**Positive Psychology Summer Institute 2002 Short Research Summaries**

**Patricia Bruininks Summary: The Differences between High and Low Hopefuls**  
Participants were presented with two vignettes designed to elicit hopefulness. These vignettes contained positive and negative information, after which participants rated how hopeful, optimistic, worried, and fearful they were for the anticipated outcome. Previous research has shown that high hopeful people (as determined by the Hopefulness Measure) not only report higher levels of hope, but are also less affected by both positive and negative information than low hopefuls. However, both high and low hopefuls report the same amount of negative affect. This study seeks to determine the physiology related to these differences by measuring arousal levels, the valence of that arousal, and parasympathetic activity.  
  
**Belinda Campos Summary: The Love of Humanity: Evidence for Prosocial Collective Emotion**  
In two studies, the authors provide initial evidence that Love of Humanity is a distinct emotional experience of love toward all people. In Study 1, Love of Humanity experience uniquely related to reports of connection toward all people, believing that people are inherently good and wanting to engage in kind, compassionate behavior towards others. In Study 2, a self-report measure of the disposition to experience love with family, friends, romantic partners and humanity showed that love of humanity was somewhat distinct from other love experiences. Future research will examine social consequences associated with the disposition to feel Love of Humanity.  
  
**Anne Conway Summary: Do Experiences of Maternal Positive Affect Promote Early Childhood Strengths?**  
In this study exploring the positive psychology of early childhood, I examined whether maternal positive affect during mother-infant play predicted emotion regulation and behavioral competence in the early preschool years. One hundred and eighty-five infants at 7 months participated in free-play with their mothers; the children's emotional and behavioral competencies were assessed later, at 33 months. Results were that maternal positive affective expressions during infancy predicted emotional regulation and behavioral competence in the early preschool years. Furthermore, emotion regulation abilities mediated the relationship between maternal positive affect and behavioral outcomes. These findings suggest that maternal positive affect is an important contributor to early childhood strengths.  
  
**Adam B. Cohen, Benjamin Tiede and Christopher Peterson Summary: Strengths and Virtues Among Parents of Cancer Patients**  
One way people develop strengths is through hardship. We measured strengths among 27 parents of cancer patients and among a control group. Cancer parents were higher on self-regulation and teamwork, but lower on kindness, learning, spirituality, honesty, and gratitude. The coherence of cancer parents' essays about their child having cancer was related to: curiosity, mercy, social intelligence, playfulness, and gratitude. In cancer parents, higher levels of well-being were related to: kindness, learning, spirituality, honesty, and gratitude. Future work will explore these issues following cancer parents over time and we will increase participation by shortening the VIA Inventory..  
  
**Katherine Dahlsgaard, Christopher Peterson, and Martin Seligman Summary: The VIA Inventory of Strengths: A New Measure of Character Strengths for Kids**  
  
Pilot data were presented for the VIA Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA-Y), a new self-report measure of character strengths. Data was collected from a sample of over 300 adolescents. Reliability of each of the scales for the 23 strengths measured was fair to good. The validity of the measure, with regard to what teachers nominated as a subject's most characteristic strengths versus how the subject actually scored, was also promising. The measure found gender and developmental differences among the sample: Girls tended to score higher than boys on strengths, and older subjects tended to score higher than younger ones.  
  
**Lisa M. Edwards Summary: An Investigation of Factors that Contribute to Subjective Well-Being in Latino Adolescents**  
Little scholarly time or energy has been spent investigating strengths in the lives of minority adolescents. The present study was designed to explore factors that contribute to subjective well-being in Latino adolescents. Based on a review of the literature about Latino values and cultural characteristics, a model of subjective well-being was proposed which included perceived family and social support, religious faith, hope, optimism, and biculturalism. Preliminary results with 192 middle and high school Latino participants suggest positive, significant relationships between all of the measured variables. Once additional data are collected, the model of subjective well-being will be further tested and refined.   
  
