

BEYOND MENTAL HEALTH

Exploring the pandemic's impacts on student wellbeing, identity, agency, meaning, and purpose

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The land on which Wake Forest University now resides and the land on which the original campus resided served for centuries as a place for exchange and interaction for Indigenous peoples, specifically Saura, Catawba, Cherokee, and Lumbee, in its current location; and Shakori, Eno, Sissipahaw, and Occaneechi, in the original campus location. Today Wake Forest continues to be a place of learning and engagement for Indigenous students, faculty, and staff regionally, nationally, and globally.





FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The analyses presented today were funded by CLTE. Measure design, data collection, and data conditioning were funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina and the Reynolds American Foundation.



IDENTITIES acknowledgment

The authors of this work hold a range of majoritized and minoritized identities. We acknowledge that these identities grant us privileges and biases of which we are not aware. One of our goals today is to generate critical discussion & elevate the work of others.



AGENDA

01.

Goals & research questions

02.

Methods: measures, participants, statistical modeling

03.

Findings

04.

Transferability & future directions: Practice implications

GOALS

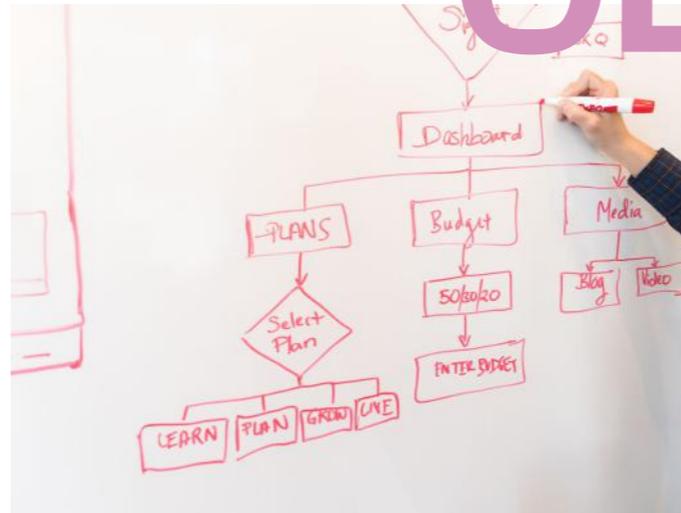
01



Theory-driven data mining

With three administrations of existing, pre-/during-pandemic Wellbeing Assessment data

02



Practice-informative models

Use a combination of theory and exploratory statistical modeling to develop practice-informative models

03



Translation to practice

Work with practice experts (like you!) to develop concrete, actionable steps

RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1.

What changed during the pandemic?

How were subjective wellbeing, identity, agency, meaning, and purpose affected by the pandemic?



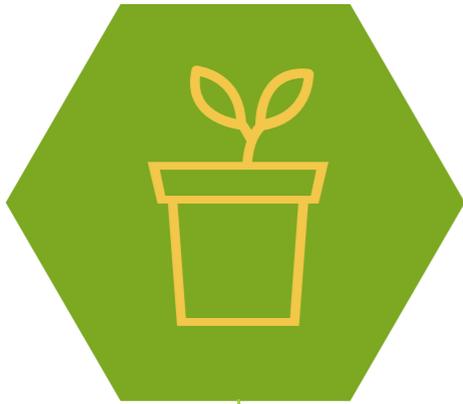
2.

Where can we intervene?

How do subjective wellbeing, identity, agency, meaning, and purpose fit together?

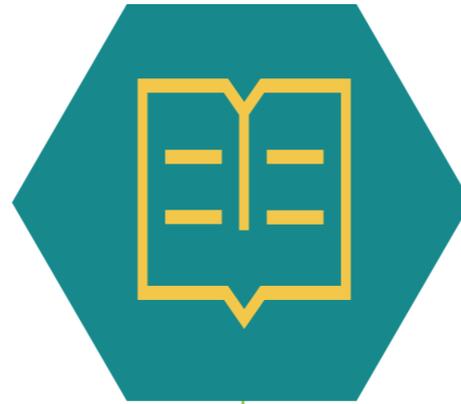
WELLBEING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Development cycle: 2014 - 2019



