


Promoting well-being via an internet intervention

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Overview

1. Background
 - Well-being
 - Internet Interventions
 2. Study Design
 3. Results
 4. What does it mean?
 5. Next steps
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Benefits of Well-being

- Numerous studies indicating the benefits of well-being
 - e.g. enhanced work productivity, social support , social interactions, prosocial behaviour; strengthened immune system, greater longevity, less stress...

(Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005)



Enhancing Well-being

- Less demonstrating whether well-being can be sustained or enhanced at a population level
 - e.g. practising gratitude, committing acts of kindness, visualising best possible future selves, processing positive life experiences

(Lyubomirsky, 2006; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005)



Early Australian Research

- Build on early Australian interventions
- E.g. “Must fool brain” intervention



MUST... FOOL...
BRAIN... INTO... BEING
... HAPPY...

I HEARD
THAT.

DAMMIT!

The Current Study

- Can well-being be enhanced via intentional activity?
- Can this type of well-being intervention be delivered via the web?



Health Promotion

- Aims to deliver efficacious, accessible, sustainable interventions
- Traditional delivery (e.g. Mass media or group programs in schools/work place/sport)
 - Not always accessible or sustainable
 - Often address general determinants of health
 - Behaviour change more likely to occur if targeted at individual (de Vries & Brug, 1999)

The Internet

- Has the potential to address these issues of efficacy, accessibility, sustainability & delivery at an individual level

(de Vries & Brug, 1999; Evers, 2006))



The Internet

➤ Household access

- 62% USA
- 60% Australia (9.1 million people)
- 60% UK
- ??% Croatia

(ABS, 2006; Evers, 2006; Fox, 2006)

Internet Interventions

Illness treatment & prevention

- E.g. anxiety
- depression
- panic disorder
- PTSD
- phobias
- OCD
- eating disorders
- encopresis
- tinnitus
- headaches

Health Behaviours

- E.g. physical activity
- nutrition / diet
- smoking cessation
- alcohol use

Wellness Promotion

- **1 online study**

Well-being Internet Intervention

Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson (2005)

- N = 577 adults
- Randomised placebo controlled trial
- Assessment x 6 (pre-, post-, 1-week, 1-month, 3-month, 6-month follow-up)
- 1-week intervention (5 active interventions, 1 placebo control)
- Measures:
 - Happiness (Steen Happiness Index)
 - Depression (CES-D)

Well-being Internet Intervention

1. Using signature strengths in a new way
2. Three good things (daily gratitude)
3. Gratitude visit
4. Identifying signature strengths
5. Identifying a time when you are at your best
6. Earliest memories (placebo control)


Increase in happiness and decrease in depression at:
post-, 1-week, 1-month, 3-month, 6-month follow-up

Well-being Internet Intervention

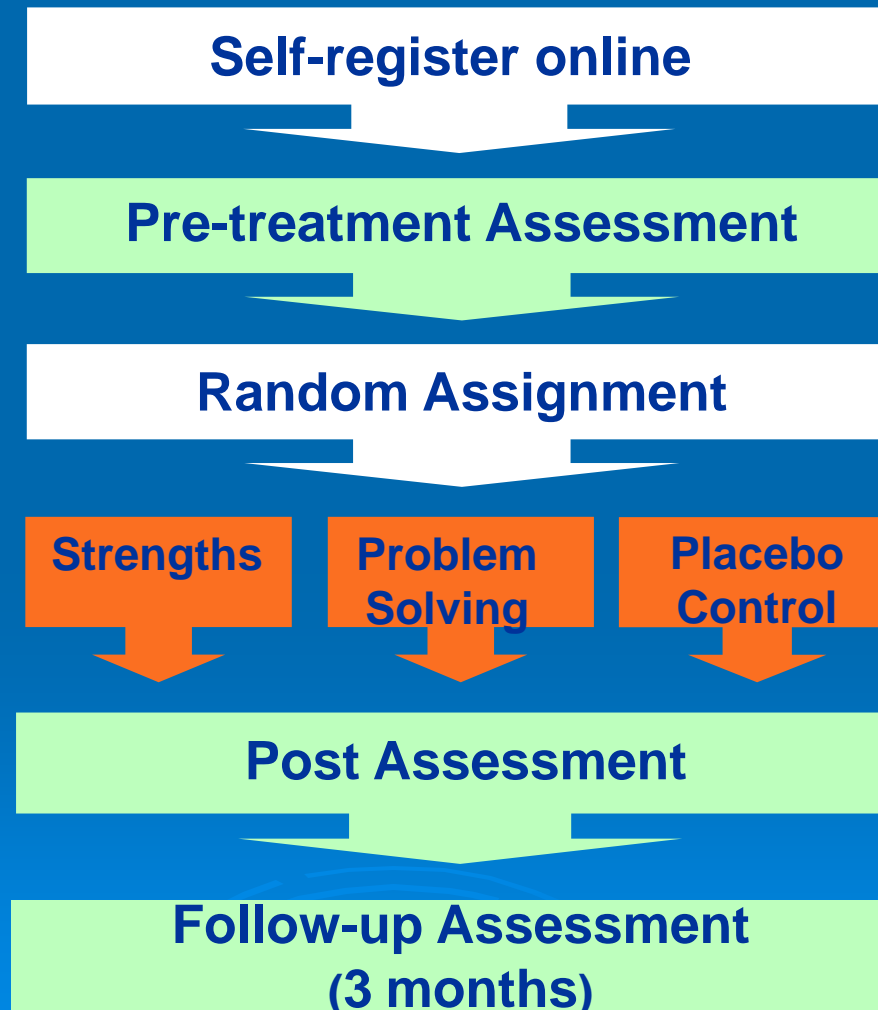
- Demonstrates the potential for Internet mental health promotion
- Limitations & Issues
 - Questionable 'Internet Intervention' (i.e. email of text based-instructions)
 - Confound – human contact



