Developing Gratitude Activity

What is gratitude?

It is a time when you aware of being thankful for a person or a situation. These moments give us a good feeling that we call 'gratitude'.

Feeling grateful just happens sometimes, but you can make a special effort to increase how often you feel it.

Research has shown that people with high levels of gratitude experience a whole bunch of benefits, so it's a great idea to increase your own.

Found gratitude gives the person expressing it the power to heal, to be energized, and to change lives.

The benefits of gratitude

Increasing your gratitude is useful because:

- it's an instant mood booster and feels great in the moment
- you're likely to feel closer to friends and family
- you're likely to enjoy your life more
- it's good for your physical health
- it's easier to cope with tough times
- good things in life don't stick in our heads as easily as bad events.

This last point is really important. We tend to remember when bad things happen, and the time we spend thinking about them makes us unhappy. But, if we make an effort to increase how often we experience gratitude, it can balance out some of the negative stuff.

That doesn't mean that you should ignore/forget your problems, or that the things wrong with your life are unimportant. It just means that good memories will also stick in your mind, so you get to enjoy them for longer.

How to practise gratitude

Experiencing more gratitude is easy and doesn't take much time. Try these ideas and see what works best for you:

- **Keep a gratitude journal.** Take five minutes each day or once a week to think of and write down three things that have happened to you since the previous day or week that you are glad you experienced.

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- **Take pictures.** Set yourself a mission to photograph little things in your everyday life that make you smile.
- **Tell someone you're grateful to have them in your life.** Whether it's someone you look up to, or someone who just makes you happy, take the time to tell them you're glad they're around.

You don't have to think up a whole bunch of really significant things in order to be grateful. You can be grateful for the smallest things, such as the sunshine, your morning coffee, or the fact that you made it to your train on time.

It is a good idea to incorporate into future sessions a short time to enable students to write down something for which each is grateful and the reason why, from the previous week's life experience. This can be something quite small or quite significant. There is no expectation and will depend upon the events of the week. Allow time to share if participants would like to, but no participant is required to do so.

What is it for which I am grateful?

Think of the recent past – preferably the last 24 hours to find three things for which you are grateful.

- Events that have happened
- Something you are good at
- Goals you have achieved
- Individuals who care for you
- Items that are important to you
- People, pets who are significant in your life

When thinking of the three things for which you are grateful, think too of why you value or appreciate these. This will elicit the positive emotions.

Discuss with others the different how you can practice cultivating gratitude in your life. Options include but are not limited to:

- Diary / journal
- Mindfulness practice
- Allocate a specific time to focus on gratitude
- Carry an "anchor" to remember gratitude practice

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Consider three things for which you are grateful and write at least one reason why you possess this gratitude.

I am grateful for: _____

Because _____

_____

_____

_____

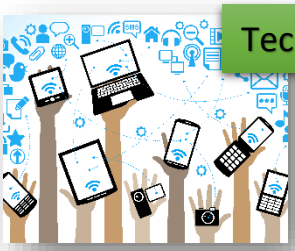
I am grateful for: _____

Because _____

_____

_____

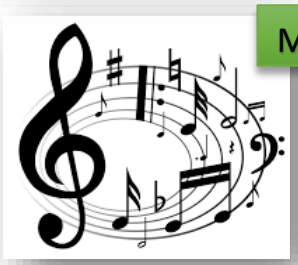
_____



I am grateful for: _____

Because _____

_____

_____

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