A Sampler of Strengths-Based Implementation and Facilitation Strategies in Recreation Therapy/Therapeutic Recreation

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Overview

• Introduction to strengths-based practice
• Principles of strengths-based practice
• A sampler of strengths-based interventions:
  • Assess your strengths with the VIA
  • Savoring scavenger hunt
  • Three good things
  • ROM Dance
  • Loving kindness meditation
  • The “ta-da” list
  • Gratitude letter
  • Joy/passion portfolio
• Application to your RT/TR practice
• Other ideas, comments, and questions
Learning Outcomes

• Identify principles that guide the implementation of strengths-based practice (using Flourishing through Leisure Model as a framework)

• Identify and engage in eight evidence-based strategies that utilize a strengths approach

• Identify at least three new ways to infuse strengths-based strategies into practice in therapeutic recreation/recreation therapy
Poll Question #1

In which area of TR/RT do you primarily work?

- Acute health care
- Community-based services
- Higher education
- Long-term care
- Mental health
- Physical rehabilitation
- Schools
- Other
Poll Question #2

In which province do you live?

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Nova Scotia
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
Poll Question #3

Are you certified through NCTRC?

- Yes
- No
- In process of becoming certified
A “Sea Change” in Health and Human Services
Paradigm Shifts .... Sea Changes

• From deficits ..... to capabilities

• From problems ..... to goals and aspirations, to people asking for help with certain aspects of their lives to reach their dreams

• From isolated, clinic-based intervention ... to contextualized, in situ learning in the community
Paradigm Shifts .... Sea Changes

• From absence of illness.... to high quality of life and well-being

• From expert-centered .... to person-centered

• From separate, segregated services ... to inclusion with others

• From passive recipients of services .... to self advocacy and education

• From the medical model .... to a capability-based, holistic, ecological model
## Comparing the two approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deficits Approach</th>
<th>Strengths Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on problems and weaknesses; strengths are just tools to help fix the person</td>
<td>Focus is on internal and external strengths as avenues to a high quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant is viewed as a problem needing to be fixed</td>
<td>Participant is viewed as potential waiting to be developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A framework and vocabulary is developed to describe problems</td>
<td>A framework and vocabulary is developed to describe strengths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing the two approaches

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deficits Approach</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Understanding problems may or may not lead to solutions for a person, but will lead to greater understanding of the problem</td>
<td>• Understanding strengths leads to understanding solutions and creative ways to improve a person’s life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus is narrower, and mostly on remediation of deficits in the person</td>
<td>• Focus is on the whole person in the context of his or her life</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Principles of the strengths approach

Every individual, group, family, and community has strengths

We do not know the upper limits of a participant’s capacity to grow, change, and achieve – never assume we do!
Principles of the strengths approach

Difficulties (illness, disability, addiction, etc.) are also sources of opportunity and challenge
Principles of the strengths approach

Collaboration (not expert domination) with participants

Every environment is full of resources

Context matters
Principles of the strengths approach

Hopefulness matters

Strengths can be nurtured (thus, must be assessed, planned, focused on, and evaluated)
A Sampler of Strengths-Based Strategies

1. Assess your strengths with the VIA
2. Savoring scavenger hunt
3. Three good things
4. ROM Dance
5. Loving kindness meditation
6. The “ta-da” list
7. Gratitude letter
8. Joy/passion portfolio
Intervention #1
Assess your character strengths and virtues!

Values in Action (VIA) Signature Strengths Questionnaire

http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/
Values in Action
Signature Strengths Questionnaire

- Measures character strengths and virtues
- 24-item short form
- Long form online

6 Core Virtues and 24 Character Strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WISDOM</th>
<th>COURAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Curiosity</td>
<td>• Valor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Love of learning</td>
<td>• Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Judgment</td>
<td>• Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ingenuity</td>
<td>• Zest and vitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HUMANITY</th>
<th>JUSTICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Kindness</td>
<td>• Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loving</td>
<td>• Fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social intelligence</td>
<td>• Leadership</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>TEMPERANCE</th>
<th>TRANSCENDENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Self-control</td>
<td>• Appreciation of beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prudence</td>
<td>• Gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Humility</td>
<td>• Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forgiveness</td>
<td>• Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Humor</td>
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</table>

(Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/
What the Research Says

• Increased use of signature strengths leads to...
  – Increased life satisfaction
  – Increased happiness
  – Decreased depression
  – Increased engagement and hope
  – Increased involvement in life passions
  – More positive relationships
  – Increased progress toward life goals
  – And more...

