# **Specialist Module with Workshop: The power of positivity and the psychology of possibility**

## Prof. Deborah Phillips

***COURSE AIMS*** ***AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of the workshop is to provide a theoretical overview and practical experience of the health psychology and its interdisciplinary nature, specifically with focus on a positive psychology framework and cognitive mindfulness (without meditation). In addition to a discussion of some traditional models and theories in health psychology, we will examine interventions for health promotion and illness prevention. Discussions will cover both theoretical and practical issues from the relationship between belief and health, attributions and heuristics, to the interaction between physicians and patients.

As well as the study of theory behind these concepts, the participants will be given the opportunity to carry out practical exercises with a focus on socio-cognitive mindfulness theory and how mindfulness and mindlessness affect health. The use of fun, thought-provoking reflections through exercises and short written reflections will be part of the workshop.

*Intended learning outcomes*

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand and utilize mind and body intervention techniques.

***COURSE CONTENT***

* Exploration of how mindful, positive framing of health-related situations and events can change the experience of a negative to a positive attribution
* Introduction to the relationship between health behavior and experience, health beliefs and communication and health promotion and expressiveness
* Practice in applying mindfulness for health promotion and happiness
* Introduction to health communications, positive psychology and health, placebos
* Introduction to stress, coping, well-being and cognitive reframing

***READING LIST***

Langer, E.J. (2014). Mindfulness: 25-year anniversary edition. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

**The following books are highly recommended but not required:**

1. Ariely, D. (2010). *Predictably irrational: the hidden forces that shape our decisions*. New York: Harper Perennial.
2. Gawande, A. (2002). *Complications: a surgeon’s notes on an imperfect science*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
3. Gawande, A. (2014) *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End.* New York: Metropolitan Books.
4. Groopman, J.E. (2008). *How doctors think*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
5. Langer, E.J., (2005). *On Becoming an Artist: Reinventing yourself through mindful creativity*. New York: Ballentine Books.
6. Langer, E. (2009). *Counterclockwise: Mindful health and the power of possibility*. New York: Ballentine Books.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The workshop will consist of twenty-four hours of work, including theoretical explanations, group discussions and practical experiential activities.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The assessment will be based on attendance at lectures, together with short reflection paper(s) and an overall written or oral assessment at the end of the course. The outcome of this workshop is expressed in the APPROVED and NOT APPROVED options.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, students are expected to be intellectually curious about the course topics, as well as willing to participate in the various exercises.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.