

Nourish

A Biweekly Newsletter
By Emma Higgins & Amanda Kelley

Termination Activities

Letter Writing

When terminating with clients, letter writing is a useful strategy for reflecting and processing. One form of letter writing is composing a letter to the client's next therapist. If a client is being transferred to a new therapist or level of care, the client can write a letter outlining the progress they have made so far, their hopes for the new therapeutic relationship, and their goals for treatment. Another form of letter writing is a goodbye letter. Clients can write a goodbye letter to their therapist or to the therapy process in general. This can be an opportunity to reflect on progress, revisit meaningful memories, or process emotions related to ending.

Survivor Tree

As termination approaches, Survivor Trees can foster and celebrate resilience for clients who have experienced trauma. They can be simple or complex, depending on the client's developmental abilities. When drawing a Survivor Tree, the branches may explore a client's areas of growth, the leaves and buds can convey a client's future hopes and aspirations, the trunk and roots can represent coping skills that the client has learned in order to stay grounded, and fallen leaves beneath the tree can mark the struggles they have worked through in therapy. Like a tree eventually blooming despite the adversity of winter, clients can go forth in life and bloom, no matter the adversities they face.



Suitcase Termination Activity

At termination, even though someone will be leaving the other behind, the client can pack up everything they have learned during their time in therapy and take it with them.

Supplies: Plastic, cardboard, or paper suitcase; paper luggage tag; sticker labels.

Goal: Process termination, provide transitional object, help regression, identify accomplishments, goals, coping tools etc.

Directions:

- Have client make or decorate their suitcase
 - Have them write something from therapy that they will "take with them" (things they learned, coping skills, supports, resources etc.)
 - On the sticker labels, have them write down goals they accomplished
 - On the luggage tag, have them write where they are going next (i.e a new life stage) or a goal they would like to accomplish
 - Help client process feelings around termination throughout the activity
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Ready to Set Sail Termination

Activity

By Jodi Smith, LCSW, RPT-S at "Play is Powerful"

Supplies: Toy boat, paper boat, box or peice of paper with a boat drawn on it etc.

Directions:

- Start by explaining to your client that because of the progress they made they are ready to sail off on their own.
- Reflect on what that feels like and process any anxiety. Transition into talking about all the things they will take with them on their journey
- Have the client answer each question and write their response down on the cards. The boat will contain cards related to tools they will take with them—supports, coping skills, things that may get in their way and strengths (as identified by the client and therapist).