



***Rooted: Futures in Focus***

**Life Skills Development Workshop for Transitional Age Youth (TAY)**

A Psychoeducational Eight-Week Group Workshop for Six Individuals

Existential Orientation with TIP Model Integrations



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## Outline of 8 Workshop Sessions

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### Initial Stage, Session 1: Greet Your Group + What Do You Value?

#### ***Purpose/Goal: Engagement and Relationship Building***

*To begin building safe and secure interpersonal group relationships, this workshop will help develop group belonging and explore values while providing an overview of the workshop with psychoeducation and group discussions.*

#### ***Objectives***

- *Introductions - Help everyone feel comfortable*
- *Group Norms - Verbal agreements*
- *Group Expectations and Questions*
- *Explore Values and Beliefs*

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### Initial Stage, Session 2: Existential Concepts and Meaning Making

#### ***Purpose/Goal: Building Identity***

*To address building identity, this workshop will reflect more on values and meaning-making with a discussion and psychoeducation.*

#### ***Objectives:***

- *Grow Self-Awareness by reviewing the Values Tests*
- *Psychoeducation: Understand the basics of Existential Concepts*
- *Connect Values Test to Meaning-Making and Purpose*

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### **Transition Stage, Session 3: Our Freedom to Make Choices**

#### ***Purpose/Goal: Self-Exploration***

*To address overall well-being, this workshop will explore how participants can feel free by exploring nearby accessible adventure options to develop agency and navigational skills. This workshop will also connect meaning-making with values, and the freedom to create one's own meaning and purpose with psychoeducation and group discussions.*

#### ***Objectives:***

- *New insights on what kind of life is worth living, and connecting this to values*
  - *Understand that we have the freedom and responsibility to design our lives with choices*
  - *Learn how to navigate and access transportation resources for day trips in the Bay Area, and how adventure therapy can support stress management*
- 

### **Transition Stage, Session 4: Isolation & Connection**

#### ***Purpose/Goal: Community Building & Deepening the Social Connection***

*To address feelings of isolation, this workshop focuses on connecting with peers by learning about trauma, attachment theory, and the basics of active listening through psychoeducation and discussion.*

#### ***Objectives:***

- *Learn about trauma's impact on the body and attachment theory*
  - *Learn the basics of active listening*
  - *Learn stress management and coping skills*
- 

### **Working Stage, Session 5: Lessons from Death & Anxiety**

#### ***Purpose/Goal: Tying together meaning, values, social connection, and mortality***

*To address fear of mortality, this workshop will help participants explore and reflect on death anxiety with psychoeducation and a group discussion.*

#### ***Objectives:***

- *Normalize death, anxiety, and death anxiety*
- *Explore life, legacy, and personal meaning*
- *Support the development of a future narrative reflection with eulogy activity*
- *Foster appreciation for life*

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## **Working Stage, Session 6: Tying it All Together with Career Goals**

### ***Purpose/Goal: Solidify Plan for Participants' Career Goals***

*To help youth explore career and life path options grounded in their values and sense of purpose by exploring career options. To address career, lifestyle, and financial goals, this workshop will help participants create a prioritized plan with worksheets.*

### ***Objectives:***

- *Explore interests and strengths*
- *Connect personal values with career/life planning*
- *Identify a realistic long-term goal and steps toward the goal*
- *Begin the termination process*

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## **Ending Stage, Session 7: Polishing Your Priorities Plan for Your Goal**

***Purpose/Goal:*** *Members will walk away with a three-step plan and identify accountability partner(s). To address proximity support, this workshop will connect participants to hold each other accountable to meeting their weekly goals.*

### ***Objectives***

- *Reflect on learning over 7 weeks, the termination process*
- *Identify a career goal and three concrete steps*
- *Match participants with partners who will help keep them accountable (in this group and/or externally)*
- *Participants practice giving and receiving support*

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## **Ending Stage, Session 8: Rooted in Your Futures**

***Purpose/Goal:*** *Participants present a three-step plan toward a life they want to live, career, goals, etc. Celebrate participants' growth, review what was learned, and prepare for what's next. In order to address continued growth and momentum, this workshop will integrate scheduling future accountability meetings.*

### ***Objectives***

- *SMART Goals presentations / personal growth plans*
- *Group experience reflection, give support*
- *Empower next steps and closure*
- *Offer future ways to connect and stay involved*
- *Terminate group*



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## **Rooted: Futures in Focus**

*Life Skills for Transitional Age Youth (TAY), an Eight-Week Group Workshop: Psychoeducational Discussions with an Existential Orientation and Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model Integration*

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### **Facilitator Guide**

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#### **Existential Therapy Goals** ([Source](#))

1. Explore the four existential givens: Meaninglessness, Freedom, Death, and Isolation
2. Increase self-awareness: Understand your thoughts, feelings, and motivations
3. Take responsibility for your life: Recognize that you are free to make choices and that you are responsible for the consequences of those choices
4. Exploring values, beliefs, and aspirations to find what gives life meaning and purpose
5. Accept anxiety and death as part of the human condition: Acknowledging that death and anxiety are a natural part of life - and having this understanding is motivation for growth
6. Live more authentically: Living in accordance with your true values and beliefs

#### **Transition to Independence Process: Model Guidelines** ([Source](#))

1. Relationship development, person-centered planning, and a focus on futures
2. Tailor services and supports to be accessible, coordinated, and built on strengths to enable TAY to pursue their goals
3. Acknowledge and develop personal choice and social responsibility
4. Ensure a safety net of support
5. Enhance TAY competencies to achieve greater self-sufficiency and confidence
6. Maintain an outcome focus in the TIP system at for TAY, the program, and community
7. Involve TAY, parents, and other community partners in the TIP system

## Notes to facilitator:

### 1. Facilitator's Main Objective:

- a. Co-create this workshop, being somewhat flexible with participants. The clients in this workshop are the center of this program's overall approach by encouraging them to develop self-awareness, a their own authentic community of support and SMART goal plan.

### 2. **Workshop Docs:** Use your Professional Google Account: Copy [Rooted TAY Workshop](#) folder to edit documents.

- a. *Test links across all resources and thoroughly review all workshop documents and resources before facilitating*
- b. [Certificate of Completion link here](#) for editing and printing to distribute to participants during conclusion of Session 8



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## Rooted: Futures in Focus

*Life Skills for Transitional Age Youth (TAY), an Eight-Week Group Workshop: Psychoeducational Discussions with an Existential Orientation and Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model Integration*

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## Faciliator Guide

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### Existential Therapy Goals ([Source](#))

1. Explore the four existential givens: Meaninglessness, Freedom, Death, and Isolation
2. Increase self-awareness: Understand your thoughts, feelings, and motivations
3. Take responsibility for your life: Recognize that you are free to make choices and that you are responsible for the consequences of those choices
4. Exploring values, beliefs, and aspirations to find what gives life meaning and purpose
5. Accept anxiety and death as part of the human condition: Acknowledging that death and anxiety are a natural part of life - and having this understanding is motivation for growth
6. Live more authentically: Living in accordance with your true values and beliefs

### Transition to Independence Process: Model Guidelines ([Source](#))

1. Relationship development, person-centered planning, and a focus on futures
2. Tailor services and supports to be accessible, coordinated, and built on strengths to enable TAY to pursue their goals
3. Acknowledge and develop personal choice and social responsibility
4. Ensure a safety net of support
5. Enhance TAY competencies to achieve greater self-sufficiency and confidence
6. Maintain an outcome focus in the TIP system at for TAY, the program, and community
7. Involve TAY, parents, and other community partners in the TIP system

### Notes to facilitator:

- **Facilitator Objective:** Support participants to be the center of a strength-based approach by encouraging them to develop their supports and goals
- **Workshop Docs:** Use your Professional Google Account: Copy [Rooted TAY Workshop](#) folder to edit documents.
  - *Test links across all resources and thoroughly review all workshop documents and resources before facilitating*
  - [Certificate of Completion link here](#) for editing and printing to distribute to participants during conclusion of Session 8



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## **Initial Stage, Session 1: Greet Your Group + What Do You Value?**

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### ***Purpose/Goal: Engagement and Relationship Building***

*To begin building safe and secure interpersonal group relationships, this workshop will help develop group belonging and explore values while providing an overview of the workshop with psychoeducation and group discussions.*

### ***Objectives***

- *Introductions - Help everyone feel comfortable*
- *Group Norms - Verbal agreements*
- *Group Expectations and Questions*
- *Explore Values and Beliefs*

### **OUTLINE FOR ONE-HOUR SESSION**

#### **10 minutes: Check-in Process**

- Reusable name tags with markers to decorate. Open the circle, and greet everyone
- Have participants say hello to each other and introduce themselves to the person next to them
- Share a little about yourself and your professional background with the group. Encourage participants to share a personal strength about themselves

#### **5 minutes: Mindfulness Intervention**

Box Breathing, Grounding Exercise - Repeat four times

Breath in slowly for a count of four, hold for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four, hold for a count of four

#### **15 minutes: Course Overview**

- Review the Eight-Week Syllabus
- Group Norms, Expectations, and Verbal Agreements
- Co-create additional Community Agreements with the group
- Review Limits of Confidentiality



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### **10 minutes: Discussion Questions**

- What matters most to you/what do you value? How do you know what you value, and why do you have these values?

### **10 minutes: Psychoeducation Intervention**

- Explore Beliefs
  - [Epistemology: How do you know what you know?](#)

### **10 minutes: Closing**

- *Faciliator Reminder:* Collect participants' creative nametags - let the group know to bring their test results and journals weekly
- For the following sessions, arrange name tags on chairs to ensure all participants sit near different peers every session.

### **Review Homework/Syllabus:**

#### **Printed Hard Copy Handouts**

- [Syllabus Outline with QR Code for Sublinks](#)
- [Rooted Foundations Support Community and Resource List](#)
- [Understanding Values & Valued Living Questionnaire](#)

#### **Complete/Return Hard Copy Handouts:**

- [Signed Consent Form](#)
- [Signed Group Norms & Expectations](#) with contact information
  - *Reminder! Bring both signed paperwork next week!*

#### **Digital Access Sublinks in Syllabus**

- [Epistemology: How do you know what you know?](#)
- Core Values Index Test: [Free CVI Assessment](#)

#### **Homework Journal:**

- Write about your strengths, and list out your support group with their contact information. -*Reminder to bring Valued Living Questionnaire results for discussion and our journal every session*

### **Questions? Feedback?**

### **Box Breathing Together** (only repeated once)

Think of what you are thankful for and what has gone right in your day. **Goodbye!**



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## Initial Stage, Session 2: Existential Concepts and Meaning Making

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### ***Purpose/Goal: Building Identity***

*To address building identity, this workshop will reflect more on values and meaning-making with a discussion and psychoeducation.*

### ***Objectives:***

- *Grow Self-Awareness by reviewing the Values Tests*
- *Psychoeducation: Understand the basics of Existential Concepts*
- *Connect Values Test to Meaning-Making and Purpose*

### **OUTLINE FOR ONE-HOUR SESSION**

#### **10 minutes: Check-in Process**

- Before participants' arrival, strategically place name tags on chairs, open the circle, and greet everyone
- Collect Consent Forms and Contact Information Forms
- Say hello to each other, introduce yourself to the person next to you - to new people!

#### **5 minutes: Mindfulness Intervention**

Box Breathing, Grounding Exercise - Repeat four times

Breath in slowly for a count of four, hold for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four, hold for a count of four

#### **25 minutes: Psychoeducation Intervention**

- [Introduction to Existentialism for Transitional Age Youth](#)
- From the [handout](#), briefly speak about the four existential givens: death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness
- Briefly further explore the existential given of **meaninglessness**

#### **10 minutes: Discussion Questions**

- Discuss the concept of meaninglessness, then have the group share ideas on creating meaning and purpose. How do you find meaning? What do you find meaningful?
- Have participants volunteer to share their values results with the group
- Many people find meaning in religion and spirituality - why do you think that is?



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## **10 minutes: Closing**

### **Review Homework/Syllabus:**

#### **Digital Access Sublinks in Syllabus**

- Take the [Meyers-Briggs Personality Test](#) -Reminder! Bring results to the next session
- [Introduction to Existential Thinking](#)
- [Existential psychotherapy helped my students cope with chaos](#)

#### **Homework Journal:**

- Why is it useful for you to know what you value? How does it feel to learn more about your values? Do you think your values will change in the future? How do you think your values and beliefs connect to your results from the Myers-Briggs Personality Test? What was the most surprising thing for you to learn about yourself?  
-Reminder! Bring *your journal* with you next week, continue bringing it every session

#### **Questions? Feedback?**

#### **Box Breathing Together** (only repeated once)

Think of what you are thankful for and what has gone right in your day. **Goodbye!**



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## Transition Stage, Session 3: Our Freedom to Make Choices

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### ***Purpose/Goal: Self-Exploration***

*To address overall well-being, this workshop will explore how participants can feel free by exploring nearby accessible adventure options to develop agency and navigational skills. This workshop will also connect meaning-making with values, and the freedom to create one's own meaning and purpose with psychoeducation and group discussions.*

### ***Objectives:***

- *New insights on what kind of life is worth living, and connecting this to values*
- *Understand that we have the freedom and responsibility to design our lives with choices*
- *Learn how to navigate and access transportation resources for day trips in the Bay Area, and how adventure therapy can support stress management*

## **OUTLINE FOR ONE-HOUR SESSION**

### **5 minutes: Check-in Process**

- Before participants' arrival, strategically place name tags on chairs, open the circle, and greet everyone
- Instruct: Say hello to each other, introduce yourself to the person next to you - new people!
- Share one thing happy and one thing crappy about your week with the group

### **5 minutes: Mindfulness Intervention**

Box Breathing, Grounding Exercise - Repeat four times

Breath in slowly for a count of four, hold for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four, hold for a count of four

### **10 minutes: Psychoeducation Intervention**

- Explore the existential given of **freedom**.
- Existentialist thought generally recognizes two types of freedom: existential freedom and essential freedom.
  - Existential freedom refers to the freedom to make choices and act
  - Essential freedom, or "freedom of being," is the ability to define oneself and create one's own meaning and purpose.



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### **15 minutes: Existential Questions "Choosing and Changing"**

- What kind of life do you consider worthy to live?
- How does being responsible and making choices that align with our values create freedom in our lives?
- What are some areas in your life where you can take more ownership of your choices?
- What are other types of freedoms? Financial, Social, Speech, Physical, Civil

### **15 minutes: Discussion - Other Freedoms - Feeling Free as Self-Care**

- What makes you feel free? *Examples: Hiking, dancing, singing, swimming*
- Who here has taken public transit somewhere fun? Does anyone ride a bike or anything?
- Talk about [adventure as a stress management tool](#), and how adventures can help you feel free.

### **10 minutes: Closing**

### **Review Homework/Syllabus:**

#### **Digital Access Sublinks in Syllabus**

- [How to use Google Maps](#)
- [Access Adventure in the Bay Area](#) - Explore Transit Links!

#### **Homework Journal:**

- Write down a place within an hour that you'd like to visit. what are the steps to access it? Are there any barriers to helping you reach this place and having a day-trip adventure? If there are barriers, are there resources for solutions? What can you imagine doing on the trip? Picnic? Hike? Urban Exploration? Dance Videos?
- *Please share your day trip adventure idea plan with the group at the next session that's accessible with public transit.*

### **Questions? Feedback?**

### **Box Breathing Together** (only repeated once)

Think of what you are thankful for and what has gone right in your day. **Goodbye!**



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## Transition Stage, Session 4: Isolation & Connection

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### ***Purpose/Goal: Community Building & Deepening the Social Connection***

*To address feelings of isolation, this workshop focuses on connecting with peers by learning about trauma, attachment theory, and the basics of active listening through psychoeducation and discussion.*

### ***Objectives:***

- *Learn about trauma's impact on the body and attachment theory*
- *Learn the basics of active listening*
- *Learn stress management and coping skills*

### **OUTLINE FOR ONE-HOUR SESSION**

#### **20 minutes: Check-in Process**

- Before participants' arrival, strategically place name tags on chairs, open the circle, and greet everyone.
- Share one thing happy and one thing crappy about your week with the group.
- Participants share a day trip adventure plan using public transit

#### **5 minutes: Mindfulness Intervention**

Box Breathing, Grounding Exercise - Repeat four times

Breath in slowly for a count of four, hold for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four, hold for a count of four

#### **25 minutes: Psychoeducation**

Explore the existential given of **isolation**.

- [Attachment Theory](#) - different attachment styles
- [Active Listening Guide](#) - How to actively listen
- Address existential isolation and the importance of social connections
- Healthy coping mechanisms when you're feeling isolated
- Discuss "[Empty Chair](#)" technique from Gestalt therapy to help work through and plan difficult conversations or release feelings



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## **10 minutes: Closing**

### **Review Homework/Syllabus:**

#### **Digital Access Sublinks in Syllabus**

- [Creating Secure Attachment Worksheet](#)
- [Attachment Style Quiz](#) -Reminder! Bring your results to the next session
- [Active Listening Guide](#)
- [Trauma Toolkit](#) - for educators but good information
- [How to Release Trauma From the Body](#)
- ["Empty Chair" technique from Gestalt therapy](#)

#### **Homework Journal:**

- What do you think about your attachment style results? How is learning about attachment styles helpful? What connections in your life now give you joy and a sense of belonging? If you want more connections with people, what is the best way to grow your connections with others?  
-Reminder to bring:  
-Attachment Style Quiz results and journal for discussion next session

### **Questions? Feedback?**

#### **Box Breathing Together** (only repeated once)

Think of what you are thankful for and what has gone right in your day. **Goodbye!**



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## Working Stage, Session 5: Lessons from Death & Anxiety

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***Purpose/Goal: Tying together meaning, values, social connection, and mortality***

*To address fear of mortality, this workshop will help participants explore and reflect on death anxiety with psychoeducation and a group discussion.*

***Objectives:***

- *Normalize death, anxiety, and death anxiety*
- *Explore life, legacy, and personal meaning*
- *Support the development of a future narrative reflection with eulogy activity*
- *Foster appreciation for life*

### OUTLINE FOR ONE-HOUR SESSION

**15 minutes: Check-in Process**

- Before participants' arrival, strategically place name tags on chairs, open the circle, and greet everyone
- Share one thing happy and one thing crappy about your week with the group.
- Discuss attachment style results

**5 minutes: Mindfulness Intervention**

Box Breathing, Grounding Exercise - Repeat four times

Breath in slowly for a count of four, hold for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four, hold for a count of four

**10 minutes: Psychoeducation Intervention**

- Explore the [existential given of death](#)
- [Discuss anxiety and coping skills](#)
- [Fight, Flight, or Freeze - The Vagus Nerve and Parasympathetic System](#)

**10 minutes: Discussion Questions**

- Death and Legacy: How do these tie into Values and Meaning-Making?



