# Mini-ActivityApproach

# **Boost Your Resilience**

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#### Resilience



Within recent years resilience has received growing interest regarding its potential influence on health, well-being and quality of life (Werner, 1992; Brand & Jax, 2007). In this context resilience describes how people empower themselves to take control of their lives after a crisis or experiencing stress as for example serious health problems, workplace or financial stressors (Richardson, 2002; "American Psychsological Association", n.d.). New research has

shown, that resilience is not only inherent but also influenced by environmental factors and can be built up through life (Garcia et al., 2013; Rees, 2015).

Resilient humans have good social contacts, are flexible, (Folke, 2006; Sturgeon et al., 2010; Rees, 2015) and able to think positive in the meaning that they maintain a hopeful outlook (Brand & Jax, 2007).

#### Our question

Challenged with exhausted clients having an injury, chronic pain or a disease that caused a rupture in their daily routine, we asked:

What kind of activities can be performed which need only little energy to be done but might bring out a higher amount of energy to empower clients to become an active partner in the rehabilitation process?

#### Literature and results

We did a literature search. In the field of positive psychology and resilience there is evidence that mini activities can have a positive impact on our health. Following some examples how the mechanism works.

#### **Positive social contacts**



The hormone oxytocin has a central role in stress regulation. Oxytocin ceases cortisol, blood pressure and supports better wound healing (Zak, 2012; Breuning, 2016). Oxytocin is produced e.g. when we get a massage, while giving birth or when we care about friends. Moreover, care about people while writing them a lovely text message is reducing the perceptions of pain and pain interference (Poulin, 2013).

#### **Positive emotions | thinking**



Positive emotions and optimism are significant predictors of positive physical health outcomes (Rasmussen et al., 2006/2009). Over time, the experience of positive emotions assists high-resilient individuals in their ability to recover effectively from daily stress (Ong et al., 2006.). Positive feelings can be triggered by looking at baby animal pictures. Listening to favourite music can have a positive affect to pain sensation

#### **Procedure in therapy**

#### Education

We start by introducing the Mini-Activity Approach in the therapy while explaining the client the concept of resilience and its relation to stress, pain and health problems in a biological reasoning.

#### Find a Mini-Activity & perform

Under discussion the client tries to find one to three Mini-Activities, either he knows already some or he can choose from the box of cards. Performing the Mini-Activity right away allows to feel the difference.

#### Transfer into daily life

We coach the client what, when and where in daily life he can perform the Mini-Activities. The goal is that the client does them at least three times a day.

#### Repertoire

When performing three Mini-Activities has become a routine, the next aim is to broaden the repertoire to train the flexibility. Thus, we invite the client to decide for new Mini-Activities in other categories.



#### Conclusion

#### Therapeutic view

The Mini-Activity Approach

- helps us to keep focused on the resources (resilience) from the beginning of the therapy.
- empowered us to maintain an occupation focused approach within chronic pain clients and in hand-rehabilitation.
- In complex client situations, we learned to start with Mini-Activities which give energy before we start supporting the clients' bigger be havioural changes (André, 2016).

#### Client's view

(Roy et al., 2007).

## **Physical good feeling**



The body position can have an impact on how we feel. After one minute in a high-power pose the testosterone hormone increases and the cortisol hormone decreases (Carney et. Al., 2010). The decrease of the cortisol has a positive influence on the feeling of pain, the wound healing, and the immune system (Ebrecht et al., 2004).

### **Mini-Activity Approach**

To boost clients' resilience we developed over 100 Mini-Activities in the above mentioned categories.

Mini-Activities

- \* do not need more than 2 minutes to be performed.
- can be performed everywhere, without any extra material.
- make the client feel good.

Spontaneous reactions were very positive. Many clients are happily surprised that they can do something that just make them feel good and that they do not have to start with execises.

We experienced that clients get strengthened by Mini-Activities and that they get faster into the therapy process, willing to actively do positive changes in their lives.

#### **OT-Team**

As we developed the Mini-Activity Approach we practiced our own resilience while choosing Mini-Activity cards and did them in our daily life . This was a very joyful act, we had a lot of fun together. Doing Mini-Activities and looking up for new ideas is still a pleasurable team-activity.

#### Outlook

If you are interested to know more about the Mini-Activity Approach you can get in touch or visit our homepage: www.handrehabilitation.ch

The cards are available in German, French and Dutch and can be ordered. We organise and give workshops about the Mini-Activity Approach.

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