and Reflection**

*In the past 10 meetings, we have completed multiple exercises that were designed to improve happiness by changing the activities (thoughts and behaviors) that we do on purpose [show the *What Determines Happiness?* figure].*

- List the exercises on the board for students to access during this discussion (list: "You at Your Best," "Gratitude Journaling," "Gratitude Visits," "Acts of Kindness," "Using Signature Strengths in New Ways," "Savoring," "Optimistic Thinking," and "Best-Possible Self in the Future").

*Which exercises are meant to promote positive feelings about one's past?*

- "Gratitude Journaling."
- "Gratitude Visits."
- "You at Your Best" (could also fit with present, to identify strengths).

*How did gratitude improve your satisfaction with your past?*

*Which exercises are intended to promote positive emotions in the present?*

- "Acts of Kindness."

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- “Using Signature Character Strengths in New Ways.”
- “Savoring” (positive experiences when using character strengths).

*How did these activities make you feel happier in the moment, feel better about your current life?*

*Which exercises are meant to improve your view of the future?*

- “Optimistic Thinking.”
- Hope (“Best-Possible Self in the Future”).

*How did these exercises improve your feelings about the future?*

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**Application to Future Situations; Summarize Activities**

- Distribute the *Well-Being Promotion Program Summary Sheet*. To promote application of learned material to future situations, ask students to identify situations/times in which it would be a good idea to use the activities to increase positive thoughts about the past, present, and future in their own future lives (i.e., upon completion of the group).
  - For instance, in addition to practicing grateful thinking at all times, they may want to enact a gratitude visit or complete a gratitude journal at times they are feeling regret or disappointment with their life circumstances. They may want to do acts of kindness, use strengths in new ways, or savor when they catch themselves feeling “blah” about their day. When they catch themselves feeling hopeless about their future, they should prompt themselves to practice hopeful and/or optimistic thinking.
  - After students identify perceived emotions that cue them to increase positive thoughts about a specific time period (past, present, and future), ask students to read aloud the definition of activities that correspond to this period (use a round-robin format).
- *Note:* Students should record their character strengths in their summary sheet during the discussion of planning to improve daily experiences.
- *Which of these activities did you feel gave you the biggest happiness boost?*
- *Which do you plan to continue in the future?*
- *Why that particular activity?*
- To capitalize on intrinsic motivation, students should plan to keep up those activities that felt natural and enjoyable and are consistent with their values. They should feel free to set aside any activities they completed mostly to gain access to rewards or out of guilt/obligation.

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**C. Personal Reflection: Progress during Group**

It is important to have students think through and reflect on their personal growth during the intervention. Provide them with the following instructions.

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**Personal Reflection**

*Take a few minutes to think of the ways you have changed over the past 10 weeks.*  
Allow a couple of minutes for students to reflect.

*In general, how have your feelings about your life changed?*

- Follow-up prompts for topics if not included in students' responses:
  - *Any changes in happiness?*
  - *What about your feelings about yourself?*
  - *People in your life?*
  - *Your past?*
  - *Your current life?*
  - *Your future?*

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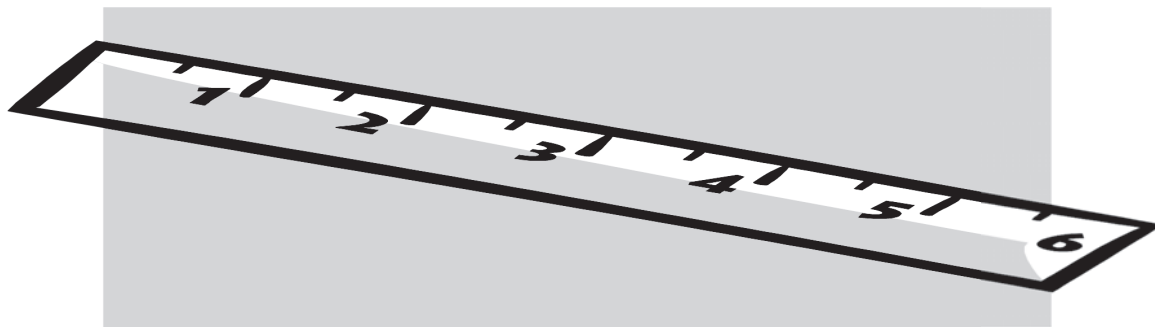
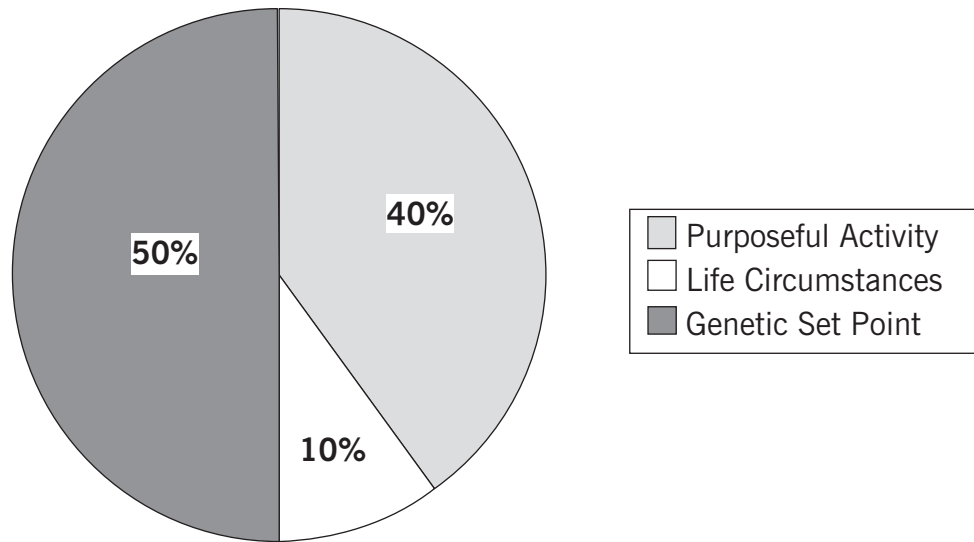
**D. Wrap-Up and Solicit Student Feedback**

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- Provide students with the *Certificate of Completion* and express appreciation for their continued efforts over the weeks.
  - Distribute the *Program Feedback Request*; ask students to write down their thoughts about their satisfaction with the program/group before leaving.
  - Collect postintervention outcome data using the same indicators of subjective well-being administered preintervention (baseline). Data collapsed across participants (i.e., mean scores at each time point) should be compared to assess progress.
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**FIGURES FOR PRACTITIONERS**

**What Determines Happiness?\***

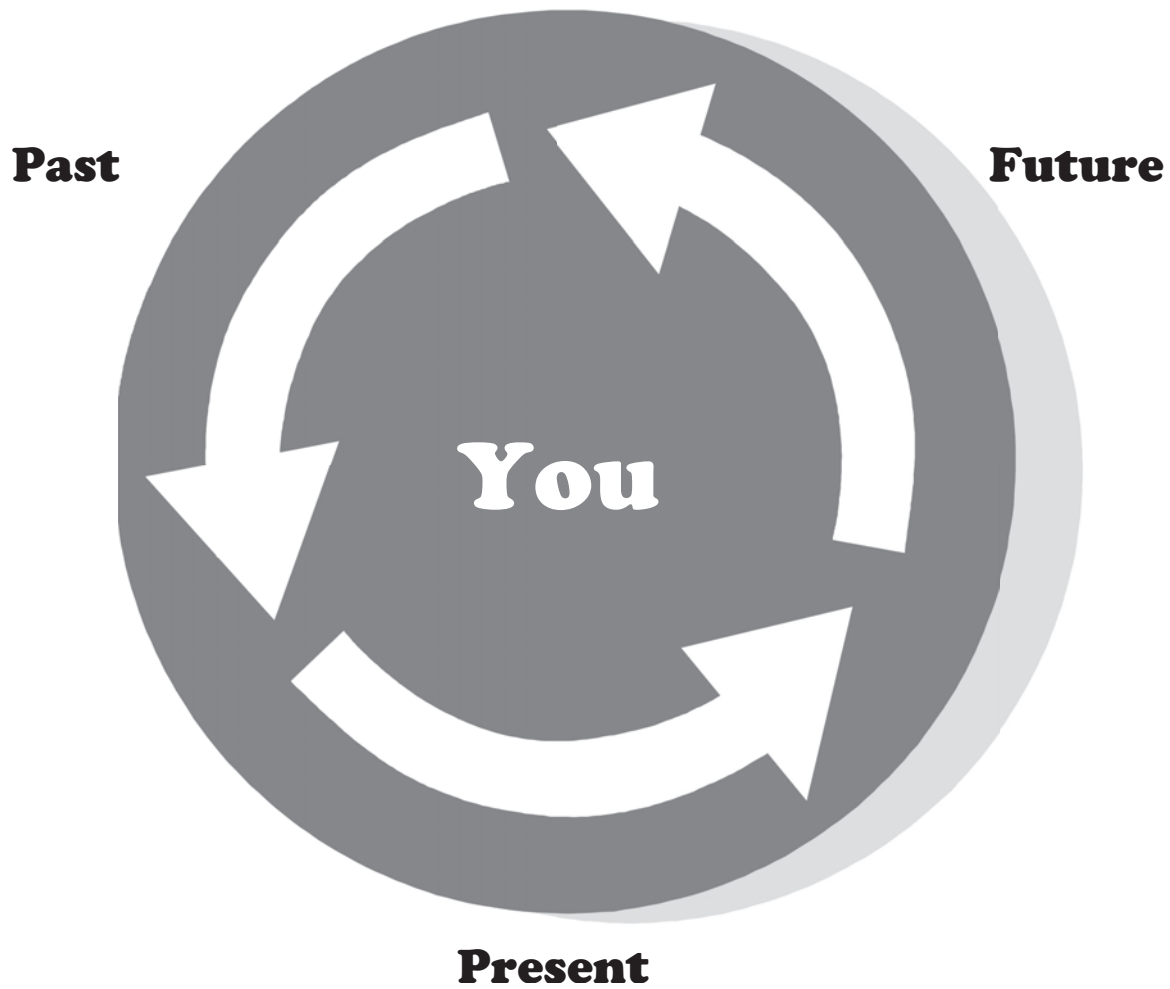


\*Based on research reported in Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005).