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**5 minutes: Closing**

**Review Homework/Syllabus:**

**Digital Access Sublinks in Syllabus**

- [Death Anxiety Scale Quiz](#)
- [5 Ways to Cope with Anxiety](#)
- [Fight, Flight, or Freeze - The Vagus Nerve and Parasympathetic System](#)
- [The Existential Moment: Existential Givens—Death](#)

**Homework Journal:** Imagine that you have passed away. Write a short speech that someone would deliver at your funeral, reflecting on your life, accomplishments, and character. Consider your values, relationships, and achievements, as well as any challenges or obstacles you faced and overcame.

- What would you want them to say about you?
- How would you want to be remembered?
- How would this translate into action now – What would you want the rest of your life to stand for?
- In 5 and 10 years, what would you like your story to be?

**Questions? Feedback?**

**Box Breathing Together** (only repeated once)

Think of what you are thankful for and what has gone right in your day. **Goodbye!**



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## Working Stage, Session 6:

### Tying it All Together with Career Goals

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***Purpose/Goal: Solidify Plan for Participants' Career Goals***

*To help youth explore career and life path options grounded in their values and sense of purpose by exploring career options. “To address career, lifestyle, and financial goals, this workshop will help participants create a prioritized plan.*

***Objectives:***

- *Explore interests and strengths*
- *Connect personal values with career/life planning*
- *Identify a realistic long-term goal and steps toward the goal*
- *Begin the termination process*

#### OUTLINE FOR ONE-HOUR SESSION

**15 minutes: Check-in Process**

- Before participants' arrival, strategically place name tags on chairs, open the circle, and greet everyone
- Say hello to each other, and say hi to the person next to you
- Share Eulogy

**5 minutes: Mindfulness Intervention**

Box Breathing, Grounding Exercise - Repeat four times

Breath in slowly for a count of four, hold for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four, hold for a count of four

**20 minutes: Psychoeducation**

- Talk about how to prioritize goals - Review [SMART Goals Worksheet](#)
  - Review [Reddit Thread](#): How to Ruthlessly Prioritize When Every Task Matters
- Link career planning to life values, personality type, eulogy, and freedom of choice
  - Explain the [O\\*NET Interest Profiler](#)
  - Discuss how interests connect to values

**20 Minutes: Activity and Discussion**

- Identify and prioritize your top goal - talk it out as a group



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- Create a mini vision board with your journal:
  - Draw or write 3 next steps to reach your prioritized goal

### 5 minutes Closing

### Review Homework/Syllabus:

#### Digital Access Sublinks in Syllabus

- [O\\*NET Interest Profiler Quiz](#) *Explore your strengths/interests as it relates to a career*
- [SMART Goals Worksheet](#) - *Review Only to Brainstorm*
- [Reddit Thread](#): How to Ruthlessly Prioritize When Every Task Matters

#### Homework Journal:

- Reflect on your O\*NET results and how they may connect to your other quizzes and journal entries (life values, beliefs, Myers-Briggs personality type, your eulogy story, your freedom/adventure day).. Do you see a pattern or have any insights?
- Write out a career goal that interests you the most, reflecting on what you have learned so far about yourself in this workshop. Review the SMART Goals worksheet template - What are three steps you can take toward your goal?
  - *Schedule a concrete action toward your goal and be prepared to share it with the group next week.*

### Questions? Feedback?

### Box Breathing Together (only repeated once)

Think of what you are thankful for and what has gone right in your day. **Goodbye!**



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## Ending Stage, Session 7:

### Polishing Your Priorities Plan for Your Goal

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***Purpose/Goal:*** Members will walk away with a three-step plan and identify accountability partner(s). To address proximity support, this workshop will connect participants to hold each other accountable to meeting their weekly goals.

#### ***Objectives***

- *Reflect on learning over 7 weeks, the termination process*
- *Identify a career goal and three concrete steps*
- *Match participants with partners who will help keep them accountable (in this group and externally)*
- *Practice giving and receiving support*

#### **OUTLINE FOR ONE-HOUR SESSION**

##### **10 minutes: Check-in Process**

- Before participants' arrival, strategically place name tags on chairs, open the circle, and greet everyone
- Say hello to those next to you - say their name when you say hello!
- Share one thing happy and one thing crappy about your week with the group
- Share O\*NET results and goal priority
  - “Tell the group one step you have scheduled toward your goal”

##### **5 minutes: Mindfulness Intervention**

Box Breathing, Grounding Exercise - Repeat four times

Breath in slowly for a count of four, hold for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four, hold for a count of four

##### **35 mins: Psychoeducation and Discussion:**

- Giving and receiving support - group circle name a strength you see in the person to the left of you
- Who's your accountability buddy? Exchange contact info if comfortable
- Reviewing and choosing a priority for [SMART GOALS](#) - review worksheet again
- Group discussion: How do you stay motivated after this group? What have you learned about yourself that will help you stay focused?



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### **10 minutes: Discussion**

Optional sharing of plans

### **15 minutes Closing**

### **Review Homework/Syllabus:**

#### **Digital Access Sublinks in Syllabus**

- 3-Step Priority Goal - Complete [SMART Goals Worksheet](#)
- [How to Choose and Work with An Accountability Partner](#)
  - *Follow up with your accountability buddy by next week to be accountable for completing one step you scheduled*
- [Accountability Partnership Worksheet](#)
- What are three steps you can take toward your goal?
  - *Reminder! Be prepared to share your SMART Worksheet and three steps with the group next week!*

#### **Homework Journal:**

- Write a letter to yourself to review in six months about where you hope to be in your goals

*Reminder!* - Group photo next week

### **Questions? Feedback?**

#### **Box Breathing Together** (only repeated once)

Think of what you are thankful for and what has gone right in your day. **Goodbye!**

***Note to Facilitator:*** Don't forget to complete and print the [Certificate of Completion \(link here\)](#) for editing and printing to distribute to participants during the conclusion of Session 8!



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## Ending Stage, Session 8: Rooted in Your Futures

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**Purpose/Goal:** Participants present a three-step plan toward a life they want to live, career, goals, etc. Celebrate participants’ growth, review what was learned, and prepare for what’s next.

*In order to address continued growth and momentum, this workshop will integrate scheduling future accountability meetings.*

### **Objectives**

- SMART Goals presentations / personal growth plans
- Group experience reflection
- Empower next steps and closure
- Offer future ways to connect and stay involved
- Terminate group

### **OUTLINE FOR ONE-HOUR SESSION**

#### **15 minutes: Check-in Process**

- Before participants' arrival, strategically place name tags on chairs, open the circle, and greet everyone
- Say hello to those next to you - say their name when you say hello!
- Share one thing happy and one thing crappy about your week with the group.
- Gratitude circle — share one thing the group means to you - shout-outs!

#### **5 minutes: Mindfulness Intervention**

Box Breathing, Grounding Exercise - Repeat four times

Breath in slowly for a count of four, hold for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four, hold for a count of four

#### **30 minutes: Intervention**

- Everyone presents their SMART Worksheet and three steps with the group (*about seven minutes presenting for each participant allowing a couple minutes for questions*)
  - Upon concluding of each presentation, present the Certificate of Completion
- Group Reflection: What will you take with you from this group? What will you leave behind?
- Take a Group Photo to Email to the group with the Doodle link (see below)



***Rooted: Futures in Focus*** “An Oak tree is a daily reminder that great things often have small beginnings” - Matshona Dhliway

**10 minutes: Discussion**

Optional: Share letters to self, share additional insights learned, shout-outs

**10 minutes: Closing**

**Review Homework/Syllabus:**

**Schedule Followup Zoom Meetings via [Doodle](#) with Facilitator**

1. Group Meeting
2. Individual Meeting

**Questions? Feedback?**

**Box Breathing Together** (only repeated once)

Think of what you are thankful for and what has gone right in your day.

**Goodbye circle:** One word for your journey ahead

Farewell and good luck! ***Community and Personal Health is Wealth!***



***Rooted: Futures in Focus*** “An Oak tree is a daily reminder that great things often have small beginnings” - Matshona Dhliway

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## Post Group

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### **Email Evaluation Survey ([link here](#))**

- Determine measures to assess the effectiveness of the group

### **Doodle: Schedule Follow-up Zooms:**

- **Individual Zoom:** Unstructured follow-up phone call for each individual member for a progress check-in and exit interview in two weeks
- **Group Zoom:** Unstructured follow-up group Zoom after one month
  - *Last Assignment:* With the group, choose a central location for participants to meet up on their own to engage in a public center with events and community partners where group members can further develop, network, and serve their community!
    - Examples: OAKSTOP, WHITE PONY EXPRESS, LIBRARY, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, JOBCORPS, CIVICORPS, ETC. Invite your friends and build your community network! [Review the Resources Sheet for more ideas.](#)

## **SESSION 1 HANDOUTS**



***Rooted: Futures in Focus*** Like an oak tree, we spread our foundational roots with core values while growing a future of purposeful choices.

## **Rooted: Futures in Focus**

*Life Skills for Transitional Age Youth, an Eight-Week Group Workshop: Existential Orientation with Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model Integration*

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### **Syllabus**

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Author [laurenmilitello.com](http://laurenmilitello.com)

***Syllabus QR Code for Digital Access to Sublinks***



Facilitator:

Email:

Phone:

Availability:

Workshop Location & Meeting Time:

#### ***GOALS OF EXISTENTIAL THERAPY*** ([Source](#))

1. Increase self-awareness: Understanding your own thoughts, feelings, and motivations.
2. Take responsibility for your life: Recognizing that you are free to make choices and that you are responsible for the consequences of those choices.
3. Exploring values, beliefs, and aspirations to find what gives life meaning and purpose.
4. Accept anxiety and death as part of the human condition: Acknowledging that death and anxiety are a natural part of life and having this understanding is motivation for growth.
5. Live more authentically: Living in accordance with your true values and beliefs.

#### ***TIP MODEL GUIDELINES*** ([Source](#))

1. Relationship development, person-centered planning, and a focus on futures.
2. Tailor services and supports to be accessible, coordinated, and built on strengths to enable TAY to pursue their goals.
3. Acknowledge and develop personal choice and social responsibility
4. Ensure a safety net of support.
5. Enhance TAY competencies to assist them in achieving greater self-sufficiency and confidence.
6. Maintain an outcome focus in the TIP system for TAY, the program, and community.
7. Involve TAY, parents, and other community partners in the TIP system.



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## **Week 1: Greet Your Group + What Do You Value?**

### ***Objectives***

- *Introductions*
- *Group Norms - Verbal agreements*
- *Group Expectations and Questions*
- *Explore Values and Beliefs*

### **Homework:**

#### **Digital Access Links and Printed Hard Copy Handouts:**

- [Syllabus Outline with QR Code for Sublinks](#)
- [Rooted Foundations Support Community and Resource List](#)
- [Understanding Values & Valued Living Questionnaire](#)

#### **Complete/Return Hard Copy Handouts:**

- [Signed Consent Form](#)
- [Signed Group Norms & Expectations](#) with contact information  
- *Reminder! Bring both signed paperwork next week!*
- [Epistemology: How do you know what you know?](#)
  - Core Values Index Test: [Free CVI Assessment](#)

#### **Homework Journal:**

- Write about your strengths, and list out your support group with their contact information. -*Reminder to bring Valued Living Questionnaire results for discussion and our journal every session*

## **Week 2: Existential Concepts and Meaning Making**

### ***Objectives:***

- *Grow Self-Awareness by reviewing the Values Tests*
- *Psychoeducation: Understand the basics of Existential Concepts*
- *Connect Values Test to Meaning-Making and Purpose*



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### **Homework:**

#### **Digital Access Links:**

- Take the [Meyers-Briggs Personality Test](#) -Reminder! Bring results to the next session
- [Introduction to Existential Thinking](#)
- [Existential psychotherapy helped my students cope with chaos](#)

#### **Homework Journal:**

- Why is it useful for you to know what you value? How does it feel to learn more about your values? Do you think your values will change in the future? How do you think your values and beliefs connect to your results from the Myers-Briggs Personality Test? What was the most surprising thing for you to learn about yourself?  
-Reminder! Bring your journal with you next week, and continue bringing it every session

## **Week 3: Our Freedom to Make Choices**

### **Objectives:**

- *New insights on what kind of life is worth living, and connecting this to values*
- *Understand that we have the freedom and responsibility to design our lives with choices*
- *Learn how to navigate and access transportation resources for day trips in the Bay Area, and how adventure therapy can support stress management*

### **Homework:**

#### **Digital Access Links:**

- [How to use Google Maps](#)
- [Access Adventure in the Bay Area](#) - Explore Transit Links!

#### **Homework Journal:**

- Write down a place within an hour that you'd like to visit. what are the steps to access it? Are there any barriers to helping you reach this place and having a day-trip adventure? If there are barriers, are there resources for solutions? What



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can you imagine doing on the trip? Picnic? Hike? Urban Exploration? Dance Videos?

- *Please share your day trip adventure idea plan with the group at the next session, which is accessible by public transit.*

## **Week 4: Isolation & Connection**

### ***Objectives:***

- *Learn about trauma's impact on the body and attachment theory*
- *Learn the basics of active listening*
- *Learn stress management and coping skills*

### **Homework:**

#### **Digital Access Links**

- [Creating Secure Attachment Worksheet](#)
- [Attachment Style Quiz](#) -Reminder! Bring your results to the next session
- [Active Listening Guide](#)
- [Trauma Toolkit](#) - for educators but good information
- [How to Release Trauma From the Body](#)
- ["Empty Chair" technique from Gestalt therapy](#)

#### **Homework Journal:**

- What do you think about your attachment style results? How is learning about attachment styles helpful? What connections in your life now give you joy and a sense of belonging? If you want more connections with people, what is the best way to grow your connections with others?  
-Reminder to bring:  
-Attachment Style Quiz results and journal for discussion next session

## **Week 5: Lessons from Death & Anxiety**

### ***Objectives:***

- *Normalize death, anxiety, and death anxiety*
- *Explore life, legacy, and personal meaning*



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- *Support the development of a future narrative reflection with eulogy activity*
- *Foster appreciation for life*

### **Homework:**

#### **Digital Access Links:**

- [Death Anxiety Scale Quiz](#)
- [5 Ways to Cope with Anxiety](#)
- [Fight, Flight, or Freeze - The Vagus Nerve and Parasympathetic System](#)
- [The Existential Moment: Existential Givens—Death](#)

**Homework Journal:** Imagine that you have passed away. Write a short speech that someone would deliver at your funeral, reflecting on your life, accomplishments, and character. Consider your values, relationships, and achievements, as well as any challenges or obstacles you faced and overcame.

- What would you want them to say about you?
- How would you want to be remembered?
- How would this translate into action now – What would you want the rest of your life to stand for?
- In 5 and 10 years, what would you like your story to be?

## **Week 6: Tying it All Together with Career Goals**

### **Objectives:**

- *Explore interests and strengths*
- *Connect personal values with career/life planning*
- *Identify a realistic long-term goal and steps toward the goal*
- *Reflect on the workshop's near conclusion*

### **Homework:**

#### **Digital Access Links:**

- [O\\*NET Interest Profiler Quiz](#) *Explore your strengths/interests as it relates to a career*
- [SMART Goals Worksheet](#) - *Review Only to Brainstorm*
- [Reddit Thread](#): *How to Ruthlessly Prioritize When Every Task Matters*



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#### **Homework Journal:**

- Reflect on your O\*NET results and how they may connect to your other quizzes and journal entries (life values, beliefs, Myers-Briggs personality type, your eulogy story, your freedom/adventure day).. Do you see a pattern or have any insights?
- Write out a career goal that interests you the most, reflecting on what you have learned so far about yourself in this workshop. Review the SMART Goals worksheet template - What are three steps you can take toward your goal?
  - *Schedule a concrete action toward your goal and be prepared to share it with the group next week.*

### **Week 7: Polishing Your Priorities Plan for Your Goal**

#### ***Objectives:***

- *Reflect on learning over 7 weeks, the termination process*
- *Identify a career goal and three concrete steps*
- *Match participants with partners who will help keep them accountable (in this group and externally)*
- *Practice giving and receiving support*

#### **Homework:**

##### **Digital Access Links:**

- 3-Step Priority Goal - Complete [SMART Goals Worksheet](#)
- [How to Choose and Work with An Accountability Partner](#)
  - *Follow up with your accountability buddy by next week to be accountable for completing one step you scheduled*
- [Accountability Partnership Worksheet](#)
- What are three steps you can take toward your goal?
  - *Reminder! Be prepared to share your SMART Worksheet and three steps with the group next week!*

#### **Homework Journal:**

- Write a letter to yourself to review in six months about where you hope to be in your goals. You may share this next group if there's time

*Reminder! The certificate will be presented, and a group photo will be taken next week!!!*



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## **Week 8: Rooted in Your Futures**

### ***Objectives:***

- *Present Smart goal plans*
- *Reflect on the group experience*
- *Identify next steps with an accountability partner*
- *Group closure, future date connections, and how to stay involved*

### **Homework:**

**Schedule Followup Zoom Meetings via [Doodle](#) with Facilitator**

1. Group Meeting
2. Individual Meeting

### ***After Group Concludes, Next Steps:***

**[Email Evaluation Survey \(link here\)](#)**

**Schedule Followup Zoom Meetings via [Doodle](#) with Facilitator**

1. Individual Meeting
2. Group Meeting

**Individual Zoom:** Unstructured follow-up phone call for each individual member for a progress check-in and exit interview in two weeks

**Group Zoom:** Unstructured follow-up group Zoom after one month

- *Last Assignment:* With the group, choose a central location for participants to meet up on their own to engage in a public center with events and community partners where group members can further develop, network, and serve their community!
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# THE CONVERSATION



How can you justify your knowledge? Epistemology has a few answers. Flickr/World's Direction

## How do you know that what you know is true? That's epistemology

Published: August 3, 2017 4:16pm EDT

**Peter Ellerton**

Senior Lecturer in Critical Thinking; Curriculum Director, UQ Critical Thinking Project, The University of Queensland

How do you know what the weather will be like tomorrow? How do you know how old the Universe is? How do you know if you are thinking rationally?

