

Keep Moving Forward

Objective

To engage in an activity that demonstrates how, even when you experience setbacks and adversity in life, you can keep moving forward to build resilience.

Materials

- Numbered spots to place on the ground (Post-it notes, chalk, paper plates, Velcro numbers, etc.)
- Small prizes (stickers, candy, etc.)
- Random number caller (phone app, bingo cage, or slips of paper in a hat)
- List of moves (next page)

Group Size

3 or more

Description

Create a large circle of numbered spots on the floor (the number of spots depends on group size and available space). Spots can be made with chalk (outside), Post-it notes, paper plates, or reusable Velcro numbers. Ask everyone to stand on a random numbered spot and spread out evenly. The facilitator reads statements from the list; participants move forward one spot, backward one spot, or stay in place depending on the direction given (more than one person may occupy the same spot). Participants always face the same direction throughout the entire game. After finishing the list, use the random number caller to select winning numbers; anyone standing on a called number wins a small prize. Follow the activity with a discussion about how life, like the game, is full of forward steps, setbacks, and pauses, yet as long as you keep facing forward you remain resilient and eventually move ahead.

Variations

- After the first round, divide into small groups and have participants create their own lists of statements for additional rounds.
Add “double forward” or “double backward” statements for bigger swings.
- Find and play the video clip from the movie Rocky Balboa (2006) of Rocky’s inspirational speech to his son to help demonstrate the concept of “keep moving forward” when you are “knocked down”.

Discussion Questions

How does this activity relate to being resilient?

1. What keeps you moving forward when you face challenges and adversity in your life?
2. When you feel like giving up and just want to “sit down” and stop participating, how do you get back in the game of life?
3. In the activity, you always stayed facing forward even when moving backward. How does “keep moving forward” help in real-life setbacks?
4. Who or what has helped give you a “forward step” during a tough time?
5. What is one small “step forward” you can take this week, even if you’ve had recent setbacks?

Keep Moving Forward Game List

F = move Forward one spot if..., B = move Backward one spot if...

F – You won a competition or accomplished something you spent time preparing for

B – You got injured or sick and had to quit doing something you love for a while

B – You got rejected by someone (job, school, relationship, etc.)

F – You agreed to try something new even though it was outside your comfort zone

B – You told yourself something negative or overly critical today

F – You acknowledged or celebrated something you did well today (even if it was small)

B – You quit something after just one setback (job search, sport, hobby, etc.)

F – You currently have a goal you are working toward and have written it down

B – You have ever relapsed into an unhealthy habit

F – After a relapse, you made changes to get back on track or asked for help

F – You have at least one support person in your life who encourages you

B – You have ever had financial struggles or money stress

F – You have made changes in your life to gain more financial independence or stability

F – You helped someone else today or this week

B – Someone close to you let you down or broke a promise

F – You forgave someone (or yourself) for a past mistake

F – You learned a new skill or piece of information this month

B – You compared yourself negatively to someone else this week

F – You practiced self-care or did something kind for yourself recently

B – You experienced a major life change you didn't choose (move, loss, breakup, etc.)

F – You reached out for support when you were struggling instead of isolating

Then What...

Objective

To utilize the skill of playing the tape to the end when considering engaging in an activity that could cause someone to relapse into a negative behavior pattern.

Materials

- ➡ “Then What?” Handout

Group Size

1 or more

Description

Explain the skill of “playing the tape to the end,” where an individual imagines a scenario they are about to engage in and considers how it will conclude. For example: You come home from a long day at work or school and feel tempted to have one drink. However, you recognize that one drink could lead to more, so you mentally play out this scenario until you envision yourself waking up the next morning with a hangover. The “Then What...” exercise examines this progression step by step. You take one drink... then what? You take another drink... then what? You hide from your family to avoid them seeing you drinking... then what? And so on. Complete both sections of the handout to demonstrate how the scenario can end with a positive outcome by using the Then What strategies to play the tape to the end when making positive choices.

