



# Promoting mental health & well-being via the Internet

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# The Plan

1. Mental Health
2. Positive Psychology
3. Internet Interventions
4. The study
5. Results
6. What Next?



Martin looked on in horror as Brian, once again, destroyed his plans for happiness and contentment.

# Mental Health & Illness

- Focus, since WW2, on psychopathology
- Limited research looking at mental health / well-being
- Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness



# Mental Health & Illness

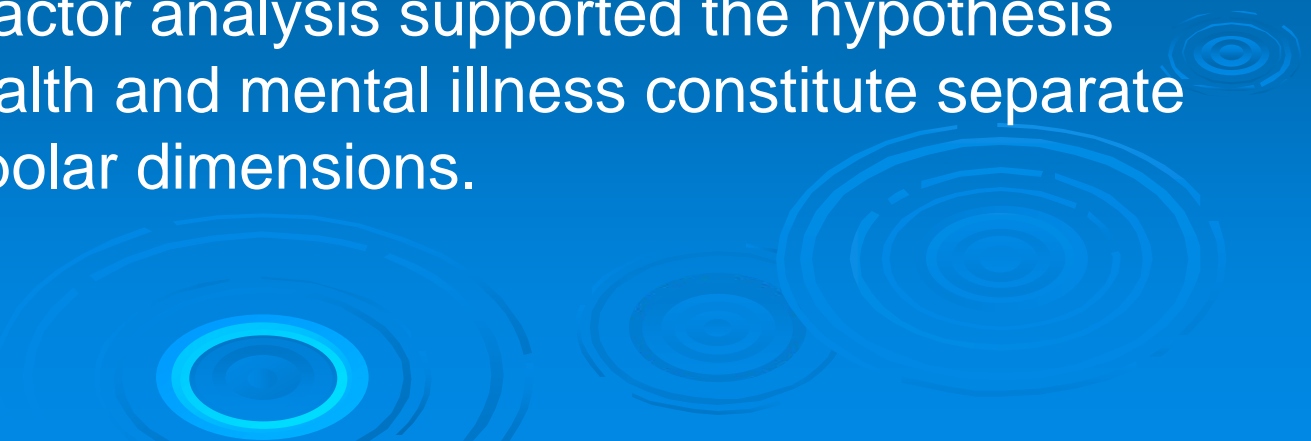
World Health Organisation (2001)

*“...a state of **well-being** in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community.”*

