

Bryant M. Stone &
Amanda B. Chamberlain

**The PPI Companion:
Empirically Supported Positive
Psychological Interventions for
the Promotion of Well-Being**

A Positive Psychological Intervention
Protocol with the Structure of
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

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Bryant M. Stone
Amanda B. Chamberlain
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Author Biographies



Bryant M. Stone, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral fellow at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. His research program focuses on unconventional approaches to substance use disorders, including inclusive and synoptical pathogenesis perspectives, alternative treatments, applications of mechanisms of behavioral change, substance use stigma, and policy change. He graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology after completing his predoctoral internship at the Medical University of South Carolina in 2023. You can learn more about his research on www.bryantstonephd.com or by contacting him at contact@bryantstonephd.com.



Amanda B. Chamberlain, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral fellow at West Virginia University Medicine. Her clinical expertise involves psychological assessment, third-wave cognitive behavioral therapies, cognitive processing therapy, primary care behavioral health, health psychology interventions, and comorbid disorder treatments. She graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology after completing her predoctoral internship at the West Virginia University Medicine in 2023. You can contact her at amanda.chamberlain@wvumedicine.org.

Dedicated to the supportive advisors
who taught us how to be patient and
informed scientist-practitioners

Table of Contents

Author Biographies.....	2
Dedication.....	3
Preface.....	7
Session 1 – Introduction.....	9
The Basis for Positive Psychological Interventions.....	11
Session 2 – Goal Pursuits.....	12
Goal Pursuits Worksheet.....	16
Positive Changes to Achieve Your Goals.....	20
Session 3 – Meaning.....	21
Meaning Questions.....	23
Coherent Life Narrative.....	24
Session 4 – Gratitude.....	27
Gratitude Letter.....	30
Count Your Blessings.....	34
Session 5 – Savoring.....	37
Savoring Eating.....	40
Savoring Moments.....	42
Session 6 – Empathy.....	44
Perspective Taking.....	46
Expressing Empathy Record Form.....	47

Session 7 – Forgiveness.....	48
What is Forgiveness.....	51
Forgiveness Letter Details Worksheet.....	52
Forgiveness Letter.....	54
Session 8 – Kindness.....	56
Savoring Acts of Kindness.....	59
Novel Acts of Kindness Brainstorm Worksheet.....	61
Five Acts of Kindness in One Day.....	63
Session 9 – Strengths.....	64
Character Strengths Assessment.....	66
Character Strengths Assessment Score Sheet.....	73
Using Signature Strengths.....	75
Session 10 – Optimism.....	77
Optimistic vs. Pessimistic Interpretation.....	80
Best Possible Self Detail Worksheet.....	81
Best Possible Self Activity.....	84
Session 11 – Termination.....	86
Goal Setting.....	88
Relapse Plan.....	89
PPI Summary.....	90
Suggested Progress Measures.....	91
References / Further Reading.....	92

*“The good life is a process, not a state of being.
It is a direction, not a destination.”*

Carl Rogers

Preface

Although the research behind positive psychological interventions (PPIs) spans two decades and many studies support their effect sizes for the promotion of well-being, there is a surprising lack of practical resources for clinicians to implement PPIs into their practice. Although individuals can find intervention resources across the internet, there is a distinct lack of publicly available protocols that are PPI-based. This lack of protocols is where the current protocol comes into play. We wanted to take the information we have learned from studying PPIs in research and intervention studies and create a publicly available PPI-based protocol for clinicians. There are several goals we hope to accomplish with this protocol, which are the following:

1. **Single resource:** We wanted to provide a cheap and easily accessible single resource for clinicians to follow. It can be challenging to string together sessions using ambiguous worksheets and instructions available on the internet. There are other PPI protocols currently being researched. However, these protocols are not as easily accessible.
2. **Easy implementation:** We wrote this protocol so that someone who has never used PPIs before can pick it up, read it, and implement it into their practice. We developed this protocol to be an approachable protocol, hoping that clinicians-in-training and experienced clinicians alike can easily understand and deliver these interventions.
3. **Structure:** We wanted to create this protocol with the structure of a traditional CBT protocol. We see the value in unstructured therapy and loosely structured therapy; however, we wanted to provide clinicians with the most structure and let them decide how rigidly they would like to follow it. We think the best way to follow this protocol is to use it to structure a session, but following it precisely is not necessary (i.e., take from it and apply it loosely or tailor it to individual client needs). If the clinician has little experience, we recommend sticking closely to the protocol instructions. Each session includes psychoeducation, a centering exercise, worksheets to guide the in-session activities, and an assignment for between sessions. Additionally, we included some suggested prompts to support the clinician in guiding the conversation meaningfully.
4. **Variety:** We wanted to create breadth in this protocol by sampling what PPIs have to offer. Thus, we selected and integrated all the major PPI domains into these sessions. Clients will be able to experience the PPIs that work best for them, and you can help guide them to additional similar PPIs upon termination or continuation of therapy beyond this protocol.
5. **Empirically supported:** This specific protocol has not been studied or verified as efficacious for promoting well-being. Still, all the interventions in this protocol have direct evidence for their efficacy or are adapted from interventions/domains that have direct efficacy for the promotion of well-being.

6. Short duration: We wanted to create a protocol that has flexibility but is ultimately short in duration so that it can be used in settings with session limits. The protocol spans between 11 sessions (minimum) and 20 sessions (maximum), depending on how many sessions the clinician decides to spend on certain PPI domains. If the treatment length is 11 sessions, each session focuses on a unique PPI domain. However, clinicians can linger on some domains (noted below) due to the applicability and breadth of the domain. Here are our recommendations (we placed these recommendations next to the titles of each session (e.g., 1-4 sessions):

Session Recommendations			
Domain	Order	Base Sessions	Additional Optional Sessions
Introduction	1	1	0
Goal Pursuits	1	1	+1-2
Meaning	2	1	+1-3
Gratitude	3	1	0
Savoring	4	1	+1
Empathy	5	1	0
Forgiveness	6	1	+1-3
Kindness	7	1	0
Strengths	8	1	0
Optimism	9	1	0
Termination	10	1	0
Total:	-	11	9

With these goals, we hoped to create an easy-to-use, empirically supported, and structured singular resource with a variety of PPIs. For further questions or concerns about its use, please contact the authors using the emails listed on the author biography page.

A final note about the presentation of this protocol. Clinicians must be cautious and present these PPIs to *enrich* someone’s life, as opposed to a way to *obtain happiness*. The intentions behind using PPIs may moderate the effect, as one study found that individuals who seek out happiness (e.g., those who strive to be happy by suppressing negative emotions and avoiding difficult situations) may inhibit their ability to experience happiness, as evidenced by quasi-experimental studies (Mauss et al., 2011). Thus, it is important to help frame these interventions as ways to experience the clients’ lives more fully, to be able to engage with what is important to them, and to help them pursue their passions in life.

It is vitally important to not suggest that this protocol will *make* clients happy (although, it is possible that they may experience better life satisfaction). Framing this protocol as a happiness-increasing therapy may have an antithetical effect and lead to disappointment for the client if they ultimately do not feel happy or happier. Further, progress in therapy can be measured in a multitude of ways, not just through feelings of happiness or reduction of symptoms. Finally,

please see the suggested measures section for self-report scales to assist you in your assessment of therapy progress.

Session 1 – Introduction

Initial Report: We recommend that the first thing you do with your clients is give them the space to tell their stories. Often, clients come into the first session and have been preparing what to say. We think it is important to allow them the space to express their story and feel heard. There are several things to achieve in this first session, but we intentionally kept the activities in this session light to allow for the client to tell their story and allow the clinician to gather necessary background information. In fact, we find it reasonable to spend most of the session talking to the clients about their lives.

Information Gathering: It may be beneficial to take a moment to gather any information that you do not already have to aid in conceptualization (e.g., sleeping patterns or family relationships). After this session, information gathering becomes less important and may even be disruptive to the flow of some sessions. Thus, we recommend gathering most of the information needed for the case conceptualization in the first session.

Psychoeducation: The following information should be paraphrased to the client using the worksheet on page 11. We do not recommend reading this verbatim to the client. We have provided sufficient detail here for the clinician's benefit.

Despite decades of research focused on alleviating symptoms, in the 1990s, the American Psychological Association began pushing for clinicians and researchers to focus on enhancing and examining the healthy aspects of one's functioning (e.g., social connectedness or empathy). Since the inception of positive psychology, multiple studies have demonstrated how focusing on positive variables (e.g., character strengths or gratitude) can result in the alleviation of psychopathology and symptoms as well as the enhancement of individuals' quality of life, adaptive functioning, and flourishing (Parks & Biswas-Deiner, 2013; Cobbs et al., 2017; Stone & Parks, 2018).

Research examining twins suggests that one's happiness is manipulatable through active efforts to promote well-being (this study examined happiness, but we have rephrased it to well-being, which is a more realistic goal; see Lyubomirsky et al., 2005 for a review). Specifically, the study found that well-being is approximately 50% determined by genetics but only 10% by circumstances. This finding suggests that life events, socioeconomic status, and living context determine one's well-being; yet the circumstance is not the most important determinant. Further, genetics may not be the most critical determinant because genetic influence is outside one's control. Instead, the most crucial determinant in one's well-being, which accounts for 40% of the variability, is one's active efforts or behaviors to *promote* one's well-being. As a result, this review suggests that one can largely influence one's well-being through active and intentional efforts.

To take advantage of the 40% of variability in well-being explained by active efforts, researchers have examined the use of positive variables in the form of interventions to promote healthy functioning and reduce psychopathology. These interventions were termed positive psychological interventions (PPIs) and have three criteria that separate the interventions from

traditional clinical interventions (Parks & Biswas-Diener, 2013). First, all PPIs have an empirical basis. For an intervention to qualify as a PPI, it must demonstrate efficacy in at least one experiment and have a strong theoretical basis for the mechanisms of change. Second, PPIs must use a positive (i.e., positive in valence) variable (e.g., savoring or empathy) instead of targeting strictly negative variables (e.g., negative automatic thoughts). Third, the change in the positive variables must cause a corresponding positive change in a population of interest. For example, increasing gratitude in an undergraduate sample could strengthen positive affect. In total, PPIs are empirically supported interventions that use positive variables and cause a positive change in a population of interest.

- ◇ Use the “The Basis for Positive Psychological Interventions” worksheet to facilitate this discussion.

