

THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT'S

WELLNESS BULLETIN

SPRING 2024 - ISSUE #1

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THE SOUL OF WELLBEING AT HAU

BY DR. LINDY MCMULLIN
DIRECTOR OF THE
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



✦ CODEPENDENCY IN
ROMANTIC
RELATIONSHIPS
APRIL 25

✦ POSITIVE
PSYCHOLOGY
MAY 14

MORE INFORMATION FOR ALL
THESE EVENTS AT END OF
BULLETIN

Welcome to the first edition of The Wellness Bulletin, a publication of the Psychology Division of Hellenic American University. Our department believes in promoting a holistic and transformative learning experience for all our readers, informing them about the latest developments in the Field of Psychology that focuses on Well Being and Quality of Life. We are all in a process of development that is not only individual but also communal.

We invite our readers to construct growing awareness and to focus on actualizing their inner potential, through a conscious decision to enhance their wellbeing individually, collectively and as part of the HAUNIV community. We also invite our readers to share their extraordinary story of wellbeing as well as faculty members from other departments, who may wish to write an article that can help raise awareness in self-care and well-being.

The five elements of well-being according to Martin Seligman (2011) are denoted by the acronym PERMA:

Positive Emotion
Engagement
Relationships
Meaning
Accomplishment



The founder of Positive Psychology has gathered enough empirical research on happiness as a cause, rather than a consequence, highlighting the need to focus on Transformative Learning. In Seligman's Positive Psychology: A Personal History, published in 2018 as an Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, he highlights the fact that positive schools and positive teachers produce more well-being.

At HAU, our focus is on the positive emotions and dedication of students, faculty, and administrative staff. Passion and dedication ensure that we are all fully engaged in creating a safe learning environment where students can actualize their inner potential. To connect with one's inner potential, one needs to believe that there is meaning in everything that is undertaken; the relationships formed between students and faculty, and peers who are dedicated to life-long learning, become at times, lifetime links that promote the well-being of all concerned. The exceptionally high standard of courses offered, the expertise of the faculty, and the general atmosphere at HAU all contribute to a general feeling of wellbeing.

Our psychology program focusses on bringing holism back into mental health, and the Counseling Center provides support and sessions in a safe and confidential space. Psychology is not only beneficial in its entirety but when taken as a Minor, will enhance whatever Major you have chosen.

We all carry our personal histories with us, which have shaped our world view, however, what makes HAU special is the dedication we all hold in focusing on essence, meaning and accomplishment that brings about Transformative Learning.

I wish you all an innovative and meaningful 2024, as we embark on bringing our community closer together with this bulletin. We take pride in making connections within our community.

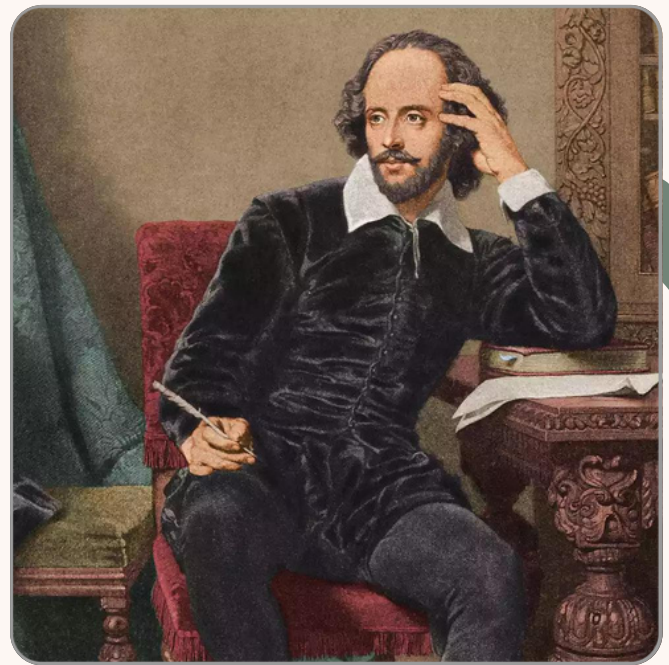


Life Satisfaction? that is the Question...

BY BARBARA. KONDILIS
MSW, MPH, ABD
ADJUNCT FACULTY MEMBER
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Are you satisfied with your life? This past January, Gallup surveyed 1,011 U.S. adults finding that **less than half** of all Americans say they are very satisfied with their life – it's the first time in over a decade the measure has dropped so low. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (<https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org>, 2020) using a scale of 0-10 to measure life satisfaction, noted an average of 6.7 among the 37 countries surveyed; Finland at highest, Turkey at lowest, and Greece in 6th place. Factors such as lower income play a role, but finding satisfaction in life is much more complicated than what this data claims. Specifically, life satisfaction and understanding the science of happiness involves various factors, including mindset, behaviors, and habits. Below are **10 tips** grounded in psychological research and philosophy that will help you **raise your life satisfaction**:

1. Practice Gratitude: Cultivating gratitude has been consistently linked to higher levels of well-being. Take time each day to reflect on things you're grateful for, whether it's your health, relationships, or simple pleasures.



"TO BE OR NOT TO BE...?" A FAMOUS LINE CONTEMPLATING LIFE AND DEATH BY HAMLET, AS WRITTEN IN THE 14TH CENTURY IS STILL POPULAR TODAY.

2. Engage in Meaningful Activities: Pursuing activities that align with your values and bring a sense of purpose to your life. Volunteering, having hobbies (music, art, sports) or causes you are passionate about (Toastmasters for public speaking, etc.) may help you develop more meaningful relationships and live more authentically.

3. Give Back: Acts of kindness and generosity toward others can boost your own sense of well-being. Look for opportunities to help others or contribute to your community (think "Politis program" and "global citizenship" opportunities).

4. Prioritize Relationships: Strong social connections are crucial for happiness and life satisfaction. Nurturing relationships with friends, family, and loved ones, is worth your time investment.



