

10TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
MAY 29-31, 2026





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3** WELCOME
- 4** ABOUT WPPA & CONFERENCE
- 16** CONFERENCE PROGRAM
- 29** WORKSHOPS
- 33** CLAREMONT INFORMATION

WELCOME

THE 2026 WESTERN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE AIMS TO BRING TOGETHER A COLLABORATIVE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY OF FACULTY, STUDENTS, SCHOLARS, AND PRACTITIONERS TO ADVANCE AND SUPPORT RIGOROUS, EVIDENCE-BASED EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND APPLICATION IN THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS, EXCELLENCE, AND OPTIMAL HUMAN FUNCTIONING. THE THEME OF THE 2026 WPPA CONFERENCE IS “FLOURISHING IN CHALLENGING TIMES.” THIS YEAR, THE CONFERENCE EXPLORES HOW INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES CAN FIND HOPE, MEANING, RESILIENCE, AND GROWTH AMID ADVERSITY AND CHANGE. WE WELCOME YOU TO THE 10TH ANNUAL WPPA CONFERENCE AS WE CELEBRATE THIS MILESTONE TOGETHER AT CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY.

WPPA



The Western Positive Psychology Association (WPPA) is dedicated to creating a collaborative scientific community of faculty, students, and scholars to advance and support academic agenda in the field of positive psychology in the western region of the United States. The WPPA encourages education, research and dissemination of knowledge in positive psychology and supports the professional development of positive psychology faculty and students in the region. The Western Positive Psychology Association (WPPA) welcomes you to its 10th Annual Conference, hosted by Claremont Graduate University (CGU). This year's theme—Flourishing in Challenging Times—reflects WPPA's commitment to advancing well-being through resilience, meaning, and human growth, inspired by Viktor Frankl's reminder that "when we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." We look forward to meaningful conversations, new collaborations, and continued growth in our shared pursuit of human flourishing.



STEWART I. DONALDSON, PH.D.

PRESIDENT & CO-FOUNDER

Stewart I. Donaldson is a distinguished university professor, president of the Claremont Flourishing Center, and the executive director of the university's Claremont Evaluation Center (CEC) and The Evaluators' Institute (TEI). Professor Donaldson works with students on a wide range of topics across several fields and programs at CGU, including the science of positive psychology, positive organizational psychology, public health and well-being, and program design and evaluation.



SHARI YOUNG KUCHENBECKER, PH.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CO-FOUNDER

Shari Young Kuchenbecker, Ph.D., from UCLA, with a B.A. from Stanford, has collaborated on research across the Western Region, focusing on the nexus of emotions, thoughts, and actions. As Director of R.W. Research, Inc., she emphasizes social interaction, pro-social skills, empathy, stress/de-stress neurohormones, hugging, and cognitive-emotional regulation, contributing to developmental studies and social change through research with students and colleagues.

Acknowledging Stewart and Shari's indispensable role, we express our deepest gratitude for their vision, leadership, and mentorship. Their efforts have been crucial in bringing this conference to life, setting a standard of excellence and collaboration.

A MESSAGE FROM CONFERENCE CHAIR



The Division of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences at Claremont Graduate University is honored to host the 10th Annual Conference of the Western Positive Psychology Association. It is our great pleasure to welcome you to this milestone gathering, Flourishing in Challenging Times, as WPPA returns to its founding home at CGU during the university's 100th anniversary year.

This year's theme reminds us that flourishing is not only something we study; it is something we practice and cultivate in times of uncertainty, adversity, and change. Inspired by Viktor Frankl's reminder that "when we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves," this conference invites us to explore what helps people continue to grow — through happiness and love, connection and leadership, psychological safety, health, purpose, flow, and the journey from surviving to thriving.

Across these three days, we will hear from scholars and practitioners whose work speaks directly to the heart of positive psychology: how people feel loved, find meaning, seek help, build trust, stay engaged, and create the conditions for flourishing across cultures, workplaces, communities, and life's most difficult seasons.

This conference came to life through the dedication of our organizing committee, volunteers, presenters, invited speakers, sponsors, and supporters. We are deeply grateful for your presence and honored to welcome you to CGU as we celebrate WPPA's 10th anniversary together.

Let us come together to learn, connect, ask courageous questions, build new collaborations, and continue cultivating the conditions for human flourishing — even, and especially, in challenging times.

Conference Chair

Tatiana Shemiakina, M. A.

