

Introduction to Psychology

APA IPI Tags: Theme 3

Content Area Tags: social (biopsychosocial)

Biopsychosocial Aspects of Subjective Well-being (SWB)

Activity Instructions

On the day planned for the activity:

- Have students get into pairs or small groups (no more than 4)
- Hand out a copy of the internal/external influences on happiness table (*included in this document as a separate page*)
- Have each group choose someone with readable writing to write down their final work, but each member of the group is to take notes and keep track of details of the discussion and decisions the group makes
- The group's task is to create a brief biography of an individual who either has or does not have sufficient internal and external factors to have a sense of high subjective well-being.
 - The biography is to be specific about the presence or absence of each of the influences and how they affect their individual.
 - Consider temperament, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education in relation to the influences
 - Also identify what influences are biological, psychological, or social
- Groups write up their biography and add the first and last names of the group members
- Groups share their biographies
- Hold a class discussion on “aha” moments, differences in biographies, subjective well-being, and how individuals in class might use the learning to increase their own SWB

Student Learning Objectives

By completing this assignment, you will be able to...

- explain at least two internal influences and two external influences on subjective well-being
- use example to illustrate how different influences may or may not affect an individual's SWB
- explain how psychological, biological, social and cultural factors influence behavior and mental processes

Post-Activity Discussion Questions (follow up activities)

1. Ask students to include some of the outcomes of high subjective well-being introduced in the Noba Project reading and then some of the potential outcomes of low subjective well-being.
2. Later in the week, or in the next week, check in to see if students have been noting differences in their subjective well-being/happiness

Instructors Notes: If want to give students questions to respond to for reading to come prepared for the activity ask them to:

- Describe three major forms of happiness and a cause of each of them.
- Be able to list two internal causes of subjective well-being and two external causes of subjective well-being.
- Describe the types of societies that experience the most and least happiness, and why they do.

Credit to: Regan A. R. Gurung, Adrian Andelin

TIP Northwest 2021

This activity could work in breakout rooms and use of shared Google document or slides. If used Google slides, each group would have slides prepared to share out with class.

Table of internal and external influences on subjective well-being/happiness. Modified from the Noba Project and it's included information from Deiner, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Lyubomirsky, 2013; Myers, 1992

Internal Factors Top-down Influences	Description
Inborn temperament	Studies of monozygotic (identical) twins raised apart indicate that our genes influence our happiness. Even when raised apart, identical twins tend to be similar in their levels of subjective well-being.
personality and temperament	Personality is partly inborn and partly learned, and it influences our happiness. For example: extroverts tend to have more "positive" feelings. Neurotics tend to have more "negative" feelings.
outlook	People may develop habits of noticing "good" thinking in life and interpreting ambiguous events in "positive" ways. Other people develop "negative" mental habits, leading to more unhappiness. Our culture may also influence whether we take an optimistic or pessimistic view of life.
resilience	Happy individuals tend to bounce back more quickly after losses and "negative" events.
External Factors Bottom-Up Influences	Description
sufficient material resources	People have enough money to meet their basic needs and fulfill their major goals.
sufficient social resources	People differ in their need for social contact, but we all tend to need supportive and trusted others: family, a friend, or a partner, or sometimes all three. We need other people to lead a fulfilled life.
desirable society	Our own efforts and circumstances influence our happiness, but so does the society in which we live. A society of hunger, war, conflict, and corruptions is much less happy than one with material resources, high levels of trust and cooperation, and people who want to help each other.