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**FIGURES FOR PRACTITIONERS**

**Happiness Flowchart**



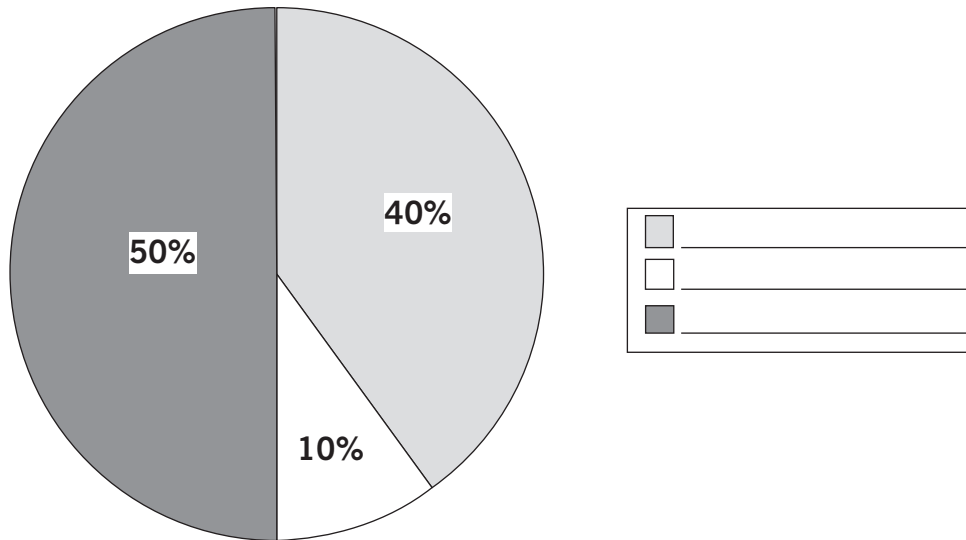
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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

## Overview of Program Activities

### What Determines Happiness?



### What Is the Purpose of This Well-Being Promotion Group?

1. During our weekly group meetings, which of the three areas that determine happiness are we going to focus on in order to improve our happiness? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How many times each week are we going to meet? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How many weeks will we meet? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do I need to bring with me to the meetings? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**Confidentiality**

**What Is Confidentiality?**

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**How Will I Keep What Students Say in This Group Confidential?**

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

## Gratitude Visit Planning Form

People who have been especially kind or helpful to me:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Person I will make a gratitude visit to: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Reminder:** Tell the person that you want to make plans to spend time with him or her. Don't tell him or her about your gratitude letter before the visit. To have the gratitude visit work really well, remember to read your letter out loud to the person. Read slowly with expression and make eye contact.

**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**Performing Acts of Kindness Record Form**

Day of the week: _____ Date: _____	
<b>Acts of Kindness</b>	

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths\***

<b>Virtue</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Description (features of the character strength)</b>
Wisdom and Knowledge	Creativity	Thinks of new ways to do things; has unique ideas or actions
	Curiosity	Interested in exploring and discovering things; asks a lot of questions
	Love of learning	Likes to become an expert in things; enjoys reading, school, and other chances to learn new information and skills
	Judgment/open-mindedness	Thinks things through from all angles; looks for evidence; does not jump to conclusions
	Perspective	Sees both sides of a story; offers good advice to other people
Courage	Honesty/authenticity	Tells the truth; a "real" person who is down to earth and genuine
	Bravery	Speaks up for what is right; faces challenges head-on
	Persistence/perseverance	Completes tasks; focused and hard-working
	Zest	Energetic; committed; full of excitement for life
Humanity	Kindness	Generous; does favors and good deeds for other people
	Love	Cares and shares with other people; values close relationships
	Social intelligence	Senses thoughts and feelings of self and other people; fits in with different groups while making others feel at ease
Justice	Fairness	Treats all people the same; gives everyone a chance without judging others harshly
	Leadership	Organizes group activities; encourages other people to make sure things get done and that everyone feels included
	Teamwork	Works well with other people; loyal to the group; does own share of work so the team succeeds
Temperance	Forgiveness	Gives people a second chance after they do something wrong; believes in mercy not revenge
	Humility/modesty	Lets achievements speak for themselves; does not seek attention, brag, or feel they are better than everyone else
	Prudence	Makes choices carefully; avoids doing things that he or she might later wish to take back
	Self-regulation	In control of his or her emotions, desires, and behaviors
Transcendence	Appreciation of beauty and excellence	Notices and is in awe of beautiful and special things in the world, such as in nature, art, science, and skilled performances
	Gratitude	Gives thanks for good things that happen; does not take things for granted
	Hope	Believes that good things will happen in the future; works hard to achieve those goals
	Humor	Likes to laugh, tease, and make other people smile
	Spirituality	Believes in a higher purpose and meaning of the universe; may be religious

\*The classification system in this handout is reported in Park and Peterson (2006).

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**New Uses of My First Signature Strength**

Signature Strength:		
Day of the Week	New Use	Feelings

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**New Uses of My Second Signature Strength**

<b>Signature Strength:</b>			
<b>Day of the Week</b>	<b>Life Domain</b>	<b>New Use</b>	<b>Feelings</b>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>

**\*\*Remember to savor: Make your good feelings last by telling someone about using your strength or taking a minute to close your eyes and think about the experience.**

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**New Uses of My Third Signature Strength**

Signature Strength:			
Day of the Week	Life Domain	New Use	Feelings
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>

**\*\*Remember to savor: Make your good feelings last by telling someone about using your strength or taking a minute to close your eyes and think about the experience.**

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**New Uses of My Fourth Signature Strength**

<b>Signature Strength:</b>			
<b>Day of the Week</b>	<b>Life Domain</b>	<b>New Use</b>	<b>Feelings</b>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**New Uses of My Fifth Signature Strength**

Signature Strength:			
Day of the Week	Life Domain	New Use	Feelings
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>
			<u>Savor:</u>

**\*\*Remember to savor: Make your good feelings last by telling someone about using your strength or taking a minute to close your eyes and think about the experience.**

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**New Uses of My Signature Strength (Child)**

<b>Strength:</b>		
<b><i>New Ways I Can Use This Strength:</i></b>	1. 2. 3.	
<b>Day of the Week</b>	<b>New Use</b>	<b>Feelings</b>

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**Examples of Optimistic Thinking**

Examples		Practice	
Good Events	Bad Events	Event	Optimistic Thought
<b>Permanent</b>	<b>Temporary</b>	<i>I was invited to the biggest party of the year.</i>	
<i>I made the goal because I'm talented in sports.</i>	<i>Even Beckham would have missed that one—I'll probably make the next goal I try for.</i>		
<b>Widespread</b>	<b>Specific</b>	<i>My good friend hasn't called me back in days.</i>	
<i>I do well in my classes because I check my agenda and do my homework after school.</i>	<i>I made a poor grade on my math test because I did not understand the ideas that were taught when I was out sick.</i>	<i>My parents increased my allowance.</i>	
<b>Take Credit</b>	<b>Blame Other Sources</b>	<i>My teacher said my science group did the best in the class.</i>	
<i>I won the contest because of my effort and talent in creative writing.</i>	<i>I lost the contest because I needed better materials to prepare myself.</i>	<i>I had to finish a giant assignment in 3 days and I got a D on it.</i>	

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**My Optimistic Thoughts**

Date	Event or Situation	Is the Event Good or Bad?	Optimistic Thought*

**\*Remember: Optimistic thoughts for good events are widespread, permanent, and take credit. Optimistic thoughts for bad events are temporary, specific, and blame other sources.**

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**STUDENT HANDOUT**

**Program Summary Sheet**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*When I want to feel more positive about my past:*

- Gratitude journal
  - Five things I'm grateful for, write down one time each week.
- Gratitude visit
  - Write a letter of thanks to someone who has been kind to me; read the letter to the person.

*When I want to feel more positive about my daily life:*

- Do acts of kindness
  - Five kind acts for other people in 1 day.
- Use my signature character strengths, which are:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Savor my successes
  - Tell someone about it or absorb myself (take a few minutes to focus on it).

*When I want to feel more positive about my future:*

- Optimistic thinking
  - View good situations as permanent, widespread, and take credit for them.
  - View bad situations as temporary, specific, and not totally my fault.
- Hopeful thinking
  - Focus on goals and ways to achieve those goals.

**STUDENT HANDOUT**

## Program Feedback Request

*Your Thoughts on the Well-Being Promotion Program*

1. What do you feel are some of the most important things you learned in the program?

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2. What did you like *best* about the program?

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3. What did you like *least* about the program?

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4. Which activities that you learned in the meetings are you likely to continue to do on your own?