5. Practice Mindfulness and Meditation:

Mindfulness practices can help cultivate awareness of the present moment and reduce stress. Regular meditation (including prayer) has been shown to promote emotional well-being and resilience.

6. Set and Pursue Goals:

Want to do that triathlon, get certified in a language, or learn how to do impressionist painting? Setting achievable goals that are aligned with your values both helps you build career growth and gives you an overall sense of accomplishment. Break larger goals into smaller, manageable steps and celebrate your progress along the way.

7. Practice Self-Care:

Physical well-being is closely linked to mental well-being. Make sure to prioritize sleep, exercise regularly, and maintain a balanced diet. Take time for activities that recharge you mentally, emotionally, and physically. This could include hobbies, relaxation techniques, or simply spending time in nature.

8. Cultivate Resilience:

Life inevitably brings challenges and setbacks. Reframing negative experiences, practicing self-compassion, and learning from your mistakes helps build character.

9. Limit Comparison:

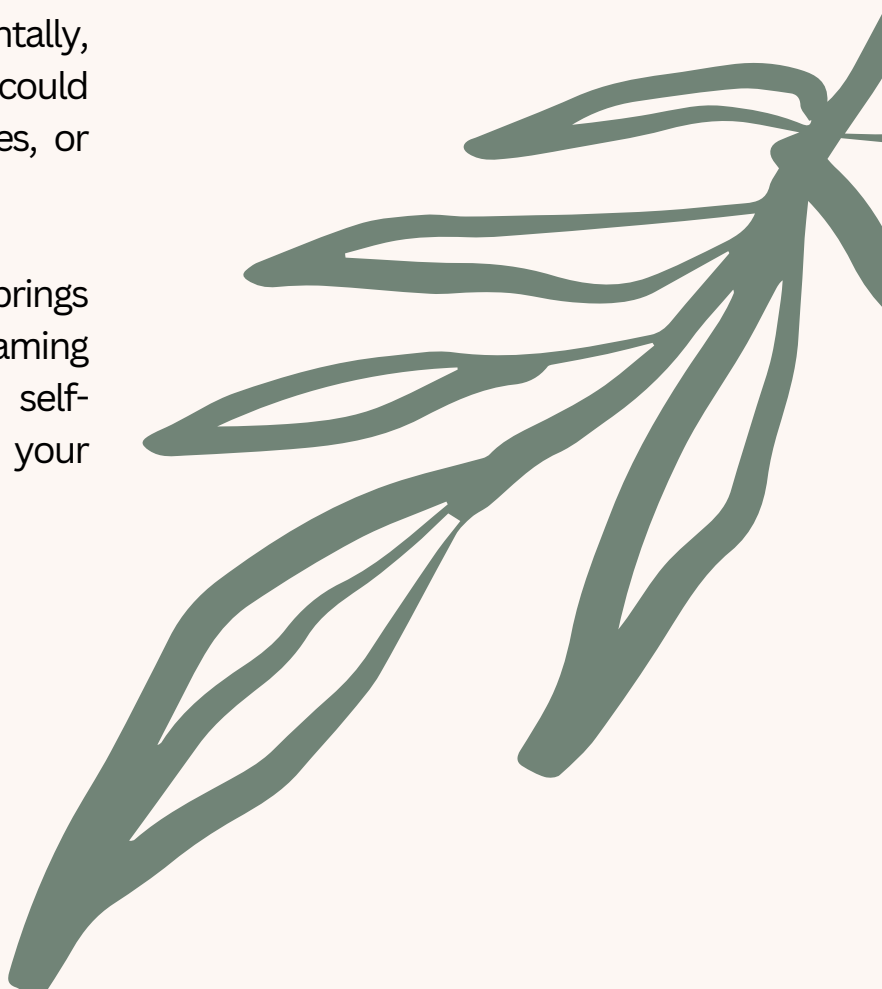
Avoid comparing yourself to others, as this can lead to feelings of inadequacy and unhappiness. Focus on your own journey and progress. A break from Instagram, Facebook or other social media may offer you inner peace, and time to appreciate yourself.

10. Seek Growth through continual learning:

Embrace opportunities for personal and professional development.



Remember that happiness is a journey, not a destination. Cultivate greater overall satisfaction and well-being each day, for a better life ahead!





THE HEROIC JOURNEY

BY HOLLY PATRICK,
MSPSY'25

If someone were to ask you to think of your favorite story, what would come to mind? Perhaps it is a movie, book, play, or even an old fairy tale you were read to as a child. Now, keep that story in your mind, and ask yourself, “What is it about this story that makes it so special to me? Which characters do I relate to most and why? What lessons did I learn from this story?”

I think we can all agree that stories have a unique way of impacting their audiences. They can inspire creativity, ignite our imaginations, influence our emotions, teach powerful lessons, and profoundly impact our worldviews. Although the plot, characters, setting, and themes of our favorite stories may differ, there is one thing most stories have in common; the template of the hero’s journey.

The hero’s journey is a framework that Joseph Campbell explored in his 1949 book, titled *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In this book, he unpacks the reoccurring themes of the hero’s journey found in many of our beloved tales and the personal development the hero experiences as a consequence of overcoming a variety of challenges.

The hero’s journey consists of different stages including the **call to adventure**, **crossing the threshold**, **trials & failures**, **death & rebirth (A.K.A. slaying the dragon)**, and **the return**. Along the journey, a hero will meet a variety of important characters including **mentors**, **allies**, and **foes** who will help them along their path. Let’s use the story of 11-year-old Harry from J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* to illustrate this:

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The Call to Adventure: Harry is in his ordinary muggle world when he receives his letter from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. This letter is Harry's call to adventure. The vile Dursleys try with all their might to prevent Harry from accepting his letter, that is until Hagrid shows up, knocking down the door, and revealing to Harry his true identity as a wizard. Hagrid is Harry's first mentor.

Crossing the Threshold: Harry and Hagrid venture to Diagon Alley, where Harry leaves behind his ordinal muggle life, and is introduced to the wizarding world for the first time.

