POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

Connecting Positive Youth Development to Intervention Science

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I. Foundations of Positive Youth Development

II. Connecting PYD to Intervention Science

III. Three Positive Development Interventions

I. Foundations of Positive Youth Development

- Developmental systems theory
  - Human development is a product of dynamic or fused relations among levels of organization
  - Person and context cannot be separated
  - Focus: the dynamic relations between person and context

Lerner, 2004
I. Foundations of Positive Youth Development

- **Plasticity** = the potential for systematic change
  - Exists across the life span
  - *Relative plasticity* because there is potential for both constancy and change
  - Coaction across multiple levels of the system can act to promote or constrain change

- The potential relative plasticity of ontogenetic change is a fundamental strength of all humans

- **Positive youth development** =
  - the development of mutually adaptive and beneficial relations between youth and the contexts in which they grow up
PYD: The Lerner Model

1. Outcomes: The 5 Cs (plus 1)
2. Process: Self-regulation
3. Practice: The Big Three

1. PYD Outcomes: Lerner’s 5 Cs Model

1. Competence  The ability to act effectively in school, in social situations, and at work
2. Confidence  An internal sense of overall self-worth and efficacy
3. Connection  Positive bonds with people and social institutions
4. Character  Respect for society and cultural rules, an inner moral compass
5. Caring  A sense of sympathy and empathy for others and a commitment to social justice
6. Contribution  The capacity to participate effectively by caring for themselves and by giving of themselves at home, in the community, and in civic life.

Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2008
3. PYD Practice: Lerner’s “The Big Three”

Give youth opportunities to:

1. Have sustained, positive interactions with adults***
2. Participate in structured activities that enable them to develop valued life skills
3. Become leaders of valued community activities.

4. Example of PYD Program: 4-H Clubs

- 6 million youth; 611,800 volunteers
- Provides experiences that develop critical life skills
- Focus areas: science, leadership, healthy living
- Caring adult volunteers support youth to
  - work collaboratively
  - take the lead on their own projects
  - set their own goals

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**What 4-H Project Do You Want to Grow With?**

2015-2016 Texas 4-H Club Project List

The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program offers more than 40 projects that youth can participate in. These projects are found throughout thirteen focus areas within the 4-H project list. Annually, a 4-H member is required to participate in at least one project, but can select more based on their area of interest. Have a look below and see what project you want to learn more about and become a leader in!

**ANIMALS**
- Beef Cattle
- Small & Companion Animals
- Dairy Cattle
- Dog Care & Training
- Goats (Dairy, Meat, or Hair)
- Horse
- Poultry (Chickens & Turkeys)
- Rabbits
- Sheep
- Swine
- Veterinary Science

**BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE**
- Aquatic Science
- Biological Sciences
- Entomology
- Meat Science

**CIVIC EDUCATION**
- Citizenship
- Global Education & Awareness

**COMMUNICATION & ARTS**
- Theater & Performance Arts

**CONSUMER & FAMILY SCIENCE**
- Clothing & Textiles
- Consumer Education
- Family Life Education
- Housing & Home Environment

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**
- Energy
- Natural Resources
- Outdoor Education & Living Skills
- Range Science
- Shooting Sports
- Water Conservation & Education
- Wildlife & Fisheries

**FOOD & NUTRITION**
- Foods & Nutrition

**HEALTH**
- Healthy Lifestyles (Health)

**LEADERSHIP**
- Community Service
- Public Speaking
- Workforce Preparation/Careers
- Youth Entrepreneurship

**PERSONAL SAFETY**
- Bicycle
- Safety

**PLANT SCIENCE**
- Horticulture
- Junior Master Gardener
- Soil & Crop Science

**TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING**
- Photograph/Video
- Robotics
- Aerospace
- Science, Engineering, & Technology

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II. Connecting PYD to Intervention Science
II. Connecting PYD to intervention science

- **Treatment** = reducing dysfunction when it occurs
- **Prevention** = reducing the likelihood of dysfunction occurring in the future
- **Promotion** = promoting adaptive functioning in key developmental domains

- (PYD, positive psychology, social and emotional learning, social competence promotion)
PYD Interventions: The Kurtines Model

