Chapter 28

Exploring the Role of Engagement on Well-Being and Personal Development: A Review of Adolescent and Mental Health Activism

Anne C. Montague and Francisco Jose Eiroa-Orosa

A growing number of researchers have explored the positive impact of activism on the well-being of the individuals involved (e.g., Gilster, 2012; Klar & Kasser, 2009). Some have also asked whether there may be specific benefits to being an activist as an adolescent, given this key developmental phase of life (Sherrod, 2006; Watts & Flanagan, 2007), or for socially excluded groups, due to the important role that empowerment plays in recovering citizenship (Rowe & Pelletier, 2012; see Pelletier, Bellamy, O'Connell, & Rowe, Chapter 29 in this volume, for further discussion of the concept of citizenship). With positive psychology's emphasis on investigating the factors that enable individuals to thrive, though perhaps the movement still avoids the thorny issue of social protest (see Di Martino, Eiroa-Orosa, & Arcidiacono, Chapter 7 in this volume), we think that exploring the links between activism and well-being is a relevant topic for the field.

However, there appears to be little research—within either positive psychology, or the behavioural sciences generally (Gilster, 2012)—on the psychological benefits of being an activist. Additionally, there is a tendency either to not differentiate activism from other forms of civic engagement or to ignore it completely in favour of "service" activities such as volunteering. For instance, this tendency can be observed in youth civic engagement research, where youth activism as a concept primarily appears (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Yohalem & Martin, 2007), or social groups under conditions of social exclusion such as mental health

service users (Milligan, Kearns, & Kyle, 2011). This article takes an axiological approach in that the authors have activist orientations themselves.

Defining activism

A careful definition of activism is important here, as a search for relevant literature reveals that activism has often been analysed in the context of research on volunteerism. Some terms referring to community engagement (which we could consider an umbrella for both activism and volunteerism), such as *activism*, *participatory citizenship*, *political involvement*, and *collective action*, are considered to be more ideologically loaded, while others, such as *volunteerism*, *community service*, and *civic* or *social engagement*, are assumed to be neutral (Eiroa-Orosa, 2016). Throughout this chapter we will use *activism* or *volunteerism*, respectively, when referring to any of the terms in either of these two lists.

From one side, Thoits and Hewitt (2001) included political activism in their definition of volunteering; indeed, Wilson (2000) has argued that these are essentially the same thing. Although we do not completely agree with this view, the following literature review will include some elements on volunteering research, as it appears that there is some overlap and there is also evidence for numerous psychological benefits of volunteering (e.g., Meier & Stutzer, 2007; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). However, it has also been argued that activism and volunteering are different experiences. In the introduction of a research paper on the benefits of being an activist, Klar & Kasser (2009) made the point that activism is a more specific concept than the broad term of volunteering. Further deepening these differences, Gilster (2012) saw volunteers as those who provide community services and work within the current social system, whereas activists look to challenge some aspect of the social structure and make a change at a community or global level. Gilster's research into differences between neighbourhood activism and volunteering found that, whilst both had a positive impact on well-

being, activism additionally led to a sense of empowerment; Gilster concluded that activism and volunteering should be studied separately. Taking this viewpoint, we accept Klar and Kasser's (2009) definition of activism as

> (...) the behaviour of advocating some political cause (for instance, protecting the environment, human rights issues, opposing abortion[1], or preventing wars) via any of a large array of possible means, ranging, for example, from institutionalised acts such as starting a petition to unconventional acts such as civil disobedience. (p. 3)

Activism and well-being

Positive psychology has been criticised for its lack of emphasis on aspects of well-being related to social change (D. Becker & Marecek, 2008; Biswas-Diener, 2011). During the literature search that we performed in preparation for this chapter, we found just three studies explicitly linking activism to positive psychological concepts (Eigner, 2001; Klar & Kasser, 2009; Sohr, 2001). Related topics such as empathy and altruism have received some attention (e.g., Batson, Ahmad, & Lishner, 2009), but some researchers believe that even these constructs have been neglected (Biswas-Diener, 2011). Given positive psychology's seminal claims to be about not only individual but also collective well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), it is a surprise to find such a lack of research on the people who are trying to make a change at either community or global levels (D. Becker & Marecek, 2008; Biswas-Diener, 2011). It has been argued that activism has been neglected by psychology in general (Gilster, 2012), and whilst there has been some research on why people become activists (e.g., Corning & Myers,

---

[1] We might add here: "or, conversely, demanding reproductive rights." Whether we like it or not, the causes of different groups of activists may be opposed—even diametrically so—since what is considered fair or desirable is far from universal.

