

5th Annual Applied Positive Psychology Symposium



Programme

Sat. 1st June, 2019

Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe

9.00 - 9.30 (30 mins)		Arrival/Reception	
PARALLEL SESSIONS			
STRAND A		STRAND B	
9.30 - 9.40 (10 mins)	Welcome Address A: Chair: Dr Matthew Smith		Welcome Address B: Chair: Dr Ceri Sims
9.40 - 10.00 (20 mins)	Talk 1a: Lisa Jones (BNU) - Compassion and trust: A qualitative investigation into fostering more 'compassionate trust' in society	Talk 1b: Karan Douglas (BNU) - The influence of musical playing and listening on hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing	
10.00 - 10.20 (20 mins)	Talk 2a: Sarah Smith (BNU) – Wisdom as embodied and embedded process: An integrative model	Talk 2b: Diane Herbert (BNU) - How do creative individuals experience and cope with the process of being creative within an organisation?	
10.20 - 10.40 (20 mins)	Talk 3a: Josef Mattes (BNU) – Towards making sense of spiritual intelligence: Two contrasting approaches	Talk 3b: Eleonora Saladino (BNU) – Passion at work: Innate or created?	
10.40 - 11.00 (20 mins)	Talk 4a: Charmaine Sonnex (University of Buckingham) – Positive pagan psychology	Talk 4b: Jennifer Martin (UC Cork) – Vulnerability & leadership.... to inform modern leadership and positive organisational psychology coaching practices	
11.00 - 11.30 (30 mins)		BREAK/ <u>POSTERS</u>	
11.30 - 12.00 (30 mins total, 4 mins & 1 slide ea., 10 mins for Q&A)	JOINT SESSION (A&B): <u>Flash Presentations</u>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lee Silver (Current BNU MAPP) - <i>Converting -ve emotions into more +ve behaviour flexibility through Broaden-and-Build</i> • Victoria Warren (Current BNU MAPP) – <i>A positive approach to fertility treatment</i> • Margaret Rioga (Current BNU MAPP) - <i>The experience of courage and grit in final year pre-registration nursing students diagnosed with a mental health condition</i> • Deborah Smith (BNU MAPP graduate) – <i>Life with a MAPP</i> • Reece Coker (BNU MAPP graduate) - <i>The Positive Psychology Network</i> 		
12.00 - 12:30 (30 mins)	WORKSHOP 1a: Vivian Callegaro (UEL) – Neuroepigenetic yoga: A compilation of yoga, neuroepigenetics and applied PP	WORKSHOP 1b: David Rawcliffe with Margaret Rioga (BNU) - The promise of positive psychology in mental health care	

12.30 - 1.30 (1 hour)		LUNCH/ POSTERS
STRAND A		STRAND B
1.30 - 1.40 (A) (10 mins)	“5 Magic Minutes” Short Activity – Steve Bagienski/Matthew Smith	WORKSHOP 2b (1.30-2.00 – 30 mins): Brittany Rehal (UEL) - How to create and foster a positive classroom environment and community
1.40 - 2.00 (A) (20 mins)	Talk 5a: Paul Conway (UEL) – The extraordinary in the ordinary: Skychology – the future of wellbeing is looking up	
2.00 - 2.20 (20 mins)	Talk 6a: Jenna Sinclair (UEL) – A PP theory of the sea’s lure	Talk 5b: Aoife Rice (UC Cork) – The effectiveness, feasibility and acceptability of a mindfulness-based intervention in two Irish primary schools
2.20 - 2.40 (20 mins)	Talk 7a: Lee Newitt (BNU) – Narrative identity: Building castles and cathedrals	Talk 6b: Steven Bagienski (Goldsmiths) - Magic-based community building and wellbeing workshops
2.40 - 3.00 (20 mins)	Talk 8a: Ingrid Kuhlman (BNU) – Older Icelandic adults’ perception of wellbeing: A qualitative study	Talk 7b: Caralyn Bains (BNU) –Trauma: When standing as witness to your own trauma helps with release
3.00 - 3.20 (20 mins)	BREAK/ POSTERS	
	VIDEO INSTALLATION: Sarah O’Flynn (UC Cork) – LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Coaching	
3.20 - 3.40 (20 mins)	Talk 9a: Urszula Wolski (BNU)- Coaching character strengths and mindfulness for achieving flow in tennis performance	Talk 8b: Cleide Burgess (UEL) – The emotional weight of losing weight – <i>with demo</i>
3.40 - 4.00 (20 mins)	Talk 10a: Angus Meichan (BNU) - Positive psychology in practice at a professional football club youth academy	Talk 9b: Ruth Howard (BNU) – Flourishing futures: Strengths-based parenting to enhance outcomes for autistic children and their families
4.00 - 4.30 (30 mins)	<i>Closings / Room for Overtime</i>	