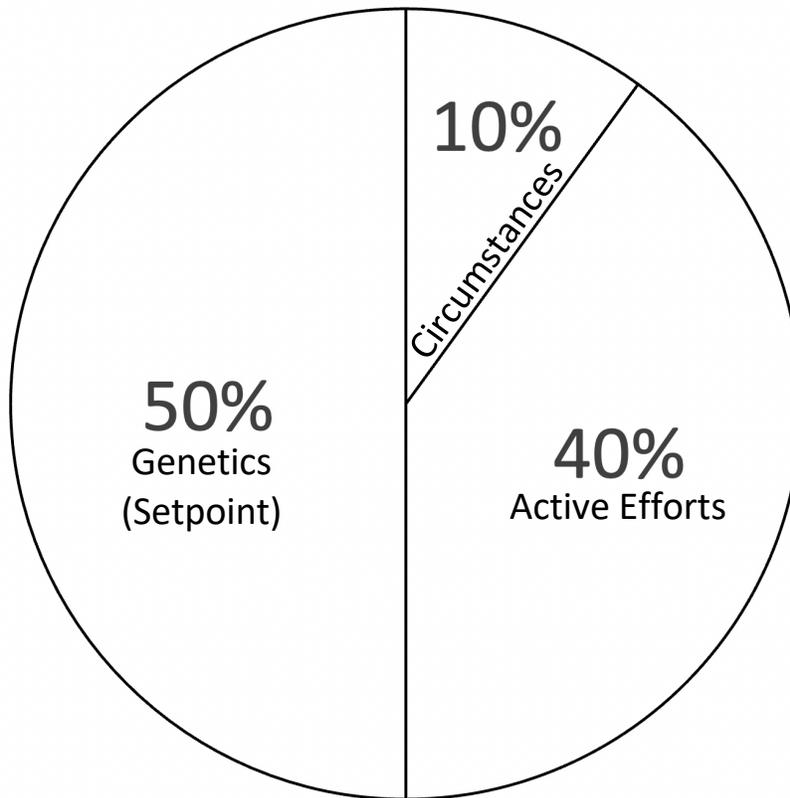
Obtain a commitment: After explaining the process and activities, allow space for the client to ask questions and discuss the rationale. Once they have asked all their questions and you have answered them, we recommend obtaining a commitment to the therapy. The research shows that these interventions have an effect when they are followed as they were tested in the experiments, which require some work or engagement from the clients both in and outside of the session. Thus, the best results will come from strong client engagement, and obtaining a commitment to put in the *effort* and *try* the interventions may motivate the clients to continue therapy even when it is difficult.

Suggested Prompts for Session: This section is listed at the end of each session. These prompts are suggestions that a clinician may want to have in their head or written down to keep conversations going and learn more about the clients.

- What brought you into therapy today?
- What moment made you decide to come to therapy?
- Why do you think you’re experiencing these emotions?
- What will help you succeed?
- What should I avoid making this a better experience for you?
- What have you liked/disliked about previous therapy experiences?
- What are you hoping to gain from therapy?
- What support do you have?
- What would your life look like if therapy was successful?
- What motivates you to improve your life?
- What are your biggest obstacles?

Homework: Ask the client to spend some time over the next week thinking about what would be different in their life if therapy were successful.

The Basis for Positive Psychological Interventions



The basis for PPIs is displayed in the pie chart above. Researchers have found that around 50% of well-being is determined by genetics or what we call a “setpoint.” The setpoint is basically our baseline level of well-being determined by genetic factors. The interesting part of this research is that only 10% of our well-being comes from our circumstances, which is why we see happy people in poor living situations and sad or depressed people in good living conditions. Feelings of well-being are largely subjective!

The major takeaway here, though, is that 40% of our well-being is determined by active efforts, which are the behaviors we engage in to promote our well-being. That means that 40% of your well-being is determined by your behavior, which, unlike thoughts and emotions, is largely in your control.

The basis of the therapy you are about to engage in uses this 40% to promote well-being. With the help of your clinician, you will learn the behavioral skills to promote well-being, a fuller engagement with life, and a pursuit of goals and values.

The following domains of PPIs will guide this therapy: 1) Pursuing Goals, 2) Finding Meaning, 3) Expressing Gratitude, 4) Savoring Moments, 5) Expressing Empathy, 6) Forgiveness, 7) Acts of Kindness, 8) Using Character Strengths, and 9) Experiencing Optimism.

Session 2 – Goal Pursuits (1-3 sessions)

Psychoeducation: Setting goals in Positive Psychology is one of the most effective methods of enhancing motivation and is empirically supported (Park & Corn, 2018). Some have largely defined goals as the target of mental action sequences, where all behaviors engaged in purposefully are considered goal-directed behaviors (Feldman & Dreher, 2012). Goals can be short-term and take less time and effort to achieve, or long-term, taking years or a lifetime to achieve. For our time together, we are focusing more on short-term goals, but we will also set a couple of long-term goals and break them down into more digestible and achievable steps. Pursuing personal goals is associated with enhancements in both physical and psychological well-being. Additionally, goals give us a measurable way to track progress and keep us accountable to ourselves. When we set goals using an individual's personal strengths and values, they are more personally meaningful and are more associated with well-being. Additionally, by focusing on these strengths, as opposed to just problems or symptoms, we hope to increase self-efficacy for achieving personally relevant goals that persists beyond the termination of therapy. Setting goals also leads to more hope, as you are setting your sights on a more positive and meaningful future.

In-Session Centering Exercise: I invite you to begin by getting comfortable in your chair. Maybe roll your shoulders back, plant your feet, and let your hands fall gently into your lap. Notice where your body comes into contact with the chair. (Pause 10 seconds) Now bring your attention to your breath, attending to how it feels breathing in, and how it feels breathing out. I don't want you to try and change your breath in any way, just notice your lungs expanding, and deflating, with each successive breath. (Pause 15-20 seconds).

Now I invite you to recall an area of your life where maybe you have been struggling or an area in which you would like to see a change. Begin to imagine the best possible outcome for this area of your life. Maybe in the next 6 months, or a year from now. Imagine living your life the way you would want it to be if you were your ultimate self. I'm not asking you get caught up in the limitations of reality, such as monetary resources or physical abilities. Instead, I invite you to allow yourself to get carried away, envisioning your ultimate life.

Now, allow yourself to connect with one of the goals that you would like to achieve in the next few months. Pick a goal that is meaningful and close to you. Come into contact with that goal, and imagine it growing from your head, like a thought bubble of your future reality. (10 seconds) Allow it to grow and surround you, as you imagine what your life would be like once you have achieved this goal. Maybe visualize it like a picture or a movie that you have stepped into. Imagine what you would see, smell, touch, taste, and hear to bring it to life in your mind. Who else is there with you? Where are you? What is going on around you?

Next, visualize yourself stepping out of the image of your creation and taking a step back to examine the scene, keeping the mental image in front of you (10 seconds). Breathe in deeply (5 seconds) and, as you exhale, use your breath to energize the image, filling it with positive energy and intention. (Allow for 4-5 breaths). Now I invite you to revisit this image but imagine dropping it down into your life 3 to 4 months in the future, or in the time frame you've set for yourself for

this goal. Notice how all the events in your life between now and then line themselves up to support you in achieving this goal. Visualize this process happening, and the pieces falling into place to help you reach this place. (20 seconds)

Once you feel like the path to your goal has been set or completed, bring your attention back to the present, in this room. What steps will you need to take in the next week to bring you closer to your goal? The next month? (20 seconds). Bring your attention back to your breath (pause) and the feeling of your body in the chair (pause), and when you're ready, open your eyes.

Goal Pursuits Activity: We designed the goal pursuits activity to help the client begin to think of short-term, easily achievable goals. Some individuals often find it difficult to complete tasks and goals, despite their desire to do so. Setting short-term, achievable goals that the clinician can help reinforce and troubleshoot throughout the remainder of therapy can introduce positive rewards back into an individual's life, building confidence, experiencing meaning, and promoting well-being.

The aim of the Goal Pursuits activity is to guide the client to create these easily achievable but important goals that the client can work on throughout the next few months of therapy together. First, help the client brainstorm a meaningful goal that they could achieve in the short-term, and then help the clients find a way to measure progress on the chosen goal. Then, help the client determine what success would be in the measurable units. Last, inspire the clients to work towards these goals by helping them write about the positive changes they would see if they achieved these goals. Specifically, note how each positive change would make the client feel. If the client appears to have difficulties with their confidence or motivation for reaching this goal, it may be helpful to discuss the costs and benefits of change and the costs and benefits of staying the same. Use the Goal Pursuits worksheet on page 16 to identify and establish goals in session. We have provided an example of this worksheet on page 15.

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- Why do you want to achieve these goals?
- Tell me how achieving these goals would add meaning to your life.
- How do these goals align with your values?
- What obstacles will get in the way of your goals?
- What would not meeting these goals mean about you? (Good for challenging beliefs)
- With whom can you share these goals?
- Tell me about your success or failure with goals in the past.
- How will you handle setbacks?
- How will you reward yourself for your efforts?
- With whom can you celebrate your successes?

Additional Sessions: The clinician may want to take several sessions to determine and achieve small, confidence-building goals, especially with individuals who may have narrow behavioral repertoires. There are several benefits to spending several sessions on goal building and pursuing. First, it can allow for some quick changes to behaviors that are directly causing dysfunction in the clients' lives. Spending additional time on approaching goals can also help build

rapport and the working alliance while promoting self-confidence and feelings of autonomy for the client. However, we recommend spending no more than three sessions total on goal pursuits.

Homework, Positive Changes to Achieve Your Goals: We designed the homework to encourage the client to begin taking steps to help facilitate their goals. The client will use the goals of their choosing from session to engage in three easily accomplishable positive changes for each goal. These changes can be a variety of behaviors, such as doing the dishes at a certain time, taking more showers, going for a walk, calling a friend or family member, telling others one's goals, etc. We have provided an example on page 19. Assign the worksheet on page 20 to help structure their between-session goals.

Goal Pursuits Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help you create short-term, easily achievable goals. Think about some positive changes that you would like to see in your life and write them below. Then, bring these goals to life by writing about how achieving these goals would affect your life. What would change? How would these changes make you feel?

Goal 1:

What is your specific goal? Exercise more frequently

How will you measure the success of this goal? Number of times I go to the gym

How will we know when you achieve this goal? I will go to the gym two times a week.

Once on Tuesdays and once on Thursday.

What would achieving this goal look like in your life?

1. More energy Feeling: Motivated
2. More confidence Feeling: Content
3. Less stress Feeling: Calm
4. I would have something to do in my spare time Feeling: Happy

Goal Pursuits Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help you create short-term, easily achievable goals. Think about some positive changes that you would like to see in your life and write them below. Then, bring these goals to life by writing about how achieving these goals would affect your life. What would change? How would these changes make you feel?

Goal 1:

What is your specific goal? _____

How will you measure the success of this goal? _____

How will we know when you achieve this goal? _____

What would achieving this goal look like in your life?

1. _____ Feeling: _____

2. _____ Feeling: _____

3. _____ Feeling: _____

4. _____ Feeling: _____

Goal 2:

What is your specific goal? _____

How will you measure the success of this goal? _____

How will we know when you achieve this goal? _____

What would achieving this goal look like in your life?

