

# THERAPY QUESTIONS

Beginning the session

Goal Setting

Getting to know your client with thought provoking questions

Understanding your client's struggles

Client's mood

Clients needs

Clients feelings & Understanding what the client is saying

Client's thoughts & behaviors

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Reoccurring suicide attempts or ideation and assess reasons for living and thoughts of self-harm

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Relationship questions

Focusing on change

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Leading Questions

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# BEGINNING THE SESSION

1. Have you ever seen a therapist/counselor before?
2. What brings you to seek therapy now?
3. What would you need to happen today to make this a useful session?
4. How would your best friend notice that this session was helpful to you?
5. What are your expectations from the therapy sessions?
6. What do you want to accomplish in therapy?
7. What would you like to be different when you walk out of here today?
8. What are your best hopes for our talk today?
9. What was that experience like?
10. What are your symptoms?
11. What do you feel is wrong with your life?
12. How can I be helpful to you today?
13. What is your main concern today?
14. Whose idea was it for you to be here today?
15. What has been going well in your life?
16. What is different today then the last time you were here?
17. What impacted you this week?
18. What is on your mind?
19. (If he/she did not do homework from previous session) What did you do that was more helpful?
20. How did you manage to get out of bed and make it here today?

# GOAL-SETTING

- 1.What would you like to see happen by the end of our session today? (or when we finish our counseling sessions)
- 2.What have you already tried and what has been useful?
- 3.What difference would that make?
- 4.How will you feel when that happens? or What would you like to be feeling?
- 5.What is already working in the right direction?
- 6.What is the least that you would like to achieve?
- 7.What would be different in your life when you have reached your goal?
- 8.How would that change make a difference for you?
- 9.How will you know that your goal has been reached?
- 10.How will others know your goal has been reached?
- 11.How would I be able to tell that your goal has been reached?
- 12.What else will be different when you have reached your goal?
- 13.What do you want to see instead of the problem?
- 14.Miracle Question/magic wand/crystal ball/dream solution?
- 15.What is your long-term goal in life?
- 16.What is your short-term goal in life?
- 17.What are the obstacles in your life that keep you away from your goals? What do you plan on doing next?

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CLIENT WITH THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

1. What are you unclear about in your life, that if you figured it out, would make the biggest difference? What opportunities do you have right now?
2. How would you act if you were 10 times bolder?
3. What would you do if success were guaranteed?
4. What does your ideal life look like in 2, 5, or 10 years?
5. How do you want to be remembered by those you love when you're gone?
6. What changes do you need to make to have the life you want?
7. What does "success" mean to you?
8. What's important to you about accomplishing this?
9. What do you want?
10. What are you saying "yes" to in your life right now?
11. What do you like about yourself (interests, life experiences, personality traits, etc.)?
12. What energizes you? (i.e., after you engage this person, place, thing, or activity, you're encouraged.)
13. What specifically are you worried about/afraid of here?
14. If you were happier, how would people know?
15. How could you view that differently?
16. What has worked in the past to get you unstuck here?
17. What else? Please tell me more about that.
18. What support do you need?
19. How can you get that support?
20. What would your ideal daily schedule look like?
21. How might your expectations be unrealistic here?

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CLIENT WITH THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

1. What's an assumption you have that might be holding you back?
2. What do you think I am missing or did not hear you say that is important that we need to revisit?
3. What are your hobbies?
4. What games do you usually like to play?
5. Which was the last book you read?
6. What type of a student were you in your high school?
7. What did you prefer in university presentations, being a leader or being a team member?
8. What are the things you can easily manage?
9. What are the things you find difficult to manage?
10. What do you think is a good life?
11. What kind of a person do you want to be?
12. What are you connected to that is bigger than you are?
13. What do you think is worthy of your attention and effort?
14. What are the main areas that you usually think about?
15. What do you think is your ideal self?
16. How far do you think you are from your ideal self?
17. What do you think can make you more content in life?
18. How do you define happiness in life?
19. What are the things that please you in life?
20. What is the toughest decision that you made in life?
21. How do you think that has affected your life?