Doctoral Student, Positive Organizational Psychology, CGU

Director of Operations, Claremont Flourishing Center

THE REKHI SINGH TRIBUTE AND GRATITUDE



Photo credit to Andrea Pricet

The Western Positive Psychology Association 10th Annual Conference **welcomes and gratefully acknowledges** the generous support of the **Rekhi Foundation for Happiness**. The Foundation is a nonprofit trust founded by **Dr. Satinder Singh Rekhi** and his wife **Harpreet Rekhi** in 2016.

It aims to expand the practice and knowledge of *Happiness Science and Positive Psychology* by establishing happiness centers at various universities.

The Foundation's commitment to advancing the science of positive psychology aligns with WPPA's mission and vision. With gratitude, we build this alliance together for a better future.

<http://rekhifoundation.com>

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

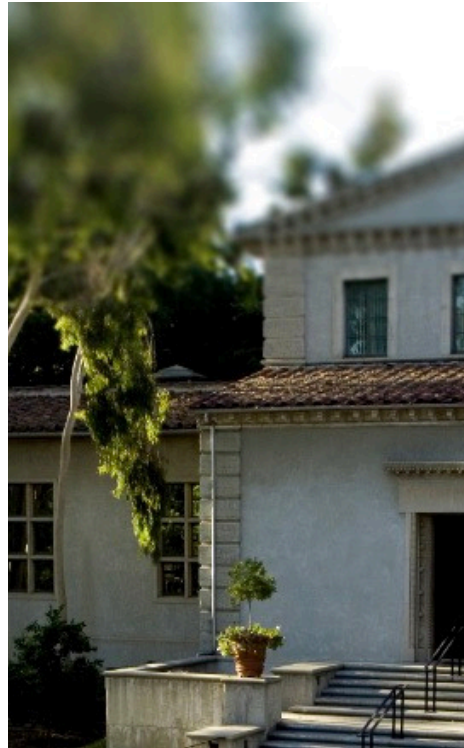
FLOURISHING IN CHALLENGING TIMES

OUR MISSION

The mission of the 10th WPPA Conference is to bring together research, practice, and community in service of understanding how people can flourish in challenging times.

Across presentations, workshops, posters, and shared conversations, the conference creates space to showcase new work, support emerging and established scholars, and translate positive psychology into meaningful application.

Together, participants are invited to explore how evidence-based ideas can strengthen meaning, resilience, connection, hope, and growth in individuals, organizations, and communities.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

One of WPPA's greatest strengths is its warm and welcoming community. Over the years, WPPA has become a place where high-quality connections lead to positive relationships, meaningful collaborations, mentorship, and lasting friendships.

As we gather for our 10th Anniversary Conference, we invite participants to continue this tradition by welcoming new voices, supporting students and emerging scholars, reconnecting with colleagues, and creating relationships that will carry our field forward. In challenging times, these connections are not simply a conference experience; they are part of how we flourish together.



KEYNOTE

Sonja Lyubomirsky, PH. D.



Feeling Happy and Feeling Loved:

What I Learned About Increasing Well-Being From 36 Years of Happiness Science

Over the past 36 years of experimental research, Sonja Lyubomirsky's lab has been identifying and testing practices that boost well-being—from expressing gratitude to doing acts of kindness to acting more social. Yet a deeper insight has emerged: These interventions work not merely because they cultivate positive thoughts or behaviors, but because they help individuals feel more connected to—and loved by—others. Yet many individuals, even those embedded in close relationships, do not consistently feel loved.

In this keynote, Lyubomirsky draws on her recent book with Harry Reis, *How To Feel Loved*, to argue that the key to happiness is not being loved, but feeling loved. Integrating findings from randomized controlled trials with insights from relationship science, she introduces three core evidence-based relational mindsets—authentic sharing, listening-to-learn, and radical curiosity—that can shift how people show up in everyday conversations. By embracing these mindsets, we can all learn to become more known—and thus to feel more seen, understood, and loved.

INVITED SPEAKERS



JAMIE SHAPIRO, PH.D.

Dr. Jamie Shapiro is an organizational psychologist, Master Certified Executive Coach, keynote speaker, researcher, and CEO of Connected EC. Her work integrates well-being science, positive psychology, and systems-level leadership to help organizations build cultures where people can thrive without burning out. In her invited talk, Jamie will explore how connection, trust, clarity, collaboration, and contribution shape high-performing cultures where well-being and performance can coexist.

Talk Title: The Light Within Leadership: How Connection Unlocks Trust, Fulfillment, and High Performance



SAIDA HESHMATI PH.D.

Dr. Saida Heshmati's talk will explore how people recognize and experience love in everyday life across cultural contexts. Drawing from interviews, focus groups, and large-scale surveys across countries, she will share findings on the everyday moments through which people feel loved — being cared for, remembered, helped, included, listened to, and emotionally seen. Her session will invite us to consider why positive psychology needs a more culturally grounded science of love.

Talk Title: Feeling Loved Across Cultures

INVITED SPEAKERS



JESSICA DIAZ, PH.D.

Psychological safety is often treated as something every workplace can simply “build,” but Dr. Jessica Diaz asks us to look deeper: safe for whom, and under what conditions? Drawing on her work in organizational psychology, employee experience, DEI, and leader development, Dr. Diaz will examine how identity, power, hierarchy, and workplace culture shape who feels able to speak up, take risks, and show up authentically at work.

Talk Title: Psychological Safety Isn’t Neutral: Identity, Power, and the Conditions for Flourishing



SHAUN TOMSON

Shaun Tomson, legendary world surfing champion, CEO, author, and leadership expert, will join us as an **invited lunch speaker** for an interactive session focused on finding purpose in challenging times. In an era defined by rapid technological disruption, global uncertainty, and rising psychological distress, Shaun will introduce The CODE Method – a practical, evidence-informed framework designed to help individuals turn hope into action, visualization into realization, and commitment into lasting purpose.

Talk Title: Finding Purpose in Turbulent Times

INVITED SPEAKERS



JASON T. SIEGEL, PH.D.

Dr. Jason T. Siegel's talk will explore how Positive Emotion Infusions may influence help-seeking among people experiencing depression. Drawing on his research in health behavior change, persuasion, motivation, stigma, and mental health communication, he will show how brief positive emotional experiences can create openings for support.

Talk Title: Positive Emotion Infusions (PEIs), Depression, and Help Seeking: The Origin of the PEI Approach, its Potential for Success, and the Broadening of the Build



DAKOTA CINTRON, PH.D.

Dr. Dakota Cintron's talk will explore how social connection shapes flourishing and health across adulthood. His cross-national and longitudinal research examines how the quality, structure, and balance of social relationships influence well-being, with attention to loneliness and social asymmetry.

Talk Title: Social Foundations of Flourishing and Health: Asymmetry, Loneliness, and Wellbeing Across the Adult Lifespan

INVITED SPEAKERS



MATT DUBIN, PH.D.

Dr. Matt Dubin, organizational psychologist and co-author of *Flow 2.0: Optimal Experience in a Complex World* with Dr. Stewart I. Donaldson, will revisit Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's foundational work on flow and its relevance for today's complex world. Drawing on two decades of research and applied work with organizations, leaders, and high-performing teams, his session will introduce a new framework for finding flow in modern contexts shaped by AI, digital life, and rapid change.

Talk Title: Flow 2.0: Optimal Experience in a Complex World



REBECCA J. REICHARD, PH.D.

Dr. Rebecca J. Reichard will examine Psychological Capital as both a major success story in positive organizational psychology and a field at an important turning point. Looking beyond the familiar HERO framework, her talk will explore what PsyCap research may be overlooking and challenge scholars and practitioners to consider how the field can evolve through bolder theory, stronger methods, and deeper integration with practice.

Talk Title: Beyond HERO: Why Psychological Capital Needs Its Next Evolution

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Friday, May 29 – Welcoming

- 03:00pm–04:00pm – Registration and Check-In – Hall, 1st Floor – registration open throughout conference
- 04:00pm–05:15pm – **Keynote – Sonja Lyubomirsky:** Feeling Happy and Feeling Loved: What I Learned About Increasing Well-Being From 36 Years of Happiness Science – *Ballroom I*
- 05:15pm–06:00pm – Sonja Lyubomirsky, Book Signing – *Ballroom I*
- 06:00pm–07:00pm – Recognition Ceremony; Wine & Cheese Celebration

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

- 07:00am–08:15am – Registration, Check-In & Continental Breakfast
Hall, 1st Floor, Registration open throughout conference
- 07:00am–08:15am – Poster Set-up, Hall, 2nd Floor
- 08:15am–09:00am – **Welcome Address – 10 Years of WPPA–** Stewart I. Donaldson, Shari Young Kuchenbecker & Tatiana Shemiakina – *Ballroom I*
- 09:00am–09:50am – **Invited Speaker – Jamie Shapiro:** The Light Within Leadership: How Connection Unlocks Trust, Fulfillment, and High Performance – *Ballroom I*
- 09:00am–09:50am – Oral Presentations – *Breakout Rooms 1 & 2*
- 10:00am–10:50am – **Invited Speaker – Saida Heshmati:** Feeling Loved Across Cultures – *Ballroom I*
- 10:00am–10:50am – Symposium & Workshop – *Breakout Rooms 1 & 2*
- 11:00am–11:50am – **Invited Speaker – Jessica Diaz:** Psychological Safety Isn't Neutral: Identity, Power, and the Conditions for Flourishing – *Ballroom I*
- 11:00am–11:50am – **Invited Speakers – Jessica Clague DeHart, Ph.D., MPH & Emily Cauble, Doctoral Student:** From Surviving to Thriving: A PERMAH-Guided Coaching Approach in Breast Cancer Survivorship – *Breakout Room 1*

