



# Positive Psychology Group Therapy for Long-Term Incarceration: A Therapy Manual

*Alecia Douglas Chahine*

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There is no denying that the prison environment is negatively saturated, but as a prison therapist you have the ability to spread and encourage positivity. That is what this group is all about. It is not only refreshing and fun for the inmate, but the group therapist too! Group participants will become familiar with the theoretical framework of Positive Psychology (a very prosocial framework) and will be encouraged to identify their strengths in order to create a purposeful life behind bars. An additional goal of the group is to be able to leave each session feeling a little bit better than when you walked in. Through group exercises, the inmates are encouraged and challenged to welcome positive emotion while learning, developing, and strengthening what makes them unique. The chapters are fairly brief (in order to maintain group engagement) and all conclude with exercises to be completed (in or out of group time). In addition to the exercises, you are provided a recommended reading list of articles, book chapters, etc. (which you select based on the unique needs of the group). This group is important because life-term or long-term inmates often get excluded from programs based on their sentence. A past group participant once stated: "many just care about recidivism, but this group doesn't forget about us". Group topics include the following: Introduction to Positive Psychology, Meaning and Purpose, Strengths and Virtues, Gratitude, Resilience, Pleasure and Positive Experience, Positive Thinking, Positive Interpersonal Relationships, Humor and Laughter, Happiness and Well-Being, Review of all Topics, Termination/Graduation. The therapy manual also includes a miscellaneous section: Selected Writing/Group Testimonials, Group Exercise/Homework Examples provided by Group Participants, In-Group Games and Activities.

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