These and other questions of the “how do you know?” variety are the business of epistemology, the area of philosophy concerned with understanding the nature of knowledge and belief.

Epistemology is about understanding how we come to know that something is the case, whether it be a matter of fact such as “the Earth is warming” or a matter of value such as “people should not just be treated as means to particular ends”.

It's even about interrogating the odd presidential tweet to determine its credibility.

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**Read more:** [Facts are not always more important than opinions: here's why.](#)

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Epistemology doesn't just ask questions about what we should do to find things out; that is the task of all disciplines to some extent. For example, science, history and anthropology all have their own methods for finding things out.

Epistemology has the job of making those methods themselves the objects of study. It aims to understand how methods of inquiry can be seen as rational endeavours.

Epistemology, therefore, is concerned with the justification of knowledge claims.

## The need for epistemology

Whatever the area in which we work, some people imagine that beliefs about the world are formed mechanically from straightforward reasoning, or that they pop into existence fully formed as a result of clear and distinct perceptions of the world.

But if the business of knowing things was so simple, we'd all agree on a bunch of things that we currently disagree about – such as how to treat each other, what value to place on the environment, and the optimal role of government in a society.

That we do not reach such an agreement means there is something wrong with that model of belief formation.



We don't all agree on everything. Flickr/Frank, CC BY-NC

It is interesting that we individually tend to think of ourselves as clear thinkers and see those who disagree with us as misguided. We imagine that the impressions we have about the world come to us unsullied and unfiltered. We think we have the capacity to see things just as they really are, and that it is others who have confused perceptions.

As a result, we might think our job is simply to point out where other people have gone wrong in their thinking, rather than to engage in rational dialogue allowing for the possibility that we might actually be wrong.

But the lessons of philosophy, psychology and cognitive science teach us otherwise. The complex, organic processes that fashion and guide our reasoning are not so clinically pure.

Not only are we in the grip of a staggeringly complex array of cognitive biases and dispositions, but we are generally ignorant of their role in our thinking and decision-making.

Combine this ignorance with the conviction of our own epistemic superiority, and you can begin to see the magnitude of the problem. Appeals to “common sense” to overcome the friction of alternative views just won't cut it.

We need, therefore, a systematic way of interrogating our own thinking, our models of rationality, and our own sense of what makes for a good reason. It can be used as a more objective standard for assessing the merit of claims made in the public arena.

This is precisely the job of epistemology.

## Epistemology and critical thinking

One of the clearest ways to understand critical thinking is as applied epistemology. Issues such as the nature of logical inference, why we should accept one line of reasoning over another, and how we understand the nature of evidence and its contribution to decision making, are all decidedly epistemic concerns.

The American philosopher Harvey Siegel points out that these questions and others are essential in an education towards thinking critically.

*By what criteria do we evaluate reasons? How are those criteria themselves evaluated? What is it for a belief or action to be justified? What is the relationship between justification and truth? [...] these epistemological considerations are fundamental to an adequate understanding of critical thinking and should be explicitly treated in basic critical thinking courses.*

To the extent that critical thinking is about analysing and evaluating methods of inquiry and assessing the credibility of resulting claims, it is an epistemic endeavour.

Engaging with deeper issues about the nature of rational persuasion can also help us to make judgements about claims even without specialist knowledge.

For example, epistemology can help clarify concepts such as “proof”, “theory”, “law” and “hypothesis” that are generally poorly understood by the general public and indeed some scientists.

In this way, epistemology serves not to adjudicate on the credibility of science, but to better understand its strengths and limitations and hence make scientific knowledge more accessible.

## Epistemology and the public good

One of the enduring legacies of the Enlightenment, the intellectual movement that began in Europe during the 17th century, is a commitment to public reason. This was the idea that it's not enough to state your position, you must also provide a rational case for why others should stand with you. In other words, to produce and prosecute an argument.

This commitment provides for, or at least makes possible, an objective method of assessing claims using epistemological criteria that we can all have a say in forging.

That we test each others' thinking and collaboratively arrive at standards of epistemic credibility lifts the art of justification beyond the limitations of individual minds, and grounds it in the collective wisdom of reflective and effective communities of inquiry.

The sincerity of one's belief, the volume or frequency with which it is stated, or assurances to "believe me" should not be rationally persuasive by themselves.

If a particular claim does not satisfy publicly agreed epistemological criteria, then it is the essence of scepticism to suspend belief. And it is the essence of gullibility to surrender to it.

### **A defence against bad thinking**

There is a way to help guard against poor reasoning – ours and others' – that draws from not only the Enlightenment but also from the long history of philosophical inquiry.

So the next time you hear a contentious claim from someone, consider how that claim can be supported if they or you were to present it to an impartial or disinterested person:

- identify reasons that can be given in support of the claim
- explain how your analysis, evaluation and justification of the claim and of the reasoning involved are of a standard worth someone's intellectual investment
- write these things down as clearly and dispassionately as possible.

In other words, make the commitment to public reasoning. And demand of others that they do so as well, stripped of emotive terms and biased framing.

If you or they cannot provide a precise and coherent chain of reasoning, or if the reasons remain tainted with clear biases, or if you give up in frustration, it's a pretty good sign that there are other factors in play.

It is the commitment to this epistemic process, rather than any specific outcome, that is the valid ticket onto the rational playing field.

At a time when political rhetoric is riven with irrationality, when knowledge is being seen less as a means of understanding the world and more as an encumbrance that can be pushed aside if it stands in the way of wishful thinking, and when authoritarian leaders are drawing ever larger crowds, epistemology needs to matter.



## **Rooted: Futures in Focus**

**A Life Skills Workshop for Transitional Age Youth (TAY)**

*Psychoeducational Eight-Week Group Workshop*



**Syllabus link**

*Like an oak tree, we spread our foundational roots with core values  
while growing a future of purposeful choices.*

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## **Rooted: Support Community and Resource List**

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### **Your Personal Support Network**

| <b>Category</b>         | <b>Person/Organization</b> | <b>Contact Info</b> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Emotional Support       |                            |                     |
| Academic/Career Help    |                            |                     |
| Health and Wellness     |                            |                     |
| Housing Support         |                            |                     |
| Legal Resources         |                            |                     |
| Community and Belonging |                            |                     |

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## List of Bay Area Resources

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### Community Centers:

- *RYSE Center* (Richmond)
  - Youth leadership, arts, wellness, and career programs.
  - Website: <https://rysecenter.org>
  - Phone: (510) 374-3401
  - Address: 205 41st Street, Richmond, CA 94805
- *Larkin Street Youth Services* (San Francisco)
  - Housing, education, employment, and health services for youth experiencing homelessness.
  - Website: <https://larkinstreetyouth.org>
  - Phone: (415) 673-0911
  - Address: 134 Golden Gate Ave, San Francisco, CA 94102
- *Youth Spirit Artworks* (Berkeley)
  - Art jobs training and supportive community building for homeless and low-income youth.
  - Website: <https://youthspiritartworks.org>
  - Phone: (510) 282-0396
  - Address: 3324 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703
- *Our Space* (Hayward, LGBTQ+ TAY Center)
  - LGBTQ+ affirming mental health services, advocacy, and support for Transitional Age Youth.
  - Website: <https://www.sidebysideyouth.org/our-space>

- Phone: (510) 798-4216
- Address: 1231-A Mission Blvd, Hayward, CA 94544

### **Health & Mental Health:**

- *Alameda County Youth Services*
  - Mental health clinics, mobile crisis response, and family support services.
  - Website: <https://www.acbhcs.org/youth/>
  - Phone: (800) 491-9099 (Access Line)
- *La Clinica de La Raza*
  - Affordable medical, dental, and behavioral health services.
  - Website: <https://laclinica.org>
  - Phone: (510) 535-4000
  - Address: 1515 Fruitvale Ave, Oakland, CA 94601
- *The Hume Center (Fremont)*
  - Comprehensive mental health services for youth and families.
  - Website: <https://www.humecenter.org>
  - Phone: (510) 745-9151
  - Address: 39420 Liberty Street, Suite 140, Fremont, CA 94538

### **Career & Education Support:**

- *Year Up Bay Area*
  - Career training, professional internships, and mentorship for young adults.
  - Website: <https://www.yearup.org/bayarea>
  - Phone: (415) 512-7588

- *Berkeley Youth Alternatives*
  - Academic support, employment services, and family programs.
  - Website: <https://byaonline.org>
  - Phone: (510) 845-9010
  - Address: 1255 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94702
- *Juma Ventures* (San Francisco, Oakland)
  - Employment opportunities and financial capability training for youth.
  - Website: <https://www.juma.org>
  - Phone: (415) 371-0727

#### **Housing & Emergency Services:**

- *Covenant House California* (Oakland)
  - Shelter, education, job training, and supportive services for homeless youth.
  - Website: <https://covenanthousecalifornia.org>
  - Phone: (510) 379-1010
  - Address: 200 Harrison Street, Oakland, CA 94607
- *DreamCatcher Youth Services* (Oakland)
  - Emergency housing, case management, and family reunification services for youth.
  - Website: <https://youthroots.org>
  - Phone: (800) 379-1114
  - Address: 2325 Clement Ave, Alameda, CA 94501

#### **Legal Assistance:**

- *Legal Services for Children* (San Francisco)

- Free legal representation and social work support for youth in foster care, immigration, and education matters.
- Website: <https://www.lsc-sf.org>
- Phone: (415) 863-3762
- Address: 1254 Market Street, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102
- *Youth Law Center*
  - Advocacy and legal reform for youth involved in the foster care and juvenile justice systems.
  - Website: <https://www.ylc.org>
  - Phone: (415) 543-3379
  - Address: 832 Folsom Street, Suite 700, San Francisco, CA 94107



## Rooted: Futures in Focus

An 8-Week Life Skills Group Workshop for Transitional Age Youth (TAY)

*Psychoeducational Discussions with an Existential Orientation and Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model Integrations*

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### Shared Agreements: Group Norms & Expectations

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#### Group Norms

- **Confidentiality:** What is shared in the group stays in the group. (Limits to confidentiality will be discussed.)
  - **Respect:** Listen actively without interrupting. Speak from your own experience.
  - **Participation:** Engage in discussions and activities to the best of your ability.
  - **Non-judgment:** Be open to different perspectives without criticism.
  - **Punctuality:** Please arrive on time and stay for the entire session.
  - **Responsibility:** Take ownership of your own growth and share space fairly.
- Self-Care:** You can pass or take a break at any time if you need to.
- Technology Use:** Phones on silent. Please avoid texting or using social media during group time.
- Community Agreements:** We will co-create additional agreements during our first session.

#### Expectations

- Attend all eight sessions if possible, and if you miss one, please inform the facilitator ahead of time.
  - Be open to exploring your own values, goals, and experiences.
  - Practice honesty, both with yourself and with the group.
  - Support your peers through listening, empathy, and encouragement.
- Remember: Growth can feel uncomfortable — that's okay.



**Rooted: Futures in Focus**

*“An Oak tree is a daily reminder that great things often have small beginnings.” - Matshona Dhliwayo*



## **Rooted: Futures in Focus**

**An 8-Week Life Skills Group Workshop for Transitional Age Youth (TAY)**

*Psychoeducational Discussions with an Existential Orientation and Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model Integrations*

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### **Group Norms & Expectations: Shared Agreements**

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#### **Participant Shared Agreement**

Initial \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to uphold the group norms and expectations.

Initial \_\_\_\_\_ I commit to participating fully in Rooted: Futures in Focus

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Emergency Contact Information**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Relationship</b> | <b>Phone Number</b> | <b>Email Address</b> |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|             |                     |                     |                      |



***Rooted: Futures in Focus***

*Like an oak tree, we spread our foundational roots with core values while growing a future of purposeful choices.*

## VALUES WORKSHEET *(adapted from Kelly Wilson's Valued Living Questionnaire)*

Deep down inside, what is important to you? What do you want your life to stand for? What sort of qualities do you want to cultivate as a person? How do you want to be in your relationships with others? Values are our heart's deepest desires for the way we want to interact with and relate to the world, other people, and ourselves. They are leading principles that can guide us and motivate us as we move through life.

Values are not the same as goals. Values are directions we keep moving in, whereas goals are what we want to achieve along the way. A value is like heading West; no matter how far West you go, you never reach it. A goal is like the river or mountain or valley we aim to cross whilst traveling in that direction. Goals can be achieved or 'crossed off', whereas values are an ongoing process. For example, if you want to be a loving, caring, supportive partner, that is a value – an ongoing process. If you stop being loving, caring and supportive, then you are no longer a loving, caring, supportive partner; you are no longer living by that value. In contrast, if you want to get married, that's a goal - it can be 'crossed off' or achieved. Once you're married, you're married – even if you start treating your partner very badly. If you want a better job, that's a goal. Once you've got it - goal achieved. But if you want to fully apply yourself at work, that's a value – an ongoing process.

The following are areas of life that are valued by some people. Not everyone has the same values, and this is not a test to see whether you have the "correct" values. Think about each area in terms of general life directions, rather than in terms of specific goals. There may be certain areas that you don't value much; you may skip them if you wish. There may be areas that overlap – e.g. if you value hiking in the mountains, that may come under both physical health and recreation. It is also important that you write down what you would value if there were nothing in your way. What's important? What do you care about? And what you would like to work towards?

1. **Family relations.** What sort of brother/sister, son/daughter, uncle/auntie do you want to be? What personal qualities would you like to bring to those relationships? What sort of relationships would you like to build? How would you interact with others if you were the ideal you in these relationships?
2. **Marriage/couples/intimate relations.** What sort of partner would you like to be in an intimate relationship? What personal qualities would you like to develop? What sort of relationship would you like to build? How would you interact with your partner if you were the 'ideal you' in this relationship?
3. **Parenting.** What sort of parent would you like to be? What sort of qualities would you like to have? What sort of relationships would you like to build with your children? How would you behave if you were the 'ideal you'.
4. **Friendships/social life.** What sort of qualities would you like to bring to your friendships? If you could be the best friend possible, how would you behave towards your friends? What sort of friendships would you like to build?
5. **Career/employment.** What do you value in your work? What would make it more meaningful? What kind of worker would you like to be? If you were living up to your own ideal standards, what personal qualities would you like to bring to your work? What sort of work relations would you like to build?
6. **Education/personal growth and development.** What do you value about learning, education, training, or personal growth? What new skills would you like to learn? What knowledge would you like to gain? What further education appeals to you? What sort of student would you like to be? What personal qualities would you like to apply?
7. **Recreation/fun/leisure.** What sorts of hobbies, sports, or leisure activities do you enjoy? How do you relax and unwind? How do you have fun? What sorts of activities would you like to do?
8. **Spirituality.** Whatever spirituality means to you is fine. It may be as simple as communing with nature, or as formal as participation in an organised religious group. What is important to you in this area of life?
9. **Citizenship/ environment/ community life.** How would you like to contribute to your community or environment, e.g. through volunteering, or recycling, or supporting a group/ charity/ political party? What sort of environments would you like to create at home, and at work? What environments would you like to spend more time in?
10. **Health/physical well-being.** What are your values related to maintaining your physical well-being? How do you want to look after your health, with regard to sleep, diet, exercise, smoking, alcohol, etc? Why is this important?