Talks

Strand A	Strand B
<p>Compassion and trust: A qualitative investigation into fostering more 'compassionate trust' in society ^</p> <p><i>Lisa Jones (BNU MAPP Graduate)</i></p> <p>The study is a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. As Western society is becoming more and more selfish and individualistic this study is concerned with how compassion and trust could be better fostered to create a more inclusive and thoughtful society. Despite the success of positive psychology since it emerged in the late nineteen-nineties there is a valid argument that positive psychology is itself contributing to the individualistic society where navel gazing and a focus on the self are having a detrimental impact on society as a whole (Becker & Marecek, 2008). To address this, Gruner and Csikszentmihalyi (2018) argue that it becomes the responsibility of positive psychology professionals to progress to a more socially focused field, by including psychosocial well-being in the research. The author has responded to this challenge by exploring how positive psychology can be more focused on social issues. She has done this by taking the perspective of a social constructionist, and borrowing ideas by Feldman-Barrett (2017) and Lomas (2016). Both posit developing and introducing new language concepts to increase our emotional intelligence through concepts that are more inclusive and caring. The author of the study has done this by combining trust and compassion to create compassionate trust: trust that is underpinned by compassion. The analysis constructed the following themes: Trust is fundamental but nuanced; Compassionate trust has a cost; Socio-cultural system a barrier; Think global, act local; and Raise awareness: Teach and emulate right values. These represent the narratives of the participants where despite difficulties in the current socio-economic system, there is hope for a better future through e.g. raising awareness and using education to develop more inclusive, compassionate and trusting values.</p>	<p>The influence of musical playing and listening on hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing ^</p> <p><i>Karan Douglas (BNU MAPP Graduate)</i></p> <p>Playing a musical instrument and listening to music both have the potential to positively impact wellbeing. This research talk will report on 2 studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One examining how musicians use their playing to influence wellbeing and how motives for playing dictate whether the musician experiences hedonic or eudaimonic wellbeing. • A second exploring how people use listening to playlists at work to support hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing and to affect workplace performance. The researcher will propose that, despite hedonia and eudaemonia having largely been discussed as separate constructs, they are closely linked and hedonic wellbeing may be a necessary mediator for eudaimonic wellbeing.
<p>Wisdom as embodied and embedded process: An integrative model ^</p> <p><i>Sarah Smith (BNU MAPP Graduate)</i></p> <p>Life offers experiences within which wisdom may emerge, but we are not all guaranteed to become wiser. At the same time, the world is becoming increasingly complex and we are challenged to respond. We are currently facing some of the most demanding global challenges ever faced. Understanding wisdom and its development may be more important than ever. In recent years, the psychological study of wisdom has begun in earnest. Numerous studies are casting light onto the nature of wisdom and its development. Whilst</p>	<p>How do creative individuals experience and cope with the process of being creative within an organisation? ^</p> <p><i>Diane Herbert (BNU MAPP Graduate, Current PhD Student)</i></p> <p>Whilst creativity is seen as being a highly desirable business skill given the pace of change in society, the creative process can be uncertain, contradictory and a source of tension (Cromptley, 1997). The purpose of the research is to better understand how people, working within a creative role in an organisation, experienced the process of being creative, to what extent they perceived it as being a source of uncertainty, risk and tension, and if so,</p>

<p>Strand A - Sarah Smith (cont.)</p> <p>wisdom is often seen as the pinnacle of human development beyond the reach of most people, recent findings are suggesting that access to wise thinking may be more variable than previously thought (Grossmann, Gerlach & Denissen, 2016). Insights into situational factors that could nudge individuals towards wiser reasoning are emerging (Grossmann & Brienza, 2018) and the importance of meaning-making, emotions and social interactions are being highlighted (Westrate & Gluck, 2017; Grossmann, Oakes & Santos, 2018; Igarashi, Levenson & Aldwin, 2018). At the same time, the psychological study of wisdom has generated over twenty-four different definitions of wisdom (Gluck, 2017). Using a qualitative analysis approach an integrative review of the literature was conducted. Six themes were identified that not only synthesise multiple perspectives on wisdom, but also offer an integrative model of wisdom as an embodied and embedded process. It is argued that wisdom may emerge and develop in the combination of and interaction between individual resources, situational contexts, cognitive processing and embodied actions, which are supported through individual and collective meaning making – a synergistic dynamic process through which enhanced levels of wisdom may be realised, leading to wiser individuals and wiser societies. The model will be presented, supported by theoretical and empirical studies, and opportunities for further research and wisdom interventions will be proposed.</p>	<p>Strand B - Diane Herbert (cont.)</p> <p>how they coped with this. This research explores how it feels to be creative within an organisation, how creative people cope when situations were uncertain or ambiguous, and how the organisational culture fosters creativity and copes with the challenges of the creative process. Data were collected by means of 11 semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of eleven individuals working in creative roles in range of organisations for whom creativity was a core business requirement. The data were analysed inductively, driven by patterns found in the participants' experience. Results from the research suggest that participants experience creativity at work as a paradoxical source of tension emanating from the conflict between their identity as creative people and the sense from their organisation that creativity was only valued as a means of making money. I have identified the paradox of commerciality and creativity as a powerful force in shaping the experience of the creative process at work, influencing the extent to which creativity is valued over and above its ability to generate financial returns. A conclusion is that, rather than simply viewing creativity as a process, organisations should pay attention to the conscious and unconscious messages regarding how creativity is valued that are being communicated by the organisation's culture and behaviours.</p>
<p>Towards making sense of spiritual intelligence: Two contrasting approaches ^ <i>Josef Mattes (BNU MAPP Graduate)</i></p> <p>This talk will provide an overview of, and comparison between, two contrasting approaches to spirituality, as sketched in Stephen Hayes' classical paper "Making sense of spirituality," and in "Spirituelle Intelligenz," a book by Julius Kuhl, respectively. The former approach is firmly grounded in behaviourist psychology, and Hayes' paper constituted a crucial stepping stone in the development of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a popular and evidence-based form of "third wave" cognitive-behavioural therapy. The latter approach is an outgrowth of Kuhl's Personality Systems Interaction Theory (PSI), an elaborate theory of human motivation that is close to theories that are popular in Positive Psychology (e.g., Richard Ryan, one of the founders of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), referred to PSI as a "sibling theory" of SDT). The talk will also touch on topics such as: Relationships of these two approaches to mindfulness, modern holistic somatic practices (in particular the Feldenkrais method), Vallerand's theory of Harmonic Passions, and Carl Roger's Person Centred Psychotherapy (which has been recently argued to be deeply related to Buddhist meditation practices).</p>	<p>Passion at work: Innate or created? ^ <i>Eleonora Saladino (BNU MAPP)</i></p> <p>Is passion at work innate or can it be created? Qualitative research aimed to explore the construct of passion in a very specific setting: the realm of work. Passion as a psychological construct has been studied in various environments, especially connected with subjective and psychological well-being. The interest in passion at work is increasing in recent years mainly due to global business competitiveness. An extensive literature review has been necessary in order to explore independent but interrelated constructs such as eudaimonia, self-determination theory and intrinsic motivation. Participants were chosen among a population of individuals who claim to be passionate about their work. Eight individuals, four male and four female, all self-employed or small business entrepreneurs, were interviewed by Skype. A thematic analysis has been performed on translated interview transcripts. Research results confirm previous studies' main findings and theories on this topic and suggest a new way of representing basic needs and motivations for passion at work. Future applications could be focused on these findings in order to confirm the existence of a circumplex model of a dual balanced structure based on focus on meaning (self and others) and focus on dimensions (mind and body) not based on a specific activity, and it could be a starting point to be able to "build" or to "create" our own passion.</p>

