

Enhancing well-being and alleviating depressive symptoms with positive psychology interventions: A practice-friendly meta-analysis

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Abstract: Do positive psychology interventions - that is, treatment methods or intentional activities aimed at cultivating positive feelings, positive behaviors, or positive cognitions - enhance well-being and ameliorate depressive symptoms? A meta-analysis of 51 such interventions with 4,266 individuals was conducted to address this question and to provide practical guidance to clinicians. The results revealed that positive psychology interventions do indeed significantly enhance well-being (mean $r=.29$) and decrease depressive symptoms (mean $r=.31$). In addition, several factors were found to impact the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions, including the depression status, self-selection, and age of participants, as well as the format and duration of the interventions. Accordingly, clinicians should be encouraged to incorporate positive psychology techniques into their clinical work, particularly for treating clients who are depressed, relatively older, or highly motivated to improve. Our findings also suggest that clinicians would do well to deliver positive psychology interventions as individual (versus group) therapy and for relatively longer periods of time. © 2009 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

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