2002) there is little known about the impact of activism on well-being once a person is committed.

Two recent quantitative studies have shed some light on the potential benefits of being an activist. Attempting to show a causal effect of activism on well-being, Klar and Kasser (2009) measured well-being after asking participants either to do a short, one-off act of activism, do a non-activist task, or do nothing. The activist group showed greater levels of subjective vitality than the other groups. Similarly, using data from a sample of Chicago residents, Gilster (2012) found that participation in activism was linked to a higher sense of mastery compared to those who just volunteered. However, these studies are hampered by several limitations. Klar and Kasser (2009) acknowledged that their results only showed statistical significance in measures of subjective vitality and were weak on other well-being measures. Future research, these authors suggested, should ask participants to take action on issues of their own choice, explore the impact of regular activism, compare well-being between forms of activism addressing different issues, and contrast those who advocate for others versus for themselves.

Sohr (2001) used a mixed method approach in a study of environmental activists. Six hundred activists from around the world were surveyed and five "hyper-activists" (those dedicating over 20 hours a week) were interviewed. The quantitative data showed higher than average mental health scores as compared to non-activists. However, it was the qualitative data that revealed a more complex picture showing how activism also had negative effects, particularly burnout. The author also recommended more research into how *collective* activism impacts on well-being, as the hyper-activists interviewed appeared to be happier when they felt they weren't acting alone.

A small number of qualitative studies have covered the psychological effects of involvement in activism. A study including interviews with 75 peace activists found that the three top rewards for being involved in activism were contact with others, sense of meaning,

and success in achieving goals (Gomes, 1992). Similarly, interviews with 23 animal rights activists showed that involvement gave them a sense of meaning, purpose, and joy (Herzog, 1993). Downton and Wehr's (1998) study of 30 committed peace activists gave rise to a model of sustained commitment including resilience, social bonds, skills building, and personal growth. Eigner (2001) interviewed 16 environmental activists revealing dimensions of well-being related to their activism such as stress compensation, efficacy, joy, and social contact. Finally, using narrative interviews with eight New Zealand political activists, Harré, Tepavac and Bullen (2009) revealed the role of integrity and efficacy in the ongoing commitment to activism.

Again, there are limits to the conclusions raised by the studies described above. For example, with the exceptions of Eigner's (2001) and Harré and colleagues' (2009) work, the positive impact of activism on well-being was not the main focus of most of the research in each study, meaning that the space dedicated to this specific aspect was limited.

Youth activism and well-being

Adolescence is an important developmental phase of life (Sherrod, 2006), a key stage in developing personal identity (Marcia, 1980), moral character (Hart & Carlo, 2005), and empathy (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2007). A number of researchers have asked whether being involved in activism could therefore have a distinct impact on the personal development of teenagers (e.g., Ginwright, 2003; Kirshner, 2007).

In the academic literature the concept of youth activism most commonly appears within youth civic engagement research (Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Sullivan, Edwards, Johnson, & McGillicuddy, 2003). There is disagreement on the definition of youth civic engagement (Sherrod, 2007), but essentially it serves as an umbrella term for a variety of pro-social behaviours such as volunteering, engaging with community groups, or involvement in

organisations fighting injustices (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Activism is included in a number of dominant models in the youth civic engagement field. Ekman & Amnå's (2012) typology distinguishes between formal and extra-parliamentary forms of activism, whilst the Innovations in Civic Participation model (UNICEF, 2008) includes advocacy and campaigning.

Research shows that youth civic engagement has many benefits, including positive identity development (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997), fulfilment (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002), self-efficacy (Kendrick, 1996), increased social connections (Dolan, 2010), and enhanced communication skills (Tucker & McCarthy, 2001). A closer look reveals, however, that there are two limits to youth civic engagement research; it typically either focuses solely on service-giving activities such as volunteering, or fails to distinguish activism from other forms of civic engagement (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Yohalem & Martin, 2007). For example, in Brady et al.'s (2012) review of 34 studies on the developmental benefits of civic engagement, only three made explicit mention of "activism" (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Youniss, McLellan, Su, & Yates, 1999; Youniss & Yates, 1999), and of these, only one considered activism as a form of civic engagement distinct from service-giving (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Most of the research examined in Brady et al.'s review did not mention activism at all, instead focusing specifically on service activities (e.g., Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Alisat, 2007; Youniss, McLellan, & Mazer, 2001).