Developmentally relevant

For traditionally-aged undergraduate students



Research-supported

To be assessable and impactful



University-supportable

"Movable" through university policies, practices, procedures, and programs

WELLBEING ASSESSMENT DIMENSIONS



Meaning



Purpose



Academic engagement



Positive coping



Belonging



Life satisfaction



Friends



Activity engagement



Optimism



Perseverance



Self-esteem



Happiness



Anxiety



Depression



Loneliness



Social anxiety

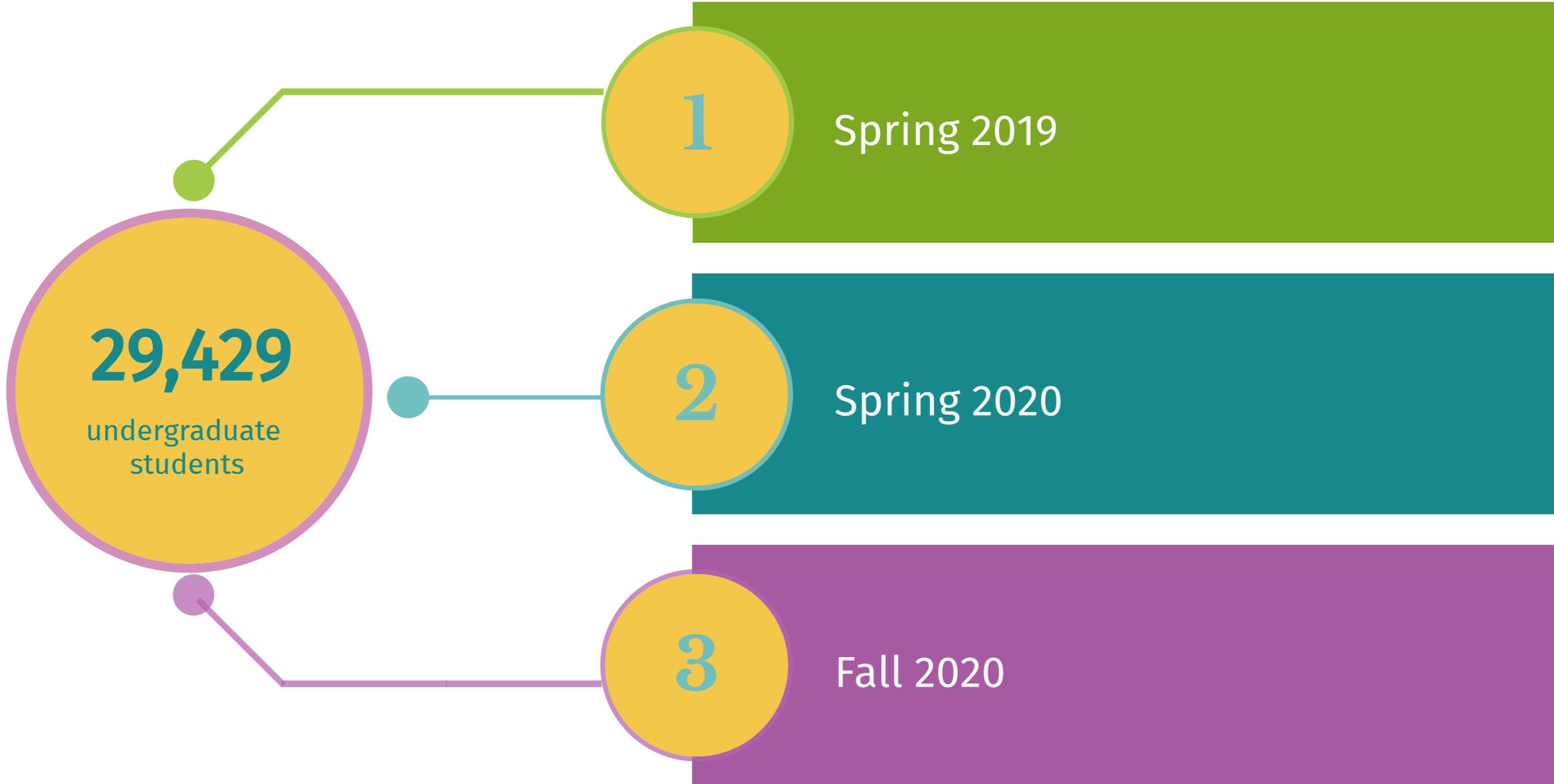


Civic orientation - moral



Civic orientation -
political

Demographics
Care & safety
Health & substances



29,429
undergraduate
students

1

Spring 2019

2

Spring 2020

3

Fall 2020



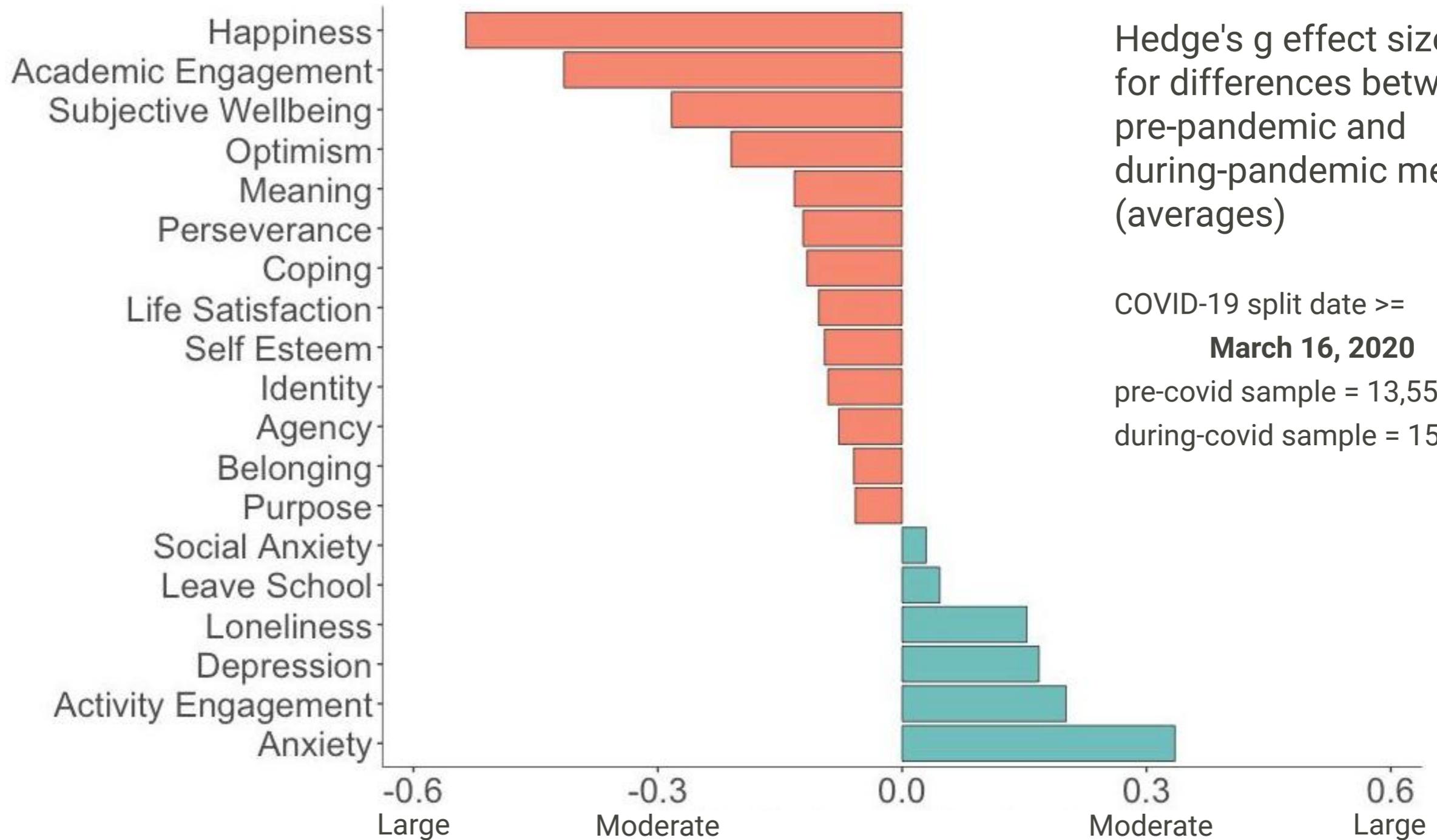
RQ1: What changed?

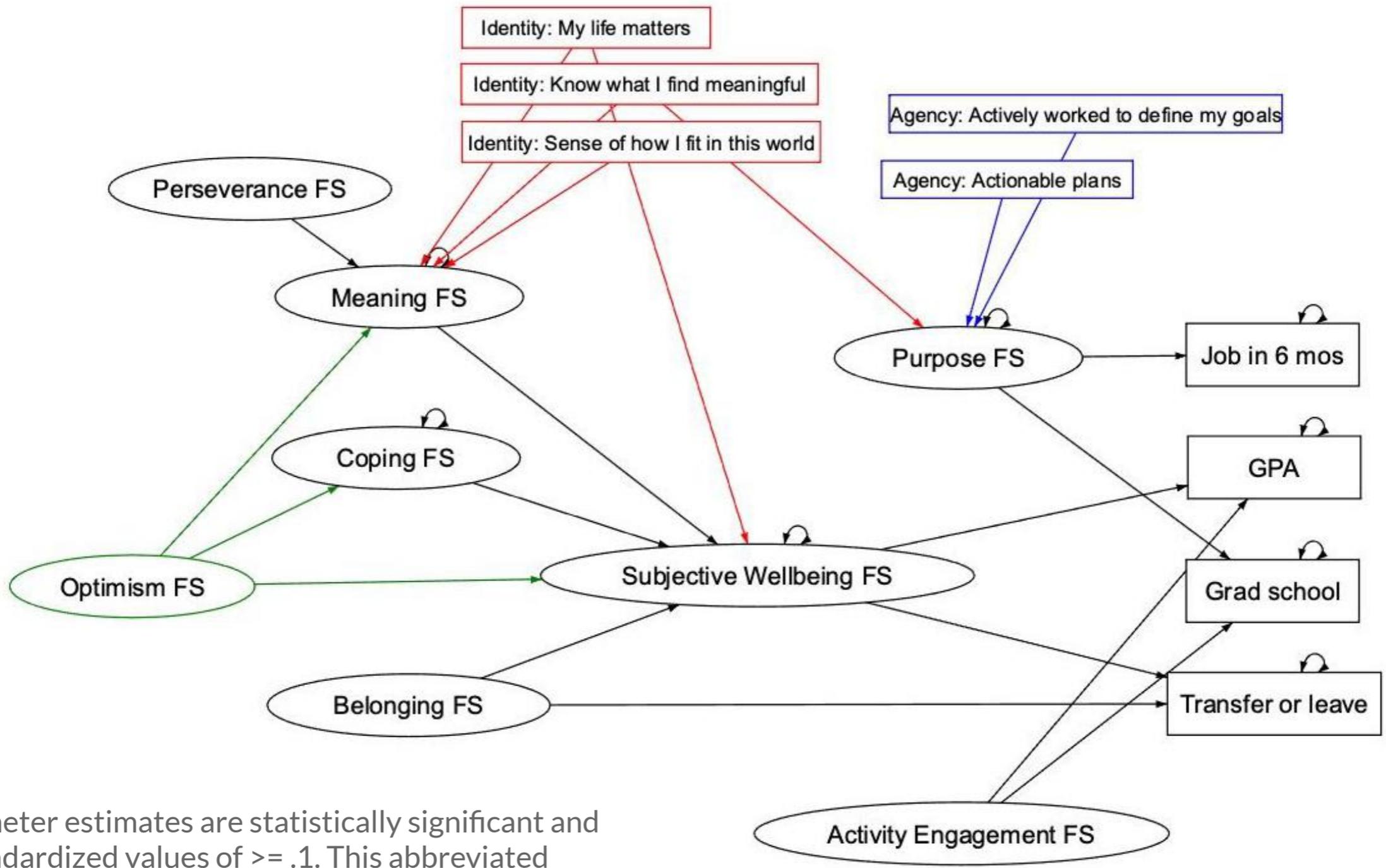
Series of one-way and two-way ANOVAs for 19 DVs and 33 IV levels (2,337) comparisons. Benjamini-Hochberg procedure to set false discovery rate at 5%.



