

International Positive Psychology Association

Clinical Division

Launching Charter

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Tayyab Rashid

Clinical Psychologist & Researcher, University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada

Philip Streit

Clinical & Health Psychotherapist, Institute & the Akademie für Kind, Jugend und Familie,
Graz, Austria

Margarita Tarragona

PositivaMente, Psicología Positiva, México

Samuel M.Y. Ho

Professor of Psychology, Department of Applied Social Sciences,
City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

Michaela Baker

Student Representative, Yale University, United States

IPPA Positive Clinical Psychology Division

Launch Proposal

Context

Clinical psychology, counselling psychology, social work, psychiatry, and other mental health domains have traditionally focused on alleviating symptoms, dysfunctions, and disorders. These disciplines have done well in making clients less sad, less angry and less anxious but little effort has been dispensed on making clients happier, engaged, connected, grounded, or grateful. Positive psychology, about fifteen years ago, asked the mental health field a critical question, *what is good about human beings, individually and collectively?* An impressive and often converging lines of research has uncovered markers and makers of good work, healthy bodies, deep learning and fulfilling work. However, the clinical domain has somewhat staggered.

Positive psychology under the auspices of International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) is uniquely positioned to create a sub-field, Positive Clinical Psychology, which integrates symptoms with strengths, risks with resources, weaknesses with values, isolation with attachment, and regrets with hope in order to understand inherent complexities of human experience, as presented in clinical settings, in a balanced way.

This charter makes that case for a distinct IPPA Division, the Positive Clinical Psychology Division that could provide a platform for mental health professionals with a shared goal of defining and refining a clinical practice which gives equal attention to positive resources of clients in order to treat their symptoms.

The Mission

The mission of the Positive Clinical Psychology Division of IPPA is to support and advance professional, ethical, effective, evidence-based and culturally responsive practice of positive psychology principles in clinical settings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the IPPA Positive Clinical Psychology Division is to provide an organized, collegial, member-driven collaborative platform for clinicians, academics, researchers and students to provide a shared context in advancing the conceptualization, research and practice of Positive Clinical Psychology. The Division also aims to provide a shared context for clinicians to exchange knowledge, explore new possibilities, and solve challenging clinical concerns.

Objectives of the Positive Clinical Psychology Division

The Division will focus on the following objectives:

1. To apply positive psychology findings in clinical settings, in assessing, treating, predicting and preventing psychological problems and enhancing human well being.
2. To provide a platform for clinicians, researchers, academics and students to share knowledge, collaborate and enable healthy dialogue, in a way that builds a richer, nuanced and relevant understanding of incorporating principles of positive psychology in clinical practice.

3. To create a hub with a rich and dynamic repository of resources which include information about empirically-supported positive clinical interventions and assessment strategies, case studies, relevant research and concrete resources such as digital applications, websites, books, and scientific and popular articles.

4. To establish research and best practice guidelines, and outline training requirements including course work, research education, ethics training, externships, supervised practicum training, supervised internships and continuing educational recommendations to ensure that requisite standards, consistent with most accreditation bodies, are met in delivering positive clinical services.

5. To plan and organize periodical online and in-person opportunities to disseminate knowledge regarding best clinical practices, which may include conferences, webinars, lectures and newsletters.

6. To establish relationships with other clinical organizations and other disciplines to foster an exchange of knowledge and explore opportunities for collaboration. These relationships are critical, as this will allow Division to connect with a clinical field, which has, hundreds, if not thousands of well-organized and established groups. The Positive Clinical Psychology Division would like to be an inclusive entity which fosters and maintains a healthy dialogue between people and organization who can come together to explore new clinical possibilities, solve clinical challenges in creative ways, learn from each other and advance clinical psychology as a balanced discipline which explores and amplifies the best resources of clients to meet some of their toughest psychological challenges and in doing so fosters growth, resilience and well-being.

Alignment with IPPA's Strategic Goals

Like other Divisions within IPPA, this Division's objectives are aligned under the three strands of IPPA's overall strategy:

- To promote the science of positive psychology and its research-based ethically sound applications
- To facilitate collaboration among clinicians, researchers, academics, educators, and students of positive psychology around the world and across disciplines
- To share the findings of positive psychology and its application in the clinical realm with the broadest possible audience

Membership

Our desire is to grow an active membership that includes a wide variety of mental health professionals including psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, counselors, social workers, mental health practitioners, academics, researchers and others who are interested in applying positive psychology in clinical settings. We would also like to expand our membership to physicians, nurses, educators, and professionals in administrative positions if they find their credentials and professional role could benefit from Division's mission, goals and endeavors. For example, we would like to explore how relatively small and inexpensive positive psychology interventions (e.g., counting your blessings, writing and delivering gratitude letter, savouring, etc.) may be disseminated through a variety of health professionals.