<input type="checkbox"/> “You at your best” writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Gratitude journal
<input type="checkbox"/> Gratitude visit	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts of kindness
<input type="checkbox"/> Savoring	<input type="checkbox"/> Using my signature strengths in new ways
<input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> “Best-possible self in the future” writing
<input type="checkbox"/> None	

5. What suggestions do you have to improve the program?

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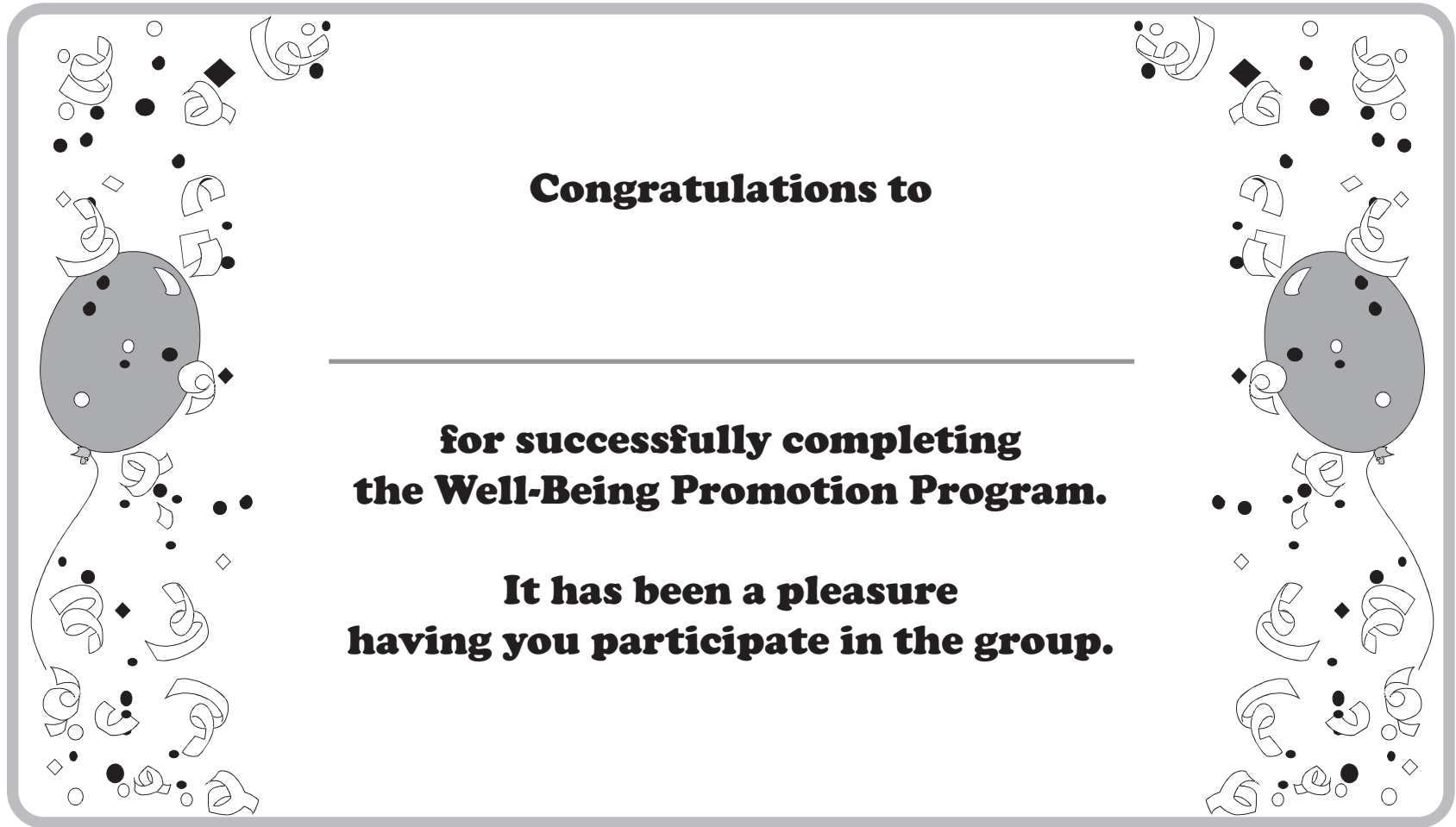
6. Any additional comments?

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Certificate of Completion



**Congratulations to**

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**for successfully completing  
the Well-Being Promotion Program.**

**It has been a pleasure  
having you participate in the group.**

## Follow-Up Sessions to Promote Maintenance of Gains from the Core Program

<b>PROGRAM REVIEW; SPOTLIGHT ON GRATITUDE</b>		<i>Follow-Up Session 1: Student Group</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review framework for increasing personal happiness.</li> <li>• Review activities and exercises learned in the intervention.</li> <li>• Discuss progress and activities students have continued since termination.</li> <li>• Practice method for using gratitude to create a focus on positive interpretations of past events.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Personal Reflection: Positive Psychology Strategies Used Since Program Termination</li> <li>B. Group Discussion: Review of the Happiness Framework</li> <li>C. Group Discussion: Review of Student Progress and Continued Activities</li> <li>D. Overview of Activities for Further Practice</li> <li>E. Revisit Gratitude Journals</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (stickers, candy, pencils, etc.)</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• Lined paper</li> <li>• <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>Happiness Flowchart</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>Program Summary Sheet</i> handout</li> <li>• Students' gratitude notebooks/journals</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

#### A. Personal Reflection: Positive Psychology Strategies Used Since Program Termination

<b>Independent Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome students back to group, provide them with notebook paper.</li> <li>• Ask students to write about the positive activities or exercises they engaged in or used the most frequently <i>in general</i> since the last meeting.</li> <li>• Ask students to write about the positive strategies they used <i>in response to difficult situations or during times of distress</i> since the last meeting.</li> <li>• Inform students that they will have the opportunity to share with the group later their continued use of purposeful activities to maintain happiness.</li> <li>• Ask students about the extent to which they have discussed the Well-Being Promotion Program activities/strategies with their parents since the last meeting.</li> </ul>
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#### B. Group Discussion: Review of the Happiness Framework

<b>Group Review and Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the session starting, consider listing the exercises on the board for students to access during this discussion (list: "You at Your Best," "Gratitude Journaling," "Gratitude Visits," "Acts of Kindness," "Using Signature Strengths in New Ways," "Savoring," "Optimistic Thinking," "Best-Possible Self in the Future").</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Throughout the 10 weeks of our group meetings, we completed multiple exercises that were designed to improve happiness by changing the activities (thoughts and</i></p>
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*(continued)*

## Follow-Up Sessions to Promote Maintenance of Gains from the Core Program (page 2 of 3)

*behaviors) that we do on purpose. [Reference the What Determines Happiness? figure.]*

*The exercises we did during the group meetings helped you learn how to purposely create positive ways to use your strengths in the present, how to create positive thoughts about your past, and how to think in ways that create positive views of the future. [Reference the Happiness Flowchart figure.]*

*It has been a while since we talked about these things, so let's review the main ideas. Which of the exercises are meant to cause positive feelings about your past?*

- Gratitude journaling.
- Gratitude visits.
- "You at Your Best" (could also fit with present, to identify strengths).

*Since our last meeting, how has gratitude impacted your satisfaction with your past?*

*Which of the exercises are meant to promote positive emotions in the present?*

- "Acts of Kindness."
- "Using Signature Character Strengths in New Ways."
- "Savoring" (positive experiences when using character strengths).

*Since our last meeting, in what ways have these activities impacted your feelings and satisfaction with how things are going now, in your current life?*

*Which exercises did you do that are meant to improve your view of the future?*

- "Optimistic Thinking."
- Hope ("Best-Possible Self in the Future").

*Since our last meeting, in what ways have these activities impacted your feelings about your future?*

### C. Group Discussion: Review of Student Progress and Continued Activities

#### Savoring Successes

*Let's talk some more about the activities that you have used since we ended our weekly group meetings, specifically the situations you recalled and wrote about at the beginning of today's meeting.*

#### Positive Activities as Coping Strategies

- Consider reminding students that sharing and reliving success, such as through the use of strengths in everyday life, or benefiting another person through acts of kindness, is an example of savoring in action.

*What activities have you used the most often, in general, since we last met?*

*What are some situations, perhaps times of stress or negative mood, when you used the activities we learned to intentionally increase positive thoughts about the past, present, or future?*

- For instance, in addition to practicing grateful thinking pretty much daily, students may have enacted a gratitude visit or completed a gratitude journal at times they felt regret or disappointment with their life circumstances. They may have performed acts of kindness, used their strengths in a new way, or savored when they caught themselves feeling "blah" about their day.
- Encourage each student to share at least one example with the group. If a student cannot identify a time he or she has used a happiness-increasing activity in the face of distress, ask the student to share a minor or major stressor that has occurred since the last meeting, and have him or her receive assistance from group members to generate ideas of activities likely to increase mood in such negative situations.

