**PLAIN LANGUAGE COMMUNITY BRIEF**

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For paper titled, “Self-Report Measurement of Well-Being in Autistic Adults: Psychometric Properties of the PERMA Profiler”

Link to free version of paper: https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/aut.2022.0049

**What is well-being? What is PERMA?**

Well-being describes a state of being healthy and feeling good about one’s life. Positive psychologists, researchers, and some mental health providers think about well-being using the concept “PERMA.” PERMA stands for five important parts of well-being: **P**ositive Emotions, **En**gagement, **R**elationships, **M**eaning, and **A**ccomplishment.

**What is the PERMA profiler?**

The PERMA Profiler is a short survey (23 questions) used to measure a person’s well-being. This measure may help researchers see if things are going well for someone, or where support is needed. The PERMA Profiler measures a person’s well-being in general and in each of the five PERMA categories. It has not been used to measure well-being in non-Autistic people, and there is not enough research that studies Autistic people’s well-being.

**Why is this study important?**

The PERMA Profiler has been used many times to study well-being in non-Autistic people. There is not enough research about what well-being looks like for Autistic people. This study was the first to test the PERMA Profiler to see if it does a good job measuring overall well-being in Autistic adults. This study will help researchers learn if the PERMA Profiler is a good tool to use in future studies to learn about Autistic peoples’ well-being.

**What did the researchers do in this study?**

First, they collected responses to the PERMA Profiler and other questions from over 500 Autistic adults. Then, they tested how well the PERMA Profiler performed at measuring well-being among Autistic adults. The goal was to see if the questions in the survey performed consistently for each person, and how the PERMA Profile performed in comparison to past studies. Researchers also looked at the relationships between well-being scores to the study participants’ mental health (anxiety and depression) and life satisfaction.

**What did the researchers learn?**

The researchers learned that the PERMA Profiler can consistently measure well-being in Autistic adult. One thing the researchers noted was that Autistic adults' average well-being scores were lower than non-Autistic adults' average scores.

The average well-being score was 5.4 out of 10.0. Scores closer to 10 mean that a person has high overall well-being, and. It is worth noting that in other studies, non-Autistic adults had a higher average PERMA Profiler score of 7.0.

The PERMA Profiler measured well-being consistently in this group of Autistic adults. It was clear that participants’ scores in overall well-being were related to their mental health and life satisfaction. The five PERMA subcategories were also related to participants’ mental health and life satisfaction, but one of them did not work as well. Researchers found that the questions that measured Engagement did not perform well among this sample of Autistic adults. Past studies had also found that the Engagement questions did not work as well for non-Autistic adults.

**Why is this study important?**

This was the first study to analyze and describe how the PERMA Profiler measures well-being in a group of Autistic adults. It is also the first study to measure how effective any personal survey of well-being is in measuring Autistic adult’s well-being. These results can help future researchers decide how to best study well-being in Autistic adults. These results also point to important changes that researchers can make to the PERMA Profiler to improve future research.

**How will this information help Autistic people now or in the future?**

This study may offer a beginning for future research on the PERMA Profiler for Autistic adults. It also suggests next steps researchers can take to improve the survey before using it more widely among Autistic adults. This work may help the field of autism research create new tools for understanding and improving well-being. The PERMA Profiler has strengths and weaknesses to consider before using in other settings. Knowing these strengths and weaknesses can tell researchers how to do strengths-based research with Autistic adults when they study the PERMA Profiler in the future.

**What are some possible weaknesses of this study?**

There are multiple weaknesses of this study that are important to highlight. First, Autistic adults did not get to help create the PERMA Profiler, so the survey was not created with Autistic people in mind. This means that teams of researchers including Autistic co-researchers might need to change parts of the survey to make sure it relates to the needs of Autistic people. A second weakness is that most participants in this study were white (85%), well-educated (over 80% completed at least some college,) and did not have an Intellectual Disability. This means the results do not represent the larger, more diverse Autistic community. A third weakness is that the study was completed during the COVID-19 Pandemic, which likely affected the participants’ well-being.