




# Exercise: Obsession Mapping

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**Map your obsessions across your life to spot patterns, triggers, and the underlying needs you were trying to meet.**

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## Purpose

Help participants see their obsessive patterns as *data*, not failure. Identify what drives obsession so it can be redirected.

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## Time

20 minutes total

- Solo journaling: 10 min
  - Small group share: 10 min
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## Materials Needed

- Workbook page or large paper with timeline template
  - Markers or pens
  - Sticky notes (optional for group patterns)
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## Activity Instructions

### Part 1: Individual Timeline (10 min)

**Prompt:**

"Map your obsessions across your life. What have you been obsessed with at different ages?"

**Timeline structure:**

- Ages 0-10
- Ages 11-18
- Ages 19-25
- Ages 26+ (or current age)

**What counts as obsession:**

- Substances (alcohol, drugs, food, etc.)
- Behaviors (work, exercise, gaming, sex, shopping, cleaning)
- People (relationships, codependency, caretaking)
- Ideas (perfectionism, control, achievement, revenge)

**Reflection questions (answer for each obsession):**

- What need was this meeting? (Escape, energy, purpose, belonging, control, meaning?)
  - What triggered it?
  - How did it serve you?
  - What did it cost you?
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## **Part 2: Small Group Pattern Recognition (10 min)**

**Instructions:**

"Get into groups of 3-4. Share your timeline—as much or as little as you want.

As you listen to each other, look for patterns:

- Do your obsessions serve a similar purpose? (All about escape? Control? Energy?)
- Do they follow similar triggers? (Stress, boredom, loneliness, trauma?)
- Do they escalate over time, or do they shift forms?

The goal: Figure out what you're *really* looking for underneath the obsession."

**Group discussion prompts:**

- "What pattern do you notice in your own timeline?"
  - "What would it look like to meet that need in a healthier way?"
  - "If you could obsess about something that *builds* you up, what would it be?"
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## Facilitator Tips

- Normalize having multiple obsessions or switching between them—that's common
  - Help them see obsession as *energy seeking an outlet*, not moral failure
  - Watch for participants who have trouble identifying obsessions—broaden the definition ("What takes over your brain when you're stressed?")
  - Celebrate insights, not just "clean" timelines
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## Follow-Up Activity

Have participants use the **Obsession-to-Fuel Worksheet** (see Module 1 Add-Ons) to plan their first redirect experiment.

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## Sample Timeline (facilitator can share)

**Ages 0-10:** Obsessed with perfect grades (control, approval)

**Ages 11-18:** Obsessed with romantic relationships (escape loneliness)

**Ages 19-25:** Obsessed with alcohol and partying (numb anxiety, feel alive)

**Ages 26+:** Obsessed with work and achievement (prove I'm not broken)

**Pattern:** All about proving I'm enough + numbing fear of not being enough.

**Redirect opportunity:** Channel that energy into building something I'm proud of—business, art, mentorship.