Note. Poster Presentations Finalists will be interviewed by the Committee from 11am till 11:50. The interviews are scheduled in advance and the presenters are notified by the email.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- 12:00pm-12:45pm – Lunch Break – Box Lunch Provided
- 12:00pm-12:45pm – **Invited Lunch Speaker – Shaun Tomson:** Finding Purpose in Turbulent Times – *Jenkins Courtyard*
- 12:45pm-12:50pm – Group Photo Session – *Jenkins Courtyard*
- 01:00pm-01:50pm – **Invited Speaker – Jason T. Siegel:** Positive Emotion Infusions (PEIs), Depression, and Help Seeking: The Origin of the PEI Approach, its Potential for Success, and the Broadening of the Build – *Ballroom 1*
- 01:00pm-01:50pm – **Invited Speaker – Dakota Cintron:** Social Foundations of Flourishing and Health: Asymmetry, Loneliness, and Wellbeing Across the Adult Lifespan – *Breakout Room 1*
- 01:00pm-01:50pm – Oral Presentations – *Breakout Room 2*
- 02:00pm-02:50pm – **Invited Speaker – Matt Dubin:** Flow 2.0: Optimal Experience in a Complex World – *Ballroom 1*
- 02:00pm-02:50pm – Oral Presentations – *Breakout Rooms 1 & 2*
- 03:00pm-03:50pm – **Invited Speaker – Rebecca J. Reichard:** Beyond HERO: Why Psychological Capital Needs Its Next Evolution – *Ballroom 1*
- 03:00pm-03:50pm – Oral Presentations – *Breakout Rooms 1 & 2*
- 04:00pm-05:00pm – **Closing Session**
Stewart I. Donaldson, Jamie Shapiro & Zachary Swanson – *Ballroom 1*
- 05:00pm – 06:00pm – Awards Ceremony & Closing Wine & Cheese Celebration

Sunday, May 31 – Workshops

- 08:00am-08:50am – Registration for Workshops
- 09:00am-12:00pm – Workshop I – *Ballroom 1*
- 09:00am-12:00pm – Workshop II – *Breakout Room 1*
- 09:00am-12:00pm – Workshop III – *Breakout Room 2*

FULL PROGRAM

Friday, May 29 – Welcoming

Burkle Family Building – Ballroom I, 1st floor

03:00pm–04:00pm – Registration and Check-In
(*registration open throughout conference*)

04:00pm–05:15pm – **Keynote – Sonja Lyubomirsky:**
Feeling Happy and Feeling Loved:
What I Learned About Increasing
Well-Being From 36 Years of
Happiness Science

05:15pm–06:00pm – **Sonja Lyubomirsky**, Book Signing
06:00pm–07:00pm Recognition Ceremony; Wine &
Cheese Celebration

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

Burkle Family Building

Check-In – Hall, 1st floor

07:00am–08:15am – Registration and Check-In
(*registration open throughout conference*)

07:00am–08:15am – Continental Breakfast

Poster Set-up – Hall, 2nd floor

07:00am–08:00am – Poster Presentations
(available during the day)

Opening Session – Ballroom I

08:15am–09:00am – Welcome Address: 10 Years of WPPA –
Stewart I. Donaldson, Shari Young Kuchenbecker & Tatiana
Shemiakina

FULL PROGRAM

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

Invited Speaker – Ballroom I

Jamie Shapiro, Ph.D.

The Light Within Leadership: How Connection Unlocks Trust, Fulfillment, and High Performance

09:00am–09:50am

Oral Presentations – Concurrent Session 1, Breakout Rooms 1 & 2
09:00am–09:50am

Breakout Room 1 – Burkle, 14, 1st floor

The Roots of Resilience: Culture, Memory & Identity

- Native Flourishing: Good Medicine. Co-presenters: Alyson L. Burns–Glover & Elinor Marie Butay. Authors: Alyson L. Burns–Glover, Laurie D. McCubbin, Dawn M. Salgado, Matthew A. Town, Elinor Marie P. Butay, Pacific University.
- Anti-Fragile Autobiographical Memories. W. Richard Walker, Charlotte Kneuper, Zach Smailer, Sophie Hoehne, Colorado State University Pueblo.
- The Samurai's Heart: A Bounded Instrumental Case Study on Kokorozashi and Its Integration with Positive Human Resource Management at a Japanese MBA School. Florencio (Jun) Kabigting, Claremont Graduate University.