Aim & Design

- Develop and test the efficacy of a positive psychology Internet intervention to enhance the well-being of adult Australians
 - A randomised controlled trial
 - 3 (group) x 3 (time)
- 

Study Design



Measures

- **Satisfaction with Life Scale** (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffith, 1985)
- **Positive & Negative Affect Scale** (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988)
- **Personal Wellbeing Index** (International Wellbeing Group, 2006)
- **Depression Anxiety Stress Scale** (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)
- **Orientations to Happiness** (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005)

Groups

1. Strengths:

- Identify & use personal strengths (e.g. curiosity, gratitude)
- 3 self-guided sessions, 3 weeks
- Interactive, personalised information and activities
- Recommended offline activities/practice

2. Problem Solving:

- Identify & use personal problem solving skills (6-steps)
- Same format as strengths intervention

3. Placebo Control:

- Reading information about problem solving
- 3 self-guided sessions, 3 weeks

Strengths Intervention

- Example web pages



Identifying Strengths**Maximising Strengths****Reviewing Progress****Question 1: What skills or activities have you learned easily or enjoy doing?**

For example, playing the guitar, teaching, solving the sudoku, selling on ebay, being a parent, organising a dinner party, reading the financial section of the newspaper, playing tennis.

Question 2: What are you doing when you feel most comfortable and at ease with yourself?

For example, at home with my family, when I am writing my monthly work report, playing tennis, when I am painting, spending time with friends, going to a party, when I am helping others, walking the dog.

Question 3: What aspects of your life are you most proud of?

For example, my work team, my children, having good friends, maintaining a regular exercise routine, my charity work, getting a bonus from work, travelling overseas.

In the next section we will begin to classify and prioritise your signature strengths.

Remember, there is no correct answer to these questions! Just answer them as best you can. Once you have answered each of these questions you can move on to the next section



Identifying Strengths

Maximising Strengths

Reviewing Progress

1. Love of learning
2. Curiosity and interest in the world
3. Creativity, ingenuity, and originality
4. Appreciation of beauty & excellence
5. Gratitude
6. Capacity to love and be loved
7. Honesty, authenticity, and genuineness
8. Hope, optimism, and future-mindedness
9. Playfulness
10. Judgment, critical thinking, and open-mindedness
11. Perspective (wisdom)
12. Social intelligence
13. Fairness, equity, and justice
14. Kindness and generosity
15. Citizenship, teamwork, and loyalty
16. Forgiveness and mercy
17. Bravery
18. Industry, diligence, and perseverance
19. Modesty and humility
20. Leadership
21. Zest, enthusiasm, and energy
22. Self-control and self-regulation
23. Caution, prudence, and discretion
24. Spirituality, sense of purpose, and faith

Roll your mouse over any of the signature strengths to read a more detailed description of its meaning.

Using your mouse, click and drag the items to arrange them in the list, with those most like you at the top, and least like you at the bottom.

If you find it difficult to rank all 24 strengths, then just focus on the top 10 strengths as these are the ones will use in the next session.

Your answers will automatically save when you click the next button.