## Values Assessment Rating Form

Read through the accompanying values sheet. For each of the ten domains, write a few words to summarise your valued direction, Eg 'To be a loving, supportive, caring, partner.' Rate how important this value is to you on a scale of 0 (low importance) to 10 (high importance). It's okay to have several values scoring the same number. Rate how successfully you have lived this value during the past month on a scale of 0 (not at all successfully) to 10 (very successfully). Finally rank these valued directions in order of the importance you place on working on them right now, with 10 as the highest rank, and 9 the next highest, and so on.

| Domain                             | Valued direction<br>(Write a brief summary, in<br>one or two sentences.) | Importance | Success | Rank |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|------|
| Couples/ intimate<br>relationships |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Parenting                          |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Family relations                   |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Social relations                   |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Employment                         |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Education and training             |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Recreation                         |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Spirituality                       |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Citizenship/ community             |                                                                          |            |         |      |
| Health/ Physical well-<br>being`   |                                                                          |            |         |      |



## **Rooted: Futures in Focus**

**A Life Skills Workshop for Transitional Age Youth (TAY)**

*Psychoeducational Eight-Week Group Workshop*



**Syllabus link**

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## **Minor Group Therapy Consent for Treatment**

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*The success of group therapy depends upon a high degree of trust between you, your group facilitator, and fellow group members. This document has been prepared to fully inform you and your parents about what to expect from group therapy and from your group facilitators.*

### **UNDERSTANDING GROUP THERAPY**

Group therapy is a process of understanding more about yourself and others in a safe environment. In group, you will have the opportunity to explore patterns of thinking and behaving that are similar to how you relate to others in your life. Objectives of group therapy include, but are not limited to:

- Develop skills to assist you in reaching your goals
- Feel a sense of support from other group members
- Understand more about yourself and your family system
- Identify and explore thoughts, feelings and behaviors that hold you back
- Learn how to improve relationships with others

You are welcome to share as much or as little about yourself while in the group, however, the more open you are the better experience you will have. You are welcome to ask questions at any time. The more deeply you understand the process of therapy, the more effectively you will be able to incorporate positive change into your life.

### **YOUR GROUP FACILITATOR(S) AND THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP**

The relationship between you and your group facilitator(s) is special and unique. You will be sharing information in group that is sensitive and personal.

Our philosophy and approach to group therapy is the belief that this is *your* group. Each group

member will have an equal say in what topics will be discussed, and what format feels most beneficial. Your group facilitator's primary responsibility is to create an atmosphere of safety and support in order for you to get the most out of group. Your group facilitator will encourage each group member to be honest, vulnerable, and respectful about his or her feelings and observations in the group.

If you are ever feeling unsafe in group, you are encouraged to discuss this with your group facilitator. If for any reason you experience any negative reactions or blocks towards participation, please share this with the group. Your voice is your power and your right.

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF GROUP THERAPY

Participating in group therapy can result in a number of benefits to you, including a better understanding of your personal goals and values, improving personal relationships, and resolution of specific problems you are facing in your life. It is important to recognize that therapy is not magic, and change does not occur overnight. Your willingness to participate fully in group and your openness to take feedback from your facilitators and other group members will play a role in how much you gain in therapy. In particular, the extent to which you are open and honest about yourself will play a role in how quickly you can achieve your goals.

## KNOWING THE RISKS OF GROUP THERAPY

There can be discomfort involved in participating in group therapy. You may remember unpleasant events, or experience feelings of anger, fear, anxiety, sadness, frustration, loneliness, helplessness, or other unpleasant feelings. If these distressful emotions arise during your therapy, please talk with your group and with your group facilitator.

During the process of group therapy, is normal to have intense feelings and reactions to other group members or even towards your group facilitators. Again, these are understandable emotions that should be discussed and processed in the group setting. If you believe that group is not the most appropriate setting for you to heal and grow, please talk with your facilitator about other possible options.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that you feel comfortable in group to talk freely about whatever is bothering you. Sometimes you might want to discuss things that you do not want your parents or guardians to know about. You have the expectation of privacy in group sessions. As a general rule, group facilitators do not talk to your parents about what you discuss in group without your permission.

However, there are some exceptions to this rule. In some situations, in accordance with professional ethics and state laws, your facilitator may disclose information without your permission. Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by law are:

- If you, another minor, a dependent person, or an elder adult is being abused
- If you are in

danger of hurting yourself, someone else, or another person's property • When a family member communicates to your facilitator that you present a danger to others

If you are doing things that could cause serious harm to you or someone else, your facilitator will use their professional judgment to decide whether a parent or guardian should be informed. In these situations, your facilitator will talk with you about their concerns and discuss the best way to include your family in order to get the support that you need.

#### GROUP MEMBER'S AGREEMENT FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

All members of the group will be asked to agree to a high level of confidentiality in the group sessions. This means that each participant agrees not to share any other group member's identifying and personal information with others. It is appropriate to share your personal reaction and feelings about group with others, but please do not share other people's stories with anyone outside of the group.

#### TIME SPENT ON YOUR BEHALF

E-mail is a helpful tool for asking general questions of your facilitator, confirming appointments, and conveying relevant information and updates. However, e-mail should not be used as a substitute for therapy. Your group facilitator will not conduct therapy via email, and in such cases that lengthy or disclosing emails are received; she/he will invite you to talk about it during group. Please notify your therapist if you decide to avoid or limit, in any way, the use of e-mail. Otherwise, your therapist may communicate with you via e-mail when necessary or appropriate. Please do not use e-mail for emergencies and please note that e-mails, faxes, etc. are all part of the clinical records.

#### ONLINE REVIEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

We understand that the use of the Internet, online reviews, and social media impact virtually all aspects of our lives – especially as teens. Please be aware of the implications of posting information about your group therapy online! If you post an online review, status update, tweet, or blog about your experience in therapy, you are publicly acknowledging a therapist-client relationship and have thus waived your right to privacy. Please consider any potential negative impact that this could have either today or in your future.

#### CONSISTENT ATTENDANCE

It is very important that you consistently attend scheduled group therapy sessions. Although illness, unexpected events, or vacations may occasionally interrupt your therapy, consistent attendance plays a large role in helping you, and your fellow group members achieve your desired goals. Please be aware that your absences negatively influence the progress of yourself and the other group members. If for any reason you are not able to attend a group session, please inform your group facilitator.

## CONCLUSION OF GROUP THERAPY

There are many different levels of care that therapists provide. Although group therapy is a very helpful tool for many people, the level of care offered with this group may sometimes not be the best match to your needs. If at any point during therapy your facilitator assesses that she/he is not effective in helping you reach your goals in the group setting, she/he will provide you and your parent/guardian with a number of referrals that may be of help.

Thank you for the time and attention that you took to read this document. We look forward to having you in group!

Please sign below to indicate that you understand and agree to the above, and consent to group therapy treatment. You are encouraged to keep a copy of this form, and refer to it from time to time during your therapy.

Client/Participant Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Client's DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Client/Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*QR Code for Core Values Index Test Free CVI Assessment*



## **SESSION 2 HANDOUTS**

## Myers-Briggs Free Personality Test





## Rooted: Futures in Focus

A Life Skills Workshop for Transitional Age Youth (TAY)

*Psychoeducational Eight-Week Group Workshop*

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## Introduction to Existentialism for Transitional Age Youth

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**What is Existentialism?** Existentialism is a philosophy that focuses on the individual and the choices they make in life. It encourages people to explore who they are, what matters to them, and how they can shape their own future. This approach emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility, self-awareness, and making choices that reflect your values. For young people transitioning into adulthood, existentialism can be a helpful framework for understanding the challenges and opportunities ahead.

**The Four Existential Givens** Existentialism teaches that there are four "givens" of human existence that we all face. These givens—death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness—can seem daunting, but they also help us reflect on what's truly important in life. Here's how each given can help you connect to your personal life:

### 1. Death

**Why it matters:** We all have a limited time on this Earth. The awareness of our mortality can encourage us to live more fully, focusing on what truly matters and making the most of our time.

**Connection to your life:** Understanding that life is finite can motivate you to pursue what excites you, take risks, and prioritize what aligns with your personal values. It can also help you face challenges with the knowledge that you have the power to create meaningful experiences.

### 2. Freedom

**Why it matters:** You have the power to choose how to live your life, and this freedom comes with responsibility. Every decision you make shapes your future.

**Connection to your life:** Your choices define your path. Whether it's your career, relationships, or personal growth, you are in control. This freedom can be empowering, but it also requires reflection and thoughtfulness about how your choices affect you and others.



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*"An Oak tree is a daily reminder that great things often have small beginnings." - Matshona Dhliwayo*

### 3. Isolation

**Why it matters:** We are all, in some ways, alone in the world. Even though we interact with others, there are aspects of our existence that are unique to us.

**Connection to your life:** Understanding that we are all individually responsible for our experiences can help you develop a deeper sense of self. It encourages you to connect with others authentically, as you recognize that both your personal journey and your relationships are vital to your growth.

### 4. Meaninglessness

**Why it matters:** Life doesn't come with an inherent meaning or purpose. It's up to each person to create their own meaning through the choices they make.

**Connection to your life:** When faced with uncertainty or confusion, existentialism encourages you to find meaning in your own way. You have the power to create a life that feels purposeful, whether through relationships, work, or personal growth. It's about asking yourself what matters most to you and making choices based on those values.

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## How Does Existentialism Help You?

Understanding these four existential givens can help you take ownership of your life. They remind you that while challenges are inevitable, you have the freedom to shape how you respond. By reflecting on death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness, you can make more intentional choices, build deeper connections with others, and create a life that feels authentic to who you are.

Existentialism is not about finding easy answers, but about asking meaningful questions and embracing the journey of self-discovery.



***Rooted: Futures in Focus***

*“An Oak tree is a daily reminder that great things often have small beginnings.” - Matshona Dhliwayo*

# Existential psychotherapy helped my students cope with chaos

by Ronald Chau

**Ronald Chau** is a graduate student in clinical psychology at the University of Arizona.

Edited by **Pam Weintraub**

## By facing the terrifying truths of existence, we become stronger, more resilient and more able to take control of our lives

How do we hold on to meaning and purpose when the possibility of death is constantly in view? How can we believe in a just world when the world is patently unjust? How can we grasp the truth when the nature of truth itself is in doubt?

Religious and philosophical thinkers have obsessed over these questions for millennia; existentialists have made them a primary concern over the past two centuries. In his seminal work *Existential Psychotherapy* (1980), the American psychiatrist Irvin Yalom categorised our existential problems into four ultimate concerns: death, freedom, existential isolation, and meaninglessness. We want to live, but we know we will eventually die. We have the freedom to make choices, but there is no absolute truth to ground these choices. We want to feel connection, but we feel alone in our subjective experience. We want our lives to be meaningful, but there appears to be no inherent meaning in the Universe.

Awareness of these concerns gives rise to anxiety that we must manage; the defence mechanisms for doing so can be conscious or unconscious. A basic tenet of existential therapy is that how we manage this anxiety is intimately tied to our emotional wellbeing. Someone might try to avoid awareness of death by compulsively throwing themselves into the well-worn distractions of work, sex, drugs, fitness or any other activity that keeps them busy. Another might try to avoid awareness of freedom by staying with a romantic partner who controls their decision making and limits their autonomy. Yet another avoids existential isolation by blindly conforming to their ingroup and denigrating or attacking the other.

In existential psychotherapy, the role of the therapist is to assist the client in confronting these ultimate concerns to find more adaptive responses. Perhaps counterintuitively, the existential therapist's goal is not necessarily to decrease anxiety or depression, but

rather to create a safe and supportive environment for the client to explore their existential conundrums and, in so doing, work through their symptoms to develop their own answers to life's ultimate questions.

Three years ago, I left my family and a good job back in Australia to pursue graduate school in the United States and study the utility of existential ideas in science-based clinical psychology. This pursuit led me to terror management theory (TMT), the leading empirical social psychological theory on how humans cope with their awareness of mortality. Based on the writings of the American cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker, especially his book *The Denial of Death* (1973), TMT begins with the core human existential problem of wanting to live while simultaneously knowing that death is inevitable. People can initially defend against potentially overwhelming fear of death by engaging in conscious, pseudo-rational strategies directed at neutralising the problem of death. People can distract themselves, suppress death-related thought, or rationalise death away by focusing on how healthy they are.

Once outside of conscious awareness, we can buffer against these death-related thoughts by implicitly striving for a sense of permanence and meaning. By adopting and meeting the standards of worth set by our culture, we attain self-esteem and feel part of an enduring cultural reality that outlasts our finite lives. Religion can offer a sense of literal immortality; ideology, nation, legacy or children can provide a sense of symbolic immortality.

TMT is supported by thousands of studies and is consistent with Yalom's contention that humans engage in defence mechanisms to avoid thoughts about death. However, I wondered whether there was room in TMT for the existential therapist whose mission is to bring death – or any other ultimate concern for that matter – to conscious awareness as a catalyst for positive personal growth and transformation. Throughout history, thinkers from Seneca to Heidegger have recommended keeping death in conscious awareness to remind us how short life is, and thus motivate us to live as authentically and as fully as possible. When you come to understand and deeply engage with the fact that your life is finite, would you choose to spend it differently? Would you continue chasing others' expectations, being what your parents, partners or friends always expect of you, or would you embrace the fear of human existence and live according to your own hopes and dreams? Would you continue to curse the state of the world, or would you open your eyes to the beauty that's all around you? Would you continue to lament what you don't have, or appreciate and savour the people you love and who love you?

**A**s I reflected on these questions in graduate school, it occurred to me that many college students have no venue – other than late-night conversations in the dormitories – and few opportunities to sit with and explore Yalom's ultimate concerns, let alone the defences that organise their lives. When I was asked to co-facilitate an existential therapy group for college students at our university counselling centre, where I worked as a therapist trainee, I was thrilled and encouraged to draw on all my training and the

available scholarly literature on existential therapies. Scaffolding would be critical to help our young adult students gain a sufficient foothold before looking directly at the ultimate questions. We can refer to this kind of confidence and willingness to stare into the abyss as existential courage. Without this courage, we might continue to live life blind to the fundamental truths of our existence, inauthentically or, as the existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre put it, in ‘bad faith’. Could my willingness to go down this road be shared with college sophomores?

Our inaugural existential therapy group first met in February 2020. We were a diverse group of six undergraduates, two graduate students and two facilitators – a communion of fellow travellers navigating the big-picture questions in life. We discussed various existential issues common to college students – choosing a university major or a career path, how to make connections while maintaining one’s individuality, and so on. However, by March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was ramping up in the US, and we were forced to move our group online. The existential issues were no longer hiding under the surface of career path or relationship discussions: they were splashed all over the news and had infiltrated all corners of our collective consciousness.

‘What is wrong with the world?’ someone said.

Through laptops and phone screens, we all stared blankly, solemnly, at each other. The impact of the pandemic was now unavoidable – school closings, unemployment, hoarding, shortages, racism, death. The happenings evoked our worst anxieties and, even as the group’s co-facilitator and a doctoral student in clinical psychology, I wasn’t immune to the dread. Our newfound and computer-mediated reality was a poor substitute for in-person gatherings, perhaps even amplifying rather than quelling the dread. We were together, but very much apart.

*What is wrong with the world?*

These words echoed a sentiment shared by millions of people at a time of significant upheaval. Many had lost jobs, or even loved ones, and many more were isolated at home and mired in the unpredictability and uncontrollability of this novel coronavirus, searching for answers in 24-hour news, fake news, social media and increasingly polarised political discourse. Many were coming of age in this strange, socially distanced world, all the while hungering for deeper intimacies. Yearning for touch while staying six feet apart.

I prompted the group: ‘I get the sense that we all think there’s something wrong with the world right now. Is that correct? Okay, but what do we mean when we say there’s something wrong with the world?’ The answers poured out:

‘People are stupid.’

‘I can’t believe people are hoarding, they’re so selfish.’

‘Why aren’t people staying at home? They’re only prolonging this crisis.’

‘I don’t know what to believe any more.’

‘I took for granted that the world would be a certain way.’

‘Someone gave me dirty looks because I’m Asian.’

These were bedrock issues surrounding ultimate concerns. ‘Okay, and how are we feeling about all that?’ I asked.

‘I feel anxious.’

‘It makes me sad.’

‘I’m scared.’

‘I feel hopeless.’

‘I’m confused.’

‘I’m frustrated.’

‘I’m angry.’

‘Those thoughts and feelings make sense,’ I replied. ‘The world is in chaos right now, some people are acting selfishly and awfully, and we don’t know when or even if things will return to normal. There is so much we cannot control.’

At this moment, I thought of Viktor Frankl, the Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor who observed that it was always possible – and necessary – to strive for meaning, even in the face of immense suffering and despair. With Frankl in mind, I responded: ‘But we can still choose how we react to this situation, even if we’re forced to stay at home. In fact, we can still choose our attitude in any given situation. How would *you* like to react to this pandemic? What kind of person would *you* like to be?’

‘I would like to be kind.’

‘I want to comfort others.’

‘I would like to reconnect with my friends and family.’

‘I am more appreciative of what I have.’

‘I want to be strong and resilient.’

‘It seems we all have a choice to make,’ I pointed out. ‘We can choose to blame others and to complain about the state of the world, which seems easier. Or we can channel that energy into taking personal responsibility and making positive changes in our lives and the lives of others, which seems harder. Which will it be?’

We ended the session by agreeing to reach out and reconnect with someone we haven't spoken to in a while, comforting them in these difficult times if we could.

Drawing out and highlighting existential themes in the group's discussion provided opportunities for reflection on the givens of existence. Faced with trying circumstances, people can easily lose sight of their existential freedom and responsibility. From there, the fall into despair and cynicism is as easy as slipping off a wet rock. Holding people accountable to life's ultimate questions is the core of existential psychotherapy, the foundation for real transformation, and perhaps a secret key for authentic living.

Having co-led this existential therapy group of college students for four months, mired in the ultimate concerns, you might have reason to worry about *my* mental health. Too much doom and gloom? Too much meaninglessness? Strangely, I am more optimistic than ever. I would be lying if I did not confess my initial skepticism about an existential therapy group for undergraduates – how could young people have the life experience to adequately contemplate such big questions? I often reflect on my own upbringing and the ubiquity of tragedy and suffering – those great harbingers of existential dilemmas; these seeds of the big questions are unmistakably present among all young people. No doubt the collective trauma brought on by the pandemic only serves to bring the tragedy of the human condition to the forefront of all our minds as well. Despite this trauma, I was inspired and even amazed by the students' existential courage and willingness to wrestle with the challenging questions in life. In facing and very plainly dissecting the terrifying truths of existence, we became stronger, more resilient and more capable of taking control of our lives and sailing toward new horizons. Can we really afford to keep living as if we'll live forever?