1. Outcomes: Positive Life Course Change
3. Practice: Participatory co-learning, transformative activities, mastery experiences

Identity = steering mechanism for the life course

1. PYD Outcome: Life course change

Life course = path through life

1. Constructed by the individual through choices and actions
2. Established pathways with socially sanctioned timetables for life transitions
3. Increased likelihood of a life course turning point

Kurtines et al., 2008b
2. PYD Processes: Self-Discovery and Self-Construction

Self-Discovery

- The “true self” is discovered and actualized
- Depends on insight into self
  - 
  - *Flow* = balanced tension between skill and challenge
  - *Feelings of personal expressiveness*
  - *Self-actualization* = reaching highest potential

Feelings of Personal Expressiveness

- unusually intense involvement
- special fit or meshing with the activity
- intensely being alive
- completeness or fulfillment
- impression that this is what they are meant to do
- a feeling that this is who they really are

Self-Construction

- The self is created through choices made from available alternatives
- Depends on the development of critical cognitive and communicative competencies
  - Information-seeking
  - Critical thinking and discussion
  - Control and responsibility

Eichas, Meca, Montgomery, & Kurtines, 2014
Schwartz, Kurtines, & Montgomery, 2005; Waterman, 2011
Berzonsky, 2011; Kurtines et al., 1995
3. PYD Practice: Participatory transformative approach

- **Participatory co-learning**
  - Problem posing = identifying the right problem to solve
  - Critical problem solving = identifying the right solution

Kurtines et al., 2008b

3. PYD Practice: Participatory transformative approach

- **Transformative activities**
  - Implementing the solution (i.e., taking action)
  - Possibly solves the problem
  - Creates mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997)

Kurtines et al., 2008b

III. Three Positive Development Interventions

**Study 1: The Changing Lives Program**

*Alternative High Schools of Miami-Dade County Public Schools*

Miami-Dade County, Florida
1. Changing Lives Program

- Need for counseling services in alternative high schools
- Community partnership
- Miami Youth Development Project

CLP group counseling in the Miami alternative high schools
- Students came from low-income, inner-city neighborhoods with high rates of crime and violence
- Had below-average school performance
- Sample: 209 African-American and Hispanic adolescents
- 14-18 years old
- Design
  - Pretest, Posttest, and 4-month follow-up
  - Non-randomized comparison group

Kurtines et al., 2008a

Eichas, Montgomery, Meca, & Kurtines, in press
Quantitative Measures

- **Mediators**
  - **Self-Discovery**, Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ, 14 items, Waterman, 1993)
    - Feelings of personal expressiveness associated with life goal pursuit
    - Example item: "When I do these activities, I feel like it's what I was meant to do" (α = .91).
  - **Self-Construction**, Personal Responsibility Measure (8 items, Ferre-Weider et al., 2002)
    - Sense of control over and responsibility for actions/consequences associated with life change goals
    - Example item: "How much control do you have over your decisions and actions? (α = .69).

- **Positive Outcome**
  - **Identity Synthesis**, Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (Rosenthal, Gumey, & Moore, 1981)
    - Example item: "I know what kind of person I am" (α = .77).

- **Problem Behavior**
  - Behavior Problem Index (28 items, Peterson & Zill, 1986)
    - Internalizing problems. example item: "I cried too much" (α = .81).
    - Externalizing problems. example item: "I was impulsive, or acted without thinking" (α = .85).

PEAQ-Qualitative Extension: Most Important Life Goal

1. Three Life Goals
   - "We would like you to describe your three most important life goals. The goals that you describe should be your most important life goals. Focus on your three most important life goals when you ask yourself the question, 'What do I want to do with my life?'"

2. Most Important Life Goal
   - "Would you please tell us which of these life goals you consider your most important life goal, that is, the goal that comes to mind MOST when you ask yourself the question, 'What do I want to do with my life?'"

3. Meaning of Most Important Life Goal
   - "What does this life goal mean to you?"

4. Significance of Most Important Life Goal
   - "Why is this significant or important to you? How significant or important is this to you?"
Most Important Life Goal meaning and significance

- Majority (92%) of life goal narratives did not show integration of life goal and self
- Most (75%) life goal narratives were self-satisfying and focused on personal gain
- “Travel a lot. Explore the world. Having freedom. Free my mind and be like an eagle.”

