

The Pursuit of Happiness: Briefly on Positive Mental Health, Well-Being, Trauma, and Resilience

Ihor Hoian ¹  0000-0003-2548-0488, Dmytro Tovmash ²  0009-0006-3761-5983, Tetiana Danylova ³  0000-0001-9319-0154,
Olena Ishchenko ²  0000-0003-3832-2403, Antonina Yaruchykh ⁴  0000-0003-1293-0005, Oksana Fedyk ¹  0000-0002-9029-2611,
Andrii Petraniuk ¹  0000-0001-5009-4795, Natalia Kostruba ⁴  0000-0002-3852-4729

 ¹Vasyl Stefanyk Carpathian National University, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

²Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine

³Institute for Social and Political Psychology, National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine

⁴Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Lutsk, Ukraine

Abstract

Introduction: Despite centuries of attempts to clearly define what human happiness is and how to achieve it, no one has completely succeeded in defining happiness or showing the only one way to achieve it. But still, the pursuit of happiness as an unalienable right of human beings who have been striving for it for eons remains a relevant topic for everyone, including psychologists, psychiatrists, and mental health specialists. Nowadays, great importance is placed on the positive aspects of mental health, active functioning in the world, and overall well-being.

Purpose: Integrating psychological and philosophical perspectives, this paper aims to explore the phenomenon of happiness as a core component of mental health and well-being.

Methodology: The authors conducted a systematic search in PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar, using search terms: happiness; subjective well-being; experience of happiness; mental health; psychological well-being; eudaimonia; resilience; quality of life; traumatic experience; cultural trauma; sociocultural factors; culture. The authors used phenomenological philosophical, hermeneutic and inductive approaches, as well as the interpretive research paradigm.

Results: The attention of contemporary researchers is focused on the place and role of happiness in mental health and well-being. Though ideas on happiness present a whole range of options, two main directions can still be identified, namely, eudaemonism and hedonism, in which happiness has been used to describe both momentary assessments of affect and life evaluations. Contemporary researchers have developed several approaches to well-being mainly emphasizing its eudaimonic character.

Conclusion: The dramatic shift in approaches to mental health and well-being with an emphasis on positivity has expanded understanding of factors and conditions that promote or undermine our mental health and well-being. Such an understanding should lead to the creation of conditions for individual flourishing, social prosperity and overall well-being offering innovative solutions to complex individual, organizational, and societal problems.

Keywords

Mental Health, Happiness, Subjective Well-Being, Experience of Happiness, Positive Mental Health, Psychological Well-Being, Eudaimonia, Resilience, Quality of Life, Traumatic Experience, Cultural Trauma, Sociocultural Factors, Culture

Address for correspondence:

Tetiana Danylova, Institute for Social and Political Psychology, National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine

E-mail: dtv280365@gmail.com

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Publisher: Paradigm (De Gruyter)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56508/mhgci.v9i1.358>

Submitted for publication: 17 November 2025
Revised: 07 February 2026

Accepted for publication: 25 February 2026

Introduction

As Sartre put it, it is impossible to define the essence of a human being as there is no abstract human nature. A human simply exists, and he/she makes him/herself choosing from a multitude of options every moment. People are not what they think of themselves, but what they make of themselves being projects that are experienced subjectively, "before that projection of the self nothing exists; not even in the heaven of intelligence: man will only attain existence when he is what he purposes to be. Not, however, what he may wish to be. For what we usually understand by wishing or willing is a conscious decision taken – much more often than not – after we have made ourselves what we are. I may wish to join a party, to write a book or to marry – but in such a case what is usually called my will is probably a manifestation of a prior and more spontaneous decision. If, however, it is true that existence is prior to essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus, the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders" (Sartre, 1948, p. 28-29).

Life can be thought of as a labyrinth with many exits. By choosing a direction to a particular exit, we choose the path we will take. As we walk this path, each of us sets a specific goal. These goals can vary, and they ultimately define who we truly are. Life guided by purposes is a conscious life, because consciousness is the determining principle here. The very concept of conscious life testifies to the fact that the purpose of human existence is fundamental, and to find it is necessary for the consciousness of this existence. For millennia, humanity's finest minds have tried to answer the questions "what is the purpose of human life?", "is it worth living?" offering a variety of answers: from simple pleasure and avoidance of pain to service to humanity.

