

ACTIVITY: Gratitude

Purpose

- Practicing gratitude helps us to notice the good things in our lives and spend more time focusing on the positive.
- The purpose of this activity is to learn how we can use the practice of gratitude to increase optimism and resiliency.

ESTIMATED TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

Required:

- A. Pen/paper
- B. Gratitude tracker for take home activity

Background

Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness or appreciation for what we have. Research studies have linked gratitude practices with greater happiness. Gratitude can help us become more optimistic, overcome adversity, and strengthen our relationships.

The first step in practicing gratitude is to notice the good in your life. This takes practice because we tend to take things for granted if they are easy, go as planned, or lack novelty. We spend more time focused on things that are difficult, troublesome, or unique.

Gratitude practices, such as giving thank you notes to others or writing down something we are grateful for every day, help us by focusing our attention on the good and increasing the positive emotions we feel. These practices also help us to create a new habit so that we will begin to naturally notice and spend more time on the positive aspects of any situation (and life in general).

Activity

- 1) Ask everyone to write down three things for which they are grateful.
- 2) Go around the room and ask people to share what they wrote (or ask for volunteers to share).
- 3) Use the questions below to guide a group discussion on gratitude.
- 4) Ask the group if they would like to join in the "Let's Try This!" activity below for the next month. Pass out the Gratitude Tracker handout.

Discussion Questions/ Key Points

- How often do you stop to notice the good and be grateful during the course of a day? Be honest!
- How can being grateful make us happier?
- Does anyone in the group do any kind of gratitude practice on a regular basis? What type of gratitude practice do you do?
- What are some things we are grateful for that we frequently take for granted?
- What are some ways to cultivate gratitude everyday?
- How do we express gratitude towards others? Do we only do this with people we are very close to?

Let's Try This!

At the end of each day write down one thing you are grateful for.

Do this for 4 weeks. To make it easier use the Gratitude tracker included in this activity.

Follow-up

After a month, discuss how the gratitude activity worked for everyone.

What did you notice?
How did you feel?

Why Gratitude is Good. Robert Emmons.

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good/.

In Praise of Gratitude. Harvard Mental Health Letter.

http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/in-praise-of-gratitude

