

# Cookie Jar

Source: Liana Lowenstein, in: Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety

**Theme:** Termination

**Recommended Age Range:** Three to Ten

**Modality:** Individual

## Goals

- Verbalize an understanding of when and how therapy will end
- Provide a positive termination experience

## Materials

- Plastic covered jar or container
- Adhesive label
- Marker
- Cookies

## Advance Preparation

Write the client's name on the adhesive label and stick it on the outside of the jar. Place the cookies in the jar. (The number of cookies placed in the jar will depend on the number of sessions the client has left until termination. For example, if there are five sessions left, then place five cookies in the jar.)

## Overview

Young children often lack the cognitive ability to fully understand a concept such as the termination of therapy. This activity provides a visual and concrete way to help young clients understand when therapy will end. This helps to prepare clients for termination and reduces feelings of rejection and loss.

This intervention should be used in conjunction with other termination activities such as games or art techniques that help celebrate the client's therapeutic achievements and facilitate the goodbye process.

## Activity Instructions

See the worksheet below.

## About The Author

Liana Lowenstein, MSW, CPT-S, is a therapist, lecturer, and author who has been working with children since 1988. She is internationally recognized for her innovative work including numerous books on child and family therapy. She is winner of the Monica Herbert award for outstanding contribution to play therapy in Canada.

## Cookie Jar

You have worked hard in therapy and you have learned so much! This means you are almost ready to stop coming to therapy. This activity is called *Cookie Jar*. It will help you understand when and how therapy will end so you will feel ready.

Open the cookie jar, take out one cookie (only one!), and eat the cookie. The remaining cookies in the jar show how many more times you will be coming here. There are four cookies left in the jar. So you will be coming here four more times, and then you and I will be saying goodbye to each other. Place the lid on the cookie jar.

Ask me to say something you have learned in therapy and to tell you why you are almost ready to stop coming to therapy.

We'll repeat this activity at the end of our next three sessions (e.g., eat one cookie from the cookie jar, count the remaining cookies in the jar, and say how many more times you will be coming to therapy). At the end of the three sessions, there will be one cookie left in the cookie jar, which means you will come to therapy one last time. The last time you come will be special. It will be a celebration of all the hard work you have done in therapy. It will be a time for us to say a last goodbye to each other.

At the end of your last session, you will get to eat the last cookie left in the jar.