Variations

- ➡ Conduct this as a group activity where one person starts by describing the initial action, and the “then what” is passed to the next person, who adds the subsequent step. This process continues around the group, with participants filling in the next “then what...” until the scenario reaches its conclusion.

Discussion Questions

1. How can you effectively apply this strategy in your recovery process?
2. If you already understand how the situation is likely to unfold, what factors might still tempt you to take the first step?
3. Can you identify a specific past experience where playing the tape to the end might have altered your decision-making? How could it have helped?

Then What?

Past Behavior / Choice	New Behavior / Alternate Choice
Then What?	Then What?
Then What?	Then What?
Then What?	Then What?
Then What?	Then What?
Then What?	Then What?
Then What?	Then What?
If you already know how this tape ends...why do you keep engaging in unhealthy behaviors? 	What values do you hold that can motivate you to stay focused on this positive new behavior? 

Perspective Top Five List

Objective

To engage in an activity that demonstrates how each person has a different perspective and that perspective can determine your perception of a situation.

Materials

- Paper and writing utensils
- Perspective Handout

Group Size

Four or more

Description

Create a few categories that will resonate with your group members, such as “most challenging thing about being in therapy” or “best thing about a particular holiday.” Whatever topics you select, ensure at least two members choose (or are assigned to) the same topic. Challenge them to come up with a top-five list for that topic. For example: “Best thing about being in therapy is sharing with other people who can relate,” “Best thing about Christmas is Christmas music,” etc. Allow time for people to read their lists aloud and discuss how different people can view the same thing differently because they are looking at it through a different lens or perspective. Follow up with the Perspective handout for added discussion.

Variations

- Pair members who chose the same topic but produced very different lists; have them interview each other about why they ranked items as they did.
- Assign the same top-five category to the entire group (e.g., “best thing about group therapy today”) and compare the range of answers.

Discussion Questions

1. How does your perspective change your experience of a situation?
2. What can you do to change your perspective if it is always negative or holding you back?
3. Why do different people have a different perspective of the same experience?
4. When you heard someone else’s top-five list, did anything surprise you or shift how you see the topic?
5. What is one small action you could take this week to practice viewing a recurring challenge through a new lens?

Know Your Perspective → Shape Your Perception → Choose a Positive Approach



Perspective – Your personal “lens” (beliefs + past experiences)

Perception – The meaning you give the event through that lens

Positive Approach – The thoughts & actions you choose next

Change any one step → change the whole experience.



Real-life example: You receive critical feedback from a boss, coach, teacher, or friend.

Old Perspective: “Feedback = I’m failing” → Perception: “I’m not good enough” → Feel defeated, avoid this person.

New Perspective: “Feedback = chance to learn and grow” → Perception: “Useful info for growth” → Feel curious, ask questions, improve faster.

10 Quick Reframing Swaps

“If I open up, people will judge me” → “Sharing lets people see the real me.”

“I don’t deserve friends” → “I’m a unique person with a lot to offer.”

“I always fail” → “Every try teaches me something.”

“The world is dangerous & unfair” → “Challenges exist, but so do kindness and chances.”

“I’m not good enough to succeed” → “I have skills + effort = I can do this.”

“People only care about themselves” → “Most people can show empathy if I let them.”

“My mistakes define me” → “Mistakes are just lessons in disguise.”

“I’ll never be happy” → “I can create joy in small moments every day.”

“I’m too flawed to be loved” → “My quirks make me human and lovable.”

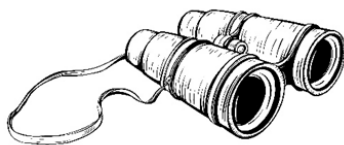
“Asking for help = weak” → “Asking for help = brave + smart.”

Your Turn – Reframe It Now

Unhelpful Thought:

Positive Reframe:

When something bothers you, ask: What’s my current perspective? What meaning am I giving this? What positive approach can I choose right now?



You don’t control what happens—you control the lens.
Change the lens → change your life.