*(continued)*



Follow-Up Sessions to Promote Maintenance of Gains from the Core Program (page 3 of 3)

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<b>Personal Reflection of Growth</b>	<p>Take a few minutes to think of the ways you changed over the course of our 10 weekly meetings, and how you have changed or stayed the same since we stopped meeting each week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pose these questions to the group:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ How have your feelings about your life changed?</li><li>◦ Any changes in happiness?</li><li>◦ What about your feelings about yourself?</li><li>◦ People in your life?</li><li>◦ Your past?</li><li>◦ Your future?</li></ul></li></ul>
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**D. Overview of Activities for Further Practice**

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<b>Need for Continued Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continued practice of positive activities (purposeful behaviors!), in particular the ones that the student felt “fit” him or her best, is essential to maintain gains in happiness.</li></ul> <p><i>One way to keep improving our lives and feelings is to continue to practice the strategies you learned during our weekly meetings, in particular those that have felt “natural” to you (those activities you have continued to use the most on your own), as well as those exercises and strategies that, upon reflection, you realize have been the most helpful in terms of having a positive impact on your mood. For our remaining time together today, we’ll practice grateful thinking. When we meet again for follow-up and review in a couple of weeks, we’ll focus on another—using signature strengths in new ways and optimistic thinking.</i></p>
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**E. Revisit Gratitude Journals**

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<b>Practice Gratitude Journaling</b>	<p><i>Remember a while back we learned that keeping a gratitude journal is a way for you to express thanks for the things in life for which you are grateful. Gratitude is linked to feelings of happiness through refocusing our thoughts on the positive parts of our past, which increases positive attitudes about our histories and lives. I would like you to take a few minutes to think about your day and write down five things in your life that you are grateful for, including both small and large things, events, people, talents, or anything else you can think of. Some examples may include generosity of my friends, my teacher giving me extra help, family dinner, your favorite band/singer, and so on.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give students about 5 minutes to list five things for which they are grateful.</li><li>• Prompt the student to be specific with identifying positive situations.</li><li>• Prompt each student to share one to two of their responses with the group after the independent writing time is over.</li></ul>
<b>Plan for Generalization</b>	<p><i>How do you intend to continue gratitude journaling in your daily life?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage students to continue journaling on a regular basis, for example, each night before bed, Sunday nights when preparing for the week, or during a shared writing activity with a parent.</li></ul>

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## Follow-Up Sessions to Promote Maintenance of Gains from the Core Program

<b>PROGRAM REVIEW; SPOTLIGHT ON USE OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS AND OPTIMISTIC THINKING</b>		<i>Follow-Up Session 2: Student Group</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review progress with gratitude journals.</li> <li>• Review activities and exercises learned in the group.</li> <li>• Review and rehearse method for planning new uses of signature strengths.</li> <li>• Review method for thinking optimistically.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Progress with Gratitude Journals</li> <li>B. Group Discussion: Review of the Happiness Framework</li> <li>C. Explore and Plan Uses of the Fifth Signature Strength in New Ways</li> <li>D. Review and Practice: Optimistic Explanatory Style</li> <li>E. Wrap Up and Gratitude for Student Participation</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible rewards for homework completion (stickers, candy, pencils, etc.).</li> <li>• Blackboard, white board, or easel</li> <li>• <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>Happiness Flowchart</i> figure</li> <li>• <i>Classification of 24 Character Strengths</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>New Uses of My Fifth Signature Strength</i> handout</li> <li>• <i>My Optimistic Thoughts</i> handout</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

#### A. Progress with Gratitude Journals

<b>Assignment Completion</b>	<p><i>Last time we were together, we discussed gratitude and developed plans for writing down our thoughts in gratitude journals. Please share your progress with continuing to write in your gratitude journals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pose these questions to the group:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>How often did you journal? At what time and where?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>What types of things did you acknowledge you were grateful for?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>How did focusing on those events and situations impact your mood?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>What obstacles did you face when attempting to journal?</i></li> <li>◦ <i>To what extent were your parents involved in your gratitude journaling?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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#### B. Group Discussion: Review of the Happiness Framework

<b>Group Review and Reflection</b>	<p><i>Throughout our group meetings, we have completed multiple exercises that were designed to improve happiness by changing the activities (thoughts and behaviors) that we do on purpose. [Show the <i>What Determines Happiness?</i> figure.]</i></p> <p><i>The exercises we did during the group meetings helped you learn how to purposely create positive ways to use your strengths in the present, how to create positive thoughts about your past, and how to think in ways that create positive views of the future. [Show the <i>Happiness Flowchart</i> figure.]</i></p> <p><i>Let's review the main ideas. Which of the exercises are meant to cause positive feelings about your past?</i></p>
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*(continued)*

## Follow-Up Sessions to Promote Maintenance of Gains from the Core Program (page 2 of 3)

- “Gratitude Journaling.”
- “Gratitude Visits.”
- “You at Your Best” (could also fit with present, to identify strengths).  
*Since we last met, how has gratitude impacted your satisfaction with your past?  
Which of the exercises are meant to promote positive emotions in the present?*
- “Acts of Kindness.”
- “Using Signature Character Strengths in New Ways.”
- “Savoring” (positive experiences when using character strengths).  
*Since we last met, in what ways have these activities impacted your feelings and satisfaction with how things are going now, in your current life?  
Which exercises did you do that are meant to improve your view of the future?*
- “Optimistic Thinking.”
- Hope (“Best-Possible Self in the Future”).  
*Since we last met, in what ways have these activities impacted your feelings about your future?*

### C. Explore and Plan Uses of the Fifth Signature Strength in New Ways

- Using Signature Strengths across Life Domains**
- Review the rationale for using signature strengths in new ways.  
*Remember a while back we learned that using our character strengths in new and different ways than we have before is a good way to increase happiness in the present. We also learned that in order to use character strengths in new ways to effectively increase happiness, they should be used in multiple areas of life, including school, friendships, and family.*
  - Ask each student to refer to his or her list of signature strengths.
    - Prompt each student to indicate which strengths he or she has targeted for increased use in prior sessions.
    - Students should then identify a fifth strength to focus on this week; student can “redo” a strength targeted prior if he or she desires.
  - Provide students with the *New Uses of My Fifth Signature Strength* handout. Ask them to work in small groups to make a list of ways they may use this strength that are different from, or unique, to prior usage.
  - Write the life domain categories on the white board and prompt students to think of ways they can use their signature strength in each domain.
  - As students work, group leaders should make sure that the activities being listed are manageable and concrete. Group leaders should brainstorm ideas alongside students and solicit ideas from other students.
  - Clarify any suggestions that may stray from the content of the signature strength and guide students to more targeted ideas. Copies of the *VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths* handout should be on hand to help students remember the meanings of the strengths.

(continued)

## Follow-Up Sessions to Promote Maintenance of Gains from the Core Program (page 3 of 3)

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<b>Plan for Implementation and Generalization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to use their chosen <i>signature strength</i> in new ways each day of the upcoming week <i>across life domains as was prepared on their New Uses of My Fifth Signature Strength record form</i>. Ask them to use the form daily to write down their feelings after using the strength, to promote self-reflection and savoring. Encourage students to find a different way to use the strength if they encounter obstacles with the first plan. <i>Typically, you've shared your homework completion with me and the other members of the group. After you complete your plan for using this strength in new ways, who can you share your experiences and feelings with?</i></li><li>• Prompt students to consider family members, friends, educators, and possibly other group members.</li><li>• Remind students that sharing successes with others helps us savor our positive experiences. <i>After your plan for next week is completed, how do you intend to continue using your signature strengths in your daily life?</i></li><li>• Encourage students to continue to use all or any of their signature strengths in new ways.</li></ul>
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### D. Review and Practice: Optimistic Explanatory Style

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<b>Practice Thinking Optimistically</b>	<p><i>Remember a while back we learned about optimistic thinking, which involves thinking about good things in your life as being permanent, such as being caused by your traits and abilities, and thinking about bad events as temporary, only lasting as long as your mood or effort. Also, optimistic thinking involves seeing good events as widespread, or seeing good things as happening throughout life, and seeing bad events as specific to certain areas of life. Finally, optimistic thinking involves taking credit for causing good events in our lives, but blaming other factors for bad events.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Illustrate with own example of a positive situation (e.g., observation of current group of students' progress with happiness promotion skills); ask students to help generate the optimistic attributions. <i>Optimistic thinking leads to resilience, the feeling that you can face any situation and come out OK. Thus, optimistic thinking is a purposeful attitude that can increase our happiness. Let's think of good or bad situations from the last few weeks, where you did or could have practiced optimistic thinking.</i></li><li>• Distribute the <i>My Optimistic Thoughts</i> handout to students. Have one or two students volunteer a situation from the last 2–4 weeks. Ask the speaker to decide if it was a good or bad event, and ask him or her how the situation could be thought of more optimistically. Ask the group to assist the speaker generate thoughts about the situation that are optimistic.</li></ul>
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<b>Plan for Generalization</b>	<p><i>How do you intend to keep practicing optimistic thinking in your daily life?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage students to continue using optimistic thinking regularly in their lives, for both positive and negative situations and events.</li></ul>
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### E. Wrap-Up and Gratitude for Student Participation

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<b>Program Termination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students about their final thoughts on the interventions beyond character strengths and optimistic thinking that they plan to continue.</li><li>• Remind them of the importance of including significant others at home (parents) and school (teachers, classmates) in their happiness efforts.</li><li>• Express gratitude for the students' continued efforts to take control over their actions and thoughts that are related to feeling happy.</li></ul>
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## Supplemental Individual Student Sessions: Multidimensional Interview of Students' Determinants of Subjective Well-Being

	<b>INTRODUCTION TO INTERVENTION</b>	<i>Supplemental Session 1: Individual Student</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish rapport with student.</li> <li>• Introduce student to intervention purpose and meeting logistics.</li> <li>• Gather baseline data on life satisfaction.</li> <li>• Start student thinking about factors that influence personal happiness.</li> <li>• Address questions and clarify misconceptions (as needed).</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<p>A. Introduction to Counselor and Intervention</p> <p>B. Activity: Multidimensional Assessment of Life Satisfaction</p> <p>C. Introductory Exploration of Student's Personal Determinants of Happiness</p>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blank copy of the screening measure completed prior (e.g., BMSLSS)</li> <li>• Blank copy of the SLSS and MSLSS for completion in session</li> <li>• <i>(For younger students)</i> Games and activities to play to establish rapport</li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

<b>A. Introduction to Counselor and Intervention</b>		
<b>Clarify Professional Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name the child prefers to go by . . . spelling?</li> <li>• Your name (including spelling).</li> <li>• Title (<i>counselor</i>); if applicable, explain trainee status.</li> <li>• <i>(For younger students): Do you know what a counselor is? Example:</i>  <i>A counselor is someone who people talk to. They can talk about things that are going well, and things that are going not so well, in their life. As your counselor, I'm here to help you feel as happy as possible and to be successful. I'm here to listen and help you learn ways to feel your best. So, I'll get to see you each week for the next few months. We'll talk about you and ways to help you become and stay very happy.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Purpose of Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask student if he or she knows why he or she gets to meet with you. If student does not know, provide a clear and accurate explanation. Example:  <i>A few weeks ago, your teacher asked you to fill out a brief questionnaire that asked you to indicate your happiness with different areas of life—home, friends, school—and overall life. Thank you for completing that! Your answers told us that although things are going OK for you, you have some room for growth in your happiness.</i>   <i>School counselors will meet with students who have parent permission to work on happiness with a counselor. I'm so glad you brought back your permission slip. I'm excited to help you learn ways of thinking and acting and getting along with others so you can become happier!</i></li> </ul>	