The 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso concludes that the purpose of human life is to be happy emphasizing that "the basic source of all happiness is a sense of kindness and warm-heartedness towards others. We are all the same as human beings. We are born the same way, we die the same way, and we all want to lead happy lives" (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2021). Indeed, the experience of happiness is something people strive for, although their interpretations of this phenomenon can vary significantly. Even various philosophical schools, whose teachings have served as a "precedent and paradigm" for entire epochs and cultures, have understood happiness differently. Though

philosophers' thoughts on happiness present a whole range of options, two main directions can still be identified, namely, eudaemonism and hedonism.

The first approach originates from the ideas of the ancient Greek thinkers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle and is associated with the realization of a person's own unique merits and virtues in his/her activities, which are consistent with his/her abilities and capabilities. For Socrates, who stated that all humans naturally desired happiness (Plato, 2013), the way of happiness was "to choose the mean and avoid the extremes on either side, as far as possible" (Plato, 2021). This path between the two extremes reminds of the Middle Way in Mahayana Buddhism, through which we can find happiness and bring harmony to life (Mintz, n/d). The traditional interpretation of Plato's understanding of happiness is that "happiness is either psychic harmony or something sufficiently caused by psychic harmony". However, some thinkers challenge this view stating that the great philosopher "views happiness as being sufficiently caused by one's fulfilling one's social function, that Plato is viewing happiness as something quite close to what we would call job satisfaction, or a sense of our realizing ourselves through our work" (Mohr, 1982). This understanding is far from simple pleasure and is considered in a broad intellectual and social context. These ideas to some extent echo the philosophical views of Hryhorii Skovoroda, whose reflections on human happiness were the leitmotif of his philosophy.

The eudaimonic approach was revealed most profoundly in the philosophy of Aristotle who stated that the goal of all human doing was happiness – the Chief Good, which is manifested in the full development and use of human abilities. Aristotle emphasized that people understood happiness differently, although everyone strived for it: "So far as name goes, there is a pretty general agreement: for HAPPINESS both the multitude and the refined few call it, and "living well" and "doing well" they conceive to be the same with "being happy;" but about the Nature of this Happiness, men dispute, and the multitude do not in their account of it agree with the wise. For some say it is some one of those things which are palpable and apparent, as pleasure or wealth or honour; in fact, some one thing, some another; nay, oftentimes the same man gives a different account of it; for when ill, he calls it health; when poor, wealth: and conscious of their own ignorance, men admire those who talk grandly and above their comprehension. Some again held it to be something by itself, other than and beside these many good things, which is in fact to all these the cause of their being good"

(Aristotle, 2021). According to Aristotle, human happiness lies in activity of the soul in harmony with virtue. Within this concept, moderation in everything was seen as the path to happiness. Philosophers believed that by balancing between extremes, people could achieve inner equilibrium and live in harmony with the world around them.

Another point of view is hedonism, according to which all moral determinations are derived from pleasure and pain. Hedonism was clearly manifested in the position of the Cyrenaic philosophers, for whom only pleasure was intrinsically good, and only pain intrinsically bad, and anything else being at best instrumentally good or bad (Lampe, 2014). Thus, people should seek pleasure and avoid pain. Similar motives can be seen in the materialistic school of Ancient India – Charvaka/Lokayata, which “defends its hedonistic principles by reasoning that one must enjoy life thoroughly because one cannot reclaim the desires of one’s past after death” (Winn, 2021).

Later, utilitarianism, another philosophical tradition which interpreted happiness, emerged. The notion “utilitarianism” was coined by the English philosopher Mill. This concept was based on the ideas of Bentham, according to which pleasure and pain were the fundamental natural principles of human life. Everything must be created in accordance with these natural principles. All people strive to satisfy their desires. Happiness/utility lies in pleasure, but in the absence of suffering. Both pleasure and utility were understood by Bentham in the broadest possible terms: pleasure is any enjoyment, including sensual pleasure, utility is any utility, including profit. “By ‘utility’ is meant the property of something whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness (all equivalent in the present case) or (this being the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief..., pain, evil..., or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered. If that party is the community in general, then the happiness of the community; if it’s a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual” (Bentham, 2017). The main principle of utilitarianism is “the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong”.

Despite centuries of attempts to clearly define what human happiness is and how to achieve it, no one has completely succeeded in defining happiness or showing the only one way to achieve it (Guha & Carson, 2014). But still, the pursuit of happiness as an unalienable right of human beings who have been striving for it for eons remains a relevant topic for everyone, including psychologists, psychiatrists, and mental health specialists. Nowadays, great importance is

placed on the positive aspects of mental health, active functioning in the world, and overall well-being.