Trials & Failures: Harry goes through a variety of trials, tests, failures, and successes at Hogwarts. This is also where he will meet his allies, Ron and Hermione, and his enemies, such as Draco Malfoy.

Death & Rebirth (slaying the dragon): Realizing that someone is trying to steal the highly powerful philosopher's stone, Harry, Ron, and Hermione venture down, past Fluffy, the three-headed dog, where they go through more tests and trials until eventually Harry is left alone to face his dragon, Lord Voldemort.

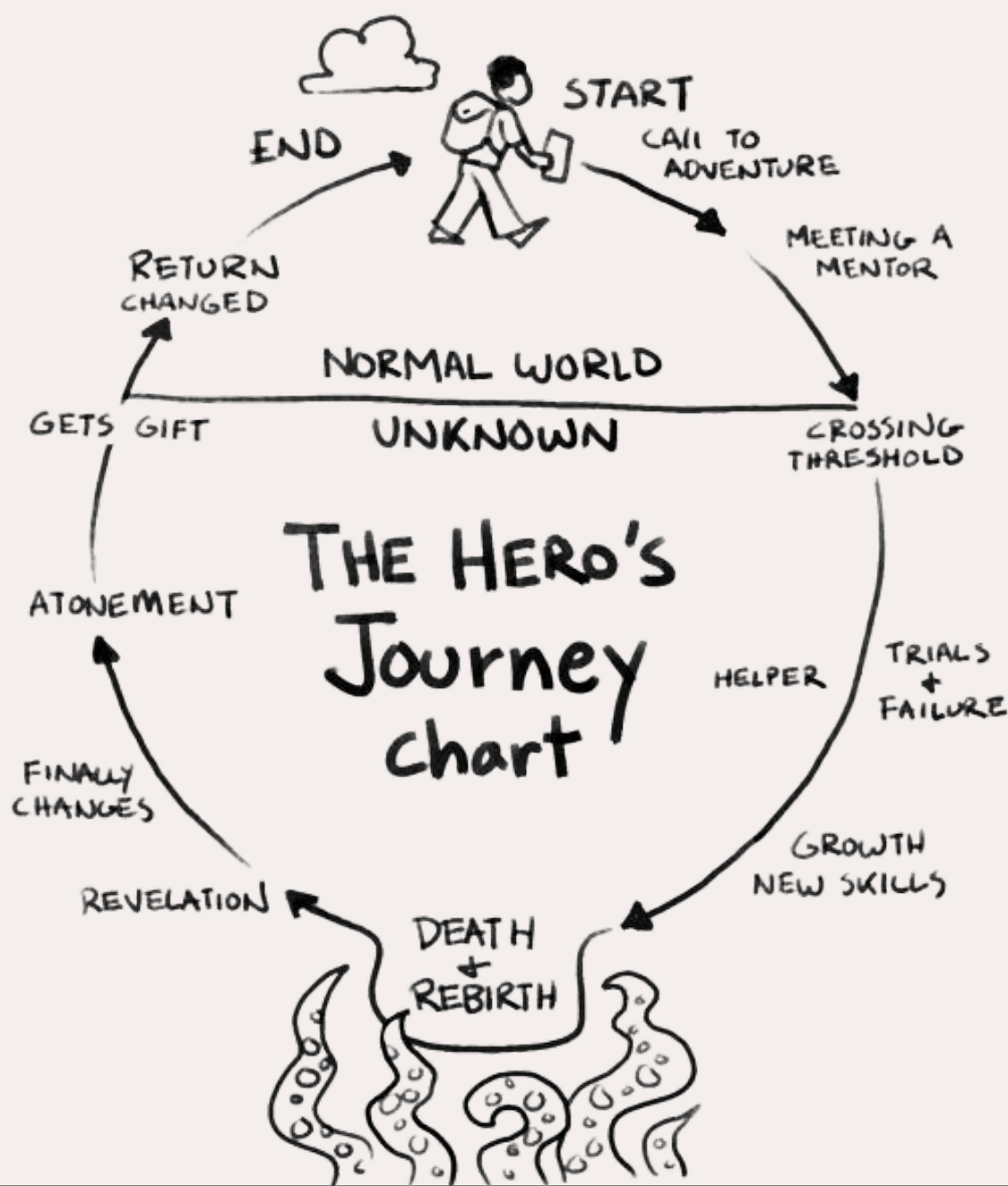
Harry's final test is when Voldemort tempts him with being reunited with his late parents. Harry is distracted for a moment but remembers why he is there – to retrieve the philosopher's stone. Through a special enchantment, the stone appears in Harry's pocket. With this in hand, he completes his task by defeating Voldemort... at least for now.

The Return: With Voldemort defeated, Harry returns to the safety of Hogwarts. The stone is returned to the hands of the school's headmaster and Harry is left to reflect on everything that transpired. Harry realizes that the key to defeating Voldemort was actually the power he derived from his mother's love – the most powerful weapon of all.



If Harry Potter isn't your cup of tea, that is okay. The hero's journey can be found in movies like The Matrix, Finding Nemo, the Wizard of Oz, and even The Hangover. I encourage you to take your favorite story and try to place it within the hero's journey diagram. But let's not stop there. Did you know we can apply these concepts to our own lives? When was the last time you answered your call to adventure, crossed the threshold into the unknown, and slayed your metaphorical dragon? Heroes and heroines are not just in the stories we read and the movies we watch. They are within every one of us.

If this concept of the hero's journey interests you, please join me on **April 12th** from **14:00 to 15:30** for an online webinar where we will workshop the ideas of the hero's journey and learn how we can incorporate this metaphor into our own lives to help us cope with change, develop and bring meaning to our lives.



ECHOES OF WELL-BEING: UNVEILING THE POWER OF NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE

BY ARTHUR ANTONOPOULOS
ADJUNCT FACULTY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

I often find myself contemplating the intricate dance of non-verbal communication and its profound impact on our well-being. In the dynamic landscape of university life at the Hellenic American College, where exams and assignments loom large, understanding the nuances of non-verbal cues becomes a powerful tool for self-discovery and stress management.