Positive pagan psychology [^](#)

Charmaine Sonnex (University of Buckingham Lecturer)

This presentation will showcase the elements of positive psychology present in the author's past and current research exploring Neo-Pagan practices through a psychological lens. In the first half, findings from interviews with 8 modern Pagan practitioners about their ritual practices will be discussed. Ritual workings are a mental operation where the practitioners raise energy, imbue it with a purpose, and then send it out to its intended target. This work cannot be conducted in an ordinary state of consciousness, and so an altered state must be realised to craft the singularity of intent necessary (Adler, 1986; Orion, 1995; Starhawk, 1986). The altered state that practitioners describe shares many features with Csikszentmihalyi's flow state. This paper will discuss the conditions that each of these states share as well as their mutual phenomenological features. The second half will present findings from current research exploring the relationship between Nature connectedness, happiness, and religious orientation. In this study, the NC scores of multiple religious groups were compared to establish if the nature worship inherent in Paganism (and some other religions) is related to higher NC in those groups. A measure of happiness was also taken as NC has been linked to increased eudaemonic and hedonic well-being (Capaldi et al., 2014; Pritchard, Richardson, Sheffield, & McEwan, *under review*). Participants aged 18+ years, from a range of religious groups, were recruited online using opportunistic sampling. NC was measured using the Biophilic Values Scale (Lumber, Richardson & Sheffield, 2017), the Connectedness to Nature (trait) scale (Mayer & Frantz, 2004) and The Childhood Experiences of Nature Scale (Wells & Lekies, 2006). Happiness was measured using the Psychological Wellbeing scale (Ryff, 1989). Data were analysed using ANOVA.

Vulnerability & leadership: Exploring the influence of gender, environment and psychological processes on leaders' willingness to show vulnerability, to inform modern leadership and positive organisational psychology coaching practices. [^](#)

Jennifer Martin (UC Cork)

Despite surging advocacy of Vulnerability in popular leadership publications, the distinct lack of empirical evidence and limited academic articles is apparent. This research explores: what influences vulnerability in the context of leadership? To what extent do psychological processes, gender and environmental factors moderate willingness to be vulnerable? How can coaching practices harness this empirical knowledge? Using mixed methodology and convenience sampling, leaders participated in semi-structured interviews (N=10) and an online survey (N=34). Thematic transcript Analysis identified factors impacting willingness to be vulnerable; causes and consequences. Imposter Phenomenon (IP), Leadership Self-Efficacy (LSE) and Authentic Leadership (AL) were also tested in relation to Vulnerability. Gender showed no statistical significance to LSE, IP, AL nor Vulnerability. AL was found to be significantly related to Vulnerability; LSE and IP were not. Qualitative analysis highlighted dominance of external influences on vulnerability, implying that external factors outweigh internal factors in leaders' willingness to share vulnerability. Subsequently, critiquing and readapting the AL model to encompass 'Mutual Positive Modelling' between leaders and followers alike, this research empirically demonstrates: that Leadership and Organisational Coaching Practice must focus on nurturing psychologically safe environments through positive psychology practices, where vulnerability is normalised, and provides an operational mechanism for Vulnerability, benefiting individuals, teams and organisations.

FLASH Presentations [^](#)

Converting negative emotions into more positive behaviour flexibility through Broaden-and-Build [^](#)

Lee Silver (Current BNU MAPP Student)

The feeling of frustration and irritation are two negative emotions that I'm experiencing often at the moment, These feel like automatic responses to my experiences, triggered by what other people did, didn't or might do. Recent academic research shows emotions are constructed in the moment, informed by past experience and in fact could be the reaction of our guesses. The Broaden-and-Build theory predicts that positive emotions undo lingering negative emotions. This means that applying positive interventions could result in increasing my behaviour flexibility in a given situation. This talk is about my personal journey into applying a positive intervention onto myself over an 8 week period and exploring the resultant outcomes and positive effects.

Flash Presentations (cont.)

A positive approach to fertility treatment [^](#)

Victoria Warren (Current BNU MAPP Student)

Stress during fertility treatment has been showed in medical research to have a negative impact on fertility. Undergoing fertility treatment is a rollercoaster of emotions of hope and stress with the addition of hormone medication causing responses a person wouldn't usually deal with. Before my studies, I was a part of creating a group on social media for women undergoing fertility treatment – a place where we had a positive approach to our treatment, finding self-help for mindfulness and stress busting. Knowing what I know now, we were practising positive psychology. Traditional clinics offer only counselling services. My dissertation has focused on providing a structured positive psychology intervention for women undergoing assisted reproduction.