These two limits to youth civic engagement research have been noted by some scholars. Berger (2009) argued that the term "youth civic engagement" covers too many types of activity and is "used to encompass all of these topics whilst clarifying none" (p. 335). Similarly, Yohalem and Martin (2007) highlighted this lack of recognition of activism, as distinct from other types of civic engagement, as a problem. The over-emphasis on service activities has also been raised. Watts and Flanagan (2007) argued that youth civic engagement literature has prioritised activities that maintain the status quo, such as community service or volunteering,

as opposed to those that challenge it, such as activism. Yohalem and Martin (2007) pointed out that "theories of the past century have failed to capture the critical role that civic or 'socio-political' activism plays in both youth and community development" (p. 807). Sherrod (2007) argued that research has primarily focused on three areas (civic education, school activities, and community service activities), none of which are necessarily likely to lead to an activist orientation. In fact, activism is often seen in a negative light, specifically because it *does* challenge the status quo (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Nevertheless, there is a small body of studies which attempt to address the distinct nature of youth activism's impact on well-being. Pancer el al. (2007) distinguished between "Activists" and "Helpers" in research on the characteristics of those who get involved in their communities versus those who don't. They found that both Activists and Helpers scored more highly on identity development and emotional adjustment than those who were not involved. However, the results were correlational, so it is not clear whether these positive effects were a result or the cause of their involvement. In a qualitative study of 10 young people involved in compulsory activism programmes addressing school injustices, Pearce and Larson (2006) found that extrinsic motivation (to get school credits) developed into intrinsic motivation over time, with enjoyment and excitement being key factors.

Larson and Hansen (2005) were able to explore how young people in a youth activist programme developed agency and strategic thinking. However, these authors acknowledged that their study used a small number of participants in one specific programme. It should also be noted that this study used exactly the same programme, as Pearce and Larson's (2006) study, which further limits the generalisability of the findings. Finally, Harré (2007) examined how being involved in youth activism and volunteering led to feelings of belonging, stimulation, efficacy, and integrity. However, whilst Harré distinguished the experiences of activism and volunteering in her introduction, the subsequent analysis failed to distinguish between the two,

so we are unable to understand whether the above benefits are equally valid across both experiences.

Mental health activism and well-being

Since the first person mental health movement (the term "first person" combines the more classical "consumers" and "survivors") began to flourish in the 1970s (Tomes, 2006), taking a separate path to the anti-psychiatry movement, a lot has been achieved in terms of rights and dignity for mental health service users, but many other issues are still pending. Several trends have had varying degrees of prominence in the history of the first person movement. From the "survivors" and their attempt to abolish the psychiatric system, to the "consumers" and their reform-oriented programme, like many movements against discrimination the movement is made up of a heterogeneous group of people, concerned with the stigma and discrimination suffered by those who receive a psychiatric diagnosis.

Besides fighting stigma and claiming rights and dignified treatment, mutual support or aid groups and interventions developed by staff with their own mental health experiences are features of many organized groups. From a horizontal collectivist[2] political stance, mutual aid groups are spaces in which people who share various difficulties meet to try to overcome or improve their situation. Although these groups avoid talking about "cases" or "samples" (Sampietro, 2016), and mutual support is not considered an "intervention"—and therefore need not be subject to evaluation or compared with treatments carried by professionals, following

---

[2] According to Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand (1995): "Horizontal collectivism includes perceiving the self as a part of the collective, but seeing all members of the collective as the same; thus equality is stressed. Vertical individualism includes the conception of an autonomous individual and acceptance of inequality" (p. 240)

the Evidence Based Medicine model—some studies have shown the effectiveness of these activities in improving symptoms and fostering recovery (Pistrang, Barker, & Humphreys, 2008). Indeed, some experimental studies have demonstrated efficacy comparable to that of professional interventions (Bright, Baker, & Neimeyer, 1999; Marmar, Horowitz, Weiss, Wilner, & Kaltreider, 1988).