Purpose

Integrating psychological and philosophical perspectives, this paper aims to explore the phenomenon of happiness as a core component of mental health and well-being.

Methodology

The authors conducted a systematic search in the electronic databases, such as PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. Relevant studies were identified using search terms: happiness; subjective well-being; experience of happiness; mental health; positive mental health; psychological well-being; eudaimonia; resilience; quality of life; traumatic experience; cultural trauma; sociocultural factors; culture. The authors used phenomenological philosophical, hermeneutic and inductive approaches, as well as the interpretive research paradigm.

Ethical considerations

This research did not require IRB approval because it did not involve humans or animals in the study and was conducted as desk research according to the thematic plan under the State Registration Number of scientific research 0125U002247.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence tools were used to create research data, fabricate sources, or generate substantive scholarly claims in this manuscript.

Review and Discussion

Since, as we discussed above, happiness plays such an important role in people’s lives and can be considered a goal to strive for, the attention of contemporary researchers is focused on the place and role of happiness in mental health and well-being. Happiness is a broad and rather vague concept, and although, as Chekola notes, some people are pessimistic about its meaningfulness, in empirical research scientists constantly refer to it, “even when they use alternative terms such as “subjective well-being”, believing it is easier to specify operational

definitions of such terms to use in empirical studies" (2007).

The concept of well-being seems very familiar and understandable, but, like happiness, it is not so easy to define it. In its simplest sense, well-being is an overall measurement of life: if we are satisfied with our lives, then our well-being is good and our lives are filled with meaning, accomplishment, and success. WHO defines well-being as a "positive state experienced by individuals and societies. Similar to health, it is a resource for daily life and is determined by social, economic and environmental conditions. Well-being encompasses quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose. Focusing on well-being supports the tracking of the equitable distribution of resources, overall thriving and sustainability. A society's well-being can be determined by the extent to which it is resilient, builds capacity for action, and is prepared to transcend challenges" (Promoting Well-Being, 2025).

The concept of well-being is sometimes used synonymously with the concept of quality of life. However, they are not equivalent and are related to different theoretical concepts (Skevington & Boehnke, 2018). Accepting the complexity of these concepts, Salvador-Carulla et al. considered the dynamics of the concepts of well-being and quality of life within the framework of social sciences, health sciences, economics, psychosocial-cultural and psychobiological models, as well as within a holistic approach, emphasizing the need to create a "comprehensive conceptual map of a series of health related "meta-categories" (2014).

A state of well-being is determined by subjective and objective factors. While objective well-being includes physical factors necessary to provide our basic needs, subjective well-being involves psychological factors such as self-confidence, life satisfaction, a sense of belonging and purpose making it unique to each of us (What Is Well-Being, 2020). Components of subjective well-being "are not entirely independent – they do overlap. These measurement constructs may be thought of in terms of a continuum, with essentially real-time assessments of experience, emotional state, or sensations at one end (associated with the shortest time unit) and overall evaluations of life satisfaction, purpose, or suffering at the other end (the longest reference periods or no particular reference period)" (Subjective Well-Being, 2013).

The terms used to describe subjective well-being have often been applied ambiguously. For example, the term "happiness" has been used to describe both momentary assessments of affect

and life evaluations complicating the overall picture. For the purposes of our study, we want to refer to Chekola's logical/conceptual core of the concept of happiness: "happiness (a) as having to do with one's life as a whole, (b) as being relatively long-lasting (when we talk about happiness of a life it is not just for a moment or a day; it is for a significant period), (c) as making one's life worthwhile (it is a final value), and (d) as being something all people desire" (2007). Emphasizing its "universal" character, this understanding of happiness takes us beyond the scope of simple affects and brings us closer to the eudaimonic concept of happiness.

The eudaimonic approach focuses on meanings, purposes, and self-realization and defines well-being in terms of full human functioning. It is the purpose of a human life – to live well, to thrive, to be happy, and to realize one's potential in a social context (Waterman, 1993). Contemporary researchers have developed several approaches to eudaimonic well-being, such as Ryff's theory of psychological well-being, self-determination theory, Keyes's model of mental health.