The experience of courage and grit in final year pre-registration nursing students diagnosed with a mental health condition [^](#)

Margaret Rioga (Current BNU MAPP Student, BNU Lecturer)

This study aims to investigate how final year pre-registration nurses diagnosed with a mental health condition experience courage and grit within the university environment. 75% of mental health conditions are established by the age of 24 (Jenkins, 2018) which makes universities a high risk for triggering the development or relapse in mental health conditions as their students are primarily from the 18 – 25 year age group. The university environment though promising can be stressful due to the workload, expectations, peer experiences and transition making it a trigger for the development of mental health conditions. Students disclosing mental health conditions on enrolment has increased by 9 990 from 2016/2017 to 2017/2018 (Jenkins, 2018.). This is a significant increase given that the total population of students in universities is 2.3 million and not all students disclose their condition due to the stigma associated with mental health (Tew et al., 2011). There is a need to explore what supports students diagnosed with a mental health condition as this will inform the university support systems for all students thereby enhancing wellbeing and lowering attrition rates. The current support mechanisms in universities are: Personal Tutors who provide pastoral support; Counselling Service; and the Disability Team (Ramluggun, lacy, Cadle & Anjoyeb, 2018). Whilst these services are present, most students do not feel able to disclose their mental health condition and when they do disclose, students feel that in some cases the Lecturers are not prepared and do not respond appropriately (Ramluggun, lacy, Cadle & Anjoyeb, 2018). The study aimed to bridge this gap by exploring what has helped final year students to progress through the programme and the findings from the research will be used to inform policies, procedures and current support mechanisms within universities. The study utilised a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experience of final year pre-registration nursing students diagnosed with a mental health condition. Six final year pre-registration nursing students were interviewed using a semi-structured interview. The results are still being analysed but the initial findings will be discussed in this presentation.

Life with a MAPP [^](#)

Deborah Smith (BNU MAPP graduate)

My work since the course - introducing Weight Watchers to Positive Psychology globally and now having a book published in September.

The Positive Psychology Network [^](#)

Reece Coker (BNU MAPP Graduate)

Announcements of some of the exciting PPN developments: call for papers for a new PP Journal; call for peer review panel; professional membership and insurance for PP Practitioners.

WORKSHOP 1a: Neuroepigenetic yoga: A compilation of yoga, neuroepigenetics and applied PP [^](#)

Vivian Callegaro (UEL)

Neuroepigenetic yoga is the trademark for a Yoga style developed by Vivian Callegaro, a Yoga Teacher and Trainer with 20 years of experience plus a BSc in Medical Physiology who is currently completing a MSc in Applied Positive Psychology and Coaching psychology (MAPPCP) at the University of East London (UEL). Her style includes a compilation of yoga techniques inserted by neuroepigenetic principles and applied positive psychology which intend to be used as a Positive Psychology Intervention. The intervention format is delivered in a 20 minutes session and is part of an ongoing Research Project submitted at the UEL MAPPCP 2019. It is hypothesized that this will provide a shift from a downward spiral to an upward spiral through neuroepigenetic mechanisms that remodel the gene expression towards the individual's best performance, health and creativity. The compilation will be applied to a group of 5-10 participants with no previous experience (mats will be provided). Their emotions will be registered before and right after the practice by getting them to answer a single question: describe in 3 words how do you feel now. The result will be shared with the audience and a final slide with relevant information on the Neuroepigenetic yoga compilation will be presented on screen.

WORKSHOP 1b: The promise of positive psychology in mental health care [^](#)

David Rawcliffe & Margaret Rioga (BNU)

Positive Psychology aims to discover what “makes life worth living” (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006). This means helping individuals and groups to move towards positive mindsets (Dweck, 2017) and moving towards flourishing (Gaffney, 2015; Seligman, 2011), which Fredrickson (2011) calls complete mental health. Keyes (2011) relates this to well-being. Ideas in positive psychology 2.0 (Ivtzan, Lomas, Hefferon & Worth, 2015; Wong, 2011) are moving forward to being able to be more inclusive, examining both the lighter and darker side of life and promoting both wholeness and wholesomeness (Kashdan & Biswas-Diener, 2015). The idea that positive psychology interventions can be used effectively in mental health care is one that is growing in popularity (Fava, 2016; Joseph, 2015; Proctor, 2017; Ruini, 2017; Green & Palmer, 2018; Akhtar, 2018; Rashid & Seligman, 2019). In addition, there are many who are aiming at specific issues, for example, well-being for the anxious and those with depression (Schotanus-Dijkstra, Pieterse, Drossaert, Walburg & Bohlmeijer, 2019), depression (Akhtar, 2018), post traumatic success (Bannink, 2014) and for the psychotic (Slade, Brownell, Rashid & Schrank, 2017). There are general well-being developments around the 5 ways of well-being (New Economics Foundation, 2006; Thompson, Aked, Marks & Cordon, 2008), PERMA (Seligman, 2011) and PERMA-V (St. Andrew's College, NZ., 2018). Well-being is becoming a part of the general approach to mental health care (Acott, Griffin and Wells, 2018; Glasby, 2012; Heginbotham & Newbigging, 2013). This workshop will explore issues which related to the promise of how positive psychology can inform mental health care: from primary care through to forensic mental health wards. This workshop looks at realistic ways to address the barriers and to promote positive psychological interventions, so true mental health (flourishing) can help the individual to grow.