RQ2: Where can we intervene?

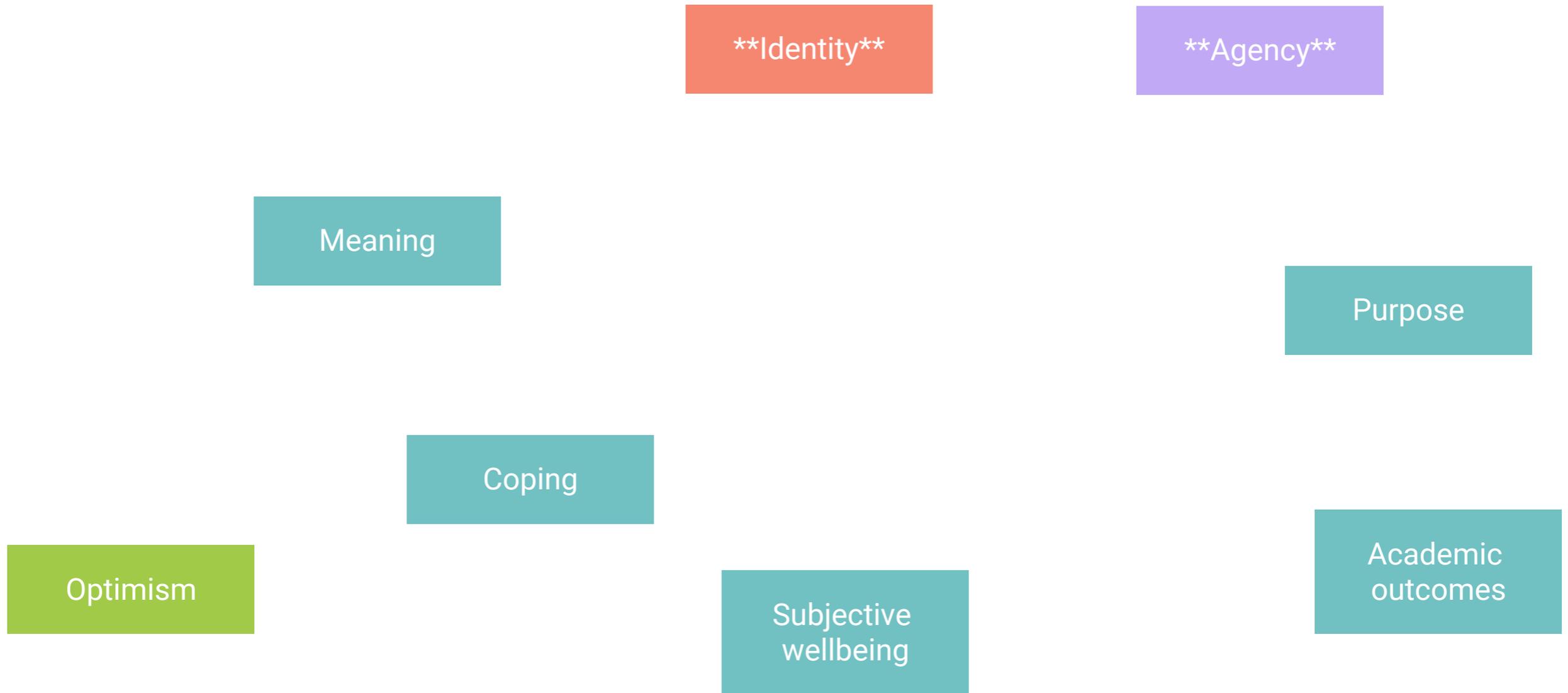
Exploratory path modeling with extracted factor scores (bifactor model for subjective wellbeing; CFA for 10 factors) and single-item indicators (identity, agency, and others). For all models, CFI \Rightarrow .95, RMSEA = $<$.05, SRMR $=<$.05. Retained paths with standardized parameter estimates $>$ 0.1.





