

CHOICES

Vancouver Island Counselling
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The Science of Thriving

Unlocking Strengths, Building Resilience, and Cultivating Joy

What if we told you that happiness isn't just something that "happens" to us—it's something we can build, nurture, and grow?

That's the central idea behind **Positive Psychology**, a field of psychology that focuses not on what's "wrong" with people, but on what makes life worth living. It's the science of human flourishing—of thriving rather than just surviving.



Developed by psychologist Martin Seligman in the late 1990s, Positive Psychology shifts the focus from mental illness to mental wellness. It explores the habits, mindsets, and environments that help people lead meaningful, fulfilling lives.

August 2025 Edition

"Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions."
— Dalai Lama



305 - 394 Duncan St
Duncan, BC V9L 3W4

Vancouver Island Counselling

Duncan: 250 746 6900

Nanaimo: 250 754 8222

Port Alberni: 250 723 7001

Victoria / Gulf Islands / Lower Mainland

1 877 746 6911

The PERMA Model: 5 Pillars of Wellbeing

The **PERMA Model** is a framework for understanding and cultivating wellbeing. It outlines five key pillars that contribute to a fulfilling and thriving life.

P – Positive Emotion

Experiencing joy, gratitude, hope, and other uplifting emotions can help build emotional resilience and overall satisfaction in life.

Try this: Start or end your day with a “gratitude pause.” Reflect on something small that made you smile.

E – Engagement

This is about being fully absorbed in what you're doing—whether it's your work, a hobby, or a meaningful project. It's the experience of flow, where time seems to disappear.

Try this: Identify an activity that energizes you. Block off time this week to fully immerse yourself in it—no distractions.

R – Relationships

Strong, positive relationships are one of the most consistent predictors of happiness. Connection builds belonging, emotional support, and meaning.

Try this: Reach out to someone you appreciate and let them know how they've made an impact on you.

M – Meaning

Having a sense of purpose—feeling connected to something bigger than yourself—can bring deep fulfillment, especially in challenging times.

Ask yourself: What values or causes matter most to you? How can you live them out this week?

A – Accomplishment

Setting goals and achieving them (big or small) builds confidence and helps us see our own progress.

Try this: Set a realistic goal this week that stretches you just a little—and celebrate when you complete it.



Tools You Can Use

These simple practices align with the PERMA model:

- **Three Good Things:** Write down three positive moments each day (Positive Emotion)
- **Flow Mapping:** Notice when you're most focused and energized (Engagement)
- **Gratitude Letter:** Write to someone who changed your life (Relationships)
- **Values Clarification:** Reflect on what gives your life purpose (Meaning)
- **Micro-Goals:** Break big tasks into tiny wins (Accomplishment)

The Benefits of Positive Psychology

Incorporating Positive Psychology practices—like gratitude, strength-based reflection, and purpose-driven action—can lead to:

- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Greater resilience in the face of challenges
- Stronger relationships and social support
- Increased motivation, creativity, and productivity
- Higher life satisfaction and emotional wellbeing
- Healthier workplace cultures and team dynamics



Whether you're navigating a personal transition or trying to foster a more connected work environment, Positive Psychology offers practical tools to help people thrive—not just get by.

We're Here for You

Positive Psychology doesn't ignore life's challenges—it simply gives us tools to meet them with strength, hope, and meaning. At Vancouver Island Counselling, we support individuals and teams in building healthy, thriving lives.

Let's create space for more of what makes life feel good.



"Wellbeing is not just about feeling good—it's about living fully."

— Martin Seligman



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