1. _____ Feeling: _____

2. _____ Feeling: _____

3. _____ Feeling: _____

4. _____ Feeling: _____

Goal 3:

What is your specific goal? _____

How will you measure the success of this goal? _____

How will we know when you achieve this goal? _____

What would achieving this goal look like in your life?

1. _____ Feeling: _____

2. _____ Feeling: _____

3. _____ Feeling: _____

4. _____ Feeling: _____

Positive Changes to Achieve Your Goals

Now that you have determined your goals to work towards throughout therapy, we want to start making positive changes to help you achieve these goals. Below, you will determine and complete three positive changes you can make for each goal. These changes should be simple and easy to accomplish. For example, if exercising is one's goal, one might consider buying a gym membership or running shoes as a positive change. Or these changes could be telling someone about your goals or setting up a timeline.

Goal 1: Exercising more frequently

List three positive changes you made to prepare for your success to achieve these goals:

Change 1: Buying gym shoes and outfit

Change 2: Setting a time each week to go to the gym

Change 3: Telling someone important about your goal

Positive Changes to Achieve Your Goals

Now that you have determined your goals to work towards throughout therapy, we want to start making positive changes to help you achieve these goals. Below, you will determine and complete three positive changes you can make for each goal. These changes should be simple and easily accomplishable. For example, if exercising is one's goal, one might consider buying a gym membership or running shoes as a positive change. These changes could also be telling someone about your goals or setting up a timeline.

Goal 1: _____

List three positive changes you made to prepare for your success to achieve this goal:

Change 1: _____

Change 2: _____

Change 3: _____

Goal 2: _____

List three positive changes you made to prepare for your success to achieve this goal:

Change 1: _____

Change 2: _____

Change 3: _____

Goal 3: _____

List three positive changes you made to prepare for your success to achieve this goal:

Change 1: _____

Change 2: _____

Change 3: _____

Session 3 – Meaning (1-4 Sessions)

Homework Review: It is important to assess progress on the client's goals. If the client is successful, then we recommend providing praise and affirmations for their success. If the client is unsuccessful, it may be beneficial to help troubleshoot briefly with the client. Even if the client reports being unsuccessful, be sure to offer praise for their efforts and validate the difficulty inherent in approaching and making changes in one's life. We advise continuing to check in on progress with the goals for the remainder of the protocol. We find it reasonable to take some time to update goals and troubleshoot when necessary.

Psychoeducation: Meaning in life refers to a life that is characterized by purpose, significance, and coherence (Antonovsky, 1993; Baumeister, 1991; Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Regarding coherence, some theorize that life is more meaningful when the world, one's life, and the events in one's life make sense and flow (Heintzelman et al., 2013; Kahneman & Klein, 2009). Purpose in life entails an individual's personal direction in life and set of goals or aspirations to pursue, and significance means seeing the value that is inherent to one's life and perceiving it as one worth living (Martela & Steger, 2016; Steger et al., 2006).

Meaning in life is associated with a greater quality of life, positive affect, and self-reported health (King et al., 2006; Krause, 2007; Steger et al., 2009). It is also correlated with a decreased risk for Alzheimer's and a reduced rate of cognitive decline related to age (Boyle et al., 2010). Meaning in life is further associated with better coping skills and lower rates of psychological disorders and suicidal ideation (Heisel & Flett, 2004; Mascaro & Rosen, 2005; Steger & Kashdan, 2009).

Centering Exercise: Allow yourself to sit in your chair and begin to feel the weight of your body. Allow your eyes to fall closed and your hands to fall into your lap or by your sides. Draw your attention to the weight of your arms on your shoulders and body, noticing how gravity pulls your body down towards the ground. Bring your attention in to your breath, allowing it to center you. Notice the temperature of the air as you breathe in and back out. Notice the temperature of the air on your skin in the places where it makes contact with the air—hands, arms, face, eyelids. Feel the weight of your body in this space and in this chair.

Bring to mind the story of your life. Everyone's life has chapters, a plot, and important characters. Watch, in your mind's eye, as your own life story unfolds in front of you. What might you title the story? What are the most meaningful chapters? The most painful? What role have you played in your own life story? Are there chapters or pages you feel the need to hide or to change? What themes or plot lines show up the most in your story? As you flip through your story, notice the way you turn the pages, whether it be delicately, with curiosity, or quickly, skimming past certain sections, just trying to make it to the end.

As you make it to where you are now, where do you see the story going next? What goals or aspirations draw you forward into tomorrow? Next week? Next year? What do you want to accomplish? Bring to mind your life's purpose, whether it be one or several. Notice how that

purpose feels in your body, whether you are able to put words to this purpose or not. Imagine that purpose filling your body, starting somewhere central and making its way down to your toes, out to your fingertips, and up to your ears. What does it feel like to hold this feeling inside of you? Is there a temperature or a sensation attached? A weight? Imagine this purpose guiding you, supporting each step forward, from your first step out of this room, to your steps tomorrow, next week, and next month. Allow yourself to draw your attention back to your body in this room, and in this chair. Notice the temperature of the room and the sounds. When you are ready, go ahead and open your eyes.

Meaning Questions: The purpose of this session is to explore the clients' life themes and significant events. The clients will use the discussion to help them write their coherent life narratives. This protocol has a list of sample questions that the clinician can use to guide the session. The clinician should provide the client with the Meaning Questions worksheet on page 23 to help them write their life narrative. The clinician has more freedom in this session to explore the client's life themes in a way that is most fitting to the clinician's therapeutic orientation (e.g., writing answers down on a worksheet or just discussing the answers).

Additional Sessions: Entire therapies, like Logotherapy, are built around finding, building, and savoring meaning in clients' lives. As such, the clinician can spend many sessions here talking with the clients about their lives and finding meaning in the perceived chaos. We recommend having the client write their Coherent Life Narrative after a thorough discussion about the clients' lives to help them put everything into perspective. We recommend spending no more than four sessions on meaning-making, as it is important to move on to additional skills.

Suggested prompts are omitted from this session because the session activities are based on open-ended questions.

Homework, Coherent Life Narrative: The goal of this PPI on page 24 is to increase the cohesion and purpose of the client's lives. The clinician will direct the client to use the information discussed in the session to write a story of their life – highlighting the significant events and what those events mean to them. Tell the client that there is no right or wrong way to write the story, but that the story should create a clear overview or summary of their lives as they understand it.

Meaning Questions

Use the following questions in the therapy session to guide a discussion about the clients' lives. The goal of this session is to prepare the client to write their coherent life narrative for homework. The clinician should be aware that these questions focus on both the good and the painful aspects of an individual's life. The purpose of the coherent life narrative is to fit all the pieces of one's life together, not just the enjoyable parts. Be sure to ask some of these questions from each domain. The clients will have a chance to see these questions on the homework.

Experiences

- What were the most challenging experiences you have encountered?
- What did you learn from those challenging experiences?
- What do those challenging experiences mean to you?
- How do those challenging experiences fit into your life story?
- What were the most rewarding experiences you have encountered?
- What did you learn from those rewarding experiences?
- What do those rewarding experiences mean to you?
- How do those rewarding experiences fit into your life story?

Relationships

- Who are the people that are most important to you?
- How have these important people shaped who you are today?
- What do these important people mean to you?
- What would your life look like without these important people?
- Who are the people who have hurt you?
- How have these hurtful people shaped who you are/aren't?
- What do these hurtful people mean to you?
- What would your life look like without these hurtful people?

Vocation/Calling

- What do you believe you were put on earth to do?
- How has this calling changed your life?
- How does it feel to engage with your calling?
- Who has you helped when you were engaging with your calling?
- Who are your mentors?
- How have these mentors helped you?
- What would it mean to you if you could engage with your calling in the future?
- What are some things that have stopped you from engaging with your calling?

Coherent Life Narrative

Use the following worksheets to write about your life story from the day you were born to today. Feel free to use additional scratch paper if you would like the room to provide more details. Make a note of all the important highs and lows of your life. Explain what these milestones and setbacks mean to you, noting your relationships and the impact of your life calling along the way. Use the following questions to guide your coherent life narrative:

Experiences

- What were the most challenging experiences you have encountered?
- What did you learn from those challenging experiences?
- What do those challenging experiences mean to you?
- How do those challenging experiences fit into your life story?
- What were the most rewarding experiences you have encountered?
- What did you learn from those rewarding experiences?
- What do those rewarding experiences mean to you?
- How do those rewarding experiences fit into your life story?

Relationships

- Who are the people that are most important to you?
- How have these important people shaped who you are today?
- What do these important people mean to you?
- What would your life look like without these important people?
- Who are the people who have hurt you?
- How have these hurtful people shaped who you are/aren't?
- What do these hurtful people mean to you?
- What would your life look like without these hurtful people?

Vocation/Calling

- What do you believe you were put on earth to do?
- How has this calling changed your life?
- How does it feel to engage with your calling?
- Who has you helped when you were engaging with your calling?
- Who are your mentors?
- How have these mentors helped you?
- What would it mean to you if you could engage with your calling in the future?
- What are some things that have stopped you from engaging with your calling?

Session 4 – Gratitude

Homework Review: Take a moment to check in with the clients about how the previous week went. Ask them how they have been feeling and follow up on any changes or ongoing situations in the client's life. Upon completion, ask the client about how the homework went. Be sure to assess for any changes in perspectives, new information learned, and opinions on the writing activity. Also, be sure to point out to the client during the homework review that their lives have followed a particular pattern and tend to continue to follow that pattern; however, also note that they have control over their behaviors and choices to change their life. You can even have the clients read their life narrative to you, if they're comfortable.

Psychoeducation: Researchers have defined gratitude as an emotion of appreciating positive things one has in their life, including people, objects, opportunities, and personal traits. In the context of this session, we define gratitude as a more relational concept that refers to both recognizing and responding with appreciation or positive emotions to the positive roles other individuals have played in one's life and the positive outcomes and experiences an individual experiences because of them (McCullough et al., 2002).

Promotion of gratitude is associated with happiness and fewer depressive symptoms (Seligman et al., 2005). Additionally, gratitude is associated with several different indicators of well-being, such as higher levels of life satisfaction, optimism, and happiness, and a better ability to cope with stress (McCullough et al., 2002). Researchers in this study also found that gratefulness is associated with more prosocial behaviors, empathy, forgiveness, and spirituality. It has also been associated with improvements in individuals with impaired body image (Geraghty et al., 2010) and with stronger social connections (Algoe et al., 2008).

