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## Are All Happy Families Alike? Conceptualizing a Dashboard of Family Flourishing

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# Are All Happy Families Alike? Conceptualizing a Dashboard of Family Flourishing

## Abstract

In the opening line of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, we read that all happy families are alike, yet all unhappy families are unhappy in their own way. The Anna Karenina Principle is derived from this and is understood to mean that success in any endeavor is so elusive that failure to achieve even one condition for success will lead to certain doom. Applying this principle to the family, one might say that a deficiency in any one element of family well-being will prevent family flourishing and doom a family to be unhappy. Thus, there are many more ways for a family to be unhappy than to flourish. Is this a helpful frame through which to view family well-being and happiness? What have scholars from the science of human flourishing learned about the conditions for family well-being? How does individual well-being relate to family flourishing? How do positive psychologists conceptualize, define, and measure family well-being? Below, I present findings from a broad survey of the positive psychology literature related to defining and measuring individual and family flourishing. I conclude with a conceptual framework for a Family Flourishing Dashboard (FFD). The dashboard incorporates a curated subset of scales for measuring subjective individual and family well-being. Such a dashboard may help families and the practitioners who work with them by promoting informed and constructive discussion about individual family members' hopes and goals for the family. Practitioners who work with families may find this dashboard of value in planning and developing positive interventions intended to boost family well-being.

## Keywords

family flourishing, subjective well-being, well-being scales, measuring family well-being

## Comments

Are All Happy Families Alike?

Conceptualizing a Dashboard of Family Flourishing

Joel H. Treisman

University of Pennsylvania

A Capstone Project Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

Advisor: Leona Brandwene

August 1, 2019

Are All Happy Families Alike? Conceptualizing a Dashboard of Family Flourishing

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Capstone Project  
Master of Applied Positive Psychology  
University of Pennsylvania  
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August 1, 2019

Abstract

In the opening line of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, we read that all happy families are alike, yet all unhappy families are unhappy in their own way. The Anna Karenina Principle is derived from this and is understood to mean that success in any endeavor is so elusive that failure to achieve even one condition for success will lead to certain doom. Applying this principle to the family, one might say that a deficiency in any one element of family well-being will prevent family flourishing and doom a family to be unhappy. Thus, there are many more ways for a family to be unhappy than to flourish. Is this a helpful frame through which to view family well-being and happiness? What have scholars from the science of human flourishing learned about the conditions for family well-being? How does individual well-being relate to family flourishing? How do positive psychologists conceptualize, define, and measure family well-being? Below, I present findings from a broad survey of the positive psychology literature related to defining and measuring individual and family flourishing. I conclude with a conceptual framework for a Family Flourishing Dashboard (FFD). The dashboard incorporates a curated subset of scales for measuring subjective individual and family well-being. Such a dashboard may help families and the practitioners who work with them by promoting informed and constructive discussion about individual family members' hopes and goals for the family. Practitioners who work with families may find this dashboard of value in planning and developing positive interventions intended to boost family well-being.

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## Introduction

I feel extraordinarily grateful to have worked for the last twenty years as a coach and facilitator with some of the most successful individuals and families in the world. Each of these families is worth tens - if not hundreds - of millions of dollars. This extreme level of wealth places them at the very top of this country's elite one-percent (Keister, 2014). In my experience, these families also enjoy high levels of psychological well-being and happiness. Are they happy because they are wealthy? Researchers have found that, at least up to a point, greater wealth does correlate with higher individual well-being and happiness (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002). However, studies have found evidence that the reverse may also be true: Happy and flourishing families are more likely to earn more and therefore accumulate wealth (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Oswald, 1997).

The idea for this paper emerged from my interest in exploring this reverse relationship. Might boosting family flourishing be linked to positive effects in the family's financial decision-making and discussions, philanthropy, income, and accumulation of wealth? Unfortunately, a complete exploration of this relationship lies far outside the scope of this paper. In order to lay the foundation for further research into the relationship between family flourishing and finance, I will focus in this paper on family well-being (FWB). I will address two questions: 1) what is family flourishing, and 2) how can we measure family well-being? Since most positive psychology researchers use the terms well-being, thriving, and flourishing interchangeably, I will adopt the same practice.

“Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way” (Tolstoy, Kent, & Berberova, 1965). Author, historian, and geographer Jared Diamond (1997) writes in *Guns, Germs, and Steel* that the correct interpretation of the opening line of Tolstoy's Anna



Karenina is that for a family to be happy, it must succeed in every pivotal domain. The Anna Karenina Principle is derived from this and is understood to mean that success in any endeavor is so elusive that failure to achieve even one condition for success will lead to certain doom (Diamond, 1997). Applying this principle to family well-being, one might say that a deficiency in any single element of family well-being will prevent family flourishing. Thus, there are many more ways for a family to fail than to flourish.

Does research from the field of positive psychology support the Anna Karenina Principle? If so, family well-being is elusive and difficult to achieve. On the other hand, if all happy families are not alike, there are multiple paths to family flourishing. Below, I will present my findings from a search of the positive psychology literature on family flourishing and its measurement. I will conclude the paper with a conceptual framework for a positive psychology-inspired Family Flourishing Dashboard (FFD). I envision this dashboard as a curated selection of widely-used and empirically-validated individual and family flourishing scales. I hope the FFD will provide a useful diagnostic tool and process for families and practitioners who wish to measure, track, and enhance family flourishing. I believe the FFD may be useful to practitioners in designing, implementing, and assessing positive family interventions intended to boost flourishing among family members and the family as a whole.

### **Methodology**

If positive psychology is the scientific study of the good life, how might we refer to the positive psychology of family flourishing (Seligman, 1999)? I refer this as “the good family life.” To understand the good family life and the factors that have been shown to promote family flourishing, I reviewed the literature on individual and family well-being constructs and psychometrics. My search terms included: family flourishing, measuring family well-being,

positive psychology and family, family well-being scales, satisfaction with family, interdependent happiness, happy families, family relationship assessments, and family quality of life.

Because one cannot fully understand well-being in the family domain without considering subjective well-being in the individual domain, I will begin with my findings on individual well-being constructs and measures. I will then provide an introduction to family flourishing frameworks and scales. Although I will reference some early theories and measures of family well-being, it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comprehensive historical discussion of these topics. Instead, I will focus on contemporary and widely-used family well-being theories and scales. I will conclude with the conceptual framework for the comprehensive Family Flourishing Dashboard.

Much of what we know today about individual and family well-being and how to measure it has emerged from the field of positive psychology. Therefore, I will begin with a brief introduction to the relatively new science of positive human functioning.

### **What is Positive Psychology?**

We have misplaced our original and greater mandate to make life better for all people – not just the mentally ill. I therefore call on our profession and our science to take up this mandate once again as we enter the next millennium (Seligman, 1999, p. 562).

With this call-to-action, then-president of the American Psychological Association (APA) Martin Seligman ushered in a new era in the scientific study of positive human functioning (Seligman, 1999). Exploration and debate about the nature of happiness and how to live the good life can be traced back to ancient philosophers and religious leaders, but it was Seligman who

inspired his colleagues to integrate previously disparate threads of research into a collaborative scientific exploration of what makes life worth living (Diener, 2009; Peterson, 2006; Seligman, 1999). Seligman's 1999 speech to the APA followed meetings he had been holding with a network of scholars and practitioners who were studying human strengths and positive attributes rather than human problems and dysfunction (Diener, 2009).

From the beginning, positive psychology was viewed as a scientific field characterized by rigorous research and empirical studies (Diener, 2009; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi exhorted their academic peers to conduct empirical studies of "the science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions" with the goal of "articulating a vision of the good life that is empirically sound while being understandable and attractive" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). They imagined a future in which a scientific understanding of positive experience, positive character traits, and the institutions supporting these would lead to effective interventions that would bolster well-being and create flourishing individuals, families, communities, and societies (Diener, Biswas-Diener, & Scollon, 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Positive psychologists like to study "what goes right in life" rather than focusing on mental illness, dysfunction, and psychopathology (Peterson, 2013; Seligman, 2011). Positive psychology is concerned with forming an empirically-grounded understanding of personal growth, the engaged and meaningful life, and all the other ingredients of the good life (Seligman, 2011). These ingredients include happiness, well-being, meaning, satisfaction, positive emotions, optimism, strengths, and positive relationships (Peterson, 2006, 2013).

Twenty years after Seligman's notable call-to-action, the study of positive human functioning remains dynamic, vibrant, and ever-expanding. Numerous positive psychology

studies, papers, and measurement scales are published every month (Donaldson, Dollwet, & Rao, 2014; Linton, Dieppe, & Medina-Lara, 2016; Parks & Schueller, 2013). Donaldson and colleagues (2014) reviewed the positive psychology literature published between 1999 and 2013 and identified 1,336 articles, of which more than 750 include empirical tests of positive psychology principles, theories, and interventions. Fresh approaches integrating learning from multiple scientific disciplines continue to add to our understanding of human flourishing. For example, our knowledge of effective human functioning now integrates learning from the fields of neurobiology, psychology, and social science (Huppert, Baylis, & Keverne, 2004).

### **Describing, Defining, and Measuring Individual Well-Being**

Martin Seligman wrote that goal of positive psychology is to “increase the amount of flourishing in your own life and on the planet” (Seligman, 2011, p. 26). However, in order to increase individual and planetary flourishing, positive psychologists needed to understand how to define and measure well-being. Researchers have produced staggering numbers of books, papers, and meta-analyses on the topic of well-being alone. A recent Google Scholar search for publications using the search term “well-being” yielded nearly 600,000 academic titles published since 2015.

### **Defining and Describing Well-Being**

Donaldson and colleagues (2014) note that the most-researched topic in positive psychology is well-being, which accounts for almost 40% more than all other major positive psychology topics combined. Despite the abundance of published studies, researchers have yet to arrive at a broad consensus on the definition, description, and measurement of well-being, flourishing, and thriving (Carlquist, Ulleberg, Delle Fave, Nafstad, & Blakar, 2017; Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012; Goodman, Disabato, Kashdana, & Kauffman, 2017; Hone,

Jarden, Schofield, & Duncan, 2014; Krys et al., 2019; Linton, Dieppe, & Medina-Lara, 2016; Seligman, 2018).

Happiness is a broad term and is often linked to satisfaction, well-being, and flourishing. In *Explaining Happiness*, Easterlin (2003) refers to happiness, utility, well-being, life-satisfaction, and welfare interchangeably. The United States General Social Survey (GSS) tracks happiness each year through the question: Taken all together, how would you say things are these days – would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy? Survey responses of “very happy” have ranged from a high of 38 percent in 1974 to low of 29 percent in 2010 with the most recent year’s (2018) very happy percentage of 31 percent (“General Social Survey,” 2018).

Huppert and colleagues (2004) wrote that positive psychology offered scientists a fresh approach to understanding effective functioning, an approach that integrated neurobiology, psychology, and social science. They argued that studying depression, disease and dysfunction did not shed light on happiness, well-being, fulfillment, and positive relationships. They defined well-being in broad terms as “a positive and sustainable state that allows individuals, groups, or nations to thrive and flourish” (Huppert et al., 2004, p. 1331). Defined as such, well-being incorporated positive psychological, positive physical, and positive social states.

### **Psychological Well-Being**

Ryff and Singer (2006) created a multidimensional model of psychological well-being (PWB) that has been extensively researched and validated. Their definition of well-being is grounded in the Greek concepts of eudaimonia and telos, which elevate individual self-realization and achieving the best that is within ourselves (Ryff & Singer, 2006). They identify six dimensions that contribute to a healthy, fully-functional and well-lived life: Self-acceptance,

purpose in life, autonomy, personal growth, environmental mastery and positive relationships. Of relevance to this paper, Ryff and Singer (1998) describe the interpersonal realm as the central dimension of a positive and well-lived life. As will be discussed in more detail below, the authors identify family life as central to meaning and purpose and cite research underscoring the connection between the experience of having and raising children and higher levels of purpose, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance.

### **Flourishing**

Huppert and So (2011), who studied flourishing across Europe, define flourishing as the experience of life going well and write that it consists of both feeling good and functioning effectively. They assert that in order for an individual to flourish, three core features plus three or more of six “additional features” must be present. The three required core features are: positive emotions, engagement or interest, and meaning or purpose. The additional features are: Self-esteem, optimism, resilience, vitality, self-determination, and positive relationships (Huppert & So, 2011). They administered a short well-being scale to 43,000 adults in 23 countries and found that Denmark led Europe with a flourishing rate of 41 percent. Seligman highlighted their study as an example of how advances in measuring flourishing at the individual, community, organization, and national level could change public policy and lives (Seligman, 2011).

