

Sense of Purpose:

Creating and Implementing
Positive Psychology (PROGRSS)
Models to Maximize Wellbeing
Among Veterans

Presented by Dr. Michael Logan & Meghan Anspach



Dr. Michael Logan



Served in the Marine Corps as an Infantry Assaultman (0351)

Utilized the GI Bill and Texas Hazlewood Exemption to earn a Doctorate in Educational Leadership

Higher education faculty, researcher, and administrator

Currently Senior Director for Veteran & Military Affairs at The University of Texas at San Antonio

Meghan Anspach



Served in the U.S. Navy as a gunners mate, stationed in San Diego, CA.

Holds a bachelors degree in psychology from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Currently attending the MSW program at the University of Arkansas, class of 2025.

Currently working as a graduate assistant in social work research at UARK

Why Veterans?

Some can struggle after service

“Research indicates that the prevalence of veterans with mental illness is higher than the national average: just over 25%, or 1 in 4, veterans struggle with mental illness, as opposed to the national average of 1 in 5. In particular, mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are known to be common among veterans” (McElhinny, 2022).

Crisis of mission

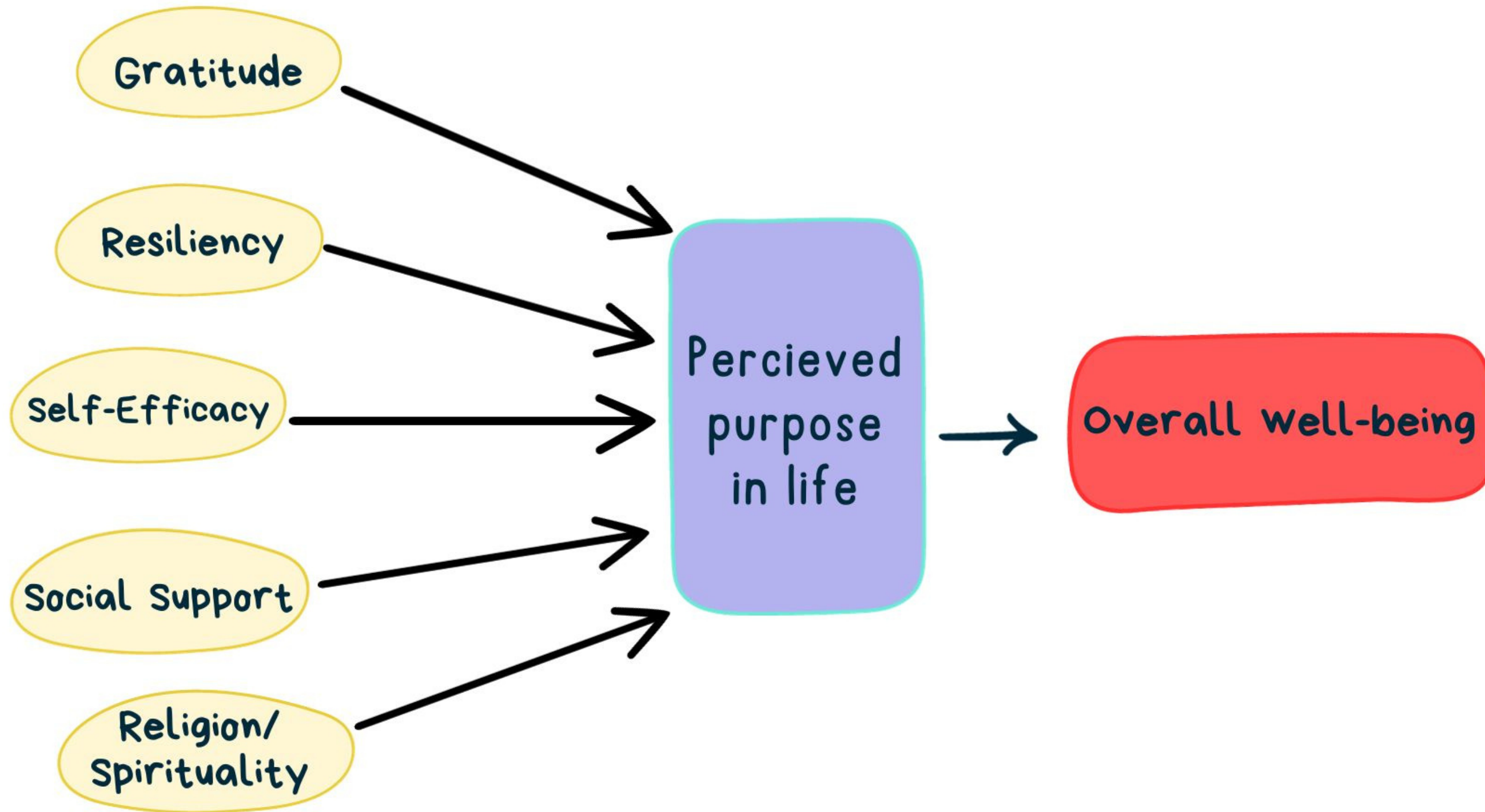
“while we are in the military, we are constantly working towards a mission or purpose. Once we get out, we no longer have a mission to work towards. To me, that shows a lack of purpose, potentially linked to an identity crisis”