Centering Exercise: Allow yourself to sit comfortably in your chair with your feet flat on the floor. Let your hands fall into your lap and begin by bringing your attention in to your breath in your chest. Simply observe the rising and falling of your chest and stomach as you breathe in... and back out. Allowing your breath to breathe itself, notice the texture and the temperature as the air flows in and out. Notice your lungs and chest expanding to allow room for the air and deflating as you breath back out. Observe your breathing for a moment, and if your mind drifts off to other things, slowly draw your attention back to your breath in your chest.

Now begin to bring to mind what you are grateful for in your life. Maybe it's a person, a pet, or a personal trait. I want you to bring the thing you are most grateful for to mind. Try to really picture it, bringing to mind the edges and the details. Keeping this image in mind, bring to mind the reasons you are grateful for this person or thing. What has it helped you to do? Has it kept you safe? Furthered your growth? Comforted you? In your mind, you can thank this person or thing for their role in your life. Feel the gratitude come up from your toes and fill your body and imagine this feeling freely flowing from your body and into the mental image you have created. When you feel you have allowed this feeling to flow into the thing you are grateful for, allow this image to fade and bring to mind someone else you are grateful for in your life. Again, really bring to mind the image of this person or thing, imagining the details. What has it meant

to you? How has it played a role in your life? What has it allowed you to do or be? Imagine the gratitude welling up in your body and pouring into the image, like water from a watering can. Thank the image and let it slowly fade away. Draw your attention back to your breath and your body in this space. Notice what you are feeling in your body, right now. Is there a pressure, weight, or a temperature to it? Thank your mind for this experience, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

Gratitude Letter Intervention: Several studies have demonstrated that individuals can feel instantaneous benefits from writing a gratitude letter after just 15 minutes of writing. These immediate effects suggest that completing this intervention during the therapy session may be beneficial because it allows for the clinician to process and bolster the experience with clients after writing.

To begin this intervention, explain to the clients that they are invited to write a gratitude letter to someone who has helped them greatly. Use the Gratitude Letter Response Form on pages 27. The worksheet has instructions on the top so that clients may refer to them during the writing process. The client may benefit from the clinician reading the instructions aloud and addressing any questions. Encourage the clients to write for a minimum of 15 minutes. If the clients report finishing early, encourage them to re-read the letter and add more detail throughout. If the clients express the desire for more time, allow the client to write for longer if necessary, but not so long that the remaining session items are not addressed. Tell the clients that they are invited to continue the writing process at home and may discuss the added material with the clinician next week.

The next step in this intervention is to discuss and process the letter with the client. A good first step may be to have the client read their letter out loud to the clinician. Listen intently and attempt to identify strong emotions or the kind behaviors of the benefactor in the letter to explore. Emphasize how incredible it is to have or have had someone in the client's life and how this individual has influenced their development. The client may choose to deliver the letter to the individual after it is written. Research suggests that the effects of the letter occur regardless of if the letter is delivered or not. Emphasize that the client does not have to deliver the letter or disclose that they are in therapy.

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- Who helped you get to where you are today?
- What are you grateful for having in your life?
- What couldn't you live without?
- Who couldn't you live without?
- What parts of your life make you feel blessed?
- What is something you wish would happen that would make you feel grateful?
- In what ways are you fortunate?
- What are some abilities that you are grateful to have?
- What are some small things you appreciate?
- What life experiences are you grateful for having?

Homework, Counting Blessings: Research has shown that counting one's blessings leads to improvement in physical symptoms, life satisfaction, and optimism compared to counting one's hassles. In this intervention, the client is invited to identify and write down 3-5 positive experiences throughout the client's days for which one is grateful. When repeated over several weeks, identifying positive experiences in the client's environment may become easier. For that reason, this homework will be carried out throughout the remainder of therapy. Provide the client with the Counting Blessings worksheet on page 34 and the example on page 33 to help guide their daily entries.

The research suggests writing down three to five blessings per day. Although the Counting Your Blessings Record Form has five lines per day, emphasize to the clients that they should identify 3-5 blessings. Further, the client may decide to carry the record form on them and write down their blessings as they occur or fill out the record form all at once at the end of the day. The method and time of filling out the record form do not matter as long as 3-5 blessings are recorded each day. The authors have added reflection questions at the end of each day for the clients to think about; however, the intervention does not call for written responses to these questions.

Counting Your Blessings

There are many opportunities throughout the day to be grateful. Use this record form to track of 3-5 good things that happened during your day for which you are grateful. You can record these experiences as they happen or all at once at the end of the day.

Monday

1. I spent time with my grandma
2. I woke up well-rested
3. I ate a good breakfast
4. I didn't have traffic on my way to work
5. I played my favorite game on my phone

Reflection Question: What more could I do for others?

Dates of the Week:

Counting Your Blessings

There are many opportunities throughout the day to be grateful. Use this record form to track 3-5 good things that happened during your day for which you are grateful. You can record these experiences as they happen or all at once at the end of the day. You do not need to write out a response to the provided questions for reflection.

Monday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Reflection Question: What more could I do for others?

Tuesday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Reflection Question: What did I receive today?

Wednesday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Reflection Question: What did I give today?

Thursday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Reflection Question: Who helped me out today?

Friday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Reflection Question: Who could I help tomorrow?

Saturday

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Reflection Question: What would I have changed about today?

Sunday

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Reflection Question: Who helped me get to where I am today?

Session 5 – Savoring (1-2 sessions)

Homework Review: Check in with the client about the Count Your Blessings worksheet and discuss with them if it impacted the client's experiences. Talk to the client about continuing to use the Count Your Blessings worksheet (recommended) for additional weeks. We advise continuing to have the client complete the Count Your Blessings worksheet for the remainder of the protocol. Check-in with the clients to ensure that the homework does not become overwhelming. If the homework becomes too much for the client to complete, we advise dropping or reducing the frequency of the Count Your Blessings worksheet and prioritizing the session-specific homework.

Psychoeducation: Savoring refers to perceiving positive experiences and sensations differently, with the intention of focusing one's awareness to intensify and prolong pleasurable moments and experiences (Peterson, 2006; Schueller & Parks, 2014). Savoring was developed out of mindfulness and involves living in the present and attending to specific details of the environment and experiences (Kabat-Zinn, 2009). Individuals can use savoring for any experience, including eating and memories. Certain activities can increase savoring, including writing about an experience, being present around other people, focusing the meaning of the experience, and keeping in mind that the experience is short-lived (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). Engaging in savoring is positively correlated life satisfaction, happiness, perceived control, optimism, and less depression (Bryant, 2003). Savoring is also associated with resilience and less negative emotions (Hurley, 2012; Smith & Hollinger-Smith, 2015).

Centering Exercise: Sit in a position that is comfortable and draw your attention in towards your breath. You can close your eyes if you are comfortable. Notice the rising and falling of your chest as you breathe in, and back out. I want to invite you to begin to attend to your experience, right now in this room. Notice the sounds in the room and the texture of the sounds. Notice your body in this space and the places where the air meets your skin. Is it cool or warm? Check-in with your body. Are there places of tension, or pain? Are you hungry or thirsty? What kind of things is your body holding today? Are you experiencing any emotions? Where do you feel the emotion in your body? Is it heavy? Or light? What kind of thoughts are going through your mind? Is there a particular place your mind is trying to take you? Allow it to guide you for a minute and then gently bring your attention back to your body in this space.

I invite you to recall a memory that is pleasant in nature. A memory that when you think back to it, makes you smile or feel warm. Recall that memory as if you were back in that space. Imagine the details as if it were happening right now. If you were transported back into that memory, what would it feel like? Is there a temperature or smell to it? Is it light or dark? What or who is around you? See if you can attend to each detail of the memory. The emotions or thoughts you experienced or may have experienced, the conversations, the faces of the other individuals. Allow yourself to sit in this memory for a few moments and attend to the experience. Gently bring your awareness back to your body in this room and your feet planted on the floor. Notice your breath and your body in this chair, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

Savoring Eating Exercise: See the Mindful Eating worksheet for instructions on page 40.

Reminiscing Exercise: For this exercise, have the client identify a pivotal and positive experience that they remember vividly. Tell the client that you would like them to tell you about that experience in great detail, just like they attended to the food during mindful eating. Make sure the client goes slowly. Have the client recall the emotions and sensations they felt as they tell you the story. The goal of this intervention is to have the client relive the experience in as much detail as possible. Questions like, “what was that like?” and, “how did that feel?” may help the client recall the details of the experience. If the client is having difficulty recalling an experience, assure the client that recalling the experience perfectly is not the goal of the activity.

- ◇ Note that this exercise should not use any traumatic experiences. Reminiscing is about savoring positive experiences. Using a traumatic experience for this exercise would turn this exercise into an exposure for which the client may not be prepared to complete.

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- What could you be doing when your mind wanders to the past or future?
- What brings you joy in life and why?
- What was the last time you were fully present for something?
- What are your favorite parts of your day?
- What is your favorite daily positive experience?
- What experiences make you feel alive?
- If you only had a year left to live, what would you do with your time?
- What do you want to experience fully in life?
- What experiences matter the most to you?
- What positive experiences can you focus on during the next week?

Additional Sessions: If the clinician desires, we recommend one additional session to help the clients learn the skill. Multiple therapies are based on mindfulness, an adjacent skill, making savoring experiences a worthwhile pursuit. This skill is particularly important for clients who present with high repetitive negative thinking.

Homework, Savoring Moments: Savoring moments in session is an important learning tool to develop the skill. However, the best effects are created with repeated practice outside of therapy. Provide the client with the Savoring Moments worksheet on page 42 and an example on page 41 to help them keep track of their savoring over the next week. The goal we have created is to complete one savoring moment each day before the next session. This worksheet contains a record for each day of the week. For more ambitious clients, we recommend printing out several copies of the worksheet to assist them in the recording.

Each section involves a place to write down what the client savored, when they savored it, the emotions they felt, their reaction to the experience, and how savoring changed their experience. It is important to emphasize that savoring should focus on positive experiences and the practice does not need to be long. Even a 30-second savoring of a moment can enhance the

experience. Some clients may say that they don't experience any positive moments to savor. It is important to validate that concern and guide them to savor banal or routine things they do in their lives (e.g., watching TV or eating) to see how it may impact even these experiences.

Savoring Eating

This activity involves slow and mindful consumption of food. Mints or other small pieces of candy with wrappers work the best for this activity. Start by handing a piece of candy to the clients and tell them not to eat it yet but to just hold it in their hands. Tell the client that this exercise is about noticing the sensations that we tend to ignore or miss. This intervention involves a series of questions to ask the participant. The clinician is free to do the intervention with the participant and provide their experiences as well. It is best to get at least 2 descriptive words for each question.