Division membership will be open to people with a current IPPA membership at the Member, Associate and Student level. Affiliates will be able to register to receive periodic newsletter from the Division, but

will not be able to participate in division activities or vote.

Full Member: Full members are expected to have a graduate degree in psychology or mental health related field from a regionally accredited graduate or professional program. The degree must be related, in part, on psychological science (research or applied) demonstrating expertise (research or practice) in clinical/counselling or related mental health fields. Full members, are expected to be licensed (or certified) to practice psychology in their jurisdiction by their regional licensing boards or professional colleges/associations. Full members are expected to follow the code of ethics of their own professional colleges/associations in the practice of positive clinical psychology. Full members are not required to have specific positive psychology training or credentials.

Benefits: Full members play a critical role in selecting leadership and shaping governance of the Division. They have the privilege of voting and applying for any leadership position within the Division. They enjoy full access to online resources (e.g., membership directory, webinars, summaries of Positive Clinical Psychology research, and free online clinical assessment tools). Their names may be included in the online database, if they opt to. In addition, they will also have access to resources offered by other IPPA divisions.

Associate: Associate members are expected to have a bachelor's degree and/or two years of graduate study in psychology or related field. They must hold a license or certification to practice psychology professionally in their regional jurisdiction. Associate members are expected to follow the code of ethics of their own professional colleges/associations in the practice of positive clinical psychology. Associate members are eligible to become full members after three consecutive years of associate membership within the Division. As full members they can vote and hold office as long as Positive Clinical Psychology Division is opted as the primary Division of the associate member.

Benefits: Associate members, will enjoy full membership privileges after being associate members for three consecutive years.

Affiliates: Affiliate members are members of IPPA who may or may not have any clinical training or experience but are interested in Positive Clinical Psychology.

Benefits: Affiliate members, with exception of holding a leadership office or voting enjoy the same benefits as full members.

Students: Students enrolled in good standing in an academic undergraduate and graduate program, and are student members of IPPA/SIPPA are eligible for student member of the Division.

Benefits: Student members enjoy the same benefits as full members. Student members are not eligible for leadership position and voting. However, as the Division evolves, student representation may be incorporated into the Division's leadership structure.

Membership in the Positive Clinical Psychology Division is free and open to any current IPPA member at the Member, Associate and Student level. If you currently have an active IPPA membership and meet the above criteria, you can join the Division by [logging into](#) your member profile. Click "Edit/View Information." Scroll down the form and check the "Clinical Division" box at the bottom of the page.

Leadership Positions

The Division members will elect, a president, president-elect, and a secretary, who will each serve a two-year term. Following the initial term, the President will transition into an optional Immediate Past President role and the President-Elect will transition into the President role. General job responsibilities for each role are as follows:

President: Preside over all activities of the Division. The president consults with members and Association leadership to identify and develop programs that advance the Division's mission. Serve as the primary spokespersons for the Division and be responsible for reports to the IPPA Leadership and the Board of Directors on a quarterly basis about Division activities, main accomplishments, membership levels and financials, and any challenges or future plans that would benefit from IPPA support. Also responsible for ensuring Division members' interests are represented in IPPA Board meetings and collaborative discussions with IPPA Leadership. After serving this two-year term, the President will transition to a non-voting Immediate Past-President role.

President Elect: Support the Division President in ongoing efforts while acquiring knowledge needed to lead the division in the future. After serving this two-year term, the President-Elect will transition into the President role to serve that two-year term.

Secretary: Serves as the chief administrative officer for the Division, assuring the maintenance of records and compliance with Division and Association policies and procedures. The Secretary will also be responsible for recording minutes of general meetings, liaising with committees, and sharing knowledge internally. The Secretary will serve a two-year term after which he or she can run for office again.

Immediate Past-President: The Immediate Past-President serves in a non-voting, advisory role to the President and President-Elect on an as-needed basis. Responsibilities include utilizing and sharing experience gained as a previous President to provide advice and leadership regarding past practices.

The Division will encourage a range of mental health professionals to submit their candidacies for the leadership positions mentioned above. Once elected, officers can develop additional roles, such as a Membership, Communication or Event Chairs. Officers can decide whether these positions are elected by Division members or appointed by Division leadership from a pool of applicants.

Given IPPA's dual emphasis on the advancement of scholarship and practice, we would like the leadership structure to inherently reflect both of those interests. Candidates have to declare their primary career role (a practitioner, a researcher, or a practitioner-researcher). For the inaugural office, we will not require that the President or President-Elect represent a specific career domain. We would encourage the first office bearers of the Division to chart a balance based on input from the Division members.

