



Future You

The person you want to be

Parent Guide to Future You

Content

Introduction to positive psychology

Purpose of Future You

Course description

Learning Objectives

Delivery

Lesson Format

Where to find more information

The Future You Programme is Priory Pembroke Academy's very own Positive Psychology course.

What is Positive Psychology:

Positive psychology has been described in many ways and with many words, but the commonly accepted definition of the field is this:

“Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living” (Peterson, 2008).

To push this brief description a bit further, positive psychology is a scientific approach to studying human thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, with a focus on strengths instead of weaknesses, building the good in life instead of repairing the bad, and taking the lives of average people up to “great,” instead of focusing solely on moving those who are struggling up to “normal” (Peterson, 2008).

What Positive Psychology Focuses on in a Nutshell:

Positive psychology focuses on the positive events and influences in life, including:

1. Positive experiences (like happiness, joy, inspiration, and love).
2. Positive states and traits (like gratitude, resilience, and compassion).
3. Positive institutions (applying positive principles within entire organizations and institutions).

As a field, positive psychology spends much of its time thinking about topics like character strengths, optimism, life satisfaction, happiness, wellbeing, gratitude, compassion (as well as self-compassion), self-esteem and self-confidence, hope and elevation.

These topics are studied in order to learn how to help people flourish and live their best lives.

For more information you can visit www.positivepsychology.com

Purpose of the Future You Programme

There are two main reasons why this programme has been developed:

1) Never before have we had so many insights into the science of wellbeing. Dr Laurie Santos is Professor of Psychology at Yale University and is an expert on human cognition and the cognitive biases that impede better choices. Her work, including the podcast The Happiness Lab, has been the main inspiration for this programme because she has brought these insights together in a way that can be understood by all and implemented into our daily lives to make a positive change.

The other inspiration is Paul McGee with his SUMO approach: SUMO has been used extensively around the world. It equips people with the insights, inspiration and practical tools to achieve better results in life, whilst having more fun in the process. It's an acronym that, depending on the context, can stand for '**Shut Up, Move On**' or '**Stop, Understand, Move On**'.

2) Statistics indicate that our unhappiness and mental wellbeing is in decline. Below is a small selection of some of the statistics.

Happiness among UK young people has hit 13-year low, study finds. 40% of young people now report being anxious about socialising with people, one-third say they don't know how to make new friends and 35% say they've never felt more alone, a study by the Prince's Trust has revealed. The Guardian, February 2022

The review of young people's wellbeing has found that almost 7 per cent of ten- to-15-year-olds in the UK, the equivalent of 306,000 children, are not happy with their lives, compared to 173,000 children ten years ago. Nursery world, August 2021

Britons are LESS happy than during pandemic: More people now are worry about their health, feel lonely and are stuck in unhappy relationships. (Mailonline, August 2022)

Action for happiness has a set of recourse for primary schools and adults but is yet to develop something for secondary schools. With their permission, the 10 keys to happier living principles are being used to introduce the Future You programme to year 9.

Course Description

This course will teach students a set of scientifically-validated strategies for living a more satisfying life. Throughout the course, we'll explore what new results in psychological science teach us about how to be happier, how to feel less stressed, and how to flourish more. We'll then have a chance to put these scientific findings into practice by building the sorts of habits that will allow us to live a happier and more fulfilling life. We'll also discuss how to apply these findings beyond our own lives to make our communities and our planet better too.

Year 9

Over term 5 and 6 students are introduced to the 10 keys of Happiness. One form time a week, students discuss each of the keys and how they can make changes in their own lives to improve their happiness and wellbeing.

Year 10

The course begins by introducing some misconceptions that people have about what makes for a satisfying life, showing that many things we think matter for our happiness such as wealth and material possessions simply don't. In fact, recent studies suggest that these goals may even undermine our sense of wellbeing. We then explore the psychological biases and features of our mind that lead us astray, biases that make it hard for us to see what makes us happy and make us seek out the wrong sorts of things. We then discuss what psychology research shows us we really should strive for to live a satisfying life. Then we talk about how to put these new life goals into practice. We will also talk about how to prevent procrastination and how to harness our automatic processes to better achieve our goals. The course ends by thinking critically about how to use what we've learned both to hack into our own happiness and to make a difference in our communities.

Year 11

Is more relaxed with a set of videos to watch and discuss based on the SUMO principles delivered by Ed Hollamby.

Learning Objectives

- Learn to identify some of the most common misconceptions about what makes us happy.
- Recognise the cognitive biases that make it hard for us to see what makes us happy and cause us to seek out the wrong sorts of things for achieving well-being.
- Discuss and practice evidence-based behaviours that psychology research suggests can help us to live a more satisfying life.
- (In year 10) Implement a set of “rewirements”: evidence-based activities that are known to increase well-being over time.
- Explore how to continue applying these findings in our own lives and in our communities.

Lesson format

Every lesson will have the same format throughout the academic year so staff can feel confident with their delivery and students know what to expect.

Year 9

Introduction, What the research says, Discussion/notes, Action ideas (these will be reflected on at the start of the following week)

Year 10

Introduction, What the research says, Discussion/notes, Brain Rewirement task (these will be reflected on at the start of the following week)

Year 11

Watch video and discuss

Feedback from previous students is that they do not all feel comfortable in a group discussion so it is important for them to be able to make notes on their ideas instead of voicing them out loud.

Notebooks

At the start of each session, students should be asked to write the heading in their book. Throughout the session, they should be encouraged (but not forced) to write their thoughts and ideas on this topic down, reminding them that no one else will read what they have written, unless they choose to share.

At the end of the session, students should write down their action/rewirement for the week.

Where to find more information

www.actionforhappiness.org

www.thesumoguy.com

www.psychologyandthegoodlife.com