

# The Container Exercise Guide

This handout provides therapists with a detailed framework and instructions for facilitating the container exercise. The exercise is a cognitive tool used in trauma therapy to help clients manage and compartmentalize overwhelming memories or emotions.

## Purpose

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- To enable clients to contain and manage trauma memories that may be overwhelming.
- To facilitate the processing of one trauma memory at a time during therapy sessions.

## Implementing the Container Exercise

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### Introduction

- Introduce the concept and purpose of the container exercise to the client, explaining its benefits and role in managing trauma.

### Visualization of the Container

- Encourage the client to imagine a container. This could be a physical object (a box, safe, or trunk), an electronic device (USB, DVD), or a virtual entity (a digital folder).

### Ownership of the Container

- The client is the only person who knows what and where the container is, and is the only person who can open it.

### Practice

- Instruct the client that whenever a distressing or triggering thought or emotion arises, they can mentally place and secure it in their container.

## Key Points

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- The container exercise is a valuable tool in trauma therapy for managing overwhelming memories or emotions.
- The client retains complete control over their container, increasing their sense of personal agency over their experiences.
- Regular practice of this exercise, paired with specific therapy and other tools, can improve a client's ability to cope with and manage traumatic memories or emotions effectively.