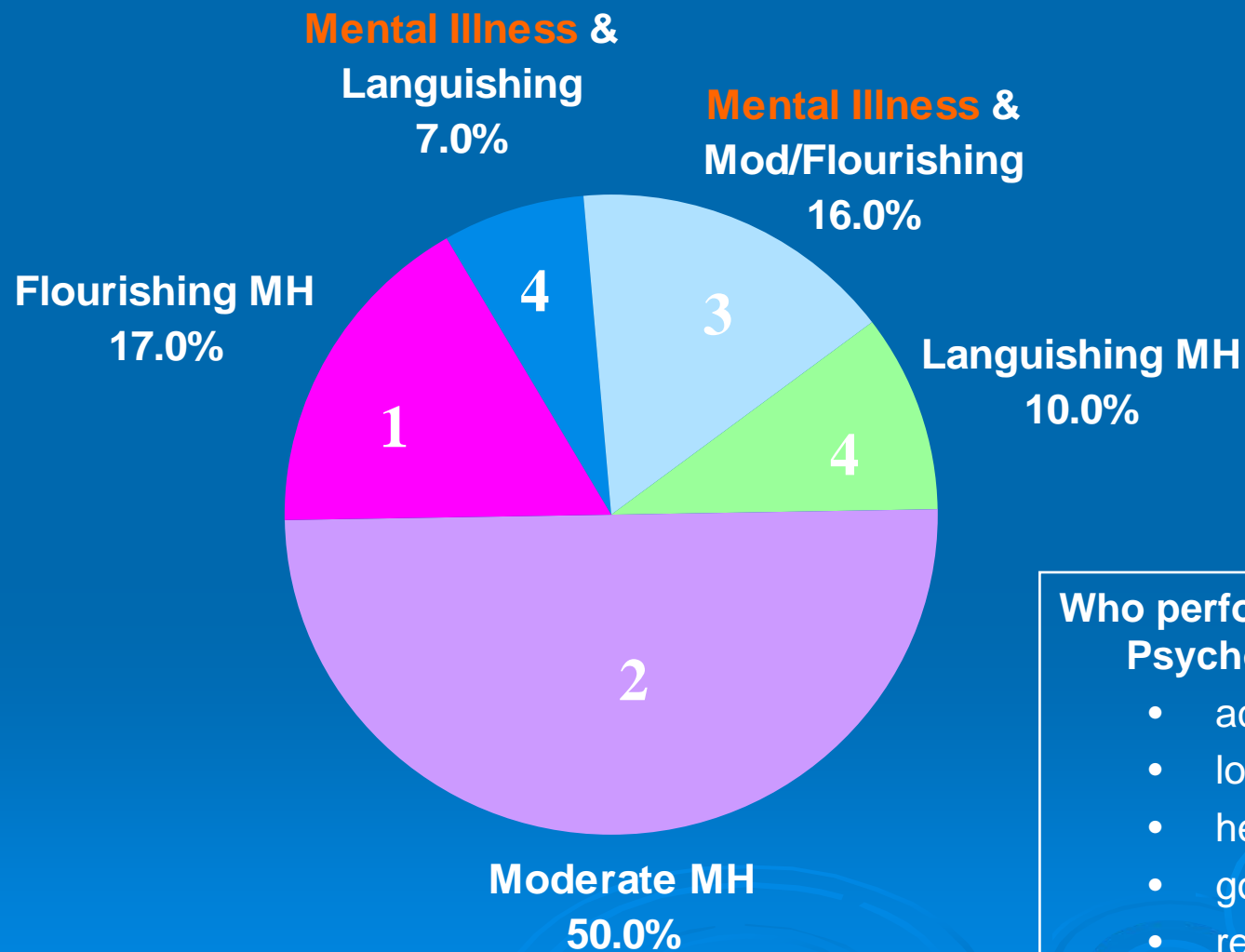


# Complete Mental Health

Corey Keyes (2005)

- N = 3,032 American adults (25-74 yrs)
  - Mental illness (depression, GAD, panic disorder, alcohol dependence)
  - Mental health (positive affect, life satisfaction, psychological and social well-being)
  - Confirmatory factor analysis supported the hypothesis that mental health and mental illness constitute separate correlated unipolar dimensions.
- 

# Complete Mental Health



## Who performs best in terms of Psychosocial Outcomes?

- activities of daily living
- lost work days
- helplessness
- goal formation
- resilience & intimacy

# Positive Psychology

- **Positive psychology** is the scientific study of wellbeing and optimal functioning, focusing on positive emotions, character traits and enabling institutions.

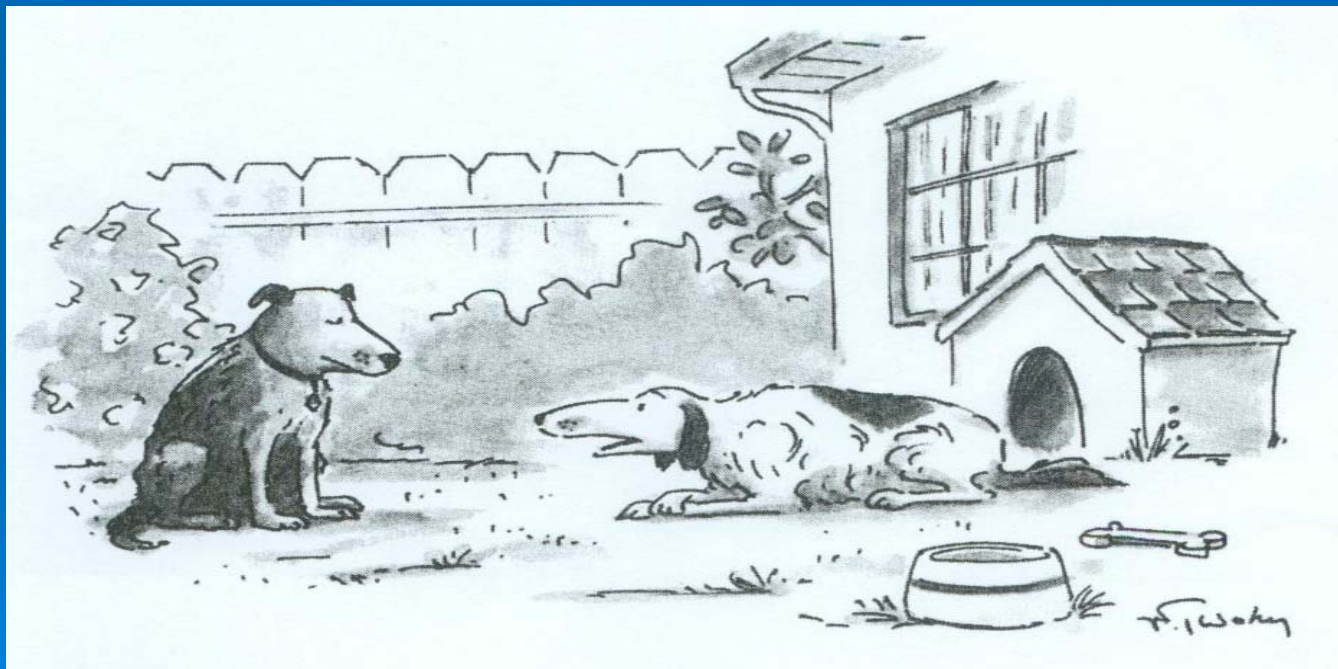
(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005)

- Aim to bring together previously disparate lines of research and theory under the one umbrella.