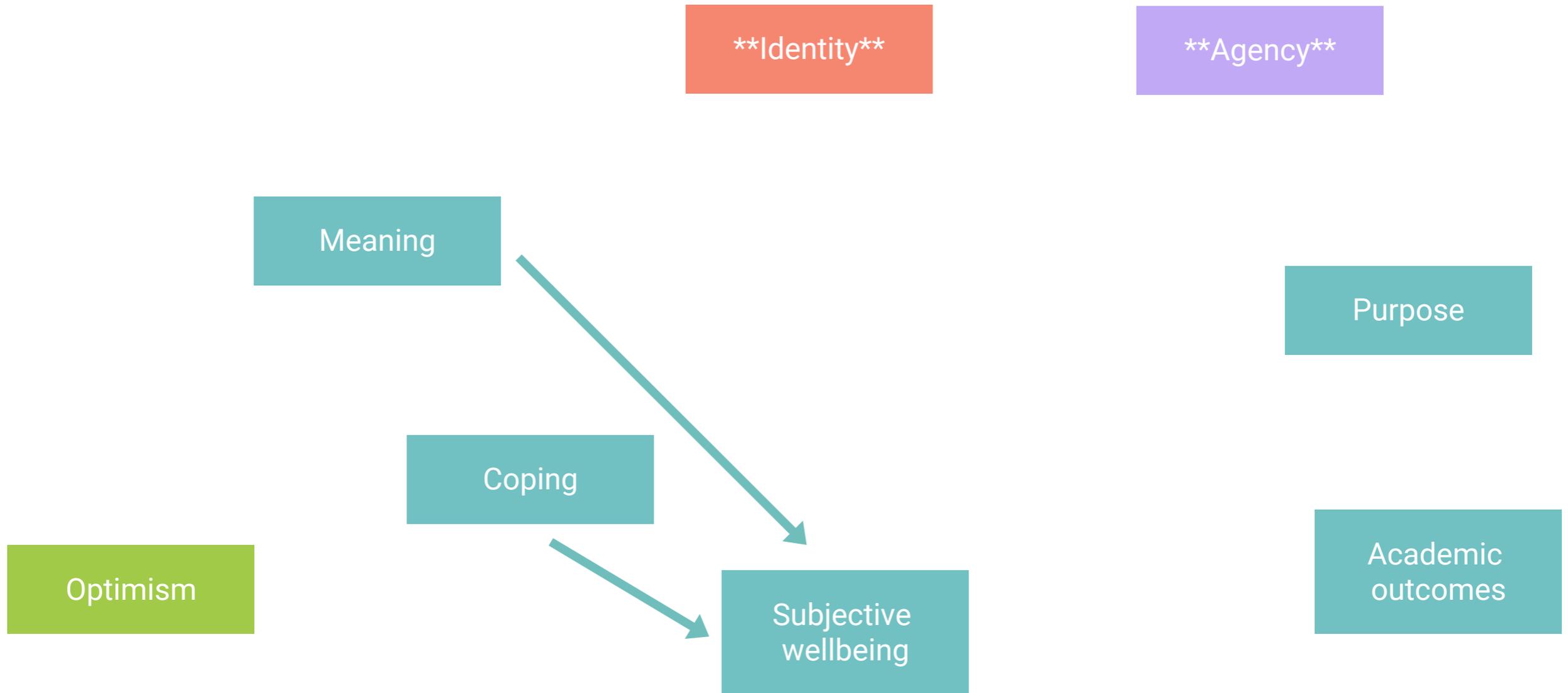
All parameter estimates are statistically significant and have standardized values of $\geq .1$. This abbreviated diagram does not include all variables in the model.

*** Agency and identity are only partially measured.*



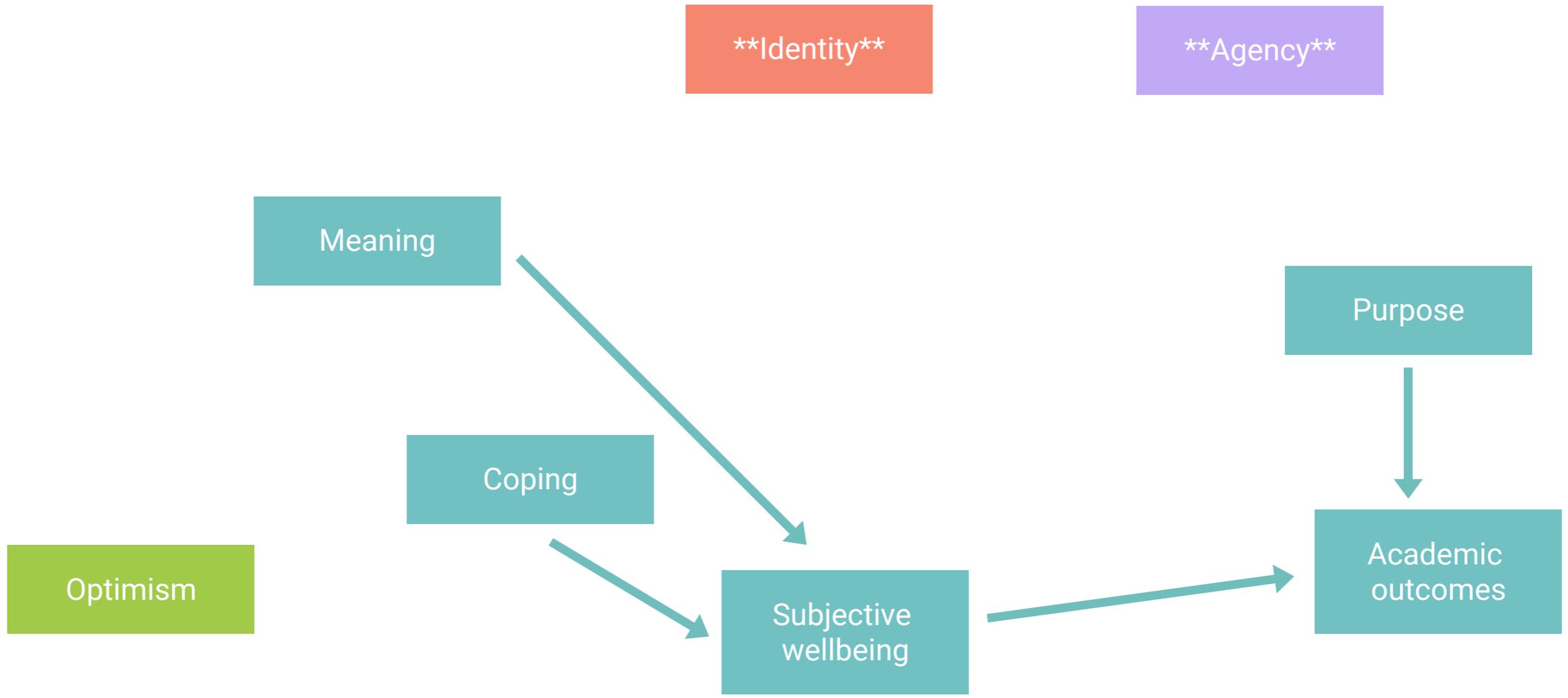
This diagram is an even more simplified version of the diagram on the prior slide (the underlying model has not changed, just the picture). More variables have been left out, and some have been combined.