*(continued)*

Multidimensional Interview of Students' Determinants of Subjective Well-Being (page 2 of 4)

**Provide an Overview of the Session Content**

- Explain the meeting logistics. Example:  
*We will meet each week during first or second period, likely in this room.*
- Provide student with an advanced organizer for the content and goal of the Well-Being Promotion Program, and the initial meetings.  
*In our first few meetings, I'd like to know more about you, including how happy you are currently. We will talk about what influences your well-being. Well-being is your overall happiness. It is how happy you are with your whole life. It is also how often you feel good and bad feelings.*
- If collaboration with teachers or parents is intended, explain that to the student.  
Example:  
*I would also like to chat with some of your teachers about their goals for your happiness. Is that OK with you? Then, I will take all of the information and we can set goals for what areas of life we want to make better and which areas we want to keep the same. Also, I will touch base with your parents to let them know what we will be working on in our weekly meetings.*
- If intervention is intended for implementation in small groups, explain that to the student.  
*Then, together with other students in your class/grade/school, we'll learn things that help most children feel happy.*

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**Establish Rapport**

- To start the verbal communication process, engage the student in a discussion of easy-to-talk-about topics; reinforce sharing of information and highlight similarities.  
*Before we move to talking about your current feelings, it would be helpful to know more about you in general.*
  - Interests?
    - Music; TV shows; movies; athletic teams
  - Things you do for fun after school (sports, clubs?) and on the weekend?
  - Favorite and least favorite school subjects and activities?
  - Family life? (siblings, pets?)
- Point out similarities between student and self, in interests and background  
*Do you have any questions for me so far?*
- Note: Younger students, such as those in elementary and maybe middle school, may speak more freely when or after engaged in a fun activity.  
*If you'd like, we can play a game today while we're talking. Or, play a game and then talk. I have \_\_\_\_\_ game and \_\_\_\_\_ game . . . would you like to play one?*
- When comfortable, interject the general questions above during the game.

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(continued)

**B. Activity: Multidimensional Assessment of Life Satisfaction**

**Comprehensive Assessment of Multidimensional Life Satisfaction**

- Administer the SLSS and MSLSS (provide completion instructions).  
*To get started, it would be helpful to know how you are feeling about your life currently. Please take a few minutes and complete this survey about how you have felt the past few weeks. Read the instructions, then indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement.*
- Allow student to complete the SLSS and MSLSS independently; stay nearby in case there are any questions about words in the items, or questions about the response metric.
- After student indicates he or she is finished, check to make sure he or she selected one response only to each of the 47 items . . . prompt the student to complete any skipped items, and to select the best answer if he or she circled two options for one item.  
*Thank you for completing that survey. When we meet next, I'd like to talk more about your happiness levels in each area of life, like happiness at home, school, and with your friends.*

**C. Introductory Exploration of Student's Personal Determinants of Happiness**

**Set the Stage**

- Explain that the meeting will end soon, and you are interested in learning the primary areas of life that impact the student's personal happiness.

**Explore Student's Perception of Primary Contributors to Life Satisfaction**

*In our last few minutes today, I'm curious about the main things you're thinking of when judging your overall happiness—that is, your satisfaction with your life in general. Like on question 1, you circled a “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” on the scale of 1–6.*

- Reference one of the global satisfaction items from the SLSS, such as:

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
My life is going well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My life is just right.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have a good life.	1	2	3	4	5	6

*What were you thinking about when you decided how happy you were with your whole life?*

- *What types of things make you happy?*
- *What else makes you happier?*

*Optional questions for teenagers (some younger children have struggled with the abstract nature of these questions).*

- *Overall, what do you think would have to change in order to move your happiness rating/level up 1 whole point (e.g., from a 5 to a 6)?*
- *What else do you think would make you happier? Are there things that your parents, teachers, classmates, or friends could do?*

*[Summarize] is that correct? Would you like to add something else that would help me better understand what influences your satisfaction with your life?*

Multidimensional Interview of Students' Determinants of Subjective Well-Being (page 4 of 4)

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**Provide Preview  
of Next Meeting**

- End meeting with an affirming statement and preview of the next session.  
*I've enjoyed talking with you today, and getting to know you a bit! I am looking forward to seeing you again next week.*
  - Remind student of the planned contact with parents and teachers, as applicable.  
*I'll also try to introduce myself to a teacher, and contact your parent. Some parents like to receive a quick e-mail that tells the activities done in a meeting.*
    - *Who do you live with at home?*
    - *Parent e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_*
    - *If e-mail unknown, phone number: \_\_\_\_\_**So I'll be back next week, and every week for about 10 weeks, on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) during \_\_\_\_\_ (class period). One of the student office assistants will bring you a pass so you may be excused from class. We'll typically meet in \_\_\_\_\_ (place).*  
*Next week, we'll talk more about your happiness in different areas of life.*
-



## Supplemental Individual Student Sessions: Multidimensional Interview of Students' Determinants of Subjective Well-Being

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF DETERMINANTS OF LIFE SATISFACTION		<i>Supplemental Session 2: Individual Student</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know student in the context of his or her current status on the common determinants of happiness.</li> <li>• Continue student reflection on factors that influence personal happiness.</li> </ul>	
<b>Procedures</b>	A. Semistructured Interview—Determinants of Personal Happiness	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the session, score SLSS and MSLSS; flag for clarification any items to which the student responded in an unusual or interesting way.</li> </ul>	
<b>Procedures Defined</b>		
<b>A. Semistructured Interview—Determinants of Personal Happiness</b>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before this meeting, score the SLSS and MSLSS. In the relevant section of this general interview protocol (e.g., family, friendships, personality), add questions to follow-up on survey items that the student responded to in a notable manner (e.g., inconsistent with other responses, particular satisfaction or dissatisfaction).</li> </ul>	
<b>General</b>	<p><i>This week, I'd like to know more about things in your family and your activities that may affect your happiness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review themes from last meeting; prompt for additional student reflections. <i>Last week you mentioned that for you, your happiness depends on _____ [recap top determinants], and sometimes _____ [recap minor themes].</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Any thoughts on what other types of things might make you happy or unhappy?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Personality and Self</b>	<p><i>How would your friends describe you? Like in terms of your personality—your typical mood or behavior?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>For instance, would your friends describe you as friendly, quiet, curious, funny, hardworking, caring, stressed out?</i></li> <li>• <i>What about these traits (your personality) makes you happy or unhappy with your life?</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Coping Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather information about preexisting use of strategies for cultivating happiness, including strategies to calm (maintain emotional well-being) in the face of stressors. <i>I'd like to know more about what you try to do to get or stay happy.</i> <i>What are some of the ways that you handle problems or deal with challenges/ stressors?</i></li> </ul>	

*(continued)*

Multidimensional Interview of Students' Determinants of Subjective Well-Being (page 2 of 2)

<b>Family</b>	<p>Who lives in your home? How happy are these people in your family?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate the well-being (overall happiness; satisfaction with life) of each person living in your home?</li> </ul>																																										
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Not at all happy</th> <th>Slightly</th> <th>Medium</th> <th>Often happy</th> <th>Delighted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Mom/Stepmom or partner</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dad/Stepdad or partner</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sibling 1 (name: _____)</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sibling 2 (name: _____)</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sibling 3 (name: _____)</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other person in home (name: _____)</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Not at all happy	Slightly	Medium	Often happy	Delighted	Mom/Stepmom or partner	1	2	3	4	5	Dad/Stepdad or partner	1	2	3	4	5	Sibling 1 (name: _____)	1	2	3	4	5	Sibling 2 (name: _____)	1	2	3	4	5	Sibling 3 (name: _____)	1	2	3	4	5	Other person in home (name: _____)	1	2	3	4	5
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<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather information about interpersonal relationships, first in an open-ended manner, and then in a specific fashion about particular people if needed.</li> </ul> <p><i>I'd like to know more about how you are getting along with people in your life. Which of your relationships (with people at home, school, or elsewhere) are going well?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>In what ways do they make you feel happy?</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Which of your relationships are not going so well (or that you are having a hard time with)?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>In what ways do they make you feel unhappy?</i></li> <li><i>(If relationships at home are not brought up): In general, how well do you get along with your parents? Siblings?</i></li> <li><i>(If relationships at school are not brought up): Which people at school make you happy or unhappy? Teachers? Classmates? In what ways?</i></li> </ul>																																										
<b>Life Circumstances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather information about life circumstances.</li> </ul> <p><i>Last, think about the events in your life (good or bad) that may affect your happiness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What are some of the things that are going on in your life (good events or situations, even those that may be out of your control) that have made you happy?</i></li> <li><i>Which things that are going on in your life (events or situations, even those possibly out of your control) have made you not happy?</i></li> <li><i>Any other things going on that affect your happiness with your life?</i></li> </ul>																																										
<b>Recap</b>	<p>[Summarize themes from student responses during this interview.] <i>Is that correct? Is there anything else in your life that makes you happy or unhappy? For instance, perhaps how your religion, or your pets, or sports or after-school activities, influences your happiness?</i></p>																																										
<b>Provide Preview of Next Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End the meeting with an affirming statement and preview of the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p><i>I've enjoyed talking with you again today! Next week, we'll start learning strategies that help students feel happier. [If relevant: As a reminder, a few other students in your class/grade/school will be included in our meetings, so that we can all learn together and support one another.]</i></p>																																										