-William Lansdon

Senior Program Manager of VMA at UTSA, US Army veteran



PROGRSS Map



Why Perceived Purpose?

Purpose in Research

Perceived purpose or meaning in life “may be defined as the extent to which a person experiences his or her life as having purpose, significance, and coherence” (Heintzelman & King, 2016).

“When considering health, we have found that a higher sense of purpose relates to fewer negative daily symptoms, predicts greater longevity, and predicts more beneficial cognitive outcomes. Sense of purpose also appears connected to greater comfort with and openness to diversity.” (Pfund & Hill, 2018).



Why Resiliency?

Resiliency in Research



“capacity to remain flexible in our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when faced by life disruption, or extended periods of pressure, so that we emerge from difficulty stronger, wiser, and more able” (Pemberton, 2015, p. 2).

10 skills:

Problem-solving, Goal setting, Effective communication, Emotional regulation/stress management, Social support network(s), Self-care, Meaning/purpose in life, Positive outlook, Self-awareness, & Effective coping strategies (Sutton, 2023b).

Why Gratitude?

Gratitude in Research

“Through this process, we recognize the fortune of everything that improves our lives and ourselves” (Millacci, 2023).

In positive psychology there are two stages:

1. The acknowledgment of goodness in one’s life.
2. Recognizing that sources of this goodness lie outside the self (Millacci, 2023).



Why Religion/Spirituality?

Religion/Spirituality in Research



“Spirituality can be defined broadly as a sense of connection to something higher than ourselves. Many people search for meaning in their lives. The sense of transcendence experienced in spirituality is a universal experience. Some find it in monotheistic religion, while others find it in meditation” (Capp, 2023).

Empirically Proven Benefits of Spirituality:

Longevity, More satisfying/meaningful life, Lower rates of depression, & Improvement in physical and mental health (Capp, 2023b).

Why Self-Efficacy?

Self-Efficacy in Research

Self-efficacy is the belief we have in our own abilities, specifically our ability to meet the challenges ahead of us and complete a task successfully (Akhtar, 2017).