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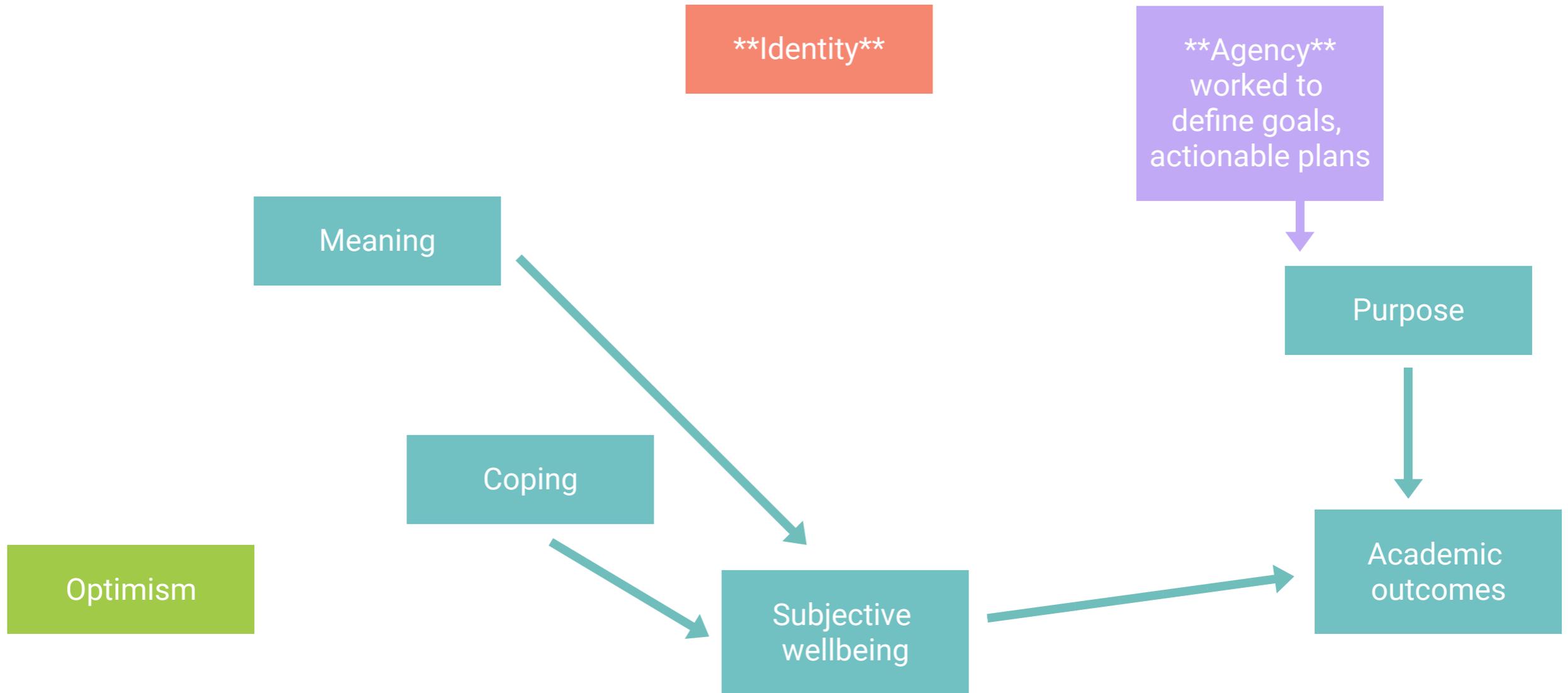
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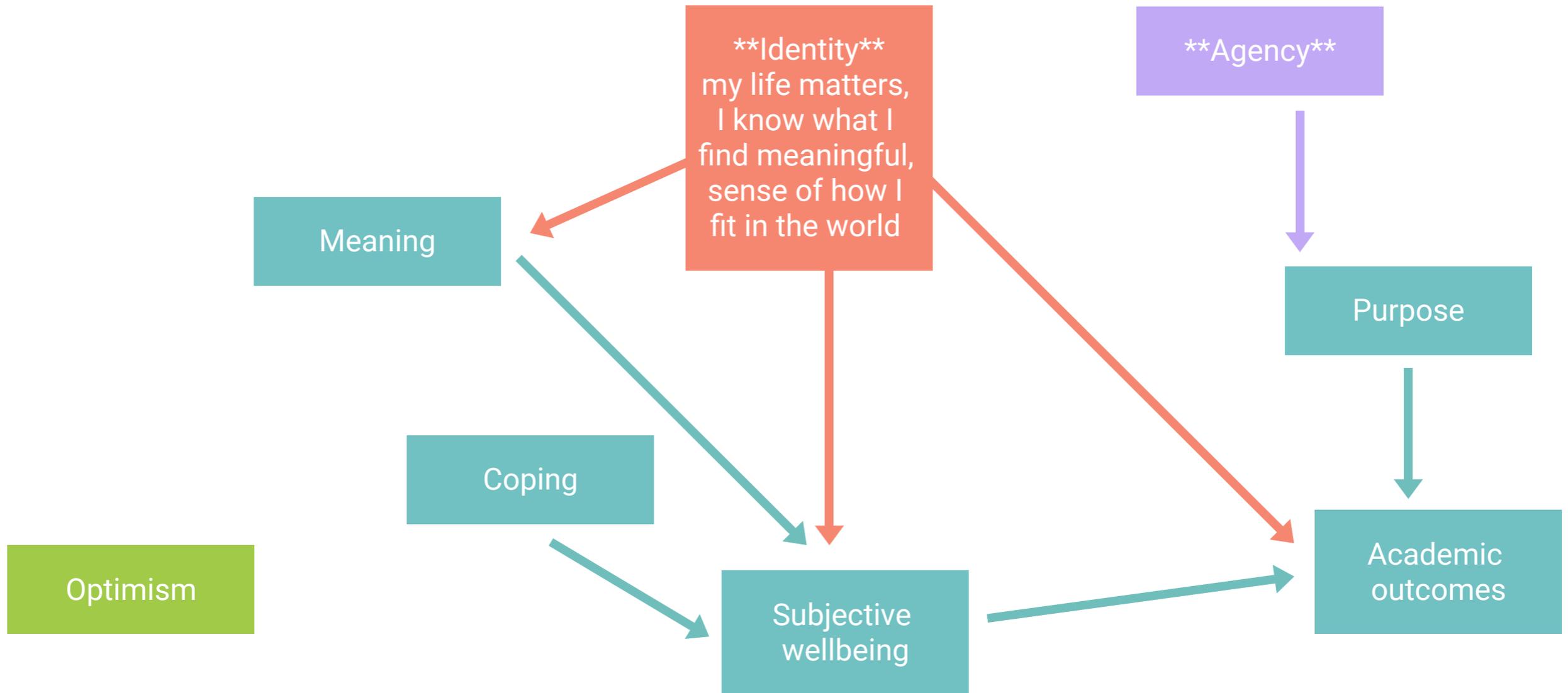