# Web Wellness

Increased interest in online wellness information unrelated to symptoms of illness, medical diagnosis or health crisis (Evers, 2006; Fox, 2006)



***“I’ve got my health, the kennel, the bone, the big yard.  
I know I should be happy.”***



# Internet Interventions

## Illness treatment & prevention

- E.g. anxiety
- depression
- panic disorder
- PTSD
- phobias
- OCD
- eating disorders
- encopresis
- tinnitus
- headaches

## Health Behaviours

- E.g. physical activity
- nutrition / diet
- smoking cessation
- alcohol use

## Wellness Promotion

- **1 online study**

# Well-being Internet Intervention


Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson (2005)

- N = 577 adults
- Randomised placebo controlled trial
- Assessment x 6 (pre-, post-, 1-week, 1-month, 3-month, 6-month follow-up)
- 1-week intervention (5 active interventions, 1 placebo control)
- Measures:
  - Happiness (Steen Happiness Index)
  - Depression (CES-D)

# Well-being Internet Intervention

1. Using signature strengths in a new way
2. Three good things (daily gratitude)
3. Gratitude visit (one-off gratitude)
4. Identifying signature strengths
5. Identifying a time when you are at your best
6. Earliest memories (placebo control)

Increase in happiness and decrease in depression at:  
post-, 1-week, 1-month, 3-month, 6-month follow-up



# Well-being Internet Intervention

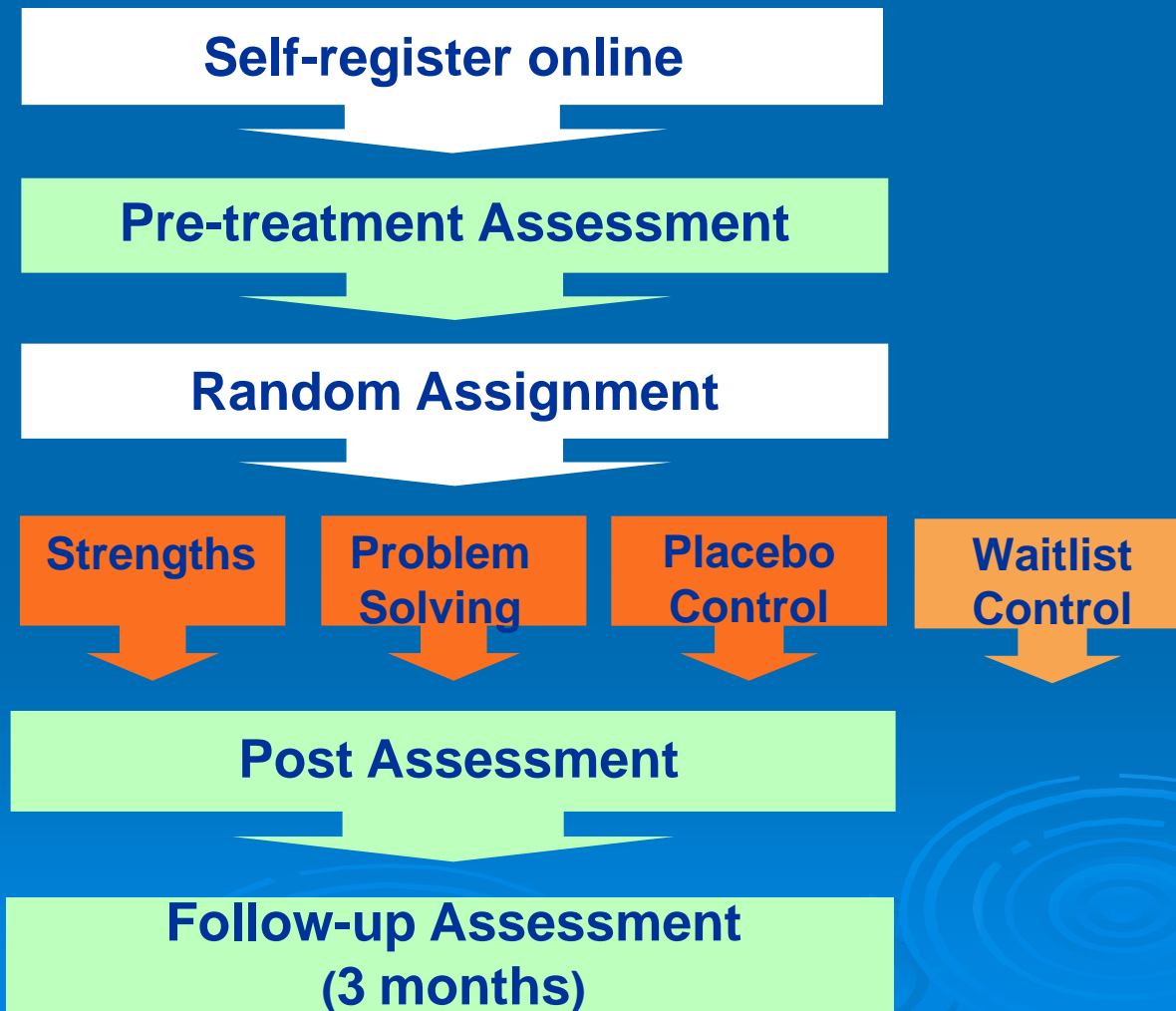
- Demonstrates the potential for Internet mental health promotion
- Limitations & Issues
  - Questionable 'Internet Intervention' (i.e. email of text based-instructions)
  - Confound – human contact



# Study Aim

- To develop and test the efficacy of an internet-based positive psychology intervention to enhance well-being and mental health of adult Australians
- To explore attrition.

