

Mental Health & Happiness

Be Kind to Your Mind, Body and Community

Cultivate Bravery: Embrace Opportunities and Manage Change

Learning Objectives

- Explore three types of bravery and key components to supporting bravery
- Practice with tools for building an awareness of your obstacles and motivators
- Try tools to plan and acknowledge your bravery

Lesson Key Points

- **Bravery, defined as courageous behavior or character, has three types**
 1. Physical bravery (e.g., firefighters, police officers, soldiers)
 2. Psychological bravery (e.g., facing painful aspects of oneself)
 3. Moral bravery (e.g., speaking up for what's right, even if it's an unfavorable opinion to a group)
- **Explore these key components to support bravery**
 - Courageous mindset – remind yourself of past successes to help to boost your bravery.
 - Establish a sense of agency – see your control and influence in the situation.
 - Focus on your motivators, strengths and values – stay focused on what works well for you.
 - Acknowledge your progress – sense of accomplishment supports well-being and bravery.
- **Tools for building an awareness of your obstacles and motivators**
 - Neuroscience of unpleasant or uncomfortable feelings: What we feel emotionally is in the body first as a physical sensation. A feeling starts as chemicals released by the brain in a biochemical rush lasting 60-90 seconds and then dissipates. The 8 uncomfortable or unpleasant feelings include: sadness, shame, helplessness, anger, vulnerability, embarrassment, disappointment and frustration. If you can move through the rush of feelings, then you can grow confidence and emotional strength. ([Dr. Joan Rosenberg](#))
 - Deep diaphragmatic “box breathing” method to take a mindful pause:
 - While visualizing the sides of a square, try this 16 second technique to minimize reactivity and gain clarity. Steps include: 1) breathing in for 4 seconds, 2) holding for 4 seconds, 3) breathing out for 4 seconds, 4) holding for 4 seconds.
 - Use neuroplasticity to maximize the well-being benefits of an experience:
 - Rewire your brain to “take in the good” with H.E.A.L., 4 steps to activate a positive experience and install it into your brain. Steps include: 1) Have a positive experience, 2) Enrich it, 3) Absorb it, 4) Link positive to negative material (optional). ([Rick Hanson, Ph.D.](#))

Lesson Key Points (continued)

- **Tools to plan and acknowledge your bravery**
 - Identify what's holding you back: Cultivate courage by planning for when an obstacle arises and establish motivators to achieve your goals.
 - Use your strengths: Research shows that people who use a personal strength each day for one week reported an increase in happiness. ([Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson](#))
- Follow the acronym W.O.O.P. to be more courageous and more successful in your endeavors:
 - Wish – Think of a wish or goal that you want to accomplish.
 - Outcome – Daydream about the outcome of achieving this goal.
 - Obstacles – Now, imagine what might hold you back.
 - Plan – Using the if/then format, create a plan to prepare for any obstacle that you might face. For example: If (this obstacle happens), then I will (take this action).

Resources

Beach Cities Health District:

- [Mental Health & Happiness Series](#)
- [Virtual Events](#)
- [Health-Related Resources & Referrals](#)

Books:

- "The Happiness Advantage" by Shawn Achor
- "Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being" by Martin E. Seligman
- "Dare to Lead" by Brené Brown, PhD, LMSW
- "Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High" by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler, MD

Websites:

- [Action for Happiness](#)
- [Greater Good in Action](#)
- [Happify.com](#)
- [Mindful.org](#)
- [Rick Hanson, Ph.D.](#)

Articles:

- [VIA Institute on Character: Bravery](#)
- ["Rewire Your Brain for Lasting Well-Being and Inner Strength" by Rick Hanson, Ph.D.](#)
- ["Three Tricky Ways to Cultivate Courage" by Christine Carter, May 21, 2015.](#)
- [Infographic from Happify on "How science can help you stick to your goals"](#)
- [Greater Good in Action Practice: "Use Your Strengths"](#)

Videos:

- ["Emotional Mastery: The Gifted Wisdom of Unpleasant Feelings" TED Talk by Dr. Joan Rosenberg](#)
- ["Three Steps to Build Brain Circuits that will Help You Deal with Fear and Stress" by Stefanie Faye Frank](#)