6 JANUARY 2021

## **SESSION 3 HANDOUTS**

## Access Adventure

<https://www.laurenmilitello.com/accessadventure>





How  
it  
works

# Google Maps Trip Planning: Organize Your Dream Vacation Like A Pro



**Rene Emery**  
March 14, 2025

*Planning your next adventure? Learn how to create custom Google Maps with color-coded destinations and day-by-day itineraries for stress-free trip planning.*

## Key Takeaways

- Google's My Maps allows you to create custom maps with color-coded destinations organized into layers.
- You can create up to 10 layers per map, and add up to 2,000 separate location pins across your entire map.
- My Maps integrates with other Google products like Drive, Calendar, and Photos, making it easy to build a comprehensive travel plan with reminders and notes.
- Access destination reviews, opening hours, and booking information directly from your custom map.
- Custom maps can be shared or embedded on websites for collaborative trip planning.
- You can view your custom maps on mobile devices, but you'll need to use a browser to create or edit them on the go.

Travel planning a dream trip is fun — but it can also bring a lot of anxiety. To give yourself peace of mind you can follow travel guides, copy other people's plans, or (my favorite) you can use Google Maps trip planner to design your own ideal vacation. You can use Google's app or web interface to:

- Add destination points
- Color code locations that you pin
- Get directions to multiple destinations
- Plan the perfect trip

I'm going to give you a step-by-step guide and instructions on how I used Google My Maps to plan an itinerary for a 3-day trip to Florence. But first, let's look at why Google Maps is such a great trip planning tool.

💡 Looking for a way to plan the most efficient route? Check out [How To Route With Multiple Stops On Google Maps](#).

## Why Google Maps is a great trip planner

A survey found that 97% of respondents were happier when they had a trip planned. Mindset and mood change when you have something to look forward to — but without an itinerary in place, this excitement can turn to anxiety.

Here are my four top reasons why you can, and should, use Google Maps to plan a road trip or vacation:

### 1. Integration with other Google products

Your Google account connects you to a number of different products that work really well together to make life easier during your travels. You can:



- Create a custom map and then copy it to your Google Drive.
- Plan out each day's agenda in Google Calendar, with exact locations and map links included.
- Use Google Sheets to budget for your vacation or road trip.  
Use location names in Google Photos so your pictures are easy to find and organize.

Google's deep product integrations make it easier to plan recreational trips and learn more about the places you plan to visit.

## 2. Reviews and additional location data

The Google Maps app on your phone doesn't have all the features of the desktop version. But if you plan out your trip on the app, you can move seamlessly between the two so that you can read:

- Reviews from other visitors
- Information about your places, including website URLs and opening and closing times
- Things to do nearby

A lot of reviews include useful travel tips. For example, when I was planning my trip to Florence I read the reviews for the Uffizi Gallery, a must-visit place for me. That's how I found out that even though you can buy tickets on the same day, the queues are long, so it's better to buy tickets in advance.

## 3. Easy access to trip itinerary

Some people keep their trip itineraries in a spreadsheet or document, but I love the combination of Google Calendar and the Google Maps trip planner. I can visualize exactly where I plan to go each day, and see instantly what's around

it. Google Maps routes are a breeze to create and make it easy for me to check travel times, no matter whether I'm walking, driving, using public transit or taking a taxi.

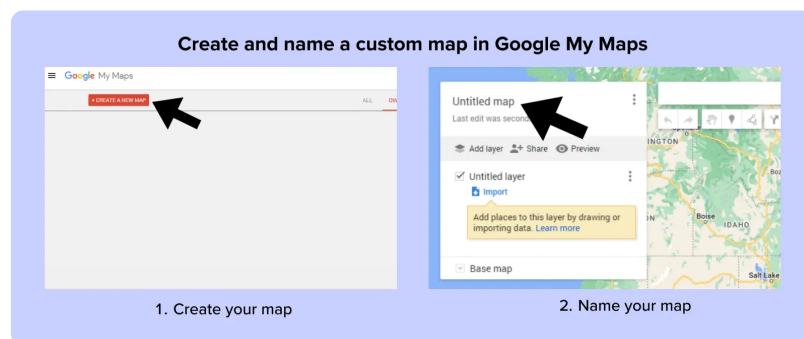
## 4. Personalized notes and labels

Worried you'll forget something important? Just open Google Maps, go to your trip planner, and add notes to your places. For example, I'm likely to forget to preorder tickets! So I create an event in Google Calendar to remind me, link the location to the event and add all the notes I need in Maps.

# How to use Google Maps to plan your trip

Now, here comes the fun part — planning your trip. Here's how I do it:

## 1. Create a new custom map



To start planning your trip with Google Maps, visit <https://www.google.com/mymaps>. On your My Maps dashboard, click the “Create a New Map” button.

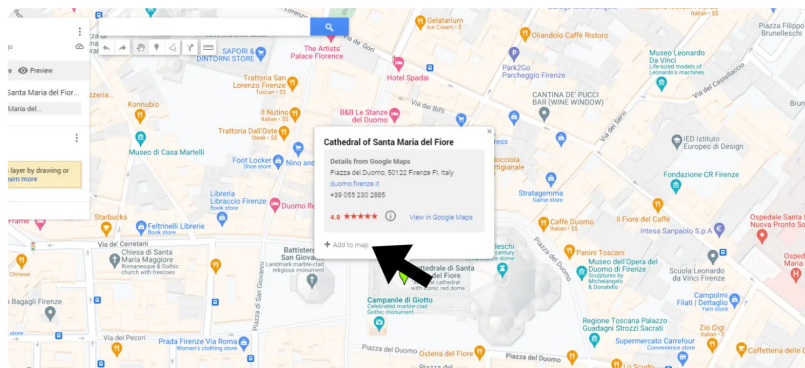
Maps will open up, and you'll have lots of options here. Start by giving your map a name. Click “Untitled Map,” and a dialog

box will open up where you can add the map's name and a description.

For this example, I'm planning a 3-day trip to Florence, Italy. So let's call this map "3 Days in Florence."

Once you've given your map a name, you can start adding your locations.

## 2. Add and customize your locations



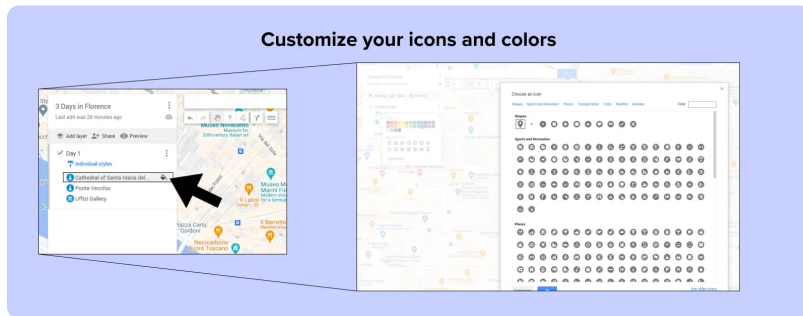
Now, here comes the fun part — adding all of the places you want to visit during your trip. I'm going to assume that you already have a list of places, but if not, take this time to research the city and make a list of sightseeing spots.

Having a list will make the planning process much quicker and easier.

In Google Maps, your locations are "pins." To start adding pins, use the search bar to search for the place of interest.

Let's start with one of the most famous sights in Florence: The Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, also known as the Duomo.

Maps will zoom in on the place you search, and you'll have the option to "Add to Map." Click or tap this button, and the point of interest will be added to your map layer.

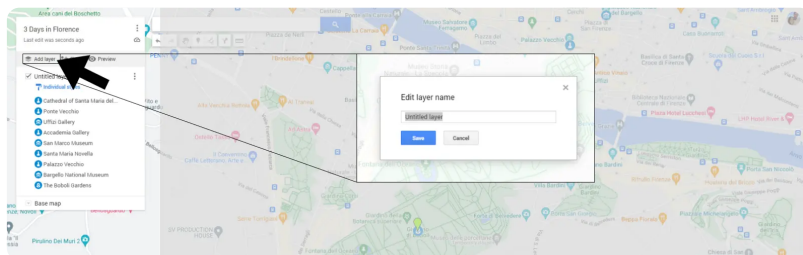


If you want to keep your pins more organized, you can change the color and icon for each point of interest.

You'll see a paint can icon when you hover over the location. Click it to open up your customization options. Google Maps gives you a wide range of icons to choose from, including ones for monuments, museums, gardens, and more.

These icons make it a little easier to see what each destination is at a glance. And that can help make the next step easier, too.

### 3. Break your trip down into layers (categories)



Planning a trip is fun and exciting, but it can easily become chaotic and messy if you don't organize things. Breaking your trip down into layers (or categories) will help you keep track of everything you want to do.

In this example, I'm planning a short trip to Florence. It makes sense to break my trip down into days, so I know which points of interest I want to visit each day. In this case, each day will be a new layer or category.

To organize things, I can click on "Add layer." Each layer will be a new "category."

Once you click "Add layer," you'll have the option to name it. Delete "untitled layer" and add your own name. In this example, I'm going to add three layers and name them "Day 1," "Day 2," and "Day 3."

Once that's set up, I can start organizing my points of interest for each day.

When planning your trip, you can add whatever categories (or layers) you want as long as they are relevant to your trip.

For example, if you're planning a road trip itinerary, you may choose to break your trip down into cities and add points of interest within each city. Maybe you want to have categories for food or specific points of interest. The great thing about using Google Maps is that you can customize it to your own traveling style and tastes.

## **How many layers can you add to a map?**

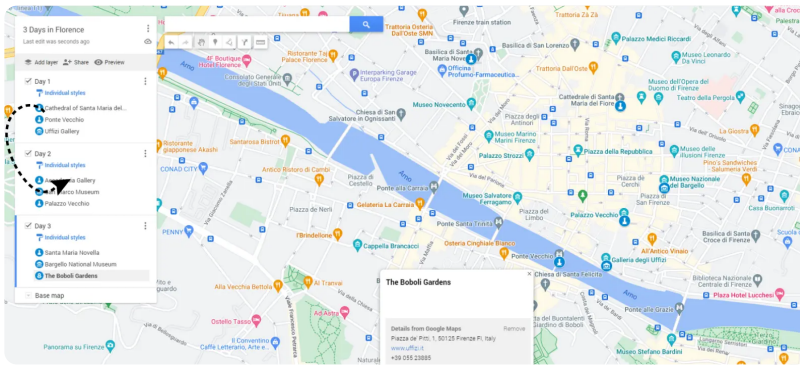
Layers can keep your map organized, but don't get too overzealous with them. There is a limit to how many layers you can add: 10.

If you're planning a big and complex trip, you may need to plan out your layers or categories carefully.

## How many location pins can you add to each layer?

You can add up to 2,000 separate pins to each map you create in My Maps.

## 4. Plan your itinerary



With all of your categories created, it's time to start planning your itinerary. You can easily move points of interest into different layers (or categories) to plan things out. Just click and drag the pin to wherever you want it to go.

In our example, I created three layers (one for each day), so to plan my itinerary, I dragged each point of interest into its respective layer.

But what if you're not breaking your trip up into days? What if you're categorizing your points of interest by city or type (museums, restaurants, etc.) No problem! You can create your layers in whatever way makes most sense to you. The point is that Google My Maps makes it easy to visualize your trip. At a glance, you can see which points of interest are close to each other. That makes it easy to create your itinerary on paper or in a digital planner.

## 5. Start booking

Now that you have your trip planned out, you can start:

- Booking your hotels
- Scheduling car rentals
- Reserving tickets for events or museums

Consider booking as far ahead as possible. If you wait too long, you may find that tickets and rooms are sold out.

## 6. Share your map

If you're traveling with friends or family, you can share your map and itinerary with them.

Here's how:

- Head back to the main Google My Maps dashboard
- Click the share button (the arrow icon) on the map you just created

You can share your map via Facebook, email, or Twitter. You can also embed your map on your website if you have one.

## 7. Access your map on your phone

You've created your map and shared it with your friends. But to use it on your phone, you'll need to make sure that you have the Google Maps app installed.

Here's how to access your maps on mobile devices:

- Open the Google Maps app
- Tap Saved
- At the bottom, tap Maps
- Choose your trip's map from the list

## Can you use your phone to create or edit Google maps?

Technically, you can create or edit maps on your phone. But you'll need to use your browser to create and edit them —not the Google Maps app.

## Road trip planning vs. city trip planning

Google Maps can be a great route planner, but you'll need to take different approaches for planning road trips and city trips.

Road trips are a little more complicated, right? You're driving from one place to the next, and at each stop, you may have a few places you want to visit. If you're just visiting a single city, planning is much simpler. Just pick your points, add them to your map, and go.

### Tips for road trip planning

- Create a layer for each stop you're making on your trip
- Add pins to each layer, so you don't miss any points of interest at each stop
- Include hotels that are on your route, so you can make an impromptu stop if you need

### Tips for city trip planning

- If you're staying multiple days, create a layer for each day, and add pins for each day (just like in my example)
- If you're only staying one day, create a layer for each type of activity, and choose spots as you go through the day

# How to use your Google Maps itinerary/wishlist on the go

You've created and shared your map, and you've downloaded the Google Maps app. Now what?

Here's how to use your Map on the go:

- Start by opening up Google Maps and tapping your Map.
- To view all of your pinned locations, tap "View map legend."
- You won't be able to tap any of the locations. The only thing you can do is view your itinerary.
- If you want to add directions, navigate back out to the main Map. Tap one of your points of interest, then tap the "Directions" button at the bottom of the map.
- The route planning screen will pop-up. Type in your next location, and Maps will find the best route for you.

By default, you'll see the driving directions for your next stop. But at the top of the screen, you can change your mode of transport to walking, biking, or public transport.

Maps will change your step-by-step directions automatically based on your mode of transport.

Now, the only thing left to do is enjoy your trip!

## Try it for yourself

Want to give the Google Maps trip planner a try for yourself?

We've created a starter map with some of the best stops in Vancouver, which is where we're based — [see it here](#). You're welcome to copy it, and use it to test out the steps above. Change icon colors, or add your own places.

Here are a few other fun maps to play with:

- [A cycle route with beer stops](#)
- [Bike routes around Vancouver](#)

Once you get the hang of using Google Maps, you can start planning your own trip. Add location pins of your must-see locations, and create a map of your bucket list of cafes, museums, stores, and restaurants to see how easy it is to plan your next trip.



### **Rene Emery**

Rene Emery is a B2B/Finance/SaaS writer who focuses on clear, concise, and optimized content. Leveraging 12+ years of experience, she relies on her work with hundreds of companies worldwide to create content that speaks to readers and makes difficult topics easy to understand.

## **SESSION 4 HANDOUTS**

Healthy relationships require the right mix of intimacy and independence. Someone who is insecurely attached often struggles to trust or commit to others. With time and effort, it's possible to feel safe and fulfilled in relationships while remaining your own person. Below are some tips for how to do this:

## **Learn about your attachment style**

Learn about the four main attachment styles as well as the associated thoughts and behaviors. This empowers you to spot trends in your relationship history and make a plan to break unhelpful patterns.

## **Examine your beliefs about relationships**

Views about relationships tend to get set early in life. For that reason, it's important to investigate what is actually true about your current relationships and abandon outdated beliefs and interpretations.

## **Act opposite to your anxious or avoidant style**

If you have an anxious attachment style, try taking small steps toward becoming more independent. If you have an avoidant attachment style, try letting down your guard and initiating intimacy.

## **Increase your emotional awareness**

Learning to express and tolerate your emotions makes you better able to accept and empathize with those of your partner. This decreases reactivity and increases attachment security.

## **Communicate openly and listen empathetically**

Secure attachment requires communicating in a respectful, open-hearted way. When conflict happens, collaborate with your partner to help each other feel understood and connected, even when you disagree.

## **Seek out others with healthy relationships**

If you want to run a marathon, it's helpful to surround yourself with successful runners. In the same way, you can improve your relationships by observing how people with healthy relationships think and behave.

## **Minimize stressors**

Stress can worsen attachment issues. Be proactive by committing to self-care, addressing conflict before it escalates, and engaging in calming activities with your partner.

## Attachment Style Test



# Become a Better Listener: Active Listening



Medically reviewed by [Vara Saripalli, Psy.D.](#) — Written by [Hilary I. Lebow](#) —  
Updated on September 28, 2021

[Active listening steps](#)   [Communication dead ends](#)

[Helpful questions for active listening](#)   [Unproductive types of questions](#)

[Summary](#)

Hearing someone is one thing, but truly listening? Now, that's a whole other story. With a little practice, it's possible to learn how to be a better listener.

You've likely been there: You're sharing something important, but the person you're talking with is focused on anything but your words. They're looking at their phone, looking around the room, totally disengaged.

You might walk away feeling unsatisfied. Or worse, unseen.

As they say, don't be *that* guy. To become a polished active listener and strengthen your connections in everyday interactions, a few pointers may help.

## Tips to be a better listener

Below you'll get more detail on these strategic steps:

- [restate](#)
- [summarize](#)
- [keep them talking: use verbal and nonverbal encouragers](#)
- [reflect](#)
- [feedback \(using "I" statements\)](#)
- [name and describe](#)
- [validate](#)
- [pause or be silent](#)
- [redirect](#)

## 13 steps to actively listen

From improved [relationship satisfaction](#) to [enhanced empathy](#), research shows that active listening is a life skill worth mastering. Here's how to train yourself to be a better listener.

### Restate

When you repeat facts or important details back to someone, it sends a clear message that you're picking up what they're putting down.

For example, "So, then what happened after John called you back?"

### Summarize

After your conversation partner is done telling a story, find a way to thread the details together, then ask to make sure what you heard is accurate.