# Study Design



# Measures

- Demographic information (pre-assessment only)
- Personal Wellbeing Index (International Wellbeing Group, 2006)
- PANAS
- Satisfaction With Life Scale
- Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)
- Program evaluation (post-assessment only)

# Groups

## 1. Strengths:

- Identify & use personal strengths (e.g. curiosity, gratitude)
- Information architecture – tunnel design
- 3 self-guided sessions, 3 weeks
- Interactive, personalised information and activities
- Recommended offline activities/practice

## 2. Problem Solving:

- Identify & use personal problem solving skills
- Same format as strengths intervention

## 3. Placebo Control:

- Reading information about problem solving
- 3 sessions self-guided sessions, 3 weeks



# Strengths Intervention

- Example web pages



## ENHANCED WELLBEING ONLINE

>Welcome  
Helpful Info  
Overview

### Identifying Strengths

Identifying Strengths  
- Activity  
Signature Strengths  
Ranking strengths  
- Activity  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

### Maximising Strengths

Review  
Step 1  
Step 2  
- Activity  
Step 3  
Strength Diary  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

### Reviewing Progress

Review  
What next?  
Conclusion  
Questionnaires

Logoff

Welcome!

Print

Next ▶

*Welcome Jo to the Enhancing Wellbeing Online (EWO) program developed by Monash University and the Australian Institute of Sport. This program provides you with personal development information and activities to be completed both on and offline.*



The program is made up of 3 sessions to be completed over a 3 week period. While it takes approximately 20 minutes to complete each session, you will also need to set aside an additional 20 minutes each week to complete the offline activity.

We suggest you designate a day each week to complete the session, allowing a week between sessions to complete the offline task. We will send you a weekly email reminder to complete the next session if you have not done so already.

There are a number of online activities to complete in each session. Your responses to these activities will be recorded automatically.

Revisit the [Explanatory Statement](#)

Next ▶

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- Identifying Strengths
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**Maximising Strengths**

- Review
- Step 1
- Step 2
- Activity
- Step 3
- Strength Diary
- Offline Activity
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- Review
- What next?
- Conclusion
- Questionnaires

**Question 1: What skills or activities have you learned easily or enjoy doing?**

For example, playing the guitar, teaching, solving the sudoku, selling on ebay, being a parent, organising a dinner party, reading the financial section of the newspaper, playing tennis.

**Question 2: What are you doing when you feel most comfortable and at ease with yourself?**

For example, at home with my family, when I am writing my monthly work report, playing tennis, when I am painting, spending time with friends, going to a party, when I am helping others, walking the dog.

**Question 3: What aspects of your life are you most proud of?**

For example, my work team, my children, having good friends, maintaining a regular exercise routine, my charity work, getting a bonus from work, travelling overseas.

In the next section we will begin to classify and prioritise your signature strengths.

Remember, there is no correct answer to these questions! Just answer them as best you can. Once you have answered each of these questions you can move on to the next section



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Welcome  
Helpful Info  
Overview

### Identifying Strengths

Identifying Strengths  
- Activity  
Signature Strengths  
Ranking strengths  
- Activity  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

### Maximising Strengths

Review  
Step 1  
Step 2  
- Activity  
Step 3  
Strength Diary  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

### Reviewing Progress

Review  
What next?  
Conclusion  
Questionnaires

Logoff

## Ranking your Signature Strengths

Print

Back

Next

1. Love of learning
2. Curiosity and interest in the world
3. Creativity, ingenuity, and originality
4. Appreciation of beauty & excellence
5. Gratitude
6. Capacity to love and be loved
7. Honesty, authenticity, and genuineness
8. Hope, optimism, and future-mindedness
9. Playfulness
10. Judgment, critical thinking, and open-mindedness
11. Perspective (wisdom)
12. Social intelligence
13. Fairness, equity, and justice
14. Kindness and generosity
15. Citizenship, teamwork, and loyalty
16. Forgiveness and mercy
17. Bravery
18. Industry, diligence, and perseverance
19. Modesty and humility
20. Leadership
21. Zest, enthusiasm, and energy
22. Self-control and self-regulation
23. Caution, prudence, and discretion
24. Spirituality, sense of purpose, and faith

Roll your mouse over any of the signature strengths to read a more detailed description of its meaning.

Using your mouse, click and drag the items to arrange them in the list, with those most like you at the top, and least like you at the bottom.

If you find it difficult to rank all 24 strengths, then just focus on the top 10 strengths as these are the ones will use in the next session.

Your answers will automatically save when you click the next button.



Back

Next

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Welcome  
Helpful Info  
Overview

### Identifying Strengths

Identifying Strengths  
- Activity  
Signature Strengths  
Ranking strengths  
- Activity  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

### Maximising Strengths

Review  
Step 1  
Step 2  
- Activity  
Step 3  
Strength Diary  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

### Reviewing Progress

Review  
What next?  
Conclusion  
Questionnaires

Logoff

## Offline Activity

Print

Back

Next

Well done! You have completed the first session. To help consolidate the work you have done online, we ask that you complete an offline activity prior to commencing the next session.

### Offline Activity

Your offline activity is to ask a family member / friend if you can share what you have learnt from this session. Only share as much or as little information as you feel comfortable with. To get the conversation started you may want to ask them some questions like:

- What do they consider to be their own personal strengths?
- Which of the signature strengths are most relevant for them?
- What do they think are your personal strengths?
- How do you both use your strengths in your daily life?

Remember, to keep the conversation focused on strengths, not weaknesses!

[Click here](#) to view/print the Strength Table (with Signature Strengths explanations).

[Click here](#) to view/print your answers to the questions at the start of this session.



