

The Power of Positive Thinking in Addiction Recovery

Positive Psychology is the study of strengths and positive traits that empower people to thrive by creating a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. In addiction treatment and recovery embracing positive psychology teachings are a fantastic path forward in regaining a sense of personal worth and boosting self-esteem. Research on positive psychology shows that factors such as mental health, life satisfaction, motivation and assertiveness are significantly improved with positive psychology practice. Coming to terms with addiction for both the addict and family members is an arduous journey, as gaining an acceptance of the consequences of addiction can bring up feelings of shame and worthlessness. In reframing past addictive behaviours and gaining a better awareness of future potential a positive path forward is possible. Some positive psychology tools are:

- Showing Gratitude – learning to value and being grateful for what you have. One way of practicing gratitude is to list three things that you are grateful for each day as to remind yourself of what you actually have in the present which is meaningful in your life. Include factors such as health, family and friends and realise all that you have right in front of you.
- Banish negative thoughts and replace with positive - if we hold on to a negative thought it will more than likely impact our actions and behaviours in a way that will keep us held in this negatively. Some ways to challenge negative thoughts is to ask yourself “what’s the worst that can happen?” or to plan an activity to distract yourself if negative thoughts strike. With practice, challenging negative thought patterns can become a practice within recovery maintenance by restoring a sense of balance and contentment.
- Savouring – this refers to taking time to stop and appreciate the simple pleasures of life. This can be practised by taking time to linger and to slow things down. This is particularly effective when looking at the chaos of addictive behaviours by noticing mindful account of ‘here and now’ present moment. Savouring the beauty of nature or the smells and sounds

of your surroundings each day will become an avenue of peaceful retreat which will invite calmness and help with coping with everyday stress and/or anxiety.

- Paying it forward – Acts of Kindness are engrained into positive psychology. It is the idea of giving back to society at large and the ‘feel good’ factor that this brings. Whether it’s a simple act like getting someone a cup of tea or signing up for volunteering work in an organisation such as Bushypark. The positive emotions that are associated with these acts not only boost self-esteem but also help individuals to feel part of something greater than themselves by being socially interested in the wellbeing of others. This rings true in addiction recovery where individuals are finding ways forward in their new sober lives. A sense of hope and recognition of positive impact we can have on others is food for the soul.

Addiction takes so much from individuals and their families and in its trail of destruction it may seem like the road to recovery is unclear and frightening. This is where we at Bushypark Treatment Centre are here to support individuals to see their potential and value with a rekindled sense of purpose. With each turn of this recovery road is new beginnings filled with a sense of optimism and hope. Positive psychology is powerful in supporting people to welcome home the person they are meant to be.