It may sound something like, "It sounds like you're frustrated because your boss dismissed your idea, am I hearing that correctly?"

### Minimal encouragers

According to a [2016 study](#)<sup>🔗</sup>, minimal encouragers can help signal your interest.

Minimal encouragers include actions like:

- making direct eye contact
- having open body language
- carrying an engaged facial expression
- nodding your head

Minimal encouragers also include employing a few verbal reactions, like:

- "Wow."
- "Mmhmm."

- “Really?”
- “I see.”
- “Then what?”

## **Reflect**

To help someone feel heard, you can think of yourself as a mirror. Reflect back to them that you’re taking their words as seriously as they are.

For example, “I can see that what happened at your work meeting today was really important to you.”

## **Give feedback**

It’s best practice to ask permission to give guidance, such as, “I have a suggestion about how to go about this. Are you open to feedback?”

If you get a green light, you could share your observations about the situation and how you’ve handled something similar in the past.

If the other person says they don’t want your feedback, you can respond by thanking them for their honesty and moving on.

## **Name the core emotion**

You might be able to suss out an underlying emotion to better understand what might be going on with the person you’re talking with.

Psychologist Robert Plutchik designed an [eight-pronged wheel of foundational emotions](#) and the sentiments that branch out from each. It’s still being studied and updated today.

Identifying someone’s emotion when they’re communicating might look like this:

If a friend tells you a date didn’t show up, you might try, “You sound pensive, my friend. I hear you expressing some annoyance. If that happened to me, I’d be a bit angry and sad.”

## **If given the opportunity, probe**

If appropriate, you may find it useful to dig a little deeper by asking open-ended questions or hypotheticals. For example, “What will you say if they offer you the job tomorrow?”

## **Validate**

To show that you’re on the same wavelength, you can express how much it means to you that someone opened up.

It could sound like, “I know this wasn’t easy to talk about. It means a lot to me that you feel comfortable enough to share this.”

## **Employ the pregnant pause**

Rather than jumping into a response after someone finishes speaking, [soak in what you just heard](#). Try taking one mindful breath before you begin a sentence.

## **Silence**

One mouth, two ears: This age-old adage exists for good reason.

Instead of being concerned about how you’re going to respond, focus on what the other person is saying.

## **‘I’ statements**

Have you ever had someone “should” on you? It doesn’t exactly feel warm and fuzzy. You may walk away feeling criticized, judged, or blamed — none of which spell good communication.

To avoid falling into a “you should this” or “you should try that” expectations and judgments trap, you can lean on “I” statements instead.

### **✓ It sounds like this:**

- I would feel sad if that happened.
- I feel concerned when you say that.
- I feel hurt when I hear that.

## **Redirect**

If things start to go on a tangent, you may gently redirect the person you’re speaking with. You could try this: “Before we move on, can we back up and talk about that other thing?”

## **Repeat back patterns, but let them draw a conclusion**

Sometimes, active [listening](#) involves noticing patterns or parallels. You may find it useful to gently point out a past scenario — if it’s relevant. Be sure to keep it open-ended, though, so the person you’re talking with can do the heavy lifting.

For example: “I remember you saying something similar the last time you got back together. What happened after you moved back in with him?”

## Common communication dead ends

### ✗ **When active listening, avoid:**

- asking why
- aggressive, skeptical, or questioning tone
- checking your phone
- dismissing someone's worries
- interrupting
- offering unsolicited advice
- saying "you should"
- crafting your responses while they're talking
- turning the focus back on you

## Helpful questions

Some open-ended, thoughtful questions can deepen a conversation.

With that said, it's important that the person you're speaking with doesn't feel like they're in a job interview — or on the witness stand. Here's how to find that careful balance.

### Open-ended questions

These kinds of questions move beyond "yes" or "no" territory.

### ✓ **It sounds like this:**

- How did that... ?
- What are you... ?
- Where will you... ?

- Who do you think... ?
- Which way do you... ?
- What's your understanding of... ?

## Reflective questions

We all absorb information differently, depending on our personal biases and filters. To avoid communication gaffes, take the time to double-check what you're hearing.

### ✓ **It sounds like this:**

- I wonder if... ?
- Did I hear that right?
- Is that what you meant?
- Am I interpreting this correctly?
- Is it accurate to say... ?

## Less helpful questions

Before you respond, slow down and be mindful about the words you choose and how you phrase your questions.

## Leading (presumptive) questions

A leading question includes your bias in a subtle way. It can make the exchange more about confirming your opinion than the speaker's unique viewpoints.

If you're not careful, these questions can come across as judgmental.

### ✗ **When active listening, avoid:**

- You can't really trust that, can you?
- Wouldn't it be better to... ?
- Don't you think it's worse if... ?
- Don't you just hate it when... ?

## Yes or no (closed-ended) questions

While brief, closed-ended questions don't exactly motivate someone to keep speaking.

### ✗ **When active listening, avoid:**

- Do you... ?
- Did she... ?
- Can you... ?
- Could... ?
- Will... ?
- Would... ?

## Let's recap

In the age of distractions, active listening is both an art form and a vital skill to learn.

As a cardinal rule, you might think of yourself as a mirror. You can do your best to focus on what the person is saying, then reflect important details and emotions back to them, instead of focusing on your response.

The qualities of a good listener include compassion, empathy, and patience. You can try asking open-ended questions and avoiding giving unsolicited advice. If you must offer guidance, you can do so gently.

By practicing these tactics, you can learn how to be a better listener in no time.

— 3 sources

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## Trauma Toolkit



# How to Release Trauma From the Body

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Medical Reviewer: Heidi Moawad, MD



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There are many different ways to release trauma from the body. Therapeutic approaches such as eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) or somatic experiencing can help with releasing trauma from the body. In addition, mind-body practices such as yoga or breathwork can be beneficial as well. Tailoring approaches to individual needs ensures a comprehensive and effective release of trauma from the body.

## Why Does Trauma Get Trapped in the Body?

When a person encounters a threat, the body responds by moving into [fight or flight](#) mode, where many different stress hormones are released. If the threat is too intense or prolonged, or if the person experiences shame surrounding the threat, their nervous system can become overwhelmed. This causes the person to get stuck in fight or flight mode, and trauma can get trapped in their body.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Where Is Trauma Stored in the Body?

[Trauma can be stored in various areas of the body](#). Physical tension, especially in the muscles and tissues, often results from the body's response to stress during a traumatic event. Additionally, the heart, lungs, and digestive system, which are associated with the stress response, may be affected. Finally, [memory of traumatic events](#) can be stored in the brain, influencing emotional and behavioral responses.

Trauma may show up in the body as:

- Back pain
- Sleep disturbances
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Cardiovascular issues
- Neurological disorders
- Musculoskeletal issues
- Respiratory distress
- Dermatological disorders<sup>3</sup>

Research has shown that [trauma affects the brain](#) in various ways. Some of the ways the brain is impacted include the way a person processes information and their ability to recall things and to focus. Additionally, trauma can make it more difficult to self-regulate. The brain will also release stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol when experiencing a threat.<sup>4, 5, 6, 7</sup>

## What Are the Benefits of Releasing Trauma From the Body?

Releasing trauma from the body has many different benefits. It is a way to address the physical symptoms of chronic tension and pain, as well as improve sleep. It reduces emotional reactivity and can also foster [post-traumatic growth](#). Overall, this culminates in a renewed appreciation of life and one's relationships.<sup>8</sup>

# 10 Ways to Release Trauma From the Body

Releasing trauma and expressing stored emotions can be done in many ways, all of which focus on finding a way to connect mind and body. Mind-body practices like yoga and meditation promote bodily awareness and relaxation. Therapies such as EMDR target traumatic memories that are stuck. This is no one-size-fits-all approach, and it is important to find a tailored approach for each individual.

Here are ten ways to release trauma from the body:

## 1. Acknowledge Your Feelings

It is human nature to avoid feeling difficult emotions. Unfortunately, [avoidance](#) doesn't make the emotions go away, it just pushes them away for a while. Acknowledging and expressing your feelings is a way to release trauma from the body. All of your feelings are valid and deserve to be acknowledged, even the ones you don't like. Challenge yourself to be curious about your feelings and explore healthy ways to express yourself.

## 2. Practice Yoga

Experiencing trauma can cause us to feel that we have lost control of our bodies and or physical responses, and practicing yoga regularly can help you connect with your body and reclaim that control.<sup>10</sup> Research indicates that some of the benefits of yoga include self-regulation, increased self-esteem, connection, self-compassion, open-mindedness, positive emotions, and mindfulness.<sup>9</sup>

There are many different types of yoga, and if you are new to yoga, it is important to know what type of yoga class you are looking for. Some of the common types of yoga classes are:

- **Yin yoga:** Yin yoga has roots in the ancient Taoist tradition in China. In this type of yoga practice, the postures are held for 4-8 minutes. The purpose of yin is to increase body awareness, experience sensation, and decrease anxiety and stress.
- **Restorative Yoga:** This is a slow and grounding practice. The goal of restorative yoga is to restore and heal the body. You may move through 3-5 postures during a restorative practice, holding poses for 15-20 minutes.
- **Vinyasa yoga:** This is a modern yoga practice syncing breath to movement with postures sequenced to move in a flow from one to the next.<sup>11, 10</sup>

### 3. Shadow Work Exercises

Psychoanalyst Carl Jung developed the shadow self. Jung believed that there was a part of the psyche called the “shadow,” which is the unconscious, repressed aspects of an individual’s personality. Shadow work promotes turning inward and looking at the part of yourself that you may be uncomfortable with. This type of work can be challenging, so if you’re dealing with a trauma-related disorder such as PTSD, it is best to seek the support of a clinician trained in shadow work to help move through this process.<sup>11</sup>

### 4. Practice Stillness

Oftentimes, our bodies are so tense, and we don’t even notice because we are so busy looking for the next thing to focus on. When we practice stillness, it allows us to connect the mind and body and slow down for a moment, which can help release trauma from the body.<sup>12</sup> Practicing stillness can be done by sitting in silence for a few minutes each day and just being.

## 5. Meditation

Meditation is a powerful tool that can be used to help heal from trauma.

Meditation is about being in the present moment, noticing thoughts that come up, and allowing them to float past. Research has shown that meditation can support and improve the quality of life for people living with PTSD, anxiety, stress, depression, and pain.<sup>13</sup>

Here are a few types of meditation to try:<sup>14</sup>

- **Mindfulness meditation:** Mindfulness meditation is about bringing attention to the present moment and acceptance of feelings and sensations without judgment
- **Focused meditation:** [Focused meditation](#) involves concentrating on something such as breathing, counting mala beads, or gazing at a candle
- **Mantra meditation** – In mantra meditation, you choose a word, phrase, or prayer to recite. First, you repeat the mantra verbally, then whisper, then mentally, then spontaneously listen.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation:** [Progressive muscle relaxation](#) involves tightening and relaxing one muscle group at a time through the body
- **Loving-kindness meditation** – Loving-kindness meditation is about opening the mind and heart to send and receive love.

## 6. Self Care

If you are suffering from PTSD or living with symptoms related to traumatic stress, [self-care](#) is extremely important. Practicing self-care can help to reduce disruptive symptoms and relax the mind and body. Self-care can consist of small acts such as [diaphragmatic breathing](#), [eating mindfully](#), avoiding alcohol/drugs, [setting boundaries](#), and getting enough rest. All of these acts can help you regulate your body and nervous system.

## 7. Journaling

[Journaling](#) or even using a voice memo journaling can be a way to express things that you weren't able to express at the moment your body experienced the trauma. Research indicates that journaling can provide an emotional release, which can be beneficial in healing trauma.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to note that sometimes journaling can be activating and cause distress. It can be helpful to set a timer and journal for 5-10 minutes, check in with your body and how you're feeling, and then proceed with more journaling or take a break if you're feeling too much distress. Journaling with prompts can be a helpful way and structured way to process emotions.

## 8. Massage

According to research, massage therapy can provide relief from physical, emotional, and psychological stress. Massage therapy also helps to decrease levels of depression, anxiety, irritability, and other trauma-related symptoms.<sup>16</sup> It decreases stress hormones and increases hormones associated with a positive mood. Massage also helps increase circulation, relax tense muscles, and relieve physical pain.<sup>16</sup>

Remember to speak with your medical provider if you are new to massage and have any illnesses that could be problematic. When exploring massage as a tool for releasing trauma, a trauma-informed therapist would be a good place to start.

## 9. Breathwork

[Breathwork](#) is a branch of yoga and is essentially the deliberate control of breath. It is a great way to release trauma and regulate the nervous system. Research has shown that breathwork and breathing-based meditation can result in a decrease in PTSD symptoms. Breathwork can also help to release stress hormones from the body, increase mood, and improve focus.<sup>17</sup>

Three-part breath can be a great way to start practicing the use of breathing techniques to improve mood and focus. Here is how to do it:<sup>11</sup>

- Inhale into the lower abdomen, pause without exhaling
- Inhale into the middle and upper abdomen and pause without exhaling
- Inhale into the chest and pause without exhaling
- Take a slow, deep exhalation, feeling the air move through the chest and abdomen
- Repeat 5-15 times

## 10. Exercise

A 2022 study indicated that physical exercise can be a beneficial and effective addition to PTSD treatment. When we experience trauma, it causes us to experience anxiety, depression, and a negative mood, and exercise can combat this by improving mood, self-esteem, and cognitive function.<sup>18</sup> Exercise includes things such as 30-minute walks, taking an aerobics class, going for a swim, taking a hike, or lifting weights.

## Therapies That Can Help You Release Trauma

While there are many things that we can do on our own to release and heal from trauma, oftentimes, working with a therapist or mental health professional can be crucial. Therapists and other mental health providers who specialize in trauma-related disorders typically have specialized training to help their clients heal.

Here are some therapies that can help release trauma from the body:

- **Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR):** [EMDR](#) is an effective treatment for trauma-related disorders.<sup>19</sup> This modality hypothesizes that traumatic memories are stored improperly in the brain and thus cause somatic and psychological symptoms. An EMDR therapist will guide you in reprocessing these memories in order to help alleviate the disruptive symptoms the memories are causing.
- **Trauma-informed yoga:** [Trauma-informed yoga](#) is a specialized form of yoga that is led by a psychotherapist or yoga teacher who has been specifically trained in this type of practice. In a study done about the effectiveness of trauma-informed yoga, many participants reported feeling empowered, having more control over their bodies, and the ability to tolerate overwhelming emotions.<sup>20</sup>
- **Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT):** [TF-CBT](#) is an evidence-based treatment designed for children and adolescents impacted by trauma, which includes their parents or caregivers in the process. It has been researched and proven to be an effective treatment for alleviating PTSD and trauma-related symptoms.<sup>21, 22</sup>
- **Emotional freedom technique (EFT):** [EFT](#) is an evidenced-based therapy that combines cognitive and somatic elements. EFT incorporates elements of exposure therapy, cognitive therapy, and somatic stimulation of acupressure points on the body and face. In a study done on veterans with PTSD, EFT was proven to be an effective treatment.<sup>23, 24, 25</sup>
- **Somatic therapy:** The goal of [somatic therapy](#) is to alleviate symptoms of chronic stress and post-traumatic stress. It offers a framework to help

assess where a person is stuck in their [fight, flight, freeze, or fawn](#) response and provides clinical tools to help move through these states.<sup>26</sup>

- **Internal family systems (IFS):** The goal of [IFS](#) is to help people heal their wounded parts by looking at our internal parts the same way we look at a family system. Through IFS, the hope is for people to achieve a deeper understanding of and acceptance of self and all inner parts.<sup>27</sup>

## What Happens When You Have a Trauma Release?

When you go through a trauma release, your body is letting go of built-up tension and stress associated with a traumatic experience. There are many [signs your body is releasing trauma](#) and it can show up in different ways—physically, emotionally, or cognitively. Physically, you might feel a release of tightness or pain. Emotionally, there could be a mixture of feelings like relief, sadness, or even joy. Cognitively, you might see things differently or have a clearer understanding of what happened.

# How Long Does it Take to Recover From Trauma?

Everyone heals differently, and when you are doing work to release trauma, there will be ups and downs. You are engaging in activities or treatment that cause you to think about aspects of your life that you have been avoiding. When this happens, it is normal to feel a dip in your mood. However, the general trend should be a decrease in trauma-related symptoms.

Some examples of questions to ask yourself during a self-check-in are:

- How well am I sleeping?
- How does my body feel physically?
- How am I handling difficult situations?
- How has my overall mood been?
- Are the symptoms I had before still bothering me?
- Some examples of questions to ask yourself during a self-check-in are:

## When to Seek Professional Support

If you or a loved one is experiencing overwhelming symptoms related to a traumatic experience, it is important to seek support from a therapist who specializes in [PTSD treatment](#). Remember that trauma symptoms can manifest as a physical response. If you have gone to a medical professional for physical symptoms and are unable to find a cause, it could be helpful to explore if these symptoms are a result of ongoing traumatic stress. When looking for a therapist, it can be helpful to use an [online therapist directory](#) or [online therapy platform](#). Ask potential therapists if they offer a free consultation so that you can get a chance to see if this person will be a good fit for your needs. Not all therapists are trained in trauma and PTSD. It is important to ask about post-graduate training your potential therapist has engaged in and what their level of experience is in regard to your needs.