## Supplemental Teacher and Classroom Sessions

### *Facilitating Student–Teacher and Student–Student Relationships*

PSYCHOEDUCATION FOR TEACHERS		<i>Supplemental Session: Teacher</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish rapport with teacher.</li> <li>• Introduce teacher to the field of positive psychology and key constructs.</li> <li>• Discuss baseline level of subjective well-being among target students.</li> <li>• Convey importance of positive student–teacher relationships.</li> <li>• Share strategies for teachers to communicate support.</li> <li>• Introduce teacher to content of student intervention.</li> <li>• Address questions and clarify misconceptions (as needed).</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Brief Presentation: Positive Psychology and Key Constructs in Intervention</li> <li>B. Baseline Subjective Well-Being of Target Students for Program</li> <li>C. Clarify Purpose of Intervention</li> <li>D. Provide an Overview of the Student-Focused Intervention</li> <li>E. Plan for Behavior Management during Classwide or Small-Group Sessions</li> <li>F. Homework: Teacher Preparation for Participation</li> <li>G. Provide Time for Expression of Questions and Concerns</li> </ul>	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Overview of Program Activities</i> handout for teacher</li> <li>• <i>Building Strong Student–Teacher Relationships</i> handout for teacher</li> <li>• Copy of intervention manual</li> <li>• (If baseline measure administered and scored): Graphed average student subjective well-being levels</li> </ul>	

#### Procedures Defined

##### **A. Brief Presentation: Positive Psychology and Key Constructs in Intervention**

Welcome the teacher, provide a copy of the teacher handouts, and thank him or her for making time to participate in the program. Introduce self and other co-facilitators, such as other mental health providers or trainees at your school, before beginning the presentation.

*In order to provide you with a better understanding of the kinds of concepts and activities that your students will be learning and engaging in throughout participation in the Well-Being Promotion Program, we will first share with you information related to the field the program is based upon: positive psychology. We will also share some strategies for what you can do outside of our weekly meetings with the students, in order to improve your own happiness and strengthen your relationships with your students.*

Deliver the PowerPoint presentation that you prepared in advance. Presentation goals:

- Communicate the importance of students' happiness.
- Introduce positive psychology and define key targets.
- Explain what positive psychology interventions are, and outline which are targeted to students in the subsequent sessions of the program.
- Convey the importance of classroom relationships to students' happiness; share the research-based ties between teacher social support and student subjective well-being.

*(continued)*

### **Facilitating Student–Teacher and Student–Student Relationships—Teacher** (page 2 of 4)

- Discuss how teachers currently communicate support and care to students.
- Suggest strategies for conveying support as suggested by prior research (specifically, Suldo et al., 2009).
- Encourage teachers to complete the weekly exercises along with their students.

As a summary of the presentation content, for teacher reference after the informational meeting, distribute the handouts *Overview of Program Activities* and *Building Strong Student–Teacher Relationships*.

*Note:* If presentation equipment is unavailable, consider allowing the teacher to reference the handouts through the discussion (rather than focus on a presentation screen). Use the handouts as an outline and guide for the discussion; the goals for the discussion remain the same as above.

Throughout and once completed, provide opportunities to pose questions.

#### **B. Baseline Subjective Well-Being of Target Students for Program**

Before this first meeting, administer and score baseline measure(s) of subjective well-being to students targeted for inclusion. Commonly used measures of global life satisfaction and satisfaction in primary domains of life include:

- Students Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS; seven-items; global).
- Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS; 40 items across five domains).
- Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS; six items—five domain specific and one global).

All are available free from the author (Scott Huebner) at [www.psych.sc.edu/faculty/Scott\\_Huebner](http://www.psych.sc.edu/faculty/Scott_Huebner).

- If the program is intended as a Tier 2 intervention for students with room for growth in life satisfaction, then data from the schoolwide screening (e.g., via the BMSLSS) conducted to identify the targeted students should be graphed.
- If the program is intended to be administered classwide (e.g., as a Tier 1 wellness-promotion program for all students), consider administering more comprehensive measures such as the SLSS and MSLSS to all students in the class.
- The PANAS-C (Laurent et al., 1999) can also be used to index positive and negative affect.

Share with the teacher graphed averages that contain his or her students' current (i.e., preintervention, baseline) levels of life satisfaction, and highlight domains that are relatively high and low. Note these measures will be readministered at the program conclusion. Average scores pre- and postintervention will be compared in order to evaluate students' level of response.

#### **C. Clarify Purpose of Intervention**

Ensure that the teacher understands that the Well-Being Promotion Program was designed to maximize students' happiness and overall well-being. Explain:

*Optimal well-being involves being happy (satisfied with life) in addition to not having mental health problems. The Well-Being Promotion Program that we are implementing with your students was designed to maximize students' happiness, not to intervene with mental health problems. Research tells us that we all have genetically set ranges of happiness, and the key to increasing happiness within our range is through purposeful activities. The purpose of the Well-Being Promotion Program is to increase your students' happiness by talking about key concepts we covered in the presentation and engaging in activities focused on them, such as gratitude and character strengths.*

(continued)

#### **D. Provide an Overview of the Student-Focused Intervention**

Describe the main components of the Well-Being Promotion Program. Explain:

*The happiness-increasing interventions we will teach your students will be taught in a classwide format, with one group leader (me) and co-facilitators (you). [If applicable, also identify the mental health provider or trainee at your school who may also assist in a co-facilitator role.] We will meet once weekly during one period of the school day, for about 10 weeks. The first meeting is just between us (the current meeting). After that, the weekly meetings with the students will include leader-guided group discussions and activities. Students will also be assigned homework at the conclusion of each meeting in order to facilitate further practice with concepts and skills learned. Regarding the focus of the meetings, the first two student meetings are mainly focused on establishing team building, a positive group environment, and introducing the students to the program. The fourth and fifth meetings focus on gratitude and include activities such as students writing about things for which they're grateful and expressing thanks to people who have been kind to them in the past. The sixth meeting focuses on acts of kindness and includes activities such as increasing the frequency of performing kind acts. The seventh, eighth, ninth, and 10th meetings focus mainly on identifying one's character strengths and include activities such as identifying perceived strengths, objectively identifying them through completing a survey, and using strengths in new ways. The 11th and final meeting includes a review of the program, including activities and skills learned in the program.*

#### **E. Plan for Behavior Management during Classwide or Small-Group Sessions**

Given the young developmental stage that is the intervention target, and the fact that groups can be as large as entire classrooms (pending sufficient availability of group co-leaders), it is advisable to develop an explicit behavior management system for use during the student sessions (meetings 2–11). This can entail extension of a current classwide system perceived by teachers as effective, or development of a new strategy for use only during the program meetings.

- To develop a behavioral management system for use prior to Session 2, inquire:
  - *What are the current classroom/school rules?*
  - *What behavior management system is currently in place in the classroom or school?*
  - *How often is feedback provided to students regarding compliance with classroom rules?*
  - *What incentives/tangibles do students seem to find motivating? Which of the options are acceptable to the classroom teacher(s)?*

#### **F. Homework: Teacher Preparation for Participation**

To prepare for participation as a co-facilitator of the Well-Being Promotion Program throughout the intervention period, encourage the teacher to become further familiar with the positive psychology constructs covered during the PowerPoint presentation.

- Distribute the full text article from Suldo and colleagues (2009) in *School Psychology Review*.
  - Encourage teacher to plan strategies (new ones introduced weekly) for communicating teacher support.
- Encourage teachers to visit [www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org).
  - *Personal levels of subjective well-being, gratitude, hope?*
  - *Own signature strengths?*
- Provide teacher with complete intervention manual.
  - Discuss plan for reading, and communicating about, session plans in advance of group leaders/facilitators meetings with students.

(continued)

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**G. Provide Time for Expression of Questions and Concerns**

Ensure several minutes to recap the information shared today, answer any of the teacher’s remaining questions, problem solve concerns, and establish the most effective methods for communication between student meetings.

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## Supplemental Teacher and Classroom Sessions

### *Facilitating Student–Teacher and Student–Student Relationships*

<b>GETTING TO KNOW CLASSMATES THROUGH TEAM BUILDING</b>		<i>Supplemental Session: Class</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a supportive group environment with clear behavioral expectations.</li> <li>• Identify classmates' common life experiences.</li> <li>• Learn to work together and contribute to a group project.</li> <li>• Understand the importance of working in a team and supporting one another.</li> <li>• Underscore ties between social relationships and personal happiness.</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	A. Introduction to Leaders and Rules B. Get-to-Know-You Exercise: Commonalities between Classmates C. Team-Building Exercise: Creative Coloring D. Group Discussion: Challenges and Benefits to Working Together E. Introduction to the Well-Being Promotion Program	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different-colored markers, crayons, or colored pencils for each student</li> <li>• A large sheet of paper</li> </ul>	

#### **Procedures Defined**

#### **A. Introduction to Leaders and Rules**

**Introduction to Leaders** • Explain to students who you are, and an overview of why you are there.

*Hello! [Each facilitator provides name and explains professional role at the school.] We have the same goal: increasing all children's happiness. We'll be with you each [specify regular meeting time, such as Friday afternoon] for the next several weeks to talk about happiness. We'll help you do activities that have been shown to help all kinds of young people feel better about their lives. We'll talk more about those types of activities next week. Today, we're hoping to just get to know one another better.*

**Establish Behavioral Expectations** • Below is an example behavior management system aligned with the larger school positive behavioral intervention and support system.