The seven core theoretical dimensions of psychological well-being, according to Su, Tay, and Diener (2014) are: 1) subjective well-being, which includes high satisfaction with life and positive feelings, 2) enriching and supportive relationships, 3) interest and engagement in day-to-day activities, 4) meaning and purpose in life, 5) a sense of accomplishment and mastery, 6) feelings of control and autonomy, and 7) optimism. As will be discussed below, Su and

collaborators (2014) created the multidimensional Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving (CIT) scale to measure each of these components of individual flourishing.

### **Subjective Well-Being**

The study of subjective well-being (SWB) has offered another route to better understanding the components of individual flourishing. Diener and colleagues (2016) define SWB as an overall evaluation of one's life and emotional experiences. SWB is considered to be a broad multidimensional entity that includes positive and negative affect, judgements or appraisals of one's life and health, and feelings about specific life events or circumstances. Each distinct facet of SWB can be studied and assessed individually. As will be discussed below, Diener et al.'s (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was one of the early approaches to measuring subjective well-being.

Stone and Mackie (2013) define SWB as the way individuals experience and evaluate their lives, including specific domains and activities in their lives. They distinguish evaluative well-being from eudaimonic well-being, experienced well-being, and hedonic well-being. Evaluative well-being refers to an individual's judgments about how satisfying life is overall or in a particular domain. Eudaimonic well-being concerns one's perceptions of meaning, purpose, and the value of one's life. Experienced well-being relates to emotional states, sensations, and feelings of purpose. Hedonic well-being, on the other hand, refers to the narrower emotional component of experienced well-being (Stone & Mackie, 2013).

In a 2016 paper highlighting new developments in positive psychology research, Diener and his collaborators described five sets of findings from what they call "the new science on subjective well-being (SWB)" (Diener et al., 2016, p. 1). The five findings they argued were important for all fields of psychology were: the multidimensionality of subjective well-being, the

circumstances influencing long-term SWB, differences in SWB across cultures, the health and social relationship benefits of SWB, and findings about how positive interventions may boost SWB. They discussed in detail implications of each finding for clinical and counseling psychologists, organizational psychologists, and research psychologists. Diener and collaborators (2016) concluded that while some psychologists may see the study of subjective well-being as an area of research unrelated to their own areas of specialty, this thinking is misguided, because SWB can and should be studied from a multitude of angles across all subdisciplines within psychology. The authors wrote that they hoped that scholarly research into the science of subjective well-being would become better integrated into all psychology subdisciplines.

Henriques and Kleinman (2014) proposed what they called a nested or unified model of individual well-being that incorporates four domains: the subjective domain, the biological and psychological health and functioning domain, the material and social environmental context, and the values and ideology of the evaluator. They argued that these elements form a holistic concept of well-being that can be valuable to theorists, practitioners, and researchers in a variety of areas of inquiry.

### **Individual and Interconnected Well-Being**

As I will discuss further below, even among individualistic Americans, researchers have found a significant relationship between individual well-being and family (Lu & Gilmour, 2004). Americans in Lu and Gilmour's (2014) study included "to love and be loved by family and friends" as key features of happiness. Social support and being oneself within a relationship were also seen as important components of happiness. By contrast, they found Chinese conceptions and sources of happiness emphasized social relationships. The Chinese view interpersonal goals and social relationships as extending beyond their immediate family members and friends and



encompassing a broader collective (Lu & Gilmour, 2004). They found that among the Chinese, individual happiness was closely linked to harmony in relationships. Lu and Gilmour (2004) differentiate American and Chinese views of the role of social relationships in promoting well-being. Among Americans, independence and being oneself within a relationship are important contributors to SWB. For the Chinese, consideration for the other and harmonious relationships with others is important.

Diener, Diener, and Diener (1995) employed four self-report measures to analyze the multi-faceted nature of subjective well-being in 55 nations representing 75% of the world's population. It is well beyond the scope of this paper to summarize each of their landmark conclusions. Among their key findings were that income, individualism, and human rights were correlated with SWB. Individualism was a strong predictor of SWB, leading them to hypothesize that a feeling of autonomy and the ability to select and pursue one's goals is important to achieving SWB. In a more recent interview, Diener reiterated these insights and discussed some surprises from his research on subjective well-being (Bakshi, 2018). He explained that even though income, trust, respect, and health matter a great deal in subjective well-being, where one lives and the societal characteristics of that country play a significant role in SWB. Of particular relevance to this paper, Diener noted that one surprising finding from his research has been that, "although income and money matter for life satisfaction, for enjoying life's social relationships are a key, regardless of whether one is rich or poor" (Bakshi, 2018, p. 259).

Using a holistic definition of family well-being, Krys and collaborators (2019) found that in both collectivistic and individualistic countries family well-being was valued over personal well-being. They assert that the well-being of a family as a whole is of fundamental importance

to individual and societal thriving. Implications of the Krys et al. (2019) study for the measurement of family flourishing will be discussed in more detail below.

### **Happiness and Well-Being**

Researchers have found that conceptions of happiness and well-being vary across cultures. For instance, Lu and Gilmour (2004) found differences between Asians and Euro-Americans in their conceptions of happiness. They refer to this as their cultural theory of subjective well-being. Their central thesis was that culture can be a major factor in shaping one's concept of happiness and subjective experiences. Among Asians, the concepts of happiness and well-being revolve around harmony, fit, and balance both within the individual and between individuals. They noted that the American definition of happiness emphasizes achievement, self-autonomy, and positive self-evaluation. Western Euro-American culture celebrates individualism, and our theories of SWB are grounded in individual self-concepts (Lu & Gilmour, 2004). Lu found that Americans view happiness and SWB as being closely-related to individual health and life satisfaction (as cited in Lu & Gilmour, 2004).

Delle Fave and colleagues (2016) explored cross-country differences and similarities in the way lay people define happiness. Psychological definitions of happiness represented the most frequent category (42% of all definitions). These included descriptions of happiness as an inner state of harmony and balance, a feeling of satisfaction, positive emotions and positive states, optimism, and meaning. Other definitions referred to particular life domains and contexts. In 11 of 12 countries, the most frequently mentioned contextual categories mentioned were family (16% of responses) and interpersonal relationships (13% of responses; Delle Fave et al., 2016). Within the family category, frequent subcategories mentioned included sharing, cohesion and mutual support, well-being, children's positive growth, goal attainment in the family, and

happiness in the presence of family. Delle Fave et al. (2016) concluded, “These results suggest that studies on well-being also may want to pay attention to the well-being of one’s family, and this element may be important across cultures” (p. 2).

Not surprisingly, happiness and well-being are also integrally linked with family relationships. Easterlin (2003) explored the determinants of happiness using data from the United States General Social Survey (GSS). He looked at the relationships between health and happiness, family and happiness, aspirations, and adaptation. He concludes his analysis by explaining happiness as follows:

...most individuals spend a disproportionate amount of their lives working to make money, and sacrifice family life and health, domains in which aspirations remain fairly constant as actual circumstances change, and where the attainment of one’s goals has a more lasting effect on happiness. Hence, a reallocation of time in favor of family life and health would, on average, increase individual happiness (Easterlin, 2003, p. 11182).

Taking a novel approach to the study of what behaviors make people happy, Asai and colleagues (2018) also found relationships and family to be significant contributors to happiness. They created a crowd-sourced HappyDB database to capture how people express their happy moments in text. Their database captured 100,000 expressions of happy moments over a three-month period in 2017. They analyzed the content of these moments to understand and categorize what activities happened and who participated in these moments. Asai and collaborators (2018) found the top two topics individuals included in their expressions of happy moments were people (46%) and family (26.4%), which was a subset of people. Their data analysis revealed that these

two topics remained at the top of the list regardless of whether individuals were reflecting on happy moments of the previous 24 hours or the prior three months.

### **Meaning in Life, Mattering, and Well-Being**

Perceived meaning in life has been found to be a crucial aspect of individual well-being (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006). Steptoe and Fancourt (2019) found that having a strong sense of purpose and meaning in life may be a protective factor in an individual's long-term health. They documented associations between a strong sense of meaning in life and reduced premature mortality, slower development of age-related disabilities, reduced incidence of cardiovascular disease, healthier lifestyles, and more preventative behaviors (Steptoe & Fancourt, 2019).

A broad review of mental health literature on the topic of sources of meaning in life and people's beliefs regarding the meaning of life strongly supported the centrality of meaning in positive human functioning, health and mental health (Glaw, Kable, Hazelton, & Inder, 2016). They found meaning in life was an indicator of psychological and spiritual well-being, psychological strength, and positive development. Higher levels of meaning in life were found to be positively related to self-esteem, extraversion, control, happiness, positive affect, life satisfaction, psychosocial health, well-being, and improved coping skills (Glaw et al., 2016). Seligman (2011), Carr (2011), and Wissing (2014) link meaning to relationships with others and identify relational well-being as the core of meaningfulness in life.

As relates to the focus of this paper, studies show that relationships with family members are significantly more important a source of meaning in life than are friendships (Glaw et al., 2016). In one study, 90% of participants identified family as the most important source of meaning in their lives compared to 66% who mentioned friends (Lambert et al., 2010). Family

members were seen as providing support and encouragement, while friends offered opportunities for sharing and enjoyment (Nell, 2014).

According to Lambert and collaborators (2013), family relationships satisfy our need for belonging, which explains why, for many, they are the primary source of meaning in life. Matera, Bosco, and Meringolo (2019) note that one's sense of belonging is closely linked to the sense of mattering, which they define as one's perception of being important to other people. Our sense of mattering emerges from our relationships with others and has been linked to self-esteem (Matera et al., 2019). Self-esteem is our evaluation of our described self, while mattering is a function of our perception of being recognized as important by others. Self-esteem, mattering, and a feeling of belonging are linked to improved health, life satisfaction, happiness, and general well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Matera et al., 2019). As relates to this paper, the authors found that mattering to friends was linked to an increase in belonging, whereas the perception of mattering to family predicted an enhanced sense of meaning in life, which they saw as associated with interpersonal well-being. They conclude by calling for additional research into the predictive relationship between the perception of mattering and individual well-being.

As seen above, definitions and theories of individual well-being abound. Researchers have yet to find consensus on one universal well-being construct or theory. In the following section, I will discuss some of the challenges and approaches to measuring individual subjective well-being, satisfaction, and flourishing.

### **Measuring Individual Well-Being and Flourishing**

With so many researchers across this broad array of disciplines creating new measures of subjective well-being all the time, it is difficult to estimate just how many individual well-being scales are currently available. While instruments have proliferated, there is no broadly accepted

measure of well-being (Layard, 2010; Linton et al., 2016). In their 2016 paper, Linton and colleagues stated that it was the ambiguity surrounding how well-being was defined and measured that prompted them to conduct a review of all available measures of well-being.

### **Proliferation of Well-Being Scales.**

In a systematic review of available scales for measuring subjective well-being, Lindert, Bain, Kubzansky and Stein (2015) identified 60 unique measurement scales published between 2007 and 2012. They identified 33 multidimensional scales and 14 unidimensional scales. The most frequently measured domains were affects (39 scales), social relations (17 scales), life satisfaction (13 scales), physical health (13 scales), meaning and achievement (9 scales), and spirituality (6 scales; Lindert et al., 2015). Scales identified ranged from one to 100 items and required from one to 15 minutes to complete. Given the limited information they found on the many scales they identified, the authors conclude that there is no one scale that offers a universal and comprehensive assessment of well-being. Rather, they propose concurrent use of at least three well-being scales to assess subjective well-being (Lindert et al., 2015).

Using a multi-pronged methodology, Linton and colleagues (2016) identified and reviewed 99 multidimensional self-report measures of well-being in adults incorporating 196 dimensions of well-being. They grouped these dimensions into six clusters: mental well-being, social well-being, physical well-being, activities and functioning, and personal circumstances (Linton et al., 2016). They selected only those instruments designed to measure well-being in adults, that were available in English, that were not disease- or context-specific. Fully one-third of the 99 instruments they reviewed had been created since the year 2000 (Linton et al., 2016).

Linton and collaborators (2016) observed three trends in the proliferation of well-being scales: 1) Many newer measures contain fewer items or exist in shorter-form versions, 2) since

the 1980s scales more frequently incorporate the concept of spirituality in assessing well-being, and 3) since 2000, more tools instruments focus on measuring positive functioning and adaptation rather than on ill health and unhappiness. They concluded that well-being should be thought of as a multidimensional construct with overlapping themes and dimensions. Well-being includes both positive and negative phenomena, subjective feelings and more objective material states and circumstances (such as health). There is a trade-off between unidimensional and multidimensional well-being measures. Short global snapshots of well-being take little time and effort for participants to complete. Broader multidimensional measures require a greater investment of time to complete but provide a more comprehensive understanding across multiple dimensions (Linton et al., 2016).