The Mirror Within: Unveiling Self-Understanding Through Others

In the bustling corridors of Massalias Street in Kolonaki, it's easy to overlook the silent language that permeates our interactions. Non-verbal cues, ranging from facial expressions to body language, act as mirrors reflecting our inner states. Observing others keenly provides a unique window into their emotions, but it's also a journey inward.

When you decode the non-verbal signals of your peers, you might discover shared experiences and unspoken challenges. This empathetic connection fosters a sense of community, reminding us that the path to wellness is often paved by mutual understanding.

Navigating Anxiety in the Academic Storm of Assignment and Midterms

As the academic semester unfolds, anxiety becomes a ubiquitous companion for many students. The stress of looming exams and impending assignments can cast a shadow on overall well-being. Amid this storm, non-verbal communication emerges as a crucial lifeline.

Recognizing signs of distress in others allows us to extend a supportive hand. A reassuring glance, a nod of understanding, or a subtle gesture can convey solidarity without the need for words. In times of academic pressure, the unspoken language becomes a sanctuary, fostering an environment where everyone feels seen and supported.



Crafting a Friendly and Professional Atmosphere

In the pursuit of wellness, the environment plays a pivotal role. As academics, we have the power to shape this environment by consciously infusing it with a balance of friendliness and professionalism. Our non-verbal cues, whether in the classroom or during meetings, set the tone for interactions.

Maintain an open posture, make eye contact, and employ gestures that convey warmth and approachability. Simultaneously, uphold a professional demeanor, emphasizing the importance of the academic journey. This delicate balance creates an atmosphere where students feel both supported and challenged, contributing to their holistic well-being.

3 Tips for Nurturing Wellness Through Non-Verbal Communication

1. Active Observation: Cultivate the habit of actively observing non-verbal cues in yourself and others. This heightened awareness forms the foundation for building empathetic connections within the university community.

2. Gestures of Support: In moments of stress, use non-verbal gestures to communicate support. A subtle nod, a comforting touch on the shoulder, or a genuine smile can convey understanding and solidarity, fostering a culture of well-being.

3. Create a Positive Environment: As educators, consciously shape the atmosphere by balancing friendliness and professionalism. Your non-verbal cues set the stage for a supportive academic community where wellness is prioritized.

In the tapestry of university life, the threads of non-verbal communication intricately weave together a narrative of wellness. By embracing these subtle yet powerful cues, we not only enhance our understanding of others but also embark on a transformative journey toward self-discovery and well-being.



Nurturing Emotional Intelligence: A Key to Success in Work and Life

BY KONSTANTINA
DENDRAKI, MSPSY'25

In today's fast-paced world, success isn't solely determined by one's intellectual prowess or technical skills. Instead, there's a growing recognition of the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in achieving personal and professional fulfillment. EI, a concept first introduced by Wayne Leon Payne in 1985 and popularized by Daniel Goleman in his seminal work "Emotional Intelligence" in 1995. It encompasses the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions while effectively navigating the emotions of others.

Emotional intelligence has five key elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These elements form the foundation upon which individuals can build fulfilling relationships, navigate challenges, and thrive in diverse environments.

Self-awareness is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence, enabling individuals

to recognize and understand their emotions, motivations, and reactions. By cultivating self-awareness, individuals gain insight into their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth, empowering them to make informed decisions and pursue personal development.

Self-regulation, the ability to control and manage one's emotions and behaviors, complements self-awareness by fostering emotional resilience and adaptability. Through self-regulation, individuals learn to respond thoughtfully to challenging situations, demonstrating restraint and composure even in the face of adversity.

Motivation fuels the pursuit of personal and professional goals, driving individuals to persist in the face of obstacles and setbacks. In emotional intelligence, intrinsic motivation plays a vital role in fostering a sense of purpose and fulfillment, empowering individuals to channel their energy and efforts toward meaningful endeavors.

Empathy, the capacity to understand and share the feelings of others, forms the bedrock of meaningful relationships and effective communication. By cultivating empathy, individuals develop a heightened awareness of others' perspectives and emotions, fostering trust, compassion, and mutual understanding.

Social skills encompass a range of interpersonal abilities, including effective communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. In today's interconnected world, strong social skills are essential for building and maintaining



positive relationships, fostering teamwork, and navigating complex social dynamics. While rational intelligence (IQ) remains important for problem-solving and technical tasks, emotional intelligence often determines how effectively individuals can apply their intelligence in social and emotional contexts. In many professional settings, success hinges not only on technical competence but also on one's ability to collaborate effectively, manage stress, and navigate interpersonal dynamics.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report, underscores the increasing demand for emotional intelligence in the workplace, highlighting its significance as one of the ten most in-demand skills through at least 2025. Dr. Shané P. Teran advocates for the integration of emotional intelligence into all facets of professional life, particularly in roles that involve emotional labor and interpersonal interaction.

In essence, nurturing emotional intelligence isn't just about individual growth—it's about fostering environments where individuals can thrive, collaborate, and contribute meaningfully to their communities and organizations. By embracing the principles of emotional intelligence and committing to continuous growth and development, individuals can unlock their full potential and cultivate fulfilling relationships both in the workplace and beyond.

As Bryant H. McGill eloquently states, "Comfort in expressing your emotions will allow you to share the best of yourself with others, but

not being able to control your emotions will reveal your worst." In a world that values authenticity, empathy, and collaboration, emotional intelligence emerges as a guiding light—a pathway to personal fulfillment, professional success, and enduring relationships.



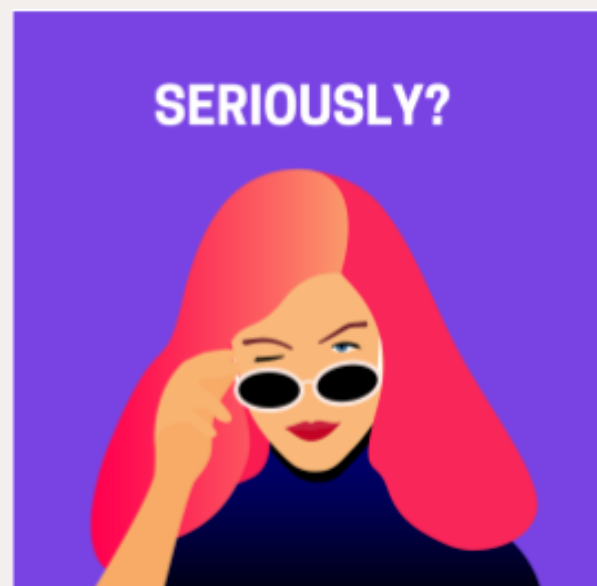


TRANSFORM YOUR WORLD: MASTERING BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION FOR LIFE'S GAME-CHANGING PLAYS

BY ARTHUR ANTONOPOULOS
ADJUNCT FACULTY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

In an era where change is the only constant, mastering the art of behavior modification emerges as a crucial skill for navigating the complexities of modern life. This transformative approach to reshaping behaviors offers a roadmap to personal and professional success, proving essential not just for technology enthusiasts but for anyone looking to make meaningful adjustments in their lives. This article delves into the essence of behavior modification, unraveling its significance in everyday dynamics and its potential to guide prospective students into exciting new territories of self-improvement and understanding.

Behavior modification is grounded in the principles of operant conditioning, a theory that suggests behaviors can be changed through the use of rewards and punishments. This powerful psychological concept enables individuals to increase desirable behaviors and eliminate unwanted ones, laying the foundation for lasting change. From improving health habits and enhancing academic performance to fostering professional skills and nurturing personal relationships, behavior modification offers a versatile toolkit for anyone ready to take control of their actions and steer their life in a desired direction.



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The importance of behavior modification extends beyond personal development. In today's fast-paced world, where distractions abound and motivation can wane, applying these principles can be a game-changer. Imagine the impact of positive reinforcement on maintaining a consistent exercise regimen, or the effectiveness of setting clear, achievable goals to boost productivity. Behavior modification isn't just about altering actions; it's about transforming mindsets and cultivating an environment where positive change can flourish.

For prospective students intrigued by the promise of behavior modification, the journey into this field is not only academically enriching but also profoundly practical. Whether your passion lies in psychology, education, healthcare, or even business, understanding how to influence behavior opens up a myriad of opportunities for innovation and leadership. It equips future professionals with the skills to inspire change in others, design effective interventions, and contribute to the well-being of communities.

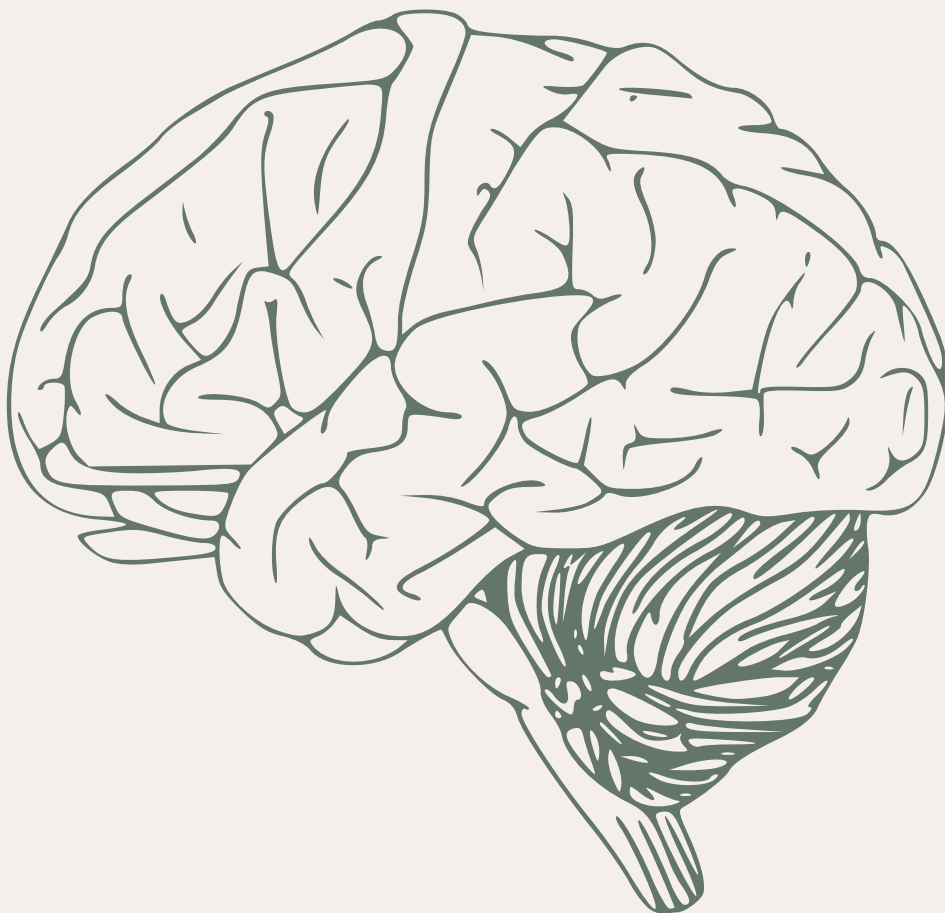
Our daily interactions, choices, and habits are all ripe for the application of behavior modification techniques. From setting up a reward system to encourage healthy eating to using time management strategies to enhance work or study efficiency, the principles of behavior modification are endlessly adaptable. They empower us to tackle challenges head-on, transforming obstacles into opportunities for growth and learning.

In offering a Behavior Modification class, we at the Hellenic American University, invite students to embark on a transformative journey into the science of change. This course is not just an academic endeavor; it's a personal exploration of how to effectively apply scientific principles to real-life challenges. Students will learn not only the theory behind behavior modification but also practical strategies for implementing these techniques in various settings.



In conclusion, behavior modification is more than a psychological concept; it's a life skill that is indispensable in today's ever-changing world. It provides a framework for understanding and influencing behavior, offering strategies that can lead to significant, positive transformations in our lives and the lives of those around us. For those ready to explore the depths of human behavior and unlock their potential for change, a class in behavior modification could be the beginning of an exciting and rewarding journey.

Let this be your invitation to a world of possibilities. Embrace the power of behavior modification, and take the first step toward crafting the life you've always envisioned. Together, let's harness the science of change to create a brighter, more fulfilling future. Yeah, seriously!





THE MINDFULNESS MIND MAP

BY PSY375 COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY CLASS
INSTRUCTOR: BARBARA KONDILIS

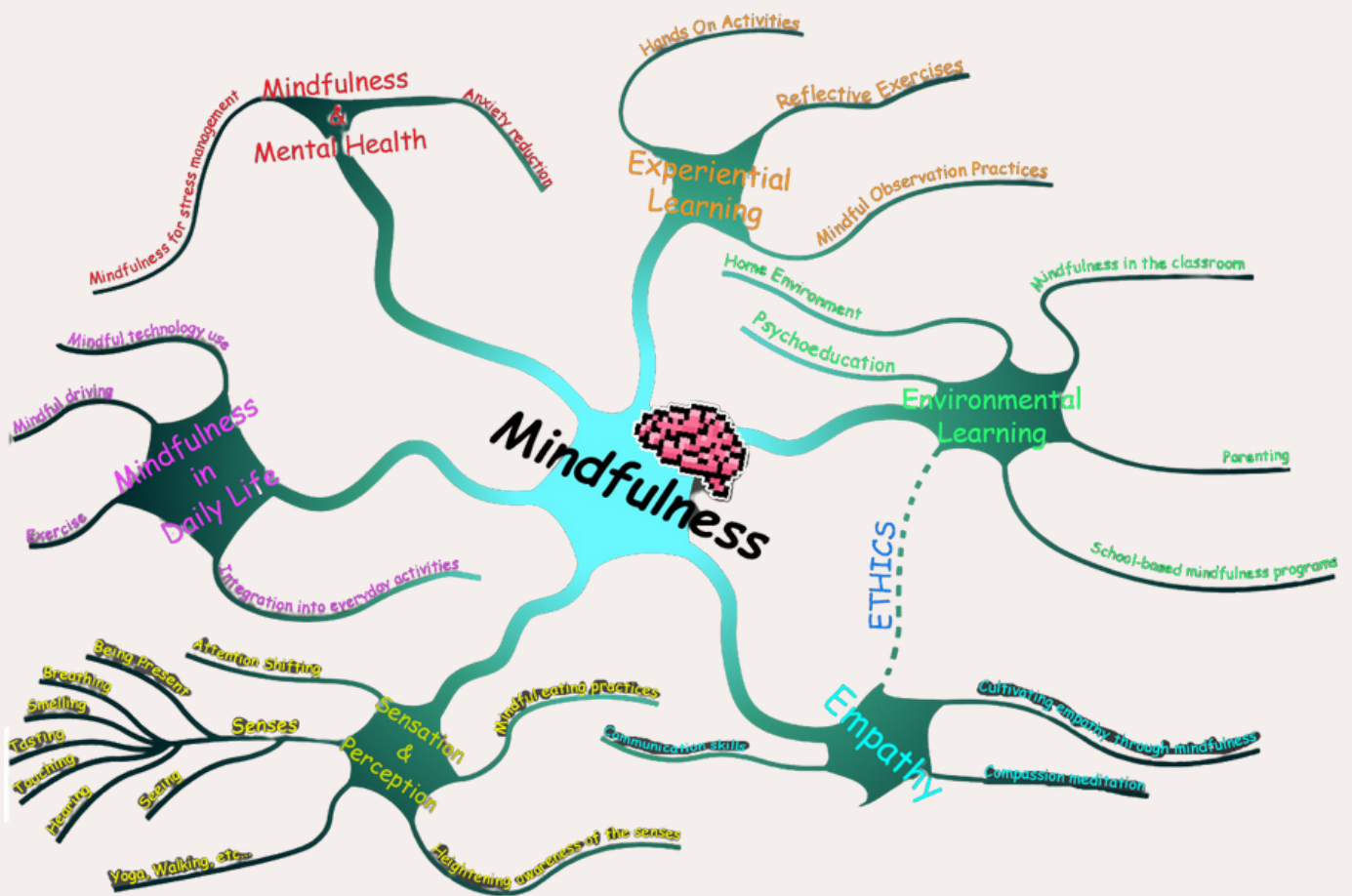
Are you constantly observing yourself being on autopilot and you wish you could stop, and live in the moment? That is what mindfulness is about, making use of our senses in the here and now, a skill that can become an automatic way of your life. You might think what is it, and where do I start? That is why we created a mind map with the help of our classmates and professor.

Mind maps were an idea of Anthony Peter "Tony" Buzan, an English author and educational consultant, who in the late 1960s showed how we can use key words, color, in a neuron-like shape to make it easy to use for learning or for setting a personal goal (used in coaching and education through today). It is more than a concept map, though certainly a more organized and clearly visual way that 'excites' our brain.

For this to happen, you will need a key idea, a concept or goal with a picture in the middle. Then, you branch it out into sub-categories of that idea with different colors and visuals. Each branch has its own smaller parts and allows us to shift our attention quickly while helping us to remember, recall, imagine, and organize our thoughts in a creative manner.



Here we created a Mind Map of what mindfulness is all about. Awareness of the other, of our own mental and physical state, and how we can be more responsible in a very busy world, can help us respect ourselves and others while reducing stress or free-floating anxiety, and even anger. Here is your 'map' for better wellbeing!