Richard, Meca, Eichas, Kurtines, Albrecht, & Goodletty, 2012

Outcome Mediation Cascade Evaluation Model

- Structural equation modeling
- Covariate-adjusted change
- Age, gender were covariates
- Indirect effects assessed using Monte Carlo method for calculating confidence intervals

Eichas, Montgomery, Meca, & Kurtines, in press

Study 3: N = 209

Most Important Life Goal meaning and significance

- A much smaller percentage (8%) of life goal narratives showed integration the life goal and the self
- A fit between life goal elements and personal interests, talents, and potentials
- “Being a Nurse means a lot to me because I always have liked helping others. I have always known I would be good at taking care of others”
- “I grew up in a family where if someone gets hurt my father would take care of that. I want to help people, I inherited it and I am meant to do it.”

Richard, Meca, Eichas, Kurtines, Albrecht, & Goodletty, 2012
Summary of findings

- Promising pattern of outcomes
  - Self-Construction
  - Self-Discovery
- Qualitative change in sense of identity
- Links to problem behaviors (not targeted by the intervention)
- Limitations:
  - No long-term follow-up, no randomization

Study 2: The Miami Adult Development Project

Florida International University
Miami, Florida

Miami Adult Development Project

- Goal: a “ready-at-hand” intervention for college students
  - Can be implemented within a college course to help young adults focus on their future
  - Easily exported and adapted
  - Identity development and mental health
  - Peer-facilitated instead of counselor-facilitated

Miami Adult Development Project

- Why college students?
  - Much work on PYD, but very little work on positive adult development or positive emerging adult development
  - Despite increased complexity of the challenge of forming a sense of identity
  - Leaving structure of childhood and adolescence = greater freedom = greater potential for distress
  - But also potential for positive development

Meca, Eichas, Quintana et al., 2014
Miami Adult Development Project

- Opportunities for supporting positive identity development occur throughout the transition to adulthood
- from adolescence through young/emerging adulthood

Sample:
- 141 undergraduate seniors, ages 19–29 years (M = 23.05, S.D. = 2.22)
  - 67% Hispanic, 13% African-American, 9% White/Non-Hispanic; 34% not born in U.S.
- Design:
  - Pretest, Posttest
  - Nonrandomized comparison group that took the class without the group experience

Example Course Schedule

Without group sessions:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
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<td>8/30</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>9/6</td>
<td>Misconceptions of Emerging Adulthood</td>
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<td>Characteristics of Emergent Adults (cont'd)</td>
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Meca, Eichas, Quintana et al., 2014
M-ADP: Direct and indirect effects

Measures

• Identity Distress
  "Identity Distress" Identity Distress Survey (Berman, Montgomery, & Kurtines, 2004); "To what degree have you been very upset, distressed, or worried over any of the following issues in your life?"
  - example item: "Long-term goals (e.g., finding a good job, being in a romantic relationship, etc.)" (α = .83).

• Identity Consolidation
  "Identity Commitment", Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (16 items, Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995)
  - example item: "There has never been a need to question my sense of right and wrong." (α = .77).

• Identity Synthesis
  "Identity Synthesis", Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981)
  - example item: "I know what kind of person I am." (α = .79).

• Well-Being
  Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (14 items, Keyes, 2005); "In a typical month how much of the time did you feel ..."
  - example item: "interested in life?" (α = .85)
  - example item: "you like most parts of your personality?" (α = .82)
  - example item: "you belonged to a community (like a social group, your school, or your neighborhood)?" (α = .76).

Model Evaluation

Before model evaluation, data were assessed for outliers, nonnormality, and pretest equivalence between intervention and comparison groups. An outlier was defined by a leverage score.