Breakout Room 2 – Burkle, 12, 1st floor

Building Resilience: Family, Community & Recovery

- Project Blossom: A Positive Psychology–Informed Group Coaching Intervention to Enhance Hope and Mental Well–Being in Survivors of Domestic Violence. Andrea Bahamondes, Universitat Jaume I (UJI), Spain.
- Sources of Strength and Mental Health: Examining Resilience and Flourishing Among Evangelical Youth in Cuba. Kelly B.T. Chang, Alecia E. Skinner, George Fox University.
- Positive Correlations Among Trait Resilience and Perceived Parental Authoritativeness and Permissiveness. Katie Yang, PhD, Villanova University, PA; Olivia Bereza, Stockton University, Galloway, NJ, United States.

FULL PROGRAM

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

Invited Speaker – Ballroom I

Saida Heshmati, PhD:

Feeling Loved Across Cultures

10:00am–10:50am

Workshop and Symposium– Concurrent Session 2, Breakout Rooms 1 & 2

10:00am–10:50am

Workshop – Breakout Room 1 – Burkle, 14, 1st floor

Not Another Statistic: The Not–So–Standard Deviation of One Positive Psychology Student

Jackson Le'Quan, MS, CIP Kaiser Permanente IRB Regional Compliance
Interim Northern California Board Chair

Breakout Room 2 – Burkle, 12, 1st floor

Symposium: Finding Hope through Play and Creativity

Chair: Lindsay “Elby” Beddes

- Introducing the Creative Wellness Program. Lindsay “Elby” Beddes, PhD, and Karen M. Yescavage, PhD, Colorado State University Pueblo.
- Permission to Play: Introducing the CW Program. Karen M. Yescavage, PhD, Colorado State University Pueblo.
- Finding Hope through Creative Engagement. Lluvia Alvarado, Joy Lopez, Lauren Michel–Budge, Regan Rodriguez, & Zachary Smailer, Colorado State University Pueblo.
- Community Mural Making and PERMA – Research Presentation. Karen M. Yescavage, PhD & Lindsay “Elby” Beddes, PhD, Colorado State University Pueblo.
- Experiential Learning in the Creative Wellness Classroom – Research Presentation. Lindsay “Elby” Beddes PhD & Karen M. Yescavage, PhD, Colorado State University Pueblo

FULL PROGRAM

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

Invited Speaker – Ballroom I

Jessica Diaz, PhD:

Psychological Safety Isn't Neutral: Identity, Power, and the Conditions for Flourishing

11:00am–11:50am

Invited Speakers – Breakout Room 1

Jessica Clague DeHart, PhD, MPH & Emily Cauble, Doctoral Student:

From Surviving to Thriving: A PERMAH-Guided Coaching Approach in Breast Cancer Survivorship

11:00am–11:50am

Lunch Break – Box Lunch provided

12:00pm–12:45pm

Invited Lunch Speaker – Jenkins Courtyard

Shaun Tomson:

Workshop: Finding Purpose in Turbulent Times

12:00pm–12:45pm

Group Photo Session – Jenkins Courtyard

12:45pm–12:50pm

Note. *Poster Presentations Finalists will be interviewed by the Committee from 11am till 11:50. The interviews are scheduled in advance and the presenters are notified by the email.*

FULL PROGRAM

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

Invited Speaker – Ballroom I

Jason T. Siegel, PhD:

Positive Emotion Infusions (PEIs), Depression, and Help Seeking: The Origin of the PEI Approach, its Potential for Success, and the Broadening of the Build

01:00pm–01:50pm

Invited Speakers – Breakout Room 1

Dakota Cintron, PhD:

Social Foundations of Flourishing and Health: Asymmetry, Loneliness, and Wellbeing Across the Adult Lifespan

01:00pm–01:50pm

Oral Presentations – Concurrent Session 3, Breakout Room 2

01:00pm–01:50pm

Breakout Room 2 – Burkle, 12, 1st floor

Thriving Under Pressure: Health, Technology & the Modern Mind

- Internet Addiction and Anxiety Among Adolescents: The Moderating Effect of Resilience. Vy Cao, Ph.D., La Sierra University.
- The Preventative and Promotive Effects of Physical Activity on Mental Health and Psychological Well-being: A Perspective of Exercise Psychology. Youngho Kim, Jonghwa Lee, Donghee Kang, Seoul National University of Science and Technology.
- Understanding Mental Health and Well-Being in International Students: Protective Factors, Coping Strategies, Stressors. Autumn Chall, Alena Slezáčková, Tatiana Malatincová, Miroslav Světlák, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.

