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The Science of Health and Happiness for Young People

2021



Welcome to the RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences



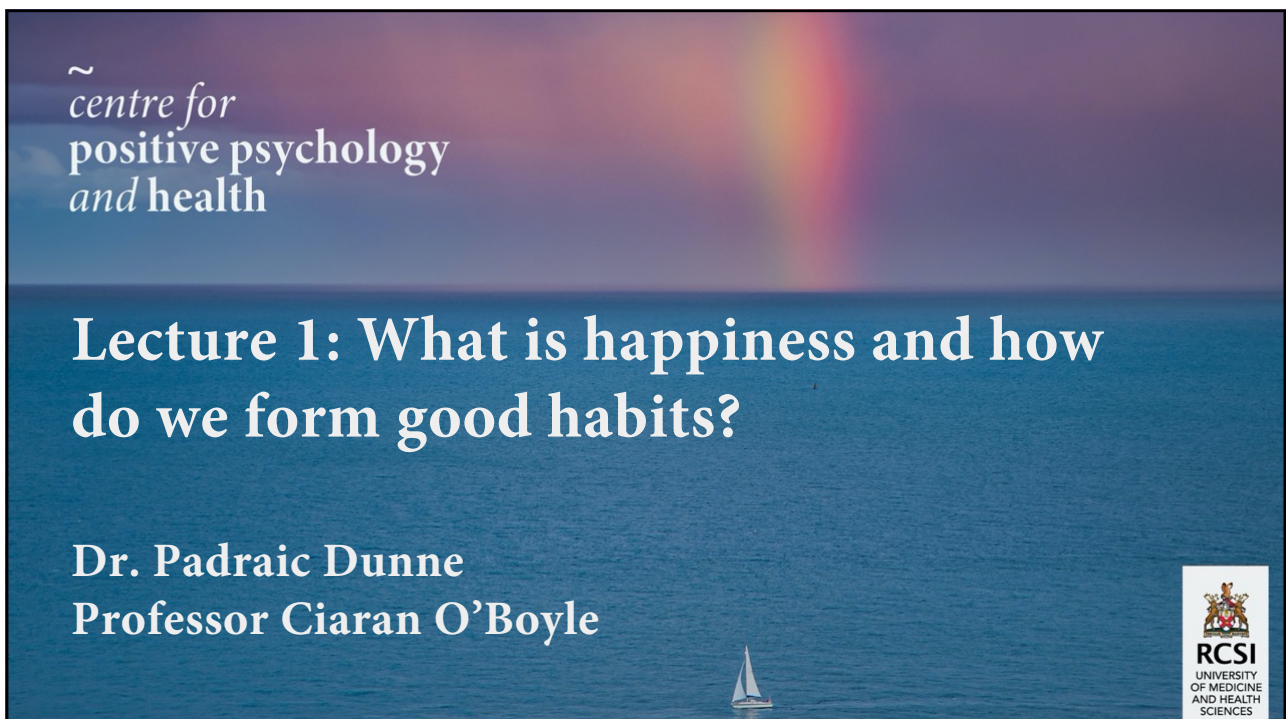


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Science of Health and Happiness *for Young People*

Course Content


- 1) Introduction – what is happiness and how do we form good habits?
- 2) Developing Attention and Focus
- 3) Time management/self-discipline and motivation
- 4) Positive emotions
- 5) This is what stress feels like
- 6) Strengths and growth mindsets
- 7) Know your brain
- 8) Emotional well-being
- 9) Adolescence and young adulthood as a time of expansion
- 10) Whole person health



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Lecture 1: What is happiness and how do we form good habits?

Dr. Padraic Dunne
Professor Ciaran O’Boyle



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Question 1: What do you think health is?



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What is Health?



'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'

<https://www.who.int/about/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions> ;



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Question 2: What do you think mental health is?



