

Worksheet

Professional Version | US English

Therapy Blueprint (Universal)



Description

A therapy blueprint is a CBT tool which summarizes the work a therapist and patient have completed together. Patients can be encouraged to think of it as 'the first session of the rest of your life'. Therapy blueprints are one way to help people to reflect on what they have learned during therapy. They act as a way of promoting resilience by reinforcing what knowledge and skills have been learned. Therapy blueprints also act as a form of relapse prevention – by making helpful knowledge and strategies more accessible, individuals are more able to cope effectively with future setbacks.

The structure of a good therapy blueprint mirrors the process of therapy itself. Suggested areas for exploration include:

- **Assessment.** What were the problems? How did they develop?
- **Formulation.** What kept the problems going? Why did they not get better naturally? Were you using any strategies to cope which came with unintended consequences?
- **Treatment.** What new knowledge and skills did you develop? What techniques were practiced?
- **Reflection on progress.** What can you do now? Looking back (past goals), looking forward (current goals).
- **Relapse prevention.** What obstacles and setbacks can you foresee? How will you cope? What helpful strategies might you implement?

Another helpful way of conceptualizing the therapy blueprint is to think about how it represents the past (the problems, what maintained them), the present (the therapy itself, new knowledge learned and skills developed), and the future (goals, plans, and strategies to manage setbacks). Therapists will find it helpful to introduce the therapy blueprint prior to the final session, and as early as the client is willing.

Instructions

Suggested Introduction



A therapy blueprint is a helpful way to look back over therapy, reflect on what you have learned, and think about what has been important to you. We want to catch it now while it's fresh in your mind. People often find that a therapy blueprint is a helpful reminder, once therapy is over, of things that they know are helpful for them. It's also a helpful way for us to reflect on what skills it might be important for you to keep practicing, to plan for triggers and things that might be difficult for you, and for us to set some goals for the future.

References

Wells, A. (1997). *Cognitive therapy of anxiety disorders: A practice manual and conceptual guide*. Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Therapy Blueprint

A therapy blueprint is a space for you to reflect on how your difficulties developed, what kept them going, and what you learned during therapy. It can help you to plan how you are going to maintain the gains that you have made, review what warning signs you might need to remain aware of, and remember what you might find helpful should it feel like your difficulties are ever beginning to return.

The problems

What problem(s) brought you to treatment?
How did they develop?

What kept them going?

Why did the problems not get better on their own?
Consider: avoidance, safety-seeking behaviors, unhelpful beliefs.

Knowledge and skills

How has therapy helped you to deal with your problem(s)? What have you learned that has been helpful?
What strategies or techniques did you learn? (e.g. challenging my thinking, facing my fears, testing my beliefs)
Describe any behavioral experiments that you conducted: What beliefs did you test? What did you discover?

Therapy Blueprint

How I think differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger strong feelings. Compare your thinking patterns before therapy and now: How did you interpret these situations then? What do these events mean to you now?

Situation

What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?

How I thought *then*

Before therapy, what kind of thoughts did you have in response to situations like this?

How I think *now*

How do you interpret this kind of event now?

How I do things differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger you and compare your reactions / responses before therapy and now.

Situation

What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?

How I responded *then*

Before therapy, how did you react when situations like this occurred?

How I respond *now*

What do you do if this kind of event happens now?

Therapy Blueprint

How far I have come & my goals for the future

What have you achieved so far?

How are you going to build on your achievements?

Setbacks and obstacles

What could cause a setback and how would you deal with it?

What obstacles do you anticipate might be challenging?

What would you do if your difficulties came back in a way that meant you were struggling?

Message to my future self

If you could send a message to your future self (something you would not want to forget) what would it be?

Therapy Blueprint

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The problems

What problem(s) brought you to treatment?

How did they develop?

Anxiety - I had lots of thoughts that I was a failure, that I wasn't functioning, and that I wouldn't be able to function.

Growing up, my parents had high academic expectations of me.

What kept them going?

Why did the problems not get better on their own?

Consider: avoidance, safety-seeking behaviors, unhelpful beliefs.

my coping response was to 'shut down', withdraw, and avoid everything.

I was being very hard on myself.

I have *really* high standards for myself.

Knowledge and skills

How has therapy helped you to deal with your problem(s)? What have you learned that has been helpful?

What strategies or techniques did you learn? (e.g. challenging my thinking, facing my fears, testing my beliefs)

Describe any behavioral experiments that you conducted: What beliefs did you test? What did you discover?

When I'm down it really helps me to do some activities from my pre-prepared list of B.A. activities.

I have a new rule: Try to achieve something when you're struggling, even if it's only small.

Doing a behavioral experiment where I had to 'be authentic' with friends and family and show vulnerability.

Learning to treat myself with compassion and accept it from others.

Therapy Blueprint

How I think differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger strong feelings. Compare your thinking patterns before therapy and now: How did you interpret these situations then? What do these events mean to you now?

Situation	How I thought <i>then</i>	How I think <i>now</i>
What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?	Before therapy, what kind of thoughts did you have in response to situations like this?	How do you interpret this kind of event now?
Noticing my body sensations: anxiety, churning.	"I can't cope".	"It's not my fault that I have a tricky brain - I'm just feeling anxiety but it doesn't mean I can't cope".
Sitting down to work.	"I can't focus 100% so there's no point in me even starting".	"I can function quite well even if I'm not 100%. Just do 10 minutes. It doesn't have to be perfect".
Social situations where people will ask how I am.	"I must only present my good side to them or they'll see me as a failure".	"It's OK to struggle, we all do sometimes. I feel <i>*more*</i> connected and close when I talk about my vulnerabilities".

How I do things differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger you and compare your reactions / responses before therapy and now.

Situation	How I responded <i>then</i>	How I respond <i>now</i>
What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?	Before therapy, how did you react when situations like this occurred?	What do you do if this kind of event happens now?
When anxiety becomes strong.	Go to bed for two weeks (literally). Sleep during the day. Not doing <i>*any*</i> of the things I need to.	Remind myself of what matters: my anxiety can be here <i>*and*</i> I can do the things I want to do.
Social situations where people will ask me how I am.	Avoid entirely.	Allow myself to talk about my vulnerabilities if I need to.
Procrastination.	mentally 'beat myself up' as a way to get myself going.	Being more compassionate, kind, and supportive with myself in my own mind.

Therapy Blueprint

How far I have come & my goals for the future

What have you achieved so far?

How are you going to build on your achievements?

1. Learned how to overcome my 'withdrawing' and 'shutting down' responses.
2. Learned self-compassion and mindfulness of thoughts.
3. Goal: maintain my progress and watch out for signs.

Setbacks and obstacles

What could cause a setback and how would you deal with it?

What obstacles do you anticipate might be challenging?

What would you do if your difficulties came back in a way that meant you were struggling?

One of my previous blocks was of failing to be self-compassionate when I really needed it, and of trying to motivate myself by being harsh and critical > I need to watch out for this.

Too much pressure at work.

Setting unrealistic expectations of myself.

Message to my future self

If you could send a message to your future self (something you would not want to forget) what would it be?

You deserve kindness! You might not have got very much of it when you were growing up but you can make up for it now. The times when you most need it are the times when you will struggle to offer it to yourself, so you need to practice and make it a habit.

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