FULL PROGRAM

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

Invited Speaker – Ballroom I

Matt Dubin, PhD:

Flow 2.0: Optimal Experience in a Complex World

02:00pm–02:50pm

Oral Presentations – Concurrent Session 4, Breakout Rooms 1 & 2

02:00pm–02:50pm

Breakout Room 1 – Burkle, 14, 1st floor

Finding Your Way: Education, Self-Efficacy & Purpose

- Lived Experiences of Academically Successful Adult Dyslexics: A Phenomenological Exploration of How Self-Efficacy is Developed. Susan Rogers, Point Loma Nazarene University.
- Positive Psychology and Life Goals in Adolescence: Gender Moderation in Self- and Other-Oriented Pathways. Chang-ho Ji, La Sierra University.
- The Impact of Positive Education on Students' Identity: Exploration in Transition to Higher Education, Sophie Mitchinson, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Breakout Room 2 – Burkle, 12, 1st floor

Flourishing at Work: Purpose, Leadership & Organizational Well-Being

- Beyond Individual Flourishing: Innovation Climate as a Systemic Enabler of Work Performance. Fabiana Memmolo, Claremont Graduate University.
- Positive HRM and Well-being in Japanese Organizations. Florencio (Jun) Kabigting Ph.D., Claremont Graduate University.

FULL PROGRAM

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

Invited Speaker – Ballroom I

Rebecca J. Reichard:

Beyond HERO: Why Psychological Capital Needs Its Next Evolution

03:00pm–03:50pm

Oral Presentations – Concurrent Session 5, Breakout Rooms 1 & 2
03:00pm–03:50pm

Breakout Room 1 – Burkle, 14, 1st floor

Positive Psychology in the Real World: Service, Leadership & Applied Practice

- Positive Psychology Isn't a Spectator Sport: Personal and Professional Growth of Doctoral Students in a Positive Leadership Track. Kristin Koetting O'Byrne, PhD, Heather N. Rasmussen, Jennifer Meredith, Kayla Waggoner, MA, Abilene Christian University
- Co-Regulating for Flourishing: Positive Psychology Meets Conscious Discipline. Molly Welch Deal, Psy.D, University of Wisconsin Stout.
- The Eleven Military General Orders and Positive Psychology. Jackie W. Kyger, EdD.

Breakout Room 2 – Burkle, 12, 1st floor

Redefining Flourishing: Solitude, Neurodiversity & New Frontier

- Connecting to the self: Positive Solitude as part of Well-being. Matthew Higgins & Tatiana Shemiakina, MA, Claremont Graduate University.
- Supporting Autistic Flourishing: Integrating Positive Psychology into Clinical Systems and Practice. Caitlyn B. Gumaer, PhD, BCBA, Easterseals Southern California.

Closing Session – Ballroom I

Stewart I. Donaldson, Jamie Shapiro & Zachary Swanson

04:00pm–04:50pm

Awards Ceremony & Closing Wine & Cheese Celebration

05:00pm–06:00pm

FULL PROGRAM

Saturday, May 30 – Positive Psychology Conference

Poster Presentations

Posters are available all day – Burkle Family Building – Hall, 2nd floor
07:00am–6:00pm

Poster Presentations Finalists will be interviewed by the Committee from 11am till 11:50. The interviews are scheduled in advance and the presenters are notified by the email.

#1 The Positive Arc of Sticky Stories: A Model of How Narratives Achieve Psychological Stickiness Through Well-Being – Gabi Logan, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

#2 Playtime Isn't Over: Qualitative Research on the Importance of Play in Emerging Adults – Joy Lopez, Regan Rodriguez, Lluvia Alvarado, Lauren Michel-Budge, Elby Beddes, Karen Yescavage, Colorado State University Pueblo, Pueblo, CO.

#3 Fun and Flourishing: Examining the Relationship Between Playfulness and Wellbeing in Emerging Adults – Lluvia Alvarado, Lauren Michel-Budge, Joy Lopez, Regan Rodriguez, Lindsay (Elby) Beddes, Karen Yescavage, Colorado State University Pueblo, Pueblo, CO.

#4 Can Allies Make a Difference? Alleviating Female Gamers' Identity Threat with Social Support – Cassidy Ochadleus, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA.

#5 Calling it 'Coping' a Cop-Out: Redefining Resilience to Promote Minority Identity and Strength – Joseph Baky, Alejandro Morales, California Polytechnic State University Pomona, Pomona, CA.

