



 **Emotion regulation**
 Exercise

 10-15 min.

 Client

 No


Positive Emotion Brainstorm

According to Broaden and Build Theory, positive emotions “broaden individuals’ thought–action repertoires, enabling them to draw flexibly on higher-level connections and wider-than-usual ranges of percepts, ideas, and action urges; broadened cognition in turn creates behavioural flexibility that over time builds personal resources, such as mindfulness, resilience, social closeness, and even physical health” (Garland et al., 2010, p. 850). In short, positive emotions can help to increase well-being and resilience. This exercise can help to increase the experience of positive emotions and thereby enhance subjective wellbeing.

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to generate possible ideas for your client to increase positive emotions in daily life. More specifically, this exercise targets the type of positive emotions that are experienced least often/are most underrepresented in his/her day to day life.



Advice

During this exercise, the practitioner may offer suggestions. After the exercise, discuss with your client which of the generated ideas seem most realistic to implement. If necessary, ask your client to translate one or more of the generated ideas into practice. This exercise also works very well in groups, due to the element of brainstorming. Form small groups of three to four people and let each group member be inspired by the suggestions of other group members during the brainstorming phase.



Suggested Readings

Garland, E.L., Fredrickson, B., Kring A.M., Johnson D.P., Meyer P.S., Penn D.L. (2010). Upward spirals of positive emotions counter downward spirals of negativity: Insights from the broaden-and-build theory and affective neuroscience on the treatment of emotion dysfunctions and deficits in psychopathology. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30, 849–864.

Tool Description

Instructions

Step 1

From the list below, which of the ten positive emotions do you feel *least* daily, consequently and want to bring into your life? Choose one grouping to work with.

Types of Positive Emotion:

- Amused, fun-loving, or silly
- Awe, wonder, or amazement
- Grateful, appreciative, or thankful
- Hopeful, optimistic, or encouraged
- Inspired, uplifted, or elevated
- Interested, alert, or curious
- Joyful, glad, or happy
- Love, closeness, or trust
- Proud, confident, or self-assured
- Serene, content, or peaceful

Step 2

Write the three emotions from the grouping that you chose under “My least experienced positive emotions” on the next page.

Step 3

Take ten minutes to reflect on how you can increase the opportunities in your life to experience those three emotions. Let your mind wander and don’t limit your possibilities. Your ideas should be true to you. Aim for at least 15 ideas.

Possible categories for your ideas include:

- Activities that you already do, but could do more often
- New activities
- Changing your mindset about current activities

Remember, this is simply a brainstorming activity. It is not mandatory that you have to take action on all of these ways to increase the positive emotions in your life. Note that the list on the next page doesn’t end after 10 minutes - you can carry list around with you so that when you have another idea, which will most likely be the case, you can capture it.

My least experienced positive emotions:

.....

.....

.....

Ideas:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.