


 **Coping** Intervention 15 min/day Client No

Positive Portfolio

Experiencing positive emotions is a key ingredient in human flourishing. According to positive psychologist Barbara Fredrickson, intentionally cultivating positive emotions contributes to wellbeing through helping us broaden our thought-action repertoire and build our intellectual and psychological resources. Fredrickson's 'hunt and gather' intervention is designed to do just this. This intervention invites people to create a portfolio with objects and mementos that evoke in them a particular positive emotion. Individuals can gather a range of verbal, visual, and auditory materials (e.g., music, poems, photos, quotes, letters, emails, cards, objects, and so on) that he/she associates with the chosen affective state, and combines these in the form of a scrapbook or scrap box.

Fredrickson recommends creating one physical portfolio for each of the ten key positive emotions: joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love. Once created, people can re-examine the contents of their portfolios (i.e., by looking at the pictures, reading the poems and letters, and listening to the music) to cultivate the chosen affective state.



Author

This tool was adapted by Lucinda Poole (PsyD) from the Hunt and Gather exercise in Fredrickson's (2009) book entitled 'Positivity' and Hugo Alberts (Ph.D.)



Goal

This tool is designed to cultivate positive affective states by creating positive portfolios.



Advice

- Encourage clients to continue to add to their portfolios over time.
- Portfolios may be created in physical (e.g., scrapbook) or digital form (e.g., on the computer, phone, or on a webpage).



- Clients can use their camera phones to add to their portfolios throughout the week by taking pictures of things that generate the target positive emotion. Photos can be uploaded to a digital portfolio or printed and pasted into a physical portfolio.
- According to Fredrickson, clients should revisit their portfolios to remind themselves of the good in their lives. This simple break can often give them a boost and inspire them to find their way back to the nourishing upward spiral of positivity.



References

- Fredrickson, B. (2009). *Positivity*. Harmony.

Positive Portfolio

Instructions

This exercise involves creating a positive portfolio. A positive portfolio is a collection of things that evoke in you a particular positive emotion. For example, an individual's 'love' portfolio may include some family photos, the collar of a deceased pet, gifts from a loved one, music from their wedding, love letters, and so on. The idea is to hunt and gather as many objects and mementos as you can, bringing them together in a kind of shrine to that particular emotion.

Step 1: Select a positive emotion

From the list below, select a positive emotion that you would like to experience more of in your life now. This will be the focus of your positive portfolio.

1. Joy
2. Gratitude
3. Serenity
4. Interest
5. Hope
6. Pride
7. Amusement
8. Inspiration
9. Awe
10. Love

Step 2: Create your portfolio

During the next week, begin to pull together objects and mementos that evoke in you your chosen positive emotion (Step 1). Items may be verbal, visual, or auditory, for example, music, quotes, poems, photos, gifts, letters, emails, cards, and objects. Combine them in whatever format works best for you (i.e., digital, physical). Commit to spending a full week on building your portfolio to allow yourself to dive deep into that emotion.

Step 3: Reflect and savor

Now that you have created your portfolio, spend 15 minutes per day over the next week to revisit its contents and experience, and savor the positive feelings that emerge. For example, re-read love letters, examine photos, play your wedding song. Intentionally cultivating the feeling of that emotion within yourself in this way is a desirable skill for those times in life when we need a boost.



Step 4: Evaluation

- How did you find the process of creating your positive portfolio? What emotions did you experience?
- What did you find more positive - the creation of the portfolio or spending time with it each day? Why?
- Were you able to cultivate the emotional state while revisiting your portfolio? What was this like? How long did this last?
- What did you enjoy most about this exercise?
- What was the most difficult part of the exercise?
- When might you revisit your portfolio in the future? Can you think of specific instances where this would be helpful or valuable?