Furthermore, as the Division develops, the membership may consider appropriate /proportionate representation of clinicians from various domains such as academic settings, hospitals, community, forensic, sports as well as clinicians primarily working with specific populations such as LGBT, geriatrics, couples, families, children and adolescents, individuals with specific physical needs, artists, athletes. This

could be achieved by establishing specialized sub-divisions or committees. Likewise, clinicians with the Division, who are interested in applying positive psychology with specific clinical conditions such as trauma, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, psychosis, attention deficit, etc. Our aim is invite a broad spectrum of clinicians with general as well as specialized expertise and provide them a fertile, inviting and inclusive platform so that the mission of the Division--a balanced clinical science which gives equal importance to negatives and positives and integrates them meaningfully towards a therapeutic change—is advanced. We will have modest beginning but our aim is to gradually bring into fold the aforementioned areas and expertise.

The leadership structure and Division’s potential growth both in expertise and experts will hopefully attract a wide range of IPPA members and hopefully enable collaboration and cooperation between practice and research in tandem to further IPPA's mission.

Election Process

With the support of the IPPA Divisions Committee, we would like to ask for nominees from among the Positive Clinical Psychology Division membership base (i.e., members must opt to join the Division as an active member prior to submitting their nomination). We believe this will ensure not only an engaged election process, but will build a strong membership base with which to begin our Division’s work. Each nominee will submit a one-paragraph bio and statement of purpose including a bulleted list describing the candidate’s vision for the Division. These submissions will be shared with all Division members for a period of time before voting. Once the Division’s officers have been elected these leaders will have the opportunity to finalize this charter and put it to a vote by members to ratify or provide any final commentary.

Committees and Working Groups

Elected officers will establish the need for committees and working groups in specific domains aforementioned. The opportunities to engage in these activities will be determined in the future.

Meetings

Elected Officers of the Positive Clinical Psychology Division will determine a meeting schedule that may include:

- Bi-annually, a meeting of the Division will be held at the IPPA World Conference
- Monthly or bi-monthly conference calls

Communication

Communication with and among division members will initially be facilitated through Association communication channels including project management software, an email communication platform, and social media channels.

Resources and Support Available

The main area of support IPPA will provide the Division is with access to membership and the Board. IPPA’s Board will help to promote the opportunities and activities of the Division to members and contact lists, encouraging greater participation. IPPA will also help make appropriate introductions to relevant researchers and scholars on the Board or within its network. Where possible, IPPA will share access to existing systems.

Major Deliverable/Target for first two year of the Positive Clinical Psychology Division (2016-2018)

Promotional Target to build a Membership Base

- Promote Positive Clinical Psychology Division at IPPA's bi-annual conference, July, 2017, Montreal, Canada.
- Publish a quarterly newsletter explaining the Divisional.
- Create an international directory of professionals (practitioners & researchers), highlighting their work/expertise in various areas of Positive Clinical Psychology (e.g., James Pennebaker and Stephen Joseph, and Richard Tedeschi on Post-traumatic Growth, George Bonanno and Jane Gillham on Resilience...etc.). This will likely promote membership as they will become acquainted with clinicians using a Positive Clinical Psychology approach.
- Create a high-quality multi-language online Positive Clinical Psychology resource roster including references of peer reviewed articles, mobile apps, credible websites, books, case studies...etc.
- Create a comprehensive list of films, literature, documentaries, songs, and artifacts, which illustrate major themes of Positive Clinical Psychology.
- Create of a list of institutions, programs, and training opportunities in Positive Clinical Psychology.
- Create awards, recognitions for students and distinguished professionals.

Educational

- Organize a series of webinars at three levels, fundamentals (Positive Clinical Psychology 101) to intermediate and advanced by inviting distinguished practitioners and researchers and also inviting major stake holders to these webinars to promote the division.
- Draft training, supervision, ethical principles, clinical experience guidelines/standards for members to help them gauge their expertise and areas of growth.
- Draft theoretical models as illustrations of Positive Clinical/Counseling psychology and post them on Division's website to help members frame, develop and refine their orientation towards a robust Positive Clinical Psychology.
- Invite distinguished clinicians practicing Positive Clinical Psychology for IPPA leadership series.
- Encourage and support students at universities in organizing Positive Clinical Psychology related events, talk, lectures & webinars.

Collaboration

- Establish collaborative relationships with relevant associations such as Division 12 (Clinical Division of APA, European and Asian clinical psychology organization, etc.)