

DIY dice

What it is

Those who play board games will be familiar with the concept of rolling a die to find out what happens next. This might not be the best way to make all decisions, but using a ‘randomiser’ like dice can help lighten cognitive load when the stakes are low – and help you explore whether you were subconsciously hoping for a particular outcome¹. Creating such a device offers a good opportunity for reflection; for example, what options are typically available to you, what attitudes do you hope to cultivate, and what might your life look like if you tried making different decisions for a while?

Testimonials

This activity has not yet been trialled by Creative Toolkit collaborators. Give it a go and let us know how it went!

Materials needed

You could create dice in a range of formats, including:

- Wood: standard-sized dice or small blocks (see [here](#) and [here](#) for examples)
- Paper: see here for a [template](#) and [here](#) for instructions for making an origami box
- Cardboard: recycle a small packing cube, perhaps after wrapping it in some plain paper
- You could also achieve a similar effect using blank playing cards (see [here](#) for an example) or even index cards.

Depending on your choice above, you may also need tape or glue, and you will definitely want implements for drawing and colouring. Fine-point permanent markers or paint pens work best on wood, but if you are using paper or playing cards you could use colouring pencils or crayons. If the cards have a shiny surface, make sure you choose implements that minimize the likelihood of smearing.



(An example of a wooden die with six different prompts to facilitate reflection. The meanings of the words and images do not have to be clear to anyone else – as long as they mean something to you!)

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/stretching-theory/202008/should-you-let-the-dice-decide>

Suggestions

All of the activities below prompt you to work in sixes simply because a standard die has six sides. If you want to think of more options, you can make a pair or set of dice; if you're struggling to come up with that many ideas, you can just insert a decorative element.

- What are six different things you could quickly and easily do to boost your mood when you are feeling out of sorts? Capture each one with a word, phrase, or image, and create a die that you can roll for inspiration next time you need a pick-me-up.
- Can you think of six things – people, places, activities, ideas – that you are grateful for? Populate your die with something that symbolises each of these. Next time your mood dips, take a few minutes, or even just 30 seconds, to focus all your thoughts on whatever comes up when you roll the die. Practicing gratitude is great for wellbeing because it can reduce stress and anxiety².
- What do you think are your greatest strengths? Put these on your die and give it a roll next time you are struggling with confidence or self-image. Whatever comes up, think about the most recent time you demonstrated that trait – and then be on the lookout for it for the rest of the day; you'll be surprised how often you suddenly notice what you were previously taking for granted.
- How could you show kindness towards others? Think of six different actions that you could easily weave into your day; this might be something as small as smiling at someone as you walk past in the hallway. These small acts not only improve the lives of others; they are also great for our own mental health³.
- What sorts of attitudes or habits are you trying to cultivate? See if you can 'nudge'⁴ yourself in that direction by giving yourself prompts (as an example, consider the die, below, that author Lucy Leonelli created to capture her approach to trying new things for a year⁵). Alternatively, if there's a particular thing you're trying to do, maybe your die might give you options for different places to attempt it, or different lengths of time.
- When faced with a tricky decision, what might be some options for helping you come to a resolution? You may not want to use a die to decide 'yes' or 'no', but perhaps you could suggest six different things to do to help you make your choice – e.g., talking to a friend, looking up additional information online, envisioning outcomes of different decisions. See if using the die helps you to feel more in control the next time you are indecisive – and helps you feel more secure in whatever choice you make.

² <https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/gratitude-mental-health-game-changer>

³ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/kindness#:~:text=We%20know%20from%20the%20research,fresh%20perspective%20and%20deepens%20friendships.>

⁴ <https://theconversation.com/nudge-theory-what-15-years-of-research-tells-us-about-its-promises-and-politics-210534>

⁵ <https://lucyfeltham.com/alphabet-britain/>



(The die accompanying the release of Lucy Leonelli's book *A Year in the Life*, which documents her attempts to try new things even if they scare her.)