

Exercise Zero: Positive memory recall and deliberate appreciation (MHPs) **(Optional First Exercise to Follow Video Training Segment #1 – Especially Gentle On-ramp)**

Karl D. Lehman, M.D., Immanuel Approach Basic Training Videos

A. Examples of positive memories:

- Playing with a favorite pet
- An especially positive time with friends
- Holding one of your children as a newborn baby
- Some other beautiful experience with one of your children
- A favorite family Christmas memory
- Some beautiful nature experience (visit National Parks to collect these!)
- Thoroughly enjoying your favorite meal/dish/food.

B. Splinter-free safety-net positive memories: The positive memories from this exercise will be used for the trauma-work safety nets. These memories therefore need to be free of splinters -- they must not include any pieces of unresolved trauma, and they must not be sitting right next to unresolved trauma.

B. Multiple memories to build momentum. Appreciation momentum builds as one works with several positive memories in succession. If the recipient gets stuck in particularly intense negative emotions when working with trauma, it will be important to have a strong safety net composed of several positive memories. Recipients should therefore use new memories each time they do the positive-memory-appreciation step in the next several exercises, in order to collect multiple positive memories. If there's time, do several laps with this positive-memory-appreciation exercise so that recipients can gather even more positive memories. ****Optional** for mental health professionals who already have tools for helping clients self-regulate**

C. Take notes for safety net coaching: Later in this series of exercises, if the recipient gets really stuck in a bad place when they are working with trauma, you will need to provide detailed, extended safety-net coaching – you will need to help them get back to their positive memories by reminding them of specific details, and then encouraging them to recall and describe these details again. So the facilitator (and observer if working in triads) should take brief notes. (The recipient should also make brief notes after the exercise). Come up with a one or two-word label for each memory, and note down a few details you could use as reminders/prompts for implementing the safety net. ****Optional** for MHPs who already have tools for helping clients self-regulate**

D. Confidentiality: It's very important that you not share any of the details from your practice partner's work without their permission, but we also want the good news regarding the Immanuel Approach to spread. So if there are details from your practice partner's work that you would like to share with others, *please ask their permission*.

E. Practice teams should stay the same: When you get to the trauma-work exercises, if the recipient gets stuck in intense negative emotions and needs rigorous coaching to help them get back to their positive memories and appreciation, it's very helpful for the other member(s) of their practice team to know the details of their positive memories (from being with them in the previous exercises where they described these details). So it's important for teams to stay the same throughout the series of exercises. ****Optional** for mental health professionals who already have tools for helping clients self-regulate**

F. Short term and priming memory: Take 5 minutes to read (not skim) through the facilitator instructions immediately prior to going through the exercise. This takes advantage of short term and priming memory, and will help the instructions feel more familiar and comfortable as you're actually using them. (For more explanation see the overview explanatory essay.)

G. 2 to 5 minutes is adequate for positive memories: Dr. Karl's demonstration positive memories are very long. For the practice exercises, 2 to 5 minutes of description is usually plenty.

Facilitator instructions (~5 min for each recipient):

Positive memory and appreciation:

- **Help recipient find splinter-free positive memory:** Sample coaching: “Do you have a positive memory that does not include any painful splinters and that is not sitting right next to painful memories?” If yes, move to the next step. If the recipient is having trouble finding a splinter-free positive memory, ask questions from the list of positive memory examples to help them.
- **Coach recipient to connect with positive memory:** The best way to connect with a positive memory is to describe the memory in as much detail as possible as one imagines being back inside of the original experience. So coach the recipient to do this.

Sample coaching: “Now I would like you to close your eyes, imagine yourself being back inside of the original experience, and describe the memory in as much detail as possible. For example:

What did you see? Hear? Smell? Taste? Feel on your skin?
What thoughts and emotions were you having at the time?
Were there any friends or family with you?
What thoughts and emotions come as you think about it now?
How does your body feel?”

After this initial coaching, allow recipient to describe the memory as it flows naturally. Then, when they are finished with their initial description, remind them of any pieces they missed (one at a time, with time to fill in each of the missed pieces).

- **Coach recipient to especially appreciate best parts:** After they have described the memory in detail, coach them to focus on, describe again briefly, and savor the aspects of the experience that they appreciated the most.

Sample coaching: “Now I want you to focus on, describe again briefly, and savor the aspects of the experience that you appreciated the most.”