[🏠](#) → [Library](#) → [Therapy](#) → [Gestalt Therapy](#) → **Gestalt Therapy: The Empty Chair Technique**

## Gestalt Therapy: The Empty Chair Technique

Author: [Kerry Nenn](#) Mar 14th 2017  Est. 9 minutes read

[What Is Gestalt Therapy?](#) | [What Is the Empty Chair Technique?](#) | [What Is the Empty Chair Technique Used For?](#) | [What Does the Empty Chair Symbolize?](#) | [The Therapist's Role in Guiding the Empty Chair Technique](#) | [How Can an Empty Chair Help Me?](#) | [Embracing the Potential for Change](#)

The Empty Chair Technique is a therapeutic practice within Gestalt therapy, where an individual engages in a dialogue with an absent person or part of themselves, represented by an empty chair. This method serves a core purpose: to facilitate self-awareness and resolve internal conflicts or unfinished business. By allowing clients to articulate their feelings, thoughts, and perceptions in a structured yet imaginative setting, the technique aims to bridge gaps in understanding and emotional well-being. Through this direct and poignant form of communication, individuals can confront unresolved issues, fostering a profound sense of clarity and reconciliation.

### What Is Gestalt Therapy?

Gestalt therapy is a form of psychotherapy that emphasizes personal responsibility and self-awareness, focusing on the individual's experience in the present moment. It uses techniques such as the empty chair to facilitate awareness of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in the 'here and now.' The goal is to help individuals learn to accept and trust their feelings and experiences, enabling them to find healthier ways to deal with life's challenges.

Dr. Brindusa Vanta, MD, says, "Gestalt therapy has been effectively used by therapists to manage various mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, substance use, PTSD, relationship issues, and low self-esteem."

### What Is the Empty Chair Technique?

The empty chair technique is a therapeutic approach used in Gestalt therapy that encourages clients to explore and express their feelings towards an imaginary person or an aspect of themselves. The idea is to have a conversation with the empty chair as though it were occupied by someone else or another part of themselves.

This helps the client gain insight into their thoughts and emotions. The therapist may guide the client through this

process, helping them articulate their feelings and then use the empty chair to promote dialogue, possibly leading to resolution or acceptance of their experiences.

## What Is the Empty Chair Technique Used For?

The empty chair technique is used in Gestalt therapy to address unresolved issues, conflicts, and emotions. This could involve the client having an imagined conversation with someone they have an issue with, or it could be used to facilitate dialogue between different parts of the client's personality.

By externalizing these internal conflicts or their unresolved feelings and emotions, the client can gain insight into their feelings, explore different perspectives, and work towards resolution. This technique can be especially effective for clients dealing with grief, guilt, resentment, or anxiety.

As Dr. Brindusa Vanta, MD, says, "The empty chair technique is traditionally used for resolving conflicts or dealing with unresolved emotions but can be used for other purposes. For example, some therapists use it to help clients explore future scenarios, using visualization and projection for self-exploration and goal setting."

## What Does the Empty Chair Symbolize?

In Gestalt therapy, the empty chair symbolizes the 'other' in a conversation or the various parts of oneself that need to be addressed. This could be a person from the client's life, an unresolved situation, or different aspects of the client's identity. The technique allows the client to project their thoughts, feelings, and experiences onto the empty chair, enabling them to gain a new perspective. This symbolic use of the empty chair method encourages introspection and helps the client better understand their emotions and reactions.

This simple approach is designed to allow you room to work through interpersonal or internal conflict. It helps you see the situation from a different perspective and gain insight into your feelings and behaviors.

### Here's what it looks like:

- You sit facing an empty chair.
- In the empty chair dialogue, you picture a person with whom you are experiencing conflict. Or, you may picture a part of yourself.
- Then, you speak to the empty chair. Explain your feelings, thoughts, and perspective of the situation.

Now things get really interesting. After you've shared your side of things, you move to the other chair.

- Respond to what you just said from that person's perspective, taking on their role.
- You may move back and forth between the chairs several times to continue the dialogue.

Meanwhile, the therapist explores this communication with questions and insights as the situation unfolds.

The Empty Chair Technique, a pivotal aspect of Gestalt therapy, offers a unique pathway for clients to explore unresolved emotions, conflicts, and internal dialogues. The therapist's role in this process is multifaceted, requiring a blend of expertise, empathy, and active facilitation to guide the client through the therapeutic journey. Here are the specific actions therapists take to facilitate the dialogue and provide support:

- ➔ **Create a Safe Environment:** The therapist establishes a space where clients feel safe and supported, encouraging openness and vulnerability. This environment is crucial for clients to freely express their thoughts and emotions during the technique.
- ➔ **Introduce the Technique:** Therapists explain the purpose and process of the Empty Chair Technique, ensuring clients understand its goals and how it might help them gain insight into their feelings and behaviors.
- ➔ **Guide the Dialogue:** As the client engages with the empty chair, the therapist actively listens, offering prompts or questions to deepen exploration. They might suggest exploring specific emotions, conflicts, or aspects of the relationship or self that are being addressed.
- ➔ **Encourage Perspective-Taking:** Therapists support clients in shifting perspectives, especially when taking the position of the other chair. This helps clients explore different facets of their conflicts or internal struggles, fostering empathy and understanding.
- ➔ **Facilitate Emotional Processing:** Throughout the dialogue, therapists help clients process the emotions that arise, guiding them toward expressing and understanding these feelings.
- ➔ **Provide Insights and Reflections:** Therapists offer reflections on the dialogue, highlighting patterns, emotions, or thoughts that emerge. These insights can help clients gain new perspectives on their situation or behavior.
- ➔ **Support Closure and Integration:** After the dialogue, therapists assist clients in integrating the experience, discussing insights, and exploring steps towards resolution or acceptance.

## How Can an Empty Chair Help Me?

Using [The Empty Chair Technique](#) helps bring you into the present. As you verbalize what's going on, the abstract becomes more concrete. When you take on the other person's role, you gain insight into your own perspective as well as theirs.

**Gain self-awareness and overcome overthinking. Begin our transformative overthinking test now.**

If the exercise represents part of you or an internal conflict, you experience different aspects of yourself and gain insight into your struggle. This discovery aspect is the ultimate goal of Gestalt therapy and The Empty Chair Technique.

Established by [Fritz Perls](#), Gestalt therapy has been widely used by therapists since its inception in the 1940s. It's hard to say how many empty chairs have provided compelling communication over the years. From high-backs and rollers to spindled wooden stools, clients the world over have spilled their guts to every type of seat imaginable. The technique has proven to be a powerful tool for understanding and insight.

## Embracing the Potential for Change

The Empty Chair Technique stands out as a transformative element of Gestalt therapy, offering a unique avenue for individuals to engage deeply with their innermost thoughts and unresolved emotions. By facilitating a direct dialogue with an absent person or a part of oneself, this method embodies the therapeutic power to illuminate and reconcile internal conflicts. It is a testament to the potential for change that lies within the realm of self-awareness and emotional exploration.

For those seeking to harness this transformative power, the guidance of a skilled professional is invaluable. Therapists trained in Gestalt therapy and experienced with the Empty Chair Technique can provide the necessary support, insight, and environment for individuals to navigate their emotional landscapes. This professional guidance not only optimizes results but also ensures the journey toward self-awareness and conflict resolution is meaningful and effective.

In embracing the Empty Chair Technique, individuals open themselves to the possibility of profound change, healing, and growth. It is an invitation to explore the depths of one's psyche, confront the unresolved, and ultimately step into a more integrated and authentic self.

Author

Kerry Nenn

Writer

Kerry Nenn is an experienced writer and blogger covering a wide range of topics, including depression, anxiety, grief, relationship challenges, eating disorders, and trauma.



## **SESSION 5 HANDOUTS**

## ***Dealing with Your Own Death Anxiety***

*One of the most important elements of critical thinking is self-knowledge, which includes the ability to critically evaluate our deepest and most private fears.*

### **Death Anxiety Questionnaire**

To test your own level of death anxiety, indicate your response according to the following scale:

|            |          |           |
|------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>0</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b>  |
| not at all | somewhat | very much |

- \_\_\_ 1. Do you worry about dying?
- \_\_\_ 2. Does it bother you that you may die before you have done everything you wanted to do?
- \_\_\_ 3. Do you worry that you may be very ill for a long time before you die?
- \_\_\_ 4. Does it upset you to think that others may see you suffering before you die?
- \_\_\_ 5. Do you worry that dying may be very painful?
- \_\_\_ 6. Do you worry that the persons closest to you won't be with you when you are dying?
- \_\_\_ 7. Do you worry that you may be alone when you are dying?
- \_\_\_ 8. Does the thought bother you that you might lose control of your mind before death?
- \_\_\_ 9. Do you worry that expenses connected with your death will be a burden to other people?
- \_\_\_ 10. Does it worry you that your will or instructions about your belongings may not be carried out after you die?
- \_\_\_ 11. Are you afraid that you may be buried before you are really dead?
- \_\_\_ 12. Does the thought of leaving loved ones behind when you die disturb you?
- \_\_\_ 13. Do you worry that those you care about may not remember you after your death?
- \_\_\_ 14. Does the thought worry you that with death you may be gone forever?
- \_\_\_ 15. Are you worried about not knowing what to expect after death?

**Higher scores reflect higher levels of anxiety.**

How does your total score compare to the national average of 8.5? When this same test was given to nursing-home residents, senior citizens, and college students, researchers found no significant differences, despite the fact that those tested ranged in age from 30 to 80.

*Source: Conte, H. R., Weiner, M. B., and Plutchik, R. (1982). Measuring death anxiety: Conceptual, psychometric, and factor-analytic aspects. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 43, 775-785.*

# 5 Ways to Cope With Anxiety

Everyone feels anxious at times. Anxiety can surface when you face a challenge, when the pressure's on to do well, or when you've got a worry on your mind.

Anxiety turns on your body's stress response (also called *fight or flight*). This instant surge of stress hormones is a survival response. It prepares you to react quickly and protect yourself if you need to. If you're scared or not sure you're safe, anxiety prompts you to be cautious.

But many people feel anxious in situations that are stressful to them but aren't dangerous. For example, they may feel anxious about taking tests, meeting new people, or speaking in class.

If you feel anxious in situations like these, you're not alone. But it's best to learn how to cope. Otherwise, anxiety can hold you back or cause you to avoid things you'd like to do.

Instead of avoiding things that prompt anxiety, it's better to face them. You might be surprised by what you can do. Here are five things that can help you through anxious moments:

1. **Start with a 'growth' mindset.** Some people have a *fixed* mindset. They might think, "This is how I am. I'm too anxious to speak in class. So I don't raise my hand." With a fixed mindset, people don't think things can change. They think they are the way they are, period.

But brain science has shown that you can teach your brain new ways to respond. People with a *growth* mindset know this. They know they can get better at just about everything — with effort and practice. That includes reducing anxiety.

2. **Notice how anxiety affects your body.** When you're anxious, do you feel "butterflies" in your stomach? Sweaty palms? Shaky hands? A faster heartbeat? Tight muscles?

These physical feelings are part of your body's stress response. They can be uncomfortable but they aren't harmful. You can cope. Next time you feel them, try to notice them without getting upset that they're there. You don't have to push the feelings away. But you don't have to give them all your attention either. See if you can let them be in the background.

3. **Breathe.** When you feel anxious, take a few slow breaths. Breathe in slowly. Be sure to breathe out all the way. You can use your fingers to count four or five breaths, in and out.

Taking slow breaths can slow the release of stress hormones. It can help your body and mind feel more at ease. As you guide your attention to your breath, you can pay less attention to anxious thoughts and feelings. Breathing like this can help you feel steady and less anxious.

4. **Talk yourself through it.** When you're anxious, you might tell yourself things like, "I can't do this!" or, "What if I mess this up?" or, "This is overwhelming." Instead, plan to tell yourself something that could help you face the moment with a bit of courage like, "I can do this!" or, "It's OK to feel anxious. I can do this anyway."

5. **Face the situation — don't wait for anxiety to go away.** You might think that you'll put off speaking in class or talking to that new person until you no longer feel anxious about it. But it doesn't work that way. It's facing the anxiety that helps you lower it.

Learning to cope with anxiety takes time, patience, and practice. Most of all it takes being willing to face situations that prompt anxiety. Start with one small step. The more you practice, the better you'll get at lowering anxiety.

As you use these five steps, it can help to get some guidance and support from a parent, school counselor, or a therapist.

And if your anxiety feels extreme or hard to cope with, or if you're feeling anxious about a problem you need help with, tell a parent or another adult you trust. With the right care and support, you can feel less anxious and more confident.

**Medically reviewed by:** D'Arcy Lyness, PhD

Date reviewed: February 2022

Note: All information on TeensHealth™ is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

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Odelya Gertel Kraybill Ph.D.  
Expressive Trauma Integration

VAGUS NERVE

# Fight-Flight-Freeze and Withdrawal

Part 1: Polyvagal theory and withdrawal as a secondary autonomic stress cycle.

Posted April 30, 2021

Reviewed by Devon Frye

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## KEY POINTS

- There is a third state of stress reaction that exists between fight, flight, and freeze: Withdrawal.
- Withdrawal is a predictable instinct to overwhelming encounters with danger and stress.
- In the short term, withdrawal is a helpful reaction that helps a survivor regroup and recuperate after trauma.
- In the long term, withdrawal becomes a prolonged and complex response that takes over and impedes trauma survivors' entire life.

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Before Porges' (2011) polyvagal theory became widely known, it was commonly thought that the autonomous nervous sys-tem has only two branches: the sympathetic system which manages in times of stress, and the parasympathetic which manages in calm.

Porges' polyvagal (PLV) theory posits that there are actually three branches, in a hierarchical relationship with each other. In simplest terms, the three pathways are:

1. The ventral vagal system, also known as the social nervous system, is in control when things feel safe. Part of the parasympathetic nervous system, it is the most recent in human evolutionary development and supports social engagement, thought, reflection, and awareness. These functions enable moral judgments and gain new learnings.
2. The sympathetic nervous system provides a different system of reaction, the mobilization of fight and/or flight reactions. When the sympathetic nervous system takes over, the ventral vagal pathway shuts down.
3. The dorsal vagal pathway forms a third system of response, the oldest and most primitive of the three. It activates in life-threatening situations, typically with a freeze response. When the dorsal vagal is in charge, the other two systems shut down.

## Polyvagal Ladder of Arousal

**VENTRAL VAGAL PATHWAY**  
In charge when things feel safe and manageable. Coordinates resources for reflection, social engagement, decision making, problem-solving, etc.

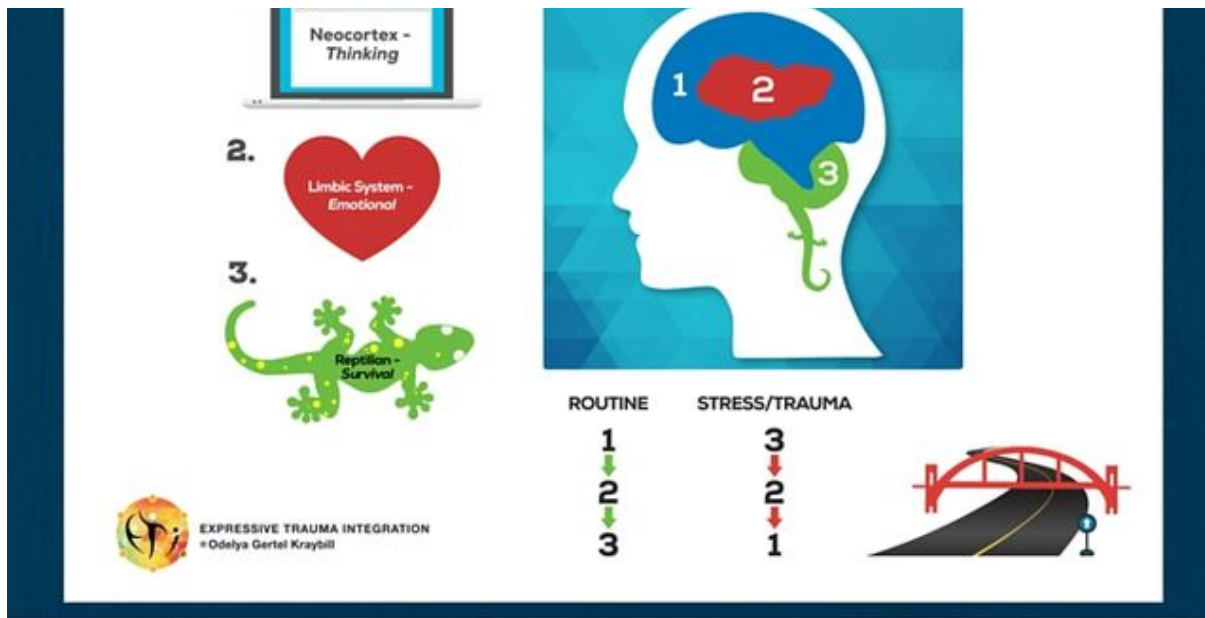
**SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**  
Takes over when aroused by a sense of danger. Responds with fight/flight.

**DORSAL VAGAL PATHWAY**  
Takes over when triggered by a sense of danger too big to escape or resist. Responds with freeze.

Porges (2011), Dana (2020)

Polyvagal Ladder Source: Porges (2011), Dana (2020)

The concept of the triune brain (MacLean, 1985) is another earlier survival theory that divides the brain into three hierarchy systems. The two models have some similarities. In the language of the triune brain model, when we experience stress and/or life-threatening situations, we go into a 3-2-1\* state. When we are safe and the upper parts of the brain are in charge (analogous to what polyvagal theory refers to as the social nervous system or ventral vagal) we are in a 1-2-3 state.



Expressive Trauma Integration™ 3-2-1

Source: Dr. Odelya Gertel Kraybill Expressive Trauma Integration™

Both the triune model and PLV theory highlight states of ex-treme reactions to threat, namely fight-flight-or-freeze (3-2-1).

I propose an additional, mixed state that exists between fight/flight and freeze: withdrawal. Withdrawal is both a short-term reaction to immediate danger and a long-term reaction to overwhelming exposure to stress, danger, and life-threat-ening situations.