Interventions developed from the point of view of first-hand experiences are also taking a leading role in the international arena. Although the Expert Patient programmes are more close to psychoeducation than to empowerment (Nuño-Solinis, Rodríguez-Pereira, Piñera-Elorriaga, Zaballa-González, & Bikandi-Irazabal, 2013), in countries like the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom, interventions carried out by other people with mental health experience (usually referred as "peer support") are widespread, ranging from orientation in initial hospital admissions to recovery, social integration, and inclusive leisure programmes. However, the results on the efficacy and effectiveness of these interventions are contradictory. While a meta-analysis in the field of depression (Pfeiffer, Heisler, Piette, Rogers, & Valenstein, 2011) found equivalent efficacy to cognitive-behavioural therapy (nowadays considered the gold standard for the treatment of depression; Churchill et al., 2010), another more recent meta-analysis, including users with different diagnoses, questioned its effectiveness (Lloyd-Evans et al., 2014).

As can be seen, the well-being of the members of first person mental health groups, and the effects of their more or less horizontal collectivist approach to recovery, has occupied many pages in major mental health journals. However, an issue that has so far gone more or less unnoticed is whether participation in first person mental health associations in general increases the psychosocial well-being of the activists, and even if it affects their recovery process. That is, is there an effect on recovery of activities such as participation in meetings where organizational issues are discussed, taking responsibility for management tasks, organizing

conferences and workshops, and the long list of other activities that take place within these organizations? As we remarked above, activism in general has shown to have beneficial effects on well-being (Klar & Kasser, 2009), even outperforming volunteerism (Gilster, 2012), although if we drill a little deeper, we can see that being an activist can lead to both positive and negative emotions being experienced. Positive emotions, such as identification or gratitude, most often occur in relation to other members of the group, while their negative counterparts, like anger and contempt, most often occur in relation to individuals and institutions that are the target of advocacy activities (J. C. Becker, Tausch, & Wagner, 2011).

In the field of mental health activism, although there is a significant presence of people who have had bad experiences with the mental health system and wish to band together to try to change how things are done (Markowitz, 2015), the profile of the people involved is very heterogeneous. Contrary to what it may seem, not all members of the movement feel the same way about clinical psychology, psychiatry, and the use of psychotropic drugs. It is not just a matter of "intensity" or "radicalism" (from those who want to abolish the whole system of mental health care, to those who want to improve specific things), but also of focus. There are groups devoted to leisure and artistic expression, while others engage in protest and/or advocacy, and many combine different interests and concerns. But what is certainly a core element of almost all organisations is the existence of support networks and social capital, whose positive impact on well-being and mental health is well known (Kawachi, 2001).

One aspect to note is that in the context of meetings and decision-making spaces, organizational tasks are often combined with an open approach sympathetic to the comments about symptoms, adverse effects of medications, or conflicts with professionals. That is, outside the context of mutual support groups, opportunities for supportive attitudes constantly occur spontaneously. Of course, in the decision-making processes of any human organisation, there are disagreements that can lead to frustrations. Although in principle frustration is

considered a negative emotion, it is important to note that the experience of both positive and negative emotions is important for global well-being (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015). After recovery, especially for people who have been subject to greater social isolation, these situations involve getting in touch again with the good and bad of human relationships and be able to face them with flexibility.

Although research on mental health activism is growing, and there are even well-known scholars who have made public their experiences with distress, when it comes to measuring its impact on well-being, as in the case of adolescents, research is scarce. However, there are a few interesting and well-constructed studies. A great example is a study from the perspective of health geography (Milligan et al., 2011), which took the autobiographical narratives of activists as raw material to analyse how identity components intertwined with the evolution of their "career" as activists in different countries. Other work has involved mental health activists in the construction of measurement instruments in a participative fashion (Rogers, Chamberlin, Ellison, & Crean, 1997; Rowe et al., 2012).

Final remarks

In this chapter, we have attempted to address some key theoretical and methodological aspects of the study of the relation between activism and well-being, and to describe two contexts we know well: youth and mental health activism. Exploring the impact of activism (i.e., social participation and engagement) on well-being should be a key element in the development of a critical positive psychology field. In the case of young people or neglected collectives such as mental health service users, it should imply the creation of a process of empowerment, taking on a committed attitude and thus an engaged research stance. Some mainstream positive psychologists have performed interesting research on related topics such as the political applications of the Dualistic Model of Passion (Vallerand et al., 2003) which

can help in understanding the differences between activists exercising their activities "harmoniously" and those who do so "obsessively"[3]. However, we believe that positive psychology has some way to go from the aseptic study of these phenomena to an engaged position with social change and justice.