Within the eudaimonic approach, Ryff shows that a deeper sense of purpose and self-actualization contribute to psychological well-being which depends on social and environmental factors rather than on person's individual experience (2008). The findings suggest that higher levels of psychological well-being may lead to better health outcomes, including a reduced risk of chronic diseases and increased life expectancy. Interventions such as well-being therapy based on Ryff's multidimensional eudaimonic model of psychological well-being have shown promising results in improving patients' impaired levels of psychological well-being and preventing relapse in people with mood disorders (Fava & Ruini, 2014). The results highlight the potential for the practical implementation of well-being research in clinical settings and underscore the need for a multidisciplinary approach to studying well-being and integrating insights from different disciplines. This holistic perspective can help us understand how different factors contribute to well-being and how they can be used to improve people's lives (Ryff, 2014).

Self-determination theory elaborated by Ryan and Deci offers a broad framework for thinking about the factors that determine people's motivation and their psychological development (2000). It begins with organismic metatheory, a set of philosophical assumptions about human nature. The theory suggests that humans are naturally active, with tendencies to assimilate, seek out and master challenges, and integrate

new experiences. Within the framework of self-determination theory, the primary psychological process through which this occurs is called organismic integration, a manifestation of the proactive, synthetic nature of a human (Ryan & Deci, 2022). Effective functioning of organismic integration requires the continuous satisfaction of people's basic psychological needs for autonomy (people need to feel that they are masters of their own destiny and have some control over their lives and their own behavior), competence (achievements, knowledge, and skills) and relatedness (a sense of belonging and connection). These needs are critical to virtually all aspects of individual and social functioning. Support for the satisfaction of these needs in the social context (both developmentally and situationally) promotes growth, engagement, efficacy, and well-being, whereas contexts that hinder the satisfaction of these needs often catalyze defensiveness, rigidity, and various forms of distress and psychopathology (Ryan et al., 2016).

Ryan, Huta and Deci hold the belief that the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives are different not because they consider different types of well-being, states, or outcomes, but because they have very different goals: "eudaimonic conceptions focus on the content of one's life, and the processes involved in living well, whereas hedonic conceptions of well-being focus on a specific outcome, namely the attainment of positive affect and an absence of pain" (2008, p. 140). Hedonic pleasure and positive emotions are also important because they are preferred states and support other human functions: "pleasure, psychological health, and optimal functioning are inter-correlated" (2008, p. 141). At the same time, within the framework of the eudaimonic tradition of Aristotle, they understand eudaimonia as a "way of living that is focused on what is intrinsically worthwhile to human beings" (2008, p. 147).

Although eudaimonia is not the final destination but a life process itself, the authors suggest that this life journey is associated with psychological well-being, the quality of relationships, and a person's impact on collective outcomes. The results of the eudaimonic way of life are: subjective and psychological well-being, subjective vitality, meaning in life, physical health. The researchers demonstrate that, unlike a hedonistic individual, eudaimonic individuals "have high levels of inner peace, as well as frequent experiences of moral elevation and deep appreciation of life; feel connected not only with themselves but also with a greater whole that transcends them as individuals; have a sense of where they fit in to a bigger picture and are

able to put things in perspective; and describe themselves as "feeling right" (as opposed to "feeling good", the state that hedonically oriented individuals seem to pursue). A life of hedonia has in most analyses been unrelated to these outcomes" (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 162-163).

Interpreting mental health as well-being, Keyes developed a model in which well-being manifests itself as an important indicator of a flourishing life. As the researcher notes, mental health is often interpreted as simply the opposite of mental illness; that is, the absence of mental illness equals to the presence of mental health. According to this assumption, if society can effectively treat mental illness, more people will become mentally healthy. However, "mental health and mental illness are not opposite ends of a single continuum; rather, they constitute distinct but correlated axes that suggest that mental health should be viewed as a complete state. Thus, the absence of mental illness does not equal the presence of mental health" (Keyes, 2005, p. 546). The study demonstrates that pure languishing without overt mental illness is just as dysfunctional as mental illness. Keyes suggests considering mental health as "the continuum at the top of the cliff where most individuals reside. Flourishing individuals are at the healthiest and therefore farthest distance from the edge of this cliff; languishing places individuals very near the edge of the cliff" (2005, p. 547). This vision ultimately led to the creation of the dual continua model of mental health, which holds that mental health and mental illness are related but distinct dimensions. It is not the absence of mental disorder that indicated positive mental health, but the presence of emotional well-being (feeling of happiness and satisfaction with one's life), psychological well-being (positive individual functioning in terms of self-realization), and social well-being (positive societal functioning in terms of being of social value) (Westerhof & Keyes, 2010).

This model is fundamentally consistent with the WHO definition of mental health, which defines it as a "state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (Mental Health, 2025). Thus, mental health depends on an individual's ability to cope emotionally, psychologically and socially with stressors and life challenges and to learn from life lessons. Thriving individuals demonstrate high levels of well-being, set high goals; they are resilient and their interactions with others satisfy their needs for belonging and support. This contributes to achieving and maintaining positive mental health (Reis & Gable, 2003).

Contemporary research shows that positive mental health as a key element of well-being is a particularly important predictor of remission in people with mental disorders such as specific phobia, social phobia, panic disorder, agoraphobia, suicidal ideation (Boreham & Schutte, 2023; Keyes, 2005; Lukat et al., 2016; Margraf et al., 2024; Teismann et al., 2018; Teismann et al., 2025). Researchers note that the lack of positive psychological (eudaimonic) well-being is a significant factor in the occurrence of a depressive disorder: people who demonstrate positive psychological well-being, which includes positive self-perception, autonomy, purpose in life, positive relationships with others, mastery of the environment, openness to new things and personal growth, are half as likely to develop depression as people with low positive well-being, regardless of the presence of negative functioning and impaired physical health (Wood & Joseph, 2010). Therefore, maintenance and improvement of positive mental health should not be a secondary outcome measure in therapy, but should take its rightful (and eventually leading) place within the model of sustainable mental health (Trompeter et al., 2017).

A high level of subjective well-being, which encompasses the various forms of happiness, is an important factor that contributes to a person's success in life. According to research, both internal and external circumstances influence happiness, and among them are inborn temperament, personality, outlook, resilience as internal causes; sufficient material and social resources, desirable society as external causes (Diener et al., 1999; Lyubomirsky, 2014). In this paper, we want to focus on resilience as we live in an unpredictable, changing world (Danylova et al., 2022; Danylova et al., 2023a). Desperately trying to struggle with uncertainty and to restore our ontological security, we sink deeper into the abyss of fears and anxiety (Danylova et al., 2023b). However, as Wei stressed, "change, uncertainty, and contradiction are ever-present and ever-constant. You can let go of the idea of linear progress and full resolution, and by doing so, you build resilience" (2016). To achieve and maintain our well-being in this world, we must learn to accept unpleasant emotions, tolerate discomfort, and learn from them by fostering our resilience.

APA defines resilience as the "process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands" (Resilience, 2018), while Cambridge Dictionary focuses on "the ability to be happy, successful, etc. again after something difficult or bad has

happened" (Resilience, n/d). The more resilient individuals are and the more resilient our social circle is, the lower our likelihood of developing mental health problems and the higher our likelihood of experiencing happiness (Aizpitarte Gorrotxategi, 2024).

Resilience is multifaceted, and one of its components is emotional intelligence (Ciarrochi et al., 2006). Developing an allostatic active inference model, Waugh and Sali stress that emotional intelligence helps people to be resilient. Interpreting resilience as the higher-order ability that includes emotional intelligence, they characterize it as "the ability to maintain high well-being in spite of threats to that well-being" (2023). This model "helps to explain the role of positive emotions in resilience as well as how people high in resilience ability use regulatory flexibility in the service of maintaining well-being and provides a starting point for assessing resilience as an ability" (Waugh & Sali, 2023).

A developed resilience ability is key to restoring mental health after traumatic exposure, which can even lead to post-traumatic growth. Traumatic events are incidents that cause physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual harm. They may involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, eliciting responses of fear, helplessness, or horror in those exposed (Cafasso, 2023; Traumatic Event, n/d). Traumatic events affect people differently; there is a range of options: from PTSD to resilient responses, which depend "on many factors, including characteristics of the individual, the type and characteristics of the event(s), developmental processes, the meaning of the trauma, and sociocultural factors" (Trauma-Informed Care, 2014).

In a globalized world, sociocultural factors appear particularly important. Indeed, cultures and specific social settings shape how their representatives interpret, experience, express, and deal with traumatic events. Being a social construct, the cultural world is fundamentally different from the natural world. As Berger and Luckmann put it, "what is 'real' to a Tibetan monk may not be 'real' to an American businessman" (1966, p. 15). A deeper understanding of the perception of psychological processes in different cultural contexts can facilitate the development of effective interventions that take into account broader psychological, cultural, structural, and societal factors (Bovey et al., 2025). This approach provides an opportunity to move away from the biomedical model of a human and consider his/her nature, mental health, and well-being through the lens of a holistic paradigm that takes into account all manifestations of a human being.