5 Magic Minutes... Short Activity [^](#)

Steve Bagienski (Goldsmiths)/Matthew Smith (BNU MAPP)



Workshop 2b: How to create and foster a positive classroom environment and community [^](#)

Brittany Rehal (UEL)

International teacher Brittany Rehal has been teaching first grade for three years and is currently the Grade 1 Team Leader at an International School in Qatar as well as a distance-learning student studying MAPPCP at the University of East London. This workshop explores how to create a positive classroom environment and build a positive classroom community. The workshop will focus on the physical classroom environment by looking at what is being communicated to students by simple yet meaningful choices such as the arrangement of desks/seating options, displays on the walls, and encouraging

<p>The extraordinary in the ordinary: Skychology – the future of wellbeing is looking up ^</p> <p><i>Paul Conway (UEL)</i></p> <p>What do people experience when they look up at the sky? What role, if any, does the sky play in the experience of wellbeing? Against a backdrop of unprecedented global urbanisation, the erosion of meaningful interactions with nature and changing nature of interactions with one another, the answers to these questions matter. Research has neglected intentional interactions with the sky, presenting a gap, and opportunity, to understand the phenomenological experience of looking up at the sky and evaluate its efficacy as a Positive Psychology Intervention. Four participants, who self-reported as having a fascination with the sky, shared their experiences during in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The results surfaced three super-ordinate themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'It's one of my needs' 2. 'This is gonna make me feel better' 3. 'Amazement. Almost every time' <p>Their experiences suggest looking up at the sky could be operationalised as a PPI, with future directions presented for researchers and practitioners to positively impact lives across the world.</p>	<p>Strand B – Brittany Rehal (cont.)</p> <p>messages or reminders. The workshop will explore how to implement routines and activities that foster positive psychology principles for all ages (e.g. growth mindset, gratitude, kindness, etc.), applying concepts and research from the literature within positive psychology and coaching to create these classroom adaptations that can be applied to curriculum as well as community within classrooms/schools. The concept of growth mindset will be showcased through various resources, ways to explain this important concept to students and parents, and language framing to best help teachers guide their students to embrace their growth mindset and flourish academically, socially and emotionally. The presentation will be supplemented with pictures from Brittany's classroom, examples from fellow teachers, online resources and tangible activities that teachers, educators and parents can use and implement right away.</p>
<p>A PP theory of the sea's lure ^</p> <p><i>Jenna Sinclair (UEL)</i></p> <p>This presentation showcases research into the intrinsic motivation behind why people feel so drawn by the sea and investigates it from a wellbeing perspective. A movement of neuroscientists, coaches and marine biologists have united to form an alliance called <i>Blue Mind</i>, based on growing research that the ocean is a free mental health resource. The recognition and use of nature-integrated, immersive Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) are increasing within Applied Positive Psychology, as is the recognition of the importance of proximity to blue space. Yet, there is still the absence of a sea-based PPI linking the two. In the quest for wellbeing, perspectives of happiness such as eudaimonic and chaironic happiness state we are happier when exposed to phenomena which are much larger than us, evoking feelings of awe. This feeling is often brought about after immersion in nature. Relatively little research exists around the mystical lure of the ocean. Thus, the aim of this research is to create a theory of intrinsic motivation for sea immersion in hostile weather conditions with secondary aims to explore further the role of the emotion of awe, spirituality and chaironic happiness in an attempt to provide the basis for a future, sea-based PPI to be used within coaching and Applied Positive Psychology.</p>	<p>The effectiveness, feasibility and acceptability of a mindfulness-based intervention in two Irish primary schools ^</p> <p><i>Aoife Rice (UC Cork)</i></p> <p>This research aimed to examine the effectiveness, feasibility and acceptability of an MBI in two Irish primary schools using a quasi-experimental design. Data was collected from children (N = 167) and teachers (N = 9) from one urban school and one rural school. Participants from 3rd to 6th class were assigned either to the intervention (n = 99) or to a control group (n = 66) using convenience sampling. The MBI was administered over six weeks and consisted of evidence-based mindfulness strategies taught by the researcher and further conducted by class teachers. The control consisted of information sheets regarding the same strategies, but participants were not asked to practice the strategies. Baseline and post-test quantitative measures included the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale - Revised, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale and the Resilience Scale - 14 for child participants and qualitative surveys for both teachers and children. There was a significant time effect for mindfulness with intervention group scores increasing at post-intervention testing ($p = .006$). Our data suggest high feasibility and acceptability of this MBI. Mixed between-within subject ANOVAs indicate no</p>

