

Identifying Past Successes

Objective

To identify previous achievements and understand how these successes inform current and future problem-solving and goal achievement.

What to Know

In solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT), identifying past successes can help you identify your strengths and previous solutions that can be built upon or re-utilized. The goal is to help you gain a more balanced view of your situation and capabilities, which can improve your confidence and self-efficacy. This approach can foster a positive mindset and encourage you to leverage your own strengths and resources.

Identifying past successes is important for several key reasons. Even though SFBT is a goal-oriented therapy that focuses on present and future circumstances and goals (rather than past experiences), exploring past successes plays a vital role within this framework for the following reasons.

- This strengths-based approach emphasizes the resources, skills, and abilities you already possess. Identifying past successes can help you recognize and leverage your strengths to address challenges and pursue your goals.
- Reflecting on previous achievements and the strategies that led to those successes can boost your confidence and sense of competence. Self-assurance is essential to motivating you to tackle present difficulties.
- Past successes provide a valuable toolbox of strategies, solutions, and coping mechanisms that you have effectively used before. These can be adapted and applied to current situations, offering concrete, proven methods for overcoming obstacles and achieving your goals.
- SFBT aims to shift the focus from problems to solutions, from what is going wrong to what is going right. Highlighting past successes helps to cultivate a positive outlook, encouraging you to view yourself as capable and resourceful, which is more conducive to problem-solving and goal achievement.
- By identifying past successes, you can see evidence of your ability to make changes and achieve goals, which fosters hope and optimism about your future.
- Your path to success is unique. Examining past successes helps you identify personalized strategies and solutions that align with your values, preferences, and life context.

Identifying your past successes empowers you, providing a sense of agency and a toolkit of strategies for addressing current challenges and working toward future goals.

This worksheet is designed to help you reflect on your past successes and understand how they are a foundation for overcoming current challenges. By recognizing your achievements, you can build confidence and a sense of competence that will aid you in navigating life's difficulties.

What to Do

Take a moment to reflect on your past experiences. Consider times when you felt proud of what you accomplished, no matter how big or small the success might seem. Answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

Describe the situation and the challenge you faced.

How did you feel at the beginning? Be specific.

What actions did you take to overcome this challenge?

How did you feel after overcoming it?

Write about a personal goal you achieved in the past.

What steps did you take to achieve this goal?

Who or what supported you in reaching this achievement?

How did accomplishing this goal affect your life or perspective?

Reflect on a time when you positively changed your life or someone else's.

What motivated this change?

How did you implement this change?

What was the outcome of this change?

Based on your previous answers, list the skills and strengths you utilized to achieve these successes.

How can these skills and strengths be applied to your current situation or goals you want to achieve?

Considering your current challenge, how can your past successes support you in addressing this challenge?

What specific skills or strengths can you leverage to navigate this challenge?

Visualize yourself overcoming a future challenge using your strengths and skills. Describe what you imagined.

Describe this visualization, focusing on your actions, thoughts, and feelings during the process.

Are there any other past successes you can think of that can help you cope, address problems and challenges, and achieve goals in the future? List them.

How does it feel to revisit your past successes?

How can recognizing these successes influence your approach to current and future challenges?

Reflections on This Exercise

Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
