



Presentation

Reuben Rusk: Saturday 6th June

Title of Presentation: Measuring and cultivating gratefulness with an online positive psychology intervention.

Presenter Name: Reuben Rusk

Abstract:

Interest in gratitude has grown rapidly over the last two decades, and a growing body of research in the field of positive psychology demonstrates its importance for well-being. This presentation will introduce the Grateful Functioning Scale (GFS-32), a new systems-based multifactorial scale developed to measure gratefulness. The GFS-32 integrates existing gratitude measurement instruments into a 32-item scale containing eight factors that reflect grateful functioning. These factors span five domains of psycho-social functioning: attention, cognition, emotion, habits, and relationships. Each factor will be briefly introduced to provide a comprehensive picture of grateful functioning.

The results of an online 3-week gratefulness intervention using this new scale will be presented. A community sample was recruited using flyers, social media, and snowball methodology. Participants came from New Zealand, Australia, the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. A full factorial design was used, with each participant given a set of five exercises. Each exercise was either one designed to cultivate gratefulness or a closely-worded exercise designed to cultivate psychological flow. Participants completed the five exercises four times between pre- and post-test questionnaires, and follow-up questionnaires were completed 1, 3 and 6 months after the completion of the exercises. Momentary ecological assessment was used to collect reported effects of the exercises during the intervention, providing detailed insights into how participants engaged with the exercises.

Significant increases in gratefulness and positive affect were evident, combined with decreases in negative affect and depressive symptoms. These benefits were found to correlate with self-reported effects of the exercises, suggesting possible mechanisms by which the intervention benefited participants. Data also indicated the presence of interactions between some

exercises. The results presented will help to inform theory and practice regarding gratefulness and online positive psychology interventions in general.

Presenter Biography:

Reuben Rusk

Reuben Rusk is in the final months of a PhD at the *Centre for Positive Psychology* at the University of Melbourne. He approaches positive psychological and social functioning as a complex dynamic system. He has published two papers in the *Journal of Positive Psychology* and presented his research at several conferences. Drawing on his initial research mapping the field of positive psychology, he has given presentations introducing the field to Masters of Applied Positive Psychology students at the University of Melbourne. His work is being applied at schools within Australia.

Professor Lea Waters

Professor Lea Waters (PhD) holds the Gerry Higgins Chair in Positive Psychology and is the Director of the Centre for Positive Psychology in the Melbourne Graduate School at the University of Melbourne. Lea is a registered psychologist (AHPRA) and a full member of the Australian Psychological Society. She has held an academic position at the University of Melbourne for the past 17 years.

Associate Professor Dianne Vella-Brodrick

Dianne Vella-Brodrick (PhD) is an Associate Professor at the *Centre for Positive Psychology* in the Melbourne Graduate School at the University of Melbourne. She is the Director of the Master of Applied Positive Psychology program offered by the centre. Dianne is an Editor in Chief of the *Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research and Practice* journal and has been a Director of three Australian positive psychology conferences. Her research interests include the development and evaluation of well-being programs, particularly in the areas of positive education and workplace well-being. Dianne specialises in innovative mixed method designs which utilise the latest technology, and she has extensive experience with scale development and psychometric testing.