

## Reflections at the Beginning of Therapy

### Goals Reflection

Reflect on why you are deciding to dedicate the time, money, and energy to therapy. You can review the various types of goals below if you find it helpful.

**Emotional Goals** (Feeling Goals): What thoughts, feelings, sensations, mental processes, cravings, urges, or impulses are you having a difficult time with, or pull you away from the person you want to be or the life you want for yourself?

**Behavioral Goals** (Doing Goals): What would you like to do more of? Less of? Are there places or things that you'd approach and engage with that you've been holding back from? If you were acting more like the person you want to be deep in your heart, how would you change the way you interact with others, the world around you, or yourself? What important relationships would you like to see change? How would you be in that new relationship?

**Outcome Goals** (Accomplishing / Achieving Goals): What goals are you moving in the direction of? What important things would you like to accomplish in your life? Consider multiple areas of life- including work / education, leisure, personal development, health, relationships (friendships, romantic partners, community engagement, etc.): what would you like to see happen in your future that you'd like to work towards?

### Length of Time

Do you have an idea of how long you'd like to be in therapy, or how often you'd like to meet?

### Feelings about starting therapy

Notice for yourself the range of feelings that come up for you as you plan to start working with a therapist. There may be a sense of freedom, of space, relief, excitement, awkwardness, guilt, sadness, frustration, disappointment, optimism, pessimism, the list is really endless. You may or may not find it helpful to communicate any of these. But, this is a chance to do your own, clear reflection.

### Ways I want to contribute to my own learning and growth

This is an opportunity to come up with your own plan for keeping yourself on track in life, for dealing with the inevitable challenges that come your way, for making the best intentional use of your time, for creating the kind of life you want. As we work together, I will be suggesting ways you can further your own learning and growth outside of our time together, and I will document these in the Resources section of your training plan. You can also include things that you discover, want to review, or have found helpful in that document as well. This includes things like books, podcasts, recordings, etc. This will also become a list of resources for you to reference to support yourself after we stop working together.

- Behavioral Goals - see the explanation in the goals section. This includes things like healthy lifestyle- sleep, diet, exercise; time with friends and family; investment in various projects; work, leisure.

## Reflections at the Beginning of Therapy

- Values you want to live. Who do you enjoy being? What qualities that you bring to life really light you up, help you feel a sense of vitality, meaning, or purpose? If you want, you can review the Areas of Life assessment that follows- and jot down significant values in important areas of life.
- Reading- what books or authors help you stay connected to the habits and ideas that are inspiring and supportive
- Podcasts, classes, etc.
- Audio recordings, visualization, reflection, meditation, etc.
- Friendships and relationships with others
- Specific CBT exercises- like daily mood logs or habits logs
- Tracking and logging habits
- Journaling

## Areas of Life Assessment\*-

1. **Family relations (other than marriage or parenting).** In this section, describe the type of brother/sister, son/daughter, father/mother you want to be. Describe the qualities you would want to have in those relationships. Describe how you would treat these people if you were the ideal you in these various relationships.
2. **Marriage/couples/intimate relations.** In this section, write down a description of the person you would like to be with in an intimate relationship. write down the type of relationship you would want to have. Try to focus on your role in that relationship.
3. **Parenting.** what sort of parent would you like to be, either now or in the future?
4. **Friendships/social life.** In this section, write down what it means to you to be a good friend. If you were able to be the best friend possible, how would you behave toward your friends? Try to describe an ideal friendship. (cont.)
5. **Career/employment.** In this section, describe what type of work you would like to do. This description can be very specific or very general. (remember, this is in an ideal world.) After writing about the type of work you would like to do, write about why it appeals to you. Next, discuss what kind of worker you would like to be with respect to your employer and coworkers. what would you want your work relations to be like?
6. **Education/training/personal growth and development.** If you would like to pursue an education, formally or informally, or undertake some specialized training, write about that. write about why this sort of training or education appeals to you
7. **Recreation/fun.** Discuss the type of recreational life you would like to have, including hobbies, sports, and leisure activities.

## Reflections at the Beginning of Therapy

8. **Spirituality.** we are not necessarily referring to organized religion in this section. what we mean by spirituality is whatever that means to you, whether it is as simple as communing with nature or as formal as participation in an organized religious group. whatever spirituality means to you is fine. If this is an important area of life, write about what you would want it to be. As with all of the other areas, if this is not an important part of your values, skip to the next section.
  
9. **Community life.** For some people, participating in community affairs is an important part of life. For instance, some people feel that it is important to volunteer for work with the homeless or older adults, to lobby government policymakers at the federal, state, or local level, to become a member of a group committed to conserving wildlife, or to participate in the service structure of a self-help group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. If these sorts of community- oriented activities are important to you, write about what direction you would like to take in these areas. write about what appeals to you about this area.
  
10. **Health/physical self-care.** In this section, include your values related to maintaining your physical well-being. write about such health- related issues as sleep, diet, exercise, smoking, and the like.
  
11. The **Environment/sustainability.** In this section, include your values related to values you might have in the area of sustainability and caring for the planet and especially the natural environment.
  
12. **Art/aesthetics.** In this section, include your values related to such pursuits as art, music, literature, craftsmanship, or any other form of beauty in the world that is meaningful to you— whether considering things that you make yourself or things that others make and that you mainly appreciate.

**\*ACT Areas of Life Assessment,** (Adapted from: Wilson, Sandoz, Kitchens & Roberts (2010). The Valued Living Questionnaire: defining and measuring valued action within a behavioural framework. *The Psychological Record*, 60, 249-272., and from the generous trainings of Russ Harris -<https://www.actmindfully.com.au/free-stuff/worksheets-handouts-book-chapters/>)