LIFEHACK

Expand your toolbox of life skills and strengthen your mental wellbeing

Main Module

The finish line

Contents

How to Use this Workbook

LifeHack is a self-help programme in which you learn various life skills for all sorts of situations you might encounter in life. This program is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and consists of reading material and interactive exercises. Four domains are covered: your emotional well-being, your studies, your social life and your self-esteem.

Each domain consists of one main module and two related optional modules. The best way to do the programme is to complete one domain per week by doing the main module and any of the optional modules that seem relevant to you. Therefore, the whole programme will take approximately 4 to 6 weeks.

You can find a list of resources in the community <u>here</u> when you need support. Counselling and Psychological services are available at HKU for current students. It is free-of-charge, professional and confidential. Don't hesitate to seek help if needed.

Enquiries and Feedback
CEDARS – Counselling and Person Enrichment Section (CoPE)
Tel: 3917-8388 | Email: cedars-cope@hku.hk

The finish line

Introduction

Congratulations! You've made it all the way to the last module of LifeHack. We're impressed and you should be very proud of yourself!

We need to take a moment to celebrate, so please do the following:

- Raise your left arm above your head.
- Straighten the fingers of your left hand.
- Raise your right arm above your head.
- Straighten the fingers of your right hand.
- With a good amount of speed and force, touch your right hand to your left hand.

And this, my friend, is how you self-five!

You might be thinking, and now what? If it's the end, what is this module all about? What you can expect in this module is to:

- Reflect on your progress and set future goals
- Learn to notice your successes
- Plan ways to celebrate and reward yourself

Let's go!

Let's be mirrors and reflect

First, a very general question: what hacks have you been using since you started and how have they influenced your life?

Now let's reflect on your goals. At the beginning of this programme, you defined some goals (refer to your SMART goal in the module "Let's go!") to work through this programme.

To which extent did you accomplish these goals? What do you think went well and what still needs some work?

Looking ahead

It's generally a good idea to set new or adapted goals as you complete the old ones. So looking ahead, what is an important thing for you to work on next? This can also be a goal that you'd set at the beginning, but haven't achieved yet.

Formulate a SMART goal for the coming month or so:

Cheat sheet: what was a SMART goal again?

An effective, well-formulated goal is a SMART goal.

S stands for specific. A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. So make sure to identify what exactly you want to do in terms of behaviour. "Get in shape" is vague, whereas "Going for a half-hour run twice a week" gives a lot of direction.

M is measurable. You should have concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the goal. To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as: How much? How many? How will I know that I'm sticking to it? How will I know when it's accomplished? So not "work out more" but rather: "work out 2 days a week".

A stands for attainable. Goals are most motivating when they are neither too easy (which is not challenging enough) nor too difficult (which can be demotivating). For example, if you hardly ever exercise at the moment, it's not very realistic to expect yourself to run a marathon in a few weeks. So make sure your goal is realistic.

R is relevant. Asking yourself what your reasons are for wanting to achieve this goal, can also increase your motivation. Why is this goal important to you? What will you gain if you succeed? Maybe you want to exercise because it relaxes you, makes you feel more fit or because it increases your self-confidence. Whatever your reasons, make sure the goal is meaningful for you!

And **T** stands for time-bound. A goal should be grounded within a time frame. Goals that can be reached in the short run are often more motivating than goals you know will take a long time. If you want to run twice a week, you could say you want to start this Tuesday and keep it up for the next three months.

And come up with an action plan: which exact steps will you take next to work towards this goal? Which hacks from the programme might be useful and how will you remind yourself to implement them?

4 types of success

You've done such an awesome job getting here and that deserves a little bit of attention. One thing we humans are notoriously bad at is recognising our own successes. One reason for that has to do with our definition of success.

Most people only feel something is a 'success' when they achieve one of their goals. And of course that is definitely a success, but there are 3 more types of success.

Taking action - any kind of action

DO OR DO NOT

THERE IS NO TRY

What if your friend had a crush on someone and gathered all their courage to ask them out. That would be pretty cool and brave of them, right - regardless of whether the person said yes or no. Because the action counts too, not just the outcome. Taking action is definitely a type of success!

