

Positive Psychology for Overcoming Depression: A Bibliotherapy Intervention

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An Epidemic of Depression

- 350 million worldwide suffering from depression.
- Leading cause of disability worldwide.
- Major contributor to the global burden of disease.
- Age 30 - mean age of 1st onset of depression (1960)
- Age 14.5 - mean age of 1st onset (1995)
- Recurrent disorder
- Under 50% of those affected have access to effective treatment, in some countries this is <10% (WHO, 2012)

What is Bibliotherapy?

- Books as therapy
- Guided or unguided
- 2000 self-help books published each year - Meyers (2008)
- The books on prescription scheme - Frude (2005)

How effective are self-help books for depression?

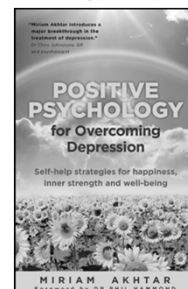
- Guided bibliotherapy more effective than no-treatment with large effect sizes e.g. Cuijpers (1997) meta-analysis
- Unguided bibliotherapy prescribed by GP's as effective as TAU e.g. Naylor et al., (2010)
- Mixed findings in relation to psychotherapy e.g. Gregory et al., (2004), Cuijpers (1997), Floyd et al., (2004)

What does this have to do with positive psychology?

PP self-help exercises found to reduce symptoms of depression as well as increase well-being, e.g.

1. Three good things/Signature strengths (Seligman et al., 2005)
2. Self-compassion/Optimism (Shapira & Mongrain, 2010)
3. Meta analysis data e.g. Sin & Lyubomirsky (2009) & Boiler et al., (2013)

First self-help book for depression based on positive psychology – by Miriam Akhtar



Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs)

'Treatment methods or intentional activities aimed at cultivating positive feelings, behaviours or cognitions – significantly enhance well-being and ameliorate depressive symptoms'

Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009

PPIs Raise and Recover Well-Being

- Overcome milder cases of depression
- Relieve residual symptoms of major depression
- Build resilience to depression
- Prevent relapse into depression
- Build mental health
- Prevention & Intervention
- Evidence-based self-help

Positive Psychology for Overcoming Depression

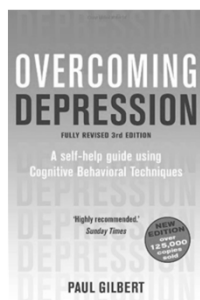
- 1.The Positive Approach to Depression
- 2.The Positive Psychology Story of Happiness
- 3.Positive Emotions: The Upward Spiral to Well-being
- 4.Savouring the Moment
- 5.The Attitude of Gratitude
- 6.Meditation: the Mindful Approach
- 7.Learning Optimism: Self-defence for the mind
- 8.Resilience: Road to Recovery
- 9.Positive Connections: Other People Matter
- 10.Vitality: Mind, Body & Spirit
- 11.Strengths: You at Your Best
- 12.Positive Directions: Moving Forward



Study Design

- UK based RCT lasting 8-weeks
- 115 participants recruited via Action for Happiness website/social media
- Allocated PP or CBT self-help book for depression
- Participant must have:
 1. Symptoms of depression (e.g. BDI-II score above cut off)
 2. No current depression treatment

CBT Self-help book



Participant instructions

- Participants received a weekly email to inform them of the chapter they were to read that week
- Participants were able to contact researcher but no counselling was provided

	PP Book	CBT Book
Week 1	Positive Emotions: The upward spiral to well-being	Mindful Preparations for Working with Depression
Week 2	Savouring the Moment	Switching our Minds to Kindness and Compassion
Week 3	The Attitude of Gratitude	Changing Unhelpful Thoughts and Feelings: Balance and Compassion
Week 4	Meditation: The mindful approach	Styles of Depressive Thinking: How to Develop Helpful Styles
Week 5	Learning Optimism: Psychological self-defense	Writing Things Down: How to do it and why it can be helpful
Week 6	Resilience: The road to recovery	Changing Behavior: A compassionate approach
Week 7	Positive Connections: Other people matter	Developing Supportive Relationships with Ourselves
Week 8	From strength to strength: You at your best	Stop Criticizing and Bullying yourself: How to treat yourself with compassion

