

Mental Health: A Sustainable Reward

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, are important for both health care workers, academics, and professionals because these goals address global challenges that directly impact their fields. People share personal and professional responsibilities for addressing human and global challenges, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. Many also care for family members, loved ones, and raise the next generation. Their roles are instrumental in shaping societies where the SDGs can be realized. Supporting those who support others through their expertise and discipline generates sustainable development and can improve working conditions, resource availability, and societal support. This can, in turn, personally and professionally benefit individuals, and the communities they serve.

Going beyond SDG 3 (good health and well-being) and SDG 4 (quality education), this class/training/workshop focuses on equipping Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) practitioners, researchers, and allied professionals with essential mental health literacy skills to prevent burnout by fostering both positive emotion and a purposeful existence. By drawing on Martin Seligman's Positive Psychology framework, we will explore techniques to enhance well-being through positive emotion, mindfulness, and strength-based approaches that promote joy and calm. Concurrently, we will integrate Carol Ryff's existential well-being framework, emphasizing self-acceptance, purpose, and personal growth to cultivate a deep sense of meaning and fulfillment in both personally and professionally.

The specific objectives of this course are threefold: (1) to increase individual knowledge of one's unique existence; (2) to demonstrate an improvement in self-understanding relative to others to be able to mobilize one's values and actions optimally with people and situations; and (3) to strengthen/re-calibrate students' well-being (in favor of positive emotion and healthy coping strategies).

The teaching approach provides a stimulating blend of interactive activities, reflective exercises, and group discussions, participants will gain practical strategies to maintain mental

resilience, foster emotional balance, and sustain long-term motivation in their critical work. By addressing both short-term life satisfaction and long-term flourishing, this workshop aims to help SDG workers, young and old, not only thrive in their careers but also align personal well-being with their local and global impact goals. Well-being is contagious and can be shared across human contexts.

The content is taught in modular format, with psychometrics, and active learning activities in individual/small/large group formats:

1. Introduction to mental health literacy
2. Understanding well-being as a concept
3. Understanding person-environment fit
4. Understanding character strengths
5. Cultivating life satisfaction
6. Cultivating emotional intelligence
7. Understanding stress and strain
8. Using the right coping strategies
9. The growth mindset and resilience
10. Cultivating positive relationships
11. Self-compassion and self-care
12. Managing anxiety/depression

About the instructor



Dr. Linda S. Pagani started her career as a nurse before transitioning to academia in Canada. She holds psychology degrees from both Concordia and McGill Universities and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Université de Montréal. Dr Pagani has held the title of Professor of Psycho-Education and has been a hospital-based Researcher for over three decades. Her work focuses on risk and protective factors that affect human development, social policy, public health, and mental health. She is internationally recognized for her contributions to psychology and to social and health policies regarding human development. This evidence-based mental health literacy course is offered in full semester, half-day/full-day/weekly workshops in person or virtual format.