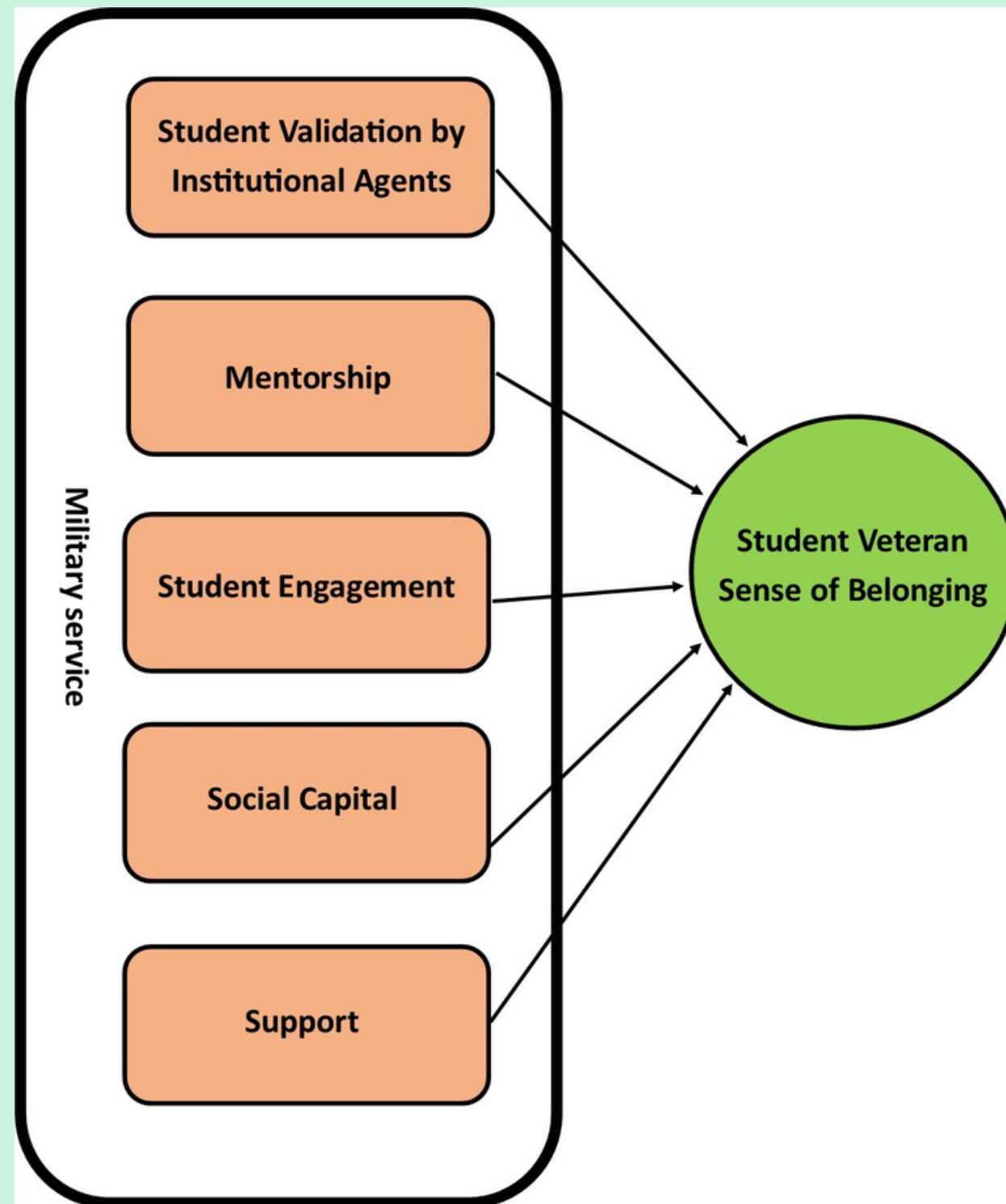
Self- Esteem: “being”
Self-Efficacy: “doing”

“Self-efficacy has been positively linked to stress management and relief from the symptoms of depression and anxiety, and may even act as a buffer between the individual and the development of depression and anxiety disorders” (Ackerman, 2023).



Why Social Support?

