

OPTIMISM

for PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Peer Support Australia gratefully acknowledges funding provided under the Australian Government National Suicide Prevention Program and the NSW Department of Health.

LIVING POSITIVELY

Optimism is living with a positive attitude. This enables us to lead meaningful lives with purpose and direction. We are living positively when we are grateful for everything we have, use our strengths and are engaged in activities.

Positive emotions include confidence, hope and optimism. These enable students to counter negative emotions, resist depression during periods of stress, increase concentration, focus on work output and improve physical health. Positive emotions provide an element of perspective when reflecting on past experiences, an enjoyment of the present and a sense of possibility when projected forward.

Living Positively focuses on developing the skills and knowledge for students to approach life with a positive attitude. It encourages students to use their strengths, engage in a range of enjoyable activities and show gratitude to others.

Students will be given opportunities to identify their personal strengths and how to take advantage of these strengths in order to feel happier and more fulfilled. The important strengths focused on throughout the module are curiosity, kindness and teamwork.

"If we remember our strengths, persevere, use positive self-talk and participate in activities we can live positively." - Peer Support Australia, 2009

According to Positive Psychology, the forms of happiness gained through engagement and meaning are of lasting benefit. Martin Seligman (2002) suggests one way of becoming engaged more often

during our lives is to identify and regularly use our particular strengths.

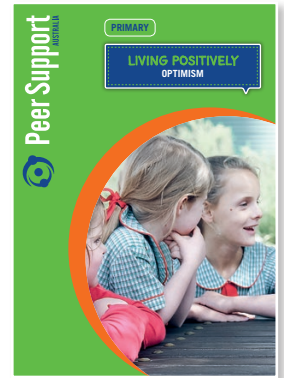
The happiness which endures longest is that which has been created through altruism and service. Service for the benefit of others provides a lasting feeling of wellbeing which is increased by subsequent experience. This can be further enhanced with gratitude. The process of expressing genuine gratitude to others provides mutual benefit and generates positive feelings in both the giver and the recipient.

Students will work with a model to assist them in developing the skills of optimism:

I LAUGH: Activities I enjoy
I LIVE: My strengths
I LOVE: Showing appreciation

Living Positively develops skills in:

- Resilience
- Coping
- Critical thinking
- Planning



What is covered in the eight peer led sessions?

- Session 1: Knowing Our Group
- Session 2: Having Fun
- Session 3: My Strengths
- Session 4: Developing My Strengths
- Session 5: Trying Our Best
- Session 6: Taking Steps
- Session 7: A Big Thanks
- Session 8: A Positive Way

Living Positively helps students:

- Identify and use individual strengths
- Enjoy life by engaging in activities
- Practise positive self talk
- Develop coping strategies
- Demonstrate perseverance
- Work towards their goals
- Develop resilience
- Demonstrate gratitude

Module Updated: 2009



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