In the last decades, there has been increasing research into the positive effects of trauma as a situation that initiates personality change; and the concept of posttraumatic growth (PTG) has been developed. Posttraumatic growth is defined as “positive psychological changes experienced as a result of the struggle with traumatic or highly challenging life circumstances. These changes occur in response to the challenge to what people assumed to be true about the lives they lived” (Tedeschi et al., 2018, p. 3). Such changes can lead to increased self-awareness and self-confidence, a more open attitude towards others, a greater appreciation of life, and the discovery of new opportunities that contribute to positive mental health and well-being (Messias et al., 2020). Yet, we have to remember that the difference between PTSD and PTG may be very subtle and they may proceed in pairs (Dell’Osso et al., 2022). Some researchers also question the prevalence of actual posttraumatic growth “suggesting instead that most of this phenomenon as currently measured is due to people’s beliefs that they have grown and less to actual lasting changes in their well-being” (Waugh & Sali, 2023).

Traumatic events can affect not only individuals, but also groups, societies, and sometimes entire civilizations. Individual experiences of suffering fuel any collective trauma, but, as Alexander emphasizes, it is the threat to collective identity that defines the essence of suffering (2016). A collective trauma targets the shared identity and may affect society as a whole. When “members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (Alexander, 2004, p. 1), we deal with cultural trauma which is “historically made” (Smelser, 2004, p. 37). Often collective and cultural traumas are connected. The pain of cultural trauma may be transmitted to new generations through psychological modeling, social environment, and epigenetic changes. Through psychological modeling, children learn emotional responses and coping behaviors from their traumatized parents or caregivers. Observing parents’ constant anxiety, they develop hypervigilance. Social environment shapes children’s worldviews and their development that leads to difficulties and lack of trust in relationships. Cultural trauma alters gene expression patterns, and offspring may show altered stress hormone regulation being more vulnerable to anxiety (How Does Cultural Trauma, 2025).

Minority groups are often disproportionately affected by cultural trauma. All this has an impact on the mental health and well-being of traumatized groups or societies, members of which experience stress, anxiety, depression, stigma, isolation, antisocial behavior, substance abuse, insomnia, hopelessness, feelings of worthlessness, resentment, fear, and existential problems (Danylova et al., 2024; Geronimus et al., 1996; Hutchison et al., 2007; Kang et al., 2024; Levine et al., 2001; Parasies et al., 2015; Vus et al., 2024). The lack of resources leads to untreated mental health disorders as “cultural trauma may represent an unrecognized fundamental cause of health disparities” (Subica & Link, 2021). Being transferred to next generations, cultural trauma may disturb their normal psychological development and deprive them of the opportunity to feel valued members of society and enjoy positive mental health and well-being. There are different styles of coping with collective/cultural traumas, and recent approaches emphasize respecting them and not valuing one type over another (Trauma-Informed Care, 2014), if these responses allow people to return to a state of productive functioning in society with a sense of their value and uniqueness in our diverse world, in which they can feel happy.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This review paper examines the problem as a whole, so caution is needed when generalizing the findings. On the other hand, this theoretical study may pave the way for multidisciplinary research at the intersection of social sciences and humanities.

Practical value

This research contributes to the elaboration of the concept of positive mental health and well-being incorporating philosophical understanding of the phenomenon of happiness, which allows to deepen and expand the interpretation of happiness in theoretical and conceptual frameworks and practical implications

Conclusions

The dramatic shift in approaches to mental health and well-being with an emphasis on positivity has been made possible in large part by the development of positive psychology that draws on the foundations of humanistic psychology; acceptance and commitment

therapy, which, like positive psychology, aims to improve psychological well-being; and existential psychology, which differs from positive psychology but shares with the latter the belief that people have the capacity for self-awareness, free choice, creativity, love, and authenticity – a human path to transformation. This paradigmatic shift towards “positivity” has expanded understanding of factors and conditions that promote or undermine our mental health and well-being. Such an understanding should lead to the creation of conditions for individual flourishing, social prosperity, and overall well-being offering innovative solutions to complex individual, organizational, and societal problems (Kumkaria et al., 2024; Lomas et al., 2021; Worthington & van Zyl, 2021). A new positive approach to mental health and human well-being must take into account cultural and social contexts, individual differences, ethical aspects and be focused on stable long-term development, which requires integration with other disciplines and the creation of a unified platform for research aimed at solving social, cultural, economic, political, and spiritual challenges humanity faces in the 21st century.

Funding statement

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and publication of this article. The publication fee was covered by the authors personally.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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