

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology focuses on personal strengths that contribute to well-being and happiness. It isn't about ignoring the difficult parts of life, but about taking in the big picture and focusing on the best parts.

You...

- ...have the agency to choose who you are, where you go, what you do, and who you share with.
- ...deserve to be here and have a place at UVa.
- ...can choose happiness, and it doesn't have to depend on people or circumstances beyond your control.

Be Perfectly Imperfect

- Everyone struggles, and it's okay – even beneficial – to feel challenged by school and other parts of life. Opening up to others and talking about how you really feel can bring you closer. It is easy to compare our own insides (who we *are*) with other people's outsides (how they *seem*). Be mindful of this, especially if using social media. Avoiding these types of social comparisons frees you to be your perfectly imperfect self!



Squash ANTs



Sometimes people have **automatic negative thoughts (ANTs)**, which aren't true but make them feel yucky anyway! Learning to replace some common ANTs with more rational thoughts can help you have a more realistic perspective and feel better about yourself, your life, and your relationships.

Squash this ANT:

Absolutes: "I never do well on tests and I won't get into grad school and I'll be unemployed forever!"

Guilt: "I should do ____ and if I don't I'm a bad person."

Mind Reading: "My TA doesn't know my name so I think she hates me."

Replace with Truth:

"I didn't do well on this test, but usually I do fine and I know I can improve next time."

"This is what I choose right now. If I change my mind later, it's okay."

"It's a big class, so I might need to introduce myself more than once."



**HOO
KNEW?**

94.0% of UVa students believe learning how to take care of themselves helps them thrive.*

RESOURCES

Madison House HELP Line
(434) 295-TALK

No issue is too big or too small. They're here to talk.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
(434) 243-5150

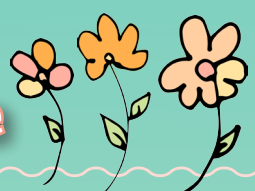
Call to see how CAPS can best support you.

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Designed by Sarah Alberstein, Class of 2017



Cultivate Gratitude



Feelings of gratitude can benefit physical, emotional, and social well-being. Although it can be a challenge on tough days, you can practice choosing gratitude:

- **Reflect and say "thanks"** – Pause to appreciate life. Express thanks to people who do things for you, no matter how small. Share a note of thanks with a special person.
- **Journal** – Take a few minutes to write down what you are grateful for and how you feel.

Thrive!

Give to Others

Thinking of others can better your mood. Do nice things for friends, volunteer in the Charlottesville community, or dedicate time to a cause you believe in.

Give to Yourself

Knowing ways to boost your mood when you're blue can help you feel a greater sense of control and resiliency during trying times. Possibilities include listening to music, going outside for fresh air, calling home or a friend, watching a funny video, or making a cup of tea. Keep trying until you find a few strategies that work well for you.

Department of
Student Health

Office of
Health Promotion

University of
Virginia