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CLIENT WITH THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

- 1.What is your most recurring dream?
- 2.Do you ever feel insomnia?
- 3.What is your eating pattern?
- 4.What are the most felt feelings throughout the day?
- 5.What do you think are your core strengths?
- 6.Is there anyone who you think understands you well?
- 7.Are there any insecurities in your life?
- 8.What are you mostly anxious about in life?
- 9.Are there any areas for improvement in your life?
- 10.What are the events in life that you are grateful for?
- 11.What do you think are the reasons that make you envy some people?
- 12.What is the source of motivation for you in life?
- 13.Who is your inspiration in life?
- 14.How would you rate your confidence on a scale of 10?
- 15.How would you rate yourself image on a scale out of 10?
- 16.What is your greatest fear?
- 17.What makes you cringe in life?
- 18.How difficult is it for you to apologize to people?
- 19.What is the most difficult thing for you to forgive in others?
- 20.What is the thing that you regret the most in life?
- 21.What are some of the unfinished businesses in your life?
- 22.How do you react to uncertain and unpleasant events?
- 23.Describe the life events that make you feel guilty today?

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CLIENT WITH THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

1. Are you satisfied with the direction that your life has taken?
2. How strong is your decision-making power?
3. Are you prone to impulsive reactions?
4. Who has been the biggest influence in your life?
5. Who is the biggest influence in your life?
6. How difficult is it for you to manage time?
7. Do you procrastinate?
8. What are our daily life stressors?
9. What are your priorities in life?
10. What is that one habit that you want to get rid of?
11. How would you help someone with a similar problem?
12. Suppose a miracle happened to solve all your problems, how do you think your life would be better?
13. Have you ever taken any impulsive decisions in life that you later regretted?
14. What are the triggering events in your life?
15. How do you think your triggers affect you in life?
16. What coping mechanisms do you use to overcome your problems?
17. Have you ever tried to shift your perspective to a more positive one?
18. Have you ever gained any productive outcomes by focusing on positive aspects of life?
19. Are there any negative automatic thoughts that keep bugging you?
20. What is the one thing that you would like to change about yourself?
21. What is the one thing that you would like to change about your family?

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR CLIENT'S STRUGGLES

- 1.What do you see as being the biggest problem?
- 2.How does this problem typically make you feel?
- 3.How would you define the biggest challenge you're facing?
- 4.What do you think is the problem from your perspective?
- 5.How have you been coping with the problem(s) that brought you into therapy?
- 6.What do you think will make the problem better?
- 7.What do you think are the effects of the problem on your life?
- 8.How do you feel when a problem pops up unexpectedly?
- 9.Do you feel sad, mad, hopeless, stuck or something else?
- 10.How do you see the problem?
- 11.What are the things or people in your life that are causing problems for you?
- 12.How often do you experience the problem?
- 13.How have you been coping with the problem that brought you into therapy?
- 14.What have you tried so far to resolve your problem?
- 15.What do you think caused the situation to worsen?
- 16.How does the problem affect how you feel about yourself?
- 17.What avenues have you pursued in the past that have worked well to solve the problem?
- 18.Tell me about a time when you were not experiencing these difficulties?
- 19.Ask for more details of previous solutions or exceptions to the problem
- 20.What could you do differently to produce a more positive outcome?
- 21.If things have improved, focus on details of how the client made this happen (strengths and resiliencies)



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR CLIENT'S STRUGGLES

1. How did you make that happen?
2. How did you manage to take such a big step?
3. What did you tell yourself to help you do it that way?
4. Emphasize the difference from how things were before
5. Pay compliments
6. What will you do to keep this going?

## CLIENT'S NEEDS

1. How often do you get to meet up with friends?
2. Can you and your partner really talk together?
3. How are you sleeping these days?
4. Are you happy with your diet?
5. How much exercise are you getting?
6. Is there anyone who you feel really understands you?
7. Who are you closest to?
8. What choice do you have about what happens in your life?
9. Do you have a clear sense of where you want to take things in life?
10. Do you feel excited by stuff in your life?
11. What involvement do you have with people around you?
12. Do you feel you have purpose?
13. Do you feel safe at home?
14. What needs do you have that you feel aren't met?

# CLIENT'S MOOD

1. Describe your typical daily mood.
2. In general, how would you describe your mood?
3. Is your mood like a roller coaster, or is it steady?
4. What energizes you and makes you feel more upbeat?
5. What brings you down or makes you feel blue?
6. How do you typically handle irritations, aggravations, and frustrations?
7. Do you get mad easily?
8. How does your anger come out?
9. Do you feel mad when you don't get your way or lose control?
10. How do you get yourself out of a bad mood?
11. We all use different strategies to cope. Do you find yourself reaching for caffeine, drugs, alcohol, sex, shopping, the internet, or something else to make you feel better?
12. What have people close to you told you about your moods?
13. What would it take for you to feel happier or more at peace?
14. How do you think your moods affect your relationships?