	<p>Strand B – Aoife Rice (cont.) significant main effects for group on all three quantitative measures. Effectiveness findings were largely inconsistent with previous literature. Feasibility and acceptability findings were consistent with international empirical research. This study adds to the growing evidence for mindfulness in education in an Irish setting. Limitations, implications and recommendations are discussed.</p>
<p>Narrative identity: Building castles and cathedrals ^ <i>Lee Newitt (BNU MAPP)</i></p> <p>This presentation will share the preliminary findings from a wider and ongoing interpretive synthesis of narrative identity literature using the analogy of Dante’s journey through the ‘inferno’ to contextualize the review. First, interpretations of literature pertaining to how life stories create meaning will be shared and suggest how polarity might play an important role in forming complex and coherent meanings of life and selfhood. Meaning making in life stories may be construed as a dynamic position of equilibrium between polarities in experiences that lead to narrative themes such as agency, communion and growth. We will focus on the example of the interplay between self and the world that creates a person’s sense of agency - the extent a person believes they create their world or are created by it. Third, we interpret literature pertaining to how meaning creates life stories and suggest some examples of practise that may increase complexity and coherence through the expression and embodiment of meaning. Concluding by asking, if it is the balance between these different experiences of meanings that provide a person with the greatest sense of who they are? Keywords: Narrative Identity; Life Story; Meaning; Complexity; Coherence.</p>	<p>Magic-based community building and wellbeing workshops ^ <i>Steve Bagienski (Goldsmiths)</i></p> <p>There has been a growing interest in utilizing magic to enhance wellbeing and improve people’s lives (Bagienski & Kuhn, 2019). While the existing empirical literature highlights some promising benefits, improved methodological approaches are needed to gain a deeper understanding of how magic can enhance wellbeing. To address this, we present the largest randomized control trial to date that investigates the impact of learning to perform magic on student wellbeing. A cohort of first year university undergraduates participated in either a magic workshop (three over the course of six weeks), or a control workshop that learned mindfulness. Dependent variables were students’ self-esteem, sense of community, closeness, and general wellbeing. We hypothesized the magic workshops to be beneficial for first year undergraduates because the transition to college requires students to become independent and is often accompanied with challenging new experiences. Results indicated that students perceived the magic workshops to be more helpful in improving their self-esteem, sense of community, closeness, and wellbeing than the mindfulness workshop. While pre and post measures revealed a numerically larger positive effect for the magic intervention, the increase was not statistically significant between groups. These results are discussed in the context of how learning to perform magic can help enhance psychological & community wellbeing. Bagienski, S., & Kuhn, G. (in press). The Crossroads of Magic & Wellbeing: A review of wellbeing-focused magic programs, empirical studies, and conceivable theories. <i>International Journal of Wellbeing</i>.</p>
<p>Older Icelandic adults’ perception of well-being: A qualitative study ^ <i>Ingrid Kuhlman (BNU MAPP Graduate)</i></p> <p>The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine older Icelandic adults’ perception and definition of well-being and explore what they believe to be the factors involved in well-being at an older age. A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyse seven interviews with older adults age 70-79. Seven primary themes and eleven subthemes were identified: 1) “You create your own well-being” with subthemes of Maintaining a</p>	<p>Trauma: When standing as witness to your own trauma helps with release ^ <i>Caralyn Bains (BNU MAPP Graduate)</i></p> <p>Trauma is something that once experienced appears to hold itself within the body. This presentation aims to look at ways in which a person can explore their trauma, using ways such as ‘writing to heal’ as advocated by Pennebaker, alongside how reflectivity can help a person move through this in a gentle way. None of us are immune to trauma across the lifespan, but PP has much to show us in terms of managing and moving through traumatic events.</p>

Strand A – Ingrid Kuhlman (cont.)

positive attitude, Living a life of contentment, and Celebrating life and everyday experiences, 2) Establishing and nurturing warm, trusting and close relationships with subthemes of Family is the most fundamental element, “To have good friends is 50% of life“, and Having a social network, 3) Regular physical activity with subthemes of Benefits for the body, Benefits for the mind, and Exercise is a social activity, 4) Having a sense of purpose and meaning in life with subthemes of Making yourself meaningful to other people, and Having something that positively captivates the mind, 5) Experiencing positive emotion, 6) Connectedness with nature, and 7) Well-being despite adversity. Establishing and nurturing warm, trusting and close relationships is the most dominant theme in the study. Proactiveness is a habit consistently exhibited by the participants and interwoven with the themes identified. The findings are discussed in the theoretical context of four common conceptional well-being models, including the six-factor model of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989), the Gallup Model (Rath & Harter, 2010), PERMA (Seligman, 2011), and the framework of flourishing by Huppert and So (2013). The study adds to existing knowledge about ageing and well-being by providing valuable insights into older Icelandic adults’ perspectives.

Video Installation (during afternoon break) [^](#)

Sarah O’Flynn (UC Cork) - LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® and your powerful purpose as a coach

This video installation will be played on a loop during the afternoon break in both seminar rooms and will illustrate the application of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® within a workshop with professional coaches (see poster descriptions for more information about this study), as they built models in answer to questions posed on the theme of ‘your powerful purpose, the hand-mind connection, WHY?’. The participants were asked to build models that represented themselves as coaches; to adapt this model to demonstrate an occasion when they felt fulfilled as a coach; a model to show where was their passion and another to represent what their clients get from working with them. They then arranged these models into a narrative structure, and finally collaborated to build a ‘WHY’ super model that contained the essential elements of their narrative.

Coaching character strengths and mindfulness for achieving flow in tennis performance [^](#)

Urszula Wolski (BNU MAPP Graduate)

Tennis is a game of two parts, the physical game and the mental game which Gallwey (2015) calls the Inner Game of tennis. While most players at club level can deal with the physical game, it is the mental game that can result in a poorer performance and the difference between winning and losing a match. Using Ryan Niemiec’s (2013) Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP) the aim was to explore whether developing strengths and mindfulness during tennis coaching sessions improves performance. Coaching sessions lasting in 90 minutes duration was carried out by the researcher with a group of five amateur tennis players over the course of 8 weeks. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with each participant after the 8 weeks and data was analysed using Thematic

The emotional weight of losing weight (with demo) [^](#)

Cleide Burgess (UEL)

Obesity is a complex phenomenon, seriously affecting health, besides the social and emotional difficulties it presents. However, limited attention has been given to the psychosocial concerns of obesity. The practice of mindfulness has been shown to promote wellbeing and has been used successfully with weight related issues. Though previous research has mainly focused on reducing the symptoms of the disorder, the objective of this research was to investigate whether introducing a positive mindfulness program to participants previously engaged in weight loss would enhance their positive emotional states, and buffer them from the common deleterious effects of obesity, as well as enhance the self-regulatory behaviours, encouraging greater weight loss. *Method & Procedure* - 15 adults were assigned to the experimental condition, which involved