**Jennifer Emilia Eells: Writing and Relationships**  
This study gathered preliminary data on the effects of writing about personal relationships. Participants wrote one-time, for thirty minutes about a randomly assigned topic: trauma, control, or relationship. Mood, engagement, relationship quality, health and well-being were assessed prior to and two weeks after writing. With permission, partners were briefly interviewed about relationship functioning. Writing condition had marginal to significant effects on participants' experience of meaning in writing, and mood immediately after writing. Condition also influenced illness, relationship fitness, mood, reports of positive change due to partner involvement, and number of activities done together, all reported at Time 2 assessments.  
  
**Gian C. Gonzaga Summary: Love and Commitment in Intimate Relationships**  
Much research has documented the deleterious effects negative emotions have on intimate relationships. My research has focused on how positive emotions affect intimate relationships.  
Specifically, I have found that the experience and expression of love relate to a) feeling emotions that motivate approach to and maintaining proximity with an intimate partner, b) a distinct expressive signal that communicates love between partners, c) social cognitive processes that help individuals suppress the thought of romantic alternatives, d) commitment enhancing behaviors, and e) physiological markers of commitment. These findings suggest that love promotes commitment between intimate partners.  
  
**Joshua Greene Summary: Emotion and Cognition in Moral Judgment**  
The longstanding rationalist tradition in moral psychology emphasizes the role of reason in moral judgment. A more recent trend places increased emphasis on emotion. While both reason and emotion are likely to play important roles in moral judgment, relatively little is known about their neural correlates, the nature of their interaction, and the factors that modulate their respective behavioral influences. Our research using neuroimaging (fMRI) suggests that moral dilemmas vary systematically in the extent to which they engage emotional vs. reasoning processes in the brain and that these variations in neural activity influence people's moral judgments.  
  
**Lene Arnett Jensen Summary: A Cultural-Developmental Approach to Moral Psychology**  
The aim of my presentation was to argue that the study of morality is central to positive psychology because the quest to make moral sense of experiences and the quest to be good are fundamental to the human condition. Furthermore, I aimed to start a conversation about two questions: 1) To what extent do we try to apply moral values universally? 2) What methods do we use in order to be sensitive to people's actual moral experiences? I presented my cultural-developmental approach to the study of moral psychology as well as four studies. These studies focused on: 1) Differences in moral conceptions between religiously liberal and conservative groups in India and the U.S. 2) Cultural and developmental patterns in morality in a study of children, adolescents, and adults who belong to diverse American religious cultures. 3) A diary study of the everyday moral experiences of American adults ages 18-27. 4) An interview study on the moral values of immigrant adolescents and parents from India and El Salvador.  
  
**Todd B. Kashdan Summary: Curiosity: Facilitating Personal Growth Opportunities**  
Curiosity was conceptualized as a positive emotional-motivational system associated with the recognition, pursuit, and self-regulation of novel and challenging experiences. The Curiosity and Exploration Inventory (CEI), a two-dimensional 7-item measure comprising exploration (appetitive strivings for novelty) and flow (activity engagement), was developed. Using five independent samples, reliability, convergent, divergent, and construct validity were documented. An experiment with 45 dyads randomly assigned to a 45-minute closeness-generating or small-talk interaction indicated that both trait and state curiosity predicted feelings of intimacy between partners. High curiosity predicted intimacy in both interpersonal contexts as a function of appetitive relationship processes. Curiosity appears to have a salient influence on positive subjective experiences and personal growth.  
  
**Joseph A. Mikels Summary: Positive Emotions and Affective Working Memory**  
Very little work in psychology has examined if and how people maintain emotions, especially positive emotions. Data collected from an emotional maintenance task indicates that people can maintain and compare negative emotional states, but that people are less able to maintain and compare positive emotional states. It is possible that negative emotions are maintained or decreased, whereas positive emotions are intensified. Future studies will need to elucidate how emotions, including positive emotions, might be maintained and regulated in general.  
  
**Anthony Ong Summary: Toward a Measurement Model of Human Strengths**  
This research integrates two general perspectives of well-being: Subjective Well-Being and Psychological Well-Being. Using exploratory, confirmatory, and multi-group analyses, support was provided for the prevailing theory that well-being is a multidimensional construct that encompasses diverse features of what it means to be well that include positive affect, negative affect, life satisfaction, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The robustness of this measurement model is demonstrated across studies of inter-individual differences and intra-individual variability. Implications for construct validity, the trait-state distinction, and the replicability of nomothetic results in idiographic data are discussed.  
  