#6 The Effects of Physical Activity on Cognitive Function in People with Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Meta-Analysis – Dojin An, Jonghwa Lee, Youngho Kim, Health and Exercise Psychology, Dept. of Sport Science, Seoul National University of Science and Technology, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

#7 Associations between Internet Addiction and PA Intention and Self-Efficacy in Korean Adolescents – Jisoo Kim, Youngho Kim, Soojin Kang, Health and Exercise Psychology, Seoul National University of Science and Technology, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

#8 Gratitude is Related to Stronger Fading Affect Bias – Richard Walker, Charlotte Kneuper, Zach Smailer, Hunter Hayslett, Sophie Hoehne, Colorado State University Pueblo, Pueblo, CO; University of Ulm, Germany.

#9 Flourishing Under Pressure: How Some Students Thrive Despite High Stress – Rachel Baumsteiger, Cal Poly Pomona, Pomona, CA.

#10 Religious/Spiritual Practices Converge on Equanimity as a Shared Pathway to Flourishing – Leonard Wieman, Vanessa Delgadillo, Viviane Seyranian, Rae Lucian B. Juan, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA.

#11 Shaping Context or Being Shaped by It? Mindfulness Compared to Mind-Wandering in Impatience Experiences – Vanessa Delgadillo, Kate Sweeny, University of California Riverside, Riverside, CA.

#12 Strength-Based Approaches for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals: A Systematic Review – Gavin S. Langhorst, Brenda Munoz, Joseph Baky, Elliot C. Summers, Alejandro Morales, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, CA.

#13 Reflective Practice in Challenging Times: Insights from Emerging Evaluators – Kaixin Liu, Kayla Thompson, Rebecca Heilman, Sonia Baron, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA.

#14 Dead Serious about the Environment: How Mortality Awareness Shapes Environmental Attitudes – Shaiq Ali Raza, Yura Kim, Gwen Gao, Nahrie Norvell, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA.

#15 Learning to be Hopeful: The Impact of Hope Training on Organizational Health, Culture, and Employee Retention – Kayla Waggoner, Heather Rasmussen, Kristin Koetting O'Byrne, Dionne Johnson, Arturo Lopez, Jennifer Meredith, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX.

#16 Forgiveness as a Moral and Psychological Process: What Therapists Need to Know About Forgiveness – Suzanne Freedman, University of Northern Iowa, Iowa.

#17 The Effects of a Gratitude Intervention on Parental Well-Being – Alyssa Thompson, Susan Rogers, Rosemond Lorona, Kim Schaeffer, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA.

#18 Why Do Resilient People Thrive? Cognitive Reframing as a Mediating Factor in the Relationship Between Resilience and Eudaimonic Well-Being – Amrit Pal Kaur Gill, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey, BC, Canada.

#19 How Psychological Distress Predicts Domains of Flourishing in Emerging Adults – Rowan Smillie, Yoanna Nedyalkova, Chiara Morici, Giacomo Bono, California State Dominguez Hills, CA.

#20 Love from Strangers: When Unfamiliar Others Make Us Feel Loved – Seyedeh Shohreh Shahangian, Neda Semsar, Saida Heshmati, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA.

#21 Pathways and Agency: Applying Snyder's Hope Theory to Leadership and Goal Attainment – Dionne Johnson, Arturo Lopez, Jennifer Meredith, Kayla Waggoner, Heather Rasmussen, Kristin Koetting O'Byrne, Abilene Christian University.

#22 "What Makes People Feel Loved?": A Reflexive Thematic Analysis of Felt Love Across Relational Contexts in Spain – Neda Semsar, Seyedeh Shohreh Shahangian, Saida Heshmati, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA.



FULL PROGRAM

Sunday, May 31 – Workshop Series

Burkle Family Building

09:00am–12:00pm – Workshop I

Burkle, 16 1st floor:

- Introductory Evaluation Tools for Positive Psychology Interventions – Jennifer Villalobos, PhD and Vicki Cabrera, PhD, Claremont Graduate University.

9:00am–12:00pm – Workshop II

Burkle, 14 1st floor:

- What Will It Mean to Thrive? Exploring the Future of Human Well-Being – Matthew Higgins, Claremont Graduate University

9:00am–12:00pm – Workshop III

Burkle, 12 1st floor:

- Designing Conditions for Positive Development Across the Lifespan Through Play – Lin Lim, PhD, MBA

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Saturday, May 30

Not Another Statistic: The Not-So-Standard Deviation of One Positive Psychology Student

In the behavioral sciences, we are trained to minimize the "p-value" and treat outliers as noise to be cleaned from the dataset. But what happens when the researcher is the outlier? This presentation follows the "not-so-standard" deviation of a student-researcher who defied the statistical odds—transitioning from a first-generation student to PhD prospect to IRB Manager.