Social Support in Research



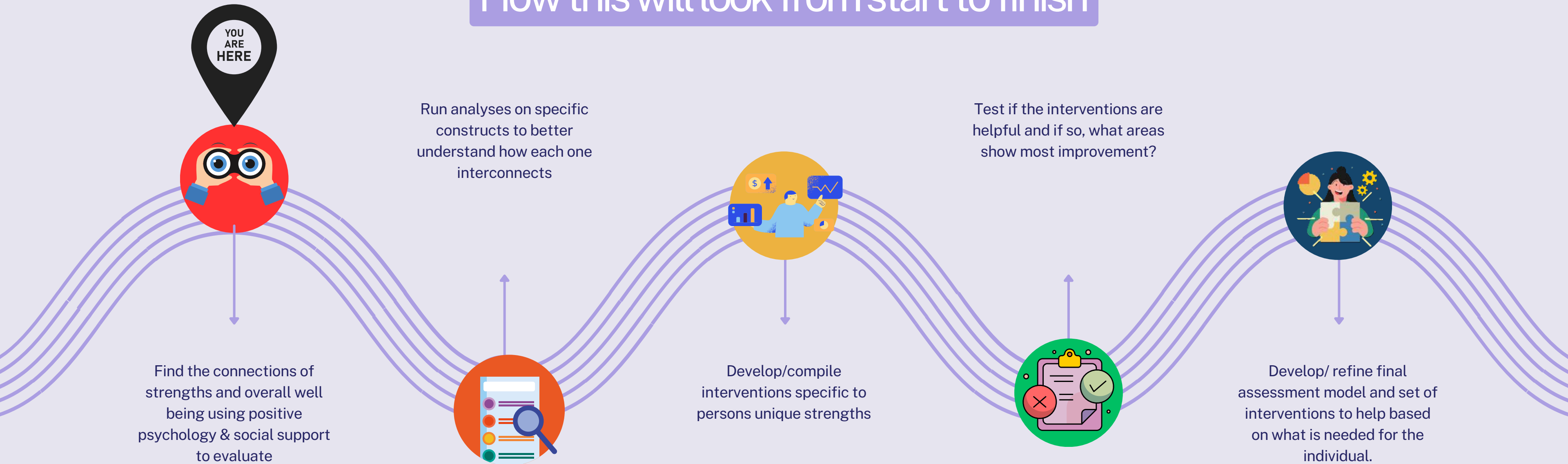
“the provision of assistance or comfort to others, typically to help them cope with biological, psychological, and social stressors... such as family members, friends, neighbors, religious institutions, colleagues, caregivers, or support groups” (APA Dictionary, n.d.).

“The harmful consequences of poor social support and the protective effects of good social support in mental illness have been well documented. Social support may moderate genetic and environmental vulnerabilities and confer resilience to stress, possibly via its effects on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) system, the noradrenergic system, and central oxytocin pathways” (Ozbay et al., 2007).

“Social support was found to be positively related with all dimensions of positive psychological strengths (hope, optimism, self efficacy, confidence, and resiliency)” (Khan & Husain, 2010).