Huppert and collaborators (2004) discussed other challenges and controversies related to the multitude of approaches used to measure positive states and well-being. Subjective well-being as measured by social and economic surveys employ unidimensional questions regarding current happiness or general life satisfaction, while psychology researchers use more comprehensive scales to capture multiple dimensions of well-being. However, Huppert and colleagues (2011) were encouraged by developments in psychophysiology and neuroscience that promised to usher in a new era of research combining subjective self-reports and objective physiological measures of well-being. Since then, we have seen growth in the number of both subjective and objective tools for measuring individual well-being (Layard, 2010; Linton, Dieppe, & Medina-Lara, 2016; Yetton, Revord, Margolis, Lyubomirsky, & Seitz, 2019).

### **Theoretical Bases of Well-Being Scales.**

Linton and collaborators (2016) found considerable disagreement among researchers regarding the definitions and theoretical foundations of subjective well-being measures. They

observed that there were vast numbers of well-being theories and many more hybrid theories. They found that the authors of many well-being scales did not specify the theories underlying their designs. However, they did find two theories were mentioned frequently: Diener and colleagues' (1985) Subjective Well-Being model and the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of health (Linton et al., 2016). The WHO defines health as: "A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" ("Constitution of the World Health Organization," 1948, p. 1; Larson, 1996). The WHOQOL is a cross-cultural quality of life assessment developed by WHO to measure functional status across a broad range of domains (Group, 1998). In addition to Diener's (1985) and the WHO's (1948) theories of well-being, Linton and colleagues (2016) identified several other well-being theories referenced in the literature: Ryff and Singer's (2006) psychological well-being theory, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Sen's (1985) capabilities approach, Antonovsky's (1988) theory of salutogenesis, Fisher et al.'s (2000) spiritual well-being model, and Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory (SDT). I will briefly describe Ryff and Singer's (2006) psychological well-being model below, as one of their six dimensions is especially relevant to the main thrust of this paper: family well-being.

Ryff and Singer's (2006) model of psychological well-being measures six dimensions of well-being: Autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, personal growth, and positive relationships. Their individual self-report scales have been heavily tested in national samples and refined over time. Researchers using these scales have linked psychological well-being to physical health, biological regulation, life and family experiences, socioeconomic status, demographic profiles, and psychological constructs such as personality traits and emotional



regulation (Ryff, 2008). I will return to Ryan and Singer's findings linking PWB and family in the section below.

As discussed above, numerous studies have linked meaning in life and well-being. Steger and collaborators (2006) observe that meaning in life can be viewed as a correlate, component, cause, or outcome of well-being. This poses challenges for measuring meaning in life. They tested the validity of the 10-item Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), which measures the presence of, and the search for, meaning in life. The MLQ scale – as well as the search for meaning (MLQ-S) and presence of meaning (MLQ-P) subscales - was found to offer a number of improvements over other measures of meaning, including greater precision, structural stability, and assessment of the search for meaning (Steger et al., 2006).

#### **New Multidimensional Scales of Well-Being: PERMA and CIT/BIT.**

In addition to the scales cited above, several newer multidimensional scales of well-being have been created and validated by positive psychologists. Two leading examples are the PERMA (Seligman, 2011) model and the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving/Brief Inventory of Thriving (CIT/BIT; Su, Tay, & Diener, 2014) scales. Seligman, who developed the five-pillar PERMA model of well-being, wrote, "I now think that the topic of positive psychology is well-being, that the gold-standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing" (Seligman, 2011, p. 13). He uses five pillars to define individual well-being: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, or PERMA. Building off of his work, Butler and Kern (2016) developed the PERMA-Profiler as a brief measure of PERMA. This scale consists of 23 questions that assess the five elements of PERMA with the addition of questions to assess overall well-being, negative emotion, loneliness, and physical health.

The CIT/BIT scales approach psychological well-being and positive functioning from a holistic angle (Su, Tay, & Diener, 2014). The theory behind these scales defines thriving as a state of positive functioning (mental, physical, and social) at its fullest range. Su, Tay, and Diener (2014) describe the CIT as a comprehensive and validated measure of psychological well-being that integrates a number of different yet interconnected elements of positive functioning. The CIT includes 18 subscales with 54 items and was designed to measure seven core dimensions of individual psychological well-being: subjective well-being (high life satisfaction and positive feelings), supportive and enriching relationships, interest and engagement in daily activities, meaning and purpose in life, sense of mastery and accomplishment, feelings of control and autonomy, and optimism. The authors of the scale note that the holistic and comprehensive CIT scale showed significant incremental validity compared to all of the other existing measures of psychological well-being. The broad BIT scale is a short scale that can be completed quickly and employs 10 items to measure the core psychological well-being dimensions to provide a succinct view of one's psychological strengths and weaknesses (Su, Tay, & Diener, 2014).

As cited in Su, Tay, and Diener (2014), some of the most widely-used and more focused well-being measures the CIT/BIT model builds upon include: Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), the Self Mastery Scale (SMS; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978), the Life Orientation Test (LOT; Scheier & Carver, 1985; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994), the Core Self-Evaluations Scale (CSES; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003), and the Flourishing Scale (FS; Diener et al., 2009). One exception to this is the broad assessment Flourishing Scale (FS; Diener et al., 2009), which includes measures of relationships, meaning, engagement, mastery, and optimism.

### **Value of Measuring Flourishing.**

Overall, researchers across many disciplines recognize the value of measuring flourishing at the individual, family, organizational, community, and national levels (Hone et al., 2014). Better subjective measures can complement objective measures, help us identify policies that may cause harm, enable better policy cost-benefit analyses, and improve evaluation of the growing number of interventions intended to boost well-being. Layard (2010) pointed out that with good information on levels of happiness, researchers and policy-makers will be able to monitor trends, identify problem groups in the population, and better analyze why some people are happy and others are not. Butler and Kern (2016) point to well-developed measurement tools as a way to help refine scholars' understanding of well-being. Butler and Kern (2016) cite Michaelson and colleagues' (2009) eight benefits of measuring well-being: 1) We can assess change over time, 2) review and evaluate policy decisions, 3) enable cross-nation comparisons, 4) assess differences across subgroups, 5) identify future areas of need and opportunity, 6) evaluate the impact of future policies, 7) shape both the content and delivery of current policies, and 8) better target policies to specific population sub-groups.

The preceding sections were intended to provide a broad overview of the plethora of approaches psychologists have taken in conceptualizing, defining, and measuring individual well-being. As will be seen in the following section, positive psychologists are just as divided over how to define and measure family flourishing.

### **The Good Life and Family Flourishing**

Family is family, in church or in prison

You get what you get, and you don't get to pick 'em

They might smoke like chimneys, but give you their kidneys

Yeah, friends come in handy, but family is family (Musgraves, 2015, track 10).

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of family throughout human history and its continuing centrality in society today. Historically, the family has been the primary unit in our social interactions, communities, and economies. (DeFrain & Asay, 2007; Krys et al., 2019). In all 60 countries participating in the latest World Values Survey, family was the most important of the life domains studied (Krys et al., 2019; World Values Survey [WVS] Association, 2014). These domains included family, friends, leisure time, politics, work, and religion. In the U.S., according to the WVS (2014), on a scale of 1 (very important) to 4 (not at all important), the importance of family nearly reached the ceiling level.

Delle Fave and collaborators (2016) studied lay definitions of happiness across 12 countries. They found that family and social relationships were the most-cited contextual definitions of happiness. In a conclusion that feels apropos in today's turbulent times, they wrote, "In a society where traditional values have lost their significance, and trust in democratic institutions and civil society is low, family relationships represent the only secure source of comfort and 'fullness of life' at the social level" (Delle Fave et al., 2016, p. 18).

An in-depth discussion of the theoretical and empirical studies linking parenting and happiness lies outside the scope of this paper, however, it is worth noting that some studies indicate that taking care of children is associated with greater positive emotion and meaning when compared to other activities parents engage in during the same day (Nelson, Kushlev, English, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). In addition, in a paper discussing three studies of positive feelings and parenting, Nelson et al. (2012) found strong and consistent evidence refuting the widely-held belief that children reduce well-being. They report that, as a group, parents report greater happiness, more satisfaction, and more frequent thinking about meaning in life than did

those without children. While they qualify many of their findings, Nelson et al. (2012) conclude that their research implies that parenthood is not only linked to feelings of happiness and meaning in life, but that children also experience positive outcomes as a result of positive parental factors.

### **Family Well-Being and Individual Well-Being**

The field of family and consumer sciences focuses on individual well-being with the philosophy that changing families, institutions, and communities happens “one individual at a time (Nickols et al., 2009). Nickols and colleagues (2009) wrote that the strengths of individuals within the family are what help families survive and endure for decades and centuries. They quote the work of McCubbin and collaborators (1997), who identified the following protective and recovery factors for families: family problem-solving communications, self-reliance and independence grounded in equality, finding meaning in beliefs and practices, flexibility, truthfulness, hope, family hardiness, family time and routines, social support, and health.

Positive psychologists often speak of the family as a positive institution that can promote individual well-being. Clearly defining an institution as a positive institution presents a challenge, however, as institutions are never completely positive or negative (Peterson, 2006). For this reason, Peterson (2006) believed that positive was the wrong adjective to use in describing an institution such as family. In writing of the role of institutions in living the good life, he replaced the word “positive” with “enabling” and pointed out that one’s view on whether an outcome is positive is a function of individual values. For instance, he wrote, children growing up with both parents generally benefit both physically and psychologically compared to children growing up without one parent. He asserted that while the nuclear family enables the well-being of children, children can thrive without two parents in the household, and those living

with two parents may not fare as well as those without both parents (Peterson, 2006). This view appears to support the idea articulated at the beginning of this paper. Contrary to the Anna Karenina Principle, all happy families are not happy in the same way.

Ryff (2014) reviewed nearly two decades of psychological well-being research and interventions. She describes the linkage between well-being and family life experiences as one of six themes that emerged from her review of over 350 publications in which her eudaimonic scales of well-being have appeared (Ryff, 2014). While acknowledging that findings from family studies are complex and often depend upon the age and gender of respondents, she revised a number of research findings linking family and well-being. Among these, she notes that greater role involvement enhances the well-being of parents (Ryff, 2014). Among men, helping family members is linked to higher levels of purpose, self-acceptance, and positive relations (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006). For women, general helping of others was associated with higher purpose and self-acceptance (Schwartz, Keyl, Marcum, & Bode, 2008). Family rituals and connections are linked to well-being in both adolescence and midlife (Bell & Bell, 2009; Crespo, Kieplikowski, Pryor, & Jose, 2011). Ryff (2014) concludes that family life is extensively linked to multiple aspects of eudaimonic well-being in adolescence and adulthood.

Krys and collaborators (2019) cite WVS Wave 6 data in describing the universality of the family. WVS data analysis found that family was seen as the most important aspect of life in all 60 countries sampled (World Values Survey, 2016). Krys and collaborators (2019) note that this suggests a possible human evolutionary perspective on family well-being: It may have been a good way to maximize the chance of passing down one's genes. In their cross-cultural four-country study (which included Canada, Columbia, Japan, and Poland) of personal and family well-being, they found that family well-being was valued over personal well-being, suggesting

that policymakers and researchers focus more of their attention on understanding the nature of FWB (Krys et al., 2019).

The Krys et al. (2019) study is especially relevant to this paper, as they studied family well-being from an intrapersonal perspective (how individuals judged the well-being of their families) rather than from an interpersonal perspective (judgments of family well-being averaged or agreed to among family members). Krys et al. (2019) concluded that “being individually satisfied is only one of many ways of living a good life” (p. 10). I have taken the same approach in my exploration of the family well-being literature and in developing the concept of a Family Flourishing Dashboard. Like many family-focused practitioners, I work directly with individual family members and families as a whole. Maintaining an intrapersonal frame in exploring family well-being provides insight into the perspectives of individual family members that might otherwise be negated or lost if all family perspectives were to be combined or averaged.

The Krys et al. (2019) study looked at two types of well-being: life satisfaction and interdependent happiness. Based on work done by Diener et al. (1985), they defined family life satisfaction as an individual’s global satisfaction with the quality of his or her family life. To measure individual life satisfaction, they employed Diener’s Satisfaction with Life Scale SWLS (Diener et al., 1985). The more Eastern concept of family interdependent happiness was defined as a global subjective assessment of the extent to which a person’s family is socially harmonized with others and experiences a collective form of well-being (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2014). To measure individual interdependent happiness, they used the Individual Happiness Scale (Individual IHS; Hitokoto & Uchida, 2014). In order to assess respondents’ assessment of their families, the authors adapted the two individual scales by changing the subject from individual to family (Krys et al., 2019).