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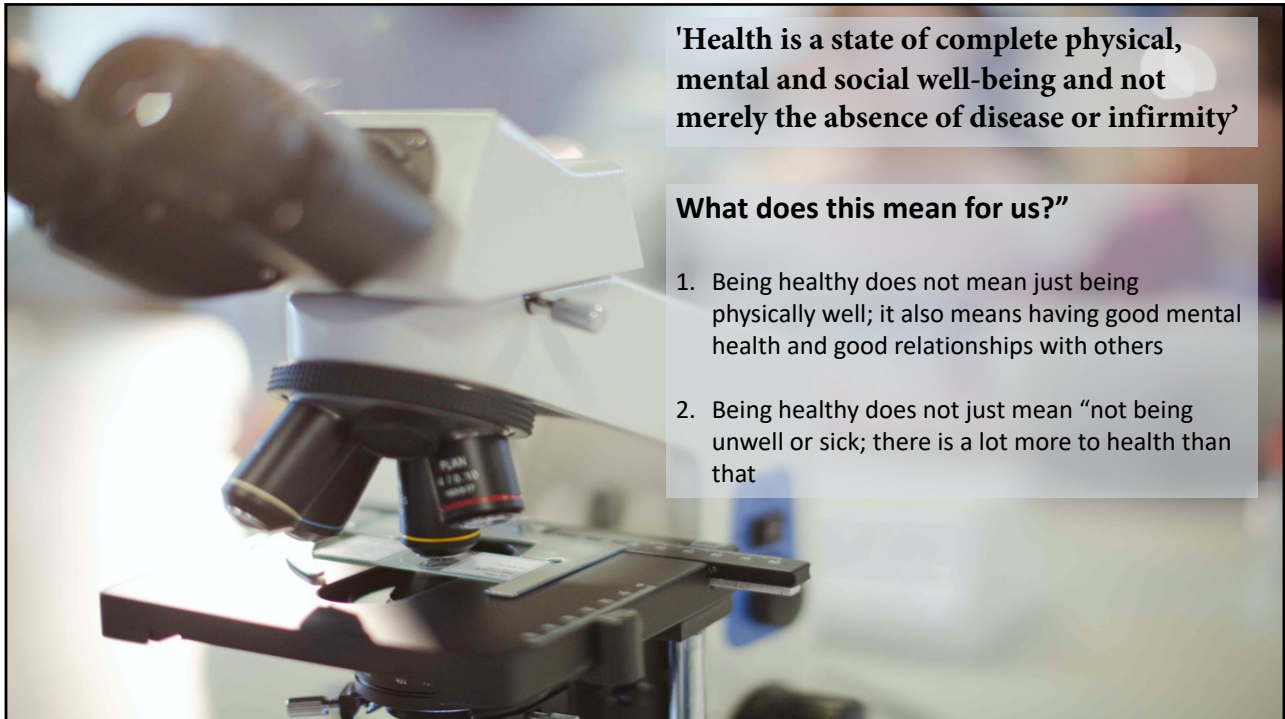
What is mental health?



Mental health: a state of well-being

.. a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.





'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'

What does this mean for us?"

1. Being healthy does not mean just being physically well; it also means having good mental health and good relationships with others
2. Being healthy does not just mean "not being unwell or sick; there is a lot more to health than that"

Diseases of lifestyle

- Non communicable diseases (NCDs) kill **41m** people each year - equivalent to **71%** of all deaths.
- **Five** conditions – diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and mental health disorders – account for an estimated **86%** of the deaths and **77%** of the disease burden in the European Region.
- Worldwide, obesity has nearly **tripled** since 1975.
- **80%** of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes and **40%** of cancer could be prevented, primarily through improvements in diet and lifestyle
- The younger you start living a healthy lifestyle, the better



<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>



PERMA

Positive Emotions. Our well-being depends on the extent to which we experience positive emotions such as happiness, joy, excitement, contentment etc

Engagement We all need to feel fulfilment by engaging in activities which are interesting and absorbing for us. These could be activities such as music, sport, gaming and hobbies that help us to achieve a sense of 'flow' – contented immersion in an activity where you are so absorbed you forget about yourself and about time.