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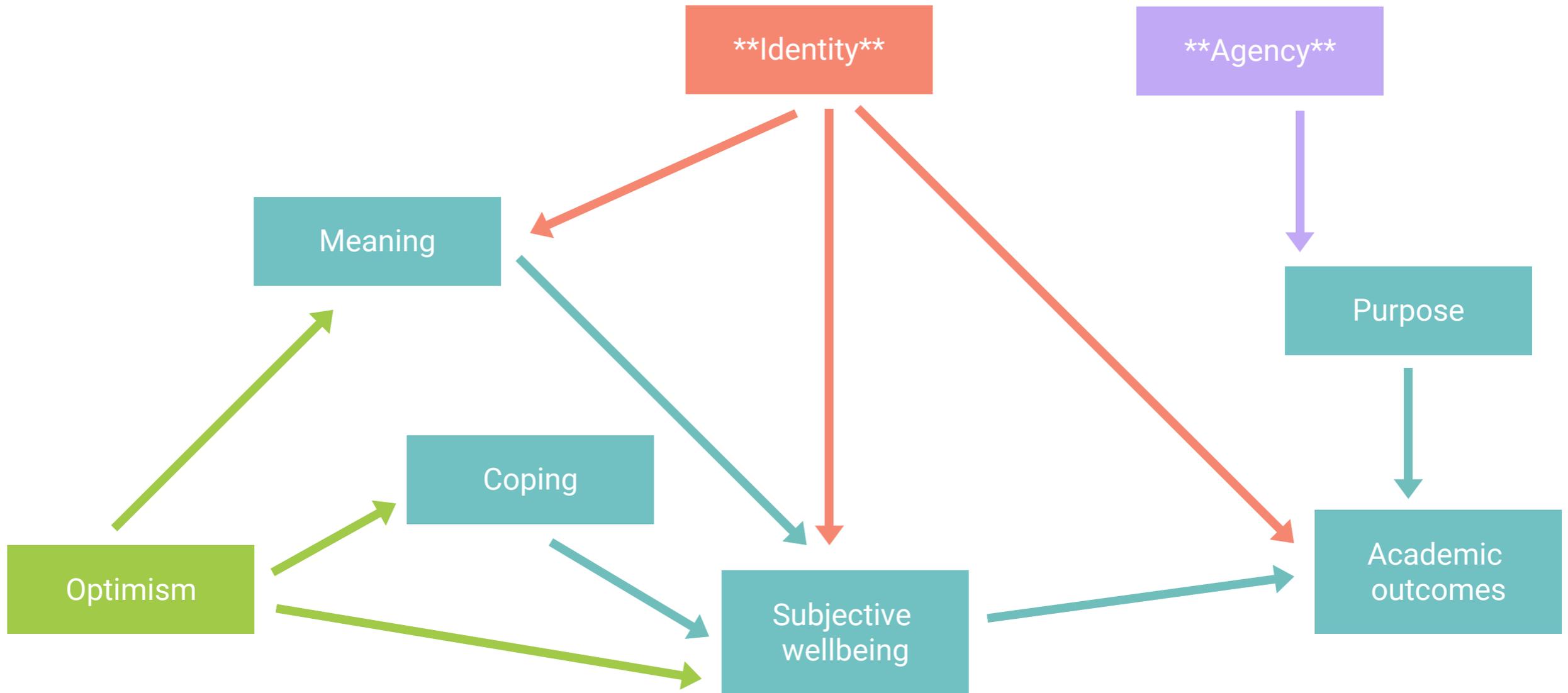
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3 Ps of Learned Optimism