# CLIENT'S FEELINGS

1. Think of a feeling that causes you personal harm, e.g., anger, sadness, etc.
2. What feeling do you want to stop?
3. Think of what information that feeling is telling you.
4. What does the feeling suggest you should do that would help things go better?
5. Will you let me know the next time you feel such extreme emotions?
6. What would help you feel more settled?
7. What else do you feel?
8. When you tell me you feel angry, what else do you feel?
9. What else could this mean?

# CLIENT'S NEEDS

1. Did I understand correctly when you said...?
2. Did I hear you correctly when you said...?
3. Am I correct in saying that...?
4. Correct me if I'm wrong but, is this what you were feeling...
5. Am I getting this right...?
6. Is this what you said...?
7. Is this what you said...?
8. Did I hear you say...?
9. Did I understand you when you said...?
10. What criteria did you use to...?
11. What's another way you might...?
12. Did I paraphrase what you said correctly?

# THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS

1. What evidence is there that this thought is true?
2. What evidence is there that this thought is not true?
3. What would I tell someone I loved if they were in this situation and had these thoughts?
4. If my automatic thought is true, what is the worst that could happen?
5. If my automatic thought is true, what is the best thing that could happen?
6. What is a more balanced view that more accurately reflects the facts?
7. Is there an alternative way of thinking about the situation?
8. Can someone I trust understand this situation in a different way?
9. What are the major issues that you face due to your thought patterns?
10. Are your behaviors actively creating the life you want to live?
11. Do you have any recurrent behaviors?
12. Do you have any recurrent thoughts?
13. Have you ever tried to break the chain of negative thinking?
14. How do other people react to your behavior?
15. How do you feel immediately after this occurs?
16. Do you have any bodily sensations after this happens, like trembling?
17. How do you react after this behavior occurs?
18. What do you think about after this happens?
19. Are you in a different place when this behavior ends?
20. Are there any people who make this behavior worse? Make it better?

# THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS

1. Does this behavior get your attention in some way?
2. What good things happen as a result of this behavior?
3. Does this help you in some way?
4. Do you feel a certain rush from doing this?
5. Does this behavior help you avoid something you don't want to do?
6. What consequences have you faced because of...
7. Have you felt "punished" due to this behavior?
8. Have you felt a "positive" consequence for this behavior?
9. What are the consequences that you feel you'd need to accept for this behavior?

# CRISIS INTERVENTION QUESTIONS

- 1.What prompted you to seek help now?
- 2.What happened to cause this crisis?
- 3.What have you done to solve this crisis?
- 4.What is not working?
- 5.What were your behaviors before the crisis?
- 6.What are your behaviors now?
- 7.Has anything like this happened before?
- 8.How was it handled?
- 9.Tell me about your history when managing crisis in your life.
- 10.What was successful?
- 11.What was not successful?
- 12.What do you feel are your strengths when handling this crisis?
- 13.Where do you feel you could use the most help when handling this crisis?
- 14.What are the two or three most important problems to be worked on immediately?
- 15.How life threatening is this situation? Immediately? In the near future?
- 16.What things are likely to stand in your way of successful crisis resolution?
- 17.What is a triggering experience for you?

# ACTIVE SUICIDAL IDEATION

1. Sometimes people feel that life is not worth living. Can you tell me how you feel about your own life?
2. What are some of the aspects of your life that make it worth living?
3. What are some of the aspects of your life that may make you feel or think that your life is not worth living?
4. Do you find yourself wishing for a permanent escape from life?
5. How would that happen for you?
6. What might you do to achieve that?
7. Do you think about your own death or about dying?
8. Have you ever thought of harming yourself or trying to take your own life?
9. Do you think or feel this way presently?
10. When did you begin to experience these thoughts and feelings?
11. What happened before you had them?
12. Were there events in your life that preceded this such as a sudden loss or feelings of depression?
13. How frequently have you had these thoughts and feelings?
14. Do these thoughts intrude into your thinking and activities?
15. How strong are they?
16. Can you describe them?
17. Can you stop yourself from having them by distracting yourself with an activity or other more positive thoughts?
18. Have you ever acted upon these thoughts?

