

February 2023

MAXIMIZING POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Do you tend to look on the sunny side, or do you see a future filled with dark, stormy skies? A growing body of research suggests that having a positive outlook can benefit your physical health. Scientists are working to better understand the links between your attitude and your body. They're finding some evidence that emotional wellness can be improved by developing certain skills.

Having a positive outlook doesn't mean you never feel negative emotions, such as sadness or anger, says Dr. Barbara L. Fredrickson, a psychologist and expert on emotional wellness at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. *"All emotions—whether positive or negative—are adaptive in the right circumstances. The key seems to be finding a balance between the two,"* she says.

"Positive emotions expand our awareness and open us up to new ideas, so we can grow and add to our toolkit for survival," Fredrickson explains. "But people need negative emotions to move through difficult situations and respond to them appropriately in the short term. Negative emotions can get us into trouble, though, if they're based on too much rumination about the past or excessive worry about the future, and they're not really related to what's happening in the here and now."

People who are emotionally well, experts say, have fewer negative emotions and are able to bounce back from difficulties faster. This quality is called resilience. Another sign of emotional wellness is being able to hold onto positive emotions longer and appreciate the good times. Developing a sense of meaning and purpose in life—and focusing on what's important to you—also contributes to emotional wellness.

Being open to positive change is a key to emotional wellness. "Sometimes people think that emotions just happen, kind of like the weather," Fredrickson says. "But research suggests that we can have some control over which emotions we experience." As mounting research suggests, having a positive mindset might help to improve your physical health as well.

Source: NIH—National Institutes of Health



IMPROVING POSITIVITY

How often do you feel thankful for the good things in your life?

Studies suggest that making a habit of noticing what's going well in your life could have health benefits. Create positive emotions by being thankful every day:

- **Take a moment.** Think about the positive things that happened during the day.
- **Journal.** Make a habit of writing down things you're grateful for. Try listing several things.
- **Savor your experiences.** Try to notice positive moments as they are happening.
- **Relive the good times.** Relive positive moments later by thinking about them or sharing them with others.
- **Write to someone.** Write a letter to someone you feel thankful toward. You don't have to send it.
- **Make a visit.** Tell someone you're grateful for them in person.

National Health Observances:



Each month, we feature select National Health Observances (NHOs) that highlight important health & life issues affecting people every day.

- **American Heart Month:** Sponsored by the American heart Association to raise awareness about heart health. Objectives are aimed at improving cardiovascular health and reducing deaths from heart disease and stroke.
- **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month:** This is an opportunity for people to become more aware of how to build and sustain healthy relationships
- **National Caregivers Day:** February 17th honors individuals who selflessly provide personal care, and physical- and emotional support to those who need it most

Mental Health Minute



Managing Stress During the Ongoing Pandemic

The changes that have happened because of the Pandemic continue to affect us. Here is a simple self-check-in:

- Take breaks to unwind through yoga, music, gardening, or new hobbies
- Safely connect with family and friends to get support and share feelings
- Take care of your body and get moving to lessen fatigue, anxiety, or sadness
- Treat yourself to healthy foods and get enough sleep

LIVE MONTHLY WEBINAR:

Minimizing Worry to Maximize your Life

Date: 2/8/2023 | Time: 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM EST

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