South Central College

PSYC 140 Psychology of Positive Adjustment

Course Outcome Summary

Course Information

Description	The Psychology of Positive Adjustment introduces students to the scientific literature on positive adjustment to modern life. We will examine the questions: What is well-being and happiness? Who achieves it? Why does it elude some people? Which practices foster well-being and happiness? We will draw from the research in social psychology, neuroscience, personality psychology, cognitive psychology and sociocultural psychology. The course will incorporate the concepts of ethical living, values clarification, and civic responsibility as part of the mature development of psychological well-being. (MNTC 5: History/Social & Behavioral Sciences & MNTC 9: Ethical & Civic Responsibility) Prerequisite: Accuplacer Reading Comprehension Score of 78 or above or completion of READ90.
Total Credits	4

Pre/Corequisites

Accuplacer Reading Comprehension Score of 78 or above or completion of READ90

Institutional Core Competencies

Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility - Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to engage in the social responsibilities expected of a community member.

Communication - Students will be able to demonstrate appropriate and effective interactions with others to achieve their personal, academic, and professional objectives.

Course Competencies

1. **Demonstrate an understanding about how research is conducted and the goals of researchers in the field of adjustment psychology.**

   Learning Objectives
   Describe and compare the advantages and disadvantages of correlational and experimental research designs.
   Explain how experimenter and subject biases can distort research findings, and discuss solutions to these problems.
   Explain the informed consent, debriefing, and minimal risk guidelines for ethical research.
   Explain the goals of researchers whose field of interest is positive adjustment and how this differs from other fields of study in psychology.

2. **Explore the major perspectives which influence the field of positive psychology.**

   Learning Objectives

Describe and compare the major psychological perspectives: behavioral, cognitive, etc.
Describe and compare the differing focuses of major positive adjustment researchers from a variety of contributing specialties: social psychology, neuroscience, personality psychology, cognitive psychology and sociocultural psychology.

3.   Identify the characteristics of positive adjustment and factors contributing to poor adjustment.

Learning Objectives
Describe the personality characteristics contributing to positive adjustment.
Describe the habits of mind characteristic of positive as well as poor adjustment.
Develop skills to select and foster positive habits of mind.

4.   Explore the impact of stress: sources, physiological responses, socio-behavioral responses.

Learning Objectives
Describe the evolution of positive emotion and happiness and its relationship with stress.
Describe the physiological and mental impact of stress.
Describe the personality traits which provide some resiliency to stress.

5.   Demonstrate an understanding of the coping mechanisms/strategies contributing to effective stress management and positive life adjustment.

Learning Objectives
Describe traditional and nontraditional coping mechanisms which contribute to effective stress management.
Describe the psychology behind why coping mechanisms work.
Experiment and document a variety of stress relief strategies.
Develop skills in creating positive coping mechanisms/strategies which specifically work for the individual.

6.   Summarize the major life events which create challenges for most/all individuals.

Learning Objectives
Describe the major life events across the lifespan which create both positive and negative challenges for most/all individuals.
Describe the concepts of hardiness and niche-picking as they interact with life events.
Describe ecological theory elements which contribute to effective transitions.

7.   Articulate the importance of effective communication and social skills to positive adjustment.

Learning Objectives
Describe effective communication, both verbal and nonverbal.
Develop skill in effective communication.
Develop skill in problem appraisal.
Develop skill in communicating during times of conflict.
Describe nontraditional and cross-cultural forms of positive communication during conflict.

8.   Summarize the development of habitual patterns of response and thinking and the impact of habituated patterns on adjustment.

Learning Objectives
Describe how habitual patterns of response are developed and maintained.
Develop skill in observing self for habitual patterns of thought.
Develop skill in crafting and installing new behaviors which foster adjustment.
Recognize habitual cultural patterns of response taken by nations, regions, etc.
Recognize the influence of media on the development of habits of thought.

9.   Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of significant social relationships and love to positive adjustment.

Learning Objectives
Describe the types of love and recognize the significant connection between love and life adjustment.
Describe the types of healthy and unhealthy friendships and recognize their impact on personal positive adjustment.
Develop skills in finding and fostering positive social relationships.

10.   Explore the impact of career choice and work life to positive adjustment.

Learning Objectives
Describe various methods for making a positive career choice.
Recognize the importance of making a "right livelihood" to positive adjustment.
Describe niche-picking and goodness-of-fit as they relate to work environments.
Recognize the importance of healthy work environments, what creates a poor mental health environment and what creates a positive environment.
Develop skills in improving personal contributions to a positive work environment.

11. Exhibit an understanding of family systems and their impact on positive adjustment.

Learning Objectives
Describe family systems and the impact family-of-origin has on adjustment.
Recognize habitual family patterns which stunt positive growth.
Recognize habitual family patterns which foster positive growth.
Develop skill in empathic listening and assertiveness.
Develop a set of personal family patterns to aspire to and practice which will assure positive adjustment.

12. Articulate traditional and nontraditional techniques for cognitive reframing - the development of new, healthy mental patterns which foster positive adjustment.

Learning Objectives
Describe "framing" and "reframing" and their impact on adjustment.
Develop skill in reframing language for positive outcomes.

13. Explore the lifelong value of learned optimism.

Learning Objectives
Describe the scientific literature on learned optimism.
Describe the characteristics of the optimistic individual and self-evaluate against those characteristics.
Develop a plan to incorporate learned optimism into life.

14. Identify the impact that ethical decision-making and values clarification have on positive adjustment during the lifespan.

Learning Objectives
Describe the development of morality across the lifespan.
Describe the development of positive disintegration across the lifespan.
Describe the development of the fully self-actualized individual.
Increase self-awareness of personal values and levels of morality.
Reflect an appreciation for the importance of civic engagement to adjustment.
Describe problem-finding, and problem solving as they apply to ethical decision-making.
Increase self-awareness of the importance of a sense of meaning and purpose.

SCC Accessibility Statement

South Central College strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you have a disability and need accommodations for access to this class, contact the Academic Support Center to request and discuss accommodations.   North Mankato: Room B-132, (507) 389-7222;   Faribault: Room A-116, (507) 332-7222.

Additional information and forms can be found at: www.southcentral.edu/disability

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