1. What does the candy feel like in your hand?
2. What are the textures you are noticing?
3. What is the temperature of the candy?
4. How hard is the candy?
Have the clients lift the candy up to their ear and play with it so that it makes a noise
5. What sound does the candy make?
6. What does the candy smell like with the wrapper on it?
Have the clients slowly unwrap the wrapper
7. What does it feel like to pull away at the wrapper?
8. What initial smells do you smell?
Have the client place the candy in their hands and not do anything with it
9. What does the candy feel like now?
10. What are the textures?
11. What does the candy smell like?
Have the clients place the candy on their tongue, but not chew it
12. What does the candy feel like on your tongue?
13. What textures are you noticing?
14. What does it taste like initially?
15. How is the texture changing?
Then have the client eat it fully
16. What flavors are you noticing now that you didn't notice before?

Finish the intervention by processing the experience. Ask the clients how other experiences in their lives may change if they savored them.

Savoring Moments Worksheet

Over the next week, you can keep track of the moments you decide to savor each day. Try to pick at least one moment to savor each day and use this worksheet to keep track of your experiences.

Monday Moment: I savored the walk to get my mail

Time: 10:30AM Feeling: Calm

How did savoring change the experience? I was able to enjoy the feeling of the sun on my skin

Savoring Moments Worksheet

Over the next week, you can keep track of the moments you decide to savor each day. Try to pick at least one moment to savor each day and use this worksheet to keep track of your experiences.

Monday Moment: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____

How did savoring change the experience? _____

Tuesday Moment: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____

How did savoring change the experience? _____

Wednesday Moment: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____

How did savoring change the experience? _____

Thursday Moment: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____

How did savoring change the experience? _____

Friday Moment: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____

How did savoring change the experience? _____

Saturday Moment: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____

How did savoring change the experience? _____

Sunday Moment: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____

How did savoring change the experience? _____

Session 6 – Empathy

Homework Review: Check in with the client about their experiences with savoring over the week. Praise them for their effort and accomplishment of any savoring they did. It is fine to encourage them to continue to savor and record their savoring experiences, as this is good practice. However, this is not built into this protocol moving forward.

Psychoeducation: Researchers have traditionally defined empathy as the emotional response to the interpretation of the emotions of another individual and experiencing an identical or similar emotion to the actual or expected feeling (Eisenberg et al., 1998). Stronger empathy is associated with prosocial behaviors and stronger relationships (Konrath, & Grynberg, 2016). In positive psychology, a distinction is made between Positive Empathy (PE) and Negative Empathy (NE). Most traditionally when talking about empathy, we have referred to negative empathy. This type of empathy focuses on an individual's negative emotions (e.g., sadness), where the validation and acceptance of these emotions is important to psychotherapy (Barrett-Lennard, 1962).

Positive empathy focuses on the understanding and vicarious experiencing of an individual's positive emotions (e.g., happiness), usually as a result of a positive experience or outcome (Morelli et al., 2015). PE is associated with more personal strengths, approaching of goals, and experiencing of positive emotions than NE (Conoley et al., 2015). Additionally, positive empathy is associated with increased social competence (Sallquist et al., 2009), perspective taking, negative empathy, life satisfaction, agreeableness and extraversion, and positive emotions like joy (Morelli et al., 2015). The repeated experience of positive emotions increases an individual's tendency to attend to and respond to positive stimuli (Fehr et al., 2017; Quoidbach, Berry et al., 2010). Therefore, positive empathy is also associated with less fear and sadness (Andreychik & Migliaccio, 2015).

Centering Exercise: Begin by allowing your eyes to fall closed, planting your feet, and finding a comfortable position in your chair. Roll your shoulders back and slowly allow your hands to fall to gently into your lap. Bring your attention in towards your breath, noticing how your chest rises with each inhale, and falls with each exhale. You do not need to change your breath in any way, just notice the temperature of the air flowing in, and back out. Bring your attention to where your body makes contact with the chair, and allow yourself to notice your body in this physical space. Notice any pressure, pain, or tension that exists in your body, and notice where it exists.

I want you to bring your mind to a time when something bad happened to a friend or family member. Maybe the loss of a job or an injury. What did it feel like in your own body when this thing happened to them? How do you imagine they felt? Anxious? Scared? I want you to bring yourself into contact with the moment they told you about the event. What was happening in your own body? What emotions were there? Notice how you feel both in reaction to the news and to the individual's own emotions.

Now, I want you to bring your awareness to a time when something good happened to a friend or loved one. Maybe a promotion, a financial success, or an addition to their family. Really imagine yourself in this moment. How did it feel in your own body when you learned about their good news? What do you think their emotions were in this moment? Happiness, excitement,

relief? What was happening in your own body? Notice how you feel both in reaction to the news, and to the individual's own emotions. Hold on to those feelings for a moment. Allow your awareness to filter back into this room. Notice the sounds, the temperature, the texture of the air. Picture yourself in this space, sitting in this chair. And, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Perspective Taking Exercise: We are going to build upon this skill by engaging in perspective taking for a situation of the client's choosing in session. Help the client pick a situation where they are still in contact with the other person involved. The client will be making contact with the other person for homework. This worksheet on page 46 is designed to guide the client to think through the experience of the other person in the situation in session. The goal of the clinician is to elicit as much detail as possible about the selected person's experience in the situation.

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- What does it feel like to understand other people?
- How has understanding other people helped you understand yourself?
- Tell me about someone in your life who is known for their empathy.
- What is your definition of empathy?
- How has empathy impacted your relationships?
- What makes it hard to empathize with other people?
- Who do you wish you could express more empathy towards?
- How do you react when someone asks for your help?
- How do you react when someone asks for your comfort or support?
- How does the way people are treated in society make you feel?

Homework, Practice Experiencing Empathy: The goal of the homework is to have the client call or meet with the selected person to practice expressing empathy. The client will use the Perspective-Taking worksheet on page 47 prior to this experience. Then, the client will engage with this individual with the intention of practicing and expressing empathy. After, the client will use the expressing empathy record form to reflect on their own reactions. The clinician and client can discuss the client's experience using the record form in the next session. You may also encourage the client to find other small ways to practice empathy throughout their week.

The clients do not have to go out of their way to express the empathy. The clients can engage in empathy during casual conversations and without the letting the other person know of the intentions to practice empathy. If the clients are strongly against practicing with an actual person in their lives, we recommend giving gentle encouragement. If the clients are still against the activity, then a modified version where they practice on their own may take the activity's place.

Perspective Taking

Use this worksheet before your conversation to guide your navigation of another person's experience in a situation of interest. Pick a situation where someone you feel comfortable with contacting is involved. The situation can be positive or negative.

Describe the situation: _____

Who was the person involved? _____

What do you think that person was thinking?

1. _____

2. _____

What do you think that person was feeling?

1. _____

2. _____

Why might that person have reacted the way they did?

How would you feel if this situation happened to you?

What would you think if this situation happened to you?

***Now practice saying something empathetic towards that person regarding the situation

Expressing Empathy Record Form

Use the following form after your conversation to record your experience of expressing empathy towards the other individual.

Day: _____ Time: _____

When I expressed empathy, it made me feel:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

When I expressed empathy, I thought:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

As a result of my experience expressing empathy, in the future I will:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Session 7 – Forgiveness (1-4 sessions)

Homework Review: It is important to talk to the clients about their experiences with empathy over the last week. Acknowledge any difficulties the clients report and praise efforts and successes. It may be worthwhile to troubleshoot how the client can continue to practice empathy beyond the previous session.

- ◇ **Disclaimer on this session:** Some people may have a strong reaction to forgiving someone who has seriously hurt them. The clinician should never force or coerce a client into completing these exercises. Ultimately, it is the client’s choice as to whether they forgive a transgressor, and if they can find no one in their life to forgive, it is best to skip this session and move on to acts of kindness. Further, encouraging someone to forgive someone when they are not ready defeats the purpose of the power and autonomy that comes from forgiveness. Even well-intentioned clinicians should be cautious about the motivation for completing this session. Present the information to the client and be sure they want to move forward with the activities. Finally, the clinician should be prepared to discuss difficult experiences with the client in this session, unlike other sessions in this protocol that focus primarily on positive experiences.
- ◇ Before introducing the skill, it may be helpful for the clinician to say something along the lines of: “Today we are going to talk about another skill, but I want to preface that this skill is not required and is instead optional in our work together. First, I’ll provide you will some information about the skill. Then, I’ll check in and see if this is something you are open to considering. Does that sound good?”

Psychoeducation: Forgiveness is a process of psychological change involving willingly responding to an incidence of interpersonal harm in a way that is prosocial, as opposed to responding with avoidance or revenge (Jankowski et al., 2013; Worthington & Sandage, 2015). Forgiveness in this context emphasizes dealing or coping with the limitations of other individuals. It focuses on recognizing that the individual has room for change and growth, and subsequently hoping that they can achieve that needed learning and growth (vanOyen Witvliet & Luna, 2018). This approach holds the individual accountable for their actions, while also empathizing with the individual’s humanity and capacity for change.

Forgiveness is associated with physical and mental health, across numerous studies (Jankowski et al., 2013; Worthington & Sandage, 2015), as well as promoting life satisfaction (Toussaint et al., 2001). Interventions promoting forgiveness may lead to reduced anxiety and depression, as well as improved self-esteem (Helb & Enright, 1993; Nsamenang et al., 2013). Additionally, these interventions increase hope, change the perception and attitudes towards the transgressor, and help with grief after a loss (Al-Mabuk et al., 1995; Worthington, 2006). There is also an association between forgiveness and improved perceptions of health in individuals with chronic illnesses (Bono & McCullough, 2006).

- ◇ The clinician may gently inquire into client readiness or openness before moving on with the session. “Before we approach this session, is there someone in your life that you feel open to forgiving?”

Centering Exercise: Allow yourself to get comfortable in your seat. Let your hands fall gently in your lap and allow your shoulders to fall back. Bring your attention to your breathing. Notice how the air feels coming in, and going back out. Feel your lungs expanding, and deflating, with each breath. (pause) Notice any sounds you can hear in the room. Notice any sounds that filter in from outside of the room. I want you to bring your mind to a time when someone hurt you. It does not have to be a physical hurt; it can be emotional pain. Imagine yourself back in that situation. What happened? Bring yourself back to that exact moment. Who was hurting you? What did you experience? How did it feel? Now, I want you to see if you can take a step back from this moment, as if you are observing it as a third person. Focus on the individual inflicting the pain. How would they need to change to not continue with this behavior, or to not perpetrate it in the first place? What would they need to learn or know? What growth would they need to experience? Finally, imagine what your life would look like if you could let go of this hurt and move on. Imagine how forgiving this person could change your life. (Pause) Now gently bring your attention back to the present moment and your feet on the floor. Notice your body in this space, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

What is Forgiveness? Worksheet: Many people have misconceptions about what forgiveness comprises. To clarify any of these misconceptions, this worksheet on page 51 delineates what forgiveness is and is not in the context of this therapy. The first part of the worksheet involves providing psychoeducation on forgiveness. Be sure to emphasize that forgiveness is not condoning or excusing the misbehavior of others, nor does it mean that one should repair the relationship with the transgressor. The second part of the task involves coming up with times when the client thought forgiveness was good and bad. After the client writes the examples, clarify how their use or understanding of forgiveness in those contexts either aligns or contradicts the meaning of forgiveness in this context.