Sample Characteristics

	PP Book	CBT Book
N =	56	59
Age*	41.73	37.34
Gender	83.93% Female	89.83% Female
Ethnicity	80.39% White British	91.49% White British
History of Depression	46.43% Previous History	59.32% Previous History
Mildly depressed	21.43%	16.95%
Moderately depressed	33.93%	42.37%
Severely depressed	44.64%	40.68%

* Significant differences noted between the conditions for Age only

Measures

Beck Depression Inventory - Scores range = 0-63, 14-19 = mild, 20-28 = moderate & 29 – 63 = severe depression

Subjective Happiness Scale - Score range 0 – 7, high scores = higher happiness

Satisfaction with Life Scale – Score range 7 – 35, scores under 20 = dissatisfaction, scores over 20 = satisfaction

Positive & Negative Affect – Score range = 10 - 50, with high scores indicating higher levels of positive/negative affect

Psychological Well-being Scales – Scores range from 7 – 42, high scores indicate greater psychological well-being

Baseline

Measure	PP Book	CBT Book
Depression	27.75	29.19
Subjective Happiness	3.60	3.52
Satisfaction with Life	14.73	16.61
Positive Affect	20.77	21.61
Negative Affect	28.43	29.88
Psychological Wellbeing – Autonomy	24.20	24.39
Psychological Wellbeing – Environmental Mastery	22.98	22.77
Psychological Wellbeing – Personal Growth	28.32	28.85
Psychological Wellbeing – Positive Relations	26.82	27.03
Psychological Wellbeing - Purpose in Life*	23.46	25.37
Psychological Wellbeing – Self-Acceptance	18.27	19.32

Measure	PP Pre N = 56	PP Post N = 29	CBT Pre N = 59	CBT Post N = 17
Depression	27.75	18.52	29.19	23.88
Subjective Happiness	3.60	3.89	3.52	3.92
Satisfaction with Life	14.73	20.24	16.61	18.24
Positive Affect	20.77	29.43	21.61	25.42
Negative Affect	28.43	23.79	29.88	28.24
Psychological Wellbeing – Autonomy	24.20	27.14	24.39	28.41
Psychological Wellbeing – Environmental Mastery	22.98	26.11	22.77	28.41
Psychological Wellbeing – Personal Growth	28.32	31.21	28.85	31.24
Psychological Wellbeing – Positive Relations	26.82	28.61	27.03	26.94
Psychological Wellbeing - Purpose in Life	23.46	26.34	25.37	27.59
Psychological Wellbeing – Self-Acceptance	18.27	22.17	19.32	21.94

4 – week follow-up

- Mixed between/within ANOVA's 2X2 performed
- Depression – significant main effect for time $F(1,42) = 25.31$, $p = 0.00$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.38$ but no effect for condition – meaning that both conditions experienced a decrease in depression over the 4-weeks and there was no significant difference in this decline between those who used PP or CBT
- Same result found for Satisfaction with Life, Positive Affect, Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Purpose in Life & Self-Acceptance
- No significant change in subjective Happiness, Negative Affect or Positive Relations from time 1 to time 2 for either book

Discussion

- Both books reduced depression and improved well-being in 4 weeks, with 10% of the initial sample no longer depressed
- No difference in efficacy between the books – PP self-help is as effective as an established CBT self-help book
- But - High levels of non-response to follow-up questionnaire – especially for CBT book? Why?

Next steps

- Follow-up with sample after they have read all 8 chapters
- Conduct post-intervention follow-up at 1 & 6 months to test how effective the PP book is in comparison to the CBT book over the longer term?
- Replication in clinical sample – participants self-selected to take part, does this impact on results?
- Replication as a non-guided intervention e.g. books on prescription – do weekly emails boost adherence/efficacy?
- Potential qualitative study – what is the experience of using positive psychology interventions for depression like - little to no research in this area?

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Thanks for listening!

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ACTION FOR HAPPINESS