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU

THAT READING THIS IS ALREADY A SUCCESS
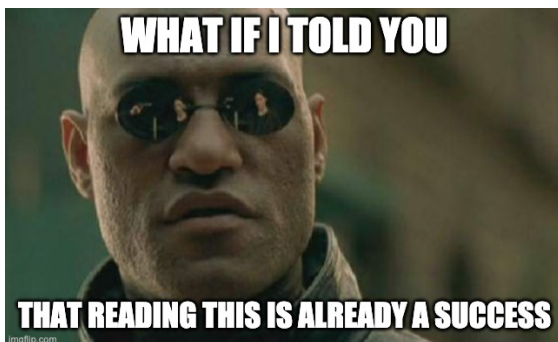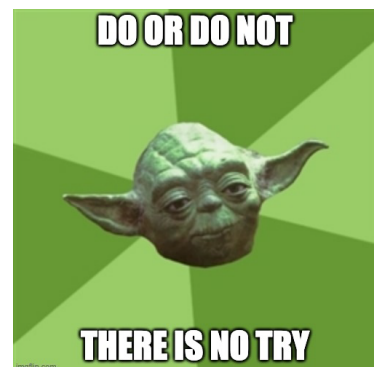
Gaining new insight

Successes aren't just about physical actions and consequences. Any time you learn something new, every 'Aha' moment, every time you go: "I hadn't thought about it like that!" - all of these are successes. That's because new insights allow you to grow and move beyond where you were before.

Acknowledging a mistake and learning from it

If anything is not a success, it's making a mistake - right?

Wrong. Any mistake that you learn from is actually a great success. First, because you were smart enough to recognise the mistake in the first place, and second because you just learned a very valuable lesson, one that will prevent lots of mistakes in the future. So making a mistake can also be a great success!

I SCREWED UP! SORRY, GUYS...

Learning to recognise all these as successes adds a lot of positivity to your day!

Let's start easy: write down 5 successes (but more is allowed!) since starting the programme. They can be big or small!

And ramping it up: write 5 successes from TODAY. Here is where you get to be a little creative.

Need inspiration?

- I got up when my alarm clock went off (instead of snoozing)
- I'm doing this module
- I exercised today
- I ate a healthy breakfast/lunch/dinner
- I worked on my paper for more than an hour
- I actively participated in class
- I learned something about myself, namely ...
- I finally sent out a job application
- I realised I snapped at my partner (for no real reason) and I apologised

Try to get into the habit of recognising successes by writing 5 successes each and every day. It only takes 2 minutes a day, and after a while you will start to notice that your days are filled with big and small successes!

Reward yourself

Lastly - and it's so weird to think that this is the very last 'lastly' - you should reward yourself for all these successes! And finishing this programme deserves the biggest reward of all, if you ask us.

Celebrate good times, come on!

Take a moment to think about how you can celebrate finishing this programme. What would you like to do? Who would you like to invite? Here are some ideas to inspire you.

If you like...	Get inspired
Food & friends	Organise a picnic. Have everyone bring some snacks and their favourite (board) games, and don't forget a speaker and some good music.
Partying & music	Check out what's going on at nearby venues and get tickets to your favourite festival / music concert / event.
Getting pampered	Do a spa day or get a fancy manicure, or maybe a long massage.
Laughing	Go to a (stand-up) comedy show, or a funny movie at the cinema (and buy a big popcorn!).
Travel	If you can afford a city trip abroad: go for it! But as a plan B, why not take the train to a nearby city you haven't been to before?

So, what will you do to celebrate this success of finishing the programme?

Who will you invite?

Make sure you add it to your calendar so you don't forget to celebrate!

The final finish line

And on that positive note, it's time to say goodbye. Kind of.

This is the end of the last module, but that doesn't mean you can never come back. You can come back at any time to do another module!

Here's a quick summary of all the hacks from this programme

Domain: Feeling good mentally/emotionally

- Boost your mood: 3 hacks to influence how you feel
- Stress less & relax more: 2 strategies to cope with stress and tips to relax more
- 'Healthify' your lifestyle (food, exercise, sleep): practical advice to improve your physical health

Domain: Your studies

- Study smarter, not harder: tips to optimize the way you study
- Beat procrastination: gain insight into why you procrastinate and learn how to overcome that annoying habit
- Boost your focus & productivity: a 5 step focus-boosting ritual to help you concentrate and get sh*t done

Domain: A healthy social life

- Level up your social life: ways to build your social circle and to improve your relationships (both friendly and romantic)
- Express yourself & say 'no': tips to speak your mind and set your boundaries in a healthy way
- Overcome social anxiety: a 3-step process to manage or overcome your social anxiety

Domain: Boosting your self-esteem

- Grow your confidence & self-esteem: 3 steps to feeling (even) happier with who you are as a person
- Overcome perfectionism & fear of failure: learn how to deal with the negative thoughts and emotions that come from perfectionism and fear of failure
- Impostor syndrome, begone!: 3 hacks to stop feeling like an impostor

And that was it!

It's fantastic that you made it all the way to the end and we're super proud of you. We wish you every success in the future and hope that all the things you have learned in this program will be of use for many years to come!

What did you think of this module? Please let us know your views <u>here</u>.