Forgiveness Letter Details: Introduce to the client that, if they are willing, they will be writing a forgiveness letter to someone who they have not yet forgiven. To help the writing process when they complete the homework, this worksheet on page 52 contains an outline to process and discuss the important details to include in the letter. When guiding the client through this worksheet in-session, elicit as much detail as possible for a more powerful letter.

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- Tell me about who has hurt you?
- How has someone hurt you in the past?
- What would you say to your transgressor today?
- What emotions do you have towards your transgressor?
- Tell me how not forgiving is affecting you.
- How could forgiveness help you?

- How have you grown since the incident?
- How has your life changed since the incident?
- How is the incident affecting you today?
- How would moving on impact your life?

Additional Sessions: People may have multiple transgressors in their life they wish to forgive. Thus, we think it is reasonable to focus multiple sessions on forgiveness if the client indicates wanting to spend more time here. We recommend using each session to focus on one transgressor to allow for ample space and processing. We recommend spending no more than four sessions on forgiveness; however, it is best to use clinical judgment on if the sessions are beneficial to the client. If the client continues to benefit because they have multiple transgressors in their life, then continuing to engage with forgiveness might be a good option.

Homework, Forgiveness Letter: For homework, the client will write a forgiveness letter to the transgressor. The goal of this letter is to put the details gathered in the Forgiveness Letter Details worksheet on page 52 into a coherent story, using the prompt on page 54. Remember to emphasize how writing this letter is about your client and does not condone or excuse the transgressor's behaviors. Be sure that the letter is not actually sent or talked about with the transgressor unless the client is safe. Note that the letter does not have a length requirement.

This letter does not need to be from the hardest situation the client has experienced. Even small transgressions can work for these activities. We do not think it is appropriate to use unprocessed trauma with this intervention because this intervention is **not** designed to treat or process traumatic experiences.

What is Forgiveness?

Forgiveness is...

- a decision for you to make.
- letting go of the need to control or influence the other person or situation.
- setting healthy boundaries or limits on what you will deem as acceptable behavior.
- something you do for yourself.
- a desire to move on.
- letting go of the desire to get revenge.

Forgiveness is not...

- something other people can tell you to do.
- forgetting what the person has done.
- letting the person out of the consequences of their behaviors.
- letting go or denying the feelings that the behavior or situation created.
- creating excuses for the person's behavior.
- reconciling or remaining in an unhealthy relationship.
- losing.

An example where I thought forgiveness was good was when I: _____

An example where I thought forgiveness was good was when I: _____

An example where I thought forgiveness was bad was when I: _____

An example where I thought forgiveness was bad was when I: _____

Forgiveness Letter Details Worksheet

Together with your clinician, you will use this worksheet to work out the details of what you will say in your forgiveness letter.

Who: _____

What was the incident (briefly summarize): _____

When did the incident happen? _____

How did the incident make you feel then (list three emotions)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How does thinking about the incident make you feel now (list three emotions)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

When you think about the incident or person, what are some thoughts you have?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How has this incident changed you? _____

What are some benefits to forgiving this person?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

State how forgiving this person is about you, and does not condone or excuse the behavior or repair the relationship:

If you could say something to this person today, what would you say? _____

What exactly would you say to this person? _____

Session 8 – Acts of Kindness

Homework Review: We encourage clinicians to check in on the forgiveness letter. If the client is comfortable, it may be beneficial to have them read their letter to you. If they decide to let you hear the letter, it is important to listen to it with an affirming and nonjudgmental stance, as everyone's forgiveness is going to look different. If the client does not wish to share the letter with you, it is important to honor that wish and not force the client to read it. If the client did not write the letter, it is important to take some time to process why they did not complete the letter, and then see if they would be willing to write it over the next week after some troubleshooting.

Psychoeducation: Researchers have described kindness as doing good deeds and favors for other individuals that often include putting someone else's needs above your own (Seligman et al., 2005). This skill also aims to broaden our individualized focus and increase connection with our surrounding world, as some individuals often turn inward and narrow their behavioral repertoires when they are distressed (Barlow, 2014).

Engaging in kindness is associated with lasting life satisfaction and reductions in depressive symptoms (Mongrain et al., 2018). Additionally, kindness is associated with subjective well-being (Alden & Trew, 2013; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Mongrain et al., 2011). Kindness is also associated with relationship satisfaction (O'Connell et al., 2016). This social connectedness is vital for physical health, as social isolation is associated with a greater risk for physical ailments, such as disease and death, at an even greater rate than smoking or lack of physical activity (House et al., 1988; Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2010; Uchino, 2009).

Centering Exercise: Begin by allowing your eyes to fall closed, planting your feet, and finding a comfortable position in your chair. Roll your shoulders back and slowly allow your hands to fall to gently into your lap. Bring your attention in towards your breath, noticing how your chest rises with each inhale, and falls with each exhale. You do not need to change your breath in any way, just notice the temperature of the air flowing in, and back out. Bring your attention to where your body makes contact with the chair, and allow yourself to notice your body in this physical space. Notice any pressure, pain, or tension that exists in your body, and notice where it exists.

Kindness requires us to be open and attentive to ourselves and to others. Being kind or compassionate is a natural ability that exists deep within us, at our central selves. It is also important, then, to be kind and compassionate towards ourselves. Open yourself up to that natural goodness that exists inside of you. Imagine that goodness like a warm, glowing light, starting at your center and expanding outward.

In this space, I want you to bring yourself back to a time when you did something kind or generous for someone else, maybe a loved one or a friend. If you cannot recall an event, think of a something kind that you would do for a loved one. Now, imagine looking at yourself through the eyes of that person, in that moment. Really allow yourself to visualize it, maybe allowing yourself to think about what that person admires or loves about you.

Maybe visualize a younger version of you, allowing love and compassion to flow out of the you that you are now, and surround the you that you were, warm and bright. What words of encouragement or compassion would you want to offer your younger self? Allow those words and the compassion to flow towards the younger you. What does this emotion feel like in your

body right now? Is it a certain temperature, or lightness? Does it bring a smile to your face? Allow yourself to sit with this feeling, and this openness. Allow the light to surround your body once more. Let yourself take in those words of encouragement and compassion that you offered to your younger self, letting them settle into your body in the present, allowing the words and the self-compassion to flow over and around you. Bring your attention back to your breath, focusing on the flow of air in, and back out, imagining yourself breathing in peace and self-compassion. When you are ready, bring your attention back to your body in this space, to the you are sitting in this room, in this chair, and allow yourself to open your eyes.

Savoring Acts of Kindness: The goal of this exercise on page 59 is to reminisce on the acts of kindness the clients have performed throughout their lifetime. Help the clients walk through some instances of acts of kindness in their lives. The goal of the activity is to elicit as much detail as possible by tracking the client's emotions, the reaction of the other person, the consequences of the act, and the thoughts before and after the act. See an example on page 58.

Acts of Kindness Brainstorming: Use the acts of kindness brainstorming worksheet on page 61 to assist the client in planning novel acts of kindness. The sheet is designed to plan the times during **one** chosen day to do five acts of kindness.

The best way to plan these activities is to walk through the client's day, hour by hour. When the client reports an opening to complete an act of kindness, note the location, the act of kindness, and the persons affected by act of kindness. The last column is a "workability rating," which is a measure of the feasibility or ease of the act of kindness. You can use a scale that makes sense to the client, such as 1-10 or 1-100. The goal of the worksheet is to plan numerous acts of kindness, but to choose to do the acts of kindness with the highest workability rating.

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- What does it feel like to help others?
- How has helping others helped you?
- What motivates you to help others?
- Tell me about a time you completed an act of kindness.
- Tell me about what it feels like when someone helps you.
- Who in your life could use some help?
- What do you think completing an act of kindness would mean to a stranger?
- How do you think kindness could help you?
- Tell me about a significant instance when someone help you.

Homework, Five Acts of Kindness in One Day: Research shows that completing five novel acts of kindness in *one* day produces a more powerful effect on emotions than doing one act of kindness a day over a week. The goal of the homework is to have the client use the worksheet on page 63 to complete and track five acts of kindness to be done in one day.

Savoring Acts of Kindness

Use this worksheet to think about three times when you have completed acts of kindness.

Act of Kindness 1: Paid for a stranger's cup of coffee

Feeling: Joy

Reaction: They were very happy

Consequence: I felt good about myself

Thoughts: "I enjoy helping others"

Savoring Acts of Kindness

Use this worksheet to think about three times when you have completed acts of kindness.

Act of Kindness 1: _____

Feeling: _____

Reaction: _____

Consequence: _____

Thoughts: _____

Act of Kindness 2: _____

Feeling: _____

Reaction: _____

Consequence: _____

Thoughts: _____

Act of Kindness 3: _____

Feeling: _____

Reaction: _____

Consequence: _____

Thoughts: _____

Novel Acts of Kindness Brainstorm Worksheet

Use the following worksheet to plan potential acts of kindness for the selected day.

Day of the Week: Monday

Time	Person	Location	Act	Workability Rating
1:00 AM				
2:00 AM				
3:00 AM				
4:00 AM				
5:00 AM				
6:00 AM				
7:00 AM	Pet	Home	Give pet treats and cuddles	7
8:00 AM	Stranger	Coffee Shop	Buy someone's coffee order	8
9:00 AM				
10:00 AM				
11:00 AM				
12:00 PM	Coworker	Breakroom	Eat lunch with coworker	6
1:00 PM				
2:00 PM	Stranger	Office	Hold door for someone	9
3:00 PM				
4:00 PM				
5:00 PM	Spouse	Home	Cook their favorite dinner	7
6:00 PM				
7:00 PM	Friend	Home	Send an appreciation text	10
8:00 PM	Spouse	Home	Watch their favorite show	9
9:00 PM				
10:00 PM				
11:00 PM				
12:00 AM				

Novel Acts of Kindness Brainstorm Worksheet

Use the following worksheet to plan potential acts of kindness for the selected day.

Day of the Week: _____

Time	Person	Location	Act	Workability Rating
1:00 AM				
2:00 AM				
3:00 AM				
4:00 AM				
5:00 AM				
6:00 AM				
7:00 AM				
8:00 AM				
9:00 AM				
10:00 AM				
11:00 AM				
12:00 PM				
1:00 PM				
2:00 PM				
3:00 PM				
4:00 PM				
5:00 PM				
6:00 PM				
7:00 PM				
8:00 PM				
9:00 PM				
10:00 PM				
11:00 PM				
12:00 AM				

Five Acts of Kindness in One Day

Completing five acts of kindness in one day will result in higher life satisfaction and happiness and lower depressive symptoms than doing one act of kindness a day over a week. The goal for the next week is to pick one day to complete five acts of kindness in one day.