**Chiara Ruini Summary: Well-Being Therapy in Generalized Anxiety Disorder**  
Well-being and quality of life have been neglected for a long time in clinical psychology. Health is simply equated with the absence of illness. A specific psychotherapeutic strategy for improving psychological well-being may be more effective compared to standard cognitive therapy in the treatment of patients with anxiety disorder. In this study we have treated 10 patients with 8 sessions of cognitive behavioral therapy and 10 patients with well-being therapy. We then have compared their results using questionnaires for measuring distress and well-being. Both treatments were effective in reducing symptoms, but well-being therapy was more effective also in improving well-being.  
  
**Shaifali Sandhya Summary: A Study of Indian Married Couples: The Role of Family Living Arrangements in Maintaining Happiness and Well-Being**  
The aim of this study was to investigate the nature of marital happiness and its impact on psychological well-being in 91, urban, Hindu, married couples from New Delhi, India. Using self-report measures and narrative interviews of husbands and wives, I focused on the nature and underlying mechanisms that regulate, maintain, and sustain marital happiness and psychological well-being. In particular, I examine the socio-cultural contexts as well as the interpersonal and personal factors that facilitate and impede happiness. Two factors were predicted to affect all aspects of couples' marital relationship-family living arrangements and gender. The main approach was to ask each marital partner to evaluate the marriage and family context. Contrary to conventional wisdom, results reveal that 1) negative self-appraisals are not normative and instead, have a deleterious influence on well-being 2) marital intimacy is essential for the happiness and well-being of Indian couples and 3) family living arrangements, gender, and the degree of happiness in marriage influence couple's appraisals of each other, their marital interaction and the quality and longevity of their relationship.   
  
**Lani Shiota Summary: A New Perspective on Trait Positive Emotionality: Differences Among Eleven Positive Affects**  
Although theorists posit the existence of several positive emotions, empirical research has emphasized only one: happiness. Descriptions of eleven positive emotions (joy, contentment, hope, love, desire, compassion, pride, gratitude, amusement, interest, and awe) are presented, and the way in which each manifests as a personality trait (appraisal, experience, and behavior tendencies) is defined. Data from the author's new, 75-item questionnaire measuring eleven corresponding traits - the "Dispositional Positive Affect Scale (DPAS)" - confirms the validity of the emotion constructs and demonstrates specific differences between the emotions in relation to other personality and demographic characteristics.  
Implications for emotion theory are discussed.  
  
**Todd M. Thrash Summary: The State of Inspiration**  
Thrash and Elliot (in press) presented a conceptualization of inspiration in terms of three core characteristics: evocation, motivation, and transcendence. The present research aimed to document these characteristics at the state level. Based on recalled experiences of inspiration, Study 1 found that inspiration involves enhanced levels of most positive state variables (e.g., meaning). Study 2 contrasted inspiration with another positive motivational state: positive affect. As expected, inspiration and positive affect demonstrated comparable levels of motivation-relevant variables (e.g., interest); inspiration was more likely to be evoked (e.g., lower responsibility appraisals); and inspiration involved higher levels of transcendence-relevant variables (e.g., insight).  
  
**Manfred van Dulmen Summary: The Developmental Course of the Relationship between Childhood Positive Affect and Romantic Relationship Functioning During Young Adulthood**  
  
This study investigated the relationship between positive affect during childhood and consequent indicators of romantic relationship quality during young adulthood. It was hypothesized that childhood positive affect would be associated with romantic relationship positive affect and enjoyment during young adulthood. Data were gathered from an study of individuals at developmental risk due to poverty. Results showed that childhood positive affect was associated with properties of romantic relationship functioning 15years later, while simultaneously considering the relationship of early emotional health and adolescent psychopathology on romantic relationship functioning. Furthermore, results showed that positive affect was a better predictor than childhood negative affect.