Back

Next

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Welcome  
Helpful Info  
Overview

### Identifying Strengths

Identifying Strengths  
- Activity  
Signature Strengths  
Ranking strengths  
- Activity  
Offline Activity  
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Review  
Step 1  
Step 2  
- Activity  
Step 3  
Strength Diary  
Offline Activity  
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### Reviewing Progress

Review  
What next?  
Conclusion  
Questionnaires

Logoff

Conclusion

Print

Back

Next

Please wait a week before logging back on for the next session. This gives you time to reflect on what you have learnt and complete the offline task. I will send you a reminder email if you forget to log on and complete the next session. Have a great week!



Back

Next

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Welcome  
Helpful Info  
Overview

### Identifying Strengths

Identifying Strengths  
- Activity  
Signature Strengths  
Ranking strengths  
- Activity  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

### Maximising Strengths

Review  
Step 1  
Step 2  
- Activity  
Step 3  
Strength Diary  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

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Review  
What next?  
Conclusion  
Questionnaires

Logoff

 Review

Print

 Back

Next 

Welcome back! In the last session you spent time identifying a problem to work on, generating possible solutions and evaluating the alternatives. At the end of the session you were asked to do an offline activity (i.e. Review the first three steps and discuss what you had learnt with a friend or family member). How did it go?



Did you try the offline activity? [Yes](#) | [No](#)

#### NO: Question 2

What happened? What stopped you from doing the offline activity?

Remember - doing the offline activity can really enhance your learning experience.

I meant to do it but just ran out of time. Will set aside specific time to do it this week.

 Back

Next 

### Identifying Strengths

### Maximising Strengths

### Reviewing Progress

On the next screen you will be asked to list two ways you can use and develop each of your chosen strengths further. You might choose to apply your strength to a challenge you are currently facing, or to a new activity. There are no right or wrong answers - just pick challenges/activities that fit well with you and use your signature strength.



Below is an *example* response for the Step 2 activity.

#### The ways that I will develop my strengths are:

##### Love of Learning

- Listen to my favourite weekend radio news program.
- Set aside dedicated time to do more research on a work project that is not going as well as I hoped.

##### Gratitude

- List 3 things that I am grateful for each week.
- Demonstrate appreciation if someone helps me at work or in my personal life.

##### The ability to love and be loved

- At the end of a phone call to my children, tell them that I love them.
- Accept compliments graciously.

Revisit the full list of [Signature Strengths](#) and their definitions.



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- Activity  
Offline Activity  
Conclusion

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Review  
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Step 2  
- Activity  
Step 3  
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Conclusion

Reviewing Progress

Review  
What next?  
Conclusion  
Questionnaires

Logoff

Weekly Strength Diary

Print

Back

Next

You can either click the link to [download a print version of Diary](#) or fill in the online Diary below. Remember, when keeping your diary try to:

- Complete the diary as you go, or at the end of each day, so that you do not forget what you have achieved by the end of the week.
- Try to engage in at least one activity per day.
- Try to make the activities achievable and enjoyable or gratifying. Review your progress at the end of the week and make changes if required.



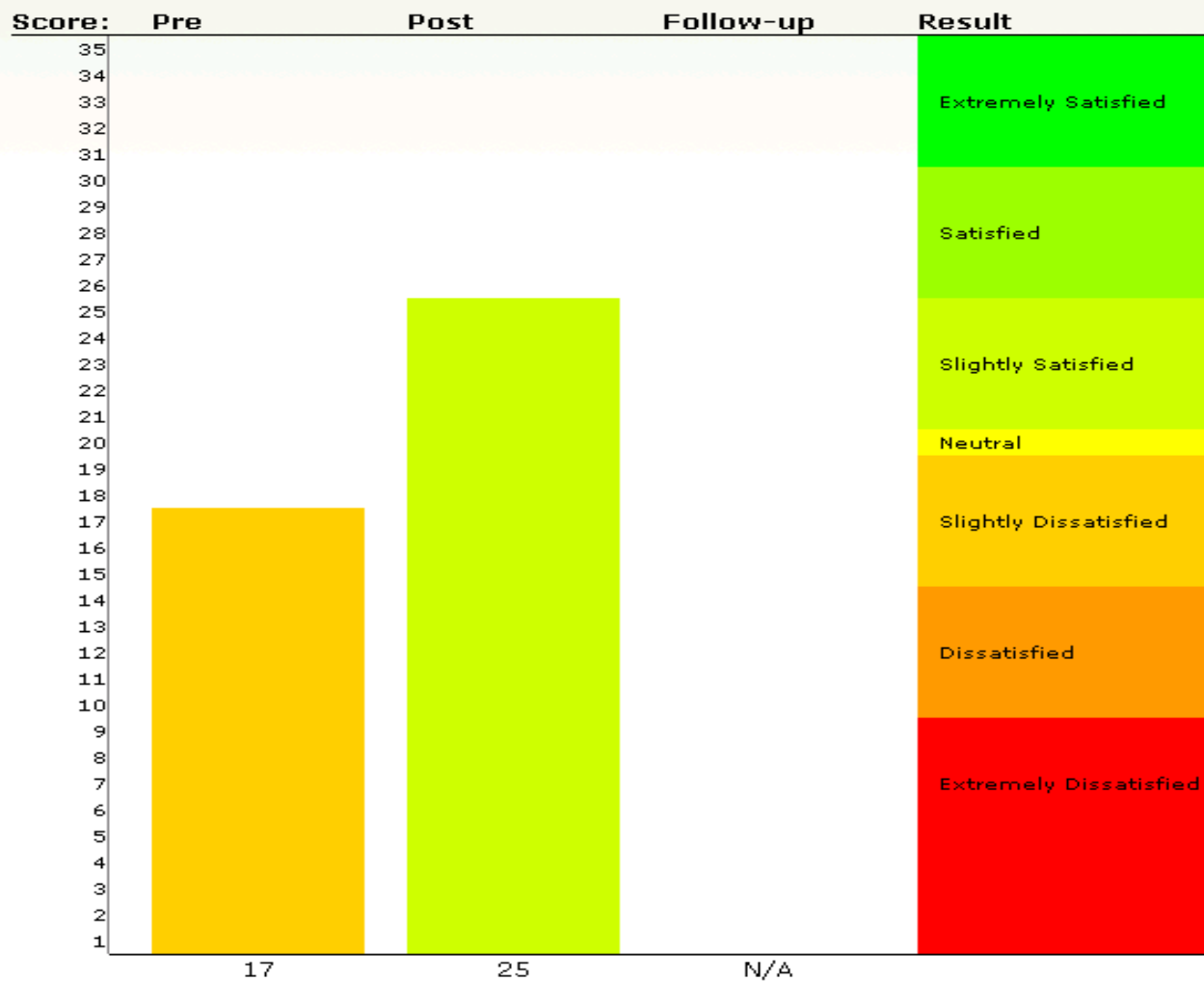
Day	Activity to Develop:		
	Strength 1	Strength 2	Strength 3
	Curiosity and interest in the world	Capacity to love and be loved	Gratitude
23 Jan 05	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
25 Jan 05	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Add New Row"/>			