Drawing on the landmark Kauai Longitudinal Study by Emmy Werner, the presenter explores the "protective factors" that allow individuals to flourish despite high-risk demographics. Central to this narrative is the role of the mentor—the "stable connection" that Werner identified as the primary catalyst for resilience. By tracing a journey from a Chapman University statistics classroom to a Master's capstone in Healthcare Compliance, this session redefines the "p" in p-value as Passion, Purpose, and Professional Pivot. Specifically, this capstone project highlighted the value of introducing alternative, rewarding career pathways for college graduates from high-risk backgrounds like the presenter.

The narrative highlights how a career in research ethics and IRB oversight is a natural extension of psychological training, rooted in a shared commitment to human welfare. Attendees will explore how deviating from the traditional PhD path is simply a widening of the scientific lens—an alternative route to supporting the wider research community where the primary mission is to protect the dignity, autonomy, and flourishing of every participant in the dataset.

Jackson Le'Quan, MS, CIP Kaiser Permanente IRB Regional Compliance Interim Northern California Board Chair

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Sunday, May 31

These scenarios will serve as the foundation for facilitated discussions about what it means to thrive under different conditions. Participants will explore which psychological resources may become more important, which aspects of current well-being frameworks remain useful, and where new approaches may be needed. The workshop emphasizes both reflection and application, encouraging participants to connect future possibilities with present-day research and practice. Participants will generate new questions, insights, and potential interventions aimed at supporting long-term flourishing. The session offers a structured yet creative space to extend the study of well-being beyond the present and into the futures we are collectively shaping.

Matthew Charles Higgins, Claremont Graduate University

Designing Conditions for Positive Development Across the Lifespan *Through Play*

Positive development across the lifespan depends on relational conditions that preserve voice, psychological safety, and the capacity to think together under stress. These conditions are especially critical for complex individuals, including those who are gifted or gifted with disabilities, whose heightened sensitivities, asynchronous development, and cognitive intensity can magnify conflict in families, classrooms, and teams where power is unequal. In such settings, communication often collapses into control, defensiveness, or withdrawal.

This workshop introduces a playful, hands-on practice (LEGO SERIOUS PLAY method), that help participants redesign these relational conditions so dialogue, trust, and strengths-based interaction can re-emerge when words alone are insufficient. Grounded in positive psychology, developmental science, and embodied cognition, participants experience how structured play externalizes perspectives, reduces threat responses, and creates shared reference points for difficult conversations (Fredrickson, 2001; Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007; Smith & Thelen, 2003). These practices are developmentally portable and adaptable from childhood through adulthood to support communication where power differences are present and cognitive diversity is high.

Lin Lim, Ph.D., MBA, Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted
SENGiifted.org

CONFERENCE GRATITUDE

This conference is made possible through the dedication, collaboration, and hard work of many individuals who have contributed in countless ways. From organizers – Tatiana, Shari, and Stewart – to speakers, volunteers, and attendees, each person plays a vital role in creating a space for meaningful dialogue, learning, and connection. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved—your efforts, passion, and support make this gathering not only possible but truly impactful.

A sincere thank you to:

Zachary Swanson
Florencio (Jun) Kabigting
Nysa Gogia
Fabiana Memmolo
Song Xue
CGU student volunteers



cgu.edu/map/



NEARBY RESTAURANTS

Local Restaurants	
Some Crust Bakery - Coffee Shop	Iron & Kin Coffee - Coffee Shop
Last Drop Cafe - Coffee Shop	Euro Cafe - Breakfast - Brunch / Café
Union on Yale - American	Bardot - American
Gus's BBQ - Barbecue	The Quarter Creole Cuisine - Creole
Walter's Restaurant - International	Eureka! - Burgers
Viva Madrid - Spanish	Tutti Mangia - Italian
La Popular - Mexican	Kazama Sushi - Japanese
<p><i>All restaurants, cafes, and coffee shops are within a 10-minute drive from Claremont Graduate University</i></p>	

SPONSORS



Rekhi Foundation – Foundation For Happiness

The Rekhi Foundation for Happiness is a nonprofit trust started by Dr. Satinder Singh Rekhi and his wife Harpreet Rekhi in 2016. The foundation aims to expand the practice and knowledge of “Happiness Science and Positive Psychology” through setting up happiness centers in various universities.

rekhifoundation.com

Claremont Flourishing Center

 Claremont Graduate University



LOV CENTER

