

 **Savouring**
 Exercise

 n/a

 Client

 No

The Savouring Expedition

Savouring is characterised by the deliberate act of deriving pleasure from an experience. Bryant and Veroff (2017) define savouring as the capacity “to attend to, appreciate, and enhance the positive experiences in [people’s] lives,” (Bryant & Veroff, 2017, p. 2). Savouring is suggested to be the counterpart to coping, which involves dealing with life’s negative experiences.

Bryant and Veroff (2017) propose three components in savouring: experience, process, and strategy. The savouring experience represents the complete picture of sensations, cognitions, behaviours and emotions when one mindfully attends to and appreciates something positive. The savouring process involves the mental and physical changes that occur over time to transform a positive stimulus into positive feelings to which a person then attends to and savours. A savouring strategy is a specific thought of behaviour in which a person engages in reaction to a positive stimulus. Such strategies amplify or dampen the intensity of positive affect. Jose and colleagues discussed the following amplifying savouring strategies: sharing the positive experience with others, behavioural expression (e.g. laughing or smiling), counting blessings, self-congratulation; memory building (intentionally remembering the positive event), and sensory-perceptual sharpening (focusing on the bodily sensations of a pleasant experience) (Jose, Lim & Bryant, 2012).

Research has shown that a consistent practice of savouring experiences leads to happiness (Jose, Lim & Bryant, 2012), optimism, life satisfaction, and reduced depressive symptoms (Bryant, 2003). This tool encourages the practice of savouring.

Author

This tool was adapted from ‘The Savoring Expedition’ exercise, developed by Harrison, Smith and Bryant (2013) and found in the book *Activities for Teaching Positive Psychology: A Guide for Instructors* (pp. 149-153), J. J. Froh and A. C. Parks (Editors).

Goal

This tool aims to:

1. Help people develop savouring skills through practicing seeking out a positive experience, savouring it, and reflecting on the strategies they used to savour.
2. Increase everyday savouring through encouraging people to identify ways in which they can apply these skills in everyday life.



Advice

- Give your client permission to deviate from the exercise at any time if they feel it will help them savour their chosen experience more fully.
- Your client may encounter difficulty in savouring. They could feel the exercise is contrived or unnatural, or they may feel uncomfortable in some way. Let your client know that if this occurs, they can simply go home and try again another time, either adapting their chosen experience or coming back to the original experience more mentally prepared and with a more open and accepting attitude.



Suggested Readings

Bryant, F. B., & Veroff, J. (2017). *Savoring: A new model of positive experience*. Psychology Press.

Jose, P. E., Lim, B. T., & Bryant, F. B. (2012). Does savoring increase happiness? A daily diary study. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 7*(3), 176-187.

Harrison, P. R., Smith, J. L., & Bryant, F. B. (2013). Savoring: The savoring expedition: An exercise to cultivate savoring. In J. J. Froh, A. C. Parks, J. J. Froh, A. C. Parks (Eds.), *Activities for teaching positive psychology: A guide for instructors* (pp. 149-153). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14042-024

Tool Description

Instructions

The therapist will need a copy of the tool instructions to give to the client to take home. The client will need upcoming free time, some comfortable clothes, to have an open mind, and to be as free from worries and distractions as possible.

Step 1: Plan your savouring expedition

Before you embark on your savouring expedition, you must choose something (i.e., an experience, activity, place, or object) that you know you enjoy. This will be the focus of your expedition. There are many types of enjoyable experiences that people find enjoyable or worth savouring. Examples include: catching up with friends, going to the movies, having a bath, going for a walk in nature, going to a special or meaningful place, eating something delicious, or listening to music. Once you have chosen your experience to savour, write it down here and include the specific details, such as what, when, where, and materials needed. (The 'when' should be a time when you are free from worries and distractions).

Step 2: Embark on your savouring expedition

When the day and time arrive, set out on your savouring expedition. Once you arrive at your destination, try to let go of any unrelated thoughts or worries and bring your focus and attention into the present. Then, when you are ready, start savouring! Immerse yourself fully into your chosen experience. Pinpoint what you find enjoyable about the activity, for instance the sights, sounds, and smells around you, or the pleasant emotions present, or the positive thoughts passing through your mind. Identify and jot down the specific things that make the experience enjoyable, interesting, or worthwhile.

Step 3: Reflect on your savouring expedition

Upon your return home, look back on your savouring expedition and bring to mind the sights, sounds, smells, thoughts and feelings that you experienced. Carefully reflect on what you enjoyed about the expedition and write this down. You might also consider sharing your experience with someone, as this can intensify the joy in savouring.

Step 4: Savour everyday life

Now that you have developed your skills in savouring, think about some ways in which you can bring savouring into your everyday life. Perhaps you will slow down and pay close and deliberate attention to the experience of eating your favourite meal, or sitting in the sun, or reading books. Write down three experiences, activities, places or objects that you can savour in your life.