# ACTIVE SUICIDAL IDEATION

1. Do your thoughts command you to act upon them?
2. If you have not acted upon them, how close do you feel you came to acting?
3. What stopped you from acting on them?
4. Have you ever started to act on your self-harm or suicidal thoughts, yet stopped before doing it?
5. Do you think you might act on these thoughts of self-harm or suicide in the future?
6. What might help you from acting on them?
7. If you did take your own life, what do you imagine would happen after you die to those people who are important to you?
8. Do you have a plan to harm yourself or take your own life? If so, describe your plan.
9. Do you have those methods available to you to take your life, such as over the counter pills, prescription pills, knives or proximity to a balcony or bridge?
10. Have you prepared for your death by writing a note, making a will, practicing the plan, putting your affairs such as your finances in order, or ensuring privacy such that you would unlikely be discovered?
11. Have you told anyone that you are thinking about taking your life or are planning to do this?



# CLIENTS WHO HAVE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE OR ENGAGED IN SELF-HARM

1. What happened in your previous attempts to self-harm or take your life?
2. What led up to it?
3. Were you using alcohol or other substances?
4. What method did you use?
5. Sometimes people have many reasons for harming themselves in addition to wanting to die. What might have been some of your reasons for self-harm or suicide?
6. How severe were your injuries?
7. What were your thoughts just before you harmed yourself?
8. What did you anticipate would be the outcome of your self-harm or suicide attempt?
9. Did you think you would die?
10. What did you think would be the response of others to your self-harm or suicide?
11. Were other people present when you did this?
12. How did you get help afterward?
13. Did you look for it by yourself or did someone else help you?
14. Did you anticipate that you might be discovered? If not, were you found accidentally?
15. How did you feel after your attempt?
16. Did you feel relief or regret at being alive?
17. Did you receive treatment after your attempt?
18. Did you get medical and/ or psychiatric, emergency help?
19. Were you assessed in an emergency department?
20. Were you cared for in an inpatient/outpatient department?
21. How do you think and feel about your life now?
22. Have things changed for you?
23. Do you see your life in the same way or differently?
24. Are there other times in the past when you've tried to harm (or kill) yourself?

# REOCCURRING SUICIDE ATTEMPTS OR IDEATION

1. How many times have you tried to harm yourself, or tried to take your life?
2. When was the most recent time?
3. What were your thoughts and feelings at the time that you were most serious about suicide?
4. When was your most serious attempt at harming or taking your life?
5. What happened just before you did this, and what happened after?

# ASSESS REASONS FOR LIVING

1. How do you feel about your own future?
2. What would help you to feel or think more positively, optimistically or hopefully about your future?
3. What would make it more (or less) likely that you would try to take your own life?
4. What happens in your life to make you wish to die or to escape from life?
5. What happens in your life to help you to want to live?
6. If you began to have thoughts of harming or killing yourself again, what would you do to prevent them?
7. What do you think might be a reason to live?

# THOUGHTS OF HARMING OTHERS

1. Are you having any thoughts of harming other people?
2. Are there other people you would want to die with you?
3. Are there others who you think would be unable to go on without you?

# PSYCHOSIS ASSESSMENT

1. Can you describe the voices you hear?
2. Can you tell if they are male or female?
3. Can you stop the voices?
4. How many different voices do you hear?
5. Do you hear these voices from within your own mind, or do they seem to come from somewhere outside of you?
6. Do you know who these voices are?
7. Do you recognize the voices?
8. What do the voices say to you?
9. Do they say anything positive, or do they say negative or hurtful things to you?
10. Do they threaten you or anyone else?
11. How do you cope with the voices?
12. Do you do anything about them?
13. Do they command you to do anything? If so what kinds of things do they ask you to do?
14. Have you ever done what the voices ask you to do?
15. What led you to obey the voices?
16. If you tried to resist them, what made it hard to do?
17. Have there been times when the voices told you to hurt or kill yourself?
18. How frequently has this happened? What happened?

# RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about the important relationships in your life.
2. What is the nature of your relationships with your family members?
3. What is the nature of your relationships with your friends/peers?
4. Do you have a good relationship with your parents?
5. Tell me about your relationship with your parents.
6. What was it like growing up in your family?
7. What do people keep doing that you dislike, and what do you wish they would change?
8. What wrongs have been done to you that you haven't forgiven?
9. What do you believe in, having quality of friends or quantity of friends?
10. How connected do you feel to people around you?
11. Do you have supportive people in your life?
12. Do you feel heard?
13. Do you feel judged?
14. What is your longest relationship?
15. Do you ever feel that your actions/behaviors/mood causes strain in your relationships?

