“Thriving in Action taught me so much about what it means to thrive as a student in academia and beyond...what it means to be persistent and resilient with my academic goals...it also provided me with a holistic vision of how to thrive. Mindfulness, gratitude, and self-compassion...really struck a chord with me.”

(Mature 2nd year student)
Close your eyes, just for a second or two, and bring to mind a recent moment of awe in your work...
Thriving in Action

Dr. Diana Brecher
Dr. Deena Kara Shaffer
ThriveRU
ryerson.ca/thriveru

Resilience Training

Lectures and Workshops

Resource Development

Conferences, Public Talks and Podcasts

Thriving in Action

Thriving in Action Online
RESILIENCE AT RYERSON

THRIVING
- We can be in charge of our emotional state
- Accomplishing goals, moving forward
- Resilience is the capacity to bounce back when things go wrong

ABILITY TO ADAPT
- What you think affects how you feel
- Mindfulness, take a breath!
- Mindful meditation

FLOURISHING!
- Fresh water
- Let the group be the best version of you
- Where's the carrot?
- Optimism is our explanation to ourselves about how something is happening
- Perfectionism is destructive
- It's hard to get movement from pessimism
- We can't go back in time

GRIT
- It's important to be in the present moment
- Passion & perseverance for long-term goals

FORGIVE YOURSELF!
- Let go
- Acceptance
- It has a large impact on our lives
- Be our own best friend in the moment we need it the most

AGAINST
- Notice how mean we can be to ourselves
- Practice self-compassion

Dr. Diana Brecher

Ryerson University
Our Intended Arc

- What is Thriving in Action and how does it fit within the larger ThriveRU initiative?
- What’s ThriveRU up to now?
- TiA overview
- The TiA curricular braid: Positive Psychology, holistic learning strategies & nature-based pedagogy
- Research and early findings
- What’s next, what if’s & who else?
Thriving in Action (TiA)

- Semester-long non-credit course blending thriving & learning strategies
- Early undergrad through doctorate
- All disciplines, all ages, all life circumstances, cohered via self-identification as “not doing very well”
- TiA serves under-represented students
- Progressive, whole-person approach
- TiA curriculum braids Positive Psychology essentials (gratitude, learned optimism, and creating new habits) with holistic academic skill-building (mindfulness-based time management, collaborative group work)
TiA Curriculum Overview

Each Thriving in Action session follows a parallel rhythm:

- *What went well?* group sharing & narrative reframe
- Thriving skill
- Reflective free-writing prompt
- Mindful movement
- Guided visualization
- Learning strategy
- Meditation/3-Minute Calming Breath
“I am so glad I took part in TiA today. I woke up feeling unmotivated,...like it was a weird day, but left the session...with a sense of uplift and open-heartedness, ready to face the day! I couldn't even think of something for What Went Well? at the beginning...
...However, with Diana's advice to open up our hearts to finding the little things...noticing...things to be grateful for, my outlook on the day began to change. With the writing prompt, I let out my thoughts and even wrote out what I wanted to get done with some affirmation. Then came Circle of Joy, which actually really helped by kind of waking up my body and giving it some love through stretches (something it really needs :))...
...And when Deena began to talk about walking into an exam with confidence, sass, and swagger, I was so excited and already yearning to feel that. This session was full of reflection, but also the feeling that I think I'm ready to take charge and strive to have this feeling, starting with today!

Thanks again for everything you both do. It really makes such a difference.”
Remembering that we have a body...
TiA Research...Then

Background

We have never been more connected. No matter where we are in the world, we can communicate with one another instantly. This has led to a shift in how we do business, how we interact, and how we think.

What Happened?

My Story and Journey

TiA Research Student Affairs

Thriving in Action

The Stories, Themes, and Methodology of What Went Well?

Outcomes Results

What's Next?
TiA Research...NOW

Mixed Methods:

- Thriving Quotient (TQ)
- OQ45 (Mental Health Vital Signs)
- General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)
- What Went Well? & Narrative Inquiry
Q8. I am good at juggling all the demands of university life.

- **Agree**
  - Pre-Test: 24%
  - Post-Test: 78%

- **Disagree**
  - Pre-Test: 76%
  - Post-Test: 22%
Q5. Even if assignments are not interesting to me, I find a way to keep working at them until they are done well.
TQ: Agency

Q7. I know how to apply my strengths to achieve academic success.

- **Agree**
  - Pre-Test: 45%
  - Post-Test: 93%

- **Disagree**
  - Pre-Test: 55%
  - Post-Test: 7%
Thriving Quotient (TQ): Grit & Perseverance

Q23. When I'm faced with a problem in my life, I can usually think of several ways to solve it.

- **Agree**
  - Pre-Test: 69%
  - Post-Test: 81%

- **Disagree**
  - Pre-Test: 31%
  - Post-Test: 19%
Q16. There is a strong sense of community on this campus.

- **Agree**:
  - Pre-Test: 48%
  - Post-Test: 81%

- **Disagree**:
  - Pre-Test: 52%
  - Post-Test: 19%
TQ: Belonging, cont.

Q10. I feel like I belong here.

- Agree: Pre-Test (56%), Post-Test (93%)
- Disagree: Pre-Test (44%), Post-Test (7%)
TQ: Optimism

Q28. I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless.

- **Agree**
  - Pre-Test: 65%
  - Post-Test: 88%

- **Disagree**
  - Pre-Test: 35%
  - Post-Test: 12%
General Self-Efficacy Scale

Low GSES
- Pre Test: 24.2
- Post Test: 32.1

High GSES
- Pre Test: 30.1
- Post Test: 34.1
OQ45

PRE THRIVING IN ACTION

- Low/Moderate: 73%
- High: 27%
From “What Went Well?”
“I learned how to thrive from Thriving in Action. My relationships with others on campus and how happy I am to be at the school has helped me thrive in many aspects of my life...I'm so thankful. Would recommend it to everyone. I wish I could do it again.”
From Writing Prompt, “Letter to Future Self”

“The perseverance you've showed thus far is admirable, but...[r]emember that everyday is a chance to be better than the last, and that often the best thing I can do is work toward a balance of work & play. Remember to back yourself the way you would [your] good homie, and to treat yourself with respect and hold yourself accountable in the same regard.”
Honouring the transition needs of students in the “messy middle”...

Passages
What’s Next, What If’s, and Who Else?

- Thriving in Action online
- TiA Training Institutes (next one Dec 10, 2018 @ Ryerson University)
- Research on low barrier group fitness for mid-stream transitioning students
- *Portage*, mentorship, peer support and a growing community
- TiA & transition out
- Community of Practice
Life vs Life with TiA
Thriving in Action as a catalyst for change

Energy vs Time graph showing the comparison of energy required with and without TiA.
Three Minute Calming Breath