### **Family Functioning and Family Well-Being**

Newland (2015) reviewed the literature on positive family functioning and FWB from 2000 to 2014 and sought to translate research into practice by creating a model of family well-being that would be useful to researchers and practitioners. She found that FWB was a multi-faceted construct and that the components of FWB include the mental and physical health of parents, family resiliency, and family self-sufficiency (Newland, 2015). Her model builds off Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) and focuses on bolstering family strengths and "positive contextual conditions" to enhance the well-being of both parents and children. Her three-layer pyramid model depicts family well-being is the foundation, developmental parenting rests on the foundation, and child well-being sits atop the pyramid (Newland, 2015, p. 5). She identifies the components of FWB as parent physical health, parent mental health, family self-sufficiency (a family's ability to meet their own basic needs), and family resiliency (a family's ability to strengthen their family relationships and enhance personal growth through positive management of conflictual or stressful situations; Newland, 2015). Developmental parenting includes affection, responsiveness, encouragement, teaching, engagement, positive discipline, and co-parenting. Newland (2015) concludes: "Families that that are physically, emotionally, and socially healthy also tend to be more resilient and self-sufficient" (p. 9). She suggests that well-being should be assessed regularly at the parent, child, and family level and that practitioners look at families "through a well-being lens" and "create an individualized family prevention or intervention plan which builds upon strengths and mitigates risks" (Newland, 2015, p. 11).



### **Relationships and Family Well-Being**

Positive psychologists and other researchers have long recognized the intrinsic value of positive relationships and the role they play in individual well-being. Berry and Hansen (1996) found that positive affect was a predictor of better social interactions, indicating that those with more positive affect may be more sociable, feel more cooperative, and exhibit more prosocial behaviors. Ramsey and Gentzler (2015) reviewed research between positive affect and close relationships and described an upward bi-directional spiral between the two at every stage of life. This upward spiral was found in parent-child relationships, friendships, and romantic relationships. Diener et al. (2016) point to evidence of a mutually-reinforcing virtuous circle that exists between social relationships and SWB. They point to studies that indicate that getting married can increase individual SWB and vice versa: those who marry may have had higher SWB prior to marriage. Other research has indicated a relationship between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009). In the case of Agate et al.'s (2009) study, family members' satisfaction with their leisure involvement together was found as the best predictor of overall satisfaction with family life.

As Duarte (2014) writes, "A flourishing – or languishing – individual does not operate in a vacuum...In fact,... how well one's close others are doing might be part of the definition of well-being" (p. 444). In a study that extends Fowler and Christakis' (2009) study finding that happiness can spread from person to person in large social networks, Chi et al. (2019) studied well-being contagion in the family and found that SWB was more contagious than distress among all family members. They also found the SWB of mothers predicted the well-being of their children, but that the same did not hold true for fathers. In addition, the SWB of children was found to be predictive of the SWB of both parents. In other words, the SWB of both parents

and children in a family can be transmitted to other family members (Chi et al., 2019). The finding that happiness was more easily transmitted than distress among family members led the authors to call for more “focus on family care that could maximize the benefits of family dynamics by strengthening the transmission of happiness among all family members and reducing distress within each family member” (Chi et al., 2019, p. 12).

Peterson, Park and Sweeney (2008) studied group-level well-being and positive outcomes associated with morale. They note that the good life is inherently a social life, so it is important to understand and promote the good life at the social level (Peterson et al., 2008). While the authors do not explore the idea of group morale in the context of family, further study of family-level morale may add a new dimension to assessing family well-being. The authors identify a tentative set of group morale dimensions but add that much more study will be needed to conceptualize, measure, and assess group morale. The preliminary dimensions of group morale they discuss include: confidence in the group, enthusiasm for daily activities of the group, optimism that the group will experience success, belief in the group’s capability, group resilience in the face of adversity, leadership that values contributions of group members, mutual trust and respect between group members, loyalty to the group, social cohesion between and among members, common purpose, devotion to group members and to the group, sacrifice of individual needs for the good of the group, a compelling group history, concern with the honor of the group, and a sense of moral rightness about the group (Peterson et al., 2008). The authors discuss positive outcomes, measures, and interventions to boost group morale in the context of sports teams, the military, the workplace, schools, and the general population during wartime. Interestingly, the discussion does not extend the concept of group morale to the domain of family.

### **Strengths and Family Well-Being**

Healthy individuals within healthy families form the core of a healthy society (DeFrain & Asay, 2007a). They write of the importance of focusing on understanding family strengths and how families succeed in the face of life's inherent difficulties. Research has identified the following contributors to family strength: appreciation and affection (caring for each other, friendship, respect for individuality, playfulness, humor), positive communication (giving compliments, sharing feelings, avoiding blame, being able to compromise, agreeing to disagree), commitment (trust, honesty, dependability, faithfulness, sharing), enjoyable time together (quality time in great quantity, good things take time, enjoying each other's company, simple good times, sharing fun times), spiritual well-being (hope, faith, compassion, shared ethical values, oneness with humankind), ability to manage stress and crises effectively (adaptability, seeing crises as challenges and opportunities growing through crises together, openness to change, resilience; DeFrain & Asay, 2016).

Character strengths, defined as positive traits expected to contribute to the good life, have also been found to be robustly related to well-being (Gander, Hofmann, Proyer, & Ruch, 2019; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Gander and colleagues (2019) employed the Values-In-Action (VIA; Peterson & Seligman, 2004) classification of strengths to study this relationship. They noted that character strengths have often been incorporated into interventions aimed at enhancing individual well-being and reference a wealth of studies indicating strong relationships between almost all character strengths and indicators of well-being. Modesty was the only character strength that did not show a positive relationship to well-being (Gander et al., 2019). They found that the strengths showing the strongest cross-study relationship with well-being were curiosity, zest, love, gratitude, and hope. Moreover, in both self-report and informant studies, Wagner,

Gander, Proyer and Ruch (2019) found that character strengths were positively associated with each of Seligman's (2011) PERMA dimensions. As it relates to family well-being, Wagner and collaborators (2019) found that the strengths of teamwork, love, and kindness were the best predictors of positive relationships.

### **Family Efficacy and Satisfaction with Family**

Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Regalia and Scabini (2011) measured the relationship between families' beliefs in their collective efficacy to manage their affairs and their satisfaction with family life. They found that this relationship was true for both parents and adolescents, men and women. High consensus that the family was efficacious was also associated with more open communication and greater self-disclosure (Bandura et al., 2011). Statistical analysis indicated that the conceptual model in which beliefs about efficacy enhanced family functioning and satisfaction was a better fit to the data than the opposite relationship.

Having touched upon a sampling of the many approaches to defining and conceptualizing family flourishing, I will turn next to a few examples of scales researchers have developed to measure family well-being and its constituent elements. It is beyond the scope of this paper to present a comprehensive analysis of every scale employed in measuring family well-being, satisfaction with family, and family quality of life. The section below provides a brief and broad history and some representative examples of family well-being measures.

### **Measuring Family Flourishing**

As discussed above, the family unit has been integral to human economic and evolutionary survival. Just as the tools for assessing individual well-being have proliferated in recent decades, researchers continue to develop new approaches and tools to enhance our

knowledge and measurement of family well-being. Below, I will provide an overview of some of the family well-being scales available.

A search of the APA PsycTESTS database of psychological tests and measures using the keyword “family” returned nearly 400 family-related scales (“PsychTESTS,” n.d.). Of note, most of the positive psychology scales discussed in this paper were not found among the search results. My search of this database and others for family assessment tools and measures of family functioning returned an array of instruments for measuring various aspects of family dysfunction and illness. While there are a growing number of studies and scales focusing on the family domain and what I am calling “the good family life” (including family satisfaction, well-being and flourishing), historically, the majority of psychology studies have focused on what Bond (2002) refers to as psychological individualism. In addition, as was noted earlier, prior to the coalescence of the modern field of positive psychology, psychologists have preferred to diagnose and assess individual and family problems rather than strengths and flourishing (Seligman, 1999). In addition, many instruments I located through my research were designed for measuring family well-being in specific populations, among certain age groups, or were embedded in large comprehensive assessments designed to measure a host of psychological constructs.

### **Early Measures of Family Well-Being**

The analysis of whole families was initially identified as a fruitful field of psychological study by Gerald Handel (1965). He quoted Burgess’ characterization of a family as a unity of interacting personalities (Burgess, 1926). Measuring family satisfaction and well-being began in the 1970s with the Family Life Questionnaire, which was designed to measure harmony and satisfaction with family life (Andrews & Withey, 1978; Beveridge, Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Guerney, 1977). This was followed in the 1980s by Olson’s (1979) Circumplex

Model of Marital and Family Systems and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES) II scale (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013). Respondents completing the latter scale completed it two times, first reflecting their current family functioning and then again with their ideal family in mind. The computed difference between the two scores represented the level of family satisfaction. The Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson & Wilson, 1982), a 14-item scale based on Olson's model, subsequently became more widely used. This scale has since been streamlined to ten items for assessing satisfaction with family cohesion, flexibility, and communication (Olson, 2004).

### **Family APGAR.**

The Family APGAR was created by Gabriel Smilkstein (1978) and assesses adult satisfaction with social support from the family. The five-item scale draws its name from the five areas of family function it measures: adaptability, partnership, growth, affection, and resolve (Lee et al., 2012). Participants rate each item on 3-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating better family functioning. Statements focus on emotional, communicative, and social interactive aspects of the respondent's relationships with his or her family, for example: "I find that my family accepts my wishes to take on new activities or make changes in my lifestyle" (Smilkstein, 1978). The intent of measuring these domains was primarily to help family medical practices search for and describe areas of family dysfunction - what was going wrong in these families - rather than on what was going right. Subsequent research raised questions about the scale's validity and stability over time as well as uncertainty about what construct it was actually measuring (Gardner et al., 2001).

**Bloom's Factor Analysis of Self-Report Measures of Family Functioning.**

In his 1985 paper, Bloom discussed four established self-report measures used at the time to assess family function. Bloom examined the following scales: 1) Moos and Moos' Family Environment Scale (FES, 1981), a 90-item assessment of the family social climate and interpersonal relationships, 2) van der Veer's Family-Concept Q Sort (FCQS, 1971), an 80-item scale, 3) Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell's scale of family cohesion and adaptability, used in the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation (FACES, 1979), 4) the Family Assessment Measure (FAM, 1983), which aimed to describe the family as a whole, relationships between dyads within the family, and the relationship between the respondent and the entire family.

In analyzing the four scales, Bloom (1985) identified 15 dimensions of family functioning. He measured and organized these under three headings: relationship dimensions, personal growth or value dimensions, and system maintenance dimensions. Bloom then created a self-report scale assessing 15 aspects of family functioning: cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, religious emphasis, organization, family sociability, external locus of control, family idealization, disengagement, democratic family style, laissez-faire family style, authoritarian family style, and enmeshment.

Bloom (1985) differentiated the assessment of individual members of a family from the study of the family as a whole. Bloom cites Fisher's (1982) point that obtaining individual self-report measures of family functioning is much less complicated than procedures needed to obtain comprehensive assessments of the family as a unit. Bloom (1985) states that self-report measures may assess individual family members' attitudes toward family, but assessment of the family as a whole will require some form of transactional or interactional analysis. For these reasons, this literature review and the conceptual discussion of a Family Flourishing Dashboard employs an

individual self-report approach rather than attempting to describe or assess the well-being of the family as a unit.

Bloom's description of the relationship dimension of family functioning is especially relevant to thrust of this paper. He extended Moos' (1974) definition of the relationship dimension: "the extent to which family members feel they belong to and are proud of their family, the extent to which there is open expression within the family, and the degree to which conflictual interactions are characteristic of the family" (Bloom, 1985, p. 9). He went further, stating that the results of his study suggested that the relationship dimension of family functioning should include: the extent to which family members seek and enjoy social interactions with others, the extent to which the family is valued by its members, and the extent to which family members are interdependent with one another (Bloom, 1985). He also described the characteristics most highly prized by family members: high cohesion and expressiveness, very little conflict, high active-recreation orientation, high sociability, an internal locus of control, a strong sense of engagement within the family, a democratic family style, and an absence of a laissez-faire approach to life (Bloom, 1985).

#### **Kansas Family Life Satisfaction Questionnaire.**

The Kansas Family Life Satisfaction Questionnaire (McCollum, Schumm, & Russell, 1988) measures family satisfaction by asking the respondent to rate his or her satisfaction with specific family relationships (i.e., between spouses, parent-child, relationship between children) as well as with global family satisfaction. One weakness of this scale is that it only applies to married couples with at least two children (Schumm, McCollum, Bugaighis, Jurich, & Bollman, 1986).