# FOCUSING ON CHANGE

1. Think of something that you are focusing on too much.
2. What gets you into trouble when you focus on it too much?
3. What is something that you can focus on instead.
4. What will you focus on that will not get you into trouble?
5. On a scale of 0-10, how content are you with your life?
6. Do you regularly set positive goals for your work life, your relationships or health, and relaxation?
7. What is your attitude about change?
8. What are these goals?
9. What positive changes would you like to see happen in your life?
10. What keeps happening repeatedly that keeps you from achieving change?
11. What three easy steps can change your situation for the better?
12. What do you think would be one thing that you could change for better if you have been a magician?
13. What additional changes would you like to see?
14. Don't you feel proud of yourself for making that change?
15. Did it feel like some much-needed relief?
16. Isn't it nice to be able to think that way about yourself?
17. Wasn't it cathartic to let go of all that pent up anger?
18. What would you need to change in order to deal with this conflict?

# FUTURE FOCUSED QUESTIONS

1. Think of what will be different for you in the future when things are going better.
2. How will things be different?
3. Think of one thing that you would be doing differently before things could go better in the future. What one thing will you do differently?
4. How has your past affected your future?

# EXCEPTION QUESTIONS

1. What is better?
2. Of the things you did, what helped the most?
3. What else has helped so far?
4. What is different about those times?
5. What did you do differently in the past?
6. What other successes have you had in the past?
7. What do you think you did to make that happen?
8. What do you think (another person) would say you could do to make that happen again?
9. When is the problem not a problem? What are you doing differently then?
10. Are there times when the problem does not happen or is less serious?
11. Have there been times in the last couple of weeks when the problem did not happen or was less
12. severe?
13. How was it that you were able to make this exception happen?
14. What was different about that day?
15. If your friend (teacher, relative, spouse, partner, etc.) were here and I were to ask him what he noticed you doing different on that day, what would he say?

# COMPETENCY OR COPING QUESTIONS

1. How did you manage that?
2. Tell me about your good qualities.
3. What gave you the strength to do that?
4. That is a great idea. How do you come up with that?
5. How did you keep it from getting worse?
6. How are you managing to cope with this to the degree that you are?
7. How did you manage to get back on the right track?
8. Suppose you were to compliment yourself on your effort, what would you say?
9. How do you most enjoy spending your time? In what are you most interested?
10. What have you achieved that you are most proud of?
11. How do you cope with stress?
12. What are some of your weaknesses?
13. What are some of your strengths?
14. What are some healthy habits that you could adopt? What unhealthy habits could you let go of?

# SCALING QUESTIONS

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is the worst and 10 is the best, where are you today?
2. How did you manage to remain at that number?
3. What would one step higher look like?
4. How would you notice you have gone up one point?
5. How would others see that you have taken a small step?
6. How do you keep from being at a lower number?
7. How have you managed to keep things from getting worse?
8. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not serious at all and 10 being the most serious, how serious do you think the problem is now?
9. On a scale of 0 to 10, what number would it take for you to consider the problem to be sufficiently solved?
10. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being no confidence and 10 being very confident, how confident are you that this problem can be solved?
11. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being no chance and 10 being every chance, how likely is it that you will be able to say "No" to your boyfriend when he offers you drugs?



# LEADING QUESTIONS

1. Are you going to prioritize your therapy homework?
2. Do you think that was the best response you could have picked considering your therapy goals?
3. Are you going to reflect on the insight of this week?
4. Why do you think that?
5. How did you come to consider this?
6. How did you come to that conclusion?
7. Tell me more...
8. Why do you think this is the case?
9. What do you think would happen if...?
10. What sort of impact do you think...?
11. How did you decide...?
12. How did you determine...?
13. How did you conclude...?
14. What is the connection between... and...?
15. What if the opposite were true?
16. What happened then?
17. Can you be more specific?
18. Can you give me an example of that?
19. How does this affect you?
20. What might cause that, do you think?
21. Can you fill me in on the details?

# ENDING OFF THE SESSION

1. What has been disappointing about this session?
2. What has been useful about this session?
3. How would you summarize this session?
4. What are the takeaways from this session?
5. What homework would you like to give yourself?
6. What would you like to focus on in our next session?