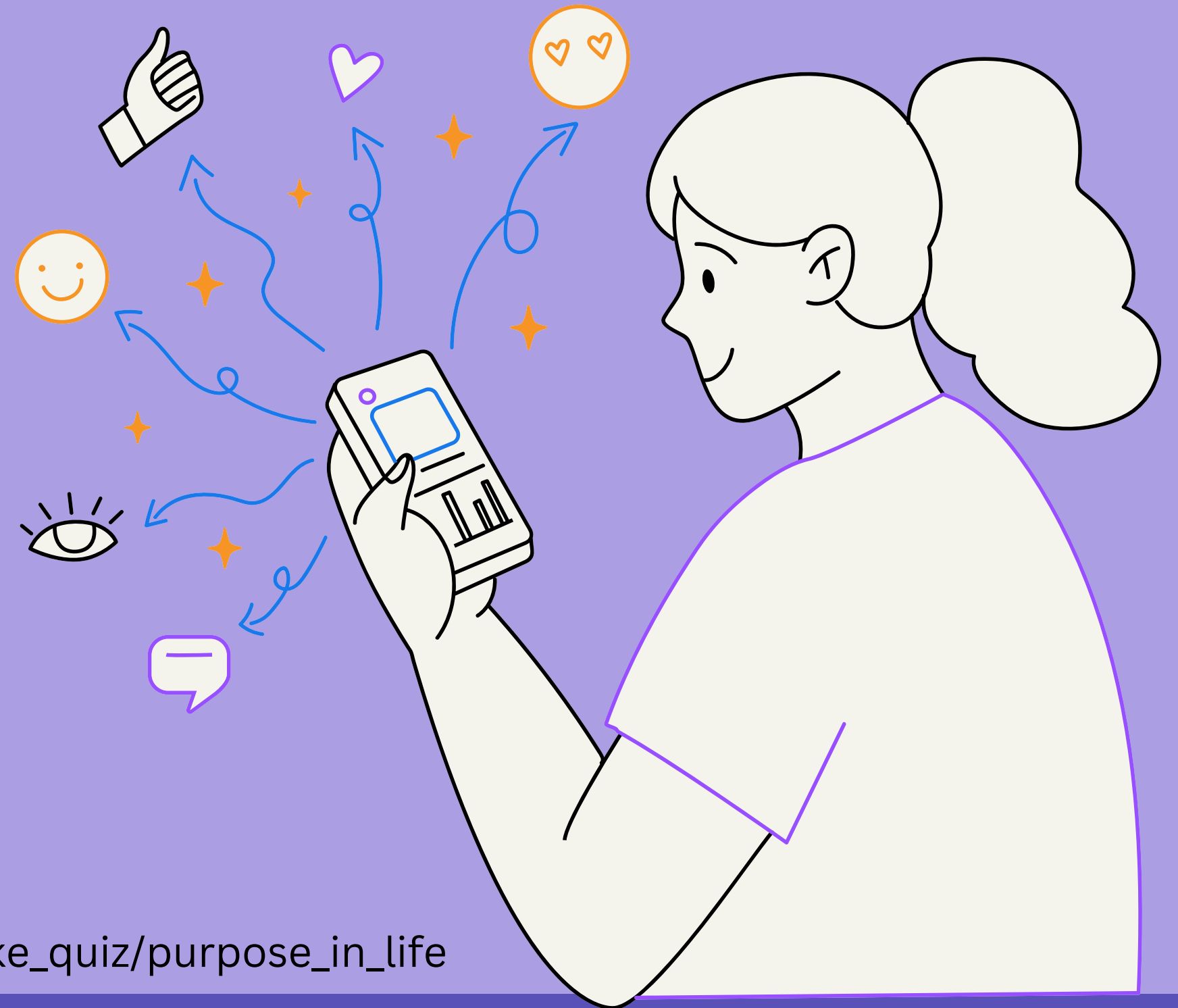
PROGRSS Model Development

How this will look from start to finish



*Repeat steps 1 & 2 to test all constructs of positive psych (listed on hand out)

Purpose Activity



Link: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take_quiz/purpose_in_life

What else can be gained

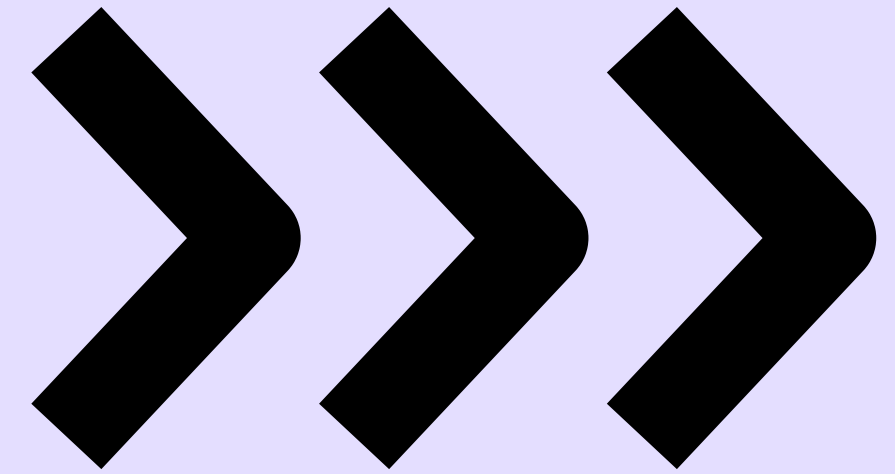
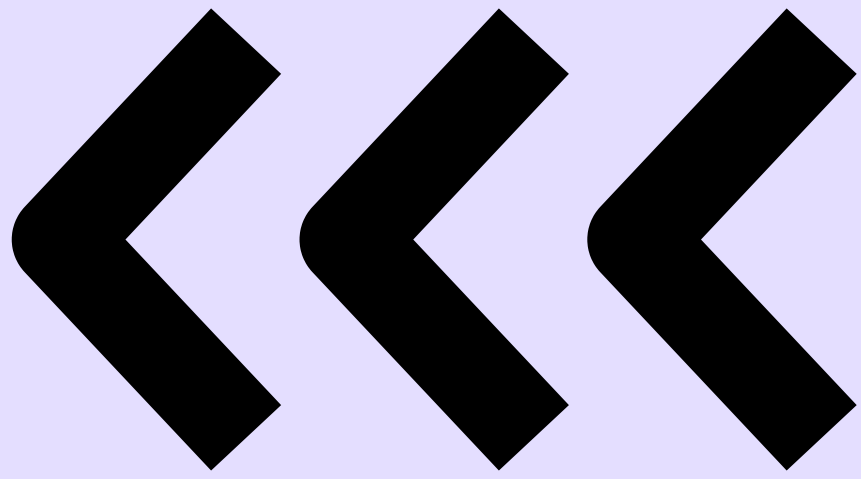
PROGRSS is Broadly Applicable