**Family Satisfaction Scale.**

The Family Satisfaction Scale (Carver & Jones, 1992) is a 20-item global family satisfaction measure that only measures satisfaction with one's family of origin. A significant limitation of this scale is that it requires respondents to reference the family in which they were primarily raised. This means that parent responders can only reference their own family of origin rather than their current family (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013).

**Family Satisfaction by Adjectives Scale.**

The Family Satisfaction by Adjectives Scale (FSAS; Barraca, López Yarto, & Olea, 2000) was designed to measure the affective component of family satisfaction rather than the more common cognitive perspective. This scale features 27 adjectives and is easy to complete. The scale items were developed from existing scales and reviewed by experts for validity. FSAS respondents indicate how they feel when they are with their family on a six-point scale ranging from totally feeling one adjective on the scale to totally feeling the adjective on other end of the scale. Respondents may select in-between options of "quite" and "to some extent." One downside of this scale is that the adjectives, including disconsolate, discontented, and repressed, may be too advanced for younger respondents (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013).

**Family Quality of Life Scale.**

Many quality of life studies emerged from a need to assess family quality of life (FQoL) among families with adults or children who face developmental and/or intellectual disabilities (Boelsma, Caubo-Damen, Schippers, Dane, & Abma, 2017). One definition of FQoL used in research has been, "a dynamic sense of well-being of the family, collectively and subjectively defined and informed by its members, in which individual and family-level needs interact" (Hu, Summers, Turnbull, & Zuna, 2011, p. 1099). The Family Quality of Life (FQoL) scale created

by the Beach Center on Disability is a 25-question tool that employs a five-point scale to measure FQoL and satisfaction in five domains: family interaction, parenting, emotional well-being, physical and material well-being, and disability-related support (Hoffman, Marquis, Proston, Summers, & Turnbull, 2006). Initially this scale was developed from a qualitative inquiry into how families with children with disabilities perceived the quality of their family life. Zuna et al. (2010) reviewed 16 measurement tools used to assess FQoL, family-well-being, and family satisfaction in the disability, healthcare and general family studies fields. The researchers identified a number of methodological and conceptual challenges inherent in FQoL scales and cautioned that “researchers should take sufficient caution when analyzing and generalizing results to the family unit when only one or two family members have completed the instrument” (Hu, et al., 2011, p. 1105). Boeslma and colleagues (2017) employed the FQoL scale in a qualitative case study research effort to explore the connection between individual quality of life and family quality of life in families with children suffering from intellectual and physical disabilities in the Netherlands. They wrote that FQoL is a dynamic construct and that both individual and collective senses of well-being are found within a family and its members. This complicates efforts to separate out and understand family life and the experiences and needs of each family member. They conclude that all family members benefit when every family member is mentally and physically healthy (Boeslma et al., 2017).

#### **Satisfaction with Family Life Scale.**

Poff, Zabriskie, and Townsend (2010) found that satisfaction with family life was linked to multiple family wellness variables, including family cohesion, adaptability, communication, and overall functioning. While many family life satisfaction measures have been created for use within specific populations, age groups, and situations, Zabriskie and Ward (2013) noted that the

scales discussed above were among the best-established and most-used scales for measuring the construct of family satisfaction. Yet they identified significant weaknesses and constraints in each scale. This led them to create the Satisfaction With Family Life (SWFL) scale (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013). This is a modified version of the Satisfaction With Life Scale discussed above in this paper (Diener et al., 1985). The researchers did not alter the original SWL scale framework other than to replace the word “life” with the words “family life” in each item (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013). They noted that “family satisfaction can be defined as a conscious cognitive judgment of one’s family life in which the criteria for judgment are up to the individual (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013, p. 449).

As with the SWL, the SWFL process employs a five-item subjective global cognitive evaluation that is shaped by an individual family member’s comparison of current family life circumstances against standards and expectations (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013). Since individuals have their own judgments and criteria about what constitutes success, both scales evaluate an individual’s global satisfaction using his or her own standards rather than comparing perceptions against a predetermined list in particular domains. A global perspective allows respondents to weigh the various domains within family life and balance a panoply of feelings, desires, disappointments, and external factors in order to arrive at a single measure of satisfaction with family (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013).

As the studies and scales discussed in this section demonstrate, many components, combinations, and interrelationships must be considered and judged when measuring family flourishing. My objective in the preceding sections was to provide an overview of the many and varied approaches to conceptualizing and measuring well-being in both the individual and family domains. As has been discussed above, positive psychology scholars generally acknowledge that

there is no single definition of family flourishing and no comprehensive consensus on how to measure this construct. With the abundance of existing individual and family well-being measurement tools plus the steady stream of newly-introduced studies and scales, positive psychology practitioners working with families face several challenges: How are they to make the most of these academic riches in service to their family clients? How do they sift through this vast universe and select the best tools for measuring and boosting individual and family flourishing? Which measures will help them to craft the most productive family conversations and design the most effective family well-being interventions?

Below, I will extend the learning gleaned from my literature search and propose a potentially novel approach to answering these questions. In short, I propose using the framework of a dashboard of individual and family well-being indicators. Rather than having to select a well-being scale or assembling their own subset of available measures, practitioners will be able to employ a Family Flourishing Dashboard consisting of a curated subset of individual and family well-being scales. The selection of scales included in the FFD will reflect the latest and best thinking on well-being measures and will evolve over time to incorporate new research and practical insights from the field of positive psychology and related fields, such as positive psychotherapy, family coaching, family-centered positive psychology, and family education. The design and construction of the FFD will reflect the needs of both practitioners and families. At the same time, the FFD will deliver on Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) vision for the scientific study of human flourishing:

...positive psychology does not rely on wishful thinking, faith, self-deception, fads, or hand waving; it tries to adapt what is best in the scientific method to the

unique problems that human behavior presents to those who wish to understand it in all its complexity (p. 7).

### **Conceptualizing the Family Flourishing Dashboard**

While reviewing the positive psychology literature on well-being, I looked for ways to apply my insights to the real-world of positive psychology and coaching practitioners. I believe that it would be most helpful if a curated group of well-being scales could be aggregated in a real-time dashboard that incorporates individual and family well-being metrics. Such a tool would guide the practitioner and client in co-creating a meaningful development plan. Just as an automotive dashboard allows a driver to monitor various systems in a car, a Family Flourishing Dashboard would allow family members and practitioners to monitor the health of the family system and provide useful data for assessing well-being in the family. Such a dashboard would be valuable to family members and to practitioners working with family clients.

I envision the FFD serving four purposes: 1) to aggregate self-report measures of individual and family well-being that can serve as a tool for regular family flourishing check-ups, 2) to provide input metrics for families and practitioners in discussing domain-specific goals for family flourishing and desired outcomes, 3) to suggest discussion topics and agenda items for regular family meetings, 4) to guide the design and implementation of positive interventions designed to boost individual family member and family-as-a-whole flourishing.

In the following section, I will discuss the FFD in more detail and expand on the concept, framework, and critical success factors. I will begin with a general discussion of using dashboards of indicators for tracking well-being.

### **Dashboards and Well-Being Indicators**

“Just as we do not have a single indicator telling us how our car is performing (instead we have an odometer, a speedometer, a gas gauge, etc.), we suggest that we do not want just one indicator of how well people are doing” (Seligman, Forgeard, Jayawickreme, & Kern, 2011, p. 97). Multidimensional concepts are often assessed through a group of indicators or through a composite or synthetic index. Composite indices carry disadvantages, such as the loss of information or arbitrary assumptions about weighting of different dimensions to calculate a single index value. In addition, composite indices involve aggregation of data (Durand, 2014). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)’s How’s Life report uses a multidimensional definition of well-being and employs a dashboard of headline indicators to present their data. How’s Life summarizes 24 indicators using a traffic light convention to show how different countries compare on 11 dimensions of well-being, with the top 20 percent showing as green lights, the middle 60 percent in orange, and the bottom 20 percent as red lights (Durand, 2014).

### **Concept and Framework**

The FFD emerged from my research into theories, conceptualizations, and measures of individual well-being and family flourishing. I read a broad sampling of research and academic papers from the dynamic fields of positive psychology, positive family therapy, family coaching, positive psychotherapy, and family-centered positive psychology. My focus throughout the literature search was on understanding how academics and practitioners in these fields describe and measure the well-being of individuals and families..

I conceived of the FFD as a dynamic tool that would combine academic insights gleaned from the latest scholarly research and learning from practitioners engaged in family work. The

FFD would produce actionable data and insights of relevance to families and the practitioners working with them. It would assist families and practitioners in assessing family well-being, formulating family flourishing goals, and tracking progress toward family goals over time. As a practitioner, I imagined such a tool would provide diagnostic information that would be helpful to me in designing positive family interventions, such as one-on-one coaching conversations, family meeting agendas, between-meeting homework assignments for family members and the family as a whole. I also envision using this tool to assess the value and impact of my professional engagement as a family facilitator and coach.

The Family Flourishing Dashboard takes the form of a cluster of a curated selection of unidimensional and multidimensional indicators and gauges. The FFD will include both individual and family well-being scales and would be customizable according to the needs of the family and practitioner. It will evolve and expand its inclusion of metrics as a family would work with a practitioner over time, with the initial assessment FFD including some foundational measures, while subsequent assessments will incorporate scales that target family-driven flourishing themes, goals, and areas of interest. The family-facing dashboard and reports would differ from those available to practitioners. For instance, practitioners might seek finer detail in scales, academic cross-referencing with related scales and research, discussion guides for moderated family meetings, and suggested positive interventions organized around specific family goals and needs.

### **Critical Success Factors**

Based on my research, I identified the following critical success factors for a Family Flourishing Dashboard:

1. The FFD should include only research-validated measures of well-being. The FFD should be based on positive psychology theory, empirical analysis of family well-being, and the latest tools for measuring well-being.
2. The FFD should be easy for family members to interpret and should not require significant time to complete.
3. The FFD should generate valuable and actionable insights regarding family well-being for practitioners working with families. The FFD will assist practitioners and families in answering key well-being questions: How do we, as family, define flourishing? What are our flourishing goals? What measures do we as a family want to track to determine whether we are flourishing over time? Are we flourishing more now than we were a quarter or a year ago? Where would we like to be, as a family, next quarter or next year? The FFD should be modular, flexible, providing an initial broad foundation of insight regarding family well-being as well as act as the scaffolding for an ongoing program of assessments, conversations, and activities in specific areas of interest to the family and practitioner. For instance, based on an initial FFD report, a family planning to meet four times a year with a family coach or family meeting facilitator would complete additional assessments between meetings and undertake specific “homework” assignments between the quarterly family meetings.
4. The FFD output should consist of a) a user-friendly report for family members, and b) a more detailed diagnostic, assessment, coaching, and intervention-planning tool for practitioners.



5. The FFD should integrate with a curriculum of learning material and a toolkit of coaching conversation outlines, family discussion guides, individual activities, and positive interventions.
6. The FFD should incorporate measures of both individual and family flourishing. It is possible for a family to flourish while individual family members are not flourishing. Conversely, family members may self-report high individual subjective well-being yet rate their family as low in measures of family flourishing.

### **Measures and Scales**

The intention is that the FFD will look like a dashboard: a visual cluster of gauges and graphic representations of the family's current state of flourishing and its progress over time toward its family flourishing goals. As discussed above, the initial FFD will provide a foundational understanding of individual and family well-being. Subsequent iterations can be customized around family needs, interests, and goals.

#### **Initial Assessment FFD.**

I envision a multi-stage, modular, and iterative dashboard of well-being. The scales and process can be supplemented and customized over time by families and practitioners. The initial FFD will include: 1) global measures associated with positive family functioning, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with family, 2) existing measures of individual and family well-being in specific domains, and 3) existing individual well-being scales adapted to measure dimensions of family flourishing. The dashboard will display indicators of both individual well-being and family well-being from the perspectives of individual family members.

