WORKSHEET 116 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

My lifeline

Placing the important moments of my life on a single line

AIM

Give an overview of the person's story: important events, ups and downs, periods of resources. A support for history taking and narrative work.

WHO IT IS FOR

Start of therapy, a period of transition, the feeling of "not knowing who I am any more", preparation for EMDR work (time line of the clinical history).

DURATION

30-45 min in session, to be completed at home

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Draw a horizontal line: birth on the left, today on the right; above, the pleasant things; below, the difficult ones.
2. The person places 6 to 10 moments, with their age and a word, without telling the details.
3. Rate each moment from -5 to +5 and join the points to see the shape of the curve.
4. Look together for the periods of resources and those to come back to later.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Going back over one's life can bring up painful memories. At home, the instruction is to write just one word for a difficult moment, without going into detail; work on traumatic memories is done in session (EMDR, NET), once there is enough stabilisation.

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WORKSHEET 116 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

My lifeline

Your life isn't just its problems. Placing the important moments on a line helps you see the whole picture: the difficult periods, but also those in which you held on, learnt, loved.

1. Write 6 to 10 important moments, from the oldest to the most recent.
2. For each one: your age (or the year) and a word or short phrase.
3. Give it a rating from -5 (very difficult) to +5 (very pleasant).
4. If you like, draw the curve on a piece of paper and note what you observe.

Age or year	The moment (a word, a phrase)	Rating -5 to +5	What I take from it

Looking at my whole line, I realise that:

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WORKSHEET 117 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The chapters of my life

Telling my life as a book

AIM

Organise the life story into major stages and give them a title, which supports the coherence of the narrative and the search for meaning.

WHO IT IS FOR

Transitions (moving house, separation, retirement, life abroad), a feeling of discontinuity, work on identity.

DURATION

20-30 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Suggest seeing one's life as a book and dividing it into 3 to 7 chapters.
2. For each chapter: the dates, a title and what characterises it.
3. Ask what each chapter has taught or left behind.
4. Explore the title of the current chapter: is it the one the person wants?

POINTS TO WATCH

> Inspired by McAdams's life story interview (the "chapters" instruction), without reproducing it. Going back over one's life can bring up painful memories. At home, the instruction is to write just one word for a difficult moment, without going into detail; work on traumatic memories is done in session (EMDR, NET), once there is enough stabilisation.

REFERENCES

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WORKSHEET 117 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

The chapters of my life

Imagine your life is a book. Each major stage is a chapter, with a beginning, an end and a title. Looking at it this way helps you see how your story moves forward.

1. Divide your life into 3 to 7 chapters.
2. Give each one its dates and a title, as in a book.
3. Note in a few words what characterises each chapter.
4. Write what each chapter has taught you or left you with.

Chapter (from … to …)	Title	What characterises it	What it taught me

The chapter I am living today is called… and I would like the next one to be called:

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WORKSHEET 118 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

High point, low point, turning point

The key scenes of my story

AIM

Describe a few specific key scenes (best moment, difficult moment, turning point) and draw meaning from them, working on the specificity of memories and the sense of having influence over one's own life.

WHO IT IS FOR

Low mood (vague, general memories), feeling lost in life, work on identity and values.

DURATION

30 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Ask for specific scenes: a moment, a place, what happened, not a whole period.
2. For the low point, the person chooses a difficult moment they can tell without being overwhelmed, not necessarily the worst.
3. For each scene: emotions, thoughts, what it says about them.
4. Look for what the person did, chose or learnt: that is often where the sense of influencing one's own life lies.

POINTS TO WATCH

> People with depression tend to recall general memories ("I always fail"): help them come back to a specific moment. Going back over one's life can bring up painful memories. At home, the instruction is to write just one word for a difficult moment, without going into detail; work on traumatic memories is done in session (EMDR, NET), once there is enough stabilisation.

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WORKSHEET 118 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

High point, low point, turning point

Some scenes sum up a period or say something important about you. Choose a few and tell them like film scenes: a moment, a place, what happened.

1. In each row, choose a specific scene (a moment, not a period).
2. Write what happened, in a few lines.
3. Note what you felt and thought.
4. Write what that scene says about you, or what it taught you.

Scene	What happened	What I felt	What it says about me

In these scenes, what I did, chose or learnt for myself:

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WORKSHEET 119 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Flowers and stones

A lifeline of the moments that did me good and those that hurt

AIM

Build a symbolic lifeline with the person (flowers = moments of resources, stones = very difficult or traumatic events) to prepare trauma work, without going into the memories.

WHO IT IS FOR

People who have experienced several traumatic events (violence, exile, war, accidents), as preparation for EMDR work or narrative exposure.

DURATION

One session (45-90 min)

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Lay out a rope or draw a line: the beginning is birth; the end that is still rolled up, the future.
2. The person places, in order, flowers for good moments and stones for very difficult ones (a candle is possible for bereavements).
3. For each symbol: the age and a title of one or two words, without any detail.
4. Photograph or copy the line: it will serve as a map for the following sessions.

POINTS TO WATCH

An exercise inspired by the lifeline in narrative exposure therapy (NET), to be done in session. The instruction is not to tell the stones at this stage. Check current stability and safety before starting. Going back over one's life can bring up painful memories. At home, the instruction is to write just one word for a difficult moment, without going into detail; work on traumatic memories is done in session (EMDR, NET), once there is enough stabilisation.

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WORKSHEET 119 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Flowers and stones

Best done with your psychologist

On your lifeline, the flowers are the moments and people that did you good. The stones are the moments that hurt you. Today the stones aren't told: they are just put in their place, with one word.

1. With your psychologist, place the flowers and stones in the order of your life.
2. For each one: your age and one or two words, without details.
3. Next to each stone, look for a flower close in time, if there is one.
4. At the end, look at all the flowers: they are part of your story too.

Age	Flower or stone	One or two words	A nearby flower

What I feel when I see my whole line, with the flowers:

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WORKSHEET 120 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The resources on my lifeline

What helped me get through the difficult periods

AIM

Identify, in the person's story, the resources that helped them get through difficulties (people, places, activities, qualities) and check which ones are still available.

WHO IT IS FOR

Low self-esteem, a sense of helplessness, EMDR preparation (resource installation), recovery after a crisis.

DURATION

20-30 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Start from 2 to 4 difficult periods already identified (worksheet 116), named with one word.
2. For each one, look for what helped: people, places, activities, beliefs, personal qualities.
3. Distinguish what the person knew how to do (skills) from what they received (support).
4. Check what is still available today and what could be reactivated.

POINTS TO WATCH

> The aim is to highlight resources, not to go back over the difficulty: stay with "what helped". Going back over one's life can bring up painful memories. At home, the instruction is to write just one word for a difficult moment, without going into detail; work on traumatic memories is done in session (EMDR, NET), once there is enough stabilisation.

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WORKSHEET 120 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

The resources on my lifeline

If you are here today, you have been through difficult times. Something or someone helped you, and you did something too. This worksheet is for finding it.

1. Choose 2 to 4 difficult periods and name them with one word.
2. For each one, note what helped you: people, places, activities.
3. Also note what you did yourself: your qualities, your ways of holding on.
4. Tick what is still available today.

Period (one word)	What helped me	What I did myself	Still there today?

A resource I want to reactivate this week, and how:

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WORKSHEET 121 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The common threads in my story

What repeats from one chapter to the next

AIM

Identify the recurring themes in the life story (situations, roles, reactions, beliefs) and distinguish those worth keeping from those worth loosening.

WHO IT IS FOR

Repetitive relationship patterns, a feeling of “always living the same thing”, work on core beliefs.

