

## Values Vision Board

### Values

Exercise

15-80 min.

Client

No



### Goal

The goal of this exercise is to help clients connect to their personal values in a creative way. This exercise allows a playful and intuitive search for one's core values that, when finished, can easily function as a visual reminder. Living a meaningful life is likely to be facilitated by increased awareness of one's core values.



### Advice

1. Suggest to your client that he/she be creative in the creation of the vision board. Here are some options:
  - Use pen and paper to make drawings.
  - Use scissors to cut pictures and texts from hardcopy magazines and glue them together on a piece of paper.
  - Use apps, like Bloom (<http://appcrawlr.com/ios/bloom-2>) or Corkulous Pro (<http://appcrawlr.com/ios/corkulous-pro>).
  - Use Powerpoint or Keynote to build a presentation with images, photos, text and so on.
  - Anything else that the client might feel is a creative expression of important values in the vision board.
2. Exposure to the vision board can serve as a prime or reminder. Therefore, your client can put the vision board where it can be seen everyday (e.g., on the refrigerator or office desk). Note that some clients may consider their board a private source of inspiration. If this is the case, they should think of a place that limits who can view their work. The point is that your client's vision board should be accessible to him/her, and should not be placed where he/she will fall out of the habit of looking at it.
3. When creating the vision board, it is important to enjoy the process and work intuitively. Rather than creating the vision board in a rational mode (a lot of thinking and internally debating), it often works best to just go with the flow: select images or texts that feel good or appropriate, without overthinking it. Prioritizing can always be done afterwards.

4. Vision boards are often used to represent personal goals and desires. It is important to inform your client that the purpose of this vision board is not to focus on specific outcomes that one hopes to achieve. This exercise is not about “the law of attraction” or “the secret”. Instead, the current board should represent general values that are considered to be important in life. Unlike goals, which represent what we want to achieve, values are ways of living that can never be obtained like an object, and can only be realized from moment to moment. Examples include freedom, creativity, autonomy, connectedness, etc. In sum, the focus is on what is important to your client, rather than on what he/she aims to achieve.
5. After your client has created the vision board, ask him/her if he/she would like to discuss the vision board together. Allowing the client to share the vision board with the practitioner can not only enhance the connection between both, but can also create a fruitful starting point for behavioural change. Questions that can be discussed during the evaluation are:
  - Can you explain to me what we are looking at?
  - How was it to create this board? What did you experience while making it?
  - What did you learn from this exercise?
  - To what extent do you think you are living in line with the values that are put on this vision board?
  - What kind of goals can be formulated based on your vision board?
  - What could you do to live more in line with the values that are depicted on your board?
6. Although this exercise may be done at the very beginning of an intervention, it may also be valuable to do it at the end of an intervention because values continue to provide useful guidance for clients once the intervention is over. In this way, the vision board can serve as a reminder for staying on course or as a buffer against relapse.



### **Suggested Readings**

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 109–132.

Hayes, S. C., K. D. Strosahl, and K. G. Wilson. (1999). *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An Experiential Approach to Behavior Change*. New York: Guilford Press.

## Tool Description

### Instructions

Living your values means listening to what is important to you and deciding to act accordingly. Simply put, it means saying: “I stand for this”, “This is what is truly important to me” or “I want to be about living this”.

In this exercise, you are going to explore your personal values. Your values are completely up to you. They are personal and reflect what is important to you. Each person has different values. Examples of values include “connecting with nature”, “being creative” and “helping others”.

In this exercise, you are going to make a visual representation of your values. More specifically, you are going to create a so-called “vision board”. A vision board is a collection of images, illustrations and/or words. You can use the following three steps to create your own personal values vision board:

*1. Collect images for your vision board.*

Find positive images that correspond with your chosen values. Look for images that resonate with you. Choose images that correspond with what you believe is important in life. Use the internet, magazines, and photographs as potential sources.

*2. Collect words for your vision board.*

You can decide to keep your vision board completely visual, or may also decide to add words to it. Again, make sure that the words you use are a reflection of, or related to, your personal values.

*3. Put your vision board together.*

Once you have selected your images and inspiring phrases, get creative with your arrangement.