

The Old Seven/Seven

A Deep Team Building Exercise for Treatment Staff
Napier Models · Modules

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Part 1 · Overview

The Old Seven/Seven

A Deep Team Building Exercise for Treatment Staff

This profound workshop guides participants through sharing seven significant life events that shaped who they are. Creates deep understanding between team members and often reveals unexpected connections and shared experiences.

3-4 hours

Learning Objectives

- Share formative life experiences in a safe environment
- Develop deeper understanding of colleagues' perspectives
- Recognize how personal history influences professional approach
- Build empathy through shared vulnerability
- Create lasting bonds that improve team collaboration

Key Topics Covered

Life Story Work

Formative Experiences

Empathy Development

Team Bonding

Personal History

Professional Identity

Shared Humanity

Intended Audience

- Established teams ready for deeper connection
- Leadership teams seeking authentic relationships
- Staff who will work closely together long-term
- Teams recovering from conflict or transitions
- Organizations valuing whole-person engagement

Prerequisites

- Completion of foundational trust-building workshops
- Team stability (not during major transitions)
- Extended time block without interruptions
- Skilled facilitator experienced in emotional processing

Part 2 • Worksheet

This powerful exercise invites you to share seven critical events that have shaped who you are today. By sharing our stories with vulnerability and listening with empathy, we build the deep trust necessary for effective clinical teams and model the openness we ask of our clients.

Remember: The goal isn't to impress or compete—it's to connect authentically and understand how our personal experiences inform our clinical work.

Time Required

15 minutes per person

Group Size

2-15 people (ideal: 3-5)

Safety Level

High vulnerability required

Activity Guidelines

Important Note for Clinical Staff:

This exercise requires significant vulnerability. Ensure psychological safety, respect confidentiality, and remember that sharing personal experiences (including recovery stories) should always be voluntary.

How It Works:

- 1

Individual Reflection (10 minutes)

Identify 7 events that profoundly shaped who you are today

- 2

Sharing (7 minutes each)

Each person shares their seven events—focusing on impact, not just details

- 3

Active Listening

Listen with full presence—no interruptions, questions saved for after

- 4

Group Processing

Discuss themes, connections, and insights as a team

Key Rule: Keep the focus on events, not on the entire life story

My Seven Critical Events

Think of events that fundamentally changed your trajectory, worldview, or sense of self. These might include:

First memories, family dynamics, early trauma or joy

School experiences, learning moments, achievements or struggles

Deaths, endings, significant losses

Love, friendship, betrayal, connection

Accomplishments, breakthroughs, pride moments

Illness, addiction, trauma, major obstacles

Spiritual experiences, recovery, major life changes

1Event 1

What happened? (Brief description)

Describe the event concisely...

How did it impact who you are?

What changed in you?

Your age when it happened:

Age or life stage...

2Event 2

What happened? (Brief description)

Describe the event concisely...

How did it impact who you are?

What changed in you?

Your age when it happened:

Age or life stage...

3Event 3

What happened? (Brief description)

Describe the event concisely...

How did it impact who you are?

What changed in you?

Your age when it happened:

Age or life stage...

4Event 4

What happened? (Brief description)

Describe the event concisely...

How did it impact who you are?

What changed in you?

Your age when it happened:

Age or life stage...

5Event 5

What happened? (Brief description)

Describe the event concisely...

How did it impact who you are?

What changed in you?

Your age when it happened:

Age or life stage...

6Event 6

What happened? (Brief description)

Describe the event concisely...

How did it impact who you are?

What changed in you?

Your age when it happened:

Age or life stage...

7Event 7

What happened? (Brief description)

Describe the event concisely...

How did it impact who you are?

What changed in you?

Your age when it happened:

Age or life stage...

Personal Reflection Before Sharing

What patterns or themes do you notice across your seven events?

Consider recurring themes, types of challenges, sources of strength...

How might these experiences influence your approach to clinical work?

Think about empathy, triggers, strengths, blind spots, therapeutic style...

Which events feel most vulnerable to share? Why?

Identifying this helps you prepare emotionally...

Team Sharing Notes

Use this space to capture key themes and responses as team members share (with their permission).

Team member name...

Key theme/event...

Your response/connection...

Clinical Integration & Team Building

How This Exercise Strengthens Clinical Teams:

- Builds deep trust necessary for handling difficult cases together
- Helps identify potential countertransference triggers
- Creates understanding of each team member's strengths and vulnerabilities
- Models the vulnerability we ask of our clients
- Reduces team splitting and enhances cohesion

After completing this exercise, what new understanding do you have about your team?

Consider shared experiences, complementary strengths, areas for mutual support...

How can your team leverage these shared vulnerabilities to better serve clients?

Think about empathy, authentic connection, modeling recovery, team consultation...

Supporting Each Other After Sharing

Remember:

Sharing at this level can bring up strong emotions. Ensure everyone has support and knows it's okay to process feelings that arise over the coming days.

What support do you need after this sharing?

Individual processing, team check-in, supervision, self-care plans...

How will you honor the trust your team has shown?

Confidentiality commitments, ongoing support, team practices...

"Vulnerability is not winning or losing; it's having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome."

- Brené Brown

By sharing our stories, we create the authentic connections that make us not just coworkers, but a true healing community.

www.TheRecoveryFiles.com