*But first, we want to give you some tips on how to behave during our meetings so that you'll get the most benefit from the activities, and earn rewards for good behavior. The CHAMPS for this lesson are:*

- *C—Conversation level is a "2"—we'll be doing group work.*
- *H—To ask for help, please raise your hand.*
- *A—Activity . . . listen to the adult speaking (leader or your teacher) or the classmate we've asked to share, or do the activity we assign.*
- *M—Movement . . . please sit at your desk until we ask you to move.*
- *P—Participation looks like eyes on the speaker or assignment.*
- *S—And that's how you'll be successful.*

*Every 5 minutes, we will put stars next to the names of the students who are following those CHAMPS. At the end of our meeting, all students who have earned at least five stars will get a reward: stickers or candy! Any questions?*

*(continued)*

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### B. Get-to-Know-You Exercise: Commonalities between Classmates

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This first exercise is an ice-breaker designed to help group participants get to know some of the things they have in common with their peers. The potential commonalities start with innocuous situations, and progress to more sensitive situations. Point out how no student is ever alone; there is almost always at least one other person who shares his or her unique situation.

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**Commonalities between Classmates** *We would like to do an activity to help us get to know one another. I know you guys know one another, but you're new to us. And, you may discover some situations you have in common with one another that you weren't aware of.*

- Ask students to stand in a large circle or in a line. Then, they should take a step forward if their answer is “yes” to a situation.
- *Take a step forward if you . . .*
  - *Have a pet.*
  - *You have at least one brother or sister.*
  - *Like to play sports.*
  - *Like video games.*
  - *Like to sing or dance.*
  - *Have a nickname.*
  - *Have ever gotten into an argument with a friend.*
  - *Have ever been picked on or teased.*
  - *Have ever been unfriendly to another kid.*
  - *Have ever felt really happy.*
  - *Have ever felt really unhappy.*
- Along the way, ask students if they knew they had that in common with their classmate; they can tell you more about their classmate's situation if they're aware of details.
- Initiate reflections from group members with regard to asking them if they realized they had so much in common with one another, and surprising identifications among classmates.

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### C. Team-Building Exercise: Creative Coloring

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The next activity was design to increase cooperative play between small groups of children.

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**Creative Coloring** *Sometimes in life we must accept help from others or rely on our friends and family for help if we are to get it done well. Think about supertime or a big holiday dinner. (Jones, 1998) If one person tries to make dinner and clean up, there is a lot of work to be done and it's a hard task. But when a whole team of people pitch in and help, making dinner and cleaning can be done in no time. Each person is a part of the puzzle and can offer different talents to use in the mealtime process.*

*In this activity, each student will be a part of a team that can make a big project easy. Each student will contribute his or her own skills to create the big picture.*

- In each small group, give each student a different-colored marker, crayon, or colored pencil.
- Tell students that the color they have will be the only color they can use for the project.

*Your group must create a picture, using all the colors. Each student may only use his or her color. You are not allowed to share or trade. Work together to create a nice picture, with each student using only the crayon in your hand.*

(continued)



## Facilitating Student–Teacher and Student–Student Relationships—Class (page 3 of 3)

- **Modifications:**

- For smaller groups, each student may have more than one color.
- Rather than creating own picture, have the group color in a page from a coloring book.
- For added teamwork, ask the group to decide how to determine which color each person will use.

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### **D. Group Discussion: Challenges and Benefits to Working Together**

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Pose the following thought questions:

- *Was this a difficult project for the group? Why or why not?*
- *How did you work as a team to complete the project?*
- *How does everyone in the team feel about the picture that was created?*
- *Is it easier to do things on your own or with others?*
- *Why is it important to be able to work with and support others as members of a team?*

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### **E. Introduction to Well-Being Promotion Program**

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*We are going to be spending some time with your class over the next few months. In our time together, we'll talk about ways to feel happier by acting differently, including by supporting one another and noticing nice things about the people in our class, including our teachers and classmates. Each meeting, we look forward to hearing about the ways that working together and treating one another kindly has made you feel. Your teacher is also going to point out (and tell us about) times where you have treated one another particularly nicely, or worked together successfully. Scientists know that happier people are especially close to many people; happy people's close friends include people in their school, like classmates and teachers, and people at home, like parents and brothers and sisters. So it's important to us that you care for one another, and let others know about that care.*

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## TEACHER HANDOUT

# Overview of Program Activities

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

*What is positive psychology?*

- The study of factors and traits that make people thrive. Positive psychology emphasizes the presence of positive indicators of mental health, such as personal happiness.

*Why are we trying to make your students happier?*

- Happier kids earn better grades, perform better on standardized tests, have more positive attitudes toward school and learning, have better social relationships, are physically healthier, and have fewer symptoms of mental health problems like depression and anxiety.

*Why are we working with your students? Or some students in particular?*

- If we are working with your entire class, we would like all of your students to participate in this universal wellness initiative because we expect they will experience an increase in happiness due to taking part in the Well-Being Promotion Program.
- If we are working with a subset of your class, we have invited students to participate based on their responses on the short survey of life satisfaction that all students recently completed. The selected students' responses indicated that they are less than completely satisfied with life. They are eligible to take part in the Well-Being Promotion Program that is intended to increase students' happiness, including from "pleased" to "delighted" with life. We would like them to participate because we expect they will experience an increase in happiness due to taking part in the Well-Being Promotion Program.

*What does the Well-Being Promotion Program include?*

- The program consists of meetings between school mental health providers and students. A schedule of what your students will be focusing on with their counselor:
  - Meeting 1: Building Strong Student–Teacher Relationships
  - Meeting 2: Getting to Know Students in the Class (Student Team Building)
  - Meeting 3: You at Your Best (Happiness Introduction)
  - Meeting 4: Gratitude Journaling
  - Meeting 5: Gratitude Visits
  - Meeting 6: Acts of Kindness
  - Meeting 7: Introduction to Character Strengths
  - Meeting 8: Assessment of Character Strengths
  - Meeting 9: Using First Signature Strength in New Ways
  - Meeting 10: Using Second Signature Strength in New Ways
  - Meeting 11: Program Review

Your class's program leader (or student's counselor) is: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

Your class or student will typically meet with the leader/counselor on: \_\_\_\_\_

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## WELL-BEING PROMOTION PROGRAM

### Building Strong Student–Teacher Relationships

Students' perceptions of social support from teachers reflect how much students feel respected, cared for, and valued by their teachers. Happier students report greater social support. *Emotional support* and *instrumental support* are the aspects of teacher support most highly related to students' happiness. **Emotional support** = students' perceptions of how often teachers care about them, treat them fairly, and make it OK to ask questions. **Instrumental support** = how much students perceive teachers make sure students have what they need for school, take time to help them learn to do something well, and spend time with them when they need help.

Sometimes, students and adults have different ideas about what types of adult actions are supportive. For example, children may focus on tangible goods as “proof” of care, whereas adults go out of their way to keep children safe (actions that may go unnoticed to children). When researchers\* interview children about what support from teachers “looks like,” many children report the same ideas, suggesting some strategies teachers may want to consider in an effort to promote positive student–teacher relationships:

- *Communicate care for well-being* through:
  - Asking personal questions (e.g., asking a withdrawn student if everything is OK).
  - Being pleasant and/or respectful.
  - Allowing free time during the day.
  - Giving candy.
- *Utilize best teaching practices* through:
  - Showing concern for both the individual student's and the entire class's understanding of academic material, then providing additional learning experiences as needed.
  - Using diverse teaching strategies, especially those consistent with a child's preferred method of learning.
- *Show explicit interest in students' academic achievement* through:
  - Recognizing student accomplishments.
  - Helping students to improve grades.
  - Providing rewards for good academic performance.
  - Explaining errors made on assignments.
  - Ensuring academic workload can be completed in a reasonable amount of time.
- *Show equity of support* through:
  - Appearing objective in your approach to (1) selecting students to participate in class, and (2) providing rewards to students.
  - Explicitly stating intent to treat all students the same.
  - Disciplining students by taking time to correctly identify the wrongdoer, rather than punishing the entire class.

(continued)

\*The findings reported in this handout are based on research conducted by school psychologists at the University of South Florida, as reported in Suldo, S. M., Friedrich, A. A., White, T., Farmer, J., Minch, D., & Michalowski, J. (2009). Teacher support and adolescents' subjective well-being: A mixed-methods investigation. *School Psychology Review*, 38, 67–85.

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**Building Strong Student–Teacher Relationships** (page 2 of 2)

- *Make students feel comfortable asking questions* through:
  - Creating a physical and emotional classroom environment in which questions appear to be encouraged—for example, through the use of posters, “question boxes” where students can privately place questions for later answer, and so on.
  - Creating a supportive emotional environment by responding positively to questions and appreciating students’ interest in learning answers.
  - Creating a logistical arrangement by providing permission, time, and diverse mechanisms for students to pose questions.

Research suggests that boys differ from girls in their views of which teacher behaviors communicate care.

<p><b>For GIRLS, teacher actions noted most as showing care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking actions to help students improve their moods.</li> <li>• Expressing an interest in students’ well-being.</li> <li>• Sharing their personal experiences with students.</li> <li>• Having contact with students outside of class.</li> <li>• Taking an interest in students’ academic progress.</li> <li>• Use of varied teaching strategies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>For BOYS, teacher acts noted most as showing care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving students rewards (e.g., candy, free time, treats).</li> <li>• Helping students improve their grades.</li> <li>• Explicitly stating permission to ask questions.</li> <li>• Responding to questions in a positive manner.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What NOT to do for girls? GIRLS appear especially sensitive to feeling low support when they perceive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A negative emotional environment.</li> <li>• Negative responses to students’ questions.</li> <li>• Strict grading policies.</li> <li>• Setting firm rules and expectations.</li> <li>• Insufficient assistance for learning.</li> </ul>	<p><b>What NOT to do for boys? BOYS appear particularly sensitive to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers assigning an overwhelming workload.</li> </ul>

## Supplemental Parent Information Session

<b>PSYCHOEDUCATION FOR PARENTS</b>		<i>Supplemental Session: Parent</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish rapport with parents.</li> <li>• Introduce parents to the field of positive psychology and key constructs.</li> <li>• Introduce parents to the content of student intervention.</li> <li>• Address questions and clarify misconceptions (as needed).</li> </ul>	
<b>Overview of Procedures</b>	A. Brief Presentation: Positive Psychology and Key Targets in Intervention B. Clarify Purpose of the Group C. Provide Overview of Student-Focused Intervention	
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer, projector, and screen for presentation</li> <li>• Parent handout: <i>Overview of Program Activities and Positive Psychology</i></li> </ul>	

### Procedures Defined

#### **A. Brief Presentation: Positive Psychology and Key Targets in Intervention**

Welcome the parents and note who is in attendance. Once all have arrived, give parents a copy of the parent handout and thank them for attending the informational session. Introduce self and other group leaders to parents before beginning the presentation.