FIGURE 2

Outcome Mediation Evaluation Model

- Structural equation modeling
- Covariate-adjusted change
- Factor structure, loadings, intercepts constrained to be equal across time
- Instructor was a covariate
- Indirect effects assessed using bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals

M-ADP: Direct and indirect effects

Indirect Effects:
Path A*Path B*Path C = .15 [.02, .47]
### M-ADP: Dosage (Attendance) analyses

**Dosage analyses:**
- Attendance predicted Identity Consolidation (path B), $B = .20$
- Attendance predicted Well-Being (path C), $B = -.15$ (direct)
- Attendance predicted Well-Being (Path B*Path F), product = .18 (indirect)

### Summary of findings
- **Promising pattern of outcomes**
- Reduction in identity distress
- Indirect effects on identity consolidation and well-being
- **Potential links between identity development and mental health among university students**
- **Limitations:**
  - No follow-up, no randomization, no qualitative assessment

### 3. Making Career and Education Choices Workshop
- **Goal:** an intervention that helps nontraditional college students prepare for college-to-work transition
- An ongoing support service for students who do not have access to traditional university resources
- **Easily exported and adapted**
- Identity development and career development
- **6-week intervention facilitated by graduate students**
3. Making Career and Education Choices Workshop

- Why nontraditional students (adult students)?

  - Identity development is a life-long process of self-integration that is renewed at every life stage (Erikson, 1959).

  - Renewed identity work in adulthood can be prompted by life events, both expectable and unexpected (Marcia, 2002), including a return to formal education in adulthood (Clausen, 1998).

Eichas, Meca, Dennard, & Stickley, in preparation

3. Making Career and Education Choices Workshop

- Opportunities for supporting positive identity development occur throughout the life course

  - during life transitions.

Eichas, Meca, Dennard, & Stickley, in preparation

3. Making Career and Education Choices Workshop

- Juniors/seniors at a University Center on a community college campus

  - University Center = partnership between a community college and a university (or several) to provide access to higher education in underserved communities

Eichas, Meca, Dennard, & Stickley, in preparation

3. Making Career and Education Choices Workshop

- Sample:

  - 45 undergraduate college students

  - 20-55 (M = 32.33, S.D. = 10.95, Median = 28)

  - 47% first in family to get bachelor's degree

  - 64% worked full-time

  - 31% had children; 24% were single parents

  - 27% received GED/high school equivalent instead of standard high school diploma

  - Design

    - Pretest, Posttest; randomized control group

Eichas, Meca, Dennard, & Stickley, in preparation
Table 1. Making Career and Education Choices Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Theme</th>
<th>Journal Exercises</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Big Picture</td>
<td>(completed in group) Identify most important life course events and turning points and co-construct life stories by sharing with the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Present</td>
<td>Solve a hypothetical career dilemma</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify a personal career/education dilemma and apply critical problem solving strategies to the personal career/education dilemma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Future</td>
<td>Identify most important long-term career goal, break this goal into activities essential for achieving the goal, and the feelings (e.g., flow) associated with engaging in the activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Life Change</td>
<td>Identify a life change goal for reaching the long-term career goal.</td>
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<td>Identify obstacles to making the life change.</td>
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<td>Apply critical problem solving about actions to take to accomplish the life change goal.</td>
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<td>5. Sources of Support</td>
<td>Identify sources of social support available for reaching goals and how to enhance this support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What Works</td>
<td>Review work by evaluating progress towards goals and identifying actions that seemed to have worked so far.</td>
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MCEC: Indirect effects

Academic SOC is intentional self-regulation in the academic domain (Geldhof, Little, & Hawley, 2012).

- It involves choosing academic goals to pursue,
- creating paths by which to reach chosen academic goals, and
- creating new academic goal-paths when previous paths become blocked.

Career agency is the “perceived capacity for self-reflection and forethought to intentionally initiate, control, and manage career transitions” (Rottinghaus et al., 2012, p. 130).
Measures

- **Identity Commitment**
  - Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (25 items, Luyckx et al., 2008)
  - Commitment Making: example item: "I have decided on the direction I want to follow in life" (α = .84; Raykov’s ρ = .91).
  - Identification with Commitment: example item: "My plans for the future offer me a sense of security" (α = .72; Raykov’s ρ = .78).