Back

Next



Here are your results for the 'satisfaction with life' questionnaire. You can compare your results for each time you completed the questionnaire. We will contact you again in 3 months to complete the questionnaires for a final time and you will be able to view your results.



# Study Results



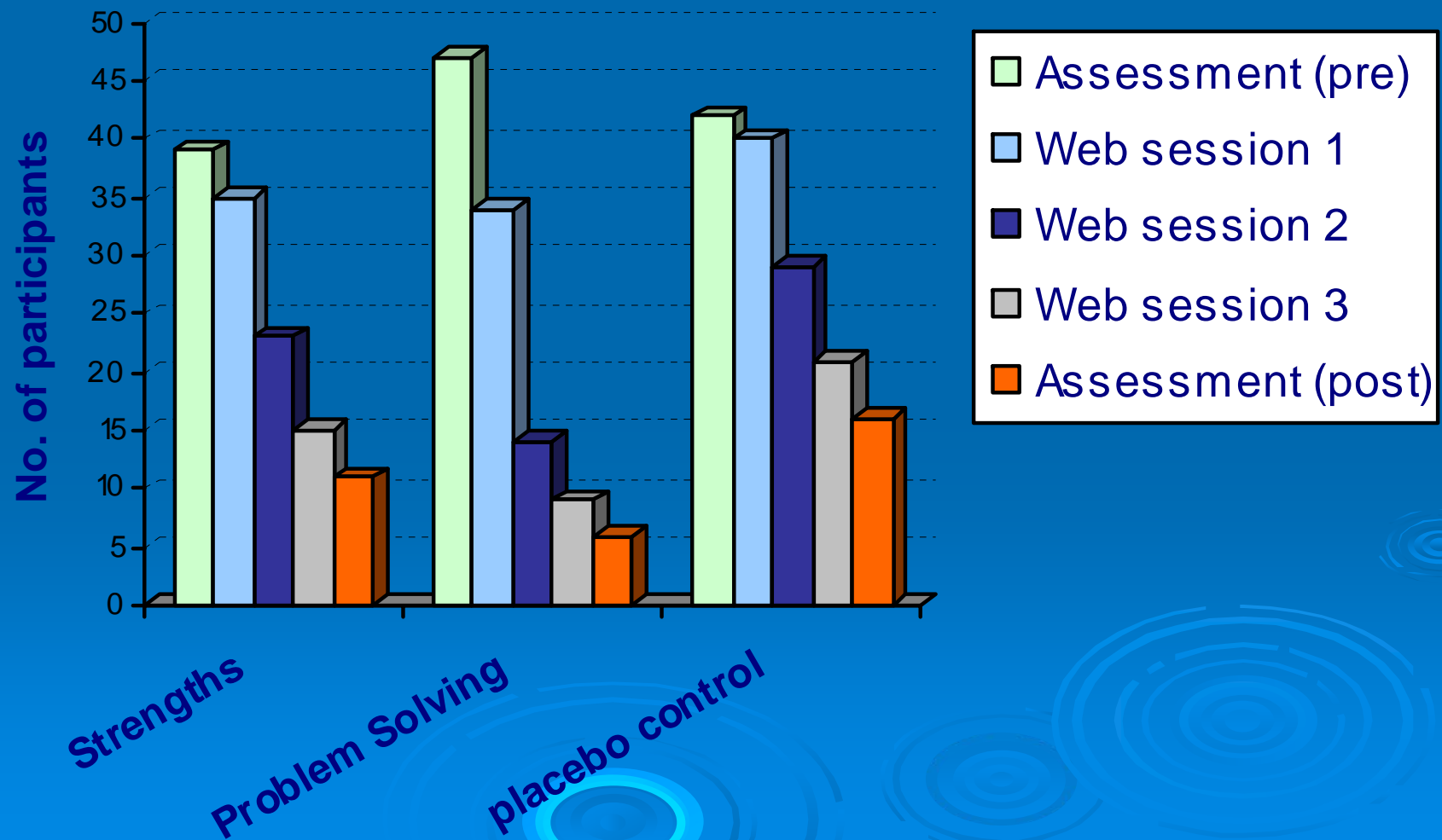
# Participant Characteristics (N=128)

