Positive Balance: a positive psychology intervention for pre-professional dancers

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Is a positive psychology intervention effective in increasing mental health and wellbeing for adolescent dancers?

Background

Pre-professional adolescent dancers experience unique mental and physical health risks including homesickness, demanding lifestyles and injury (Bettle et al. 2021). Positive psychology techniques have been found to support resilience in the face of these challenges (Foka et al. 2020).

Objectives

- Develop a manualised intervention using positive psychology for adolescent mental health and wellbeing
- Test efficacy of manualised intervention

Methodology:

- Intervention mapping approach (Bartholomew, Parcel & Kok (1998)
- Six steps of development
- Individual methods for each step

Mapping Step 1: Understanding population needs

- Thematic Analysis of Interviews (fig 1)
- Frequency Analysis of Dancer's Self-Reported needs (Fig 2)

Fig.1 interview thematic analysis word cloud

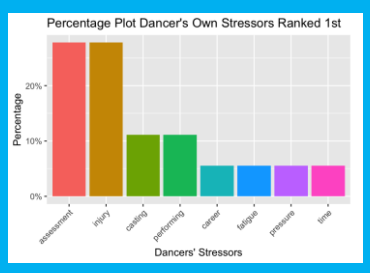

Fig 2. participants' self-reported stressors

Step 2: Identify factors to address (measures)

Results of step 1 + evidence from literature demonstrated need to increase/reduce the following:

- Wellbeing
- Depression
- Optimism
- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy

Step 3: Intervention Design

Activities were then developed with population needs and change factors in mind.

Fig 3. Gratitude Tree (Lin, 2015)

Fig 4. origami strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

Step 4: Pilot Study

Self-report scales = repeated measures ANOVA
Psycho-education questionnaires = frequency analysis
Psycho-education 'self-reflection exercise' = pre/post

- No significant effect of intervention on scale results
- Significant results on psychoeducation measures

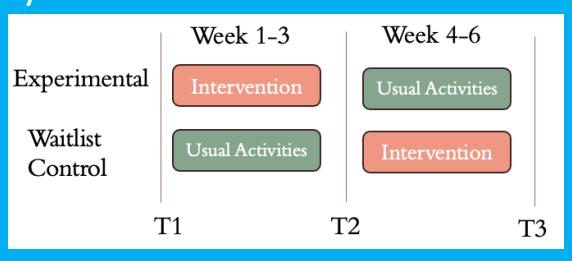

Fig 5. Experimental Design

Step 5: Implementation plan

2nd Draft Manual

- Facilitator responsibilities
- Material checklists
- Delivery plan

Step 6: Evaluation plan

Steps 1-5 were completed iteratively for phase 1 to establish a continuous evaluation

Phase 1 (Implementation) Preliminary Results

As a result of the intervention mapping, psychoeducation of positive psychology was added to the intervention.

- Knowledge acquisition methods are highly significant
- Preliminary findings show an increase in practice for some positive psychology tools
- These methods and tools will be adapted for future phases

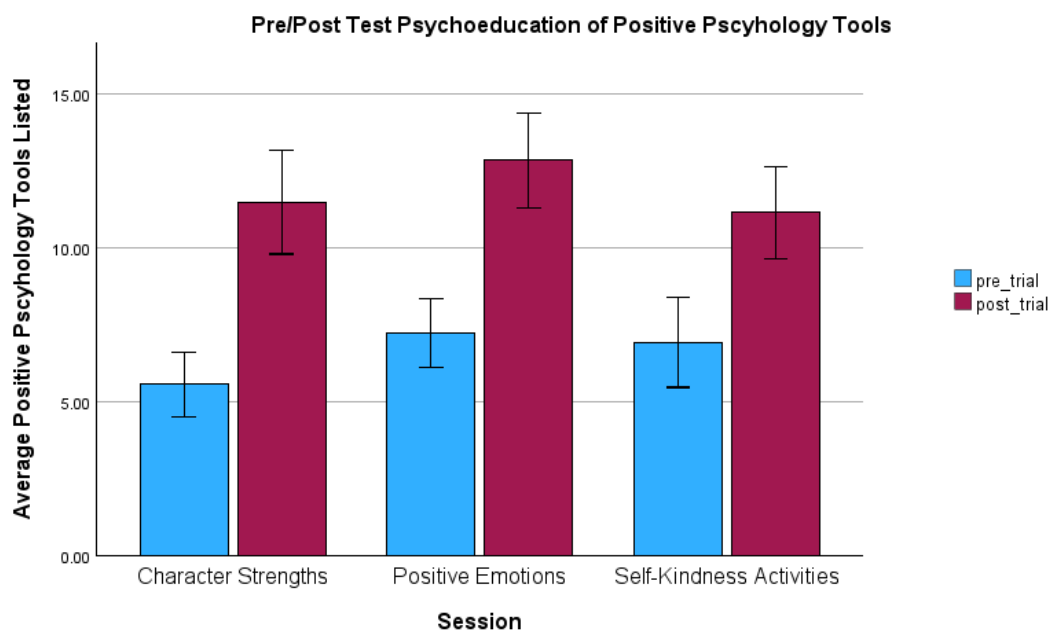

Fig 6 Pre/post test results for psychoeducation of positive psychology t

Conclusion & Future Recommendations

- Psycho-education effective for this cohort
- Focus on psycho-education of theory and tangible positive psychology techniques (savouring positive emotions, using character strengths and practicing self-kindness)
- Beneficial to use cohort-specific examples for techniques e.g., mindfulness to tackle performance-related stress

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