

Debits and Credits (Creating your Emotional Piggy Bank)- An Exercise in looking at your Emotional "Bank"

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This exercise came about because of a statement one of my old bosses used to say to me. She used to tell me "Don't forget to put some pennies in your bank," meaning don't forget to do something positive...

Population: This activity is helpful for adolescents and adults dealing with relationship issues

Materials Needed: anything goes...I have used cute little ceramic piggy banks in the past that you can paint (they are in the S&S catalog) and processed it as being a visual reminder of your emotional bank, I have also just used paper and markers and had clients create more of a physical drawing or list...use what you have access to!

Creation: You can have client create bank after initial thoughts on what piggy bank is used for and before processing, or you and discuss and process out and then have client's create visual memory of discussion...whatever works best with your population...

Concept/ Processing: You will have client participate in discussion regarding what piggy bank is used for. (Containing money in one place instead of having it all over the place and hard to track, Helps to save towards a goal, ect...) Then have client to think about relationships as being a combination of positive and negative experiences...Just as with any new relationship (whether it is with someone else, or with yourself) you start out at a neutral point in the relationship. As relationships build, experiences that help to form the relationship being to take on positive tones to shape the relationship (i.e.- helping a friend out that is in need, having lunch and going to a movie together, going on a trip together that is enjoyable, ect.) OR experiences shape the tone of the relationship in a negative way (i.e.- arguing with a friend over something, divorce, selfishly not considering the other person in the relationship, ect.) Ask the client to think about relationships they have with others? Are some more positive than others? How is your relationship with yourself? Have the client look at each relationship they have with others in an individual manner, including the relationship they have with themselves, ask them where they currently feel like their relationship is? Have them choose one relationship they would like to focus on...it can be a positive relationship, or one that is struggling...Is it in the black? (are there lots of credits in the bank?) Is it in the red? (have negative experiences made you bankrupt?) or is it neutral? Some experiences cost a lot (take out a lot of debits) and some experiences put a lot of pennies in the bank...other small things just add up consistently over a period of time...Ask them to look at the progression of their relationship. How can the client change that relationship to make it more ideal? What are some examples that they client can come up with that would be examples of debits and credits they could personally perform? Ect.

This intervention is helpful when one relationship seems to be affecting a client for a period of time. It helps to break down the weight of different emotional values placed to certain experiences. Clients have responded that they have enjoyed being logical with the activity and then being able to paint/ draw after processing this in the past. Hopefully it will be effective with your clients as well!!!