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## The Resources Memo

You probably know the general effective factors in psychotherapy: therapeutic relationship, resource activation, problem actualization, motivational clarification and problem solving (Grawe, 1998).



In recent years, within the framework of research on effective factors in psychotherapy the perspective for the perception, development and utilization of client/patient potentials has changed considerably, as a result, the term »resource activation« has become established (Grawe & Grawe-Gerber, 1999). This is exactly where this Resources Memo picks up.

In psychotherapy, resources and the inner potentials of a person, such as one's own abilities, skills, knowledge, talents, inclinations, and strengths, are a real treasure trove and a good basis for any changes and empowerment. Many children, adolescents and adults are often not even aware of their own resources!

Many people frequently experience small, but also more severe crises in their lives. In everyday life crises may be relatively minor, but in the context of family life or in school, training and professional life, they can be much larger and more significant. Even severe strokes of fate are not uncommon. In addition to these major challenges, it is also the little »daily hassles« that cause many people trouble every day.

It is often difficult for people to recognize and use all the positive resources that they already have within themselves, and thus to put problems into perspective and to master crises. With the help of the Resources Memo cards, you have the opportunity to approach the topic of

resources quickly and playfully and to address many resources in relation to a specific subject matter.

In order to really use a resource, it is important to activate it quickly, effectively and also sustainably. These 30 resource memo pairs will be of great help to you and your patients or clients.

### Working with the Resources Memo cards

The Resources Memo cards can be used very well in therapeutic work with children and adolescents. Thus you can work goal orientated, but also in a playful way on a specific resource during the therapy session. A more profound discussion on the use, activation and development of the resources can be held during the memo game or after a completed round.

### Function of the Resources Memo cards

- ▶ Introduce a playful approach to working with your patients and clients. Use the game as an ice-breaker.
- ▶ Use the cards to ask specific questions about existing resources and resources that may already have been used successfully in the past.
- ▶ Clarify with your patients/clients whether and which techniques work for them or which ones they are already familiar with.
- ▶ Use the memo cards as a nonverbal medium.
- ▶ Make your patients/clients curious regarding the therapeutic work with you.
- ▶ Use the memo game to bring variety into the therapy session.



- ▶ Use the memo cards for psychoeducation.
- ▶ Use the cards to help yourself and/or your patient to remember certain resources or techniques also after the therapy session.
- ▶ After the therapy session: Give copies or printouts of individual cards as a memento or connected with homework in order to practice at home.
- ▶ Find one or more resource memo cards together with your patient or client, that he or she can use as a quick aid in difficult situations.
- ▶ You can also use the cards in the context of group or family therapy or in couple counselling.
- ▶ Use the game to identify personal strengths and abilities more quickly.
- ▶ Reflect on your own experiences.
- ▶ By playfully using the memo cards, it is also possible to develop wishes for the future and find ways to reach resulting goals.

### The therapeutic use of the Resources Memo cards

As a psychotherapist, an educator or a counselor, you help your patient or client to discover their own resources and to use them later in a specific way. Especially when playing with the Resources Memo for the first time, some patients or clients may still have doubts or difficulties to get engaged in a »game in therapy«. Here it can be helpful to discuss the meaning and purpose of such games and exercises together and to play only after that.



Adjust the number and motifs of the memo cards to your patient's cognitive abilities or the topic that you want to address.

### Double benefit of the Resources Memo cards

The Resources Memo cards are not only suitable for playing games, they can also be used in many other areas of work and for many other purposes! Besides the use in the (psycho-)therapeutic field, they can be used in the following areas:



**In kindergarten.** As an educator, e. g. in kindergarten, you can teach the children from the age of about three the world of resources. Have children identify and describe their resources. Use the cards to discuss particular situations or to talk about an event

(e. g., an argument between two children) by clarifying together which resource(s) would have been helpful here.

**In school.** As a teacher or an educator in school or school counseling/social work, you will find a quicker and also

deeper entry into conversations that you may not have had before in so little time.

### Client/patient range

The Resources Memo can be used to work with a very broad spectrum of clients, such as people with intellectual or learning disabilities, or even people with autism spectrum disorder. Furthermore, you can also use the memo very well when working with people who do not speak your own language.