HAUNIV COUNSELING CENTER

BY DR. M. AGORASTOU
COUNSELING CENTER
COORDINATOR

“Νους υγιής εν σώματι υγιεί”

A healthy mind in a healthy body is a well-known and frequently used phrase that comes from the Latin, *mens sana in corpore sano* (Juvenalis, 10.356-64). The premise of the body and mind connection can be found in all ancient narratives, and it reveals to the modern man something that our ancestors knew very well: that you cannot claim a healthy mind unless your body is healthy too.

In modern science, this aspect has been corroborated through the advancement of our knowledge of how any psychological difficulty leaves its imprint on our nervous system, tissues, muscles, and DNA.

In other words, a conceptual understanding of an emotional issue doesn't necessarily mean that we are also healing from it. We need to incorporate all aspects of our body and mind to create long lasting and impactful change.

Contemporary mental health approaches strive towards change through embodiment, not just analysis and exploration of the issue at hand. Practices such as somatic movement, mindfulness, breathwork and expressive arts are firmly incorporated in the self-awareness process.

At the University Counseling Center we follow such a holistic model of health that addresses psychological difficulty through the right balance of mind, body and spirit, embracing the dictum "healthy mind in healthy body" (*νους υγιής εν σώματι υγιεί*). As such, the service philosophy is manifested in a twofold manner: a) towards the service users, through interventions that are designed to foster the cultivation of awareness in psychological processes and the development of skills and abilities that



enhance individual, student and community wellbeing: and b) towards the HAUniv graduate trainees who staff the Center: we strive to cultivate in our graduates those qualities that make for caring, compassionate, ethical and knowledgeable future professionals.

Student counseling services are an important thread running through a successful academic life. Targeted interventions can address the following:

- Support students who are facing personal and/or academic problems to stay and successfully complete their studies.
- Help cultivate and refine both academic and life skills necessary for personal and professional development.
- Provide insight into a student's own resources and empower self-care strategies.
- Help towards developing better employability skills.
- Lead to a fuller and richer student experience.

As part of a larger dynamic system, the Counseling Center adheres to wellbeing principles that address the multifaceted and ever-changing nature of the person in the environment. Being aware of the interconnectedness of the human condition is a necessary step to create not only individuals who thrive but also systems that are alive, flexible, and healthy.

We know that change is challenging to everyone, and the body, especially through our autonomic nervous system, which will fight for homeostasis, sameness, and routine. However, that's where our most advanced and sacred task as humans comes in; our ability to persist in the face of uncertainty - our inherent wisdom to be able to withstand the grey area of change and keep our eye on the prize; a healthy, balanced mind and body. We welcome everyone to the Counseling Center, and we look forward to serving your unique needs.



Sexual Difficulties after Sexual Assault in Women

BY KONSTANTINA
DENDRAKI, MSPSY'25

Sexual assault is a traumatic experience that can result in a myriad of psychological and emotional challenges for survivors, particularly in the realm of sexual functioning. The aftermath of such an assault often leads to a profound disruption in how survivors perceive themselves, their bodies, and their sexuality. Understanding the various sexual difficulties that survivors may face is essential in providing effective support and intervention.

One of the most common sexual difficulties experienced by survivors of sexual assault is arousal dysfunction. This can manifest as a diminished ability to become sexually aroused or experience pleasure during sexual activity. The traumatic nature of the assault can create significant barriers to arousal, as survivors may struggle to trust their partners or feel safe and comfortable in intimate situations. Additionally, the experience of sexual assault may lead to heightened anxiety or hypervigilance during sexual encounters, further inhibiting arousal and enjoyment.

Desire dysfunction is another prevalent issue among survivors of sexual assault.

The trauma of the assault can profoundly impact survivors' desire for sexual intimacy, leading to a loss of interest in sexual activity or a reluctance to engage in sexual relationships altogether. Survivors may experience feelings of guilt, shame, or fear associated with their sexuality, making it challenging to reconnect with their desires and needs.

Many survivors also report difficulties achieving orgasm, both during solo and partnered sexual activity. This may be attributed to a variety of factors, including heightened anxiety, dissociation, or a disconnection from one's body following the trauma of sexual assault. The experience of pleasure may feel overwhelming or unsafe for survivors, leading to an inability to reach orgasm or a diminished capacity to experience pleasure.

Dyspareunia, or pain during sexual intercourse, is another common sexual difficulty experienced by survivors of sexual assault. The physical and emotional trauma of the assault can result in pelvic floor dysfunction, muscle tension, and vaginal dryness, all of which contribute to pain and discomfort during penetrative sex. Survivors may also experience flashbacks or intrusive memories of the assault during sexual activity, exacerbating feelings of distress and discomfort.

In addition to these specific sexual difficulties, survivors of sexual assault may also struggle with broader issues related to intimacy, trust, and communication in their relationships.



The experience of sexual trauma can erode trust and create barriers to emotional intimacy, making it challenging for survivors to establish and maintain healthy, fulfilling relationships. Survivors may also experience feelings of shame, guilt, or self-blame related to their sexual assault, further complicating their ability to navigate intimate connections with others.

Addressing these sexual difficulties requires a comprehensive and trauma-informed approach to therapy and support. Therapeutic interventions focused on rebuilding a sense of safety, trust, and empowerment are essential for survivors to reclaim agency over their bodies and sexuality. Cognitive-behavioral techniques, mindfulness practices, and somatic experiencing can help survivors develop coping strategies for managing anxiety, dissociation, and other symptoms related to sexual trauma.

It is also important for survivors to have access to resources and support services that address the physical aspects of sexual dysfunction, such as pelvic floor therapy, gynecological care, and pain management techniques. Creating safe and supportive environments where survivors feel heard, validated, and respected is essential for facilitating healing and promoting healthy sexual relationships. In conclusion, sexual assault can have profound and long-lasting effects on survivors' sexual functioning and intimate relationships.

By acknowledging and addressing the diverse range of sexual difficulties experienced by survivors, we can work towards creating more inclusive and responsive support systems that honor survivors' experiences and promote their healing and recovery.