***Baseline FFD: individual well-being scales.***

Individual well-being scales that might be included in the baseline FFD are described below:

1. Flourishing Scale (FS; Diener et al., 2009). As was discussed above, individuals do not flourish in isolation. Measuring the well-being of each family member will assist practitioners in forming an accurate assessment of the family system and in creating positive interventions for individuals and the entire family. The Flourishing Scale is an 8-item self-report measure of a respondent's self-perceptions of success in the domains of relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism (See Appendix A, figure 1). Diener et al. (2009) note that this scale offers a single indicator of psychological well-being that has good psychometric properties and has been shown to have strong associations with other well-being scales. The scale includes several social relationship items, including having supportive relationships, contributing to others' happiness, and being respected by others.
2. Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving Scale (CIT; Su et al., 2014). Positive psychologists understand individual well-being to be multidimensional and inclusive of multiple domains. As discussed above, the CIT is a holistic and empirically-validated 54-item multidimensional scale designed to measure a broad range of well-being and positive functioning dimensions (See Appendix A, figure 2). The CIT covers seven dimensions of thriving, another word for positive functioning, and includes 18 facets of well-being within those dimensions (Su et al., 2014).
3. Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger et al., 2006). As previously stated, meaning in life has been identified as a strong indicator of well-being and a facilitator of adaptive coping. The MLQ is a 10-item scale measuring the presence of, and the search for,

meaning in life (See Appendix A, figure 3). This scale measures both the search for and presence of meaning, which provides insight into individuals who are searching for life's meaning but feel they have yet to find it as well as those who feel they understand their meaning in life and are no longer searching for it (Steger et al., 2006).

4. Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The literature linking character strengths and positive relationships suggests that understanding each family member's character strengths may be a prelude to rich family discussions regarding both individual and family flourishing (Wagner et al., 2019). The considerable research linking individual well-being and the 24 VIA character strengths was discussed above. (See Appendix A, figure 4).

***Baseline FFD: family well-being scales.***

Family well-being scales that might be included in the baseline FFD are described below:

1. Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL; Zabriskie & Ward, 2013). Understanding individual family members satisfaction with the family provides practitioners with a foundational starting point for exploring family flourishing goals. The SWFL provides a brief five-question measure of individual family member satisfaction with family life. As discussed above, the SWFL scale is a modified version of Diener et al.'s (1985) Satisfaction With Life (See Appendix B, figure 1). The SWL scale framework was modified by replacing the word "life" with the words "family life" in each item (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013).
2. Adaptation of Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences (SPANE; Diener et al., 2009). Positive and negative affect have been linked to individual well-being (Diener et al., 2009). Understanding family members' positive and negative feelings related to recent

family experiences may provide families and practitioners with an indicator that helps families explore the question: How are we doing as a family? The 12-item SPANE scale measures positive and negative experiences and feelings based on the amount of time feelings were experienced during the last four weeks (See Appendix B, figure 2). The positive and negative can be combined to create a balance score. According to the authors, the existing scale converges well with other measures of affective well-being and emotions. The SPANE scale may lend itself to modifications that shift the experience domain from that of the individual to the family (See Appendix B, figure 3). Note that use of this author-adapted version of this scale in the FFD would be experimental.

3. Adaptation of Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving scale (CIT; Su et al., 2014). As discussed above, thriving is multidimensional, and the CIT offers a well-established scale for assessing individual well-being across an array of dimensions. The scale has yet to be adapted to apply specifically to the family domain, but the idea of modifying a subset of the full CIT scale's dimensions to apply these to the family domain was explored through personal communications with one of the scale's creators (E. Diener, personal communication, June 27, 2019). While the authors of the scale have written of applying these scales in the workplace and schools, they did not mention use in family settings (Su et al., 2014). In personal correspondence, Diener suggested an adapted CIT might be incorporated into an integrated Dashboard of Family Flourishing that could include: 1) a global measure of satisfaction with family, 2) the CIT's measures of social relationships, and 3) a measure of meaning and purpose derived from family (E. Diener, personal communication, June 27, 2019). In my conceptualization, the adapted FFD version of the CIT would include the following dimensions of the full CIT scale: relationship (including

support, community, trust, respect, loneliness, and belonging), engagement, meaning and purpose, and optimism (See Appendix B, figure 4). Note that use of this author-adapted version of this scale in the FFD would be experimental.

4. Adaptation of Mattering to Others Questionnaire (MTOQ; Marshall, 2001). As was previously noted, meaning and mattering have been linked to well-being. Understanding how family contributes to family members' sense of meaning may enrich discussions and suggest positive interventions designed to enhance meaning and mattering from the family. Marshall (2001) created the MTOQ to measure and study the construct of mattering to others (See Appendix B, figure 5). The 11-item scale can be adapted to measure individual family member perceptions of mattering to family. Note that use of this author-adapted version of this scale in the FFD would be experimental.
5. Family Satisfaction by Adjectives Scale (FSAS; Barraca, López Yarto, & Olea, 2000). Most scales measuring family satisfaction are cognitive (Barraca, López Yarto, & Olea, 2000). Including a descriptive scale in the FFD will broaden discussion with family members and possibly provide both families and practitioners with vocabulary they can use to promote deeper discussion of family flourishing goals and interventions. As discussed above, the FSAS measures the affective component of family satisfaction rather than the more common cognitive perspective (See Appendix B, figure 6). This scale features 27 adjectives describing individuals' perceptions of family and can be completed quickly.

#### **Subsequent FFD.**

Next, the family and practitioner will discuss the initial FFD results and explore family goals and areas of family well-being for further exploration. Guided by these results, the

practitioner will consult individual and family flourishing literature, a library of positive interventions, and a toolkit listing well-being measures for different domains. The practitioner and family members will discuss and agree upon themes and scales to be added to the subsequent Family Flourishing Dashboard. Family members will complete the next round of the FFD following assigned positive interventions and any other activities they may undertake to enhance the well-being of the family. This iterative process will allow the family and practitioner to measure individual and family well-being over time, track well-being trends and progress, and further customize the dashboard.

Additional scales or indicators that might be added to the dashboard might include both existing and adapted measures of other well-being dimensions, such as resilience, optimism, hope, and autonomy. In addition to the scales discussed above, I have experimented with adapting several existing scales in order to measure elements of family flourishing. These include the PERMA-Profilier (Butler & Kern, 2016) and the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009). This scale easily lends itself to this purpose, and the concept of this adaptation was supported by the one of authors of the scale (M. Kern, personal communication, July 8, 2019). Other scales, such as those intended to measure couple relationship flourishing, may also be added to subsequent dashboards (Fowers, et al., 2016).

### **Conclusions**

Happy people and happy families are happy in their own ways. Conventional wisdom appears to accept the view that people possess both good and bad traits, display both strengths and weaknesses, and engage in both healthy and unhealthy behaviors. In fact, research has shown that, despite our daily struggles and challenges, most people are resilient and happy (Diener & Diener, 1996; Peterson, 2012). My literature review supports the contention that

family well-being is multidimensional. There are many ways a family may flourish and many ways to measure family well-being. Measuring how individual family members perceive their own well-being and that of their family can provide valuable data in creating a roadmap for enhancing flourishing at the individual and family level.

As has already been shown, the universe of published well-being measures is large and growing every month. Positive psychologists and scholars from related domains have created numerous competing and overlapping scales for measuring well-being among individuals and families. Many of these scales have been empirically validated. Some have not. I have proposed the Family Flourishing Dashboard to help simplify the process of selecting which metrics help assess family flourishing. The FFD will integrate a curated subset of empirically-validated and theoretically-sound well-being scales into one dashboard of indicators. The initial baseline dashboard can be administered, updated, and repeated multiple times to provide families and practitioners with updated data that will inform a regular family flourishing check-up. As family members agree on goals and areas in which they hope to enhance family well-being, the scales included in the dashboard can be replaced or supplemented.

In order to provide the most utility and insight for both end-users and practitioners, the FFD might include two versions of dials, gauges, and data output: one for family members and one for practitioners (See Appendix C). The family dashboard would be written using layperson's language and feature consumer-friendly visuals. The practitioner-facing dashboard would display more detailed data, diagnostics, and possibly prescriptive suggestions or links to helpful practitioner resources.

### **Future Directions**

The Family Flourishing Dashboard offers practitioners and families an easy-to-understand aggregate picture of individual and family well-being. Like a car's dashboard, the FFD can be used to monitor the functioning and well-being of the family system at any given time and to assess trends in well-being elements over time. As a practitioner, I believe the FFD may offer a powerful tool for measuring the impact of positive interventions on individual well-being and family flourishing. The following examples identify only a subset of the potential applications and populations for the FFD.

#### **Traditional Nuclear Families**

“All the problems of the world seem to either begin in the family or end up in the family” (Olson, as cited in DeFrain & Asay, 2016, p. 294). DeFrain and Asay (2016) advocate the “simple genius” of focusing on family strengths as a path to understanding how families cope with life's difficulties. For positive psychology practitioners working with traditional nuclear families, the FFD offers a valuable multidimensional tool for measuring and raising family member awareness of not only family strengths, but also paths to enhanced family functioning, greater family well-being, and other positive family outcomes.

#### **Extended and Non-Traditional Families**

The scales selected for inclusion in the FFD do not impose any constraints on the definition of family. The obvious benefit of selecting tools and measures that do not require a specific family structure is that the FFD may be used in a broader array of family contexts. These might include three generations of a family living together, extended family units, and non-traditional families, such as blended families created through second marriages.



**Families with Special Needs**

As previously discussed, many family well-being measures arose from research into families caring for children or adults with special needs or functional limitations. The FFD will not include scales specifically intended to measure well-being in families facing these day-to-day difficulties. However, the measures included in the FFD will not diminish the value of the data and insights that may be helpful to families facing these challenges.

**Families Undergoing Transition**

Birth, death, marriage, divorce, and the transition to empty-nesting may increase or decrease family well-being. Family members anticipating one of these transitions, already in the throes of change, or hoping to regain their footing after a major upheaval may find the FFD tool and process of value. Practitioners or clinicians might find the FFD scales helpful in understanding which aspect of family well-being have been affected by the transition and in selecting appropriate positive interventions.

**High Net Worth Families**

Returning to the questions posed in the introduction to this paper, the FFD may assist practitioners and families in exploring the relationship between family flourishing and financial flourishing. FFD indicators may lead to insights into whether and how enhanced family well-being correlates with quantitative and qualitative improvements in financial well-being and decision-making. For instance, a practitioner might assign the FFD and a financial well-being questionnaire after an initial family meeting and over time. Working together, the family and practitioner might identify areas in which the family wants to enhance both family well-being and financial outcomes. On a quarterly or semi-annual basis, for instance, the family might retake the FFD and update their financial and wealth-related questionnaires. Over time, the

updated indicators might be helpful in measuring the family's progress toward their well-being and financial goals.

The objective of this paper was to present learning from a broad search of the positive psychology literature on the theory and measurement of family well-being. Because individual and family flourishing are closely linked, it was essential to explore what psychologists have learned about individual well-being. The many insights gleaned from this literature review inspired development of a conceptual framework that integrates a subset of empirically-supported measures of individual and family well-being. I call this framework the Family Flourishing Dashboard. I plan to prototype and field-test the FFD with client families in my practice to help them flourish in their own unique ways. Happy and flourishing families are not alike. I hope the FFD will help families appreciate their unique flourishing profiles and their own paths to greater family well-being.

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**Appendix A: Baseline FFD – Individual Well-Being Scales**

Below are eight statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by indicating that response for each statement.

1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life
2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding
3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities
4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others
5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me
6. I am a good person and live a good life
7. I am optimistic about my future
8. People respect me

*Figure A1.* Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009).

Relationship	Support	1. There are people I can depend on to help me.
		2. There are people who give me support and encouragement.
		3. There are people who appreciate me as a person.
	Community	1. I pitch in to help when my local community need something done.
		2. I invite my neighbors to my home.
		3. I look for ways to help my neighbors when they are in need.
	Trust	1. I can trust people in my society.
		2. People in my neighborhood can be trusted.
		3. Most people I meet are honest.
	Respect	1. People respect me.
		2. People are polite to me.
		3. I am treated with the same amount of respect as others.
	Loneliness	1. I feel lonely.
		2. I often feel left out.
		3. There is no one I feel close to.
	Belonging	1. I feel a sense of belonging in my community
		2. I feel a sense of belonging in my state or province.
		3. I feel a sense of belonging in my country.
Engagement	Engagement	1. I get fully absorbed in activities I do.
		2. In most activities I do, I feel energized.
		3. I get excited when I work on something.
Mastery	Skills	1. I use my skills a lot in my everyday life.
		2. I frequently use my talents.
		3. I get to do what I am good at every day.
	Learning	1. I learned something new yesterday.
		2. Learning new things is important to me.
		3. I always learn something every day.
	Accomplishment	1. I am achieving most of my goals
		2. I am fulfilling my ambitions.
		3. I am on track to reach my dreams.
	Self-Efficacy	1. I can succeed if I put my mind to it.
		2. I am confident I can deal with unexpected events.