Day of the Week: Monday

Act of Kindness 1: Bought a coffee for a stranger

Time: 11:05AM Feeling: Happy Reaction: Positive

Five Acts of Kindness in One Day

Completing five acts of kindness in one day may result in stronger life satisfaction and well-being and fewer depressive symptoms than doing one act of kindness a day over a week. The goal for the next week is to pick one day to complete five acts of kindness in one day.

Day of the Week: _____

Act of Kindness 1: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____ Reaction: _____

Act of Kindness 2: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____ Reaction: _____

Act of Kindness 3: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____ Reaction: _____

Act of Kindness 4: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____ Reaction: _____

Act of Kindness 5: _____

Time: _____ Feeling: _____ Reaction: _____

Session 9 – Strengths

Homework Review: We recommend examining the client’s Five Acts of Kindness in One Day worksheet at the beginning of this session. Although it is important to complete all five acts of kindness in one day, it may still be beneficial to praise the clients for any acts of kindness they completed. If the client did not complete the homework, the clinician may consider having them try again over the next week since this activity only requires one day. Use clinical judgment to determine the appropriate pace of therapy and the potential benefit of having the client try again with this homework.

Psychoeducation: Broadly, strengths refer to things people are good at or excel in. In the realm of positive psychology, character strengths are considered positive qualities or traits that everyone has in various amounts (Peterson et al., 2005). It is important to make some distinctions about what we mean when we talk about strengths. A strength is a trait that is individually fulfilling and valuable, not just as a tool for advancement (i.e., not just a means to an end; Seligman et al., 2005). Additionally, it does not devalue other individuals but instead can be beneficial to other people as well as the individual. Strengths also have easily identifiable opposites, are measurable, and are distinct from one another. These traits are also significantly embodied by certain people and can be completely missing in other individuals. Lastly, strengths are positive traits that are often cultivated and encouraged by society.

When individuals implement activities where they use their identified strengths, it may lead to well-being and life satisfaction and is associated with less stress (MacDougall, 2018; Proyer et al., 2015; Darabi, 2018). It can also lead to improvement in psychological symptoms, such as depressive symptoms, and promote well-being. Additionally, using identified strengths in a novel way leads to lasting promotion of happiness and fewer depressive symptoms (Seligman et al., 2005).

Centering Exercise: Plant your feet flat on the floor and allow your hands to fall into your lap. Allow your eyes to fall closed and begin to notice your breath. Notice the temperature of the air flowing in, and back out. Notice your chest expanding, making room for the air, and contracting as you breath back out. Begin to notice your body in this chair. Are you holding any tension in your body? Do any areas hurt or twinge when you bring them into your awareness? If your mind gets distracted during this activity, as minds often do, simply draw your attention back to my voice and the activity.

Bring to mind your life and what has led you to this room today. What events transpired? What is unique about you on this journey? What traits specific to you have supported you through life’s challenges? If an outside observer were looking in on the life you have led, what would they see? Bring to mind a specific situation that you had to overcome. Really imagine it as if you were experiencing it again. What was it like? How did it feel before and after you overcame it? What helped you through?

As you allow that situation to fade from your awareness, I invite you to consider your strengths. What are you good at? What are you proud of? Are you courageous? A leader? What about compassion? Curious... or kind? If we were to bottle you, what words would belong on your label? How do you embody these strengths? What role have they played in your life? What

does it feel like to hold these strengths in your body? Allow your awareness to float back to your body in this space, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

Character Strengths Assessment: The goal of the character strengths assessment on page 66 is to elucidate a client's signature character strengths so that they may use their strengths in a novel manner over the next week. Upon completion of the survey, score the assessment. There are three questions for each character strength, and each strength is separated into clusters with a total score. Use the score sheet to sum the total score for each strength, which follows the same order as the survey. The next part of the session should be used to discuss examples of when the client has used these character strengths and brainstorming novel ways to use these character strengths. Use the suggested prompts to elicit discussion.

- ◇ Note: this measure is a face valid measure and has not been psychometrically evaluated. The purpose of this scale is strictly for clinical discussions and not research. Due to copyright reasons, we could not include a validated scale, but we recommend checking out the VIA Strengths Assessment as an alternative to the provided assessment.

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- How do you feel about your strengths?
- What do you like about yourself?
- How can you use your strengths?
- What positive things have other people said about you?
- What character traits have helped you overcome adversity?
- What parts of you make you the proudest?
- Who do you aspire to be?
- Who are your role models and why?
- Tell me about your greatest success.
- What makes you feel like a worthy person?

Homework, Using Strengths in a Novel Manner: To allow strengths to promote well-being, one must use the strengths in a novel manner. The homework assignment on page 75 elicits this use by having the clients use two of their signature strengths in three novel ways over the next week. See example on page 74.

Character Strengths Assessment

Please fill out the following survey to determine your best character strengths.

1 = not true of me, 2 = somewhat true of me, 3 = true of me
4 = very true of me, 5 = extremely true of me

1. I find it enjoyable to express my feelings through art or writing.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have a vivid imagination.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I think outside of the box.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. The world is full of interesting stuff.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have questions about the world that I love to think about and explore.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I wish I knew more about my favorite topic or hobby.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. Before acting, I think thoroughly about the consequences.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have a good sense of judgment.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I am a cautious person.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I am a bold person.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I don't let fear or uncertainty hold me back.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I face my challenges head on.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. Honesty is the best policy.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I tell the true, even if it is unpleasant.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I take responsibility for my actions.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I persevere through my challenges.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have overcome a great deal of struggles.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Life's drawbacks have not stopped me.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I am a kind person.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I like doing things for other people.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I wish I volunteered more often.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I love being close to my friends and family.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I feel a strong bond with my friends and family.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I care deeply about people.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I am grateful for all the kind things people have done for me.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I would not be where I am today without the help of others.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I appreciate the kind things other have done for me.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. My future looks bright.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have a positive outlook on life.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I expect good things to happen to me.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. People think I am funny.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I like to use humor to lighten the mood.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I enjoy watching others smile and laugh.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I follow a routine.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I always do what is best for me.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I am disciplined.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I treat people fairly.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I think everyone should have a fair chance in life.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I enjoy doing what is best for everyone.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I approach life with excitement.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Others have told me that I am enthusiastic.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I am an energetic person.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I feel a spiritual connection to the universe.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I am at awe with the aspects of reality that are hard to explain.

1 2 3 4 5

3. When making important decisions, my spirituality often provides answers.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I am interested in understanding things I do not know.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have a love for learning.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I want to know more about my favorite topic.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I am a modest person.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I do not brag about my accomplishments.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I can admit when I am wrong.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I enjoy savoring positive memories and experiences.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I take time to taste all the flavors of my food.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I enjoy taking walks in nature.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I am aware of the emotions of others.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I want to cry when I see others crying.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I feel joy when good things happen to others.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

1. I can pick up on the small details in social interactions.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have a good understanding of when it's my turn to speak and listen.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I can learn a lot about others' relationships by watching other people interact with each other.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

Character Strengths Assessment Score Sheet

Take the total item scores and add them to this sheet to develop a clear understanding of the client's signature strengths. The character strengths on this sheet are in the same order as on the survey.

1. Creativity _____
2. Curiosity _____
3. Judgment _____
4. Bravery _____
5. Honesty _____
6. Perseverance _____
7. Kindness _____
8. Love _____
9. Gratefulness _____
10. Optimism _____
11. Humor _____
12. Discipline _____
13. Fairness _____
14. Zest _____
15. Spirituality _____
16. Love Learning _____
17. Humility _____
18. Savoring _____
19. Empathy _____
20. Social IQ _____

Using Signature Strengths

Although it is beneficial just to know one's signature strengths, one can benefit the most from using their signature strengths. Over the next week, pick your top two signature strengths, and use them in a novel manner three times each.

Signature Strength: _____ Kindness _____

Novel Use 1: _____ I bought a stranger a cup of coffee. _____

Day: Monday Time: 9:40 AM Emotion after Using Strength: Joy

Using Signature Strengths

Although it is beneficial just to know one's signature strengths, one can benefit the most from using one's signature strengths in a novel manner. Over the next week, pick your top two signature strengths, and use them in a novel manner three times each.

Signature Strength: _____

Novel Use 1:

Day: _____ Time: _____ Emotion after Using Strength: _____

Novel Use 2:

Day: _____ Time: _____ Emotion after Using Strength: _____

Novel Use 3:

Day: _____ Time: _____ Emotion after Using Strength: _____

Signature Strength: _____

Novel Use 1:

Day: _____ Time: _____ Emotion after Using Strength: _____

Novel Use 2:

Day: _____ Time: _____ Emotion after Using Strength: _____

Novel Use 3:

Day: _____ Time: _____ Emotion after Using Strength: _____

Session 10 – Optimism

Homework Review: Examine the client's efforts over the last week with using their strengths in a novel manner. It is important to praise effort and progress. If the client reports difficulty using strengths or did not engage in the homework, it may be beneficial to troubleshoot with the client before moving on to the optimism session.

Psychoeducation: Researchers have defined optimism as a positive view on life, even in times of struggle (Segerstrom, 2006). In our framework, optimism applies to a more general context, where it is a broad sense of confidence regarding life outcomes, instead of positive beliefs about a specific event (Bouchard et al., 2018). Individuals with more optimism have higher believability in their ability to approach and achieve goals (Segerstrom, 2006). Additionally, this skill is most helpful when clinicians use it to cultivate positive attitudes towards achieving realistic goals, otherwise it may have an adverse effect (Norem & Illingworth, 1993).

The skill of optimism is highly correlated with positive affect and better coping, even in various times of stress (Carver et al., 2010). Further, it may promote motivation, effort, and goal engagement, and alleviate physical and mental health symptoms (Segerstrom, 2006; Lench, 2011). Finally, optimism is associated with the development of social networks and relationships, as well as general emotional well-being (Bouchard et al., 2018).

Centering Exercise: Find a comfortable position in your chair and allow your eyes to fall closed. Notice where your body comes into contact with your seat and with the room. Notice where the air comes into contact with your skin, on your face, hands, and neck. Maybe notice the temperature or the texture of the air. Now bring your attention to your breath and the movement of your chest and diaphragm, without attempting to change it in any way. Simply allow yourself to breathe in, and breathe out, exactly as you were before.

If you are willing, visualize where you would like to be in five years. Who would you be? What would you be doing? Who else would be there? What about in ten years? Where would you want to be? Who and what would be there with you? Allow your mind to compose this picture for a few moments, putting together the detail of the you that you would *want* to be in ten years.

Now, I invite you to start visualizing the steps you would need to make it to this place. What would you need to do to reach this goal? What goals lie between here and there? Imagine what future you would want you to know or do to get there. Imagine floating forward through time. Imagine that you have completed these steps to get to this future version of your life. See yourself in your mind completing these steps. Once you have made it to the final step, allow yourself to exist in this moment, where you have finally achieved this life or version of yourself. Allow your mind to float back to the present and the sounds in the room. See if you can tend to each individual sound. Imagine yourself existing in this space, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

Optimistic vs. Pessimistic Interpretation: The goal of this exercise on page 80 is to bring awareness to the optimistic and pessimistic style of interpretation of the consequences of events in the client's life. The clinician will assist the client in interpreting the consequences of situations in the client's life from both an optimistic and a pessimistic lens. Be sure to make the optimistic and pessimistic interpretations starkly different to better illustrate the differences between optimism and pessimism. It is important to emphasize clients can interpret almost all situations optimistically or pessimistically to demonstrate the flexibility of our perception of reality. See example on page 79.

Best Possible Self Detail Worksheet: The goal of this worksheet is to assist the client in creating a more detailed and vivid best possible self-story for homework. The clinician's job is to assist the client in answering the provided questions in detail. The clinician can use the worksheet to facilitate discussions on the client's future. If the client has a difficult time answering the questions, the clinician should attempt to assist the client in coming up with answers that most people would want in their ideal futures (i.e., most people would like a large home with a backyard or financial stability).

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- What kind of person do you want to become?
- Who will be present in your ideal future?
- How does your ideal future differ from most people's ideal futures?
- What job do you want to have?
- What do you want people to say about you at your retirement party?
- Who do you want to have in your life in X years? (Fill in X with a number that's best for the client).
- What do you want to have in your life in X years? (Fill in X with a number that's best for the client).
- If everything works out for you, what would your life look like?
- What are three things you really want to happen?
- Tell me about your aspirations in life?

Homework, Best Possible Self: The goal of this PPI is to increase the client's optimism for the future. Explain to the client that the goal of this activity on page 84 is for them to plan it all out. Emphasize to the client that they can write about details not covered in the Best Possible Self Detail Worksheet. The client should not feel restricted to only the details discussed in the session. Some clients may find that traditionally negative aspects of one's life should be a part of their ideal future (e.g., stress from a job that gives purpose). Emphasize to the clients that they are not limited to only discussing positive situations.

Optimistic vs. Pessimistic Interpretation

Situation 1: Getting sick and having to take off work.

Pessimistic Interpretation: I had to miss my meetings and assignments, which will pile up and be even more to do when I return to work.

Optimistic Interpretation: I got to take time off work and relax at home with the kids. We played games and I made lunch.

Optimistic vs. Pessimistic Interpretation

Situation 1: _____

Pessimistic Interpretation: _____

Optimistic Interpretation: _____

Situation 2: _____

Pessimistic Interpretation: _____

Optimistic Interpretation: _____

Situation 3: _____

Pessimistic Interpretation: _____

Optimistic Interpretation: _____

Best Possible Self Detail Worksheet

List five character traits or values that you will have in your ideal future. Who do you want to be?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List five negative habits or behaviors that you will no longer have in your ideal future:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Who are some of the people who will be with you in your ideal future?

List five activities you can do with the people in your life in your ideal future (i.e., going on vacation):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

What is your dream job/role? _____

What would you be doing at this dream job/role?

Describe your house in your ideal future: _____

Describe your car in your ideal future: _____

Describe some emotions you may have in your ideal future and why you might experience those emotions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Describe some thoughts you may have in your ideal future and why you might experience those thoughts:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

What does this ideal future mean to you? _____

Session 11 – Termination

Homework Review: Check in with the client about the BPS activity. If you have the time, it may even be beneficial to have the client read what they wrote. Regardless, it is important to take the time to really savor the client’s experiences with the homework before moving on to the remainder of the termination session.

Psychoeducation: The purpose of the psychoeducation in the termination session is to remind the clients that relapse is normal (Wojnarowski, 2019). In fact, this research suggests that about a third of people who completed CBT will experience a relapse. Thus, the purpose of this session to develop a plan to help the client if they do relapse. Further, in this session, we recommend setting some goals with the clients. For psychoeducation on goal setting, see Session 1.

Centering Exercise: Allow yourself to get comfortable in your chair and close your eyes. Take a second to notice how you feel in the present moment. Notice any emotions you are feeling or thoughts you are having. Today is the final session, and the work we have done is ending. Take a moment to notice what it feels like to hear that news. Notice how your body responds to hearing me say that out loud and make room for that reaction.

Now, I want you to think back on what your life was like when we first met. Think about your circumstances and what motivated you to come to therapy. Take a second to recall any emotions you experienced or thoughts you had before or during our first session. Now think about how, as the sessions progressed, these emotions and thoughts changed. Notice how your life has changed in the middle of our work together. Think about the first change you noticed and what it felt like to notice that change.

Next, I want you to think about where you’re at in life now. Think about all of the progress you have made so far. Think about your success with your goals, such as _____ (insert a goal the clients succeeded at). Notice any emotions or thoughts you have when you think about your current life compared to before therapy. Notice how it feels in your body to think about your progress and your growth.

Finally, think about where you want your life to head from this point forward. Think about where you want to be in the next week (pause), month (pause), year (pause), and five years (pause). Notice any reactions you have to thinking about your life moving forward. Now when you are ready, please return your focus to the present moment and open your eyes.

Termination Discussion: Prior to moving on with the session, it is important to allow for a brief discussion after the centering exercise to process the client’s feelings about terminating therapy and making it to this point. The clinician may also open a discussion on the ending of the therapeutic relationship. This is also a great place for the therapist to provide feedback on the growth the client has experienced and the work they have put into therapy. Additionally, the clinician may elicit feedback from the client about how they felt therapy went, what skills were most helpful, and if there was anything that felt less helpful. The clinician can draw from some of the questions in the suggested prompts to help guide this conversation.

Goal Setting: The purpose of goal setting in the final session is to increase the client’s autonomy over their well-being. Setting goals for the next week, month, year, and 5 years allows the client to have something to work towards as they become their own “therapist.” Use the worksheet on page 88.

Relapse Planning: Relapse is a normal part of maintaining behaviors that promote well-being and flourishing. Thus, it may be beneficial to make a relapse plan with the clients to have for if or when it happens. The worksheet is divided into three sections which are: 1) warning signs, 2) steps to take, and 3) potential obstacles. Warning signs refer to any phenomena that the clients notice that could indicate a decline in their well-being has started or will start (e.g., dishes piling up, skipping doing laundry, or feeling despair about the future). Steps to take refer to anything that the client has learned to support their mental health over the course of therapy (e.g., talking to family, taking a shower, or going on a walk). Finally, the potential obstacles section involves barriers that limit the client's ability to engage in the steps to take (e.g., getting lost playing games on their phone, isolating, or oversleeping). Use the worksheet on page 89.

Suggested Prompts for Session:

- How have you changed over the course of therapy?
- What skills most helped you experience these changes
- How is your life different now that therapy is coming to an end?
- What did you learn about yourself in therapy?
- Where do you want to be in your life in the coming years?
- How will you use the skills you learned in therapy?
- What are some major takeaways from therapy?
- How will you handle setbacks?
- What setbacks do you expect?
- Who can you reach out to for support?
- What are some strategies you can use to prevent relapse?

PPI Summary: We created a one-page handout on page 90 to provide the clients with an overview of the work they completed with you. The handout provides a description of the PPI domain for each session as well as the interventions that comprised those sessions. The clients can use the PPI Summary handout as a “Table of Contents” for the handouts they accumulated throughout the protocol.

Goal Setting

Now that you have completed a course of therapy, it is time to start thinking about the next steps in your life. You can create a list of goals that you would like to see yourself accomplish within the next week to several years of your life. It may be best to write easier goals for the short term and more challenging goals for the long term.

In the next week I would like to:

1. _____

2. _____

In the next month I would like to:

1) _____

2) _____

In the next year I would like to:

1) _____

2) _____

In the next five years I would like to:

1) _____

2) _____

Relapse Plan

Reminders:

Relapse is normal, as emotions naturally ebb and flow

Relapse is not a failure

Life is full of potential stressors

Warning Signs:	Steps to take:	Potential obstacles:

Therapy Summary

Goal Pursuits – A change in behaviors for the purpose of achieving a specific outcome.

- Setting and Achieving Realistic Goals

Meaning – Moving towards a life that is characterized by predictable connections and includes purpose, significance, and coherence.

- Life Narrative

Gratitude – Appreciating positive things one has in their life, including people, things, opportunities, and personal traits.

- The Gratitude Letter
- Counting Blessings

Savoring – Perceiving positive experiences and sensations differently, with the intention of focusing the awareness to intensify and draw out pleasurable moments and experiences.

- Reminiscing
- Mindful Eating
- Practicing Savoring

Empathy – The emotional response to the interpretation of the emotions of another individual and experiencing an identical or similar emotion to the actual or expected feeling.

- Perspective Taking
- Expressing Empathy

Forgiveness – A process of psychological change involving willingly responding to an incidence of interpersonal harm in a way that is prosocial, as opposed to responding with avoidance or revenge.

- Forgiveness Letter

Acts of Kindness - Doing good deeds and favors for other individuals that often include putting someone else's needs above your own.

- Savoring Kindness
- Five Acts of Kindness in One Day

Strengths – Skills that people excel at or traits that are positive and meaningful.

- Strengths Assessment
- Using Strengths in a Novel Manner

Optimism – A positive view of life, even in times of struggle.

- Optimistic Interpretation
- Best Possible Selves

Termination

- Goal Setting
- Relapse Plan

Suggested Progress Measures

1. Patient Health Questionnaire – 9

Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., & Williams, J. B. W. (2001). The PHQ-9: Validity of a brief depression severity measure. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 16(9), 606–613. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1525-1497.2001.016009606.x>

2. Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale

Radloff, L. S. (1977). The CES-D Scale. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 1(3), 385–401. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014662167700100306>

3. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(6), 1063-1070. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1063>

4. Subjective Happiness Scale

Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S. (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation. *Social Indicators Research*, 46(2), 137–155. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006824100041>

5. Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069>

6. Satisfaction with Life Scale

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71–75. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13

7. The Meaning in Life Questionnaire

Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The meaning in life questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53(1), 80–93. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.53.1.80>

8. The Flourishing Scale

Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D.-w., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2010). New well-being measures: short scales to assess flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social Indicators Research*, 97(2), 143–156. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-009-9493-y>

9. The Brief Resilience Scale

Smith, B.W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P. and Bernard, J. (2008). The Brief Resilience Scale: Assessing the Ability to Bounce Back. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 15, 194-200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705500802222972>

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