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Every woman experiencing incidents of sexual trauma (gender-based or domestic) can call the SOS 15900 hotline or send an email to: sos15900@isotita.gr

Visit the website metoogreece.gr. Metoogreece.gr is the State's website that collects all necessary information and emergency contact numbers for issues of sexual harassment, abuse, and domestic violence, as well as actions to combat them. The website also announces initiatives aimed at helping everyone to take action against any form of harassment and abuse.

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Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

BY SOTIA KATARA, MSPSY'25

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a neuropsychiatric disorder that affects approximately 2% of the general population and is characterized by Obsessions (images, urges or thoughts) causing anxiety and Compulsions (physical or mental acts such as hand washing, counting, praying etc.) aimed at reducing the anxiety caused by Obsessions. Individuals who suffer from this disorder might actually spend hours every day performing their compulsions and rituals, something that is causing them a significant degree of distress and impairment in their personal, social and professional life.

What causes OCD?

There are different scientific theories about the causes of OCD and honestly speaking there is no clear answer; research in this field is ongoing. However, there is strong evidence that OCD is most probably caused by biological and genetic factors as well as psychological factors supported by the theories of learning (theories of classical and operant conditioning). What is important to remember is that people with OCD do not choose to have OCD as people with diabetes do not choose to be diabetic.

Let's now have a look at some common myths surrounding OCD:

Myth No1:

"We are all a bit OCD"

Truth:

OCD is not a quirk or a personality trait, it is an illness. And NO, not everyone has it. So let us all think twice next time we are about to say "I am so OCD" just because we want to have our desk nicely organized.

Myth No2:

People with OCD should simply relax and not be so worried.

Truth: People with OCD often experience extreme fear, anxiety, disgust, and shame due to their obsessions. They perform compulsions not because they want to, but because they feel that in this way they will be temporarily relieved from their negative feelings.



Myth No3:

OCD is all about microphobia and symmetry.

Not true: OCD is a disorder with many faces. Microphobia and symmetry are just two of them, perhaps the ones which are mostly presented in the media and movies. Try to think of OCD as an ice cream which comes in different flavors. If one asked us to mention the most common obsessions, we could list the following four categories (although there are many other forms).

1. Obsessions about being responsible for causing or failing to prevent Harm (Harm OCD)

Example: “What if I hit a pedestrian with the car?”

Possible Compulsions: Repeated checking for possible accidents or reassurance seeking from family and friends that could sound like “Do you think that I hit that person while I was driving”?

2. Repugnant ‘taboo’ obsessions about sex, violence, and religion

Examples:

“What if I stab my partner with the knife while we eat?”

“What if I am sexually attracted to my best friend’s partner?”

“What if I swear in church?”

Possible Compulsions: Avoiding touching knives, avoiding friends, compulsive praying, confessing etc.

3. Symmetry, Arranging and Counting Obsessions (Just Right OCD)

Example: “Odd numbers are bad”

Possible Compulsions: mental arranging and/or counting.

4. Contamination obsessions

Example: “What if the toilet I used in the restaurant was contaminated with HIV?”

Possible compulsions: Avoid using the toilet in the future (or even avoid going to restaurants, excessive hand washing, checking etc.)

What is the recommended therapy?

OCD can potentially become chronic if it is not treated in time with a psychotherapeutic method called Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and more specifically with a method called Exposure with Response Prevention (ERP). In some cases, medication is deemed necessary at the same time as psychotherapy, but this can only be evaluated by a psychiatrist. Through ERP, individuals are gradually exposed to their fearful stimuli, and they are then asked to refrain from performing compulsions.



During the therapy, the person who suffers from OCD learns to tolerate anxiety and to ultimately accept that we cannot control everything. Acceptance of uncertainty is a key component of OCD therapy.

If you feel that anything of all the above sounds familiar, you might perhaps consider seeking professional advice from a mental health specialist who will be able to diagnose whether you meet the criteria for OCD or not. If you have already been diagnosed with OCD and you are trying to recover, we know how hard it is, but with the right therapy, hope, confidence, and personal commitment you can finally make it.

Finally, a friendly reminder for all those who do not suffer from OCD: please help eliminate stigma and increase awareness. OCD is a medical condition. It is not perfectionism, is not a bad habit, is not a trait, is not something that people choose to have. Therefore, please think before you use any phrases or jokes that might emotionally and psychologically harm other people who currently suffer.





SPRING 2024
COUNSELING
CENTER
EVENTS



The Counseling Center Presents :

**Κινητή Μονάδα Ψυχικής Υγείας
& Συνθετική Θεραπεία στην
επαρχία: Μοντελο Κοινοτικής
Ψυχικής Υγείας.**

Date: Friday 29th March

Time: 14:00-16:00

Location: Massalias 22, 6th Floor



**Presented by:
Στυλιανός Κουτελιέρης,
Ψυχοθεραπευτής & Γενικός
Διευθυντής ΕΨΥΘΕ**

The Counseling Center Presents: The Heroic Journey



When? Friday, April 12th
from 2:00-3:30pm

Where? Online via Teams

Presented By Graduate Student:

Holly Patrick



The Counseling Center Presents:

Pharmacology and Homeopathy
in Clinical Practice

When? Friday April
19th from 3:00-4:30pm

Where? Onsite 6th
floor board room

Presented By
Psychiatrist:
Dr. Dimitris
Livas

The Counseling Center Presents:

CODEPENDENCY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

When? Thursday,
April 25th from
4:00-5:30pm

Where? Online via
Teams



Presented
By Graduate Student:
Marianna Tzannou

The Counseling Center Presents: **POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY**

WHEN? MAY 14TH FROM 3:00-4:30 PM

WHERE? MASSALIAS 22, ROOM 504

**PRESENTED BY
GRADUATE STUDENT:**

**PETROS
PSYCHOUNTAKIS**





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Send your article with references APA style - (Mate, 2017)

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