Exception Finder - Session activity

Facilitate a structured practice of exception finder with preparation, reflection, and an agreed closing.

Mental health professionals | 30 minutes

Fictional example: Devin started one task more easily when a friend sat nearby.

0-5 min | Agree on purpose and fit

Explain the educational scope. Ask what would be useful, check readiness and access needs, and establish choices to observe, adapt, or pass. Use an ordinary example; do not solicit trauma narratives.

5-10 min | Orient with an example

Useful differences can appear when a difficulty is less influential. Fictional example: Devin started one task more easily when a friend sat nearby. Ask what is observed and what remains uncertain.

10-20 min | Practice and compare

Recall a recent manageable exception, what was different, and which elements could realistically recur. Offer quiet individual work, a supported conversation, or an observing role. Compare two possible responses without evaluating people as right or wrong.

20-25 min | Reflect on meaning

Which detail made that occasion different? Ask what fit, what did not fit, and how culture, power, disability access, or external conditions affect the options.

25-30 min | Integrate and close

Invite one optional next step or support request. Orient to the current setting, allow an unfinished question to remain unfinished, and agree how to revisit it. End early or adapt if activation increases.

Adaptations

For a group, use fiction and no compulsory round-robin disclosure. For remote use, allow off-camera reflection and private notes. For brief use, keep one example and one question while retaining opening and closing choices.

Reflection

What adaptation or follow-up is needed?

Scope and adaptation

Acknowledge distress and structural barriers before asking about change. Do not use exceptions or compliments to dismiss harm. A personal scale is a conversational aid, not a validated outcome measure, risk screen, or reason to withhold assessment.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: What is Solution-Focused Therapy?. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/approaches/resources/SFB-A04-4