Seligman (2005)
Intervention #2
Savoring

Relishing Life
Savor in three time frames

- Reminiscing about the past
- Savoring the present moment
- Anticipating the future
Savoring Scavenger Hunt

• Fill all three boxes (luxuriating, basking, marveling)

• For each box, list:
  1. What you did
  2. How you felt
What the Research Says

• Stronger relationships
• Improved mental and physical health
• Finding more creative solutions to problems
• More enjoyment, pleasure and positive emotion in daily life
• High life satisfaction

Bryant & Veroff (2006)
Intervention #3
3 Good Things

good things happen everyday.
3 Good Things

Write down three things that went well in the last week, and explain why they went well.

1. Give the event a title.
2. Write down exactly what happened in as much detail as possible.
3. Include how this event made you feel at the time and how this event made you feel afterward.

*Use whatever writing style suits you.*

*Don’t worry about perfect grammar and spelling.*
What the research says

Taking in the good...

• Provides positive emotion in the moment
• Supports stronger immune and cardiovascular systems
• Increases optimism, resilience, and resourcefulness
• Rights the negative bias of the brain and counteracts the effects of painful experiences

Fredrickson (2009)

Good feelings today increase the likelihood of good feelings tomorrow.

~ Rick Hanson
Intervention #4
Goals of the ROM Dance

• Increase frequency and enjoyment in daily exercise
• Increase range of motion in all body joints
• Enhance ability to cope with stress and pain through relaxation techniques
• Provide forum for group interaction
• Improve body awareness
• Promote an experience of well-being
Principles of the ROM Dance

• Attention to the present
• Diaphragmatic breathing
• Postural alignment
• Awareness of movement
• Slow movement
• Relaxed movement
• Imagination
I am sitting on my chair at a quiet beach. The sun is shining brightly.
Waves lap at my feet as they dangle in the water.
3 to 42
What the research says

ROM Dance
• Increased range of motion
• Pain management
• Reduced perceived stress and enhanced relaxation
• Increased perceived enjoyment

– Van Duesen & Harlowe (1987)
ROM Dance Certification

• [http://taichihealth.com/?page_id=106](http://taichihealth.com/?page_id=106)

• Competency video plus written test

• Fee is $100
Intervention #5
Loving Kindness Meditation
Loving Kindness Meditation

Four wishes

🌱 May you feel safe.
🌱 May you feel happy.
🌱 May you feel healthy.
🌱 May you live with ease.

http://positivityresonance.com/meditations.html
What the Research Says

- Increased love
- Increased engagement
- Increased serenity
- Increased joy
- Increased amusement
- More positive interactions and connections with others

Fredrickson (2013)
Intervention #6
Make a “To-Do” “Ta-Da” List
Upward Spiral Theory of Lifestyle Change

What the Research Says

Positive emotions create nonconscious and increasing motives for wellness behavior
Resources moderate the positive emotion yield of wellness behaviors.
“Ta-Da” List!

Today’s Date:

________________________________________
Intervention #7
Gratitude Letter

Write a letter to someone you never properly thanked for helping you develop your leisure identity. Deliver it in person. Read it out loud.
What the research says

1. Grateful thinking promotes the savoring of positive experiences
2. Expressing gratitude bolsters self-worth and self-esteem
3. Gratitude helps people cope with stress and trauma
4. Expressing gratitude encourages moral behavior
5. Gratitude builds social bonds
6. Gratitude tends to inhibit comparisons with others
7. Practicing gratitude is incompatible with negative emotions
8. Gratitude helps thwart “hedonic adaptation”

Lyubomirsky (2007)
Intervention #8
Positive Emotions from Passions

- Joy
- Gratitude
- Serenity
- Interest
- Hope
- Pride
- Amusement
- Inspiration
- Awe
- Love
Tips for Creating and Using a Passion Portfolio

1. Be sincere. Let your positivity and passions be heartfelt and authentic, not forced.

2. Create depth within your portfolio. Include multiple artifacts that reflect your passions.

3. Let your portfolio evolve over time. Keep adding to it.

4. Always keep your portfolio at hand.

5. Pull out your portfolio when you feel the tug of a downward spiral.

6. Engage with your portfolio mindfully, with an open heart.


8. Ask, “What could I do right now to cultivate this passion?”
What the Research Says

- Positivity feels good
- Positivity broadens the mind
- Positivity builds resources
- Positivity fuels resilience
- Positivity forecasts flourishing
- You can purposefully raise your positivity to reap these benefits

– Fredrickson (2009; 2013)
Questions and Discussion

You’ve participated in several activities designed to promote well-being:

- Assess your strengths with the VIA
- Savoring scavenger hunt
- Three good things
- ROM Dance
- Loving kindness meditation
- The “ta-da” list
- Gratitude letter
- Joy/passion portfolio

How could you use them in your TR practice?
A wonderful resource!

• Greater Good in Action website (http://ggia.berkeley.edu/)
References

• See additional webinar handout for complete reference list