	Self-Worth	3. I believe that I am capable in most things.
		1. What I do in life is valuable and worthwhile.
		2. The things I do contribute to society.
		3. The work I do is important for other people.
Autonomy	(Lack of) Control	1. Other people decide most of my life decisions. (R)
		2. The life choices I make are not really mine. (R)
		3. Other people decide what I can and cannot do. (R)
Meaning	Meaning & Purpose	1. My life has a clear sense of purpose.
		2. I have found a satisfactory meaning in life.
		3. I know what gives meaning to my life.
Optimism	Optimism	1. I am optimistic about my future.
		2. I have a positive outlook on life.
		3. I expect more good things in my life than bad.
Subjective Well-Being	Life satisfaction	1. In most ways my life is close to ideal.
		2. I am satisfied with my life.
		3. My life is going well.
	Positive feelings	1. I feel positive most of the time.
		2. I feel happy most of the time.
		3. I feel good most of the time.
	Negative feelings	1. I feel negative most of the time. (R)
		2. I experience unhappy feelings most of the time. (R)
		3. I feel bad most of the time. (R)

Figure A2. Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving Scale (CIT, Su et al., 2014). Highlighted questions are included in Brief Inventory of Thriving (BIT) scale.

Please take a moment to think about what makes your life feel important to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below.

Absolutely Untrue  
Mostly Untrue  
Somewhat Untrue  
Can't Say True or False  
Somewhat True  
Mostly True  
Absolutely True

1. I understand my life's meaning
2. I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.
3. I am always looking to find my life's purpose
4. My life has a clear sense of purpose.
5. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.
6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.
7. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.
8. I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.
9. My life has no clear purpose.
10. I am searching for meaning in my life.

Presence and Search Subscale

Presence: 1, 4, 5, 6, 9 reverse-coded

Search: 2, 3, 7, 8, 10

*Figure A3.* Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ, Steger et al., 2006).

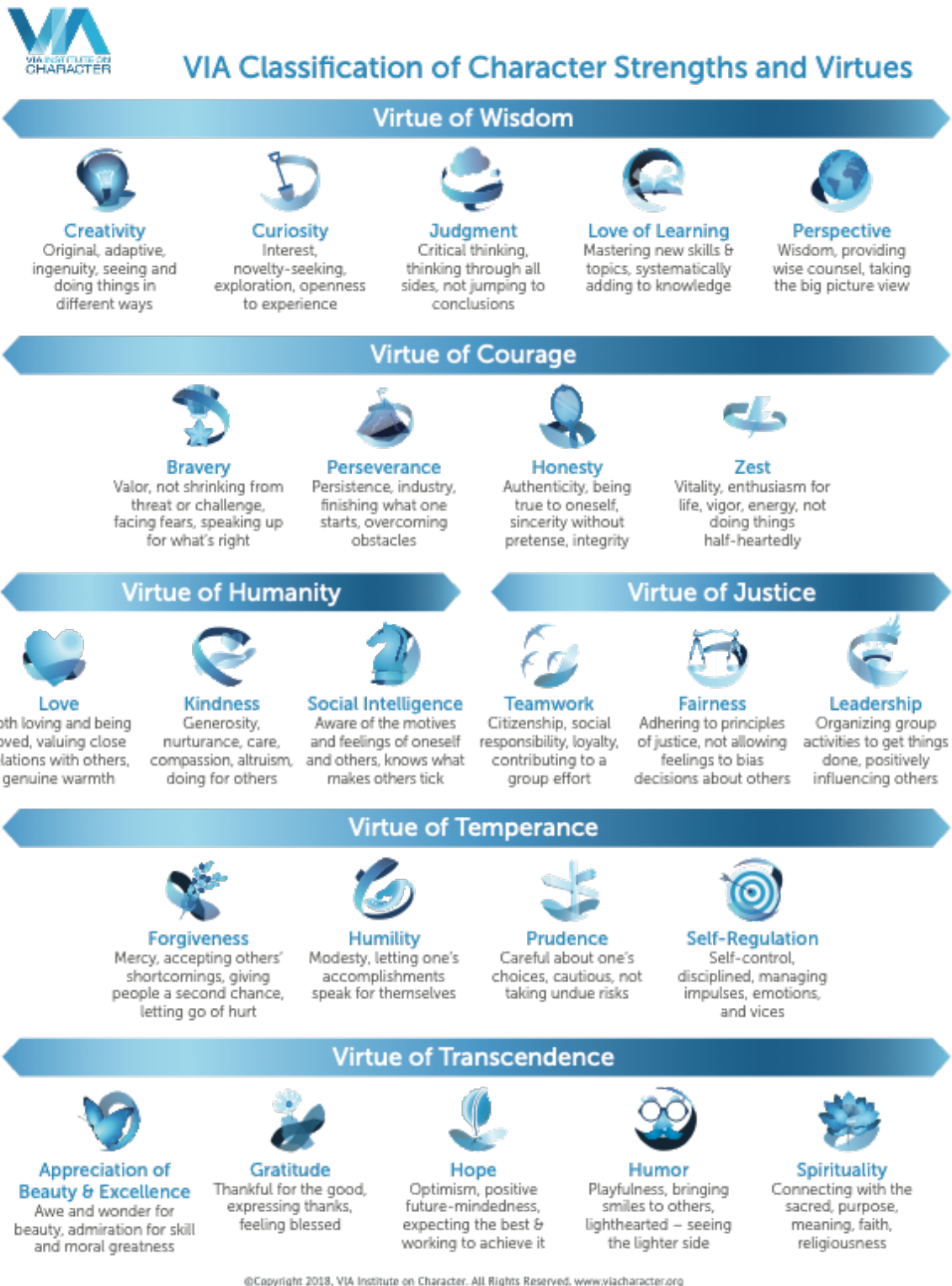


Figure A4. VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Retrieved from <https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths>

**Appendix B: Baseline FFD – Family Well-Being Scales**

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item. Please be open and honest in responding.

1. In most ways my family life is close to ideal.
2. The conditions of my family life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my family life.
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in my family life.
5. If I could live my family life over, I would change almost nothing.

*Figure B1.* Adapted from Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL, Zabriskie & Ward, 2013).

Please think about what you have been doing and experiencing during the past four weeks. Then report how much you experienced each of the following feelings, using the scale below. For each item, select a number from 1 to 5, and indicate that number on your response sheet.

1. Very Rarely or Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Very Often or Always

Positive

Negative

Good

Bad

Pleasant

Unpleasant

Happy

Sad

Afraid

Joyful

Angry

Contented

*Figure B2.* Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences (SPANE, Diener et al., 2009).



Please think about what your family has been doing and experiencing during the past four weeks. Then report how much your family experienced each of the following feelings, using the scale below. For each item, select a number from 1 to 5, and indicate that number on your response sheet.

1. Very Rarely or Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Very Often or Always

Positive

Negative

Good

Bad

Pleasant

Unpleasant

Happy

Sad

Afraid

Joyful

Angry

Contented

*Figure B3.* Adapted from Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences (SPANE, Diener et al., 2009).

Relationship	Support	1. There are family members I can depend on to help me.
		2. There are family members who give me support and encouragement.
		3. There are family members who appreciate me as a person.
	Family as “Community”	1. I pitch in to help when my family needs something done.
		2. I invite my family to my home.
		3. I look for ways to help my family members when they are in need.
	Trust	1. I can trust people in my family.
		2. People in my family can be trusted.
		3. Most people I in my family are honest.
	Respect	1. Family members respect me.
		2. Family members are polite to me.
		3. I am treated with the same amount of respect as others in my family.
	Loneliness	1. I feel lonely in my family.
		2. I often feel left out of my family.
		3. There is no one in my family I feel close to.
	Belonging	1. I feel a sense of belonging in my immediate family.
		2. I feel a sense of belonging in my extended family.
	Engagement	Engagement
2. In most family activities I do, I feel energized.		
3. I get excited when I work on something with my family.		
Meaning	Meaning & Purpose	1. My family life has a clear sense of purpose.
		2. I have found a satisfactory meaning in family life.
		3. I know what gives meaning to my family life.
Optimism	Optimism	1. I am optimistic about my family’s future.
		2. I have a positive outlook on my family life.
		3. I expect more good things in my family life than bad.

Figure B4. Adapted from Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving scale (CIT, Su et al., 2014).

Each person has ideas or feelings about how other people see them. I am interested in how you think people in your family think about you. Choose the rating you feel is best for you and circle the number provided.

5 – A lot

4

3 – Somewhat

2

1 – Not much

1. I feel special to my family

2. I am needed by my family

3. I am missed by my family when I am away.

4. When I talk, my family tries to understand what I am saying

5. I am interesting to my family.

6. My family notices my feelings.

7. My family gives me credit when I do well.

8. My family notices when I need help.

9. I matter to my family.

10. People have many things to think about. If people in your family made a list of all the things they think about, where do you think you'd be on the list?

*Figure B5.* Adapted from *Mattering to Others Questionnaire (MTOQ)*, Marshall, 2001).

<b>When I am home with my family, I mostly feel...</b>							
	<b>Totally</b>	<b>Quite</b>	<b>To Some Extent</b>	<b>To some extent</b>	<b>quite</b>	<b>totally</b>	
1. happy							1. unhappy
2. alone							2. accompanied
3. cheerful							3. miserable
4. consoled							4. disconsolate
5. understood							5. misunderstood
6. tranquil							6. disturbed
7. discontented							7. contented
8. insecure							8. secure
9. pleased							9. displeased
10. satisfied							10. dissatisfied
11. inhibited							11. at ease
12. discouraged							12. encouraged
13. censured							13. supported
14. uncomfortable							14. comfortable
15. harassed							15. relieved
16. not respected							16. respected
17. relaxed							17. tense
18. excluded							18. involved
19. agitated							19. serene
20. calm							20. nervous
21. attacked							21. protected
22. joyful							22. sad
23. free							23. weighed down
24. appreciated							24. not appreciated
25. not close							25. close
26. stimulated							26. repressed
27. bad							27. well

Figure B6. Family Satisfaction by Adjectives Scale (FSAS; Barraca, López Yarto, & Olea, 2000).

**Appendix C: Family Flourishing Dashboard – Illustrative Examples of Indicator Gauges**

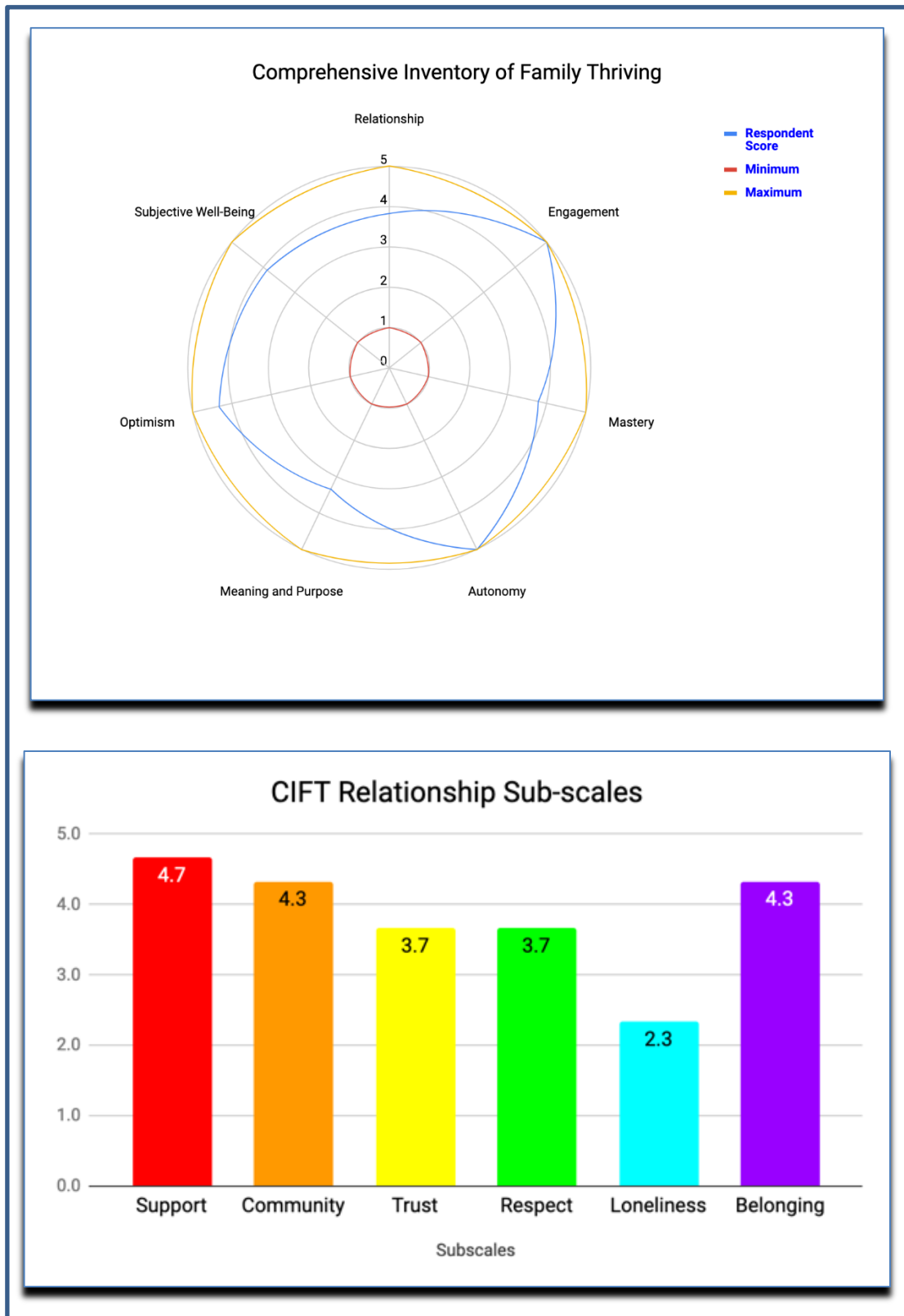


Figure C1. Adapted from Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving Scale (CIT, Su et al., 2014).