While the focus of this study is among the veteran community, the method and model will be broadly applicable to various types of populations. Mental health clinics, schools, universities and businesses would be able to better help others by pin pointing an individuals strengths, helping them to build on those strengths, and address areas of concern or areas that may need improvement.



Implementing Positive Psychology





Dr. Michael Logan

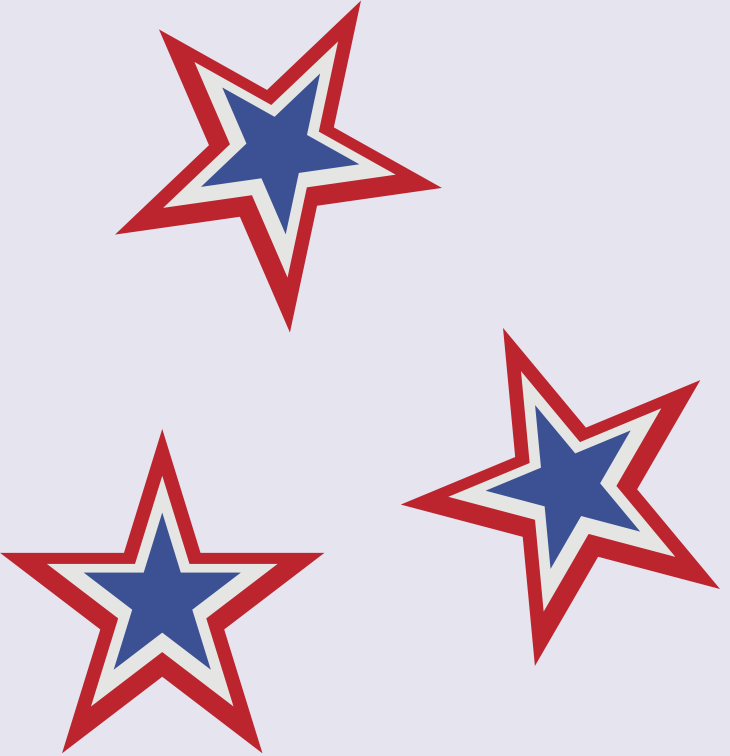
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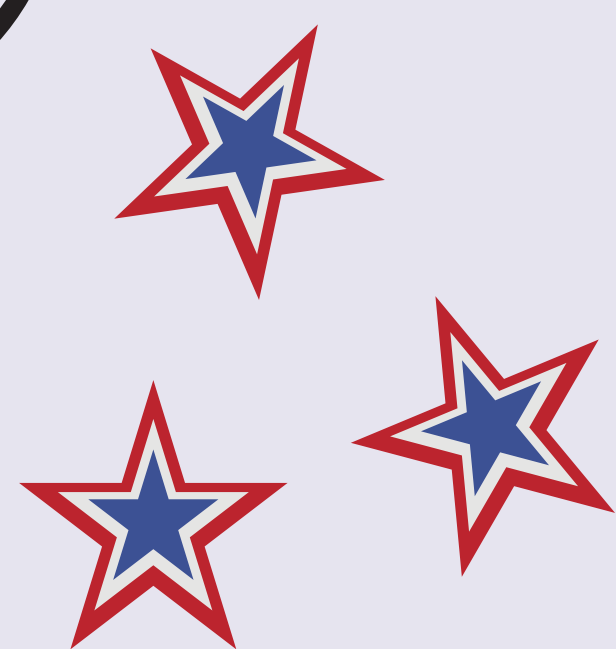
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Veterans

Thank you

FOR YOUR SERVICE



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