Relationships We thrive off of our relationships with other people; nurturing healthy and strong relationships with those around us is a significant contributing factor towards our overall happiness providing us with experiences of attachment, support, being valued and being loved.

Meaning. Having meaning and purpose in our daily lives is crucial for cultivating happiness and well-being. Often involves serving something bigger than ourselves

Accomplishment. Important for our sense of well-being giving us feelings of mastery and achievement.

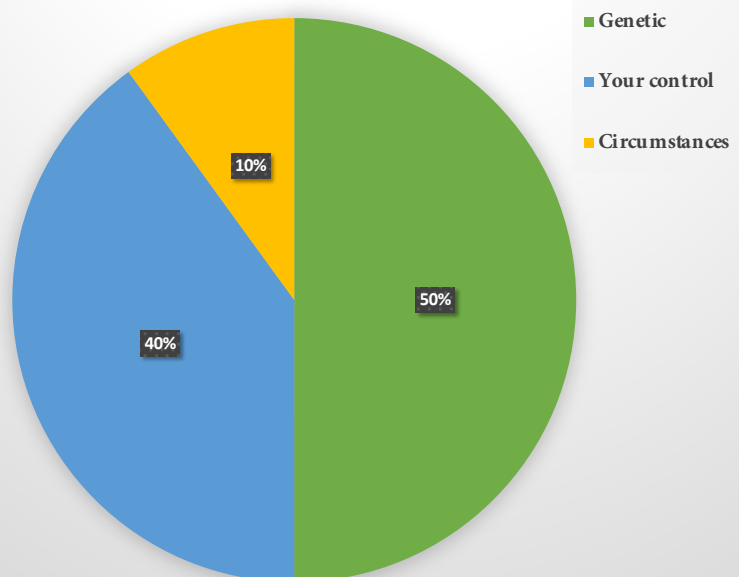


Did you inherit your level of happiness?

Our basic temperament is inherited but we have some control over how happy we feel.

Lyubomirsky S. (2007) *The How of Happiness*. New York: Penguin

Level of Happiness



How can we increase PERMA?

Positive Emotions: Try to notice the positives in your life not just the negatives. Either daily or weekly, start writing down three good things that have happened to you.

Engagement: Learn to use your best strengths especially for things you don't like doing

Relationships : Set out to improve your relationships by taking more time, by showing understanding and compassion for others and by trying to use positive responses to people rather than negative responses.

Meaning: Think about what is important to you; what gives your life meaning?

Accomplishment: Think about your achievements and what you hope to achieve. Celebrate your achievements



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Useful resources



Siegel RD (2016) *Positive Psychology: Harnessing the Power of Happiness, Mindfulness and Inner Strength*. Boston, Harvard Medical School.



Bonniwell I. (2012) *Positive Psychology in a Nutshell*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.



Chatergee R. (2017). *The 4 Pillar Plan*. London, Penguin Life



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Further exploration - videos

Rangan Chatterjee. How To Make Diseases Disappear

TED x talk from 2016 by one of the new pioneers of progressive medicine. Author of the international bestseller, The 4 Pillar Plan, his 15 years of clinical experience in the NHS includes internal medicine, immunology and general practice.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaY4m00wXpw>

Beth Frates: RCSI MyHealth: Paving the Path to Wellness

A short (17minute) video of Professor Beth Frates, pioneer in lifestyle medicine, speaking at RCSI in 2019, setting out some of it's key principles of healthy behaviour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSv6-jvT02M>

Martin Seligman: The New Era of Positive Psychology.

One of the key founders of the science of positive psychology, Professor Martin Seligman, in this 2004 TED talk, explains why we needed to create a more positive psychology of well-being and happiness.

https://www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_the_new_era_of_positive_psychology?language=en

