Teaching & Learning Guide for: A General Model of Preventive and Interventive Self-Control

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Author’s Introduction

The field of self-control has witnessed an unprecedented boom, not least due to the immense implications of successful and unsuccessful self-control for people’s lives. However, successful and unsuccessful self-control can take many different forms, and many conceptual problems have been raised as to what self-control is about and how to best study it. Integrating different literatures, our Social and Personality Psychology Compass article provides a general model of self-control, which distinguishes between preventive (i.e., anticipatory) and interventive (i.e., momentary) forms of self-control. The proposed Preventive-Interventive Model (PI-Model) of Self-Control combines seven basic components: preventive strategies, desire, conflict, motivation, volition, opportunity constraints, and behavioral enactment. The model helps to distinguish self-control from standard motivational processes, to define the concept of temptation, and to identify different types of self-control failure including self-monitoring failure, motivational self-control failure, and volitional self-control failure. Further, the model helps to outline five broad mechanisms through which people may be able to proactively boost self-control success.

In this 10-week supplementary teaching and learning guide, weeks 1–2 are spent reviewing previous models from which the PI-Model drew ideas. Week 3 is spent reading about integrative models of self-control including the PI-Model. Weeks 4–7 focus on core components from the PI-Model: desire, conflict, motivation, and preventive self-control. Week 8 covers pertinent topics to self-control including affect and self-regulation. Week 9 takes the learner into the context of everyday life and self-control. And finally, week 10 deals with practical ways to boost self-control.

We believe that a thorough reading and discussion of the papers in this teaching and learning guide will provide a broad introduction to the field of self-control and might also help the learner identify self-control conflicts and make smart decisions about how to handle them.

Syllabus

Week 1: cybernetic and self-regulatory strength models of self-regulation and self-control

Cybernetic models


Self-regulatory strength model


Week 2: dual-system and dual-motive models

Dual-system approaches


Dual-motive approaches


Week 3: integrative models


Week 4: desire


Week 5: conflict

Week 6: self-control motivation and ability

Overviews


Executive functions and self-regulation


Role of personal willpower beliefs


Week 7: preventive self-control

Precommitment


Implementation intentions


Situational constraints

Week 8: affect and self-regulation

Affect as feedback signal and guide for future behavior


Self-regulation of affect (emotion regulation)


Week 9: self-regulation and self-control in everyday life


Week 10: boosting self-control


Additional Resources

Recommended handbooks:

Recommended popular science books:

