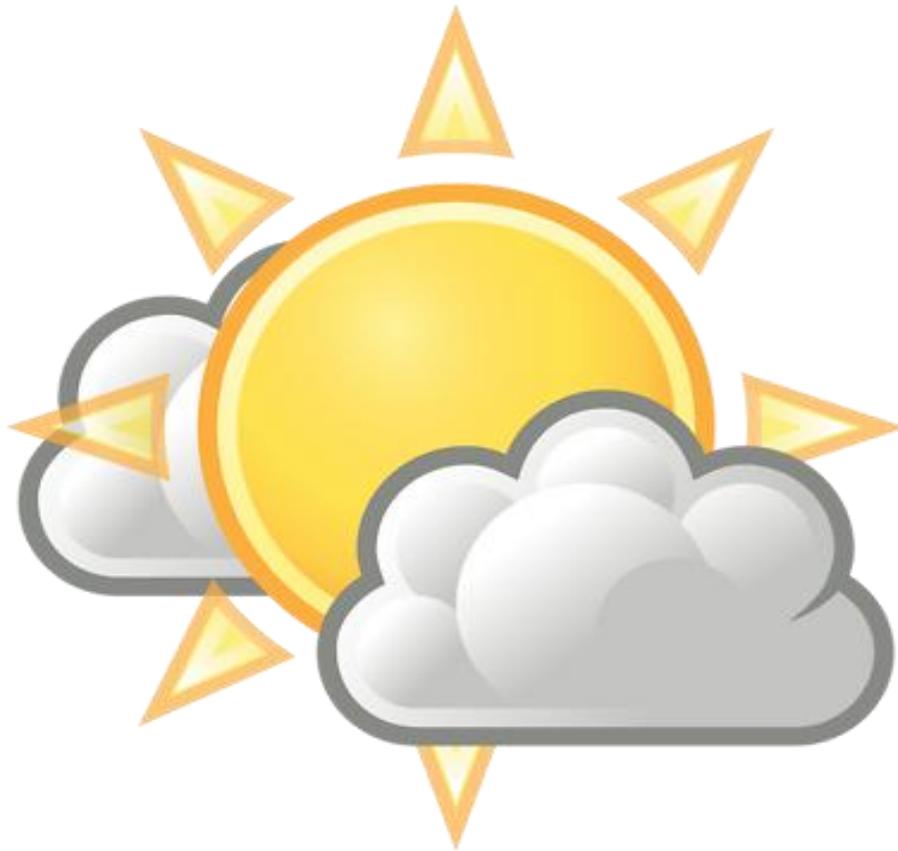


Massachusetts General Hospital  
Research Study

# Positive Psychology



The **H**appiness, **O**ptimism, and **P**ositive **E**motions  
Study





# Table of Contents

<b>Study Calendar</b>	4
<b>Introduction</b>	5
<b>List of 10 Emotions</b>	11
<b>Week One</b> (Gratitude for Positive Events)	13
<b>Week Two</b> (Personal Strengths)	22
<b>Week Three</b> (Gratitude Letter)	30
<b>Week Four</b> (Enjoyable and Meaningful Activities)	37
<b>Week Five</b> (Remembering Past Success)	46
<b>Week Six Introduction</b> (Your Choice)	54
<b>Week Six Option One</b> (Acts of Kindness)	56
<b>Week Six Option Two</b> (Repeat a Previous Exercise)	64
<b>Next Steps</b>	70
• <b>Positive Activity Schedule</b>	73
• <b>“My Favorite Skills” List</b>	75

## Appointments (to review each week's exercise)

Week 2 Call \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3 Call \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4 Call \_\_\_\_\_

Week 5 Call \_\_\_\_\_

Week 6 Call \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6 Mood Assessment** \_\_\_\_\_

A call from one of our staff members who will ask you questions about your mood

**Week 12 Mood Assessment** \_\_\_\_\_

Another call from one of our staff members who will ask you questions about your mood

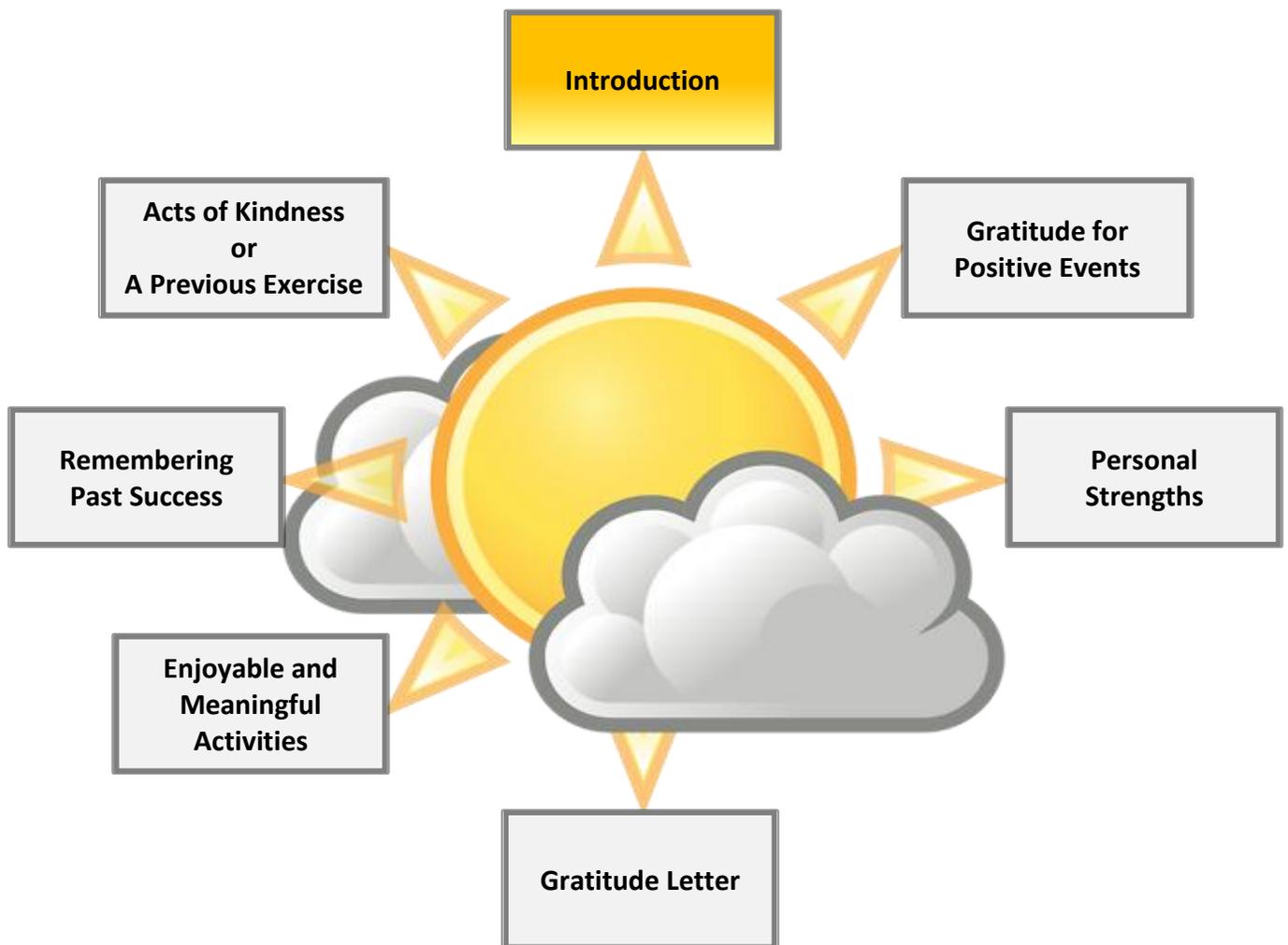
**Call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ if you need to change your appointment.**

**Principal Investigator  
Jeff C. Huffman, MD  
Director of Cardiac Psychiatry Research  
Massachusetts General Hospital**

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# Introduction

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# Introduction

## Why is this study being done?

Many people who have recently been admitted to the hospital for depression can continue to feel depressed for weeks, months, or even years. Medications and different types of therapy can help, though these treatments do not always help everyone. Most forms of psychotherapy focus on reducing *negative* feelings—for example, they may focus on changing automatic negative thoughts or provide skills to deal with difficult emotions.

Sometimes this therapy can be very helpful, but it may not focus on the “other side” of a person’s emotional life—positive thoughts and feelings. **Getting rid of negative feelings is not the same as increasing positive feelings, like feeling more hopeful, more satisfied, or more proud.** We think it may be important to help people with depression experience positive thoughts and feelings.

Positive psychology, a newer approach to helping people, focuses more on improving positive emotions and might help people to feel more hopeful, grateful, and happy. We have found that many people who are hospitalized for depression have found such exercises to be helpful and easy to do. However, this treatment has not been scientifically studied to see how it might be helpful to people after they have been discharged from the hospital.

## What is my role?

Though we think that these positive psychology exercises can be helpful to people like you, we need your help! These exercises have never been used for people who have just been discharged from the hospital, so we need to learn from you whether they are useful. We have taken positive psychology exercises that have been helpful for people in other situations and changed them to fit these circumstances.

We would like to ask you to complete one positive psychology exercise per week for the next six weeks. Following completion of each exercise, you will speak with a study trainer by phone to review the exercise and then to learn about the next one. Your participation will allow us to learn how helpful this group of

positive psychology exercises is in helping you continue to improve after discharge from the hospital. If they are helpful, we may someday make these exercises part of standard treatment for patients who have depression and have been in the hospital, and your participation will help us decide how we might do that.

## **So what is this 'positive psychology', anyway?**

Positive psychology is an area of psychology that is interested in helping people to experience more positive emotions and better mental health. This is done through specific, intentional activities that are designed to improve mood. These exercises include such things as savoring pleasant events during your day, using your strengths, performing kind acts, or remembering past successes.

## **Is it really possible for a person to experience more positive emotions?**

Yes. It appears that almost half of a person's happiness is directly under one's own control while the rest is determined by genetics and life circumstances. Specific activities, like the ones you will perform in this study, can improve feelings of peace, happiness, and optimism. Like other activities that can benefit health, positive psychology exercises take practice, and there will be some exercises that may really be a great match for you, while others may be less effective. But with some effort, we believe that you will discover positive activities that you will enjoy and that will provide you with lasting benefit.

## **What are some myths about positive emotions?**

*Myth #1: "My circumstances must change before I could possibly feel happy."*

It is normal to believe that if only something about the circumstances of our lives would change, then we would be happy. It can seem that finding a new roommate, getting a job, or having a life partner are required before one can experience more hope, happiness, or life satisfaction.

Circumstances absolutely can have an impact on happiness. However, people can improve their level of happiness without a change in circumstances. In fact, intentional activities (like the exercises you will be completing) appear to have more powerful effects on happiness than life events! So you do not need to wait until your circumstances change to feel more satisfied with your life.

*Myth #2: "Feeling more satisfied or happy isn't under my control—it either happens or it doesn't."*

In many ways, experiencing more positive thoughts and feelings is a lot like acquiring any new skill, such as learning to speak a foreign language. Some people learn how to pronounce new words and acquire foreign accents easily. But with concentrated effort and practice, even those of us who have a hard time with these skills can learn a new language. Similarly, some people have found it a great struggle to experience the positive, but with intentional and consistent effort, it is possible to feel happier.

### **Isn't this for people who have less serious problems?**

We do not want to gloss over or ignore the severity of your illness or the difficulty of your life circumstances. The fact that you have been in the hospital makes it clear that you have truly been suffering and that your problems are real and serious.

However, we do believe that people with very serious problems can also benefit from these exercises. The exercises have been selected because there is evidence in scientific studies that they do help people to feel happier. We encourage you to give each of the activities a try—as clichéd as they might seem—because many people find that the exercise actually ends up having a much more powerful effect than they expected.

It may not be easy to do the exercises—it may be hard to remember good times, to have enough motivation to complete a task, or to really even remember what a positive feeling or thought feels like! Do you remember the first time you tried to ride a bike, type a sentence, knit, or play a sport? Those activities may have felt quite unnatural or difficult at first, but with some practice they became easier, more natural, and more fun. Even if one of the exercises never feels right, even after an honest effort, one of the other exercises might really improve your mood or outlook. This study will give you a chance to try many different exercises, and at least some of them may fit you really well.

## **How will the exercises work?**

Each week, you will get a new exercise from your study trainer. You will rate your mood prior to starting the exercise, complete the exercise during the next week and write about it, and then rate your mood after the exercise. You will then go over the exercise with your trainer the following week and get a new one. You will do a total of six exercises in this study.

## **What is some advice for completing the exercises?**

You might have the best success by keeping these important things in mind:

### **1. Staying focused on the present and being nonjudgmental**

During many of these exercises, it may be easy to have negative thoughts creep in. This is normal; after all, you have been depressed and are just being discharged from the hospital. It is not unexpected that you would have distressing or hopeless thoughts. Indeed, staying in the moment can be a real challenge.

Still, an important skill for these exercises (and life!) is to be able to return your focus to the moment and to the positive emotional exercise that you are completing. If you notice yourself "heading negative," it can be very helpful to deliberately and nonjudgmentally "turn your mind" back to the moment and to the exercise you are completing.

### **2. Plan ahead**

The exercises can require some advance planning. Having extra time to brainstorm about an exercise can help you to pick something that is the most meaningful, interesting, and doable. The more you can plan ahead, the more likely the exercise will be a good fit and boost your spirits!

### **3. Novelty**

When we tested these exercises in people with depression, they found that thinking about something new or trying something a little different was much more powerful than a usual thought or act, even if the usual way is a positive one. For example, they found that when doing acts of kindness, performing acts that weren't part of their daily routine boosted their happiness a lot more. Similarly, when they wrote letters of gratitude, they wrote about something for which they hadn't already thanked that person. Doing something newer and different can give you a burst of positive feeling and feel more deeply meaningful.

#### **4. Naming positive emotions**

We will encourage you to work on building your vocabulary for positive emotions. Rather than just feeling “good,” we think that by understanding and labeling your good feelings more specifically (like “joy” or “amusement” or “pride”), it will be easier to more fully recognize and savor the positive events, thoughts, and feelings in your life. We include a list of 10 of the most common positive emotions on the next page to help get you started. Your trainer can give you an even bigger list.

#### **5. Develop new skills**

Over the course of this study, we will help you develop useful skills, such as becoming more aware of positive things in your life, expressing gratitude more regularly, or identifying new ways to use your strengths. You will use these skills as part of the study exercises, and we hope that you will be able to start using these skills in your everyday life too. So, on the last page of this manual, there is a space to write down the new skills you learn and how you might use them in the future to boost your spirits and improve your life.

#### **6. Willingness**

You still may feel skeptical. Give the exercises a try! You may surprise yourself by completing more of the activities than you expected, and may get more of a boost than you anticipated. By trying the exercise, it will also be helpful to hear what worked or did not work for you, so we can continue to refine the exercises to help them be most effective.

**Over the next six weeks, our goal is that you will:**

- **Be able to identify positive emotions and thoughts**
- **Be more aware of positive events in your life**
- **Be better able to use your personal strengths and qualities to accomplish goals and feel good about yourself**
- **Learn simple but powerful new skills that you can use in your daily life to boost your mood**
- **Be able to regularly use these skills to develop a habit of happiness**

# Ten Positive Emotions

(adapted from Barbara Fredrickson and her colleagues)

**Gratitude:** Feeling thankful about something—a person, event, place, or just being happy to be alive.

**Joy:** A sudden, intense feeling of great happiness, delight, or elation.

**Serenity:** A more relaxed and sustained version of joy—feeling a deeper sense of peace and contentment.

**Interest:** A positive feeling arising from being engaged in, or curious about, something or someone.

**Hope:** A feeling that things can turn out for the best, and that possibilities for positive outcomes exist

**Amusement:** A more playful positive emotion that results from feeling entertained by a funny situation.

**Inspiration:** A feeling that comes when a person or event leads someone to feel a deep desire to do something positive.

**Awe:** An all-consuming feeling that occurs when a person feels amazed by something on a grand scale. It can be triggered by seeing something like the vastness of nature or by another person's incredible skills or actions.

**Love:** An all-encompassing positive feeling—whether romantic, platonic, or a more general fondness—that can be directed at another being or oneself.

**Pride:** A deep sense of satisfaction or pleasure resulting from something a person has done or created.

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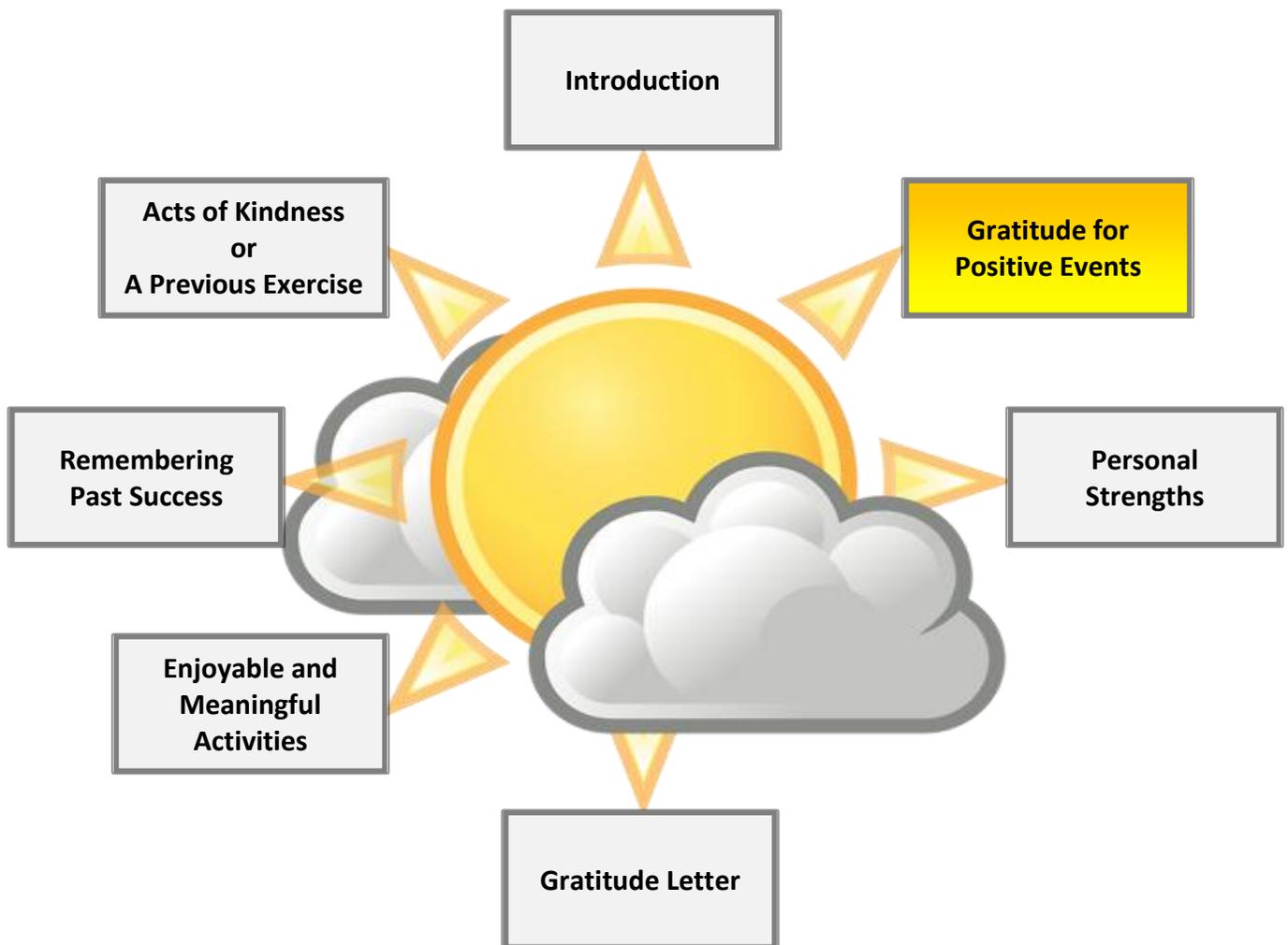
# **Weekly Exercises**

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# Week One

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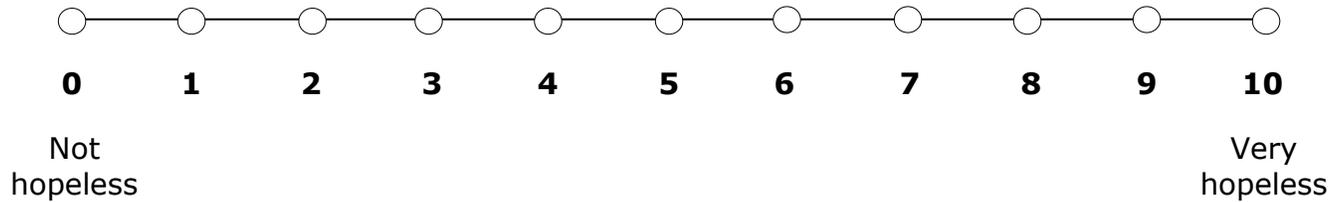


# Week One: Gratitude for Positive Events

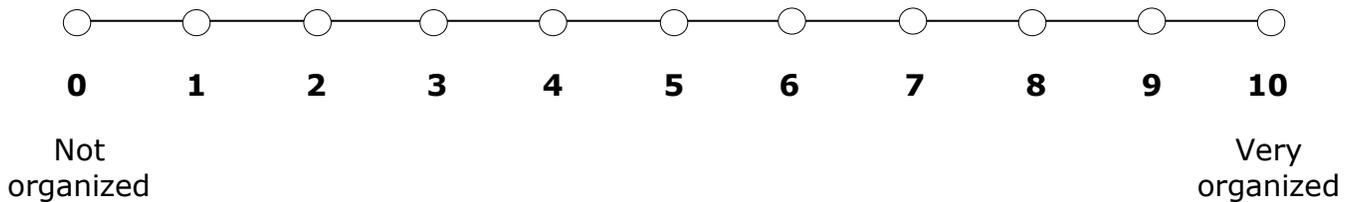
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## Pre-Exercise Ratings

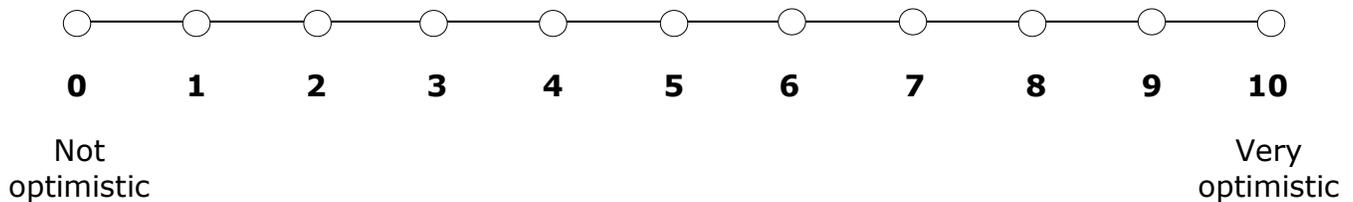
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

In this exercise, we will focus on identifying and re-experiencing three positive events that happened in the past week. People often do this for negative events but less frequently do this for good things that happen. It makes sense to analyze bad events so that we can learn from them and avoid them in the future. However, it can be easy to overdo this focus on the negative, and this can be a set-up for continued anxiety and depression. One way to keep this from happening is to develop our ability to think about the good in life.

Most of us are not *nearly* as good at savoring and appreciating good events as we are at analyzing bad events, so this is a skill that needs practice. As you become better at focusing on the good in your life, it may become easier to feel even more grateful for what you have and more hopeful about the future.

The following exercise will ask you to identify three good things in your life that occurred in the past week. It may have been very hard to notice these things this past week. However, by looking back carefully and specifically searching for good things that may have happened, you may be surprised to find that there were small (or even large) positive events and blessings to be counted.

### **I have been feeling low and am hospitalized—how can I possibly identify good things that are happening in my life?**

At first, it can seem hard to identify positive events during a serious crisis. However, this is one reason we do this exercise first: now may be the most important time to remember that good things—even small ones—can happen, even in the midst of serious depression. As you get skilled at focusing your attention on pleasant moments that happen during the day—a kind gesture from someone, a greatly-appreciated visit, good news about family or friends—you may even find it much easier to use these skills once the good things in your life are more obvious.

## Instructions

Take 10-15 minutes to complete this exercise. Use this time to write down three good or positive things that happened this week. Use the space below to write about the events—it is important that you have a physical record of what you wrote. The things you list can be relatively small in importance (“I enjoyed my lunch today”) or relatively large in importance (“My sister gave birth to a healthy baby boy”). They can be related to your hospitalization or completely separate.

As you write, you will follow these instructions:

1. Give the event a title (e.g., “sister remembered my birthday”)
2. Write down exactly what happened in as much detail as possible, including what you did or said, and if other people were involved, what they did or said.
3. Record how this event made you feel at the time. Use the most specific positive emotional words that you can think of to describe how you felt: Joy? Satisfaction? Relief?

Some important tips:

The goal of the exercise is to remember the good event and then enjoy the positive emotions that come with it. Don’t analyze the event itself in too much detail—the important thing here is being able to:

- *Take your time to experience and savor* the positive emotion, and then
- *Name and describe* that positive feeling (like joy, pride, relief, or contentment) as specifically as possible—not just that you felt “good”.
- Refer to the list of positive emotions (*page 11*) to help you describe the good feelings you experienced.
- You may also find yourself wanting to write something like “I felt less sad.” It’s good to note this but try to describe the feeling or thought using positive emotions. So, for example, instead of writing “I felt less sad,” you might write “I felt a little bit of relief.”
- Focus on the exercise. If you find yourself focusing on negative feelings or emotions, turn your mind from the negative feeling and refocus yourself on the good event and the positive feelings that came along with it. This can take effort, but it gets easier with practice and can make a real difference in how you feel.

## Exercise

### Positive event #1:

(1) Event title: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) What exactly I did or said, and if another person (or people) was involved, what they did or said:

(3) The positive thoughts and emotions I experienced at the time of the event (be as specific as possible and give as much detail as you can):

**Positive event #2:**

(1) Event title: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) What exactly I did or said, and if another person (or people) was involved, what they did or said:

(3) The positive thoughts and emotions I experienced at the time of the event (be as specific as possible and give as much detail as you can):

**Positive event #3:**

(1) Event title: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) What exactly I did or said, and if another person (or people) was involved, what they did or said:

(3) The positive thoughts and emotions I experienced at the time of the event (be as specific as possible and give as much detail as you can):

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you experience when thinking over this list of things that you were grateful for?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (being more aware of positive things) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

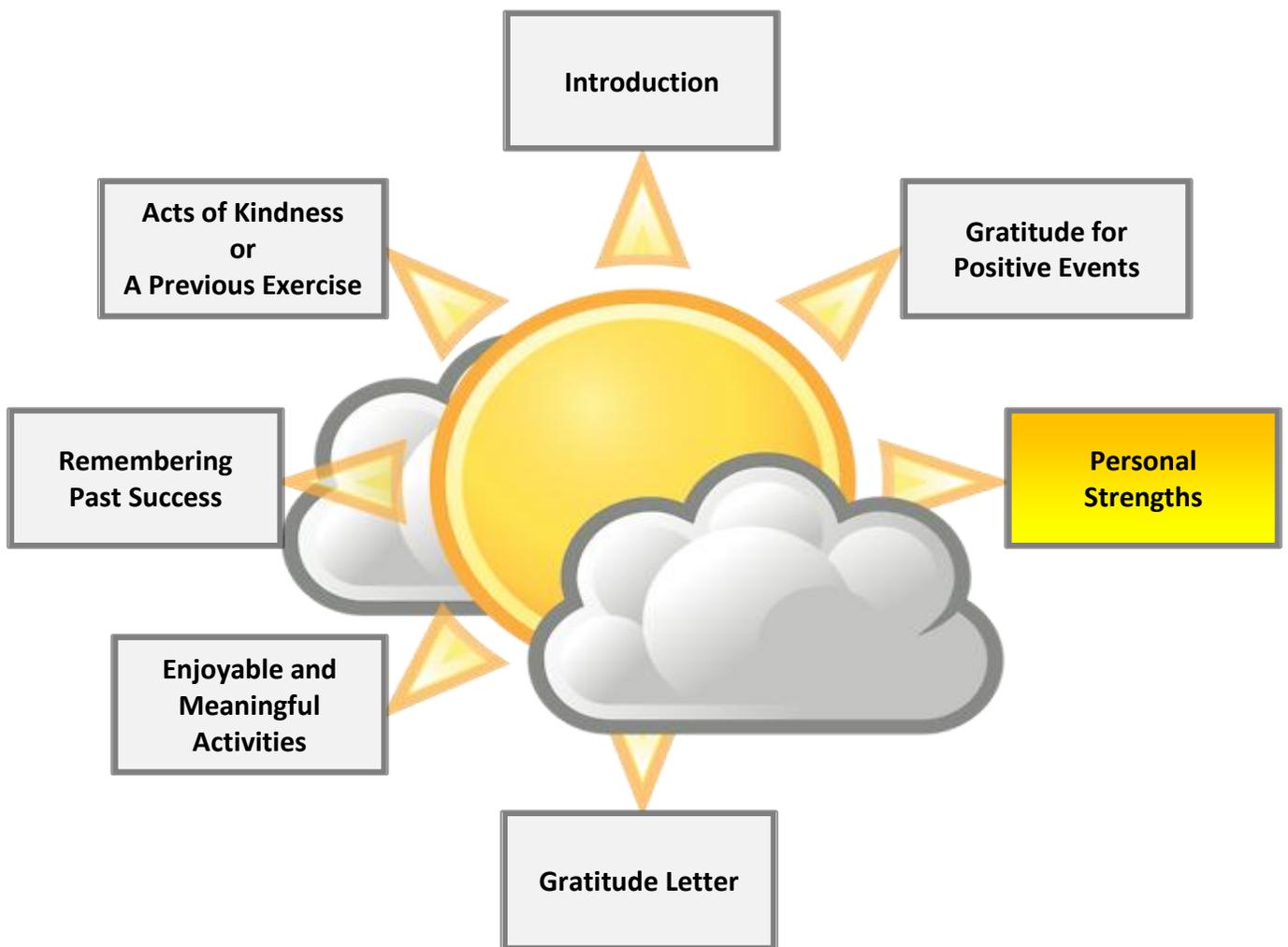
**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Two

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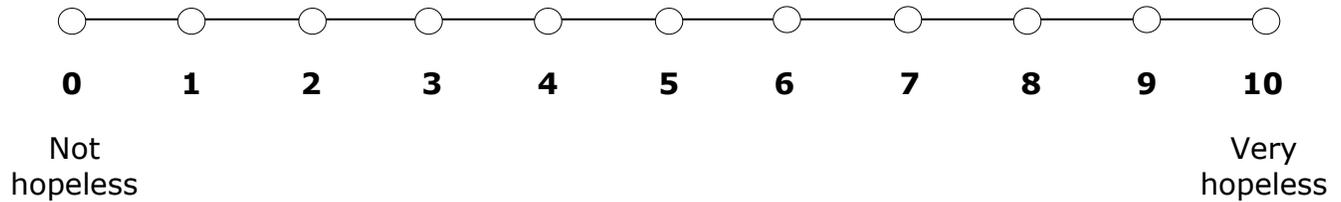


# Week Two: Personal Strengths

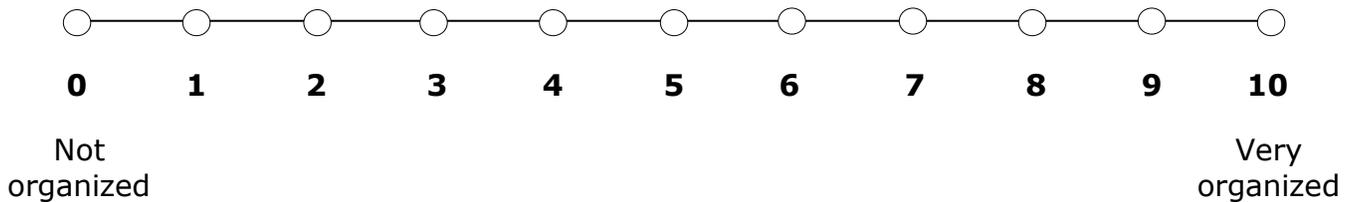
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## Pre-Exercise Ratings

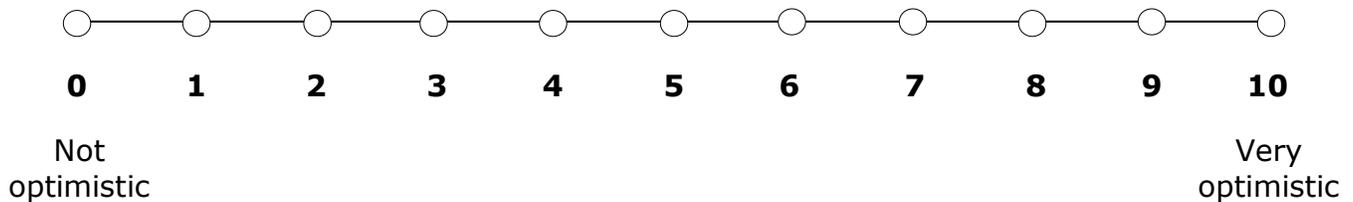
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

The purpose of this exercise is to have you identify a personal strength or positive quality, and then to use it in some way in the next day. We spend a lot of time focusing on our shortcomings. In some ways, this makes sense—if we hope to be more skilled or function at a higher level, it may be quite useful to improve areas of weakness. At the same time, it can be hard—and not a lot of fun—to focus only on our challenges, and it can lead us to forget some of our best characteristics.

It can be really satisfying to shift that focus onto our personal strengths. These are areas in which we have natural interests and skills, and it can feel really good to have a sense of mastering something. It can also be nice to show our strengths to friends and strangers, so they get to see us at our best. Finally, by reconnecting with forgotten or underused talents, it's satisfying to just remember that you do have some remarkable abilities.

**Using strengths boosts self-esteem, increases energy, reduces stress, and increases feelings of productivity.** Therefore, we feel that training ourselves to be more aware of our strengths and use them more frequently in our lives is an excellent skill that can benefit us physically and mentally.

Now that you are out of the hospital, or getting close to being ready to leave, this can be a perfect time to remind yourself of a personal strength and put it to good use.

This exercise has two parts:

1. First, you will review (with your trainer) the list of Personal Strengths on the next page and pick one of your signature strengths. A signature strength is one that makes you feel:
  - A sense of ownership and authenticity (“This is the real me”)
  - A feeling of excitement or satisfaction while using it
  - Energized, rather than exhausted, while using the strength

Your study trainer will help you pick one of these strengths for this exercise.

2. You will then use that signature strength in some way in the next week and will record how you used it, the result, and how you felt while using it.
  - When performing this exercise, it may be useful to use your strength in a new or different way than you usually do. This may help you learn new ways to use your strengths and may make using them more fun!

## Choosing a Personal Strength

Review this list to identify a signature strength for this exercise. As you look at this list consider the following:

Which of these strengths feels like “the real you”? If you were going to describe yourself to another person, which of these qualities would you pick?

1. **Curiosity [interest]:** Taking an interest in an experience for its own sake; exploring and discovering.
2. **Love of learning:** Mastering new skills and knowledge, whether alone or with others.
3. **Bravery [courage]:** Not avoiding threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; acting on your beliefs even if unpopular.
4. **Persistence [perseverance]:** Finishing what you start; persisting with something in spite of hard times or barriers.
5. **Honesty [authenticity]:** Presenting yourself in a real and genuine way; taking responsibility for your feelings and actions.
6. **Zest [enthusiasm]:** Approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated.
7. **Love:** Valuing close relationships with others, particularly those in which sharing and caring are returned.
8. **Social intelligence:** Being aware of the feelings and ideas of yourself and others.
9. **Teamwork:** Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group.
10. **Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to the ideas of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings get in the way of decisions that affect other people.
11. **Leadership:** Encouraging a group to get things done and still maintaining good relationships with group members.
12. **Humility / Modesty:** Letting your accomplishments speak for themselves; not bragging that you more special than you really are.
13. **Self-control [self-regulation]:** Regulating what you feel and do; being disciplined; controlling your appetites and emotions.
14. **Appreciation of beauty and excellence:** Appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance.
15. **Humor [playfulness]:** Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side of life.
16. **Spirituality [religiousness, faith, purpose]:** Having clear beliefs about a higher purpose, the meaning of life, or the meaning of the universe.

**The personal strength I will use for this exercise:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Instructions

You will now use this personal strength in the next week. You can complete this exercise however you choose: you can use your strength in whatever way you think is most appropriate, and however you think the strength will feel like the 'real you.'

As with the other exercises, the more deliberately and specifically you can use your strength, the better. You want to **use your strength on purpose and pay attention to your strength "in the moment."**

In addition, the more you can use your strength in a **new or different way** (rather than just using the strength as you do every day), the more you may get a real boost in happiness and confidence.

Once you have used your strength, on the next page you will write about it. Specifically, you will write about the situation, how you used your strength, and how you felt during the event and afterwards.

## Exercise

(1) **My signature strength:** \_\_\_\_\_

(2) How I used my personal strength (describe the situation, how you used your strength, and the result):

(3) How I felt while using this personal strength (be as specific and detailed as you can):

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have now as you review how you used your signature strength?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (finding new ways to use your strengths) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

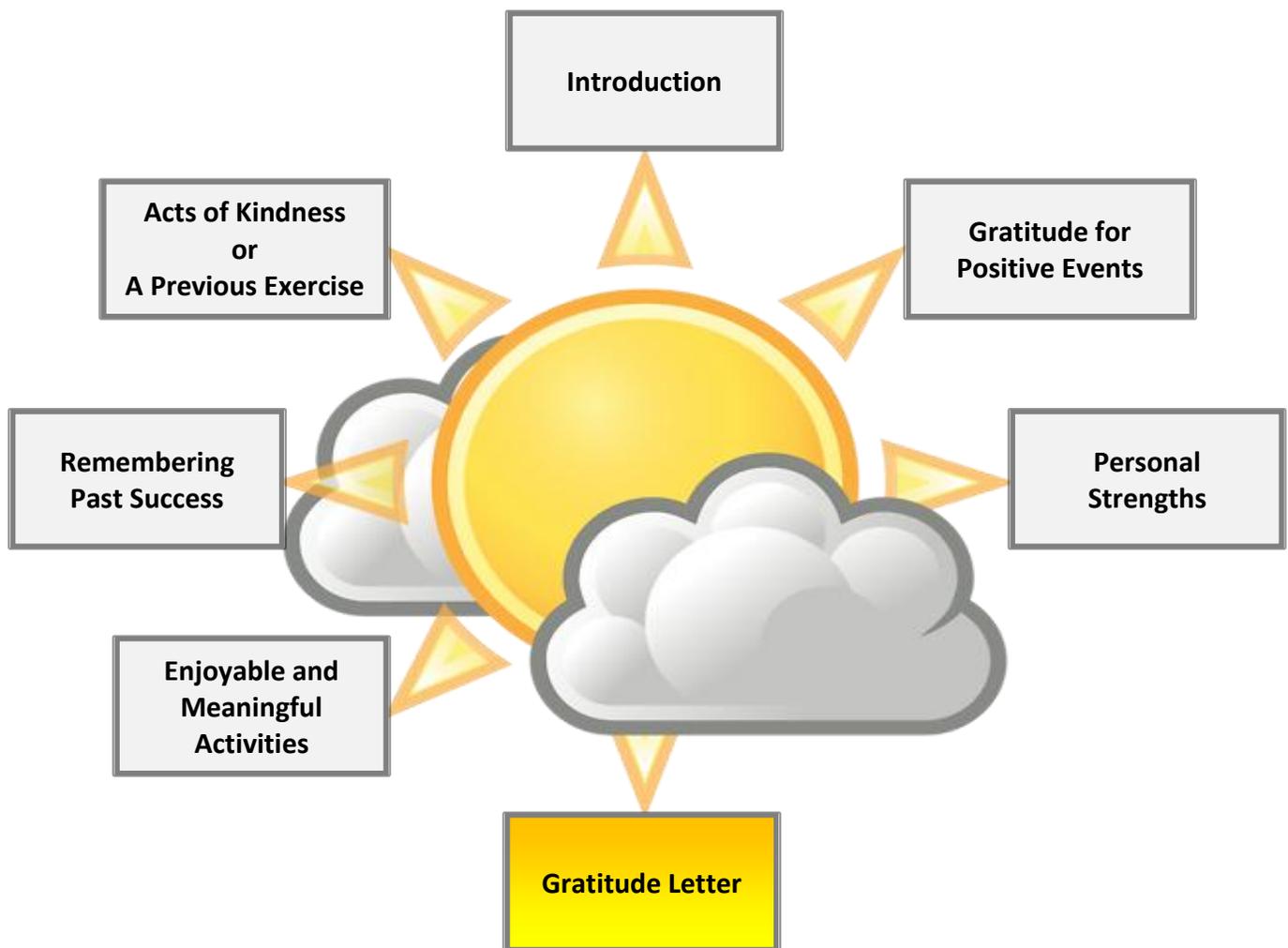
**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Three

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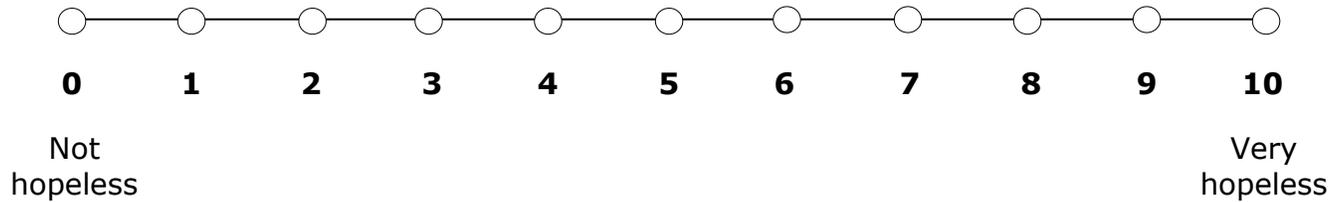


# Week Three: Gratitude Letter

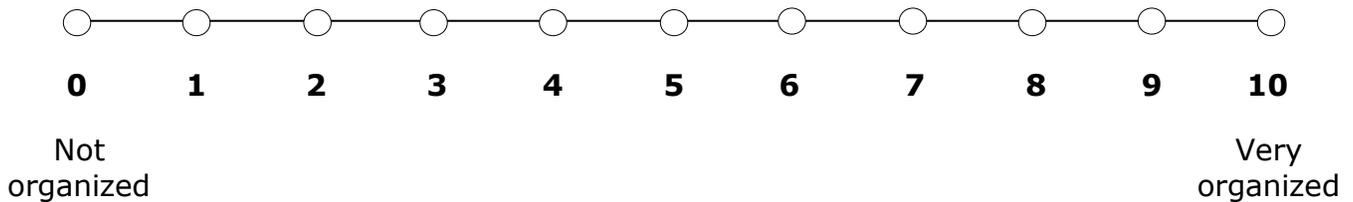
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

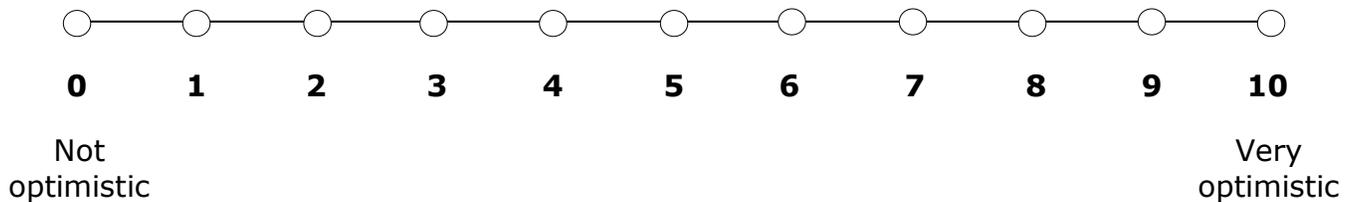
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

We will now describe your third positive psychology session. So far we've introduced "Gratitude for Positive Events" and had you use a Personal Strength. If you have found useful ways of using these skills in your life, it may be helpful to add those ideas to the last page of the manual, for your reference after the end of the study.

By now, you may have been out of the hospital for some time. You may be starting to feel better and you may be starting to get back to your usual activities. On the other hand, it may be the case that you are still struggling with depression. In both cases, it can be a good time to go back to the idea of gratitude (feeling grateful). If you are feeling better, it is a nice time to reflect on being glad about another person's kindness. If you are struggling, a boost of good feelings may help to "jumpstart" your mood.

Being able to feel gratitude and then express it to others is an important part of having a satisfying life. In fact, more and more research has found that life satisfaction depends far less on actual events, and far more on *what we decide to pay attention to*. Remembering another person's kindness toward you—and then thanking them in writing--can be one important and enjoyable way to pay attention to good things in your life. In this exercise, you will think of a time when another person made a kind gesture toward you that resulted in joy, relief, serenity, or other positive feelings.

Please take some time to think back over the past several years of your life and remember an instance when someone did something for you for which you are extremely grateful. For example, think of the people – parents, children, spouses/partners, relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers, doctors/therapists/nurses, employers, and so on – who have been especially kind to you but have never heard you fully express your gratitude.

When preparing for this exercise, **it may be most helpful to select a person or act that you haven't thought about for a while**—something that isn't always on your mind. Or if you do choose a person to whom you often feel grateful, it can be helpful to think about a different act (or aspect of the act) than the ones for which you usually feel thankful or express gratitude. It may be more helpful to bring these events out of the "back" of your mind than to select something that you often think about.

## Instructions

Now, for the next 15 minutes, write a gratitude letter to one of these individuals. Use the instructions below to help guide you through this process:

- 1.** Use whatever format you like, but remember to write as though you are directly addressing the individual you are grateful to. If it is helpful to start the letter with "Dear so-and-so," or end with "Sincerely, XXX," feel free to do so.
- 2.** Do not worry about perfect grammar and spelling.
- 3.** Describe in specific terms why you are grateful to this individual and how the individual's behavior affected your life. Focus on the specific parts of the behavior that most affected you and the details about how this affected you afterwards.
- 4.** Describe what you are doing now and how often you remember their efforts.
- 5.** You are welcome to show or give this letter to anyone you please. People have found that they can get even bigger boosts of good feeling when they share the letter with the recipient. On the other hand, the letter you write is a private document in which you can express your gratitude freely, and you do not have to share any of it with another person if you do not want to.
- 6.** Write the letter on the next page. When you next speak with your study trainer, you will review the letter (sharing only as much of the letter as feels comfortable). You will also discuss how you felt during and after writing the letter.

## **Exercise**

Gratitude letter:

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have when looking back over the gratitude letter you wrote this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (expressing feelings of gratitude more regularly) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

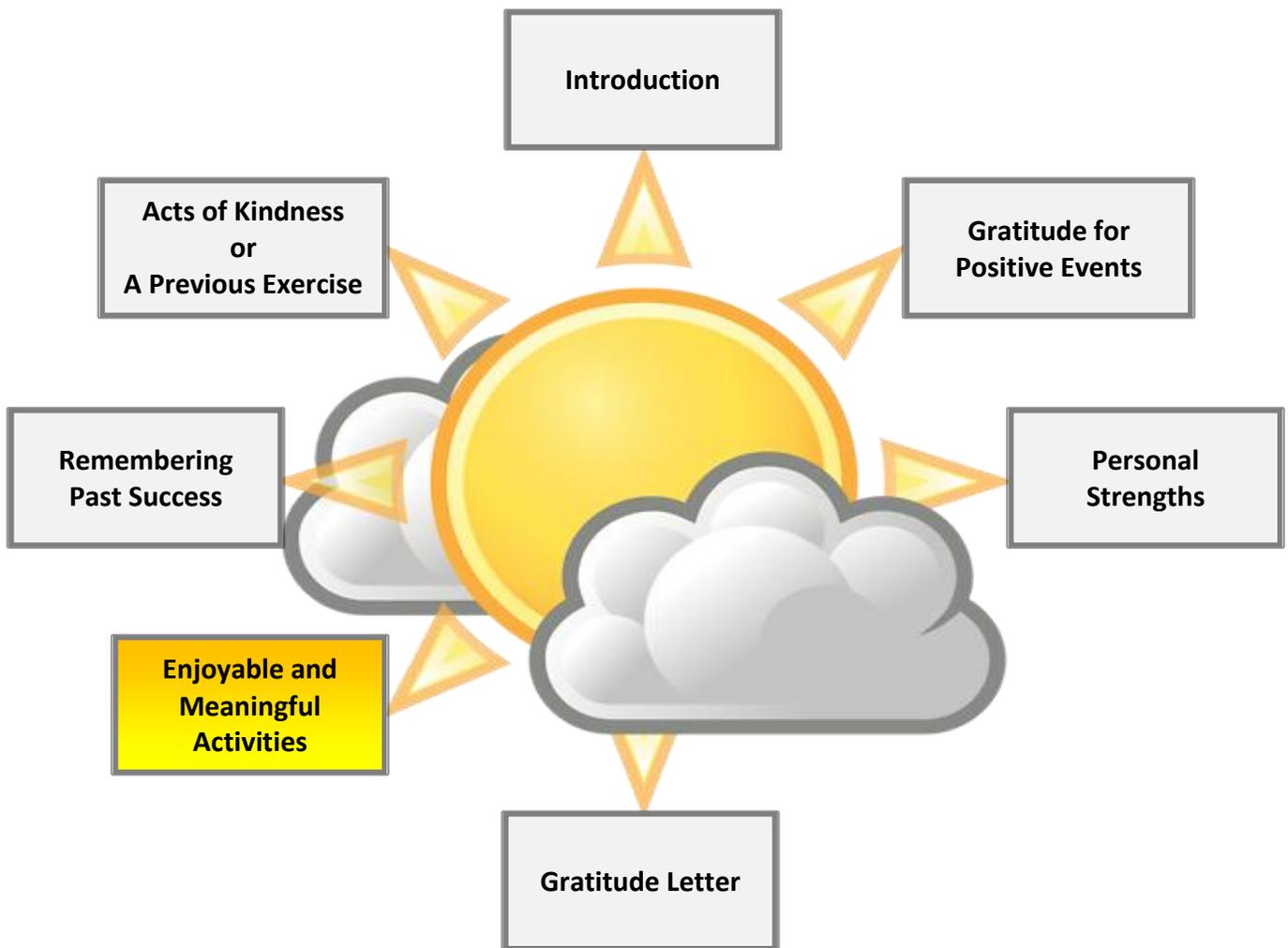
**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Four

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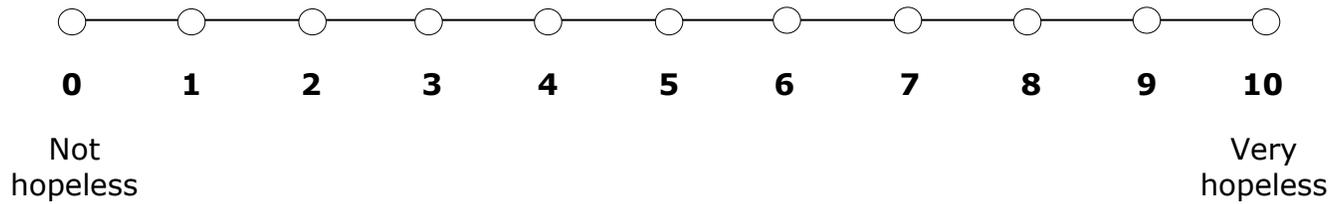


# Week Four: Enjoyable and Meaningful Activities

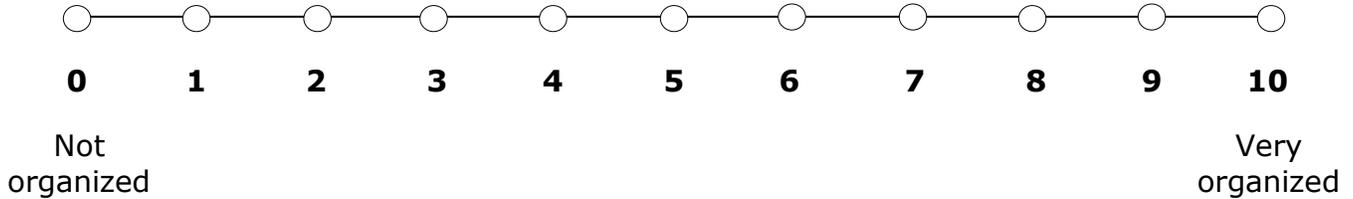
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

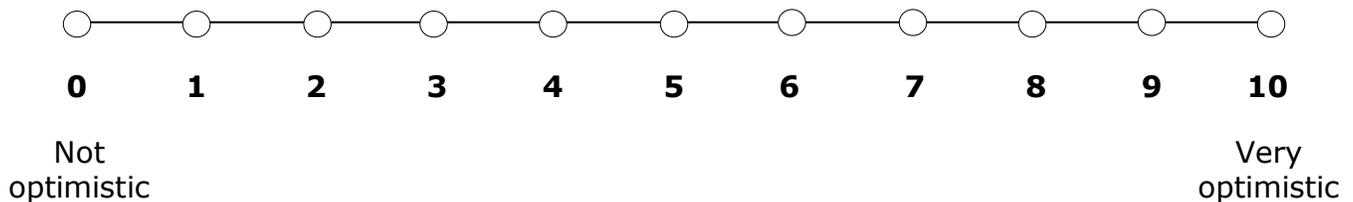
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

One of the biggest findings in happiness research is how important **variety and novelty (newness)** are to having and maintaining a satisfying life. Doing a single activity—or a single type of activity—no matter how enjoyable, can lose its punch after a while. If you listen to a favorite song over and over, or have the same great-tasting food over and over, eventually those favorite things lose their kick. Instead, if they are mixed in with other experiences and are enjoyed occasionally, they maintain their effect and can provide a burst of positive energy each time.

This week's exercise will help you to build the skill of planning and engaging in enjoyable and meaningful activities.

There are different types of activities. First, **there is a difference between "fun" activities and "meaningful" activities.** Some activities are very enjoyable in the moment (such as playing a slot machine, riding a roller coaster, or seeing a funny movie), while others may be less immediately fun but bring a lot of satisfaction or have a lot of meaning (writing a thoughtful letter to an old friend, or committing to volunteer at a soup kitchen once a month). By combining these two kinds of activities, you can get the benefits of both kinds of activities without either one feeling stale.

Second, **there can be a big difference between completing an activity alone and completing the activity with someone else.** A favorite hobby done alone brings a different kind of satisfaction than a meaningful conversation with a group of old friends, and by doing both types of activities, you can get the boost of connecting with other people while still "recharging your batteries" by enjoying an activity by yourself.

In this exercise, you will perform a variety of activities that can show you how different kinds of activities can bring different kinds of happiness and satisfaction. It will also show you how important the notion of variety can be.

We know that your circumstances may make it difficult to complete some activities. We want to emphasize that these activities do not need to be major tasks—the more you can do, the more you will get out of it, but anything simple that brings you enjoyment/satisfaction is appropriate for this exercise. Also, an important step toward a bigger goal—making phone calls, writing a detailed list, or having a meeting that gets you one step closer to a meaningful goal—also works well.

## Instructions

Over a 1-2 day period, do the following three activities:

- 1.** Choose an enjoyable activity to do alone and do it to completion. For example, you might read a book, listen to favorite music, remember good times from the past, look at a nice view, or meditate.
- 2.** Choose an enjoyable activity to do with others and do it until completion. For example, you might go for a walk with a friend, talk to an old friend on the phone, or watch a movie with others. Sometimes it's helpful to first identify the "who," and then you can figure out the "what do to with them."
- 3.** Choose an activity you deem important and meaningful and do it to completion. For example, you might make a medication chart and commit to using it to take medication regularly, or you might find and complete an application for school, housing, insurance, or volunteering. If a task seems too big, you could choose to set a goal of starting with a smaller, manageable step that will move you closer to completing the task.
- 4.** Record what occurred during and after the 3 activities. You may wait to write down what happened after you have done all 3 activities, or you may find it easier to record the event right after each individual activity rather than waiting until you have completed them all.

This may seem like a lot to keep track of—so your trainer will work with you beforehand to identify the activities and make sure they fit you and your life.

## Exercises

**Activity #1 (enjoyable activity by yourself):** \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Describe the activity:

(2) How did I feel during the activity?

(3) What good things happened as a result?

**Activity #2 (enjoyable activity with others):** \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Describe the activity:

(2) How did I feel during the activity?

(3) What good things happened as a result?

**Activity #3 (important and meaningful activity):** \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Describe the activity:

(2) How did I feel during the activity?

(3) What good things happened as a result?

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you experience when thinking over the activities that you did this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (awareness of the types of activities we perform) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

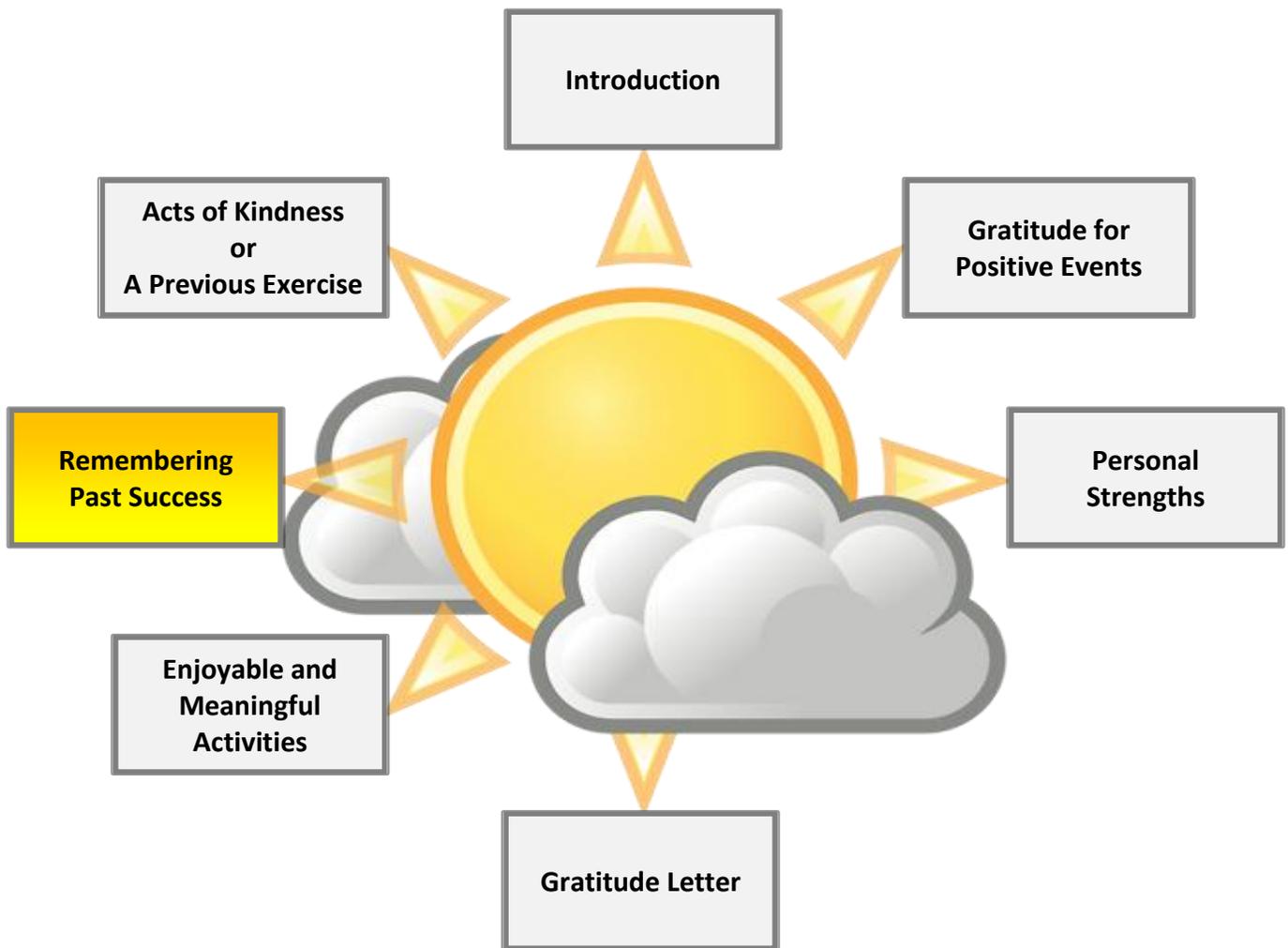
**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Five

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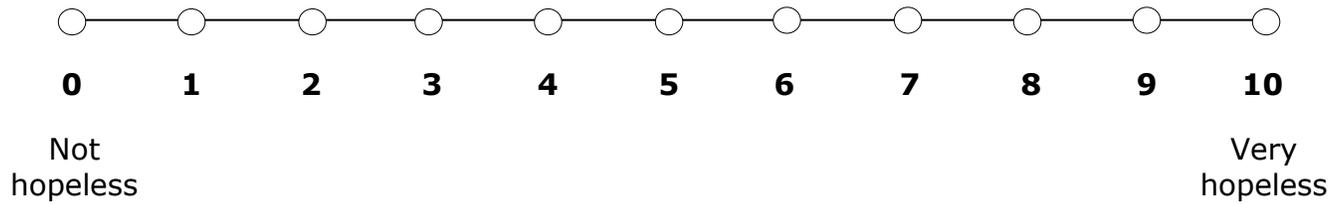


# Week Five: Remembering Past Success

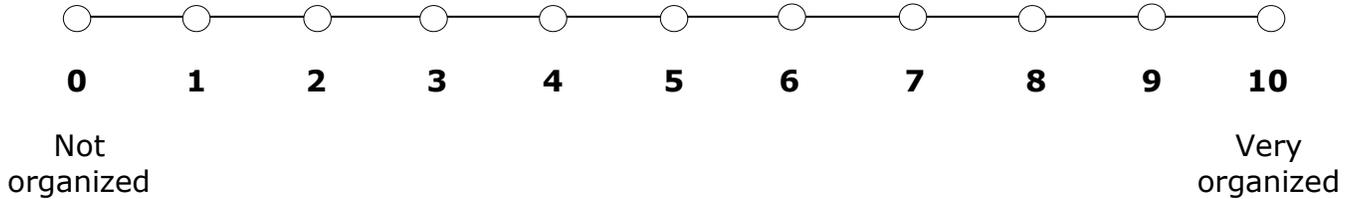
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

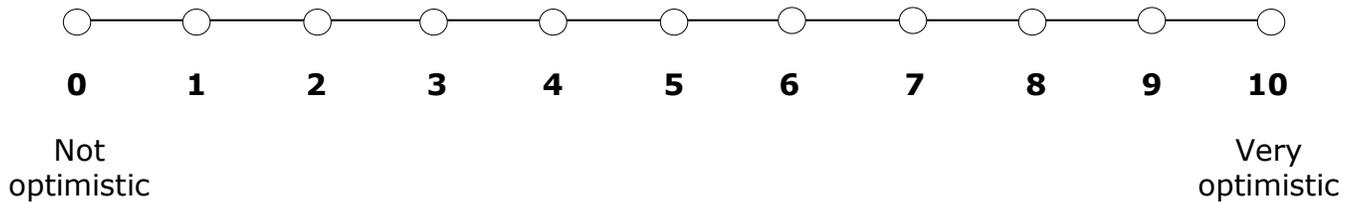
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

You have now been completing positive psychology exercises for over a month! We hope that you have found the exercises to be interesting, enjoyable, and useful. We also hope that you have been able to continue to use the skills you have learned by doing these exercises.

Today we will have you complete a new exercise. In this exercise, we are going to focus on a time when you had success. We will think about the success you had, how it felt, and how you played a role.

Remembering and focusing on success can be hard. It can be easy to think of past difficulties or failures, or how we might not have measured up in a certain situation. It can be human nature to dwell on difficulties or areas where we can improve, and sometimes much harder to vividly remember times when we had success. Furthermore, if you are still feeling depressed, it can be very hard to remember (or believe) that you have had success and that you have the skills to do it again.

**However, our strengths, successes, and accomplishments are really important parts of our lives, and they can also teach us about how we can have success in the future.** Usually success does not happen purely by random chance—in most cases, you played a real role in making that success happen.

In fact, the kind of success we want to focus on with this exercise is one in which you had an **active role** in making the success happen and **felt proud** about your contribution to the success. As long as it meets those requirements, it can be anything!

Some examples:

- Learning how to drive
- Doing well in a class or doing a good job on a work assignment
- Working together with a group of people to put together a party
- Winning a competition
- Making it to a difficult appointment or having a difficult conversation

Successes can be large or small, public or private, individual or group efforts. In many ways, the outcome is less important than the process—the ingredients within you that made it happen. What we want to figure out is: how did you do it? How did it feel? How can you use those skills again?

The overall goal of this exercise is to remind you that you have the skills to be successful. In fact, you have already used these skills!—and we want to help you remember them. We also want to remind you about the good feelings and pride that came from that success.

## Instructions

Take the next few minutes to think about a time when you succeeded at something. Again, this should be something in which you had an active role and about which you felt (even a little) proud. It can be a small, daily task, or an incredibly difficult task that happened in a specific moment, or a longer-term goal/accomplishment. Think as specifically as possible about the situation (for example, instead of “raising my kids,” it might be “raising my son to be kind to others, like the time he thoughtfully consoled a classmate who had lost his grandmother”).

If you can’t think of anything, you may be trying too hard to think of a “major” life event. Think about the past few days: was there anything that happened, even very small, that was a success? On the other hand, you may be thinking too “small”—think about the big events of your life, and times when you were the proudest or happiest—those times may be worth thinking and writing about.

Use the instructions below to help guide you through this process:

- 1.** You will first write about the event. You will then write about the positive feelings and thoughts you had during the event. Then you will write about the positive feelings and thoughts you have now, as you look back at your success.
- 2.** Finally, you will write about how you did it—what role you had in making the success happen and which of your good qualities “came out”.
- 3.** Do not worry about perfect grammar and spelling.
- 4.** Write these responses on the next pages. When you next speak with your study trainer, you will review the event, how it made you feel, and how you were involved in your success.

## **Exercise**

(1) My successful event:

(2) Describe the event in detail:

(3) The positive thoughts or feelings I experienced at that time (be as specific and detailed as possible):

(4) The specific steps I took in making this success happen:

(5) What this success says about me and my good qualities:

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have when thinking about the success you wrote about this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (awareness of our successes) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

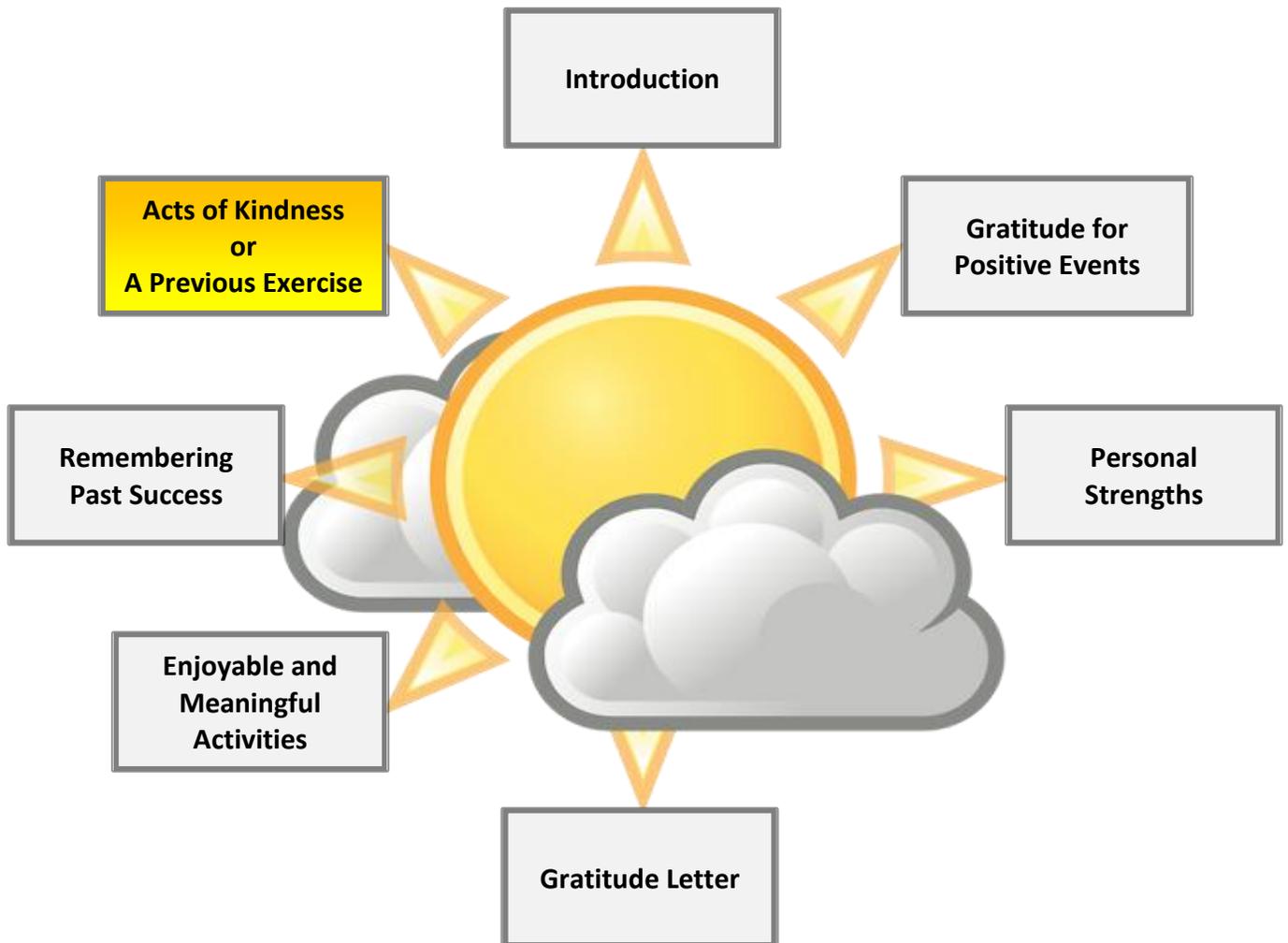
**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Six

## (Option #1 or #2)

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## Instructions

This week marks six weeks of being in the study. You have now done a wide variety of positive psychological exercises, and you are probably getting more and more skilled at identifying positive events, using your strengths and skills, and finding ways to feel grateful even in difficult times.

This week, we are giving you a choice. We have one final new exercise, on performing three Acts of Kindness for others within a 1-2 day period. On the other hand, if you would rather repeat an exercise from a prior week, you can do that instead!

Choose whether you would like to work on the new exercise (Option #1—Acts of Kindness) or an exercise you have previously completed (Option #2—choice).

If you select Acts of Kindness, turn to the next page.

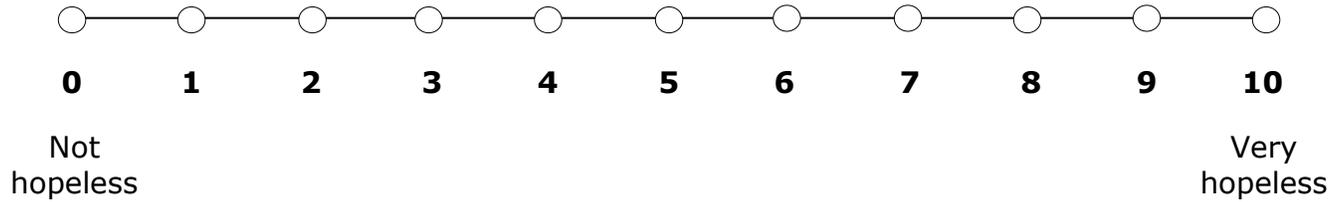
If you select Choice, turn to page 64.

# Week Six—Option 1: Acts of Kindness

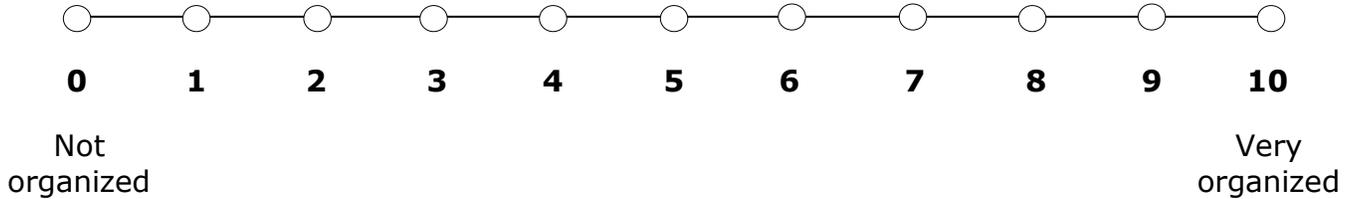
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

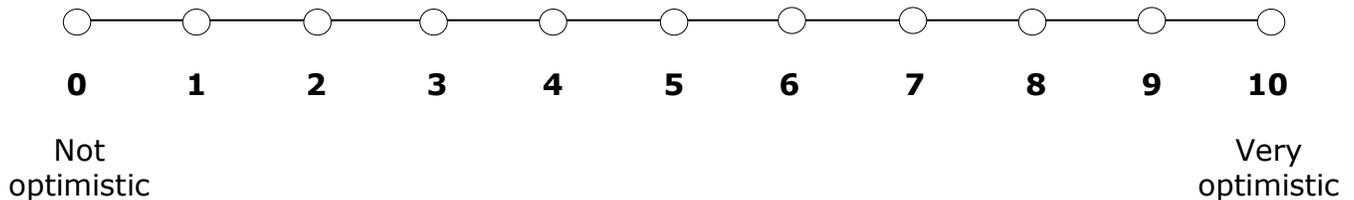
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

You have now completed a wide variety of exercises. These have involved thinking of positive events in the past and future, using strengths, and completing activities to boost your mood. You hopefully have found some exercises that fit you well and that you were able to add to some of your skills to your favorites list. This next exercise will focus on kindness, and performing kind acts for others.

### Why does doing a kind act make people feel happy?

1. Being kind and generous **can lead you to see others in a more positive light** (“My roommate really appreciated me helping her today. Maybe she is nicer than I thought and is just having a hard time”) and **fosters a heightened sense of cooperation in your community** (“We all must pitch in to improve the environment”).
2. Kind acts can **relieve guilt or discomfort about others’ difficulties and can help you appreciate your own good fortune**. Helping others can make you feel advantaged (and thankful) by comparison (e.g., “I’m grateful I have a home”). Providing kindness or assistance to someone else can deliver a welcome distraction from your own worries and troubles, and can put things in perspective.
3. A big benefit of being kind is **the way it can boost your self-esteem and change (in a good way) how you see yourself**. When you commit acts of kindness, you may begin to view yourself as a person who is kind and caring. Studies find that helping others or volunteering for a good cause helps people to see their own abilities, resources, and expertise. It also gives them a greater feeling of control over their life.
4. Finally, **kindness can start a cycle of positive events**. Helping someone may lead that person to like you, to appreciate you, and to offer gratitude. We have found that one reason that kind acts make people happier is how much the recipients appreciate the act. As an added benefit, by acting kind toward others, it may also lead people to help you in *your* time of need. But, even without this “returning the favor”, it can just feel great knowing that you have helped another in some small or large way.

### Hold on! I’m not feeling my best. How can I help others?

It is sometimes helpful to perform kind acts exactly *when* you are not feeling your best. As noted, these acts can help to distract you from a difficult situation, or take you away from being “stuck” in a series of negative thoughts about yourself and your life. Furthermore, some people find that it is helpful to have outside motivation to be active and involved with others—you may find it easier to get out of bed and engaged with the world if you are doing it with a purpose to help others, rather than for yourself.

## Instructions

Please take some time to think about three kind acts that you could perform this week to help people in your life; it could be for someone you know or for a stranger. These generous acts should be something that are not normally required in your life, but that go above and beyond what you typically do. Furthermore, these kind acts should involve some sacrifice (small or large) by you in terms of your effort, energy, money, or time. Identify these acts in your mind, and then go ahead and do them all in 1-2 days.

(Doing it all in 1-2 days is actually pretty important. This helps you to perform acts that are a little more out of your usual “day to day” activities, and studies have found that doing kind acts in a short time boost mood much better than spreading three acts out over a week)

Also, it is helpful to vary the type of kind acts you perform. Try a few different acts that require different amounts of effort and skill to see which work best for you.

Again, the most important part is not the size of the acts, but that they are something you would not be doing anyway. You may not need to plan every detail of each act—chances to be kind can come out of the blue—but it is helpful to come up with a specific plan for at least a couple of the acts, and then go ahead and do them.

Once you have done them, please write about the kind acts that you performed. You can write about each act after you have done it, or you can write about all three at once, but it is generally helpful to write about the act within a day of performing the act to keep the event and its effects fresh in your mind.

When you write, be sure to describe exactly what you did, how you felt, and what response the recipient had (if any). The recipient’s response can sometimes be the best part of the exercise! It is also possible that the recipient of the act—the “receiver”—may not be very thankful. That’s okay—just the act of being kind to someone else can remind YOU that you are a kind person and that you are capable of reaching out to others in their time of need. And that can feel good.

**Note:** You might feel a little shy or nervous before trying one of these acts. That is completely normal, and it usually will get easier once you do the first one—many people find that the good feelings you get from performing the kind act outweigh any jitters you had beforehand.

## Exercise

### Kind act #1

(1) What I did:

(2) How I felt in anticipation of the act (as I thought about doing it):

(3) How I felt when I did the act:

(4) The response the recipient had, if any:

## **Kind act #2**

(1) What I did:

(2) How I felt in anticipation of the act (as I thought about doing it):

(3) How I felt when I did the act:

(4) The response the recipient had, if any:

### **Kind act #3**

(1) What I did:

(2) How I felt in anticipation of the act (as I thought about doing it):

(3) How I felt when I did the act:

(4) The response the recipient had, if any:

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have when thinking about the kind acts you performed this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (being kind to others) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

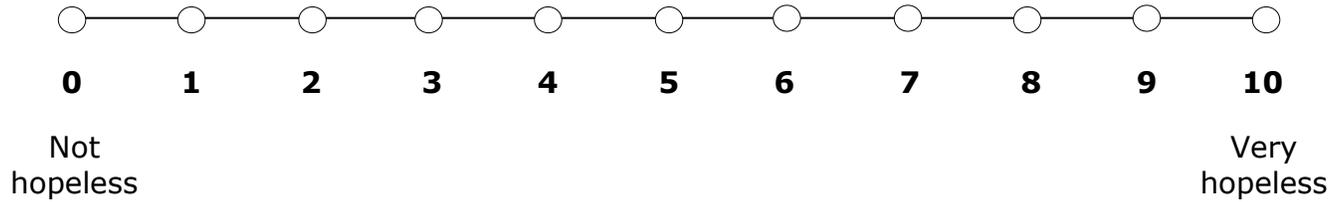
**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

# Week Six—Option 2: Choice from Previous Weeks

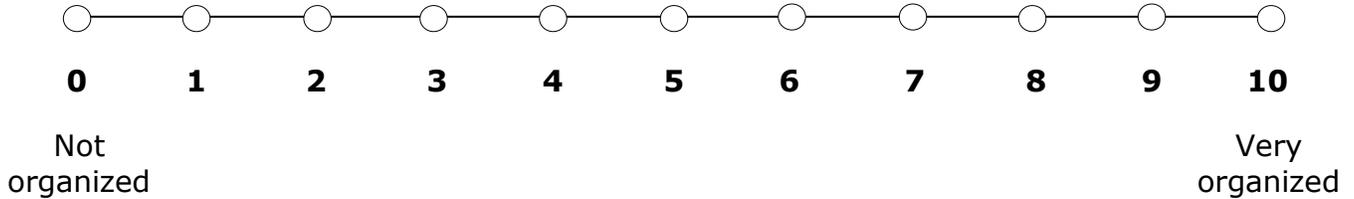
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

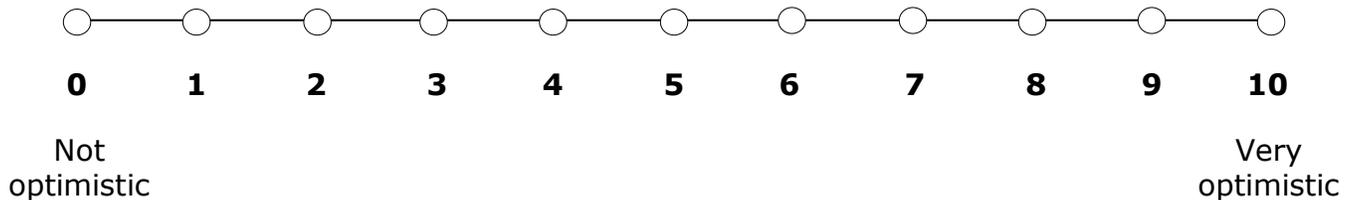
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

One of the most important things about activities that boost positive thoughts and feelings is the idea of **matching** a person with the right activity. Some people really get a lot out of thinking and writing exercises (like the gratitude letter), and some really get a big boost from doing activities (like the strengths exercise). Sometimes, it doesn't matter whether it is a "thinking" or "doing" activity, but instead what matters is exactly what the activity is all about—the focus of the activity.

Because our goals are to (1) use exercises that are effective in boosting your positive thoughts/feelings and (2) find exercises that feel to you that they are worth repeating after the study, it is important to match the right exercises to you and your situation.

In addition to choice, the other thing that is important is practice. As you do these activities more frequently, they often get easier and more enjoyable, and you can 'tailor' an activity slightly to make it fit your style and preferences.

With that in mind, for this final exercise, we will have you choose an exercise that you have completed previously. It could be the exercise you liked best, or just one that you would like to try again. You will repeat the exercise, and you can work with your trainer to make small adjustments if you think it will make the exercise even more useful. For example, you might pick a new strength to use for the *Personal Strengths* exercise, or you might write about seeing a loved one succeed for the *Past Success* exercise, for example.

On the other hand, some people like trying as many different exercises as they can, and as we discussed, newness and novelty can help increase positive feelings. If you would rather try one more new exercise about *performing acts of kindness*, you can do that instead of repeating a past exercise.

## Instructions

1. Select (with your trainer) an exercise that you would like to complete.
2. Complete the exercise according to the instructions for that exercise, and write about the exercise using the same format as before.
3. If you choose to complete the new exercise (three kind acts) instead, the instructions and a space to write about the exercise follow on page 52.

**The exercise I chose for this week:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Any changes to the exercise:**

Use the following page to write about the exercise.

## **Exercise**

If you chose a thinking/writing exercise (gratitude for positive events, gratitude letter, remembering past success), complete the exercise below.

If you chose a “doing” exercise (using strengths; enjoyable and meaningful activities), write about: (1) what you did, (2) how you felt when you completed the activity, and (3) how you feel now, as you look back.

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have when thinking about the exercise you performed this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?



---

## **Next Steps**

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## The end of the study...is just the beginning!

During this study, we have been helping you develop specific skills to increase positive feelings and thoughts. We have also been taking special note of the skills and exercises that are the best fit for you, and encouraging you to keep using them!

We hope that these exercises have helped to provide a boost in your positive thoughts and feelings. If they have helped you to feel more proud, satisfied, or at peace, the next step is to sustain this new level of positive thoughts and feelings. You know this intimately if you've worked hard to make changes before but found that it's hard to stick to the changes. We would guess that some of your other attempts might have worked, just not for long. However, by using the exercises you've practiced these last six weeks, you can sustain gains in positive experiences. In fact, the more you perform these activities, the more you may find that they become a natural, enjoyable part of your life.

Today, your trainer will review with you what worked well—and what didn't—over the past six weeks. What kind of exercises worked best? What helped motivate you to complete them, and what got in the way? What surprised you? We will then take this information and try to make a plan for the future to help you use the exercises that fit you the best and helped you the most.

We will also leave you with 3 key ideas about maintaining your new skills:

**1. Timing and variety are really important.** People often adapt to major life events. If a big life event happens—good or bad—people often return to their former level of happiness after a few weeks or months. In the same way, it is possible to “adapt” to the positive psychology exercises. However, this is only true if the exercises are done in a way that makes them routine and run-of-the mill. For example, it appears that for most people, doing a positive psychology exercise once per week with a good solid focus and effort leads to more (and longer) good feelings than doing a little every day.

In addition, changing up the activity in large or small ways really can keep it from becoming boring. For example, if you enjoy expressing gratitude, you may choose to vary the areas (like health or friendships) in which you count your blessings. In this way, the strategy may remain interesting and meaningful, and can keep working for weeks and months and years. So, whatever activities you choose, be sure to use timing and variety to help them give you the biggest happiness boost.

**2. Commitment is necessary.** Scientific study has confirmed an obvious truth: the more motivated you are to have a satisfying life, the more successful you will be! But motivation can be really difficult to keep up. This means that you should choose positive psychology activities *that are a good fit and that will help you to stay*

*motivated*. We have also found that the exercises work as long as you keep using them. This means that if you *make an effort to practice these strategies every single week*, you will probably see your positive feelings grow. The good news is that the exercises are pretty simple, can give you a boost right away, and are often fun!

What if you're too busy, or too tired? We hope that these exercises—and the goal of having a more satisfying life—can feel worth your consistent effort. Besides, many of the exercise do not require much time. They are simply ways of living your life:

- Observing your daily tasks and relationships with a new, more kind, and optimistic perspective
- Using your strengths whenever possible
- Remembering good events at the end of a day, and so on.

Most of these strategies won't be a drain on your time, but, by deliberate choice and with some effort, can be woven seamlessly right into your day.

**3. Happiness—and life satisfaction—can become a habit.** We all have habits—some good, some bad. Habits form with practice. Every time you repeat a behavior (such as going for a walk in the morning), connections develop in your memory between the behavior and the environment in which it occurs. In the case of a morning walk, the cues (alarm clock going off, having breakfast) automatically trigger the behavior (putting on walking shoes), until the behavior simply becomes natural.

To apply this idea to our exercises, the more often you start a positive activity (such as performing kind acts or expressing grateful feelings during difficult moments), the stronger the connection becomes between the activity and the world around you. So the next time (or more likely the tenth time) you feel stuck or hassled, it may be easier—even automatic—to jump into savoring positive events or feeling grateful.

As you might expect, habits take time to stick. However, if you use these ideas about timing, variety, and effort, you really can create a habit of positive activities. **It is in your power to achieve real and lasting change, one that may lead you to feel happier and more hopeful—and in less danger of sliding into serious depression.**

To help you with developing this positive habit, we recommend formally scheduling positive psychology exercises for the future, starting with the next three weeks. On the next two pages, write the date that you'll complete the exercise and write down which type of activity you will perform. Be as specific as possible, and be sure to add variety to the exercises to keep them fresh and to keep them from becoming just another task you have to complete. Hopefully, by continuing to perform these exercises in the future, you can begin to develop a tradition of positive activities—a habit of happiness.

## Positive Activity Schedule

### Week 1:

Date to complete the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the exercise/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

How it went:

---

---

### Week 2:

Date to complete the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the exercise/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

How it went:

---

---

### Week 3:

Date to complete the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the exercise/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

How it went:

**Following Weeks:**

What I will do and when:

## My Favorite Skills

<b>Skill</b>	<b>How I can use this exercise/skill in my life</b>
<i>Sample:</i> <i>Gratitude Letter</i>	<i>1. Write small thank you notes to my friends when they help me out or do something nice.</i> <i>2. Just pay attention when someone does something kind for me, and let myself feel grateful to them, even if I never get to thank them fully.</i>

Massachusetts General Hospital  
Research Study

# Positive Psychology (Trainer's Edition)



The **H**appiness, **O**ptimism, and **P**ositive **E**motions  
Study





## Table of Contents

<b>Study Calendar</b>	4
<b>Introduction</b>	5
<b>List of 10 Emotions</b>	11
<b>Week One</b> (Gratitude for Positive Events)	13
<b>Week Two</b> (Personal Strengths)	22
<b>Week Three</b> (Gratitude Letter)	30
<b>Week Four</b> (Enjoyable and Meaningful Activities)	37
<b>Week Five</b> (Remembering Past Success)	46
<b>Week Six Introduction</b> (Your Choice)	54
<b>Week Six Option One</b> (Acts of Kindness)	56
<b>Week Six Option Two</b> (Repeat a Previous Exercise)	64
<b>Next Steps</b>	70
• <b>Positive Activity Schedule</b>	73
• <b>“My Favorite Skills” List</b>	75

## Appointments (to review each week's exercise)

Week 2 Call \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3 Call \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4 Call \_\_\_\_\_

Week 5 Call \_\_\_\_\_

Week 6 Call \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6 Mood Assessment** \_\_\_\_\_

A call from one of our staff members who will ask you questions about your mood

**Week 12 Mood Assessment** \_\_\_\_\_

Another call from one of our staff members who will ask you questions about your mood

**Call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ if you need to change your appointment.**

**Principal Investigator  
Jeff C. Huffman, MD  
Director of Cardiac Psychiatry Research  
Massachusetts General Hospital**

## INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY FOR THE INTERVENTIONIST

The AFSP Manual for participants is meant to be straightforward for intervention delivery. In most cases, this Interventionist Manual will discuss ways to help facilitate brainstorming for the exercises if a subject seems stuck, confused, or otherwise at risk of being unable to generate adequate ideas.

Undoubtedly, it is best if the participant can generate an idea without the interventionist's help, and you may simply reach the end of the session with their task to consider thinking about the exercise and find a solution/task on their own. The idea is that, after the intervention, they would be doing this all on their own, so they should get used to engaging in that decision process.

However, if a participant is really struggling and you get the sense that they may not have the motivation, cognition, or energy to develop their own positive psychology task(s), you can absolutely give suggestions as outlined in the following pages. In all cases, you want as much as possible to have the participant generate content/ideas, with you helping to frame the ideas, rather than you assigning the participant a task.

In a similar vein, it is not necessary to read these pages verbatim (or the pages for any of the exercises); indeed, the depth of the discussion may depend a bit on the patient. Furthermore, you may come up with a script that works for you when you describe the rationale for the intervention. However, you will want to make sure you hit the most important points for everyone.

With every participant, you will want to:

1. **Generate excitement/curiosity:** We are very excited about this approach and feel that it is a very different way of approaching psychological treatment (and life) compared to what has been tried before.
2. **Validate their situation and severity of suffering:** At the same time, we understand that they have been feeling terrible and that positive thinking may seem corny, unrealistic, or insufficient. It will not be a cure-all by any means. But we think there are some really important principles here that might help.
3. **Garner their involvement as a scientist:** In the end, we don't really know if any or all of these exercises will work, and that's why we are recruiting them to participate as co-investigators or beta-testers in this process with us. Some exercises may be terrible, but they are all pretty different, and some might really be great matches—we will rely on them to tell us what works and what doesn't, and we promise to listen.
4. **Emphasize these 'tips':** Staying in the moment, the importance of novelty, and generating a vocabulary for positive emotions.
5. **Make sure they get how the study works regarding ratings, sessions, and exercises.**

At various points, you will want to have patients name or list positive feelings that they have experienced as they go through the exercises. We give them a "top 10" emotions list in the participant manual, and that should be sufficient (and not too overwhelming) for most people. But if people are struggling, we often will just try to name a few common psychological states (gratitude, hope, joy, pride, serenity) and/or take patient's cues (if the patient reports feeling "good" but it sounds like pride, it may be worth inquiring about this more specific word).

*A few more scenarios that may arise in your dealings with this gang:*

1. ***Difficulty with completing the exercises:*** *Emphasize that even if they don't complete the whole thing, or even any of it, that's okay—you won't be mad or annoyed or upset. It's understandable that things are hard given everything that has been going on, and while they will get the most out of the program if they do the exercises fully, having the phone call to connect and discuss and problem-solve may help a lot in terms of making the most out of the program (you want to walk the line between being welcoming/laid-back and being too permissive so they never do anything and don't feel that it's expected).*
2. ***Comparison with the past:*** *They may feel that they could have been much more positive before, or been better at thinking about positive events. Emphasize that while that may be true, they are now taking an active role in addressing the problem, which is great.*
3. ***Focusing on distress:*** *They may wish to engage you in negative thoughts, difficult circumstances, or other discursions. Promptly validate that it is clear that they have a lot going on and are in a lot of distress (if applicable), and that for just these moments, you want to put that aside to try to work on the specific goals of this program.*
4. ***If patient expresses suicidal ideation:*** *Stop going through exercise and refer to suicide assessment script at the back of this packet.*

5. ***What if they are saying they hate the intervention:** Encourage them to stick with it if they can--often people get into a groove with the intervention and they may find that with a little practice, this gets easier and more enjoyable. You can also tell them that it is really helpful to us to hear when and how it is not helping--this prevents us from delivering a bad treatment to people, and that in a few weeks at the end of the study, we are going to get detailed feedback from them in an exit interview to get their take on what could be different or better and what did not work well at all. Finally, if they are really feeling worse, they can of course drop out--if they wish to do so, they can--see if you can get them to commit to a single exit phone call at the follow-up to get some f/u data. If they are in the control condition and they hate it and say they wanted the PP intervention, you can tell them that when they are all done with the study (12 weeks), we would be absolutely happy to send them all of the materials for that intervention as well.*
6. ***Use the “My Favorite Skills” page:** This is key. We are having them focus on these as tips and skills they can use in their daily lives. So when an exercise goes well and/or we can help them think about how to use the exercise in life, we have them write it in the back of their manual on the very last page, and we will ask them about this regularly.*

## INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY FOR THE PATIENT

### **Introduction (Completed in the hospital)**

Below you will find text that describes positive psychology and can be used as an optional “script” to describe the intervention study to patients.

1. We are really trying to take a different approach to help people with depression. In psychiatry for many years we have focused on people’s negative feelings and ignored positive thoughts and feelings. Traditionally, we try to help people ignore negative thoughts and feelings (“here are your automatic negative thoughts, don’t feel anxious, here’s how to feel less sad, etc.”), but there is very little emphasis on actually boosting people’s positive feelings, to help them feel more hopeful, more grateful, stronger, and maybe even a little happier. That’s what this treatment is all about.
2. We studied some positive psychology exercises with patients in the hospital, to help patients get a boost in their positive feelings while they were in the hospital. People really seemed to like the exercises and get a lot out of them. But we need your help to learn if these exercises help people like you who have had serious depression, after they leave the hospital. You can tell us what worked—and anything that didn’t—so we can design the best possible treatment to help people feel their best.
3. One thing that we will emphasize a lot is that mastering the skills to increase positive feelings takes practice. It can feel unnatural at first and can sometimes be pretty hard—you have had serious depression and have been in the hospital, so motivation can be hard. But doing these exercises definitely seems to be worth it for people, and it is possible to feel more hopeful and happier with this effort. Plus, the exercises are actually pretty fun.
4. So the way that the exercises will work is that each week I will give you an exercise to complete—like remembering a time when you had a past success and writing about those good feelings, or picking a strength and using it in some way. You will complete the exercise sometime over that next week and write about how it went. Then we will talk on the phone and review the exercise and the feelings and thoughts that it created. Finally, I will give you a new exercise for the following week.
5. There are some important tips for the exercises that I want to emphasize. First, while you are doing exercises, you may find that it is easy to be reminded of or think about negative events or feelings. This is totally normal! You have been depressed and your life has been stressful. However, for the purposes of these exercises, we will work with you to **turn your mind and your attention back to the exercise and to positive thoughts and feelings**, even if just for a few minutes. This will take practice, but giving yourself a little mental vacation from depression/anxiety through these exercises might really make a difference.
6. Another tip has to do with **trying new things**—the more out of your routine you can get, the more of a positive boost you will experience. For example when you write a letter thanking someone who has done something kind

for you, the more it can be above and beyond what you usually thank people for, the better. And just the idea of trying these exercises, even if you are not sure at first if they will help, is an important one. Some exercises will be better fits than others, but you may be surprised that some may help you more than you thought. This is also part of trying new things!

7. We will also work with you to increase your words for positive thoughts and feelings. When you are feeling depressed, it can be easy to have a lot of words to describe how low you feel—sad, anxious, worried, hopeless—but often people do not have a lot of words to describe feeling good. But feeling joyful or proud or content are all different, and we want to **help you see that there are also lots of different kinds of positive thoughts and feelings**. So it can help you to see when you are having a positive experience or feeling and you can write more specifically about them.

8. Finally, the last thing I would say about the exercises is to plan ahead. The exercises can take some time to complete, and if you actually **allow yourself the space to plan the exercise and the time to do it** with plenty of lead time, you will find that you will get a lot more out of it, you will enjoy it more, and it will help your mood even more. We can help you plan to get the most out of these exercises.

9. During this program, we will help you **identify the exercises and skills that best fit you**, and help to add them to the “My Favorite Skills” page to use when you need a boost in mood. This list is located in the back of this manual and we will be helping you to add to it by writing down ideas and successful exercises. The exercises are simple, portable, and effective, so we think that by the end of this project you will be feeling better AND you will have new skills for the future!

Additional points to cover:

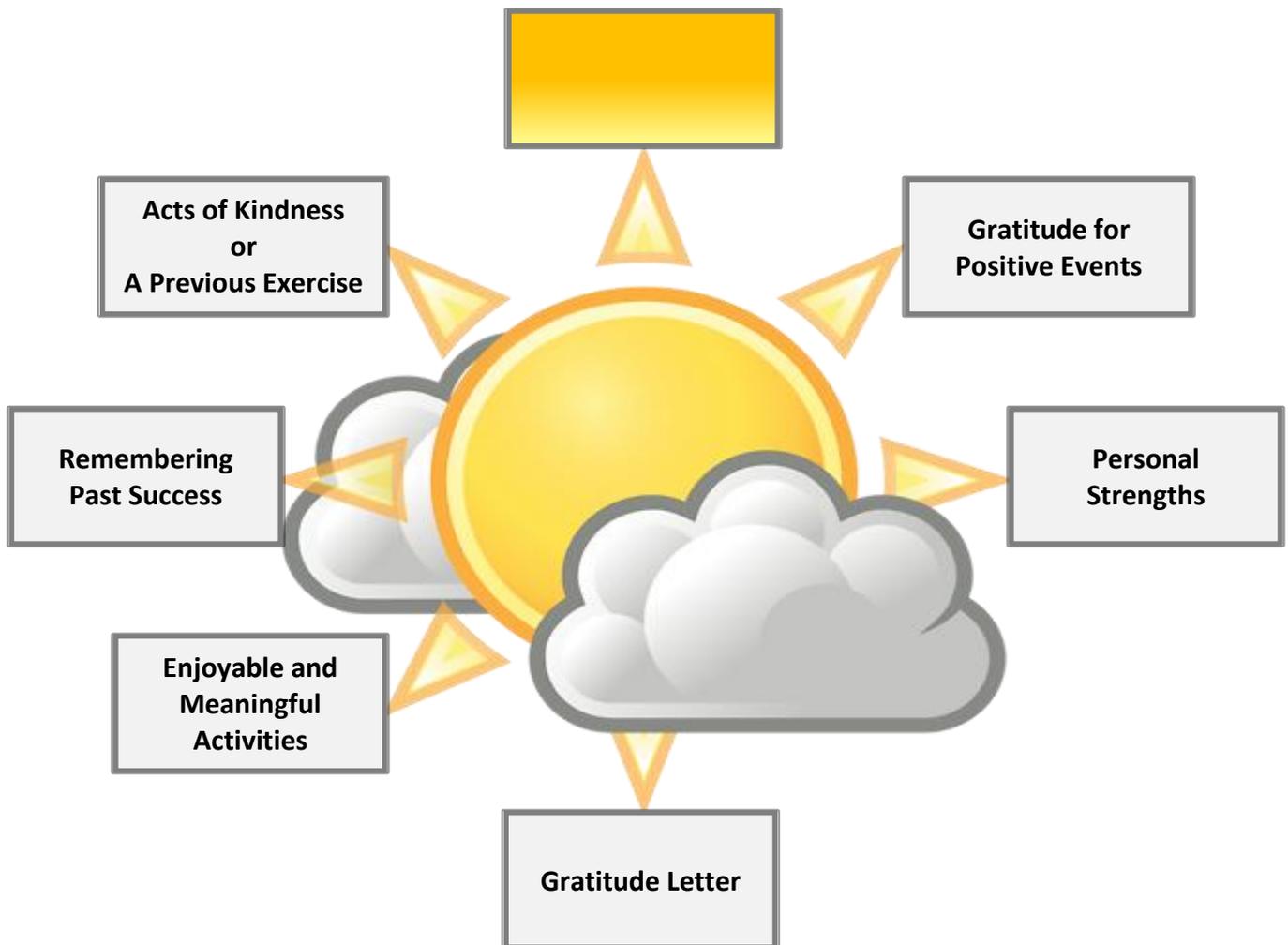
- **Introduce the patient manual and how they will use it over the coming weeks. This includes introducing the “top 10” emotions list.**
- Remind the patient that future intervention sessions will be conducted by phone and that you will be their assigned positive psychology trainer throughout their time in the study.

---

# Introduction

*(Introduction to study; completed in the hospital)*

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## Introduction

### Why is this study being done?

Many people who have recently been admitted to the hospital for depression can continue to feel depressed for weeks, months, or even years. Medications and different types of therapy can help, though these treatments do not always help everyone. Most forms of psychotherapy focus on reducing *negative* feelings—for example, they may focus on changing automatic negative thoughts or provide skills to deal with difficult emotions.

Sometimes this therapy can be very helpful, but it may not focus on the “other side” of a person’s emotional life—positive thoughts and feelings. **Getting rid of negative feelings is not the same as increasing positive feelings, like feeling more hopeful, more satisfied, or more proud.** We think it may be important to help people with depression experience positive thoughts and feelings.

Positive psychology, a newer approach to helping people, focuses more on improving positive emotions and might help people to feel more hopeful, grateful, and happy. We have found that many people who are hospitalized for depression have found such exercises to be helpful and easy to do. However, this treatment has not been scientifically studied to see how it might be helpful to people after they have been discharged from the hospital.

### What is my role?

Though we think that these positive psychology exercises can be helpful to people like you, we need your help! These exercises have never been used for people who have just been discharged from the hospital, so we need to learn from you whether they are useful. We have taken positive psychology exercises that have been helpful for people in other situations and changed them to fit these circumstances.

We would like to ask you to complete one positive psychology exercise per week for the next six weeks. Following completion of each exercise, you will speak with a study trainer by phone to review the exercise and then to learn about the next one. Your participation will allow us to learn how helpful this group of

positive psychology exercises is in helping you continue to improve after discharge from the hospital. If they are helpful, we may someday make these exercises part of standard treatment for patients who have depression and have been in the hospital, and your participation will help us decide how we might do that.

## **So what is this 'positive psychology', anyway?**

Positive psychology is an area of psychology that is interested in helping people to experience more positive emotions and better mental health. This is done through specific, intentional activities that are designed to improve mood. These exercises include such things as savoring pleasant events during your day, using your strengths, performing kind acts, or remembering past successes.

## **Is it really possible for a person to experience more positive emotions?**

Yes. It appears that almost half of a person's happiness is directly under one's own control while the rest is determined by genetics and life circumstances. Specific activities, like the ones you will perform in this study, can improve feelings of peace, happiness, and optimism. Like other activities that can benefit health, positive psychology exercises take practice, and there will be some exercises that may really be a great match for you, while others may be less effective. But with some effort, we believe that you will discover positive activities that you will enjoy and that will provide you with lasting benefit.

## **What are some myths about positive emotions?**

*Myth #1: "My circumstances must change before I could possibly feel happy."*

It is normal to believe that if only something about the circumstances of our lives would change, then we would be happy. It can seem that finding a new roommate, getting a job, or having a life partner are required before one can experience more hope, happiness, or life satisfaction.

Circumstances absolutely can have an impact on happiness. However, people can improve their level of happiness without a change in circumstances. In fact, intentional activities (like the exercises you will be completing) appear to have more powerful effects on happiness than life events! So you do not need to wait until your circumstances change to feel more satisfied with your life.

*Myth #2: "Feeling more satisfied or happy isn't under my control—it either happens or it doesn't."*

In many ways, experiencing more positive thoughts and feelings is a lot like acquiring any new skill, such as learning to speak a foreign language. Some people learn how to pronounce new words and acquire foreign accents easily. But with concentrated effort and practice, even those of us who have a hard time with these skills can learn a new language. Similarly, some people have found it a great struggle to experience the positive, but with intentional and consistent effort, it is possible to feel happier.

### **Isn't this for people who have less serious problems?**

We do not want to gloss over or ignore the severity of your illness or the difficulty of your life circumstances. The fact that you have been in the hospital makes it clear that you have truly been suffering and that your problems are real and serious.

However, we do believe that people with very serious problems can also benefit from these exercises. The exercises have been selected because there is evidence in scientific studies that they do help people to feel happier. We encourage you to give each of the activities a try—as clichéd as they might seem—because many people find that the exercise actually ends up having a much more powerful effect than they expected.

It may not be easy to do the exercises—it may be hard to remember good times, to have enough motivation to complete a task, or to really even remember what a positive feeling or thought feels like! Do you remember the first time you tried to ride a bike, type a sentence, knit, or play a sport? Those activities may have felt quite unnatural or difficult at first, but with some practice they became easier, more natural, and more fun. Even if one of the exercises never feels right, even after an honest effort, one of the other exercises might really improve your mood or outlook. This study will give you a chance to try many different exercises, and at least some of them may fit you really well.

## **How will the exercises work?**

Each week, you will get a new exercise from your study trainer. You will rate your mood prior to starting the exercise, complete the exercise during the next week and write about it, and then rate your mood after the exercise. You will then go over the exercise with your trainer the following week and get a new one. You will do a total of six exercises in this study.

## **What is some advice for completing the exercises?**

You might have the best success by keeping these important things in mind:

### **1. Staying focused on the present and being nonjudgmental**

During many of these exercises, it may be easy to have negative thoughts creep in. This is normal; after all, you have been depressed and are just being discharged from the hospital. It is not unexpected that you would have distressing or hopeless thoughts. Indeed, staying in the moment can be a real challenge.

Still, an important skill for these exercises (and life!) is to be able to return your focus to the moment and to the positive emotional exercise that you are completing. If you notice yourself "heading negative," it can be very helpful to deliberately and nonjudgmentally "turn your mind" back to the moment and to the exercise you are completing.

### **2. Plan ahead**

The exercises can require some advance planning. Having extra time to brainstorm about an exercise can help you to pick something that is the most meaningful, interesting, and doable. The more you can plan ahead, the more likely the exercise will be a good fit and boost your spirits!

### **3. Novelty**

When we tested these exercises in people with depression, they found that thinking about something new or trying something a little different was much more powerful than a usual thought or act, even if the usual way is a positive one. For example, they found that when doing acts of kindness, performing acts that weren't part of their daily routine boosted their happiness a lot more. Similarly, when they wrote letters of gratitude, they wrote about something for which they hadn't already thanked that person. Doing something newer and different can give you a burst of positive feeling and feel more deeply meaningful.

#### **4. Naming positive emotions**

We will encourage you to work on building your vocabulary for positive emotions. Rather than just feeling “good,” we think that by understanding and labeling your good feelings more specifically (like “joy” or “amusement” or “pride”), it will be easier to more fully recognize and savor the positive events, thoughts, and feelings in your life. We include a list of 10 of the most common positive emotions on the next page to help get you started. Your trainer can give you an even bigger list.

#### **5. Develop new skills**

Over the course of this study, we will help you develop useful skills, such as becoming more aware of positive things in your life, expressing gratitude more regularly, or identifying new ways to use your strengths. You will use these skills as part of the study exercises, and we hope that you will be able to start using these skills in your everyday life too. So, on the last page of this manual, there is a space to write down the new skills you learn and how you might use them in the future to boost your spirits and improve your life.

#### **6. Willingness**

You still may feel skeptical. Give the exercises a try! You may surprise yourself by completing more of the activities than you expected, and may get more of a boost than you anticipated. By trying the exercise, it will also be helpful to hear what worked or did not work for you, so we can continue to refine the exercises to help them be most effective.

**Over the next six weeks, our goal is that you will:**

- **Be able to identify positive emotions and thoughts**
- **Be more aware of positive events in your life**
- **Be better able to use your personal strengths and qualities to accomplish goals and feel good about yourself**
- **Learn simple but powerful new skills that you can use in your daily life to boost your mood**
- **Be able to regularly use these skills to develop a habit of happiness**

## Ten Positive Emotions

(Adapted from Barbara Fredrickson and her colleagues)

**Gratitude:** Feeling thankful about something—a person, event, place, or just being happy to be alive.

**Joy:** A sudden, intense feeling of great happiness, delight, or elation.

**Serenity:** A more relaxed and sustained version of joy—feeling a deeper sense of peace and contentment.

**Interest:** A positive feeling arising from being engaged in, or curious about, something or someone.

**Hope:** A feeling that things can turn out for the best, and that possibilities for positive outcomes exist

**Amusement:** A more playful positive emotion that results from feeling entertained by a funny situation.

**Inspiration:** A feeling that comes when a person or event leads someone to feel a deep desire to do something positive.

**Awe:** An all-consuming feeling that occurs when a person feels amazed by something on a grand scale. It can be triggered by seeing something like the vastness of nature or by another person's incredible skills or actions.

**Love:** An all-encompassing positive feeling—whether romantic, platonic, or a more general fondness—that can be directed at another being or oneself.

**Pride:** A deep sense of satisfaction or pleasure resulting from something a person has done or created.

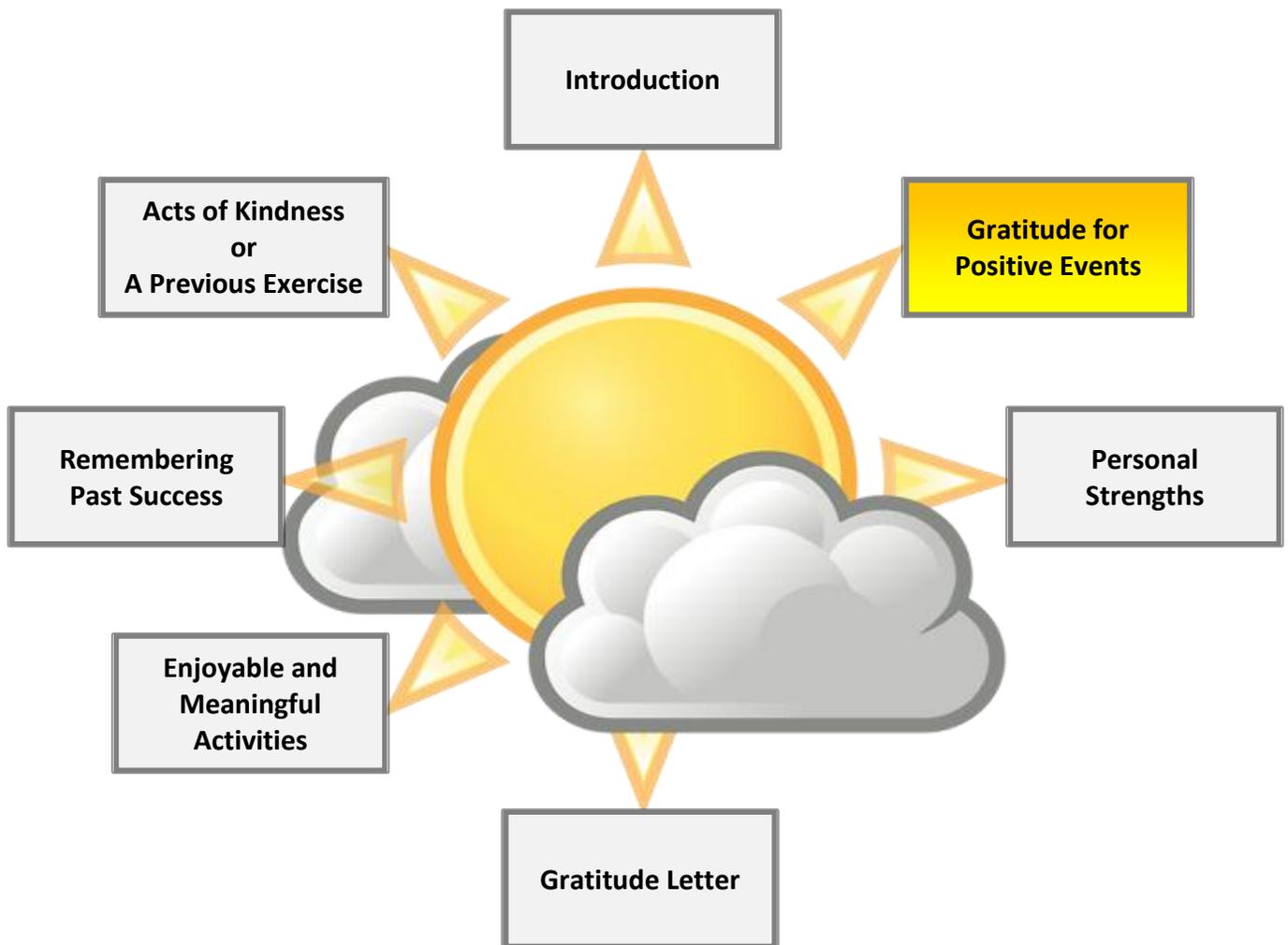
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# **Weekly Exercises**

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# Week One

(Assigning gratitude for positive events; completed in the hospital)



## WEEK 1: ASSIGNING GRATITUDE FOR POSITIVE EVENTS

### Introduction to gratitude for positive events

- Description of this first exercise will be completed during this introductory session, and it will be completed while the patient is still hospitalized. The introduction and instructions in the patient manual have been shortened and it is worth hitting all of the points there.
- **Skill to emphasize:** Awareness of positive events in daily life.

### Key points to cover:

- Set the framework for the session—you will describe their first exercise and give them their specific instructions. Then, they will do the exercise in the next 24 hours, and tomorrow you will review the exercise and how it went.
- The introduction and instructions have been shortened and it is worth hitting all of the points there:
- It is easy and normal to focus on/analyze bad events, but here we will look at positive events.
- Does the patient find him/herself thinking of negative events?
- This may be very hard given their symptoms and that they are hospitalized—but they can do it!
- [Go through the instructions in the participant manual specifically down the list]
- Remember to allow self to savor and specifically identify the positive feeling linked with event.
- Remind them about completing the pre-post assessments/re-reading instructions.
- Discuss/brainstorm possible ideas, especially if you suspect this may be hard for the patient.
- If they mention something and light up even slightly, notice that!
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

### If the participant feels there is ‘nothing that is good,’ offer suggestions regarding:

- Visitors, phone calls, cards, other shows of support from their life outside the hospital
- Positive interactions with hospital staff (e.g., team, nurses, therapist, ancillary staff)
- The food in the hospital (doubtful)
- Improvement of symptoms since being hospitalized (e.g., mood, sleep, energy, physical symptoms)
- Having a shower/other self-care
- Something else they appreciated (e.g., beauty, being alive)
- Being in the study

### If the person reports that writing is hard for them:

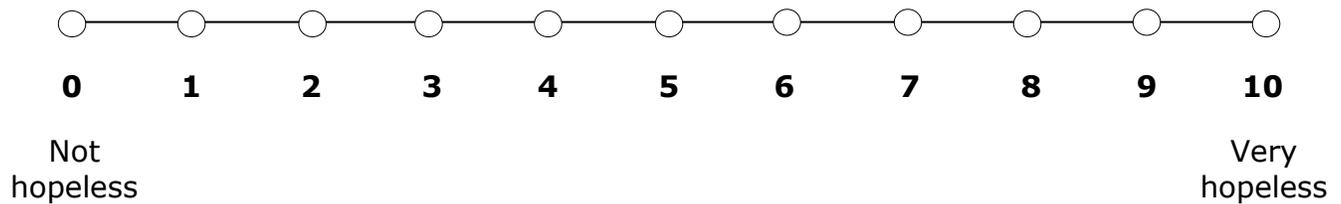
- Confirm that this is not due to physical handicap or issues with literacy.
- Let them know that it’s OK to make it short, but that it’s important to write if they can, so that they can have a physical record of what they wrote which in our experience is very helpful. Also remind them that we will not collect anything that they write.
- Also, they will then want to talk about the exercise in some detail with you to consolidate their experience and get a sense about how it went and how they feel now.
- You will really want to push them to write the exercise details down before you meet with them—if they haven’t written things down, ask them to do so and tell them that you’ll come back in 10 minutes.

# Week One: Gratitude for Positive Events

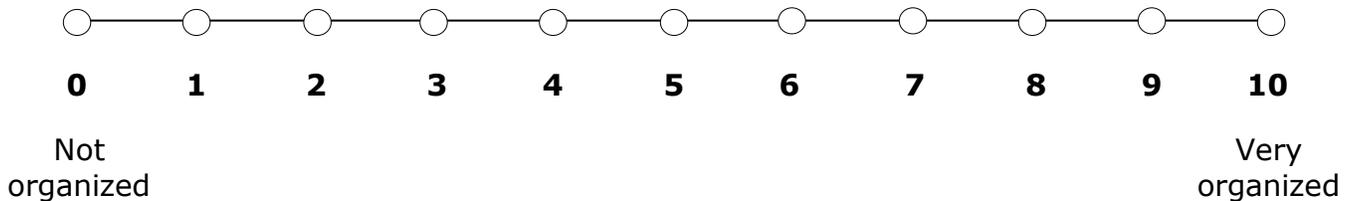
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

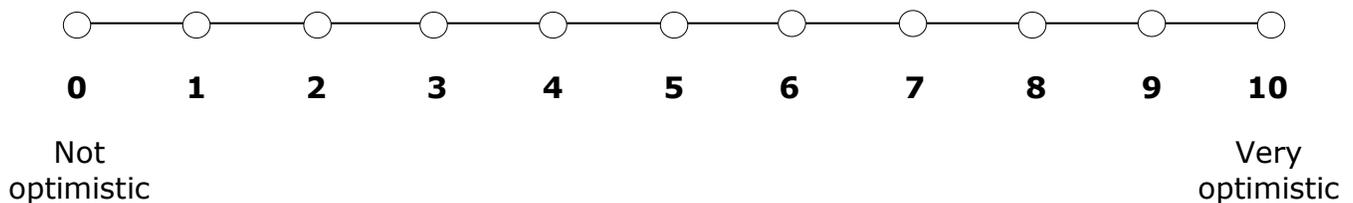
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

In this exercise, we will focus on identifying and re-experiencing three positive events that happened in the past week. People often do this for negative events but less frequently do this for good things that happen. It makes sense to analyze bad events so that we can learn from them and avoid them in the future. However, it can be easy to overdo this focus on the negative, and this can be a set-up for continued anxiety and depression. One way to keep this from happening is to develop our ability to think about the good in life.

Most of us are not *nearly* as good at savoring and appreciating good events as we are at analyzing bad events, so this is a skill that needs practice. As you become better at focusing on the good in your life, it may become easier to feel even more grateful for what you have and more hopeful about the future.

The following exercise will ask you to identify three good things in your life that occurred in the past week. It may have been very hard to notice these things this past week. However, by looking back carefully and specifically searching for good things that may have happened, you may be surprised to find that there were small (or even large) positive events and blessings to be counted.

### **I have been feeling low and am hospitalized—how can I possibly identify good things that are happening in my life?**

At first, it can seem hard to identify positive events during a serious crisis. However, this is one reason we do this exercise first: now may be the most important time to remember that good things—even small ones—can happen, even in the midst of serious depression. As you get skilled at focusing your attention on pleasant moments that happen during the day—a kind gesture from someone, a greatly-appreciated visit, good news about family or friends—you may even find it much easier to use these skills once the good things in your life are more obvious.

## Instructions

Take 10-15 minutes to complete this exercise. Use this time to write down three good or positive things that happened this week. Use the space below to write about the events—it is important that you have a physical record of what you wrote. The things you list can be relatively small in importance (“I enjoyed my lunch today”) or relatively large in importance (“My sister gave birth to a healthy baby boy”). They can be related to your hospitalization or completely separate.

As you write, you will follow these instructions:

4. Give the event a title (e.g., “sister remembered my birthday”)
5. Write down exactly what happened in as much detail as possible, including what you did or said, and if other people were involved, what they did or said.
6. Record how this event made you feel at the time. Use the most specific positive emotional words that you can think of to describe how you felt: Joy? Satisfaction? Relief?

Some important tips:

The goal of the exercise is to remember the good event and then enjoy the positive emotions that come with it. Don’t analyze the event itself in too much detail—the important thing here is being able to:

- *Take your time to experience and savor* the positive emotion, and then
- *Name and describe* that positive feeling (like joy, pride, relief, or contentment) as specifically as possible—not just that you felt “good”.
- Refer to the list of positive emotions (*page 11*) to help you describe the good feelings you experienced.
- You may also find yourself wanting to write something like “I felt less sad.” It’s good to note this but try to describe the feeling or thought using positive emotions. So, for example, instead of writing “I felt less sad,” you might write “I felt a little bit of relief.”
- Focus on the exercise. If you find yourself focusing on negative feelings or emotions, turn your mind from the negative feeling and refocus yourself on the good event and the positive feelings that came along with it. This can take effort, but it gets easier with practice and can make a real difference in how you feel.

## Exercise

### Positive event #1:

(1) Event title: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) What exactly I did or said, and if another person (or people) was involved, what they did or said:

(3) The positive thoughts and emotions I experienced at the time of the event (be as specific as possible and give as much detail as you can):

**Positive event #2:**

(1) Event title: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) What exactly I did or said, and if another person (or people) was involved, what they did or said:

(3) The positive thoughts and emotions I experienced at the time of the event (be as specific as possible and give as much detail as you can):

**Positive event #3:**

(1) Event title: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) What exactly I did or said, and if another person (or people) was involved, what they did or said:

(3) The positive thoughts and emotions I experienced at the time of the event (be as specific as possible and give as much detail as you can):

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you experience when thinking over this list of things that you were grateful for?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (being more aware of positive things) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

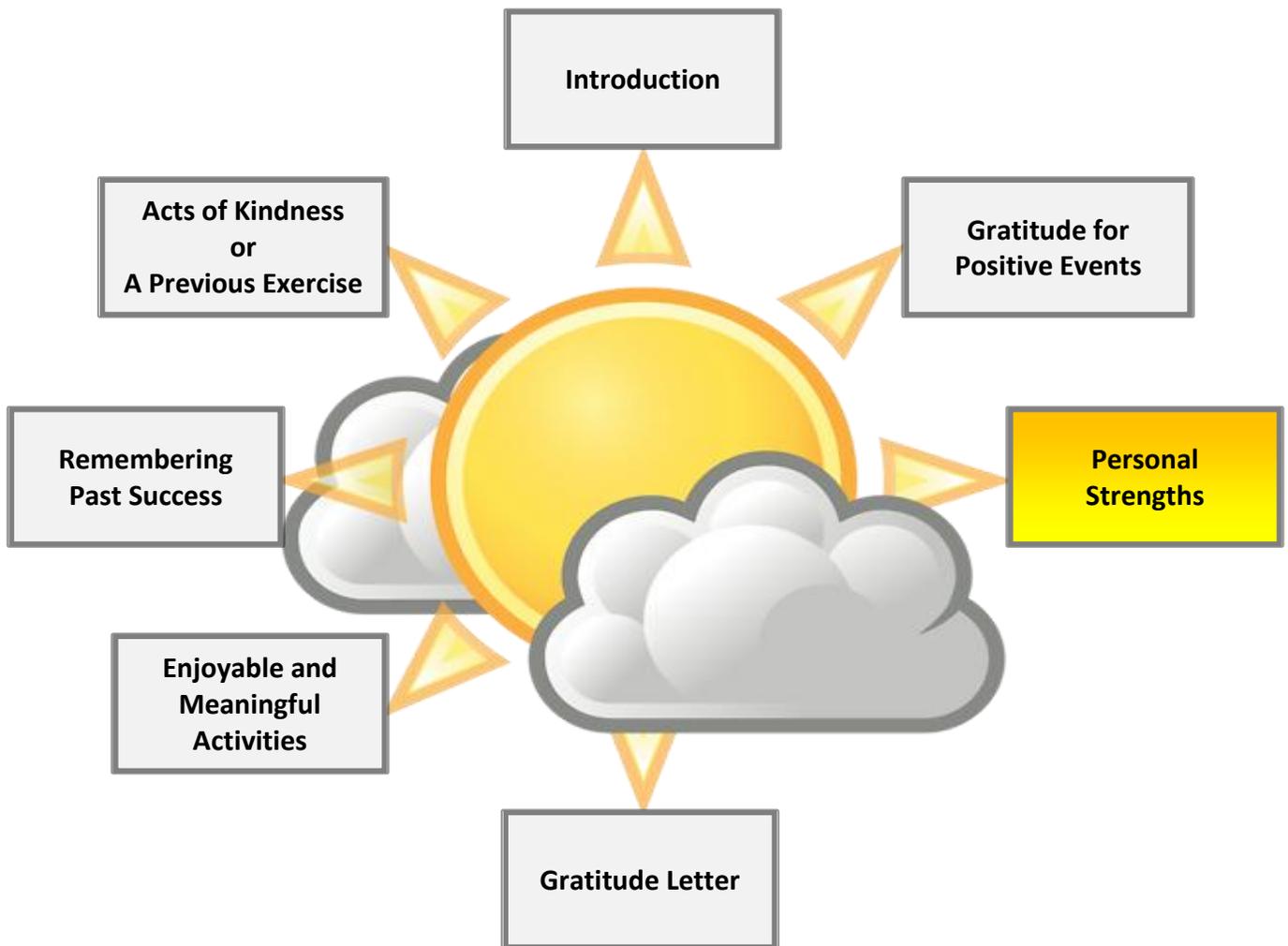
**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Two

(Reviewing gratitude for positive events and assigning personal strength;  
*completed in the hospital*)

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## WEEK 2 (begins on Study Day #2): REVIEWING GRATITUDE FOR POSITIVE EVENTS

### A. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the PP model and goals (*Completed in the hospital*)

- Set the frame for the session—you will review the exercise from last week with them to see what they did and how it went, and then describe the next exercise. Then, they will do the exercise sometime in the next week, and you will review the exercise and how it went at next week's call.
- Remind them that this program was designed to help them learn and repeatedly use skills (e.g., being more aware of positive things around them, using their strengths in a positive way) that will help them to experience more happiness, more hope, and better health.
- Remind them of the target skill for this week: Being aware of and grateful for positive events.

### B. Review of gratitude for positive events (*Completed in the hospital*)

#### If they completed the exercise:

- Review events, probe a bit more about what felt good about the event.
- Push them to expand their vocabulary of positive words as they describe their thoughts and feelings.
  - If they say “good”: ask for more, give them choices, offer ideas (see page 11 for list of positive emotions).
- Be amazed that they were able to find three (or even one) good events in the midst of being depressed, suicidal, hospitalized.
- Inquire about their experience of focusing on positive events in their lives and identifying the emotions that they experience when good things happen to them.
- Observe positive expressions/inflections/statements.
- Observe to them – (a) doing this boosted their spirits, (b) the more they do this, the easier it will get, and (c) it will be even easier to find good things, and lift their own spirits, as they recover even more fully.
- They can now look proactively for good things and savor them when they happen.
- “Do you think you could use this skill in the future? When? How? Put it on your list!”
  - Brainstorm suggestions:
    - Identify something you are grateful for each day and write it in a journal, or tell a family member or friend.
    - Savor a positive event by noticing how gratitude, joy, amusement, etc make you feel –do these emotions give you more energy, change your outlook, even for a little while?
    - Smile when you think of something good that has happened.
    - When you are having a rough day, try to think of a positive experience that happened that day. Does that improve your mood?
    - Think of a neutral or even negative event...and find a positive aspect of it.
  - If this is a useful exercise, have them take notes on the last page of manual.
- Review the pre- and post-exercise ratings.

#### If they did **not** complete the exercise:

- If they did not do it, indicate to them—no problem, why don't we use this time to do it together now? Help them think through the past week day by day– what positive experiences did they have? Any unexpected conversations or visitors? A nice meal? Good news from the doctor? Encourage them to be specific and detailed as they describe the positive events and their feelings. Explore how they felt while describing the events to you. Praise and validate their efforts. Then encourage them to write down the details of the exercise after your meeting so they have a record of the positive events that they can refer to later, if they choose.
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it

down—it's like the good thing happened twice—but no problem, we will review.

- If they only did part of it, or just planned it, no problem, review what they did, praise/validate for accomplishing what they did—underscore that this is more than they would have otherwise done—and then help them think through completion.
- Remember to gather the pre & post-exercise ratings prior to reviewing the exercise. If they did not complete the exercise, do the steps sequentially: get pre-exercise ratings, do the exercise together, and then get post-exercise ratings.

## WEEK 2: ASSIGNING PERSONAL STRENGTHS

*(Assigned in the hospital but completed after discharge at home)*

### Introduction:

- You will want to introduce the idea that you are going to pick a personal strength of the participant and use it in some way in the next week.
- **Skill to emphasize:** Finding new ways to use your strengths.
- You will go through the rationale as outlined in the instructions.
  - It's easy to focus on our shortcomings, and this is normal, so we can get better.
  - It's particularly easy to remember shortcomings when depressed—that's part of depression.
  - However, remembering and using strengths is really important too, and much more satisfying .
  - In fact, using strengths boosts self-esteem, increases energy, reduces stress, and increases feelings of productivity.
  - Now that you are out of the hospital, or getting close to being ready to leave, this can be a perfect time to remind yourself of a personal strength and put it to good use.
- Then you will explain what is going to happen.
  - Pick a signature strength (and you will describe what that means) from a list together.
  - Then make a plan to use that strength in some way in the next 24 hours.
  - Then write about it.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

### Strengths survey:

- You will go over this now. Definitions of the strengths are listed in their manual and you can use them if needed (or have them refer to that page during the survey).
- One way to start is to have them look at the list and see if anything obvious jumps out. Otherwise, basically just say, "I am going find out which of these strengths feels like "the real you", which of them you would use to describe yourself to another person."
- You can then have them just respond definitely, somewhat, or no to each one on the list as you say it. Then collect the "definitely" strengths, and review them again. Have the person pick one that seems like a real core strength and one (this is important) that they could use in the next day (or week).
- If they can't pick a strength:
  - What would a friend say about your strengths?
  - When you are enjoying yourself, what strengths are you using?
- Once they have picked the strength:
  - Brainstorm with them about how they might use it, and how that might go (how much you need to do this depends on the patient).
  - Consider discussing plan B if it seems like plan A might fall through or be too ambitious.
  - Really emphasize—paying attention to the fact that you are using the strength and how that feels,

- and doing something more/different than normal will give you more of a boost.
- Emphasize to them that they will get the greatest benefit from using their strength if they do so in a novel way.
  - Remind them to richly/specifically describe positive thoughts/feelings.
  - If they have trouble figuring out how to use the strength, see the list below.

*Consider the following options/suggestions if the patient picks a strength but has a hard time figuring out how to use it (numbers are from the #s used for each strength in the patient manual):*

### **1 + 2. Curiosity (Interest) and Love of Learning**

- Attend a new group.
- Watch a new movie.
- Talk to someone you might not usually talk to, and find out about their interests/goals.
- Pick an interesting book to skim (from the unit or a friend). Try to select a book from a section that you wouldn't usually visit.
- Eat something you've never tried before.
- Join an online forum for a topic that interests you (e.g., literature, pets, fitness, skincare, travel, physics, politics, etc.). See [www.delphiforums.com](http://www.delphiforums.com) for ideas.

### **3. Bravery (Courage)**

- Go against peer pressure or social norms.
- Allow yourself to trust your treatment team, if that is difficult.
- Stand up for someone even if you disagree with him/her.
- Introduce yourself to someone (or a group of people) you see daily but with whom you have never spoken.
- Speak up for an unpopular idea (if you believe in it).

### **4. Persistence (Perseverance)**

- Finish a project ahead of time.
- Notice your thoughts about stopping a task, and make a conscious effort to dismiss them. Focus on the task at hand.
- Begin using a time management aid of some sort (a palm pilot, a daily planner, etc.). Find a system that works and actually use it.
- Set a goal and create a plan for sticking to it.
- When you wake up in the morning, make a list of things that you want to get done that day that could be put off until the next day. Make sure to get them done that day.

### **5. Honesty (Authenticity)**

- Be honest with yourself about your feelings, hopes and dreams. If possible, you can do a positive activity that's in line with this.
- Dare to be who you are. This can be at your comfort level and can be done in small or big ways. For example, this can include being your authentic self in how you dress, in a joke that you share, or in an activity that you do.
- Share your genuine thoughts and opinions with your friends and family, possibly in a loving and constructive manner.

## **6. Zest (Enthusiasm)**

- Go out of your way to become more involved in an organization to which you already belong.
- Do something because you want to do it, not because you have to do it.
- Get a good night's sleep and eat a good breakfast to give yourself more energy during the day.
- Do something physically vigorous in the morning (e.g., ride the bike, walk briskly around the unit, etc.).
- Find your passion. What do you love to do? If you already know what your passion is, then build time for it in your schedule if you can do it here. If you don't, then try to discover it. What did you love to do when you were younger? Try it again.

## **7. Love**

- Tell partner/spouse/sibling/parent/friend that you love or appreciate them.
- Send a loved one a card or e-card to say that you were thinking about him/her.
- Give loved ones a big hug and a kiss.
- Make a list of the people in your life who love you. Write a letter to them thanking them for their love.

## **8. Social Intelligence**

- The next time you see your nurse, ask how he or she is doing, and mean it.
- Go into a social situation in which you would normally feel uncomfortable.
- Whenever you talk with someone, try to figure out what his or her motives and concerns are.
- Encounter someone who is alone and, by being friendly, include that person in your group.
- Notice whether you unintentionally interrupt people when you are talking with them. Make a point to slow down the pace of conversation.
- Practice really listening while someone else is talking.

## **9. Teamwork**

- Be the first to volunteer to do something in a group.
- Pick up litter that you see on the ground or elsewhere on the unit.
- Clean and beautify a communal area on the unit.

## **10. Fairness**

- When others express an opinion, practice simply listening to them without judgment. Wait until they have stopped talking and you completely understand them before you consider your own opinion.
- Stay impartial in an argument between friends despite your beliefs. (Be the mediator.)
- Notice when you treat someone based on a stereotype or pre-conception; resolve not to do it again.
- Defend someone who is not present.
- Stop gossiping. Don't say something about another person that you would not be willing to say in their presence.
- Help others on the unit who might have not had the same opportunities/advantages that you have.

## **11. Leadership**

- Organize a fun activity for an evening or weekend day on the unit.
- Start a group to discuss important issues.
- Make a phone call to someone in the outside world and discuss some way that you will take on a leadership role after you leave.

## **12. Humility/Modesty**

- Don't talk about yourself at all for a full day, unless someone asks you directly about yourself.
- Dress and act modestly, so as not to attract attention to yourself.
- Find a way in which someone you know is better than you. Compliment him or her for it.

### **13. Self-Control (Self-Regulation)**

- Set aside a designated amount of time and *actually* journal, complete therapy homework, or complete other tasks related to your treatment.
- Ride the bike on the unit (or walk the unit).
- Set aside a designated amount of time and address an issue from your outside life that has been hard to manage or impeding your progress.
- Clean or organize your room. Every day, make sure that you pick up whatever mess you made during the day.
- Leave something unfinished on your plate that you usually regret eating afterwards.
- When something upsets you, put it aside and instead focus on the good things in your life.
- Make a resolution not to gossip. When you feel the urge to talk about someone behind his or her back, remember your resolution and stop yourself before you talk.
- In the evenings, make an agenda for the following day. Stick to that agenda.
- When you become overly emotional about something, take a break, put it aside, and calmly consider all of the issues again.

### **14. Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence**

- Go to the fish tank, look out the window, or find something else calming or beautiful and take the time to appreciate it.
- Write down your thoughts about a piece of art, or something beautiful you see outdoors.
- Take a walk with a friend and comment on something attractive that you see.
- Or pick out the most moving music you know of, and listen to it appreciatively on headphones if you have access. Or ask a friend to recommend the most beautiful music he or she knows.
- Keep a journal, and every night, record something you saw during the day that struck you as extremely beautiful or skillful.
- Find something or someone that you find beautiful or excellent and let it/them inspire you throughout the day.

### **15. Humor (Playfulness)**

- Every day, make someone smile or laugh.
- Learn a joke and tell it to your friends.
- Watch a funny movie or TV show.
- Read the comics.
- Learn a magic trick and perform it for your friends.

### **16. Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose)**

- For 5 minutes a day, relax and think about the purpose of life, and where you fit in.
- For 5 minutes a day, think about the things you can do to improve the world or your community.
- Read a religious or spiritual book, or go to a religious service every day.
- Explore different religions. You can do this by looking on the Internet, or asking your friends about their religions.
- Spend a few minutes a day in meditation or prayer.

### **Caution, Prudence, and Discretion**

- During a conversation, think twice before saying anything. Weigh the probable effect of your words on others.
- Think about the motto “Better safe than sorry” at least three times a day. Try to incorporate its meaning into your life.

- Before you decide to do something important, reflect on it for a moment and consider if you want to live with its consequences 1 hour, 1 day, or 1 year later.

### **Creativity, Ingenuity, and Originality**

- Keep a journal and allow yourself to write freely.
- Submit a piece to a literary magazine or newspaper.
- Make a gift or a card for a friend.
- Ask the occupational therapist for art supplies and create something.
- Learn a new word (perhaps at [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com)) and actually use it in conversation.

### **Judgment, Critical Thinking, and Open-Mindedness**

- Play devil's advocate and discuss an issue from the side opposite to your personal views.
- Take a current event in the news and carefully consider each person's viewpoint.
- Sit with someone at lunch who differs from you in a way that you believe is important.
- Pick something you believe strongly, and think about how you might be wrong.

### **Perspective (Wisdom)**

- Get a quote a day online (see [www.quoteaday.com](http://www.quoteaday.com)).
- Give advice to an upset friend.
- Think of the wisest person you know. Try to live each day as that person would live.
- Imagine that you are a consultant asked to give thoughtful advice to someone in your current situation. What advice would you give yourself?
- Look up prominent people in history and learn their views on important issues of their day.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms)

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Gratitude for Positive Events, you were able to \_\_\_\_\_, and you have been \_\_\_\_\_ (any use of PP skills). This week we also discussed the Personal Strengths exercise, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep up the good work, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

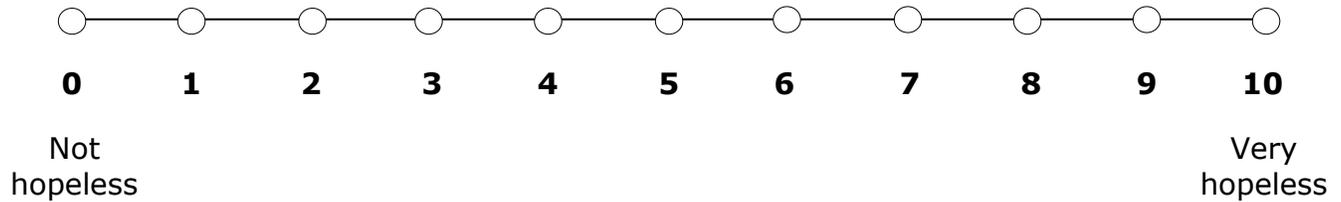
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse
- The following definitions of the CGI-I require an understanding of what constitutes a clinically significant improvement. Since the CGI-I is always a judgment made in comparison to the patient’s state at the start of the trial (baseline), a clinically significant improvement is said to occur when the patient’s symptoms move closer to normal functioning than to the patient’s level at baseline.
- When rating the CGI-I (as contrasted to the CGI-S, which is rated relative to an age, gender and community matched peer), the clinician asks the following question:
  - Compared to his/her condition at baseline, how much has he/she changed with respect to symptoms of major depression? Rate total improvement for major depression only whether or not, in your judgment, the improvement is entirely due to treatment.

# Week Two: Personal Strengths

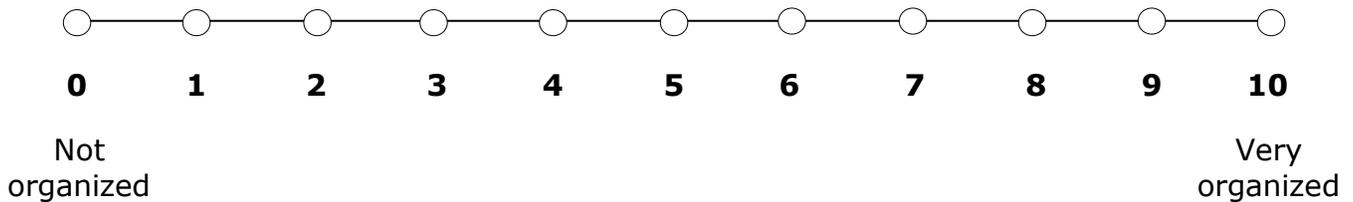
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

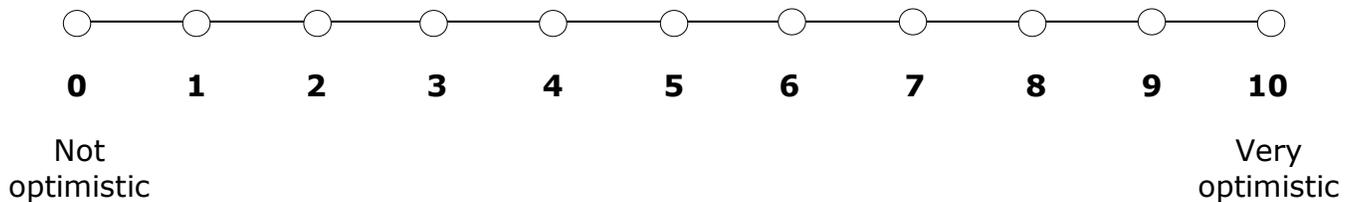
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

The purpose of this exercise is to have you identify a personal strength or positive quality, and then to use it in some way in the next day. We spend a lot of time focusing on our shortcomings. In some ways, this makes sense—if we hope to be more skilled or function at a higher level, it may be quite useful to improve areas of weakness. At the same time, it can be hard—and not a lot of fun—to focus only on our challenges, and it can lead us to forget some of our best characteristics.

It can be really satisfying to shift that focus onto our personal strengths. These are areas in which we have natural interests and skills, and it can feel really good to have a sense of mastering something. It can also be nice to show our strengths to friends and strangers, so they get to see us at our best. Finally, by reconnecting with forgotten or underused talents, it's satisfying to just remember that you do have some remarkable abilities.

**Using strengths boosts self-esteem, increases energy, reduces stress, and increases feelings of productivity.** Therefore, we feel that training ourselves to be more aware of our strengths and use them more frequently in our lives is an excellent skill that can benefit us physically and mentally.

Now that you are out of the hospital, or getting close to being ready to leave, this can be a perfect time to remind yourself of a personal strength and put it to good use.

This exercise has two parts:

3. First, you will review (with your trainer) the list of Personal Strengths on the next page and pick one of your signature strengths. A signature strength is one that makes you feel:
  - A sense of ownership and authenticity (“This is the real me”)
  - A feeling of excitement or satisfaction while using it
  - Energized, rather than exhausted, while using the strength

Your study trainer will help you pick one of these strengths for this exercise.

4. You will then use that signature strength in some way in the next week and will record how you used it, the result, and how you felt while using it.
  - When performing this exercise, it may be useful to use your strength in a new or different way than you usually do. This may help you learn new ways to use your strengths and may make using them more fun.

## Choosing a Personal Strength

Review this list to identify a signature strength for this exercise. As you look at this list consider the following:

Which of these strengths feels like “the real you”? If you were going to describe yourself to another person, which of these qualities would you pick?

17. **Curiosity [interest]:** Taking an interest in an experience for its own sake; exploring and discovering.
18. **Love of learning:** Mastering new skills and knowledge, whether alone or with others.
19. **Bravery [courage]:** Not avoiding threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; acting on your beliefs even if unpopular.
20. **Persistence [perseverance]:** Finishing what you start; persisting with something in spite of hard times or barriers.
21. **Honesty [authenticity]:** Presenting yourself in a real and genuine way; taking responsibility for your feelings and actions.
22. **Zest [enthusiasm]:** Approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated.
23. **Love:** Valuing close relationships with others, particularly those in which sharing and caring are returned.
24. **Social intelligence:** Being aware of the feelings and ideas of yourself and others.
25. **Teamwork:** Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group.
26. **Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to the ideas of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings get in the way of decisions that affect other people.
27. **Leadership:** Encouraging a group to get things done and still maintaining good relationships with group members.
28. **Humility / Modesty:** Letting your accomplishments speak for themselves; not bragging that you more special than you really are.
29. **Self-control [self-regulation]:** Regulating what you feel and do; being disciplined; controlling your appetites and emotions.
30. **Appreciation of beauty and excellence:** Appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance.
31. **Humor [playfulness]:** Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side of life.
32. **Spirituality [religiousness, faith, purpose]:** Having clear beliefs about a higher purpose, the meaning of life, or the meaning of the universe.

**The personal strength I will use for this exercise:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Instructions

You will now use this personal strength in the next week. You can complete this exercise however you choose: you can use your strength in whatever way you think is most appropriate, and however you think the strength will feel like the 'real you.'

As with the other exercises, the more deliberately and specifically you can use your strength, the better. You want to **use your strength on purpose and pay attention to your strength "in the moment."**

In addition, the more you can use your strength in a **new or different way** (rather than just using the strength as you do every day), the more you may get a real boost in happiness and confidence.

Once you have used your strength, on the next page you will write about it. Specifically, you will write about the situation, how you used your strength, and how you felt during the event and afterwards.

## Exercise

(1) **My signature strength:** \_\_\_\_\_

(2) How I used my personal strength (describe the situation, how you used your strength, and the result):

(3) How I felt while using this personal strength (be as specific and detailed as you can):

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have now as you review how you used your signature strength?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (finding new ways to use your strengths) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**

Very difficult Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

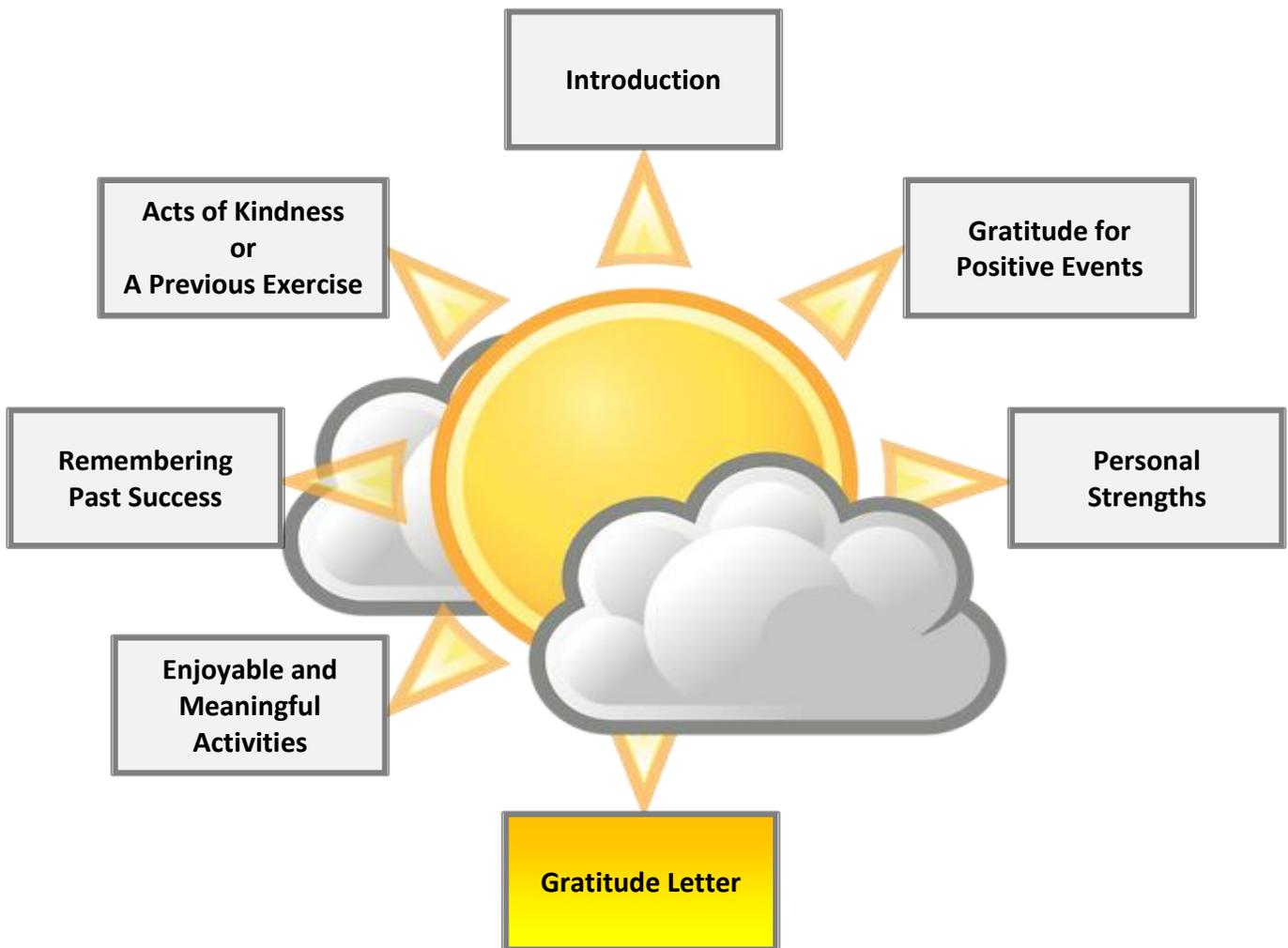
**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Three

(Reviewing using personal strengths and assigning gratitude letter;  
*phone session*)

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## WEEK 3: REVIEWING PERSONAL STRENGTHS

### A. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the PP model and goals

- Set the frame for the session—you will review the exercise from last week with them to see what they did and how it went, and then describe the next exercise. Then, they will do the exercise sometime in the next week, and you will review the exercise and how it went at next week's call.
- Remind them that the goal of the program is to help them be aware of positive events, to find ways to use their positive skills and qualities, and to help them learn and repeatedly use skills that will help them to experience more happiness, more hope, and more satisfaction in their life. These exercises are the next step.
- Remind them that this program was designed to help them learn and repeatedly use skills (e.g., being more aware of positive things around them, using their strengths in a positive way) that will help them to experience more happiness, more hope, and better health.
- Remind them of the target skill for this week: Finding new ways to use your strengths.
- “Last week, you got practice in identifying and experiencing positive events in your life.”
  - “Have you noticed that you have been able to notice positive events as they happen in your life from time to time? If yes, tell me more about that.”
  - (if no) “That’s okay, it definitely is a skill that takes practice and I understand if those events may have felt few and far between sometimes.” “Would you like to use this skill more?” Then brainstorm.

### B. Reviewing personal strengths

#### If they completed the exercise:

- Review events, probe a bit more about what felt good about event.
- Push them to expand their vocabulary of positive words as they describe thoughts and feelings.
  - If they say “good”: ask for more, give them a choice, offer ideas (see page 11 for list of positive emotions).
- Be impressed at their strength and use of it in the midst of just being discharged from the hospital.
- Inquire about their experience of focusing on their strengths and identifying the emotions that they experience when using them.
- Observe positive expressions/inflections/statements.
- Observe to them that (a) doing this boosted their spirits, (b) the more they do this, the easier it will get, and (c) they can find other ways to pay attention to their strengths and use them in a deliberate manner for a boost in confidence, self-esteem, and mood.
- “Do you think you could use this skill in the future? When? How? Put it on your skills list!”
  - Brainstorm suggestions:
    - Use/apply a different personal strength, or use/apply the same one in a new way.
    - Each day, think of one way in which you used one of your strengths that day and write about it.
    - Make note of something you want to get done that day and then do it.
    - Help someone else use one of their strengths in a new way.
    - Instead of choosing a strength that you are good at, try to use one that you don’t use often, or one that doesn’t come as easily to you. Then, use that strength in a new way.
  - If this is a useful exercise, have them take notes on the last page of manual, “My Favorite Skills”.
  - If the exercise did not seem to fit, ask them if there are ways they could change the exercise in a way that they might want to use it in the future. Have them note this in the skills list.
  - *Reminder about using the skills list: This is key. We are having them focus on these exercises as tips and skills they can use in their daily lives. So when an exercise goes well and/or we can help them think about how to use the exercise in life, we have them write it in the back of their manual*

*on the very last page, and we will ask them about this regularly. This also applies when the participant doesn't feel the exercise worked yet was able to consider ways to change the exercise so that they might want to use it in the future.*

- Review the pre- and post-exercise ratings

**If they did not complete the exercise:**

- If they did not do it, indicate to them—no problem, why don't we use this time to do it together now? Help them think through the past week day by day—what strengths have they used? Did they curiosity by watching a movie or reading a book? Did they appreciate beauty by listening to music? Did they exhibit persistence by getting something done on their “to-do” list? Encourage them to be specific and detailed as they describe way they used their strength and their feelings it brought up. Explore how they felt while describing the events to you. Praise and validate their efforts. Then encourage them to write down the details of the exercise after your meeting so they have a record of their strengths that they can refer to later, if they choose.
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it's like the good thing happened twice—but no problem, we will review.
- If they only did part of it, or just planned it, no problem, review what they did, praise/validate for accomplishing what they did—underscore that this is more than they would have otherwise done—and then help them think through completion.
- Remember to gather the pre & post-exercise ratings prior to reviewing the exercise. If they did not complete the exercise, do the steps sequentially: get pre-exercise ratings, do the exercise together, and then get post-exercise ratings.

## WEEK 3: ASSIGNING GRATITUDE LETTER

### Introduction:

- This week we will have them write a letter about feeling grateful.
- **Skill to emphasize:** Expressing feelings of gratitude more regularly.
- If you have a sense of how they are doing (i.e., feeling depressed or feeling better), you can emphasize that feeling better is a good time to remember kind acts and grateful feelings to keep the good feelings going now that they are beginning to experience them more. In contrast, if they are feeling down, you can emphasize that recalling another person's kindness, and writing about that, can sometimes help to move people from feeling stuck in the present in the midst of anxious or negative feelings to feeling, perhaps, valued, or acknowledged and grateful.
- Then describe the exercise (thinking back, picking something/someone, writing to them).
- Emphasize: not something they regularly thank someone for (a different person or a different act by a person they often thank)—this will give them a bigger boost than something they always thank the person for.
- Clarify that they will write the letter, and then write about how it made them feel (and to use their specific positive emotion/thought vocabulary as much as possible).
- Brainstorm with them beforehand if it seems they will need help.
- Help the person to be as specific as possible about what they are thanking the person for.
- Emphasize that they do not need to send the letter—but that sending it (or calling/thanking the person) will actually give them a bigger boost!
- Emphasize that writing it down can be an important aspect of processing the experience and that by writing the letter down they will get the most from the exercise.
- Do they send the letter?
  - They don't have to. (This can be a relief and can reduce resistance to doing the exercise.)
  - However, the exercise will likely be even more powerful if they do send the letter, so perhaps after they finish you can discuss what it would be like and share the finding that sending the letter (or sharing one's gratitude in person or by phone) seems to boost mood even further.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**
- If the subject can't think of anyone, you may suggest the following:
  - Family—current or past actions
  - Friends—current or past actions
  - Teachers, bosses, mentors, co-workers—current or past actions
  - Health care providers—current or past actions
  - Random folks who have done even small nice things—emphasize that it can be for a small or large action. For example, encourage them to think of a time when someone did something small like listen, open a door, etc. (though of course bigger events are better and more meaningful).

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms)

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Personal Strengths, you were able to \_\_\_\_\_, and you have been \_\_\_\_\_ (any use of PP skills). This week we also discussed the Gratitude Letter exercise, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep up the good work, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

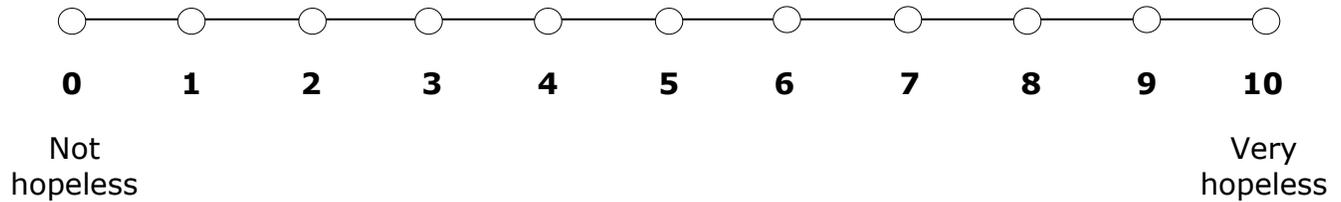
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

# Week Three: Gratitude Letter

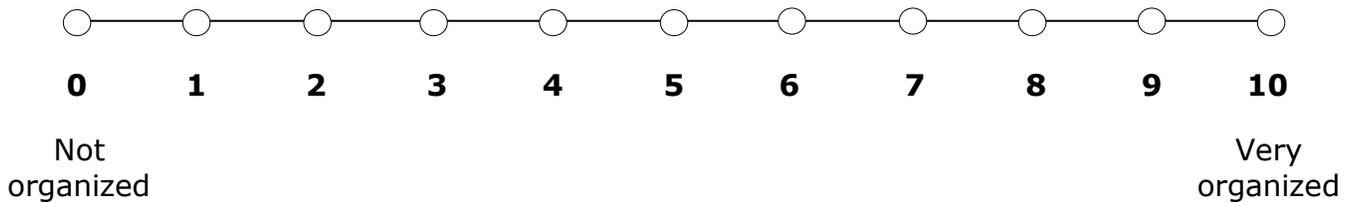
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

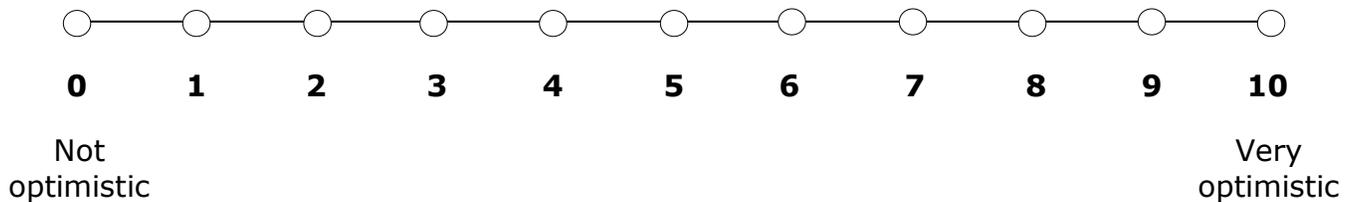
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

We will now describe your third positive psychology session. So far we've introduced "Gratitude for Positive Events" and had you use a Personal Strength. If you have found useful ways of using these skills in your life, it may be helpful to add those ideas to the last page of the manual, for your reference after the end of the study.

By now, you may have been out of the hospital for some time. You may be starting to feel better and you may be starting to get back to your usual activities. On the other hand, it may be the case that you are still struggling with depression. In both cases, it can be a good time to go back to the idea of gratitude (feeling grateful). If you are feeling better, it is a nice time to reflect on being glad about another person's kindness. If you are struggling, a boost of good feelings may help to "jumpstart" your mood.

Being able to feel gratitude and then express it to others is an important part of having a satisfying life. In fact, more and more research has found that life satisfaction depends far less on actual events, and far more on *what we decide to pay attention to*. Remembering another person's kindness toward you—and then thanking them in writing-- can be one important and enjoyable way to pay attention to good things in your life. In this exercise, you will think of a time when another person made a kind gesture toward you that resulted in joy, relief, serenity, or other positive feelings.

Please take some time to think back over the past several years of your life and remember an instance when someone did something for you for which you are extremely grateful. For example, think of the people – parents, children, spouses/partners, relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers, doctors/therapists/nurses, employers, and so on – who have been especially kind to you but have never heard you fully express your gratitude.

When preparing for this exercise, **it may be most helpful to select a person or act that you haven't thought about for a while**—something that isn't always on your mind. Or if you do choose a person to whom you often feel grateful, it can be helpful to think about a different act (or aspect of the act) than the ones for which you usually feel thankful or express gratitude. It may be more helpful to bring these events out of the "back" of your mind than to select something that you often think about.

## Instructions

Now, for the next 15 minutes, write a gratitude letter to one of these individuals. Use the instructions below to help guide you through this process:

- 1.** Use whatever format you like, but remember to write as though you are directly addressing the individual you are grateful to. If it is helpful to start the letter with "Dear so-and-so," or end with "Sincerely, XXX," feel free to do so.
- 2.** Do not worry about perfect grammar and spelling.
- 3.** Describe in specific terms why you are grateful to this individual and how the individual's behavior affected your life. Focus on the specific parts of the behavior that most affected you and the details about how this affected you afterwards.
- 4.** Describe what you are doing now and how often you remember their efforts.
- 5.** You are welcome to show or give this letter to anyone you please. People have found that they can get even bigger boosts of good feeling when they share the letter with the recipient. On the other hand, the letter you write is a private document in which you can express your gratitude freely, and you do not have to share any of it with another person if you do not want to.
- 6.** Write the letter on the next page. When you next speak with your study trainer, you will review the letter (sharing only as much of the letter as feels comfortable). You will also discuss how you felt during and after writing the letter.

## Exercise

Gratitude letter:

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have when looking back over the gratitude letter you wrote this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (expressing feelings of gratitude more regularly) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

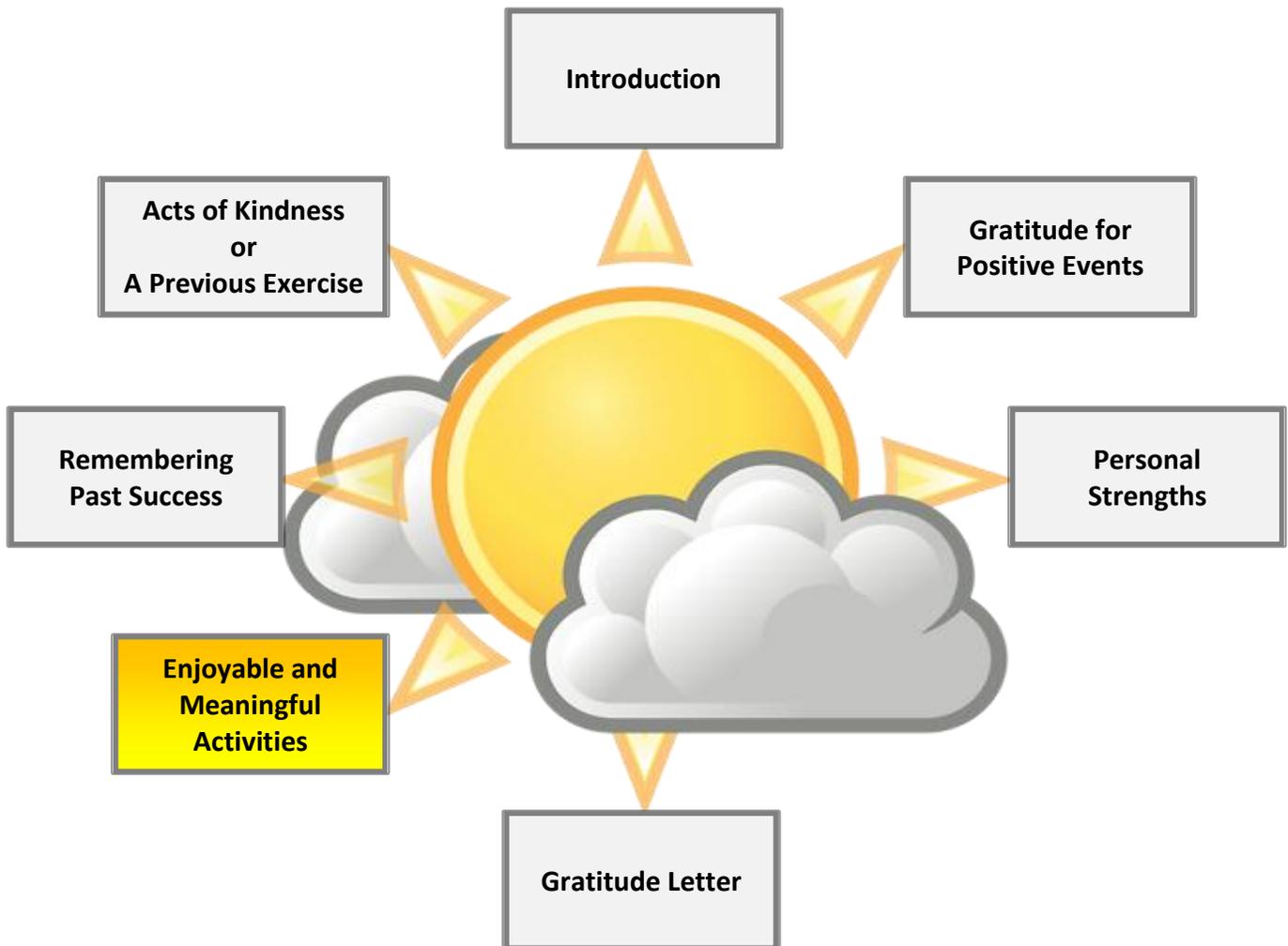
**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Four

(Reviewing gratitude letter and assigning doing important/enjoyable activities; *phone session*)

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## WEEK 4: REVIEWING GRATITUDE LETTER

### A. Check-in: Participant's overall experience applying PP skills or techniques from prior weeks

- “Before we get to this week’s exercise--you have now gotten practice in recalling good events and using a personal strength.”
  - “Have you noticed that you have been able to use either of these skills? How?”
  - “Would you like to use them more? Tell me more about that.”
  - Consider referring to the skills list – “Did you look at your skills list to consider ways you could boost your mood using exercises we’ve already covered?”
  - Brainstorm with them about this.
- By this point in treatment, most participants have a strong understanding of the frame for the session and the program goals. There may be sessions, however, where the participant may benefit from a reminder of the frame, such as when they have a difficult time staying on task or keeping the discussion limited to positive psychology. Similarly, there may be times when it would be helpful to remind the participant of the goals of the program, such as when they’ve had a good experience in the past week applying the exercises and may benefit from a reminder linking their success to the treatment goals. If needed, the clinician may include the following at any point of the session:
  - Reminder about the structure for the session—you will review the exercise from last week with them to see what they did and how it went, and then describe the next exercise. Then, they will do the exercise sometime in the next week, and you will review the exercise and how it went at next week’s call.
  - Remind them that this program was designed to help them learn and repeatedly use skills (e.g., being more aware of positive things around them, using their strengths in a positive way) that will help them to experience more happiness, more hope, and better health.
- Remind them of the target skill for this week: Expressing feelings of gratitude more regularly.

### B. Reviewing gratitude letter

#### If they completed the exercise:

- For this week’s exercise--they can share as much of the letter as they like. People do get a bigger boost by reading the letter, experiencing it again.
- If they do read it, praise/validate when they used specific details and expressed clear gratitude.
- Push them to expand their vocabulary of positive words as they describe their thoughts and feelings.
  - If they say “good” ask for more, give them a choice, offer ideas (see page 11 for list of positive emotions).
- Inquire about their experience of acknowledging gratitude more often in their lives and identifying the emotions that they experience when they express that gratitude.
- Observe positive expressions/inflections/statements.
- Observe to them that (a) doing this boosted their spirits, (b) the more often they do this (in small and large ways—it doesn’t always have to be a letter), the easier it will get, and (c) they can have fun and be creative as they find other ways to intentionally express gratitude to those who do something kind for them.
- “Do you think you could use this skill in the future? When? How? Put it on your skills list!”
  - Brainstorm suggestions:
    - Send a thank you note to a friend.
    - Send an e-card to someone to thank them for something.
    - Express your thanks to someone on social media (Facebook, Twitter).
    - Say thank you to someone you don’t normally thank (e.g., the bus driver).
  - If this is a useful exercise, have them take notes on the last page of manual, “My Favorite

Skills.”

- If the exercise did not seem to fit, ask them if there are ways they could change the exercise in a way that they might want to use it in the future. Have them note this in the skills list.
- *Reminder about using the skills list: This is key. We are having them focus on these exercises as tips and skills they can use in their daily lives. So when an exercise goes well and/or we can help them think about how to use the exercise in life, we have them write it in the back of their manual on the very last page, and we will ask them about this regularly. This also applies when the participant doesn't feel the exercise worked yet was able to consider ways to change the exercise so that they might want to use it in the future.*

**If they did not complete the exercise:**

- If they did not do it, indicate to them—no problem, why don't we use this time to do it together now? Review what the plan was, who they want to thank, and what they want to say. Then, see if they can think through and complete the letter with you verbally, line by line, over the phone. Praise and validate their efforts. Explore how they felt while composing the letter verbally with you. Then encourage them to write down the letter later.
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it's like the good thing happened twice—but no problem, we will review.
- If they only did part of it, or just planned it, no problem, review what they did, praise/validate for accomplishing what they did—underscore that this is more than they would have otherwise done—and then help them think through completion.
- Remember to gather the pre & post-exercise ratings prior to reviewing the exercise. If they did not complete the exercise, do the steps sequentially: get pre-exercise ratings, do the exercise together, and then get post-exercise ratings.

## WEEK 4: ASSIGNING ENJOYABLE AND MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

### Introduction:

- Tell them right up front that this is a little bit of a complicated exercise, but it is a good one and that the two of you will work together to make it easy to do.
- **Skill to emphasize:** Awareness of the types of activities we perform.
- Emphasize the point about variety (eating favorite meal every meal, seeing favorite movie twice a day would not be fun, but having your favorite meal once a week is awesome when you have it).
- Emphasize the point about alone vs. with others (we all can get a boost from doing things with other people—for some that is a group, for some that is 1:1).
- Emphasize the point about doing hedonic (e.g., amusement park) things all the time—would not get much done, maybe empty or doing meaningful things all the time (e.g., run marathon)—exhausting, tiring. But combining fun with meaning can help both.
- Then segue into the exercise—picking 3 things (fun alone, fun with another, meaningful)—emphasize that we will brainstorm together and make a plan. This will allow them to get the best of all worlds and see how mixing it up can really boost good feelings.
- The activities can be small or large, or part of a bigger goal (e.g., a step toward a meaningful goal).
- Emphasize that doing them all in a day or two—clustered—will give them the biggest boost by giving them three different kinds of good feeling activities lumped together.
- Then you will brainstorm each one.
  - *They can be small acts, just so long as they are doing them deliberately.*
  - *Fun alone—can be a usual activity, but something novel or something that helps them decompress can really be more effective.*
  - *Fun with another—in person is definitely better and something slightly out of the ordinary is definitely better. But they can do by phone or internet if they must.*
  - *Meaningful—emphasize that even a small step toward a goal counts, as long as they think they will feel that it is real progress and/or is something they will be proud to accomplish. Meaningful things also need not be toward a major goal (e.g., getting healthier, getting a job, getting a house, finding a partner, etc), it can also be anything related to meaning and purpose (e.g., religion/spirituality).*
  - *If they can't do in 1-2 days, ok, but really does help!*
- It is useful to have them deliberately and intentionally plan the acts beforehand, and to make sure that they're really attending to the act while doing it. This will almost certainly boost the effects they get. Validate that this does require more work up front (and during the event), but it really does help.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed the Gratitude Letter, you were able to \_\_\_\_\_, and you have been \_\_\_\_\_ (any use of PP skills). This week we also discussed the Enjoyable and Meaningful Activities exercise, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep up the good work, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

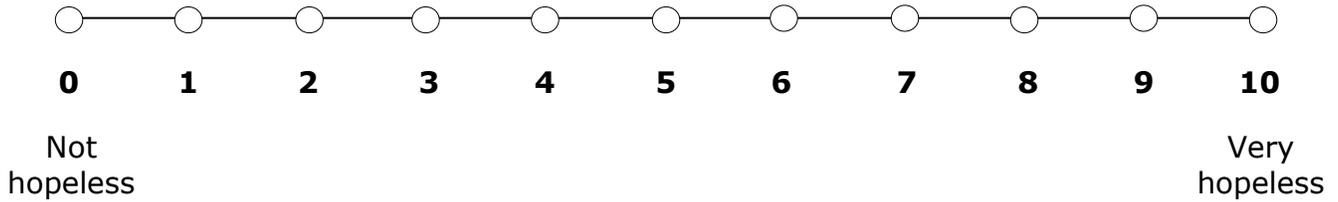
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

# Week Four: Enjoyable and Meaningful Activities

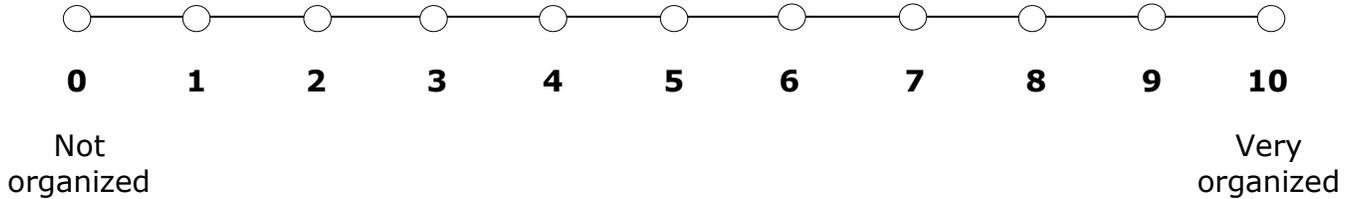
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

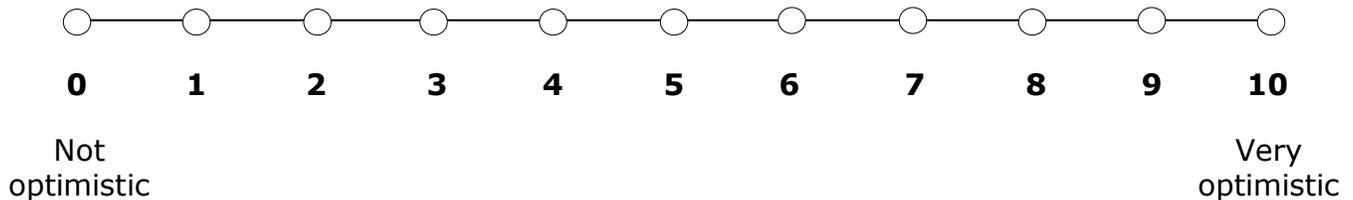
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

One of the biggest findings in happiness research is how important **variety and novelty (newness)** are to having and maintaining a satisfying life. Doing a single activity—or a single type of activity—no matter how enjoyable, can lose its punch after a while. If you listen to a favorite song over and over, or have the same great-tasting food over and over, eventually those favorite things lose their kick. Instead, if they are mixed in with other experiences and are enjoyed occasionally, they maintain their effect and can provide a burst of positive energy each time.

This week's exercise will help you to build the skill of planning and engaging in enjoyable and meaningful activities.

There are different types of activities. First, **there is a difference between "fun" activities and "meaningful" activities.** Some activities are very enjoyable in the moment (such as playing a slot machine, riding a roller coaster, or seeing a funny movie), while others may be less immediately fun but bring a lot of satisfaction or have a lot of meaning (writing a thoughtful letter to an old friend, or committing to volunteer at a soup kitchen once a month). By combining these two kinds of activities, you can get the benefits of both kinds of activities without either one feeling stale.

Second, **there can be a big difference between completing an activity alone and completing the activity with someone else.** A favorite hobby done alone brings a different kind of satisfaction than a meaningful conversation with a group of old friends, and by doing both types of activities, you can get the boost of connecting with other people while still "recharging your batteries" by enjoying an activity by yourself.

In this exercise, you will perform a variety of activities that can show you how different kinds of activities can bring different kinds of happiness and satisfaction. It will also show you how important the notion of variety can be.

We know that your circumstances may make it difficult to complete some activities. We want to emphasize that these activities do not need to be major tasks—the more you can do, the more you will get out of it, but anything simple that brings you enjoyment/satisfaction is appropriate for this exercise. Also, an important step toward a bigger goal—making phone calls, writing a detailed list, or having a meeting that gets you one step closer to a meaningful goal—also works well.

## Instructions

Over a 1-2 day period, do the following three activities:

- 1.** Choose an enjoyable activity to do alone and do it to completion. For example, you might read a book, listen to favorite music, remember good times from the past, look at a nice view, or meditate.
- 2.** Choose an enjoyable activity to do with others and do it until completion. For example, you might go for a walk with a friend, talk to an old friend on the phone, or watch a movie with others. Sometimes it's helpful to first identify the "who," and then you can figure out the "what do to with them."
- 3.** Choose an activity you deem important and meaningful and do it to completion. For example, you might make a medication chart and commit to using it to take medication regularly, or you might find and complete an application for school, housing, insurance, or volunteering. If a task seems too big, you could choose to set a goal of starting with a smaller, manageable step that will move you closer to completing the task.
- 4.** Record what occurred during and after the 3 activities. You may wait to write down what happened after you have done all 3 activities, or you may find it easier to record the event right after each individual activity rather than waiting until you have completed them all.

This may seem like a lot to keep track of—so your trainer will work with you beforehand to identify the activities and make sure they fit you and your life.

## Exercises

**Activity #1 (enjoyable activity by yourself):** \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Describe the activity:

(2) How did I feel during the activity?

(3) What good things happened as a result?

**Activity #2 (enjoyable activity with others):** \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Describe the activity:

(2) How did I feel during the activity?

(3) What good things happened as a result?

**Activity #3 (important and meaningful activity):** \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Describe the activity:

(2) How did I feel during the activity?

(3) What good things happened as a result?

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you experience when thinking over the activities that you did this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (awareness of the types of activities we perform) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

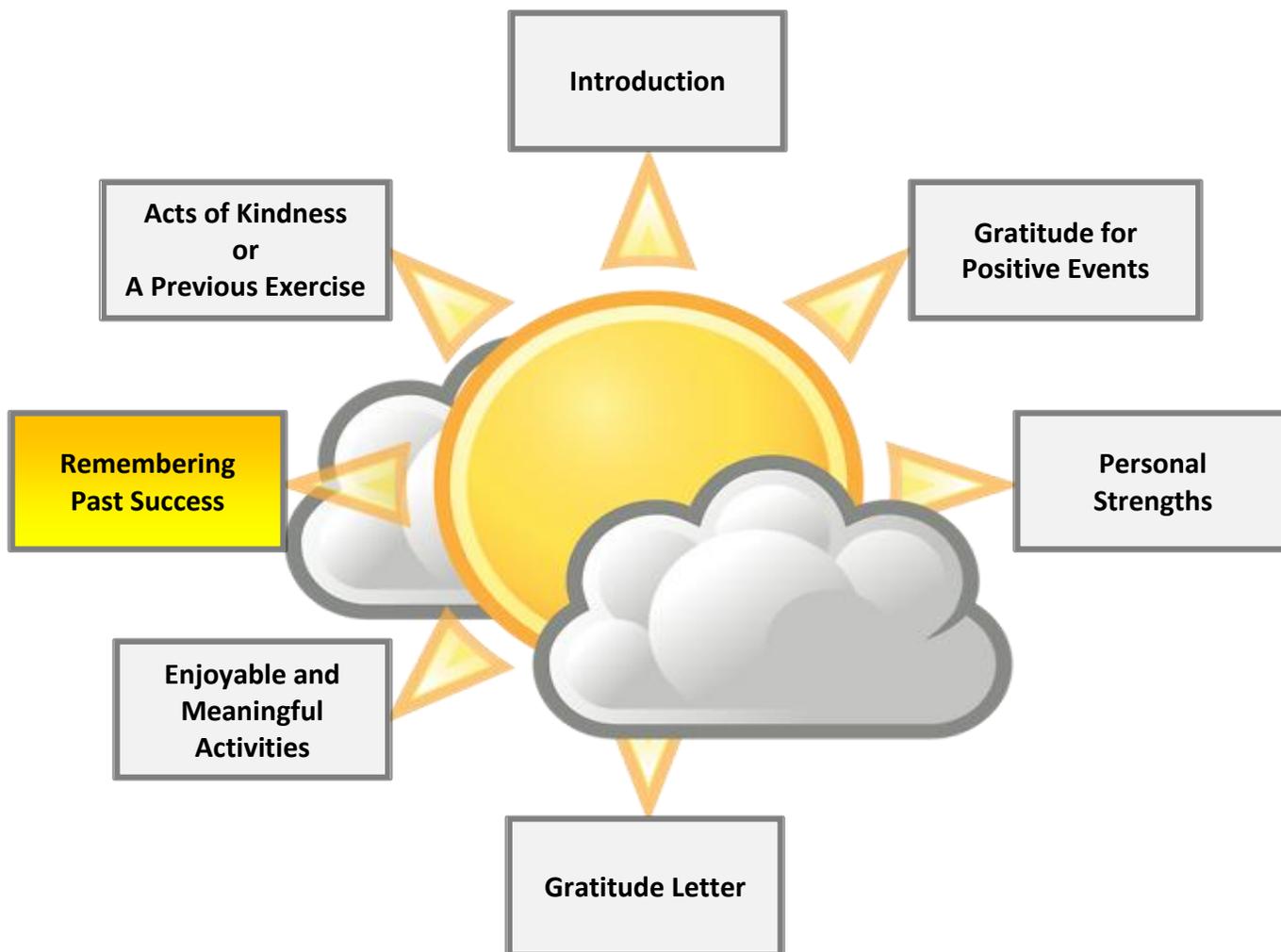
**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Five

(Reviewing important/enjoyable activities and assigning past success;  
*phone session*)

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## WEEK 5: REVIEWING ENJOYABLE AND MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

### A. Check-in: Participant's overall experience applying PP tools or techniques from prior weeks

- “Before we get to this week’s exercise, you have now been in this program for over a month. You have done exercises about remembering good things, using a strength, writing a gratitude letter, and this week’s exercise.”
  - “Which of these have been good fits for you?” (if they cannot recall, perhaps observe the ones you felt they engaged with the best)
  - “Have you noticed that you have been able to use those skills or exercises in your life from time to time? When? How?”
  - (if no) “Would you like to use them? Tell me more about that.”
  - Consider referring to the skills list – “Did you look at your skills list to consider ways you could boost your mood using exercises we’ve already covered?”
- By this point in treatment, most participants have a strong understanding of the frame for the session and the program goals. There may be sessions, however, where the participant may benefit from a reminder of the frame, such as when they have a difficult time staying on task or keeping the discussion limited to positive psychology. Similarly, there may be times when it would be helpful to remind the participant of the goals of the program, such as when they’ve had a good experience in the past week applying the exercises and may benefit from a reminder linking their success to the treatment goals. If needed, the clinician may include the following at any point of the session:
  - Reminder about the structure for the session—you will review the exercise from last week with them to see what they did and how it went, and then describe the next exercise. Then, they will do the exercise sometime in the next week, and you will review the exercise and how it went at next week’s call.
  - Remind them that this program was designed to help them learn and repeatedly use skills (e.g., being more aware of positive things around them, using their strengths in a positive way, acknowledging gratitude) that will help them to experience more happiness, more hope, and better health.
  - Remind them of the target skill for this week: Awareness of the types of activities we perform.

### B. Review enjoyable, important and meaningful activities

#### If they completed the exercise:

- Now for this week’s exercise, have them go through the events in some detail.
- Praise/validate what they did, how they did it
- Push them to expand their vocabulary of positive words as they describe their thoughts and feelings.
  - If they say “good”: ask for more, give them choices, offer ideas (see page 11 for list of positive emotions).
- Inquire about their experience of consciously performing important, enjoyable, and meaningful activities in their lives and identifying the emotions that they experience while performing them.
- Observe positive expressions/inflections/statements.
- Observe to them that (a) doing this boosted their spirits, (b) being mindful of mixing fun and meaningful activities can make a real difference in the amount satisfaction overall one has, and (c) they can find other ways to add variety and novelty to their daily lives in a deliberate manner for a boost in mood.
- “Do you think you could use this skill in the future? When? How? Put it on your skills list!”
  - Brainstorm suggestions:
    - Set aside 30 minutes each day for yourself, to do an activity that is enjoyable or meaningful.

- Read a pleasurable book.
  - Watch one of your favorite movies.
  - Call a friend or family member that you haven't called in a long time.
  - Think of a longer-term goal and make a plan to achieve it by taking one small step each day.
  - Try to find a way to make one of your everyday tasks more enjoyable (e.g., listen to music while washing the dishes, or watch a movie while folding clothes).
  - Plan an enjoyable event for a future date.
- If this is a useful exercise, have them take notes on the last page of manual, "My Favorite Skills".
  - If the exercise did not seem to fit, ask them if there are ways they could change the exercise in a way that they might want to use it in the future. Have them note this in the skills list.
  - *Reminder about using the skills list: This is key. We are having them focus on these exercises as tips and skills they can use in their daily lives. So when an exercise goes well and/or we can help them think about how to use the exercise in life, we have them write it in the back of their manual on the very last page, and we will ask them about this regularly. This also applies when the participant doesn't feel the exercise worked yet was able to consider ways to change the exercise so that they might want to use it in the future.*
- Review the pre- and post-exercise ratings.

**If they did not complete the exercise:**

- If they did not do it, indicate to them—no problem, then validate their situation in a way that is appropriate –e.g., "I understand that you still are having many days where you are not feeling very well and it's hard to find the energy or motivation to do more than you are already doing. But that's why I think this may be the perfect time to do this exercise. Let's use this time to think through the exercise again together." Review what the plan was, brainstorm any problems they may anticipate, and then see if they can imagine doing at least one of the activities step by step with you over the phone. Ask them to be as specific and detailed as possible and to tell you about any positive thoughts or feelings they are having as they imagine the event. Praise and validate this effort. Then help them plan to give the exercise a shot next week.
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it's like the good thing happened twice—but no problem, we will review.
- If they only did part of it, or just planned it, no problem, review what they did, praise/validate for accomplishing what they did—underscore that this is more than they would have otherwise done—and then help them think through completion.
- Remember to gather the pre & post-exercise ratings prior to reviewing the exercise. If they did not complete the exercise, do the steps sequentially: get pre-exercise ratings, do the exercise together, and then get post-exercise ratings.

## WEEK 5: ASSIGNING REMEMBERING PAST SUCCESS

### Introduction:

- Remind them that it is normal to focus on failures or times when things could have gone better—it is part of human nature, part of depression, and certainly can help us improve.
- **Skill to emphasize:** Awareness of our successes.
- At the same time, it is important to be able to appreciate when we have had success—we learn a lot from this, it helps us make future success happen, and it can really give us a boost of motivation!
- Today, we are going to discuss a time when you had success. We are going to define success as **\*\*anything\*\*** where you had a role in a good thing happening and when you felt (even a little bit) proud of your contribution to the success.
- Otherwise, it really can be anything.
  - It can be recent, old.
  - It can be small or large.
  - Go through the examples on the page in the participant manual (driving, etc.).
- They are going to identify a single time when they had success—something when they had an active part in a good thing happening and about which they felt proud.
  - They are then going to write about it: they are going to specifically describe their success and how they played a part in the success as specifically as possible.
  - Then they are going to write about what positive thoughts and feelings they had at the time (as specifically as possible) and then about what positive feelings come up as they look back.
  - Finally, they are going to write about what this success says about their skills and strengths.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**
- If they cannot think of anything (They may be thinking too small/recent, or too big/grandiose):
  - What are you proudest of?
  - When did someone give you a compliment?
  - When did you get an award?
  - What was something hard you did?
  - What was a time when you used a strength of yours?
  - What was something good that happened in the last few days?
- If they find that thinking of a past success leads to distressing comparisons about their function/accomplishments in the past compared to now:
  - Help them to focus on experiencing the good feelings they experienced at that time.
  - Help remind them that they are still that person—smart, wise, resourceful, collaborative, or whatever else makes sense—and that in fact looking back at that time was a reminder that they have these strengths and they didn't go away. Depression can sap your strength and wobble your confidence but it can't change who you are.
  - Tell them that it is ok to look back and draw strength from that prior accomplishment—and the good feelings associated with it—to put fuel and positive energy in their tank to deal with whatever difficult struggles they have now (and getting out of bed today may take all the strength they have).
  - Every time they deliberately use their skills to accomplish something, the easier it will get the next time.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Enjoyable and Meaningful Activities, you were able to \_\_\_\_\_, and you have been \_\_\_\_\_ (any use of PP skills). This week we also discussed the Remembering Past Success exercise, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep up the good work, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

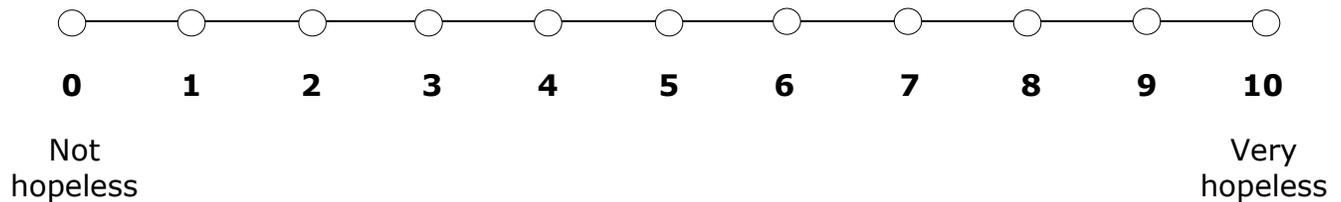
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

# Week Five: Remembering Past Success

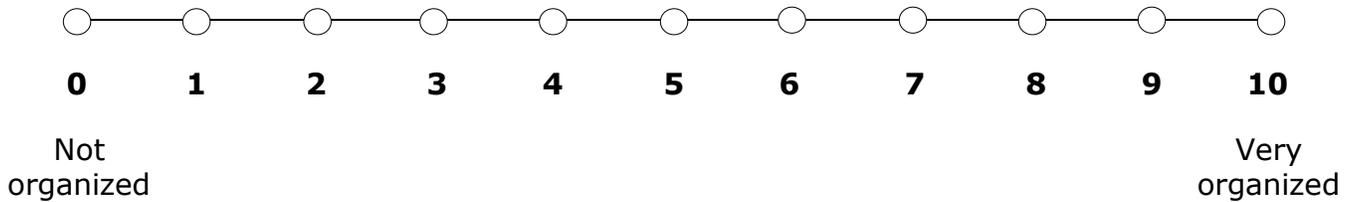
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

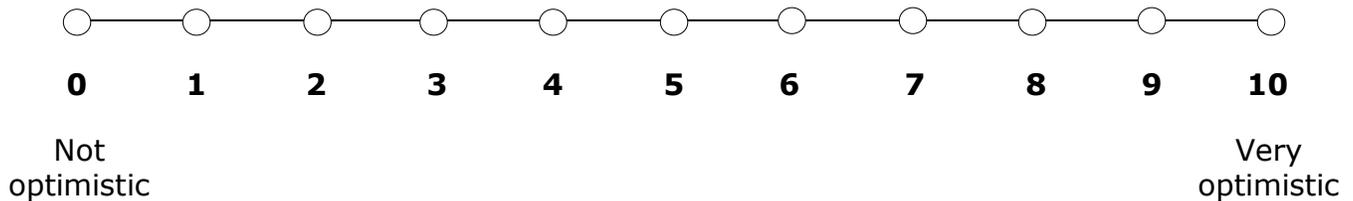
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

You have now been completing positive psychology exercises for over a month! We hope that you have found the exercises to be interesting, enjoyable, and useful. We also hope that you have been able to continue to use the skills you have learned by doing these exercises.

Today we will have you complete a new exercise. In this exercise, we are going to focus on a time when you had success. We will think about the success you had, how it felt, and how you played a role.

Remembering and focusing on success can be hard. It can be easy to think of past difficulties or failures, or how we might not have measured up in a certain situation. It can be human nature to dwell on difficulties or areas where we can improve, and sometimes much harder to vividly remember times when we had success. Furthermore, if you are still feeling depressed, it can be very hard to remember (or believe) that you have had success and that you have the skills to do it again.

**However, our strengths, successes, and accomplishments are really important parts of our lives, and they can also teach us about how we can have success in the future.** Usually success does not happen purely by random chance—in most cases, you played a real role in making that success happen.

In fact, the kind of success we want to focus on with this exercise is one in which you had an **active role** in making the success happen and **felt proud** about your contribution to the success. As long as it meets those requirements, it can be anything!

Some examples:

- Learning how to drive
- Doing well in a class or doing a good job on a work assignment
- Working together with a group of people to put together a party
- Winning a competition
- Making it to a difficult appointment or having a difficult conversation

Successes can be large or small, public or private, individual or group efforts. In many ways, the outcome is less important than the process—the ingredients within you that made it happen. What we want to figure out is: how did you do it? How did it feel? How can you use those skills again?

The overall goal of this exercise is to remind you that you have the skills to be successful. In fact, you have already used these skills!—and we want to help you remember them. We also want to remind you about the good feelings and pride that came from that success.

## Instructions

Take the next few minutes to think about a time when you succeeded at something. Again, this should be something in which you had an active role and about which you felt (even a little) proud. It can be a small, daily task, or an incredibly difficult task that happened in a specific moment, or a longer-term goal/accomplishment. Think as specifically as possible about the situation (for example, instead of “raising my kids,” it might be “raising my son to be kind to others, like the time he thoughtfully consoled a classmate who had lost his grandmother”).

If you can’t think of anything, you may be trying too hard to think of a “major” life event. Think about the past few days: was there anything that happened, even very small, that was a success? On the other hand, you may be thinking too “small”—think about the big events of your life, and times when you were the proudest or happiest—those times may be worth thinking and writing about.

Use the instructions below to help guide you through this process:

- 1.** You will first write about the event. You will then write about the positive feelings and thoughts you had during the event. Then you will write about the positive feelings and thoughts you have now, as you look back at your success.
- 2.** Finally, you will write about how you did it—what role you had in making the success happen and which of your good qualities “came out”.
- 3.** Do not worry about perfect grammar and spelling.
- 4.** Write these responses on the next pages. When you next speak with your study trainer, you will review the event, how it made you feel, and how you were involved in your success.

## **Exercise**

(1) My successful event:

(2) Describe the event in detail:

(3) The positive thoughts or feelings I experienced at that time (be as specific and detailed as possible):

(4) The specific steps **I** took in making this success happen:

(5) What this success says about me and my good qualities:

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have when thinking about the success you wrote about this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (awareness of our successes) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

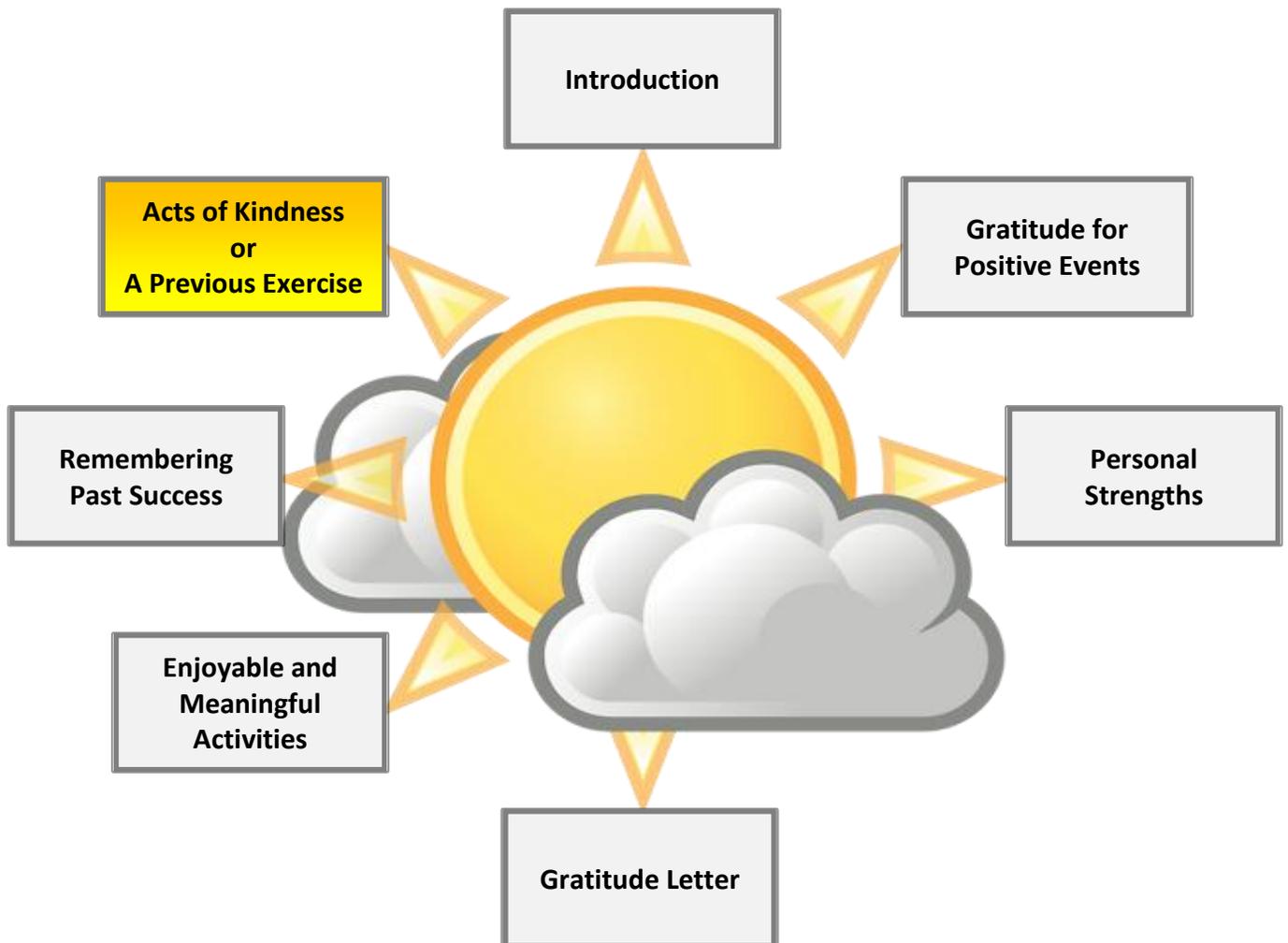
Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

# Week Six

(Reviewing past success and assigning choice/kindness; *phone session*)



## WEEK 6: REVIEWING PAST SUCCESS

### A. Check-in: Participant's overall experience applying PP skills or techniques from prior weeks

- “Before we get to this week’s exercise, you have now been in this program for about a month. You have done exercises about remembering good things, using strengths, writing a gratitude letter, doing important/enjoyable activities, and this week’s exercise.”
  - “Have you noticed that you have been able to use either of these skills? How?”
  - “Would you like to use them more? Tell me more about that.”
  - Consider referring to the skills list – “Did you look at your skills list to consider ways you could boost your mood using exercises we’ve already covered?”
  - Brainstorm with them about this.
- By this point in treatment, most participants have a strong understanding of the frame for the session and the program goals. There may be sessions, however, where the participant may benefit from a reminder of the frame, such as when they have a difficult time staying on task or keeping the discussion limited to positive psychology. Similarly, there may be times when it would be helpful to remind the participant of the goals of the program, such as when they’ve had a good experience in the past week applying the exercises and may benefit from a reminder linking their success to the treatment goals. If needed, the clinician may include the following at any point of the session:
  - Reminder about the structure for the session—you will review the exercise from last week with them to see what they did and how it went, and then describe the next exercise. Then, they will do the exercise sometime in the next week, and you will review the exercise and how it went at next week’s call.
  - Remind them that this program was designed to help them learn and repeatedly use skills (e.g., being more aware of positive things around them, using their strengths in a positive way, acknowledging gratitude, noticing different types of activities) that will help them to experience more happiness, more hope, and better health.
  - Remind them of the target skill for this week: Awareness of our successes.

### B. Reviewing past success

#### If they completed the exercise:

- Now for this week’s exercise, have them go through the success in some detail.
- Praise/validate what they did, how they did it.
- Have them talk in some detail about the event and how they had a role.
- Ask them about feeling proud.
- Push them to expand their vocabulary of positive words as they describe their thoughts and feelings.
  - If they say “good”: ask for more, give them a choice, offer ideas (see page 11 for list of positive emotions).
- Inquire about their experience of focusing on ways in which they succeed in their lives and identifying the emotions that they experience when they acknowledge the role they played in these accomplishments.
- Observe positive expressions/inflections/statements.
- Observe to them that (a) doing this boosted their spirits (if it did), (b) being mindful of successes (small or larger) in everyday life can provide a real boost to self-esteem and remind them of their own skills, and (c) has the potential to make a real difference in their ability to expect and create future success with continued practice.
- “Do you think you could use this skill in the future? When? How? Put it on your skills list!”
  - Brainstorm suggestions:
    - Identify a small success that occurs each day and write about it or tell someone else about

it.

- Commemorate a past success in some way (make a collage/slideshow, paint a picture about it, etc.)
  - Look at the qualities in yourself that you identified in the past success exercise which you just completed and see how you may have used one or more of those qualities in the past week.
  - Choose a type of behavior you want to improve and keep track of your progress towards accomplishing it.
- If this is a useful exercise, have them take notes on the last page of manual, “My Favorite Skills”.
  - If the exercise did not seem to fit, ask them if there are ways they could change the exercise in a way that they might want to use it in the future. Have them note this in the skills list.
  - *Reminder about using the skills list: This is key. We are having them focus on these exercises as tips and skills they can use in their daily lives. So when an exercise goes well and/or we can help them think about how to use the exercise in life, we have them write it in the back of their manual on the very last page, and we will ask them about this regularly. This also applies when the participant doesn't feel the exercise worked yet was able to consider ways to change the exercise so that they might want to use it in the future.*
- Review the pre- and post-exercise ratings.

If they did **not** complete the exercise:

- If they did not write anything, again, no problem, suggest that you use this time to complete the exercise together over the phone. If they cannot think of a success, ask the following questions (What are you proudest of? When did someone give you a compliment? When did you get an award? What was something hard you did? What was a time when you used a strength of yours? What was something good that happened in the last few days?) to help them identify a success and then ask about what happened and how they felt at the time. Then ask the patient how they feel now, talking to you about their success. Praise and validate their effort. Then help them make a plan to finish the rest of the exercise questions this week.
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it's like the good thing happened twice—but no problem, we will review.
- If they only did part of it, or just planned it, no problem, review what they did, praise/validate for accomplishing what they did—underscore that this is more than they would have otherwise done—and then help them think through completion.
- Remember to gather the pre & post-exercise ratings prior to reviewing the exercise. If they did not complete the exercise, do the steps sequentially: get pre-exercise ratings, do the exercise together, and then get post-exercise ratings.

## WEEK 6: INTRODUCTION TO CHOICE EXERCISE

### Introduction

- Start with a short acknowledgement that this will be the last exercise the two of you will do together, and point out that they are getting good at this/getting the process down pat/showing progress (or anything else that seems true).
- Say that there are a couple of options for this week, and that the first option is that they can do a new exercise. This one is about doing three acts of kindness, all done over the course of about one day, for others. The acts can be small or large, just as long as they are done deliberately to help someone else.
- Ask them, “What do you think about that? How does that sound to you?”
  - If quite positive, then just say, “Ok, let’s go with that,” and go right to acts of kindness.
  - If they are lukewarm (or entirely against it, tell them that the other option is that they can repeat an exercise from the prior week. For example, maybe \_\_\_\_\_ (one you think they did well).  
“What you do think about that?”
- Then you will go to whichever option they choose.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

## Instructions

This week marks six weeks of being in the study. You have now done a wide variety of positive psychological exercises, and you are probably getting more and more skilled at identifying positive events, using your strengths and skills, and finding ways to feel grateful even in difficult times.

This week, we are giving you a choice. We have one final new exercise, on performing three Acts of Kindness for others within a 1-2 day period. On the other hand, if you would rather repeat an exercise from a prior week, you can do that instead!

Choose whether you would like to work on the new exercise (Option #1—Acts of Kindness) or an exercise you have previously completed (Option #2—choice).

If you select Acts of Kindness, turn to the next page.

If you select Choice, turn to page 64.

## WEEK 6: ASSIGNING ACTS OF KINDNESS

- Briefly review the reasons that kind acts can make people feel good.
  - Helps you to feel connected to others, even if only in a small or quick way.
  - Can help distract you from your problems or appreciate your own good fortune.
  - Can remind you that you are—and can be—a kind person who does nice things for those around them.
  - Can also bring a cycle of positive events—the other person may have a positive reaction, which can feel good, and maybe they will do something nice for you.
- **Skill to emphasize:** Being kind to others.
- Especially if they feel depressed or chronically feel that no one else ever does nice things for them
  - Mention that it may seem completely backwards to help others when it is hard to even help yourself or do the basics of life, or when other people may not seem to give a damn about you.
  - But—being kind to others really can bring positive energy to you at a time of need.
- **Emphasize:**
  - The acts can be large or small but:
    - Should be something different or above/beyond what you would normally do.
    - Should all be one within 1 day ideally (or 1-2 days at most)—studies have found that doing them all in 1 day gives the most boost.
    - The participant should deliberately focus on the kind act while doing it and how it feels to do it.
  - They can pay attention to the person's reaction and if it is (+) that can give a boost.
    - But even if they don't even notice, or give minimal thanks—that's ok—the participant knows that they made a sacrifice for someone else and that they are kind, and “hey, I will know that you were kind to someone else and how much effort that took!”
  - Plan together – brainstorm with the participant what acts they might want to do.

## WEEK 6: ASSIGNING CHOICE EXERCISE

- Highlight the idea of “matching”—finding exercises that are the right fit for a person can be really important.
  - Thinking vs. doing
  - Content
- Also important is the idea of practice—building skills to be able to access positive emotions and really tailoring exercises to fit just right.
- Then, say that you will just list the exercises they have already done and then you can decide together which one to do. They can pick one to repeat because it went very well last time, or even if they would just like to try it again.
- You can also emphasize that they can change up the exercise a little bit to make it fit their needs and personality even better.
- Then list them—give brief descriptions.
  - First was the one in the hospital, listing three good things that had happened in the prior week
  - Strengths (you will give little descriptions for each of these)
  - Gratitude letter
  - Important and enjoyable activities
  - Success
- If they are having trouble picking one, point out two that you think they did well (or that you think they could do well this week), and present them with a choice between those two.
- Now, review the instructions with them and think about any adjustments you might like to make—we would like to have it be a bit different for those exercises (strengths, gratitude letter, success).
  - Three good things—fine to keep exactly the same—if they want to change, all in a single day?
  - Strengths—same strength in different way or a new strength (can review list with them)
  - Gratitude letter—different person or different act by same person
  - Activities—fine to keep same, but see if they can mix up activities and/or other people
  - Success—different successful event
- You don’t have to reread the whole intro to them but it can be good to summarize why we chose this exercise and how it can be helpful to people—and you can say, “like when you did \_\_\_\_\_ before, people can find that they feel \_\_\_\_\_ and seem \_\_\_\_\_ after they do this exercise.”
- Review how they will write it in the book, since there is kind of a generic page.
- Have them write in their book right now re: which exercise they picked and what they will do.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Remembering Past Success, you were able to \_\_\_\_\_, and you have been \_\_\_\_\_ (any use of PP skills). This week we also discussed the Acts of Kindness/Choice exercise, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep up the good work, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

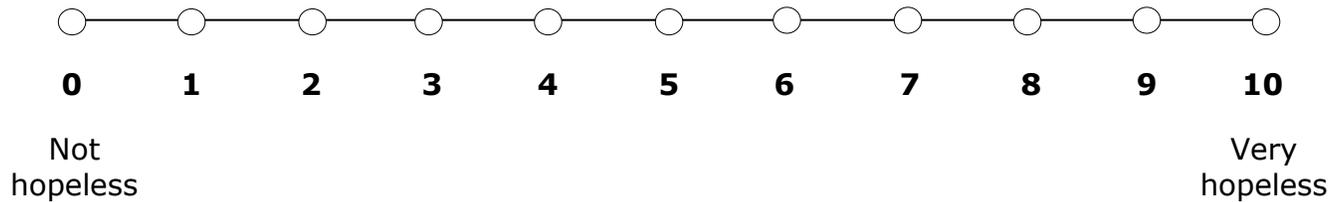
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

# Week Six—Option 1: Acts of Kindness

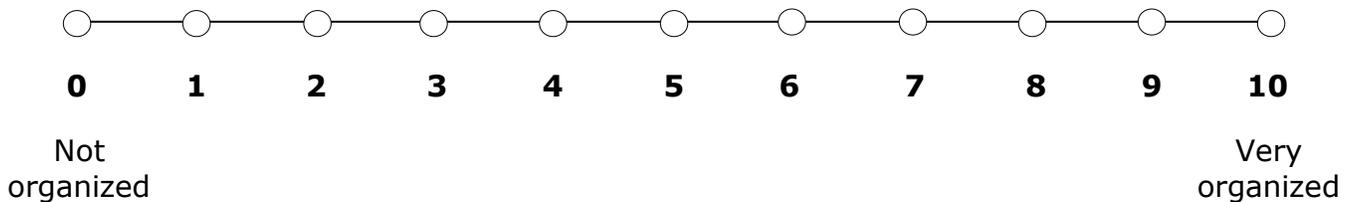
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

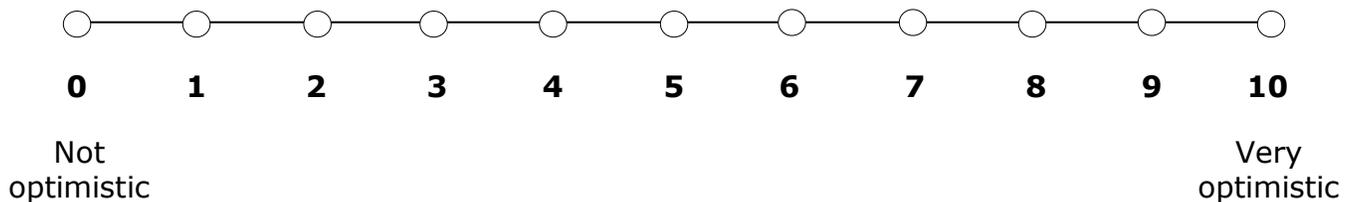
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

You have now completed a wide variety of exercises. These have involved thinking of positive events in the past and future, using strengths, and completing activities to boost your mood. You hopefully have found some exercises that fit you well and that you were able to add to some of your skills to your favorites list. This next exercise will focus on kindness, and performing kind acts for others.

### Why does doing a kind act make people feel happy?

5. Being kind and generous **can lead you to see others in a more positive light** (“My roommate really appreciated me helping her today. Maybe she is nicer than I thought and is just having a hard time”) and **fosters a heightened sense of cooperation in your community** (“We all must pitch in to improve the environment”).
6. Kind acts can **relieve guilt or discomfort about others’ difficulties and can help you appreciate your own good fortune**. Helping others can make you feel advantaged (and thankful) by comparison (e.g., “I’m grateful I have a home”). Providing kindness or assistance to someone else can deliver a welcome distraction from your own worries and troubles, and can put things in perspective.
7. A big benefit of being kind is **the way it can boost your self-esteem and change (in a good way) how you see yourself**. When you commit acts of kindness, you may begin to view yourself as a person who is kind and caring. Studies find that helping others or volunteering for a good cause helps people to see their own abilities, resources, and expertise. It also gives them a greater feeling of control over their life.
8. Finally, **kindness can start a cycle of positive events**. Helping someone may lead that person to like you, to appreciate you, and to offer gratitude. We have found that one reason that kind acts make people happier is how much the recipients appreciate the act. As an added benefit, by acting kind toward others, it may also lead people to help you in *your* time of need. But, even without this “returning the favor”, it can just feel great knowing that you have helped another in some small or large way.

### Hold on! I’m not feeling my best. How can I help others?

It is sometimes helpful to perform kind acts exactly *when* you are not feeling your best. As noted, these acts can help to distract you from a difficult situation, or take you away from being “stuck” in a series of negative thoughts about yourself and your life. Furthermore, some people find that it is helpful to have outside motivation to be active and involved with others—you may find it easier to get out of bed and engaged with the world if you are doing it with a purpose to help others, rather than for yourself.

## Instructions

Please take some time to think about three kind acts that you could perform this week to help people in your life; it could be for someone you know or for a stranger. These generous acts should be something that are not normally required in your life, but that go above and beyond what you typically do. Furthermore, these kind acts should involve some sacrifice (small or large) by you in terms of your effort, energy, money, or time. Identify these acts in your mind, and then go ahead and do them all in 1-2 days.

(Doing it all in 1-2 days is actually pretty important. This helps you to perform acts that are a little more out of your usual “day to day” activities, and studies have found that doing kind acts in a short time boost mood much better than spreading three acts out over a week)

Also, it is helpful to vary the type of kind acts you perform. Try a few different acts that require different amounts of effort and skill to see which work best for you.

Again, the most important part is not the size of the acts, but that they are something you would not be doing anyway. You may not need to plan every detail of each act—chances to be kind can come out of the blue—but it is helpful to come up with a specific plan for at least a couple of the acts, and then go ahead and do them.

Once you have done them, please write about the kind acts that you performed. You can write about each act after you have done it, or you can write about all three at once, but it is generally helpful to write about the act within a day of performing the act to keep the event and its effects fresh in your mind.

When you write, be sure to describe exactly what you did, how you felt, and what response the recipient had (if any). The recipient’s response can sometimes be the best part of the exercise! It is also possible that the recipient of the act—the “receiver”—may not be very thankful. That’s okay—just the act of being kind to someone else can remind YOU that you are a kind person and that you are capable of reaching out to others in their time of need. And that can feel good.

**Note:** You might feel a little shy or nervous before trying one of these acts. That is completely normal, and it usually will get easier once you do the first one—many people find that the good feelings you get from performing the kind act outweigh any jitters you had beforehand.

## Exercise

### Kind act #1

(1) What I did:

(2) How I felt in anticipation of the act (as I thought about doing it):

(3) How I felt when I did the act:

(4) The response the recipient had, if any:

## **Kind act #2**

(1) What I did:

(2) How I felt in anticipation of the act (as I thought about doing it):

(3) How I felt when I did the act:

(4) The response the recipient had, if any:

### **Kind act #3**

(1) What I did:

(2) How I felt in anticipation of the act (as I thought about doing it):

(3) How I felt when I did the act:

(4) The response the recipient had, if any:

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have when thinking about the kind acts you performed this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill (being kind to others) in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

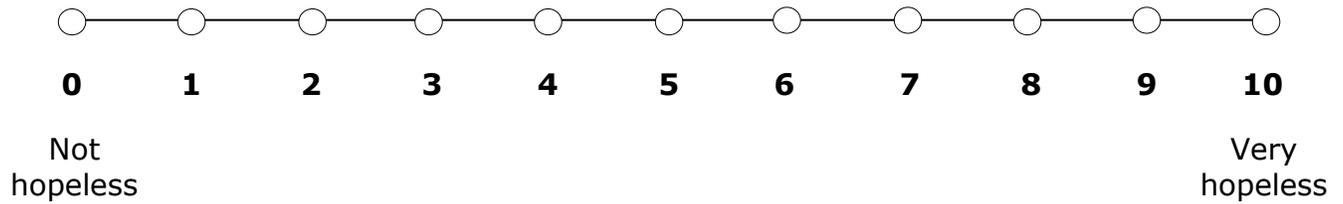
**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

# Week Six—Option 2: Choice from Previous Weeks

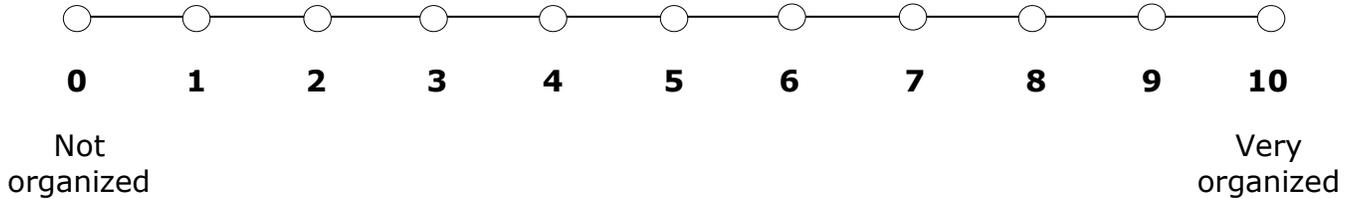
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

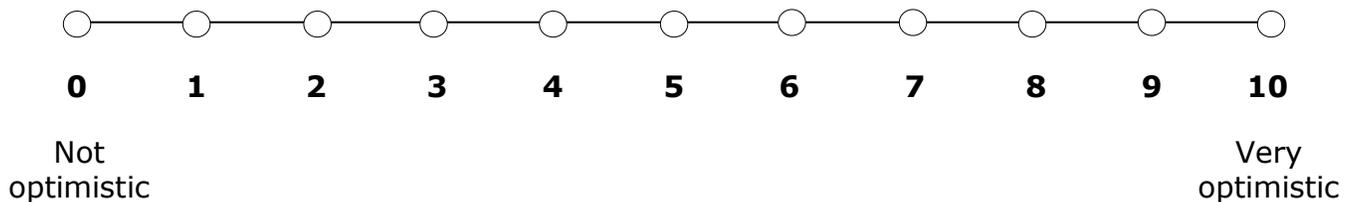
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

One of the most important things about activities that boost positive thoughts and feelings is the idea of **matching** a person with the right activity. Some people really get a lot out of thinking and writing exercises (like the gratitude letter), and some really get a big boost from doing activities (like the strengths exercise). Sometimes, it doesn't matter whether it is a "thinking" or "doing" activity, but instead what matters is exactly what the activity is all about—the focus of the activity.

Because our goals are to (1) use exercises that are effective in boosting your positive thoughts/feelings and (2) find exercises that feel to you that they are worth repeating after the study, it is important to match the right exercises to you and your situation.

In addition to choice, the other thing that is important is practice. As you do these activities more frequently, they often get easier and more enjoyable, and you can 'tailor' an activity slightly to make it fit your style and preferences.

With that in mind, for this final exercise, we will have you choose an exercise that you have completed previously. It could be the exercise you liked best, or just one that you would like to try again. You will repeat the exercise, and you can work with your trainer to make small adjustments if you think it will make the exercise even more useful. For example, you might pick a new strength to use for the *Personal Strengths* exercise, or you might write about seeing a loved one succeed for the *Past Success* exercise, for example.

On the other hand, some people like trying as many different exercises as they can, and as we discussed, newness and novelty can help increase positive feelings. If you would rather try one more new exercise about *performing acts of kindness*, you can do that instead of repeating a past exercise.

# Instructions

1. Select (with your trainer) an exercise that you would like to complete.
2. Complete the exercise according to the instructions for that exercise, and write about the exercise using the same format as before.
3. If you choose to complete the new exercise (three kind acts) instead, the instructions and a space to write about the exercise follow on page 52.

**The exercise I chose for this week:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Any changes to the exercise:**

Use the following page to write about the exercise.

## **Exercise**

If you chose a thinking/writing exercise (gratitude for positive events, gratitude letter, remembering past success), complete the exercise below.

If you chose a “doing” exercise (using strengths; enjoyable and meaningful activities), write about: (1) what you did, (2) how you felt when you completed the activity, and (3) how you feel now, as you look back.

**Once you have completed the exercise, please also answer the following:**

(1) What thoughts and feelings do you have when thinking about the exercise you performed this week?

(2) Are there ways you could incorporate this week's skill in your daily life? How?

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?



---

# Next Steps

**(Reviewing kindness/choice and making plans for exercises in the future:  
*phone session*)**

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## WEEK 7: REVIEWING ACTS OF KINDNESS/CHOICE EXERCISE

### A. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the PP model and goals

- By this point in treatment, most participants have a strong understanding of the frame for the session and the program goals. There may be sessions, however, where the participant may benefit from a reminder of the frame, such as when they have a difficult time staying on task or keeping the discussion limited to positive psychology. Similarly, there may be times when it would be helpful to remind the participant of the goals of the program, such as when they've had a good experience in the past week applying the exercises and may benefit from a reminder linking their success to the treatment goals. If needed, the clinician may include the following at any point of the session:
  - Remind them that this program was designed to help them learn and repeatedly use skills (e.g., being more aware of positive things around them, using their strengths in a positive way, acknowledging gratitude, noticing different types of activities, noticing successes) that will help them to experience more happiness, more hope, and better health.
  - Remind them of the target skill for this week: Being kind to others OR repeat of previous skill.
- “Before we get to this week’s exercise, you have now been in this program for about a month. You have done exercises about remembering good things, using strengths, writing a gratitude letter, doing important/enjoyable activities, remembering past successes and this week’s choice exercise.
  - Which of these have been good fits for you?” (if they cannot recall, perhaps observe the ones you felt they engaged with the best)
  - “Have you noticed that you have been able to use those skills or exercises in your life from time to time? When? How?”
  - (if no) “Would you like to use them? Tell me more about that.”
- If they did choice last week and they went through this list with you when picking a choice, then you can summarize by saying, “last week we reviewed what you had done and we found that \_\_\_\_\_ were good fits for you”
  - In either case: “Have you noticed that you have been able to use those skills or exercises in your life from time to time? When? How?”
  - (if no) “Would you like to use them? Tell me more about that.”
- Exit Interview – Mention that at the end of the call there will be a chance for them to voice whatever praises and concerns they may have about the program.

## WEEK 7: REVIEWING ACTS OF KINDNESS

### If they completed the exercise:

- Now for this week's exercise, have them go through the events in some detail.
- Praise/validate what they did, how they did it.
- Push them to expand their vocabulary of positive words as they describe their thoughts and feelings.
  - If they say "good": ask for more, give them a choice, offer ideas (see page 11 for list of positive emotions).
- Inquire about their experience of being kind to others and identifying the emotions that they experience when they follow through with these acts (whether thanked for their kindness or not).
- Observe positive expressions/inflections/statements.
- Observe to them that (a) doing this boosted their spirits, (b) that with continued practice this exercise will get easier and can make a real difference in the amount of overall satisfaction one has, and (c) it can be used in novel ways to give them a real boost in mood.
- "Do you think you could use this skill in the future? When? How? Put it on your skills list!"
  - Brainstorm suggestions:
    - Sign up to volunteer for an organization that is meaningful to you.
    - Send a letter to someone who is lonely.
    - Say a prayer for someone that is having a difficult time.
    - Donate something you don't use to the Salvation Army.
    - Give someone a compliment.
    - Give up your seat on the T.
    - Give a larger tip than usual at a restaurant.
    - When driving, let someone cross the street in front of you.
    - Hold the door for someone walking behind you.
  - If this is a useful exercise, have them take notes on the last page of manual, "My Favorite Skills".
  - If the exercise did not seem to fit, ask them if there are ways they could change the exercise in a way that they might want to use it in the future. Have them note this in the skills list.
  - *Reminder about using the skills list: This is key. We are having them focus on these exercises as tips and skills they can use in their daily lives. So when an exercise goes well and/or we can help them think about how to use the exercise in life, we have them write it in the back of their manual on the very last page, and we will ask them about this regularly. This also applies when the participant doesn't feel the exercise worked yet was able to consider ways to change the exercise so that they might want to use it in the future.*
- Review the pre- and post-exercise ratings.

### If they did **not** complete the exercise:

- If they did not do it, indicate to them—no problem, why don't we use this time to do it together now? Help them think through the past week day by day—how have they been nice to others over the past week? Have they held a door for someone? Gave up their seat on the T? Smiled at someone? Said something nice to someone? Encourage them to be specific and detailed as they describe the acts of kindness and their feelings associated with them. Explore how they felt while describing the acts to you. Praise and validate their efforts. Then encourage them to write down the details of the exercise after your meeting so they have a record of the kind acts they performed that they can refer to later, if they choose.
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it's like the good thing happened twice—but no problem, we will review.
- If they only did part of it, or just planned it, no problem, review what they did, praise/validate for accomplishing what they did—underscore that this is more than they would have otherwise done—and then help them think through completion.
- Remember to gather the pre & post-exercise ratings prior to reviewing the exercise. If they did not

complete the exercise, do the steps sequentially: get pre-exercise ratings, do the exercise together, and then get post-exercise ratings.

## WEEK 7: REVIEWING CHOICE EXERCISE

### If they completed the exercise:

- Now for this week's exercise, have them go through the events in some detail.
- Praise/validate what they did, how they did it.
- Push them to expand their vocabulary of positive words as they describe their thoughts and feelings.
  - If they say "good": ask for more, give them a choice, offer ideas (see page 11 for list of positive emotions).
- *Given that they have now done this twice, review with them about how they could do this on a more regular basis.*
- Observe positive expressions/inflections/statements.
- Observe to them that (a) doing this boosted their spirits, and (b) this exercise is now part of their "My Favorite Skills" List---a skill that can be used in variety of ways to give themselves a boost of positive emotion and energy.
- "Do you think you could use this skill in the future? When? How? Put it on your list!"
  - Brainstorm suggestions, i.e. help them to identify other ways in which they can use the skill they chose.
  - If this is a useful exercise, have them take notes on the last page of manual, "My Favorite Skills."
  - If the exercise did not seem to fit, ask them if there are ways they could change the exercise in a way that they might want to use it in the future. Have them note this in the skills list.
  - *Reminder about using the skills list: This is key. We are having them focus on these exercises as tips and skills they can use in their daily lives. So when an exercise goes well and/or we can help them think about how to use the exercise in life, we have them write it in the back of their manual on the very last page, and we will ask them about this regularly. This also applies when the participant doesn't feel the exercise worked, yet was able to consider ways to change the exercise so that they might want to use it in the future.*

### If they did **not** complete the exercise:

- If they did not complete the exercise, say no problem and then help them either to complete the exercise with you over the phone (if it's a thinking/writing exercise), or help them to imagine doing one aspect of the exercise with you now, step by step (for "doing" exercises.) . Again, focus on the positive and ask them to identify any positive feelings the event/letter/exercise elicited. Then help them make a plan to finish the exercise this week.
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it's like the good thing happened twice—but no problem, we will review.
- If they only did part of the exercise , no problem, review what they did, praise/validate for accomplishing what they did—underscore that this is more than they would have otherwise done—and then help them think through completion.
- Remember to gather the pre & post-exercise ratings prior to reviewing the exercise. If they did not complete the exercise, do the steps sequentially: get pre-exercise ratings, do the exercise together, and then get post-exercise ratings.

## WEEK 7: INTRODUCTION FOR FUTURE COMPLETION OF EXERCISES

### Introduction:

- Congratulate them on finishing the program! You can point out that they have done several different exercises, and that, while doing this has not been at all easy given everything going on in their life, they have been able to complete the exercises and (if true) gotten some real benefits from the program.
  - Give examples of exercises that went well and good feelings that resulted.
- Ask them about their take on the program.
- Now...the key next step is to keep it going. We want to help them keep using these skills to not just feel better for right now, but to help them keep practicing these new skills to boost their mood, energy, and outlook for weeks and months and years to come. That's the goal of this final part of the program and the handbook.
  - If they say they got nothing out of it, gently challenge, notice what they did well, observe harder to see progress in oneself when depressed, and observe that they may not be giving enough credit to themselves.
- "We've just reviewed what exercises and skills worked best for you, and my sense is that \_\_\_\_\_ were the best exercises for you and your skills in \_\_\_\_\_ were areas of real strength for you. Does that seem right? Have I missed any?"
- So, we want to think about how you can use those exercises in the future in large and even small daily ways. A couple of things to keep in mind:
  - Emphasize point about timing and variety.
  - Emphasize point about commitment—they more they do them, the better they will feel.
    - Committing to do them weekly or more often is a lot to ask.
    - But...they can be folded into life (can recall good events when standing in a line, can perform acts of kindness on purpose any old day, can express gratitude for others in a slightly above and beyond way when someone does something nice).
    - When done this way, not draining, but can actually boost energy/outlook.
  - In this way, happiness can become a habit.
    - It is within their power to achieve real and lasting change (say that whole bolded section in the manual).
- One of the most important parts of making these exercises work is to plan ahead.
  - With that in mind, "we are going to think about the next few weeks and what kind of exercises you might do during that time to keep up your positive psychological skills."
  - Make sure they have their book and something to write with, and tell them that you are going to write in some things together.
  - Then have them think about the next week and an exercise they might do (a lot like the choice exercise).
  - Then do it for the following weeks (either having them think thru a whole exercise or about small ways they can use the skills in the following weeks).
  - Then think about other small ways they will use skills in the following weeks—they want to have a list of options from which they can choose when they are looking for a boost or relief from low feelings.
- Praise them for their work up until now, and emphasize that you definitely believe they can keep going with these skills/exercises and that they will continue to provide a boost in their overall well-being. They can do this!
- Tell them it has been great working with them, you know they can keep it going, and remind them about 6/12 week assessment calls.

If they cannot think of anything:

- Try to recall their best exercise and think through what it would be like to repeat it.
- Pick small exercises/tasks (recalling good things, recalling success).
- Have the commit to one small thing.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Acts of Kindness/Choice, you were able to \_\_\_\_\_, and you have been \_\_\_\_\_ (any use of PP skills). This week we also discussed how to use PP in the future, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming).

Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

❖ ***DO NOT FORGET TO SET UP THE 6 AND 12 WEEK FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS***

**Exit Interview** [Note: only do this if you think they have not run out of gas]

- "Finally, I would like to take just a couple of minutes to ask you some questions about the study."
  - How was it to participate in this study?
  - Was there anything we could do to make participation easier or more enjoyable?
  - Did the schedule with the phone calls work well?
  - Do you have any feedback about the actual exercises? Anything you think would be more helpful?
  - Any final comments?

## The end of the study...is just the beginning!

During this study, we have been helping you develop specific skills to increase positive feelings and thoughts. We have also been taking special note of the skills and exercises that are the best fit for you, and encouraging you to keep using them!

We hope that these exercises have helped to provide a boost in your positive thoughts and feelings. If they have helped you to feel more proud, satisfied, or at peace, the next step is to sustain this new level of positive thoughts and feelings. You know this intimately if you've worked hard to make changes before but found that it's hard to stick to the changes. We would guess that some of your other attempts might have worked, just not for long. However, by using the exercises you've practiced these last six weeks, you can sustain gains in positive experiences. In fact, the more you perform these activities, the more you may find that they become a natural, enjoyable part of your life.

Today, your trainer will review with you what worked well—and what didn't—over the past six weeks. What kind of exercises worked best? What helped motivate you to complete them, and what got in the way? What surprised you? We will then take this information and try to make a plan for the future to help you use the exercises that fit you the best and helped you the most.

We will also leave you with 3 key ideas about maintaining your new skills:

**4. Timing and variety are really important.** People often adapt to major life events. If a big life event happens—good or bad—people often return to their former level of happiness after a few weeks or months. In the same way, it is possible to “adapt” to the positive psychology exercises. However, this is only true if the exercises are done in a way that makes them routine and run-of-the mill. For example, it appears that for most people, doing a positive psychology exercise once per week with a good solid focus and effort leads to more (and longer) good feelings than doing a little every day.

In addition, changing up the activity in large or small ways really can keep it from becoming boring. For example, if you enjoy expressing gratitude, you may choose to vary the areas (like health or friendships) in which you count your blessings. In this way, the strategy may remain interesting and meaningful, and can keep working for weeks and months and years. So, whatever activities you choose, be sure to use timing and variety to help them give you the biggest happiness boost.

**5. Commitment is necessary.** Scientific study has confirmed an obvious truth: the more motivated you are to have a satisfying life, the more successful you will be! But motivation can be really difficult to keep up. This means that you should choose positive psychology activities *that are a good fit and that will help you to stay*

*motivated*. We have also found that the exercises work as long as you keep using them. This means that if you *make an effort to practice these strategies every single week*, you will probably see your positive feelings grow. The good news is that the exercises are pretty simple, can give you a boost right away, and are often fun!

What if you're too busy, or too tired? We hope that these exercises—and the goal of having a more satisfying life—can feel worth your consistent effort. Besides, many of the exercise do not require much time. They are simply ways of living your life:

- Observing your daily tasks and relationships with a new, more kind, and optimistic perspective
- Using your strengths whenever possible
- Remembering good events at the end of a day, and so on.

Most of these strategies won't be a drain on your time, but, by deliberate choice and with some effort, can be woven seamlessly right into your day.

**6. Happiness—and life satisfaction—can become a habit.** We all have habits—some good, some bad. Habits form with practice. Every time you repeat a behavior (such as going for a walk in the morning), connections develop in your memory between the behavior and the environment in which it occurs. In the case of a morning walk, the cues (alarm clock going off, having breakfast) automatically trigger the behavior (putting on walking shoes), until the behavior simply becomes natural.

To apply this idea to our exercises, the more often you start a positive activity (such as performing kind acts or expressing grateful feelings during difficult moments), the stronger the connection becomes between the activity and the world around you. So the next time (or more likely the tenth time) you feel stuck or hassled, it may be easier—even automatic—to jump into savoring positive events or feeling grateful.

As you might expect, habits take time to stick. However, if you use these ideas about timing, variety, and effort, you really can create a habit of positive activities. **It is in your power to achieve real and lasting change, one that may lead you to feel happier and more hopeful—and in less danger of sliding into serious depression.**

To help you with developing this positive habit, we recommend formally scheduling positive psychology exercises for the future, starting with the next three weeks. On the next two pages, write the date that you'll complete the exercise and write down which type of activity you will perform. Be as specific as possible, and be sure to add variety to the exercises to keep them fresh and to keep them from becoming just another task you have to complete. Hopefully, by continuing to perform these exercises in the future, you can begin to develop a tradition of positive activities—a habit of happiness.

# Positive Activity Schedule

## Week 1:

Date to complete the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the exercise/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

How it went:

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## Week 2:

Date to complete the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the exercise/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

How it went:

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## Week 3:

Date to complete the exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the exercise/activity: \_\_\_\_\_

How it went:

**Following Weeks:**

What I will do and when:

## My Favorite Skills

<b>Skill</b>	<b>How I can use this exercise/skill in my life</b>
<i>Sample:</i> <i>Gratitude Letter</i>	<i>1. Write small thank you notes to my friends when they help me out or do something nice.</i> <i>2. Just pay attention when someone does something kind for me, and let myself feel grateful to them, even if I never get to thank them fully.</i>

Phone script for suicidal ideation reported by patient:

### FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS TO ASSESS SUICIDALITY

If patient endorses suicidal thoughts on the 3 Question Check-In (*Thoughts of killing him/herself*):

- Is it a feeling that life isn't worth living, or do you actually have a wish to die?

*(If has a wish to die)*

- Is it a thought that you wish you weren't alive, like going to sleep and not waking up, or do you actually have thoughts of harming yourself?
- Have you ever harmed yourself or attempted suicide in the past?

*(If has thoughts of harming self)\*\**

- Have you thought about ways of harming yourself? What are they?
- Would you be able to do it if you wanted?
- Do you think you would do it?
- What has kept you from doing it?
- Should we be worried about your safety right now?

\*\*If you become acutely concerned, you can tell the patient "These are serious thoughts and I want to get you help quickly. I am going to let your doctors know that you have been having these feelings to make sure you're safe and can get help quickly," and immediately can hang up and call me. If the person has thoughts of harming self but no intent to carry them out and says that there is no worry about safety currently, can complete f/u call, then say the same and call me.

If: Life not worth living but no wish to die, ok to email/leave message

If: Wish to die but no thoughts of harming self/plan and no h/o attempt, ok to email/leave message.

If: Wish to die and prior h/o attempt, but no thoughts of harming self, immediately call/page PI (\_\_\_\_\_/pager \_\_\_\_\_) until you reach him

If: Active thoughts of harming self, immediately call/page PI (\_\_\_\_\_/pager \_\_\_\_\_) until you reach him

Massachusetts General Hospital  
Research Study

# Practicing Organizational Skills





## Table of Contents

<b>Study Calendar</b>	4
<b>Introduction</b>	5
<b>Exercises Begin</b>	10
<b>Week One</b> (Daily Events)	11
<b>Week Two</b> (Health Events)	17
<b>Week Three</b> (Morning and Evening Events)	23
<b>Week Four</b> (Interactions with Others)	29
<b>Week Five</b> (Leisure Time Activities)	35
<b>Week Six</b> (Your Choice)	40
<b>Next Steps</b>	46
• <b>To-Do List</b>	50

## **Appointments (to review each week's exercise)**

**Week 2 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 3 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 4 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 5 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6 Phone Appointment** \_\_\_\_\_

A call from one of our staff members who will ask you questions about your mood

**Week 12 Phone Appointment** \_\_\_\_\_

Another call from one of our staff members who will ask you questions about your mood

**Call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ if you need to change your appointment.**

**Principal Investigator  
Jeff C. Huffman, MD  
Director of Cardiac Psychiatry Research  
Massachusetts General Hospital**

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# Introduction

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## **Introduction**

### **Why study organization and memory?**

A very common symptom of depression is poor concentration. People who have serious depression also can have lots of trouble with their memory and organizing their thoughts. Problems concentrating and remembering can make it hard to complete daily tasks like going to appointments, taking medications, or filling out applications.

This may be an even bigger problem for people who have been in the hospital for depression. Being in the hospital can put people behind on bills, school/work, and relationships, which can cause a significant amount of stress. If it is hard to organize your thoughts or remember important information, catching up can be quite difficult. All of this can start a downward cycle—it can be easy to get frustrated or angry about problems with organizing and concentrating, and this can make depression feel even worse.

Most treatment programs for depression focus on improving mood—trying to help people feel less sad, less nervous, or less hopeless. This makes sense, but sometimes this treatment does not focus on the important symptoms of poor concentration, problems with organization, and poor memory—problems that can get in the way of really recovering from depression.

In this study, we will have you “practice organizational skills.” When we say “organization,” we are talking about mental organization—a feeling that you can organize and collect your thoughts to be able to make decisions and complete tasks.

The goal of this program is to give you practice in remembering events that have happened in your week. Then, after 6 weeks, we will also help you work on creating a system to remember important tasks in the future. We hope that this practice will help you to feel more organized and to feel more able to complete important activities. Feeling better organized can help you to feel more in control of your life, which may improve your overall mental health.

## **What is my role?**

Each week, you will focus on different types of events (like events related to your health or interactions with other people) that happened during that week. Because a program like this has never been used before in people with serious depression, we need your help in telling us how well it works. Your study trainer will work with you to complete exercises on a weekly basis, and you can then let us know whether it seems to be helping with your mental organization and memory. We will also ask you if there are ways in which we could make this program better.

## **What exactly will happen in this program?**

Each week, you will get a new exercise from your study trainer that you will complete at the end of the week. The exercise will have you mentally review activities or events that have happened to you over the past 7 days. Then you will write down a list of these events, without assigning any particular feelings or emotions associated with them. The types of events will be different each week. Some weeks we will have you list any events that happen. Some weeks we will have you list specific kinds of events, like events related to your health or events that happen in the morning. You will rate your mood and your level of organization prior to starting the exercise, and then complete the ratings after the exercise.

Each week you will have a 20 minute phone call once per week with your study trainer. During these phone calls, you will review the exercise with your trainer and go over a new exercise for the next week. After doing this for six weeks, the study trainer will discuss ways to organize yourself in the future, like using “to-do” lists and other techniques.

We hope that getting into the habit of recalling and recording the daily events in your life can help you to overcome the effects of depression on your thinking. The study will take a total of six weeks.

## **Isn't this for people who have less serious problems?**

We do not want to gloss over or ignore the seriousness of your illness or the difficulty of your life circumstances. The fact that you have been in the hospital makes it clear that you have truly been suffering and that your problems are real and serious.

However, we do believe that people with very serious problems can also benefit from these exercises. People with major depression definitely can have problems with organizing their thoughts and their memory, and we have specifically chosen these exercises to try to help with these important symptoms.

It may not be easy to do the exercises—it may be hard to remember what happened seven (or even two) days ago, let alone listing events for each day! Do you remember the first time you tried to ride a bike, type a sentence, knit, or play a sport? Those activities may have felt quite unnatural or difficult at first, but with some practice they became easier and more natural.

## **What is some advice for completing the exercises?**

You might have the best success by keeping these important things in mind:

### **1. Focusing on the present, and being nonjudgmental**

During these exercises, it may be easy to have negative thoughts creep in. This is normal; after all, you have been depressed and are just being discharged from an inpatient unit. As you list events, you may find that you get “stuck” feeling sad or worried about the event or what it means. Staying with the task of simply listing the events can be a real challenge.

Still, an important skill for these exercises (and life!) is to be able to return your focus to the moment and to the organization exercise that you are completing. If you notice yourself “heading negative,” it can be very helpful to deliberately and nonjudgmentally “turn your mind” back to the moment and to the exercise you are completing.

## **2. Plan ahead**

The exercise can require some advance planning—give yourself 20-30 minutes to complete it. Having extra time to brainstorm about the events of the past week will give you plenty of time to remember the past week and what happened during that time. The more you can plan ahead, the less stressful it will be to remember the events of the past week and you will have more success in filling out the list.

## **3. Start with today's events**

Trying to remember a whole week of events can seem like a giant task. Most people find it easiest to break things up by going a day at a time. Almost everyone finds that they can remember three things that happened today, and this can jog your memory about what happened yesterday. Yesterday can remind you of the day before that, and then next thing you know, you may be on a roll!

## **4. Willingness**

You still may feel skeptical. Give the exercises a try! You may surprise yourself by completing more of the activities than you expected, and may get more of a boost in your organization, memory, and concentration than you realize. By trying the exercise, it will also be helpful for us to hear what worked or did not work for you, so we can continue to refine the exercises to help them be most effective for you and other people like you!

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# **Weekly Exercises**

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# **Week One**

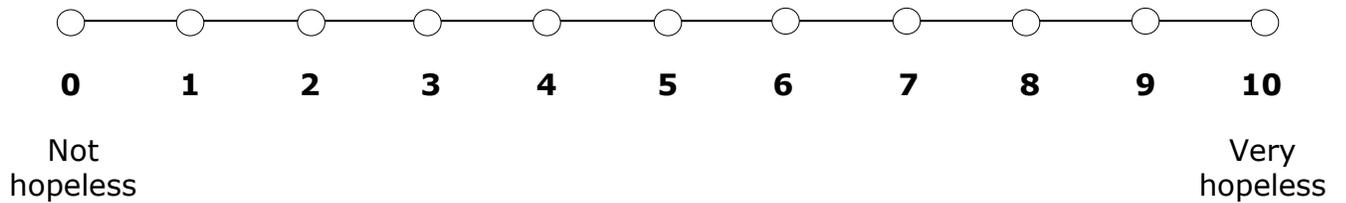
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# Week One: Daily Events

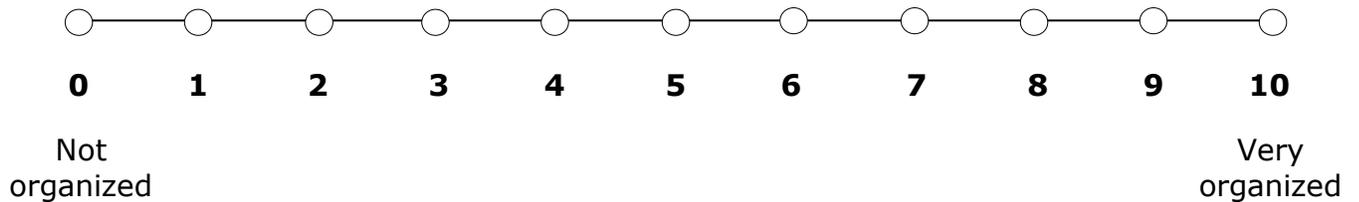
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

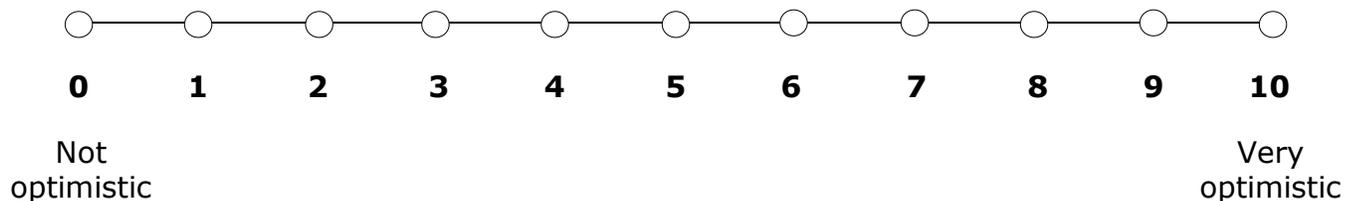
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

Today we will give you some practice in recalling events that occurred over the past week.

As we discussed earlier, recalling three events that occurred each day in the prior week might help you feel more organized. Another potential benefit is that it may actually show you that your memory may not be quite as bad as it seems—when people are depressed and feeling in a haze, it can seem like it is impossible to remember anything. Chances are, with some hard work and careful thought, you may be able to remember at least a few things that happened over the past week.

### **I have been feeling low and am hospitalized—how can I possibly remember these things?**

At first, it can seem hard to remember events during a difficult time like this hospitalization. However, this is one reason we do this exercise first: now may be the most important time to learn that you are able to collect your thoughts and remember events in your life. Even if you can't remember much, you may be able to recall more than you thought when you first sat down to do the exercise.

And if you can remember things now, in the middle of a hospitalization, there is a good chance that it will be even easier to remember events once you leave and are feeling less depressed. We also expect that as you get skilled at focusing your attention, you will even find it much easier to use these skills once you have left the hospital.

You may also find that some of these events over the past week have been upsetting. Our advice is to list the event, without describing (or dwelling on) the emotions that went with it. Sometimes, you may even decide to steer clear of very upsetting events and just list smaller, less difficult things. Remember, the goal of this work is to help you feel more organized by jogging your memory and having you record your life events, so you can even choose routine things to write down!

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events that happened each day. Next, use the following page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week. The things you list can be good, bad, or neutral. They can also be relatively small in importance (“I had lunch in the dayroom”) or relatively large in importance (“my son graduated from high school”).

At first you may find this difficult or overwhelming, but it often gets easier once you get started—you may find that remembering one event jogs your memory about several more!

Many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great! If you can’t remember anything that happened on a particular day, skip it and move on to the next day. Also, if you cannot recall too much, don’t be too hard on yourself—we understand that you have been depressed and that this can be difficult. Overall, this writing should take about 10 minutes at most.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or focus on) the feelings associated with the events.**

Here’s an example to get you started:

**Week 1:** 8/2/13 to 8/9/13 (today)

<b>Day of week:</b>	1. <i>Went to the discharge planning group on the unit.</i>
<u>Friday (8/9)</u>	2. <i>Talked to my sister Sara on the phone.</i>
	3. <i>Watched the movie Footloose with other patients in the group room.</i>

## Exercise—Recalling daily events

Week 1: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

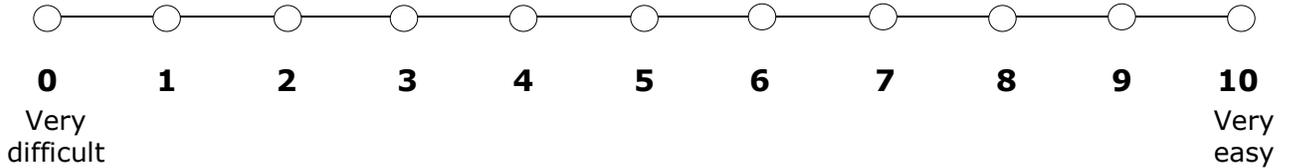
**Day of week:** 1.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2.  
3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

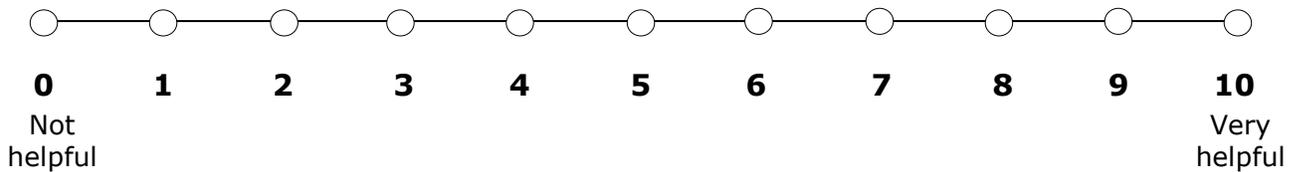
## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

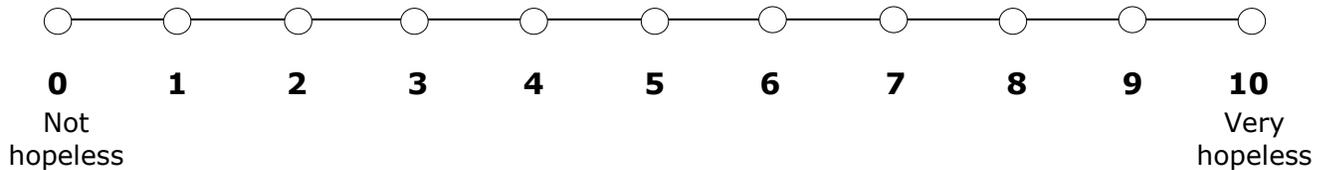
**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?



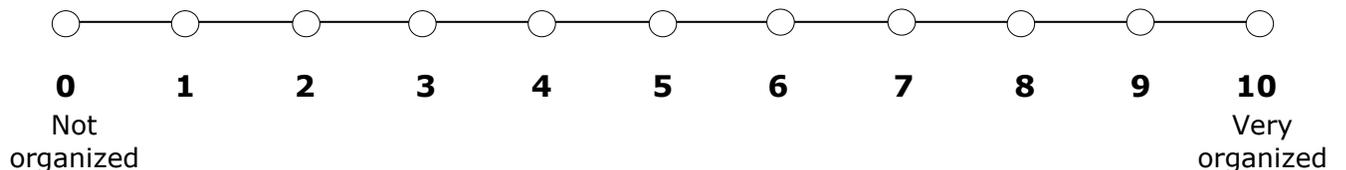
**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?



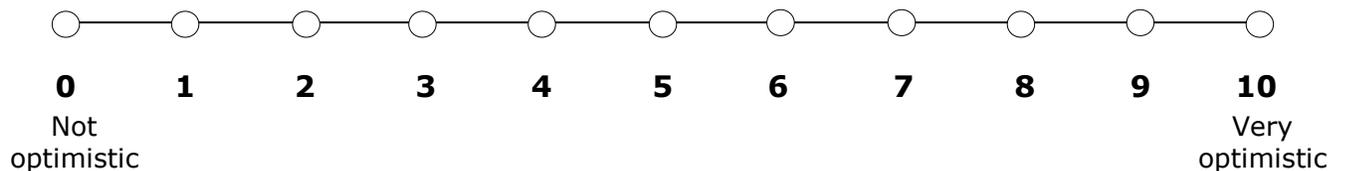
**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:



**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:



**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:



**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Two**

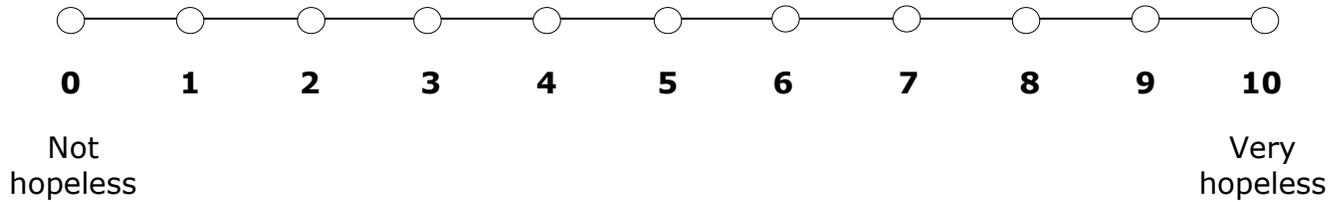
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# Week Two: Health Events

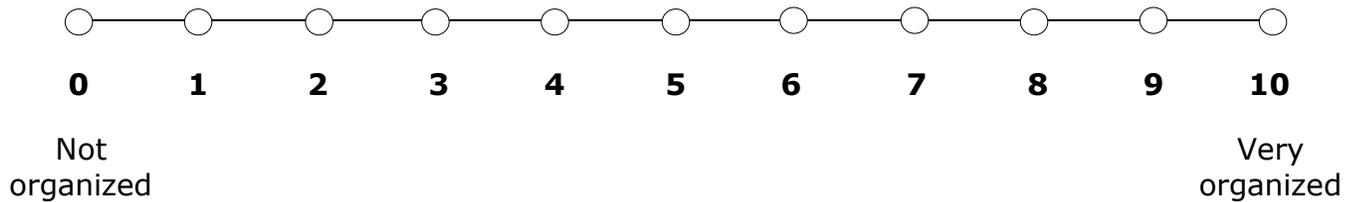
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

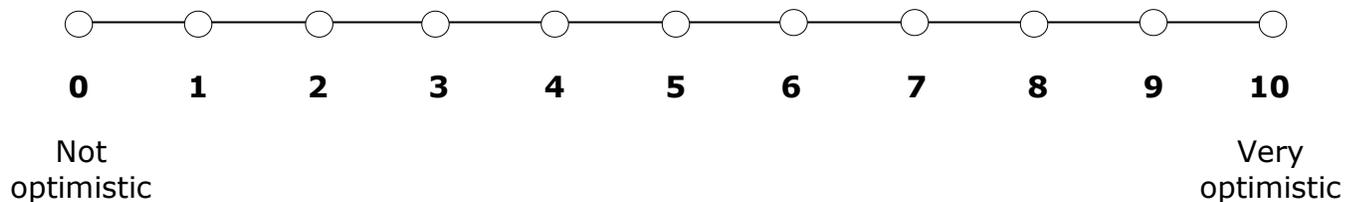
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

We will continue to have you recall events that happened each day in the past week, and to list them in this packet. Now that you are out of the hospital, you may find that it will be easier to remember what has happened each day. Perhaps you have settled back into an old routine that makes it easier to remember and mentally organize what has happened each day. Perhaps you have a new routine that is easy to remember.

On the other hand, some people find that after they leave the hospital, it's harder to remember what happens each day. The hospital can be a memorable place in many ways, with lots of other people around, groups, and new care providers. Perhaps at home things can seem more routine, and some people even find being out of the hospital isolating or boring. If this is the case, it may feel harder to remember what happens on a specific day or week.

Whether it is easier or harder to remember what happened, don't worry. Over the course of the next few weeks, we will hopefully help you settle into a regular routine of recalling and recording events, and we expect that this will become easier for you as the weeks go on.

This week we will have you focus specifically on events that happened related to your **health**.

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events related to your health that happened each day.

Health-related events might include

- doctor's visits, taking medications, discussions or phone calls with a nurse or social worker
- going to the pharmacy
- discussions about your health with friends or family
- healthy activities such as exercising or eating in a healthy way
- physical symptoms you may experience

Now, use the next page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week related to your health. You may find that remembering one event jogs your memory about several more. Again, many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great.

Because this exercise is specific to your health, it may be the case that nothing happened on a certain day related to your health. Keep in mind that anything related to your health—from symptoms to discussions about your health to healthy behaviors to appointments—are fine to write down. If you still can't remember anything related to your health that happened on a particular day, you can skip it and move on to the next day.

**Though these health events may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with them.**

## Exercise—Remembering events related to your health

Week 2: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Day of week:** 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2.

3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Three**

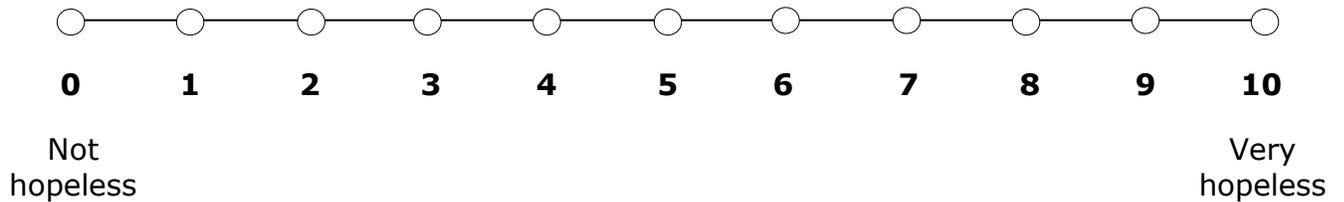
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# Week Three: Morning and Evening Events

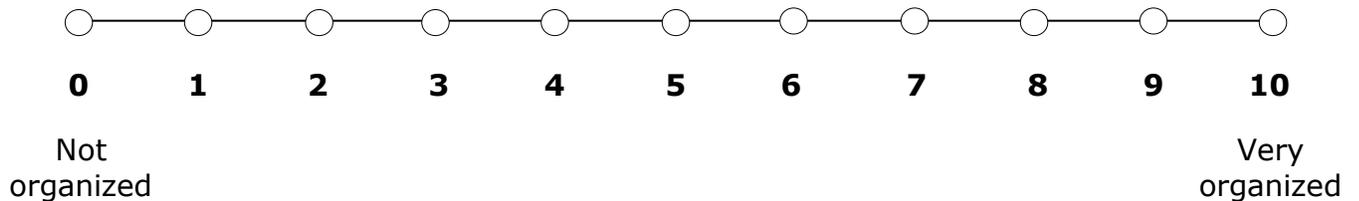
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

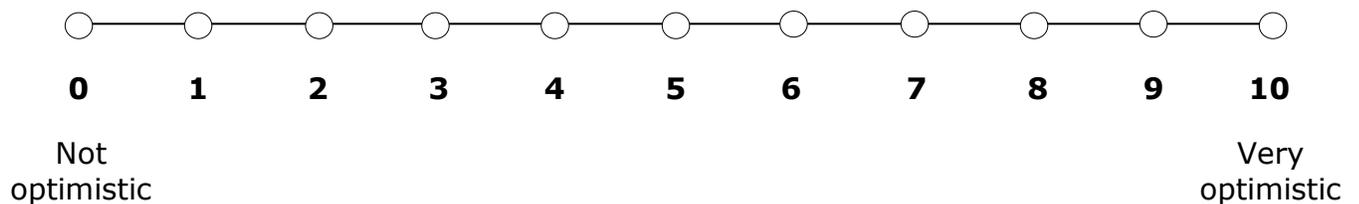
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

We will continue to have you recall events that happened each day in the past week, and to list them in this packet. Now that you have been completing these exercises for several weeks, you may notice that it is becoming easier for you to remember the events of your week or that you are more aware of events as they happen during the day.

Cognitive “flexibility” can be important in the way that people organize or remember information. Being able to put events into different categories can help make them easier to remember. A walk with a friend may fall into an “interactions with others” category or a “health event” category, and it may be easier or more familiar to place it into one of these categories compared to the other. This is one of the reasons that we have had you recall events in different categories—to try to expand the way that you may organize events in your mind.

This week, we will have you remember and record your life events in a different way—based on *when* they happen. Recalling your life events based on when they happen can help you to see patterns in your life and your behaviors. This can be helpful if you are trying to figure out why something is happening (why can't I sleep?), or if you are trying to establish a new pattern (like taking a walk at noon every day).

Many people find that how they begin their day has an important effect on their mood and memory for the rest of the day. Likewise, the last event or two in a day can have lasting effects that carry over into the next day. This week we will have you focus on events that happened related to your **mornings and evenings**.

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events related to your mornings and evenings that happened each day. Think about what you did when you woke up, and what you did when you went to sleep. These could include morning-time routines like reading the paper and having coffee, bedtime routines like watching a TV show or reading a book, and so on. They can also be important or unusual events that only happened once that week. As long as the event happened in the morning or the evening, it will do the trick for the purposes of our organizational skills exercise.

Next, use the following page to write down *one to two morning events or activities in the morning*. Then, write down *and one to two evening events for each day of the week*. You will notice that this is a bit different than the usual pattern of just writing three things per day, and that the worksheet on the next page is a bit different.

If you can't remember anything that happened on a particular morning or evening, skip it and move on to the next day.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with them.**

**Exercise—Remembering events that happened in mornings and evenings**

**Week 3:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
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<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
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<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
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<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
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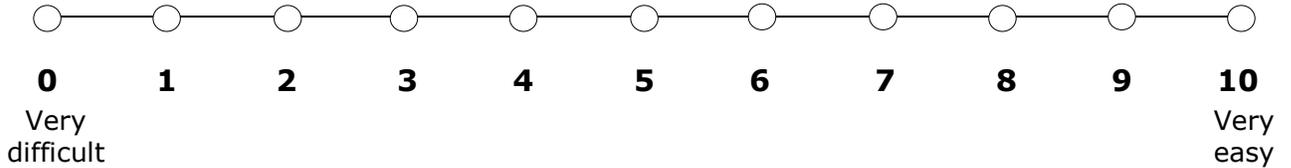
<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
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\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

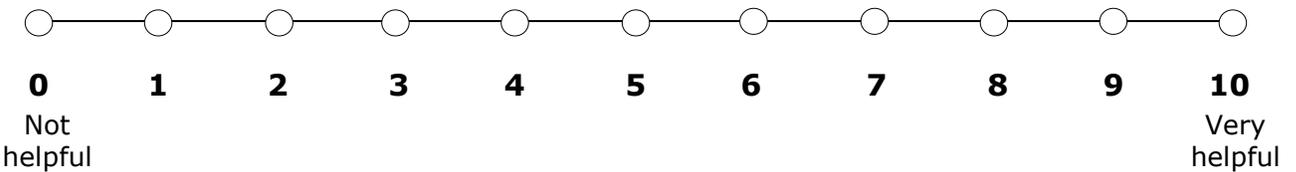
## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

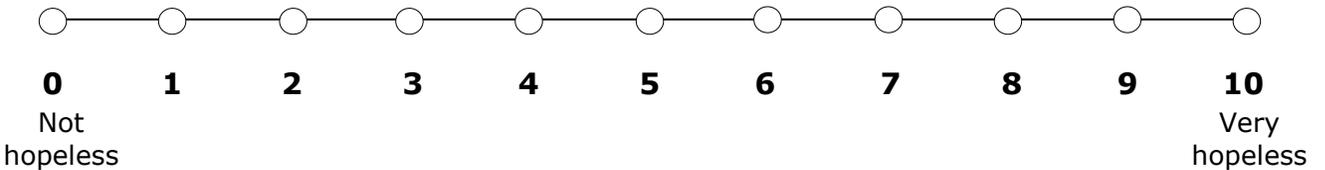
**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?



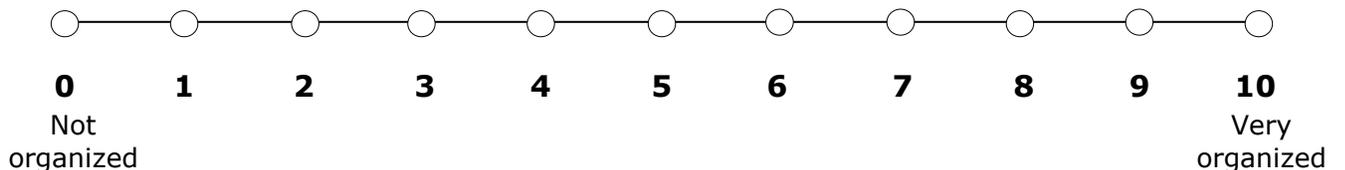
**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?



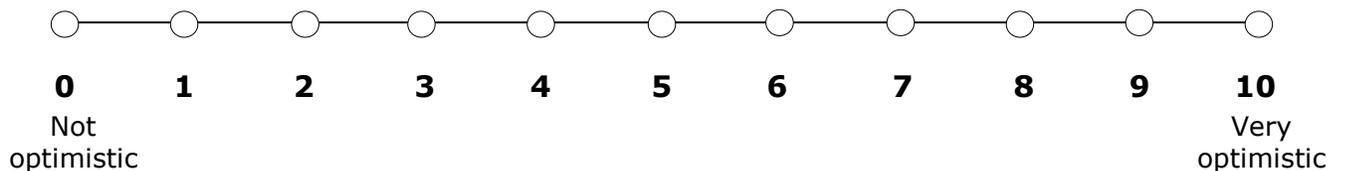
**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:



**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:



**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:



**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Four**

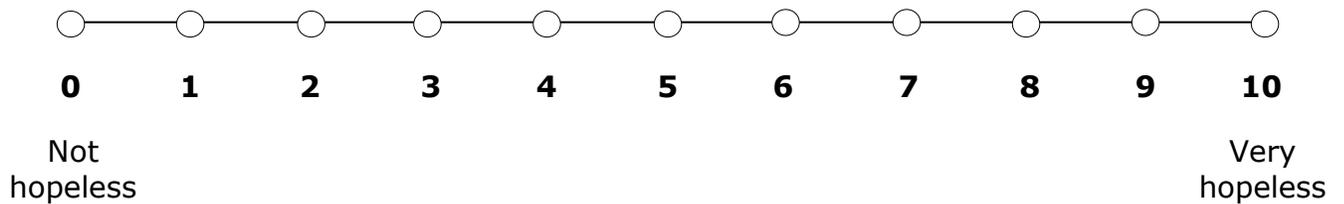
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# Week Four: Interactions with Others

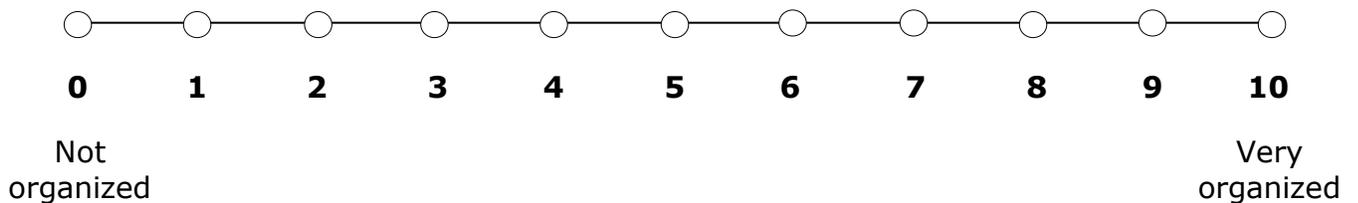
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

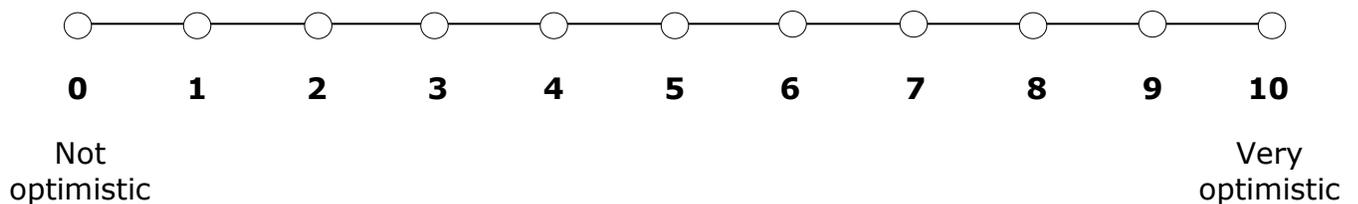
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## **Introduction**

We will continue to have you recall events that happened each day in the past week, and to list them in this packet. You may notice that it is becoming easier for you to remember the events of your week or that you are more aware of events as they happen during the day.

Given how important organization and memory are in our daily lives, if you are beginning to notice a difference in how well you are able to collect your thoughts and remember events from your day, you may find that you are more productive than you had been a few weeks back or that you can finish tasks more quickly.

On the other hand, if you haven't yet noticed an improvement, don't worry. It can take some time to have these skills make a difference, and we recognize also that you may not be in full recovery from your depression. We encourage you to keep at it!

This week we will add variety to this exercise by having you list only events related to interactions with others. This can include speaking with someone, attending an appointment with a doctor or therapist, meeting friends, participating in phone conversations, having an interaction with a stranger. It can also include simply performing an act shared with other people, such as going to a coffee shop, concert, library, or church.

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days and to identify any interactions with others—large or small—that happened each day.

Now, use the next page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week related to social activities. Many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great.

If you can't remember anything that happened on a particular day, skip it and move on to the next day.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with them.**

This point above may be particularly important this week. Interactions with others can bring up a lot of feelings (good or bad). Keep in mind that the goal of this task is to help you *remember and organize* events in your mind, not to review the feelings that went with the event. So, in performing this task, if you notice yourself feeling "stuck" on the emotions related to your interaction with another person, simply turn your mind back to the task of simply listing the event in the provided space and moving to the next event.

## Exercise—Remembering interactions with others

Week 4: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Day of week:** 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2.

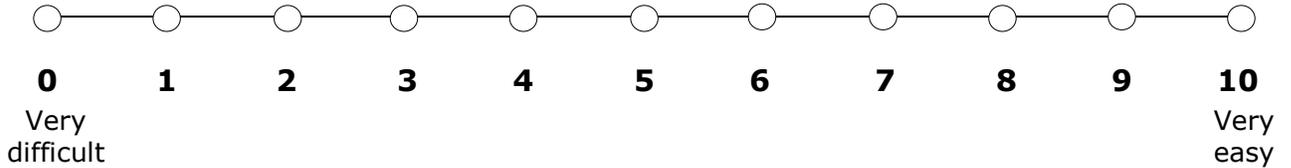
3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

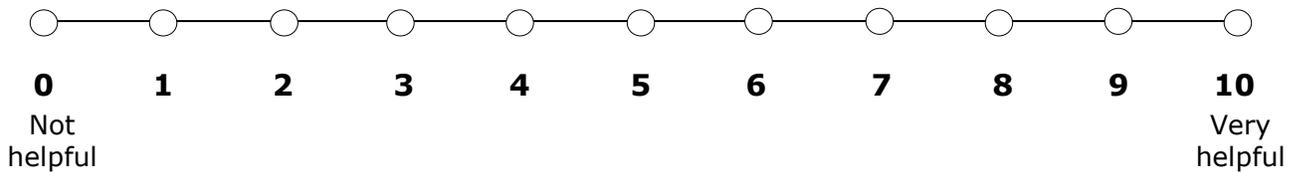
## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

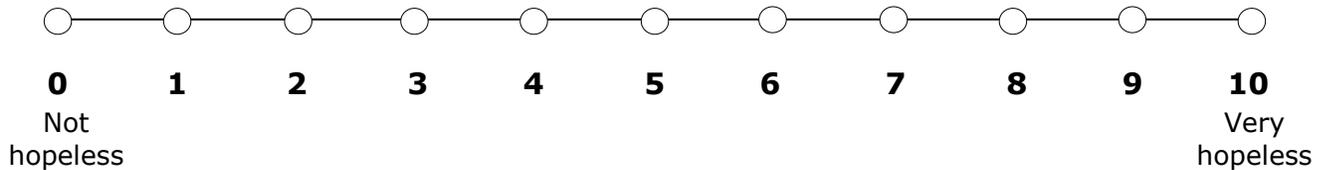
**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?



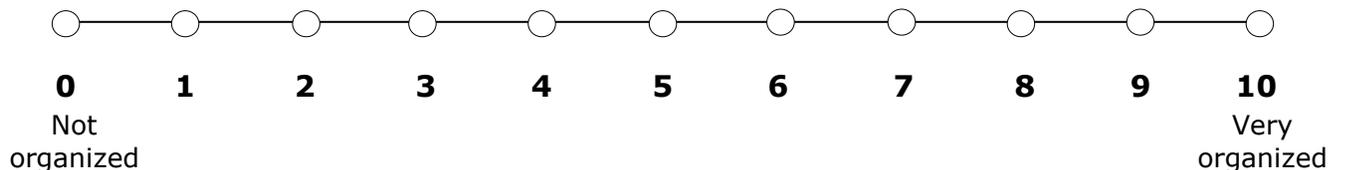
**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?



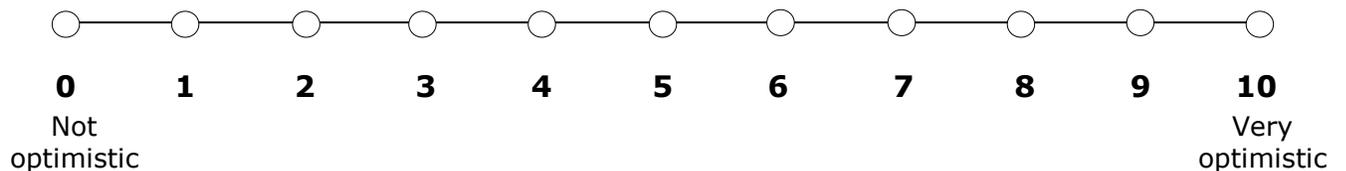
**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:



**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:



**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:



**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Five**

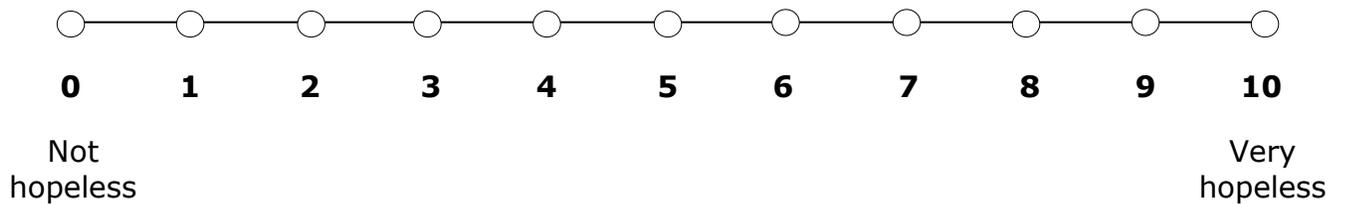
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# Week Five: Leisure Time Activities

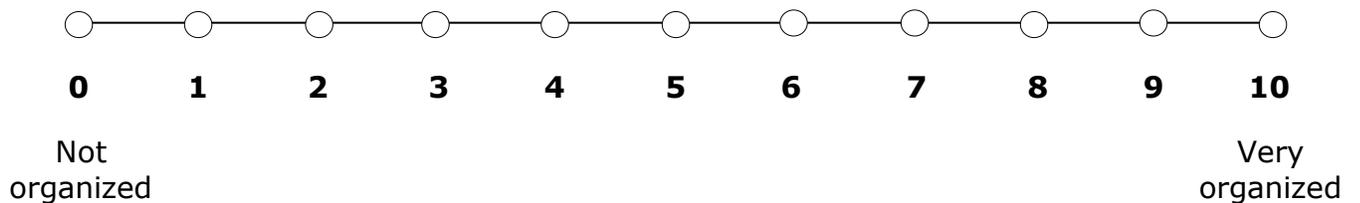
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

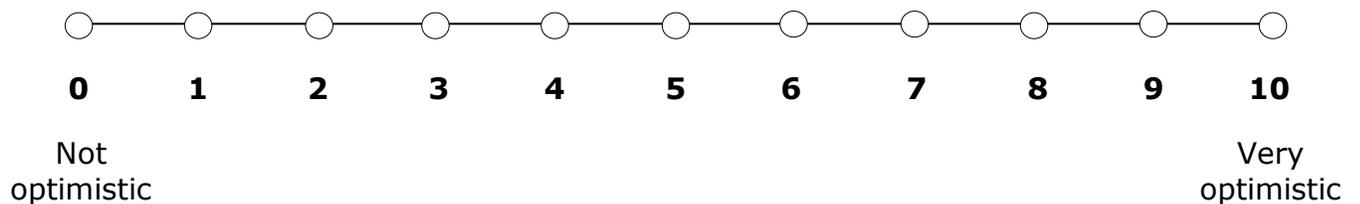
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

You have now been in this program for over a month, and you may find that these exercises are becoming quite easy—perhaps they even feel too simple. On the other hand, you may find that the exercises are challenging because you are not used to applying organizational skills in this way. For now we will continue to have you recall different categories of events that happen each week. Once you have completed this part of the program, we will move on to the next phase about organizing your plans for the future.

This week we will have you focus on recording events related to activities done during leisure time. This can include recreational activities, such as playing a game, making something, or participating in a sport. It can also include low-key activities, like reading a book, watching a movie, or even looking out the window and enjoying the view. The activities can be those that are done alone or with someone else—the only important thing is that they are done during “free” time, when you are not working or doing other necessary tasks.

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events related to leisure time.

Now, use the next page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week related to leisure activities. Many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great. If you can't remember anything that happened on a particular day, skip it and move on to the next day.

You may feel that an activity isn't exciting or interesting enough to count. For the purposes of this exercise, any leisure event you recall is great—the goal of this program is to help you organize events, and it doesn't matter if the event is small or large, meaningful or routine.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with them.**

## Exercise—Remembering events related to leisure time

Week 5: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Day of week:** 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2.

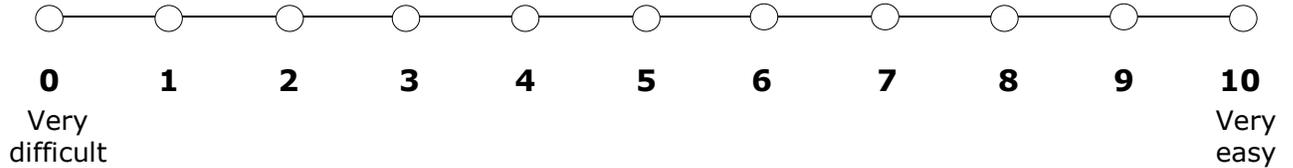
3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

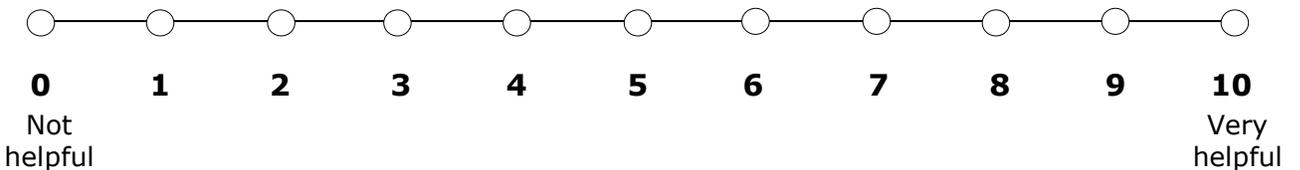
## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

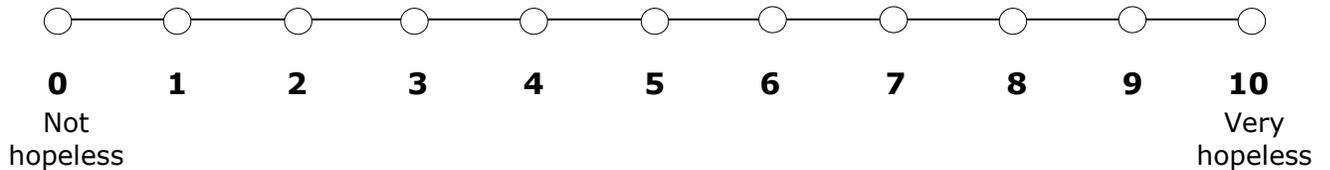
**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?



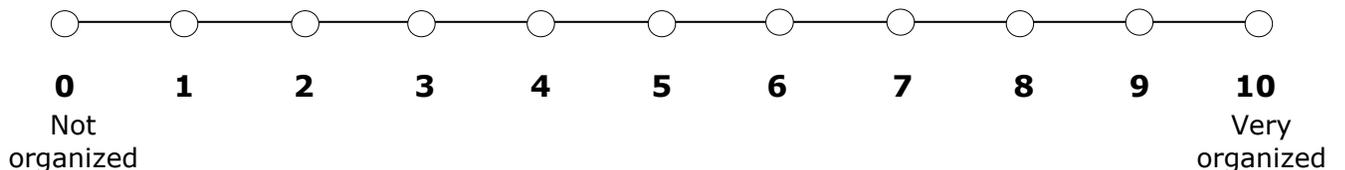
**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?



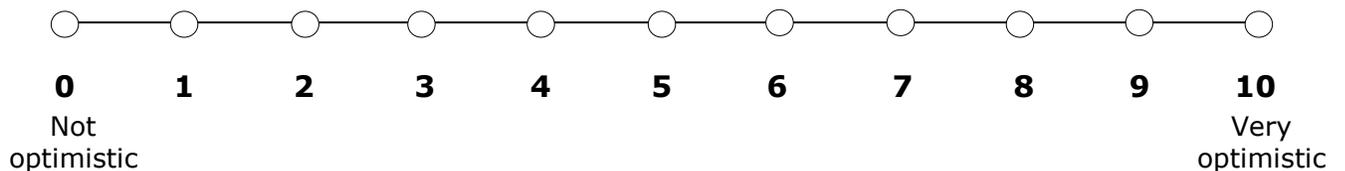
**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:



**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:



**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:



**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Six**

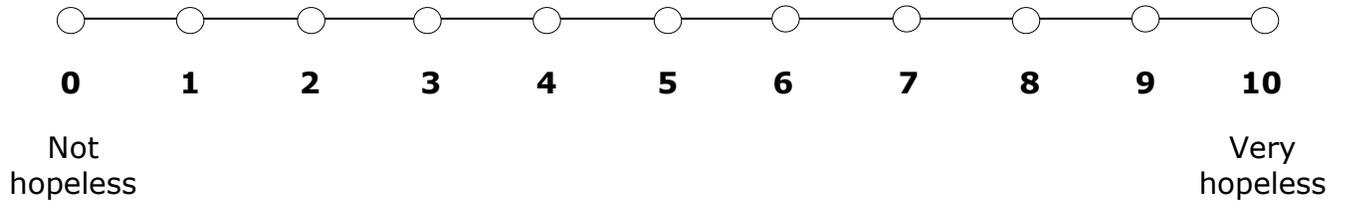
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# Week Six: Choice

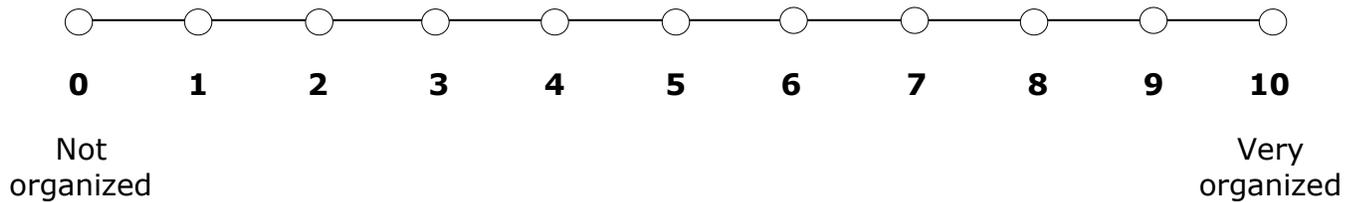
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

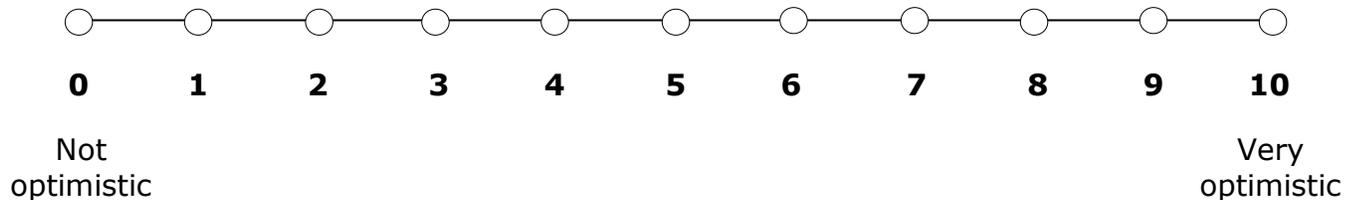
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

This will be your final week of recalling past events as part of this program to boost your memory, concentration, and organizational skills. By now, you have probably gotten the idea of the exercises and may have a routine by which you are able to recall small and large events that happen throughout the week.

You may have found that some of the exercises were more helpful than others in improving your organization or were a better fit for you. Perhaps the general “daily events” exercise that included any event worked best for you. Perhaps one of the exercises that focused on a specific area, like health events, felt most useful. Or the exercise that focused on time of day may have helped the most because it was so specific.

This week we will have you choose any of the organizational exercises from the past 5 weeks. By giving you this choice, we hope that it will make this week’s exercise the most relevant to you and your life, and will have the biggest impact on your level of organization. You may decide to choose the exercise that you felt helped you the most, or was the easiest to complete, or conversely, you may decide to choose the exercise that was the most challenging, as a means to measure your improvement or simply to get more practice. You and your study trainer will work together to choose the right exercise for you, and you will complete it for next week.

## Instructions

**Exercise:** Recalling events related to \_\_\_\_\_

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events that happened each day. Again, you can pick any of the organizational exercises (like health events, or morning and evening events) you have completed in previous weeks.

Now, use the following page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week.

Whichever exercise you choose, complete it just like you did the previous week. If you end up recalling many of the same events you did when you originally did the exercise, that is fine. The goal of the exercise is not to come up with different events every week, just to be more aware of events that occur in a week and to organize them and write them down.

Many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great! If you can't remember anything that happened on a particular day, skip it and move on to the next day. Overall, this writing should take about 10 minutes at most.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with the events.**

**Exercise—Remembering events related to \_\_\_\_\_**

**Week 6:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

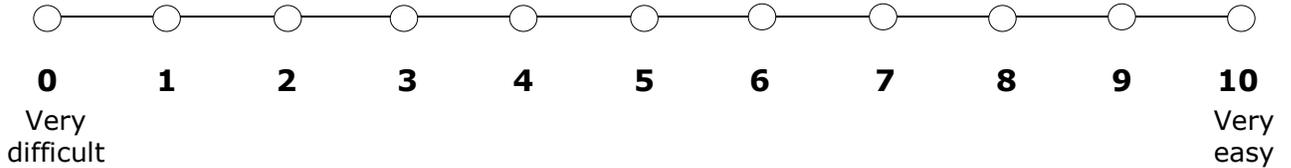
<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

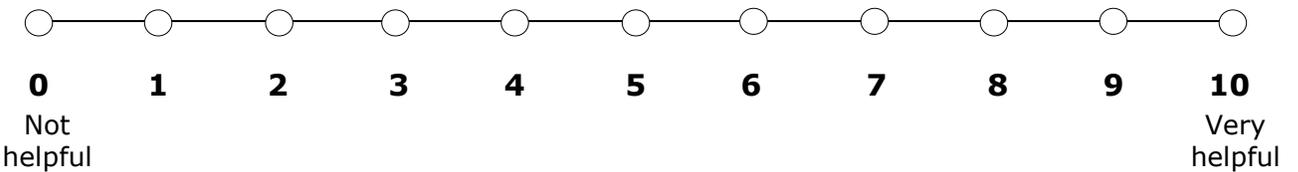
## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

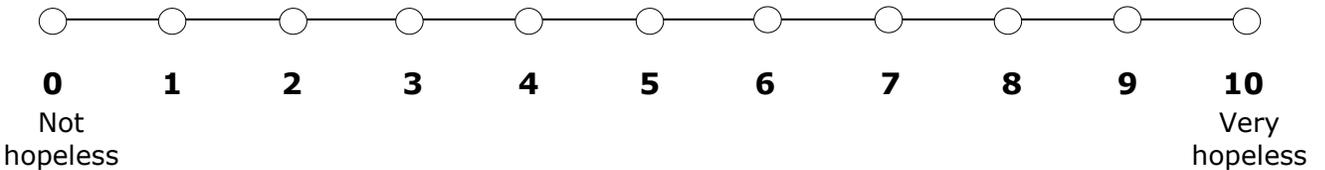
**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?



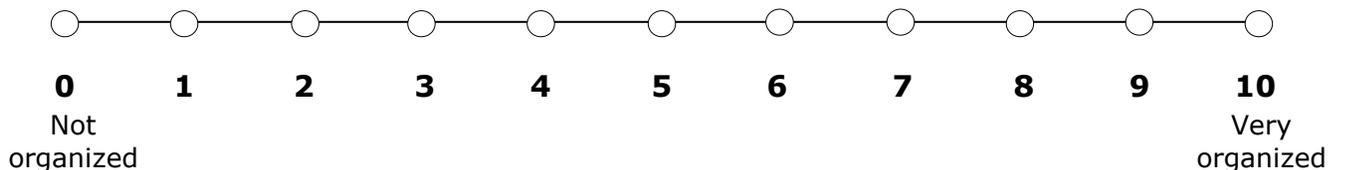
**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?



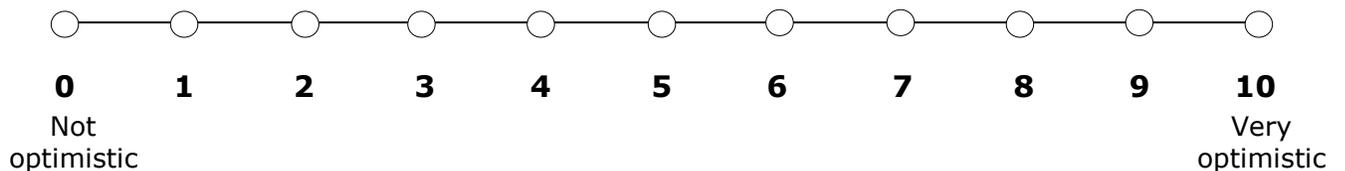
**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:



**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:



**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:



**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Next Steps

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## The end of the study...is just the beginning!

It's relatively easy to become more organized for a short duration, just as it's possible to quit smoking or start a new exercise plan for a few hours, but it gets much harder when you try to keep this up for weeks or months. The challenge lies in sustaining the new level of organization. You know this intimately if you've tried to turn your life around before but found that "nothing works." We would wager that your previous attempts *have* worked, just not for long.

However, by using the exercises you've practiced these last six weeks, you can continue to stay organized. By using your mind to organize events that have occurred each week, you've been flexing a "memory and organization muscle" that you can use in your life to remember important details and events that occur every day. If you found these exercises helpful, we would encourage you to continue them each week.

You are now ready for the next step. Now that you have spent the past six weeks getting better at organizing and remembering events that already happened, we are now going to help you get more organized to complete events in the future.

In this final section we are going to help you to develop a system to remember important future events (like appointments or meetings with friends) and to organize yourself to complete complicated tasks (like cleaning an apartment or filling out job applications).

This process has two important steps:

**First, find a place to write down important future events, like appointments and social events.** It is important to have a single place to write down these important facts. We have all had the experience of writing dates or appointments on different slips of paper, only to lose the paper and forget about the details. We have also had the experience of thinking, "Oh, I will remember that!" and then remembering it too late (or not remembering it at all).

By having a single place where you write down meetings/appointments, you will be able to rest easier, knowing that you won't have to find those slips of paper. You can simply look at this spot on a regular basis and know what you'll need to do in the next day, week, and month.

Where will you write this all down? Many people use a small notebook. Some use a calendar. Some people use a "notes" feature on a smartphone or computer. The easier and more natural, the better—if you are a person who can carry a notebook or small calendar in your pocket or purse, this often works well. Likewise, if you are often using your cell phone, this is a great place to keep information. Whatever you choose, if you can write (or type) the future event immediately, the better the chances it won't be forgotten.

*Okay, I have a place to write about future events. Now what?* **Next, you will use this information to make a to-do list each day.** By looking at your collected appointments and events, you will be able to see which are coming up. Some of them may need advance planning. If you have a relative's birthday party, you may need to get them a present. If you have an appointment and need help with transportation, that may need to be arranged.

In addition to your upcoming events, you will also want to add anything else you would like to accomplish that day. Perhaps you have some specific tasks that need to be completed (like paying bills), or perhaps you would like to take a step toward a goal (like volunteering at an animal shelter). You can also include activities you might want to do every day, like take a walk or take medications.

Some people like to write their to-do list first thing in the morning, and others like to do it at night, for the next day. We would just recommend that you find a system that works for you, and stick with it. We also recommend that you make your to-do list in the same spot that you made your list of future events—that way you won't have to go back and forth.

If you are able to find a place to write important future events, and then to make a to-do list each day, we feel certain that you will feel more organized, that you will remember more of these events, and that you will be able to accomplish more!

### **What are some tips for recording future events and making to-do lists?**

- 1. Commitment is necessary.** Just as it is with many other things, it may be that the more motivated you are to become organized, the more successful you will be! We also know that the organizational strategies only work as long as you use them. This means that you will need to make a concerted effort to practice this plan daily if you wish to see your organization grow.
- 2. Even with commitment, it will take some trial and error—and that is normal!** Creating a system like this can take some time and energy. It can seem like a big task to find or buy a notebook, or to start to use the notes feature on a phone. And then getting into the habit of writing down appointments and other events can take several days until you settle into a routine and system that works for you.

If you have trouble at first, don't worry. Many people can have trouble at first when they develop a plan to become more organized. It may take a couple of days until you are able to come up with a plan that will work for you day in and day out. But with consistent effort, just as with the exercises you have been completing for the past 6 weeks, we feel sure that you will be able to develop a system that works for you and your situation. And with practice you will be more organized!

**3. Organization can become a habit.** We all have habits—some good, some bad. Habits form with repetition and practice. Researchers theorize that every time you repeat a behavior (such as going for a walk in the morning), associations develop in your memory between the behavior and the context in which it occurs. In the case of a morning walk, the cues (alarm clock going off, having breakfast) automatically trigger the habitual behavior (putting on walking shoes), so that the behavior simply becomes natural.

To apply this to organizational strategies, the more often you use a system to record events and plan the day's activities, the easier and more natural it will become. As you might expect, habits take time to form and endure, but you really can do it. It is in your power to become more organized and aware of the world around you.

To help you with this process we are including some examples of recording events and making to-do lists. See the next page.

## **Week of August 5<sup>th</sup>**

### **Events to remember**

- Monday August 5<sup>th</sup>:
  - Appointment with Dr. Jones in Lowell 9:00AM
- Tuesday August 6<sup>th</sup>: No events
- Wednesday August 7<sup>th</sup>:
  - Going to lunch with Janet in Cambridge 12:30PM
  - Jamie's birthday party in Lowell 7:00PM
- Thursday August 8<sup>th</sup>:
  - Pick up Sara's daughter from pre-school 2:30PM
- Friday August 9<sup>th</sup>:
  - Appointment with Dr. Evans in Saugus at 10:00AM
  - Pick up Sara's daughter from pre-school 2:30PM

### **To-do list**

#### Monday August 5<sup>th</sup>:

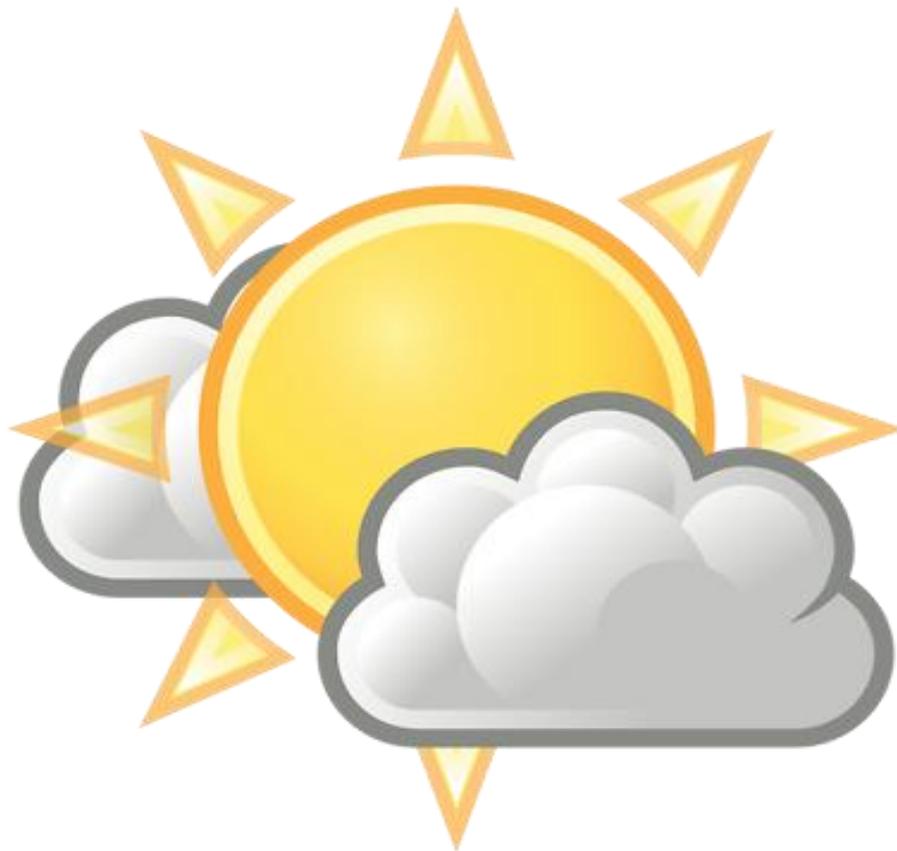
- Go to appointment with Dr. Jones
- Pick up prescriptions from the pharmacy
- Call Janet to see if she can give me a ride to the birthday party on Wednesday
- Go for a 10 minute walk around the block
- Take all of my prescribed medications

#### Tuesday August 6<sup>th</sup>:

- Buy a present for Jamie (and maybe get some new shoes)
- Call hospitals to see if they have any open volunteer positions
- Pay water bill
- Go for a 10 minute walk around the block
- Take all of my prescribed medications

**Massachusetts General Hospital  
Research Study**

**Practicing Organizational Skills  
(Trainer's Edition)**





## Table of Contents

<b>Study Calendar</b>	4
<b>Introduction</b>	5
<b>Exercises Begin</b>	11
<b>Week One</b> (Daily Events)	11
<b>Week Two</b> (Health Events)	17
<b>Week Three</b> (Morning and Evening Events)	23
<b>Week Four</b> (Interactions with Others)	29
<b>Week Five</b> (Leisure Time Activities)	35
<b>Week Six</b> (Your Choice)	40
<b>Next Steps</b>	46
<b>To-Do List</b>	50

## **Appointments (to review each week's exercise)**

**Week 2 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 3 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 4 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 5 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6 Call** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6 Phone Appointment** \_\_\_\_\_

A call from one of our staff members who will ask you questions about your mood

**Week 12 Phone Appointment** \_\_\_\_\_

Another call from one of our staff members who will ask you questions about your mood

**Call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ if you need to change your appointment.**

**Principal Investigator  
Jeff C. Huffman, MD  
Director of Cardiac Psychiatry Research  
Massachusetts General Hospital**

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# Introduction

**(Introduction to study; *completed in the hospital*)**

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## INTRO TO PRACTICING ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS FOR THE INTERVENTIONIST

In most cases, this commentary will discuss ways to approach delivery of the control condition and to help facilitate brainstorming for the exercises if a subject seems stuck, confused, or otherwise at risk of being unable to complete the exercise or generate adequate ideas.

The primary challenge of delivering the control condition is that of remaining engaged but detached, and resisting the temptation to provide supportive conversation beyond that which will enable the subject to complete the weekly exercise. This is an attentional and time control condition, where the focus of the subject's attention is memory rather than positive feelings. The focus of the interventionist is to help the subject complete the exercise and remain engaged in the study---that's all! Subjects will have questions about how to complete the exercises --"Can I do this day by day?"--(the answer is 'no'); "How can I possibly remember my whole week all at once?" Discussions related to these type of questions are fine, but in general any conversation about feelings, mood, or general encouragement not specifically related to completion of the exercises should be redirected.

### Comments regarding the introduction pages above:

It is not necessary to read verbatim these pages (or the pages for any of the exercises); indeed, the depth of the discussion may depend a bit on the patient. Furthermore, you may come up with a script that works for you when you describe the rationale for the intervention. However you will want to make sure you hit the most important points for everyone.

For everyone, you will want to:

6. Generate some (but not too much) interest/curiosity: We are excited about this approach and feel that it is a different way of approaching treatment for depression compared to what has been tried before.
7. Validate their situation and severity of suffering: We understand that they have been feeling terrible and that exercises to address mental organization and memory may seem insufficient or unimportant. It will not be a cure-all by any means. But we do think this approach has the potential to help them feel more mentally organized and in control of their life.
8. Garner their involvement as a scientist: In the end, we don't really know if these exercises will work, and that's why we are recruiting them to participate as co-investigators or beta-testers in this process with us. , Remind them that even if they find themselves skeptical about how much the exercises are helping, it is important that they continue. Improving memory takes time. Some exercises may be terrible, , and some might really be great matches—we will rely on them to tell us what works and what doesn't, and we promise to listen.
9. Emphasize the value of these 'tips': Staying in the moment, the importance of practice and repetition, developing habits and routines, and planning ahead.
10. Make sure they get how the study works regarding ratings, sessions, and exercises.

### *A few more scenarios that may arise in your dealings with this gang:*

1. ***Difficulty with completing the exercises: Emphasize that even if they don't complete the whole thing, or even any of it, that's okay—you won't be mad or annoyed or upset. It's understandable that things are hard given everything that has been going on, and while they will get the most out of the program if they do the exercises fully, having the phone call to connect and discuss and problem-solve may help a lot in terms of making the most out of the program (you want to walk the line between being welcoming/laid-back and being too permissive so they never do anything and don't feel that its expected).***
2. ***Comparison with the past: They may feel that they could have remembered much more before, or organized themselves better. Emphasize that while that may be true, they are now taking an active role in addressing the problem, which is great.***
3. ***Focusing on distress: They may wish to engage you in negative thoughts, difficult circumstances, or other discursions. Promptly validate that it is clear that they have a lot going on and are in a lot of***

*distress (if applicable), and that for just these moments, you want to put that aside to try to work on the specific goals of this program.*

4. ***If patient expresses suicidal ideation:*** *Stop going through exercise and refer to suicide assessment script at the back of this packet.*
5. ***What if they are saying they hate the intervention:*** *Encourage them to stick with it if they can--often people get into a groove with the intervention and they may find that with a little practice, this gets easier and more enjoyable. You can also tell them that it is really helpful to us to hear when and how it is not helping--this prevents us from delivering a bad treatment to people, and that in a few weeks at the end of the study, we are going to get detailed feedback from them in an exit interview to get their take on what could be different or better and what did not work well at all. Finally, if they are really feeling worse, they can of course drop out--if they wish to do so, they can--see if you can get them to commit to a single exit phone call at the follow-up to get some f/u data. If they are in the control condition and they hate it and say they wanted the PP intervention, you can tell them that when they are all done with the study (12 weeks), we would be absolutely happy to send them all of the materials for that intervention as well.*

## INTRO TO PRACTICING ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS FOR THE PATIENT

### **Introduction (Completed in the hospital)**

Script for intro

1. We are really trying to take a different approach to help people with depression. Sometimes we can do a good job of treating some symptoms of depression—like how hopeless or sad people are—but some symptoms are left over, like problems with concentrating and remembering. Poor concentration, problems with organization, and poor memory—these are problems that left untreated can get in the way of really recovering from depression. That’s what this treatment is all about.
2. We have some ideas about how to help people’s memory and mental organization. We will try to get people with depression used to remembering events in their daily lives as a way of helping with memory. Later, we also have ideas about using to-do lists and other organizational methods to help with mental organization. But we need your help to learn if they help people like you who have had serious depression, after they leave the hospital. You can tell us what worked—and anything that didn’t—so we can design the best possible treatment to help people feel their best.
3. The way that the exercises will work is that each week I will give you an exercise to complete about remembering events in your life. Sometimes the events can be about anything, and sometimes they will be a specific thing, like remembering events related to your health. At the end of the week, you will write down the events over the past week in your handbook. Then we will talk on the phone each week to review the exercise and how it went, and then I will give you a new exercise. You’ll rate your symptoms and level of organization before and after each exercise too.
4. There are some important tips for the exercises that I want to emphasize. First, while you are doing exercises, you may find that it is easy to write down your feelings about events or feelings. This is totally normal! You have been depressed and your life has been stressful, and it may be that you are still feeling down. On the other hand, really good things may be happening to you. However, for the purposes of these exercises, we will focus on writing down events without assigning or describing any feelings or emotions that went with the event—it is designed to be a memory task. This will take practice, but it will get easier over time.
5. Another important piece is that we realize that this may be very difficult at first. You clearly have been dealing with a lot, and have been quite depressed, and we know that depression has big effects on memory. But over time, you will find it easier. Many people can be hard on themselves when they first try these exercises, but with some practice, most people are able to get in a groove.

6. We also recommend that for the exercises where you are asked to remember events from the past week, starting with today's events is often the easiest way to start. Then working backwards—yesterday, the day before, and so forth—can jog your memory for each day before that.

7. Another tip about the exercises is to plan ahead. The exercises can take some time to complete, and if you give yourself 20-30 minutes to really think about what happened the past week, you will have a lot more success.

8. Finally, the last thing I would say is to give it a try! You may be skeptical that you will be able to do the exercises, or that they will even help. Or maybe you will feel that they get repetitive after a while. You may surprise yourself by completing more of the exercises than you expected, and that they may help your memory and organization more than you expected. But in the end, even if they don't work for you, it will be incredibly helpful to know that the exercises were not helpful, so we can continue to change around the exercises to make them more helpful for you and people like you. We will only know if they work if we test them out in real people with real depression.

## **Introduction**

### **Why study organization and memory?**

A very common symptom of depression is poor concentration. People who have serious depression also can have lots of trouble with their memory and organizing their thoughts. Problems concentrating and remembering can make it hard to complete daily tasks like going to appointments, taking medications, or filling out applications.

This may be an even bigger problem for people who have been in the hospital for depression. Being in the hospital can put people behind on bills, school/work, and relationships, which can cause a significant amount of stress. If it is hard to organize your thoughts or remember important information, catching up can be quite difficult. All of this can start a downward cycle—it can be easy to get frustrated or angry about problems with organizing and concentrating, and this can make depression feel even worse.

Most treatment programs for depression focus on improving mood—trying to help people feel less sad, less nervous, or less hopeless. This makes sense, but sometimes this treatment does not focus on the important symptoms of poor concentration, problems with organization, and poor memory—problems that can get in the way of really recovering from depression.

In this study, we will have you “practice organizational skills.” When we say “organization,” we are talking about mental organization—a feeling that you can organize and collect your thoughts to be able to make decisions and complete tasks.

The goal of this program is to give you practice in remembering events that have happened in your week. Then, after 6 weeks, we will also help you work on creating a system to remember important tasks in the future. We hope that this practice will help you to feel more organized and to feel more able to complete important activities. Feeling better organized can help you to feel more in control of your life, which may improve your overall mental health.

## **What is my role?**

Each week, you will focus on different types of events (like events related to your health or interactions with other people) that happened during that week. Because a program like this has never been used before in people with serious depression, we need your help in telling us how well it works. Your study trainer will work with you to complete exercises on a weekly basis, and you can then let us know whether it seems to be helping with your mental organization and memory. We will also ask you if there are ways in which we could make this program better.

## **What exactly will happen in this program?**

Each week, you will get a new exercise from your study trainer that you will complete at the end of the week. The exercise will have you mentally review activities or events that have happened to you over the past 7 days. Then you will write down a list of these events, without assigning any particular feelings or emotions associated with them. The types of events will be different each week. Some weeks we will have you list any events that happen. Some weeks we will have you list specific kinds of events, like events related to your health or events that happen in the morning. You will rate your mood and your level of organization prior to starting the exercise, and then complete the ratings after the exercise.

Each week you will have a 20 minute phone call once per week with your study trainer. During these phone calls, you will review the exercise with your trainer and go over a new exercise for the next week. After doing this for six weeks, the study trainer will discuss ways to organize yourself in the future, like using “to-do” lists and other techniques.

We hope that getting into the habit of recalling and recording the daily events in your life can help you to overcome the effects of depression on your thinking. The study will take a total of six weeks.

## **Isn't this for people who have less serious problems?**

We do not want to gloss over or ignore the seriousness of your illness or the difficulty of your life circumstances. The fact that you have been in the hospital makes it clear that you have truly been suffering and that your problems are real and serious.

However, we do believe that people with very serious problems can also benefit from these exercises. People with major depression definitely can have problems with organizing their thoughts and their memory, and we have specifically chosen these exercises to try to help with these important symptoms.

It may not be easy to do the exercises—it may be hard to remember what happened seven (or even two) days ago, let alone listing events for each day! Do you remember the first time you tried to ride a bike, type a sentence, knit, or play a sport? Those activities may have felt quite unnatural or difficult at first, but with some practice they became easier and more natural.

## **What is some advice for completing the exercises?**

You might have the best success by keeping these important things in mind:

### **1. Focusing on the present, and being nonjudgmental**

During these exercises, it may be easy to have negative thoughts creep in. This is normal; after all, you have been depressed and are just being discharged from an inpatient unit. As you list events, you may find that you get “stuck” feeling sad or worried about the event or what it means. Staying with the task of simply listing the events can be a real challenge.

Still, an important skill for these exercises (and life!) is to be able to return your focus to the moment and to the organization exercise that you are completing. If you notice yourself “heading negative,” it can be very helpful to deliberately and nonjudgmentally “turn your mind” back to the moment and to the exercise you are completing.

## **2. Plan ahead**

The exercise can require some advance planning—give yourself 20-30 minutes to complete it. Having extra time to brainstorm about the events of the past week will give you plenty of time to remember the past week and what happened during that time. The more you can plan ahead, the less stressful it will be to remember the events of the past week and you will have more success in filling out the list.

## **3. Start with today's events**

Trying to remember a whole week of events can seem like a giant task. Most people find it easiest to break things up by going a day at a time. Almost everyone finds that they can remember three things that happened today, and this can jog your memory about what happened yesterday. Yesterday can remind you of the day before that, and then next thing you know, you may be on a roll!

## **4. Willingness**

You still may feel skeptical. Give the exercises a try! You may surprise yourself by completing more of the activities than you expected, and may get more of a boost in your organization, memory, and concentration than you realize. By trying the exercise, it will also be helpful for us to hear what worked or did not work for you, so we can continue to refine the exercises to help them be most effective for you and other people like you!

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# **Weekly Exercises**

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# Week One

**(Assigning General Daily Events; *completed in the hospital*)**

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## WEEK 1: ASSIGNING GENERAL DAILY EVENTS

### Introduction

Key points to cover:

- Set the frame for the session—you will describe their first exercise, give them their specific instructions, and then return tomorrow to review the exercise with them and discuss how it went. Before and after the exercise, they will rate how they were feeling and how organized they felt.
- Given that you have just done the introduction, you will just want to go through the instructions:
  - Each week, before they complete the exercise, they will complete the pre-exercise ratings.
  - Then, they will take some time to think about the past 7 days—start with today and work back
  - Then they will write down events for each of the past 7 days—remind them: just the facts
  - You can point them to the example on the bottom of the page—remind: can be banal stuff!
  - They will then complete the post-exercise ratings
  - Try to gauge how easy this will be for them—probe about what they'd say about today.

If the person reports that writing is hard:

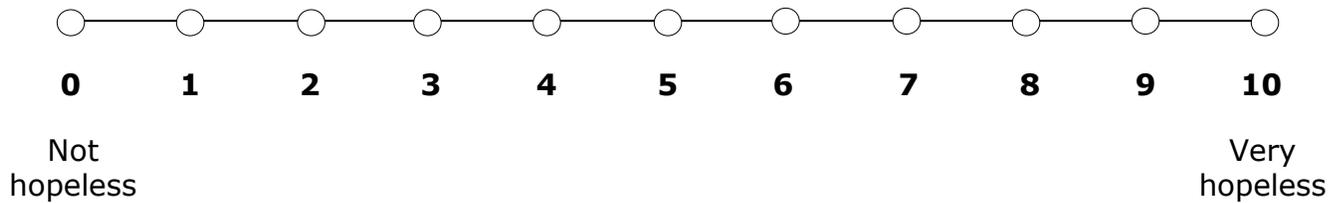
- Let them know that it's OK to make it short ---they are really just listing events, not describing them. You can refer back to the example in their "Practicing Organizational Skills" handbook, page 11. Acknowledge that it's important to write if they can, so that they can have a physical record of what they wrote which in our experience is very helpful.
- You will really want to push them to write the exercise details down before you meet with them—if they haven't written things down, ask them to do so and that you'll come back in 10 minutes.

# Week One: Daily Events

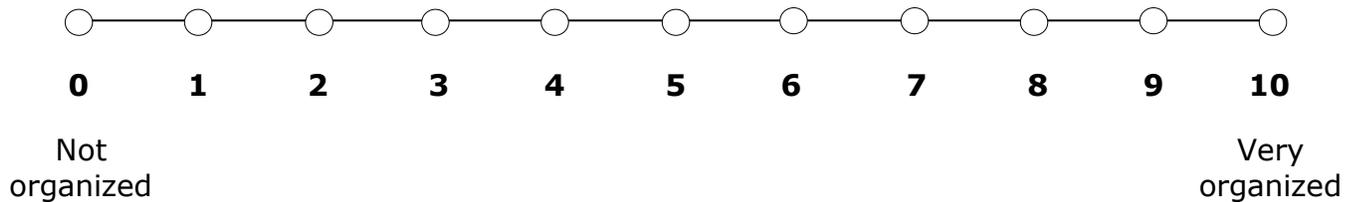
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

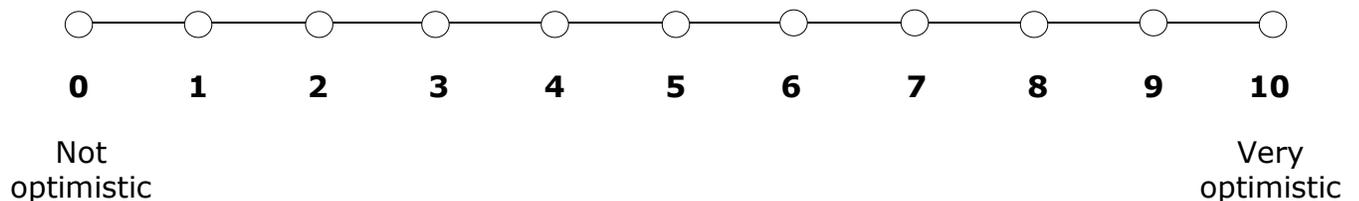
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

Today we will give you some practice in recalling events that occurred over the past week.

As we discussed earlier, recalling three events that occurred each day in the prior week might help you feel more organized. Another potential benefit is that it may actually show you that your memory may not be quite as bad as it seems—when people are depressed and feeling in a haze, it can seem like it is impossible to remember anything. Chances are, with some hard work and careful thought, you may be able to remember at least a few things that happened over the past week.

### **I have been feeling low and am hospitalized—how can I possibly remember these things?**

At first, it can seem hard to remember events during a difficult time like this hospitalization. However, this is one reason we do this exercise first: now may be the most important time to learn that you are able to collect your thoughts and remember events in your life. Even if you can't remember much, you may be able to recall more than you thought when you first sat down to do the exercise.

And if you can remember things now, in the middle of a hospitalization, there is a good chance that it will be even easier to remember events once you leave and are feeling less depressed. We also expect that as you get skilled at focusing your attention, you will even find it much easier to use these skills once you have left the hospital.

You may also find that some of these events over the past week have been upsetting. Our advice is to list the event, without describing (or dwelling on) the emotions that went with it. Sometimes, you may even decide to steer clear of very upsetting events and just list smaller, less difficult things. Remember, the goal of this work is to help you feel more organized by jogging your memory and having you record your life events, so you can even choose routine things to write down!

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events that happened each day. Next, use the following page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week. The things you list can be good, bad, or neutral. They can also be relatively small in importance (“I had lunch in the dayroom”) or relatively large in importance (“my son graduated from high school”).

At first you may find this difficult or overwhelming, but it often gets easier once you get started—you may find that remembering one event jogs your memory about several more!

Many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great! If you can’t remember anything that happened on a particular day, skip it and move on to the next day. Also, if you cannot recall too much, don’t be too hard on yourself—we understand that you have been depressed and that this can be difficult. Overall, this writing should take about 10 minutes at most.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or focus on) the feelings associated with the events.**

Here’s an example to get you started:

**Week 1:** 8/2/13 to 8/9/13 (today)

<b>Day of week:</b>	1. <i>Went to the discharge planning group on the unit.</i>
<u>Friday (8/9)</u>	2. <i>Talked to my sister Sara on the phone.</i>
	3. <i>Watched the movie Footloose with other patients in the group room.</i>

## Exercise—Recalling daily events

Week 1: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Day of week:** 1.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2.  
3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Very difficult Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not helpful Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not hopeless Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not organized Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not optimistic Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Two**

**(Reviewing general daily events and assigning health events;  
*completed in the hospital*)**

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## WEEK 2 (begins on Study Day #2): REVIEWING GENERAL DAILY EVENTS

### C. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the model and goals (*Completed in the hospital*)

- Set the frame for the session—you will review the first exercise, then introduce them to a new exercise, give them the specific instructions for the exercise, and then next week you will review with them the exercise and how it went.
- Remind them that the goal of the program is to help them get practice in remembering events that occurred in the past week in a variety of areas of their life. We think this may help them to feel better able to remember important things in their life and to help them to feel more organized.
- This might help them to accomplish more and feel better. This exercise is the next step.

### D. Review of general daily events (*Completed in the hospital*)

- If they did not do it, either do it with them together right then or, in rare circumstances, make a time to come back in ~10 minutes to review (use judgment).
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it can really help with memory and organization—but no problem, we will review.

#### When reviewing:

- Review events in a relatively detached way—do not probe for more details or (especially) feelings.
- Check in about how easy or hard it was, and if they came up with any strategies to make it easier.
- Be mildly impressed and supportive of their efforts, “great, sounds like you were able to do most of it.”
- One way of remaining detached but involved is to note (write down) the patient’s list as they are reading it to you – this may help to maintain attention while extinguishing any urge to comment/question in a therapeutic way.

## WEEK 2: ASSIGNING HEALTH EVENTS

### E. Assigning – Health events (*Assigned in the hospital but completed after discharge at home*)

- Discuss that the next exercise will be the same, with one major difference: it will deal with health events and activities.

#### Introduction:

- Remind them that they may very well be out of the hospital by the time they write this one.
- This will be a very different experience of remembering—they may have a lot more or a lot less going on, and it will be a time of transition.
- Remind them of the point made last week -- We believe that if symptoms of depression --- specifically poor concentration, problems with organization, and poor memory— are left untreated, these problems that can get in the way of really recovering from depression. The purpose of these exercises is to improve these symptoms.
- This might make it easier or harder to remember, but in any event, after a few weeks they will likely get in a routine about remembering these events.
- For this week: just like last week—at the end of the week, they will re-read directions, complete the pre-exercise ratings, write down things that happened that week, then complete the post-ratings. Then you will review with them.
- The difference this week—health events. This can include discussions/calls/appts with care providers. It can also include activities related to health (going to the pharmacy), behaviors related to health (like following a healthy diet) or physical symptoms.
- Remind them: plan ahead, list just the facts, start from that day and work backwards, and use whatever other strategies worked for them in the last week(s).
- One thing is that they probably don't want to list mental health symptoms here because we are trying to avoid high-emotion events and are looking more for specific health-related events.
- Also, there may not be three things each day related to their health—that's okay.
- Try to gauge how easy this will be for them—probe about what they'd say about today.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

#### If the person reports that writing is hard:

- Let them know that it's OK to make it short, but that it's important to write if they can, so that they can have a physical record of what they wrote which in our experience is very helpful.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

4. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Daily Events, and you were able to \_\_\_\_\_. This week we also discussed the upcoming Health Events exercise, which is a little bit different because it has you remember health events, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep it up, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

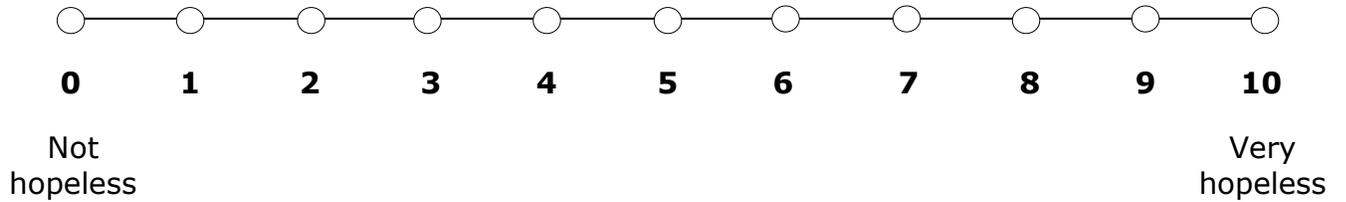
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse
- The following definitions of the CGI-I require an understanding of what constitutes a clinically significant improvement. Since the CGI-I is always a judgment made in comparison to the patient’s state at the start of the trial (baseline), a clinically significant improvement is said to occur when the patient’s symptoms move closer to normal functioning than to the patient’s level at baseline.
- When rating the CGI-I (as contrasted to the CGI-S, which is rated relative to an age, gender and community matched peer), the clinician asks the following question:
  - Compared to his/her condition at baseline, how much has he/she changed with respect to symptoms of major depression? Rate total improvement for major depression only whether or not, in your judgment, the improvement is entirely due to treatment?

# Week Two: Health Events

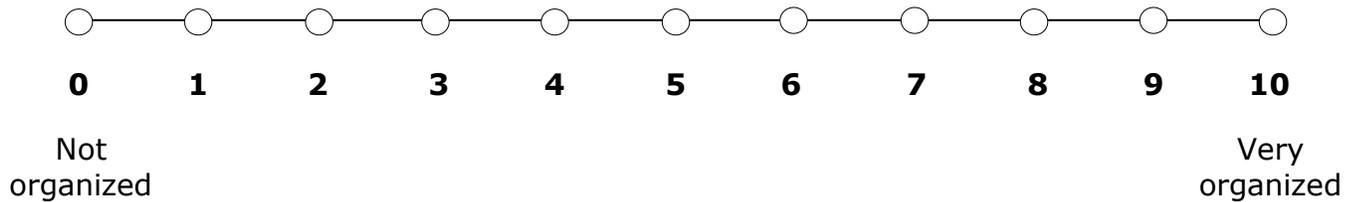
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

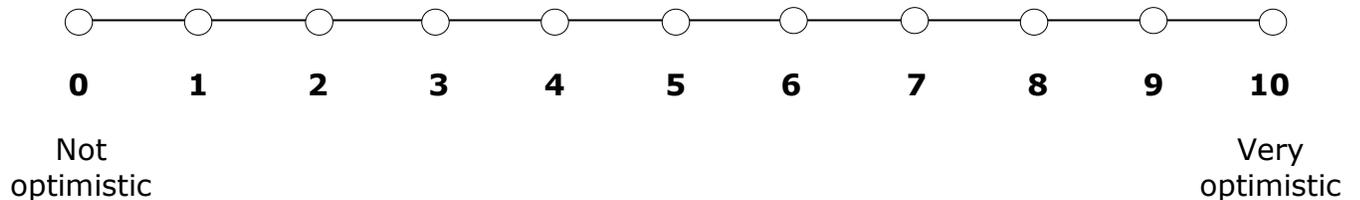
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

We will continue to have you recall events that happened each day in the past week, and to list them in this packet. Now that you are out of the hospital, you may find that it will be easier to remember what has happened each day. Perhaps you have settled back into an old routine that makes it easier to remember and mentally organize what has happened each day. Perhaps you have a new routine that is easy to remember.

On the other hand, some people find that after they leave the hospital, it's harder to remember what happens each day. The hospital can be a memorable place in many ways, with lots of other people around, groups, and new care providers. Perhaps at home things can seem more routine, and some people even find being out of the hospital isolating or boring. If this is the case, it may feel harder to remember what happens on a specific day or week.