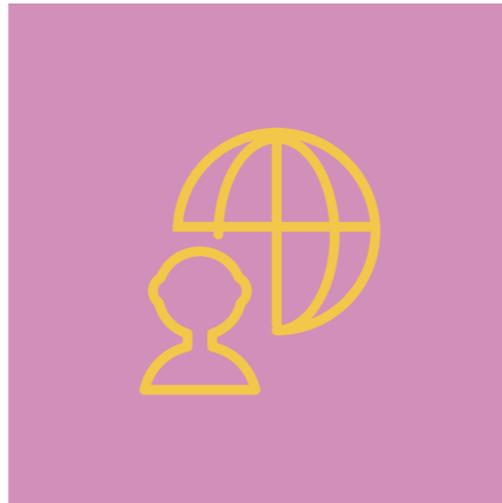
Positive events = permanent, pervasive, personal
Negative events = impermanent, isolated, impersonal

Permanent



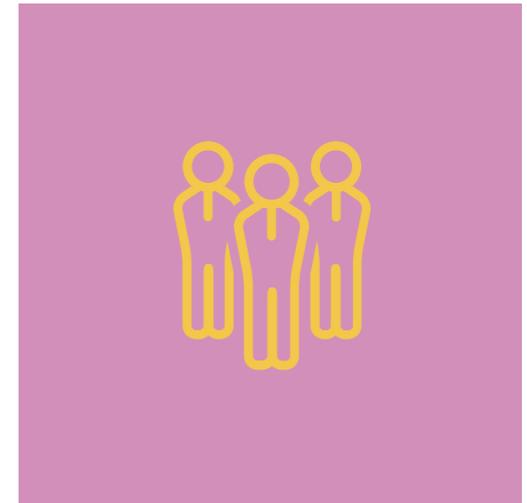
Is the event forever? Or is this an unusual occurrence?

Pervasive



Is this event a reflection of who you are as a person? Or is it just about a brief instance of behavior?

Personal



Is the event about you? Or something outside of yourself?

Example Using Class Conversations

PERMANENT, PERVERSIVE, PERSONAL

01 Optimism > positive event

Everyone got an A on the midterm! I am impressed by how good your study skills, persistence, and determination are!

02 Pessimism > positive event

Everyone got an A on the midterm. You all must have gotten lucky this one time.

IMPERMANENT, ISOLATED, IMPERSONAL

Example Using Class Conversations

PERMANENT, PERVERSIVE, PERSONAL

01 Optimism > positive event

Everyone got an A on the midterm! I am impressed by how good your study skills, persistence, and determination are!

03 Pessimism > negative event

No one got an A on the midterm. Obviously, you all have bad study skills that need to be improved before you fail at life.

02 Pessimism > positive event

Everyone got an A on the midterm. You all must have gotten lucky this one time.

04 Optimism > negative event

No one got an A on the midterm. Let's chalk this up to covid interfering with our best study skills, and let's find a way to responsibly improve for next time.

IMPERMANENT, ISOLATED, IMPERSONAL

LET'S DIG DEEPER!



Is optimism really an accessible, pervasive, teachable intervention?



How feasible is training and intervention with faculty and staff (and not just students)?



What else might work? What are you seeing in the models? Or the measures?

KEY REFERENCES

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Wellbeing Assessment technical reports for spring 2019, spring 2020, fall 2020:
<https://wellbeingcollaborative.wfu.edu/the-wellbeing-assessment/technical-reports/>