References

Batson, C. D., Ahmad, N., & Lishner, D. A. (2009). Empathy and altruism. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 417–426). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Becker, D., & Marecek, J. (2008). Positive psychology: History in the remaking? *Theory & Psychology*, *18*, 591–604. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0959354308093397

---

[3] According to the Dualistic Model of Passion (Vallerand et al., 2003), some people experience "harmonious" passions, while others have "obsessive" passions. That is, the former feel they have chosen to embark on a pursuit and can engage or disengage from this passion whenever they choose. This sense of choice tends to promote wellbeing. The latter, however, feel almost compelled to pursue their passion. That is, if they do not allocate all the resources available, they feel they will experience negative consequences, such as a decline in their status or self-esteem; and this sense of compulsion tends to lower wellbeing.

Becker, J. C., Tausch, N., & Wagner, U. (2011). Emotional consequences of collective action participation: Differentiating self-directed and outgroup-directed emotions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *37*, 1587–1598. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0146167211414145

Berger, B. (2009). Political theory, political science and the end of civic engagement. *Perspectives on Politics*, *7*, 335–350. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S153759270909080X

Biswas-Diener, R. (Ed.). (2011). *Positive psychology as social change*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Brady, B., Dolan, P., Kearns, N., Kennan, D., McGrath, B., Shaw, A., & Brennan, M. (2012). *Understanding youth civic engagement: Debates, discourses, and lessons from practice*. Galway, Ireland: UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. Retrieved from http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/sites/www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/files/understanding_youth_civic_engagment_2012.pdf

Bright, J. I., Baker, K. D., & Neimeyer, R. A. (1999). Professional and paraprofessional group treatments for depression: A comparison of cognitive-behavioral and mutual support interventions. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *67*, 491–501. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.67.4.491

Churchill, R., Moore, T. H., Caldwell, D., Davies, P., Jones, H., Furukawa, T. A., . . . Hunot, V. (2010). Cognitive behavioural therapies versus other psychological therapies for depression. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, *9*, CD008698. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD008698

Corning, A. F., & Myers, D. J. (2002). Individual orientation toward engagement in social action. *Political Psychology*, *23*, 703–729. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0162-895x.00304

Dolan, P. (2010). Youth civic engagement and support: Promoting well-being with the assistance of a UNESCO agenda. In C. McAuley & W. Rose (Eds.), *Child well-being*; *Understanding children's lives* (pp. 111–126). London, England: Jessica Kingsley.

Downton, J., & Wehr, P. (1998). Persistent pacifism: How activist commitment is developed and sustained. *Journal of Peace Research*, *35*, 531–550. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022343398035005001

Eccles, J. S., & Barber, B. L. (1999). Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *14*, 10–43. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558499141003

Eigner, S. (2001). The relationship between "protecting the environment" as a dominant life goal and subjective well-being. In P. Schmuck & K. M. Sheldon (Eds.), *Life goals and well-being: Towards a positive psychology of human striving* (pp. 182–201). Göttingen, Germany: Hogrefe and Huber.

Eiroa-Orosa, F. J. (2016). Community engagement as mental health promotion: Towards a committed psychological practice. *International Journal of Psychology*, *51*, 242. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12302

Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., & Spinrad, T. L. (2007). Prosocial development. In N. Eisenberg (Vol. Ed.), W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Series Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Social, emotional, and personality development* (Vol. 3, pp. 646–718). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Ekman, J., & Amnå, E. (2012). Political participation and civic engagement: Towards a new typology. *Human Affairs*, *22*, 283–300. http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/s13374-012-0024-1

Flanagan, C., & Levine, P. (2010). Civic engagement and the transition to adulthood. *Future of Children*, *20*(1), 159–179. http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/foc.0.0043

Gilster, M. E. (2012). Comparing neighborhood-focused activism and volunteerism: Psychological well-being and social connectedness. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *40*, 769–784. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20528

Ginwright, S. (2003). Youth organizing: Expanding possibilities for youth development. *Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing: Occasional Papers Series*, *3*. Retrieved from http://lvejo.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/4243_Papers_no3_v3.qxd_.pdf

