Positive Psychology in Practice:

Can the subjective well-being of adults living in a socially deprived community be increased?
With thanks to:-

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Joe Williamson, MPhil
Director, Wellhouse Housing Association

With thanks to:-

Cheryl Rees          Dr. David Sheffield

Cara Fleming
Can well-being be increased & sustained?

- Fordyce
- Emmons & McCullough
- Seligman
- Fredrickson
- Lyubomirsky
Can well-being be increased & sustained?

Let’s stretch the boundaries of PP in practice

Can PP be embraced by & make a difference to adults in a socially deprived community?
Wellhouse: facts & figures....

- 1,030 homes, approx 2,500 tenants
- **66%** households **dependent** on benefits
  - 55% full benefit, 11% partial

**Weekly income** (as of 2006, presently slightly improved):-
- 29% on < £100
- 43% on £100-£150
- 13% on > £250
Wellhouse: facts & figures....

- 98% white, British ethnic group

- Wellhouse is 12th most deprived community of the 6,505 data zones in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD, 2006)
Wellhouse Housing Association (WHA)

- Established a Trust, 2003
  - recognition of need to regenerate housing & community
- 13 local members on WHA committee
- Revenue from tenants rents pumped back into house repairs/new housing/community regeneration & welfare
- Opened ‘the hub’, 2004
Birth of Wellhouse intervention!

Co-operating with Joe Williamson, Director, Wellhouse Housing Association, I design an intervention

Advisory team streamlines initial proposal

(Prof. Phil Hanlon, Dr. Carol Tannahill, Dr Carol Craig)

Thus “Have a Word with Yourself” project was created
“Have a word with yourself” Community-Based Pilot

Screening baseline
(n=65, 57 retained)

Intervention (AAB design)
(Initial screening acts as baseline control)

Measures:
- Community services use
- SWB measures
- Depression
- Life Events

3 good things/gratitude (mth)
pre/post SWB, depression, post-intervention evaluation
(n=52 @ pre & 50 @ post)

Follow-ups @ 3 & 6mths
SWB/dep’/screen measures, sub-sample interviewed

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Recruitment, Participants, Procedure

- Leaflet drop/doorstep/‘the hub’ drop-ins
- Aged 18-90, 52f/13m m46.8 (from initial 65)
- Researcher present in participants home for completion of all questionnaires
- Contacted by researcher during 4week intervention an average of 7.24 times (phone)
Wellhouse interventions: the details

*First,*
- 3 good things
  - reflect on & record each night for 14 days

*Followed by,*
- Gratitude reflection
  - Two 7day periods of reflection
  - @ end of each 7day period asked to write down what felt grateful/thankful for
- researcher requests visual check that writing took place
Hypotheses & tests......

Would.....

- Intervention be associated with **changes** in well-being? (pre-post)
- Intervention be associated with **greater changes** in measures than would **normally be expected**? (screening-pre)

Thus.....

- ANOVA to look for global differences across 3 time points
- T-tests to examine if there were differences across screening-pre-post measures
Results

Taking each well-being measure in turn let’s see what happened…….
**Satisfaction with Life**

- **Significant main effect of time**
  - Means ±SE - 18.1±1.0  18.9±1.1  20.3±1.0
  - F(2,48)=3.09, p=.050, eta-squared = .059

- However, no significant difference between screen & pre (t=.89, p>.1) or pre & post (t=1.54, p>.1)
Self-esteem

Effect of time approaching significance

- Means ±SE = 26.7±0.6  27.7±0.7  27.8±0.7
- F(2,48)=3.02, p=.053, eta-squared=.058 (medium effect)

- Significant difference between screen & pre (t=2.12, p=.039) but not between pre & post (t=0.12, p>.1)
Subjective Happiness  

No main effect of time

- Means ±SE = 4.34±0.19  4.44±0.21  4.52±0.21
- F(2,48)=1.11, p=.33, eta-squared=.022

No significant difference between screen & pre (t=.73, p>.1) or between pre-& post (t=.73, p>.1)
**Optimism - LOT-R, Scheier, Carver, Bridges**

**Significant main effect of time**
- Means ±SE = 11.1±0.6  11.2±0.7  12.5±0.6
- F(2,48)=5.12, p=.008, eta-squared=.095 (medium effect)

**No sig’ difference between screen & pre**
(t=0.12, p>.1) **but** was between pre & post
(t=2.89, p=.006; sig’ even after Bonferroni correction)

**Also sig’ difference between screen & post**
(t=2.74, p=.008; sig’ even after Bonferroni correction)
Significant main effect of time
- Means ±SE = 12.8±1.0  13.9±1.0  11.3±1.0
- F(2,48)=4.09, p=.020, eta-squared=.077 (medium effect)

No sig’ difference between screen & pre
(t=1.36, p>.1) but was between pre & post
(t=3.18, p=.003; sig even after Bonferroni correction)

But no sig’ difference between screen & post
(t=1.38, p>.1) (post measure was different from a mean of screen & pre (t=2.56, p=.01)
Initial conclusions.....

4 weeks of reflection on & writing about good things & what one feels grateful for decreased self-reported depressive symptoms & increased self-reported optimism....
Post study evaluation…

- Intervention rated useful/meaningful (rated 1-4 on 1-7 Likert Scale, 1 = most)

- 45% likely to continue thinking/writing
  - re-examine this @ 3 & 6mths

- 36.2% talked to others about experience on intervention

- 46.2% said thinking &/or behaviour had changed
Final comments….

Alignment with theory & previous findings?

Will effects hold for 3 & 6mths?

Content-analysis of interviews may point to processes of change

Sustainability & extend to other Wellhouse residents?
Thank you for listening

Your questions, reflections welcomed