Whether it is easier or harder to remember what happened, don't worry. Over the course of the next few weeks, we will hopefully help you settle into a regular routine of recalling and recording events, and we expect that this will become easier for you as the weeks go on.

This week we will have you focus specifically on events that happened related to your **health**.

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events related to your health that happened each day.

Health-related events might include

- doctor's visits, taking medications, discussions or phone calls with a nurse or social worker
- going to the pharmacy
- discussions about your health with friends or family
- healthy activities such as exercising or eating in a healthy way
- physical symptoms you may experience

Now, use the next page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week related to your health. You may find that remembering one event jogs your memory about several more. Again, many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great.

Because this exercise is specific to your health, it may be the case that nothing happened on a certain day related to your health. Keep in mind that anything related to your health—from symptoms to discussions about your health to healthy behaviors to appointments—are fine to write down. If you still can't remember anything related to your health that happened on a particular day, you can skip it and move on to the next day.

**Though these health events may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with them.**

## Exercise—Remembering events related to your health

Week 2: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Day of week:** 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2.

3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Very difficult Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not helpful Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not hopeless Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not organized Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not optimistic Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Three**

**(Reviewing health events and assigning morning and evening events; *phone session*)**

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## WEEK #3: REVIEWING HEALTH EVENTS

### A. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the model and goals

- Set the frame for the session—you will review the first exercise, then introduce them to a new exercise, give them the specific instructions for the exercise, and then next week you will review with them the exercise and how it went.
- Remind them that the goal of the program is to help them get practice in remembering events that occurred in the past week in a variety of areas of their life. We think this may help them to feel better able to remember important things in their life and to help them to feel more organized.
- This might help them to accomplish more and feel better. This exercise is the next step.

### B. Review of health events

- If they did not do it, either do it with them on the phone together or, in rare circumstances, make a time to call back in ~10 minutes to review (use judgment).
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it can really help with memory and organization—but no problem, we will review.
- If they recorded feelings and emotions, reinforce that they remembered the item, remind that we want just the facts. If they want to talk about the event, redirect. Say, “that sounds like quite an event, what else do you have on your list?” or “sounds like there’s a lot there, I’m glad you listed it, but I’m going to try to just stick to the memory part of this—what do you have next?”

### When reviewing:

- Review events in a relatively detached way—do not probe for more details or (especially) feelings. One way of remaining detached but involved is to note (write down) the patient’s list as they are reading it to you – this may help to maintain attention while extinguishing any urge to comment/question in a therapeutic way.
- Check in about how easy or hard it was, and if they came up with any strategies to make it easier.
- Be mildly impressed and supportive of their efforts, “great, sounds like you were able to do most of it.”

### WEEK #3: ASSIGNING MORNING AND EVENING EVENTS

- Discuss that the next exercise will be the same, with one difference: it will deal with morning and evening events.

#### Introduction:

- Basically, go through the introduction:
  - May be getting easier as they get practice
  - This project has them identifying events based on different categories—like health last week
  - This week, will work on cognitive flexibility by having people put things into a different kind of category, based on when the event happened—morning and evening
  - Morning and evening events can be memorable—start of day, last events of day
- For this week: just like last week—at the end of the week, they will re-read directions, complete the pre-exercise ratings, write down things that happened that week, then complete the post-ratings. Then you will review with them.
- The difference this week—they will record 2 kinds of events—want to remember 2 morning and 2 evening events each day, and the grid they fill out is different.
- Remind them: plan ahead, list just the facts, start from the day and work backwards, and use whatever other strategies worked for them in the last week(s).
- The events can be any kind of event.
- Try to gauge how easy this will be for them—probe about what they'd say about today.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

#### If the person reports that writing is hard:

- Let them know that it's OK to make it short, but that it's important to write if they can, so that they can have a physical record of what they wrote which in our experience is very helpful.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Health Events, and you were able to \_\_\_\_\_. This week we also discussed the upcoming Morning and Evening Events exercise, which is a little bit different because it has you remember morning and evening events, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep it up, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

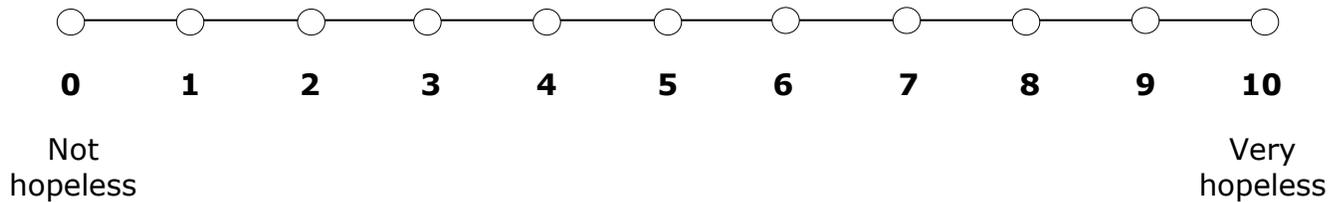
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

# Week Three: Morning and Evening Events

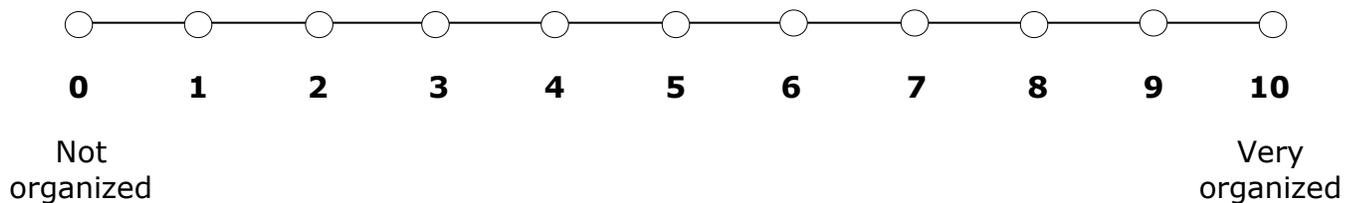
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

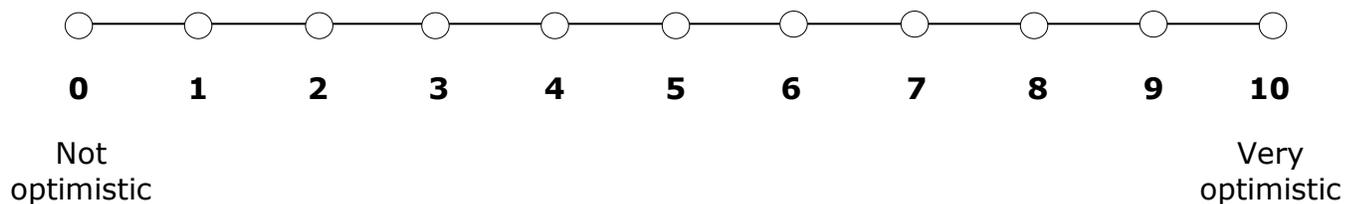
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

We will continue to have you recall events that happened each day in the past week, and to list them in this packet. Now that you have been completing these exercises for several weeks, you may notice that it is becoming easier for you to remember the events of your week or that you are more aware of events as they happen during the day.

Cognitive “flexibility” can be important in the way that people organize or remember information. Being able to put events into different categories can help make them easier to remember. A walk with a friend may fall into an “interactions with others” category or a “health event” category, and it may be easier or more familiar to place it into one of these categories compared to the other. This is one of the reasons that we have had you recall events in different categories—to try to expand the way that you may organize events in your mind.

This week, we will have you remember and record your life events in a different way—based on *when* they happen. Recalling your life events based on when they happen can help you to see patterns in your life and your behaviors. This can be helpful if you are trying to figure out why something is happening (why can't I sleep?), or if you are trying to establish a new pattern (like taking a walk at noon every day).

Many people find that how they begin their day has an important effect on their mood and memory for the rest of the day. Likewise, the last event or two in a day can have lasting effects that carry over into the next day. This week we will have you focus on events that happened related to your **mornings and evenings**.

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events related to your mornings and evenings that happened each day. Think about what you did when you woke up, and what you did when you went to sleep. These could include morning-time routines like reading the paper and having coffee, bedtime routines like watching a TV show or reading a book, and so on. They can also be important or unusual events that only happened once that week. As long as the event happened in the morning or the evening, it will do the trick for the purposes of our organizational skills exercise.

Next, use the following page to write down *one to two morning events or activities in the morning*. Then, write down *and one to two evening events for each day of the week*. You will notice that this is a bit different than the usual pattern of just writing three things per day, and that the worksheet on the next page is a bit different.

If you can't remember anything that happened on a particular morning or evening, skip it and move on to the next day.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with them.**

**Exercise—Remembering events that happened in mornings and evenings**

**Week 3:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Day of week:</b> _____	<b>Morning:</b> 1. 2.	<b>Evening:</b> 1. 2.
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Week Four

**(Reviewing morning and evening events and assigning interactions  
with others; *phone session*)**

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## WEEK 4: REVIEWING MORNING AND EVENING EVENTS

### A. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the model and goals

- Set the frame for the session—you will review the first exercise, then introduce them to a new exercise, give them the specific instructions for the exercise, and then next week you will review with them the exercise and how it went.
- Remind them that the goal of the program is to help them get practice in remembering events that occurred in the past week in a variety of areas of their life. We think this may help them to feel better able to remember important things in their life and to help them to feel more organized.
- This might help them to accomplish more and feel better. This exercise is the next step.

### B. Review of morning and evening events

- If they did not do it, either do it with them on the phone together or, in rare circumstances, make a time to call back in ~10 minutes to review (use judgment).
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it can really help with memory and organization—but no problem, we will review.
- If they recorded feelings and emotions, reinforce that they remembered the item, remind that we want just the facts. If they want to talk about the event, redirect. Say, “that sounds like quite an event, what else do you have on your list?” or “sounds like there’s a lot there, I’m glad you listed it, but I’m going to try to just stick to the memory part of this—what do you have next?”

#### When reviewing:

- Review events in a relatively detached way—do not probe for more details or (especially) feelings.
- Check in about how easy or hard it was, and if they came up with any strategies to make it easier.
- Be mildly impressed and supportive of their efforts, “great, sounds like you were able to do most of it.”

## WEEK 4: ASSIGNING INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS

- Discuss that the next exercise will be the same, with one difference: it will deal with interactions with other people.

### Introduction:

- For this week: just like last week—at the end of the week, they will re-read directions, complete the pre-exercise ratings, write down things that happened that week, then complete the post-ratings. Then you will review with them.
- The difference this week—interactions with others. Right away you want to note that it can be tough in some cases to just stick to the facts without assigning feelings (good or bad) or judgment to the event or the other person, but remind them that the goal here is to help with memory and organization and so we really do want just the facts.
- Remind them: plan ahead, start from the day and work backwards, and use whatever other strategies worked for them in the last week(s).
- Also, there may not be three things each day related to others—that's okay.
- Try to gauge how easy this will be for them—probe about what they'd say about today.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

### If the person reports that writing is hard:

- Let them know that it's OK to make it short, but that it's important to write if they can, so that they can have a physical record of what they wrote which in our experience is very helpful.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Morning and Evening Events, and you were able to \_\_\_\_\_. This week we also discussed the upcoming Interactions with Others exercise, which is a little bit different because it has you remember interactions with others, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep it up, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

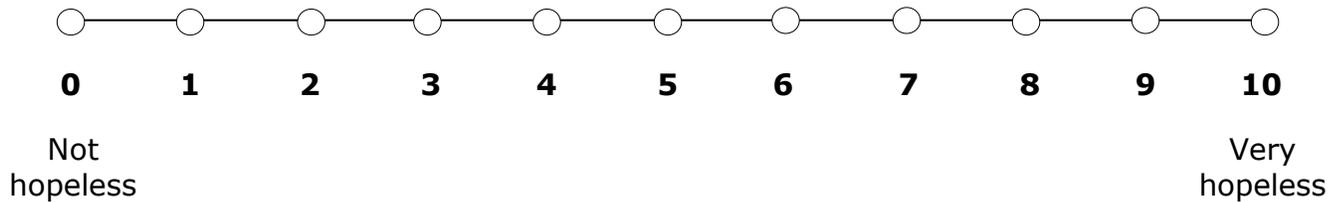
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

# Week Four: Interactions with Others

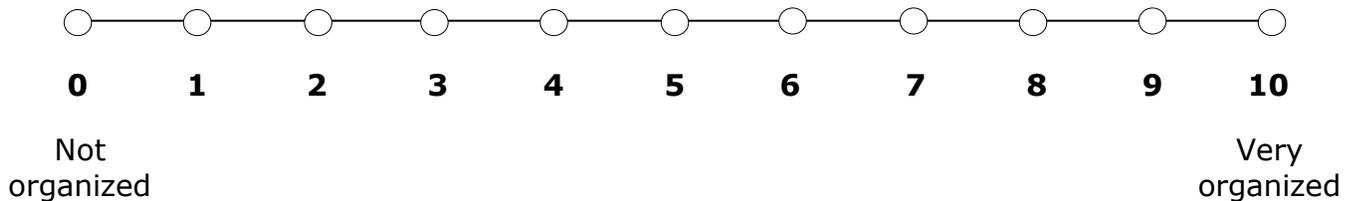
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

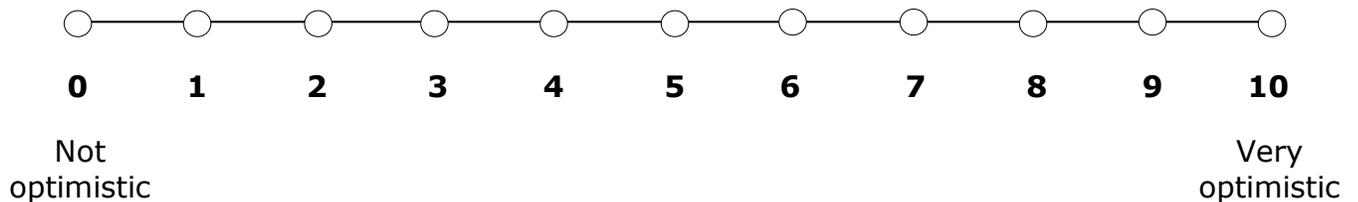
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## **Introduction**

We will continue to have you recall events that happened each day in the past week, and to list them in this packet. You may notice that it is becoming easier for you to remember the events of your week or that you are more aware of events as they happen during the day.

Given how important organization and memory are in our daily lives, if you are beginning to notice a difference in how well you are able to collect your thoughts and remember events from your day, you may find that you are more productive than you had been a few weeks back or that you can finish tasks more quickly.

On the other hand, if you haven't yet noticed an improvement, don't worry. It can take some time to have these skills make a difference, and we recognize also that you may not be in full recovery from your depression. We encourage you to keep at it!

This week we will add variety to this exercise by having you list only events related to interactions with others. This can include speaking with someone, attending an appointment with a doctor or therapist, meeting friends, participating in phone conversations, having an interaction with a stranger. It can also include simply performing an act shared with other people, such as going to a coffee shop, concert, library, or church.

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days and to identify any interactions with others—large or small—that happened each day.

Now, use the next page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week related to social activities. Many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great.

If you can't remember anything that happened on a particular day, skip it and move on to the next day.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with them.**

This point above may be particularly important this week. Interactions with others can bring up a lot of feelings (good or bad). Keep in mind that the goal of this task is to help you *remember and organize* events in your mind, not to review the feelings that went with the event. So, in performing this task, if you notice yourself feeling "stuck" on the emotions related to your interaction with another person, simply turn your mind back to the task of simply listing the event in the provided space and moving to the next event.

## Exercise—Remembering interactions with others

Week 4: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Day of week:** 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2.

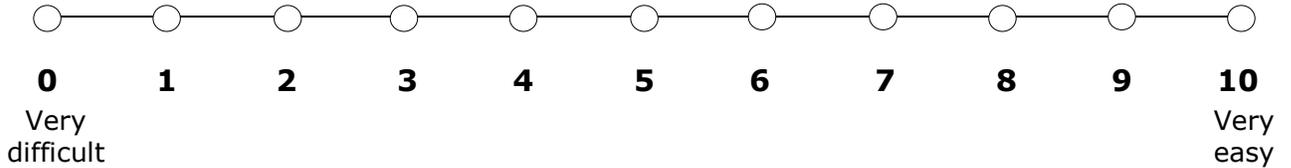
3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

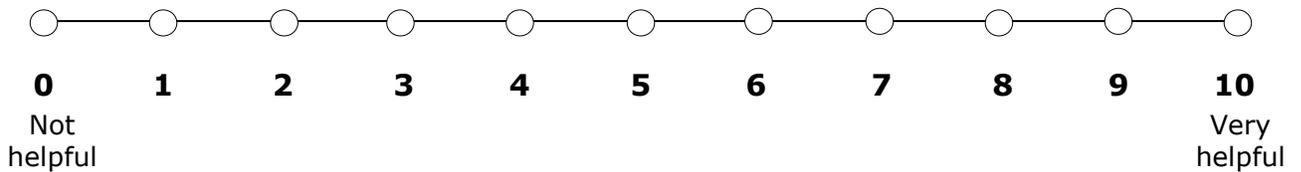
## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

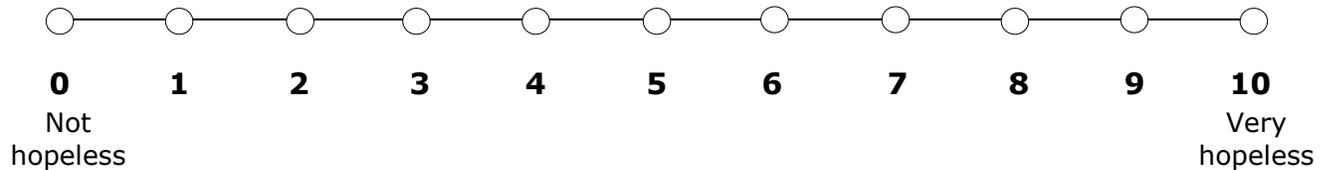
**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?



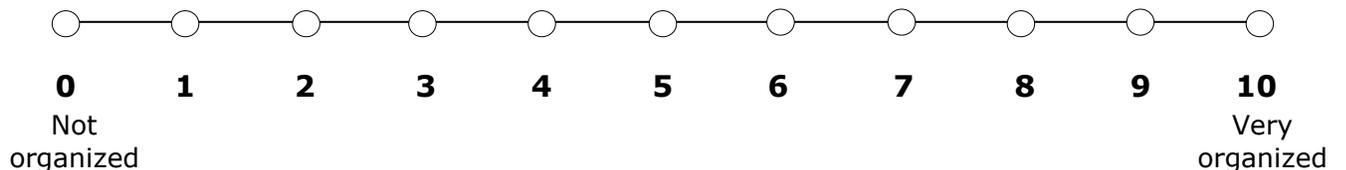
**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?



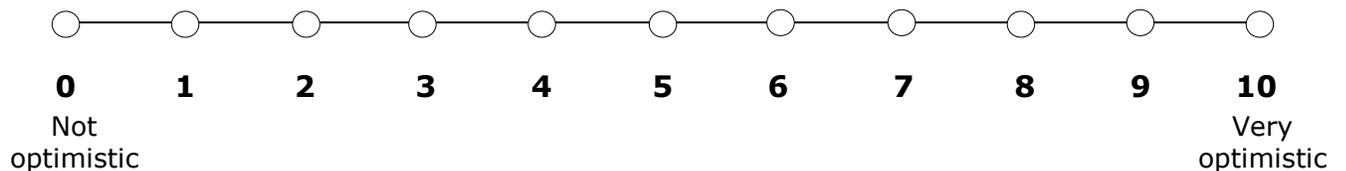
**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:



**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:



**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:



**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Five**

**(Reviewing interactions with others and assigning leisure time activities; *phone session*)**

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## WEEK 5: REVIEWING INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS

### A. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the model and goals

- Set the frame for the session—you will review the first exercise, then introduce them to a new exercise, give them the specific instructions for the exercise, and then next week you will review with them the exercise and how it went.
- Remind them that the goal of the program is to help them get practice in remembering events that occurred in the past week in a variety of areas of their life. We think this may help them to feel better able to remember important things in their life and to help them to feel more organized.
- This might help them to accomplish more and feel better. This exercise is the next step.

### B. Review of general daily events

- If they did not do it, either do it with them on the phone together or, in rare circumstances, make a time to call back in ~10 minutes to review (use judgment).
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it can really help with memory and organization—but no problem, we will review.
- If they recorded feelings and emotions, reinforce that they remembered the item, remind that we want just the facts. If they want to talk about the event, redirect. Say, “that sounds like quite an event, what else do you have on your list?” or “sounds like there’s a lot there, I’m glad you listed it, but I’m going to try to just stick to the memory part of this—what do you have next?”

#### When reviewing:

- Review events in a relatively detached way—do not probe for more details or (especially) feelings.
- Check in about how easy or hard it was, and if they came up with any strategies to make it easier.
- Be mildly impressed and supportive of their efforts, “great, sounds like you were able to do most of it.”

## WEEK 5: ASSIGNING LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

- Discuss that the next exercise will be the same, with one difference: it will deal with leisure events.

### Introduction:

- They may notice that they are getting better at this, that this is getting easier and in fact that it is even getting too routine or easy. Remind them that there are only 2 weeks left in this part of the study and that we want to make sure we have this nailed.
- For this week: just like last week—at the end of the week, they will re-read directions, complete the pre-exercise ratings, write down things that happened that week, then complete the post-ratings. Then you will review with them.
- The difference this week—leisure time activities. Remind them that this can be anything at all, just as long as it occurs during a time when they are not taking care of basic self-care, going to appointments, doing work or school activities, or engaging in other commitments. Exercise counts, as does reading a book, watching TV, calling a friend, or surfing the web.
- Remind them: plan ahead, list just the facts, start from the day and work backwards, and use whatever other strategies worked for them in the last week(s).
- Also, there may not be three things each day related to leisure—that's okay.
- Try to gauge how easy this will be for them—probe about what they'd say about today.
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

### If the person reports that writing is hard:

- Let them know that it's OK to make it short, but that it's important to write if they can, so that they can have a physical record of what they wrote which in our experience is very helpful.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Interactions with Others, and you were able to \_\_\_\_\_. This week we also discussed the upcoming Leisure Time Activities exercise, which is a little bit different because it has you remember leisure time activities, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep it up, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

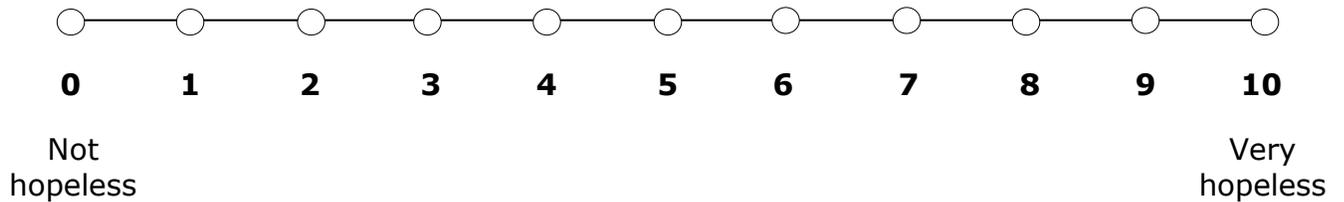
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
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  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

# Week Five: Leisure Time Activities

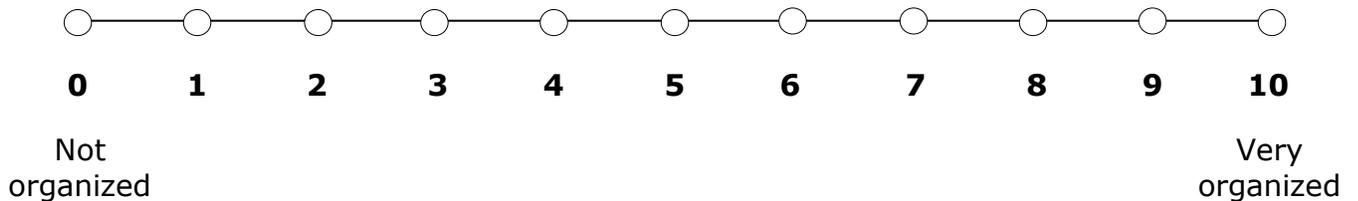
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

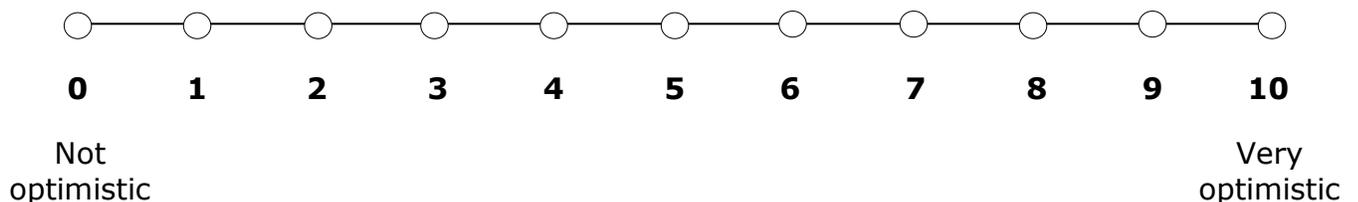
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## Introduction

You have now been in this program for over a month, and you may find that these exercises are becoming quite easy—perhaps they even feel too simple. On the other hand, you may find that the exercises are challenging because you are not used to applying organizational skills in this way. For now we will continue to have you recall different categories of events that happen each week. Once you have completed this part of the program, we will move on to the next phase about organizing your plans for the future.

This week we will have you focus on recording events related to activities done during leisure time. This can include recreational activities, such as playing a game, making something, or participating in a sport. It can also include low-key activities, like reading a book, watching a movie, or even looking out the window and enjoying the view. The activities can be those that are done alone or with someone else—the only important thing is that they are done during “free” time, when you are not working or doing other necessary tasks.

## Instructions

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events related to leisure time.

Now, use the next page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week related to leisure activities. Many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great. If you can't remember anything that happened on a particular day, skip it and move on to the next day.

You may feel that an activity isn't exciting or interesting enough to count. For the purposes of this exercise, any leisure event you recall is great—the goal of this program is to help you organize events, and it doesn't matter if the event is small or large, meaningful or routine.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with them.**

## Exercise—Remembering events related to leisure time

Week 5: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Day of week:** 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2.

3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Very difficult      Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not helpful      Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not hopeless      Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not organized      Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

—  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —  —

**0**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

Not optimistic      Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# **Week Six**

**(Reviewing leisure time activities and assigning choice exercise;  
*phone session*)**

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## WEEK 6: REVIEWING LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

### A. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the model and goals

- Set the frame for the session—this is the second to last week of phone calls and as before you will review the first exercise, then introduce them to a new exercise, give them the specific instructions for the exercise, and then next week you will review with them the exercise, how it went, and begin discussing new ideas about organization.
- Remind them that the goal of the program has been to help them get practice in remembering events that occurred in the past week in a variety of areas of their life. We think this may help them to feel better able to remember important things in their life and to help them to feel more organized. This might help them to accomplish more and feel better.

### B. Review of general daily events

- If they did not do it, either do it with them on the phone together or, in rare circumstances, make a time to call back in ~10 minutes to review (use judgment).
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it can really help with memory and organization—but no problem, we will review.
- If they recorded feelings and emotions, reinforce that they remembered the item, remind that we want just the facts. If they want to talk about the event, redirect. Say, “that sounds like quite an event, what else do you have on your list?” or “sounds like there’s a lot there, I’m glad you listed it, but I’m going to try to just stick to the memory part of this—what do you have next?”

#### When reviewing:

- Review events in a relatively detached way—do not probe for more details or (especially) feelings.
- Check in about how easy or hard it was, and if they came up with any strategies to make it easier.
- Be mildly impressed and supportive of their efforts, “great, sounds like you were able to do most of it.”

## WEEK 6: ASSIGNING CHOICE EXERCISE

- Discuss that the next exercise will be a little different – they will get to choose what type of event to focus on (all exercises listed below).

### Exercises to Choose From:

- Daily Events
- Health Events
- Morning and Evening Events
- Interactions with Others
- Leisure Time Activities

### Introduction:

- Remind them that this is the last week of this phase of the organizational program. By now, they probably have a good sense of the situation here, and so we are going to have them remember whatever kind of event feels most useful or important to them.
- For this week: just like last week—at the end of the week, they will re-read directions, complete the pre-exercise ratings, write down things that happened that week, then complete the post-ratings. Then you will review with them.
- The difference this week—choice.
- Remind them: plan ahead, list just the facts, start from the day and work backwards, and use whatever other strategies worked for them in the last week(s).
- Try to get them to commit to a specific category (or just all things), brainstorm with them
- **Critical: Convey that even if they did not complete it, that is okay and you will chat with them next week to try to help make it easier and keep moving forward.**

### If the person reports that writing is hard:

- Let them know that it's OK to make it short, but that it's important to write if they can, so that they can have a physical record of what they wrote which in our experience is very helpful.

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed Leisure Time Activities, and you were able to \_\_\_\_\_. This week we also discussed the upcoming exercise of your choice, you chose to do the \_\_\_\_\_ exercise again, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming). Keep it up, and I will talk to you next week!

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

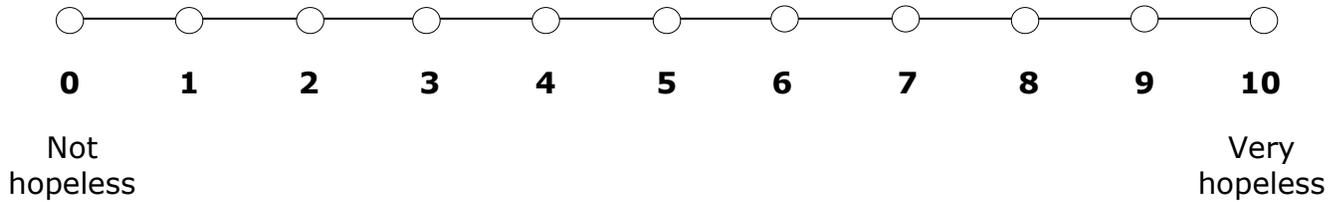
- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
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  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

# Week Six: Choice

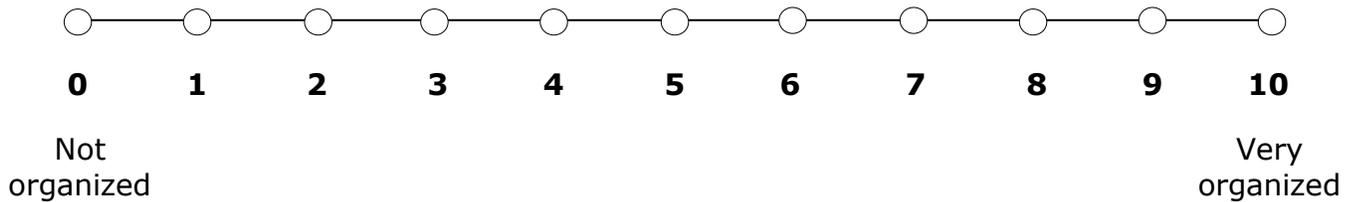
Completed on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Pre-Exercise Ratings

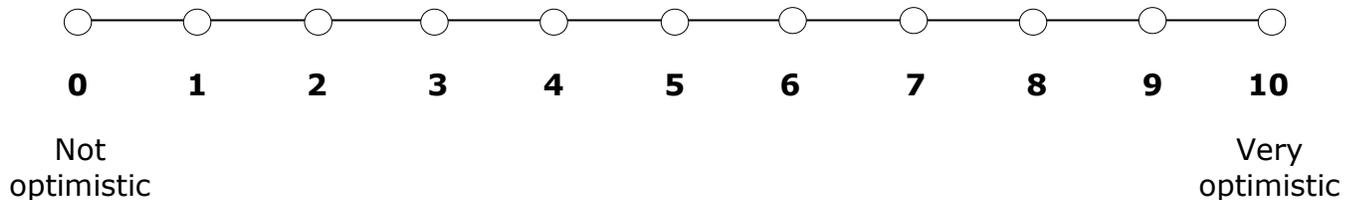
**(1)** Before you start to read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of hopelessness (fill in the appropriate bubble):



**(2)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your level of feeling mentally organized:



**(3)** Before you read the instructions and complete the exercise, please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (i.e., your feelings that things will work out for the best):



## **Introduction**

This will be your final week of recalling past events as part of this program to boost your memory, concentration, and organizational skills. By now, you have probably gotten the idea of the exercises and may have a routine by which you are able to recall small and large events that happen throughout the week.

You may have found that some of the exercises were more helpful than others in improving your organization or were a better fit for you. Perhaps the general “daily events” exercise that included any event worked best for you. Perhaps one of the exercises that focused on a specific area, like health events, felt most useful. Or the exercise that focused on time of day may have helped the most because it was so specific.

This week we will have you choose any of the organizational exercises from the past 5 weeks. By giving you this choice, we hope that it will make this week’s exercise the most relevant to you and your life, and will have the biggest impact on your level of organization. You may decide to choose the exercise that you felt helped you the most, or was the easiest to complete, or conversely, you may decide to choose the exercise that was the most challenging, as a means to measure your improvement or simply to get more practice. You and your study trainer will work together to choose the right exercise for you, and you will complete it for next week.

## Instructions

**Exercise:** Recalling events related to \_\_\_\_\_

Take 5-10 minutes to think about the past seven days—think about events that happened each day. Again, you can pick any of the organizational exercises (like health events, or morning and evening events) you have completed in previous weeks.

Now, use the following page to write down three events or activities that happened each day of the week.

Whichever exercise you choose, complete it just like you did the previous week. If you end up recalling many of the same events you did when you originally did the exercise, that is fine. The goal of the exercise is not to come up with different events every week, just to be more aware of events that occur in a week and to organize them and write them down.

Many people find that starting with yesterday and working backwards is the easiest way to do this exercise, but whatever works to help you remember these events is great! If you can't remember anything that happened on a particular day, skip it and move on to the next day. Overall, this writing should take about 10 minutes at most.

**Though these things may have been good or bad, it is important to stick to the facts and to not list (or dwell on) the feelings associated with the events.**

**Exercise—Remembering events related to \_\_\_\_\_**

**Week 6:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

<b>Day of week:</b>	1.
_____	2.
	3.

\*Now, please complete the post-exercise ratings on the next page.

## Post-Exercise Ratings

Immediately after completing this exercise, please rate the following:

**(1)** How easy was it to complete the exercise (fill in the appropriate bubble)?

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Very difficult Very easy

**(2)** Overall, how helpful do you feel this exercise was?

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not helpful Very helpful

**(3)** Please rate your feelings of hopelessness after you completed the exercise:

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not hopeless Very hopeless

**(4)** Please rate your level of feeling mentally organized after you completed the exercise:

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not organized Very organized

**(5)** Please rate your feelings of optimism about the future (feelings that things will work out for the best) after you completed the exercise:

○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

Not optimistic Very optimistic

**(6)** What was helpful about this exercise?

**(7)** What was less helpful or difficult about the exercise, or what could make it better?

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# Next Steps

(Reviewing choice exercise and making plans for to-do list; *phone session*)

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## WEEK 7: REVIEWING CHOICE EXERCISE

### A. Setting the frame for the session and reviewing the model and goals

- Set the frame for the session—this is the last week of phone calls and that after reviewing the exercise, you will discuss with them some new ideas about organization.
- Inform them that "at the very end today, we will get a chance to get specific feedback from you about your experience with this study and with this treatment."
- Remind them that the goal of the program has been to help them get practice in remembering events that occurred in the past week in a variety of areas of their life. We think this may help them to feel better able to remember important things in their life and to help them to feel more organized. This might help them to accomplish more and feel better. Since they have now done the memory exercises, they will now do the next step, about organization.
- Exit Interview – Mention that at the end of the call there will be a chance for them to voice whatever praises and concerns they may have about the program.

### B. Review of choice exercise

- If they did not do it, either do it with them on the phone together or, in rare circumstances, make a time to call back in ~10 minutes to review (use judgment).
- If they did it, but did not write it down, emphasize that you think they will get even more out of writing it down—it can really help with memory and organization—but no problem, we will review.
- If they recorded feelings and emotions, reinforce that they remembered the item, remind that we want just the facts. If they want to talk about the event, redirect. Say, "that sounds like quite an event, what else do you have on your list?" or "sounds like there's a lot there, I'm glad you listed it, but I'm going to try to just stick to the memory part of this—what do you have next?"

### When reviewing:

- Review events in a relatively detached way—do not probe for more details or (especially) feelings.
- Check in about how easy or hard it was, and if they came up with any strategies to make it easier.
- Be mildly impressed and supportive of their efforts, "great, sounds like you were able to do most of it."

## WEEK 7: MAKING PLANS FOR TO-DO LIST

### Introduce to-do list

#### Introduction:

- Emphasize that they now have lots of good practice about remembering things in the past
- If they found these exercises useful, they should continue them, and can customize to whatever way that is most useful to them—whatever topic is important and whatever method of recording them
- Now we will discuss a system for remembering things that will happen in the future
  - Find a place to write down important upcoming events
    - Book, calendar, phone, tablet—whatever they will really use and is easily accessed
  - Then use the information to make a to-do list for the day
    - Can be specific appointments, steps toward a goal, or repeated activities (walking each morning)
    - Make the list at the same time every day

#### Tips:

- Commitment is necessary, expect it to be hard for the first 1-2 weeks and that it will be forgotten sometimes
- Trial and error is necessary to find a system that works
- But they can do it! With commitment, this is within their reach
- And may have real benefits: make appointments, reach goals, not forget commitments to others, feel better about self.
- Show them the examples on the next page, one for “events to remember” and another for “to-do list.”

**Have them go through with you and discuss how they think they will do it (if at all).**

Now review the ratings (and the 3 questions re: symptoms).

### 3 Question Check-In:

- You will ask patients these three questions each week to gauge their current level of symptoms.
- “Now I want to ask you some questions about how you’ve been feeling over the past week. I’m going to read you three statements. You can agree, disagree, or be neutral.”

1. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I have been having thoughts of killing myself.\*

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**\*If the patient says agree or strongly agree to question 3, go to the script on the last page of this document. Be sure to document the patient’s responses and to check in with a study MD as outlined.**

**RECAP:** Alright, just to reorient us. Today we reviewed your chosen exercise, \_\_\_\_\_, and you were able to \_\_\_\_\_. This week we also discussed how to use these organizational skills in the future, and we were able to make a great start by \_\_\_\_\_ (any brainstorming).

### Complete The Clinical Global Improvement Scale

- A 7 point scale anchored as follows:
  - 0 = Not assessed
  - 1 = Very much improved
  - 2 = Much improved
  - 3 = Minimally improved
  - 4 = No change
  - 5 = Slightly worse
  - 6 = Much worse
  - 7 = Very much worse

**❖ DO NOT FORGET TO SET UP THE 6 AND 12 WEEK FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS**

**Exit Interview** [Note: only do this if you think they have not run out of gas]

- "Finally, I would like to take just a couple of minutes to ask you some questions about the study."
  - How was it to participate in this study?
  - Was there anything we could do to make participation easier or more enjoyable?
  - Did the schedule with the phone calls work well?
  - Do you have any feedback about the actual exercises? Anything you think would be more helpful?
  - Any final comment

## The end of the study...is just the beginning!

It's relatively easy to become more organized for a short duration, just as it's possible to quit smoking or start a new exercise plan for a few hours, but it gets much harder when you try to keep this up for weeks or months. The challenge lies in sustaining the new level of organization. You know this intimately if you've tried to turn your life around before but found that "nothing works." We would wager that your previous attempts *have* worked, just not for long.

However, by using the exercises you've practiced these last six weeks, you can continue to stay organized. By using your mind to organize events that have occurred each week, you've been flexing a "memory and organization muscle" that you can use in your life to remember important details and events that occur every day. If you found these exercises helpful, we would encourage you to continue them each week.

You are now ready for the next step. Now that you have spent the past six weeks getting better at organizing and remembering events that already happened, we are now going to help you get more organized to complete events in the future.

In this final section we are going to help you to develop a system to remember important future events (like appointments or meetings with friends) and to organize yourself to complete complicated tasks (like cleaning an apartment or filling out job applications).

This process has two important steps:

**First, find a place to write down important future events, like appointments and social events.** It is important to have a single place to write down these important facts. We have all had the experience of writing dates or appointments on different slips of paper, only to lose the paper and forget about the details. We have also had the experience of thinking, "Oh, I will remember that!" and then remembering it too late (or not remembering it at all).

By having a single place where you write down meetings/appointments, you will be able to rest easier, knowing that you won't have to find those slips of paper. You can simply look at this spot on a regular basis and know what you'll need to do in the next day, week, and month.

Where will you write this all down? Many people use a small notebook. Some use a calendar. Some people use a "notes" feature on a smartphone or computer. The easier and more natural, the better—if you are a person who can carry a notebook or small calendar in your pocket or purse, this often works well. Likewise, if you are often using your cell phone, this is a great place to keep information. Whatever you choose, if you can write (or type) the future event immediately, the better the chances it won't be forgotten.

*Okay, I have a place to write about future events. Now what?* **Next, you will use this information to make a to-do list each day.** By looking at your collected appointments and events, you will be able to see which are coming up. Some of them may need advance planning. If you have a relative's birthday party, you may need to get them a present. If you have an appointment and need help with transportation, that may need to be arranged.

In addition to your upcoming events, you will also want to add anything else you would like to accomplish that day. Perhaps you have some specific tasks that need to be completed (like paying bills), or perhaps you would like to take a step toward a goal (like volunteering at an animal shelter). You can also include activities you might want to do every day, like take a walk or take medications.

Some people like to write their to-do list first thing in the morning, and others like to do it at night, for the next day. We would just recommend that you find a system that works for you, and stick with it. We also recommend that you make your to-do list in the same spot that you made your list of future events—that way you won't have to go back and forth.

If you are able to find a place to write important future events, and then to make a to-do list each day, we feel certain that you will feel more organized, that you will remember more of these events, and that you will be able to accomplish more!

### **What are some tips for recording future events and making to-do lists?**

- 4. Commitment is necessary.** Just as it is with many other things, it may be that the more motivated you are to become organized, the more successful you will be! We also know that the organizational strategies only work as long as you use them. This means that you will need to make a concerted effort to practice this plan daily if you wish to see your organization grow.
- 5. Even with commitment, it will take some trial and error—and that is normal!** Creating a system like this can take some time and energy. It can seem like a big task to find or buy a notebook, or to start to use the notes feature on a phone. And then getting into the habit of writing down appointments and other events can take several days until you settle into a routine and system that works for you.

If you have trouble at first, don't worry. Many people can have trouble at first when they develop a plan to become more organized. It may take a couple of days until you are able to come up with a plan that will work for you day in and day out. But with consistent effort, just as with the exercises you have been completing for the past 6 weeks, we feel sure that you will be able to develop a system that works for you and your situation. And with practice you will be more organized!

**6. Organization can become a habit.** We all have habits—some good, some bad. Habits form with repetition and practice. Researchers theorize that every time you repeat a behavior (such as going for a walk in the morning), associations develop in your memory between the behavior and the context in which it occurs. In the case of a morning walk, the cues (alarm clock going off, having breakfast) automatically trigger the habitual behavior (putting on walking shoes), so that the behavior simply becomes natural.

To apply this to organizational strategies, the more often you use a system to record events and plan the day's activities, the easier and more natural it will become. As you might expect, habits take time to form and endure, but you really can do it. It is in your power to become more organized and aware of the world around you.

To help you with this process we are including some examples of recording events and making to-do lists. See the next page.

## **Week of August 5<sup>th</sup>**

### **Events to remember**

- Monday August 5<sup>th</sup>:
  - Appointment with Dr. Jones in Lowell 9:00AM
- Tuesday August 6<sup>th</sup>: No events
- Wednesday August 7<sup>th</sup>:
  - Going to lunch with Janet in Cambridge 12:30PM
  - Jamie's birthday party in Lowell 7:00PM
- Thursday August 8<sup>th</sup>:
  - Pick up Sara's daughter from pre-school 2:30PM
- Friday August 9<sup>th</sup>:
  - Appointment with Dr. Evans in Saugus at 10:00AM
  - Pick up Sara's daughter from pre-school 2:30PM

### **To-do list**

#### Monday August 5<sup>th</sup>:

- Go to appointment with Dr. Jones
- Pick up prescriptions from the pharmacy
- Call Janet to see if she can give me a ride to the birthday party on Wednesday
- Go for a 10 minute walk around the block
- Take all of my prescribed medications

#### Tuesday August 6<sup>th</sup>:

- Buy a present for Jamie (and maybe get some new shoes)
- Call hospitals to see if they have any open volunteer positions
- Pay water bill
- Go for a 10 minute walk around the block
- Take all of my prescribed medications

Phone script for suicidal ideation reported by patient:  
**FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS TO ASSESS SUICIDALITY**

If patient endorses suicidal thoughts on the 3 Question Check-In (*Thoughts of killing him/herself*):

- Is it a feeling that life isn't worth living, or do you actually have a wish to die?

(*If has a wish to die*)

- Is it a thought that you wish you weren't alive, like going to sleep and not waking up, or do you actually have thoughts of harming yourself?
- Have you ever harmed yourself or attempted suicide in the past?

(*If has thoughts of harming self*)\*\*

- Have you thought about ways of harming yourself? What are they?
- Would you be able to do it if you wanted?
- Do you think you would do it?
- What has kept you from doing it?
- Should we be worried about your safety right now?

\*\*If you become acutely concerned, you can tell the patient "These are serious thoughts and I want to get you help quickly. I am going to let your doctors know that you have been having these feelings to make sure you're safe and can get help quickly," and immediately can hang up and call me. If the person has thoughts of harming self but no intent to carry them out and says that there is no worry about safety currently, can complete f/u call, then say the same and call me.

If: Life not worth living but no wish to die, ok to email/leave message

If: Wish to die but no thoughts of harming self/plan and no h/o attempt, ok to email/leave message.

If: Wish to die and prior h/o attempt, but no thoughts of harming self, immediately call/page PI  
(\_\_\_\_\_/pager\_\_\_\_\_) until you reach him

If: Active thoughts of harming self, immediately call/page Jeff Huffman (\_\_\_\_\_/pager\_\_\_\_\_) until you reach him