Gomes, M. E. (1992). The rewards and stresses of social change: A qualitative study of peace activists. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *32*(4), 138–146. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022167892324008

Harré, N. (2007). Community service or activism as an identity project for youth. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*, 711–724. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20174

Harré, N., Tepavac, S., & Bullen, P. (2009). Integrity, efficacy and community in the stories of political activists. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *6*, 330–345. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14780880903324764

Hart, D., & Carlo, G. (2005). Moral development in adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *15*, 223–233. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2005.00094.x

Herzog, H. A. (1993). "The movement is my life": The psychology of animal rights activism. *Journal of Social Issues*, *49*(1), 103–119. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1993.tb00911.x

Kawachi, I. (2001). Social ties and mental health. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, *78*, 458–467. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jurban/78.3.458

Kendrick, J. R. , Jr. (1996). Outcomes of service-learning in an introduction to sociology course. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *3*, 72–81.

Kirshner, B. (2007). Introduction: Youth activism as a context for learning and development. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *51*, 367–379. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0002764207306065

Klar, M., & Kasser, T. (2009). Some benefits of being an activist: Measuring activism and its role in psychological well-being. *Political Psychology*, *30*, 755–777. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2009.00724.x

Larson, R., & Hansen, D. (2005). The development of strategic thinking: Learning to impact human systems in a youth activism program. *Human Development*, *48*, 327–349. http://dx.doi.org/10.1159/000088251

Lloyd-Evans, B., Mayo-Wilson, E., Harrison, B., Istead, H., Brown, E., Pilling, S., . . Kendall, T. (2014). A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials of peer support for people with severe mental illness. *BMC Psychiatry*, *14*, 39. http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-14-39

Lomas, T., & Ivtzan, I. (2015). Second wave positive psychology: Exploring the positive–negative dialectics of well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *17*, 1753–1768. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9668-y

Marcia, J. E. (1980). Identity in adolescence. In J. Adelson (Ed.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp. 159–187). New York, NY: Wiley.

Markowitz, F. E. (2015). Involvement in mental health self-help groups and recovery. *Health Sociology Review*, *24*, 199–212. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14461242.2015.1015149

Marmar, C. R., Horowitz, M. J., Weiss, D. S., Wilner, N. R., & Kaltreider, N. B. (1988). A controlled trial of brief psychotherapy and mutual-help group treatment of conjugal bereavement. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *145*, 203–209. http://dx.doi.org/10.1176/ajp.145.2.203

Meier, S., & Stutzer, A. (2007). Is volunteering rewarding in itself? *Economica*, *75*(297), 39–59. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0335.2007.00597.x

Milligan, C., Kearns, R., & Kyle, R. G. (2011). Unpacking stored and storied knowledge: Elicited biographies of activism in mental health. *Health & Place*, *17*, 7–16. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2009.12.016

Nuño-Solinis, R., Rodríguez-Pereira, C., Piñera-Elorriaga, K., Zaballa-González, I., & Bikandi-Irazabal, J. (2013). Panorama de las iniciativas de educación para el autocuidado en España [Overview of education initiatives for self-care in Spain]. *Gaceta Sanitaria*, *27*, 332–337. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.gaceta.2013.01.008

Pancer, S. M., Pratt, M., Hunsberger, B., & Alisat, S. (2007). Community and political involvement in adolescence: What distinguishes the activists from the uninvolved? *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*, 741–759. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20176

Pearce, N., & Larson, R. (2006). How teens become engaged in youth development programs: The process of motivational change in a civic activism organization. *Applied Developmental Science*, *10*, 121–131. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads1003_2

Pfeiffer, P. N., Heisler, M., Piette, J. D., Rogers, M. A. M., & Valenstein, M. (2011). Efficacy of peer support interventions for depression: A meta-analysis. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, *33*, 29–36. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.genhosppsych.2010.10.002

Pistrang, N., Barker, C., & Humphreys, K. (2008). Mutual help groups for mental health problems: A review of effectiveness studies. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *42*, 110–121. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10464-008-9181-0

Rogers, E. S., Chamberlin, J., Ellison, M. L., & Crean, T. (1997). A consumer-constructed scale to measure empowerment among users of mental health services. *Psychiatric Services*, *48*, 1042–1047. http://dx.doi.org/10.1176/ps.48.8.1042

