

The BRAIN TRUST NETWORK [BTN]
Meeting Notes

Tuesday, February 14, 2017

4:30-5:30 pm

UTEP Health Science Center and School of Nursing Building
Room 384

Attending:

Nancy Antillon, Dr. Beth Abbott, Brenna Bastion, Sharon Butterworth, Maria Carrillo, Rick Chafino, Manny Castruita, Arturo Jaime, Dr. Kristin Kosyluk, Tony Martinez, Dr. Holly Mata, Enrique Mata, Juan Carlos Mendoza, Olivia Narvaez, Denise Uga, Guillermo Valenzuela, Albert Villa, Dr. John Wiebe

Welcome and Introductions:

Sharon Butterworth convened the meeting at 4:30 pm and called for brief introductions.

“What is Positive Psychology?”:

Dr. John Wiebe, UTEP Professor of Psychology, provided a presentation on the history and current practice of Positive Psychology. He explained that he has a special interest in this topic and his dissertation was in an area related to positive psychology. When Dr. Wiebe began in the psychology profession, [Dr. Martin Seligman](#) was President of the American Psychological Association. His early work was on the theory of learned helplessness. He studied dogs' responses to pain, either with the possibility of escape or without. Dogs without the possibility of escape eventually did not even try to avoid the pain even when an escape was made available. Seligman's theory of depression recognized that people get to the point that they just decide they can't effect change so they stop trying. So, if individuals show a learned helplessness, we must work with them to demonstrate their agency and efficacy.

He explained that the profession of Psychology is more traditionally dysfunction focused. Dr. Seligman changed the focus of his work and used his presidency to promote positive psychology as a science. In the 90's there was not much clarity on the definition of positive psychology. In scientific terms this is a very young field. Dr. Seligman developed the PERMA Theory including 5 pillars of well-being - Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Much of positive psychology studies happiness. Some people are now studying using traditional cognitive therapy models with a positive psychology spin, increasing sense of control and improving memory for positive things. Dr. Wiebe provided research examples and explained that happiness has more to do with what we remember about what happens to us than what actually happens. He added that happiness is contagious. Dr. Wiebe closed the presentation with a brief overview of [Dr. Angela Duckworth's](#) research and her work on *grit*, as well as the work of [Dr. Carol Dweck](#) on *mindset*. After the presentation, Dr. Wiebe responded to questions and the group entered into a lively discussion about Positive Psychology.

Updates:

Dr. Kristin Kosyluk updated the group on a research project she is working on “Narrative Enhancement and Cognitive Therapy (NECT)” with Dr. Phil Yanos. For more information contact Dr. Kosyluk at kkosyluk@utep.edu . She also updated the group on an opportunity to become a trained Peer-to-Peer mentor for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Please see the attached flier. NAMI Peer-to-Peer (P2P) is a free 10-session educational program for adults with a mental health condition who are interested in better understanding their condition and journey to recovery. The class is facilitated by a team of mentors with lived experience. NAMI is looking for individuals living in recovery who are interested in becoming trained as mentors to lead a 10-session course. The training is free. The next training is April 7-9, 2017. Anyone interested in joining the NAMI El Paso team, please contact Donald Andrus by email at dtandrus@miners.utep.edu or by phone at 915-247-6278.

Mr. Manny Castruita, Director, Counseling, Advising, and College Readiness, reported on numerous positive actions related to mental health within the El Paso Independent School District. For more information contact Mr. Castruita at (915) 230-2384, or mcastrui@episd.org Dr. Holly Mata was pleased to report that El Paso was the first city in Texas to pass a civil social host ordinance. Since then, San Antonio and many other cities are investigating passage of a similar ordinance.

Dr. Beth Abbott reported that the Center Against Sexual and Family Violence will hold a “Man UP” dinner at Ardivinos Desert Crossing on February 23rd. Tickets are \$75.00 for more information see <https://www.casfv.org/> .

Next Meeting:

The Brain Trust now has a standing meeting time of 4:30 pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month for 2017.

The Next Brain Trust Network meeting is scheduled for 4:30 pm, Tuesday, March 14, 2017 in room 384 at the UTEP Health Sciences Center and School of Nursing Building.