

Tell us what you think!



ENHANCING POSITIVE AWARENESS

Check out the evidence!

We tend to think of emotions as good bad or positive/negative - but **ALL emotions** serve an important purpose. What we call **negative emotions** refer to emotions which are **uncomfortable or difficult**.

What is the negativity bias?

Our brains are hard-wired to pay attention to negative information⁵. This is called the **negativity bias**.

The negativity bias has an evolutionary explanation:



To readily recognize threats to our survival in order to keep us out of harm's way.



However, this means that our minds tend to pick up negative information and quickly label it as important,



which leads to even **more** negative thoughts.

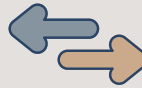
This can be harmful to us, since it may lead us to getting **stuck** in this **cycle of negative thinking!**³

How do we combat our negativity bias?

Often, we think about positive and negative emotions as opposites:



if I have a negative feeling,



it means that I have no positive feelings,

and vice versa.

Almost everyone works to feel less bad... but we often don't realize that in order to feel less bad, we need to **focus on feeling good**.



As **positive emotions** go **UP**, **negative emotions** tend to go **DOWN**.



If we only try decreasing our negative emotions, it's **extremely difficult** and can make it worse.

One way to decrease the negative is **TO BUILD** our experience of **positive emotions** – which will give some relief and decrease the negativity bias.⁶



Building our awareness of the positivity in our lives can allow us to:

Experience more positive emotions

Decrease our focus on negative emotions



Research effectiveness

Research shows that **increasing our ability to notice the positive** things that happen to us and our own positive actions can:



protect us against the harmful effects of stress



reduce depressive symptoms



increase our overall well-being^{1, 2, 4}

3 GOOD THINGS:

This activity purposefully **brings our attention to the positive events** in our lives, both little and big, that happen throughout the day;



Try writing down 3 good things that happened in the last 24 hours.



so that we can acknowledge and savour the feeling of experiencing them.



I had my favourite breakfast, helped a partner/family member.



Think about how you felt in those moments and savour that feeling!

View the [Three Good Things](#) resource!

Listen to the [Coming to your Senses](#) guided audios!

MINDFUL MOMENTS

This activity involves using the five senses to ground ourselves in the present moment, take a pause, and accept what we're experiencing.

For example, focusing on the sounds or smells around us or how our clothes feel on our body.

Bringing our attention back to the present moment using our senses

gives us a chance to notice positive things that are happening



and helps us accept what we're experiencing in this moment.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

These are small acts of kindness for the people around you,



View the [Random Acts of Kindness](#) resource!

whether they are a part of your community, school, work or home.



For instance, praising a co-worker on their presentation, or asking about a family members' day!

ACTING ON VALUES

Another way to enhance social connection is by acting on our values to make a **positive difference**.



Start by identifying a cause that you care about and take **meaningful action**.



View the [Acting on Values](#) resource!



View the [Gratitude Journaling](#) resource!

Learn more about the **benefits of keeping a gratitude journal** and get started!

GRATITUDE BUILDING



Regularly writing in a gratitude journal can make us **more aware of all that we are thankful for** in our lives. This can include noticing and appreciating...



...all the positive things that happen to us (e.g., someone holding the door as we enter the lecture hall).

...all of our **OWN** positive contributions to the world, no matter how big or small (e.g., helped a classmate).



REMEMBER: All emotions have their importance. Even our negative emotions can tell us what we need to know about our lives and circumstances.

FEEDBACK & CONTACT INFORMATION