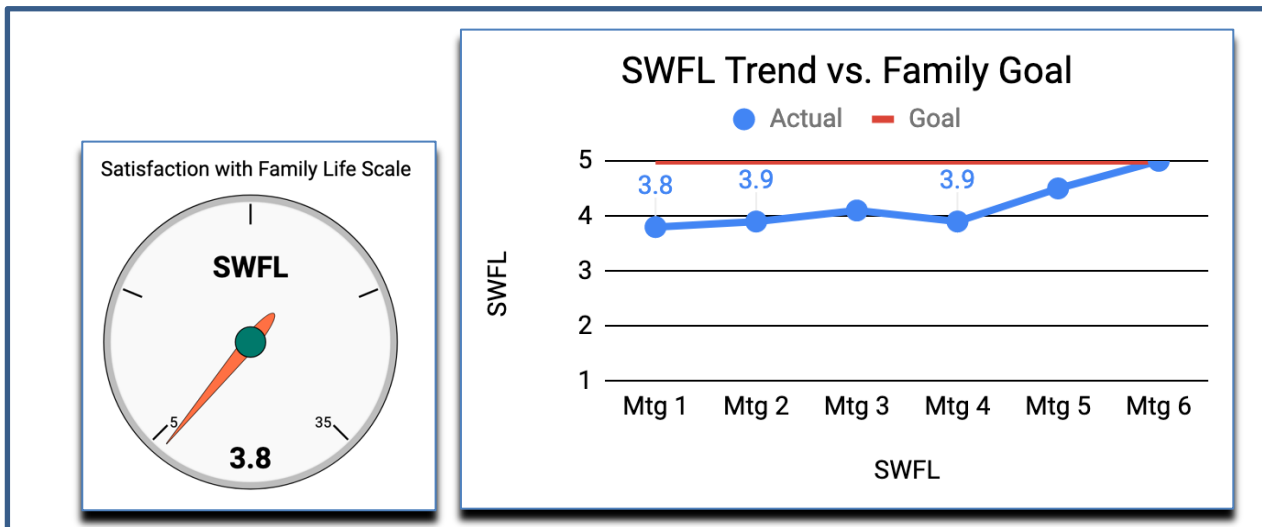


Figure C2. Adapted from Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL, Zabriskie & Ward, 2013).

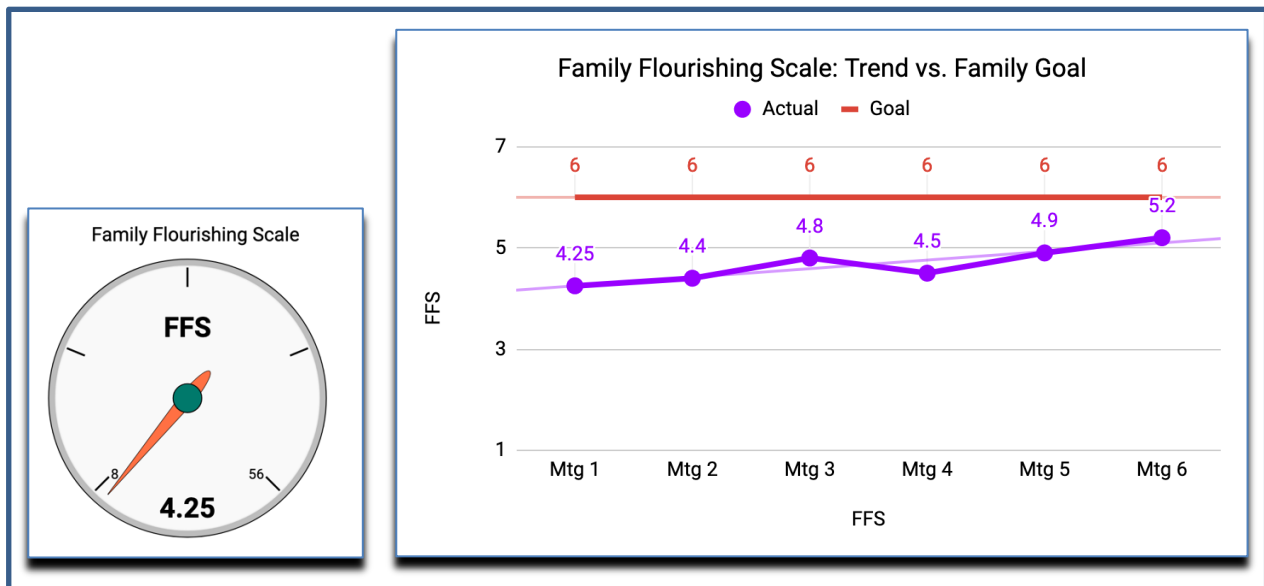


Figure C3. Adapted from Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009).

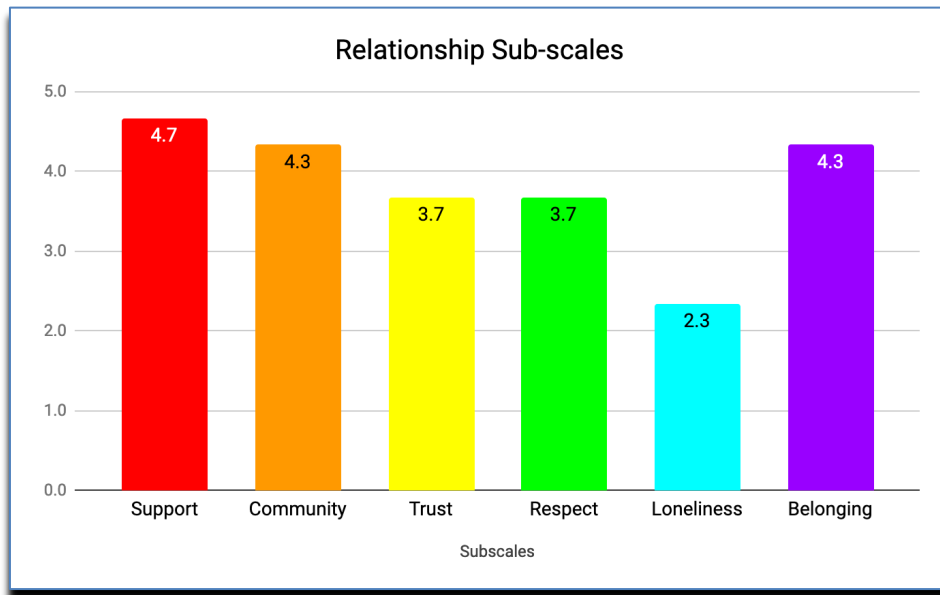


Figure C4. Adapted from Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving Scale (CIT, Su et al., 2014).

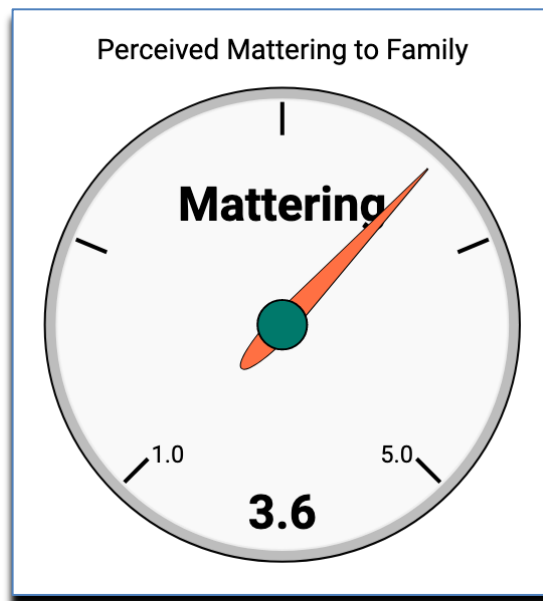


Figure C5. Adapted from Mattering to Others Questionnaire (MTOQ, Marshall, 2001).

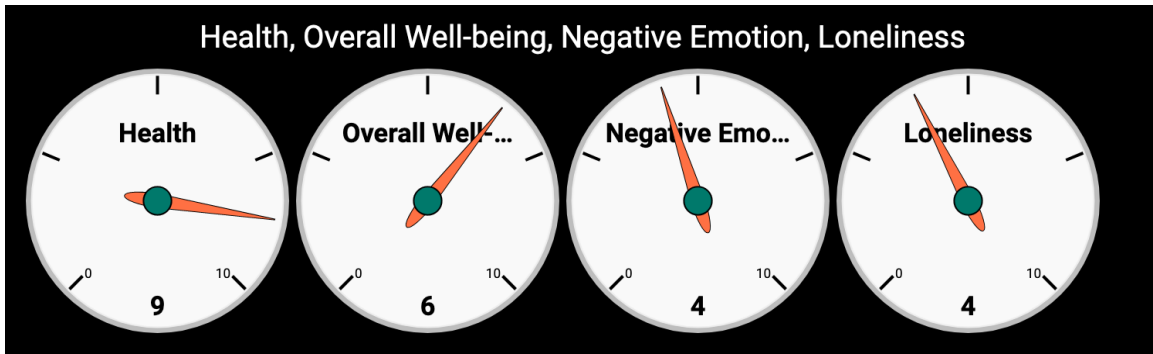


Figure C6. Adapted from Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving Scale (CIT, Su et al., 2014).

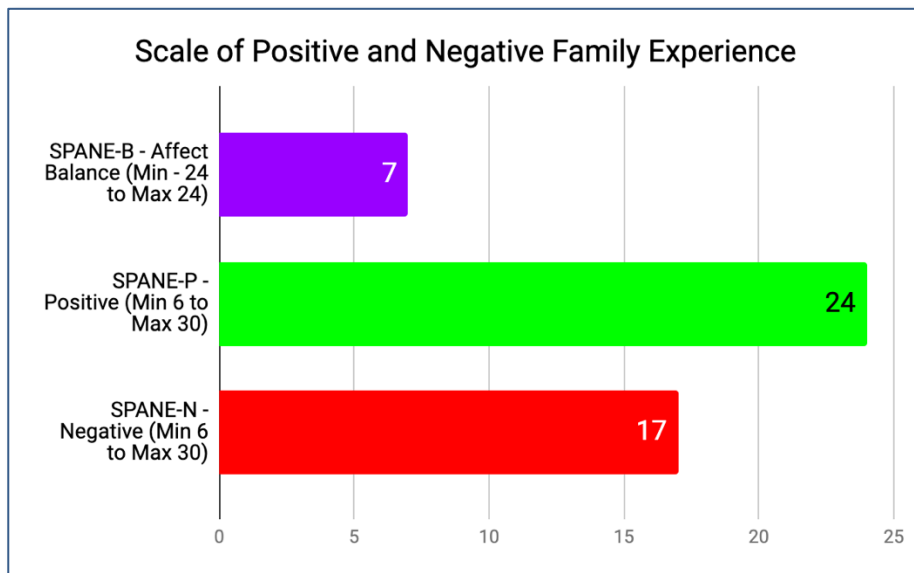


Figure C7. Adapted from Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences (SPANE, Diener et al., 2009).



<b>Family Satisfaction by Adjectives Scale</b>		
<b>Totally</b>	<b>Quite</b>	<b>To Some Extent</b>
cheerful	accompanied	calm
encouraged	appreciated	consoled
secure	at ease	contented
stimulated	close	involved
supported	comfortable	tranquil
	happy	
	joyful	
	pleased	
	protected	
	respected	
	satisfied	
	understood	
	well	

*Figure C8.* Adapted from Family Satisfaction by Adjectives Scale (FSAS; Barraca, López Yarto, & Olea, 2000).