

Information Handout

Professional Version | US English

Forgiveness Methods



Description

Forgiveness is an effective treatment for anger, with a rich methodology and academic literature. *Forgiveness Methods* is an information handout which explores ways of forgiving. It includes some discussion of common misconceptions which often present as blocks to forgiveness.

Instructions

This is a Psychology Tools information handout.

Suggested uses include:

- Client handout – use as a psychoeducation resource.
- Discussion point – use to provoke a discussion and explore client beliefs.
- Therapist learning tool – improve your familiarity with a psychological construct.
- Teaching resource – use as a learning tool during training.

References

Enright, R. D., Fitzgibbons, R. P. (2000). *Helping clients forgive: An empirical guide for resolving anger*. New York: American Psychological Association.

Forgiveness Methods

Five steps for granting the gift of forgiveness (R. Klimes)

- A. Acknowledge** the anger and hurt caused by the clearly identified specific offenses.
- B. Bar** revenge and any thought of inflicting harm as repayment or punishment to the offender.
- C. Consider** the offender's perspective. Try to understand his/her attitude and behaviour.
- D. Decide** to accept the hurt without unloading it on the offender. Passing it back and forth magnifies it.
- E. Extend** compassion and good will to the offender. That releases the offended from the offense.

Four stages of forgiveness (Enright & Fitzgibbons)

1. Uncovering

Gaining insight into whether, and how, the injustice and subsequent injury have compromised his or her life. Confronting anger and shame. Becoming aware of potential emotional exhaustion. Becoming aware of cognitive preoccupation. Confronting the possibility that the transgression could lead to permanent change for them. Discovering how the transgression changed their view of the world.

2. Decision

Gaining an accurate understanding of what forgiveness is, and making a decision to commit to forgiving on the basis of this understanding

3. Work

Gaining a deeper understanding of the offender and beginning to view the offender in a new light (reframing), resulting in positive change in affect about the offender, about the self, and about the relationship. Showing empathy and compassion. Bearing the pain. Giving the moral gift of forgiveness.

4. Deepening

Finding meaning in the suffering (post-suffering growth). Consideration of times when we have needed other's forgiveness. Knowing that we're not alone. Becoming aware that forgiveness allows us to feel more connected with others and to experience decreased negative emotion.

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