*To give you a better understanding of the kinds of concepts and activities that your children will be learning and engaging in throughout participation in the Well-Being Promotion Program, we will first share with you information related to the field the program is based upon: positive psychology.*

Deliver the PowerPoint presentation that you prepared in advance. Presentation goals:

- Communicate the importance of parents' and children's happiness.
- Introduce positive psychology and define key targets.
- Explain what positive psychology interventions are, then demonstrate by leading the parents to complete one (e.g., gratitude journaling, acts of kindness planning, savoring).
- Encourage parents to complete the weekly exercises at home along with their child.
- Outline the positive psychology targets their child will focus on each week in the group.

As a summary of the presentation content, for parent reference after the informational meeting, distribute the *Overview of Positive Psychology and Program Activities* handout.

\*\*\*If presentation equipment is unavailable, consider allowing parents to reference the handout through the discussion (rather than focus on a presentation screen). Use the handout as an outline and guide for the discussion; the goals for the discussion remain the same as above.\*\*\*

Throughout presentation and once completed, provide opportunities for parents to pose questions.

#### **B. Clarify Purpose of the Group**

Ensure that parents understand that their child has been asked to participate in the group in order to maximize happiness and overall well-being, not because he or she has been identified as mentally ill, for instance, with elevated levels of depression or other problems. Sample script:

*(continued)*

## Supplemental Parent Information Session (page 2 of 2)

*Optimal well-being involves being happy (satisfied with life) in addition to not having mental health problems. We have asked your child to participate in the group program in order to maximize his or her happiness, not because of mental health problems. Research tells us that we all have genetically set ranges of happiness, and the key to increasing happiness within our range is through purposeful activities. The purpose of the weekly group is to increase your child's happiness to the top of his or her possible range by talking about key concepts we covered in the presentation, and doing exercises focused on those targets, such as gratitude, character strengths, optimism, and hope.*

### **C. Provide Overview of Student-Focused Intervention**

Describe the main components of the Well-Being Promotion Program. Sample script:

*The happiness-increasing interventions we will teach your children will be taught in a small-group format, with roughly six to seven students per group, as well as one group leader and a co-facilitator. All leaders are trained in the program and are mental health practitioners or trainees. For example, I am a school psychologist [school social worker, counselor] here at the school. Your child and other students in the group will meet once weekly during one period of the school day, for 10 weeks. Additionally, once the program ends, your children will attend once-monthly check-in meetings to review skills learned in the program. These check-ins will also occur during one period of the school day, for 2–3 months. The weekly meetings will include leader-guided group discussions and activities. Students will also be assigned homework at the end of each meeting, intended to provide more practice with concepts and skills learned.*

*In order to keep you apprised of what your children are learning, each week you will receive a handout via e-mail or a hard copy that will be sent home with your child. The handout of the week will provide an overview of the skills learned and types of activities performed that week in the student meetings, as well as tell you the homework tasks assigned. It will also provide suggestions for things you can do and talk about at home to help your children further acquire the skills taught in the group meetings.*

*Regarding the focus of the meetings, the main goal of the first is to establish a positive group environment and introduce the students to the program. The second and third meetings focus on gratitude and include activities such as students writing about things they're grateful for and expressing thanks to people who have been kind to them in the past. The fourth meeting focuses on acts of kindness and includes activities such as increasing the frequency of performing kind acts. The fifth, sixth, and seventh meetings focus mainly on identifying and using one's character strengths. These meetings include activities such as identifying perceived strengths, objectively identifying them through completing a survey, and using strengths in new ways. Also, the seventh meeting teaches students how to savor positive experiences. The eighth meeting focuses on optimism and includes an activity that teaches students to think optimistically. The ninth meeting focuses on hope and includes an activity in which students write about their best possible selves in the future, including their personal goals and paths to attaining these goals. The tenth and final meeting includes a review of the program, including activities and skills learned in the program. The check-in meetings also review the skills and concepts learned in addition to reviewing students' progress and experiences since the conclusion of the program, and provide an opportunity to rehearse specific activities they learned through participating in the program.*

Encourage parents to ask questions about the intervention. Provide more details about the scheduling logistics or intervention content as necessary to address questions.

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## PARENT HANDOUT

# Overview of Program Activities and Positive Psychology

\*\*\*Consider and Discuss\*\*\*

- *What do you hope your child will gain from the Well-Being Promotion Program?*

### Why Parents' Happiness Is Crucial to Children's Happiness

- Research has demonstrated that youth's happiness ratings are correlated, or have a positive relationship with, parents' happiness ratings.
  - As parents' life satisfaction increases, so does their child's.
  - Reciprocal relationship: your child's level of life satisfaction may influence yours too.
- Research has found numerous benefits of happiness, including better physical health, academic and occupational success, and rewarding social relationships.

\*\*\*Consider and Discuss\*\*\*

- *What is your understanding of "positive psychology"? What have you heard before?*

### Key Features of Positive Psychology

- The study of factors and traits that make people thrive.
- Positive psychology gained in popularity in the last 15 years, and grew out of discontent with a focus on mental health problems.
- Emphasizes both the absence of mental health problems and the presence of well-being.

### Key Terms in Positive Psychology

- **Subjective well-being:** A scientific term for happiness, and common indicator of wellness. Often the primary outcome of interventions designed to improve happiness. High subjective well-being reflects high life satisfaction (judging your life to be going well on the whole), and experiencing more positive emotions than negative emotions.
- **Gratitude:** A tendency to appreciate positive aspects of life, feel grateful for positive things in life, and convey thankfulness and appreciate others. Crucial to making and maintaining positive relationships with others.
- **Kindness:** A character strength involving motivation to act kindly toward others, to follow through on plans to be kind, and to recognize kindness in others. Acts of kindness, or behaving in ways that benefit others or make them happy at personal expense, have been shown to cause increases in happy moods and life satisfaction.
- **Character strengths:** Set of 24 individual positive traits within six broader classes of virtues. Each person has a unique profile of strengths and signature strengths, which are traits most frequently used and appreciated in one's life. Research has shown that using signature strengths in everyday life can improve overall subjective well-being.
- **Savoring:** Focusing on and enjoying past, present, and/or future positive events. Savoring involves anticipation, reminiscing, and prolonging the enjoyable moment. It can be increased through behavioral, social, and cognitive strategies. Linked to higher subjective well-being.

(continued)

## Overview of Program Activities and Positive Psychology (page 2 of 2)

- **Optimism:** A tendency to expect positive outcomes and emphasize the positive aspects of situations. Also refers to viewing positive situations as widespread and due to personal factors, while crediting negative events to temporary and external factors. Related to the prevention and reduction of mental health problems, as well as better school adjustment and resilience.
- **Hope:** A positive motivational state involving goal-directed thoughts and strategies, and paths to achieving goals. Linked to positive mental health and well-being.

### What Are “Positive Psychology Interventions”?

- Brief, easy, often self-administered exercises designed to mimic the actions and thoughts of naturally very happy people.
- These exercises have emerged within the last decade, and are growing in popularity in line with increasing evidence that they work to increase subjective well-being as intended.
- Positive psychology interventions for children and teens have targeted gratitude, character strengths, kindness, optimism, and hope.
- Overall, research on these interventions has found positive results, including increases in life satisfaction and improved mood.

#### \*\*\*Activity: “Sweet Savoring”\*\*\*

- *Instructions:* For the next 2–3 minutes, think about an enjoyable experience you have had, either recently or in the past.
- *Do:* Take a minute to close your eyes; think about your experience during that situation and the good feelings you had then.
  - Use your senses—consider sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste.
  - Remember and relive the experience . . .
- *Share:* Pair up and spend a few minutes talking with your partner about your experience.
- *Reflect:* What feelings did you have with completing this activity? Feelings when reliving the experience in your thoughts? Feeling when sharing (reminiscing) with another adult?

### Additional Thoughts

- When your child shares with you the strategies he or she is learning through the program, and you practice them too (either independently or with your child), you may cause even greater improvements in well-being for both of you.
- Visit [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org) or [www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org) to learn more about ways to maximize your well-being.

### What Does the Well-Being Promotion Program Include?

- The program consists of meetings between school mental health providers and students.
- A schedule of what your child will be focusing on in each meeting:
  - Meeting 1: Introduction to Program (“You at Your Best” activity)
  - Meeting 2: Gratitude Journaling
  - Meeting 3: Gratitude Visits
  - Meeting 4: Acts of Kindness
  - Meeting 5: Introduction to Character Strengths
  - Meeting 6: Identifying Signature Strengths
  - Meeting 7: Using Signature Strengths in New Ways
  - Meeting 8: Optimistic Thinking
  - Meeting 9: Hope and Goal-Directed Thinking
  - Meeting 10: Program Review
  - Follow-Up Meetings (Program Review, Focus on specific exercises)