DURATION

20-30 min, ideally after worksheet 116 or 117

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Reread the lifeline or the chapters with the person.
2. Look for what repeats: situations, roles (the one who helps, the one who leaves…), emotions, inner sentences.
3. For each thread, explore what it brought (often protection) and what it costs today.
4. Choose one thread to keep and one to loosen, with a small concrete step.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Phrase the threads without judgement: a repeated pattern has usually been useful at some point. Going back over one’s life can bring up painful memories. At home, the instruction is to write just one word for a difficult moment, without going into detail; work on traumatic memories is done in session (EMDR, NET), once there is enough stabilisation.

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WORKSHEET 121 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

The common threads in my story

In a life, some things come back: situations, roles, reactions. Seeing them lets you keep what does you good and loosen what hems you in.

1. Reread your lifeline or your chapters (worksheets 116 and 117).
2. Note what repeats: situations, roles, emotions, sentences you tell yourself.
3. For each thread, write what it gave you and what it costs you today.
4. Choose one thread to keep and one to loosen.

What repeats	When (examples)	What it gives me / costs me	Keep or loosen?

The thread I want to loosen, and a small first step:

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WORKSHEET 122 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The places of my life

My lifeline, city by city

AIM

Go through the life story by way of the places lived in (countries, cities, homes), which makes memories easier to access and gives continuity to paths marked by moves or migration.

WHO IT IS FOR

Expatriates, migrants, children of diplomats or military families (“third culture kids”), frequent moves.

DURATION

20-30 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. List the places where the person has lived, in order.
2. For each place: the years, what was lived there, an image or a sensation that remains.
3. Identify what was kept from each place (language, customs, friendships, tastes).
4. Link this line to the worksheets in pack 3 (migratory grief) if losses come up.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Going back over one’s life can bring up painful memories. At home, the instruction is to write just one word for a difficult moment, without going into detail; work on traumatic memories is done in session (EMDR, NET), once there is enough stabilisation.

REFERENCES

Westerhof, G. J. & Bohlmeijer, E. T. (2014). Celebrating fifty years of research and applications in reminiscence and life review: State of the art and new directions. Journal of Aging Studies, 29, 107-114.

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WORKSHEET 122 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

The places of my life

When you have moved a lot, life is often told place by place. Each city, each home left something: a language, friends, a smell, a way of being.

1. Write down in order the places where you have lived (country, city, home).
2. For each one: the years and what you lived there, in a few words.
3. Add an image, a smell or a sensation that stays with you.
4. Write what you keep from that place and that is still in you.

Place	Years	What I lived there	What I keep

What goes with me from place to place, and that I also find here:

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WORKSHEET 123 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Extending the line

The next chapters of my life

AIM

Extend the lifeline into the future based on the values and resources identified, to move from the story of the past to concrete choices.

WHO IT IS FOR

End of lifeline work, transitions, a feeling that the future is blocked, end of therapy.

DURATION

20-30 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Start from the lifeline and the chapters already written.
2. Invite the person to imagine 1 to 3 next chapters, with a desired title.
3. For each one: what matters (a value), a resource from the past to take along, a first step.
4. Remember that the future stays open: the aim is a direction, not a rigid plan.

POINTS TO WATCH

> If the future seems empty or threatening, explore possible hopelessness or suicidal thoughts before continuing. Going back over one's life can bring up painful memories. At home, the instruction is to write just one word for a difficult moment, without going into detail; work on traumatic memories is done in session (EMDR, NET), once there is enough stabilisation.

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WORKSHEET 123 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Extending the line

Your lifeline doesn't end today. You can't foresee everything, but you can choose a direction: what matters to you and what you take from your story.

1. Imagine 1 to 3 next chapters and give them a title you would like to live.
2. For each one, note what matters to you (a value, worksheet 34).
3. Choose a resource from your past to take with you (worksheet 120).
4. Write a concrete first step, and when you will take it.

Next chapter (title)	What matters to me	What I take from my story	A first step, and when

If I reread this line in five years' time, I would like to be able to say:

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