Identifying Strengths

Identifying Strengths
- Activity
Signature Strengths
Ranking strengths
- Activity
▶ Offline Activity
Conclusion

Maximising Strengths

Review
Step 1
Step 2
- Activity
Step 3
Strength Diary
Offline Activity
Conclusion

Reviewing Progress

Review
What next?
Conclusion
Questionnaires

Logoff

Well done! You have completed the first session. To help consolidate the work you have done online, we ask that you complete an offline activity prior to commencing the next session.

Offline Activity

Your offline activity is to ask a family member / friend if you can share what you have learnt from this session. Only share as much or as little information as you feel comfortable with. To get the conversation started you may want to ask them some questions like:

- What do they consider to be their own personal strengths?
- Which of the signature strengths are most relevant for them?
- What do they think are your personal strengths?
- How do you both use your strengths in your daily life?

Remember, to keep the conversation focused on strengths, not weaknesses!

[Click here](#) to view/print the Strength Table (with Signature Strengths explanations).

[Click here](#) to view/print your answers to the questions at the start of this session.



Identifying Strengths

Maximising Strengths

Reviewing Progress

On the next screen you will be asked to list two ways you can use and develop each of your chosen strengths further. You might choose to apply your strength to a challenge you are currently facing, or to a new activity. There are no right or wrong answers - just pick challenges/activities that fit well with you and use your signature strength.



Below is an *example* response for the Step 2 activity.

The ways that I will develop my strengths are:

Love of Learning

- Listen to my favourite weekend radio news program.
- Set aside dedicated time to do more research on a work project that is not going as well as I hoped.

Gratitude

- List 3 things that I am grateful for each week.
- Demonstrate appreciation if someone helps me at work or in my personal life.

The ability to love and be loved

- At the end of a phone call to my children, tell them that I love them.
- Accept compliments graciously.

Revisit the full list of [Signature Strengths](#) and their definitions.

Participant Characteristics (N=160)

Age	M=37 (SD=11.2) Range 18-62yrs
Sex	83% female
Employment	80% employed 16% students
Education	76% with tertiary degree
Marital status	57% married/defacto 33% single
Family	58% have children