<b>Age</b>	M=37.2 (SD=11.3) Range 19-62yrs
<b>Sex</b>	85% female
<b>Employment</b>	84% employed 13% students
<b>Education</b>	81% with tertiary degree
<b>Marital status</b>	57% married/defacto 33% single
<b>Family</b>	40% have children

# Attrition


- The proportion of users who drop out before completing (Eysenbach, 2005)
- Face-to-face interventions (10%)
- Internet Interventions (6-95%)
  - **95% & 77.5%** for Moodgym - depression prevention (Christensen et al., 2004)
  - **65.0%** for smoking cessation program (Etter, 2006)
  - **29.0%** for Happiness intervention (Seligman et al., 2005)
  - **6.0%** for Panic Online - Panic disorder treatment (Klein et al., 2006)
- Pre (N=128) to post (N=33) assessment attrition = **74%**

# Attrition by Group

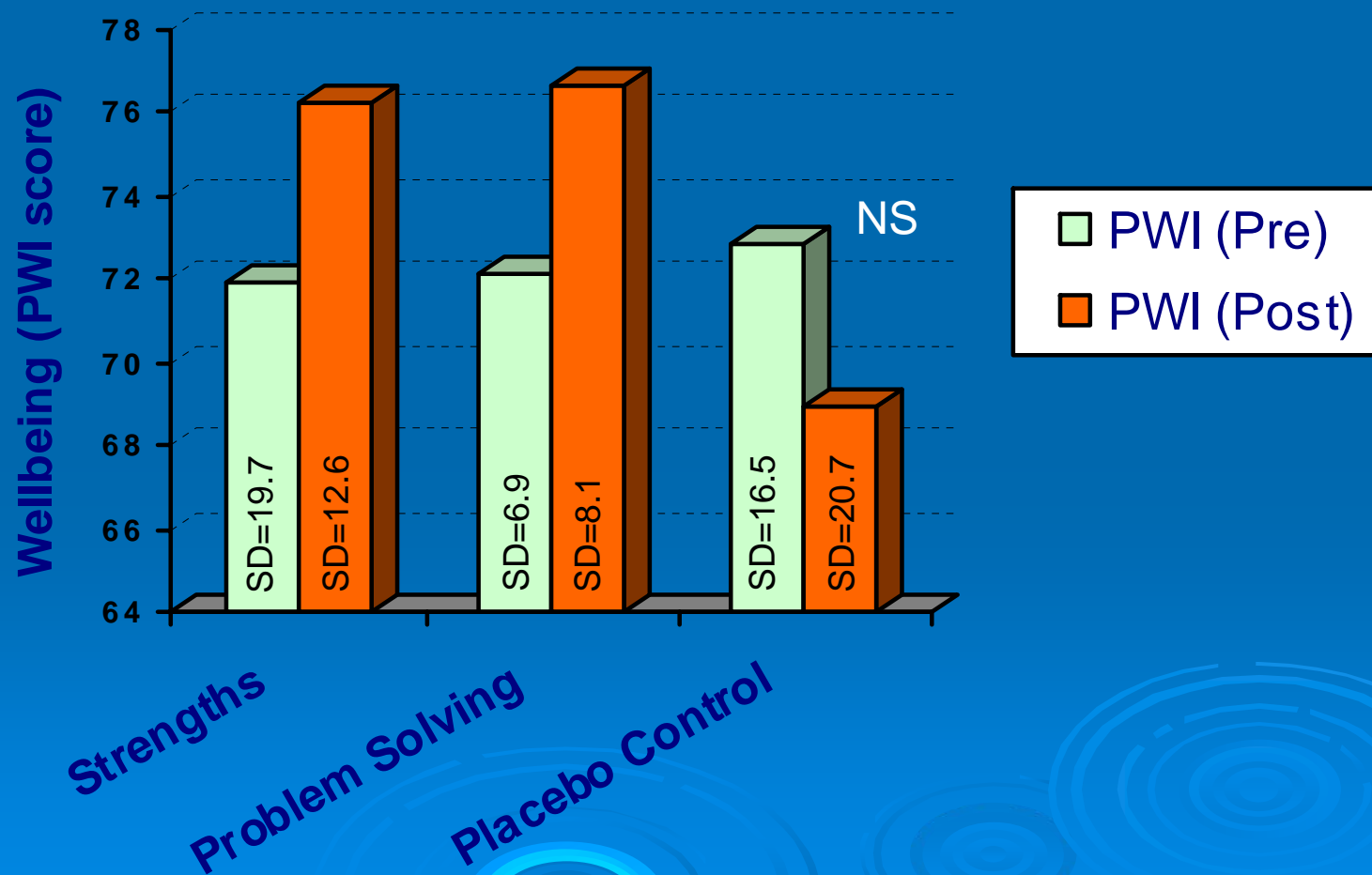


# Attrition

Factors that may impact on attrition:

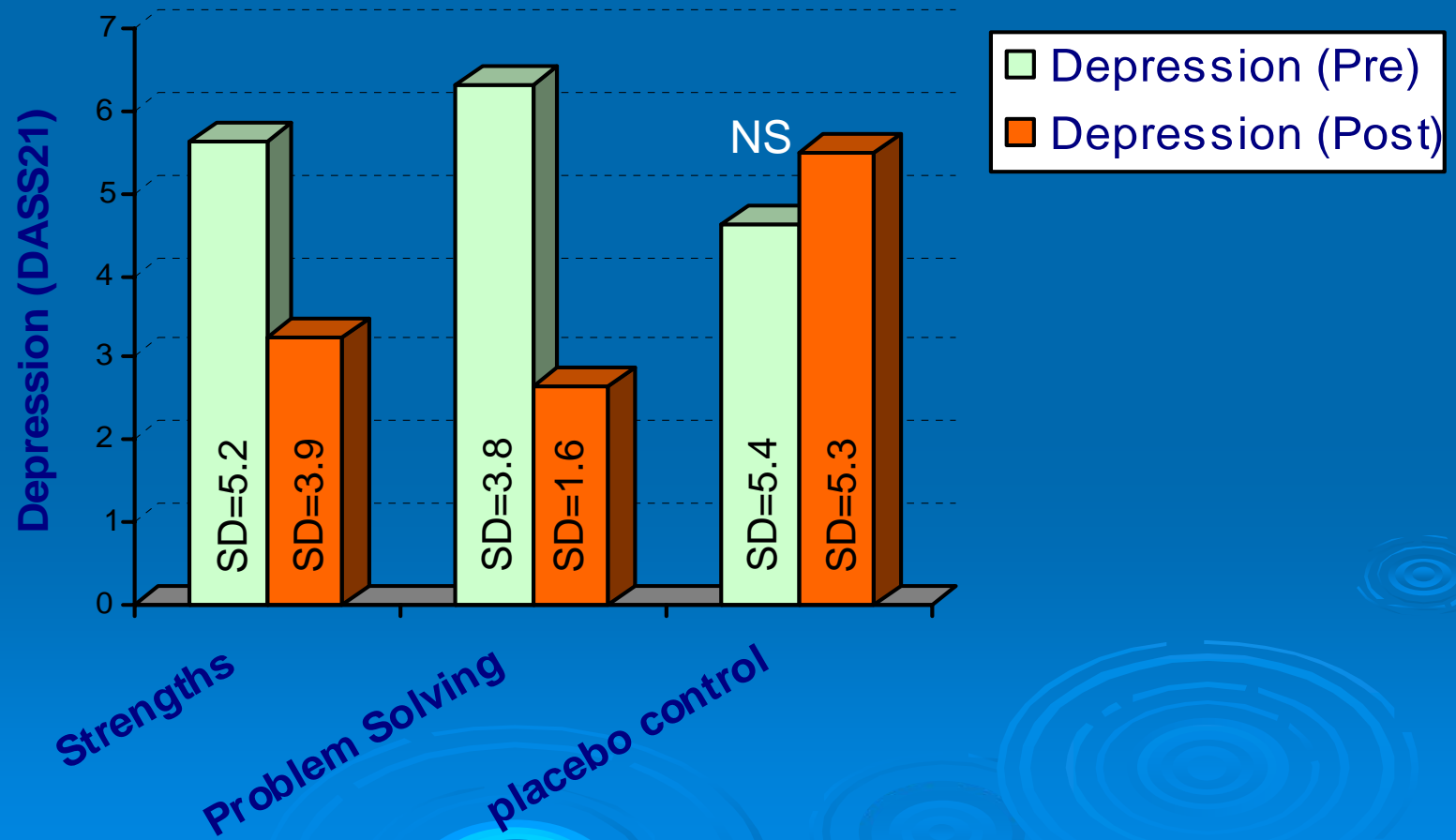
- Motivation (i.e. alleviate illness vs enhance wellness)
  - Human contact during assessment or intervention
  - Information architecture (e.g. tunnel design)
  - Web technical issues
  - Interactivity / effort (e.g. less attrition from group 3)
- 

# Pre-post group means for well-being (PWI)





# Pre-post group means for depression (DASS)



# Results

## Well-being:

- Placebo = no change
- Strengths & problem solving = increase
- Australian PWI normative range (73.4 - 76.7)

## Depression:

- Placebo = no change
- Strengths & problem solving = decrease
- Pre- and post means in 'normal range' (0-9)

## Anxiety & Stress:

- No change for all groups

# Limitations & Summary

## Limitations:

- High attrition rate (more data needed)
- Interim data only
- Maintaining change (3 month follow-up)
- Technical issues & waitlist control

## Summary:

- Online interventions based on evidence based protocols have the potential to impact positively on the well-being and mental health of adult Australians.
- Factors that impact on attrition require further exploration.



“To live is the rarest thing in the world.  
Most people exist, that is all”

*Oscar Wilde*