<p>Strand A - Urszula Wolski (cont.)</p> <p>Analysis. In total, four main themes were identified: Strengths Awareness and Strengths Blindness, Mindfulness Awareness and Practice, Tennis Performance and Evaluation of the Course. In conclusion it was found that the course was beneficial to all tennis players who participated as it created greater awareness and mindfulness of character strengths and how to use them which resulted in changes both on and off the court, with some report of flow experiences.</p>	<p>Strand B – Cleide Burgess (cont.)</p> <p>attending 8 weeks of a positive mindfulness for obesity intervention, whilst continuing on their weight-loss program. 16 participants were allocated to the control condition, which involved continuing with their weight loss program, only. Data were collected at pre- and post-intervention, from both the experimental and control groups. <i>Results</i> - Post-test measures from the experimental participants have shown a strong significant improvement in all wellbeing measures (self-awareness, self-compassion, positive & negative affect, self-esteem, measured via Body Image-Acceptance and Action Questionnaire) and weight loss ($F(1, 29) = 7.5, p < .0001$). <i>Conclusion</i> - Our results suggest that increasing the wellbeing of participants attempting to lose weight, through mindfulness programs, could have a significant impact on weight loss and on the quality of an individual's life.</p>
<p>Positive psychology in practice at a professional football club youth academy ^ <i>Angus Meichan (BNU MAPP Graduate)</i></p> <p>Recounting the experience of a MAPP graduate using positive psychology techniques and insights in a sport psychology role. How young players are being helped to achieve optimal performance states by focusing on the positive rather than the negative, developing strengths, and fostering hope.</p>	<p>Flourishing futures: Strengths-based parenting to enhance outcomes for autistic children and their families ^ <i>Ruth Howard (BNU MAPP Graduate, BNU PhD Student)</i></p> <p>Previous theories of autism have inadequately explained autism, autistic children's development and co-morbid mental health problems. The author proposes Autistic Development Theory (ADT), based on current evidence, to describe autistic children's development and escalating mental health problems. ADT considers a cognitive difference in perception causes affective development delays and escalating anxieties which lead to the presentation of behaviours and delays associated with autism and the commonly occurring co-morbid mental health problems. Flourishing Futures has been developed for parents to learn about ADT's approach to understanding autism, strategies to help manage daily life and use a strength-based developmental approach to parenting. Various positive psychology approaches are taught to parents to help enhance well-being for the whole family. Flourishing Futures is currently being evaluated with an evaluation group (EV) and waiting list controls (WLC). EV parents complete a range of well-being measures for themselves and the SPENCE children's anxiety scale and the Autism Treatment Checklist for the child at 3 time points, pre workshops, post workshops and 12 weeks post workshops. The WLC complete the initial measures and 12 weeks later. WLC are then given the workshops and complete post-workshop measures. Early findings will be presented and discussed with suggestions for further research.</p>

Posters: [^](#)

Urszula Wolski (BNU) - *Character strengths and participation in sport/physical activity to promote positive ageing*

The aim of research is to investigate whether an intervention programme encourages 'non-active' adults to participate in regular sport and/or physical activity in relation to their character strengths. Character strengths are what are unique and authentic to everyone, such as love, gratitude and appreciation of beauty, and as a result, it is these that will encourage participation in activities that are found to be enjoyable and could lead to flow experiences. Such activities can therefore help to lead to greater health, well-being and eudaimonic happiness. Over the course of 8 weeks 10 'non-active' participants (aged 40+), i.e. those participating in little to no physical activity, will be asked to participate in a range of self-selected sport and/or physical activities and to keep a record of activities and their experiences in a journal. At the start of the programme each participant will take the VIA Character Strengths Survey to determine their top strengths and enable them to choose 'suitable' activities. Also, at the start of the programme, half way through and at the end, participants will be asked to complete a well-being and satisfaction with life scale survey. At the end of the programme, each participant will be interviewed using a semi-structured interview in order to discuss their experience on the programme and whether this has encouraged them to continue with their chosen activity(ies). Results from the surveys will be compared with data from the journals and interviews which will be analysed using thematic analysis. Whilst much research has been done on the elderly population and positive ageing, little has been done on the 'middle ages', and to date, no research exists that looks specifically at the relationship between character strengths, sport and physical activity and positive ageing.

Victoria Leaney (BNU) - *Why are men reluctant to take part in counselling and/or seek professional help?*

Men are currently underrepresented in present literature on mental health and engagement with therapeutic treatments. This literature review will summarise the literature on mental health issues related to the male population. The main topics explored in this audit are; mental health and men, masculine norms and positive coaching as an alternative to traditional therapy. The aim of the review is to identify the reason why men do not presently engage in professional help, especially in relation to mental health, and what can be done to change this. Limitations were set in terms of subjects researched as the area is very broad. Areas reviewed were gender specific research related to mental health, masculinity and the process of coaching. Seminal literature pertinent to the suggested research question were; McKelley and Rochelen (2007; 2010) about masculine norms and coaching as an alternative to therapy, Rochelen and Hoyer (2005) on the social marketing of mental health to men. The literature review identified a common theme across a vast amount of the literature pertaining to the lack of a theoretical model of male depression and/or help-seeking in men. While there are various models to explicate the gender imbalance in the diagnosis of depression in men, there is limited research investigating men's perceptions of depression (Cole & Davidson, 2018). Further study into the 'sources' of men's resistance to help-seeking is required if we are to develop a model to promote mental health services to reluctant men, a blue print if you will (Rochlen & Hoyer, 2005). Therefore qualitative research will need to be conducted to form a foundation to understanding the sensitivities that may be motivating negative help-seeking behaviour (Rochelen & O'Brien, 2002a, 2002b).

Lisa Lomax (BNU) - *Practicing mindfulness and meditation to affect happiness and wellbeing*

My experience of practicing mindfulness and meditation to affect happiness and wellbeing.