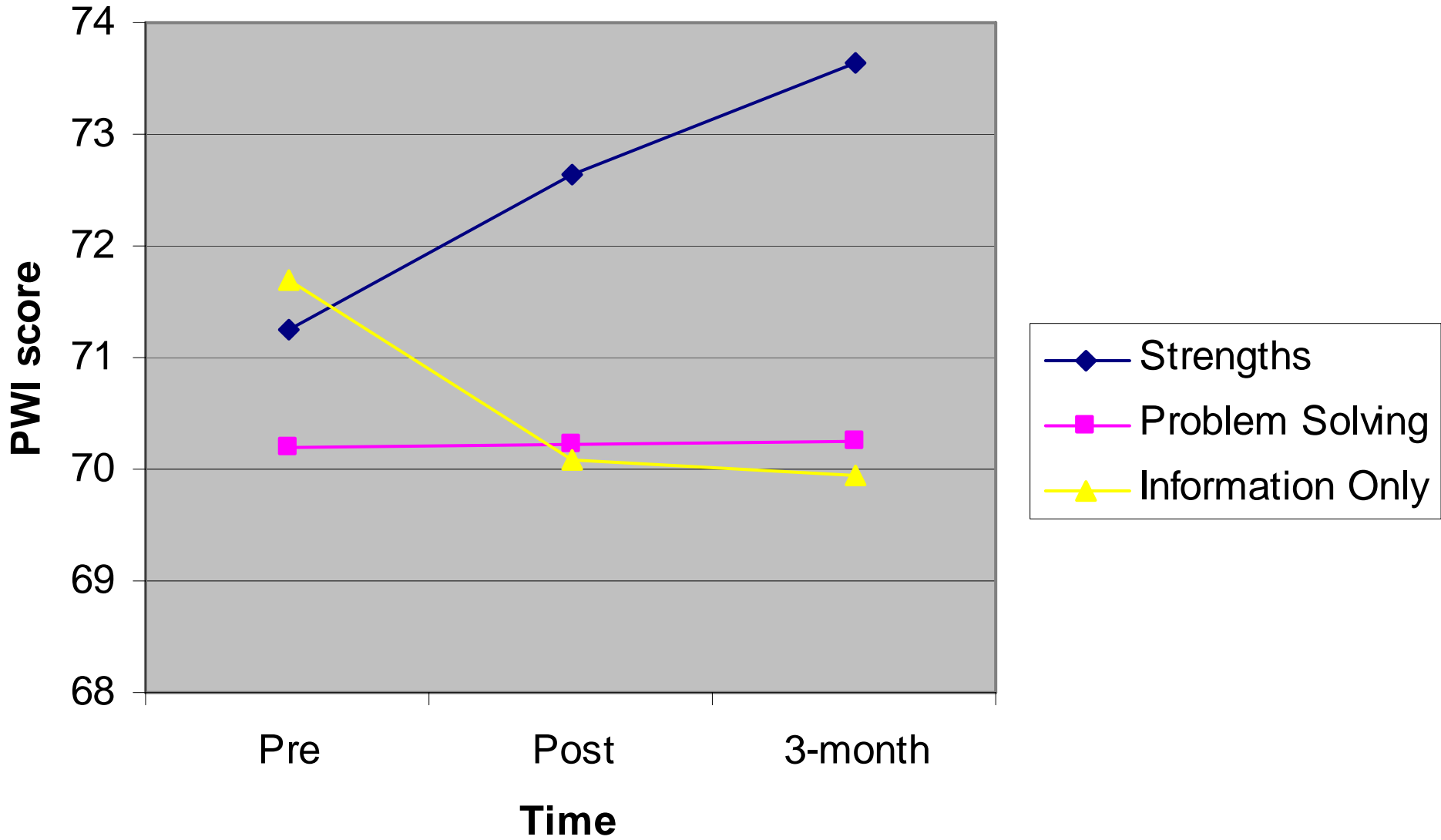
Study Results

- Intention to treat analysis (Gross & Fogg, 2004)
- Repeated measures MANOVAs & ANOVAs

PWI-A

- A significant interaction between group and time, Wilks Lambda = .93, $F(4, 312) = 2.81$, $p = .02$, partial eta squared = .03

Chart 1: Mean PWI-A score by group



SWLS & PANAS & DASS

- No significant change



What does it mean?

- The strengths intervention appears to increase the cognitive component of well-being (PWI-A) over time
- Replicates happiness results (Steen Happiness Index) of Seligman, Steen, Park & Petersen (2005)
- Why the PWI-A?
 - What do PANAS, SWLS & PWI-A measure?
 - Global vs domain specific
 - Or does the study just need more power?

What does it mean?

Depression, Anxiety, Stress (DASS):

- Does not replicate previous findings
- No difference with PS intervention either
- All low to start with (floor effect?)

Limitations

- Small sample size
- High attrition rate (83%)
- Measure of well-being (i.e. SWB not PWB or combined measure)

Summary

Enough evidence to warrant further investigation of internet interventions



What Next?

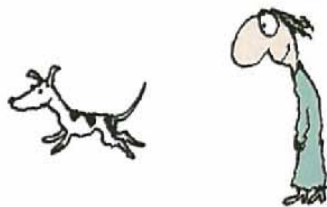
- Study 2
 - Strengths
 - Strengths plus e-coach
 - Mindfulness
- Factors that impact on attrition/adherence
e.g. human support via email
- Look at including PWB/SWB measures
 - E.g. 7-types of happiness

SEVEN
TYPES
of
ORDINARY
HAPPINESS

SECRET HAPPINESS
WHICH IS STEADY
BUT BEAUTIFULLY
DELICATE



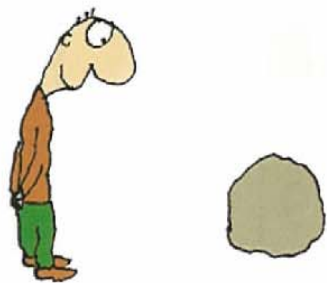
Three minutes of
happiness borrowed
from a dog.



TRADITIONAL
LYING DOWN
HAPPINESS



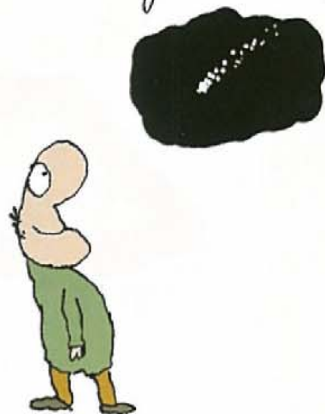
The happiness which
comes from staring
at a rock.



HAPPINESS BLENDED
WITH A MYSTERIOUS
SADNESS



The strange happiness
associated with seeing
a meteorite or
shooting star.



Diffuse, residual
happiness resulting
from rhythmic
domestic tasks such
as washing the dishes.



“To live is the rarest thing in the world.
Most people exist, that is all”

Oscar Wilde

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