Rowe, M., Clayton, A., Benedict, P., Bellamy, C., Antunes, K., Miller, R., . . . O'Connell, M. J. (2012). Going to the source: Creating a citizenship outcome measure by community-based participatory research methods. *Psychiatric Services*, *63*, 445–450. http://dx.doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201100272

Rowe, M., & Pelletier, J.-F. (2012). Citizenship: A response to the marginalization of people with mental illnesses. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice*, *12*, 366–381. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15228932.2012.697423

Sampietro, H. M. (2016). Del diagnóstico al activismo, un proceso personal de empoderamiento [From diagnosis to activism: A process of personal empowerment]. *Revista Asociación Española de Neuropsiquiatría*, *36*(129), 193–207. http://dx.doi.org/10.4321/S0211-57352016000100013

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 5–14. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.5

Sherrod, L. R. (2006). Promoting citizenship and activism in today's youth. In S. Ginwright, P. Noguera, & J. Cammarota (Eds.), *Beyond resistance! Youth activism and community change: New democratic possibilities for practice and policy for America's youth* (pp. 287–299). New York, NY: Routledge. http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203961001

Sherrod, L. R. (2007). Civic engagement as an expression of positive youth development. In R. K. Silbereisen & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Approaches to positive youth development* (pp. 59–74). London, England: SAGE.

Sherrod, L. R., Flanagan, C., & Youniss, J. (2002). Dimensions of citizenship and opportunities for youth development: The what, why, when, where, and who of citizenship development. *Applied Developmental Science*, *6*, 264–272. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0604_14

Singelis, T. M., Triandis, H. C., Bhawuk, D. P. S., & Gelfand, M. J. (1995). Horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism: A theoretical and measurement refinement. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *29*, 240–275. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/106939719502900302

Sohr, S. (2001). Eco-activism and well-being: Between flow and burnout. In P. Schmuck & K. M. Sheldon (Eds.), *Life goals and well-being: Towards a positive psychology of human striving* (pp. 202–215). Göttingen, Germany: Hogrefe and Huber.

Sullivan, L., Edwards, D., Johnson, N., & McGillicuddy, K. (2003). An emerging model for working with youth: Community organizing + youth development = youth organizing. *Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing: Occasional Papers Series*, *1*. Retrieved from https://fcyo.org/uploads/resources/8141_Papers_no1_v4.qxd.pdf

Thoits, P. A., & Hewitt, L. N. (2001). Volunteer work and well-being. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *42*, 115–131. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3090173

Tomes, N. (2006). The patient as a policy factor: A historical case study of the consumer/survivor movement in mental health. *Health Affairs*, *25*, 720–729. http://dx.doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.25.3.720

Tucker, M. L., & McCarthy, A. M. (2001). Presentation self-efficacy: Increasing communication skills through service-learning. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, *13*, 227–244.

UNICEF. (2008). *Young people's civic engagement in East Asia and the Pacific*. Retrieved from http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/files/EAPRO_study_by_Innovations_in_ Civic_Participation.pdf

Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C., Mageau, G. A., Koestner, R., Ratelle, C., Léonard, M., . . . Marsolais, J. (2003). Les passions de l'âme: On obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*, 756–767. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.4.756

Watts, R. J., & Flanagan, C. (2007). Pushing the envelope on youth civic engagement: A developmental and liberation psychology perspective. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*, 779–792. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20178

Wilson, J. (2000). Volunteering. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *26*, 215–240. http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.215

Yohalem, N., & Martin, S. (2007). Building the evidence base for youth engagement: Reflections on youth and democracy. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*, 807–810. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20180

Youniss, J., McLellan, J. A., & Mazer, B. (2001). Voluntary service, peer group orientation, and civic engagement. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *16*, 456–468. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558401165003

Youniss, J., McLellan, J. A., Su, Y., & Yates, M. (1999). The role of community service in identity development: Normative, unconventional, and deviant orientations. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *14*, 248–261. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558499142006

Youniss, J., McLellan, J. A., & Yates, M. (1997). What we know about engendering civic identity. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *40*, 620–631. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0002764297040005008

Youniss, J., & Yates, M. (1999). Youth service and moral-civic identity: A case for everyday morality. *Educational Psychology Review*, *11*, 361–376. http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1022009400250