Course: Assessment and interventions

- Block: 1
- 6 ECTS

Positive psychology assessment and intervention can be understood as any intentional activity or method (training, coaching, etc.) based on (a) the cultivation of valued subjective experiences, (b) the building of positive individual traits, and/or (c) the building of civic virtue and positive institutions (Meyers, van Woerkom, & Bakker, 2013).

In contrast to the traditional assessment goals in psychology related to illness and disorder, positive psychological assessment identifies factors that are related to well-being. These factors can refer to Seligman's PERMA framework (Seligman, 2012). Via positive psychological assessment, practitioners and researchers strive to incorporate assessment of human strengths, resources, and fulfillment into their clients' life using different instruments.

Positive psychological assessment requires measures of positive constructs, such as optimism, self-efficacy, locus of control, gratitude and well-being. Positive interventions may focus on stimulating subjective experiences (e.g., remembering sacred moments, expressing gratitude), identifying, developing, and using character strengths, or focusing on valued characteristics of organizations or organizational subgroups.

Several studies have shown that the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions may depend on individual characteristics such as initial levels of engagement, self-efficacy or age. Therefore, this course will deal with the question how positive psychology interventions may be tailored to the needs of the individual. Because autonomy-supportiveness is crucial for the success of any positive intervention, we will also address self-administered interventions that may be combined with experience sampling methods.

In relation to this we will also discuss available instruments for assessing (character) strengths (e.g., the Values In Action inventory of character strengths, VIA-IS; Peterson & Seligman, 2004) or (momentary) positive states such as psychological capital (referring to self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism, Luthans, Avolio, Avery, & Norman, 2007) or positive emotions.