Daisy Beth Gibbons (UC Cork) - *Promoting subjective well-being in transition year students through a positive psychology intervention*

Background: The increasing rates of mental health disorders among young people makes wellbeing interventions a priority for school children. While Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) appear to be effective in increasing subjective wellbeing, the evidence is mixed. There are gaps in the literature including the lack of: control groups, follow-up and parental involvement. Furthermore, most school-based PPIs are extensive, lasting up to 12 weeks, with little research evaluating the effects of a shorter PPI on wellbeing. *Aims:* The current study aims to overcome some of the research limitations by investigating the effects of a four-week long multi-target (students and parents), multi-component positive psychology intervention including gratitude, acts of kindness, character strengths and hope on adolescent subjective wellbeing in an Irish sample. *Methods & Procedures:* A quasi-experimental, mixed methods design was implemented

Posters – Daisy Beth Gibbons (cont.) [^](#)

to explore the study's aims. Two transition year classes were assigned to an intervention group (n = 22) or a wait list control group (n = 25) using a simple coin toss. Measures of wellbeing, anxiety and depression were taken at pre-test, post-test and at a one-month follow-up. *Outcome & Results:* The hypothesis that participants in the intervention group would demonstrate significant improvements in wellbeing found mixed support. This was supported only in the case of negative affect; a 2x2 mixed ANOVA demonstrated a significant interaction effect between group and time at post-test (p = .042). However, no significant effects were determined on other indicators of subjective wellbeing, anxiety or depression. *Conclusion & Implications:* The primary findings from this study reflect the often mixed and inconclusive results in current literature, moderated by limitations of sample size and attrition. Future research should focus on the replication and extension of current interventions, which may allow the creation of "positive educational institutions".

Lorna Lawless (UC Cork) - A study of the experience of flow states for mixed martial arts (MMA) athletes

Flow states are characterised as moments of absolute absorption in the task at hand. They are those moments in life where we feel and perform at the best of our abilities. Individuals in flow, report it as an autotelic experience, which brings meaning and purpose to their lives (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). To date there has been a scarce amount of research conducted on Mixed Martial Arts athletes. This study used an interpretative phenomenological approach to gain a rich insight into the experience of flow states for MMA athletes. Three superordinate themes were found after data analysis: transition to a fighter identity, chaotic harmony and being an MMA athlete. These findings provide an insight into the psychological skills utilised by fighters to facilitate the fighter identity. Rich insight was gained into the experience of flow states for MMA athletes and how they internally represent this altered state. Finally, fighters reported a strong sense of belonging to the social world of MMA, highlighting the formation of an identity reference group. The implications of these findings are further discussed.

Asma Basurrah et al. (UC Cork) - Cross-cultural implication of character strengths intervention

Using your signature strengths in a different way for a week is a classic Positive Psychology intervention (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005) that has been validated across numerous settings and contexts (Schutte & Malouf, 2018). Notwithstanding the effectiveness of these types of interventions (Bolier et al., 2013), there can be issues of non-adherence, or drop-offs in experimental designs. This experiment tested the effectiveness of daily prompts to determine whether this would impact on non-adherence rates. In addition, this intervention was initially trialled with western English-speaking samples. Strengths may be construed in alternative ways in different cultures. The main purpose of the studies is to determine how applicable the Character Strengths intervention is cross-culturally. In order to test this idea, general population from Poland, Saudi Arabia and Thailand were sourced through non-probability sampling via social media. Participants completed the VIA Character Strengths Survey and were then randomly assigned to a control group, a Signature Strengths condition, or a Signature Strengths with daily reminders condition. The level of happiness and depression were measured at baseline, 1 week and 1 month follow-up to examine the changes over time. The results are analysed in terms of the effectiveness of daily reminders as well as the influence of cultural contexts.

Sarah O'Flynn & Eric Baxter (UC Cork) - LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® as a purposeful tool in the coaching space

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® playfully engages people with the serious intent of fostering clarity and applying learnings gained in play to other life domains. The poster presents work from two LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops – one with professional coaches, who built models in answer to questions posed on the theme of 'your powerful purpose, the hand-mind connection, WHY?', and the other with college level Gaelic footballers who built models in answer to questions posed on the theme of Growth Mindset in sport.

In the coaching workshop, the participants were asked to build models that represented themselves as coaches; to adapt this model to demonstrate an occasion when they felt fulfilled as a coach; a model to show where their passion was and another to represent what their clients get from working with them. They then arranged these models into a narrative structure, and finally collaborated to build a 'WHY' super model that contained the essential elements of their narrative. Post workshop one to one interviews were analysed using IPA. The focus of this paper will be an exploration of the themes of their experience of this type of playful learning and sharing of stories through the use of the metaphoric models they had built, as well as their lived experience of being leaders and influencers as professional coaches in practice.

Posters – Sarah O’Flynn & Eric Baxter (cont.) [^](#)

The participants in the football workshop were asked to build models that represented themselves as players, an example of fixed mindset and an example of growth mindset. They were then asked to identify growth mindset highlights in their models which could be used to make a difference in their fixed mindset models. Collaboratively, they then built an agreed super model of their now shared understanding of growth mindset. Post workshop one-to-one interviews were analysed using IPA. The focus of this part of the poster will be an exploration of the themes of their experience of this type of playful learning and sharing of stories through the use of the metaphoric models they had built, as well as their lived experience of being leaders and influencers both in the sporting arena and within their communities.

By leveraging the hand-mind connection and hands-on tinkering to bring about moments of mindfulness, participants had the opportunity gain insights which they could apply to their coaching practice, sporting and wider lives.