### Resource diagnostics

The identification of existing resources is certainly one of the most important tasks in psychotherapy. In the diagnostic assessment of resources you can orient yourself towards the following areas:

- ▶ **In terms of content:** This refers to interests, scholastic abilities, a positive self-image ...
- ▶ **Intrapersonal:** the previous way of dealing with life and the tasks and competences associated with it.
- ▶ **Social resources:** important friendships or relationships. Why do these work (so) well? Are these relationships maintained? If so, how?
- ▶ **Material resources:** What material resources are available in your patient's environment, and which of them can he or she use?
- ▶ **Previous crises:** Which crises and problems have been successfully overcome? Which strategies did your patient use in the process?
- ▶ **Goals:** What goals does your patient have for him- or herself (short-, mid- and long-term) and how can these be used as a resource for taking action?



### Game instructions

To begin, all the cards are shuffled and then placed face down on the playing area. After that, the first player turns over two cards and places them face up on the board so all players can see them.

Then the cards are turned over again. The next player turns over two cards and tries to find cards with the same pictures. It is important that the the position of the cards is not changed while turning them over. If a player succeeds in uncovering two identical cards, she may remove the pair and place them in front of her on her pile of cards. After finding two identical motifs, the player may reveal two more cards and show them to the others. The game continues until all matching pairs of pictures have been found. The player with the most pairs of cards is the

winner. Since there might be a tie with 30 pairs of pictures, there may be either two winners or another round may be played!

**If you are short of time**, you can vary the game and speed it up by leaving one of the shown cards face up.

### Variations of the classic memo game

**Pantomime Memo.** All memo cards are spread face down on the table. The first player turns over two cards so that only he can see them. Then he pantomimes the resource depicted on the cards. All players now try to remember both the position of the cards and the resources depicted on them. If the first player has found two identical cards, he can take the pair and place it on his pile of cards. After that it is the next player's turn to turn over the cards and present them in mime. Apart from that, the rules of the »classic« memo games apply. The winner is the player with the most pairs.

**The never-ending memo story.** Depending on the game time, either all memo cards or only a set of cards without the matching partners is laid out face down on the table. The first player may now choose three cards and tell her own memo story based on the three visible pictures. The cards are placed in the appropriate order. The next player chooses three new cards and extends the story. The game ends when all the cards have been turned over and used for the story. This variation is also very suitable for working with groups.

**The Resource Tower.** The Resources Memo card set is spread out face down on the table. Then the first player picks up a card, shows it to all the other players, and says something about the resource shown. For example, what this resource does and why it might be important, and whether the player already possesses it or knows someone who does. For each resource that the player already has, he or she can place the corresponding card in front of him on the table or build a tower out of it.

**My Life and Resources.** Give your patient a long piece of ribbon or rope and ask her to describe her life from the past to the present with its »ups« and »downs« using the rope. Then ask your patient to add the resources used or not used or not available to the line. Of course, you can also let the life line continue into the future and place here the »wished-for resource cards« that the patient particularly wishes to have.

**Resource map.** Ask your patient to draw a picture of himself and his environment. Then ask him to first complete the picture with the



cards showing his existing resources. Once those have been discussed, it is a good idea to add to the picture the resources that the patient still wishes for and / or would like to work on.

**Guessing resources.** All memo cards are spread out face down on the table. Then the first player takes a card, mimes the resource, and the other players get to guess which resource is being displayed. The first player to correctly name the resource receives the memo card. Then it is the next player's turn. The player who recognized the most resources at the end of the game is the »Resource-Master«!

### Literature

Grawe, K. (1998). *Psychologische Therapie*. Göttingen: Hogrefe.

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### The authors



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**Annika Botved** grew up partly in Denmark and France. After school she lived in Switzerland for three years and attended a hotel school there. After a few years in the industry and additional studies in Germany, she ended up in Hannover. »My school notebooks and textbooks have always been full of little drawings. Painting has always been a lot of fun for me.« After a few stints in academic professions, she started further training in new media and two years later took the plunge into self-employment by founding penimals. »Finally I get to paint and draw all day long and my children are good advisors and inspiration at the same time.«



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