

Spark Up Positive Change: Small Steps to Mental Health Well-Being

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Today's Presentation

- Set the Stage
 - Introduce why today's discussion is important
 - Describe how to apply evidence-based strategies for building sustainable habits: Trigger to Glimmer [how habits are formed, how long, practice]
- Facilitated Panel Discussion
 - Introduce yourself by describing an every day positive habit
 - Exchange strategies for how to foster a daily shift in mindset
- Conclusion
 - Strategies & Tactics reinforce & sustain a joyful habit & positive shift
 - List Resources and Next Steps

Introduction: Why this Matters

- There is a need to acknowledge the mental health impacts of chronic conditions including PKU: perpetual trauma, anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, anger, isolation; a foundation of negative thought processes.
- Good news, a shift in Mental Health Well-being discourse towards positive psychology and
 - Collaboratively discuss what can work
 - Move towards overall wellness
 - Use of daily habits, micro sparks~
- Small positive steps can lead to significant improvement in mental health well-being



What are Micro-Sparks?

Micro-sparks are a flash of joy and optimism

- An event or moment of surprise that spontaneously creates feelings of happiness
- Like a glimmer – opposite of a trigger

Micro-spark activators

- Sound
- Smell
- Touch
- Taste
- Pictures
- Humor
- Memory
- Mindfulness
- Helping Others
- Compassionate Self-talk

Positive habits that are reinforced can create change and improve overall wellness



Spark Up to Better Mental Health

Action to Create a Micro-Spark	Results of That Small Step
Practice Gratitude	<u>Improved Mood and Resilience</u> : Increases dopamine and serotonin levels improving mood and resilience against stress
Movement (Exercise)	<u>Enhanced Brain Function and Mood</u> : Increases endorphins which improves brain function and mood
Prioritize Sleep	<u>Better Emotional Regulation</u> : Helps regulate emotions, improve cognitive function, and reduce stress levels
Connect with Loved Ones	<u>Increased Oxytocin Levels</u> : Boosts oxytocin, which enhances feelings of trust, love, and social bonding
Set Small Achievable Goals	<u>Sense of Accomplishment</u> : Releases dopamine, which motivates further positive actions and boosts confidence
Engage in Mindfulness	<u>Reduced Anxiety and Stress</u> : Lowers cortisol and promotes relaxation and emotional balance
Help Others	<u>Increased Happiness</u> : Boosts serotonin and endorphin levels, leading to a heightened sense of happiness and satisfaction
Take Breaks in Nature	<u>Improved Mental Health</u> : Spending time in nature reduces stress, lowers cortisol levels, and enhances overall well-being



Resources

- NPKUA Mentor Program
 - Free peer mentoring for the community
 - Trained mentors that can help others navigate challenges, provide encouragement and instill hope
 - Adult program 18 years old or older
 - Any member of the PKU community
- How to find a mentor:
 - Look for the special badges and Mentor bracelets
 - Visit the Table in the Exhibit Hall
 - Look at the Mentor summaries on NPKUA Web Site