In reality, the trauma survivors who come and go, week in and week out in a clinical setting, dwell mostly in an in-be-tween mode. They are exhaustingly hyper-alert, chronically anxious, often in an emotional freeze, but rarely in a full-blown state of shutdown or immobilization.

As a short-term reaction, we can understand withdrawal as a predictable instinct to overwhelming encounters with ex-treme danger. Universally, when the episode ends, survivors seek out a place of safety to recuperate physically and re-group emotionally.

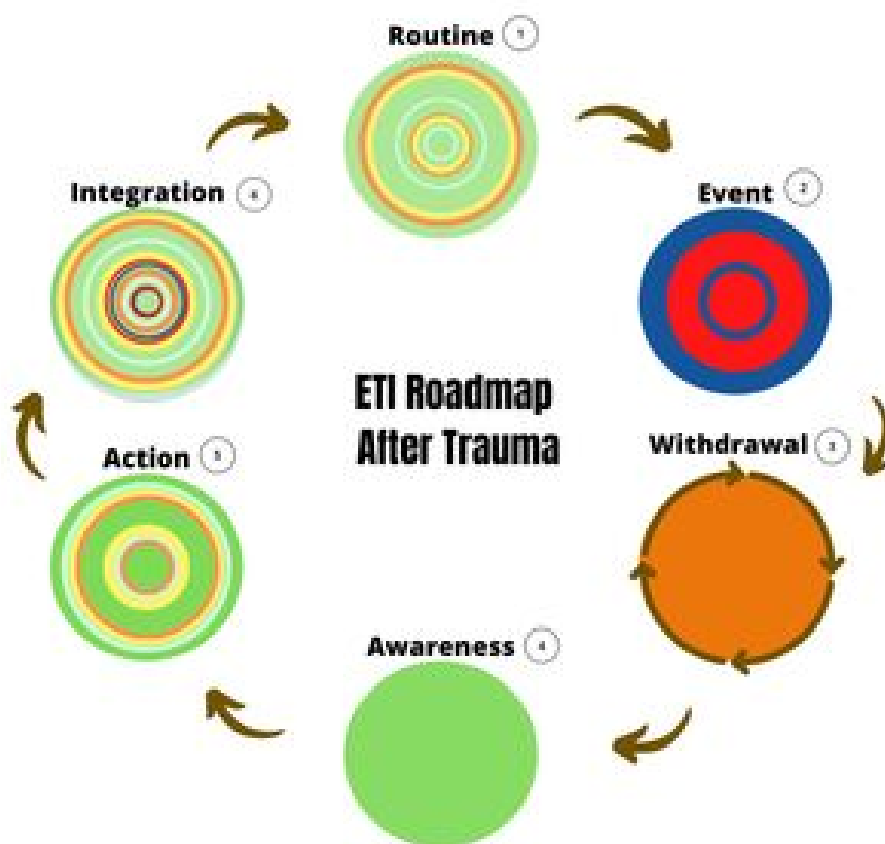
For how long? It depends—on the depth of the trauma, the state of personal resources for coping, the level of safety in the environment, previous trauma history, and much more. Some people move on from withdrawal in a matter of days. Many require months, some require years. And some never return fully to the emotional presence they once displayed.

The struggle with long-term symptoms of withdrawal is what brings most survivors into therapy and a great deal of our work with them is about helping them learn to manage and live with withdrawal. This task looks different for each client. But we are dealing with reactions with deep biological rootings and the mechanisms involved are the same for everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, etc.

In the essay in which I first encountered the concept in reference to conflict-resolution, Ron Kraybill (1988) described withdrawal as an instinctual and natural response to the pain of a particular relationship that sometimes becomes an obstacle between individuals after deep interpersonal conflict. That's just one form of withdrawal.

In the context of trauma, for many survivors, withdrawal becomes a prolonged and complex response that takes over and impedes their entire life.

To work effectively with a chronic state of withdrawal, therapeutic responses must correspond to the complexity of the problem. We have to bring a systemic framework to treatment. In my next blog post, I'll provide such a framework and show how to use it with survivors trapped in chronic withdrawal.

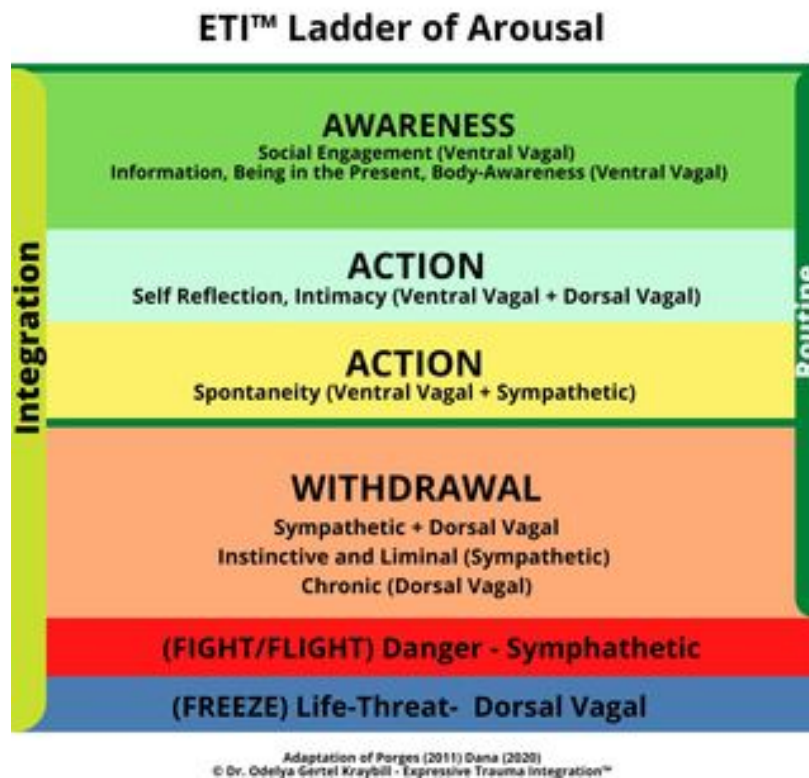


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ETI™ Roadmap After Trauma

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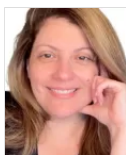
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ETI™ Ladder of Arousal

Source: Adaptation of Porges (2011) Dana (2020) © Dr. Odelya Gertel Kraybill - Expressive Trauma Integration™

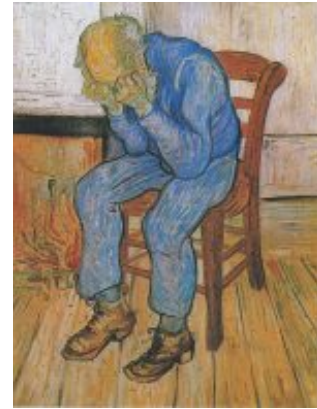
## About the Author



**Odelya Gertel Kraybill, PhD, LCPC**, is an integrative trauma therapist and scholar who blogs and teaches about sustainable trauma integration in the US and abroad.

Online: [Parents Series: Neurodivergent Parenting](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#)

## The Existential Moment



A picture is worth a thousand words.

*At Eternity's Gate* by Vincent van Gogh conveys the overwhelming weight of grief. However, the title brings home the meaning of the work and, more surprisingly, the hope in the subject of the painting, death.

# The Existential Moment: Existential Givens —Death

Author: EHI (<https://ehinstitute.org/author/oatmealsep32/>)

February 1, 2022

Western art depicts death through numerous symbols and scenes: skeletons, skulls, scythes, apocalyptic scenes, the superhuman, the demonic, plagues, war, and so on. The Grim Reaper and The Angel of Death are perhaps the most famous personifications of death.

Death in art raises important themes. It is terrifying, even gruesome. Grieving ranges from abject anguish to regret to simple wistfulness. It is an incomprehensible mystery, an absurdity, or a doorway to awe-inspiring hope. It is inescapably our own and undeniably certain, coming for us all.

E-H Therapy theory holds that four existential givens (also called paradoxical polarities) pervade *The Cosmological Dimension of the Therapeutic Encounter* (<https://ehinstitute.org/the-existential-moment-the-cosmological/>). An essential task in therapy is to help clients acknowledge and accept these realities and their actual but unacknowledged givenness and paradoxical influence, which too often go denied and realized in polarization.

The first polarity is wishing to live but having to die. Death is overtly alive, for instance, when a client faces a terminal diagnosis or copes with the loss of a loved one. It might be unacknowledged, for example, in issues of power, control, and security, as we all face the whim of Fate and the fear of the Reaper.

On the other hand, life matters to us. We care. Caring makes life a project to be undertaken, a gift to be lived. Issues of significance and meaning rise and stand opposite the absurdity raised by death. The denial of death too often motivates a possessed attempt to live and avoid nonbeing. Acknowledgment of death, however, may spur a new lease on life.

Overall, a central question arises in therapy and life when we confront the reality of always effectively standing at eternity's gate: how do we choose to live?

## **SESSION 6 HANDOUTS**

## QR Code O-NET Interest Profiler



## SMART Goals

|          |                                                                                                          |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>S</b> | <b>Specific</b><br>What am I going to do? Why is this important to me?                                   |
| <b>M</b> | <b>Measurable</b><br>How will I measure my success? How will I know when I have achieved my goal?        |
| <b>A</b> | <b>Attainable</b><br>What will I do to achieve this goal? How will I accomplish this goal?               |
| <b>R</b> | <b>Relevant</b><br>Is this goal worthwhile? How will achieving it help me? Does this goal fit my values? |
| <b>T</b> | <b>Time-Bound</b><br>When will I accomplish my goal? How long will I give myself?                        |

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# Action Plan

My goal is \_\_\_\_\_

| Date to finish | How will I measure my success? |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
|                |                                |

## Steps to Achieving my Goal

| Description | Time Estimate | Completion date |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
|             |               |                 |
|             |               |                 |
|             |               |                 |
|             |               |                 |
|             |               |                 |
|             |               |                 |

| Obstacles that may arise | How I will respond |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                          |                    |
|                          |                    |
|                          |                    |
|                          |                    |

| Helpful Tools | Helpful Resources |
|---------------|-------------------|
|               |                   |
|               |                   |
|               |                   |

## How to Ruthlessly Prioritize When Every Task Matters

General Advice

The ability to prioritize effectively is a critical skill for employees in every organization.

Yet, we often spend our time being reactive instead of consciously prioritizing.

If you're like me, you probably check email or chat first thing in the morning, often before you officially start work. You think you want the information in those accounts, but it often comes as a distraction against more critical work. Experts call this a recency bias.

**A better way to work is to be proactive** and consciously decide what actions and projects come first, regardless of when you became aware of them.

Seeing the big picture requires thinking about things in advance — i.e., why should I have this done today instead of next week?

At first, you'll need to consciously decide where to spend your time and whether you're tackling your work in the proper order. Practice these steps, however, and prioritizing will become second nature.

### 1-Start with your goals.

If you don't know what matters, you can't prioritize. So before you even attempt to prioritize, you need to get clear on what you're trying to accomplish. (Even better, set SMART goals.)

If you're a marketer, it might be user sign-ups or leads generated. If you a product person, it might be creating value for your users. In sales, closing deals reigns supreme.

This is an easy step to miss, but it's a critical one. Once you have a clear picture of your goals, you can move on to deciding how to achieve them.

### 2-Understand what actually matters most.

Many experts recommend that you look at every task based on two criteria:

1. Is this urgent?
2. Is this important?

Often urgent, unimportant work gets done first because it seems like it has to. Urgent always takes priority.

But is that unimportant task going to move the needle forward?

Instead, narrow down your options by considering the results you want to achieve. Prioritize work that is urgent AND important, followed by work that is simply important.

Is a task actually not that critical? Lower its priority or send it packing.

### 3-Think of 'impact' not size.

It can also be easy to put too much weight on tasks and projects that are large or have personal value.

But the best way to prioritize your tasks is to think of what the task will accomplish, not whether it's a big or small task, difficult or not.

What's the expected impact of this work going to be? Is it marginal or game-changing? Will it reveal some critical knowledge, or is it just something you're doing because you did it last month too?

### 4-Don't spread yourself too thin.

With the right mindset, process, and tools, you can beat burnout and outpace it with productivity.

However, letting yourself get overrun by too many tasks will almost certainly lead to 1) not being able to finish your work on time and 2) not being able to excel on any particular task.

---

You have to make tradeoffs. Usually, that's one priority per day and a maximum of three per week.

Don't worry. Finish early, and you can always jump on to priority number four.

#### 5-Face what you're putting off.

If something is indeed essential and high-impact, it may also be challenging, a lot of work, or out of your comfort zone.

This can lead to procrastination, stress, and ultimately, missed deadlines.

If it's important work that has to get done, it's better to set it as priority number one and get to it. Put down your email and chat, turn off notifications, and get to work. You'll be much happier with the task behind you.

#### 6-Ditch tasks that take up too much of your time.

One of the best prioritization tricks is to cut out tasks entirely.

Now, if your boss gave you a task, you'll need to supply a rationale why your other work is more important.

How?

Share your thought process around what the urgent and importance of the task is based on its expected impact.

Most of the time, your manager will be thankful that you're thinking critically about how you're spending your time. If they agree, they won't be mad that you pushed back. Instead, they'll be delighted that you've given so much thought to how you spend your time.

#### 7-Leave room for surprises.

Once I've done all of the above, there's still one mistake I still make. That's to not leave enough room for extra tasks to come up.

I tend to fill my work week with the amount of work I think I can get done, but invariably, something will come up, adding an extra task to an already full week.

Always leave some **wiggle room**.

If you don't need it, great, move on to the next thing. But if you do, you'll find it a lot less stressful if you feel you have some bandwidth to tackle whatever it is that just came up.

Summary:

- Set clear goals.
- Prioritize work that is important and will impact those goals, even if other work seems more urgent.
- Ditch tasks that aren't helpful.
- Leave room for the unexpected.

 276 

 14



 Share

...

## **SESSION 7 HANDOUTS**

## OUR ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERSHIP

# Goal progress worksheet

**Date:**

**Goal:**

**Tasks set for completion by this meeting:**

**Progress update:**

*Include milestones met, what went well, what didn't & reasons why.*

**Any questions, advice or support required from this meeting?**

*Also make note of any advice you are provided with*

**Tasks to accomplish by next meeting:**

## OUR ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERSHIP

# Goal progress worksheet

### Potential challenges or obstacles I may face:

### Support measures:

*Identify ways to overcome the challenges/obstacles you've listed above. What could you do?  
Who could you gain support from? What support would you need?*

### Actions I need to complete to support my accountability partner:

*(If any) By when?*

### Next meeting date:

*"If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy, and inspires your hopes."*

ANDREW CARNEGIE

## **SESSION 8 HANDOUTS**



## **Rooted: Futures in Focus**

**An 8-Week Life Skills Group Workshop for Transitional Age Youth (TAY)**

*Psychoeducational Discussions with an Existential Orientation and Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model Integrations*

---

### **Workshop Evaluation Survey**

---

**Thank you for participating in the Rooted: Futures in Focus workshop!**

We value your feedback! Your responses help us understand your experience and improve future sessions. All responses are anonymous unless you choose to provide your name.

#### **Part 1: General Information (*Optional*)**

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Pronouns (optional): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Age: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Contact (only if you want follow-up info or to stay connected): \_\_\_\_\_
-

**Part 2: Overall Experience** Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) by circling the number that best described your opinion.

**Statement**

1. I felt welcomed and safe in this group environment.

1   2   3   4   5

2. The facilitator created a supportive and respectful space for sharing.

1   2   3   4   5

3. The workshop content was relevant to my life and needs.

1   2   3   4   5

4. I gained valuable insights about myself through this workshop.

1   2   3   4   5

5. The group activities (journaling, discussions, breathing exercises) were helpful.

1   2   3   4   5

6. I better understand my values, choices, and goals after completing this program..

1   2   3   4   5

7. I feel more confident about planning my future.

1   2   3   4   5

8. I would recommend this workshop to a peer.

1   2   3   4   5

### **Part 3: Session-Specific Feedback**

Which sessions stood out to you the most? *(Check all that apply and briefly explain why.)*

- Session 1: What Do You Value?
- Session 2: Existential Concepts and Meaning
- Session 3: Our Freedom to Make Choices
- Session 4: Isolation & Connection
- Session 5: Lessons from Death and Anxiety
- Session 6: Career, Lifestyle, & Financial Goals
- Session 7: Polishing Your Priorities Plan
- Session 8: Rooted in Your Futures

**Which session(s) were most meaningful to you and why?**

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---

### **Part 4: Self-Reflection & Impact**

**1. What were some of your personal takeaways from this workshop?**

---

**2. How has your understanding of your values or purpose changed (if at all)?**

---

**3. Did the journaling exercises help you reflect or grow? Why or why not?**

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**4. What is one thing you plan to continue working on after this workshop?**

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**5. Have you stayed in contact or plan to stay connected with anyone from the group?**

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## **Part 5: Feedback on Facilitation and Logistics**

**1. What did you appreciate about the facilitator or facilitation style?**

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**2. Were there any materials, resources, or activities that stood out to you as especially helpful (or unhelpful)?**

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**3. Was the pacing of sessions (one hour/week) manageable for you?**

- Yes
- No (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Suggestions for improving the workshop in the future?**

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**Part 6: Future Involvement**

- Would you be interested in future follow-up group meetups or check-ins?
  - Yes
  - No
- Would you like to help facilitate a future group or help spread the word?
  - Yes
  - No

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**Thank You for Your Feedback!**

Your honesty supports the growth of this community and helps others thrive.

If you'd like to receive a digital copy of your Certificate of Completion or stay connected, please include your email above.