- **Academic Selection, Optimization, and Compensation** (Intentional Self-Regulation in the Academic Domain)
  - Academic Selection/Optimization: example items: "I can easily prioritize my academic goals," and "I obtain the resources needed to reach my academic goals" (Raykov’s ρ = .91).
  - Academic Compensation: example item: "If one way of pursuing an academic goal doesn’t work, I try another" (Raykov’s ρ = .79).

- **Career Agency**
  - Career Agency, Career Futures Inventory-Revised, (10 items, Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012)
  - Example item: "I can perform a successful job search" (α = .89). Two parcels were created using a balancing strategy (Little, 2013).

Outcome Mediation Evaluation Model

- Structural equation modeling with a Bayesian estimator
- Covariate-adjusted change
- Factor structure, loadings, intercepts constrained to be equal across time
- Indirect effects assessed using Bayesian credibility intervals

Summary of findings

- Promising pattern of outcomes
  - Increase in identity commitment
  - Potential links between identity commitment and positive change in academic and career domains

- Limitations:
  - No follow-up, small sample, no qualitative assessment
Challenges for the future (1)

• How do we document “qualitative” intervention change
  • subjective experience of the content, structure, and organization of self and identity and its meaning and significance?

Challenges for the future (1)

• A strictly quantitative approach cannot capture changes in the meaning and significance of critical experiential components of self and identity
  • Because the changes are subjective in nature (e.g., subjective meaning and significance).
  • Because they are nonlinear, discontinuous, and not easily quantifiable (i.e., transformational change).
  • (And a strictly qualitative approach cannot estimate multiple pathways of intervention effects—direct, mediation, cascade.)

Solution: integrate qualitative and quantitative analysis

• Use qualitative methods to elicit narrative data from participants and identify theoretically meaningful response properties
  • Build quantitative models of intervention outcome to evaluate the probability of the emergence of properties identified through qualitative analysis
Relational Data Analysis (RDA)

- Multi-phasic approach to analyzing free response data, based on grounded theory

1. Theory neutral coders identify all of the unique content properties in a particular data set
   - by breaking the data down into the largest possible set of basic elements
   - each element represents the most basic conceptually meaningful units of content from an ordinary language perspective.

Example: Most Important Life Goal

Ordinary Language Categories (identified by theory-neutral coders)

Hierarchical and Temporal Structural Organization (identified by theory-laden coders)
Relational Data Analysis (RDA)


- If acceptable, use as outcome in statistical models with appropriate estimator for ordinal or nominal outcome data (e.g., WLSMV in Mplus)

Example: Most Important Life Goal, meaning and significance

Psychometric analyses

- Level 1
  1. Theory-laden = 96% agreement (Fleiss’s Kappa = .84)
  2. Theory-neutral = 92% agreement (Fleiss’s Kappa = .71)
  3. Theory-laden/theory-neutral: 94% agreement

Level 2

1. Theory-laden = 86% agreement (Fleiss’s Kappa = .69)
2. Theory-neutral = 77% agreement (Fleiss’s Kappa = .54)
3. Theory-laden/theory-neutral: 81% agreement

Relational Data Analysis (RDA)

- Qualitative Extension Method: add an open-ended response component to elicit linguistic expressions of meaning and significance of life course experiences

  - Examples:
    - Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire: meaning/significance of most important life goal
    - Academic Motivation Scale: meaning/significance of going to college
    - Possible Selves Questionnaire: meaning/significance of most important future possible self
    - Transformative Goal Attainment Scale: meaning/significance of most important life change goal
    - Can do this with any fixed response measure (DIDS, U-MICS, ISI, IDS, etc.)

Eichas, Montgomery, Meca, & Kurtines, in press

Rinaldi, Meca, Eichas, Kurtines, Albrecht, & Goodletty, 2012
Challenges for the future (1)

- Allows us to **richly reflect rather than reduce** subjective experiences of self and identity (i.e., meaning and significance)
- Allows us to identify qualitative **transformational** change in self and identity (not just increase/decrease in a particular dimension)
- Allows us to **discover** properties we would otherwise not know to look for (quantitative measures are limited to the imagination of the researcher)
- Allows us to **integrate** evaluation of transformational change in meaning and significance of self and identity with estimation of multiple pathways of intervention effects.

References

References


References

